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**Boundaries, Borders and Peace-Building
in Southern Africa:
The Spatial Implications of the
'African Renaissance'**

Richard A. Griggs

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Boundaries, Borders and Peace-Building in Southern Africa: The Spatial Implications of the 'African Renaissance'

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The opinions contained herein are those of the author and are not to be construed as those of IBRU.

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Boundaries, Borders and Peace-Building in Southern Africa: The Spatial Implications of the ‘African Renaissance’

Richard A. Griggs

1. Introduction

Border and boundary problems have enormous implications for peacebuilding and demilitarisation in the Southern African Development Community (SADC).¹ On one hand, secessionist movements, conflicting state claims to territory, ethnic claims to state powers and territories, and the illegal movement of people and goods bring instability and conflict to the region. On the other hand, the spatial plans associated with the discourse of an *African Renaissance* propose an opportunity for building stability, peace and prosperity through regionalisation, cooperative management of resources, and transport corridors that link Southern African economies. This *Briefing* uses geographic analysis and maps to assess the potential of the African Renaissance to provide peaceful solutions to boundary problems affecting the SADC region.

This report is divided into six sections. First, boundaries and borders are defined and their role in conflict management explained. A mapped analysis of the types of boundary conflicts affecting Southern Africa follows. Thirdly, three paradigms for addressing these conflicts are outlined. Fourthly, the proposed African Renaissance is presented as a new paradigm of boundary management. The fifth section assesses the capacity of the African Renaissance paradigm to provide a system of boundary management that is more appropriate to Southern Africa than the outdated Westphalian model of sovereign states jealously guarding their borders. The spatial plans associated with the renaissance discourse are generally supported but critiqued to the extent that they fail to address the need for appropriate boundary adjustments and ignore significant geopolitical factors in the region. The report ends with a brief summary.

2. The Role of Boundaries and Borders in Conflict Management

Perhaps the best way to appreciate the link between boundaries and borders in conflict management is to first understand their role and function in human survival. Long before children develop language skills, they must distinguish between themselves and their environment. This creates a boundary that ensures survival, self-preservation, and self-advancement, the concept of *human territoriality*. However, we are not alone in the world and to survive we must learn to negotiate our own boundaries with those of others. This creates a zone of interaction or a border. Thus, *boundaries* mark the precise points of contact between two opposite bodies or forces (Glassner, 1996). *Borders* refer to the zones of cooperation, conflict, or transit across two bounded spaces (Glassner, 1996).

The chief function of boundaries or borders is to separate or assign some part of space (e.g., land, air, or water areas) to an individual, a society, an organisation, or a government authority. Thus,

¹ In the text the acronym SADC should be read as a proper noun, ‘Sadec’. It is a shorthand that eliminates the need for any preceding article (‘the’).

anyone who lays claim to a bounded space becomes involved in negotiating with a whole network of authorities, actors, and other claimants to bounded spaces. Figure 1 points to just a few of these, and also shows the various stages in the boundary-making process.

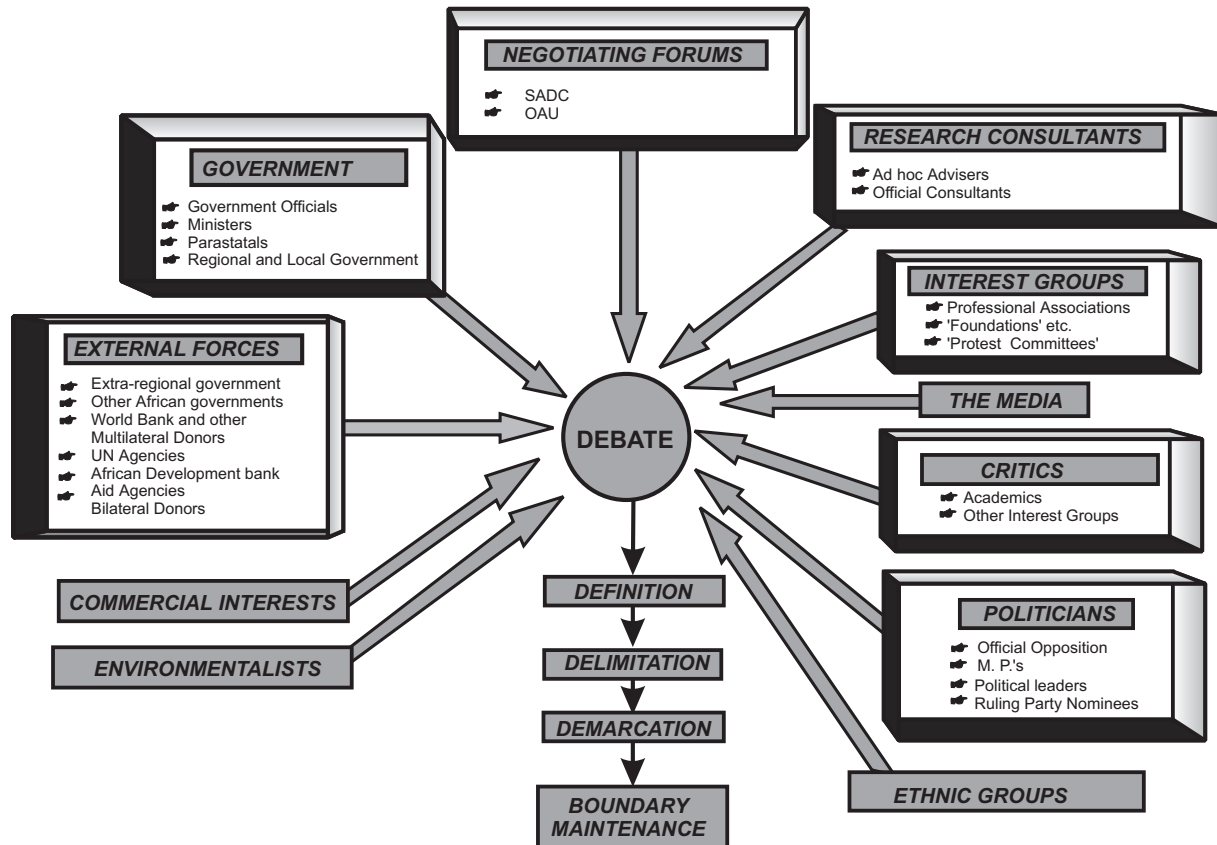


Figure 1: Some Key Role-Players and Forces That Shape State Boundaries

The interactions among claimants to various bounded spaces locally, nationally, and internationally create much of what we know as politics. Political conflict over boundaries is not unusual because boundaries are a power-laden phenomenon that define entire social groupings (e.g., Zambians) and determine such human factors as citizenship, nationhood, and the kinds of resources that are available to a country for development. The large number of role-players involved in negotiating boundaries means that conflicts can become so heated and complex that solutions are difficult to find. Some of the bigger boundary conflicts can last for decades (e.g., Eritrea's secession from Ethiopia), centuries (e.g., Northern Ireland), and even millennia (e.g., Israel vs. Palestine).

Conflicts over boundaries can be rooted in a poor delimitation, incomplete negotiations in which major role-players are excluded, or because decision-makers have a weak understanding of the role and function of boundaries. The creation of South Africa's nine new provinces in 1993 is a recent example of both poorly delimited boundaries and a process that excluded major role-players. Territorial trade-offs between politicians of various parties superseded expert attention to social, cultural, economic, and political phenomena. Opportunities for public referenda were sidelined.

The resulting security problems from several violent disputes were enormous and the impact of too many poorly-run provinces continues to be very costly in economic terms (Griggs, 1998a).

On a broader scale, one has only to consider that many contemporary conflicts in Africa were bred by the very poorly managed process of boundary delimitation issuing from the 1884 Berlin Conference. Arbitrary lines ripped nations apart, forced others together, and distributed resources illogically (e.g., fifteen states with no access to the sea). This laid a foundation for secessionist movements, ethnic conflict, coups, competing state claims to territory, war, and the mass migration of people (Griggs, 1994 and 1997a).

It is ironic that despite the very serious problems associated with poor boundary management, boundaries are seldom the organisational focus of institutes, NGOs, schools, or universities. So few people ever undertake boundary studies that the subject is commonly treated as an obscure matter for geographers and politicians to ponder. This lack of research and education allows mistaken assumptions and perceptions to misinform popular culture, those who make spatial decisions, and those who manage boundaries. So, it is necessary to examine our false perceptions about them.

A weak understanding of the role and function of boundaries may be at the root of poor boundary delimitations and management practices. One could argue that a limited imagination based on the categories of 'yours' and 'mine' resulted in sub-dividing Africa into 'objective', non-negotiable spheres of authority (Figure 2). Each state jealously defends its territory and resources and goes to war if there is an infringement of its sovereignty. It is difficult to negotiate new ways of sharing territory and resources in a region (e.g., cross-boundary cooperation) if people view boundaries as hard-line, objective entities that capture territorial spaces for a 'chosen people'. For example the moral imperative of apartheid in South Africa's history was often based on the belief that South Africa was a God-given place for whites to rule.

Likewise, the European map of hard-line states taught generations of African leaders to see boundaries as immovable lines in the dirt that act as containers of wealth and authority. This created rigidity in boundary perceptions and therefore invited conflict in the post-independence period both among new states and older political formations such as tribes and nations (e.g., Biafra vs. Nigeria). The legacy of colonialism and European education appears to have left Africans unable to access their own subjectivity, imagination and culture of boundary-making and yet unable to fully embrace the European imposition.

Prior to the Europeans, most boundaries in Africa were not hard-lines but consisted of overlapping spheres of authority that permitted access to resources by common agreement. One could argue that the ecological, political, and economic survival of Africa will ultimately depend on a return to the earlier, more flexible African attitudes toward boundaries. For instance, one can imagine concentric circles of sovereignty within African regions that allow for more peaceable co-management between local, national, and regional scales of human organisation (the concept of *subsidiarity*). Existing states might become autonomous units within a Southern African confederation. For example, Zanzibar or Cabinda could be operated like Hamburg, city-states within larger governing units. These are not prescriptions but possibilities when we begin to see boundaries as negotiable entities that can be adjusted to changing times and needs.

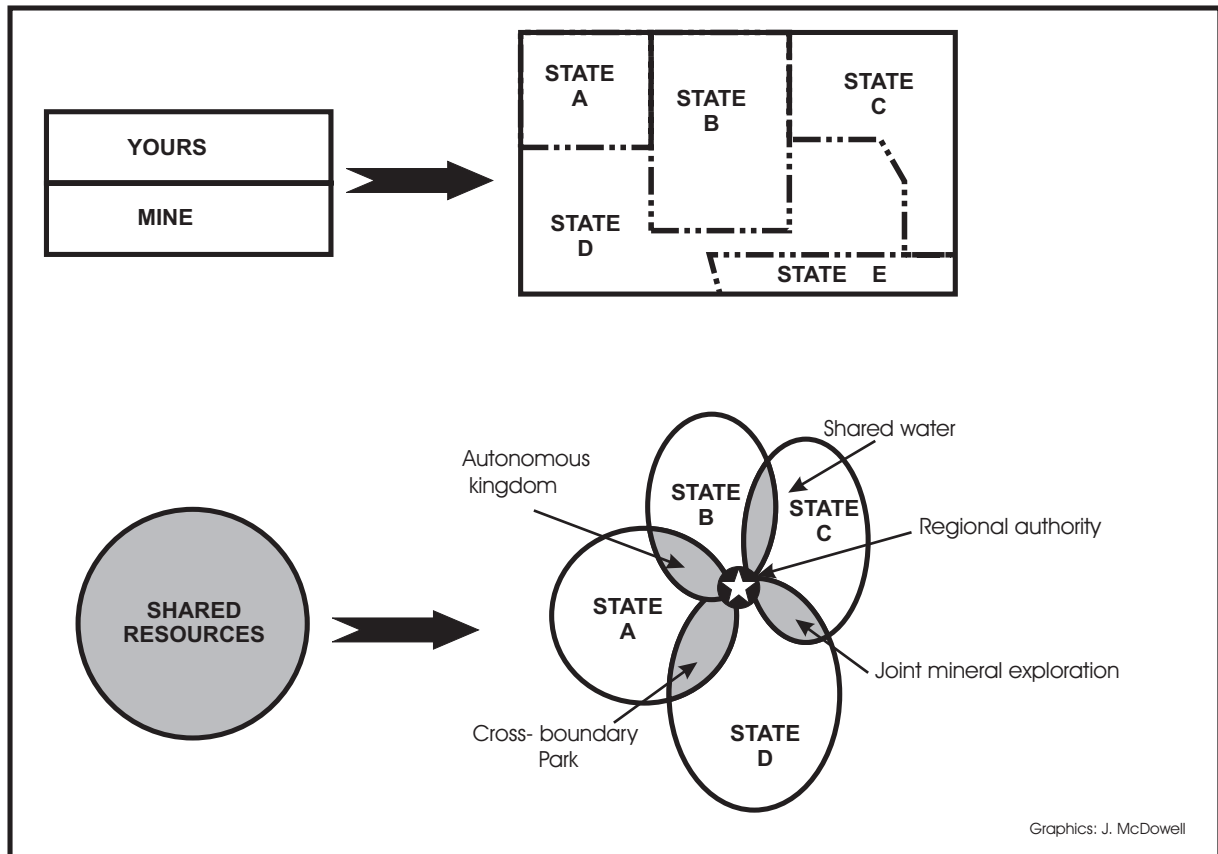


Figure 2: Two Kinds of Boundary Regimes

Rigid perceptions of boundaries lead us into conflicts because they blind us to the constant need to monitor, analyse, negotiate, and adjust them. An exception to this was the 1995 transfer of Walvis Bay from South Africa to Namibia. It eliminated a point of tension between South Africa and Namibia and an anomaly on the map – a South African exclave surrounded by Namibian territory. This indicates that boundary adjustments at appropriate times (e.g., shortly after South Africa’s democratic transition) can be a tool of peace-building.

Imagining international boundaries as hard-lines also creates a false consciousness through the reification of a social construction. Rarely are boundaries a physically given reality like a timberline or a sea shore. Most boundaries are created by humans to organise *their* activities in the world (e.g., a provincial boundary to separate administrative areas). Thus, they seldom exist as objects in space nor can they always be located with precision. For instance, all international boundaries are invisible planes (constructed by human conventions) that connect the sky overhead to the mineral and hydrological wealth below the earth’s surface and extend 200 or more miles out to sea (Figure 3).

Aside from being too rigid in our dealings with boundaries, too much romanticism and idealism can also result in poor boundary management practices. For instance, dreamers, poets, song-writers, visionaries and philosophers have often promoted the idea that peace would result from a world without boundaries. Peaceful boundary management is not about the eradication of divisions in space but about more responsive and appropriate ways of managing human territoriality as times and conditions change. South Africa provides an illustrative example of this

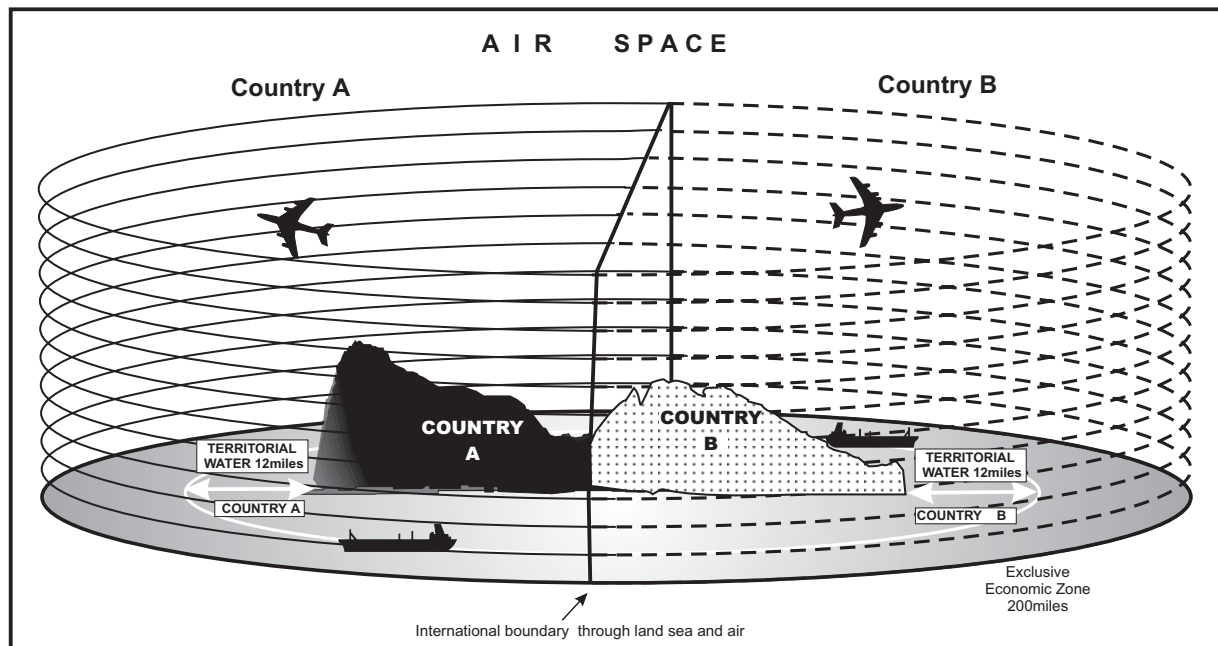


Figure 3: Boundaries are not Lines but Invisible Planes

point. It has many troubling border problems stemming from 1990 when border controls were relaxed to save funds and help establish the government's credibility as a peace-loving democracy.

Before 1990, the Security Branch and Counter-Insurgency Units of the South African Police controlled the borders ruthlessly and efficiently. In those days, unauthorised persons moving across borders were targets of arrest or even armed attack. There were also electrified fences, land mines, and patrols by land, air, and sea. Much of this activity was aimed at members of the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) who were perceived as enemies of the state in a time of war. There were relatively few incursions as a result (LeRoux 1996; Minaar and Hough 1996). With steps toward democratisation in 1990, the counter-insurgency methods were abandoned, the electric fences turned off, the landmines removed, and the patrols minimised. Responsibility for border maintenance was shifted from the Security Branch to many different government departments.

While the end of apartheid and its draconian methods is to be hailed, the fragmentation of authority at the borders, the lack of clear policy, and the general relaxation in border controls was harmful to many South African businesses and undermined many well-intended policies. The problems that came with lax border control included massive illegal border crossings and immigration that contributed to xenophobia, a rise in corruption among border officials, disease owing to fewer health inspections, tax evasion due to smuggling, movement in endangered species, and syndicates moving contraband and smuggled goods in both directions (Mercury, 1998; Nxumalo, 1997; Rodney, 1998; Ross, 1998). In a 1996 study, the South African Police (SAPS) authorities confessed that by 1993 border control had broken down to the degree that it was "virtually non-existent" (LeRoux, 1996). This state of affairs was confirmed by a study undertaken by the US Immigration and Naturalisation Service (1997).

Since then, SAPS and the Department of Home Affairs have continuously argued that lax border controls have had an enormous effect on crime in South Africa with up to 60% of house break-ins

and bank robberies being committed by foreigners (Krost, 1999). Certainly the rapid increase in auto hijacking and theft dates to the period of lax border controls. It is also known that increased cross-border cooperation reduced some of these incidents in 1997, and decreased cooperation owing to the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC, formerly Zaire) was simultaneous with another increase in hijackings and stolen vehicles (Republic of South Africa, 1999). However, attributing increases in crimes to this one social cause is difficult, if not impossible, since it was concurrent with many other political changes that accompanied the end of apartheid. Nonetheless, the central point is confirmed: the policy of relaxing border controls does not automatically lead to peace-building. We clearly need to move away from the rigid ideas of state sovereignty and embrace more cross-boundary cooperation at regional and global scales but must also be realistic about the kinds of problems we confront at the boundaries and address these pragmatically and efficiently. Engaging in more research and education can help direct us toward better paradigms of boundary management.

3. Boundary Problems in Southern Africa

The boundaries of the SADC states are shown in Figure 4. Most of these boundaries were delimited during the period of the Berlin Conference (1884-1885) when fourteen colonial states met to split up Africa's territories between a few great powers. By 1918 most of the boundaries were settled by treaty or war. Figure 5 shows that there have been only six significant changes in Southern African boundaries since 1918 and one of these was a reversal to the Berlin Conference delimitations (the return of Caprivi to South West Africa).

Despite Southern Africa's remarkably stable boundary regime, there have been many long-term conflicts and problems related to the perpetuation of colonial demarcations. Figure 6 categorises the conflicts destabilising the SADC region. The struggle against numerous secessionist movements, ethnic insurgents, and clashes on the borders all explode the myth that fossilised boundaries are a means of achieving stability.

Figures 7 and 8 illustrate some of the key boundary problems in SADC. Many of these already involve conflict and war; others are problems that may yet explode into conflict. The problems that are illustrated include:

1. illogical and irregularly shaped boundaries;
2. landlocked states;
3. cultural fault lines; and,
4. disputes between states over the location of boundaries.

Each of these are briefly described below.

3.1 Illogical and Irregularly-shaped Boundaries

The European delimitation of African states was decided largely on the basis of colonial competition and the economic needs of powerful European states. At independence, this left many

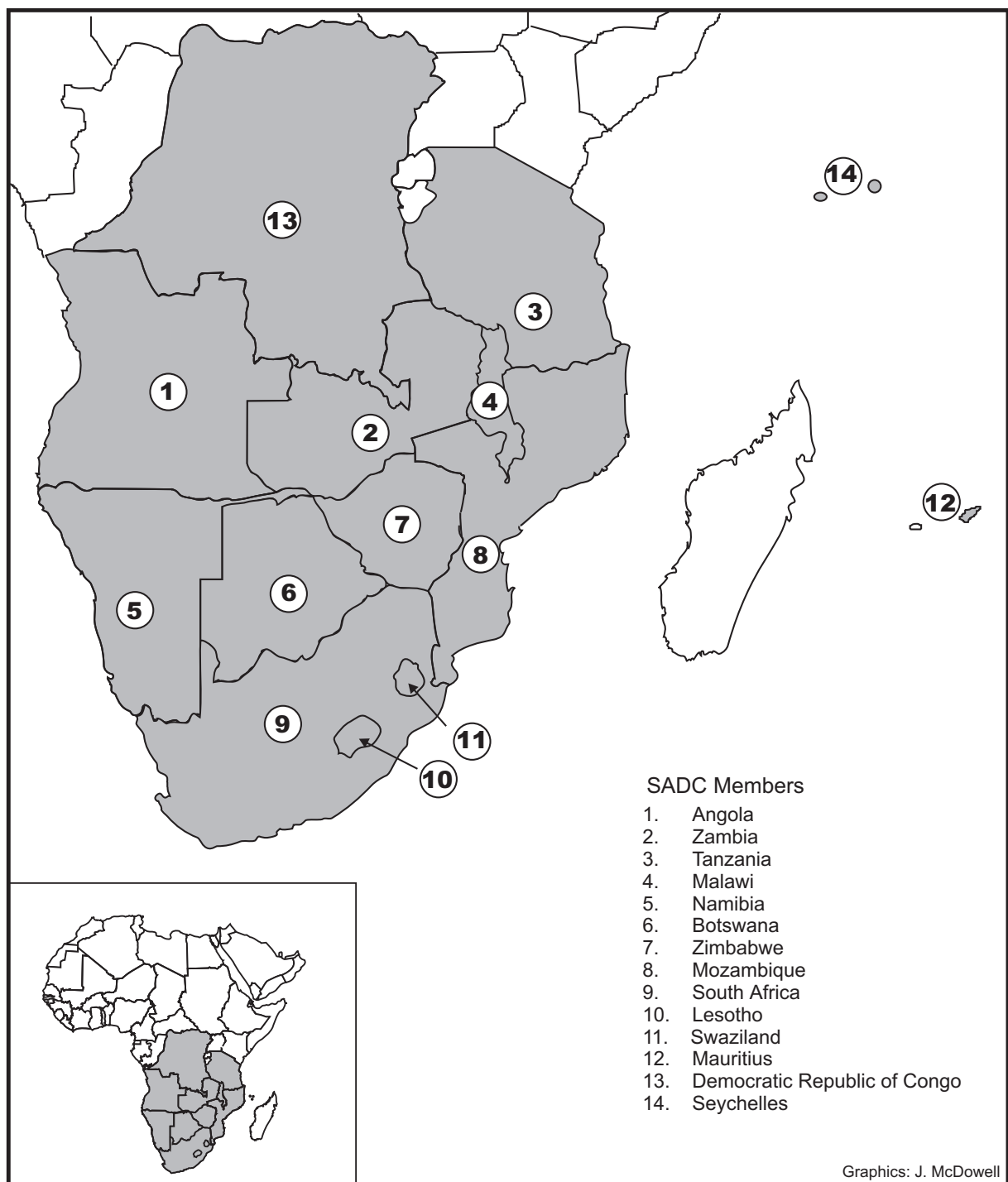


Figure 4: The Southern African Development Community

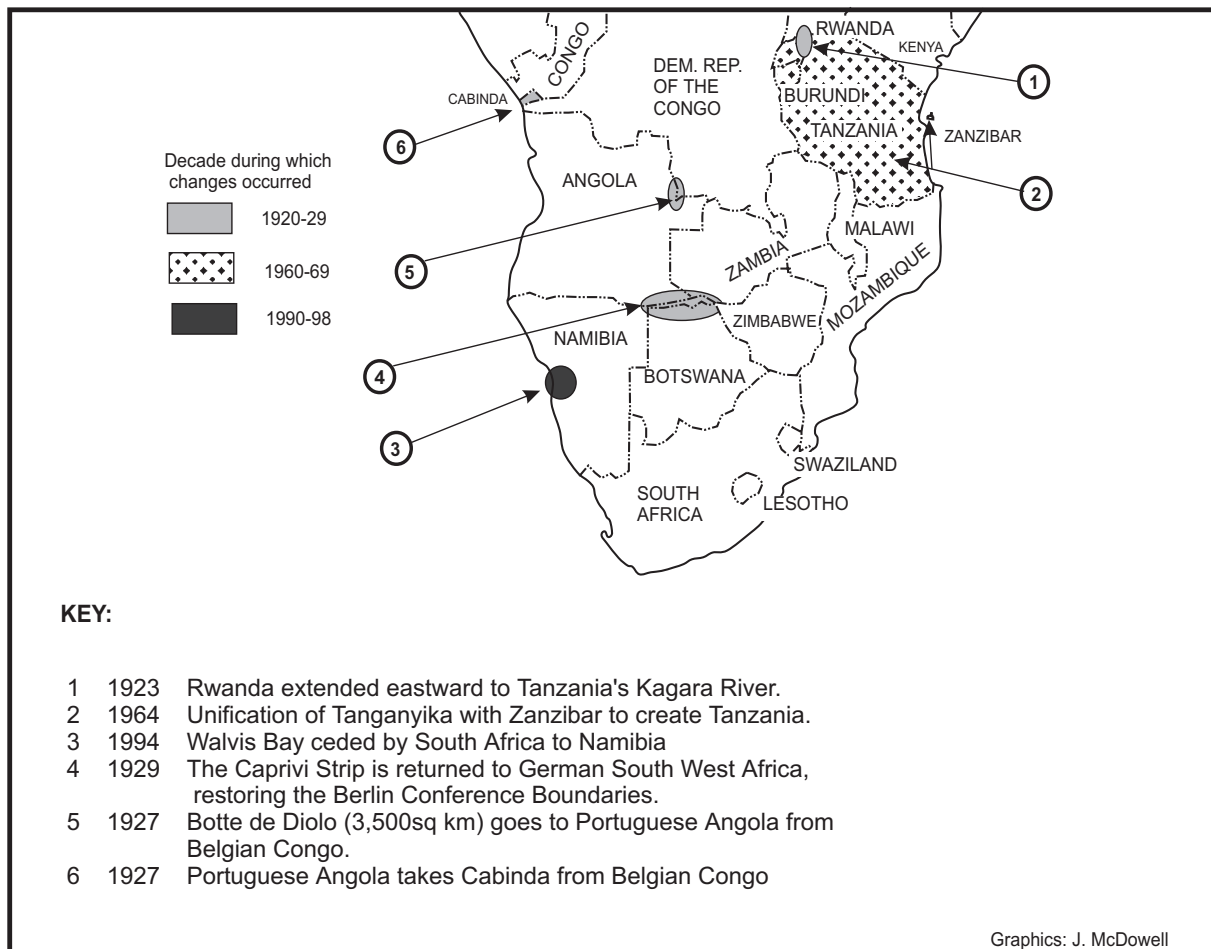


Figure 5: Boundary Changes in Southern Africa Since 1918

African states disadvantaged in terms of internal resources, security, access to the sea, and appropriate transport routes. If one can imagine an African perspective in which the boundaries would be delimited for the purposes of lessening conflict and creating opportunities for internal trade and development, the existing political geography could not be more illogical or irregular. The most common problems include:

Exclaves. These are territories laying outside the state to which they 'belong' and are often adjacent to or surrounded by neighbouring states. These fragment a state making entry and exit through neighbouring territories problematic, and can become focal points for secessionist movements. For example, the secessionist movement FLEC has been waging war with Angola since Angola annexed Cabinda in 1975 following independence from Portugal.

Enclaves. These are independent states or exclaves of a neighbouring country that perforate the host country. These become convenient points for smuggling, avoidance of customs and excise duties, the importation of contraband, and a point of entry for illegal aliens. For example, South Africa suffers from constant cross-border cattle rustling from Lesotho.

Protruding territories. These are also called prorupt territories and refer to an extension, peninsula or corridor of a state that appears to jut into a neighbouring country. These can be difficult to access or patrol and can invite conflict by isolating people in an area. Shaba province in the Democratic Republic of Congo is part of a protrusion where there has been a history of secession.

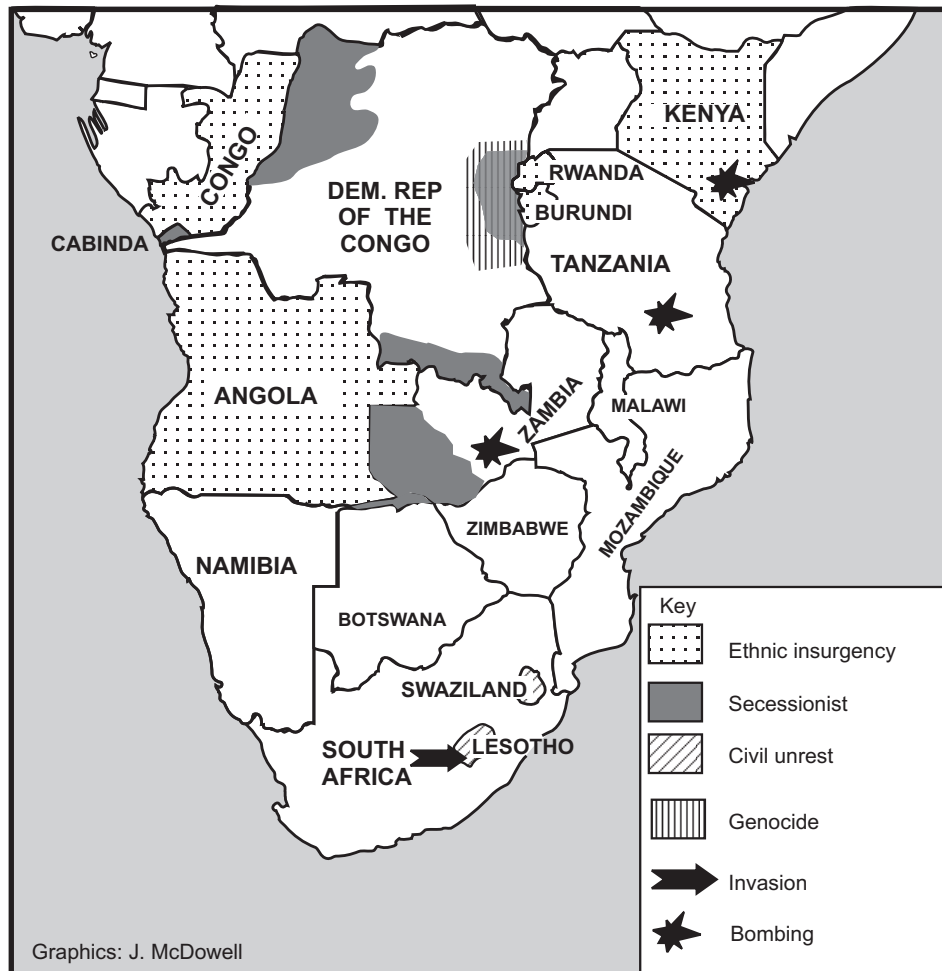


Figure 6: Conflict and War in SADC States 1998-1999

Elongated territories. Malawi is an example of an oblong shaped state. The proportion of border area to the size of the state is very large. This makes border control expensive and difficult (tiny Malawi is surrounded by three large states and its porous borders and location have made it a site of continuous refugee flows).

Oversized states. These are states that may be too large and culturally diverse to be politically manageable as a nation-state. A notable example of this is the DRC. This may be more a matter of politics than sheer geography as confederation or forms of federalism might possibly resolve this but this is an expensive option for many poor African states.

Microstates. These states are often too small to be economically viable. Their poverty and dependence on neighbouring states creates instability which invites interference and even occupation by stronger states (e.g., South Africa's 1998 occupation of Lesotho).

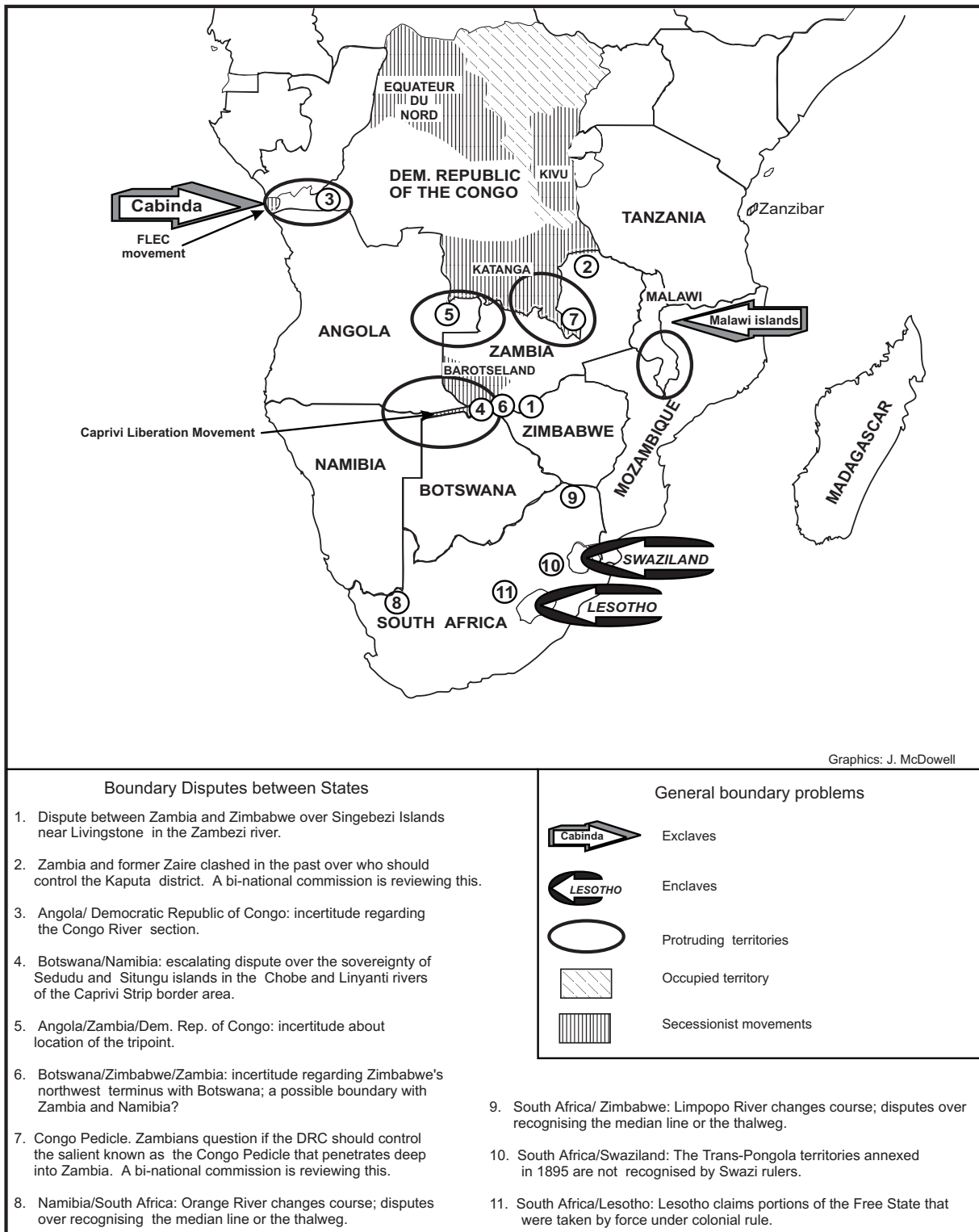


Figure 7: Some Specific Boundary Problems in the SADC Region

3.2 Landlocked States

Africa has the world's majority of landlocked states (fifteen in total). Figure 8 shows that six of these are located among the fourteen SADC countries. Those states without access to the sea experience become vulnerable to the terms of trade and transport demanded by neighbouring coastal countries. That reduces the profit and market competitiveness of goods from landlocked states. Since the landlocked states cannot benefit equally from regional development, a politics of resentment develops that can hinder regional economic unity. This kind of politics led to the collapse of the East African Community in 1977 and is also a source of friction within SADC where South African benefits disproportionately partly because of its industrial capacity and its command of seaborne traffic through sophisticated rails and ports.



Figure 8: Landlocked States

3.3 Cultural Faultlines

The violent and swift absorption of many tribes and nations into arbitrary geographic units left a difficult legacy for nearly all African states. Boundaries that split tribes, kingdoms, and nations across state boundaries created cross-boundary ethnic ties that are sometimes stronger than

allegiance to the state. One significant reason for wars in Africa is because the cultural boundaries do not conform to state boundaries, leading to ethnic groups vying for control of the state (e.g., the ethnic insurgency in Angola), secessionist movements, and irredentism. Secessionists seek to carve their own territorial state from an existing state. Irredentists use the justification of former historic links and ethnic ties to 'reclaim' their resident territories within the borders of a neighbouring country.

One example of secession is the bid by the Lozi speaking tribes of Southern Africa to form their own states. They once had autonomy in Northern Zimbabwe (Zambia) under British rule. This creates a cultural fault line that has an impact on four different states (Angola, Zambia, Namibia, and Botswana). The secessionist movement in Western Zambia (Barotseland) has kinship ties with tribes in Angola and several thousand people who occupy the border areas of Namibia's Caprivi region, and parts of Northern Botswana (see Figure 6). At the time of writing, the Angolan authorities are helping to arm and finance Barotse secessionism in Western Zambia in retaliation for Zambians supporting Angola's rebel movement UNITA (Venter, 1999). In November 1998, Namibia's border guard, the Special Field Force (SFF), chased another group, some 2,500 members of the Caprivi Liberation Movement, over the border into Botswana. The secessionists were of the Lozi speaking Mashubia and Mafwe tribes. The SFF is composed mainly of Oshimwambo people (Namibia's dominant ethnic group) who were once guerrillas in the Peoples Liberation Army. As of August 1999 the threat to Namibia escalated when the 'Caprivi Liberation Army' launched attacks on a military base, police, and a radio station in the regional capital, Katima Mulilo (Amupadhi and Barrell, 1999).

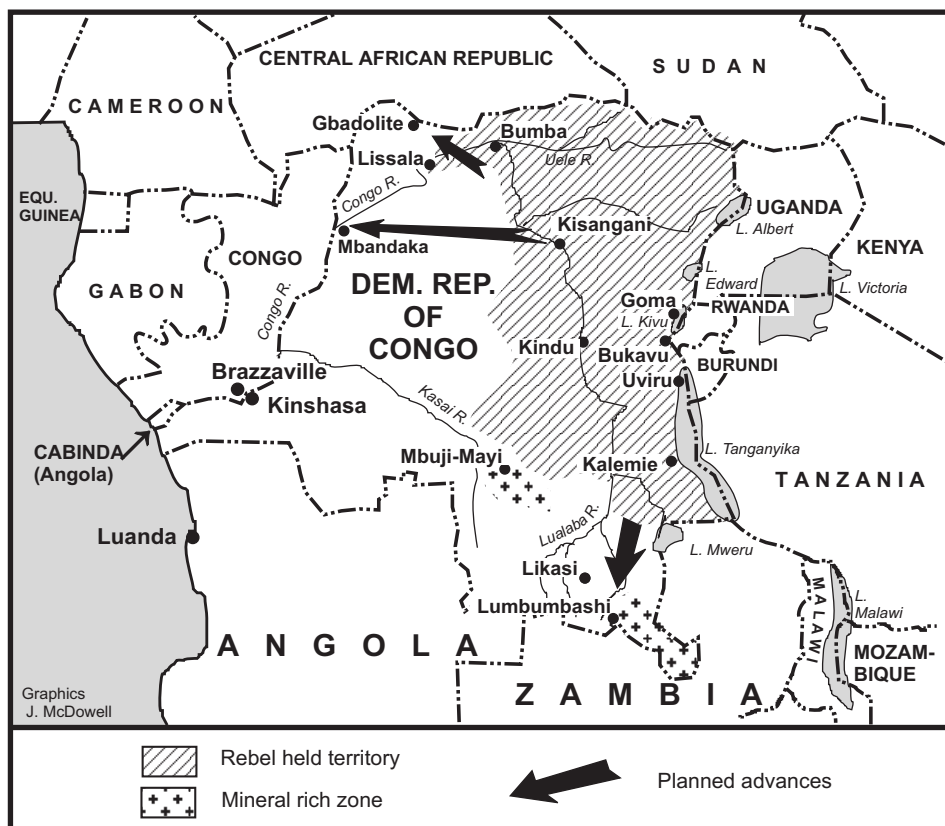


Figure 9: Rebel Held Territory in the Democratic Republic of Congo – March 1999

War in the modern Democratic Republic of the Congo is a partial consequence of irredentism. The Eastern Congo has historic ties and cultural ties to both Tutsi-dominated Rwanda and Burundi. It is also vital to security interests of Uganda. When Hutu militias, notably the Interhamwe responsible for the 1994 genocide of nearly one million Tutsis, used refugee camps in the Congo as a staging grounds for attacks on Tutsi-dominated Rwanda, this helped create a resistance movement among the ethnic Tutsi on the Congo side of the border. In 1997 Laurent Kabila organised this force into a revolutionary movement that overthrew the Mobutu regime (Griggs 1997b). Later, Kabila turned on the ethnic Tutsi's and this factor gave rise to another rebel movement in 1998 that with Rwandan support now occupies one-half of the DRC (Griggs 1998b). Figure 9 illustrates that the area of military occupation that has created a *de facto* Tutsi-dominated state in the Eastern Congo with military and political ties to Uganda and Rwanda.

3.4 Disputes over State Sovereignty

Figure 7 lists eleven disputes between SADC states over matters of boundary delimitations. In some cases states claim territory within neighbouring states. For instance, neither Swaziland nor Lesotho recognise British acquisitions of territory that were subsequently awarded to South Africa. Lesotho claims substantial portions of the Free State province (Cape Times, 1995; Ramainoane, 1998). Swaziland claims most of the province of Mpumalanga and parts of Northern KwaZulu-Natal (Africa Research Bulletin, 1998).

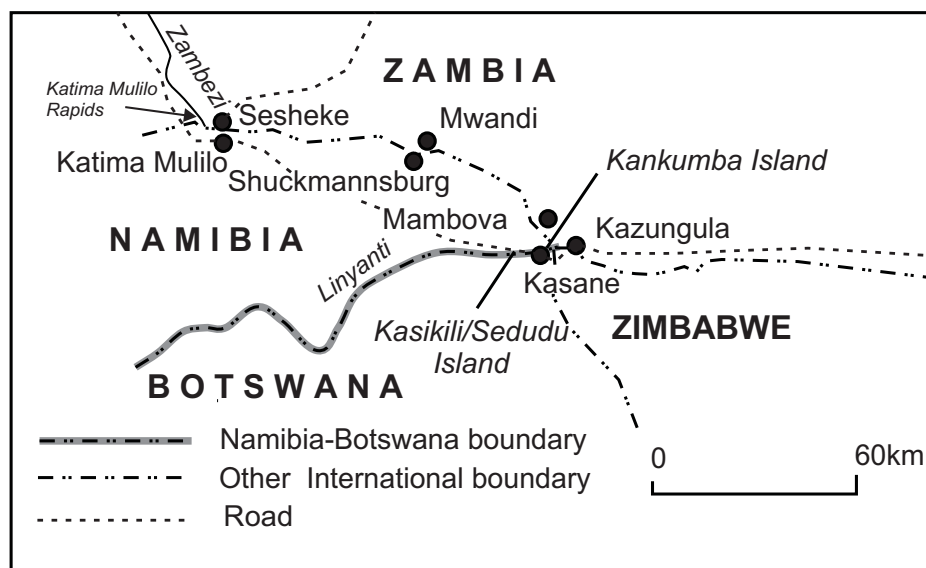


Figure 10: Caprivi Strip – River Islands Under Dispute

One boundary dispute has threatened war between Namibia and Botswana. The dispute over conflicting claims to two small river islets in the Caprivi Strip border area (Figure 10) has led to an arms build-up (Rakabane, 1997), clashes, and contributed to the Barotse secessionist movement described earlier. The Botswana Defence Force set up several camps in early 1997 along the Namibian/Botswana border to “defend” the islands and has even killed two Namibians “illegally” occupying the area (International Boundaries Research Unit, 1998; Maletsky, 1998). The Caprivi territory was first awarded to German South West Africa (Namibia) under a British-German

accord of 1890. In 1918 it was ceded to Botswana but then handed back to South West Africa in 1929 (then under South African rule). Incertitude about the border along the Chobe and Linyanti rivers became increasingly problematic when the newly independent Namibia sought to develop the water resources of the region in the early 1990s. This has led to each state claiming Sedudu (Kasikili to Namibians) and Situngu – the border islands in the river channel. The Kasikili/Sedudu Island dispute was referred to the International Court of Justice for adjudication, which in December 1999 ruled in favour of Botswana.

4. Paradigms for Boundary Management

There are three main paradigms for boundary management:

1. The Westphalian model that defends the sovereignty of existing territories through the threat or use of force;
2. Adjusted boundaries that remove the sources of conflict through an improved allocation of resources and territory; and,
3. Side-stepping the need for boundary adjustments through regionalisation.

4.1 The Westphalian Model

Colonisation not only imposed new boundaries on Africa but also the Westphalian system of boundary management. This refers to the 1648 *Treaty of Westphalia* that ended the Thirty Years War in Europe. The fundamental idea was that each state would wield absolute sovereignty within its borders. By agreeing to this, the policy of non-interference in the ‘domestic’ affairs of other states became the standard guideline for the conduct of international relations. The result in Europe, Africa and the rest of the world, was a global system of anarchical boundary management based on the arbitrary state boundaries created by occupation and war. Individual states used large standing armies supported by a huge civilian-military bureaucracy to maintain their respective boundaries.

The importation of the Westphalian system was given ideological support by the ideas of the French Revolution of 1789. States that acted as containers for sovereign authority were also tasked with establishing a world of nation-states. Nationalist discourse contributed the idea that all peoples within conquered territories should conform to a single national culture (the state *is* the nation).

Both the Westphalian model and nationalist discourse were formalised in Africa in 1964 when the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) agreed that boundaries were non-negotiable permanent fixtures. This committed all African states to the questionable task of building single nations from the multinational groupings contained within the boundaries of conquest. One could easily argue that this decision contributed to:

- Nation-building exercises that involved the severe repression of ethnic groups, tribes, and old nations;

- Competition between ethnic groups for control of each state bureaucracy because of limited, dependent, and often nationalised economies in which the state became the main provider of goods, services, and jobs;
- Reactionary ethnic politics that has included coups, acts of genocide, and secessionist movements; and,
- Roaming ethnic militias that become pawns of war during the regular periods of instability that Southern African states experience (e.g., Hutu militias that move between Rwanda, Burundi, the DRC, Tanzania, and Sudan).

The assumption posited by the OAU in its 1963 *Cairo Declaration*, that stable boundaries contribute to political stability, is questionable. It may be that rigid boundaries help produce long-lasting conflicts. If the need for boundary adjustments is not addressed, discontent builds, forces assemble, and then changes are rapid, violent, and less controlled. For example boundary pressures on Uganda and Rwanda owing to cross-border invasions by insurgents along with ethnic persecution of the Tutsis invited the occupation of the eastern part of the country. Now nearly all Southern African states, ethnic militias, and rag-tag armies along with extra-regional actors are involved in an explosive conflict that could remake the map of the region. Even a conflict settled by negotiation rather than force probably requires new boundary arrangements if it is to resolve the underlying problem of border security.

4.2 Adjusted Boundaries

The failure of the Westphalian model to prevent conflict suggests that it might be better to create more agreeable boundaries than use armies to fix them in place. Considering that Angola, the DRC, Namibia, and Zimbabwe are directly engaged in wars costing millions of dollars a day to protect their own territorial integrity and that of their neighbours, boundary maintenance appears to command the resources that should go into development. Better boundaries might help reduce conflict, improve access to resources and speed up development.

Many African leaders like former Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere have argued that the central problem of the development relates to “*arbitrarily drawn borders resulting in little states that make little sense and which if left on their own cannot develop at all*” (O’Grady, 1997). Wole Soyinka, the Nigerian Nobel-prize-winning political analyst advised the OAU in 1994 to “*sit down with square rule and compass and redesign the boundaries of African nations*” (the Economist, 1994).

Boundary adjustments without a programme of regionalisation may have a fatal flaw: it perpetuates the Westphalian system. If the existing system of sovereign states jealously guarding their borders cannot withstand the pressures of a globalising world or effectively prevent conflict, how can drawing new, encapsulated and competing states to replace the old ones solve the problem? Furthermore, the fear of opening a ‘Pandora’s box’ of boundary changes has so far prevented any unity among governments on this issue. The remaining alternatives are to soften the boundaries between states rather than to change them or to both regionalise and make *some* boundary adjustments.

4.3 Regionalisation

Theoretically, regionalisation pools political and economic resources and the need for potentially destabilising boundary changes is eliminated. Organisations such as SADC are a means to institutionalise cross-boundary cooperation to gain the following kinds of benefits:

- less dependence on the First World as trade is stimulated within Africa;
- larger capital flows owing to the attraction of a big, open market;
- a cooperative basis for industrial development and therefore job creation;
- equalising development between states, with the result that illegal immigrants and cross-border crimes would decrease;
- abolishing the high tariffs that obstruct free trade (e.g., the retaliatory road taxes that countries slap on each other for hauling goods across the border);
- resources shared more efficiently;
- wildlife managed according to their habitats and migration patterns;
- the competitive capacity of Southern Africa in the world economy would be increased;
- a forum for negotiating conflict between states;
- increased cooperation on issues of regional security including cross-border crimes;
- a coordination of human rights polices in Southern Africa and a means to monitor transgressions;
- a limit on military spending because of cooperation on defence;
- coordinated energy policies to reduce overall costs and stimulate development; and,
- water basins shared more efficiently and with less environmental damage.

With a coordinated plan for sharing resources across boundaries, Southern Africa could develop the energy, resources, and work-force to become an economic giant. After Namibia, South Africa, the DRC, Seychelles, and Mauritius were admitted in the 1990s, SADC doubled its territory to put into place one of the wealthiest organisations in the world in terms of resources. This includes the world's richest fisheries, vast hydroelectric potential, huge timber reserves, and strategically-situated ports mid-way between East and West. The mineral wealth is legendary: 99% of the world's chrome reserves, 85% of its platinum, 70% of its tantalite, and 68% of its cobalt not to mention at least 50% of the world's vanadium, diamonds, and gold (Ramano, 1998).

The fourteen member states are also a large potential market comprising nearly 200 million people. The bigger market could attract larger capital flows and build a cooperative basis for industrial development. A strategic spin-off of industrialisation would be the construction of the middle class vital to sustaining democracy (Mbaku, 1997).

5. The African Renaissance as Spatial Geostrategy

The African Renaissance markets and promotes an alternative paradigm to the Westphalian model. It is based on side-stepping the ill-effects of colonialism and the Berlin Conference (no boundary modifications) through regionalisation and cross-boundary spatial development. It also seeks to overcome Africa's geopolitical position of being part of a 'South' that is subordinate to the 'North' where capital and power have accumulated. Figure 11 shows that the richest seven countries in the world are in the 'North' while the poorest eight countries are in the South.

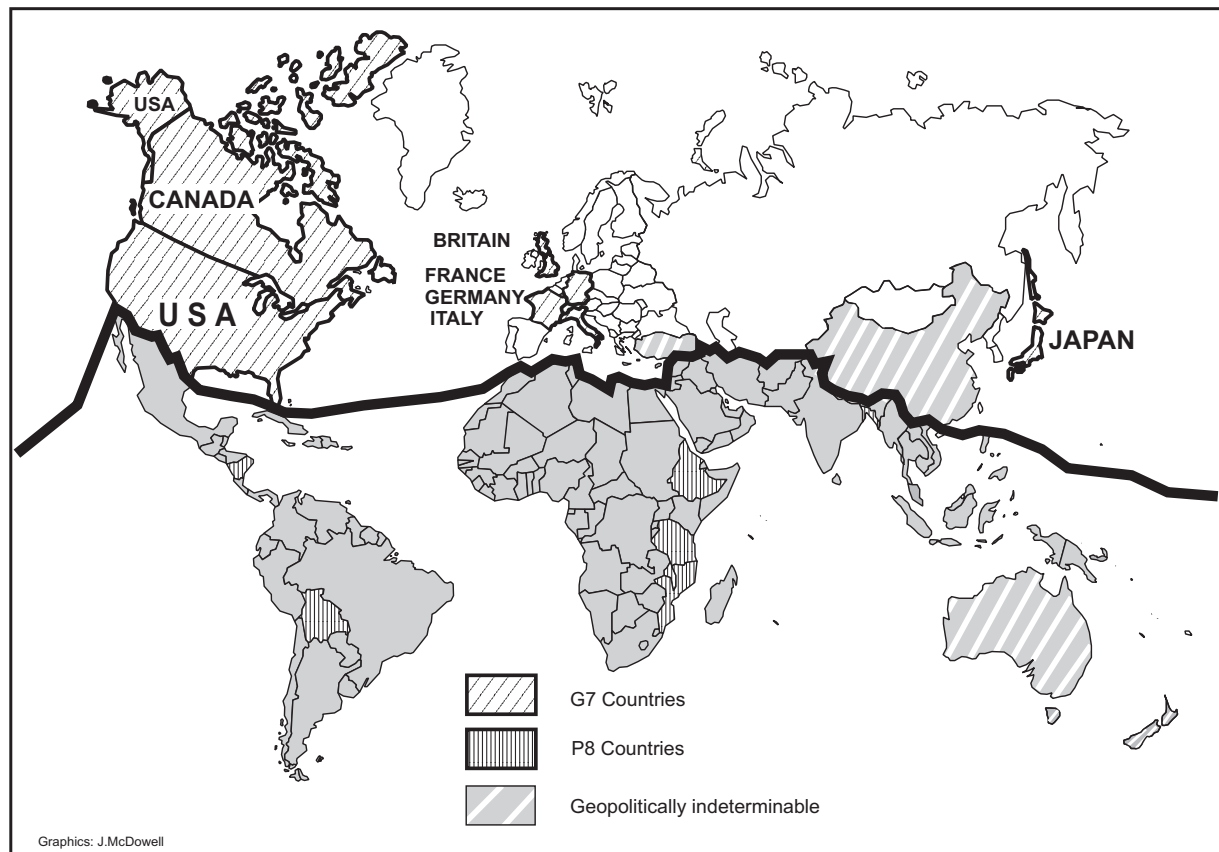


Figure 11: A North-South World

Although the idea of an African Renaissance was first raised in an April 1994 address by President Mandela to the OAU summit in Tunis (Vale and Maseko, 1998), it was a speech by Deputy-President Thabo Mbeki that began to catch the attention of the media. He opened his talk to the United States Corporate Council on Africa with the line, "*The African Renaissance is upon us*" (Barber, 1997). Soon afterwards, numerous speeches, papers, editorials, articles, and commentaries stressed African renewal through a new political economy of regional integration and cross-border initiatives that would become the "*building blocks of an African Economic Union*" (Seale, 1997). In July 1997, President Mandela described the renaissance in clear geopolitical terms: "*the creation of a new world order that involved the reconstruction of countries through regional economic associations capable of successfully competing in the global economy*" (Seale, 1997).

This idea of a 'renaissance' or 'rebirth' raises the question of what is 'new' about an African Renaissance. The regionalisation of the African continent has been part of agreements and

movements that are decades old. The social construction of pan-Africanism dates to the period of independence. The idea of achieving African Unity through regional organisations like SADC dates to the Lagos *Plan of Action* that was adopted by the Organisation of African Unity in April 1980.

What is new is *not* African unification based on the starting blocks of African regionalism but the location, strategy and tactics for that achievement. Firstly, the African Renaissance is being launched from SADC, where eleven out of fourteen member states have democratically elected governments (Swaziland, Lesotho, and the DRC are the exceptions). Secondly, it is being based on market-led approaches and not the old order of state-controlled economic development. This means opening borders for freer trade and to create the economies of scale for Africans to compete in a rapidly globalising and capitalist world. Thirdly, South Africa is viewed as the regional economic engine capable of creating the infrastructure and transport to unite the region.

Claiming a greater share of global power and wealth for Southern Africa is geopolitics in its most classic sense. Nearly all the elements of an African Renaissance raise issues of territoriality, borders, boundaries, and shared space. Examined below are the three main spatial dimensions of the African Renaissance. These include:

1. Strengthening regional levels of authority;
2. Cross-border spatial development initiatives; and,
3. Cross-border cooperation.

5.1 Strengthening Regional Levels of Authority

The success of the African Renaissance is dependent on creating a level of regional integration that enables cross-boundary cooperation on a range of issues such as trade, water, transport, or peace-keeping. This demands mechanisms for cooperation and conflict management which is the role of SADC. The need to evolve common political values, systems, and institutions as well as to promote and defend regional peace and security was recognised in Article 5 of the 1993 *Windhoek Treaty* under which SADC was created. Unfortunately, very little progress has been made toward a common set of institutions and the Security Organ has been a source of debate and division. This problem is further analysed in Section 6.

There have been a few preliminary advances that help to establish a footing for a strengthened SADC. Several states have had democratic elections and moved away from Marxist models of governance creating some common values around economic issues. There has also been significant headway in establishing the Spatial Development Initiatives (examined in the next section). These are the geographic foundations for improved transport and trade that could very well open the gateways to global investment, but they cannot replace the need for strong democratic regional institutions.

5.2 Spatial Development Initiatives

Spatial Development Initiatives, or SDIs, use roads or rail to link major nodes of potential investment such as ports, parks, tourist facilities, mining areas, or major industrial developments. Of all the spatial issues, the development corridors are the most tangible measure of an African

Renaissance in progress. Figure 12 illustrates the cross-border Spatial Development Initiatives that cut across Central and Southern African states.

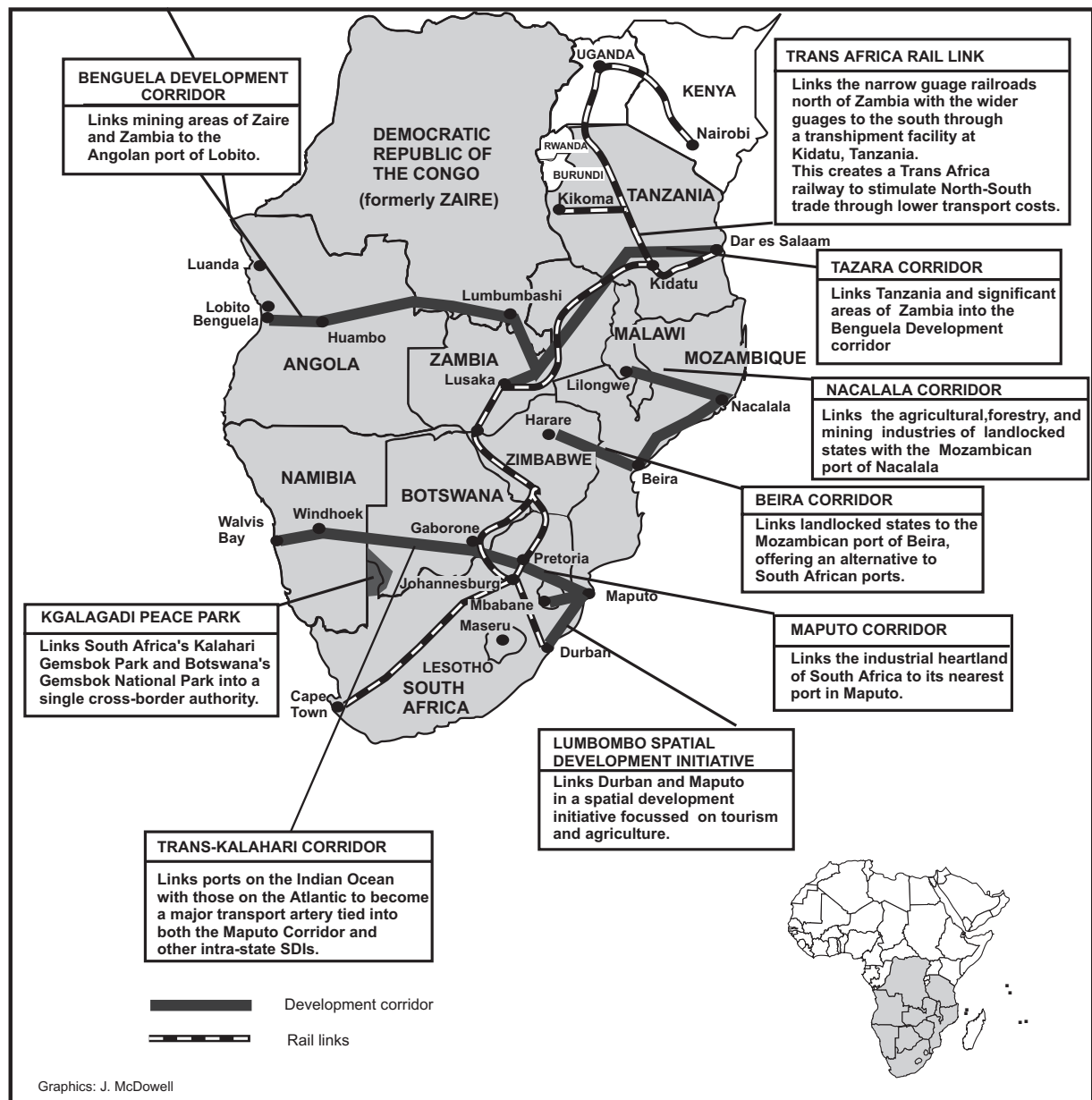


Figure 12: Spatial Development Initiatives in Southern Africa

SDIs also appear to be a viable and effective means of promoting Southern African integration. Firstly, these cross-boundary projects are usually managed by joint authority. This includes interstate cooperation in speeding up customs and managing border posts. Secondly, the increased economic interaction between provinces and towns on both sides of the international border leads to integration in real geographic terms while overcoming the legacy of arbitrary colonial boundaries. Thirdly, these corridors are largely financed by private capital. Governments can not afford the approximately US\$170 billion that the World Bank estimates is required to upgrade the transport infrastructure in Southern Africa (Electronic Mail and Guardian, 1997). Much of the

finance is from local investment banks, the Development Bank of Southern Africa, consortiums of corporate investors, and black empowerment groups.

One of the SDIs, illustrated in Figure 12, is the Maputo Corridor. This project upgrades the Maputo Harbour and links it by road and rail to South Africa's industrial heartland. Compared to the port of Durban, this shortens the transport distance by 150km. This cuts costs for South African mining and industry while helping to rehabilitate Mozambique's infrastructure and industry, long shattered by civil war. A total of 184 different projects are involved on both sides of the border including an aluminium smelter, iron ore works, tourism projects, casinos, and agricultural developments (Business Report, 1999).

Bids, commissions, and concessions were used to attract investors to the Maputo Corridor based on the real market value of these projects. For instance, the cross-border toll road is privately financed by Trans-African concessions and will be operated for 45 years before reverting to government ownership. Owing to this strategy, this project was awarded the highest rating ever in project finance worldwide for its ability to meet the debts incurred (Hlophe, 1998).

5.3 Strengthening South-South Ties

Simply integrating many disadvantaged economies across the borders of Southern Africa will not do the job of moving the region from a dependence on raw material exports to selling highly skilled industrial products at globally competitive prices (Mbaku, 1997). The African Renaissance also depends on extra-regional trading ties that stimulate local industry and development. Most African states have long had their primary trading ties with wealthier, more developed states in Europe and the Americas. This has left them vulnerable to Northern hegemony (Figure 11) and few if any Southern African states have prospered from North-South trade. As indicated in both African National Congress discussion documents and in South African foreign policy, South-South relations are intended to counter-balance Northern control of development processes (Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, 1995; ANC, 1998).

South-South ties have two significant advantages. Firstly, they link Southern Africa with emerging markets of the same relative capacity. Through trade, shared technology, and diplomatic agreements these Southern countries could take steps to build global markets while escaping the geopolitical pressures of Northern hegemony. Secondly, these South-South linkages offer large, unrealised markets. While the North dominates industry and information on a global scale, the vast majority of natural resources including fisheries, minerals, forests, and energy are in the South. With large-enough markets in the South, the Southern African states could rise to political and economic power through the strategic control of minerals.

Figure 13 illustrates some areas where South-South ties are emerging. The map is not a final expression of these alliances but shows some alliances in their infancy, including a rim of countries surrounding the Indian Ocean, a South Atlantic Alliance budding with the Mercosur States, and ties to the economic giants of the developing world like China, Malaysia, and India. These alliances also include linkages with some of the world's top oil producers such as Saudi Arabia, Libya, Iran, and Angola.

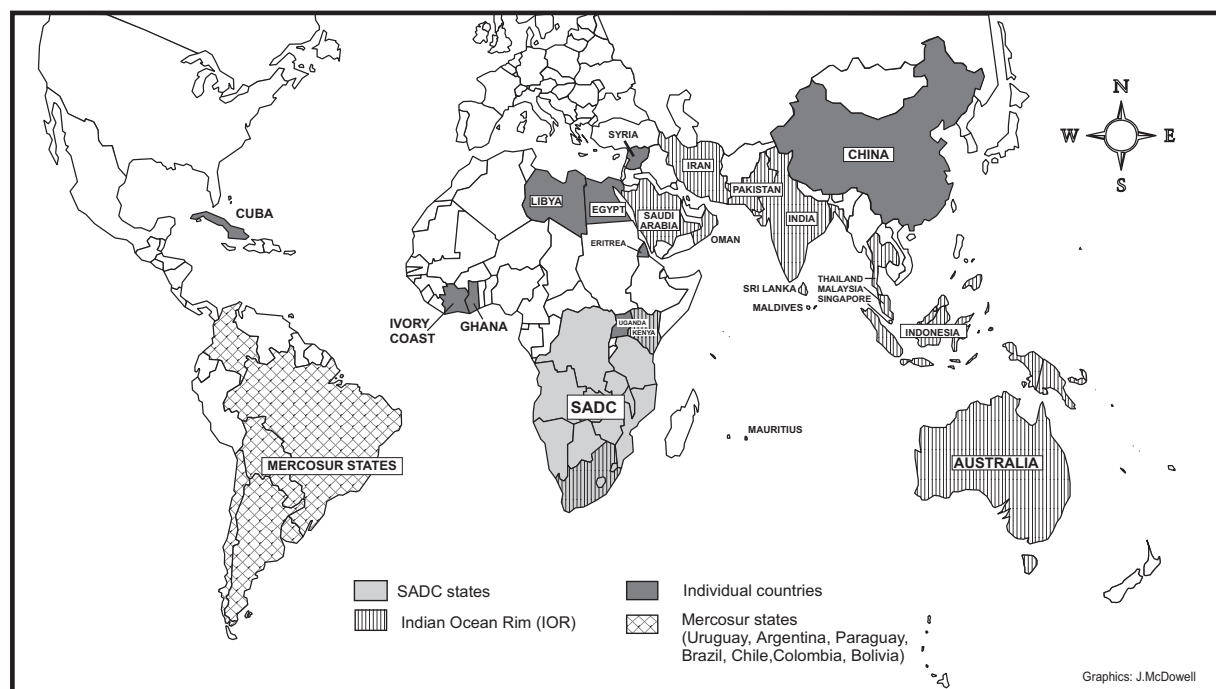


Figure 13: Emerging South-South Political and Economic Alliances

Tangible southward shifts in capital may be very slow to effect. For example, while both SADC and the Mercosur states have a strong interest in expanding trade and have even established a commission to pursue this, both regions are emergent economies in global terms and still on the rebound from authoritarian regimes. Each has restricted policy options because of debt to Northern banking institutions and suffers from unequal terms of trade. Presently Mercosur's trade with SADC countries is about 1% of its total volume (Mills, 1998). Nonetheless, just between South Africa and the Mercosur states lies the potential to monopolise 80% of the world's trade in hake. Argentina and Zimbabwe could tie up 30% of the beef market (Mills, 1998).

The 15 Indian Ocean Rim States constitute another very youthful pillar of South-South trade but one with huge potential. The region includes some 1.5 billion people and is centred on the three industrialised countries of South Africa, India, and Australia. A major study was completed in May 1998 by Britain's Elsevier Reed group that endorses the strategy arguing that the economic outlook for South Africa is so positive that it could rapidly constitute 25% of its trade (Robertson, 1998).

The alliances with China and India include formal signed agreements that tie SADC to two of the world's largest economies. Economics and demographics suggest that China, already the third most powerful economy, will overtake the US to become the world's biggest global trader soon after the turn of the millennium. India could also take second position before mid-century. China has already planned thirty new industrial development projects in South Africa (Sapa, 1998).

6. Assessing the Potential of the African Renaissance

The African Renaissance appears to offer a badly need paradigm shift regarding African political spaces. It revives an earlier pre-European time in African culture and history when boundaries were seen as soft, flexible, and mobile rather than rigid containers. Given the global impetus toward regionalisation and the position of Southern Africa in a Northern-dominated world, regionalisation, spatial development, and South-South ties may be an inevitable development. However, in terms of rapid progress along these lines, there are few tangible signs of success.

Six indicators support a more pessimistic outlook on the prospects for an African Renaissance in the near future. The obstacles that directly confront the success of this paradigm include:

1. Few Southern African leaders with the vision to embrace new boundary management practices;
2. A lack of institutional support for boundary research;
3. Limited participation in the discourse within Africa's vast rural areas;
4. No meaningful mechanisms for resolving the crisis of war and instability which is dividing rather than uniting Africans;
5. Weak South-South ties; and,
6. Few Southern African leaders willing to construct strong and democratic regional institutions.

This supports the view that the obstructions in the way of the African Renaissance are so large and significant that it can only be conceived as is a trans-generational project to be renamed and re-visited many times before it is realised.

6.1 No New Attitudes

A 'renaissance' that has real geopolitical impact must begin with SADC leaders embracing a new attitude toward boundaries. Expanding beyond the limited political geography of the Berlin Conference means rejecting the Westphalian model of objective lines in the dirt to be jealously defended. Such a paradigm shift could break the overlong imposition of European boundary perceptions on both African culture and its elites but there is no evidence of this taking place. The idea of boundary modifications are commonly met with such fear and hostility that it is not addressed at all in renaissance discourse. Furthermore, Southern African leaders have not challenged the OAU for being hamstrung by the 1964 Cairo Declaration and inadequately committed to the right to self-determination.

The failure to accept that certain boundary adjustments must be negotiated undermines the renaissance itself. This is because the member states that comprise SADC are not the ideal units for a coordinated and effective process of regionalisation. Successful regionalisation depends on relative equality between states *before* integration takes place. For example, when one big state like South Africa in Southern Africa dominates the entire economic community, the disadvantaged members suffer from negative flows of capital and people while the richer members contends with an uncontrollable influx of migrants. South Africa as the most economically powerful member,

can derive as much as 60 times the trade benefit as some of its smaller partners (Schoombee, 1998).

Existing state boundaries pose an obstacle to equalising SADC economies since the political geography favours some states with more advantages in terms of resources and access to transport. The enclaves, exclaves, protruding territories, states too large to be manageable, states too small to be viable, the suppressed ethnic groups and nations, and the vast number of competing regional organisations need to be addressed. This requires a SADC sector that can initiate a process of recommending and drafting the protocols for making selective boundary changes. As yet, there is no sector of SADC directly concerned with boundary cooperation and management. Furthermore, the existing structures have no democratic mandate in the region and cross-boundary cooperation must be a democratically managed process that takes place through transparent and inclusive processes.

6.2 Little Research Support

Owing to the history of boundary problems in Africa, one would think that institutes for boundary studies would proliferate while universities and NGOs sponsored major research programmes to identify, explain and eliminate a structural source of violence on the continent. While a few NGOs such as the Centre for Conflict Resolution (Cape Town) have sponsored topical research on the subject, there is not a single institute on the continent devoted to the topic of boundary management. Vastly more institutional support is required to build the curriculum, institutes, and organisations that can improve boundary management practices, advise on disputes, and to help construct a more boundary-conscious society.

Monitoring and negotiating boundaries appropriately requires centralised information and research. This means bringing geographers, peace researchers, and other scholars for cooperative peace-based research. Until the leaders of SADC awaken to this need, NGOs should work proactively to fill this role as far as possible. However, the lack of concern at a regional level ensures that boundary conflicts will continue as long as they are left unattended.

6.3 Weak on Rural Participation

There is an acute urban/rural split within Southern Africa that will be accentuated if the material benefits of the renaissance accrue mainly to the urban-industrial-corporate sector. For instance, the weak point of the spatial development schemes is the failure of the rural people (both poor and rich) to participate. Fruit sellers, small businesses, taxis, tourist lodges, and small truckers have all complained about the effects of Spatial Development Initiatives. The siting of the toll roads has sometimes separated local communities from their schools and shopping centres. Small haulers complain about the high costs of tolls. There was almost no participation by small business in the development and planning of the Maputo Corridor. In many cases, the only benefit that some affected communities can derive is to purchase shares in the project (Hammond, 1998).

Already new development projects are shaping a geography of inequality both within the cities and between cities and their rural hinterland. In Mozambique, aid and investments have seen spectacular economic success both statistically and on the ground in Maputo. However, the villages and rural regions away from the capital (where most Mozambicans live) there is seldom

electricity, running waters, telephones, or any sign of new prosperity (Mallet, 1999). This could eventually undermine the cities too as rural immigrants, attracted by development but lacking in education and skills flock to the cities in the hope of participating in specialised industries. As in South Africa, their usual destination is large informal settlements where the unemployed turn to informal trading, domestic labour, or crime.

Information technology presents an obvious example of the urban/rural divide. African elites can connect to cyberspace in the cities but rural areas where 80% of the Southern African population resides, would remain far removed from such technology where on average, the nearest telephone is 50km away (Holman, 1998). All of Africa has access to just 2% of the world's telephone lines, less than New York City or Tokyo (Finance Africa, 1997). On the other hand, African cities conduct more telephone traffic per subscriber than the United States or Japan (Finance Africa, 1997). This suggests that urban elites will plug into the global network of relations at a much faster rate than poor rural people who in any case have far more immediate priorities: health, sanitation, water, and electrification.

This geographic split with regard to the beneficiaries of the renaissance tells us that the entire concept must be reworked to address prospects for the rural poor. The discourse of an African Renaissance may be powerful enough to grab the imaginations of the elites of government, business, and academia but fails to reach the broader African populace. The remedy to this developing problem is transparency and inclusivity in regional institutions. This means a strongly democratic SADC aided by public forums and the arts. It also means a Bill of Rights for Southern African peoples that is strictly adhered to. None of this has been created so that the African Renaissance while powerful and reasonable in its discourse is likely to be applied in a way that accentuates rather than bridges class divides.

6.4 Too Much War and Instability

If the 'renaissance' is to be implemented, Southern Africa must participate in the global economy on favourable terms. The major spoiler here is that wars and instability stall the cross-border cooperation and trade within Southern Africa that is necessary to create economies of scale to compete globally. For instance, this year only 11 states are negotiating free trade because two of the most resource-wealthy countries, the DRC and Angola, are at war. War also drives away foreign investment (Spira, 1998; Vesley, 1999). As long as fighting for territory predominates as an ethos rather than cooperation across boundaries, the renaissance will be obstructed and limited to a waiting game.

Of course, war does more than stop progress. It reverses major gains since war is about destruction rather than development. War and instability in Angola and the DRC have already dampened prospects of linking their vast oil, gas, petroleum, and mineral deposits to South Africa's refining and distribution capacity. War in the Congo also holds at bay Southern Africa's access to its massive hydroelectric potential. Angola has mortgaged most of its wealth including decades of oil production to combat both a 25-year long ethnic insurgency and a secessionist movement (Ferreira, 1999).

Before the outbreak of war in the DRC and Angola, post-1994 South Africa's intra-African export trade was growing at 13% a year (van Hyyssteen, 1999). By the end of 1997, it accounted for 19% of South Africa's trade (Business Day, 1998). After the outbreak of war in late 1998, the growth

figures declined by ten percentage points and exports to Zimbabwe plummeted by 14% as its economy shrunk in the face of its expensive troop involvement in the Congo (van Hyssteen, 1999). Zimbabwe's leadership hopes to wrest the African Renaissance from South African hands by exploiting DRC resources as its war booty (Griggs, 1998c; Business in Africa, 1999). If this trend continues, the regional engine of the renaissance – South Africa – could move toward isolation and taking advantage of extraregional trade opportunities from behind borders that are strengthened against immigrants, refugees, and illegal goods: a total unravelling of SADC and a return to the Westphalian model.

The solution rests with appropriate structures for conflict management in the SADC region. This has only been attempted in the form of the Organ for Politics, Defence, and Security. It was partly created as a result of scholars and activists lobbying for human rights as a mechanism to enhance democracy, stability and security (Seymour, 1997). Ironically, it has come to be dominated by President Robert Mugabe whose human rights record has left much of the world aghast. Struggle for control of the body has also divided Southern African states and created a feud between Presidents Mugabe and Nelson Mandela. Thus, there is no indication that the renaissance is moving forward on this front.

6.5 Weak South-South Ties

Prospects for the new geopolitics of South-South alliances came into sharpest relief with South Africa's failure to inject its renaissance agenda into the September 1998 meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement in Durban. As the new president of the 113-member organisation of Southern states, Nelson Mandela engaged in some initial shuttle diplomacy to set the agenda on 'Global Apartheid.' South Africa's vision was to unite Southern states behind a political and economic strategy that would help scrap debt to Northern states, reform the UN, increase South-South Economic ties, and generally escape the onus of Northern hegemony. South Africa's plan to detail reforms was sidelined by the 'Old Guard' of African leaders who were troubled by (or jealous of) South Africa's leadership role. Instead the African agenda moved toward politics including the condemnation of Jonas Savimbi and discussion surrounding the war in the DRC (Cornish, 1998). The final communique acknowledged that South-South cooperation was "*a central strategy for creating a new global environment*" but this was just one part of a long list of rambling and vague statements; not an economic strategy to unite the South (Non-Aligned Movement, 1998).

6.6 Weak Support for Strong Regional Institutions

Ultimately, a new geopolitical order, research support, popular participation, conflict management mechanisms, and South-South regional ties all require a convergence of policy and institutional mechanisms among SADC states. So far, this has not taken place. The Achilles heel of the African Renaissance may be a basic unwillingness by Heads of State to sacrifice state sovereignty for the sake of the spatial integration process. There is neither an independent directorate nor a parliament that can fast-track regional plans, legislate, and adjudicate disputes.

The loose system of sectoral co-operation on which SADC has functioned for twenty years has done little to advance integration. Southern African states have fallen short of completing the tasks set for themselves. Eight protocols have been drafted since 1994 covering issues of crime, mining, education, energy, shared water, transport and communication, liberalisation of trade, and

immunities and privileges. As of March 1999, only two of the eight protocols had been ratified (transport, and immunities and privileges). The most far-reaching of these, the *Maseru Protocol* on the liberalisation of trade was drafted in August 1996 with the intention of dismantling all tariffs within six months. It is still under discussion at the time of writing.

If SADC is confined to a club of the government and business elite and lacks strong and democratic regional institutions it cannot succeed in creating lasting solutions. Firstly, it alienates too many role-players (e.g., business, NGOs, rural poor). Secondly, it makes the enforcement of any pacts, agreements, or decisions subject to the whim of state leaders. For instance, while talk of free trade is persistent and its benefits seemingly enormous, tariffs account for up to 50% of government income in Southern African states. This means that states that lose in the open competition for market share will either renege on agreements or raise taxes to offset the loss of customs revenue (Dludlu, 1999). When under popular pressure, some Heads of State might prefer to renege.

The rapid geographic expansion of SADC has also slowed its progress. It is difficult to deepen relations while new members are being assimilated. While it was vital to include South Africa from 1994, the addition of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 1997 is a mixed blessing. DRC membership could be a boon in terms of resources but a drawback if the political order fails to stabilise. Now there are proposals to merge the Common Market of Eastern and Southern African States (Comesa) and SADC to create an Eastern and Southern African Development Community (Kornegay and Landsberg, 1998). This would further delay the integration of SADC and perhaps enrol new conflicts and problems. Such suggestions further point to basic problems among African leaders in either understanding the role and function of boundaries or in their willingness to adjust them properly.

7. Summary

Altogether, a new paradigm regarding boundary management in Southern Africa is necessary owing to the failure of the Westphalian System in a rapidly globalising world. This makes regionalisation, if not pan-Africanism, a necessity. The African Renaissance offers a paradigm and discourse capable of enrolling African peoples in an effort of construct a new political geography that involves regional membership, cross-boundary communications, and increased ties across the Southern Hemisphere. However, there are a number of obstacles to achieving this as outlined in the previous section. How the African Renaissance is managed and who owns the discourse are critical factors in its success or failure.

Foremost among problems of boundary management is the need for deeper levels of structural integration accompanied by democratic management and more scientific attention to boundaries. Running SADC like a Club of States is doomed since the units making up SADC are far from equal or ideal. Progress is limited by Southern African leaders who are too jealous of their own power and sovereignty to limit it for the sake of deeper integration. An unwillingness to re-examine boundaries compounds the problem. While some integration may be achieved in terms of Spatial Development Initiatives, better communications will mainly increase the wealth of states that command access to transport terminals, seaports, and sophisticated industry (Marcharia, 1998). These problems should be more seriously analysed and a scientific approach taken. So far, politicians are ruling the spatial development processes.

There is also a critical need to make the 'renaissance' a popular movement. As long as the ideal of the African Renaissance can only be realised among an elite, it will just be a marketing tool to attract foreign investment in such enterprises as SDIs. Otherwise, the geography it promises on the basis of elitism and unchallenged boundaries is one of fortified urban areas and security villages for the government and business elites who will be surrounded by an alienated underclass of the poor and unemployed.

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