

Daniel Tevera, Sam Moyo, eds.. *Environmental Security in Southern Africa*. Harare: Southern Africa Regional Institute for Policy Studies, SAPES Trust, 2000. xvi + 236 pp. \$24.95, paper, ISBN 978-1-77905-101-1.



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Addressing Environmental Insecurity in Southern Africa

The fate of the countries and their citizens that make up the Southern African Development Community (SADC) is inextricably bound to the natural environment that enables these states to survive economically through the exploitation and exportation of their natural resources. The natural environment further directly provides for the livelihood of 70 percent of the region's population, with the result that environmental degradation directly threatens the existence of the majority of people in the region. In the past decade there has been an increase in the demand for the natural resources of the region, for both local consumption as well as for export purposes. This trend, along with an increase in the competition over natural resources between the various classes and sectors within countries, and between neighbouring countries, has led to the increase of environment-related conflicts in the SADC region (p. 3).

The need to address environmental security issues within the SADC from a regional perspec-

tive, as opposed to the standard national one, was considered at the SAPES Trust Annual Colloquium on Regional Environmental Security and Natural Resources, held in Harare, Zimbabwe in 1998. The book currently under review is a product of the 1998 colloquium and aims at providing "a coherent treatment of key themes in relation to contemporary environmental security issues in the region" (p. xiii). Under the editorship of Daniel Tevera and Sam Moyo, the fifteen contributing authors identify and address a variety of environmental issues that are presented under four sections, namely environmental security frameworks, the land issue, water insecurity, and the cross-cutting issues of regional development, integration and energy provision.

On the very first page, the editors identify cross-border investments, migrants, the threat of the re-colonisation of Southern Africa's natural resources as a result of the economic liberalisation era, the conflict over natural resource ownership, and conflicting relations between states and civil society as major sources of environmental insecurity in the region (p.xiii). In order to address these

conflicts successfully the editors underline the importance of recognising the inseparable connection between environmental and human security issues in the region, and the fact that natural resource conflicts result from a diversity of factors (p. xv). What is needed is a holistic view "of the circumstances in which people use natural resources, and are affected by socio-economic and political factors which have the potential to modify the demand for and supply of natural resources" (p. xiii). These themes re-emerge throughout the book as various authors seek to identify environmental security issues, their causes and possible solutions in the region.

In part 1, the emphasis falls on environmental security frameworks needed to address environmental issues and conflicts within Southern Africa. Existing environmental policy initiatives and research in the region are strongly criticised for their national focus and are accused of using methodologies and paradigms that were developed mainly in the North and which therefore also favor the North in their dealings with the South (pp. 7-9). The roles played by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and inter-governmental organisations (IGOs) on local levels and in wildlife management also come under attack. While it is acknowledged that some NGOs and IGOs have done pioneering work in the SADC region, they are also accused of further marginalising the poor (p. 37), of being self-seeking and of misusing "nature and the poor as a way of staying in business" (p. 43), of "falsifying information and feeding the public half truths so as to make sure that their masters continue to pay the bills" (p. 47), and of neglecting the important task of building capacity on community level (p. 47). In order to address environmental security in the region it is argued that regional approaches need to be developed to regulate inter-state natural resource management (especially in terms of water management in the arid and semi-arid parts of the region), and to monitor and anticipate potential environmental insecurity and conflicts (pp. 15-18).

The importance of indigenous knowledge in reversing environmental degradation in the region is underscored, along with endogenous community management of nature as *the* future model of nature and wildlife management (p. 49).

In part 2 attention moves from the general environment to the important land question which was already a key environmental security issue prior to the current massive land expropriation programme of the Zimbabwean government. It is argued that the land question in the region is a reflection of the political struggles over the historical loss of land by indigenous communities to a minority of white people and an emerging black elite (p. 70). Land policies in the 1990s in Southern Africa are criticised for promoting freehold land markets to the disadvantage of the traditional tenure system and the expansion of commercial farming aimed at the export sector (p. 53). Economic liberalism has further marginalised the region's rural majority through new land alienation in the past decade for tourism and mining purposes, which holds the added threat of recolonising natural resources in Southern Africa (pp. 54, 70-71). In order to address the land question in the SADC region, the authors call for, *inter alia*, proper research into land alienation that will allow redress to take place (p.86), and national economic policies aimed at encouraging and supporting local investors—who are perceived to be better agents of national economic development than trans-border companies and financing (p. 99).

Despite the high levels of media and political attention being directed at the land issue in the region in the past few years, as a direct consequence of the actions of the Zimbabwean government, the single most important environmental security issue in the region is its water resources. The SADC region consists mostly of arid and semi-arid regions in which water is a scarce and very valuable resource. Water security in the region is difficult to obtain due to the fact that most of the region's water courses are shared, which en-

hances the possibility of future conflicts over access to water in the region (pp. 119-121). Part 3 of the book addresses the pressing issues of regional management of shared water courses by focusing on the management of the Zambezi River (pp. 119-155), the socio-economic impacts of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (pp. 175-186), and the SADC protocol on shared water courses (pp. 157-173). While the latter protocol is an important step towards co-ordinating and managing the region's scarce water resources, it remains to be seen if the SADC as an institution will be powerful enough to force all its members to adhere to the basic principles of the protocol. In the meantime, the demand for water resources is likely to increase in the region. This is due to expanding industrialisation, growing national populations, growing urbanisation and the intensification of agriculture, which will most likely intensify the competition over water resources between the countries in the region in the near future (p. 119).

The book concludes its survey of environmental security issues in Southern Africa by focusing on what it terms crosscutting issues in part 4. Spatial development initiatives and regional integration such as the Maputo Development Corridor (initiated by the South African government in 1997 to transform the national space economy) are viewed as being a result of unique conditions and the authors caution that because of regional inequalities the other proposed nine development corridors in the region should not duplicate the South African model. What is needed instead is the development of a "planned regional industrial development strategy which realises the potential of all countries and allocates industrial portfolios on the basis of comparative advantage" (p. 203). This strategy, along with realising the energy potential of the region without which industrial and economic development and expansion would be unobtainable, are left to the SADC to formulate and implement (pp. 189-207).

Environmental Security in Southern Africa provides an important introduction to environmental security issues in Southern Africa and the historical development of these issues. Based primarily on printed official and published sources, it does succeed in its stated aim of coherently focusing on key environmental security themes in the region. It is logical that the authors would, within the context of the current globalised world order and trends towards greater political and economic integration on regional level, emphasise the dominant role the SADC as an institution needs to play in establishing environmental security in the region. However, just how this process will come about is not explored in the book. It is common knowledge that international and regional organisations are only as strong as their member states allow them to be. Historically states have been more inclined to exploit transnational resources, such as water, unilaterally, irrespective of the preferences of other legitimate beneficiaries. Convincing the member states to delegate enough authority, power and responsibility to the SADC to manage the region's shared natural resources effectively and to the advantage of all the legitimate beneficiaries will be a challenge. But this needs to be the starting point if the region wants to make proper progress towards achieving regional environmental security.

Another problematic aspect of the book is the nationalities of the contributing authors, who hail from Zimbabwe (five), Mozambique (one), Lesotho (one), Botswana (two), Zambia (one), Kenya (one), Sweden (three) and the United Kingdom (one). It would have been interesting to read contributions from the unrepresented states in the SADC region, especially from South Africa which, for better or for worse, does dominate the region in many aspects and whose experiences do at times differ from those of the other SADC members. On the whole however, the book is a good introduction to the theme, and one that policy makers and environmental practitioners, as well

as researchers into environment-related themes in Southern Africa, should take note of.

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