The functioning of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the primary characteristics of the member states

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ABSTRACT

The article describes the formation of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and reflects on the structure and value of the institution within the region. The concept of intergovernmental relations (IGR) is defined and the commonalities with regards to intergovernmental structures and the establishment thereof, between SADC member states, are discussed. The SADC comprises fourteen vastly different and diverse countries and mention is made of the size, population composition and government types of each of the countries and its impact on the creation and viability of intergovernmental relations.

INTRODUCTION

In most contemporary states the various public functions are performed by institutions divided into tiers/spheres or levels of government. The number of tiers/spheres or levels are determined by *inter alia* the geographic area, the political guidelines contained in the constitution and the social composition of the society served by public institutions. Therefore, it should be obvious that the division of functions amongst the different tiers/spheres/levels of government will be peculiar to each state. It may, however, be possible to identify a number of common characteristics that could serve as guidelines to countries wishing to reconsider existing structures and practices. The discussions that follow will commence with a brief exposition of the SADC to be able to identify the *raison d'être* of such institution and to indicate the primary characteristics of the fourteen countries currently forming the SADC.

Article

SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (SADC)

Historical overview

Following the Lusaka Declaration on the topic "Southern Africa: Towards economic liberation" the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) was formed on 1 April 1980. The SADCC comprised Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, (joined after its independence in 1990), Swaziland, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. The basic aim of SADCC was to reduce its members'economic dependence on South Africa and to promote the members'economic development. The SADCC mainly addressed issues pertaining to infrastructure deficiencies and to create a platform to promote dialogue and obtain funding from foreign donors.

After the release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners by the former South African government, the focus of the SADCC had to be reviewed. In August 1992 the SADCC was transformed into the current Southern African Development Community (SADC) following a meeting in Windhoek and the subsequent Windhoek treaty. South Africa acceded to the Treaty in 1994, followed by Mauritius in 1995, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Seychelles were admitted in 1997 (an application by Uganda for membership is currently being considered by SADC). The fourteen countries comprising SADC are:

- Angola
- Botswana
- Democratic Republic of Congo
- Lesotho
- Malawi
- Mauritius
- Mozambique
- Namibia
- Seychelles
- South Africa
- Swaziland
- Tanzania
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

New members are admitted through a unanimous decision of the SADC Summit and upon acceding to the SADC Treaty.

Although the SADC operates within the broad confines of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) now being transformed into the African Union, it has identified its own objectives and developed its own organisational structures and procedures.

Objectives

The SADC recognises the sovereignty of member states, but also acknowledges the need to promote co-operation amongst member states in order to address the challenges of the dynamic and increasingly complex regional and global environment.

The main objectives of the SADC could be summarized as follows (Nyirenda, 2000:27) to:

- achieve development and economic growth, alleviate poverty, enhance the standard and quality of life of the peoples of Southern Africa and support the socially disadvantaged through regional integration

- evolve common political values, systems and institutions

- promote and defend peace and security

- promote self-sustaining development on the basis of collective self-reliance and the interdependence of member states

- achieve complementarity between national and regional strategies and programmes

- promote and maximise productive employment and utilization of resources of the region

- achieve sustainable utilisation of natural resources and effective protection of the environment

- strengthen and consolidate the long-standing historical, social and cultural affinities and links among the peoples of the region.

The SADC member states agree that issues of underdevelopment, exploitation, deprivation and poverty can only be overcome through economic co-operation and integration. In order to achieve the objectives, SADC member states intend to (http://www.sadcreview.com):

- harmonise political and socio-economic policies and plans

- mobilise people to initiate and implement cross border economic, social and cultural ties

- develop policies to increase free movement of capital, labour, goods, services and people among members states

- promote human resource development

- promote the development, transfer and implementation of technology

- improve economic management and performance through regional co-operation

- promote the co-ordination and harmonisation of international relations of member states

- secure international understanding, co-operation and support as well as mobilise the inflow of public and private resources into the region.

To realise the objectives of SADC, thirteen sectors of co-operation have been identified and assigned to different member states to deal with. These are

Energy	Angola
Agricultural Research, Livestock Production and Animal Disease Control	Botswana
Environmental Management and Water	Lesotho
Inland Fisheries, Forestry and Wild Life	Malawi
Marine Fisheries and Resources, Legal Affairs	Namibia
Finance, Investment and Health	South Africa
Human Resource Development	Swaziland
Industry and Trade	Tanzania
Crop Production, Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources	Zimbabwe
Culture, Information, Sport and Transport and Communications Commission (TCC)	Mozambique
Tourism	Mauritius
Employment, Labour and Mining	Zambia

The DRC and Seychelles have not been assigned sectoral responsibilities at this stage.

It appears as though the SADC common agenda has been articulated ambiguously and can, therefore not be operationalised effectively. Thus a more explicit common agenda is to be formulated, clearly spelling out the common focus areas.

Organisational framework and management

The most important structures of the SADC are as follows (http://www.sadcreview.com):

• Summit of Heads of State or Government

The Summit is the ultimate policy-making body of the SADC and is composed of the Heads of State or Government of the member states. It is headed by a Chairperson and a Vice-chairperson, elected for an agreed upon period. It is responsible for the

creation of directorates, committees and agencies. The Summit also appoints the executive secretary and his/her deputy on the advice of the Council of Ministers. Decisions are taken on the basis of consensus and are binding on the member states. The summit meets at least once a year.

• Council of Ministers

The Council consists of ministers responsible for, but not exclusively, the particular country's economic planning or finance. The Council supervises the functioning and development of the SADC and has to ensure that the policies are implemented. It approves policies, strategies and work programmes of the SADC and advises the Summit on matters of overall policy, including the efficient and harmonious functioning of the Institution. The Council also recommends to the Summit suitable persons for appointment as executive secretary and his/her deputy. It may create its own committees if and when necessary. The Council may also convene conferences and meetings to promote the objectives and programmes of SADC. The Council meets at least four times a year.

• Troika

The Troika consists of the Chairperson, incoming chairperson and the outgoing chairperson of SADC (i.e. of the Summit). Other member states may be co-opted. The Troika acts as a steering committee to obtain speedy decision-making and to facilitate timely implementation of decisions and to provide policy direction to SADC institutions between regular SADC meetings.

The Troika operates at the level of the Summit; the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security; the Council of Ministers and the Standing Committee of Senior Officials.

• Organ on Politics, Defence and Security

The Organ's activities are co-ordinated at the level of the Summit and reports to the Chairperson of the SADC. The chairperson of the Organ serves on a rotational basis for one year. The member state holding the chairperson position provides the secretariat. The structure, operations and functions of the Organ are regulated by the Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation.

• Integrated Committee of Ministers (ICM)

The ICM consists of at least two ministers from each member state to oversee the activities of the four core sectoral areas, *viz.*

*   Trade, Industry, Finance and Investment
*   Infrastructure and Services
*   Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources
*   Social and Human Development and Special Programmes.

The ICM provides policy guidance to the Secretariat, makes decisions on matters pertaining to the directorates and monitors and evaluates their work. It also has decision-making powers to ensure rapid implementation of programmes that may be delayed until a formal meeting of the Council of Ministers can be convened.

• Standing Committee of Senior Officials

The Standing Committee consists of a permanent secretary or an official of equivalent rank from an SADC contact point from each member state. These officials are often attached to a ministry responsible for economic planning or finance in a member state. The Standing Committee acts as a technical advisory committee to the Council of Ministers to whom it also reports. The Standing Committee meets at least once a year.

• Secretariat

The Secretariat is the principal executive body of the SADC. It is headed by an Executive Secretary, appointed by the Summit. The Secretariat is responsible for the management of SADC meetings and for the general and especially the financial administration of the SADC. The Secretariat collates and disseminates information on SADC and maintains a database. It mobilises resources, co-ordinates and harmonises programmes and projects among co-operating partners. It furthermore develops strategies for self-financing and income generating activities and investments. The Secretariat also undertakes research on community building and manages special programmes and projects.

• Tribunal

A Tribunal is constituted to ensure adherence to and that a proper interpretation is maintained of the provisions of the SADC Treaty and subsidiary instruments and to

adjudicate upon such disputes as may be referred to it. Decisions by the Tribunal are final and binding.

• *Parliamentary Forum*

The SADC representatives initiated the Parliamentary Forum in 1993 to guarantee the achievement of effective regional integration and prospective governance and freedom in the SADC region. The Forum was launched in 1996 in Windhoek to promote:

- the principles of human rights and democracy in the SADC region

- peace, democracy, security and stability on the basis of collective responsibility

- good governance, transparency and accountability in the region and in the operations of the SADC structures.

The Forum consists of

- the Secretary-General (five year renewable contract)
- Executive Assistant
- Office Administrator
- Part-time Financial Accountant
- Part-time secretarial and support personnel.

• *SADC National Committee*

The National Committee is located in the ministry responsible for SADC matters and acts as an important link between other organs of state and SADC organs. Functions include regular consultations with and briefings of relevant government institutions, the business community and the media on matters relating to SADC.

• *Commissions and Sector Co-ordinating Units (SCUs)*

SADC established commissions and sector co-ordinating units to guide and co-ordinate regional policies and programmes in specific areas. The sectors are allocated to individual member states to co-ordinate and provide leadership. Sectoral committees of ministers supervise sectoral activities. Sector co-ordinating units are part of national governments and staffed mainly by civil servants of the sector co-ordinating country.

Sectoral commissions are regional institutions and may be established through a convention approved by the Summit and ratified by member states. Sectoral committees and commission have to report to the Council.

• *Additional units - Gender Sector*

The Gender Sector framework includes:

- committee of ministers responsible for gender or women affairs
- advisory committee consisting of government and NGO representatives from each SADC member state
- gender unit and the SADC Secretariat.

A declaration of gender and development was signed in September 1997 by SADC heads of state in Blantyre, Malawi that endorsed the decision to establish a policy and institutional framework for gender mainstreaming in SADC. The declaration entails:

- achieving at least a 30% target women in political and decision-making structures by 2005
- promoting women's full access to, and control over, productive resources to reduce the level of poverty among women and
- repealing and reforming all laws, amending constitutions and changing social practices that still subject women to discrimination.

SADC operates in a decentralized manner with its head office in Gaborone, Botswana. Most member states are assigned the co-ordination of at least one sector as set out in par 2.2 through the Sector Co-ordinating Unit (SCU). The main rationale of the decentralized system is the promotion of a sense of ownership by directly involving member states. A member state responsible for a particular sector provides the infrastructure required to carry out the activities involved. The structure presents a number of problems (Report on the review of operations of SADC institutions, 2001:11-12), e.g.

- unclear lines of authority and accountability
- disparity in and often inadequate provision of resources and staffing by member states of sectoral responsibilities
- differences in management and administrative procedures, rules, standards, qualifications and performance criteria of personnel in regional programmes
- proliferation of meetings and associated costs
- inability of the Secretariat to undertake the required strategic planning and management
- lack of institutional mechanisms for ministers of foreign affairs of member states

to discuss and co-ordinate common positions on matters pertaining to the institution at various international fora.

FINANCES

The SADC reveals a high level of reliance (± 80%) on donor funding for projects and programmes. The SADC budget for operational costs of running the Secretariat and the various commissions are funded from contributions by member states. Membership contributions are, however, not equitable and the system does not take into account the capacity and circumstances of member states to contribute (Report on the review of operations of SADC institutions 2001:29).

Estimates of revenue and expenditure are prepared by the Executive Secretary for approval by the Council of Ministers. Budgets for sectoral projects are handled directly by the project executing agencies, but project sponsors, sector co-ordinating units and the Secretariat have to mobilise resources for projects. Member states also finance the personnel required to service their respective sector co-ordinating units (http://www.sadcreview.com).

PERSONNEL

The SADC makes use of different organisational structures to carry out its functions. As already alluded to, the sectoral activities are entrusted to member states who also provide the secretariats for such activities. The current total personnel component of the SADC Secretariat, commissions and sector co-ordinating units is 384. This number comprises 194 professionals and 190 support personnel (Report on the review of operations of SADC institutions 2001:29).

One of the challenges facing SADC is a shortage of skilled, trained professional personnel, managers, policy analysts and entrepreneurs to advise ministers and the Summit on policy issues and to manage the executive actions. The initiatives to restructure the SADC could play an important role in increasing the capacity of the Institution to promote political stability and create an environment conducive to economic development.

SADC'S CONTRIBUTION

SADC followed a decentralised approach. This was subsequently changed to a sectoral approach. Thus, most member states have been assigned the responsibility to co-ordinate one or more sectors (*cf.* Par 2.2). Each member state is therefore, required to propose sector policies, strategies and priorities and has to process projects

for inclusion in sectoral programmes. This have to be monitored and results reported to the Council of Ministers.

The *Programme of Action* of SADC contains all the programmes and projects approved by the Council of Ministers. Each identified sector as assigned to a member state is managed by the particular member.

On the political front, SADC promotes the ideals of democracy, good governance, respect for the rule of law, and respect for human rights. Although violence occurs in some member states, most of the region has enjoyed relative peace and stability. It is particularly in this regard that this article (and related articles in this journal) is aimed at identifying the organisational structures in the fourteen countries and indicating the relationship amongst the different levels/tiers or spheres. Some general characteristics will be identified that could assist member states to reconsider their existing intergovernmental relations, thus improving co-ordination amongst different public institutions and obtain more efficient and effective public service delivery.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS (IGR)

Defining the function

Intergovernmental relations encompass all the interdependent relations amongst the various tiers/spheres/levels of government and include the co-ordination of public policies determined by the legislative and executive bodies of the various governmental structures. Intergovernmental relations could also refer to the actions and transactions of political office bearers and officials on any tier/sphere/level of government that have a bearing on the decisions and actions of another tier/sphere/level of government.

A variety of relationships exist both formally and informally and the effectiveness and efficiency of public service delivery by public institutions will largely be dependent on the relationships amongst the different institutions involved in related activities. Effective intergovernmental relations are thus a key requirement for effective and efficient public service delivery.

The term IGR could also be used to refer to the relationships among different governments e.g. South Africa and Botswana or Namibia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo - in this case the term extra governmental relations could be used. IGR could also be used to refer to the relations among governments on the same tier/sphere/level e.g. between different provinces/regions or between municipalities - the term normally used in this regard is intra-governmental relations.

Types of relations

• *Legislative relations*

Particular relations are normally established on the different tiers/spheres/levels of government e.g. amongst the national, the provincial and the local legislatures. In this regard the constitution of a state or other legislation will prescribe the nature and extent of the legislative competencies of each legislature. In the case of the Republic of South Africa the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996) determines in section 43 that the legislative authority of

- the national sphere of government is vested in Parliament
- the provincial sphere of government is vested in the provincial legislatures
- the local sphere of government is vested in the municipal councils.

Thus although provision may be made for legislative functions to be performed by various tiers/spheres/levels of government, the national legislature nearly without exception retains the final authority in a state. The justification for this requirement is to be found in the need to ensure that the unity of the state is retained and that subordinate legislative institutions operate within a framework that recognises the authority of the national legislature.

• *Administrative relations*

To ensure that the executive actions of government at the different levels/tiers/spheres are carried out efficiently and effectively, particular administrative arrangements are required. In this regard it is imperative that the executive institutions on the respective levels/tiers/spheres of government obtain clarity regarding their functions and powers.

In highly centralised states executive institutions on the national level/sphere of government are usually assigned the authority to play a prominent role in policy-formulation and monitoring the executive actions of the other levels/spheres of government. In decentralised countries the different levels of executive institutions will usually be assigned specific powers and functions and have their areas of operation clearly defined.

From the above-mentioned it could be argued that constitutional provisions could play an important role in obtaining administrative arrangements to promote sound intergovernmental relations. Various institutions are also established to co-ordinate the activities of the different tiers/spheres/levels of government. In some countries the executive formally establishes these structures in terms of legislation or decisions. It

should, however, be emphasized that structures and functions and powers of such structures are determined by a variety of factors e.g. historical antecedents, size of a country, political arrangements and the role of the public sector in the provision of services to members of society.

CHARACTERISTICS OF IGR IN SADC

As alluded to in the previous paragraph, the intergovernmental relations in a state are peculiar to the particular state. Therefore the structures, systems and relationships in one state cannot simply be transferred to another state. However, some general characteristics could be identified which could serve as guidelines for the development of structures and systems in other countries. In each case the historical, political, geographical characteristics and composition of the country's social structure should be taken into account.

Historical considerations

No independent African state commenced its legislative, executive and judicial system on a clean slate. Various historical considerations shaped the composition of each state. Even the colonial powers that ruled each of the SADC countries before independence established its own political, executive and judicial institutions according to their own policies e.g. Great Britain in the case of e.g. South Africa, Botswana, Malawi, Swaziland, Zambia, Lesotho and Zimbabwe; Germany in the case of Namibia although South Africa also played a significant role for a number of years; Portugal in the case of Mozambique and Angola, and Belgium in the case of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Mauritius was discovered and ruled by the Portuguese, the Dutch and subsequently by the British until its independence in 1968.

Even in pre-colonial times traditional authorities governed different countries, although not necessarily as a nation state. In the case of Botswana the country was run by a traditional assembly, known as the *kgotla*. Issues of national concern were raised at the *kgotla* but villagers were also afforded the opportunity to raise their concerns (Edge & Lekorwe, 1998:62). During the Belgian colonial period in the present day Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Colony was governed by a colonial charter and ruled directly from Brussels. Thus the Colony's administration was highly centralized. Although Lesotho became a British protectorate in 1868, later ruled by the former Cape Colony, the chiefs played a prominent role, but resulted in considerable tension and ultimately to war in 1880/81.

In most of the SADC countries tribal institutions were recognised under colonial rule. However, such institutions often played a subservient role and were controlled by the district commissioners or the colonial government. Thus indigenous structures were

mostly underdeveloped in African countries. Their functions and powers were mostly limited to tribal matters and they were not afforded opportunities to become experienced in the government and administration of society as a whole in the particular country.

Indigenous systems were often retained after independence, but as these systems were not well developed, and their functions and powers not clearly delineated, they were often not fully integrated into the system of government and administration of the state.

Political considerations

African states tend to be highly centralised. This may partly be due to internal conflict preceding and following independence from the colonial of power. The newly established national government's immediate concern often focused on eradicating inequalities that developed during the colonial era, promote unity in the state and resolve tribal conflict. Situations such as these were particularly prevalent in countries such as Angola, Mozambique and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In these cases it is to be expected that nation building and its subsequent requirement of strong nationally developed policies would be introduced.

Not all SADC countries introduced and maintained democracy after independence. This could partly be ascribed to tribal conflict, but in some cases also to the ruling party's reluctance to subject it to public scrutiny during an election and the possibility of losing the election. Therefore, in some African countries general, free and fair elections are a rarity. Some countries seem to be intent on regular elections, e.g. Namibia, Mauritius and South Africa. However, although general elections do occur in some countries few changes in government have been effected. Constitutions are often amended to allow the head of state to continue in office for lengthy periods e.g. Zimbabwe and Zambia. Table 1 illustrates the member states' government type.

Table 1: *Government types of SADC member states*

Countries	Government type
Angola	Multiparty democracy with strong presidential system
Botswana	Parliamentary republic
DRC	Transition to representative government
Lesotho	Parliamentary constitutional monarchy
Malawi	Multiparty democracy
Mauritius	Parliamentary democracy
Mozambique	Republic
Namibia	Republic
Seychelles	Republic
South Africa	Republic
Swaziland	Monarchy
Tanzania	Republic
Zambia	Republic
Zimbabwe	Parliamentary democracy

The case of Swaziland needs special attention as it is one of the last countries in SADC that has not yet completed the transition to full democracy with multi-party politics. Two structures are currently in existence *viz.* a conventional tripartite system (with legislative, executive and judicial branches) and a parallel system of traditional governance reporting directly to the Monarch. The final authority vests in the Monarch, but the unwritten Swazi law and customs guide the Monarch's actions and decisions. However, the executive is dependent on the Monarch and the Prime Minister and cabinet's decisions are subject to royal approval. Swaziland also does not have a formalised constitution as the Monarch has suspended it. Although political parties exist, they operate informally. No clear guidelines exist to arrange decentralised decision making. Therefore, the country is characterised by a highly centralised administration.
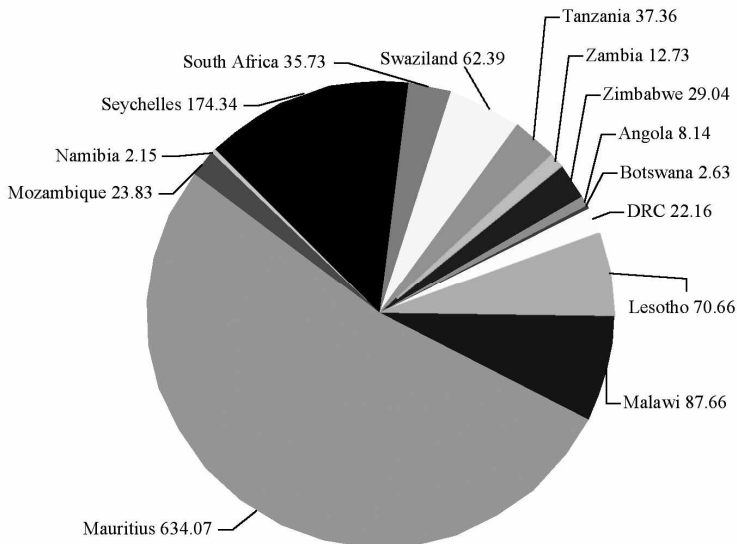
Physical features

States establish governmental structures to suit their particular political, social, economic and physical conditions. As is to be expected the area of a state and its population would be two important considerations determining the nature and the extent of its decentralization. The following tables provide an indication of the divergence in the sizes and population of the SADC countries.

Table 2:   Size and population density of SADC member states

Countries	Area	Population
Seychelles	455 sq. km	1 771 327
Mauritius	118 480 sq. km	10 385 849
Swaziland	17 363 sq. km	1 083 289
Lesotho	30 355 sq. km	2 143 141
Malawi	118 480 sq. km	10 385 849
Zimbabwe	390 580 sq. km	11 342 521
Botswana	600 370 sq. km	1 576 470
Zambia	752 614 sq. km	9 582 418
Mozambique	801 590 sq. km	19 104 696
Namibia	825 418 sq. km	1 771 327
Tanzania	945 087 sq. km	35 306 126
South Africa	1 219 912 sq. km	43 586 097
Angola	1 246 700 sq. km	10 145 267
DRC	2 345 410 sq. km	51 964 999

Figure 1: Population density (persons per sq. km) of SADC member states

Tanzania 37.36
Zambia 12.73
Zimbabwe 29.04
Angola 8.14
Botswana 2.63
DRC 22.16
Lesotho 70.66
Malawi 87.66
Mauritius 634.07
Mozambique 23.83
Namibia 2.15
Seychelles 174.34
South Africa 35.73
Swaziland 62.39

(source: http://www.sadcreview.com)

The significance of the physical features for intergovernmental relations and the existence of regional, sub-regional and municipal structures should be quite obvious. If a state is relatively small in size the need for decentralisation may be negligent, e.g. Seychelles (455 sq. km), Mauritius (1860 sq. km). However, the larger states may find it imperative to establish regional and sub-regional structures to deal with the divergent needs in their areas of jurisdiction, compare in this regard Angola (1 246 700 sq. km), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2 345 410 sq. km), Namibia (825 418 sq. km), Mozambique (801 590 sq. km) and South Africa (1 219 912 sq. km). However, to this should also be added the size of a country's population and the other physical features. A state may be relatively large, but be sparsely populated (e.g. Botswana (2,6 persons per sq. km) and Namibia (2,1 persons per sq. km) and thus may not require extensive regional and sub regional governmental and administrative structures.
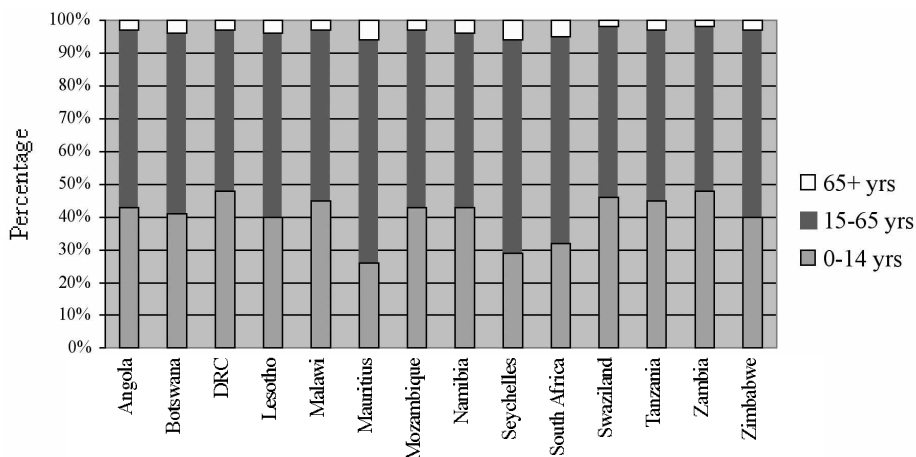
A factor that needs to be considered in regard to the physical features of a state concerns the distribution of the population. Should a state's population be distributed unevenly across its area of jurisdiction with widely divergent economic capabilities of the various regions, decentralised government and administration are prerequisites for development e.g. South Africa, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Angola.

The composition of its population i.e. ethnic distribution (e.g. the DRC with 200 ethnic groups) and the political philosophy of the government in power (i.e. centralized or decentralized) will be important considerations in determining its governmental structures and extent of the decentralisation or devolution of power to regional, sub-regional or municipal government and administration. The following table and figure indicate the age, gender and ethnic composition of member states.

Table 3:   Age, gender and ethnic composition of SADC member states

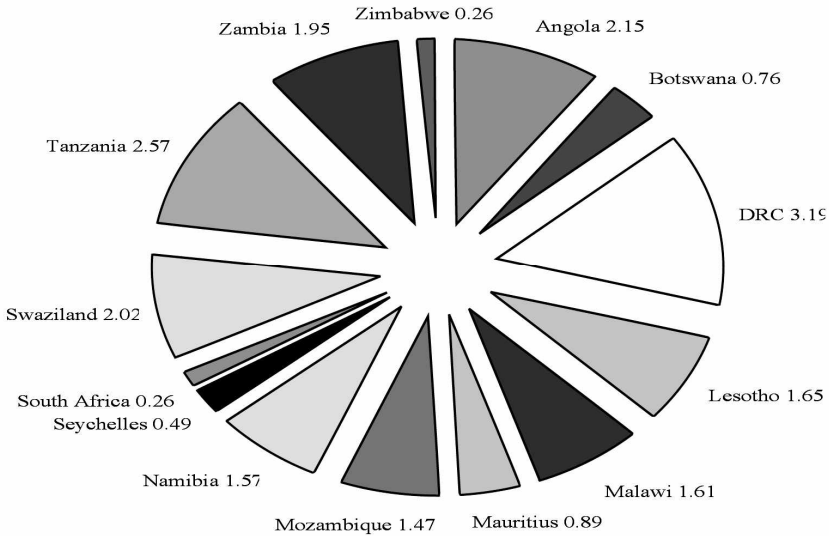| Countries	Ethnic composition	Gender Male/Female
Seychelles	Seychellois (mixture of Asians, Africans and Europeans)	0.93
Swaziland	2 ethnic groups with Africans comprising 97%	0.95
Tanzania	2 ethnic groups with Bantu tribes comprising 95%	0.99
Zambia	2 ethnic groups with Africans comprising 98.7%	0.99
Lesotho	3 ethnic groups with Sotho tribe comprising 99.7%	0.95
Mauritius	4 ethnic groups with Indo-Mauritian tribe comprising 68%	0.98
South Africa	4 ethnic groups with Africans comprising 75.2%	0.94
Zimbabwe	4 ethnic groups with Shona tribe comprising 71%	1.02
Angola	5 ethnic groups with Ovimbundu comprising 37%	1.02
Botswana	5 ethnic groups with Batswana tribe comprising 95%	0.94
Mozambique	5 indigenous tribal groups	0.97
Namibia	10 ethnic groups with Ovambo tribe comprising 50%	0.99
Malawi	11 ethnic groups	0.97
DRC	More than 200 African tribes with majority comprising Bantu tribes	0.98

Figure 2: Age structure (%) of SADC member status
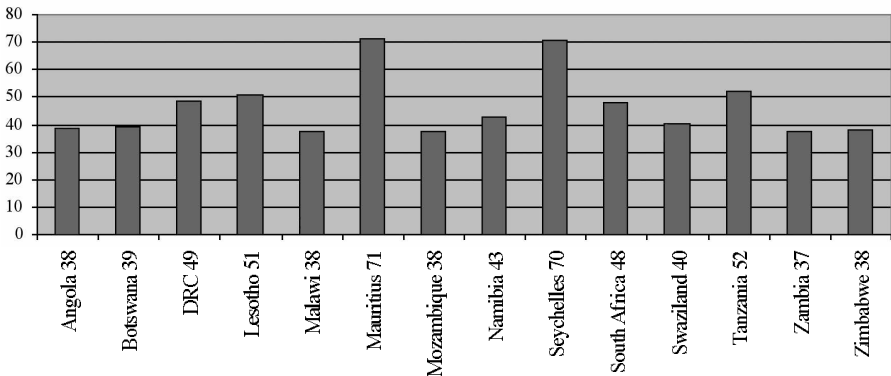
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As mentioned previously intergovernmental relations could facilitate more effective and efficient service delivery. Factors that could influence service delivery and thus also have an impact on the existence and role of intergovernmental relations structures include life expectancy and population growth. The following figures indicate above-mentioned factors of individual SADC member states.

Figure 3: Population growth (%) of SADC member states

(source: http://www/sadcreview.com)

Figure 4: Life expectancy (yr.) of SADC member states

(Source: http://www.sadcreview.com)

Regional and sub-regional structures

As already mentioned, the regionalisation in a country is dependent on *inter alia* its size, population, population distribution, composition of population, the geographical features as well as the political philosophy of the government in power. With these considerations in mind some general characteristics of the regional structures of the SADC countries could be presented. The following table identified the regional division of the SADC member states.

Table 5: Regional divisions of SADC member states

Countries	Government type
Swaziland	4 districts
Zimbabwe	8 provinces and 12 cities
South Africa	9 provinces
Zambia	9 provinces
Mauritius	9 districts and 3 dependencies
DRC	10 provinces and 1 city
Mozambique	10 provinces
Botswana	10 districts and 4 town councils
Lesotho	10 districts
Namibia	13 regions
Angola	18 provinces
Seychelles	23 administrative districts
Malawi	24 districts
Tanzania	25 regions

Angola as an example is a country of contrasts with ethnic groups comprising Ovimbundu 37%, Kimbundu 28%, Bakongo 13%, others 25%. National reconciliation is considered important in a nominally multiparty democracy. It is highly centralized and its provincial and local government structures are in an embryonic stage. Angola has 18 provinces headed by governors and three deputy governors. Every province has a number of municipalities (*municipios* or districts) which are subdivided into *communas.* Another form of local government is the *aldeas* (or *barrios*).

Botswana, quite different from Angola has a relatively homogenous population with the Batswana comprising 95% of the population. Botswana is a unitary republic with a multiparty democracy. The country is highly centralized with various local government structures (i.e. two city councils, nine district councils, three town councils, 12 land

boards and 12 tribal administrations). The 10 district administrations are considered deconcentrated agencies of the Ministry of Local Government.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo has more than 200 ethnic groups. The largest tribes are the Mongo, Luba, Kongo and Mangbetu-Azande, which are concentrated in various provinces. Although it is the largest of the SADC states its political turmoil has prevented the development of any significant decentralisation to its ten provinces with nominal powers.

The newly established Mozambican government after independence in 1971 abolished the town councils established by the colonial Portuguese powers in 1978. It was only in 1990 with the new Constitution that 33 municipalities were established in the ten provinces and assigned substantial autonomy. The municipalities are still governed by a strong centralized hierarchical system government.

Lesotho, Swaziland, Mauritius and Seychelles are the smallest of the SADC states. Thus it could be expected that regionalism would not feature high on the agenda of the respective governments. In Lesotho as a case in point the district councils that existed since independence in 1966 were abolished by the BNP (Basutuland National Party) possibly because they were controlled by the BCPC (Basutuland Congress Party). However, district development committees, ward development committees and village development committees were established, but were not effective as they were controlled by central government and civil servants. Mauritius, being highly populated, is divided into five municipal councils in the urban areas, four district councils with 126 village councils in their areas of jurisdiction. Thus clearly no significant regional structures, but mainly governmental structures that could take responsibility for services required by its largely urbanised communities. A similar arrangement exists in Seychelles consisting of 23 administrative districts for its 15 inner islands and 111 outer islands (the latter consisting of mostly atolls and granite islands).

South Africa could be described as one of the most developed SADC states with a population that is unevenly distributed in the nine provinces, with Gauteng the most densely populated (365 persons per sq. km) and Northern Cape the most sparsely populated (2,1 persons per sq. km). The Western Cape the most urbanised province with 95,1% functionally urbanised and the Northern Transvaal the least urbanised province with 12,1% of its inhabitants functionally urbanised. The South African system of government is highly decentralized, and guaranteed in the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1996 which determines in section 40(1) that "government is constituted as national, provincial and local spheres of government which are distinctive, interdependent and interrelated." South Africa is further divided into six metropolitan councils, 47 district councils and 231 local municipalities. Although the municipal system of government only came into existence in December 2000 the Constitution, 1996 is abundantly clear that each of the three spheres of government is distinctive and that another

sphere is prevented from encroaching on the geographical, functional or institutional integrity of government in another sphere.

Namibia could be considered as a prime example of a state that requires regional or even sub-regional structures as it is relatively large (825418 sq. km) - the fifth largest SADC country. It is divided into 13 regions, but is characterized by a highly centralized government. Co-ordination of Namibia's governmental structures is mainly the responsibility of the Ministry of Regional and Local Government and Housing.

Considering the examples quoted above, it could be deduced that regional, sub-regional and local government structures are products of geographical, political and socio-economic considerations. However, it appears as though political considerations - including ethnic conflict and civil war - play a significant role in determining the extent to which regional and sub-regional structures are in actual fact allowed to exercise legislative and executive functions. Therefore, in the stable SADC countries with well established systems of government the regional, sub-regional and local government structures are well developed whereas in countries which have recently established democratic governments or are in the process of establishing democracies, decentralised government is still in an embryonic stage.

Intergovernmental co-ordinating structures

In countries with well defined regional and local government structures, formal intergovernmental co-ordinating structures are required to ensure efficient service delivery by the respective institutions. In the case of South Africa the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1996, *inter alia* provides for co-operative government. This constitutional requirement has resulted in the establishment of a number of legally established co-ordinating structures as well as a number of co-ordinating structures established by decisions of the

Executive (Cabinet) in the national sphere of government or of the provincial executives. The system of intergovernmental relations has developed remarkably since the first, fully democratic elections of April 1994. The operation of the various structures are continuously being reviewed and steps taken to ensure that the requirements of the Constitution, 1996, relating to the distinctiveness, interdependence and interrelatedness of the three spheres of government are adhered to.

Other SADC countries have not all developed extensive intergovernmental co-ordinating structures. In some countries a specific department has been assigned the responsibility to co-ordinate the activities of the respective levels/tiers of government. In the case of Tanzania this function has been entrusted to the Ministry of Regional Administration and Local Government.

Although the Zambian governmental structure is highly centralised structures have been established to promote co-operative actions amongst the levels of government. This is mainly achieved through the Office of the Secretary to Cabinet as head of the provincial level of government, co-ordination is assigned to the provincial secretary with a comparable arrangement at the district level. Co-ordination in Zambia is also promoted by the National Development Co-ordinating Committee that provides a forum for consultation among provinces and development oriented ministries on development issues. A Provincial Development Co-ordinating Committee has also been established under a provincial secretary to co-ordinate planning within a province and to ensure that locally determined priorities are incorporated into provincial development plans and policies.

Zambia has furthermore, established a District Development Co-ordinating Committee operating under a District Council Secretary. This Committee co-ordinates the development projects in a district and renders assistance to the Provincial Local Government Officer and the Provincial Planner in co-ordinating development projects in a province.

In Zimbabwe decentralisation is still rather limited. However, co-ordination amongst the levels of government are promoted at the central government level, through the Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development operating through two departments *viz.*

- Department of Physical Planning which advises municipalities on spatial planning matters and the development of state land

- Department of Rural Development which is responsible for rural development projects and planning.

At the provincial level of government Zimbabwe has established a Provincial Administrator's office to promote intra-provincial co-ordination. However, it appears as though the established provincial development committees and the provincial councils have been largely ineffective and do not necessarily add value at the national or sub-national level. Even the provinces' roles in local government matters seem to have declined. As no formal revenue sharing exists between central and local government, the latter is largely dependent on central government for its funds. Thus it seems as though the highly centralized system of government in Zimbabwe does not promote formal intergovernmental relations at this stage.

The relative small sizes of the two island states of Mauritius and Seychelles do not justify extensive decentralisation. However, in the case of Mauritius, with its high population density and high degree of urbanisation five municipal councils, four district councils and within them 126 village councils have been established. The Association of Urban Authorities co-ordinates activities of the urban areas and the Association of District Councils co-ordinates matters concerning rural local government. Co-ordination among

the central government and the urban and rural structures mainly vests in the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development's 35 Citizens Advice Bureaus.

As already alluded to, many African countries are highly centralized and have been plagued by civil war and ethnic conflict e.g. Angola, Mozambique and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Therefore extensive decentralised structures have not been established and in cases where they have been established they do not necessarily play a significant role in the overall governmental and administrative matters of the country. In Angola co-operative government is a multi-sectoral concept which recognizes the distinctiveness of the different levels of government and promotes co-ordination amongst the levels of government. However, as provincial and local government have been severely dislocated by decades of war, little evidence is available on the effectiveness of the sub-national and local government institutions.

Although Mozambique has recognized the need for decentralisation, it seems as though the system of government remains highly centralized. The 33 municipalities are still governed by a hierarchical system through which officials are centrally appointed. Even the district administrator is appointed by the Minister of State Administration. Local authorities may however, appeal against administrative acts by higher bodies, but no real decentralisation is in existence.

As a result of the volatile nature of the political situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) there is little evidence of any administrative system. Although there are 10 provinces and one city in the DRC the country lags behind other countries regarding co-operative government. It is even argued that it is a "failed state" and one of the least cohesive and most unstable countries in SADC.

In SADC the relatively small countries e.g. Lesotho, Swaziland and Malawi (the latter with only 94 080 sq. km of land - and 24 400 sq. km water) do not require extensive governmental structures to co-ordinate governmental activities. In the case of Swaziland the peculiar constitutional arrangement with the Monarch as the main source of authority it is to be expected that co-operative government is nearly non-existent. In Lesotho various local government bodies were established in 1996 to promote popular participation and to enhance co-operative government and decentralisation. Efforts to promote co-operative government are influenced by three factors i.e.

• historical considerations influenced by tribal and military and political developments

• civil society's role in trying to obtain peace and stability by establishing informal co-ordinating structures e.g. a *Crisis Committee* and a *Lesotho Network* for *Conflict Management*

• decentralisation by the establishment of community councils, rural councils, urban councils and municipal councils.

Most recently a Local Government Service Commission, district planning units and district developing co-ordinating committees have been established for co-ordination purposes. Currently, the political instability and conflict amongst traditional chiefs prevent effective co-operative government.

Namibia and Botswana are both characterized by large arid or semi-arid areas. In the case of Botswana only 0,6% of the area consists of arable land with 46% permanent pastures and 47% forest and woodland. Thus it could be expected that the sparsely populated society (2,6 persons per sq. km) is distributed quite unevenly. Botswana has three town councils, one township authority, nine district councils, 12 land boards, 12 tribal administrations and 10 district administrations (the latter being considered as deconcentrated agencies of the Ministry of Local Government and thus cannot be regarded as local authorities). The President of Botswana's powerful role complicates efforts to promote co-operative government. In fact the system of government is highly centralised and local government is strictly controlled by central government. This contributes to local government being rather vulnerable as far as their powers and functions are concerned. Botswana has recently embarked on a decentralisation process to develop a more cordial relationship between central and local government institutions. Although local authorities have developed in terms of their human resources, functions and finances, their overall potential to deliver services and plan and implement development projects are still restricted. Therefore, little evidence of real co-operative government can be found.

SUMMARY

Considering the fourteen SADC countries it becomes clear that the political situation in a number of states thwart efforts to decentralise government. In a number of states central governments are still engaged in nation building exercises while in others efforts are still under way to resolve ethnic conflicts and civil wars. Thus co-operative government is not high on the agenda and sub-national and local government structures are mainly financed, staffed and controlled by central government e.g. Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Considering the co-operative government structures in the fourteen SADC countries it seems as though South Africa has progressed the furthest with its efforts to promote co-operative government. It is the only state that guarantees co-operative government in its Constitution. It is also one of the few SADC countries that has succeeded in promoting the devolution of authority to the spheres of provincial and local governments. As no governmental system is static it remains to be seen whether South Africa will continue with the current policy of decentralised government and administration or whether it will follow the examples of various other African states to allow central government to usurp the powers of its sub-national and local spheres of government.

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