

CHAPTER 9 CONCLUSION

It was pointed out in chapter 1 that one of the limitations of the study is that the comparative analysis of the ASEAN and SADC(C) politico-security regionalisms was not primarily designed around the (quantitative-driven) empirical perspectives of international relations (IR), but the (qualitative-driven) theoretical ones of IR. The sections building some links between ASEAN and SADC(C) by cross-references (i.e., what broad similarities and differences are) (see Chapter 5 and 7) have attempted to reflect on the essence of social constructivism in unfolding the character, type and nature of both the ASEAN and SADC(C) regionalisms in particular terms of the political security arena. Firstly, it is recommended, however, that future research should develop the substantive empirical questions of constructivism through incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods which are more attuned to the identification of mechanisms of contemporary (security) regionalism in the South.

In terms of contemporary security regionalism, future research can also be further studied in light of the classical readings related to security community and security complex. As Hettne (2001:13) argues, the term 'security regionalism' implies attempts by states and other actors in a particular geographical area – a region in the making – to 'transform a security complex with conflict-generating interstate and intrastate relations towards a security community with cooperative external relations and domestic peace'. In this sense of security regionalism, as noted in chapters 4 and 5, historically both the ASEAN and SADC regions had experienced animosity, which could characterise the regions as unstable security complexes with regard to patterns of enmity rather than amity. Thus, given that the historical regional security dynamics (relations) among the local states are the basic elements of understanding regional security complexes, chapters 4 and 5 in this study can be utilised to illustrate such variables of security complexes as the structural patterns of both local and global security dynamics in both ASEAN and SADC(C) (*cf* Buzan, 1988; 1991).

Both ASEAN and SADC are also seen, to some extent, to be attempting to project themselves as regional security communities in the post-Cold War era (for ASEAN, see Acharya, 2001; for SADC, see Ngoma, 2003; 2005). Indeed, as Acharya (2001:131) argues, 'security communities are not marked by the absence of conflict *per se*, but by the ability of societies and governments to manage them peacefully'. As examined in

the previous chapters, despite differing scope and extent, both ASEAN and SADC seem to prefer the method of diplomatic negotiations to the one of militaristic measures so that they are attempting to pursue the principle of pacific settlement of disputes in their regions. Within this context, as indicated in section 8.2, such comparative findings as institutionalisation, norm-based conflict management and collective regional identity as exceptionalism in ASEAN and SADC will be useful to develop a framework for the study of regional security communities in particular terms of 'evolutionary' security communities among sovereign states (*cf* Schoeman, 2002:1-26; Ngoma, 2005). The key point here is the impact of constructivism upon envisaging regional security communities in both ASEAN and SADC. Therefore, it is recommended that future research should reflect on sociological or ideational, rather than power-based or material, approaches to regional security community buildings in the South, including the ASEAN and SADC region. In doing so, one may find the basis for the role of a constructivist perspective of international relations in constructing security communities.

This study has highlighted the interplay of regional states in both ASEAN and SADC, but has neglected the role of non-state actors. In particular, I have limited my study to the (Wendtian) social constructivism or a *modernist* type of constructivism that focuses on the state as a major actor in terms of shaping and being shaped by the intersubjective ideas of actors through various interactions. Here it is important to note that, however, we are witnessing the growing influence of other political actors such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) which often go beyond the state-centric approach to global politics. In this sense, McGrew (1992:3) argues that the political activity and process (embracing the exercise of power and authority) are no longer mainly defined by national, legal and territorial agents; rather the growing array of issues, which surface on the political agenda, has been joined by the emergence of new kinds of actors involved in political decision-making.

Although the state still remains central in the security arena, it no longer dominates either as the exclusive referent object or as the principal object of threat, in the way it did previously. The changed and different context of both ASEAN and SADC in the post- Cold War era necessitates attention to a range of new referent objects for security and sources of threat from different angles (Buzan, et al, 1998). It is therefore recommended that future research needs, as other constructivists also argue (Reus-Smit, 2001:209-230), to open constructivism to the possibility of state transcendence by including non-state actors as important players in affecting international politics with

a view to better understand the mechanism of contemporary security regionalism.

Drawing critical (heterodox, or counter-hegemonic) constructivism from Cox's essay '*Social Forces, States and World Orders*' (1981), furthermore, it is important to indicate that humans are not just followers of given structures, but rather they create them. Given that contemporary regionalism can be understood in the context of the 'new regionalism' that not only derives its importance from globalisation (Grugel and Hout, 1999:10-11), but also marks a concerted response against the forces of globalisation (Hettne, 2001:84-88), critical constructivism from the perspective of Coxian critical theory will also be helpful for understanding the mechanism of contemporary security regionalism. For critical constructivism, this approach is rooted in a theory of history in the sense of being concerned not just with the past but with a continuing process of historical change. It is directed to the social and political complex as a whole rather than to the separate parts; and its aims are just as practical as those of problem-solving theory, but it approaches practice from a perspective which transcends that of the existing order, which problem-solving theory takes as its starting point (Cox, 1981:129-30). On this basis, Cox (1981:135-138) proposes a method of historical structures, defined as particular configurations of forces (ideas, institutions and material capabilities) which do not determine actions but nevertheless create opportunities and impose constraints.

In brief, historical structures are the notion of a framework for action in which the three levels (social forces related to production, forms of state and world orders) can be explained in terms of the configurations between material capabilities, ideas and institutions. Cox's historical structure may be applied to the SADC and ASEAN regions with illuminating regional 'ideas', 'institutions', and 'capabilities' in order to see the regional (hegemonic) order in relation to the current world (hegemonic) order. For instance, with regard to the economic security of trade in SADC and ASEAN, there exists regional dynamics of economic relations among member states, in particular the relations between economic powers (South Africa in SADC and Singapore in ASEAN) and the rest of the member countries. This may help us to find a link between the controlling social forces (e.g. South Africa's manufacturing capital and their labour force) in the region and the world order.

Given the assumptions above, there are a number of security issues that critical constructivism does not pay attention to, such as drug trafficking, water, arms

smuggling, poverty and health. These cannot be solved 'technically' within the prevailing mainstream (problem-solving) approaches (*cf* Devetak, 2001:155-180; Leysens, 2001:219-236). In other words, the analysis of social forces related to production in the SADC and ASEAN regions may be linked to the expanded notion of security, for instance the position of women or migration, beyond traditional security issues. The fact that critical theory focuses on the historical structures of which these problems are just 'symptomatic', means that we need to regard the newly emergent security issues as 'challenges' which may require the 'transformation' of the historical structure of the regions.

Therefore, given that contemporary security regionalisms in the various perspectives of constructivism in IR are composed of multi-dimensional characteristics, including a modernist type of constructivism and critical constructivism, means that future research should pay attention to the (emancipatory) role of critical theory which is, from a developing world perspective, an aid in changing the existing order, by emphasising equity, justice, freedom and emancipation (Cox, 1995:35). For the South, and particularly for the ASEAN and SADC regions, the issues of equity, justice, freedom and emancipation are not just theoretically significant, but also looming large in reality.