



**SECURITIZATION OF NON-TRADITIONAL
SECURITY THREATS BY THE ECONOMIC
COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES
(ECOWAS), 1999-2009**

BY

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the securitization of non-traditional security threats by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) between 1999 and 2009. The study identifies the transnational security threats and their salience in the sub-region; it extrapolates the threats on the security agenda of the ECOWAS; and it examines the security actors and their perception of security threats in the sub-region. The study also assesses the effectiveness of the securitization mechanisms (policies, instruments and institutions) adopted by the sub-regional body to deal with the threats and analyzes the challenges in the implementation of the securitization mechanisms. The study asserts that in line with the perception of the securitizing actors, the ECOWAS has securitized small arms and light weapons, terrorism financing, smuggling, money laundering and political threats. However, environmental threats manifested in desertification, pollution, rising sea-level, deforestation, transnational pandemic diseases such as malaria and HIV/AIDS, refugees, internally displaced persons, natural resource conflicts, religious fundamentalism, ethnic separatism and poverty exacerbated by political corruption are yet to be securitized by the ECOWAS. These 'soft threats' pose serious security challenges to the sub-region. The study argues that threats emanating from environmental insecurity have imposed resource conflicts which result in high death rates and forced migration of peoples across the sub-region. Poverty and corruption have also undermined security in the sub-region. The study recommends a holistic regional environmental security (RES) framework to deal with the devastating effect of environmental threats, poverty, and corruption in order to safeguard human security in the sub-region. This study is significant as it extends the securitization theory to West Africa by combining discourse analysis with empirical data and interviews sourced in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Senegal and Togo to ascertain the securitization of security threats by the ECOWAS.

خلاصة البحث

تبحث هذه الدراسة التأمين من المهددات الأمنية غير التقليدية من قبل الجماعة الاقتصادية لدول غرب أفريقيا (إيكواس) خلال الفترة 1999م - 2009م. تحدد الدراسة مجموعة من المهددات الأمنية العابرة للحدود الوطنية ومدى تأثيرها على أمن المنطقة الإقليمية. كما تبحث الدراسة مدى اهتمام هذه المنطقة الإقليمية بهذه المهددات ومكانها في سلم أجندة وأولويات المنظمة الأمنية. إضافة لذلك تهتم الدراسة برؤية أعضاء هذه الجماعة الإقليمية لأهم المهددات الأمنية لإقليمهم. تقيّم الدراسة مدى فاعلية الآليات الأمنية التي تبنتها هذه الجماعة لمواجهة المهددات الأمنية التي تواجهها من حيث السياسات، الأدوات والمؤسسات، مع تحليل لأهم التحديات التي تقف حجرة عثرة أمام تلك الآليات. تؤكد الدراسة على التناغم والتوافق بين رؤية أعضاء الجماعة والسياسات الأمنية التي اعتمدها منظماتهم في مجال مكافحة انتشار الأسلحة الصغيرة والخفيفة، تمويل الإرهاب، التهريب، غسيل الأموال، والمهددات السياسية الأخرى. بالمقابل تظل المهددات البيئية ممثلة في التصحر، التلوث، ارتفاع مناسيب مياه البحر، إزالة الغطاء النباتي، الأمراض الوبائية العابرة للحدود الوطنية مثل الملاريا وفيروس نقص المناعة المكتسبة/الإيدز، اللاجئين والمشردين داخلياً، الصراع على الموارد الطبيعية الشحيحة، الأصولية الدينية، النزعات الانفصالية ذات الطبيعة العرقية إضافة للفقر، والتي تفاقمت مجتمعة في حدتها بسبب الفساد السياسي. تظل هذه المهددات الأمنية الهامة من الموضوعات التي لم تستطع جماعة الإيكواس التعامل معها بكفاءة ونجاح. ويبدو أن هذه المهددات الناعمة تمثل تحديات أمنية خطيرة للإقليم. ترى الدراسة أن المهددات الناعمة عن ضعف الأمن البيئي قد فرضت صراعاً على الموارد مما نتج عنه ارتفاع في معدلات الوفيات والهجرة القسرية للبشر داخل حدود هذا الإقليم. بناءً على ما سبق توصي الدراسة بتبني منهج كلي ومتكامل لحماية الأمن البيئي للمنطقة للتعامل مع الآثار المدمرة للمهددات البيئية، الفقر، والفساد وذلك بهدف تحقيق أمن البشر في المنطقة. تنبع أهمية هذه الدراسة من محاولتها تطبيق نظرية الأمن الإنساني على هذه المنطقة الإقليمية وذلك من خلال محاولة المزاجية والجمع بين عدد من مناهج البحث العلمي في تجميع وتحليل المعلومات مثل المعلومات الرسمية والمقابلات الميدانية المتوفرة في بعض بلدان الإقليم مثل بنين، بوركينا فاسو، ساحل العاج، غينيا، النيجر، نيجيريا، سيراليون، غانا، السنغال، وتوقو، وذلك بهدف التأكد من الإجراءات التي اتخذتها الإيكواس من أجل تأمين إقليمها وتحصينه ضد المهددات الأمنية.

APPROVAL PAGE

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

Adams Isiaka Abiodun

Signature

Date

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

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THE ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES (ECOWAS),
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Affirmed by Adams Isiaka Abiodun

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Signature

.....

Date

To my spouse, Fatimah and our children: Faaizah, Miqdad, Muadh and Muhammad

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Abstract in Arabic	iii
Approval Page	iv
Declaration Page	v
Copyright Page	vi
Dedication	vii
Acknowledgements	x
List of Tables	xiii
List of Figures	xv
List of Abbreviations	xvi

CHAPTER 1: SECURITIZATION OF NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY

THREATS BY ECOWAS	1
Introduction	1
Statement of the problem	1
Research questions	2
Research objectives	2
Justification of the study	3
Literature review	4
Regional security and securitization	5
African Union and ECOWAS	6
International, regional and national threats in Africa	9
Role of civil society in securitization	10
Securitization by ECOWAS countries	13
Small arms and light weapons (SALWs)	14
Salience of SALWs in West Africa	16
Terrorism	17
Terrorism in Africa	19
Terrorism in West Africa	20
Assessing the impact of terrorism	25
Environmental security threats	26
Environmental threats in Africa	27
Environmental threats in West Africa	27
Theoretical framework	32
Research assumptions	34
Conceptual definitions	37
Threats and security challenges	37
Regional security actors	39
Securitization policies	40
Security: International, regional, national and internal	41
Definition of terms	44
Method of data collection	46
Data analysis	47

Organization of the study	48
Limitations of the study	49

CHAPTER 2: THE EVOLUTION OF ECOWAS AS A REGIONAL SECURITY

ORGANIZATION	51
Introduction	51
ECOWAS: background	51
Aims and objectives	57
Principles	61
Institutions	65
ECOWAS as a sub-regional organization	69
Evolution of ECOWAS as a sub-regional security actor	72
Security threats faced by ECOWAS member-states	82
ECOWAS: achievements and challenges	86
Conclusion	88

CHAPTER 3: NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY THREATS ON THE

ECOWAS SECURITY AGENDA	90
Introduction	90
Non-traditional transnational security threats in West Africa	90
Transnational organized crimes and violence	94
SALWs proliferation	100
Environmental threats	102
Climate change	104
Desertification and shrinking of the Lake Chad basin	105
Rising sea-level	106
Drug trafficking	109
Money laundering and smuggling of goods	116
Corruption	117
Human trafficking/human smuggling	120
Maritime piracy	123
Terrorism	126
HIV/AIDS threat	129
Refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs)	133
Civil wars	136
Conclusion	137

CHAPTER 4: SECURITIZING ACTORS' PERCEPTION OF NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY THREATS IN WEST AFRICA

139	
Introduction	139
Questionnaire	139
Respondents' demography	141
Questionnaire administration	142
Parameters for the securitization questionnaire	143
Non-traditional security threats in West Africa (1999-2009)	146
Relevance of threats on the ECOWAS security agenda	147

Sectoral analysis of threats	149
Prevalence of environmental threats in West Africa	151
Prevalence of non-traditional security threats in West Africa	152
Threats from illicit SALWs in West Africa (1999-2009)	153
Terrorism threat in West Africa (1999-2009)	155
Environmental degradation and responses by ECOWAS	156
Effectiveness of ECOWAS securitization mechanisms	158
Challenges in the implementation of ECOWAS securitization	160
Belief system effect on perception of threats	161
Interview: Justification and procedures	166
Analysis of interviews	167
Discussions on the survey and interviews	173
Conclusion	178

CHAPTER 5: ECOWAS SECURITIZATION MECHANISMS: IMPACTS AND CHALLENGES 180

Introduction	180
The ECOWAS security environment	180
ECOWAS security mechanisms and impacts	184
Protocol Relating to Mechanism for Conflict Prevention	184
Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons.....	187
Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance	191
Framework against Money Laundering/Drug Trafficking	195
Political Declaration against Trafficking in Humans	200
Convention Relating to Free Movement of Persons/Goods	203
ECPC and environmental threats in West Africa	205
Mechanisms on internally displaced persons (IDPs)	211
Policies against terrorism/transnational organized crimes	212
Policies on diseases: HIV/AIDS, malaria, etc.	215
Challenges in the securitization of threats by ECOWAS	219
Conclusion	227

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS 229

Introduction	229
Summary of findings	233
Conclusion	242
Recommendations	248

BIBLIOGRAPHY 255

APPENDICES.....	288
APPENDIX I: Research Questionnaire	288
APPENDIX II: Interview Protocol	296
APPENDIX III: List of Interviewees	277

LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table No.</u>		<u>Page No.</u>
3.1	Projected impacts of one-metre sea-level rise in WA by 2100	108
3.2	Heroin seizures in WA (2003-2008)	113
3.3	Seizures, arrests and convictions over drugs in WA (2005-2009)	114
3.4	Cocaine (base and salts) seizures in WA (2003-2008)	115
3.5	Corruption ranking of countries in WA (2010)	118
3.6	GDP ranking of ECOWAS member states (2009)	119
3.7	Victims of human trafficking in WA (2003- 2008)	121
3.8	International terrorism indicator in WA	129
3.9	AIDS & HIV statistics for WA in 2009	131
3.10	Refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in WA (2010)	134
3.11	WA report of IDPs and refugees (June 2011)	135
3.12	Civil wars in WA (1999-2011)	137
4.1	Frequency distribution of variables	140
4.2	Sectoralization of security threats in WA (1999-2009)	150
4.3	Prevalence of environmental threats in WA (1999-2009)	152
4.4	Statements on non-traditional security threats in WA	153
4.5	Statements on threats from illicit SALWs in WA	154

LIST OF TABLES (CONTINUED)

4.6	Terrorism threat in WA (1999-2009)	155
4.7	Evaluation of salience and response to environmental threats in WA	157
4.8	Respondents' assessment of ECOWAS securitization mechanisms	159
4.9	Challenges of securitization of threats by ECOWAS	160
4.10	Respondents' beliefs and perception of environmental threats	164
4.11	Interviews summary	172
5.1	Environmental threat impacts of natural disasters in WA	209
5.2	Deaths from Environmental Threats (per million people) in 2004	210
5.3	Malaria prevalence in ECOWAS states (2010)	218
5.4	Economic and development indicators for ECOWAS states (2011)	222

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Figure No.</u>		<u>Page No.</u>
1.1	Securitization framework	33
2.1	Map of ECOWAS member states	56
4.1	Respondents' perception of security threats in WA (1999-2009)	147
4.2	Relevance of threats on the ECOWAS security agenda (1999-2009)	148
4.3	Political threats	150
4.4	Military threats	151

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACHPR	African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights
AEC	African Economic Community
AFRICOM	United States African Command
AMU	Arab Maghreb Union
APEC	Asia Pacific and European Commission
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
AQIM	Al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AU	African Union
CEAO	Communauté Économique D'Afrique Occidentale
CIDOB	Barcelona Centre for International Studies
COMESA	Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa
CPI	Corruption Perception Index (Transparency International)
DfID	Department for International Development
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOMOG	ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group
ECOSAP	ECOWAS Small Arms Control Programme
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECPF	ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework
EEC	European Economic Community
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization (United Nations)
GIABA	Groupe Inter-Gouvernemental d'Action contre le Blanchiment d'Argent en Afrique de l'Ouest (Intergovernmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa)
GWoT	Global War on Terror
HDR	Human Development Report
HRW	Human Rights Watch
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ICG	International Crisis Group
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development
IMB	International Maritime Bureau
IMO	International Maritime Organization
INCB	International Narcotics Control Board
Interpol	International Criminal Police Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPCC	Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change
LPA	Lagos Plan of Action
MCA	Military Cooperative Agreement
NDLEA	National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (Nigeria)
NEPAD	New Partnership for African Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS (CONTINUED)

OAU	Organization of African Unity
OCHA	Office of the Commissioner for Humanitarian Affairs (United Nations)
PCASED	Programme for Co-ordination and Assistance for Security and Development (AU)
PoA	Programme of Action
PTAs	Preferential Trade Areas
RCSA	Regional Centre on Small Arms
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
RES	Regional Economic Security
RPSC	Regional Peace and Security Cluster
RSCT	Regional Security Complex Theory
RSO	Regional Security Organization
SACU	Southern African Customs Union
SADC	Southern African Development Cooperation
SALWs	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SARS	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome
SAS	Small Arms Survey
TOC	Transnational Organized Crimes
UEMOA	Union Économique et Monétaire Ouest-Africaine
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCCD	United Nations Conference on Climate Change and Desertification
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNCTOC	United Nations Convention on
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drug and Crime
UNPOA	United Nations Programme of Action
UNTOC	United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime
WA	West Africa
WACSOA	West African Civil Society Forum
WAEMU	West African Economic and Monetary Union
WAGP	West African Gas Pipeline
WANEP	West African Network for Peace
WAANSA	West African Action Network on Small Arms
WIDER	World Institute for Development and Economic Research

CHAPTER ONE

SECURITIZATION OF NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY THREATS BY ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES (ECOWAS)

INTRODUCTION

Non-traditional transnational security threats in West Africa (WA) include illicit small arms and light weapons (SALWs) proliferation, terrorism, and environmental degradation. These security challenges transcend state boundaries, thus forcing states' responses not only individually but also collectively at global and regional levels. The United Nations (UN) encourages this collaborative development. However, the end of the Cold War in 1990 exacerbated the salience of these security challenges hitherto either handled unilaterally by the affected states or through multi-lateral arrangements among the states.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Member states of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have handled traditional military (state-centred) security issues since the post-colonial period. For example, peacekeeping and enforcement operations were carried out in Liberia (1990-1999), Sierra Leone (2000) and Guinea (1999). But, since the end of the Cold War in 1990, non-traditional security threats and their transnational impacts have also occupied the security agenda of the ECOWAS. This study examines the securitization of non-traditional transnational security challenges in WA during 1999-2009.

The study focuses on the recurrent non-traditional transnational security challenges such as terrorism, illicit small arms and light weapons proliferation, and environmental degradation in West Africa. It analyzes how the ECOWAS deals with and/or securitizes them. Securitization is the process through which security actors discursively and politically construct certain issues as existential threats to referent objects thereby invoking exceptional or emergency security measures to deal with the threats. This thesis also assesses the effect of securitization of threats on the security architecture of the region.

This study answers the following questions:

- What are the non-traditional transnational security threats in WA?
- What are the threats on the ECOWAS security agenda?
- How do ECOWAS security actors perceive non-traditional security threats?
- What are the policies adopted by the ECOWAS to deal with securitized transnational threats?
- What are the challenges faced by the ECOWAS in the implementation of securitization policies?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study ascertains ECOWAS member states' securitization of security threats such as small arms and light weapons proliferation, terrorism and environmental degradation in WA. The thesis assesses how the ECOWAS constructs threat agendas through shared perception of threats and the endorsement of special measures to address these threats. It evaluates the implementation of the measures adopted and the likelihood of reverting to the status quo through the process of desecuritization.

In other words, the study categorizes the existential threats in WA and examines the process of securitization. It identifies the securitizing actors and their motivations and ascertains whose security is existentially threatened (national or human security). It also examines the politics of threat identification and ascertains the challenges faced in the implementation of securitization on the basis of indicators such as resource allocation trends, military involvement, legislation, and institutionalisation.

JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

There is a dearth of work on the securitization of non-traditional transnational security threats by regional groupings in the African continent. There is also a lack of studies focusing on national responses to security challenges in WA. This study, therefore, constitutes an in-depth foray into an area worthy of detailed research. The study provides a critical understanding of the security foundations of the ECOWAS, its security pattern and how constructing responses to these issues could engender peace and security in the sub-region.

By critically assessing the implementation of securitization in a geopolitical region, important measures were suggested to improve the management of non-traditional transnational security threats in the ECOWAS member states and particularly in Nigeria, which doubles as the regional hegemon as well as the most populous country in WA.

The study also contextualized regional threats and their dynamics in WA. It compared the best securitization practices that could be emulated by national governments, regional actors as well as the African Union (AU). It also identified the problems and prospects of securitization by ECOWAS member states and

recommended useful measures and programmes for policy and action as well as assessed the effectiveness of the regional mechanisms put in place by the ECOWAS.

The recommendations seek to ensure peace and cooperation geared towards durable security especially as it relates to human security, which is currently the dominant focus of the broader/comprehensive security agenda. Assessment of the role of security agencies in the implementation of measures wrought in response to the securitized threats also revealed the challenges faced by the security agencies such as the Customs, Police and the Navy, especially where maintaining internal security and peace is concerned.

An evaluation of the implementation of the securitization policy of the ECOWAS backed by well-researched recommendations has the potential to speed up efforts on SALW, terrorism and environmental degradation in the region. Overall, since security has been linked to good governance, the study suggested measures to promote democratic values and ideals which have remained elusive to most countries in WA.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There exists scholarly works dealing with security in general and securitization in particular. These works are reviewed under two sections. The first section examines the general literature on regional security, the AU, the ECOWAS, and the role of civil society in securitization. The second section explores the literature on the issues of small arms and light weapons proliferation, terrorism and environmental threats.

Regional Security and Securitization

The literature on regional security and securitization is burgeoning but relatively few focus on WA. Buzan (1991), Buzan and Waever (2003), Tavares (2008), Ayoob (1997) and other scholars attempted an analytical framework for understanding regional peace and security. Buzan (1991) identifies five security complexes in the Third World: Latin (South) America; Middle East (including North Africa); Southern Africa; South Asia; and Southeast Asia.

Interestingly, the West African states of Mauritania, Mali, Niger and Chad, and Sudan were designated by Buzan as ‘buffer states’ between the Middle East and Southern Africa Security Complexes (Buzan, 1991: 210). Buzan insists that the rest of WA consisting of Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, the Gambia, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Cote D’Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, and Burkina Faso, does not belong to any security complex. He postulates that a security complex is characterized by a high level of threat and or fear among two or more contiguous states, a situation which he did not find in the over twenty five states straddling West and Central Africa (1991: 193-206).

However, contemporary events such as regional political and economic integration, the pervasiveness of proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW), “the global war on terror (GWOt)”, and environmental threats have since overtaken Buzan’s thesis. In fact, WA has evolved into a regional security complex with interdependent security forcing states to take on security issues as common agendas.

Tavares (2008) introduces the concept of ‘regional peace and security cluster’ (RPSC) which he argues is a broader approach than the RSC. The RPSC framework seeks to account for the agents of peace and security, the instruments of peace and

security, the security pattern, the conflict pattern, the positive peace pattern, and the level of regional integration. It also examines how these different components relate to each other. This study is a synthesis of the RSC and the RPSC approaches. The RSPC is useful for the broad approach of inclusion of state and non-state actors as well as its emphasis on other sectors such as economic, social and environmental, besides the military focus of RSC.

AU and ECOWAS

On the main threats to sub-regional peace and stability in WA, a group of experts under the United Nations Security Council (UNSC, 2011) identifies drug trafficking, terrorism, challenges to democratic governance and piracy as threatening. The report lists the Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Hezbollah, Taliban and the propensities to unconstitutional changes of government as the main elements that threaten security in the sub-region. The role of African regional and sub-regional organizations in the securitization of humanitarian civilian protection under conflict prevention, management, resolution, and peacekeeping has been problematised as a dilemma between accountability and the right to protect civilians.

Collective securitization of intra-state conflicts by African regional organisations such as the ECOWAS has tended to result into positive and negative outcomes for both the interveners and the civilians. Aning and Salihu (2011) blame lack of political will, poor judicial systems in contributing member states, and resource constraints as factors that collectively undermine the safeguard of human security and securitization of threats.

The violence and militancy in the Niger Delta is intricately linked to insecurity in WA. Akinola (2011) argues that the spillover of the Niger Delta crisis to the Gulf of

Guinea impacted negatively on Nigeria's role in peacekeeping operations and regional security initiatives in the sub-region as well as disrupted regional energy infrastructure and supply chain. Watts and Ibaba (2011) implicate the prevalence of small arms and light weapons, corruption, state violence, unethical corporate practice by multinational oil companies operating in the Niger Delta and the politics of oil revenue distribution as major factors that drive conflict and insecurity in the Niger Delta and by and large its impact on the regional security architecture.

Issue-specific threats such as maritime piracy pose threats and vulnerabilities to the continent, and the international community, especially in the Horn of Africa, off the coast of Somalia, thereby galvanising international cooperation to tackle the menace. Attempts have been made to frame piracy and maritime security as a 'hard security' issue that challenge the international merchant shipping sector and therefore demands effective counter-piracy measures. The menace of pirates, especially in the coast of Somalia and the Gulf of Aden off the Horn of Africa, speaks to the securitization of specific issues hitherto deemed as 'soft threats' (Onuoha, 2010).

Espousing regional responses to threats, Caballero-Anthony (2008), Lawson (2005), Emmers (2003), Cawthra (2008), Williams (2008) Haacke and Williams (2008), and Ogwu (2009) provide an overview of the transnational challenges posed by non-traditional security issues. Caballero-Anthony's (2008) work on Southeast Asia concludes that these threats are pushing the Association of Southeast Asian States (ASEAN) to deepen regional security cooperation and suggests that the ECOWAS would follow the same path.

A useful comparison between security cooperation and regional security collaboration by the Southern Africa Development Cooperation (SADC) examines concrete manifestations of the principles of RSC in Southern Africa, and draws