

Resenha do Livro

The Southern African Development Community Treaty-Nexus; Integration in the Southern African Development Community Region

The Southern African Development Community Treaty-Nexus; Integration in the Southern African Development Community Region; Edts: K. Gombe Adar, D. Mpabanga, K. Lotshwao, T. Molokwane, N. Musekiwa. London: Lexington Book, 2023.

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The two books actually represent two volumes of the same scientific work carried out by a team of experts led by Prof. Korwa Adar, at the time a professor at the University of Botswana, together with the other editors of the two books. Not coincidentally, the volumes were edited by the same authors and published by the same publishing house, Lexington of London.

There is a basic idea – that of “Sadness” - running through these two volumes, which deal with an important issue of local development, identity and institutional arrangements within SADC (Southern Africa Development Community). This organization is composed today by 16 member-states belonging to the Austral Africa region, whose leader is South Africa. The organization has been founded in 1992, as a result of the transformation of the SADCC – Southern Africa Development Coordination Conference, founded in 1980 - whose main aim was the struggle against the apartheid regime of Pretoria.

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The pivotal idea which crosses the two books, that of “Sadness”, has long been formulated by Prof. Adar, who associated it to another concept, that of “Sadcnization”. The term “Sadness” has a multifaceted meaning: philosophical-identitarian, wanting to represent the condition of those who live in the same geographical area, and who should develop (so it is still a project) a common consciousness; political, since SADC is regarded as the most important sub-regional organization in Africa, but still does not have a parliament elected by its citizens, nor a significant level of popular participation in the regional unification project; bureaucratic-administrative, involving structures that still have difficulty in presenting themselves as substitute or complementary for their national counterparts; and finally communicational, since SADC citizens have not yet been adequately informed of the project, as well as of the potential and mutual interests that a more united and cohesive SADC could bring them.

The second term, “Sadcnization”, on the other hand, gathers within itself the aspirations of the group of scholars who edited the two volumes, and probably of groups of citizens who are particularly sensitive with respect to the need to accelerate a process of regional unification that, to a greater or lesser extent, can only benefit the member states. According to the two introductions Prof. Adar wrote in the two volumes, democracy and integration could be the new bases of a new, popular SADC.

The first volume,

The Southern African Development Community Treaty-Nexus, deals with legal as well as communication dimensions. The two Lusophone countries belonging to SADC, Angola and Mozambique, have been covered respectively by an article written by Nelson António, on the right to demonstrate in Angola and its relations with the SADC right, a second study on the communication dimension, written by Luca Bussotti and José Katito, on the coverage of Angolan press regarding SADC, and, about Mozambique, by an article written by Laura António Nhaualeque on how Mozambican press represents the image of SADC.

In the second volume, *Integration in the Southern African Development Community Region; The Southern African Development Community Treaty-Nexus*, dedicated to the political as well as to the administrative dimension, it is possible to read two articles on Angola: the first one was written by Nuno Fragoso Vidal, on the challenges of national and regional people-driven integration and democratization; and a second one had as its author Eurico Ngunga, dealing with the process of democratization of the public institution in Angola. For Mozambique, the two articles of these

sections have been written by Arcénio Cuco and Felizardo Pedro, who proposed a study on terrorism in Cabo Delgado (Northern Mozambique) in relation to the process of SADCization; and by Henriques José Henriques, on direct citizens participation in government policies in Mozambique, in relation to SADC.

Overall, the two volumes return a comprehensive, developing and rather problematic picture of regional integration and especially of effective public knowledge and participation in the SADCization process. In several countries, integration between citizens and SADC institutions is very modest; what appears even more serious is the gap between the practice used in some of the member-states (including Mozambique and Angola, but also Zimbabwe and in part Madagascar) with respect to legal, political and administrative practices, which are mostly anti-democratic and disincentivize citizen participation in the management of public affairs, making the SADCization process difficult.

Some recent cases show how difficult is the effective integration into SADC of the principles of democratization, institutional collaboration and mutual integration among the SADC member-states and between them and their citizens. The permanent political crisis in e-Swatini is maybe the most paradoxical case: here, since May 2021 this small and landlocked country managed by an authoritarian king, Mswati III (with 15 wives and 36 children), is going through an unprecedented political-institutional crisis in which the king is unwilling to grant a constitution that is less absolutist and more respectful of his subjects' human rights. In this crisis, SADC intervention has been very discreet, not to say ineffective, leaving things exactly as they were at the beginning of the protests. A second case is represented by terrorism in Mozambique: here, SADC sent a military contingent (SAMIM), but only after a diplomatic incident with Mozambique. As a matter of fact, Mozambique had approached Rwanda first (a country which is not part of SADC), without informing SADC. Today, it is Rwanda itself that has taken military control of much of the region, while SAMIM has already announced its withdrawal, by June 2024, moreover after less-than-stellar results on the ground.

The studies presented in these two volumes, together with the two episodes here mentioned, in addition to many others, demonstrate the need for ever greater knowledge of what SADC is succeeding in doing in the vast region under its purview. Various SADC countries were not represented in the two volumes here analysed, as Democratic Republic of Congo, e-Swatini, Lesotho, Namibia and so on. Once the project has been funded by SADC in cooperation with GIZ (the German agency for international cooperation) it is desirable that a next book can include all the

other countries which have not been covered in these two volumes. This would provide a comprehensive picture of the situation of the Sadcnisation process, thus giving a very useful tool for rulers and citizens to improve the effectiveness of the action of this important sub-regional organization with respect to its own implementation. An action, it is worth remembering, that will have to include a holistic perspective in the political as well as in the socio-cultural dimension.

Referência

ADAR, E.; MPABANGA, D.; LOTSHWAO, K.; MOLOKWANE, T.; MUSEKIWA, N. **The Southern African Development Community Treaty-Nexus; Integration in the Southern African Development Community Region**. London: Lexington Book, 2023.