

“The Quest for Regional Integration Amidst Political Conflict and Socio-Economic Disparities: The Case of The Southern African Development Community (Sadc)”

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The Southern African Development Community (SADC) was formed in the context of immense political solidarity at the time when the Southern African region was facing a lot of political turmoil that was generated and reinforced by the struggle against colonialism and apartheid. The attainment of national liberation and installation of majority rule in Southern Africa was always considered the major challenge facing the organisation. After most of the states in the region had accomplished majority rule the organisation saw the attainment of full and deep integration in the region as the next major challenge. The region continues to experience internal armed conflicts among some of its member states. In addition the region is also faced with problems such as reduced economic growth, unemployment, poverty and the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Despite these challenges SADC still aims at achieving integration among its member states. Is it possible for the member states to integrate into one body considering the economic, political and social challenges that they are facing? This paper tries to address this question by examining these challenges and how they are being addressed not only by the organisation but by the member states as well. The core argument of this paper is that full and deep integration in the region, is dependant on each member states' capacity to address these challenges.