Rethinking East African Integration: From Economic to Political and from State to Civil Society

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Abstract
This essay takes cognizance of the fact that integration, which entails the establishment of some structural conformity, is an important variable in the process of development. It traces historical efforts at integrating East Africa since pre-colonial times, explaining the changing nature of social and economic relations. The paper argues that state-driven efforts to integrate Africa in the colonial and early post-independence period militated against local patterns of cooperation in the East African sub-region because these schemes emphasised economic development. In any renewed effort toward integration, the emphasis ought to be laid on political debates and the participation of civil society in new forms of integration. By allowing greater participation of individuals in sub-regional constitutional amendments, the region could enhance regional citizenship, mutual co-existence and provide an impetus for greater economic development. Moreover, a bottom-up approach to the question of citizenship would guarantee self-respect and security among the peoples of the region, and also lead to long-term political and economic security.

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Résumé

Cet article reconnaît que l'intégration, qui correspond à la mise en place d'une certaine conformité structurelle, constitue une variable importante du processus de développement. Il décrit les tentatives historiques d'intégration de l'Afrique de l'Est depuis la période pré coloniale, en expliquant la nature changeante des relations socio-économiques. Cet article affirme également que les tentatives d'intégration de l'Afrique au cours de la période coloniale et de la période après-indépendance, étaient défavorables à la coopération dans la sous-région est-africaine, dirigée par l'État. Ces plans d'intégration insistaient sur le développement économique. Du fait que ces plans ont été un total échec, cet article propose une redéfinition de l'intégration. Dans le cadre d'un nouvel essai d'intégration, il faudrait accorder davantage d'importance aux débats politiques, et à la participation de la société civile. En permettant une plus grande participation des individus aux amendements constitutionnels sous-régionaux, cette région pourrait améliorer la citoyenneté régionale, la co-existence mutuelle, mais également favoriser le développement économique. En outre, une approche du bas vers le haut, en matière de citoyenneté, pourrait garantir le respect et la sécurité au sein des populations de cette région, ce qui, dans le long terme, favoriserait une certaine sécurité économique et politique.

Introduction

A move towards East African integration provides space for a wider terrain of social interaction, the self-actualisation of individuals and citizenship within the sub-region. Partnership and collective action is crucial in development, therefore, enlarging the social terrain of interaction could pay dividends in economic and political terms. However, this will be achieved only if an adequate policy reformulation on the terms of integration is undertaken to lessen distinctions that ascribe specific characteristics to different states of East Africa, characteristics that define individuals as Kenyans, Tanzanians or Ugandans. The constitutionality of integration must be worked out in terms of a reasonable theory of integration; one that provides for a shared space to pursue socio-political and economic activities across national borders, a space that transcends the concerns and interests of top political leaders.

The last decade of the twentieth century provided us with evidence of the collapse of numerous states and sharpening of ethnic strife globally, as in the case of Eastern Europe. This development has given rise to a need for avenues to reinforce common identities, which lessen the likelihood of violence and insecurity in sub-regions worldwide, and help promote a framework for cooperation (UNRISD 1994). I will argue that East African residents can draw from new trends in globalisation to make

their national borders more porous, instead of just being obstacles to human interaction. A good neighborliness approach to their affairs could enable the people of East Africa to resolve the problem of insecurity that has dogged the politics of the Great Lakes region (Salih and Murkakis 1998). A new attempt toward integration could enable citizens of the sub-region to stabilise, enhance and realise the full potential of their human resources for progress and development. This would also lessen the problem of refugees, which has impacted severely on the process of development in East Africa. Indeed, East African states have previously concentrated refugees from Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda and Somalia in the various camps within the region. In other instances, refugees and immigrants have been denied employment because of their citizenship (see Mamdani 2001; Malkki 1995; Turshen and Twaigiramariya 1998).

However, efforts towards inclusion of East Africans in the process of development would be self-defeating without analysing critically the historical premises on which East African integration was based. Earlier forms of integration emphasised economic factors and the role of the states in alleviating the grave problems of poverty and other social injustices that people experienced. For example, East Africans established inter-state parastatals such as the East African Airways and the East African Railway Services and Ports Authority. With such strong state involvement in the activities of individuals, the East African leaders perceived economic integration and cooperation as a panacea for all ills their inhabitants suffered. Here I suggest, however, that purely state and economic-driven approaches to problems in East Africa are limiting and exclusive—because they focus on the role of the state rather than on the welfare concerns of the people. Instead, I propose a historical approach as a way toward charting a new course for East African integration.

While tracing the history of integration efforts in East Africa, this paper departs from approaches that emphasised economics and the role of the state as mediator of those relations, to propose the encouragement of political debates among civil society in the process of integration. It highlights historical citizenship indicators in East Africa during the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial eras and demonstrates how they relate to the current premises on which the renewed efforts of integration are erected.

Pre-colonial societies and integration

The East African sub-region comprising Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi possesses a common historical heritage dating back to the pre-colonial period. During pre-colonial times people intermingled

freely without inhibition and restrictions of artificial boundaries of country-specific laws, trading among themselves within the sub-region and beyond. Moreover, they intermarried and related variously, including participating in political affairs of the communities within which they resided. Some Arab and Waswahili traders from the East African coastal region, for instance, established chiefdoms and kingdoms in areas as far as the Great Lakes of East Africa in the nineteenth century prior to colonialism. Paul Tiyambe Zeleza (1993:303) confirms this as follows:

> Family, clan and ethnic associations, both real and affected, played an important role in the provision of trading skills, capital and credit, and information. Traders formed alliances in foreign countries through marriage and blood brotherhood. The careers of the famous Swahili and Nyamwezi traders, such as Tippu Tip and Msiri who created commercial empires in Kasongo and Katanga respectively, were built on shrewd alliances with local rulers or people based on either marriage or fictional kinship ties.

They created these empires to secure important scarce items and products of daily use that were not available in the areas from where they came. Furthermore, they needed to purchase goods for exchange in the vibrant export and import trade of the nineteenth century. Some areas in present day Uganda, such as Kibero on Lake Kyoga and Bunyoro, specialised in salt and iron respectively (Gimode 1996:3). Further, in the interior of Africa, traders sought to exchange goods from the Far East (China, India, Persia, Arabia, and Pakistan), such as beads, cloth, utensils with copper, skins and ivory (Horton and Middleton 2000). In the process several ethnic groups, such as Waswahili, Nyamwezi, Akamba and Yao, distinguished themselves as specialists in the enterprise.

The existing political organisation within the region did not deter movement and the co-residential status of people. Whenever residents found it necessary, and in order to benefit from outsiders, local leaders would levy taxes and tariffs, as was the case in the nineteenth-century kingdoms of Mirambo of Wanyamwezi and Kabaka Mutesa I of Buganda. The Akamba of present day Kenya and Yao of Tanzania were similarly engaged in long distance trade that took them far away from their homes for several weeks or even months in parts of central and east Africa. One could also argue that this was a regionally integrated area characterised by expanding commercial networks and good neighborliness.

On another level, adjacent communities such as the Maasai and Kikuyu of Kenya engaged in local trade activities. The Hutu and Tutsi of Rwanda and Burundi co-existed mutually, as well. The colonial system of

governance in Rwanda and Burundi gave the Tutsi who are a numerical minority of 14 percent a lordship-like license to rule over the 85 percent Hutu majority. Whereas inter-ethnic or intra-ethnic differences, disputes and sometimes conflicts between ethnic groups such as the ones between the Hutu and Tutsi or the Maasai and Kikuyu existed, they did not deter the people from pursuing wider communal interests. Ali A. Mazrui (1994:134-136) has described this system as Africa's culture of tolerance, whereby African communities had recourse to their 'cultural attribute of short memory of hate'. By this Mazrui means that the East African peoples accommodated each other readily and forged mutual relationships. This spirit of accommodativeness and ecumenism certainly became an asset for future integration of the region.

The East African communities had built-in mechanisms of conflict management and resolution, having few long-standing differences between themselves. In fact, among the Kikuyu, there is a clan of Maasai origin called *Nyokabi*. Conversely, in the Tutsi/Hutu relationship there existed the *Kwihutura* and *gucupira* institutions that prevented the hardening of lordship-like distinctions, differences that had the potential of giving rise to disaffection against the Tutsi rulership, for instance. Mahmood Mamdani (1996:10) asserts that in pre-colonial Rwanda, the institution of *Kwihutura* enabled 'the rare Muhutu (Hutu person) who was able to accumulate cattle to rise through the socio-economic hierarchy and to shed Hutuness and achieve the political status of a Mututsi (Tutsi person)'. Mamdani (2001:70) adds that 'the loss of property could also lead to the loss of status summed up in Kinyarwanda word *gucupira*'. This is not to say that the *Kwihutura* system, or any other inclusive mechanisms designed to establish the realm of governance, guaranteed the safeguard of human rights in those societies. One can argue, though, that the Banyarwanda upheld citizenship and rights of individuals in the process of governance in pre-colonial societies. Thus, little evidence, if any, exists of pre-colonial East African societies that emphasised the idea of citizenship more than residence.

Colonialism and integration

Drawing on the spirit of cooperation and integration in East Africa, European finance capital gave more impetus to colonial integration efforts. The late nineteenth century was characterised by merchant capitalism, which established trading networks throughout East Africa. On the other hand, the twentieth century was overwhelmed by the spirit of industrial capital for which East Africa was both a market for European manufactures and a source for raw materials and human resources whose aim was to

create wealth to alleviate the economic problems of metropolitan Europe. European colonists in East Africa embarked on a program of systematic integration of the region. For instance, in 1902, the British established the Court of Appeal for East Africa, followed by the setting up the East African Currency Board in 1905 and a Postal Union between Kenya and Uganda in 1911. In 1917, the British colonial administration established a Customs Union.

By 1920, the East African Currency Board (EACB) was already issuing a single regional currency. When Tanganyika was transferred from German to British control, the country used the common currency already established (Gimode 1996:8-9; Secretariat of the Permanent Tripartite Commission for East African Co-operation 1997:1). Thus the British attempted to harmonise their administration and control of native affairs in East Africa. They argued that a stronger political union would be a prerequisite for economic integration of East Africa.

Prominent British citizens and parliamentarians agitated for the Federation of East Africa. Following this, Sir Sydney Henn in 1924 moved in the House of Commons that the East African territories be coordinated. Henn urged the British Secretary of State for the Colonies to send to East Africa a special commission that would report to him on the workability of the policy and services throughout the territories. He hoped that the special commission would also give him advice on how to run the programme of future economic development in the East African region (see Henn 1924). As a result, the British government established an East Africa Commission chaired by Colonial Secretary, W. G. Ormsby-Gore. The commission solicited views from Africans, people of Asian descent and Europeans on federation (see W. G. Ormsby-Gore 1925).

What was surprising, however, is that the majority of settlers in East Africa opposed the idea, save for a few like Lord Delamere. Delamere proposed that there be a Legislative Council with an elected European majority over all parties in the territories of East Africa. According to Lord Delamere, the federation would offer space for the further spread of European 'civilization' from the already relatively 'civilized' European-settled British East Africa, Kenya to Uganda and Tanganyika. From another point of view, though, Lord Delamere and the wealthy European settlers were interested in the labour force that they could obtain from the other territories. Nevertheless, despite the advocacy of federation by the minority rich white settlers, the moderates among the settlers in Kenya were opposed the idea, arguing that it was not the appropriate time. These moderates advocated the establishment of a white-dominated strong central

government in the hope that the federation would follow naturally. On the other hand, Africans vehemently opposed the idea of federation. This is confirmed in Ormsby-Gore's report:

> We found little, if any, support in East Africa for the idea of immediate federation, and in some quarters we found definite hostility. We received a memorandum against federation from the King and the native government of Buganda, and discussions which had taken place in parts of Kenya immediately prior to our arrival revealed that the suggestion was viewed with more than a little suspicion by all sections of European opinion in Kenya. All shades of opinion in Zanzibar are hostile to federation and we also received representations against federation from various Indian Associations throughout the three northern territories (Ormsby-Gore 1925:7).

Africans were particularly suspicious of the motives and intentions of the colonists. Instead, they wanted first for their grievances to be considered —for their civil rights to be recognised.

Instead of pursuing the idea of an East African federation, the Ormsby-Gore report suggested that regular conferences of governors and responsible officials of the various departments be held in the territories on a rotational basis. The report suggested that governors from Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika, Nyasaland (Malawi) and Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) and the Resident of Zanzibar attend the conferences. The governor in whose territory the conference was held would make the necessary secretarial arrangements. The governor of the host country was also responsible for drawing up the agenda for discussion. These governors' conferences dealt with matters of common interest to all territories, including 'native' administration, communications, taxation, land policy and labour, among others.

Ormsby-Gore renewed his call for a greater measure of administrative and political unity in Eastern and Central Africa. In 1927, for example, he persuaded Sir Hilton Young (Lord Kennet) to go out to East and Central Africa as chairman of a commission to look into the whole question of federation or closer coordination between the several governments in that part of the world (Amery 1953:361-362). At this point, the Kikuyu Central Association (KCA) reacted to the proposal by presenting a memorandum to the Hilton Young Commission, rejecting the idea of a federation. KCA thought that a federation of British East African territories was likely to impose widespread domination of the white settler community in the region. These events caused the crusade for federation to slow down, and the integrative effort translated into governors' conferences in the 1930s. The British administrators consolidated the East African Services (EAS)

in areas of as air transport, meteorology, customs, excise and income tax departments. These developments notwithstanding, the general mood in Britain was for the federation.

The end of the Second World War provided an impetus to the revival of a debate on the federation question. The war had made inter-territorial planning a useful ingredient in stabilising colonial control. Britain adopted this strategy in managing its colonies in the post-World War I period, after becoming conscious of the presence of Italy in the Horn of Africa when the latter entered the Second World War in 1940. Britain could no longer assume there were no security threats to its territories from hostile adversaries operating in the Horn of Africa. Consequently, Britain embarked on a strengthening government regulation and coordination of its territories in East Africa (Rothchild 1968b:47). Donald Rothchild has described this situation as follows:

> A burgeoning of councils and boards took place around the secretariat of the Governors' Conference. The East African Production and Supply Council and the War Supplies Board are perhaps the most memorable of these transient bodies. These two agencies strove to fulfill allied resource of manpower demands, but they found themselves continually hampered by the *de facto* constitutional basis on which they operated.

In fact, in 1944, the Association of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of East Africa had criticised the existing system, which vested power in the institutions of the individual territories. The Chamber of Commerce argued that decentralisation meant that commercial activities in East Africa could be harmonised to speed up development of the region. After the Second World War, entrepreneurs and business people called for pursuance of a non-political line in the constitutions of the territories.

The business people were largely dissatisfied with the political institutions and procedures. They directed their criticism at the governors' conferences, which they saw as secretive and impotent in the face of new opportunities for stimulating economic progress in the region. The conferences usually decided upon common legislation in private and then presented identical bills to the three Legislative Councils (Rothchild 1968b:47). Naturally, this procedure minimised the role of local non-official groups and their representatives. It influenced the Legislative Councils' effective participation in the process of governance. It locked out the opinion of the majority of Europeans, becoming an object of attack by 'citizens' and 'subjects' who desired inclusion in the running of affairs of the colonial

state. The British government took note of this and made efforts to re-examine the inadequacies of the governors' machinery to attune to the new situation. Be that as it may, all the reforms were crafted with the intentions of maintaining British colonial interests.

Meanwhile, the British Labour Party published its White Paper on 'Inter-territorial Organisation in East Africa' in December 1945. The British government clarified its position on closer political union in East Africa. The Secretary of State for the colonies at the time, George Hall, informed the House of Commons that the proposals aimed:

1   To provide a constitutional basis for the operation of the common services;
2   To secure the more efficient coordination of policy and action, particularly in the sphere of economic development, communication and research;
3   To associate representatives of the public of all races with the management of the common services;
4   To provide effective means of enacting common legislation where this was required (Rothchild 1968b:48).

However, the British imperial government stated further that the proposal did not mean political unification, but an arrangement purportedly designed to permit the peoples of East Africa to take responsibility for their own affairs. Despite this rhetoric, evidence pointed to the schemes of white colonists to obtain firm control over East Africa. They intended to do this by securing access to political apparatuses for economic control of the three East African territories. In short, the governors hoped to establish a constitution for the common services, which would create both an East African High Commission and a Legislative Assembly (Rothchild 1968b). The East African High Commission would consist of the governors of Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika, with the Governor of Kenya Acting as Standing Chairman. The Legislative Assembly was vested with power to enact ordinances for the three territories.

The East Africa High Commission met regularly during the year to deal with matters regarding policy as they related to the supervision of the broad network of common services in the territories. In fact, the East African High Commission provided the impetus for functional integration of the common services. For instance, it facilitated the integration of the system of harbours and railways, the creation of an East African Navy and the expansion of Makerere College into the University College of East Africa (Gimode 1996:10).

Nonetheless, the future of the East Africa High Commission was not clear, given the decolonisation wind of change blowing ferociously across the continent in the 1950s and early 1960s. For instance, a constitutional conference held in Dar es Salaam between the 27th and 29th of March 1961, attended by delegates from the Government of Tanganyika and the British government, discussed the achievement of full internal self-government and the attainment of independence in Tanganyika. The delegates agreed that independence ought to come to Tanganyika on the 28th of December 1961. Following this conference the Government of Tanganyika expressed its desire to continue with its participation in the common services provided that the East African High Commission did not infringe on the nation's sovereignty.

The event offered an opportunity for the territories to review their position in the East African High Commission. Central to their concern was a need to include the masses in the decision-making process. A meeting was organised for the 19th and the 27th of June 1961 in London for the delegates from the United Kingdom, Tanganyika, Kenya, Uganda and the East African High Commission, along with an observer from Zanzibar. The delegates proposed that:

> ... it would be in the interests of all the territories to ensure that whatever constitutional changes might take place in the future in East Africa, common services at present provided by the East African High Commission should continue to be provided on an East African basis ... They agreed that the Organization, which would be responsible for the common services, should be entitled the 'East African Common Services Organization' (Cmnd. 1433. London H.M.O.S. 1961: 4-11).

Having realised the deficiencies of the East African High Commission, the delegates agreed to enhance genuine and popular participation of the masses in the affairs of the sub-region.

Moreover, bearing in mind the different forms of constitution in the territories the British endeavoured to involve the people in the countries' affairs on an equal basis. Thereafter, the responsibility for running the East African Common Services Organization (EACSO) would rest with a group consisting of the principal elected Minister and other high ranking officials who were responsible to the legislature in each of the three territories and having full authority in the appropriate fields. This group was designated as the East African Common Services Authority (EACSA), whose decisions on matters concerning the territory were unanimous. The EACSA would determine its own procedures, which included arranging

meetings and the election of the Chairman. Despite recognition of the need for participation of the masses in the affairs of the sub-region, the emphasis remained on the state and economics – an arrangement that was to dog future efforts toward the integration of East Africa.

The EACSA was to be supported by four groups, each consisting of one minister from each territory. The groups were to be responsible for formulating policy in their specified fields such as taxation, law and the general administration of the territory. These groups came to be described as 'triumvirates' for the purpose of convenience. The 'triumvirates' were responsible for communications, finance, commercial and industrial coordination and social and research services. However, future efforts in the process of integrating East African integration largely drew on the EACSO statutes. Jane Banfield asserts that:

> EACSO came into being as a result of local demands, to meet a local situation, and is a creation of the East African Governments; it is not 'colonial' in the sense of being the creature of a colonizing power. As such, EACSO is more 'realistic' as an organization in terms of its ability to meet changed and changing political situations and needs, [and it] provides a forum for various experiments in inter-territorial, inter-governmental, even inter-political arrangements (Banfield 1968:261).

Even though the EACSO policies echoed dominant colonial views, post independence efforts towards integration seem to have been patterned on this philosophy. Indeed, like the British colonists, the East African leaders of the post-colonial state hoped to create a stronger economic entity of the sub-region grounded in a federation. Yet the constitution and institutional arrangements, which they inherited at independence, have proved so far to be major impediments in realising their goals. Each of the three countries entered the era of independence with its own specifically defined national goals – goals that would impact the process of integration thereafter.

Independence and integration

The East African countries emphasised different development strategies after independence. Thus their integrative efforts came to prove problematic in the independent states. The inter-state integration arrangements in Africa as inherited from the British colonial administrators dealt with the economic aspects of production of goods and exchange of services. In other words, different countries became specialised in production and exportation of particular products - this purpose had served the British well. They

also developed specialised forms of transport and communication as well as services such as re-insurance and tourism. For example, Kenya increasingly specialised in food manufacturing, while Uganda produced electricity and processed raw minerals. Tanzania became famous for its wildlife tourism.

Even though East African political leaders – Julius Nyerere, Jomo Kenyatta and Apollo Milton Obote – understood the deficiencies of the institutions they inherited, they hoped to build an East African Federation. Their assumption was based on the understanding that integration efforts in East Africa would lead to the achievement of pan-Africanist ideals so greatly sought by independent African nations. While they perceived the EACSO as an ineffective organisation, the three leaders nonetheless envisaged the federation to be the most reasonable way to solve some of their deeply felt economic problems.

Suffice it to note that the decolonisation process in the three territories made it difficult to attempt a supranational unification. The decolonisation process had planted seeds of national consciousness – a sense of ideological and national interests of the individual leaders and states. In the debates on the nature of integration, much energy was consumed by the demands for nation building as pitched against the federation scheme. Moreover, even within the different countries, there were divergent views on what form the federation ought to take. For example, the Kenya African National Union (KANU) and the Kenyan African Democratic Union (KADU) were engaged in animated debates on the question of integration. Adar and Ngunyi (1994: 399) have asserted that whereas the two parties accepted the idea of federation in principle:

> . . . KADU inscribed in its policy position the idea that 'the regions (*majimbo*) must maintain their powers'. Regionalism (majimboism) as advocated by KADU emphasized the need for autonomy of the different regions within Kenya. KADU carried this policy position into the federation debates, and in so doing came much closer to Buganda's position on the matter. KADU's ethnic-oriented policy position was based on the belief 'that a federal constitution is the best available means of entrenching personal liberty where traditions will be maintained'. KANU campaigned on the pledge of East African federation, which emphasised the need for a unified Kenya. These opposing views affected the way Kenya participated in the East African federation.

There also emerged two centrifugal views in Uganda, namely the official Uganda government position, which supported the federation as stated in

the 1963 Nairobi declaration, and the position of the Kingdom of Buganda, which opposed the idea. Buganda favored an autonomous status for the Kingdoms, as enshrined in the federal constitution of Uganda. This constitutional procedure placed the Uganda government in an awkward position. The Uganda government was compelled to clarify the questions of the East African federation to its citizens. Finally, when it came to making a decision about the East African federation, the government of Uganda was non-committal to the process.

Then, with Uganda's position appearing uncertain, Kenya and Tanganyika considered the formation of a federation independent of Uganda. Tanganyika on its part envisaged a closer political federation that would alter existing economic disparities within the sub-region. Kenya, on the other hand, maintained that a true federation must exercise control over foreign policy and foreign relations. In 1963, Kenyan and Tanganyikan members of parliament realised that the federation issue was dragging on, so they demanded the immediate federation of the East African countries (Adar and Ngunyi 1994:400).

But even with the expression of such strong sentiments for the federation, they did not arrive at a consensus on the way to go about integrating the region. Tanganyika, nonetheless, made it known that it was ready to federate with either of the two—Kenya or Uganda—or both.Uganda emphasised that it would not be rushed into a federation prior to sorting out crucial domestic issues. Kenya, in an apparent change of heart, expressed the view that federation of only two countries did not make sense. Thus, the federation issue remained a thorny one for the East African integration efforts.

As the states approached the mid-1960s, the warmness with which they had received the idea of a federation diminished and general acrimony between the East African states crept into inter-state relations. For example, Uganda and Tanganyika feared that Kenya would dominate the affairs of the federation, given the country's strong economy. Indeed, Kenya came to dominate the economy, inheriting most of the property from the colonial rulers. This led to an uneasy relationship among the countries. Tanganyika and Uganda wanted a more just sub-regional integration that would promote uniform economic growth in all three countries.

With the three countries having defined their national priorities, it became clear that national boundaries would remain unchanged. The boundaries also defined national policies, citizenship and residence of individuals.

However, East African leaders still nursed the idea of integrating the region. Writing on the subject, Donald Rothchild says that:

> ... because federation is a response to genuine needs, it seems certain that the desire to found transnational unions will persist in the years to come. Economic inducements such as regional comparative advantage and economies of scale as well as expanded opportunities for interterritorial projects (electric power and irrigation systems), a wider financial base, and a more rational allocation of skilled technicians and managerial personnel are constants (Rothchild 1968a: 1).

As it happened, in the years that followed East African countries continued to specialise in different commercial, industrial and mineral activities. Uganda specialised in mining and electric production, while Kenya continued to manufacture household products. Tanzania, on the other hand, attempted to jump-start its weak industrial base as opposed to tourism.

Ideological differences among the East African leaders emerged because of the economic disparities of their countries. By mid-1960s, some of the gains towards integration had been lost. The East African leaders called meetings in Kampala and Mbale in 1964 and 1965 to resolve their differences and the economic disparities. During the meetings they agreed to embark on a programme of industrialisation in Tanzania. They also sought to correct trade imbalances between the three countries.

In June 1965, Tanzania proposed that each country should establish separate currencies and banks because its leaders were not convinced of the benefits of integration. Kenya, which was experiencing a positive interterritorial trade balance over the rest of the countries, embraced the idea. This acrimony signaled the collapse of the East African common market.

However, East African political leaders had not discarded integration. Thus, they set up another commission in September of 1965 that recommended a Common Market and Common Services for Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. They appointed Kleid Philip, a leading United Nations economist, to look into ways of making the East Africa federation work. He transformed legal and institutional structures that would suit the sub-region. His team comprised three ministers from each country. This culminated in the Treaty for East African Co-operation in Kampala on June 6, 1967. This co-operation became effective on 1st December 1967, establishing the East African Community, whose headquarters were in Arusha, Tanzania.

Although the formulations of the 1967 Treaty laid down new strategies for integration, the East African leaders did not abandon the structures

that they had inherited from colonialism – they merely added new elements to them. The new elements that they added aimed to correct the economic disequilibria in trade between the countries. They hoped to promote a more viable development strategy through the harmonisation of fiscal incentives offered by each country. These included the transfer tax system and the establishment of the East African Development Bank. At the time, they argued that a more equitable distribution system of industrial benefits would diversify wealth and bring about economic equilibrium.

In general, East African leaders thought that by putting into place a series of financial and administrative structures, they would effectively regulate the functioning of the Common Market Services (Thien 1989; Hazelwood 1992; Mutere 1996a). These blueprints, nonetheless, did not facilitate the process of integration that these leaders had anticipated. Eventually, the East African Common Market, which was perhaps one of the most advanced institutional structures in Africa's attempts at regional integration, collapsed. The collapse was largely due to lack of political goodwill and economic vision on the part of the leaders of member states. The members also lacked commitment to implement the economic policies that their leaders had promulgated. Thus, towards the mid-1970s, the EAC was headed for collapse. Absalom Mutere asserts that:

> The institutional machinery of the EAC lacked an autonomous body with at least power of initiative and supervision. Consequently, the East African regional institutions could hardly play a dynamic and mediatory role in harmonizing partner states' national interests. Also unfortunate was the composition of the supreme decision making body, the East African Authority, made up of the three countries' presidents. This increased the danger of transforming personal rivalries into more lasting inter-state conflicts (Mutere 1996b:8).

Essentially, East African leaders were not ready to forfeit their political and economic sovereignty – they certainly were not ready for regional integration. Also the deep involvement of the state and the emphasis it laid on the economic gains from the integration militated against the success of the EAC.

Strident economic competition and the strong feelings of nationalism became a recipe for the growing spirit of acrimony that seemed to spread within the region. The bad blood also spread from the governmental level to the mass media, creating an atmosphere of immobilism and enmity among East African residents. Anyang'-Nyong'o (1990) and Mutere (1996c) have argued that personal and ideological differences of the East African leaders precipitated the collapse of the EAC. Yet these ideological

differences were merely a reflection of the political and economic separate paths the East African partners had chosen to follow. Tanzania chose to follow a socialist path, while Uganda contemplated moving toward the left (however, largely following a mixed economy). Kenya, on the other hand, embraced free market capitalism disguised as African socialism. The different political philosophies and economic policies came into conflict with one another and rendered the federation idea a spent force.

It is true that economics, rather than political factors, led to the collapse of the EAC. The process of distributing the assets and liabilities of the defunct EAC pointed to economic factors as straining integration efforts. According to Edwin Gimode, the collapse of the EAC was a foregone conclusion:

> There was no more political will to keep it (EAC) going....Kenyan mass media subtly referred to Tanzania's socialism as a euphemism for laziness and lack of productivity. Tanzanians referred to General Amin as an ignorant fascist. In fact, as early as 1975, Kenya's Attorney General Charles Njonjo, had advised the government to withdraw from the community. Similarly the ruling party and the cabinet in Tanzania had advised President Nyerere on the same (Gimode 1996:18).

Following the strain in relations, the heads of state in East Africa, Julius Nyerere, Idi Amin and Jomo Kenyatta, parted ways. Finally, in 1977, the EAC collapsed and the efforts towards integration were dashed.

But despite the collapse of the EAC, cooperation continued at certain levels. For example, following the expulsion of the Asian business community and the sharp decline of manufacturing in Uganda from the mid-1970s onwards, Kenyan business people intensified trade in Uganda. Consumer goods and other imports from Kenya increased in markets in Uganda. Mamdani (1983:97) notes that in 1971 imports of animal oil and fats, cotton fabric and sugar valued at Uganda Shs. 24 million, Shs. 12.3 million and Shs. 11 million respectively streamed into Uganda from Kenya. By 1976, Uganda imported from Kenya products valued at Uganda Shs. 94.99 million, Shs. 41.68 million and Shs. 76 million. Concomitantly, multinational corporations (MNCs) operating in Kenya extended their commercial undertaking in Uganda. These included: Cooper Motors, Leyland Paints, East African Industries, Robbialac Paints and Shell Chemical Company.

Kenya continued to make economic in-roads into the Ugandan market – a move Uganda largely ignored because of the country's shattered econo.ny from Idi Amin's misrule. For example, in 1980, Kenya won a

contract of 110.6 million pounds sterling to supply Uganda with buses, trucks and Land Rovers. The business that went on between the two countries appeared to convince economic and political analysts that Uganda and Kenya were moving close again, despite the earlier political misunderstandings (Okoth 1994: 374). Similar agreements existed between Kenya and Tanzania. Numerous MNCs operating in Kenya extended their commercial activities in the Tanzanian market. The Phillips electronic manufacturing plant, for instance, spread its trade network to Tanzania. While this business was going on between well-established MNCs, the people of East Africa were restricted by their governments from crossing the national borders to trade, work or visit relatives.

Only prominent businesspeople were allowed to cross the national borders for trade. This restriction created a security issue on the common borders of the East African nations. The masses violated the borders in various ways in search of better living standards by engaging in 'magendo' – petty clandestine trade in items such as cooking oil, soap, flour, and toothpaste among others. In some cases women engaged in prostitution on either side of the borders. The security problem became real with the increase of refugees, especially those fleeing the tyranny of the misrule of Amin into Kenya and Tanzania.

It is not surprising that these developments compelled the East African countries to rethink regional cooperation. Tanzania and Kenya were not on very good political terms, but when Idi Amin claimed part of Kenya's territory in 1976, President Nyerere sharply criticised him. Similarly, when Tanzanian troops invaded Uganda, ostensibly to 'discipline' Amin in 1979, Kenya kept quiet over the matter. It would appear the mood among the ruling elites in Kenya was jubilant with Amin's ouster. Writing about Kenya's silence at the fall of Amin, Godfrey Okoth asserts that within a few days of Yusufu Lule's leadership in Uganda, there was a positive move to improve the relationship between Kenya and Uganda. Okoth claims that:

> ...there were some significant foreign policy initiatives in regard to Uganda-Kenya relations. For instance, shortly after becoming Foreign Affairs Minister, Otema Alimadi travelled to Nairobi for talks on reviving bilateral relations [between the two countries]. Kenya seemed to have responded favorably - by providing Uganda with generous economic assistance and by accepting to extradite several fugitives of the Amin regime (1994:373).

Thus, the spirit of East African integration lingered on, despite the intermittent misunderstandings among the East African heads of state.

For example, in 1980, President Milton Obote of Uganda could not see eye to eye with President Daniel arap Moi of Kenya.

In the following years, however, the two presidents warmed to each other. Following an agreement signed between the two presidents, Uganda's debts were rescheduled and Ugandan railway wagons carrying coffee were allowed to proceed to the Kenyan seaport of Mombasa instead of unloading them at the Kenyan/Ugandan border town of Malaba, as had been hitherto been the case. Moi and Obote also agreed to tighten the border security to curb cross-border cattle rustling and smuggling.

In the early 1980s, East African leaders were moving closer to each other, perhaps because of the realisation of the futility of fighting an undeclared 'Cold War' amongst themselves. For example, during the attempted coup in 1982 by members of the Kenyan Air Force, the Tanzanian government cooperated with Kenya in repatriating the coup leaders who had fled to Tanzania, in order that they might face trial in Kenya. The coup leaders, Hezekiah Ochuka and Pancrass Okumu Oteyo, were subsequently tried and hanged in Kenya. The Kenyans exchanged the coup leaders for Tanzanians who were also believed to have hatched a plan to overthrow Nyerere's government and who had sought political asylum in Kenya. Thereafter Kenya and Tanzania seemed to cooperate quite well on maters of border security.

Renewed effort toward integration or cooperation?
A rethinking

The beginning of the 1980s witnessed a resurgence of efforts toward cooperation of the East African countries. This was a response to the dismal development of Africa at the national, sub-regional, regional and international levels. By the mid-1970s, the overall economic performance of African countries slowed down considerably. Some of the basic socio-economic infrastructure inherited from the colonial administration in East Africa was rapidly deteriorating.

The stagnation of national economies militated against the thought of establishing cooperation in basic areas such as education and training; research; transport, production and marketing of strategic industrial products such as chemicals, metal and engineering goods; and money and finance. Coupled with this was an unjust international economic relations, christened the New International Economic Order (NIEO). The NIEO favored developed countries over developing ones. As a consequence, developing countries, particularly those in Africa, became trapped in the negative effects of the deteriorating terms of trade and high

interest rates, a situation which made it difficult for them to earn the much-needed foreign exchange resources for the purposes of development (Rasheed and Sarr 1992:13-14).

By the late 1970s African leaders were changing their strategies in managing the affairs of the continent. African leaders sought appropriate solutions to their dire economic and social problems. Working with this understanding in mind, African intellectuals and policy specialists met in Monrovia in February of 1979 to discuss development prospects in Africa. They were chiefly concerned with the type of development and the means that would transform the functionality of African social and economic systems as they approached the twenty-first century. Other meetings followed with the most important of them, perhaps, being the sixteenth session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in July of 1979 in Monrovia. The outcome became known as the 'Monrovia Declaration of Commitment'. The strategy adopted laid emphasis on three basic principles: namely, self-reliance, self-sustainment and economic cooperation and integration. It was envisaged this approach would help Africa to solve its social, political and economic problems.

In April of 1980, the second extraordinary summit of the OAU was held in Lagos and adopted what was known as the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) – a translation into specific actions of the basic principles of the Monrovia strategy. The East African leaders followed up on the LPA as a new source of inspiration for greater regional integration and pan-Africanism. In his speech at the summit meeting to sign the formal winding up of the East African Community in Arusha on 14th May 1984, Nyerere offered an alternative framework for integration. He announced that:

> Today, we are meeting to sign an Agreement, which formally brings that [East African] community to an end. Therefore, I cannot pretend that this is a very proud day for East Africa! .... We have to learn from its mistakes and move forward again. The existence of the Community was not itself a mistake. . . None of our East African Corporations or institutions worked perfectly; I do not know of any national ones that do either. And just as faults within our domestic economies are dealt with and overcome – to be replaced by new problems–so the inevitable problems in international cooperation structures can be tackled (Nyerere 1984:1-2).

According to Nyerere, the reasons for the break-up of the Community could not be sought in organisational faults nor the different ideologies adopted in the three countries. Rather, the break-up occurred through a

general lack of political will. It is true that there had been a weak spirit for cooperation and a lack of appreciation of national independence.

The three East African countries ran mixed economies and traded with both capitalist and communist states. Yet these same countries could not trade among themselves. East African leaders realised that they needed to trade with each other. Thus, in 1984, they signed the East African Mediation Agreement to pave the way for a new form of cooperation. Presidents Julius Nyerere, Daniel Arap Moi and Apollo Milton Obote of Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda respectively signed the East African Community Mediation Joint Communiqué. The communiqué heralded a new era in East African cooperation.

However, political developments in Uganda and the ouster of Obote as president of Uganda in 1985 slowed down the process of close cooperation and integration in East Africa. On another level, scholars in public universities and lawyers in East Africa began to think of alternative frameworks for integration. They proposed a move away from concentrating exclusively on state structures (statism) and economics to re-examining the constitution of the countries of East Africa with a view to empowering civil society in the management of their affairs. They envisaged a new approach that would consider politics and the role civil society played in strengthening the newly found spirit of integration among East Africans (Shivji 1991). In 1996 lawyers and social scientists from the East African nations met in Mombasa, Kenya to debate an appropriate constitutional framework for a civil society-type mode of integration. They came up with eight resolutions on how to proceed with integration in the social and economics spheres (see Wanjala 1996; Kibwana 1996).

In the past, schemes to integrate East Africa had been considered in purely economic terms giving little attention to the social aspect of cooperation. A great deal of energy had been expended in erecting economic institutions to foster development within the sub-region. For instance, in the 1920s, the 1940s and even the 1960s and 1970s, the emphasis was on economic cooperation and integration.

Whereas economic cooperation and integration and the building of institutions are plausible approaches that could give impetus to progress and development in the East African countries, there is a need to shift and reconsider how civil society could participate in reforming the institutions. For example, with the new wave of democratisation in the early 1990s, various groups of individuals were involved in discussion on the question of East African integration. Scholars in public universities, women's groups, youth groups, transnational groups and different ethnic groups

across borders demanded freedom of association and movement within the region. They underscored the importance of adhering to constitutional reforms as the way to long-term integration.

The people of East Africa have a common cultural heritage that could be harnessed in the integration scheme. In recognition of this potential, leaders of the sub-region called a meeting in Arusha, on March 14, 1996. At this meeting Presidents Daniel Arap Moi, Benjamin Mkapa and Yoweri Museveni signed an accord that brought into being the Secretariat of the Tripartite Commission for East African Cooperation. The problem with this accord, however, is that its emphasis is on economics and the centrality of the state as the principal organisational unit of the affairs of the people. Hence, it does not take into consideration the place of civil society and individual citizens in shaping their own destiny. Until the issue of constitutionalism is resolved, the process of integration will remain a far-fetched dream for East Africans.

Even with the numerous meetings that have been held at different levels and institutions, such as the East African Judicial Committee, Environmentally Sustainable Development and the Promotion of Trade and Defense and Security in the Sub-Region, integrational efforts have not yielded a homogenous society that has eradicated nationalist sentiments. Economics and statism have reared their heads in efforts towards integration of the region. While it is a good idea to rely on economists as consultants to implement integrative efforts, there is a need to cast the net wide and involve other social as well as physical scientists. An attempt to include a wide range of people in the debate would minimise strongly worded economic statements such as:

> Future plans for the cooperation include the establishment of a single market for the [sub]-region. To achieve this, the harmonization of policies necessary for the establishment of the market and the promotion of trade, tourism and investment will be speeded up . . . . The key areas covered include the decision by the East African Central Banks to allow exchange of currencies in respective banks in the region (Weggoro 1997:3).

While these are very good objectives they will certainly remain attractive only on paper if other social factors are not considered as crucial in the cooperation. It is imperative that the place of civil society is appraised in this arrangement. For example, the political leaders should make regulations and laws that would permit free movement and residence of individuals. This, therefore, calls for a paradigmatic shift towards embracing a civil society approach in the process of integration. While

the state ought to be recognised as a point of reference, it should devolve some of its powers to the public and reduce statism – the idea that the state is the only source of organisation and that the process of integration in East Africa must be economic in essence.

The institutions which civil society helps to build are likely to be long lasting, given that the same civil society possesses the capacity to re-examine and re-evaluate them from time to time in the event they are rendered obsolete. Unlike the state, which operates above civil society and whose institutions may be synonymous with the ideals of certain leaders predisposed toward prebendalism, the realm of civil society allows for flexibility and innovativeness from the bottom. This is because the domain of civil society is that of public opinion and the culture of respecting individual rights and their participation in the decision-making process. Thus, civil society embraces the bottom-up approach – an alternative framework that could be adopted in solving problems besetting Africans.

Suffice it to reiterate that, since the early 1990s the area has witnessed a resurgence of constitutionalism to re-examine the constitutions of the East African countries involved with a view of imposing limitations on the exercise of state power and entrusting institutions close to the masses with this task. This process has given the impetus to the people of the sub-region to redesign their own forms and modes of governance. The limitation of government involvement and the protection of fundamental human rights and freedoms have been the underlying tenets of these civil society, politically driven initiatives (Tindifa 1996:131).

Accountability and transparency of the government are crucial in the integration process. Thus, a 'responsive state' ought to draw up a framework of integration in which popular participation of the masses empowers and equips them with skills to make decisions in economic and social spheres. Civil society would participate in decision making processes not only through traditional methods of elections, but by way of strengthening existing and emerging social groups to manage and determine their destiny.

Recent newspaper reports provide evidence that East Africans are keen on reviving sub-regional integration. This will require the nurturing of a common political environment in the East African countries, including the other Great Lakes region countries of Rwanda, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. If a civil society-responsive political culture were to be cultivated and nurtured in the East African sub-region, the problems of insecurity and political instability that have dogged the Great Lakes region of East Africa would be greatly minimised. Political

systems would become more open, stable and, therefore, citizen-sensitive and friendly (Kibwana 1996).

This type of integration would also go far in solving the current refugee problem. For example, the out-migration of impoverished peasants from Rwanda and Burundi since the early 1950s, and who form about 40 per cent of the population of Buganda or Banyamulenge of eastern Congo, would not be considered as aliens or immigrants but as committed citizens to the progress of the region. The latter notions quickly bring into focus the idea of citizenship and residence, the former flowing from membership of a political community, with the latter emphasising merely the provision of labour. The notion of residence as perceived in terms of border surveillance appears to strip a people of their human rights legally, even though they contribute immensely to institution building and economy of the countries in which they reside.

Rwandese refugees fall within this category. The Rwandese refugees suffered injustices meted out on them in Uganda. Successive Ugandan governments considered them to be aliens with no rights of citizenship despite the role they played in installing the National Resistance Movement (NRM) at the political helm. During the early days in the NRM constitution of villages, anyone, despite their birth or descent, could be elected to Resistance Committees – the committees responsible for running village affairs during the guerrilla warfare. The criteria of birth and descent were largely ignored and, instead, residence and labour were emphasised. Nevertheless, these political ideals were abandoned once the war was won and Ugandan citizens began to nurse leadership ambitions (see Mamdani 2001:2159-184). Mahmood Mamdani describes these as:

> . . . developments that would bring home to refugees a bitter truth: that in Africa today, once a refugee, always a refugee. As a senior RPA commander put it to me in Kigali in 1995, 'You stake your life and at the end of the day you recognize no amount of contribution can make you what you are not. You can't buy it, not even with blood'. No doubt their ranks included some who were convinced from the outset that there was no alternative but to return (Mamdani 1996:26).

Indeed, the above scenario flows from the fact that political leaders have made the state and nationality as the two major determinates of citizenship, and also social, political and economic relations. They make laws that pit citizens against residents, and in this way create conflicts and social disharmony. As for the refugees, they have more often than not had little

option but to return to their 'motherland' or stay wherever they are as aliens. The insecurity in the Great Lakes region of East Africa is a function of this predicament.

Various segments of the East African people have received the idea of the bottom-up approach to civil matters and the management of the East African region with mixed feelings. For example, the political leadership has preferred to maintain the status quo, whereas the various groups of people have sought a political order for a broader based participation of individuals in shaping their destiny. In this context, several social movements have been emerging in the East African sub-region. These have included associations of the media, lawyers, women's movements, business people, university lecturers and students, among others. These groups have embraced the bottom-up approach located outside of state organisation to underscore the importance of civil society in the process of governance. There is no doubt that an approach such as this will ensure that there exists a political culture that would render national boundaries more porous. What this would lead to is the perception of new ways of governing the affairs of the region by empowering the people. It would be easier to enforce law, to curb crime within the region, and even to facilitate the implementation of the Lagos Plan of Action for economic integration of Africa.

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to explain the concept of integration in the process of governance and formulating the language of rights among the peoples of East Africa. It has highlighted integration schemes since pre-colonial times and demonstrates how individuals co-existed and lived mutually without regard to rigid political boundaries. This essay has asserted that citizenship flowed across ethnicity and became the basis of integration. Moreover, the recognition of individual rights in this understanding guaranteed security within the region, a factor that enabled free movement of people and their interactions.

However, with the advent of colonialism this approach was altered, and the emphasis was laid on residence instead of citizenship. On another level, the colonial administration came to dichotomise society in two domains, that of citizen and subject. These actors were organised within the state structure and governed by the constitution that stripped civil society of the power to influence decisions. This is because the 'subjects', who constituted the majority, were under the control of the colonial administrative machinery that gave more power to the few 'citizens' who

were Europeans. Following this, state power became synonymous with European power and presence. The integrative efforts that were forged at the beginning of the twentieth century were patterned and adopted a top-down approach. This approach was exclusive and authoritarian, explaining why the African peoples in the East African sub-region initially rejected it.

This paper has further argued that the independence schemes of integration were both economic-based and statist enforced. Thus, they were authoritarian in nature and did not take into consideration the civil and political nature of issues and experiences that confronted Africans. These efforts have also proved inadequate, as they have been based on unworkable premises, despite the good intentions the political leaders may have had. The statist and economistic approach to integration resulted in the collapse of the East African Community, barely ten years after its formation.

This essay proposes that the previous approaches to East African integration be rethought to give more attention to the bottom-up approach. This entails grounding debates on the essence of constitutionalism and the possibility of constitutional consensus. The assumption is that, if consensus can be achieved in the process of politics within the sub-region, the politically established boundaries will be rendered inconsequential with time and natural integration would take place. This would mean that there would be greater respect for human rights in the region. It is possible that the much-sought economic development would be realised faster because human resources and capital could be freely harnessed.

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