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DEMOCRACY AND MILITARY COOPERATION IN REGIONAL INTEGRATION-A CASE OF EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY

Научный руководитель – Degtarev Denis

Amuhaya Claire Ayuma

Postgraduate

Российский университет дружбы народов, Факультет гуманитарных и социальных наук,
Москва, Russia

E-mail: ayuma2002@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Whereas the objectives of most nations for regional integration are the same, they integrate for economic, political, social and cultural reasons. Most countries belong to different smaller regional organisations within a broader region and the strategies they use to obtain these objectives differ. The aim of this article is to analyse the strategies that East African Community uses in pursuing its objectives for regional integration and the peculiarities and challenges that emerge within the region based on theories of integrations as argued in Neofunctionalism, Intergovernmentalism and Liberal Intergovernmentalism. East African Community uses several strategies but this article will explore the two main ones that is Democracy and Security Cooperation or Military Cooperation. The different progress that has been achieved and the setbacks will be discussed.

Key Words: Regional Integration, Democracy, Security Cooperation, Military Cooperation

INTRODUCTION

For regional integration to be achieved all actors involved must have a burning desire for need of integration, both as individual countries and other institutions that are in support of integration. For example, the African Development Bank (AfDB) which is among the main supporter for regional integration in Africa has its own strategy which is “The Bank’s Regional Integration Strategy focuses on three pillars: Power and infrastructure connectivity; Trade and Investment; and Financial Sector Integration.”[1]And as the President of the African Development Bank once said “The lack of integration amounts to Africa’s own Beggar-Thy-Neighbour policy,” adding: “It must stop.” Which clearly shows the importance of integration and the desire for development within the region.

East African Community is a very good example of one of the organisations which could be said was transplanted after independence of three states, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania which were all under British either as a colony or protectorate and one of the oldest regional organisations that collapsed in 1977 after less than twenty years of independence. It could be argued that since it was a carry-over organisation maybe the then governments did not really understand the purpose of regional organisations and did not take it seriously to ensure it prospers leading to its failure and it is even assumed the day of the collapse the Kenyan delegation celebrated with champagne which if true shows how they disregarded the organisation. After several years of learning and understanding the importance of regional organisations it was revived and currently it consists of six countries, Rwanda, Burundi and South Sudan as new members.

At the centre of the problem lies the post-colonial state, which was the price to be paid for rapid decolonisation. Transplanting European-style states, modes of economic development, and forms of Westphalian international relations to non-European peoples was not easy anywhere.

But, while in much of Asia the new states and their system of political economy eventually took root, in most of Africa the transplant has to varying degrees failed." [2]

DEMOCRACY IN EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY

"There is no consensus on how to measure democracy, definitions of democracy are contested and there is an ongoing lively debate on the subject. The issue is not only of academic interest. For example, although democracy-promotion is high on the list of American foreign-policy priorities, there is no consensus within the American government on what constitutes a democracy" [3]

Democracy has been and is still one factor that most African nations like Kenya and its regional partners still battle with but democracy is used for strengthening key institutions especially political institutions as they mostly tend to affect basic human rights like those of freedom of speech and which might hamper regional integration. Because if one country makes democratic progress then it can have a ripple effect and affect the other member countries as well or if one member already has strong democratic institutions then it will force the others to adopt as well for easier coexistence.

There have been examples of countries that belong within a regional organization have intended to pursue acts which might not be deemed democratic leading to member states oftenly reiterating that democracy is a prerequisite for membership within the organisation. "There have been instances when a particular state, by carrying out specific internal political actions, comes into conflict with the prevailing tenets of the region or the international organisations to which it belongs. As a result, it begins to force harsh criticisms or weighty sanctions of one type or the other. UNASUR recently applied political sanctions on Paraguay by suspending its participation in the grouping after the rushed impeachment and ouster of its democratically elected president, Fernando Lugo, which took place on June 22." "On his part, the Secretary General said that should the impeachment process ignore due process and the right to defence, it would seriously affect democracy in the integration bloc, because Paraguay was holding the *pro tempore* presidency of the organisation while Lugo "above all is a popularly-elected president." "The legitimacy of the "express" impeachment was immediately questioned by UNASUR, the sub-regional Mercosur trading bloc and the hemispheric Organisation of American States (OAS), all of which warned, even before the impeachment vote, that it would result in negative consequences for democracy in the country." [4]

All these culminated with a strong joint statement from the regions Presidents with backing from other countries like the USA and other regional organisations like organisation of American States that democracy was a condition of membership.

East Africa community underwent such a crisis when Burundi's President Nkurunziza tried to seek a third term in office sparking protests in the country and while in Tanzania where EAC had convened to discuss the situation there was an attempt coup by army general Godefroid Niyombare but the EAC quickly announced their support for President Nkurunziza as what was happening was not constitutional and therefore democracy was in jeopardy. "East African Community (EAC) leaders have strongly condemned the attempted coup in Burundi. The leaders said they did not accept the coup and called for a speedy return to constitutional order in that country. "The summit is of the view that the coup does not solve the problem of Burundi," the leaders said today in a statement read by host President Jakaya Kikwete who is also the chair of the EAC. Presidents Uhuru Kenyatta, Yoweri Museveni of Uganda and Paul Kagame of Rwanda attended the daylong summit convened in the Tanzanian capital of Dar es Salaam to discuss the political and security situation in Burundi." [5]

While in the case of Paraguay the different organisations within the region were able reach a consensus on how to solve the situation and even issue a joint statement that has not been the

case in the Burundi crisis as it is claimed that “Nkurunziza has exploited divisions within and between the AU, the UN and the East African Community (EAC), the sub-regional organisation charged to lead the continental response. This enables his government to rebuff lacklustre EAC attempts to bring it to negotiations and has stalled the deployment of AUC-authorized human rights and military observers, as well as UN Security Council-sanctioned police. Lack of a shared analysis of the crisis’s nature fuels disunity.”[6]

Leading to the crisis to actually not solved yet because even within the EAC member states there have been accusations especially from Tanzania’s President Kikwete during that crisis period that “Kikwete seemed convinced of Rwanda’s backing for the attempted coup. This new strategy was based more on geopolitical considerations. He now suspected Kigali of trying to put in place in Bujumbura a regime answerable to Rwanda.” “On the other side, Kigali saw in the rapprochement between Bujumbura and Dar es Salaam an ideological coming together on the question of ethnicity.²⁶ For his part, the Ugandan head of state, the president of the regional peace initiative in Burundi during the peace processes 15 years earlier, although ready to show closer involvement on the matter, had no clear position on the question. And Kenya barely showed any interest in the subject ”[7]

From examples in regional organisations like European union one can note that being a member of an organisation that insists on democracy for its member states leads to transition of democracy and consolidation of democracy being faster for the smaller and weaker states and it is actually why some countries like Greece and most Eastern Europe countries were accepted in to the organisation “the acceptance of poorer economies like Greece, Spain and Portugal was motivated largely by the desire to help these restored democracies remain democratic by bolstering them politically and economically.” Similarly, the Europe agreements with accession of candidates in Central and Eastern Europe and the Baltic Area are designed to “facilitate” the transition countries’ full integration into the community of democratic nations”[8].

For membership to EAC the “adherence to universally acceptable principles of good governance, democracy, the rule of law, observance of human rights and social justice;”[9] is one of the factors to consider for membership so in this regard it is important to note that democracy is an important issue for member states.

According to the Economist Intelligence Unit’s measure of democracy, its unit’s index “is based on the view that measures of democracy that reflect the state of political freedoms and civil liberties are not thick enough.”, and “is based on five categories: electoral process and pluralism; civil liberties; the functioning of government; political participation; and political culture. The five categories are interrelated and form a coherent conceptual whole.”[10]

Even though the East African Community does not have any large developed democratic country, Tanzania is believed to have made major democratic gains especially with the current President Magufuli since his inauguration in 2015 and it is regarded to have the best democracy than its neighbours and it is currently position 83 in the world rankings by the Economist but in EAC it is the 1st followed closely by Kenya and Uganda at position 92 and 94 and then Rwanda, Burundi and lastly South Sudan.

“Adherence to the rule of law under the Fifth Phase Government of President John Magufuli has propelled Tanzania to emerge the best democracy in East Africa and 13th in Sub-Sahara Africa, with the country recording an overall score of 5.47. Kenya and Uganda have been ranked second and third in East Africa respectively while in Sub-Sahara Africa, they are on position 15 and 17, correspondingly, according to latest findings contained in the Democracy Index 2017 titled, “Free speech under attack.”[11] so in essence it has a role to enforce to the other member states which are still grappling with major democratic issues like Burundi which is yet to solve its current crisis with reports of gross human rights violation.

The greatest hindrance for consolidation of democracy within the EAC region is not only

the constant conflicts within the member states but within the great lakes region and Africa as a whole as conflict in one country normally has an effect to its neighbours especially if countries have the same tribes within the different borders as is with the case of Rwanda and Burundi or issues like refugees influx and a country like Kenya is currently in conflict with the international community as it hosts a huge number of refugees and it recently decided to close down some of the camps.

The lack of harmonization of the democratic policies within the member countries is also an issue especially on election issues/political issues so the recommendation has been for the monitoring and observation of elections and support missions to National Electoral Commissions in the EAC Partner States

MILITARY COOPERATION IN EAST AFRICA COMMUNITY

Security is an important issue for any society and numbers and cooperation go a long way in making sure that one has its security in check. Regions have always cooperated on security issues from as far back as 1100 BC during the ancient Greek period when the city states formed Amphictyonic League. “In the ancient times, an amphictyonic league was an association of town-states linked together to form a cultural and political union. In most cases, these town-states were in close distance to each other and had a common origin. The most significant such league was the Amphictyonic league of Delphi Initially created to protect the temple of Apollo in Delphi and of Demeter in Thermopiles from enemies”[12].

Even though security cooperation incorporates issues like economic, political, social but generally when mentioned it is military cooperation that comes to mind for protection against threats outside a region just like in ancient Greece leading to the formation of amphictyonic league “The purpose of the collective security system formed by the city-states was to protect all cities of the Amphictyons and was upheld by a vow of all the city-states to march united against any aggressor that threatened one of the member states”[13]

According to liberals like Karl Deutsch “security community, defined as a group of people that had become integrated to the point that there is real assurance that the members of that community will not fight each other physically but will settle their disputes in some other way”[14]

One of the main objectives of the East African Community according to Article (5) of the Treaty for Establishment of the East African Community is “the promotion of peace, security, and stability within, and good neighbourliness among, the Partner States;” [15]and one of the ways of achieving these objectives is through military cooperation hence the establishment of cooperation in defence affairs and this was because the heads of states were convinced “that peace, security and strong political relations are critical factors in creating a conducive environment for **regional co-operation and integration;**”[16]

As Shaw (1998:2) notes: ‘the prevailing assumption remains that “Angola”, “Liberia”, “Somalia”, etc. constitute short-term domestic “crises” bounded and contained by effective national borders. Instead, the converse is much closer to the truth: no civil con [U+FB02]ict/peace-keeping “emergency” in contemporary Africa is contained within one territory and the majority are really long-term.[17] Meaning that conflict in a country within one region will somehow affect the other countries within the region so security cooperation is very important especially in East Africa where all countries have had different conflicts at different periods ranging from Post-election violence in Kenya to Rwanda civil war or the most recent political crisis in Burundi but the one conflict that has made the members of EAC to unite is the Somali conflict which has affected the members through acts of terrorism from time to time.

“On the 28th day of April 2012, the five East African Heads of state signed a protocol for Cooperation in Defence affairs in Arusha, Tanzania. This was after an elaborate process of

many meetings that sought to iron out the gray areas of legal and administrative diversity among individual member states. What started as a policy framework developed into an MOU, an Agreement, and eventually into a Protocol. Article 2 of the protocol covers the scope of cooperation and without prejudice to the generality of the article, the Partner States agreed *inter alia* to cooperate in military training, joint operations, technical cooperation, visits, and exchange of information”[18]

Other than the partner states cooperating among themselves according to the Protocol “The Partner States shall cooperate in all defence affairs and collaborate with international and regional organisations to promote peace, security and stability in the Community.”[19], this means cooperating with regional organisation like the African Union or United Nations Peace Keeping Missions which I will explore further within the paper the areas that EAC has cooperated with them.

So military training, joint operations which includes Peace Support Operations and Peace Building functions for conflict resolution in areas where conflict has taken place, technical cooperation and exchange of information could be said to be the four military cooperation indicators within the East African Community.

“The East African Community (EAC) Military Field Training Exercise (FTX) ‘*Exercice Ushirikiano Imara*’ 2014,’ Swahili for *Firm Cooperation*, was officially opened on Friday, 17th October 2014 in Mwaro, Burundi. The Field Training Exercise(FTX), which was preceded by a Command Post Exercise held last year in Muzinda, Burundi, is meant to evaluate a combined Joint Task Force of 1,904 personnel from East Africa Community partner states on Peace Support Operations, Counter-Terrorism, Counter-Piracy and Disaster Management. The official opening ceremony was presided over by the First Vice President of the Republic of Burundi H.E. Prosper Bazombanza. In his remarks, the Vice President said, “Security challenges faced within our region are addressed through these military exercises which help our armies build required capabilities.”[20] Other than among each other the EAC as well has joint military training with countries like China and USA.

Other regions have done the same too like Russia Federation and Belarus “Belarus and Russia have 35 international agreements which aim to harmonise joint military activities in the line of air force and air defence, to solve issues of military-technical **cooperation**, to execute arms control obligations and military intelligence, to jointly use military infrastructure objects, to provide **regional security** and to develop unified systems of the **Regional Group of Forces**, including information support systems for military cooperation between Belarus and Russia and Belarus-Russia **unified regional air defence system.**”[21]

So it is important for countries within a region to have a unified defence system especially if they will need coordination from external attacks to the region.

The EAC has been active on Peace Keeping missions within the region and it took an active position in the conflicts in Burundi and South Sudan but there has been a problem of coordination between the regional organisations like African Union and EAC but also within the EAC itself as it has weak institutional structures “The EAC has recognised that economic integration can succeed only if peace, stability and security are established throughout the region. It therefore focuses its efforts on crisis prevention, conflict resolution, small arms and light weapons control, and the promotion of good governance. These efforts are being hindered, however, by weak institutional structures within the EAC secretariat, including in particular, the lack of a Directorate for Peace and Security and inadequate implementation of regional strategies and standards within the partner countries.[22]

CONCLUSION

The East African Community has to grow and make credible and tangible changes within the region so that the member states can realise its value. Once the value is realised then

syncing priorities will be easier making it faster for development within the region. This will also make it harder for member states to leave and encourage more membership in turn making it stronger and the enforcement of rules and regulations will be easier especially when broken by any member state as the cost to the organisation whether political or economic is high. It also has to strengthen its own institutions within the EAC so that the aims of the organisation could be achieved and lastly whether it likes it or not cooperation with other regional organisation is a must for it to achieve its success.

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