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“You Don’t Dictate the Tune”: The Parasitic Bloc, the East African Community (EAC) and European Union (EU) Relations

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Abstract

The relation between the East African Community (EAC) and the European Union (EU) has so far contributed towards the economic development of both regions. However, on the issues of trade, technical assistance and foreign aid, the relationship has not always been symbiotic. The EAC has heavily relied on EU funding and technical expertise to support its programmes. Out of 112,984,442 million USD, the EAC budget for 2024/2025, 61% of the funding comes from partners with the EU doing the heaviest financial lifting of 30%. In 2023/2024 budget, the EU cushioned the EAC budget with 40% technical budgetary support and in 2022/2023 budget, the EU contributed 50% support. Of the budgetary and programmes support, the EU has dictated the appropriation of the EAC budget. Large chunks of money have been going to line items compatible with the EU foreign policy. Although the EU is the main trade partner of the EAC, the relation has been quite dependent.

This paper argues that the EAC bloc is quite parasitic in its relations with the EU. Because of this parasitic relationship, the EU has dictated the programmes of the EAC secretariat in leitmotif of “he who pays the piper, dictates the tune”. Although some EAC partner states and the EU member

states have inked Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), the EAC is yet to fully liberalize its markets, meet the standards requirements of goods, improve on governance and human rights. Instead of implementing EPAs requirements, the EAC has been relying on the EU handouts. This relation has been off balance and set the EAC in a weaker position. For EU-EAC relations to be symbiotic and of equal benefits to both regions, EAC partner states have a caveat to improve on governance, human rights, and adherence to EPAs. Above all, the EAC should begin to delink itself from heavily reliance on EU funding for its programmes and projects and entirely fund these programmes and projects from partner states.

This paper used elite interviews and secondary sources to understand the relationship between the EAC and the EU. It combines processing tracing, case study and comparative methods to contextualize and validate causal chains and casual processes. Furthermore, the paper theorizes regional integration and constructs the concept of the parasitic bloc to depict EAC-EU relations. Finally, it draws conclusion and recommends direction of future research.

Keywords: Parasite, Bloc, East African Community, European Union, Relations, Economic Partnership Agreements

1. Introduction

The historical relation between the East African Community (EAC) and the European Union (EU) goes back to so many years. It is apparent and worth to note that the EAC was born before the EU in 1967 and thus it is as old as African Union (AU) (Riak, 2022) ^[24]. The East African Community is the regional intergovernmental organization of the Republics of Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, South Sudan, DR Congo and Somalia with its headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania. The countries have a population of 343 million people, potentially providing a rich market for goods and services, which in turn could boost trade and development in the region. Indeed, EAC was founded and became operational from 1967 when the Treaty establishing the Cooperation was signed. In 1977, the then Cooperation collapsed after 10 years of existence. In 1984 Mediation agreement signed for division of assets and liabilities.

However, the Treaty for Establishment of the East African Community was revived with signing on 30th November 1999 and entered into force on 7th July 2000 following its ratification by the original three-partner states-Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. The Republic of Rwanda and the Republic of Burundi acceded to EAC Treaty on 18th June 2007 and became full members of

the Community with effect from 1st July 2007. Republic of South Sudan acceded to the Treaty on 15th April 2016 making the bloc robust with wider trade market. Democratic Republic of Congo and Federal Republic of Somalia joined the East African Community on 29th March 2022 and 4th March 2024 respectively.

Although it's collapsed in 1977 due to ideological and leadership deficits, the bloc is not nascent in the institutional foundation and grounding. As it lays its integration agenda, the bloc continued to receive substantive support from Western donors, for instance, U.S through USAID and European Union through European Development Funds (EDF). Yet, it has not fully achieved the integration milestones spelt out in the treaty and consequently on various protocols such as Custom Union 2005, Common Market 2010 and Monetary Union 2013. The last leg of the deepest integration, political federation is still yet to be attained.

Thus, the negotiations for the East African Federation all underscore the serious determination of the East African Leadership and citizens to construct a powerful and sustainable East African economic and political bloc (Biswaro, 2012)^[2].



Fig 1: Stages of EAC Integration

The integration within the EAC has been set in gradual phases center-pieced on trade and services. Establishing common market that its enhances trade & services, custom union for single custom territory, duty remissions & rules of origin and monetary union for banking services have continued to promote integration agenda. The destiny model of custom services has deepened integration amongst the EAC partner states. Yet, with this systematic integration, EAC has largely depended on EU on both technical and financial spheres. The practice has been duped as EU 'constant handouts support' to EAC. This support has been quite parasitic, as it is one-sided benefit and thus not symbiotic between the two sisterly blocs. This then begs the question, why is this the case? How does the EAC, which is much older continued to depend much on the EU support? Has this made the EAC parasitic? How could the EAC delink itself from this path dependency?

This paper argues that EAC has heavily relied on EU budgetary and technical support and this relation has been quite parasitic. Leapfrogging from this dependency requires the EAC partner states' commitment to take full charge in financing and supporting the EAC programmes and projects. The paper is organized as follows: section one introduces the paper. Section two discusses the regionalism and economic integration in theoretical perspective. Section three discusses the concept of parasitic bloc. Section four looks at how the EAC has parasitically relied on the EU. Understanding this, the paper critically analyzed EAC budget for 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 and the gaps filled by the EU. Section five discusses EU aid for trade as a phenomenon of dependency of the EAC. Section

six discusses the implications of Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAS) on the EAC and the EU. Section seven analyzes the changing world order and its effects on EAC-EU relations. Section eight concludes and section nine gives direction of the future research.

2. Regionalism and Economic Integration in Theoretical Perspective

Empirical studies on regionalism and economic integration have made it clear that economic, geopolitical, and socio-cultural relationships across the globe, for which Africa is no exception, have been changing rapidly in the last few decades. The world has seen a dramatic increase in Regional Trade Agreements (RTAs) since the early 1990s. Although there were only 124 RTAs notifications before 1995, this number rose to 575 by July 31, 2013, out of which 379 were in force (WTO, 2013)^[29]. International trade, foreign direct investment, international migration, technology transfer, international politics, and policy coordination have been key forces behind this trend of increasingly close cooperation among member countries of regional and economic blocs. Economically, regionalism and economic integration among nations is anticipated to increase the chances for investment, be useful to the people of the nations, and foster exploration of growth and development resources (Asante-Poku and Angelucci, 2013)^[1]. This is really good news for African countries where growth and development agenda have been key in the last few decades, particularly in light of the continent's desire to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

It is interesting to note that although the two concepts-regionalism and economic integration are often used interchangeably; they are not necessarily the same thing. While regionalism is much broader and involves forming entities of countries with shared political, economic, social, cultural, and geographical demarcations, economic integration is often considered within the framework of economic theory (for example, the contribution of economic theory to understanding the economic aspect of regionalism). This was the character of the creation of regionalism in most parts of the world (and Europe in particular) after the post cold-war era (Soderbaum, 2004)^[27]. However, the instigation of formal regionalism can be dated to the late nineteenth or early twentieth century (Capoccia and Ziblatt, 2010)^[4].

Early post-war regionalism across the globe comprised of three main categories: (i) security regionalism, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), and Central Treaty Organization (CENTO); (ii) economic regionalism, such as the European Commission (EC), North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), Pacific Asia Free Trade Area (PAFTA), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), and Southern African Development Community (SADC); and (iii) multi-purpose regionalism or organizations, such as the Organization of American States (OAS), the African Union (AU), and the Arab League (Senarclens, 2007)^[26].

Africa's pre-independence history of regionalism and economic integration dates to the early twentieth century, when the South African Customs Union (SACU) was formed. Following political independence, the call for regionalism and economic integration in African countries

was renewed during the days of Kwame Nkrumah, the first President of Ghana. After leading Ghana to achieve independence in 1957, Nkrumah attempted to gain political independence as well as economic and political integration for the whole continent. In his speech declaring independence for his country, he said that Ghana's independence was meaningless unless it was linked with the total liberation of Africa and that Ghana's independence was only the first step toward a united and integrated Africa (Nkrumah, 1965)^[21].

Although Nkrumah did not live to see his dream come to reality, the post-independence period saw many African leaders embracing the concept of regionalism and economic integration as a vital element of their development agenda and engaging their countries in a number of regional and economic integration arrangements. In addition to Nkrumah, leaders such as George Padmore, W.E.B. Dubois, Marcus Garvey, and Julius Nyerere, among others, saw the need for regionalism in Africa, which they thought would quicken the pace of the continent's economic and social development (UNCTAD, 2009)^[28].

Africa has adopted regionalism mainly because of its potential economic benefits. As Julian (2012)^[17] notes, African leaders have come to realize the benefits of regionalism in stimulating stability and cooperation through inter-regional policies, institution building, trade, and other issues of common interest. Moreover, the creation of regional blocs was seen as a way to rescue the continent from colonial and neo-colonial influences and enable it to effectively engage with the developed world (Julian, 2012)^[17]. It is not surprising that the continent has for decades initiated a variety of regional arrangements, mainly along economic and political lines, aimed at integrating Africa to achieve these benefits.

One such arrangement is the famous Lagos Plan launched in 1985 by the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which was founded in 1963 and succeeded by the African Union (AU) in 2002. The Plan envisaged three regional arrangements aimed at the creation of separate but convergent and overarching integration arrangements in three sub-Saharan African sub-regions. West Africa was served by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which predated the Lagos Plan. East and Southern Africa were served by the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA). For Central Africa, the treaty of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) was also approved. All these arrangements, together with that of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) in North Africa were expected to lead to an all-African common market by the year 2025 (Hartzenberg, 2011)^[15].

Several other arrangements have occurred following the Lagos Plan. Among these is the famous Abuja Treaty of 1991, which aimed to reaffirm the commitment of the OAU's heads of state to an integrated African economy. Delineated within this Treaty was the creation of the African Economic Community (AEC), African Monetary Union, African Central Bank, African Court of Justice, and Pan African Parliament. In order to speed up the process of creating these entities, the 1999 Sirte Declaration was signed; it later led to the 2002 launch by African heads of state of the African Union (AU), which replaced the Organization of African Unity (OAU). In addition to those already mentioned, recognized regional and economic

integration organizations include the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CENSAD), the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the East African Community (EAC).

Regionalism therefore can be referred to the efforts by a group of countries to enhance their economic, political, social, or cultural interactions. Lee (1999) argues groups' regionalism as under four major headings: Economic (market) integration, regional cooperation, regional integration, and development integration (Lee, 2002)^[18].

Redie Bereketeab in his piece "*Re-conceptualizing Identity, Citizenship and Regional Integration in the Greater Horn Region*" (2012) argues regional integration on de-territorial basis as he emphasizes:

"Regional integration could be said to require a de-territorialisation of identity and citizenship. De-territorialisation in turn would mean designing other forms of identity and citizenship foundations. The rationale and logic of this argument is prevalence of some kind of common regional integration presupposes a prevalence of some kind of common regional identity that transcends the ideology that confers upon territoriality a socio-politically-defining power" (Bereketeab, 2012).

At least theoretically it could be plausible to claim that primordial perception of identity would pose a hindrance for regional integration although post-modernist perception would facilitate it. This contention stems from the assumption that primordial affiliation often tends to impose strict and closed membership premises where it becomes, mildly put, difficult for individual members to opt out or come in.

While identity integration is very important, economic integration is very paramount too. Thus economic integration refers to commercial policy of indiscriminately reducing or eliminating protectionist policies only among participating countries (Salvatore, 2010)^[25]. It focuses on widening the market of the countries joining together. Philips Drysdale and Richard Gamaut (1992)^[6] define economic integration as a movement toward one price throughout the global economy for goods and services (Drysdale and Gamaut, 1992)^[6].

Regional cooperation involves cooperation among distinct countries with a shared interest in a particular issue and may include "the execution of joint projects, technical sector cooperation, common running of services and policy harmonization, and joint development of common natural resources" (Lee, 2002)^[18]. Besides, regional integration is "a process whereby political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations, and political activities toward a new center, whose institutions possess or demand jurisdiction over the pre-existing national states" (Haas, 1958)^[13]. Development integration involves collaboration by a number of distinct countries whose main objective or agenda is the economic and social development of their region. To Lee, this requires more state intervention, as it was seen as a response to the problems created by economic integration, although it has proved more difficult to implement.

Regional cohesion, the greatest form of regionalism, occurs through the combination of all the above regionalism processes. With this, there is the formation of a unified and united regional entity. Andrea Hurrell (1995)^[16] compares new and old regionalism and comes up with five distinctive

characteristics of new regionalism, which:

1. Appears very broad in its scope and has a variety of structures or procedures for forming regionalism;
2. Does not restrict regionalism or integration among countries just in a particular geographical location or stage of development. It expands to even partnerships between countries on different continents and at different levels of development (among developing and developed countries);
3. Differs greatly in the level of institutionalization of the different regions;
4. Presents itself in a multifaceted manner, going beyond a particular focus (be it social or political); and
5. Entails the formation of a regional sense of identity (Hurrell, 1995) ^[16].

The discussion of regionalism by Hurrell and Lee reveals some interesting similarities and distinctions. Under Hurrell's classifications, regionalization and regional awareness and identity are not necessarily government induced. However, all the others-regional interstate cooperation, state promoted regional integration, regional cohesion, economic integration, regional cooperation, regional integration, and development integration-are mainly government initiatives. While regionalization focuses more on social and economic benefits with more roles for the private sector, regional awareness and identity stresses the importance of identical traits and ideologies among countries. Other than developmental integration and perhaps regional cohesion-which is also founded on both social and economic benefits like regionalization - regional interstate cooperation, state promoted regional integration, and economic integration all place emphasis on economic gains (Mengisteab and Bereketeab, 2012) ^[19].

Additional definitions cast regionalization as a political process (political union or integration) characterized by economic policy coordination and harmonization among member countries (Fishlow and Haggard, 1992) ^[10]. However, in some situations, regionalism can be viewed as a socio-political project with aspirations to restore past ethnic and cultural identities and autonomies (Giordano, 2000) ^[11].

What is worrying for regionalism and economic integration in Africa is that, although some efforts have been made, the full rationale for the formation of the AU, AEC, and the eight recognized regional blocs (ECOWAS, COMESA, ECCAS, AMU, CENSAD, IGAD, SADC, and EAC) are yet to be realized in terms of accrued benefits of regionalism.

Apart from African based regional blocs, other regions in North America and Europe formed their own regional organizations. One of such organization is the European Union formed in 1960s as European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), to the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957 via Treaty of Rome. The Maastricht Treaty established the European Union in 1993 and introduced European citizenship. The Lisbon Treaty that came to force in 2009 allowed several constitutional amendments to Maastricht Treaty. However, the relations between African regional blocs, particularly, EAC with EU is quite parasitic and dependent path.

2.1 Why Regionalism/Regional Integration: Rationale?

- Because of perceived/real benefits that we expect:
- We don't integrate because *we love one another - affinity!* No!

- National interests such as national security, politics:
- The focus of regional integration has been on functional cooperation with an emphasis on the economic aspects:
- Through economies of scale afforded by harmonization on common external services:
- Through establishment of common infrastructure that would promote citizens' interests:
- Foster deeper integration among member states while at the same time ensure the widening of movement of citizens:
 - To increase market sizes:
 - To lower cost of doing business:
 - To access markets:
 - For efficient use of resources:
 - To improve growth rates:
 - To enhance social sector harmonisation:
 - To boost negotiation power and
 - To enhance peace and security (Riak, 2022) ^[24].

3. Concept of Parasitic Bloc, the East African Community (EAC)

Parasitism biologically refers to an inharmonious inter-specific ecological interaction in which individuals or species (the parasites) use the organs, tissues or cells of individuals of another species (the hosts), causing them harm. Studies of parasite community ecology are often descriptive, focusing on patterns of parasite abundance across host populations rather than on the mechanisms that underlie interactions within a host (Pedersen and Fenton, 2006) ^[22]. The most common interaction networks in community ecology are consumption webs, which incorporate explicit trophic structure and directionality such that primary producers (basal level) are consumed by species at the intermediate level, which are in turn, consumed by predators higher up the network. It is critical to suggest that within host, parasitic communities can be represented in a similar fashion, incorporating trophic structure in terms of the resources of the host that the parasites consume and the components of the immune response of the host that attack infecting parasites (Ibid).

The resource base is the host, a critical variable necessary for understanding parasitic communities. Competition and commensalism are common and mutualists frequently mediate the host-parasitic interaction, as predation is an integral part of transmission in many animal parasitic systems (Price, 1990) ^[23]. In addition to tight linkage in consumption involving parasites, the component communities of one host frequently have cross-linkage into other component communities on other hosts (Ibid). Therefore, host associations are crucial to understanding parasite communities but also parasite communities profoundly influence host interactions.

One major difficulty with describing within-host parasitic communities is how to estimate interaction longevity strengths. There are several analytical tools in community ecology that enable interaction strengths and network structure to be determined from a range of semi-quantitative and qualitative data (Gotelli and Allison, 2006) ^[12].

With this parasitic concept, it is appropriate to argue that EAC relations with EU are pivotally built on parasitism. EU funded 50% of the EAC budget for 2022/2023, 40% of EAC budget for 2023/2024 and 30% for EAC for 2024/2025 fiscal year. Apart from budgetary support, EU allocated 85 million Euros development envelope fund to the EAC. This

is 400% to that of EAC partners' budgetary contribution. This is quite substantial and can only be done by a true friendly bloc. Moreover, the EU has continued to earmarked technical support towards the EAC secretariat and other arms of the community. Yet, the EAC has stuck in parasitism not able to reciprocate in kind and action. All EAC-EU supports are path-dependence and tilted to the EAC as recipient. Although EU has benefited from trade of goods from EAC partner states, the trade relation has been on "whoever pays the piper dictates the tune" making this

relations more parasitic (Riak, 2022)^[24]. The EAC becomes the parasite, as the EU remains the host.

4. EU Substantial Budgetary Supports to EAC

As argued earlier, the EAC has continued to depend on financial support from the EU. Substantive budgetary cushions has emanated from the EU and continued to support EAC programmes. The following table provides insights towards EU contribution.

Table 1: EU Substantial Budgetary Supports to EAC

East African Community Secretariat Budget (USD)	Actual Budget	EU Contribution in Percentage
FY'24/25 (1st Jul 2024 to 30 June 2025)	\$112,984,442	30
FY'23/24 (1st Jul 2023 to 30 June 2024)	\$103,842,880	40
FY'22/23 (1st Jul 2022 to 30 June 2023)	\$91,579,215	50
Total	\$308,406,537	120

Source: EAC Secretariat

European Development Fund (EDF)

Created in 1957 by the Treaty of Rome and launched in 1959, the European Development Fund (EDF) is the EU's main instrument for providing development aid to African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries and to overseas countries and territories (OCTs).

The EDF funds cooperation activities in the fields of economic development, social and human development as well as regional cooperation and integration. It is financed by direct contributions from EU member states according to a contribution key and is covered by its own financial rules. Although the 11th EDF remains outside of the EU budget, the negotiations in the Council of Ministers on the different elements of the 11th EDF have taken place in parallel with the negotiations of the external instruments financed under the budget, to ensure consistency. The total financial resources of the 11th EDF amount to €35.1 billion for the period 2019-2021 (Riak, 2022)^[24].

In the field of the external actions of the European Union, the applicable legislation is composed in particular by the international agreement of Cotonou for the aid financed from the European Development Fund, by the basic regulations related to the different cooperation programmes adopted by the Council and the European Parliament, and by the financial regulations.

After having EDF1, 2, EU and partners are at the 11th EDF. The 11th EDF was created by an intergovernmental agreement signed in June 2017 as it is not part of the EU budget and entered into force on the 1st March 2020, after ratification by all member states. In order to ensure continuity of funding for cooperation with ACPs and OCTs, a 'Bridging Facility' was set-up to cover the period between the end of the 10th EDF (December 2018) and the start of the 11th EDF (March 2020). This 'Bridging Facility' seized to exist when the 11th EDF entered into force.

The EU has allocated to the East African Community an envelope of Euros 85, 000,000 under European Development Fund (EDF) to the EAC between 2014-2020 (EAC Secretariat Report, 2021)^[7]. This envelope slowly is being allocated to projects to be implemented at partner states level and some amount are being spent at the EAC Secretariat for coordination.

5. The European Union (EU) Trade with the East African Community (EAC)

In the developed world and advanced developing countries, welfare systems are to the greatest or the least extent, capable of compensating and retooling the losers. These conditions are absent in Africa, with the possible exception of South Africa. That points to the need for development partners to step in, in this case the EU, with an appropriately designed and sustainable aid-for-trade package. That in turn brings the spotlight back to the aid for trade agenda. A far-sighted view on the EU's part would recognize that this might be a small price to pay for politically stable, reforming, and ultimately expanding economies that will become larger markets for European exports and investment. The value of total trade flows between the EAC and the EU member states (27) is about 10% of EU imports; 14% exports to the EU being dominated by a few products such as plants, flowers, coffee, vegetables, fish and tobacco (Fact Sheet Report, 2024). The EU mainly exports machinery, chemicals and vehicles to the EAC.

6. Implications of Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) to the East African Community (EAC).

EPAs are Economic Partnerships Agreements that have been negotiated and signed by EU with Africa and Caribbean countries. Since 2002, the East African Community (EAC) partner states of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda have been negotiating an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the European Union (EU). The EPAs negotiations were finalized on 16th October 2014. It was then signed by Kenya and Rwanda in November 2016. Uganda and Tanzania have reservations on the document. However, Burundi has been sanctioned by EU and thus cannot trade directly or through the EAC with EU. Hence, Burundi has not inked the EPA. South Sudan, DRC and Federal Republic of Somalia are yet to be engaged on EPAs. Although the EAC-EU EPAs covers several cooperation areas of interest to the EAC and EU economies such as development matters, the main objective of cooperation in goods trade is the liberalization of trade between the two regions. For long, trade between EAC partner states and EU member countries were governed by the African Caribbean

Pacific (ACP) group of countries and EU Agreement trading regime, the ACP-EU trading regime provided un-reciprocal market access to EU of products exported from the ACP countries, with exports from the former (including EAC partner states) entering the EU market on duty free basis, while exports from EU to EAC countries were subjected to import duty. Once negotiations are completed and once the agreement comes into force, the EAC- EU EPA will provide a reciprocal preferential trading arrangement between EAC partner states and the EU member countries (Mbithi, 2015)^[20]. EAC's liberalization of EU imports is progressive; starting two years after the EAC- EU EPA comes into effect with import duty being targeted for elimination within a period of 17 years after the EAC- EU EPA comes into effect (EAC Secretariat Report, 2021)^[7].

The EPAs on EU and EAC are argued on potential positive and negative implications, Monica Hangi (2009)^[14] argues that EPA will lead to a closer economic integration between East African countries and the EU; thereby further enlarge the market for these countries (Hangi, 2009)^[14]. This enlarged market, governed by a stable, transparent and predictable framework for trade, will allow for economies of scale, improve the level of specialization, reduce production and transaction costs and altogether help to increase competitiveness. This will lead to an increase in trade flows, technology and investment in the country and hence promote sustainable development and contribute to poverty reduction. The EAC Customs Union and Common Market Protocols will as well get a positive boost from EPA negotiations and regarding the Common External Tariff, final solutions will be easily obtained once all member countries of the EAC sign EPA with EU.

EPA will contribute to trade policy reforms within the member countries, introducing increased openness as well as transparency. EPA will consolidate and lock-in these reforms, there by make these policies more predictable and less reversible. This will help to mobilize economic operators and to attract foreign investment.

EPAs negatively impacts on EU-EAC trade of goods and services, and particularly on EU-EAC member states. The loss of government revenue is taken, as a short term and static consequence of EPA since long term, more dynamic consequences, are more important. These long-term dynamic effects are mentioned above such as economies of scale, increased efficiency and productivity changes as a result of greater competition. An increased unemployment rate is as well anticipated which will at the end provoke economic insecurity and political instability within the region (Mbithi, 2015)^[20].

Due to the EPAs, the provision of health, education and other basic social services will only be available to those who can pay for them. Low income groups, the peasants and the unemployed will have less access to fewer basic social services; and dumping of cheap EU agricultural surpluses (dairy products, cereals, beef etc) is seen as a threat to the viability of agriculture and agri-processing industries, particularly for small scale farming sector, which does not receive state support. Rural economies will collapse hence increasing insufficiency and food insecurity (Hangi, 2009)^[14].

7. Changing World Order and its Effects on EAC-EU Relations

The changes in European integration with Brexit, couple

with global pressures such as migration, climate change and terrorism, are likely to change the relationship between EAC-EU, particularly, the EAC financial dependency. This should be born in mind insofar the much funding the EAC has been receiving from EU could scale down. The United Kingdom had an average around €12 billion in EU funding each year between 2011-2015 but over that same period made an average net contribution of €15 billion (Riak, 2022)^[24]. It is Germany that takes the lead in funding EU budget with an annual average of around €15 billion (Dieter and Higgott, 2003)^[5]. When Britain pulled out of EU single market, then its funding to EU got ceased and thus the overall funding of EU consequently dropped and this in turn affects the EAC budgetary and development support.

Migration has been a serious debating issue within the European Union members. While some members feel that free flows and movement of people should be restricted due to the immigrants' constraint of resources to the migrating countries together with security threats, other members believe that migration is part and parcel of the human integration. This debate has been further revisited more with terrorists attack in France, Brussels and United Kingdom. A key finding and policy implication of the research is that restrictive immigration policies are not effective in deterring or containing migration (EU Report, 2023)^[8]. Instead, they simply increase the costs and risks of movement, including through exposing people to exploitation by smugglers and traffickers, as well as employers in places of destination. Moreover, research has suggested that restrictive policies also reduce return migration, as immigrants feel 'trapped' in their country of immigration and are reluctant to risk leaving in case they are unable to reenter. Thus, policies aimed at promoting return should regularize the situation of migrants, enabling them to move freely and safely between countries of destination and origin.

However, with reelection of President Donald J. Trump of United States who is an-immigration and anti-globalization mold, fighting for free immigration could is already daunting. He signed several executive orders the first day (20th January 2025) he was inaugurated into the office and 11 million people without proper legal documents have been scheduled for deportation. Several European countries such as Italy, Hungary, Spain and Greece have been ahead of game on anti-immigration policies and if not reverse on time, the entire EU could be infected with anti-immigration lyrics. This could affect EAC-EU relations immensely since migration of the EAC citizens to EU member states is very high and frequent. The same applies to the EU citizens travelling to EAC partner states for commerce and tourism. It is upon Germany and French not to roll off their hands on strong European Union.

8. Conclusions

The paper advanced a strong argument as far as regionalism and regional integration is concern, peculiar, the EAC and the EU relations. While locating the important of regionalism and regional integration in theoretical perspective, the paper argues that relations amongst the regional integration blocs are not always symbiotic. This argument has been narrowed down to the relations between the EAC and the EU. While appreciating the historical relationships between the EAC and the EU, the paper with surveyed-empirical literature found that the EAC has parasitically relied on EU. This has been demonstrated by

the huge budgetary support of the EAC activities and further funding through European Development Funds (EDFs), which the EAC has not reciprocated. Moreover, trade between the two sisterly regional blocs has skewed and dictated by the EU terms. Conditions such as adherence to good governance, human rights and rule of law are yet to be fulfilled by the EAC partner states to benefit fully from trade and development funds. Even with EPAs, the empirical literature showcased that the EU dictated the agreement and EAC has to dance to the tune of the accord lest the EU withdraws its support. This relation has continued to place the EAC at the receiving end. Thus, this relationship will not lead to the claimed long-term benefits unless the issues of inequalities are addressed.

Hence, a regional integration agenda that appears to privilege some, who often wield the “big stick”, will only create disillusionment, frustration, and anger for the weaker ones, and will sooner rather than later begin to unravel itself. However, who is going to be blamed? It is true to the adage “he who pays the piper, dictates the tune”.

Finally, the EAC has to delink itself from this too much dependency, set up its own funding sources and relate with the EU with equal terms. There should be no master-servant relationship but the relationship should be built, promoted and carried out in equal terms and measures. The EU should view EAC as partner and not a colonial region that can be subjected to unilateral European terms and conditions of integration.

9. Recommendation for Future Research

While the paper has demonstrated the parasitic nature of the EAC on the EU in their relations, further research is hereby recommended to regional integration scholars to discern reasons why the EAC took parasitic stand in its relations with the EU.

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