Political Factors Influencing Integration in the East African Community (EAC) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Block

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ABSTRACT

Regionalism in Africa has been pursued to enhance political unity at the Pan-African level. Despite the numerous efforts of political integration by the East African regional states, success has been limited. Several authors have examined the influence of regionalism from various perspectives and regions. However, they have not addressed the EAC and the ASEAN in a comparative context. There is therefore a knowledge gap in the context of the EAC situation and how it compares with the ASEAN regional bloc. The specific objective of this study was to assess the political factors which influence development in the EAC and the ASEAN regional blocs. This study was guided by the Neo-Functionalism Theory. This study employed the concurrent mixed methods approach, incorporating the survey design for the quantitative component, and the exploratory design for the qualitative component. The target population included members of the EAC Secretariat, delegates attending various EAC council and summit meetings, ASEAN diplomatic representatives within the EAC Partner States and officers from the Ministries of EAC and Foreign Affairs. The study employed both purposive and stratified random sampling to select the study sample. The Quantitative data was generated using questionnaires while qualitative data were generated using in-depth interviews. The findings indicate that: the EAC member states have embraced similar policies on human development, social benefit, and protection, across the region. The study concludes that, inspite the numerous efforts of advancing political integration by the East African regional states, real, tangible success is still a mirage. The EAC members require mutual political trust if the ultimate goal of a political federation is to be realized. The study recommends the development of a legislative and political framework (laws, policies, and guidelines) for Community Development within partner states.

(286 Words)

Keywords: *political factors, regional integration, neo-functionalism, intergovernmental organizations, geopolitical significance*

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Ernst Haas, the eminent researcher of the European integration and neo-functionalism, defines the political integration, as the process whereby nations forgot the desire and ability to conduct foreign and vital domestic policies independent of each other, seeking instead to make joint decisions or to delegate the decision-making process to new central organs (Lindberg, 1963). From this definition, it could be observed several essential elements of the concept of political integration: The political integration is a process, making joint decisions, a delegation of the activity of decision-making, specific policies of decision-making to new Central Organs.

Regional integration is "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, 1968). It also refers to the efforts of a group of countries to enhance their economic, political, social, or cultural interactions (Lee, 2002). Lee (2009). The regional integration can be grouped under four major headings: economic (market) integration, regional cooperation, regional integration, and development integration (Lee, 2002)

1.1.1   East African Community

The East African Community (EAC) is an intergovernmental organization composed of five states in the African Great Lakes neighborhood in eastern Africa, namely, Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda. (*East African Community Anthem* - Youtube (2018). With a land area of 2.42 million square kilometers and a combined Gross Domestic Product of US$ 169.5 billion (EAC statistics for 2015), its realization bears great strategic and geopolitical significance and prospects for the renewed and reinvigorated EAC. The study of the EAC is guided by its Treaty, which instituted the Community. It was signed on 30 November 1999 and entered into force on 7th July 2000 following its ratification by the original three Partner States - Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda (EAC, 2015).

1.1.2. Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

In comparison to the preceding, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations [*Association of Southeast Asian Nations, 2015:*] (Chalermpalanupap, 2008: 10) is a political and economic organization of Ten Southeast Asian countries. Since its formation on August 8, 1967, by Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand, (Wikisource, 2007) the organization's membership has expanded to include Brunei, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar (Burma), and Vietnam. (*Association Of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)* | U.S (2018). Its principal aims include accelerating economic growth, social progress, and sociocultural evolution among its members, alongside the protection of regional stability and the provision of a mechanism for member countries to resolve differences peacefully (*asean.org,2015:*) (*The Economist, 2015:* 13)

ASEAN covers a land area of 4.4 million square kilometers, 3% of (*Association Of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)* | U.S (2018). ASEAN territorial waters cover an area about three times larger than its land counterpart. Member countries have a combined population of approximately 625 million people, 8.8% of the world's population. In 2015, the organizations combined nominal GDP had

grown to more than US$2. 8 Trillion Asian: (*Association Of Southeast Asian Nations | Asean*. (2018).

1.2   Statement of the Problem

The centrality of Regional Integration in the economies of developing countries cannot be overemphasized. Nevertheless, it may be remarked that despite the numerous efforts of passing on this noble initiative by the EAC regional states, success has been modest. There is no comprehensive integration policy to cement the East African regional states. Ninalowo (2003) explains that there is a lack, of political will in the member countries that are necessary to see integration succeed. This is expressed in the persistent nonobservance of commitments undertaken within the respective agreements and in the insufficient use of the instruments set up by these agreements. Furthermore, there is an obvious concern about the absence of shared political values; countries have had very different experiences and obstacles to deal with. Some members are only now starting to recover from the disruptive politics of military dictatorships and the painful experience of ethnic conflicts. Each country, in dealing with such challenges has created elements of a unique political culture.

Comparatively, the overall structure of the ASEAN economies has changed since the adoption of the AEC Blueprint in 2007 with the growing importance of the services sector. The share of the services sector in the economy steadily increased to reach 50.2% in 2014 while both the industry and the agriculture sector's share declined and stood at 38.0% and 11.0% respectively. Growth in the region has been driven by an increasing share of foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows to the services sector, as well as a solid performance in the trade sector, contributing to the region's output expansion (ASEAN, 2015). Why is the East African Community not at par or even higher, in economic development and growth than its ASEAN counterpart?

1.3   Objective of the Study

The objective of the study was to assess the **political factors** which influence development in the ASEAN regional bloc and compare them with scenario obtaining in the EAC.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Political Influence in the EAC Integration

The East Africa Community is a potential precursor to the establishment of the East Africa Federation, a proposed federation of its five members in a single state (EAC, 2000). In 2010, the EAC launched its common market for good, labor and capital within the region, with the goal of a common currency by 2012 and the full political federation in 2015, East Africa Community Fact and Figures (2009).

Kimenyi (2006), points out the unwillingness of governments to cede authority to regional bodies because many African countries are still dealing with sovereignty issues, and are still unwilling to reduce the powers of the state. To date, Political Federation is yet to be achieved, and talks towards laying the foundation for ultimate political Federation have been acrimonious due to fear of loss of sovereignty among the Partner States.

Commitment to the formal EAC idea is relatively narrow, in both social and generational terms, and thus many have questioned the timetable for the project. The fast-tracking political union was first discussed in 2004 and enjoyed a consensus among the three presidents of Kenya, Tanzania, and

Uganda. There however remains significant political differences between the states. In Uganda, Museveni's success in obtaining his third-term amendment raised doubts in the other countries. The single-party dominance in the Tanzanian and Ugandan parliaments is unattractive to Kenyans, while Kenya's ethnic-politics remain absent in Tanzania. Rwanda has a distinctive political culture with a political elite committed to building a developmental state, partly to safeguard the Tutsi group against a return to ethnic violence (Booth *et al.,* 2007).

Burundi has been politically unstable with riots and protests starting in April 2015 after President Nkurunziza's announcement of a third term. Burundi's unrest has evolved into a seemingly intractable crisis with street clashes between government forces and armed opposition groups, grenade violence targeting police, militia violence against internally displaced persons (IDPs) attempting to flee, and security agents conducting searches and arrests of suspected rebels throughout the country (*The Guardian*, 15 January 2016). The political unification of EAC has a long way to go since all the Partner States have issues they need to resolve before they can embark on political federation matters.

2.2. Political Influence in the ASEAN Integration
Throughout its evolution, ASEAN has consistently maintained its attachment to the full respect of national sovereignty and the principle of non-interference in internal affairs, which translates into consensual decision-making, political rather than legally-binding agreements and the lack of sanctions for non-compliance. A breakthrough regarding institutionalization came about with the signing of the ASEAN Charter of 2007, which has enhanced ASEAN's standing as a rule-based organization and approximated it somewhat to structures typical of the EU. ASEAN integration project is however imperiled by some structural factors, currently aggravated by the divisive influence of China in the economic and security field (Jones, 2004). During the 14th ASEAN Summit held 26 February to 1 March 2009, the ASEAN heads of state/governments adopted the ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint (APSC). (Jakarta: Association of Southeast Asian lands. Jun 2009). The document is based on the rules and aims of the ASEAN charter, the ASEAN Security Community Plan of Action, the Vientiane Action Program, and other relevant decisions.

In sum, the APSC aims to produce a community that portrays the following characteristics: a rule-based community of shared values and norms; a cohesive, peaceful, stable and resilient region with a shared responsibility toward comprehensive security; and a dynamic and outward-looking region in an increasingly integrated and interdependent universe (Bellamy, 2006)

During the 14th ASEAN Summit that the member governments of ASEAN adopted the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint (ASCC). The ASCC envisions an: "ASEAN Community that is people-centered and socially responsible with a view to achieving enduring solidarity and unity among the nations and peoples of ASEAN by forging a common identity and building a caring and sharing society which is inclusive and harmonious where the well-being, livelihood, and welfare of the peoples are enhanced". Among its focus countries are human development, social benefit, and protection, social justice, and rights, ensuring environmental sustainability, making the ASEAN identity, and contracting the growth gap (Ismail, 2009),

2.3   Theoretical Framework
The study is anchored on Neo-functionalism theory. A group of American academic theorists present neo-functionalism as a deliberative paradigm reaction by to previously feeble attempts to

the logic, or to predict the course of contemporary international change (O'neill,1996). The fundamental assumptions of neo-functionalism are embedded in their perception of the role of the nation-state. They discounted the nation-state as an irrelevance rather than disparaging it as evil something propagated by functionalists. According to O'Neill, the neo-functionalists theorized that, nation-states were principally concerned to perpetuate social and ideological divisions along existing faultiness they had been responsible for creating. They were also too culturally insular, as such, incapable of meeting the more expansive functional or welfare needs of modern citizens. In this regard, these needs could only be met with international cooperation.

In that context, the political integration is perceived as a process, that differs from the potential existence of political integration as a status. This process represents the activity of delegating the power of decision-making to new central organs, which includes delegation of the sovereignty, from a national level to a newly established – supranational one.   The theory posits that integration results from the need to shift specific functions away from exclusively nation-state control toward supranational institutions. These new units would hold the decision-making power once enjoyed by the nation-state (Schmitter, 1969).

The critical element in the theory of neo-functionalism is the spill-over effect (Majone, 2009, 104,105). The effect of spill-over takes the central position in this theory and according to Lindberg (*Theorizing   Regionalism: Cooperation*,   Integration   (2018).   Retrieved   from http://aei.pitt.edu/78876/1/Borzel.pdf): "it refers to a situation in which a given action, related to a specific goal, creates a situation in which the original goal can be assured only by taking further actions, which in turn create a further condition and need for more action, and so forth" (Laursen, 2005). The spill-over effect is the effect from the ongoing process of integration (in the political sense) and specific integration in certain sectors that spontaneously leads to integration in another sector (*Theorizing Regionalism: Cooperation, Integration* (2018). Retrieved from http://aei.pitt.edu /78876/1/Borzel.pdf). In that direction, the initiation of integration in one sector would produce integration in another sector. The establishing of common institutions that govern certain social issue would be followed by extending their authority of decision-making in another specific sector. This logic of spontaneously extending authority of decision making of the supranational institutions is called spill-over effect.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a mixed approach and the *ex-post-facto* design. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed. The area under study was within the member states of the EAC regional bloc comprising of; Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda and South Sudan. South Sudan was however excluded from the study because of the prevailing internal conflicts and political instability which have delayed its full integration into the EAC. The EAC regional offices in Nairobi, Kampala, Arusha, Bujumbura, and Kigali provided an accessible population for this study. The ASIEN population for study comprised of personnel in the offices and residences of the high commissioners, diplomats, and ambassadors of these EAC member states. These are drawn from China, Indonesia, Japan, Thailand, Cambodia, Philippines, and Singapore. Table 3.1 summarizes the study population, sample, data collection tools and sampling strategies employed towards determination of each sample size.

Table 3.1: Sample Size

POPULATION COMPONENTS	Population (N)	Sample size (n)	Sampling strategy	Data Collection tool
EAC Secretariat	9	3	Stratified purposive	Interview schedule
Delegates attending EAC meetings	600	180	Stratified random	Questionnaire
Members of EAC	72	22	Stratified random	Focus group discussion
Northern Corridor integration	11	3	Stratified purposive	Interview guide
Diplomatic Missions	207	62	Stratified random	Questionnaire
TOTAL	**899**	**269**		

Determination of sample size from the target populated used the statistical procedure for sample size (SS) determination; the researcher computed the sample size at the 5 % level of significance, with an error of 5%. Using the Survey System (2017) SS calculator, this gave a sample size of 269 as summarized in Table 3.1. The data from the questionnaires were analysed by use of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software Version 24.0. This software provided general statistical information about the participants investigated and assist in making inferences about the population (McNeill, 2005).

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Political Factors Promoting EAC Growth and Development
This section examined the EAC respondents' rating of political factors promoting EAC growth and evolution. The analysis is grounded on the mean ratings computed from responses given by the selected stakeholders representing the EAC region. The mean ratings are then converted to percentage ratings, where the midpoint (cutoff point) is 60%. Ratings above 60% are interpreted as high, where 60 -74% are moderately high, 75 – 84 is high 85% and above is very gamey. Likewise, below 60% is low and very low, successively. Table 4.1 presents this analysis

Table 4.1. Political Factors Promoting EAC Growth and Development

POLITICAL FACTORS PROMOTING EAC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT	Mean Rating	St. Dev.	% Rating
Historical ambition potentially provides politicians in the EAC region with the ability to present themselves as statesmen and representatives of a more significant regional interest	3.55	1.239	71
The visions of a political union are shared together by the majority of the population, who is well informed about the process in all the EAC countries.	3.24	1.190	64.8
There is an enhanced sense of East African identity, developing from modern communications	3.82	0.799	76.2
The Commitment to the formal EAC idea is relatively stable, in both social and generational terms	3.85	1.080	77
The fast-tracking political union is enhanced by a consensus among the leaders of the member states	3.76	1.098	75.2
The possibility of speeding integration so as to achieve political federation sooner than later, is embraced by leaders of the EAC member states	3.24	1.264	64.8
There remains a significant political cohesion among the EAC member states	3.75	1.162	75
EAC has potential for expansion as other current non-EAC states have expressed same interests as EAC member states	3.94	1.139	78.8
The EAC member states have embraced similar policies on human development, social benefit and protection, across the region	3.61	1.135	72.2
The EAC regional identity is characterized by social justice and rights, ensuring environmental sustainability.	3.63	1.005	72.6
The EAC member states are continually forging a collective identity and building a caring and sharing society which is inclusive and harmonious.	3.77	0.933	75.4
The EAC member states are people-centered and socially responsible to achieving enduring solidarity and unity among the East African citizens	3.94	1.043	79.8
OVERALL MEAN	**3.68**		**73.6**

Source: Field Data, 2017

The results in Table 4.1 shows that the valuations applied by the EAC respondents of the political factors influencing development range from a minimum of 64.8% to an uttermost of 79.8%. The lowest factor, which is ranked as moderate, represents the "possibility of speeding integration to achieve political federation sooner than later, is espoused by the leadership of the EAC member countries." This means that the leadership of the EAC states has put reasonable efforts to achieve political integration.

The highest rated factor, represented by the statement that "The EAC member states are people-centered and socially responsible with an aspect to achieving enduring solidarity and oneness

among the East African citizens." This is construed as a high rating. This means that the member states in the EAC region are investing adequately on their citizens to attain solidarity among the citizens of East Africa.

Another factor having a low valuation of 64.8% is extracted in the assertion that "The sights of a political union are shared together by the majority of the population, who is well informed about the process in all the EAC countries." This implies that communication and pedagogy of the EAC population on the usefulness of integration is still low.

The results also suggest that the historical ambition has not adequately provided politicians in the EAC region with the ability to represent themselves as statesmen and representatives of greater regional involvement. This was rated at 71%. The results further show that the EAC member states have not adequately embraced similar policies on human development, social benefit, and protection, across the region. This was rated at 72.2%.
Also, the findings show that the member states have not adequately fostered an EAC regional identity, which is characterized by social justice and rights, ensuring environmental sustainability. This was rated at 72.6%. The overall mean rating for political factors influencing development in the EAC region was computed at 73.6%, which is relatively modest.

The analysis has indicated, however, that the following factors are showing a positive path to progress in political integration. These factors received a rating of 75% and above. One of these is the fact that there is an enhanced sense of East African identity, developing from modern communications. The other factor is the fact that, the commitment to the formal EAC idea is relatively stable, in both social and generational terms. Also receiving high rating is the effort of the fast-tracking political union, which is enhanced by a consensus among the leaders of the member states. The respondents also concurred that there remains a significant political cohesion among the EAC member states. Further to this, the respondents concurred that EAC has the potential for expansion as other current non-EAC states have expressed same interests as EAC member states. Lastly, the respondents strongly agreed that the EAC member countries are continually forging a collective identity and building a caring and sharing fellowship, which is inclusive and proportionate.

Kimenyi (2006), directs out the unwillingness of governments to surrender authority to regional bodies because many African states are however dealing with sovereignty issues, and are yet unwilling to cut the powers of the state. To date, Political Federation is yet to be achieved, and talks towards laying the basis for ultimate political Federation have been acrimonious due to the concern of loss of sovereignty among the Partner States.
 According to Elbadawi and Mwega (1998), political integration is a process by which a supranational state is produced out of smaller nations. The individual states share a joint government, and the supranational state is recognized internationally as a single political entity In substance, the Partner States need to infer that for political integration to come after, they should be made to give up some of their powers to the Community, and this has been the significant drawback towards the EAC political Integration.

It has been contended, perhaps humorously, that the critical drivers for Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania are that Kenya wishes to export surplus capital, Uganda seeks an outlet for its surplus labor, and Tanzania wants to realize a Pan-African vision (Ayee, 2011). It has also been argued,

nonetheless, that the commonalities go far more recondite. Many of the national elites old enough to recall the former EAC often share memories and a keen sense of red ink at its eventual dissolution (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_African_ Community_Customs_Union).

More cynically, others have indicated that this historical ambition potentially provides politicians with the ability to represent themselves as statesmen and representatives of greater regional involvement. Furthermore, EAC institutions bring significant new forces to dispose and depose those who serve in them (Wangamati and Okoth, 2015).

There remain significant political differences between the states. Museveni's success in obtaining his third-term amendment raised doubts in the other countries. The single-party dominance in the Tanzanian and Ugandan parliaments is unattractive to Kenyans, while Kenya's ethnic-politics remains absent in Tanzania. Rwanda has a distinctive political culture with a political elite committed to building a developmental state, partly to safeguard the Tutsi group against a return to ethnic violence (Booth *et al.,* 2007).

4.2   Political Factors Promoting ASEAN Growth and Development
Table 4.2 presents the rating of the ASEAN respondents on political factors promoting its growth and development.

Table 4.2: Political Factors Promoting ASEAN Growth and Development

POLITICAL FACTORS PROMOTING ASEAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT	Mean Rating	Sd Dev	% Rating
Historical ambition potentially provides politicians in the ASEAN region with the ability to present themselves as statesmen and representatives of a more significant regional interest	4.23	0.770	84.6
The visions of a political union are shared together by the majority of the population, who is well informed about the process in all the ASEAN countries.	4.22	0.934	84.4
There is an enhanced sense of ASEAN identity, developing from modern communications	4.47	0.615	89.4
The Commitment to the formal ASEAN idea is relatively stable, in both social and generational terms	4.52	0.815	90.4
The fast-tracking political union is enhanced by a consensus among the leaders of the member states	3.74	1.005	74.8
The possibility of speeding integration to achieve political federation sooner than later is embraced by leaders of the ASEAN member states	4.03	0.822	80.6
There remains a significant political cohesion among the ASEAN member states	4.09	0.806	81.8
ASEAN has the potential for expansion as other current non-ASEAN states have expressed same interests as ASEAN member states	3.96	0.816	79.2

The ASEAN member states have embraced similar policies on human development, social benefit, and protection, across the region	4.18	0.841	83.6
The ASEAN regional identity is characterized by social justice and rights, ensuring environmental sustainability.	4.38	0.763	87.6
The ASEAN member states are continually forging a collective identity and building a caring and sharing society which is inclusive and harmonious.	4.23	0.770	84.6
The ASEAN member states are people-centered and socially responsible for achieving enduring solidarity and unity among the ASEAN citizens	4.44	0.621	88.8
OVERALL MEAN	**4.21**		**84.15**

Source: Field Data, 2017

Table 4.2 shows that the respondents' ratings vary from a minimum of 74.8% to a maximum of 90.4 %, on the consensus among the leaders of the member states to fast-track political union and for the commitment to the formal ASEAN idea, which is relatively healthy, in both social and generational terms. These ratings are mostly very high, indicating that the ASEAN region has achieved milestones in political integration. The overall mean rating for the political factors is computed at **84.15%,** which can be interpreted as very high. This high rating can be attributed to the ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint (APSC), which aims to produce a community that portrays the following characteristics: a rule-based community of shared values and norms; a cohesive, peaceful, stable and resilient region with a shared responsibility toward comprehensive security; and a dynamic and outward-looking region in an increasingly integrated and interdependent universe (Jones, 2004).

The factors that received the highest ratings in the analysis are: There is an enhanced sense of ASEAN identity, developing from modern communications (89.4%); The Commitment to the formal ASEAN idea is relatively stable, in both social and generational terms (90.4%); The ASEAN regional identity is characterized by social justice and rights, ensuring environmental sustainability (87.6%), and; The visions of a political union are shared together by majority of the population, who is well informed about the process in all the ASEAN countries (84.4%). Other factors include: Historical ambition potentially provides politicians in the ASEAN region with the ability to present themselves as statesmen and representatives of a more significant regional interest (84.6%), and; The ASEAN member states have embraced similar policies on human development, social benefit, and protection, across the region (83.6%).

During the 14th ASEAN Summit that the member governments of ASEAN adopted the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint (ASCC). The ASCC envisions an: "ASEAN Community that is people-centered and socially responsible with a view to achieving enduring solidarity and unity among the nations and peoples of ASEAN by forging a common identity and building a caring and sharing society which is inclusive and harmonious where the well-being, livelihood, and welfare of the peoples are enhanced". Among its focus countries are human development, social benefit, and protection, social justice and rights, ensuring environmental sustainability, making the ASEAN identity, and contracting the growth gap.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations
5.1 Conclusion

As shown in the objective of this study, it can be understood that the weak institutions in EAC lack the mandate to enforce and implement agreements; this is ascribable to the reluctance by the partner nations to give their sovereignty. This has also resulted in the slow harmonization and coordination of policies. Thirdly, the security and instability in the region create an environment not conducive for investors, disputes and tension between communities further slows the integration operation. Terminal, but not least the lack of participation by the private sector and citizens who are really the remainder beneficiaries of the integration process is missing. The participation process of the citizens is yet to be institutionalised as the masses have no avenues of participation unlike the EU, where the people directly participate in electing representatives of the EU parliament through political parties.

On that point is no comprehensive integration policy to cement the EAC regional states. The primary cause is that there is a lack, of political will in the member countries to see the integration succeed. This is expressed by the persistent nonobservance of commitments taken and insufficient use of the instruments set up by these arrangements. The EAC member states do not share common political values: each has had different political experiences and each has chosen a different path to handle them. The experiences have created elements of a unique political culture for each member state.

Compared to EAC, the ASEAN, throughout its evolution has consistently maintained its attachment to the full respect of national sovereignty and the principle of non-interference in internal affairs, which translates into consensual decision-making, political rather than legally-binding agreements and the lack of sanctions for non-compliance.

5.2   Recommendations
The study recommends the development of a legislative framework (laws, policies and guidelines) for Community Development within partner states. Harmonization of democratization policies, processes and practices. In doing so, the EAC should emulate ASEAN block by embracing similar policies on human development, social benefit, and protection, across the region. This would enable EAC member states realize a common identity, a feature that is prerequisite for integration in the region.

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