

The Uniting of East Africa and the Uniting of Europe?

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This article will try to explain some aspects of the integration process within the second East African Community (EAC), using major reflections of the theory of Neofunctionalism (NF). To assess NF's validity, it is used not in its "original" environment, namely the European context, but rather "out of area." The author attempts to explain the foundation of the EAC through an NF lens of analyzing and discovers some parallels with the early years of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). Three main axioms of the theory are taken and projected onto the East African case study. The main thesis asserts that NF explains parts of the integration process in East Africa and furthermore reveals parallels between the EAC and the EU.

Although the European integration process is an extraordinary development, it can be said that in the global context it is in fact not a unique phenomenon (Varwick, 2004: 162). In Africa, beginning in the late 1990s, and in particular after the reorganization of the African Union (AU) in 2002, regional integration has become a new trend among nation-states (Musonda, 2004: 44).

Introduction: Africa as a "Spaghetti Bowl"

Currently, there are about fourteen regional integration organizations (RIOs) in Africa overlapping and maintaining competition with each other (Asche and Bruecher, 2009:174). The situation is often illustrated with the picture of a "spaghetti bowl" (Draper, Halleson and Alves, 2007). This metaphor refers to the complexity and lack of clarity of tangled spaghetti (representing RIOs) sharing one bowl (representing fifty-four African nation-states and their multiple memberships), which hinders positive economic integration (Qobo, 2009: 57). The African RIOs overlap each other, which means (in addition to remaining in competition with one other) they are creating artificial production areas, hindering liberal economic development (Bhagwati, 2003:1128ff.). Within East Africa, the area that forms the focus of this article, there are about five main RIOs (EAC, SADC, COMESA, IGAD, IOR; see Abbreviations); however, some of them are more advanced than others in terms of their institutional and functional development (Asche and Bruecher, 2009). The most well-established of the region—or consistent with the metaphor: the thickest of the pieces of spaghetti—is known as the East African Community (EAC). It is a RIO, which was refounded by Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda in 1999 after one decade of loose multilateral cooperation (Hofmeier, 2005: 210). Now the EAC has approximately 130 million inhabitants, and since 2007, it includes Rwanda and Burundi as well (World Development Report, 2010: 420). The EAC nowadays has an institutionalized decision-making framework (Summit, Secretariat, Legislative Assembly, Court of Justice), the aim of which is to create a political federation via several integration steps (free trade area → customs union → common market → single currency → federation) (EAC Treaty, 1999: §5/2). Since EAC is probably the most ambitious African integration project, it is important to explain and understand its development, for example via the application of a theory of regional integration.

Referring to this, the paper seeks to follow some aspects of such an EAC integration process by using the analytical tools of the theory of Neofunctionalism (NF). In combining

a well-established integration theory with an empirical case that is still unfolding, the aim is to determine whether the East African integration pasta can be partly understood by using NF developed by Ernst B. Haas (Haas 1958; 1964; 2004). As a theory originally conceived to explain the European integration process, it might have the potential to reveal analogies between the uniting of Europe and other integrating regions elsewhere, especially if NF is taken “out of area” to explain phenomena like the uniting of East Africa (Haas, 1961:366). Compared to other integration theories, the theory proposed by Haas has significant advantages in offering an adequate and abstract theoretical framework as well as a dynamic process character and a modern view of different actors in several political settings. It is neither “obsolete nor obsolescent” (Haas, 2004: liii) but an appropriate theoretical basis that has the strength to analyze other regional integration phenomena even beyond Europe (Jaspert 2009). Hence, the author tries to comprehend the specific case of the uniting of East Africa, via the projection of the most important elements of NF. For this purpose, in the second part of this paper the central ideas of NF are elucidated. The main section then takes a closer look at EAC from an NF perspective, one aim of which is to draw some comparisons with the integration process in Europe in the 1950s. As regional integration in East Africa is a complex process, this paper examines only some aspects of the current development, such as the main actors and their motives, the process character, as well as the finality of EAC. Finally, the conclusion attempts to show perspectives regarding the explanation of the development of empirical cases of regional integration via the application of NF and EAC’s future.

The Theory of Neofunctionalism: Paradigm and Applications

Thus, it is important at first to outline NF’s basic assumptions. Therefore, in the first subsection, the main axioms of NF will be outlined, as well as its major items and characteristics. Then, in the second subsection, the first and probably the most famous application of the theory—the development of the ECSC—will be outlined briefly in order to understand how Haas used it to explain regional integration in praxis.

Basic Assumptions of the Theory

First, according to NF, it is very important to understand the reasons why nation-states are keen to integrate and create RIOs. Therefore, it is useful to introduce Haas’ definition of regional integration (Haas, 1970: 610). For Haas, integration is a mixture of common ideas, necessities, internal and external constraints, and the political will to find new solutions for national and regional problems (Haas, 2004: 51). He defines the origin of motives as a combination of political calculations, national and/or regional interests, constraints and the socially constructed shift of loyalties, and activities of diverse actors involved in the process (Haas, 2004: 16). For NF, regional integration is a mixture of voluntary and forced cooperation, which can lead to deeper integration via the loss of national sovereignty if interests and/or constraints are complementary and if the RIO solves problems better than the national entities (Haas, 2004: 51). Through spillover and spillback effects between various levels of functional intrastate politics, regional integration then becomes a process of institutionalization and regionalization of the societies that can ultimately lead to the construction of a new supranational unity (Haas, 2004: 297). Hence, the basic assumptions of Haas’ main book the *Uniting of Europe* are that regional integration finally is a supranational overlay atop former intergovernmental cooperation (Haas, 2004: 4). This means that even the fact that states started to integrate more or less voluntarily, it would not prevent them from a dynamization of an integration process through their loss of sovereignty (Schmitter, 1969). Such a deepening is not only linked with constraints and interests states are faced with but also with the rise of alternative actors. Second, this leads to the political actors involved in the decision-making processes. According to NF, it can be said that, as Haas declared in his book, nation-states are no longer the only decision makers (Haas 2004: 113). Their role

is not only challenged by the rise of national and transnational interest groups but also via the establishing of regional institutions. In this regard, it is important to note how strong the influence of civil society and/or other political actors is on important decisions (Haas 2004: 5). Furthermore, Haas illustrated that shared interests and ideas, as well as common constraints, can speed up integration, whereby an active and supranational regional institution is also capable of intensifying such a process (Haas, 2004: 19). Altogether, the performance of institutions regarding their capacity to solve cross-border problems and the activities of non-state actors (combined with the other factors explained) can push nation-states forward toward deeper integration (Haas, 2004:51). Third, in this regard, it is obvious that Haas did not consider regional integration as a grand “bargaining game” (Hoffmann, 1983:29) but as a detailed process with various actors, influences, and decision-making levels. Therefore, each integration process has its own process-related “logic of sector integration” according to NF (Haas, 2004: 238). This means states are likely to begin their coordination within politically non-sensitive areas with potentially high absolute gains such as economy, infrastructure, or energy politics (Haas, 2004: 240). After a process in which states make profits, learn from and increase in trust for each other, the initial cooperation can spill over to other policy areas through the state actors but also via pressure from interest groups or the ruling of regional institutions (Haas, 2004: 313). In cases of economic gains, overlapping interests and trust are very likely; Haas even presumes that an automatism of the process can develop via spillover (Haas, 2004: 103). According to Haas and Schmitter, regional integration is in this sense much more than negotiations; it is a long-lasting, complex, and dynamic process with different types of actors and influences acting between them (1964). Hence, in between grand, steps-based approaches like intergovernmentalism (Hoffmann, 1959) and detail focused theories without a particular paradigm, like new regionalism (Cox, 1995; Söderbaum, 2002), NF offers a third and second image paradigm to provide an overview, as well as insights into the black box (Rosamond, 2000: 146).

In part three of this paper, these three important NF axioms already explained will be projected onto the EAC case in the following way: First, regarding the role of actors and their interests, second, with focus on the process character, including spillover dynamics, and in the end, the question of finality and automating of the integration process. Before starting the main analysis, the next part depicts how NF empirically explains the development of ECSC. This *modus operandi* does make sense not only because a first application helps to understand the theory but also since comparative insights in the European and East African integration processes will be given as well.

First Application: The Case of ECSC

In brief, Haas explains the process of integration leading to the ECSC as having occurred in the following steps (Haas, 2004: 283–440). First, political pressure from the coal and steel industries, along with other state reasons (economic interests, post-war constellations etc.) in favor of a new form of collaboration, led to European coordination within this sector (Piazolo, 2006:17). A new regional and partly supranational institution, namely the ECSC High Authority, was founded to manage and oversight (Haas, 2004: 32). After some time governments and other interest groups assessed that this functional cooperation worked well, and they argued for the intensification of cooperation in other areas, for example, the nuclear energy sector (Weidenfeld, 2004: 428). In such an environment (ideally a pluralistic), bottom-up pressure from interest groups as well as the experiences of regional cooperation of state actors (or efficacy in terms of solving problems) can provoke an expansion of the cooperation toward more integration (Haas, 2004: 297). Following this so-called spillover effect, the European integration process took place in a dynamic institutional environment, and due to linkages between sectors, cooperation spilled over from steel to energy politics to economics and later on to other sectors (Haas, 2004: 314). In the end, a supranational

political organization—EEC and later on the EU—was created through more spillover, and a geographically extendable economic, and then later also political, community was born (Haas, 2004: 38). Is this theoretical paradigm useful to explain an African integration process, or is it only useful for the European case?

The Uniting of Europe = The Uniting of East Africa?

Answers are sought to the question whether NF could be useful in explaining new developments in global south integration phenomena in particular, through exploring the theory's potential in the EAC case study. Since NF has been revived as a relevant paradigm and is again used to explain regional integration in Europe, Latin America, and East Asia, it is legitimate to project the paradigm onto African integration processes as well (Mattli, 1999; Zimmerling, 1989). Three important variables of the theory will be projected onto the EAC integration process to determine whether NF is still an appropriate tool to analyze integration phenomena or not. Since the theory has a very specific definition of actorhood combined with the role of their interests and constraints, the first subsection will show whether East Africa is characterized by a similar constellation as Europe in the 1950s. Furthermore, one of the strengths of NF is that it has a focus on process dynamics within integration through spillover and the logic of sector integration (Haas, 2004: 283). According to that, the second subsection examines whether such effects occur in East Africa, too. The final subsection will then project the importance of idealism and finality posited by NF onto the EAC case. The analysis concludes with a summary, including an outlook.

European and African Integration: Actors and Motives

THE QUESTION OF ACTORHOOD

Since on the one hand NF does not deny the importance of state actors, while on the other hand it opens the black box regarding CSOs and NGOs, it seems to offer an adequate medium for explaining the integration processes in Europe and East Africa (Dunn and Heutz, 2007: 181). In the EAC case, three interdependent countries that are very vulnerable to external influences created a RIO in order to better respond to several international trends like globalization, liberalization, and interdependencies but also to internal developments (Mair, 2001:12; Musonda, 2004). Furthermore, beyond the interests and constraints that East African nation-states were dealing with, external donors and national interest groups pushed integration forward (Kopsieker, 2007). These included trade unions, business groups, labor unions as well as international social and economic NGOs and donors (EAC Update, No. 35/2010:10). Since state actors recognized that regional integration will not be successful without NGOs (EAC, 1997:2), several interest groups, including the East African Law Society (EALS) and the East African Business Council (EABC), accompanied and monitored the initiation of EAC in the 1990s (Odhiambo, 2010: 55). Because of the early inclusion of CSOs, EAC was one of the first African RIOs that created an ascertained status for non-state actors embedded in the integration process (Dähne, 2007). Due to the newly guaranteed status of NGOs and donors, interest groups as well as foreign stakeholders are now directly involved in the decision-making processes (EAC, 2001). For example regarding the decisions of the EAC Summit, business organizations as well as humanitarian CSOs have increased their influence and now play a decisive role in the implementation of regional integration schemes, e.g., in the fields of customs harmonization or poverty reduction (FES, 2009: 8). Overall, a mixture of political will combined with internal and external interest pressures has shaped the integration in East Africa over the last fifteen years (Speiser, 2003: 8). In this regard, the initiation of EAC can be compared with the development of ECSC, where nation-states as well as non-state and external actors pushed the integration forward, due to economic needs and interests (Haas, 2004: 283–440). These empirical observations are concordant to the definitions of actorhood made by NF, since Haas declares that nation-states are no longer the only decision-makers (Haas, 2004:113).

Furthermore, African state actors are not only the main drivers of new integration processes regarding internal pressure, but they are also forced to do so in an environment of globalization and interdependence, due to their limited stateliness. According to the book *The New Regionalism in Africa*, “the ability [of nation-states] to negotiate transfers of sovereignty is frequently emerging as the only alternative to de facto disempowerment” (Grant and Söderbaum, 2003: 24). In other words, regionalism is often the only way to avoid further vulnerability and to create positive economic, social, and political changes (Fugazza, 2008: 154). Faced with such challenges, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda also founded EAC in 1999 to escape from the vulnerability trap concerning external economic or political shocks (Kibua and Tostensen, 2005). In the end, in the EAC context the process of regionalization has not only been driven by the interests of states but also by those of NGOs and external forces, a development that Haas describes exactly as the establishment of a regional political community (Haas, 2004:5). When state actors try to solve problems and push the creation of synergetic solutions through the establishment of regional institutions forward, NGOs are animated to do the same (Akopari, 2002: 89). There is the same mix of political actors as in Europe (CSOs, states, external forces), although the origins of their influence, of course, vary (Piazolo, 2006; Haas, 1968: 297). Since state actors still play the most decisive role in the process, while NGOs begin to create their own political agenda, the actor definition of NF appears to fit very well (Haas, 2004: 113). The broader definition of actorhood offered by NF is hence very useful, especially compared to the state- or to the society-based focus of other approaches (Moravcsik, 1998; Söderbaum, 2005: 221).

THE MAIN DRIVING FORCES

Moreover, it is important to mention that NF has an alternative emphasis on the role of interests, reasons, and constraints that motivate or force actors to engage within integration. Haas’ definition, therefore, goes beyond the pure game of will and looks for the roots of integration on different decision-making levels (Haas, 1970:611). In East Africa, there is evidence of a mixture of precisely the same reasons for integration as those that played a role in Europe in the 1950s, along with those factors, which have influenced shifts towards the new regional entity in both regions (Sperling et al., 2007). Some of the main motives of states and NGOs are:

- Regional constraints like water or food supply, strong economic, social, and financial dependencies on international partners (Nohlen, 2000: 459, 774, 821) and responsibilities that can only be fulfilled in cooperation (like resource management or the HIV issue) (Tietze, 2006).
- National problems, such as how to attain economic growth through new resources and markets (Musonda, 2004:122).
- The will of political actors (including preserving aspects of their sovereignty) confronted with interest conflicts and constraints (Mehler et al., 2004: 260).

While reasons for integration vary in detail, all significant regional integration processes share a high synergetic potential of multidimensional endogenous needs and constraints, mixed with political will (Haas, 2004:16) and exogenous pressure (Zimmerling, 1989). Whether in Africa, Europe, or Latin America, the main reasons for voluntary integration are similar, and if the relevant constraints, needs, and will are highly complementary, advances in the process are probable (Haas, 1967). Additionally, in both the European and East African case, external sponsorship of RIOs accompanied the nexus of will, enforcements, and problems (Repinski and Stahl, 2005:17). Just as the U.S. formerly supported Europe to stabilize the continent and to foster economic and political relationships, the EU (and other donors) nowadays try to strengthen EAC through funding, technical and knowledge transfer, as well as the establishment of an Economic Partnership Agreement (Eid, 2008:103). Whether it is accurate or not, donors in particular do often see economic integration as one of the few options available for developing regions to escape the poverty trap (Makgoeng, 2007:44).

As a result, both exogenous or endogenous motives for or aims of regional integration are similar in Europe and East Africa. From that point of view, it can be said NF provides an appropriate definition regarding the role of actors and motives. Nevertheless, when it comes to the examination of motives, classical NF has a very endogenous focus on integration and mentions external factors only in passing (Schmitter, 1970:854). Therefore, a reformed paradigm has to be amended by adequate concepts on external influences (Zimmerling, 1991).

PEACE, SECURITY, AND THE SPAGHETTI BOWL

Returning to the EAC case, another main motive, namely the interest in national security, has to be mentioned (Nye, 1968). The context giving rise to this motive is to some extent comparable to the security situation in post-war Europe. Core EAC members are not challenged by an intraregional post-war situation; however, they are confronted with the unstable and warlike environment of the Horn of Africa (Matthies, 2006: 25) and the Great Lakes Region (Njome Ekango, 2001: 154). Given the region's conflict ridden neighbors, namely the Democratic Republic of the Congo, (South) Sudan and Somalia, EAC members are almost required to deepen their liaisons (Matthies, 2005). Thus, in East Africa as well as in Europe (East-West-Conflict; post-war), grave security problems in the direct neighborhood were a decisive catalyzing factor. EAC as an "island of stability" (Saligmann, 2001:29) is also a reaction to the menacing environment the nation-states are facing. Particularly for the consolidation of the post-civil war regimes in Rwanda and Burundi, it is of essential importance to build up an active regional bloc within the unstable meta-region (Repinski and Stahl, 2005). Thus, the integration process geographically spilled over onto them, as EAC became economically and politically successful (Asche and Bruecher, 2008: 175). Hence, Rwanda and Burundi joined EAC in 2007, since EAC became a more attractive economic market (free trade area, planned common market), which extended its work on foreign and security politics (Kerler and Roggenkamp, 2007: 27f). One can determine the spillover by using the "spaghetti bowl" picture, since both states would have had the opportunity to join other similar RIOs that offer economic and security politics in the subregion (Asche and Bruecher 2009: 174). Compared to the other five organizations in East Africa, EAC is the most advanced RIO regarding economic and political integration (Hofmeier, 2008: 233). While neighboring RIOs in Central Africa (CEEAC, CEMAC) and the Horn (IGAD) are not more than "paper tigers" (Donaiski 2010: 70), and IOR is only a loose regional forum, Southern African RIOs are almost too far away to be relevant (SACU, SADC) (Mair, 2001: 405). The only competing piece of "spaghetti" was COMESA, although it does not have a strong focus on security politics (Sidiropoulos and Meisner, 2005: 1). In the end, Rwanda and Burundi both chose EAC, since the RIO is more dynamic than the others are. Nevertheless, all old EAC member states at least have a double membership regarding one of the already mentioned competing organizations (Hofmeier, 2008: 234).

Since EAC, COMESA, and SADC in particular are trying to create the same type of regional economic bodies with the same aims and similar designs, an overlapping membership gives rise to significant economic, fiscal, and political contradictions (Mashindano, Rweyemamu and Ngowi 2007). This situation is completely different to the constellation in Europe in the 1950s, where only two organizations shaped the region, whereby EEC served for economic and NATO for security politics. However, it can also be assumed that since WEU was established and extended in 1991, a situation of competition with NATO became obvious, a problem that has never been resolved (Piazolo, 2006: 171). While the coordination between NATO and WEU is still in its infancies, EU states tend to split into two fractious cases of conflicts like Bosnia, Iraq, or Libya. In this regard, the East African states seem to be more unified in times of conflicts (Hofmeier, 2004:211). Thus, even if such EAC members have additional memberships in other RIOs, in times of contradictions, e.g., during EPA negotiations or the DRC conflict, they appear to prefer the East African option (Adelmann, 2003:36). In the end, even if the situation is quite complex due to the overlapping membership issue, EAC at

least does not have an organizational nemesis, as ESCS/EEC plus NATO had until the Warsaw Pact ended in 1990. Compared to other African Regions—particularly West and Southern Africa—EAC is in the special position of being an economically and institutionally advanced RIO, capable of harmonizing with competing organizations from a strong position (Otieno-Odek, 2005). Unfortunately, NF does not consider the issue of overlapping memberships since the theory insists that integration is a unique process. At least the paradigm mentions that the perspective of peace and security through integration may be decisive for states to go ahead (Haas, 2004: 5).

Integration beyond Summits and Negotiations

A CONNECTING HISTORY

Furthermore, EAC members are in the unique position of having a second opportunity to create a regional political body. Since the first EAC, founded in 1967, broke down in 1977—due to diametrically opposed political nation-building processes and economic developments—member states are now trying to avoid the failures of the past, especially those associated with economic and security factors (Musonda, 2004: 74). Consequently, NF considers the second EAC not as an isolated integration experiment but rather as socially “loaded” with the legacy and knowledge of the prior attempt (Haas, 2004: xiii). Several institutions, like LVFO or EADB, survived the decline of the first EAC, whose collapse was provoked by bad political leadership (Kiwanuka, 1979). Moreover, the strong intraregional economic and sociocultural trade continued across the borders, ignoring the political ice age between the dictatorship in Kampala, the authoritarian government in Nairobi and the socialist regime in Dar-es-Salaam (Nassali, 2003: 124). Beyond the transient political leadership, a strong tradition of informal and institutional cooperation—a sense of “East African identity”—still existed after 1977 (Hofmeier, 2007: 426). In the end, the second EAC must always be seen as a construction influenced by its predecessor, as well as yet to be established common norms and values (Dietrich, 1998: 188). Today the member states, that is, the political systems, the conduct of leadership, and the economic alignments, are much more similar (Meyns, 2006: 5), as is the relative power among the member nations and their motives to cooperate (Musonda, 2004: 106). Therefore, the states now try to harmonize their economies, build compensation mechanisms, and strengthen regional institutions, as well as the role of NGOs, in order to avoid a second collapse (EAC, 1997: 3). NF works very well in this context, since it recognizes increasing confidence and a learning effect, as well as “shadows of the future” and the past, as decisive multiplying factors for integration (Haas 2004: xvii). The theory goes deeper into the process than other paradigms, without getting stuck in bottom-up details (Rosamond 2000: 146). Compared to Europe—where states have mostly been linked by conflicts before the 1950s—the lower degree of intricacy of the regional constellation eases the integration, although the spaghetti bowl simultaneously complicates it.

East African Integration as a Process

Above all, it ought to be noted that the current EAC secretary has claimed one of the main reasons for the collapse of the first EAC was its state, actor-centered approach toward integration (EAC, 1997). This means a strategy to build a stable people-centered integration process beyond the main negotiations between state leaders was completely missing (Odhiambo, 2010: 8). Now it seems the states have learned from their mistakes, trying to make the integration more open and people-centered (EAC, 1997: 2). Therefore, the second EAC commenced with loose coordination in sectors like infrastructure, energy supply, and telecommunications while embedding decisive CSOs (Hofmeier, 2005: 43). Through the remaining institutions, such as EADB and LVFO, the states as well as the participating NGOs (EABC, EALS) tried to solve regional issues that could not be managed unilaterally (Dietrich, 1998: 188). In this framework, it is important to know the institutional heritage of the first EAC, as well as the

participating NGOs, played a particularly critical role in preparing and paving the way for new negotiations on the second integration attempt (Odhiambo, 2010: 50). The result was the EAC treaty implemented in 2001, which was extended to all economic sectors and introduced social and security politics as well, because the states proclaimed the more cooperation is intensified, the more problems can be solved effectively on a regional level (Smith, 2011: 22). Thus, loose cooperation in specific sectors spilled over into a multidimensional integration treaty, influenced by interest groups (Speiser, 2003: 23). Compared to the development in Europe, it can be assumed, that from an NF standpoint the initiation process of EAC and ECSC were quite similar, even if the bottom-up pressure was higher in Europe (Piazolo, 2006: 20). Therefore, the initiation of the second EAC, theoretically, speaks strongly in favor of NF, which emphasizes the process character of integration, in contrast to approaches focusing on summits and negotiations (Haas, 1976: 173-212). This logic becomes much more important, because organizations like EAC have their own institutional framework, with partly independent regional decision-making bodies (Meysns, 2009: 219). With the EAC treaty, several supranational institutions were established, such as the emergent regional court EACJ or the parliament EALA (EAC Treaty, 2001: para. 16). As both tried to find and foster their own role regarding the integration process and the treaty allowed them to do so, EAC received a sort of inner life that judges, plans, or implements also beyond the “bargaining game” (Hoffmann, 1983: 29). This continuing process led to a bottom-up dynamic, with new national and regional NGO actors seeking influence (Dähne, 2007: 5). For example, after the establishment of the EAC secretariat, the number of regional NGOs fighting poverty increased while their level of effectiveness also improved through the new coordination center (Eberlein, 2001: 37). In fact, as Haas describes in the *Uniting of Europe*, EAC appears to be at the center of a new dynamic integration process with various actors and regional institutions that are trying to extend their influence (Haas, 2004: 30). Thus, EAC currently enjoys its first spillover effects. Today, economic integration is still developing, while regional cooperation was extended geographically as well as politically, e.g., toward attempts in favor of a coordinated foreign and security policy (Wapakhabulo, 2002: 7). The new members and politics areas have again seen a rebounding spillover effect toward economic integration.

It is worth mentioning that the joining of Rwanda and Burundi in July 2007 and subsequent commencement of implementation of Customs Union in July 2009 has bolstered the EAC market and further unleashed the opportunities of the expanded market to the people of EAC. (Bagamuhunda, 2010: 2)

Finally, EAC is on its way toward a common market, as the free trade area and the customs union have at least formally come into force. The discrepancy between ratification and implementation in East Africa, which will be shown by the two following examples, underlines, however, that NF ideals often do not occur in reality. In this regard, there is a big gap between EAC and ECSC, since ECSC members tended not only to ratify documents but were also bothered to implement them (Piazolo, 2006: 25).

THE EXPANSIVE LOGIC OF SECTOR INTEGRATION

Regarding this, another very important point within NF is the “expansive logic of sector integration,” which becomes apparent on closer examination of the integration process (Haas 2004: 283). Several years before EAC was founded, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda were already cooperating informally on issues including road building, the management of Lake Victoria, and energy supply (www.lvfo.org/, 12.13.2008:14.14). This flexible coordination led to a more clearly defined and institutionalized integration body, and spillover effects in the telecommunication, transport, and economic cooperation sectors could be observed (Kopsieker, 2007:3). From this point, the states tried to create a market focused economic organization with several integration steps (<http://www.eac.int/index.php/home.html>, 12.12.2008:15.25). Although according to that, the EAC integration scheme seems to reflect the expansive logic

of sector integration on paper, economic vulnerabilities and lack of political will slowed down the integration in reality.

Therefore, it was especially the weak and unprepared business groups of Tanzania and Kenya that caused a spill back regarding the development of the free trade area (Dähne, 2007:3). Due to a lack of information about the advantages of a free trade area and an undiversified economic development, business groups urged their governments to maintain NTBs to protect their economies (Musambayi, 2006:30). Even if the customs union now officially works, there are still NTBs and other protectionist policies that hamper economic integration, also because ruling elites try to maintain neo-patrimonial rent-seeking systems (Kopsieker, 2007). Furthermore, the main impact on the degree of integration is still made by inter-state political coordination (Musonda, 2004). Thus, against the predictions of Haas, pressure exerted by the economy or CSOs was merely of secondary importance (Dähne, 2007: 4). In this case, the partly dogmatic NF and its economy-based logic is indeed a disadvantage compared to other integration theories (Söderbaum, 2002: 28). In contrast to Europe, the ECSC, and its industries, East Africa does not have a strong economic development status, which could generate a primary functional spillover for integration (Rosamond, 2000: 51–54).

Furthermore, due to limited pluralism, political will dominates the regional landscape. In such an environment, “low” politics areas, like economics, soon become quite sensitive, whereby the idea of automatic sector integration fails (Mehler et al., 2006: 316). Interestingly, an expansive logic of sector integration may also be observed in EAC but more through political cooperation than through CSOs such as in Europe in the 1950s (Haas, 2004:103). Over the last fifteen years, EAC member states have intensified their political cooperation and, thereby, avoided further internal conflicts jamming the integration process (Bagamuhunda, 2010). Given that armed conflicts have taken place in the region, particularly in the 1970s, it ought to be underlined that peaceful co-existence is one of the most powerful reasons for further integration (EAC, 1997: 2). In EAC, these political circumstances led to further economic cooperation and not vice versa as suggested by the expansive logic of sector integration (Kerler and Roggenkamp 2007). In any case, the primacy of economics sounds dissonant within a theoretical composition that has its roots in political cooperation for peace (Haas, 2004: 103). Even if for Haas integration is the perfect means “for resolving conflicts between” states (Haas, 1967: 610), the theory underemphasized this political issue and remains focused on economics. This reason for regional integration is not merely an idealistic one, since in both regions intrastate wars have not occurred after the initiation of cooperation, a fact that is often forgotten (Kiwanuka, 1979). It is of course not clear whether the integration process directly or indirectly provoked the absence of war. Nevertheless, the fact that no conflict has occurred anymore to this date underscores the status of the European and East African states as constituting cohesive communities (Saligmann, 2001: 29). Therefore, a strength of NF is its capacity to take into account political as well as economic motives, although it tends to place too much emphasis on economics (Haas, 2004: 283). Why should the expansive logic of sector integration not work the other way round? The primacy of economics seems to posit an incorrect initial causality, but it has its roots in the development of the EU as well as the functionalist heritage of NF (Mitrany, 1966). Hence, to ease the application of the theory beyond Europe, a broader definition of the logic of sector integration is required.

THE ROLE OF REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Another critical item of the process framework applied to the East African context is the institutionalism that stands behind NF. For example, EALA, initially created as a weak institution, is now an active and important actor, struggling against the decisions of the summit or the Council of Ministers (EAC Treaty, 1999: para. 48).

Compared to other regional parliaments in Africa South of the Sahara, EALA was able to extent its capacities and to ascertain its authority especially struggling against the council of ministers. (Dähne, 2007: 5)

At the same time, EACJ started to rule critically against EAC members and increasingly asserted its supranational human rights competences, which are still icebound (Lamin, 2008: 236). Given these examples of emancipation of regional institutions, the establishment of an East African Civil Society Forum (EACSOF) and the increasing number of CSOs trying to get influence (Onyango-Obbo, 2007: 57), it cannot be denied that regional institutions and CSOs do matter (North, 1980). However, in Europe and in East Africa, the roles as well as the effects CSOs and institutions have on the integration often remain unclear (Przeworski, 2004: 2). The institutional framework of EAC—even if it is one of the most advanced African RIOs—is still dominated by intergovernmental decision making (EAC Treaty, 1999: para. 11–16). Against the ideas of Haas, it was not the strong supranational institutions that caused spillover but rather interest analogies and learning effects by state actors (Haas, 2004: 60). Again, NF is too dogmatic, overemphasizing the role of regional institutions. Thus, even in Europe—despite the fact there are strong supranational institutions like the European Court of Justice or the EU Commission—it can be argued the regional arena is still partly dominated by state actors.

INFORMAL INTEGRATION

Another drawback of NF is that even if it is focused on integration as a process, it only considers formalized developments while paradoxically overlooking informal cooperation (Boås, 2003: 43). Especially in the EAC case, informal dynamics such as intraregional (black) trade, social mobility, or transnational networks are so important the focus on institutions appears to be far away from reality (Onyango-Obbo, 2007: 57). In this dynamic context, regional institutions do play an important role in generating a platform for decision making and interests. However, again, the primacy of institutions can be denied (Haas, 2004: xvii). In reality, regional integration in East Africa also goes beyond interactions of states, institutions, and CSOs, due to high informal cultural, economic, and social exchanges (Onyango-Obbo 2007). This factor is important, however, it is not part of NF, which puts emphasis on formal and official interactions. In this regard, EAC cannot be compared with ECSC, since states are weaker and the transnational, cultural, and social exchange is higher than it has been with the case in Europe (Zartman, 2007).

Altogether, one can assume the spillover dynamics, together with the notion of actors and their interest and constraints are partly inadequate to explain EAC integration (Söderbaum, 2002). While state actors are often led by realpolitik, their political will usually dominates, even if overlapping interests or constraints exist in a politics area (Musambayi, 2006: 30). Thus, the logic of sector integration, as well as the focus on rational choice as major acting principle, and institutions is defined too narrowly to be satisfying. Is the third key aspect, namely the finality of integration, more useful?

The Finality of Regional Integration

The third axiom dealt with here will refer to the idea of finality—looking at the idealist side of NF. In this regard, Haas predicts that ultimately a successful economic integration will lead to a new supranational “political community” with regional identities and loyalties (Haas, 2004: 16). Interestingly, Rolf Hofmeier points out that in the EAC case the process of regionalization is accelerated by “a commune and existing regional East African identity” (Hofmeier, 2007: 426). While the initiation of a new supranational community is still in its infancy in regard to the building of identities and loyalties, East African integration seems to be more advanced than European unification (Onyango-Obbo, 2007). Several observations support this proposition. First, the region is more homogenous than Europe ever was, which means any reluctance to cooperate may be more easily overcome (Mair and Peters-Berries, 2001: 91). Second, a shared history and shared languages, remarkable cross border trade and socio-cultural exchange as well as the normative heritage of Pan-Africanism, make East Africa a sort of cultural and linguistic entity (Nassali, 2003:124). Third, while the regional languages officially used

are Kiswahili and English, the complementarities between the bureaucracies, as well as the broadly spread feeling of regional solidarity, may ease the integration process (Mair, 2001: 91). Especially due to the common colonial history and the languages, the administrative, educational, and judicial systems of EAC member states are much more homogenous than in ECSC (Dietrich, 1998: 189). That is why cross-border communication, cultural exchange, and regional media or social mobility are more advanced than in Europe to this date, even if East Africa is still relatively poor and underdeveloped (REED, 2005). Although the creation of a regional political community is still far away, some shards of this idea may be found (Odhiambo, 2010: 60).

From this point of view, NF has a significant advantage in offering a paradigm that may be used to understand the empirical case (Haas, 1992: 224). Nevertheless, against NF propositions, it remains unclear whether such dynamics will lead ultimately or taxonomically toward a new political entity (Haas, 2004: 5). The final stage of NF integration would see—under ideal conditions—*islands of regional integration merging into a bigger unit* (Schmitter, 1969). In this context, it is crucial to note the EAC Island grew in 2007 through geographical spillover by about 20 million inhabitants and still has the final aim of a federation within approximately thirty years (von Soest, 2008:2). Although theory and practice seem to be similar in this case, it also reveals the discrepancies between policies and politics in Africa's integration contexts (Djadjaglo, 2009:261). While the extension of the EAC made the mastering of the first important tasks toward an economic community initially more difficult, ideas like the political federation vegetated on paper (Dähne, 2007:4). On the contrary, political will controlled many decisions made by heads of states who are primarily looking out for securing their own regimes (<http://www.dailynews.co.tz/business/?n=19675&cat=business>, 06.16.2011:10:32). Since regional institutions are still not strong enough, such "empty chair policies" may hinder or stop the integration process (<http://www.ena.lu>, 06.16.2011:10:46). The big difference between the two cases is that in the EAC region such strategies may be more destructive than in Europe, as the regional institutions still remain weak and the "sacrifice" of national sovereignty required by membership in the community is still at a low level (Lamin, 2008: 236). Currently, there exists an extended conflict between, on the one hand, the necessities that force states to cooperate, and on the other hand, the political will to preserve sovereignty (Söderbaum, 2002: 176). At the same time an empty chair policy may serve as a convenient strategy for the political elites, the potential for new resources or influence through integration may also be very attractive (Dähne, 2007). As in Europe in the 1960s and 1970s, overbearing national interests are still regulating East African integration (Hrbek, 2004: 98). The lack of will and the incapacity to go ahead with too few financial resources may only be balanced by more sensible pragmatism on the part of the members, pressure from the societies, inherent necessities, and perhaps support from donors (Qobo, 2009: 59). While ECSC and its members had the Marshall Plan to support development and integration, a consequent external support is still missing in EAC (Murray 2008: 273). Generally, EAC could be an interesting counterpart to the EU, because the community is between states of being a weak intergovernmental arena and a new supranational actor (Hofmeier et al, 2005: 46).

Nevertheless, the EU support of EAC, unlike SADC, remains inchoate, especially because EAC does not yet represent an attractive market to invest in (Eid, 2008). Therefore, and because of other constraints mentioned above, it is highly questionable whether EAC can generate an automatic integration process toward its final stage of a political federation. In this regard, the NF axiom of finality and automatism preliminary stays untouched.

Conclusion: Similar in Context, but Different in Detail

The aim of this article was to answer the question, "Is this theoretical paradigm of NF also able to explain an African regional integration process or is it only useful for the European case?" through some arguments that sought to strengthen the analytical potential of NF without

being too uncritical. In the EAC case, the broader definition of actors, the involvement of interests, and constraints, as well as learning, ideas, and experiences, the dynamic process character and the peace perspective of NF are its strengths. Furthermore, the social constructive components expressed by spillover and spillback dynamics and the idea of an identity shift that speeds up integration are valuable aspects. Admittedly, there are some weak points, such as the expansive logic of sector integration, rational-choice and automatism, the ignorance regarding exogenous and informal integration, or the focus on institutions. Especially in developing areas, weak states often create weak institutions, which cannot fulfill their basic duties (Ressler, 2007: 255). In this context, the theory's European roots in the analysis of pluralistic, post-war welfare states and industrialization is very apparent (Haas, 2004: 17).

Thus, in order to use NF on a broader analytical level, the disadvantages mentioned have to be set aside, e.g., by using the new regionalism with different standpoints on institutional and informal matters (Boås, 2003) or the focus of intergovernmentalism on external influences (Hofmann, 1959). However, the dynamic character, the mixture between constraints, needs and political will, and the different roles of various actors in the East African context in particular reflect the experience of European integration in the 1950s. East Africa is also a developing region with a democratization process underway and intensified cooperation on political, economic, and social problems. Furthermore, member states need each other for overlapping reasons, while being confronted with unexpected external influences and consequences. A less conflict prone relative constellation of powers, the vulnerability of the member states and fewer geo-strategic interests in the region by external actors could at least theoretically make the integration process even easier than in Europe. In addition, the core region offers a high level of cultural, economic, and political homogeneity between states, which have not yet finished their own nation-building processes (Boås, 2003: 42). Although economic development is not comparable to that of Europe, EAC members appear to have more in common (Hofmeier, 2007: 426). Further, while economic development remains relatively limited, "the [informal] cross-border flows that are truly bottom-up constitute a significant bottom-up pressure for regionalism" (Iheduro, 2003: 59).

Altogether, the region has significant potential for deeper integration if nation-states, emerging institutions, and other actors are able and also willing to use it to their advantage. Nevertheless, a purely economic integration model cannot be the universal remedy for the massive socio-political and economic problems faced by East Africans (Balassa, 2011). There is no equivalent to the Marshall Plan in place to promote the prosperous economic development, hence alternative external funding has to be obtained and a balancing and a redistributing integration model that ensures advantages for all members needs to be maintained (Asche, 2009: 80). Furthermore, the CSO role will also be relevant, since only the participation of such actors could avoid an elite-driven and, in the long run, unstable integration (Mehler et al., 2006: 405).

To answer the question stated at the beginning with regard to East Africa, it must be said that Haas' basic assumptions may be transferred to EAC as a regional body. Although spillover may thus far be seen only between the political nation-state actors— and not in a functional sense by interest groups or economic pressure—small steps to create supranational institutions and a political community are evident (Odhiambo, 2010). The stronger the influence of CSOs and regional institutions becomes, the more the integration process moves toward a political union (Ocitti, 2007). In this regard, the aims of EAC are currently very ambitious while integration is still ongoing (Smith, 2011: 24).

EAC countries established a Customs Union in 2005 and are working towards (. . .) a Common Market in 2010, subsequently a Monetary Union by 2015 and ultimately a Political Federation of the East African States (<http://www.eac.int/about-eac.html>, 03.13.2010:10.43).

Regarding the future of the process as well as the engagement of the political actors, EAC currently appears to be a unique phenomenon in Africa (Hofmeier, 2007:426). Even if it is still hampered by a lack of will or capacity, the RIO has a broad agenda and relatively strong institutions with an emerging number of CSOs, which altogether could push the project forward as it has been in Europe. Therefore, the well-established paradigm of NF, its dynamic process character and its broad perspective on actors and interactions make the theory again an attractive framework. Since NF can explain integration only if some steps towards deeper cooperation has been undertaken, it is questionable whether the paradigm traces weaker RIOs. With focus on the African spaghetti bowl of integration, such “paper tigers” (Donaiski, 2010:70) are still more the rule than the exception. Further analysis is nevertheless required using the theory on other RIOs, including beyond Africa and Europe.

ABBREVIATIONS

COMESA: Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
 CEEAC: (French) Economic Community of Central African States
 CEMAC: (French) Monetary Union of Central African States
 CSOs: Civil Society Organizations
 EABC: East African Business Council
 EADB: East African Development Bank
 EAC: East African Community
 EALA: East African Legislative Assembly
 EACJ: East African Court of Justice
 EACSOF: East African Civil Society Forum
 EEC: European Economic Community
 ECSC: European Community for Steel and Coal
 EPA: European Partnership Agreements
 IGAD: Intergovernmental Authority on Development
 LVFO: Lake Victoria Fisheries Commission
 NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization
 NF: Neofunctionalism
 NTBs: Non-Tariff Trade Barriers
 RIO: Regional Integration Organization
 SADC: Southern African Development Community
 SACU: Southern Africa Customs Union
 U.S.: United States
 WEU: West European Union

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