

The EU as an Influencing Force of East African Community Integration? An Analysis of Local Stakeholders' Perceptions and the Study of Consent*

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Abstract: There is consensus in the literature that the European Union (EU) influences the integration processes in Africa, including the East African Community (EAC), through the promotion of its norms and own understanding of integration. With regard to the EAC, the EU promotes a liberal narrative of progressive trade opening and economic liberalization, with a focus on making trade work through infrastructure development (mainly road building) and functional institutions. However, existing research is predominantly EU-centered, and therefore does not take into account the perceptions of the various local stakeholders or it limits itself to the study of the elite, thereby ignoring the internal state-society complexes of regional integration. This article seeks to advance the existing literature by

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examining to what extent local actors—state and non-state—in Uganda consent with the EU’s promotion of regional integration in its relations with the EAC. This article finds that consent differs from actor to actor and consent differs according to the substance of the EU promotion of regional integration of the EAC, namely infrastructure or institutions.

Keywords: East African Community, Integration, Local stakeholders, Consent, Economic Partnership Agreement

The East-African Community (EAC) is a Regional Economic Community (REC) in Africa. It is an institutionalized region with six partner states: Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi and Rwanda. South Sudan joined in March 2016 and the Democratic Republic of Congo and Somalia are currently negotiating accession. Kenya is the only “developing country” in the EAC, while others are considered to be “least-developed countries” (LDC). The EAC partner countries have long upheld the idea of cooperation. More recently, they re-embarked on a process of regional integration (RI), as is visible in the adoption of the East African Monetary Union (EAMU) Protocol in 2013, with the aim of achieving a single currency within 10 years. Furthermore, since 1999 the EAC has become the fastest growing integration initiative in sub-Saharan Africa (Vanheukelom, Byiers, Bilal, & Woolfrey 2016). The ultimate goal is to become a federation with a powerful and sustainable economic and political bloc.

According to several authors, the EU has been central in influencing RI projects in Africa (Bachman & Sidaway 2010; Gray 2011; Pirozzi & Godsäter 2015). Their findings are often based on comparative institutional research between EU and African institutions, particularly dominant since the 1990s. However, such debate all too often perceives the state as a whole and thereby it ignores potential differences among local stakeholders. In other words, it ignores the internal state–society complexes as part of the EU’s promotion of RI (Taylor 2013).

Furthermore, while literature on norm promotion has paid much attention to the mechanisms and channels of (EU) norm export, it has neglected (strategies of) norm import by the recipient (Björkdahl, Chaban, Lelsie & Masselot 2015).

In line with a critical social-constructivist approach (cf. Walsham 1993, Bailey 2011), this article is therefore concerned with the general opinions and perceptions of the local stakeholders, which it views as being influenced by the EU. Specifically, the research question addressed in this article is “do local state and non-state actors/stakeholders consent with the EU’s promotion of RI in its relations with the EAC and its partner countries?” The aim is not to explain why actor’s consent or not, but to establish whether they do or do not by offering an analytical and empirical addition to the research agenda concerning the role of the EU as an actor that promotes RI. More specifically, this research will analyze how recipients in Uganda evaluate the EU’s norm promotion, using a “local stakeholder approach.” The selection of Uganda is motivated by the fact that Uganda’s political elite is one of the driving forces of EAC integration (Langan 2015) and because the country comes nearest to being instructive for the region. The country is geographically located centrally and it borders every other country except for Burundi. Uganda is a LDC; and the status of governance¹ and public appreciation² of integration is comparable with the region as a whole (Trademark East Africa 2013). Still, however instructive this selection may be, this article aims to encourage further research in the other EAC partner countries in order to further verify the findings. More Africa- and local stakeholder-centered research is highly relevant as it contributes to “decolonizing knowledge” (cf. Jones 2006) and to recent calls for the recognition of “African agency” in international politics (Brown &

¹ With an exception of Rwanda, Uganda holds the average on the 2016 Corruption Index for the EAC (<http://www.transparency.org>).

² The EAC is considered to be positive by 55% of the population in Kenya, 67% in Uganda, 55% in Tanzania, 64% in Rwanda and 66% in Burundi

Harman 2013).

Methodologically, the article follows an inductive and interpretative approach.³ It relies on data collected from 28 semi-structured interviews with local stakeholders, defined as government ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs), media, academia, business corporations, trade unions and civil society organizations (SCOs) involved with EAC integration. The data was complemented with a document analysis⁴ of government and civil society documents and presidential speeches. In the eventual “meaning-making” process of the collected data, a string of codes and themes emerged, which was then mirrored to the research question. The interviews were held in one round (May–June 2016). During the fieldwork careful consideration was given to “ethical and substantive validity” as outlined by Angen (2000).

Researching whether EAC stakeholders consent with what the EU promotes first requires understanding the context of endogenous integration in East Africa and the substance of the EU’s promotion of RI in the EAC. Therefore, the article is structured as follows. The first section will provide the conceptual, historical and structural context of EAC integration, thereby identifying the endogenous drivers of RI in East Africa. The second section will, based on a literature overview, complement the first section by discussing the external drivers and the

³ Note: a critical approach implies a certain ‘a priori’ conception of reality, while an inductive interpretative approach rejects this. Still, this research deems both approaches to be in harmony, as also expressed by Walsham (1993).

⁴ President Museveni’s Fundamental Change Speech(1986); the Ten Point Programme (NRM 1981–1986); the *Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community* (EAC, 1999); *The National Policy on East African Community Integration: Embrace Your Opportunity* (GoU, 2015a); *the Second National Development Plan: 2015/16 – 2019/20* (GoU, 2015b); *the Vision 2040*(GoU, 2013); *Uganda’s trade Negotiating Framework* (Seatini, 2013)

content of EU promotion of RI towards the EAC. Both sections will establish the following assumption: although there are endogenous factors in favor of, or against, RI, the EU influences the outcome, suggesting “consent.” The third section will briefly point out some key problems regarding that assumption, proposing the need for a more nuanced focus on local stakeholders. Finally, the fourth section is two-fold: it presents key empirical findings concerning how local stakeholders perceive “RI” and evaluates these findings in terms of “consent.”

Regional Integration in East Africa: The Context

This section will briefly put EAC integration into conceptual, historical and structural context, indicating the different drivers, processes and outcome of integration. This will further provide context to better understand and embed the research question into the existing literature.

Conceptual context: What is regional integration?

There is a lack of consensus on defining RI in the literature, partly due to different conceptions of what constitutes a region and different emphasis on the *form* of integration, whether political, economic or social. Applying a social-constructivist framework, this article sees a region as a socially constructed entity and therefore not predetermined and subject to change over time. A region is always “for someone,” “because of someone” and “for some purpose.” Therefore, RI is more than just a *de facto* process involving the formation of distinct parts into a partial or complete whole. RI is an *act*. Also, it involves more than just cooperation. Whereas cooperation includes forms of interaction and diverse actions, RI stresses interdependence, unification, institutionalized actions and institutions (Schulz, Söderbaum, & Öjendal

2001; Nshimbi 2015). *Regional economic integration*, then, encompasses measures to abolish discrimination between economic units belonging to different states, aimed at increasing trade between the integrated countries through elimination of trade barriers and the coordination of monetary and fiscal policies (Balassa 1961). There are several stages: Free Trade Area, Customs Union, Common Market, Monetary Union, Fiscal Union and Political Union. *Regional political integration* could then be seen as the completion of Economic Integration. However, political integration can develop simultaneously with, and in fact is complementary to, economic integration (Brou & Ruta 2011). Political integration is the establishment of a unified law frame, the creation of common institutions, the development of a decision-making center, and the projection of identity. A crucial step is the process of delegating the autonomy of the political units to the newly formed political community (Ilievski 2015).

Historical context: East Africa and its oscillating process of integration

Historically, Uganda and Kenya installed a customs union as early as 1917, which Tanzania (then still Tanganyika) joined a decade later. The Union enjoyed fiscal integration, a monetary union and a common currency. It was succeeded by the East African High Commission (EAHC) from 1948 to 1961, the East African Common Services Organization (EACSO) from 1961 to 1967 and finally it was superseded by the East African Community (EAC) from 1967 to 1977. Trade, education and agricultural services were jointly run and enacted by a Central Legislative Assembly. As elites became obsessed with the politics of absolute sovereignty resulting in nationalist economic policies, interstate distrust, competing multi-ethnic domestic interests and the desire to consolidate state power, the EAC dissolved in 1977 (Nshimbi 2015). However, in 1993 Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania revived the integration hopes and signed the *Agreement for the Establishment of*

the Permanent Tripartite Commission for East African Co-operation (EAC 1993), which led to the signing of the *Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community* (EAC 1999). On the 7th of July 2000, the re-establishment of the EAC came into force and has since pursued four pillars: the Customs Union (completed 2005), the Common Market (completed⁵ 2010), the Monetary Union (pending) and the Political Federation (pending).

Structural context: drivers of integration

How to understand the EAC history of oscillating between integration and disintegration (cf. Nshimbi 2015)? What drives it? Börzel (2016) determined three possible explanatory dimensions for RI: (i) the logic of action (instrumentalist or norm-based?); (ii) the role of non-state actors; (iii) and the level of analysis (do the main drivers of region building lie within or outside the region?). Regarding the first dimension, rationalist/instrumentalist arguments include geographical factors (e.g. landlockedness), the prevalence of violence and shared regional security threats. This article does not dispute these rationalist arguments,⁶ but also emphasizes the role of collectively shared beliefs and behavioral practices, based on a social-constructivist point of view. Regarding behavioral practices, the question comes to mind “who” is

⁵ Both the Customs Union and Common Market were completed in theory. However, in practise the completion remains debatable. Numerous non-trade barriers still remain, as also pointed out in the 2014 Common Market Scorecard (World Bank 2014) and by Calabrese & Eberhard-Ruiz (2016).

⁶ A good example is the accession of South-Sudan: although South-Sudan is one of the poorest countries in the world and largely instable after suffering from years of civil war, the accession still followed through because if South-Sudan would return to war, the neighbouring countries would lose as much as 34% of their combined annual GDP over a 10-year period, with Kenya losing about \$1 billion a year (Frontier Economics 2015).

practicing and why? More than anything, the literature describes African integration to be driven by the political, economic and ideological motives of “opportunistic statesmen”, i.e. the elite (Cammack 2007; Booth et al. 2007; Söderbaum & Taylor 2008; Bachman 2009; Oyugi 2012; Bach & Gazibo 2012). As African regimes more than often are “neo-patrimonial states”,⁷ elites have sufficient tools to curb RI according to their own interests (Bach 2008; Lorenz 2011; Taylor 2013). Also, there are plenty of incentives: EAC institutions bring significant new powers (e.g. to reward political loyalty, create obligations and generate support); acting on the regional stage helps national leaders to project themselves as statesmen of a higher order; and RI brings in foreign funding that directly benefits the elite (Piccolino 2013).⁸

The second dimension as outlined by Börzel (2016) is the involvement of non-state actors. As indicated above, most literature perceives RI to be dominated by the elite. Other literature explicitly notes the absence of SCOs and private sector participation in the RI process (Matimbwa 2008; Oyugi 2013; Ochwada 2013; Malipula & Kitigwa 2010; Vanheukelom et al. 2016). Often CSOs do not have sufficient capacity to participate or they are often excluded or intimidated⁹ for

⁷ Note that this too is a debatable issue. ‘Patrimonialism’ often is described as a ‘catch-all’ and ‘ubiquitous’ concept (cf. Kelsall 2011; Wai, 2012). Many therefore think the use of the concept applied to African states should be reconsidered (cf. Pitcher, Moran & Johnston 2009).

⁸ Donors contribute 65% to the EAC budget, while partner states only contribute 28% (Vanheukelom et al., 2016). As the EAC decision making process is done at the Summit – comprising the Heads of Government of Partner States – and the council of ministers and as international funding often is aimed at the functioning of these institutions, elites then are direct beneficiaries of the funding.

⁹ With explicit regard to the environment of civil society participation in Uganda – not necessarily related to the integration context – the EU electoral observation report 2016 criticised the narrowing of political space, crackdown of social media and intimidation by government actors (EU 2016).

being too critical (Godsäter 2013). This provides a vacuum for politicians and their experts to dictate the integration process.

Finally, the third dimension addresses whether the drivers for integration are endogenously or exogenously motivated. Previous dimensions already made a strong case for endogenously driven factors, but exo- and endo-genously motivated factors are not always easy to distinguish, e.g. pan-Africanism and the historical struggle for independence (Nshimbi 2015; Vanheukelom et al. 2016). Pan-Africanism is an endogenously grown ideology aimed at the “unification of Africa” based on a common heritage and cultural links. However, it cannot be seen apart from exogenous colonial occupation. Pan-Africanism is rooted in a combined struggle against imperialism and colonial domination and the colonial occupation established the foundations for the basic institutions, state structures, political and educational system on which pan-Africanism took form. The next section will elaborate more on the EU exogenous influence.

Regardless of the different drivers for integration, the outcome has been disappointing. EAC integration remains a façade: there is a gap between commitments and reality (Vanheukelom et al. 2016). Many policies are not implemented and institutions seem dysfunctional, as also indicated in the 2014 *Common Market Scorecard* (World Bank 2014). Elites are weary of too much integration, as they fear strong institutions could erode their power. Therefore, in return for funds, elites often signal reforms rather than strengthen the core functions, as it often suffices for the portrayal of themselves as responsible international partners and for the attraction of foreign funds (Taylor 2013). Then, it seems the different agreements regarding the “four pillars of integration” should rather be understood as a discursive and image-boosting exercise (Gibb 2009).

The EU as an Influencing Force of EAC Integration

As shown above, RI in East Africa had its roots long before Robert Schuman’s idea of integration in his now famous declaration on the 9th of

May, 1950. This article therefore by no means claims that the EU is the only exogenous influencing factor or that endogenous factors should be side-lined. However, as Europe and Africa are more entangled than any other continents in the world, this does suggest the potential for transfer and convergence of norms, whereby “norms” are defined as “inter-subjective understandings that constitute actors’ interests and identities and create expectations as well as prescribe what appropriate behavior ought to be by expressing rights and obligations” (Björkdahl & Elgström 2015). European countries, and later on the EU, influenced integration processes in Africa (Bach 2008; Börzel & Risse 2009a, 2009b; Pietrangeli 2009; Farrell 2009, 2013; Bachman & Sidaway 2010; Gray 2011; Piccolino 2013; Pirozzi & Godsäter 2015).

Since the 1990s, RI has become a distinctive EU norm, promoted through European external policy (Murray 2009; Farrell 2009). The European Commission (EC), being the main supporter, understands RI to be “the process of overcoming, by common accord, political, physical, economic and social barriers that divide countries from their neighbors and of collaborating in the management of shared resources and regional commons” (EC 2008). The EC is convinced that RI is a key step towards further integration into the world economy, as well as an instrument to stimulate investment and lock in the necessary trade reforms (Marinov 2013). RI will establish economic and social development and guarantee long-term prosperity, growth and regional security. Taking in the notion of Normative Power Europe (NPE) (cf. Manners 2002), RI then mainly has become a normative idea aimed at exporting “neoliberal”¹⁰ EU preferences of trade opening, economic liberalization and WTO compatibility through means of integrating markets, advocating the regional dimension of business and capacity development and through

¹⁰ With explicit regard to the environment of civil society participation in Uganda – not necessarily related to the integration context – the EU electoral observation report 2016 criticised the narrowing of political space, crackdown of social media and intimidation by government actors (EU 2016).

promoting well-functioning regional and national institutions (Hurt 2003; Söderbaum & Taylor 2008; Börzel & Risse 2009b).

These general ideas on RI are further specified in the *communication on regional integration for development in ACP countries* (EC 2008), which could be defined as the core document outlining the EU policy framework on RI for the ACP. The communication indicates five priority areas for EU support: (i) strengthening regional institutions through enhancing “ownership processes” and capacity building; (ii) building regional integrated markets; (iii) supporting business development by improving the regulatory environment, strengthening productive capacities, and mobilizing capital; (iv) connecting regional infrastructure networks with an emphasis on completing the “missing links” between national road, energy and telecommunications networks; (v) and developing regional policies for sustainable development, especially with regard to agricultural production, natural resource management and social cohesion. These five priorities for the ACP are further operationalized in a number of concrete trade and financial assistance instruments for the EAC and its partner states: the *Regional Indicative Programme for Eastern Africa, Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean* (RIP)(EC, 2015); the *National Indicative Programme for Uganda* (NIP) (EC, 2014a); the *EU-EAC Economic Partnership Agreement* (EPA) (EC, 2014b); and *The EU Strategy on Aid for Trade: Enhancing EU support for trade-related needs in developing countries* (AFT) (EU 2007).

The RIP¹¹ highlights a commercial and market-oriented approach, as there is a strong focus on infrastructure and trade (EC 2014a; Pirozzi & Godsäter 2015). The RIP allocates 63% of the total budget towards the objective of regional economic integration by means of connecting

¹¹ The Regional Indicative Programme for Eastern Africa, Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean (RIP EA-SA-IO) is a multi-annual policy document outlining the key EU strategic objectives in terms of regional economic integration and development towards five *duly mandated regional organisations* (DMRO): COMESA, EAC, IGAD, IOC and SADC.

regional infrastructure networks, improving the strategic and regulatory framework of infrastructure networks, enhancing the organizational capacity of regional organizations, and through delivering trade related assistance and support to the private sector. When applied to the EAC, more than half of the total allocated $\square$ 85 million in direct support under the RIP is directed to achieve those objectives. The EAC will also indirectly benefit from an additional “infrastructure-financing envelope” of $\square$ 600 million (45% of the total budget) covering all regions within the RIP. The focal sectors under the **NIP**¹² are consistent and complementary with the RIP. As a result, the NIP, too, highlights a strong market-oriented approach with a focus on infrastructure (cf. figure 1).

Transport Infrastructures:	150 - 230 M €	(40 % of total)
Food Security and Agriculture:	100 - 130 M €	(22.5 % of total)
Good Governance:	100 - 168 M €	(29 % of total)
Measures in favour of civil society	25 M €	(4.25 % of total)
Support to the National Authorizing Officer and Technical Cooperation Facility	25 M €	(4.25 % of total)
Total amount	578 M €	

Figure 1. Focal Sectors NIP Uganda 2014-2020 (EC 2014a).

The **EU-EAC EPA**¹³ (EC 2014b) is a reciprocal free-trade agreement between the EU and the EAC. According to EU officials, EPAs are primarily tools for development and the promotion of regional economic integration and not about opening markets to EU exports (Mandelson 2005, as cited in Björkdahl & Elgström 2015). It is believed

¹² The National Indicative Programme is the application of the RIP to a country in specific, closely related with the *Country Strategy Paper*.

¹³ The full text of the EU-EAC EPA was agreed 16th October 2014 and expected to be signed 18 July 2016, but in a sudden twist Tanzania decided to halt signing, citing the “turmoil” thatthe EU is experiencing following Britain’s exit. (Karuhanga, 2016).

the development of markets through the EPA will bring benefits such as: more sales; better infrastructure, administration and public services; training opportunities and knowledge transfer; and more transparency, political and economic stability (EC 2010). Still, despite the message, EPAs are mainly about “economic reform and progressive trade opening” (Bilal & Stevens 2009). They are a controversial liberalization instrument aimed at locking in the EU market-oriented and macroeconomic policies (Woolcock 2014; Pirozzi & Godsäter 2015). For example, pointing to the phrasing of some clauses in the EPA, Asche (2015) indicates that while the EPA also draws on improved trade capacity building and other aid interventions, the clauses that protect infant industries in the partner regions are phrased in a manner that indicates the reluctance of EC negotiators to accept them. The EPA aims to swiftly open up the markets and reduce or cut away tariffs, thereby making reciprocal trade work. Finally, the wider AfT policy framework (EU 2007) addresses the “supply-side” of trade. It is assistance provided to support development countries’ efforts to expand their trade as leverage for growth and poverty reduction. In other words, it addresses capacity building. However, as Langan and Scott (2014) indicate in a case study of Kenya and Uganda, AfT often does not reach its goals. First of all, while AfT is focused on the supply-side of trade and “poverty-reduction,” a significant proportion of total AfT allocations is directed towards “infrastructural projects,” primarily road-building. Moreover, a large share of the European funds directed to road building is merely a form of “boomerang-aid,” namely subsidizing European firms rather than eliminating poverty. Then, though the EU has put some emphasis on pro-poor development, its strategies and funding allocations often have failed or are insufficient. This is supported by three other observations. First of all, giving the example of the Uganda-EU NIP, Langan (2015) illustrates that while the EC discursively places budget support¹⁴ on a pro-poor development terrain, much of its finances go

¹⁴ Adhering to the principle of ‘ownership’, both the RIP and NIP budget are

towards the implementation of regressive trade opening and economic liberalization. Secondly, the Ugandan NIP funding towards civil society is not necessarily effective in pro-poor development either. Under the NIP, civil society support is ruled to be ineffective in the long-term, given that donor funding lacks strategy and is described as overly programme specific or linked to particular policy agendas rather than core funding for CSO capacity building (Concord 2013). Finally, Söderbaum and Taylor (2008) point out that a focus on “good governance” (29% of the NIP budget) is no different from a focus on trade in that “good governance” should be interpreted in terms of “making trade work” through “less government” and “getting the prices right.”

In conclusion, through the different policy documents it is clear that the EU in its relation with the EAC *primarily* understands RI to be about progressive trade opening and economic liberalization, while some attention is given to poverty reduction and social needs. RI in the EAC is pursued through: (i) enabling regional movement and access by infrastructure development and doing away with trade barriers, and (ii) strengthening regulatory powers of institutions. Through the principle of ownership the EAC leadership is introduced to these views, which in turn has a strong discursive impact on the view of RI on behalf of those policy-makers (Pirozzi & Godsäter 2015). In conjunction with the argument that even in the absence of a specific policy action, agreement or treaty, a political actor is still able to exercise influence and induce behavioral change (Finnemore & Sikkink 1998), it is clear that the EU in its relation to the EAC is a global actor capable of exporting its views and norms, including on RI.

The EAC: Truly a Unitary Actor?

While academic research has given plenty of consideration towards

partly allocated directly to the national governments, which could be termed as ‘budget support’.

how the EU influences integration in general, and to a small extent, also the EAC, less attention is given to the recipient. This Eurocentric bias is also followed by a tendency for state-centric research—an actor is seen as a unitary agent with little distinction between local stakeholders. Where a more refined distinction is made, the influence is often considered solely at the level of elites. For example, Langan and Scott (2014) state that because ACP policy elites themselves have ownership over the EU support to reciprocal trade, the EU discourse was narrated as “common-sense” and thus helped to “construct both internal/official and external/public consent for the pursuit of second-generation trade liberalization.” Also, Hurt (2003) understands the approach taken by the EU to be within the “hegemonic dominance” of neoliberalism within political elites. This is questionable—not least because as elites often define state interests, the study of elites becomes the study of the actor as a whole—but also because it fails to solve at least the following two questions.

First of all, a neo-patrimonial system of governance within the EAC should, in theory, encourage protectionist policies. Because elites are able to define the national interests, utilization of resources to the advantage of the elites becomes more important than national development and the broad-based productivity of the economy. This kind of business flourishes in protected niches and it creates a climate that is generally unfavorable to long-term, large-scale investments and thus development and integration (Booth et al. 2007). Also, when a LDC opens up its market, it seriously underestimates its own ability to break into this new regional export market. Hence, RI usually benefits those states that are closest to the world average level of economic development (van Hoestenberge, Roelfsema & Khalidi 2009; Langan 2015). Hence it is extra puzzling why the EAC and particularly its least developed partner states embark on free market integration.

Secondly, budget support does not equal a “blank check.” Support must be followed by “not only a shared commitment to economic commitments ideologically motivated in terms of a free market

orientation, but also commitments to fundamental values of human rights, democracy, and the rule of law and commitments to good governance and ‘anti-corruption’ measures” (Knoll 2008). Therefore, by accepting EU aid aimed at facilitating integration, elites agree to conditions that likely will deteriorate their power base in the long run.

As such, the argument that “as long as RI does not bring forth participation, democracy, the sharing of sovereignty, or development outside of clientelism, the neo-patrimonial state approves of integration” (cf. Gibb 2009; Taylor 2013; Mathieson 2016) is unsatisfactory. The counter-argument is that there must be other actors and interests in place. As it is plausible that European ideas often face political contestation and social mobilization (cf. Börzel & Risse 2009a; Björkdahl & Elgström 2015), citizen and civil society reaction and protest should be taken into consideration, even more so because the impact of civil society is globally increasing (De Lombaerde, Söderbaum, Van Langenhove & Baert 2009). Thus, a better understanding is needed of EAC local stakeholder agency and the way interests, institutions and ideas shape the trade-development nexus within the EAC (Carbone & Orbie 2014). Farrell (2013) states it more simply: “There is inadequate research on the politics of integration in Africa in terms of the interests of the state and non-state actors.” Hence, this article upholds a “local stakeholder approach.”

Stakeholders’ Perspective on EAC Integration and EU Involvement: A Matter of Consent?

Consent is more than just the acceptance of something done or planned by another. It preconditions some *knowledge of the other agent* (in order to consent, agent B must know of agent A and the message agent A promotes) and a *conscious change of thought* (either from being persuaded from previously disagreeing to agreeing, or having something pointed out of which one was previously unaware).

In the literature, consent is often defined within the context of

social learning (cf. Checkel 1999), Europeanization (cf. Schimmelfennig 2012), or within a Neo-Gramscian framework (cf. Gramsci 2006), whereby consent is blended with coercion resulting in a “hegemony.” The bulk of such research zooms in on the favorable factors on how consent can be achieved, or more broadly studies the development of consent itself (cf. Hurt 2003; Ciplet, Roberts & Khan 2015). However, such literature focuses on norm export instead of strategies of norm import by the recipient. The objective of this research is not to investigate the development of consent as such, but to determine whether local stakeholders approve of what the EU promotes or not; i.e. to determine not the process but the outcome of consent.

Björkdahl et al. (2015) and Risse (2015) distinguish four outcomes of consent: adoption, adaption, resistance and rejection. *Adoption* or convergence is the most complex outcome in which the recipient reflects a conscious and unambiguous translation of exported European norms into its local practices. *Adaption* or transformation refers to the transfer of norms where norms are changed in some way to meet local characteristics, but regardless of such alteration “the original content of the transfer must remain unmistakable.” *Resistance* is the outcome where at the core recipients’ practices are guided by norms that are distinct from the norm export practice. Finally, *rejection* implies a contestation between the promoted norms and pre-existing norms of recipients. Recipients’ norms diverge “unambiguously and conscientiously” from the exported norms. The four conceptualizations could be visualized as follows:

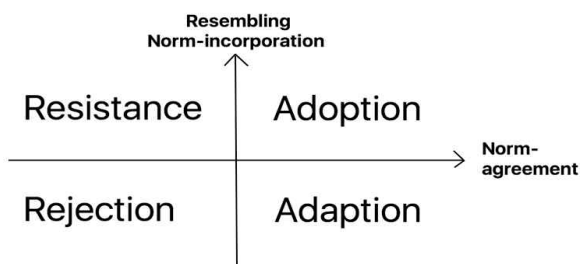


Figure 2. Framing outcome of consent.

In this visualization “consent” refers to “adaption and adoption,” while “resistance and rejection” could be understood as grades of “dissent.” The level of “norm agreement” could be understood as whether aligning with the EU norm export *in principle* or not. The level of “resembling norm incorporation” could be seen as agreement *in reality*.

To consent is understood to be an active verb. Accordingly, this research selects studying consent of the “promotion” of European norms over the “diffusion,” as the latter refers to “all kinds of norm transfer,” consciously or unconsciously (cf. Risse 2015). Hence, the notion that all stakeholders in some way or the other take note of how the EU approaches its own integration process, is beside the question. Instead, through 28 semi-structured interviews, stakeholders were asked whether they agree or disagree with the EU promotion of RI. More specifically, they were asked to comment on the notion that “RI is primarily about trade opening, through (i) enabling regional movement by doing away with trade barriers and infrastructure development, and (ii) strengthening the regulatory framework of institutions.” Prior to being introduced to the research question stakeholders were first of all asked about their own general vision and perception on RI and about their experiences with the EU. This allowed identifying the preconditioning “knowledge of the other agent.” Afterwards the findings were compared with additional analysis of local policy documents and public speeches, allowing to better identify the second precondition of a conscious (change in?) thought process. The 28 interviews included representatives from CSOs; academia; MDAs; media; and business corporations and associations. They were selected using snowball sampling.

Ugandan policy documents: a starting point

The Ugandan ideal of RI is vested in three founding documents (interview 1): President Museveni’s *Fundamental Change Speech*

(1986), the *Ten Point Programme* (NRM 1981-1986) and of course, the *Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community* (EAC 1999). During his inaugural address in 1986, President Museveni called for East African regional *cooperation*, especially through means of transport and communication, to enlarge and develop the small domestic markets. The *Ten-point programme* further outlined this policy, denouncing the balkanization of Africa into small and uneconomic units. Instead, access to a diversity of resources, natural and human, should maximize a country's potential to usefully compete with other world powers, provided the adherence to democracy and human dignity. Finally, the *Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community* (EAC 1999) complements this "enabling access" message with a more mixed message of integration through market and human development. Most explicitly in articles 5.1 and 7.1 the Treaty states the objective to widen and deepen *cooperation* not only in political and economic fields, but also in socio-cultural fields, research and technology, defense, security and legal and judicial affairs. The Treaty states the guiding principles on how to become a people-centered and market-driven *cooperation*; how to install an export oriented economy for the Partner States; and how to involve a wide range of stakeholders in the process of integration. Thereby it highlights a people-driven integration process, with nation states guiding its citizens to enable them reap the accruing benefits of RI.

In later documents, the Government of Uganda (GoU) further elaborates on capacity development through RI. For example: while the *Vision 2040* (GoU 2013) lays out the broad 30-year vision for a "transformed Ugandan society from a peasant to a modern and prosperous country within a strong *federated* East Africa," the *Second National Development Plan: 2015/16 – 2019/20* (GoU 2015b) articulates the key strategy to ensure Uganda will benefit from such vision. Namely, the strategy should be "to strengthen Uganda's competitiveness through sustainable wealth creation, employment and inclusive growth." Central is the allocation of key investments in areas with the "greatest multiplier effect" on the economy: infrastructure; human capital, agriculture,

tourism, minerals, oil and gas. Investments can be direct or indirect: either aimed at strengthening capacity, or reducing the cost of doing business. Finally, the *National Policy on East African Community Integration: Embrace Your Opportunity* (NPEACI) (GoU 2015a) also emphasizes the need to combine human and market development through a focus on poverty reduction, prioritization of freedom of people, and active engagement by people in RI. Also, the NPEACI puts forward the aim to mainstream all national policies into the RI process, whereby priority is given to regional commitments over national policy.

In conclusion, Ugandan policy objectives aim to find a balance between progression of the RI process and capacity development, whereby capacity is defined as human capacity, industrial capacity and organizational capacity. Whereas the initial policy objectives put forward goals of “market cooperation,” later documents increasingly deepened the cooperative regional relationship, going as far as imagining a federated East Africa, i.e. economically and politically integrated. Also, the initial “market access” message was complemented with more attention to regional commitments and human development.

Government ministries, departments and agencies

While the founding policy documents aim to find a balance between an economic/market-oriented and social-oriented understanding of RI, MDAs are less so in their perception of integration. They tend to emphasize economic integration more than social integration and mainly prioritize advancing the opening of markets over private sector development. It is believed the private sector will only be empowered through RI, noting that bigger markets bring more consumers, which in turn will increase sales volume (interview 4). Furthermore, MDAs claim that because RI will bring knowledge and foreign investment, there is plenty of reason to pursue integration first; or as one interviewee put it: “in order to build a house one also invites plumbers and bricklayers” (interview 3). Only on occasions where private sector capacity is limited,

it is the role of the government to provide companies with the right “entrepreneurial environment,” i.e. infrastructure and a sound economic policy (interview 3). Hence, this research finds that MDAs interpret RI to ideally be about trade, as trade is the vehicle to redistribute resources and resources are needed to rebuild the country. Human development is achieved through market development and therefore RI should be the facilitation of trade by opening up the borders to neighboring countries (interview 3).

Clearly, MDAs’ perceptions on RI are very similar to the norms promoted by the EU in relation to the EAC. This is further exemplified in the perception of the MDAs towards the EPA. The EPA fits well into the narrative of market opening. For example, despite Ugandan businesses being skeptical of the EPA for fear of competition, the Export Promotion Board continues to persuade them and push through the narrative of the EPA (interview 2). Also, the EPA is seen as a useful instrument to achieve EAC objectives: because the EU pressures the EAC to negotiate as a block, the EU provides the EAC partner states with a good opportunity to strengthen their internal relations and integration laggards such as Tanzania are pressured to become more outward looking, all for the good of EAC integration (interview 2, 4, 5). The EU has the right to apply pressure, as the EU contributes a lot of investments to EAC integration framework. However, MDAs do not agree with the EU vision on institutions. While they are valuable, institutions should only be seen in terms of driving identity, instead of advancing the regulatory aspect and the “ownership processes through participation” (interview 3, 5). Still and despite domestic criticism, Ugandan Ministries are favorable towards the signing of the EPA. They claim that eventual problems concerning implementation will be ironed out in later stages (interview 5): the objective is first to have an agreement and then later to see how it can be worked out. This indicates substantial trust in the EU and of its intentions.

In sum, MDAs share a common view with the EU that RI primarily translates into trade opening through enabling regional movement and

tariff reduction. In this way, MDAs seem to divert from the more balanced message as put forward in EAC and Ugandan policy documents, indicating a conscious agreement with the EU. Therefore, as far as the focus on the opening of markets through infrastructure development and doing away with trade barriers, this research finds that MDAs *adopt* the European norms. After all, they highly agree with the norm in principle and try to incorporate in reality. Secondly, as for the focus on the opening of markets through institutional development, MDAs do not seem to unambiguously translate the EU understanding of institutions into the own practices. They disagree with the EU intent of institutions, but value them as a method to solidify prestige in the region. Hence, at the core the MDAs' practices are guided by norms that are distinct from the European norm export practice and could therefore be termed as *resisting*.

Civil society organizations

CSOs criticize MDAs for over-focusing on trade and ignoring their responsibility towards private sector and human capacity, thereby doing the Treaty wrong (interview 14). It is not because market and human development, or capacity building and RI go hand in hand, that one should be given less attention. First of all, while not ignoring the importance of market oriented integration, CSOs primarily advocate a "social and people based" approach, claiming RI should focus more on issues like health, governance, gender and environmental welfare. A people-based approach should in principle also bring forth tangible realities for the common man to understand and experience (interview 14). Secondly, referring to the different elements of "capacity building" (cf. UNCED 1992, chapter 37), CSOs find that currently capacity development and the supply-side constraints have not been sufficiently addressed by the Ugandan MDAs.

CSOs define **industrial capacity** or competitiveness more than just enabling movement (cf. building roads and tariff reduction). It is the

ideal where regional industries are in harmony and where each national industry has its own comparative advantage (interview 13). Currently, Uganda does not have goods and services with added value to trade or companies to compete. Furthermore, removing barriers (i.e. lowering export taxes on raw materials) only strengthens the lack of added value as it further incentivizes the export of more raw materials (interview 14). True national production at the level of international standards should be reached through internal integration of the different national industries, prior to opening of the market. Or as one interviewee put it: “one first has to have bricks before being able to call on a bricklayer” (interview 12).

Regarding **human capacity**, CSOs state that because the majority of the population does not know what the EAC is or does, or is not informed or consulted, people cannot hold the government accountable and do not know how to participate in order to fully benefit (interview 12, 13). As for their own capacity, CSOs acknowledge that they disappoint. They often lack the information and organizational capacity; they are uninterested because issues such as health and governance are not given much attention; or they are blocked from participating (interview 14). To overcome, human capacity should be prioritized through the circulation of information, consultation and tangible realities. Human capacity is at the core of RI.

Finally, **organizational capacity** is understood to include a “sustainable governing framework for the fair movement of goods.” Again, organizational capacity development should be prior to opening up the market. If no checks and balances are in place, import of bad quality materials will follow (interview 13). Regarding those checks and balances, one study carried out by a leading NGO specialized in EAC integration finds that the Ugandan institutional trade negotiating framework itself has inadequate capacities due to a lack of resources (funds to the Ministry of Trade have been reducing every financial year); inadequate civil society and private sector participation; inadequate awareness and understanding of the provisions of trade agreements and the potential impact thereof on the national economy and inadequate

coordination among trade negotiators; and inadequate coordination (different ministries are responsible for different trade agreements) (Seatini 2013). To overcome, the GoU should strengthen institutions by emphasizing service delivery, good governance, the rule of law and effective intervention (interview 14).

Clearly, the perceptions of CSOs towards RI lean more towards the foundational Ugandan policy documents and in many ways differ from the EUs promotion of RI in relation to the EAC. In general, there is a lack of trust and confidence in the EU. SCOs see the EU as a self-serving actor whose policies are not suitable for the EAC, at least in the short run. Again, the EPA stands as an example: CSOs interpret the EPA to be the epitome of the EU's business-oriented free-market values, and claim the EU has deceived the EAC negotiating partners into accepting a harmful trade agreement that in essence is aimed at obtaining access to raw materials for the EU's own benefit. By doing away with import taxes, the country decreases its ability to invest in the industry sector. Furthermore, free trade with the EU is a delusion because the EU market cannot be reached due to difficulties in distance, non-tariff barriers and different production costs (interview 14). Finally, with the regard to promoting functional regulatory institutions, CSOs claim the EU contradicts itself. Giving the example of the EPA institutional negotiation framework (cf. EPA-TAPP), the EU is blamed for not sufficiently consulting civil society stakeholders, thereby missing an opportunity to provide an honest regulatory framework that they themselves advocate. Even more, because of this neglect the financial support for the negotiating framework only benefits the political elite, enhancing the EU influence on those elites.

In conclusion, CSOs agree that RI improves trade and that it in turn is beneficial for development in the long run. However, RI includes so much more than trade alone and trade should be pursued through other means than just infrastructure development and tariff reduction. So, they *reject* the promotion of RI through infrastructure development. The national markets should reach a certain "capacity threshold" before being

opened up, not the other way around. Secondly, as for the promotion of RI through strengthening the institutional regulatory environment, CSOs seem to adopt the EU norms. However, this research would argue that the CSO norm perception of institutions is more derived from own considerations and experience, instead of EU influence. After all, CSOs highlight a negative experience with the EU promotion of institutions. Also, it should be noted that because some CSOs are excluded from the negotiations with the EU, despite being deeply involved with EAC integration, some know little about the EU policies concerning institutions (cf. interview 12), thereby reducing the potential norm transfer by the EU (cf. precondition of consent). Hence, with regards to the promotion of functional institutions, consent is not of issue here.

Private sector actors and media

In general, media, the private sector actors and even academia are all in favor of RI. Enlarging a trading environment for the benefit of more and better trade is seen to be crucial and in fact necessary for development. However, a common idea is that trade negotiations should not be governed by competition and the opening of markets alone: negotiators should also take in the “complexity of a developing country,” i.e. “social and economic safeguards.” RI should first and foremost serve the people and companies should have the capacity and goods to trade before anything else. The GoU should take responsibility hereof (cf. interview 7).

Private sector actors in particular value long-term vision concerning national development. However, despite a governing policy framework that outlines balanced investment, they feel that RI is currently about pursuing short-term benefits and objectives for personal gain. For example, Uganda pretends to be a champion of integration but fails to pressure its neighbours into complying with the EAC agreements for fear of losing prestige and leadership of the integration process (interview 1, 7). Also, Uganda currently invests more in its regional

military capacity than to prepare its citizens and companies to take part in the “global rat race” (interview 6). The GoU should take up its responsibility for providing infrastructure, vocational skills, institutional quality control and regulations. Especially locally owned companies (cf. interview 6,7,8,10), as compared to foreign or Kenyan owned (cf. interview 9, 11), struggle with the lack of government responsibility towards investments and regulations. Without this, the Ugandan competitive sector is being flooded by “foreign cartels” (interview 10), which prevents competing beyond the country borders and impedes the local market. Foreign owned companies on the other hand are more vested in the different EAC partner countries or they often have more trade links with the EU, thereby giving them a bigger network, assets and capacity to cope and to reap the benefits of opening up the market.

Clearly, private sector actors seem to agree with the opening of markets and RI *in principle*, but *in reality* it should take into account the industrial, human and organizational capacity of the country and its companies. While global integration is a good thing, it should be postponed for reasons of long-term national development, i.e. until the EAC as a region is strengthened. Private sectors advocate a step-by-step integration into the global economy. This extends to their perceptions on the EU promotion of RI. While they welcome the EU funds and initiatives towards infrastructure, particularly noting the EU funds towards improving and completing the Kampala Bypass and other road works,¹⁵ the private sector (especially the Ugandan owned companies) fears the reciprocal trade provisions under the EPA. Facilitating the entry of EU products and companies is seen as premature. For now, companies are happy with the current “Everything But Arms” framework. Still, in their relations with the EU, private actors are not disappointed with the

¹⁵ The Kampala bypass project includes building double-carriage roadways and replacing bridges and roundabouts with flyovers. It is aimed to primarily to decongest traffic from the city centre by diverting transit trucks heading to Western Uganda, Rwanda and Eastern DR Congo.

EU advocating reciprocity. After all, the EU is a competitor and the global environment only requires such behavior. Reciprocity is good in the long run, but for now in the short-term it is up to the GoU to put their own interests on the table. As for the EU promotion of functional and regulating institutions, Ugandan companies are also much in favor. In particular they attribute the quality of European products to the quality of the EU institutional framework. This is in stark contrast to the often poor products pouring in from China, due to deficient Ugandan framework. A more “European like” Ugandan regulatory framework is thus very welcome (interview 9). Finally, although not many companies have heard of the EPA (cf. interview 8, 10), many of them know of the EU import regulations as they either trade or want to trade with the EU. Further, many of them also claim to have attended some form of business conference, e.g. the ones organized by the EU Delegation or the European Business Forum.

The media in many ways agrees with the private sector actors. They understand that RI in terms of trade interests is for the good of development and value the importance of infrastructure and institutions. Like the private sector, they disagree with the GoU in advancing regional or global integration, without compliance of partner countries and step-by-step securities for human and business capacity (interview 15, 16). With regards to the EU, they too seem less disappointed with the EU serving its own interests, but prefer the strengthening of EAC integration prior to integrating EAC and EU markets through reciprocal trade. After all, they claim the EU in the aftermath of World War 2 did just that: for long the EU protected its own market until it was strong enough to compete in a global free market. Still, despite their objections, newspapers have not reported much on the RI debate (interview 15, 17). For one, there is not enough public interest and secondly, they claim they are not given enough information by the GoU as they receive little press releases regarding progress on the negotiations (interview 15).

In conclusion, private sector and media stakeholders consent with the EU that RI is for the benefit of trade, which in turn is for the benefit of

development. Transport infrastructure is key to create more and better trade. However, they are leery of EU reciprocal trade liberalization and market opening for fear of being flooded by more competitive European actors. Free trade is good, but only among equals. Therefore, to make regional trade work, they want time to prepare. Hence, it could be said they *adapt* the EU's promotion of RI through enabling regional movement and access by infrastructure development and doing away with trade barriers to the complexities of being a developing country. Secondly, the private sector and media *adopt* or converge with the European call for strong institutions. They unambiguously support well-functioning regional and national institutions, e.g. quality control for imported goods through a functioning Ugandan Bureau of Standards, as it is only in the best interest for themselves.

Conclusions

This article attempted to answer whether local actors—state and non-state—consent with the EU's promotion of RI in its relations with the EAC and its partner countries, whereby “consent” is regarded to be a conscious and active outcome of norm transfer. This outcome can include *adoption or adaption*.

First, East African integration attempts, in particular before EAC integration, were contextualized and mirrored against exogenous European influence. The literature indicated that despite a disappointing outcome of the integration process due to a lack of implementation of policies and dysfunctional institutions, the EU influences integration processes in Africa, and thus potentially the EAC. With regard to the EAC, the EU mainly promotes RI through progressive trade opening and economic liberalization, by focusing on making trade work through infrastructure development (mainly road building) and functional institutions. As the literature all too often is state-centric and perceives the elite to act like the state as a whole, it concludes that this EU discourse constructs both official and public consent for the pursuit of

second-generation trade liberalization. However, this article indicated in section three that local stakeholders possibly could contest this narrative. Hence, existing research is incomplete.

In line with a critical social-constructivist approach, this research has taken an inductive interpretative approach towards the research question. The research finds that all stakeholders understand RI to be necessary because of global developments. Because “globalization” is the current framework for global trade and development, it is unavoidable and therefore countries should better “tap in” by integrating if they wish to take part on the global stage. However, as much as stakeholders agree on identifying the core, defining it is another matter: CSOs and MDAs hold contrasting views on RI, while private actors are somewhere in between. As the principle of RI leaves room for interpretation, this extends to level of consent with the EU.

With regards to the EU promotion of RI through the aforementioned policies, the empirical evidence outlined in section four indicates that consent differs from actor to actor and that it is not absolute—if stakeholders consent with the EU promotion of RI through infrastructure development, it does not mean they consent with the promotion of institutions and vice versa. The outcome is as follows:

- MDAs *adopt* the understanding and expectation that RI requires infrastructure development and removing trade barriers, although some of their vision can also be attributed to their wish to strive for prestige. However, they *resist* the assumption that RI also requires functional regulating institutions.
- CSOs *reject* the EU focus on infrastructure development because they believe the EU is not honest about its objectives and because trade should be pursued through other means than infrastructure alone. CSOs emphasize RI includes much more than trade, e.g. the sharing of ideas and coming together as people. With regards to consenting with the EUs promotion of institutions this research can only conclude CSOs *agree*, as no empirical data suggests norm transfer with the EU. The CSO norm perception of

- institutions is derived from own considerations and experience.
- Finally, private sector actors and media consent with the value of enabling regional movement through infrastructure development and the removal of trade barriers, but *adapt* it to fit the complexities of being a developing country. They *adopt* the European call for strong institutions. They unambiguously support well-functioning regional and national institutions.

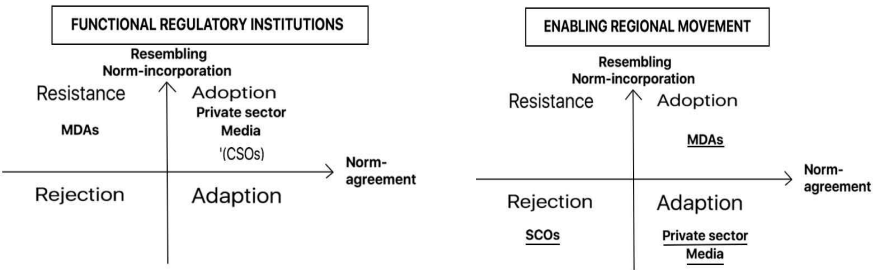


Figure 3. Visual outcome of consent.

Hence, local stakeholders could at the most be seen as *selectively* adopting or adapting the EU’s promotion of RI in its relations with the EAC and its partner countries. This contradicts state-centered research in that although elites have ownership over the EU support to reciprocal trade, the EU discourse *is not* narrated as “common-sense” and thus *did not* help to “construct both internal/official and external/public consent for the pursuit of second-generation trade liberalization” (cf. Langan & Scott 2014). In turn this delegitimizes the notion of a normative power, at least when it comes to evaluating “perceptions.” In this case the EU could only be seen as a “partial normative power.”

Finally, it must be noted that this research is incomplete and limited in some aspects. For example, based on the stakeholders’ perspectives this research has emphasized the market-oriented policies of the EU and thereby it ignored other norms such as democracy promotion. Furthermore, this article has limited itself to assessing consent through

the perceptions of the stakeholders, while not dedicating itself to, for example, consent through institutional arrangements. This is fuel for further research. Also, the findings based on Ugandan stakeholders should be verified and falsified through deductive research within the other EAC partner states. The reason being is that the remarkable positive attitude of Ugandan government actors towards the EU-EAC EPA, which in contrast finds difficulty in being concluded regionally. Secondly, future research could also focus more on the *process* of consent instead of the outcome, provided it is researched through the point of view of the recipient. Such study would further clarify consent in terms of institutional incorporation and also focus more on the term “diffusion” instead of promotion.

List of interviews¹⁶

- Interview 1 Department of Political Science Makerere University, Kampala, 17 June 2016.
- Interview 2 Export Promotion Board, Kampala, 7 June 2016.
- Interview 3 Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives, Kampala, 17 May 2016.
- Interview 4 Ministry of Finance, Planning and economic Development, Kampala, 20 May 2016.
- Interview 5 Ministry of East African Community Affairs, Kampala, 7 June 2016.
- Interview 6 Uganda Flowers export association, Entebbe, 9 June 2016.
- Interview 7 Uganda National Farmers Federation, Kampala, 16 May 2016.
- Interview 8 Empower East Africa, Kampala, 6 June 2016.
- Interview 9 Silver Nile Exporters, Kampala, 5 May 2016.
- Interview 10 Jerodi Trading, Kampala, Kampala, 2 June 2016.
- Interview 11 DSTA Uganda LTD., Kampala, 13 June 2016.

¹⁶ While the analysis is based on 28 interviews, only 15 of them were selected to illustrate the main findings.

- Interview 12 East-African Sub-Regional Support Initiative for the advancement of women, Kampala, Kampala, 18 May 2016.
- Interview 13 Consent, Kampala, 16 May 2016.
- Interview 14 Seatini, Kampala, 6 May 2016.
- Interview 15 Observer, Kampala, 13 May 2016.
- Interview 16 New Vision, Kampala, 4 May 2016.
- Interview 17 Daily Monitor, Kampala, 26 May 2016.

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Appendix

Basic questionnaire semi-structured interview

1. What is Regional Integration to you and why do you or don't you value it?
 - How do you relate regional integration with the global context?
2. What is Regional Integration to Uganda and the EAC?
 - Do you participate in Regional Integration? How, why and when?
 - What are the alternatives?
3. The EU is a big actor when it comes to regional integration. How much do you know about the EU?
 - Have you had any contacts with EU public servants? If not, why? If yes, who, when, why, what where they about and for how long? Also, was it a pleasant encounter?
 - Do you know of any projects for the benefit of regional integration?
 - How do you think the EU perceives regional integration and why?
 - What are the positive factors and negative?
4. Could you comment on the statement that regional integration primarily is about trade opening, through (i) enabling regional movement by doing away with trade barriers and infrastructure development, and (ii) strengthening the regulatory framework of institutions?
 - This statement is promoted by the EU. Does this make you feel different about the EU?
 - Do other actors in Uganda think the same way? Do you agree with them?