

# Governance and Development of the East African Community: The Ethical Sustainability Framework

Kanakulya Dickson

## Abstract:

The pursuit of sustainability has become a major challenge in contemporary times as humans seek to avoid possible catastrophic fissures within the systems on which humans depend. Regionalization projects such as the East African Community (EAC) present opportunities to generate regional approaches to sustainability. To that end the research identified a need to re-conceptualize sustainability theory and policy. From a philosophical and applied ethics perspective, the study set out to generate an ethical view of sustainability of the EAC. The study used qualitative methodology and was carried out between 2011 and 2014.

The findings show a divergence between the two main conceptual approaches to sustainability in Africa, namely, the 'Market inspired sustainability' (MIS) logic and the 'Traditional African sustainability' (TAS) logic. It also uncovered Colonial Social Darwinism (CSD) as the governance philosophy used in the earlier EAC, which underlay the 'colonial-functionalist' approach to regionalization (EAC-1). This explains key causes of unsustainability within the current regionalization project (EAC-2) such as political corruption, unethical public service, etc. Despite acceptable levels of competence in regional governance within individual EAC member states in terms of: i) hierarchical, ii) network, and iii) market styles of metagovernance, a closer analysis revealed: i) an inverse relationship between transfer of capabilities from colonizers to natives (TCCN) and the sustainability of post-independence states (SPIS); and ii) a directly proportional relationship between colonial governance style (CGS) and the economic performance of post-colonial (EPPC) East African countries. It also revealed an ambitious but inadequately grounded drive to expand the EAC project without due attention being given to existing fault-lines of possible disintegration.

The EAC faces a risk of turning into colonial victimization and villainization writ large; which is unsustainable due to the social laws of victim-disaffection (ViD) and villain-encumbrance (ViE). Further analysis showed that these fault-lines of disintegration could be exasperated internally by the governance styles and stances taken by the ruling regimes of the core member states: Kenya's Jubilee Alliance Party (JAP) has to balance between the forces of ethnically inspired devolution and multicultural capitalism; Tanzania's Chama Cha Mapimduzi (CCM) still has to overcome a socialist single-party hangover and manage the political marriage between the mainland and the island; and Uganda's National Resistance Movement (NRM) has chosen a governance philosophy of hybrid Marxism. From a justice point of view, the study advocates for establishing a Regional Basic Structure (RBS) that uses a 'one-step original position' as a mitigation measure. The RBS should be founded on universal egalitarianism so as to minimize misrepresentation and diminish the political elitist culture of betrayal of the electorate at all levels of representative leadership.

In a reconstructive fashion, the research augmented the position that ethical values within society (the ethical fabric) provide the foundation on which other dimensions of sustainability are built. On the basis of that premise, the study generated and proposes the Comprehensive Ethical Sustainability (CES) framework as a scheme of axiomized ethical principles designed to be used towards the realization of the sustainability of systems and processes. The CES scheme is a principlistic recasting of selected intuitively valuable dominant approaches to development; designed to be convertible into a comprehensive program of action (or sets of regional policies) towards the attainment of governance and development sustainability in an integrated EAC. The CES framework is fashioned as a re-organized, multi-dimensional cocktail of i) compound, ii) compatible and iii) complimentary principles of: i) *Justice*, ii) *Capabilities*, iii) *Ubuntu* and iv) *Integrity*, whose application would make the regional bloc sustainable. These principles are considered and proposed as pillars in the: i) theorization of sustainability; and ii) policy formulation, structural arrangements and individual action aimed at sustainability.