

Media and the Sustenance of Collective Identifications in Africa

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Abstract

The initial, post-independence attempt to unite the three East African countries of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania floundered in the wake of ideological differences by the political leadership in the three countries. Before its demise, the East African Community (EAC), as it was called, had been looked upon by the European Economic Community (EEC), the precursor to the European Union, as an example of how to unite. However, the idea of one East Africa survived and in 1993, cooperation between the three countries was again revived. Today, the three East African countries are discussing the possibility of a political federation. Using an eclectic admixture of media discourse analysis and historical analysis, this essay examines the role of the mass media in sustaining the idea of one East Africa at a time when regional integration was absent. My research focused on editorials and opinion articles published in a section of the local media between 1977 and 1993, and examines how rhetorical and literary devices in media discourse were used to keep the idea of one East Africa alive, and to agitate for increased cooperation.

Key words: Media discourse analysis, regional integration, co-operation, East Africa

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We share a common past and are convinced of our common destinies. We have a common history, culture and customs which make our unity both logical and natural. Our futures are inevitably bound together by the identical aspirations and hopes of our people and the need for similar efforts in facing the tasks that lie ahead for each of our free nations.

Statement issued in Nairobi on June 5, 1963 by President Julius Nyerere of Tanganyika, and Prime Ministers Milton A. Obote of Uganda and Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya

Introduction

For about 15 years, the three East African countries of Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania pursued a successful regional cooperation initiative that was increasingly seen as an example of how a group of countries sharing geographical adjacency could integrate. In 1977, however, this project collapsed amid bitter acrimony. The break-up of what was then called the East African Community was blamed on a wide range of reasons: tensions created by the adoption of capitalism in Kenya and socialism in Tanzania; the unpredictable, arbitrary and authoritarian rule of Field Marshall, Al Hajj Dr. President Idi Amin Dada of Uganda, the self-proclaimed Conqueror of the British Empire, who overtly coveted different parts of Kenya and Tanzania; and on proxy wars by Cold War superpowers. Although the member states negotiated a Mediation Agreement for the Division of Assets and Liabilities, which they signed in 1984, the breakup occasioned bitter rivalry; in 1979, Amin invaded Tanzania, which responded by deposing and sending him to exile in Saudi Arabia where he died in 2003. The border between Kenya and Tanzania was closed. On their part, Uganda and Kenya fought a brief border war in December 1987. While this was going on, all the three countries joined other trading blocks such as the Common Market for East and

Southern Africa (COMESA), thereby demonstrating a persistent felt need for regional cooperation even when they desisted from cooperating amongst themselves. Officially, prospects for co-operation amongst the three countries appeared low.

It was therefore somewhat surprising when on November 30, 1993, the Heads of State of the three countries signed the Agreement for the Establishment of the Permanent Tripartite Commission for East African Co-operation, marking the start of a new round of co-operation. Since then, the three countries have re-established the East African Community,¹ and are cooperating in a wide range of areas, including education, defense, education, and cultural matters. They have launched an East African passport for their nationals. On January 1, 2005, they launched the East African Community Customs Union. Even more interestingly, they have formed a committee to study how the political federation of the three countries could be fast-tracked. Chaired by Kenya's Attorney-General Amos Wako, the group recommended that full political federation be attained by the year 2010. Meanwhile, other countries in the region such as Rwanda and Burundi have applied to join the EAC, and heads of state of these two small countries have been attending EAC summit meetings. Clearly, regional integration is in vogue once again.²

Using the methodology of media discourse analysis, this study generally looks at the period between 1977 when the community collapsed and 1993 when cooperation was revived, and particularly between 1990 and 1993 when media agitation for regional integration gained momentum, with the aim of critically assessing the role of a section of the East African media in sustaining the idea of one "East Africa." The objective is to

¹ The Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community was signed by Presidents Benjamin Mkapa of Tanzania, Daniel arap Moi of Kenya and Yoweri Museveni of Uganda on November 30,1999.

² For a summary of East African integration efforts, visit the secretariat web site at www.eac.int
For further readings on EAC history, see Green (1978), Mwase (1978), Agbor-Tabi (1989).

demonstrate how media discourse contributes to the formation, and change, of social perceptions regarding a political unit and its relations to other units and how such change might influence aspects of collective identity.

It is important to state that the media are not a prerequisite for the emergence of a collective identity. Long before the media as they are known today appeared, people still identified themselves collectively along familial, gender and territorial categories. During this pre-industrial era, priests, scribes, and bards, were responsible for recounting, re-enacting and codifying traditions (Smith 1991:38; 94-95). In the post-industrial society the media are credited with having profoundly influenced the development of collective identities, especially those covering vast tracts of territory. Perhaps the greatest proponent of this view is Anderson who has forcefully argued that it was print capitalism which "made it possible for rapidly growing numbers of people to think about themselves, and to relate themselves to others, in profoundly new 'ways" and to create "that remarkable confidence of community in anonymity which is the hallmark of modern nations" (1983:36). Print capitalism was able to do this by providing the written word in a large scale in the form of the novels and newspapers which were partaken every morning in a ceremony aptly described as a "communion"(Anderson1983: 35). The media practitioners of today are the "agencies of popular socialization," and at whose disposal is a vast array of technologically advanced equipment (Smith 1979: 184; 1991:11). They form an important part of the elite intellectuals to whom the task of ensuring a common public mass culture and ideology has been entrusted. Regarding the integration of transnational societies, it is assumed that the media will give rise to transnational publics, who will then begin to imagine the new community (Robins & Morley 1989:12; Robins 1994: 81; Schlesinger 1993:7). To understand how the media perform this role, discourse analysis appears to be the suitable methodology.

A Note on Discourse Analysis and Media Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis has been developed concurrently in many academic disciplines using different theoretical perspectives, and as a consequence defies easy or conclusive definition. It emerged as a new study across disciplines such as anthropology, micro-sociology, cognition and social psychology, politics, rhetoric, stylistics, linguistics, semiotics, and other disciplines in the humanities and social sciences in the 1960s and 1970s (Van Dijk 1988b: 17; 1991b: 108; 1996; Jaworski & Coupland 1999; Wetherell et al., 2001). Potter and Wetherell (1987: 1-32) provide an excellent account of how it developed from a fusion of methods from linguistics, semiotics and ethnomethodology. It has been variously described as all research concerned with language in its social and cognitive contexts; as a description for studies focusing only on linguistic units above the level of the sentence; as the correct term for research dealing with cohesion and connectedness across sentences or turns of talk-and to cover developments stemming from structuralism and semiotics (Potter and Wetherell 1987:6). It has been pointed that "no social practice exists outside the domain of the semiotic - the practices and production of meaning" (Hall 1988: 51). For our purposes, we shall adopt Van Dijk's definition that discourse analysis is a transdisciplinary approach to the study of how language is used to communicate in a sociocultural context (1991b: 108; 1991a: 44; 1985a: 11).

Although discourse analysis has historically been traced back to over 2,000 years ago when Philosophers like Aristotle related discourse structures to the art of persuasion in public contexts (Van Dijk 1988b: 18), it is a relatively new approach in media studies. Boyd-Barett traces the *interpretive tradition* - one of the three major intellectual sources of media analysis which concentrates on media texts (unlike the others, the *social science*, which focuses on context only, and the *creative traditions*, which concentrate "media practice as vocational preparation") to 1948, with the emergence of the notion of textual discrimination, through the early analysis of films, to a variety of neo-Marxist, structuralist, psychoanalytical, feminist and post- structuralist approaches to the reading of texts (1991: 23). This tradition fused with that from the social science that looks beyond texts to the

context of media production as well as uses of the media texts, and the result was discourse analysis in media studies, which has come to be regarded as the best of both traditions. By interrogating media texts, media discourse analysis can assist in revealing the role of language use in producing and sustaining certain forms of social and political identity.

In recent years, discourse analysis has become more or less accepted as an alternative or addition to classical content analysis, which has dominated the study of the media for decades (Van Dijk, 1991b: 109). Indeed scholars like Potter and Wetherell go as far as claiming its superiority over content analysis which they argue is mechanical and less effective: "If we adopt a theoretical perspective in which language is seen as an essentially functional medium, where the meaning of terms is closely related to their particular context of use, content analysis is less helpful" (1987:41). Thus, the attractiveness of discourse analysis lies in its ability to address issues of meaning in context as well as the "sheer subtlety of a situation where participants may be constructively using their language to produce different sorts of effects" (Potter and Wetherell 1987: 41). In other words, discourse analysis makes it possible to examine how the social world is constructed and how it is perceived through language use.

The term discourse analysis is used here in its broadest sense - the analysis of written texts, in this case the media text concerning the issue of regional integration in Eastern Africa. It should be emphasized that our concern is not with the linguistic questions, for instance the formal structure of sentences, phonology and morphology. The objective is to understand how a group of Kenyan newspapers deployed language to construct an identity of East Africa at time when that identity did not legally exist.

The application of discourse analysis in the study of journalistic output is based on the well-founded knowledge that news is a product of the linguistic resources at the disposal of the journalist. Like in other dimensions of discourse such as conversation, journalists use language to construct versions of events. According to Potter and Wetherell, it is apposite to use the term *construct* for three reasons. The first is that it reminds us that "accounts are

built out of a variety of pre-existing linguistic resources, almost as a house is constructed from bricks, beams and so on"; the second is that construction implies "active selection; some resources are included, some omitted"; and thirdly, the notion of construction emphasizes the "potent, consequential nature of accounts." Such construction need not be conscious; it emerges as journalists try to "make sense of a phenomenon" (1987:33- 34). News is also heavily moderated and influenced by news processing, the context in which it takes place, as well as the predispositions of those involved in it:

News is not a natural phenomenon emerging straight from reality, but a *product*. It is produced by an industry, shaped by the bureaucratic and economic structure of that industry, by the relations between the media and other industries and, most importantly, by relations with government and with other political organizations. From a broader perspective, it reflects, and in return shapes, the prevailing values of a society in a particular historical context" (Fowler 1991:222).

This "product" and "construction" is what people base their social and political knowledge and beliefs about the world. In other words, news shapes our worldview. It is therefore important to study how media messages are presented in order to arrive at our own judgments about the hidden implications of such representation.

The Corpus

A total of 29 editorials, columns and interpretative reports carried by four Kenyan print media organizations, namely, the *Standard* Newspapers Group, the *Kenya Times* Media Trust Group, the *Nation* Newspapers, and the *Weekly Review* Magazine Ltd.³,

³ It is important to make a distinction between newspapers and magazines, given that one of the newspapers in the sample is a magazine. The difference rests mainly on schedule and physical appearance, and has no legal basis. In Kenya, both are registered as newspapers. However, newspapers appear every day, while magazine regularity might vary from one week to two years depending on the specialization. A

between 1990 and 1993 formed the raw empirical data for this study. These papers were selected for several reasons: firstly, as serious, national, high-quality newspapers, these media had a fairly wide readership⁴; secondly, they have been in existence for fairly long length of time during which they have covered East African affairs; and thirdly, they have different ownership structures which gives this study a comparative dimension centering on how ownership - the political economy - impacts on journalistic output in a given issue. The year 1990 is significant in the history of East African integration in the sense that it was the year that hostilities between the three countries suddenly disappeared, ushering in new prospects for integration. The articles were chosen based on the fact that they were the only ones to appear on the issue of regional integration since 1990. Editorials, columns and interpretative articles were chosen over straight news articles because unlike straight news where opinions are less overt, this genre of writing generally reflects the corporate opinion of such organs and, more often than not, those of the authors. While the sample size may appear small, it is unlikely to undermine the results because they are the entire number of articles written on the issue in their genre. This is not to say that the issue did not generate a

magazine like the *Weekly Review*, although specializing in politics and economic writing, competes for the same market as the newspapers. In terms of appearance, magazines are smaller in size compared to newspapers. Another important distinction is in price: magazines are usually more expensive than newspapers. Closely related to cost and specialization aspect is the fact that magazines are normally retained by readers for longer periods than newspapers.

⁴ According to the Kenya Media Survey of 1992, the Nation had a circulation of 250,000, the Standard 56,000, and the Kenya Times 22,000. The then Managing Editor of the *Weekly Review*, Mr. Jaindi Kisero, told me in an interview in May 1994 that the magazine had a circulation of 16,000. To get an idea of readership, in poor countries like Kenya where only a few can afford newspapers, each publication is read by at least three other people besides the individual who purchased it.

lot of news: other news genres such as straight news, which are more numerous, have not been included. Moreover, it is appropriate to use a small sample in discourse analysis:

Because one is interested in language use rather than the people generating the language and because a large number of linguistic patterns are likely to emerge from a few people, small samples or a few interviews are generally quite adequate for investigating an interesting or practically important range of phenomena. For discourse analysts the success of a study is not in the least dependent on sample size. It is not the case that a larger sample necessarily indicates a more painstaking or worthwhile piece of research. (Potter and Wetherell 1987: 161).

Application of Discourse Analysis in this Study

A detailed structural analysis was undertaken by examining the headlines, style and rhetoric used in the articles. The discourse analysis begins with a thematic analysis of the texts. By thematic structure, it is understood the "hierarchical organization of themes or topics in a text" (Van Dijk 1988a: 72). It is this structure that defines the most important information in a text. As a result, headlines and the actors mentioned in the headlines were analyzed. After the thematic analysis, attention was then turned to the analysis of style and rhetoric, which is part of the so-called "surface structures" (Van Dijk, 1991a: 209). Style was taken to mean the diction and variation of words editorial writers and other pundits use in reference to integration in East Africa. This analysis is important because it is from these descriptions that we may detect the implicit evaluations such writers have of the process of regional integration, and the factors that could have nourished their perceptions. It is also important because the public's perception of news events and processes are to a large extent shaped by their symbolization in the media. The simple act of labeling or naming something can affect human behavior toward that thing and even transform the nature of the thing itself (Wang, 1994: 564). The use of different words by journalists and editors not only reflects their perception of a news event but also conditions the way these reports are received.

The editorial, unlike headlines which appear in every page, is specific to a fixed page. Various headed as leader, editorial, opinion, comment, and so on, it purports to speak the point of view of the media organization carrying it. Editorials also serve an important symbolic function; they appear to partition off the "opinion" component of the paper, giving the impression that other sections, by contrast, are pure "facts" and are not influenced by the predispositions of the writer, journalistic conventions and context. This symbolism is reinforced by layout and typography, the editorial usually being printed in the same position on the same page everyday, often adjacent to "letters to the editor" page, which are also categorized as (mere) opinion (Fowler, 1991: 208). Often, bold type, reinforcing authoritativeness, is normally used, as is a type size that is slightly bigger than that used throughout the rest of the text in that particular newspaper. Finally, an editorial is often accompanied by the newspapers' logo or masthead.

An Analysis of Media Discourses on East African Integration

The Nature of Headlines

Headlines are the most conspicuous part of a newspaper article, mainly because of how they are composed and typographically designed. They are brief, printed on top of the article in large bold type, and often across several columns. In consequence, they have an important textual and cognitive function as they are usually read first. Their main function is to summarize what journalists consider to be the most important information in a story, that is, their 'topic,' which represents criteria of journalistic decisions about the newsworthiness of an event (Van Dijk, 1991:71). Grammatically, headlines are often incomplete sentences owing to lack of space, although in the view of Van Dijk, this characteristic is important as it may have special ideological function (1991:50). A total of 29 headlines were studied, this being the number of headlines that accompanied the only openly opinionated articles on

integration. The majority of these headlines are agitational in nature; 10 out of 29 headlines directly call for the revival of the East African community, and none opposes regional integration.

Words used in the headlines

Van Dijk has stated that the "choice of one word rather than another to express more or less the same meaning, or to denote the same referent, may signal the opinions, emotions, or social position of a speaker" (1991:53). In a newspaper, choice of words may signal the political opinions (ideology) of the newspaper about certain events. Thus, the purpose of examining the choice of words, that is, their lexical style, is to expose their characteristics and thereby bring to the fore the underlying semantic concepts used by the newspapers, as well as how newspapers use words in headlines to define and evaluate integration affairs.

The most frequent headline words in this corpus are **East African**, which appears nine (9) times, **East African Community** (5), **co-operation/Co-operate** (5), **New** (5), and **Regional** (5). What is most noteworthy is the fact that the countries of Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania are frequently referred to as East Africa, despite the fact that the geographical region of Eastern Africa encompasses other countries such as Somalia, Malawi, Ethiopia, Rwanda and Burundi. Although the three countries owe their East Africa tag to the colonialists who named them thus, the media do not appear eager to drop the name or explain that it is a misnomer. They prefer to maintain a name that is not geographically correct, one that marks the borders of East Africa through the exclusion of countries that fall within the geographical region of East Africa. The same also applies to the application of the term "regional"; the three countries are by no means the only ones in the region.

We also encounter quite a high frequency of the word **co-operation** (5) and **unity** (5), as well as other closely related words like **community** (2) and **Pact** (2). The fact that there was neither co-operation nor unity during much of the period when the headlines were written is a statement of the headlines' clamor for unity and co-operation. Another

interesting aspect is the reference of the people of the three countries as **citizens of East Africa**. In so doing, the media unquestioningly perpetuates an absurd situation in which a non-existent status is conferred on a people so that they appear to belong to a "nation-state" that exists largely in the imagination as East Africa was not one country at the time when these articles were written and, as we have seen, even the term 'East Africa' itself is geographically incorrect since in the way it is applied, it is not isomorphic to the geographical space of East Africa.

The importance of the high frequency of the word **Time** becomes clear when we consider the context in which it is used. The word appears in headlines that are typically agitational. For Example: TIME FOR REBIRTH OF EA CO-OPERATION (*Sunday Nation*, November 10, 1991), and IT IS TIME TO REVIVE THE EA COMMUNITY (*Kenya Times*, November 12, 1992). These headlines appear at a time when the East African community had long been defunct, and when low-key moves to revive it were developing. Thus, by presenting time as being ripe for the revival of the community, the Kenyan press openly supports integration, although this may indicate that the press had read the signs of the times - the moves to revive co-operation - and are therefore expressing the prevailing integrationist ideology. No reasons are given why the press considers it appropriate for the three countries to integrate at this time, but to be fair, it is difficult to undertake any kind of explanation in the headlines given their nature. What should be borne in mind, however, is that although such reasons and justifications may be given in subsequent text, the wording of a headline may be used as the sole basis for the formation of opinions by some readers, some of whom rarely read editorials beyond the headlines (Cerulo 2000).

Actors

There is a remarkable absence of actors in the headlines, especially of personalities, for an African press that was at that time renowned for observing a personality cult. One possible explanation for this would be that the press welcomed the opportunity to comment

and analyze East African affairs as one in which it can protest against the imposition of a personality cult approach to journalism that is so common in domestic news reporting. Another would be that the press regards the idea of regional integration as being more important than the individuals involved in bringing it about or impeding it. Whatever the case, the only actor mentioned by name in the headlines is President Ali Hassan **Mwinyi** of Tanzania who is mentioned once. It is significant that the editorial in which his name appears is written to support his remarks that integration be revived, which he had expressed during an interview with the *Executive* magazine, yet another Kenyan publication, in August 1993. By including Mwinyi's name on the headline, it is being acknowledged that he has played a significant part, indeed more than any of the other two heads of state, in bringing about regional co-operation. He was instrumental in reconciling Presidents Moi of Kenya and Museveni of Uganda. During his tenure, Tanzania has appeared enthusiastic about reviving the community.

Other actors appearing in the headlines are **citizens, foreign minister, leaders** and **all**. The reference to the people of the three countries as citizens of East Africa should be interpreted as serving the purpose of conferring a common international status to them. This delineates the boundaries of the **East African Community** by excluding others who, even though they may be inhabitants of the geographical East Africa, are nonetheless non-citizens of the community as imagined. The other category of actors is simply described as **leaders**. This description obviously means political leaders, and particularly the heads of state of the three countries. It is a noteworthy term to ascribe to Presidents who faced deep crises of legitimacy: Mwinyi had, at least until then, not been tested in a democratic election of political parties and was seen as a protégé of his predecessor, Julius Nyerere; President Daniel arap Moi of Kenya exhibited few qualities of a democrat; and Museveni shot his way to power. By being referred to as **leaders**, a positive term, we see the press trying to confer legitimacy at the regional level people who are accused of being dictators in their respective countries. It is as if the **leaders** are being told by the media: if you initiate

integration, then we as the media are ready to forget your shortcomings at the domestic level and legitimate you in the eyes of East Africans.

Qualitative properties of headlines

What follows now is an analysis of the qualitative properties of the headlines with aim of revealing their ideological implications. For our purpose, we shall examine four headlines, each from each of the four news organizations in the sample, selected for the sole reason that they accompanied editorials or columns that were the first to appear in the respective papers on the East African integration issues in 1990 - the year when hostilities between Kenya and Uganda improved enough to allow integration efforts to be re-launched.

The headlines are:

EAC REVIVAL: WHAT A WELCOME IDEA (The *Standard on Sunday*, February 16, 1992)

IS A NEW EAST AFRICA FINALLY ABOUT TO RISE? (*Kenya Times*, August 28, 1990)

TIME FOR REBIRTH OF EA CO-OPERATION (*Sunday Nation*, November 10, 1991)

EMPHASIS ON CO-OPERATION (*Weekly Review*, November 22, 1991)

A casual glance at these headlines reveals that they are either campaigning for, or assessing the revival of the East African Community (EAC) or some form of cooperation in East Africa. Even without the benefit of exposure to the specific issue being discussed in the main text and the ideological positions taken therein, it is quite obvious that the papers are promoting integration. For instance, to the *Standard*, EAC's revival is enthusiastically seen as a "welcome idea." To the *Kenya Times*, it is a new East Africa being about to "rise." The use of the word "rise" instead of "to be revived" is significant in that it is analogous to the mythology in which the legendary bird, phoenix, rises again, rejuvenated and strong, after burning itself to ashes. By using this metaphor of the legendary bird, East African

integration is endowed with highest possible degree of invincibility; even in death, it is still alive and capable of rising again. To the *Nation*, support for regional integration is straightforward, open and urgent: now is the time for the "community" to be reborn.

On the face of it, *Weekly Review's* headline is rather bland and devoid of emotions; it is what is normally referred to as a "label" headline because it has no active verb or actors. On close scrutiny, however, it becomes clear that the headline is crafted to serve an agitational role as well. The headline introduces an analytical piece whose objective details are that President Moi had paid a visit to Ethiopia, and that an announcement had been made to the effect that the presidents of Tanzania and Uganda would pay a visit to Kenya. It is these details that the magazine chooses to interpret as being symptomatic of increasing emphasis on co-operation. No allowance is made for the possibility that the proposed visits by the Presidents could be for any reason other than to discuss regional co-operation. Although the press might have been told by government sources that regional co-operation was on the agenda, it not explicitly stated in the story. It becomes clear, therefore, that integration, whether it is defined as "co-operation" or "unity" or "community" is being promoted by the Kenyan newspapers in the headlines examined in the study. It is depicted as a good thing that existed in the past and which later disappeared, but is now about to "rise" or appear; something that is welcome and good for "us."

Style and Rhetoric

The "lexical style" or choice of words is crucial and will usually "signal the position of the writer" (van Dijk 1991:211). "Rhetorical structures" refer to the mechanisms that are used to make a piece more persuasive, for instance, hyperbole and understatements (van Dijk 1988:16). An important aspect of style concerns how the participants are identified in the text. We have seen through our study of headlines, that the inhabitants of the three countries are variously referred to as "East Africans," "citizens" or "citizenry," "all," "the people," and the "East African Community." These identifications, as we have seen, are

significant because they attribute a collective identity to the region's inhabitants that does not legally or administratively exist. East Africa is therefore, an "imagined community" (Anderson, 1983: 5). It is also an identity that is constructed through difference and contrast (Schlesinger, 1993:7). Thus, the people are referred to as "East Africans" in order to differentiate them from other Africans. The same applies to the description of "the people of the region," where the aim appears to be to differentiate the region from other parts of the continent. Thus, the media liberally uses such terms to construct a collective identity for a multiethnic, multi-racial society whose only common bond is to inhabit three countries that have, through historical accident, usurped the name "East Africa."

Lexical style also functions as a way through which positive or negative feelings about an event or process are expressed (Van Dijk 1991). In these articles, there are many instances in which the writers of editorials and columns choose words that positively portray the integration process. Integration is variously referred to as "co-operation," "agreement," "treaty," "unity," "rebirth," "new-look East Africa," "camaraderie," "federation," "renaissance," "revival," "East African idea," "regional idea," "partnership," "sisterhood," "new era in East Africa," "brotherhood," "dream," "commonality" "East African communion," "East African triumvirate," "East African super-state," to mention but a handful.

These terms not only express certainty and affirmation regarding integration efforts, but are also hope-laden, and tend to portray integration as a reality. All of them are characteristically constructive; there is no evidence of skepticism. Indeed no negative terms are used to describe integration despite ample historical evidence that integration can often result in deep polarization and wrangling within a hitherto peaceful community and could even lead to war such as that fought in 1994 between North and South Yemen after a three-year flirtation with integration. The fact that different tribes within the three countries have also been unable to live harmoniously with each other despite efforts by colonial and post-colonial administrations to integrate them into nation-states should also serve as proof

that integration has a dark flipside. However, this lesson appears to have escaped the media who continue to construct a positive image of integration with little or no caution that it could lead to problems. This uncritical, whole-hearted support for integration indicates that the media generally followed the dominant elite-led thinking on integration.

Another interesting aspect of this positive emphasis on integration is that the terms applied to it implicitly associates integration with development and progress. Descriptions such as "East African super-state," "renaissance," "co-operation" and even "federation," allude to an advanced state of inter-territorial progress, something to be aspired to, a goal of much significance. Others such as the "East African idea," "brotherhood," "sisterhood," "East African communion," "dream," etc., evoke abstract, transcendental, and metaphysical concepts. This is the effective component of Anderson's "imagined community" - a deep, horizontal comradeship that inexplicably leads people to willingly kill, and die for it (1983:7).

Alliteration, rhyme, pun and repetition

Although not very common - perhaps due to lack of literary-minded journalists, perhaps because of copy editing conventions in environments of scarce space - these figures, which operate at the level of sound and sentence structure, still emerge significantly in the text. They are to be found in headlines as well as in the main texts of the editorials and opinion columns. Examples are headlines such as: "A TIME FOR REGIONAL AMITY AND COMITY (*Nation*, November 22, 1991) where rhyme is used, and COMMUNITY COLLAPSE COSTLY (*Nation*, November 30, 1993), which is a fine example of alliteration.

In the main texts, we come across examples like:

... stronger regional communities that would *boost and bolster* trade among African countries ..." (*Sunday Nation*, November 10, 1991).

The time is ripe for Presidents *Moi, Museveni and Mwinyi* to have their names enter the history books as the three Ms who revived East African *amity, comity and communion* (*Sunday Nation*, November 10, 1991)

There were *ruined* careers, *ruined* contacts and *ruined* hopes for many" (*Weekly Review*, December 10, 1993).

...the need for the people of East Africa to *turn to each other*, rather than *on each other*, is even stronger" (*Sunday Nation*, November 10, 1991).

The functions of these rhetoric devices appear to be to emphasize meaning. Although a great majority of the newspaper readers are likely to know who the Presidents of the three countries are, it is considered necessary to repeat their names, and in order to benefit from alliteration, their non-rhyming first names are conveniently kept out, although this is the first time that their names appear in the text. This goes against the journalistic convention that requires that news personalities be fully identified in the first instance, and thereafter be referred by their surname, or first name, depending on the house-style of the news organization. This is yet another instance where journalistic rules are being sacrificed to serve the ends of a newspaper's opinion on integration.

As for the repetition of *ruined*, it is really not necessary to keep repeating it like a refrain. The sentence could have retained the same meaning if it read: "There were *ruined* careers, contacts and hopes." This repetition, which again breaks with journalistic convention of guarding against redundancy, emphasizes the negative impact of the collapse of the community. Likewise, the use of the phrase, *turn to each other*, would have conveyed the intended message, but in order to stress the folly of hostilities and for full contrast, another expression, *turn on each other*, is also used. The moral is that a house divided cannot stand, which is another way of calling for unity of the three countries.

Hyperbole

We also encounter a significant frequency of exaggeration or hyperbole. These are a surprise in quality national press like the newspapers we are examining. But it does explain

the fact that in matters of integration, the Kenyan press will break, consciously or unwittingly, journalistic conventions and standards in order to emphasize or de-emphasize a point or issue. Here are few examples:

...(integration) would mean that the three countries will find it easier to deal with donor demands and withstand *heckling* from do-good organizations from the West much more effectively" (*Kenya Times*, December 1, 1993).

The so-called "do-good organizations," meaning donor agencies and others who insist on human rights and better governance, do not actually heckle. Owned by the then ruling party, the Kenya African National Union (KANU), the ruling party's newspaper was using the occasion to hit at the governments perceived enemies.

If the moment could be seized (to integrate), the three statesmen would probably *need to do nothing else* to ensure their places in history" (*Kenya Times*, August 28, 1990).

Here the three presidents are being lured into greater integration with the promise that their names would be etched in history; this is certainly an attractive prospect for megalomaniac leaders like Moi who had at one time proposed to construct the tallest skyscraper in downtown Nairobi with a four story statue of himself. However, these are people whose place in history is already assured; they are presidents, irrespective of particular nuances of their rule. Yet this prior achievement is disregarded and made to appear like a non-achievement. Only initiating integration is good enough an achievement for history to remember!

They (the three presidents) could lay the foundation for an East African super-state with more than 65 million people, which, *by the stroke of a Pen*, would become, after Nigeria, the world's second largest conglomeration of black people" (*Kenya Times* August 28, 1990).

Nye has remarked that unity is a short word for a long process (1964:4). By using the expression, by *the stroke of a pen*, a very long, complex process is simplified and made to appear so simple and manageable.

As the saying goes, leaders come and go but institutions remain and so the efforts started in Nairobi should be viewed in the wider context of leaders wishing to *fulfill the wishes of the 75 million East Africans*" (*Kenya Times*, November 23, 1991).

No opinion poll, no referendum, no research, had ever been done to gauge the support of integration in East Africa. To say that integration constitutes the *wishes* of the *75 million East Africans* is an overstatement based on an assumption.

No tale of lost opportunities in this region matches in consequence that of the loss of the golden chance we fleetingly had in the 1960s to create a political federation encompassing Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika." (*Standard*, January 17, 1993)

It is not clear how many tales of lost opportunities there are in the region, or when their consequences were ever assessed for impact. Suffice it to say that this seemingly authoritative claim is in actual fact an exaggeration that is deliberately deployed to stress the value of integration.

To paraphrase, the millions of Ugandans who lost their lives because of Idi Amin and his policies might still be alive today if we had federated in the 1960s. And the millions of Tanzanians whose lives were destroyed by Julius Nyerere misguided policies of socialism and self-reliance could have been spared if federation had come then" (*Standard*, January 17, 1993).

Put another way, the newspaper is endowing integration with the ability of not only improving living standards of the people, but also of saving lives. This is the perfect hyperbole. Integration has yet to prove itself as the panacea to the twin problems of dictatorship and underdevelopment. And neither does it insure against socialism.

Countries that can survive much more comfortably in the present uncertain international context *are in a frenzy to develop linkages*" (*Nation*, November 22, 1991).

The countries referred to here are the developed countries, including European ones. They are portrayed as being in a *frenzy* to integrate. Given the then loud acrimony surrounding the form European integration should take, this is either a deliberate attempt to distort facts, or a mark of the papers' ignorance regarding integration elsewhere.

What is needed is the *political nod and factories with idle excess capacity will re-start production...*" (*Nation*, November 22, 1991).

This is yet another over-simplification of the long process of unity. That production capacity in factories would be restored or used fully is wishful thinking that fails to consider the full implications of globalization and neo-liberal economics which undermines the manufacturing capacity of developing economies, whether they are integrated or not.

Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania, like most African countries, are *too small to support any significant industrial production.*" (*Sunday Nation*, December 12, 1993).

These countries are by no means small. Kenya alone has about 32 million people. Not that size is an important factor in industrialization. Some small countries like South Korea, Taiwan and Israel have industrialized without the benefit of integration.

Metaphors

Metaphors are quite common in the texts being examined, which is quite normal in opinionated writing. According to Fitzgerald, "metaphors may help to create identities and identities may feed on metaphors"(1992:115). It is therefore crucial that they be examined. Here are a few examples:

This is *fertile ground* for the *seeds* of federation." (The fact that Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni went to the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania). (*Standard* January 17, 1993).

The problem with this metaphor is that it exacts too much from a minor factor - that Museveni studied at the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania. Julius Nyerere attended the University of Edinburgh in Scotland, yet nobody is capitalizing on it to promote the integration of Scotland and Tanzania! The metaphor of "seeds" evokes delicate life, care and importance.

(people of East Africa).. are *brothers and sisters with relatives* across the borders" (*Standard.*, February 16, 1992).

True, there are a few tribes that were split by the arbitrariness of colonial boundaries, but people in such ethnic communities are related only figuratively, not in fact. Also, this statement makes it appear as though all people in the region are related to one another.

...politicians are hurriedly trying to put together *the broken potsherd* of the former East Africa "(*Sunday Nation.*, March 15, 1992).

Although a broken potsherd would appear to symbolize death, this imagery is effective because of its familiarity in a culture that uses pottery quite widely. The imagery also suggests a certain utilitarian value that underlines the importance of integration. It also fits well with the description of renewed co-operation efforts as "revival" and "resurrection," both of which in turn evoke mending and molding life.

The thought of East Africa cannot fail to strum the chord of nostalgia in the generation that reaped the benefits of a *vast geo-cultural landscape*" (*Sunday Nation.*, March 15, 1992).

This is both a hyperbole and a metaphor. It calls up the image of a culturally uniform region, which does not exist in East Africa, where diverse ethnic groups practice

different cultures. It is based on an erroneous assumption, perhaps forgivable if made by foreigners, that since all East Africans speak Kiswahili language, then the whole region must be culturally homogeneous.

Our leaders... killed this *goose that laid the golden eggs*" (*Sunday Nation*, December 12, 1993).

This metaphor attributes the qualities of a living thing to the defunct EAC. This animating of the EAC is a statement on the importance this newspaper attaches to integration efforts. The eggs are golden, no less, which suggests extraordinary value. Here is a lament that East African leaders destroyed an important organization.

Conclusion

What the foregoing shows is that headlines play an important part in defining regional integration. In this role, the headlines in the Kenyan Press are invariably positive, occasionally neutral, and rarely negative. The concept of "East Africa" is described in glowing terms that are themselves pregnant with meaning: "co-operation," "giant step," "amity," "comity," and "a worthy dream". It is portrayed as an idea whose time has come, and whose implementation "East Africans" would be foolish to delay. Most of the examined headlines were directly agitational, insisting that time is nigh for the revival of regional integration efforts in East Africa, while those that attempted to be neutral or objective by attempting to address issues of uncertainty and concern regarding integration in the region, ended up betraying the biases of their writers by the euphemistic manner in which they went about doing this. The analysis of style and rhetoric, on the other hand, supports the conclusions reached after the examination of headlines. Both the lexical selection and rhetorical artistry, although often subtle and seemingly innocent, have been carefully mobilized to emphasize evaluations that positively promote the ideology of integration. Little

doubt is left regarding the positions taken by the press in affairs of integration in East Africa.

Discourse analysis can aid the understanding of how integration itself represented, and how its momentum is maintained over long stretches of time. A discourse analytical approach makes it possible to study subtle aspects of organization, meaning, or style of discourse, and how these can be taken into account in their social-cultural context. Thus, in analyzing headlines, it was seen that their role in articles on integration is hardly innocuous. The headlines introducing articles on integration are invariably positive, occasionally neutral, and rarely negative. The analysis of style and rhetoric, on other hand supported the conclusions reached after the examination of the headlines; that both the lexical selection and rhetorical artistry, although often subtle and seemingly innocent, have been carefully mobilized to emphasis evaluations that positively portray the ideology of integration.

The study of regional integration is a much wider issue encompassing a wide range of disciplines, and cannot therefore be restricted to the analysis of media discourse on integration. There is need for further research, specifically media effects research, to examine what sort of impact media discourse on integration has on readers. The need for such research becomes more crucial given that people expose themselves selectively to different issues, and that their critical analysis is dependent on their knowledge about certain issues (Zaller, 1992:1; Ang, 1990; 165). Further research may also apply media discourse analysis to the rest of the East African mass media, especially radio and television. Some media, such as the East African, have emerged with an East African audience in mind, and their contribution needs to be studied. When Nye (1966:79) observed that the media were instrumental in integrating East Africa, he was setting a research agenda. This study has by no means exhausted it.

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