

What does the Data Tell Us About Dominatarian Theory of Regional Integration?

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Abstract

In this article an alternative thinking and methodological approach for the study of regional integration is proposed, addressing the limitations of classical regional integration theories and the new regionalism approach. A ‘dominatarian’ theory is introduced as an alternative analytical framework that exposes meanings attributed to a social force called ‘personness’, and how regions could be (re)constructed through this anthropocentric lens. The East African Community (EAC, henceforth referred to as the *Jumuiya*) is chosen as a tour de force for regional integration theories. The triadal analysis of the three main components of classical regional integration theories—economy, institutions and politics—reveals the deficiency of these frameworks in explaining the role of ‘personness’ in regional integration processes, especially within the African context. Consequently, the phrase ‘contextual misfitability’ has been coined to describe this condition. The article concludes with a reflection on how meanings are created and re-created from the Darwinian ontologies of natural sciences into social science regimes and its application to regional integration studies.

Keywords: Dominance, RTD, Regional Integration, EAC, Kenya