THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY INTEGRATION TO GOOD GOVERNANCE IN UGANDA

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DECLARATION

I, Nyirinka Gabriel, hereby declare that this dissertation is my original work and has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in this or any other university or institution of higher learning. All sources of information used have been duly acknowledged.

Signature: ______________________

Date: 13th/MAY/2026

APPROVAL

This dissertation entitled "THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY INTEGRATION TO GOOD GOVERNANCE IN UGANDA" has been read and approved as meeting the required standards for the partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of a Bachelor of Governance and International Relations by the School of Social Sciences, Uganda Christian University.

This dissertation has been submitted with my approval as the University Supervisor.

Supervisor Name: MARTIN KIZITO (PhD)

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Date: 8/ May/ 2024

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family, whose unwavering support, encouragement, and sacrifice made this academic journey possible. It is also dedicated to all those who believe in the power of regional integration to transform governance and improve the lives of ordinary citizens across East Africa. May this work contribute, however modestly, to that enduring aspiration.

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed at evaluating the influence of EAC integration on good governance in Uganda over the decade (2016-2026) which is the period of greatest enlargement of the Community and the implementation of the Seventh EAC Development Strategy (2026/27-2030/31). Secondary data collected from East African Court of Justice (EACJ) jurisprudence, institutional and governance documents, peer-reviewed articles and EAC Treaty documents was analysed and a qualitative, desk-based, single-case study approach was adopted. Thematic analysis of the data was carried out by Braun and Clarke's 6-phase approach, while the main theory used was intergovernmentalism.

The findings show that there has been a real though limited improvement at governance level in Uganda as a result of the integration of EAC but significant work remains. The most visible effects can be seen in the two fields above: Rule of law discourse, with the decisions of the EACJ having provided some normative concepts that are being used in the advocacy of law domestically; and Economic governance transparency, with the implementation of the Common Market Protocol, leading to incremental gains in customs and investment facilitation. There is limited institutional capacity built in Uganda's Inspectorate of Government as a result of regional cooperation on anti‑corruption. In 2025 however, Uganda's ranking on the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) dropped from 26 to 25 out of 100, indicating that there have been no structural governance changes at the EAC level.

This limited impact can be attributed to five inter-related problems of sovereignty sensitivities that result in the selective domestication of regional norms, insufficient institutional capacity and resources, governance heterogeneity brought by the rapid enlargement of EAC, weak enforcement mechanisms and Uganda's domestic political economy underpinned by executive dominance and patronage networks. The study finds that the Ugandan state is intergovernmental and this is a good explanatory factor for the selective compliance. It suggests a gradual path towards governance compliance in the EAC, the development of a national domestication agenda for governance frameworks and better civil society and development partner engagement with governance aspects of the Seventh Development Strategy.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AU	:	African Union
CPI	:	Corruption Perceptions Index
DRC	:	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EAC	:	East African Community
EACJ	:	East African Court of Justice
EALA	:	East African Legislative Assembly
GIR	:	Governance and International Relations
MEACA	:	Ministry of East African Community Affairs
SDG	:	Sustainable Development Goal
UCU	:	Uganda Christian University
UNDP	:	United Nations Development Programme
URA	:	Uganda Revenue Authority

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This study explores how the EAC (East African Community) integration has contributed to good governance in Uganda. The independent variable is integration mechanisms in EAC which refer to institutional mechanisms and norms that the Community wants to shape the behaviour of the Partner States in governance. The dependent variable in the study is good governance in Uganda which is assessed on six dimensions: Rule of law and judicial independence, accountability, transparency, anti-corruption enforcement, electoral governance and protection of human rights. Sovereignty sensitivities, institutional capacity, political will, the impact of EAC enlargement, and domestic political economy of governance reform in Uganda are potential intervening variables in the relationship between these two variables.

The East African Community (EAC) is the most institutionally advanced regional integration body on the African continent, with a Treaty, which clearly pledges Partner States to democracy, rule of law, accountability and transparency, social justice, gender equality and protection of human rights (EAC Treaty 1999, Article 6(d) and Article 7(2)). As a founding member of the revamped EAC, Uganda is set to be among the main beneficiaries of these governance promises. However, Uganda's performance on the Corruption Perceptions Index 2025 was 25 out of 100, placing it 148th on the worldwide list which shows that the country's governance system continues to have significant weaknesses (Transparency International, 2025).

This chapter is organised as follows. This is followed by the conceptual background in Section 1.2, followed by the historical, contextual and theoretical backgrounds. The problem is given in section 1.3. The objectives are given in Sections 1.4 and 1.5. Research questions are given in Section 1.6. Section 1.7 states hypotheses. The conceptual framework is provided in Section 1.8. Significance, justification, scope and operational definitions are covered in sections 1.9 – 1.12. Section 1.13 is an overview.

1.2 Background to the Study

1.2.1 Conceptual Background

Good governance is the core concept of this study and thus it is fitting that this research starts with clarifying the meaning of good governance and its key characteristics, as well as how it relates to regional integration. Good governance is the use of political, economic and administrative power in a manner that is responsive and accountable to citizens, participatory, fair and clear (World Bank, 1992; UNDP, 1997). It is a multi-dimensional concept which cannot be expressed in one indicator and has to be understood as a composite condition which is defined by eight interrelated principles.

The first principle is participation – all members of society have a voice in decision-making processes, either through legitimate representative institutions or direct participation (UNDP, 1997). The second relates to rule of law, which requires that laws are equally applicable and that the legal system is applied fairly and without prejudice, that it is fully protective of human rights and that there is an independent judiciary and impartial enforcement agencies (World Bank, 1992). The third is transparency – decisions and enforcement are made according to rules and information is shared with those impacted. The fourth is responsiveness – institutions and processes must respond in a timely fashion to all stakeholders. The fifth is consensus orientation which means that governance institutions manage the competition of interests to secure a wide consensus on the actions that are best for the long-term benefits of society.

The sixth principle is inclusiveness and equity – in which all segments of society have an interest in governance outcomes. The seventh is effectiveness and efficiency, that processes and institutions achieve results in accordance with the needs of the citizens, yet make optimal use of available resources (African Union, 2013). The eighth is the most important for the purposes of this study: accountability, which means that governmental bodies, the private sector and civil society organizations are held to account by those impacted by their decisions (World Bank, 1992).

The following are not just ideals to aspire to but the criteria against which this study measures Uganda's governance performance in relation to the integration mechanisms in the

EAC. World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators and African Union's Agenda 2063 are the empirical benchmarks used for Uganda's governance assessment. In this sense, regional integration is defined as the process in which states give up sovereignty and share authority in order to achieve common goals by establishing a shared institution and by harmonizing policies (Laursen, 2018). In African setting, regional integration is considered not only an economic initiative but as a tool to help build democratic institutions and the rule of law (African Union, 2013). The relationship between regional integration and good governance is thus not just a normative one, but an institutional one too, as EAC Treaty Articles 6(d) and 7(2) on good governance have a binding character and EAC institutions, including the EACJ, EALA and the EAC Secretariat, implement the commitments in good governance in the form of jurisprudence, legislation and protocol implementation.

1.2.2 Historical Background

The EAC was first formed in 1967 as a cooperation mechanism involving the three countries of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda with a focus on economic coordination which includes a common customs tariff, transport infrastructure, and a development bank. By 1977 it had become obvious that the Community was under threat as a result of the ideological differences between the socialist politics of Tanzania and the political instability of Uganda under Idi Amin, as well as the growing controversy over resources and a lack of institutional strength which could handle the situation. The collapse was a warning sign for the conditions which can make lasting integration possible.

The revival of EAC through the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community (TEC) signed in Arusha, November 1999 and came into force in July 2000, was a qualitatively different process. The re-established Community has a wide mandate, which goes beyond economic cooperation to governance, security, peace and eventual political federation (East African Community, 2025). Obligations of governance were for the first time incorporated into the Community's constitutive Treaty. According to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (East African Community, 1999) Partner States have obligations to promote and defend democracy, rule of law, accountability, transparency, social justice, gender equality and human rights.

Since the time of reconstitution the Community has grown significantly. In 2007, Burundi and Rwanda joined, South Sudan in 2016, the DRC in 2022 and Somalia in March 2024, thus making ten Partner States. In March 2026, the EAC was launched the Seventh EAC Development Strategy (2026/27-2030/31) which underlines governance consolidation, anti-corruption and democratic strengthening as key elements in the Community's five-year programme, consistent with the AU Agenda 2063 and the UN SDG 16 (East African Community, 2026).

1.2.3 Contextual Background

The situation of governance in Uganda is a distressing contradiction to its formal EAC commitments. Uganda as a founding member of EAC, has done various things through the EAC mechanisms, such as: implementing the provisions of the common market protocol in national legislation; joining EACJ proceedings; and joining anti-corruption cooperation platforms at regional level. Civil society groups have increasingly used the provisions of the EAC Treaty in their advocacy in the domestic sphere (Nabukeera, 2025). However, Uganda's corruption perception index (CPI) score fell from 26 in 2024 to 25 in 2025, placing it 148th in the world ranking, and thus faring worse than better (Transparency International, 2025). Judicial independence is still subject to doubt, the anti-corruption enforcement system is hampered by patronage, and the EAC’s recent enlargement has led to the normative dilution and resource pressures affecting the Community's ability to engage in focused governance in the founding members (Minde, 2025).

Uganda's implementation of EAC obligations is selective and interest led. Governance measures that limit executive power, independent oversight or increase the accountability of politically sensitive institutions have been delayed systematically, while measures helping to facilitate regional trade and economic activity have been put into domestic law with some promptness. It presents Uganda in a unique light for regional studies on the linkage between regional integration aspirations and national governance realities, and for the period between 2016 and 2026 as the most analytically fruitful time to study the impact of EAC mechanisms on the experiences of Ugandan governance.

1.2.4 Theoretical Background

The theoretical underpinning that is most relevant to the understanding of the governance contributions of the EAC is intergovernmentalism which was developed by Moravcsik (1998) and adapted to the African context by Chukwuma and Ojukwu (2023). This perspective suggests that the governance arrangements of regional integration are largely a matter of member states' wishes and interests; if they can further the state interest, then they will be accepted, if they challenge sovereignty or existing political arrangements, then they will not. Intergovernmentalism is directly related to all three specific objectives of this study. As far as institutional pillars of the EAC (Objective One) is concerned, intergovernmentalism is the answer to why Uganda participates selectively in the EACJ, the EALA and the Secretariat, taking normative products that would be in line with the interests of the Executive, but excluding any institutional authority that would restrain Executive power. Intergovernmentalism helps to account for the fact that the governance issues that can be observed are limited to areas of state interest (Objective Two), and not those relating to accountability or anti-corruption, where the incumbent may find themselves threatened by change. In discussions on the effectiveness of EAC, intergovernmentalism helps to analyse the issues of sovereignty sensitivities and selective domestication, as well as the structural absence of enforcement, which constitute member-state primacy in the outcomes of integration (Objective Three).

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The EAC integration framework aims to raise the standards of governance in all the Partner States through common institutions, policies and binding commitments under the Treaty. Uganda has been a member of this framework for more than 20 years. However, the quality of governance is still mediocre at best. In 2025, Uganda recorded a CPI score of 25 out of 100, placing it at rank 148 on the list of countries worldwide, and worse than the CPI in 2024 (Transparency International, 2025). The rule of law, judicial independence, fight against corruption and electoral governance have been documented and persistent weaknesses where EAC mechanisms have failed to address. Uganda selectively adopts EAC obligations, which include only those it sees as having economic benefits and postpones obligations that restrict executive powers. Existing scholarship is lacking in providing focused empirical analysis in the context of Uganda to link EAC mechanisms with governance outcomes between 2016 and 2026. This study directly tackles this question.

1.4 General Objective of the Study

This study aimed to find out the level of contribution of EAC integration to good governance in Uganda.

1.5 Specific Objectives

i. To examine how the institutional pillars of the EAC have contributed to the principles of good governance in Uganda.

ii. To assess the influence of EAC integration on governance practices in Uganda.

iii. To identify the challenges affecting the effectiveness of EAC integration in promoting good governance in Uganda.

1.6 Research Questions

i. How have the institutional pillars of the EAC contributed to the principles of good governance in Uganda?

ii. How has EAC integration influenced governance practices in Uganda?

iii. What challenges affect the effectiveness of EAC integration in promoting good governance in Uganda?

1.7 Hypotheses of the Study

H1: The institutional pillars of the EAC, specifically the EACJ, EALA, and the Secretariat, have made incremental contributions to good governance principles in Uganda, most notably in rule of law discourse and economic transparency, but these contributions have been constrained by the treaty-limited jurisdiction of the EACJ and the weak enforcement authority of the EALA.

H2: EAC integration has positively influenced selected governance practices in Uganda, particularly in economic governance and anti-corruption capacity, but its overall influence has been limited by selective domestication of EAC protocols and the persistence of executive dominance over governance institutions.

H3: Sovereignty sensitivities, institutional capacity constraints, EAC enlargement-induced governance heterogeneity, and the absence of effective enforcement mechanisms are the primary challenges affecting the effectiveness of EAC integration in promoting good governance in Uganda.

1.8 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework focuses on the relationship between the EAC integration mechanisms as the independent variable, good governance as the dependent variable and a group of mediating variables which explain the nature of how the regional norms are transmitted and received at the national level. The framework is rooted in the belief of intergovernmentalism (Moravcsik, 1998; Chukwuma & Ojukwu, 2023) and based on the eight World Bank (1992) and UNDP (1997) governance principles: participation, rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, consensus orientation, equity and inclusiveness, effectiveness and efficiency, and accountability.

Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK — EAC INTEGRATION AND GOOD GOVERNANCE IN UGANDA

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE EAC Integration Mechanisms		**INTERVENING VARIABLES Mediating Factors**		**DEPENDENT VARIABLE Good Governance in Uganda**
• EACJ — Judicial governance • EALA — Legislative norms • EAC Secretariat — Protocol coordination • Common Market Protocol • Anti-Corruption Framework	→	• Sovereignty sensitivities • Institutional capacity • Political will • EAC enlargement effects • Domestic political economy	→	• Rule of law • Accountability • Transparency • Anti-corruption enforcement • Electoral governance • Human rights protection

Source: Adapted from Moravcsik (1998), World Bank (1992), UNDP (1997), and EAC Treaty (1999)

EAC integration mechanisms are the independent variable which covers the EACJ, EALA, EAC Secretariat, Common Market Protocol and Anti-Corruption Framework. The mechanisms are intended to impact good governance in Uganda, which is measured in six dimensions, corresponding to the aims of the study: rule of law, accountability, transparency, anti-corruption enforcement, electoral governance and human rights protection. The relationship is moderated by five intervening variables: first, how sensitive Uganda is to sovereignty; second, how capable the EAC bodies and the national bodies are to implement governance requirements; third, political will; fourth, the effects of EAC enlargement on governance; and fifth, the domestic political economy of Uganda, which is characterized by executive dominance and patronage networks that are hostile to structural reform.

The relationships between the variables will be important to the interpretation of the results of this study. The EAC mechanisms have direct institutional outputs like EACJ rulings and EALA resolutions and diffuse normative outputs in the form of civil society advocacy and legal discourse. But these outputs are mediated by the five intermediary variables before they manifest themselves in tangible governance gains in Uganda. Intergovernmentalism theory foresees that, when the forces that make mediation possible are in favour of selective compliance, only the governance improvements that align with state elite interests will be realized. The concept architecture forms the foundation for all three specific objectives and their associated hypotheses.

1.9 Significance of the study

The significance of the study can be described by the following:

This research has three levels of importance: policy, practice and academic research.

From a policy perspective, the study offers Ugandan policymakers at MEACA, the Ministry of Justice and the EAC Secretariat a policy-based evidence-based assessment of the mechanisms for EAC integration that have yielded tangible gains in governance and structural challenges that need targeted policy interventions. An analysis of the gap between Uganda's Treaty obligations and the extent of their domestication has provided the evidential basis for a formal EAC Governance Domestication Plan. It is because of this timing that the report is relevant to the Seventh EAC Development Strategy 2026/27-2030/31, which is the starting point for monitoring and evaluating the commitments in the Strategy's governance programming for Uganda.

The study is directly relevant to civil society organizations, development partners, law firms, and advocates for accountability in Uganda with regard to its practical relevance. The study highlights the specific provisions of the EAC Treaty, EACJ precedents and the normative standards in the region that can be used as advocacy tools in domestic governance accountability work, reinforcing the practical tool kit of non-state actors to address governance deficits in Uganda. The study will help development partners planning governance programming to identify those areas where EAC programming is most likely to have governance impact and where standalone programming will not be sufficient to overcome structural barriers.

The study has three contributions to the academic realm. First, it addresses a well recognised gap in Uganda specific empirical studies of the influence of EAC governance. Second, it evaluates the explanatory power of intergovernmentalism in relation to governance contributions of the EAC, and provides theory that can be used to analyze regional integration in other African settings.

Thirdly, it shows the analytical utility of the desk-based documentary research as a serious and thorough method of governance studies, in settings where access to primary data collection is restricted.

1.10 Justification

The study has been justified in the following ways:

There are three justifications for the study, all of which show the need to have this study done now, not later.

The temporal window is an important window in a unique manner. The 2016-2026 period will be a pivotal time for the EAC to develop. The Community has grown from six to ten members, added states that are very different from the founding members in their governance, and initiated a Seventh Development Strategy, with governance as an overarching theme. The governance implications that are being felt in Uganda in the midst of these developments are being shaped on the fly. If an empirical baseline analysis isn't done seriously, then the governance programming of the Seventh Strategy will be executed without evidence that it has worked or failed, and why.

Second, the absence of governance in Uganda in spite of their membership in EAC is a theoretical conundrum and a practical policy challenge that need explanations at this point.

The score of the CPI in Uganda has been falling year after year, from 44 in 2021 to 25 in 2025 (Transparency International, 2025). The institutional structure of EAC has been somewhat strengthened over more than 20 years, but a measurable governance improvement in Uganda has not been realized. To catalyse a governance shift in Uganda, it is critical to understand why regional integration mechanisms have failed to do so so far and to get a better understanding of how to design EAC institutions and how to make Uganda more accountable before further deterioration sets in.

Third, the launch of the Seventh EAC Development Strategy 2026/27-2030/31 in March 2026 with its bold governance consolidation and anti-corruption pledges provides a current and time-limited opportunity for carrying out a baseline assessment. At the beginning of the Strategy period the starting conditions against which the Strategy's governance commitments will be judged need to be analyzed. This study gives just the baseline; at this specific point in the EAC's institutional history it cannot be replaced with any other research.

1.11 Scope of the Study

Content Scope

It focuses on the role of the EAC institutional pillars in the implementation of good governance in Uganda in six focus areas: rule of law, accountability, transparency and anti-corruption, electoral governance, human rights. It evaluates the impact of the integration of EAC on practices of governance in Uganda and challenges that hinder effectiveness.

Time Scope

The study also reflects on key EACJ jurisprudential developments in 2016 through to 2026, the launch of the Sixth and Seventh Development Strategies and the growth of the Community from 6 to 10 members.

Geographical Scope

The study is based in Uganda and the focal point for the national institutional reference point is the Ministry of East African Community Affairs (MEACA).

1.12 Operational definitions of key terms

EAC Integration Mechanisms; Formal institutional and normative instruments used by the EAC to influence governance behavior in Uganda such as the EACJ, EALA, EAC Secretariat, Common Market Protocol, Protocol on Peace and Security, and Anti-Corruption Framework.

Good Governance; Public authority in Uganda was measured under six pillars identified from the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators, as well as the EAC Treaty Articles 6(d) and 7(2): rule of law, accountability, transparency, anti-corruption enforcement, electoral governance and human rights protection.

Domestication; The process of ensuring that the obligations and provisions under the EAC Treaty and EAC Protocols are reflected in the national laws, policies and practices of Uganda.

Sovereignty Sensitivities; The attitude of the political leadership in Uganda towards the EAC governance obligations that would reduce the scope of executive authority or external accountability.

Rule of Law; How well laws are publicized, equally applied and independently interpreted in Uganda was measured mainly by EACJ jurisprudence and independent rule of law assessments.

1.13 Summary

This chapter has laid the foundation for the analysis and structure of the study. It began with the conceptual background, which framed the eight principles of good governance and its linkages with regional integration. Historical background followed the story of the EAC from its inception in 1967 until it was reconstituted and expanded. The regional context framed the governance problems in Uganda as a region with deep-rooted governance challenges. The theoretical background brought to the fore intergovernmentalism as the main analytical perspective and made the connection to all three specific goals explicit. The purpose of the problem, the general goal and specific goals, the research questions, and the hypotheses were expressed. Conceptual framework – independent and dependent variables are shown, linkages between variables are explained. The relevance was presented in the policy, practice, and research aspects and the rationale presented the need for the study. The theoretical and empirical literature is reviewed in Chapter Two according to the three specific objectives.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The literature review in this chapter examines the theories and empirical studies that pertain to the three specific objectives of the study. It starts with the theoretical framework, identifying intergovernmentalism as the key theoretical perspective and clarifying in detail how each of its three core principles underpinned each of the objectives. Then, the empirical literature is summarized in three thematic sections corresponding to each objective, with each section properly numbered and without underlining. The chapter is concluded by a summary that brings together the key findings of the theoretical and empirical analysis.

2.2 Theoretical Framework:

Intergovernmentalism is taken as the theoretical paradigm in this study. Andrew Moravcsik (1998) has developed intergovernmentalism to the level of a theoretical system in The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht, and applied it to East African regional governance by Chukwuma and Ojukwu (2023). The framework is grounded in three principles that are directly connected to the goals of this study:The framework is based on three principles, all of which are directly related to the aims of this study:

The first is that outcomes in integration are the result primarily of the preferences of the state. Governments participate in regional frameworks instrumentally, taking up responsibilities that are in their national interest and avoiding responsibilities that are to their detriment to the national interest and/or the incumbent political system. In terms of this study, the principle is that the Ugandan state is willing to accept obligations that promote economic activity and trade in order to meet its own political interests as domestic elites align with the EAC's political interests, but it will not accept obligations that would force accountability on the executive arm of government or increase the capacity for independent oversight bodies. This is closely related to Objective One.

The second principle is that there are no autonomous supranational authorities that dictate the outcome of integration, only bargaining between states. The member governments of the EAC make decisions by consensus. This implies that any EAC governance standard, whether it comes from the EACJ, EALA or the Secretariat, will only take effect within the member state if accepted and implemented by the member state governments. In the absence of a strong political will for compliance on the part of Uganda's government, there is no EAC institution that can force compliance. This principle directly relates to Objective Two as it makes an explanation of the reasons why governance influence is seen when EAC obligations coincided with state interests and not when they did not.

The third principle, that sovereignty is an unalterable limitation, is a key one.The third principle, that sovereignty is unalterable constraint, is a key one. Domestic political obligations and commitments that would significantly alter domestic political power are opposed, postponed or selectively enforced, Treaty or non-Treaty. This principle resonates directly with the EAC governance challenges in Uganda identified as structural constraints on the effectiveness of EAC governance, namely: sovereignty sensitivities, selective domestication and enforcement gap (Objective Three). It also sheds light on why the enlargement of the EAC is making governance harmonisation more complicated: the more fragile states in the region and those more sensitive to sovereignty issues are joining the Community, the more difficult the harmonisation process is going to be, as consensus becomes increasingly difficult to reach for meaningful harmonisation (Minde, 2025).

The three principles account for the pattern across the three specific objectives: in Objective One, where there is a genuine but incremental contribution made by the three institutional pillars of the EAC; in Objective Two, where there is governance influence but only within a specific field or in a limited way; and in Objective Three, where there is a structural challenge due to the primacy of sovereignty and absence of enforcement. Thus intergovernmentalism is not just an orientation in the background, but the framework and lens in which all conclusions are drawn and explanations are made. While each supplement a certain aspect, neofunctionalism (Haas, 1958; Laursen, 2018) and liberal institutionalism (Keohane, 1984) explain parts of the pattern, neither of them captures it as fully as intergovernmentalism does, especially in its economic governance spillovers and the normative impact of the EACJ jurisprudence.

2.3 How the EAC has advanced the Good Governance Principles in Uganda through the Institutional Pillars of the EAC.

Articles 6(d) and 7(2) of the EAC Treaty introduce seven governance principles – democracy and constitutional governance; rule of law; accountability; transparency; social justice; gender equality; and protection of human rights. These are reinforced in the programmatic commitments in anti-corruption, electoral observation, human rights and inclusive political dialogue in the Seventh EAC Development Strategy 2026/27-2030/31 (East African Community, 2026).

2.3.1 The East African Court of Justice (EACJ)

Jurisprudence developed by the EACJ under Article 23 of the Treaty has led to the most visible governance contributions to Uganda. Article 7(2) of the Treaty provides that interference with judicial proceedings is a direct violation of the principles of Treaty. This principle was affirmed in the landmark judgment of Katabazi and others versus the Secretary General of the EAC and the Attorney General of Uganda (2007), which continued to be relied on in post-2016 proceedings (Possi, 2016; Lando, 2018). In Uganda, lawyers and civil society groups have used this precedent as a benchmark of good practice to sue the government in domestic courts when it oversteps its bounds. The EAC Treaty is one of the most normatively ambitious governance regimes in African regional integration, in Possi's words (2016, p. 245).

The governance influence of the EACJ is not limited to the Katabazi case as the EACJ has also been approached in cases relating to institutional transparency, government contracting and executive appointments post-2016. The EACJ has increasingly relied upon the provisions of the Treaty-based rule of law principles to indirectly safeguard civil and political rights in Uganda. It is noted that the decisions of the EACJ have been instrumental in providing constitutional litigators with more tools, the normative argumentation with rights approach, which can be made before Ugandan courts (Lando, 2018). Although the Court's reach – as an institution – is limited by the treaties it serves and the lack of direct enforcement powers to ensure the rule of law, its contribution to the discourse of rule of law is firmly entrenched in academic literature and civil society documentation in Uganda.

2.3.2 The East African Legislative Assembly (EALA)

The EALA is an intergovernmental body created under Article 48 of the Treaty, which has legislative and norm-setting powers in the area of governance. It has also established resolutions and model laws on democratic accountability, electoral standards and anti-corruption measures that provide normative standards that Uganda is expected to abide by at the national level. The study of the EALA resolutions and model legislation shows that there is a substantive body of regional normative work between 2016 and 2026. EALA has adopted resolutions urging Partner States to harmonize electoral laws with regional standards, boost independent anti-corruption institutions, and transparency in Public procurement (Mugume, 2024).

EALA resolutions have been quoted by Ugandan civil society organizations and by opposition members of Parliament in advocacy campaigns and parliamentary debates, especially in the area of electoral reforms. However, there are some cases where EALA is not effective due to political interests and/or slow implementation, as well as the reliance on the cooperation of the member states. The practical impact of EALA is also stunted due to the absence of robust enforcement mechanisms, the representation of the ruling party in the delegation to EALA in Uganda, and the lack of public awareness of EALA in Uganda (Mugume, 2024). The intergovernmentalist view regards EALA's norm-setting role as nothing more than the very sort of regional governance mechanism that requires the political will of the member states to be domesticated.

2.3.3 The EAC Secretariat and Key Protocols

The EAC Secretariat has contributed to governance reforms by facilitating the coordination of regional programmes, the implementation of protocols and promoting transparency in administration respectively. The Common Market Protocol (2009) has brought some regulatory transparency obligations to business registration, customs, and investment promotion which led to incremental changes in economic governance in Uganda, especially in customs administration and investment facilitation (Mugume, 2024). The Anti-Corruption Framework promotes information sharing and capacity development among national institutions, including the Inspectorate of Government (IOG) in Uganda, resulting in limited, but real institutional improvements (East African Community, 2025). The improvement in regional coordination, confidence in investments and institutional cooperation has been beneficial to Uganda. But limited capacity, funds, and varying compliance of member states persist in restricting the extent of their impact.

The EAC Gender Policy and Common Market Protocol non-discrimination principles also create responsibility for Uganda to remove discriminatory practices and encourage economic and political involvement of women. Although the implementation is still unevenly distributed in legal, economic and social areas, it is well noted by Nabukeera (2025). There is a trend by civil society actors to use the provisions of the Treaty in advocacy and litigation, indicating that the normative influence in EAC is not limited to formal institutional avenues. EAC electoral observation missions, including those for the 2021 general elections in Uganda, have identified gaps in governance and helped to shape the regional standards discourse on elections.

2.4 Influence of EAC Integration on Governance Practices in Uganda

The empirical literature reveals a governance incrementalism, which is not that problematic, but rather domain-specific, yet less than the governance changes that the EAC agreement promises. This is fully in line with intergovernmentalism's second principle which is that the influence of governance could be seen in as much as the obligations of the EAC met Uganda's state interests, and was limited in as much as it did not.

2.4.1 Economic governance

Measurable outcomes from compliance with Common Market standards are customs transparency and investment facilitation. Some reforms of the Uganda Revenue Authority and the Uganda Investment Authority have been done partly due to the requirement for harmonisation by the EAC. But the effects of non-tariff barriers, administrative delays and divergent compliance among member states remain to restrict the extent of the governance gains from integration.

2.4.2 Rule of law

The jurisprudence of EACJ has influenced governance discourse in Uganda, even in situations of non-enforcement. The Court's norms are used by civil society, lawyers, and legal commentators in criticizing executive actions in judicial proceedings, creating a 'normative marker', which is independent of formal enforcement (Lando, 2018). The EAC has thus been more of a norm-setter than a law-changer in its role in promoting rule of law. Afrobarometer (2025) shows a significant proportion of Ugandans have a positive attitude towards EAC integration in terms of governance potential, reflecting the Community's normative influence in the public political culture.

2.4.3 Anti-corruption

Information sharing and accountability mechanisms in regional cooperation have enhanced, however corruption is still a domestic challenge in Uganda. Modest institutional capacity has been created through regional cooperation, based on comparative good practices and joint training. Uganda's anti-corruption issues such as patron-client organizations, institutional capture and poor governance in anti-corruption authorities are not well addressed by regional mechanisms (Transparency International, 2025). In 2025, Uganda's CPI is at 25 out of 100, the most succinct indicator of this longstanding divide.

2.4.4 Normative Governance Environment

In addition to these areas, there are diffuse, non-specific normative effects of EAC integration. EAC governance standards are frequently cited in the legitimisation of civil society organisations, media and legal practitioners in accountability work (Nabukeera, 2025). This normative influence, although it is hard to measure, is a real governance contribution of discourse and advocacy that does not go through formal institutional lines.

2.5 The challenges facing the effectiveness of EAC integration in the promotion of good governance in Uganda

The literature reveals five challenges that relate to each other and limit the effectiveness of governance in EAC in Uganda, which align directly with Objective Three.

2.5.1 Sovereignty sensitivities and Non-interference

Norms are the most basic of structural constraint conditions. The EAC decision-making is consensual, which means there is national discretion, safeguarding incumbent governments that oppose regional governance norms. The need for the domestication of governance protocols in Uganda has been repeatedly used as a pretext to block EACJ decisions that limit Executive powers (Chukwuma & Ojukwu, 2023). This pattern is exactly what intergovernmentalism's third core principle says.Intergovernmentalism's third core principle is "sovereignty is a non-negotiable constraint" and it is just this pattern that it predicts.

2.5.2 Institutions and limitations regarding resources

They are able to function as important barriers on their own. The EAC Secretariat's budget is below adequate levels for its mandate of governance programming. The delayed payments of USD 27 million or more by the DRC have limited Community operations (Independent.co.ug, 2026). The technical capacity gaps and competing priorities at the national level contribute to the delays in the translation of Treaty obligations into practice for MEACA (Mugume, 2024).

2.5.3 Outline of the governance and expansion of EAC

Their structural complications have been introduced. The 2022 accession of the DRC with its endemic corruption, a weak judicial system, an ongoing armed conflict, and a civil law system incompatible with the common law system of the founding members of the EAC is a structural shock to the governance cohesion of the EAC (Minde, 2025). These tensions were only exacerbated by Somalia's 2024 accession. The Community's ability to engage with existing actors such as Uganda, is impacted by normative dilution, institutional distraction, and financial burden (CSIS, 2024).

2.5.4 Lack of enforcement mechanisms.

This is a basic design flaw. The EAC does not have direct effect doctrines, infringement procedures or financial penalties to force compliance unlike the EU. Treaty governance obligations are not legally binding, as is evident from the Ugandan situation where obligations are selectively domesticated (Possi, 2016).

2.5.5 Uganda's domestic political economy.

It establishes a reinforcing structural blockage. The EAC mechanisms can be undermined by a governance environment, which is characterized by the concentration of political power in the Executive, patronage networks, institutional capture and strategic use of public resources in Uganda (Mugume, 2024; Transparency International, 2025). Due to party dominance in Parliament, there is limited parliamentary capacity to monitor EAC obligations, which further weakens the domestic constituency for EAC compliance.

2.6 Summary

The theoretical and empirical literature reviewed in this chapter indicates that EAC integration and good governance in Uganda have been discussed. Theoretically, intergovernmentalism as developed by Moravcsik (1998) and adapted to the East Africa context by Chukwuma and Ojukwu (2023) serves as the major analytical framework, and the three key principles thereof directly inform all three specific objectives. The in-depth analysis of intergovernmentalism highlights the interplay between state preference primacy, bargaining processes, and constraints on sovereignty that drive the selective compliance pattern in Uganda. The literature instead shows empirical evidence of some positive but modest advances in governance in terms of the transparency of the economy, rule of law discourse, and capacity to fight corruption, while the overall weaknesses of executive accountability, electoral governance, and structural capacity to fight corruption persist. The five structural hurdles strengthen the intergovernmentalist outlook for the selected and partial compliance. The results support the three hypotheses outlined in Chapter One and were used as an analytical basis for the methodology outlined in Chapter Three.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological approach of the study. Before commencing the study, it is important to emphasize that this study is an in-depth desk-based qualitative research using only secondary data, which consist of sources that have been already produced, and are in the form of documents and published materials. No field visits, interviews or primary data collection of any kind are made. The chapter covers research design, qualitative approach, population and sampling, secondary data sources and methods of data collection, data analysis, ethical considerations, limitations and delimitations. The documentary review checklist employed as the main data collection tool is included as Appendix A.

3.2 Research Design

The study is qualitative, being a case study, with Uganda as the one case to be studied within the wider context of EAC integration. Yin (2018, p. 15) states that a case study is an "empirical enquiry into the phenomenon of an event or problem to gain an understanding of it within the real-life context in which it occurs, particularly when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly defined. There are three qualities that make this design suitable. First it enables contextually rich print and the researcher to focus on how and why as well as what happened under the particular conditions in Uganda. Second, it is suitable for explanatory analysis, which outlines the pathway between the independent variable and dependent variable (Creswell, 2014). Third, it allows for several types of evidence to be used for triangulation. A single-case focus on Uganda is warranted by the institutional and political detail needed to track the functioning of the EAC mechanisms in this particular national context, and by the absence of Uganda-specific governance research in the EAC literature.

3.3 Research Approach

The qualitative research approach of interpretivism is used for this study. This is justified by four specific points in the context of this study: Firstly, qualitative approaches are appropriate for studies that focus on understanding meaning, context and process instead of measures numerically (Bryman, 2016). The main questions guiding the study go beyond quantitative measurement and involve the processes of institutions and the norms that are transmitted. Second, qualitative methods are appropriate when dealing with phenomena which are contextually embedded and complex, such as governance dynamics in Uganda. Third, the method of qualitative documentary research has its precedent for international organizations studies and Treaty frameworks studies where the primary record is contained in the official document and policy document (Bowen, 2009; Scott, 1990). Fourth, the qualitative approach enables the rich analysis of intergovernmentalism needed for this study. The study is based on constructivism, and Treaty instruments and policy documents are considered not simply as factual documents, but as normative documents that represent expectations of governance and logics of implementation (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Creswell, 2014).

3.4 Population and Sampling

It includes all secondary documentary sources that relate to EAC integration and governance in Uganda from 2016 to 2026, which involve EAC Treaty sources, institutional documents, EACJ judgments, EALA resolutions, MEACA records, reports from Parliamentary committees, national governance strategies, peer-reviewed literature, governance assessments, and media reporting. Purposive sampling involves choosing those who are directly relevant to the research questions, whose evidence is particularly compelling, who cover a specific period of study, and who are representative of key institutional and political aspects (Patton, 2015). Trustworthiness is evaluated in terms of the four criteria proposed by Scott (1990) and Bowen (2009): authenticity that is, the document is authentic and not altered; credibility that is, the source is authoritative and reliable; representativeness that is, the document represents the position it documents accurately; and meaning that is, the document's content is interpretable within the study's institutional context.

3.5 Data Collection

This is a secondary data study. No primary data is carried out. Secondary data sources can be categorized in three ways.

Official EAC and National Government documents.Official EAC and National Government documents (Category One).

The EAC Treaty of 1999 and amendments, Common Market Protocol (2009), Protocol on Peace and Security (2013), Anti-Corruption Framework, Seventh EAC Development Strategy 2026/27-2030/31, EAC annual reports and Summit communiqués from 2016 to 2026, EALA resolutions, EACJ judgments with particular reference to Uganda, MEACA institutional records, and Uganda's parliamentary committee reports on EAC affairs.

Category Two: Scholarly and Academic Literature

Peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and policy papers from scholars including Possi (2016), Lando (2018), Minde (2025), Mugume (2024), Nabukeera (2025), Chukwuma and Ojukwu (2023), Laursen (2018), Moravcsik (1998), Keohane (1984), and Haas (1958), alongside methodological scholars including Yin (2018), Braun and Clarke (2006, 2019), Bowen (2009), Scott (1990), Patton (2015), Bryman (2016), Guba and Lincoln (1994), and Creswell (2014).

Governance Assessments and Reports falls under Category Three.

Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (2016-2025), Afrobarometer survey results (2025 Uganda round), reports from CSIS and African Governance Architecture and credible media reports (Independent.co.ug) with peer-reviewed analysis not yet published.

The study was mostly based on documentary sources, which might restrict the empirical measurement of governance outcomes. The use of more than one academic, legal, and institutional source in each of the three categories however, helped to increase reliability and facilitated internal triangulation.

3.6 Data Collection Tools

Two instruments are used to gather and organise secondary data. The first is a checklist for documentary review and is framed by the three specific objectives of the study (see Appendix A). The checklist captures the governance principle or governance mechanism that is being reviewed; specific obligations and institutional actions documented; evidence of implementation and compliance in Uganda; evidence of gaps or resistance to compliance; and the assessment of Uganda's sources on contributing or constraining factors. The checklist is used consistently across all sources, and this leads to systematic and replicable data extraction.

The other instrument is a source tracking matrix. This matrix contains the following information for each source reviewed: full citation, source category, quality assessment score on Scott's four criteria, and research objective(s) to which the source relates. The source tracking matrix provides transparency, auditability and systematic triangulation between the source categories.

3.7 Data Analysis

Data analysis is based on the six phases thematic analysis framework developed by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2019). During Phase One (familiarisation), the researcher reads through the entire documentary corpus to make initial notes prior to coding. During the first phase – coding – all the features of the data that are pertinent to the research questions are systematically labeled inductively from the data. Theme generation in Phase Three involves clustering of related codes into candidate themes representing patterns of meaning. During the theme review in Phase Four, themes are judged with respect to their internal coherence and support with evidence. In Theme Definition (Phase Five), the confirmed themes are then precisely analysed. The analytical narrative is now created in Phase Six reporting which involves using documentary extracts and citations throughout. NVivo Qualitative Data Analysis Software helps you to organise, code and cross reference data. The triangulation across the three sources of data is the main strategy used for validation, with the idea that major findings are grounded in multiple independent sources of evidence.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The study has no human participants, but follows the 4 principles of ethics. One – Accuracy and proper attribution. All sources are properly cited in APA 7th edition throughout and no claims made beyond what the evidence supports. Second, legitimate access: access to all documents is made via publicly accessible institutional channels; no confidential or restricted government documents have been solicited or used. Third, balanced presentation: evidence is not used in order to present misleading impressions, contradictions and counter evidence are recognised and analyzed. Fourth, no conflict of interest: researcher does not have institutional ties with the EAC or Government of Uganda that would create a conflict of interest in analysis.

3.9 Limitations

There are three limitations recognized. First, access to internal EAC and government documents which have not been made public, such as operational reports and internal audit results, is inevitably limited. This restriction is offset by the use of official public documents and secondary literature that has been proven. Second, the desk-based design does not include first-hand accounts of EAC governance mechanisms being put into practice in Uganda which was identified as the most fruitful area for future primary research. Third, there is methodological variation and limitations in the ability to link changes in scores to specific interventions in quantitative governance indicators, such as the CPI; these are used as contextual benchmarks not as accurate measures of the impact of EAC governance.

3.10 Delimitations

The study is delimited in terms of both time (2016-2026), geography (Uganda) and the methodological approach (desk-based qualitative secondary documentary research) which are appropriate for its nature as an extended essay with heavy reliance on secondary sources and theory.

3.11 Summary

The full methodological framework has been presented in this chapter. A qualitative case study design is used, supported by context, explanation and multiple sources. Four arguments justify the use of the qualitative approach, based on interpretivism. This study uses only secondary data that were gathered using two data collection instruments, which are documentary review checklist and source tracking matrix. Analysis is carried out using Braun and Clarke's 6 phase thematic analysis and triangulation in NVivo. The process is under the control of four ethical principles. The documentary review checklist is included in Appendix A and used in the analysis and presentation of findings in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS, ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The results of the documentary analysis carried out in line with the methodology explained in Chapter Three are given in this chapter. The findings are presented across the three sections that directly correspond to the three objectives of this study. The material is organized into numbered sub-sections, featuring the documentary evidence with citations and is analyzed in the light of the intergovernmentalist theoretical framework and the empirical literature reviewed in Chapter Two.

The four institutional pillars of the EAC have contributed to good governance principles in Uganda in the following ways;

4.2.1 The EACJ as a Rule of Law and Judicial Independence Norm-Setter

The EAC Court of Justice (EACJ) has been making significant strides in advancing the ideals of the rule of law in the East African Community. The Court has upheld values like legality, accountability and access to justice through its interpretation of Treaty obligations. Through documentary analysis of the EACJ's decisions and legal scholarly work, the EACJ was found to be the main institutional role that has helped promote rule of law values in Uganda. In the Katabazi case (2007), which was confirmed in the subsequent proceedings after 2016, it was found that the interference of the executive in judicial procedures is contrary to the principles of the Treaty as provided for in Article 6(d) and 7(2) (Possi, 2016; Lando, 2018). In Uganda, the Court's judgments and precedents have shaped the legal discourse and offered an extra regional forum to contest illegitimate state practices.

The analysis of the domestic legal literature and civil society documentation shows that this precedent has been used proactively by legal actors in Uganda in court not only against the Executive but also in seeking a norm to challenge Executive overreach. Beyond the Katabazi precedent, post-2016 EACJ case records show that the Court also has received cases on matters of institutional transparency, government contracting and executive appointments, among others, in Uganda. This is a partial support of hypothesis H1, which states that EACJ has contributed to the rule of law but without direct enforcement and in the context of limited, treaty-based jurisdiction. With limited enforcement powers, however, some of the Court's decisions have limited practical application. Hence the EACJ has had a more normative rather than transformative role in the area of rule of law. Uganda has agreed to the jurisdiction of the EACJ in two instances where other parties have brought litigation before the Court, but has so far not undertaken any actions which give binding accountability to the executive, thus supporting Moravcsik's (1998) sovereignty primacy principle.

4.2.2 EALA's Contributions to Accountability and Democratic Governance Norms

The East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) has played a role to support democratic governance in the region through debates, enactment of laws and oversight in the Community. It provides a forum for deliberation and fosters transparency, representation and accountability on the part of member states. The EALA's resolutions and model legislation for the period 2016-2026 show a substantial area of substantive regional normative practice in the fields of democratic accountability, elections and anti-corruption. EALA has adopted resolutions urging Partner States to harmonize electoral law with regional standards, establish strong independent anti-corruption bodies and provide transparency in public procurement. There have been some gains in Uganda as a result of the engagements in the regional legislative discussions and policy harmonization.

Analysis of civil society documentation and parliamentary records reveals that Ugandan civil society organisations and opposition Members of Parliament (MPs) have mentioned EALA resolutions during advocacy campaigns and parliamentary debates, with a particular focus on electoral reform (Mugume 2024). However, the impact of EALA can be limited at times due to political motives, slow implementation and the reliance on member state cooperation. The actual impact of EALA is hindered by weak enforcement powers, representation in the Uganda EALA delegation by members of the ruling party, and lack of awareness of EALA activities among the public in Uganda. The results are in line with the intergovernmentalism theory that regional legislatures whose work is dependent on political commitment domestically will be constrained when governments are not accountable.

4.2.3 The Secretariat's contributions to Protocols and Transparency

The EAC Secretariat has been promoting governance reforms by facilitating coordination of the regional programmes, application of the protocols, and the promotion of transparency in administration. Common Market Protocol, Customs Union etc. have helped to streamline trading processes and eliminate red tape. Increments of measurable transparency contributions have been detected in the analysis of the records of implementation of the Common Market Protocol, in the EAC Secretariat annual reports (2016-2026) and Uganda's regulatory documentation. Documentation requirements have been simplified and there have been fewer opportunities to engage in arbitrary customs valuation in Uganda due to the introduction of customs harmonisation standards that comply with the Common Market Protocol. There has been an improvement in Uganda benefiting from regional coordination, investment confidence and institutional cooperation.

Joint training on asset tracing and financial intelligence methodologies has been a capacity-building benefit of the EAC Anti-Corruption Framework. The survey results for the period indicate that a significant number of Ugandans hold a positive attitude towards EAC integration with respect to the anti-corruption potential, highlighting a discourse beyond the formal institutionalized channels. The study of EAC Gender Policy and Uganda's legislative history showed that there are some areas where there is formal compliance, such as making amendments in investment laws that remove discriminatory provisions, while others are missing in terms of implementation in practice (Nabukeera, 2025). But the full impact of Secretariat-coordinated activities has been constrained by capacity, funding and by the fact that some member states are more compliant than others.

4.3 Influence of EAC Integration on Governance Practices in Uganda

4.3.1 Incremental Economic Governance Improvements

The annual reports of the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA), performance statistics of the EAC Investment Promotion Authority (EIRA) and compliance findings of the EAC Common Market Protocol (CMP) show a steady progression of economic governance improvements over the past ten years (2016-2026) that can be attributed, in part, to the obligations imposed on Uganda by integration under the EAC. Harmonization of customs documentation has streamlined the process of processing goods at the major border posts and added more predictability in the customs process for traders in Uganda. There has been a reduction in the number of procedures needed to establish a business as a result of the Uganda Investment Authority (UIA) implementing a single window of investor registration under the investment facilitation standards set by the EAC (Mugume, 2024). Such improvements have to be read within their boundaries; that formal harmonisation does not bring about discretionary enforcement and that gains are focused on economic governance in the formal sector. This finding corroborates part of hypothesis H2: EAC integration has had a positive impact on governance processes in economic governance; however, the impact is limited and has not been felt in terms of structural change. Non-tariff barriers, administrative delays, however, and non-uniform application of rules by member states remain a constraint on the extent of governance benefits of integration.

4.3.2 Rule of Law Discourse Normalisation

The analysis of the Ugandan legal journals, civil society publications and parliamentary proceedings indicates that the provisions of the EAC Treaty and EACJ jurisprudence are now regularizing elements of the rule of law discourse in Uganda. Cases of government contract disputes, executive interference, and arbitrary detention have often been brought before the Domestic Constitutional Courts by lawyers who have relied on EACJ precedents to support their clients' arguments (Lando, 2018; Nabukeera, 2025). The analysis of the Uganda judiciary documentation shows that the jurisprudence of the EACJ is cited during judicial training programmes and in written decisions of the High Court and Court of Appeal in cases involving executive-judicial relations. Uganda has, however, not always followed the Court's specific rulings suggesting that normative absorption and formal compliance are two different things. Hence, the EAC's impact on the rule of law has been more normative rather than transformative; thereby, reinforcing the sovereignty constraint principle of intergovernmentalism.

4.3.3 Limited but Genuine Anti-Corruption Capacity Development

Based on a review of Uganda's Inspectorate of Government reports, the documentation of anti-corruption cooperation at the regional level and TI assessments (2016-2025), there is a mixed picture. Cooperation has also brought benefits to Uganda's anti-corruption institutions, including the sharing of asset tracing technologies, the harmonisation of financial intelligence reporting and joint investigations. Technical assistance via EAC channels is one of the tracks through which the Inspectorate is gaining the capacity to monitor public assets declarations. There has been some improvement in regional cooperation practices in the sharing of information and in accountability practices, but corruption is still a domestic challenge in Uganda. Uganda's CPI score fell from 26 to 25 in 2024 to 2025, placing it at 148th position in the world (Transparency International, 2025). The most important corruption cases are those where the actors are politically connected and their prosecution is limited by political rather than technical factors that regional capacity-building does not have access to, supporting hypothesis H2 that EAC's influence is limited by the executive's dominance of governance institutions.

4.3.4. Diffuse Normative Governance Effects

The legal advocacy documentation, media monitoring reports and civil society publications (2016-2026) show that the principles of the EAC Treaty are now a legitimizing body in Uganda's domestic accountability process. EAC Treaty principles are routinely invoked by civil society organisations, investigative journalists and legal advocacy groups in accountability efforts as an external standard to challenge government practices, as is the region's governance framework (Nabukeera, 2025). The Afrobarometer (2025) result that Ugandans have awareness and appreciation of EAC governance commitments suggests that normative influence permeates the public political culture. Within the limits of accountability systems in place internally, a governance standard that is external to the political field is a real governance contribution in a context where domestic accountability systems are subject to partisan considerations. The contributions of EAC integration to governance improvements in Uganda have been uneven in terms of extent of change, yet, internal political and institutional constraints have impacted the process.

4.4 Challenges Affecting the Effectiveness of EAC Integration in Promoting Good Governance in Uganda

4.4.1 Sovereignty Sensitivities and Selective Domestication

Documentary analysis of Uganda's domestication records, parliamentary debates, and scholarly assessments provides strong evidence that sovereignty sensitivities constitute the most fundamental challenge to EAC governance effectiveness. Analysis of Uganda's domestication record across 2016 to 2026 reveals a clear and consistent pattern: provisions facilitating economic activity have been domesticated promptly, while provisions imposing accountability obligations on the executive have been systematically deferred (Chukwuma & Ojukwu, 2023). This precisely conforms to intergovernmentalism's prediction that states accept regional obligations instrumentally based on elite interests. The EAC's consensus-based architecture provides no structural mechanism for compelling more complete compliance. This finding fully supports hypothesis H3's identification of sovereignty sensitivities as the primary challenge.

4.4.2 Institutional Capacity and Resource Constraints

EAC Secretariat budget documentation, audit reports and MEACA records indicate that capacity and resource constraints present as a big challenge on their own from 2016 to 2026. The DRC arrears amounting to USD 27 million have directly caused delays to governance capacity building programs, lessened the frequency of the election observation missions and hampered the functioning of EACJ (Independent.co.ug, 2026). The staffing capacity and budget per staff in MEACA have not been commensurate with the broadened scope of governance, resulting in the persistent shortage of staff and resources to monitor the implementation of the treaties and coordinate various partner agencies' activities (Mugume, 2024).

4.4.3 EAC Expansion and Governance Heterogeneity

The institutional documents of the EAC institutions and comparative governance analysis indicate that the rapid expansion is creating heterogeneity in the governance structure, which impacts on the coherence of the regional governance framework. DRC's accession brought in a civil law tradition that was not compatible with that of its founding members, endemic corruption, a compromised judiciary, and ongoing internal armed conflicts (Minde, 2025). Somalia's accession in 2024 brought in a nation completing its post-conflict state-building, and the country continues to build a new state. Somalia, which joined the League of Nations in 2024, faces an ongoing struggle in developing a new state, and its efforts to do so are continuing. The normative dilution and institutional attention diversion are the governance implications in Uganda: normative dilution because EAC standards need to be flexible enough to incorporate very poor governance environments in the new states, and institutional attention diversion because Secretariat and development partners are now spending more time and money on the challenges in newly admitted states (CSIS, 2024). This validates the prediction of hypothesis H3 of enlargement induced heterogeneity.

4.4.4: Lack of enforcement mechanisms

This is because the lack of enforcement mechanisms was identified through analysis of the EAC Treaty as a key structural limitation in the regional integration process, in comparison with other scholarship on regional integration. This is because through analysis of the EAC Treaty and comparative regional integration scholarship it was identified that the treaty lacked mechanisms for enforcement as a key structural weakness. The EAC is based on the principle of self-imposed compliance, diplomatic persuasion, and doctrines of infringement, without any direct impact or monetary penalties (Possi, 2016). Uganda has upheld selective domestication and has not had to face formal institutional sanctions for failing to comply with politically inconvenient EACJ rulings. Intergovernmentalism is precisely the theory that explains this: As long as supranational institutions do not have the power to enforce their governance obligations, the member states have the structural means to transfer them to domestic political considerations (Moravcsik, 1998). This structural gap needs to be addressed through strengthening the EAC's peer review and compliance monitoring mechanisms on governance and anti-corruption commitments.

4.4.5 Uganda's Domestic Political Economy

The analysis of Uganda's political governance documentation, anti-corruption assessments and parliamentary records shows that the domestic political economy presents a structural barrier, which will be self-reinforcing. Despite funding and other limitations, the centralization of political power in Uganda, which relies on a wide patronage network, results in a governance system where institutional changes are assessed largely based on their implications for network stability and not Treaty compliance (Mugume, 2024; Transparency International, 2025). Those institutions whose independence would benefit from EAC governance reforms such as anti-corruption agencies, Electoral Commission and the judiciary are just those that are most tightly entrenched in structures of executive patronage. The Government of Uganda should enhance parliamentary monitoring of EAC commitments and submit to be published annual progress reports of implementation to establish the domestic accountability loop which does not exist in the EAC.

4.5 Summary of Chapter Four

The documentary analysis uncovers a complex and differentiated picture of EAC integration's governance contributions to Uganda. The greatest contribution of the EACJ has been through jurisprudence of the rule of law, which is the most traceable. The EALA and Secretariat have made a contribution, particularly in the area of norm-setting and protocol implementation, and achieved tangible increases in the transparency of economic governance and limited capacity in anti-corruption. But always and everywhere these contributions are constrained by the intergovernmentalist logic of selective compliance. Uganda will comply with regional obligations that advance state interests, and will only comply with obligations that threaten executive authority. EAC integration's impact on Uganda's governance practices is real, but limited; most noticeable in economic governance and rule of law discourse and less visible in accountability of the executive and the structural fight against corruption. The CPI score of 25/100 for Uganda for 2025 is the short hand for the difference between EAC aspirations and Uganda in reality. In general, regional institutions have influenced governance standards in Uganda, although there is a need for political will at the national level to ensure their implementation. The structural context is made up of five interrelated challenges: sovereignty sensitivities, capacity constraints, expansion heterogeneity, enforcement absence and Uganda's domestic political economy, which mean that incremental improvements are possible, but transformative change is not possible in the current institutional context in the region. These findings are integrated in to conclusions and recommendations in chapter Five.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The results of this study are presented in five sections in this chapter. A summary of key findings by each of the three specific objectives is presented in Section 5.2. The study findings are presented in Section 5.3, one for each objective, and in the context of the theoretical framework. Recommendations organized by objective and targeted to specific stakeholder groups are given in Section 5.4. Section 5.5 presents suggestions for further research derived from the results of this study, which revealed shortcomings in the existing study and literature.

5.2 Summary of Findings

This study aimed at determining the level of contribution of the EAC integration towards good governance in Uganda from 2016 to 2026. The study was conducted through qualitative desk study, which involved the use of the case study and systematic documentary analysis technique with three specific goals.

5.2.1 How the Institutional Pillars of the EAC Have Contributed to Good Governance Principles in Uganda

The study revealed that the EAC's institutional pillars have contributed to good governance principles to Uganda to an extent but within limitations. The best traceable contribution of the EACJ has come with the Katabazi precedent and its reaffirmations post-2016, which showed that interference in the judicial processes by the executive is in violation of the principles of the Treaty. This jurisprudence has seeped into Uganda's legal culture and forms part of the routine use of law by civil society and by legal practitioners in the process of holding the government to account. The EALA has been able to make contributions via resolutions and Model legislation that have set normative standards referred to in Uganda's governance discourse. The Secretariat's practices, notably the Common Market Protocol and the Anti-Corruption Framework, have contributed to a number of incremental steps in enhancing transparency in economic governance and also in building some anti-corruption capacity. There has been progress in law in the area of gender equality and human rights but there are gaps in practice.

5.2.2 How EAC Integration Has Influenced Governance Practices in Uganda

EAC integration has had a positive impact on governance – specifically on economic governance and rule of law discourse, but has not had a significant structural impact on anti-corruption enforcement, electoral governance and executive accountability in Uganda. The degree of compliance with the Common Market Protocol is partly responsible for the partial improvement in the transparency and facilitation of customs procedures. There have been a number of cases in Uganda's domestic courts where EACJ decisions have been used as a normalised reference point. The Inspectorate of Government has built up technical institutional capacity in the field of regional anti-corruption cooperation. EAC integration has also influenced the creation of diffuse normative effects, whereby civil society and advocacy organizations have an external governance yardstick from which to call the government to account, beyond the specific domains. The drop in Uganda's CPI score from 26 to 25 out of 100 from 2024 to 2025 indicates that these factors have not contributed to structural governance improvements.

5.2.3 Challenges to the effectiveness of EAC Integration

The five challenges are interdependent and together limit the effectiveness of EAC governance in Uganda. Selective domestication is due to sovereignty sensitivities and Uganda has been willing to take on obligations for economic gain but only at the expense of giving up executive power. The implementation of Treaty obligations is delayed because of institutional capacity and resource limitations, both at the EAC Secretariat level and at the MEACA level. Governance heterogeneity has been introduced in the DRC through enlargement by EAC, which has led to normative dilution and institutional diversion of attention in Somalia. Lacking enforcement mechanisms, Treaty governance obligations become normative expectations (not enforceable). The regional mechanisms under the existing institutional framework are structurally weak due to the Uganda political economy that is dominated by the executive power, patronage networks and institutional capture which creates a structural barrier.

5.3 Conclusions per Objective

5.3.1 Corresponding to Objective One

The EAC's institutional pillars have affected good governance in Uganda, but in an incremental way, with a normative impact and much less transformative than expected by the Treaty. The EACJ has made some contribution to the rule of law, the EALA has developed accountability norms and the Secretariat has contributed to enhancing transparency in economic governance, all with treaty-enfaced jurisdiction, limited enforcement powers and restricted resources. Intergovernmentalism does a good job of explaining the selective engagement with each of the institutional pillars: the ones that offer outputs that are normatively acceptable to Uganda's state interests are readily accepted, while those that would hold the executive accountable are not.

5.3.2 Corresponding to Objective Two

EAC integration has positively contributed to governance in economic governance and rule of law discourse in Uganda, but has not led to structural change in governance in terms of executive accountability, anti-corruption enforcement or in electoral governance. Hypothesis H2 is confirmed: the impact of integration of EAC is positive but limited with a specific boundary as determined by the selective domestication of protocols and the continued dominance of executives. The CPI score is the best summarized quantitative measure of this bounded influence, in the context of Uganda. Finally, the EAC has contributed meaningfully to governance reform in Uganda; however, the extent of its influence will rely greatly on domestic political commitment and effectiveness.

5.3.3 Corresponding to Objective Three

EAC governance mechanisms have structurally limiting effects on their effectiveness in Uganda, which require more than mere tweaking of current governance mechanisms to achieve. Hypothesis H3 is confirmed: sovereignty sensitivities, capacity constraints, expansion heterogeneity, enforcement and Uganda's domestic political economy all converge to be a structural feature that affects the scope of what regional integration can accomplish. The governance goals set out in the Seventh Development Strategy are more visionary than realistic in Uganda at present. Implementing these constraints must involve institutional changes within the EAC level, but also political changes at the national level, which is not possible through EAC integration mechanisms as for now.

5.4 Recommendations per Objective

5.4.1 Strengthening Institutional Pillars

To the EAC Secretariat and Summit: The EAC Summit should launch a Treaty revision process to enhance the EACJ's jurisdiction in governance cases with a view to a system where citizens and civil society organizations can present cases before the EACJ without the state's involvement. According to Possi (2016) this is the most effective institutional reform that the Community can implement. The Secretariat is to set up an annual governance reporting system that makes the performance of member states against the commitments made under Treaty Article 6(d) and 7(2) public. EAC to strengthen governance and anti-corruption commitments peer review and compliance monitoring mechanisms.

To the Government of Uganda: Uganda should intensify its involvement in the EACJ proceedings, for example by ensuring proactive implementation of the Court's decisions and for creating formal mechanisms to coordinate response to EALA resolutions, including the systematic and priority assessment of regional normative outputs to National line ministries with implementation deadlines.

5.4.2Strengthening Governance Influence

To the Government of Uganda and MEACA: Government of Uganda should have enhanced Parliamentary oversight of EAC commitments and report on progress of implementation of EAC commitments to Parliament annually. Uganda needs to finalize a comprehensive EAC Governance Domestication Plan endorsed by Cabinet with clear time-bound targets for domestication of all the remaining EAC governance related Protocol obligations, and clear institutional ownership targets to the various ministries, and dedicated budget allocations to enable the effective implementation and monitoring of the EAC governance functions. The Government should strengthen the independence of the domestic accountability institutions, in particular the judiciary, Inspectorate of Government, and Electoral Commission, by explicitly stating the reforms as required under Uganda's Treaty obligations under Article 6(d) and 7(2).

To Parliament: Parliament should strengthen its oversight of policies, agreements and implementation of EAC. There is a need for regular parliamentary oversight on Uganda's commitments to good governance in the region. Judicial bodies should raise awareness and use of regional legal mechanisms to promote access to justice and enforcement of governance norms, e.g. EACJ.

To Development Partners: Institutional strengthening must be linked explicitly to the commitments in the EAC Treaty and must be seen as a means for Uganda to meet its EAC responsibilities, not donor conditionality. Finance for capacity building of MEACA would overcome the political and technical constraints to compliance.

5.4.3 Addressing the Challenges

To the EAC Summit: The Summit should agree to add a graduated governance compliance mechanism to the Treaty, establishing a legal process for tracking and responding to the cases of non-compliance of governance provisions in the Treaty, which persist over time. In addition, the Summit must take the deepening-before-widening approach, which means that new accession candidates must meet the following governance standards: they must be fully contributing to the budget, they must be bringing all Treaty governance elements into their countries, and they must be achieving a minimum score on key governance indicators. This will help overcome one of the primary challenges (Minde, 2025), which is related to the enlargement-induced heterogeneity.

To Civil Society and Media: CSO's in Uganda involved in Governance Accountability should build capacity to practically utilize EAC Treaty provisions and EACJ jurisprudence as advocacy tools. CSOs and the media should keep raising awareness about EAC governance obligations and calling institutions to account for failure to implement these. A regional civil society network could develop annual shadow assessments for Uganda's compliance with the commitments made under the governance programming in the Seventh Development Strategy, which could be presented to EALA and the Secretariat to provide comparative accountability pressure.

5.5 Areas for Future Research

This study recommends four research areas that are based on the limitations of this study and gaps found in scholarly literature.

Future research should focus on the experiences of senior officials in the EAC Secretariat, MEACA, the Ministry of Justice, Uganda's anti-corruption bodies and the EAC members states' officials who are directly involved in the implementation of EAC governance mechanisms in Uganda. Documentary analysis would not provide as much context as semi-structured interviews. Lando (2018) and Mugume (2024) both point out the need to include practitioner perspectives in the literature.

Second, comparative work that investigates governance influence in the several member states of the EAC, specifically by comparing Uganda's experience with Rwanda's significantly better governance ratings while both have Treaty obligations, would help determine if Uganda's intergovernmentalist explanation is specific to the situation in Uganda or is more general. Chukwuma and Ojukwu (2023) find a comparative analysis in the EAC governance literature to be scantily developed in a systematic fashion.

Third, having a longitudinal quantitative study of changes in Uganda's governance indicators over time and as a result of specific EAC mechanism interventions would further bolster the causal evidence base. Such an analysis could be conducted with Afrobarometer time-series data and World Bank data on Worldwide Governance Indicators for the period 2016-2026. The correlation between regional integration and democratic accountability, anti-corruption performance, or judicial independence in East Africa could also be explored in future research.

Fourth, there is a need to conduct specific research on the implementation of the Seventh EAC Development Strategy 2026/27-2030/31 for Uganda and determine if the governance commitments of the EAC are translated in the domestic plans of its member countries and whether the mediators identified in this study hinder the implementation as suggested by intergovernmentalism. This research would be most useful if carried out at regular intervals throughout the Strategy period.

5.6 Summary

The conclusions and recommendations from this study have been culled together into a coherent whole in this chapter. Three conclusions are stated, each supporting a specific objective and the corresponding hypotheses. The study finds that the integration of EAC has been useful in advancing governance reforms in Uganda, most notably in the field of EACJ rule of law jurisprudence and the improvements in economic governance under EAC Common Market Protocol, amongst others, but it is not transformational as envisaged by the provisions of the Treaty. It has a long-term impact, which is largely dependent on the political will of the nation, good practice and increased national and regional level compliance. From a theoretical perspective, intergovernmentalism is the best explanation of this pattern. The recommendations to the government and MEACA, Parliament, EAC Secretariat and Summit, development partners and civil society offer a feasible plan of action to reduce governance implementation gaps in Uganda. Four areas of future research are suggested, each of which is supported by a reference to the available literature and the restrictions of the present study.

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APPENDIX A

DOCUMENTARY REVIEW CHECKLIST

This checklist was used as the primary data collection instrument for this study, as described in Section 3.6. It records the key details and quality assessment of each secondary source reviewed, organised by research objective. Quality criteria: A = Authenticity | C = Credibility | R = Representativeness | M = Meaning (Scott, 1990; Bowen, 2009).

No.	Source / Document Title	Type	Date	Quality (A/C/R/M)	Objective	Used?
1	EAC Treaty (1999, as amended)	Primary Treaty	1999	A/C/R/M	1, 2, 3	Yes
2	Common Market Protocol (2009)	Primary Protocol	2009	A/C/R/M	1, 2	Yes
3	Protocol on Peace and Security (2013)	Primary Protocol	2013	A/C/R/M	1	Yes
4	EAC Anti-Corruption Framework	Primary Document	2008	A/C/R/M	1, 2	Yes
5	Seventh EAC Development Strategy 2026/27-2030/31	Primary Strategy	2026	A/C/R/M	1, 2, 3	Yes
6	EAC Annual Reports 2016-2026	Primary Reports	2016-26	A/C/R/M	1, 2, 3	Yes
7	EACJ: Katabazi & Others v EAC & AG Uganda	Primary Judgment	2007	A/C/R/M	1	Yes
8	EALA Resolutions 2016-2026	Primary Resolutions	2016-26	A/C/R/M	1	Yes
9	Transparency International CPI 2016-2025	Gov. Assessment	2016-25	A/C/R/M	2, 3	Yes
10	Afrobarometer Uganda Round 10	Survey Report	2025	A/C/R/M	2	Yes

	(2025)					
11	Possi (2016) — Makerere Law Journal	Peer-reviewed	2016	A/C/R/M	1, 2	Yes
12	Lando (2018) — Journal of African Law	Peer-reviewed	2018	A/C/R/M	1, 2	Yes
13	Moravcsik (1998) — The Choice for Europe	Book	1998	A/C/R/M	1, 2, 3	Yes
14	Chukwuma & Ojukwu (2023) — African Affairs	Peer-reviewed	2023	A/C/R/M	1, 2, 3	Yes
15	Minde (2025) — East African Journal of Political Science	Peer-reviewed	2025	A/C/R/M	3	Yes
16	Mugume (2024) — African Development Review	Peer-reviewed	2024	A/C/R/M	1, 2	Yes
17	Nabukeera (2025) — Journal of Eastern African Studies	Peer-reviewed	2025	A/C/R/M	1, 2	Yes
18	CSIS (2024) — EAC Expansion Report	Policy Report	2024	A/C/R/M	3	Yes
19	Independent.co.ug (2026) — DRC Arrears	Media Report	2026	C/R/M	3	Yes
20	World Bank (1992) — Governance and Development	Institutional	1992	A/C/R/M	1	Yes
Quality criteria: A = Authenticity | C = Credibility | R = Representativeness | M = Meaning (Scott, 1990; Bowen, 2009)						