



The Economic Prospects of Devolution Among the Aembu And the Ambeere Communities of Embu County, Kenya (2010- 2022)

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Chief Editor Web: www.ijscd.org Email: info@ijscd.org Editing Oversight Impericals Consultants International Limited	<p>Abstract: The study focused on how ethnic polarization influenced governance in some aspects of economic ethnic polarization in Embu County, though not limited in scope to devolution between 2010 and 2022. The objective of the study was to: investigate the economic prospects of devolution in Embu County. The study was significant because apart from being an avenue for economic development, the success of devolution in Kenya indicated how constitutional democracy enhanced equitable economic development. It was envisioned that symbiotic patriotism transcended between the devolved government and the national government. The Hegemonic Exchange Theory (2016) by Rothchild and the Rising Expectations = Rising Frustrations Theory (1993) by Huntington and Learner, complemented each other and provided an opportunity to interpret the findings of the study. The review of related literature was guided by the research objective in the context of economic prospects of devolution but only limited to governance. The review sought to integrate the Theoretical Framework and paid attention to relevance, divergence, research gaps as well as personal views. The sample size was 130 respondents drawn from a target population of 608,599 (KPHC, 2019). Primary data was gathered through questionnaires, interviews and by examining relevant Government reports. The respondents for random sampling totaled 70 and that of purposive sampling to 60. Secondary data was sourced from articles in newspapers, journals, books from public and university libraries, theses including online sources. The study greatly relied on qualitative method of data collection and analysis. Data presentation was portrayed using descriptive statistics such as frequency tables, verbatim captions and pie-chart where applicable for effective understanding of data analysis. Devolution in Embu County offered sectorial prospects. However, equitable distribution of this sectorial economic infrastructure was one of the robust options of ethnic communities' parity to bring about ethnic co-existence and sustainable peace in Embu County.</p> <p>Keywords: Economic prospects, Devolution, economic ethnic polarization, governance, communities</p>
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1.1 Study background

Ethnic polarization made reference to a situation where a heterogeneous society living in the same geographical locality got divided in opinion, stand or action into two distinct groups based on common

ethnicity. Ethnic polarization was usually the final stage of sparking inter-ethnic conflict (Montalvo and Reynal-Querol, 2005). To trigger World War 11, Nazi Germany systematically used entrenched ethnic polarization to attack Austria, the Rhineland, Czechoslovakia and ultimately Poland because she knew that the people of Germany descent in those countries would be dependable allies. The motive of ethnic polarization equally made the Germany political governance to adopt an Anti-Semitism Policy that led to the Jews holocaust in Germany between 1939 and 1945 (Cornwell, 1969).

In the African continent, the Europeans used the “divide and rule policy” to pacify the African communities who resisted their rule. This policy was carefully crafted along ethnic polarization. The majority ethnic Hutu used entrenched ethnic polarization to oppose political and economic marginalization against the ethnic minority Tutsi that led to the Rwanda genocide. This trend was replicated in South Sudan, Ethiopia, Nigeria and Sierra-Leone (Nnoli, 1978; Mamdani, 2009). When ethnic polarization transits to inter-ethnic wars, huge cost and human capital implications occur as in the current situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The highest number of United Nations Peace Keeping Force (UNPKF) since 1945 called the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) was stationed in that country through the approval of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC Resolution 1258, 2008).

In the East –Africa region, ethnic polarization usually manifested in socio-economic, religious and political dichotomies. The entrenchment of ethnic polarization in Kenya that had often led to open inter-ethnic conflict was a familiar phenomenon more so in the Rift-Valley, North–Eastern, Coast and Eastern Regions. The motivation for political, economic and social domination gave room to sabotage, disproportional representation, marginalization and litigations that ultimately fueled armed inter-ethnic conflicts.

The first model of governance of local government that was ethnic based became elaborate in 1963; through the Local Government Act (LGA, 1963). Decentralization was a governance model that was highly controlled by the central government through the Minister for Local Government. Devolution as a governance model legally donated constitutional power to the county residents to chart their destiny in local socio-economic and political governance using legal and legitimate local Government institutions such as the County Executive Committee (CEC) and the County Assembly (CA) as guided by the (GoK, 2010; GoK, 2012; GoK, 2020). Embu County, located in the Eastern Region of Kenya formed the basis of my study. River Thuci defined the boundary between Embu and Tharaka-Nithi County to the north, Rupingazi with Kirinyaga County to the west, Tana with Machakos County to the south and Kitui County to the east. Embu town was the County headquarters. The County comprised of 06 sub-counties namely: Embu west, Embu east, Embu north, Mbeere north, Mbeere south and Mwea.

Table1: Administrative and Estimated Demographic Details of Embu County

Distribution of Population by Sub-County in 2019	
Sub-County	Population
Embu East	129,564
Embu North	79,556
Embu West	127,122
Mbeere South	163,476
Mbeere North	108,881

Source: *KHPC (2019)*

The Akamba migrated into the Embu County part of the Mwea Settlement Scheme (MSS) through cordial arrangements by the Ndia of Kirinyaga County and Ambeere elders of Embu County during the colonial period. The rest of the Agikuyu community, the Ameru, Achuka, Atharaka, the Abagusii, Abaluhya, the Taita and the Luo bought land in recent times and settled in Embu County (Mugo, 2021).

The Aembu form the majority of the ethnic community followed by the Ambeere and the Akamba as per the Kenya Population and Housing Census (KPHC, 2019). The extent to which ethnic polarization influenced governance institutions and facilities in Embu County was investigated. Ethnic polarization and subsequent contestation was overly witnessed among the Aembu and Ambeere ethnic communities.

The perpetrators were widely viewed as the Aembu while the victims were mostly viewed as the Ambeere. The Hegemonic Exchange Theory (2016) by Rothchild and the Rising Expectations = Rising Frustrations Theory (1993) by Huntington and Learner were applied in this ambience of victor and victim identity. Ethnic polarization was intense between the Aembu and the Ambeere communities in the institutions and facilities of governance of Embu County. The monopoly of ultimate power and authority to control the economic, social and political institutions of the County was the desire of the two communities.

During the colonial period, ethnic polarization expressed itself through the powerful colonial chief set up that saw clear ethnic divide. After independence, the kingpin political phenomenon was used in a backdrop of a single party state (Murunga and Nasong'o, 2007). The kingpins in the Aembu and the Ambeere marshalled their communities stand and lines of action around ethnic polarization. After the end of Kenya African National Union (KANU) regime, ethnic institutionalization of governance that favoured a region against others brought about regional and ethnic polarization. With the advent of devolution on 9/3/2013, certain government ministerial functions were constitutionally assigned to the counties ushering the Hegemonic Exchange Theory (2016) by Rothchild of executive powers justified through the office of the Governor, County Government of Embu (CGE) and the County Assembly of Embu (CAE). However, the pervasive sentiments of ethnicity seemed to cloud central/national government development blue prints such as the Sessional Paper no 10 of 1965 and Kenya Vision 2030 (2007) in nurturing dynamic economic gains for the County residents.

At the same time, the Big Four Agenda (BFA) projects (GoK, 2018); all in the purview of the County Government of Embu (CGE) appeared to have made insignificant impression in affordable housing, accessible and affordable health, manufacturing for job creation and adequate food security. When accountability and transparency were not prudently engaged in the execution of these noble projects, the scenario was a fertile ground for inter-ethnic polarization.

The Ambeere community in Embu County seemed to manifest the Rising Expectations = Rising Frustrations Theory (1993) by Huntington and Learner because of skewed distribution of the vast economic resources of the County through the current leadership governance realities. Ethnic polarization in Embu County had led to destruction of property, extreme discrimination, fear, mistrust and at its worst, insecurity and profiled deaths. However, ethnic indifference and silence can tone it down (Bhavani and Miodownik, (2008). Consequently, a more appealing and lasting solution to the

entrenchment of ethnic polarization needed to be sought to usher strength in ethnic diversity. A widely legitimate and accountable leadership governance conscious of equitable distribution of socio-economic infrastructure development across all the 06 sub- counties of Embu County was likely to tone down the tide of inter-ethnic animosity and usher impartial service delivery for all the residents of Embu County.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Ethnic polarization in the economic governance of Embu County among the Aembu and the Ambeere communities existed even during the pre-colonial period though it became more persistent from the 1990. The developments in this period though legal and possibly legitimate partially attracted alternative opinion and stand. In particular, the decentralization led to the emergence of the then districts and local government institutions attached to the Aembu and the Ambeere respectively. The constitutional and legal transition from the highly centralized, top-down and inequitable system of government to a devolved government that bore the objective of institutionalizing bottom-up decision making, equitable socio-economic infrastructure development and popular participation was highly acclaimed; though it had not abated the problem (Kangu, 2015).

The euphoria exuded by the Ambeere in vouching for devolution in the Constitution of Kenya (CoK, 2010) had perceptively benefited the Aembu community more than them. The problem had defied the previous and current institutional governance framework of Embu County; even outside the two ethnic divide. Rising Expectations = Rising Frustrations Theory (1993) by Huntington and Learner was manifested in that respect.

Ethnic polarization among this two communities had occasionally transited to open inter-ethnic violence in the case of Ngiiri land and MSS that had attracted security intervention in recent times. However, inter-ethnic skirmishes were common. This had the potential to derail effective and legitimate governance as well as be a cause for stifled service delivery to all the county residents. However, there was unity in diversity and diversity dividends provided a progressive option to entrenched ethnic polarization (Kirk, et.al. 2018).

Could proportional representation be an eye opener in diffusing ethnic polarization between the Aembu and the Ambeere in Embu County? Was the status of a minority ethnic community within a state or county set up a curse and a consignment to irrational subjugation by the majority ethnic community? It should not be lost that a minority and prejudiced race and ethnic community respectively ascended to the Presidency of the United States of America (USA) between 2008 and 2017, Rwanda since the year 2000 and Britain since 2022.

From the foregoing, ethnic polarization among the Aembu and the Ambeere which was premised on the economic institutions of governance of Embu County had to be investigated on the basis of interrogation of specific areas of economic prospects to deflate ethnic polarization in Embu County, Kenya between 2010 and 2022.

1.3 Objective of the Research

The objective of the research was to:

Investigate the economic prospects of devolution in Embu County, Kenya between 2010 and 2022.

The Research Hypothesis: Devolution had sufficient economic prospects in Embu County

1.4 Significance and Justification of Study

The CEO of Embu County who remained the Governor was facilitated by a resident CAE for quick implementation of the county socio-economic and political development. However, the CAE was a Quasi-judicial institution when it came to the impeachment of the CEO and other members of the executive; including senior office holders of the CAE. Consequently, Should these devolved modes of local governance succeed, the Judiciary could also be devolved to have all the three arms of government domiciled in the counties.

The success of the counties meant increased income per capita, better means of livelihood and cohesive and solid patriotism for the people of Kenya. The success of Kenya's devolved government oriented around the respect and fidelity of the Constitution, the presidential system of government, a unitary state and the rule of law earned the entire country international political credibility (GoK, 2010).

Equitable economic development was a policy value embraced by the CGE as an engine of wealth creation. This was consistent with international development blue print such as Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) running from 2016-2030. The SDG addressed the eradication of poverty, hunger and disease, decent housing, affordable and clean energy, sustainable cities and communities, clean water and sanitation, industry, innovation and infrastructure, gender equality, peace, justice and strong institutions. The United Nations Center for Human Settlement (UNHABITAT) was committed to strengthening of the local government authorities through the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA).

The European Commission Charter of Local Government (ECCLG), the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) and the United Cities and Local Government of Africa (UCLGA) were all committed to the consolidation of sustainable local development initiatives and united voice of local governments in Africa.

The East-Africa Community (EAC) protocol established the East-Africa Local Government Forum (EALGF) in order to engender collaborative development and wellbeing of the regional populace. The Association of Local Government Authorities of Kenya (ALGAK) established in 1959 had mirrored its socio-economic and political benefits in tune with legal documents such as the Local Government Act cap 265, CoK (1963), County Government Act (CGA, 2012) added to the development blueprint of Kenya Vision 2030, (2007).

The National Government had not only devolved specific functions closer to the citizenry but also given financial facilitation to the counties through the Commission of Revenue Allocation (CRA) and the Equalization Fund (EF). This implied that the Government of Kenya was a prime mover in partnering and actualizing the SDG to the level of local communities. Additionally, prudent and efficient utilization of public resources and wealth creation report of the Auditor-General in the CGE provided a basis for bench marking with other county governments.

1.5 Review of Related Literature

Prospects of Devolution

Gale (2008) observed that the main functions of Local Authorities in Britain: included strategic planning, social services (except in London), transport, fire, police services and education (except in London). Other functions included land adjudication, land registration and dissemination of postal services. The second tier of the local government that dealt with strictly local functions was delegated to parish councils (community councils in Scotland) which were the smaller sub-divisions of *Borough/District Councils*. They carried out voluntary services though councils at times recommended payments of certain levels of allowances. Their functions included the upkeep of public housing, waste collection and local planning, sports, culture and maintenance of local parks. London, with its Greater London Authority (GLA), chaired by the Mayor was the only large urban area with two tiers of administration, split between the GLA and *Borough Councils*. The other six major urban areas of England: Newcastle, Leeds, Manchester, Liverpool, Sheffield and Birmingham comprised the metropolitan counties and operated under one single layer of local government, the *Borough*. Non-metropolitan counties were administered by either non-metropolitan unitary authorities or two tier counties.

Most towns or cities in Britain were part of a district, administered by a District Council headed by a Mayor elected from the other councilors and an executive elected for one year term of office. Thirty British cities operated under a Lord Mayor (known in Scotland as a Lord Provost) who played ceremonial and public relations roles. Using the legislative process, unitary authorities were created in the UK between 1990s and 2009. The autonomous public services included hospitals ran by Hospital Trust (HT), water supplies manned by private companies and state schools ran by the central government under the Board of Governors (BoG). Like in Kenya the concept of effective service delivery to the local sovereign was prioritized coupled with firm central government control in a unitary system of government. The spheres and scope of functions were also clearly defined. However, the history of local government in Kenya and Embu County does not span into decades like was the case of Britain. The church in Kenya had never been apportioned any legislative role in the governance of local authorities as was the case in Britain. This was an area of governance prone to polarization since the Catholic and Anglican Church in Britain operated on very antagonistic approaches. The end result was the formation of a militia group; the Irish Republican Army (IRA) that expressed the Catholic Church faithful's polarization.

Vijandra (2003) observed that the elected councils held executive and judicial powers. The *panchayat* distributed land and collected taxes allocated by the government on behalf of a particular village. A larger council supervised the village councils. The independence Constitution of India placed the *Panchayat Raj* Institutions (PRI) in the non-justiciable part of the Constitution. By the L.M Singhvi Committee (1986) the *GramSabha* (village Assembly) was considered as the base of a decentralized system while the PRI were viewed as institutions of self-governance empowering the sovereign to participate in the process of planning and development. The 73rd amendment of India Constitution (1992) put the PRI in the Constitution and established a three-tier structure of *panchayats*: *Gram panchayat* (GP), intermediate or *Panchayat Samiti* (PS) and district or *ZillaParishad* (ZP). All the seats in the levels of the *panchayats* were to be filled through competitive elections in the respective territorial constituencies, with a third of the seats reserved for women. Weaker castes and tribes were

to be proportionately elected as per their population in the *panchayats*. The function, powers and responsibilities of the municipal governments were both obligatory and discretionary.

However, India's local government system legislatively covered the village and played both discretionally and obligatory functions. Such a governance framework evoked the entrenchment of polarization in an environment that was replete with social caste segmentation. All residents of Embu County were citizens at par. However, the $\frac{2}{3}$ gender rule which had worked well for India's village legislature was equally a compliant paper policy in the CAE for the three electoral cycles of 2013, 2017 and 2022. The past and the sitting CGE were congratulated for being above board on a matter that had dogged the national legislative bodies for long.

Bekink (2006) observed that from 1994, the government of South Africa was constitutionally made up of three tiers of Central, Provincial and Local Governments. The latter administered cities and smaller regions called Municipalities. There were three categories of Constitutional Municipalities namely; Metropolitan Municipalities for major city regions, District Municipalities for wider areas outside the cities and Local Municipalities. Each municipality was divided into Wards and ran by an elected Council where decisions were made through approved policies and by-laws. The 08 Metropolitan Municipalities had operated under exclusive municipal executives and legislative authority and so do the 44 District Municipalities as long as their area included more than one municipality. The Mayor was assisted by a Mayoral Committee made up of elected Councilors. The 226 Local Municipalities shared municipal executives and legislative authority with the District Municipality within whose area it fell. South Africa had a total of 278 municipalities.

The metropolis had a choice of an executive Mayor or a collective committee system of government. Emotive ethnicity had infiltrated the effective governance in South Africa shrouded in power and socio-economic control of members of one community over others. This lapsed to ethnic polarization. It was my view that the Central Governments powerful control caused ethnic polarization in the governance framework of the Local Government in South Africa. This was relevant to the Hegemonic Exchange Theory (2016) by Rothchild.

Like in Kenya, local government was responsible for service delivery of basic services closest to the people. Efficient and effective governance policies on the transfer of power and jurisdiction were also outlined. These indicators qualified the theoretical framework used in this research. Similar to Kenya's 2 tier government, the 3 tier government of South Africa though autonomous operated in tandem in a unitary system of government. However, the local authorities in Kenya ceased to have legislative authority since March, 2013.

Burk (1964) and Mutebi (1999) denoted that at independence in 1962, Uganda consisted of 10 districts, 04 kingdoms and 01 special district of Karamoja. The 1962 Constitution required that $\frac{9}{10}$ of district council members be directly elected. In 1967 the Constitution of Uganda abolished the kingdoms and the country was divided into 18 districts. The right to establish district councils and their offices; decide the mode of elections and empower a national minister to suspend a district council or to undertake any of its duties was given to parliament. The 1967 Local Administrations Act (LAA) and the 1964 Urban Authorities Act (UAA) gave the central government direct control over local

administration in each district. The district council's jurisdiction included primary education, roads construction, land allocation, community development, law and order and local tax collection. By 1987 the National Resistance Movement (NRM) government and the National Resistance Council (NRC) had established both district administrations and a hierarchy of Resistance Councils (RC).

The village RC-I was made up of a 09 member resistance committee to administer the affairs of the village. The village RC combined to form the 09 members of the Parish RC-II who assembled with the other parish committee members in the sub-county and elected 09 members to form the Sub-county RC-III. The County RC-IV were established in the statute and functioned as governing bodies particularly for election purposes. The District RC-V contained 02 representatives elected from each RC-III and 01 representative for women elected from RC-IV and from each municipal RC. At all RC levels, heads of government departments serving that council, including chiefs, were made ex-officio members of their respective RC but without voting rights. In 1989, the NRC decided that each RC-III would choose 01 representative to the NRC and each RC-V would choose a woman as its representative on the NRC. Direct RC elections and popular recall existed at the village level only. The term for each RC was 02 years and could be suspended by the minister for local government for disrupting public security, participating in sectarian politics, engaging in smuggling, obstructing national plans or corruption.

By 1989, Uganda comprised of 34 districts and 150 counties. There were also 65 urban authorities, including Kampala City Council, 14 municipalities, 27 town councils and 23 town boards. Since 1997, the local government in the district and the sub-county, the city council and the city division council for the city, the municipal council and the municipal division council for municipality, the town council, and the county, parish and village for administrative units in the rural areas had operated. The administrative units in the urban areas were the parish (ward) and the village. My observation was that the decentralization of powers, functions and services to all levels of local government in a hierarchical level applied in Uganda while the concept of autonomous functions applied in the governance constitutional framework of the 47 counties in Kenya. The Hegemonic Exchange Theory (2016) by Rothchild was thus applied.

However, the NRC bore the power to overrule the minister for local government's decisions. It was also worth noting that the ruling political party had total control of local government in Uganda with supreme power of RC in place. The Rising Expectations = Rising Frustrations Theory (1993) by Huntington and Learner was thus inclined. Although the existence of kingdoms offered an alternative center of power, they were configured on ethnicity. The kingdoms also heightened ethnic polarization as a response to marginalization in key governance positions of the powerful RC in Uganda. The politics of the ruling political party was entrenched in the running of local government in Uganda. Party polarization in the key governance positions of Embu County similarly existed. This state of affairs had led to a surge in ethnic polarization.

Bell (1964), Manone (1974) and Mukudi (2012) asserted that local government in Kenya was formulated by the British colonialists and tailored towards serving the central government in both colonial and post-colonial era. Though Bell (1964) and Manone (1974) discussed local government during the colonial era, the latter dealt with the matter at the central government scope while the

former detailed that the war councils formed by Governor Sir Henry Belfield in 1915 set up local committees which became the precursors of the county councils in Kenya. The local committees decided who could be spared to join the army, and listed the African resources in the country in terms of cattle and crops.

However, Mukudi (2012) and Bell (1964) agreed that although local government was legally empowered by colonial ordinances, the Local Authorities received legislative force through the Local Government Act (LGA), cap 265 (1963). The city council, the municipal council, the county council, the town/ urban council and the rural council were under the Minister for Local Government. The minister approved revenue sources, budgets, by-laws, and dissolved a council if it was not functioning properly. The councilors elected a Mayor for both the city council and the municipal councils while a chairman applied to all the others.

The Councilors represented a Ward and were elected for 05 years during a General Election. The Public Service Commission (PSC) appointed technical staff such as the Town Clerk in case of the city council and municipal councils and Clerk to Council in the case of county councils and others. All the councils operated through departmental committees. Between 1964 and 1990, Kenya witnessed an exponential degeneration into authoritarianism.

A series of constitutional amendments concentrated unchecked executive power at the Centre, creating a powerful neo-patrimonial presidency. In a backdrop of a *de facto* and *de jure* one party state, the powerful Minister for local Government favoured his region and ethnic community. Authoritarianism and neo-patrimonialism deepened disparities in the level of regional development while the central government capacity to provide public goods deteriorated. This phenomenon brought about polarization in the local government governance. That was why the constitutional debates of 2010 focused on how to share power among the various ethnic and regional groups under a substantially power emasculated presidency.

Haugerud (2000) observed that the Embu County Council was established in 1967. Ten years later the municipal council of Embu was established while the County Council of Mbeere was established in 1996. Three years later, the municipal council of Runyenjes was established. The DC posted to Embu District were at the helm of the local authorities in their capacities as chairmen representing the interests of a strong unitary government during the colonial and post-colonial Embu District until 2012. The Mayors, Council Chairmen including the Town Clerks and the Clerk to Councils for municipalities and county councils respectively could all be overruled by the DC of Embu and Mbeere Districts. Haugerud had not tackled devolved governance as part of local government in Embu County. However, the crafters of the new Constitution partitioned Kenya into 47 counties by taking into account geographical size of the regions, population, ethnic and cultural diversity, public goods provision and cost implications of the new administrative system (Kangu, 2015).

The cities under the CoK (2010) included Nairobi, Kisumu, Mombasa, with only municipalities and county councils category of Local Authorities spared; but all are under the county governments. However, Nakuru became the 4th city of Kenya in 2021. The county governments in Kenya, Embu County included began operation on 9th March, 2013. Efficiency and service delivery to the devolved

governments had presumably been enhanced through an elected Governor and legitimized CA. This political reality manifested the relevant to both the Hegemonic Exchange Theory (2016) by Rothchild and the Rising Expectations = Rising Frustrations Theory (1993) by Huntington and Learner. The 47 devolved units were also based on ethnic homogeneity, which had posed mixed implications for the future survival of counties in Kenya with a multi-ethnic base with relative population level to the majority ethnic community. The skewed ethnic distribution mostly guided by demographic majorities added to political party alignments and sheer political survival had since led to entrenched ethnic polarization under the identities of the oppressor communities and the oppressed communities. This was the scenario that prevailed in Embu County.

1.6 Methodology

Research Design: The study employed both qualitative and quantitative research design. Oral and verbatim responses, patterns and inferences were used. The research design was configured in tune with the research objectives. However, unforeseen delay was encountered in quantitative research design which was largely fashioned on purposive sampling. Such designs provided a deeper insight to the independent and dependent valuables of the research topic. Interviews and written questionnaires were insightfully used for generation of information that was appropriate for generation of research findings.

Sample size: The sample size was 130 respondents derived from a target population of 608,599 (KPHC, 2019). The sample size distribution in sub-counties were: 29 for Embu west, 23 for Embu east, 18 for Embu north, 20 for Mbeere north, 21 for Mbeere south and 19 for Mwea. Six research assistants were used. Their articulation in the local languages, knowledge of the geographical area, ethnic dynamics and governance framework viz-a-viz legal authority documents in Embu County was considered.

Table 2: Sample Size per Sub-County of Embu County

Sub –County	Samples Size
Embu West	29
Embu East	23
Embu North	18
Mbeere North	20
Mbeere South	21
Mwea	19
Total	130

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Sampling Techniques: Both probability and non-probability sampling technique were used to identify the sample size. In the probability sampling category, 20 respondents were sampled in Embu West Sub-County, 10 in Embu north, 10 in Embu east, 10 in Mbeere north, 10 in Mbeere south and 10 in Mwea. This category of sample size population totaled to 70 research respondents. For the non-probability sampling category, the knowledge in framework, norms and practices of governance on the

ground viz-a-viz ethnic dynamics in the area of equity and equality in Embu County was a criterion for consideration.

The research respondents in this category and their area of recruitment included: the CGoE(01), the Senator(01), Members of the National Assembly (04), Women Representative (W Rep) (01), Members of the County Assembly (MCA) (10), Deputy County Commissioner (DCC) (02), Assistant County Commissioners (ACC) (06), Chiefs (12), Speaker of the County Assembly (01), County Secretary (01), Clerk to the County Assembly (01), County Executive Committee (CEC) Members (01), CPSB (01), SCA (04), Media personnel (02) and Clergy Members (12) which totaled to 60 research respondents.

Table 3: Cumulative Sample Size per Sub-County for both Probability and Purposive Sampling Technique in Embu County

Sub –County	Cumulative Sample Size	
	Probability	Purposive
Embu West	19	10
Embu East	11	12
Embu North	10	08
Mbeere North	10	10
Mbeere South	10	11
Mwea	10	09

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Table 4: Sample Size by Gender per Sub-County for Sampling Technique in Embu County

Sub-County	Probability		Purposive	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Embu West	07	12	07	03
Embu East	04	07	09	03
Embu North	05	05	06	02
Mbeere North	01	09	08	02
Mbeere South	04	06	08	03
Mwea	05	05	05	04

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Research Instruments and Methods of Data Collection Techniques: Through field research, the study generated primary data based on oral and written interviews from the questionnaires. Official government reports from Government Printers were used to enhance this area. Secondary data was gathered from relevant books, written articles in journals, newspapers, and electronic sources. Such materials were sourced from Kenyatta University Post Modern Library (KUPML), Kenya National Library Services (KNLS), Embu and internet sources.

Data Analysis: The data collected was assembled, polished, consolidated and variously coded under broad and specific categorization as guided by the objectives of the research and research questions; added to the insightful testing and prove of the research hypothesis. The relationship between the independent and dependent research valuables was brought out. Innovative and logical symbols were used to code and summarize data and enhance the objectivity of certain research respondent's identity

and confidentiality. Data was also synthesized and reviewed to come up with integrated thematic and sub-thematic issues examined in different chapters as guided by the objectives of the research. In particular, statistical tools such as mean, average and range were used. The statistical analysis for this objective based research included: descriptive, predictive, and inferential including hypothesis testing. The analytical tool of excel was extensively used in the construction of bar graphs, line graphs, and pie charts. However, to enhance on logical insights and inferences, diagrams, tables, plates and verbatim captions were used. Corroboration with published works was used to validate conflicting field data.

Data Presentation: Data was translated into diagrams, tables, figures, plates, pie charts, bar graphs, line graphs and verbatim captions as guided by the objective of the research and the theoretical framework. This was done through interpretation, in order to provide meaning and relevance of data; more so within the context to prove the research hypothesis.

1.7 Research Findings and Discussions

Economic Prospects of Devolution in Embu County

The agricultural sector had potential for a high income earning sector in Embu County. The cash crop sector covered crops such as coffee which did well in Embu east, Embu west and some parts of Embu north sub-counties. The 1977 peak of coffee rates and payment was surpassed in the year 2022/2023 at the rate of 400 shillings per kilogramme. Embu County had over 20000 coffee factories. The high spike in coffee payouts automatically led to increased establishment of coffee processing factories (PS/AB/MCA/01/22, O.I., Embu North Sub-County, 10/11/2022). Tea was also extensively grown in Embu east and Embu north sub-counties. There was a total of 03 tea processing factories in Embu County namely: Mungania and Rukuriri in Embu East Sub-County and Kathangariri in Embu North Sub-County. The payout to the farmers which was popularly known as Tea Bonus ranged between 39 and 40 shillings per kilogramme as per the Kenya Tea Development Authority (KTDA) Reports on 26th January, 2022).

Macadamia nuts was a big income boost in Embu east, Embu north and Embu west sub-counties. A macadamia processing factory called PRIVAMNUTS EPZ (KENYA) LTD was built at Muthatari in Embu West Sub-County in 2015 and started its operations in February, 2016. The former Governor of Embu; His Excellency Martin Nyaga Wambora had this to say:

The factory had an employee capacity of 2000 workers. Embu County was currently the largest producer of Macadamia nuts in East and Central Africa. Trade, Tourism, Investment will continue supporting. Public Private Partnership (PPP) so as to create more opportunities for wealth creation and employment to the residents thus boosting the country's economy (2022).

It was noted that the tea and macadamia factories were well connected to tarmac roads. However, most of the coffee factories particularly Nembure-Rukira, Ena-Rukira-Kithimu-Karurina-Ndatu-Kambo-Kimangaru-Itabua in Embu West Sub-County and Kivwe-Muruatetu-Kagumori, Kivwe-Karingari, Nembure-Karingari-Mirundi-Kamviu-Kianjokoma, Kamviu-Kianjuki-Muchagori-Kavutiri, Kamviu-Makengi-Nguire-Kang'ethia, Makengi-Kang'ethia, Makengi-Kevote-Ena, mainly in Embu West Sub-County should be tarmacked.

The region accommodated about 07 coffee and macadamia distribution factories, with most areas domiciled in sub-counties that were very different from the constituencies. If the Building Bridges Initiative (BBI) on review of the Constitution was allowed by the SCoK on 31st March, 2022 (*The East*

Africa, Thursday: 31st March, 2022, pg. 1-3), this area had a new constituency slotted to it. However, Mbeere North Constituency had been declared untenable. The situation appeared to support the Rising Expectations = Rising Frustrations Theory (1993) by Huntington and Learner. This was because the NGCDF was entrenched in the Constitution and was a game changer in development. On the other hand, Mbeere North was part of Embu East Constituency between 1963 and 1987 (Hornsberg, 2022). After having enjoyed political autonomy since 1988, it would not be the wish of the Ambeere community to lose a national level seat. The possibility of being marginalized at both the national/central and sub-national level was a sad fate for any community (Cornell & D'Arcy, 2016).

The One Acre Fund (OAF) in partnership with Ministry of Agriculture; Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS) and CGE introduced Hass Avocado farming on co-operative basis for export in December, 2018 in Embu East Sub-County. The processing factory was located at Ena in Embu East Sub-County. Apart from high income earnings and mitigation of food insecurity, the project had led to the establishment of Kagaari- Gatari Irrigation Project (Catherine Njue, O.I., Embu West Sub-County, 31/08/2022; Josphine Njeru, O.I., Embu East Sub-County, 01/09/2022).

Hass avocado growing had since been adopted in Mbeere North Sub-County, Evurore Division through the efforts of the Catholic Church in that area (Wereri Nyaga, O.I., Mbeere North Sub-County, 29/08/2022). The game changer of Hass Avocado farming was slowly creeping in Mbeere South Sub-County. The possibilities of using devolution to empower rural communities just like federalism had done in Nigeria, Ethiopia and South Africa was not far-fetched. (Dominic Njeru, O.I., Mbeere South Sub-County, 28/08/2022; Cornell & D'Arcy, 2016).

Dairy farming was prominently done in Embu East Sub-County with the Kenya Co-operative Creameries (KCC) depot and milk collecting center at Runyenjes. A dairy product processing factory had been earmarked in Embu East Sub-County. Farmers in Embu West and Embu North sub-counties had for a long time been selling milk in Mbeere South Sub-County using *matatus*, motorcycles and pick-ups in Muthatari, Rwika, Gachoka, Gachuriri, Muraru, Mecca, Munathiri, Gikiro, kiritiri and Machang'a market centres (James Njagi, O.I., Embu North Sub-County, 05/09/2022). Traditional livestock farming was popular in the Arid and Semi-Arid (ASAL) sub-counties of Mbeere South, Mbeere North and Mwea.

Weaving and pottery were cottage crafts that could be incorporated in a wider scale in the Export Processing Zone were a factory of this nature located at Machang'a area of Mbeere South Sub-County to connect very well to Mwea Sub-County. With elaborate infrastructure the MGR would be financially rejuvenated. Poultry keeping also did well in these sub-counties.

It was interesting to note that Mbeere South Sub-County and Mbeere North Sub-County were second to Meru County in the area of *Miraa* production (CGE Media Biefs, 2022). This export crop would give the residents of these sub-counties increased earnings if the water and infrastructure facilities were sufficient and usable in all weather. A few farmers grew *miraa* in some parts of Embu east and Embu west sub-counties. It was curious that the spirit of co-operative farming had not been taken up as far as this crop was involved (PS/AB/MCA/01/22, O.I., Mbeere North, 02/10/2022).

There was only one tarmac road done by the national government connecting mbeere South and Mbeere North to the three sub-counties of the Aembu community, and none to Mwea Sub-County either way. The Gachoka-Gachuriri-Makima-karaba road should be done to open up this potential agricultural area and promote tourism and the Mwea Game Reserve (MGR) too. The Machang'a-

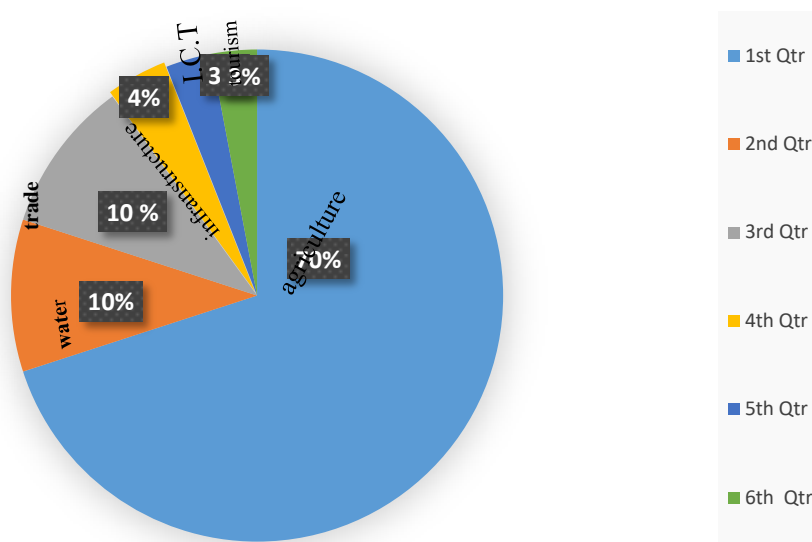


Figure 1: A Pie Chart Showing the Economic Prospects of Devolution Model of Governance in Embu County

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Scheme-Makima-Karaba road was the worst of the roads. The Makutano-Karaba-Wango-Nthingini-Riakanau road should be tarmacked to support the fisheries department and other motor boat riding initiatives. The Kiritiri-Irabaari-Kirie-Kiminda-Siakago road should be tarmacked to unlock agricultural and livestock potentials in that part of Mbeere South Sub County. This included the Kavondori-Kerwa-Gikondi-Muminji-Siakago-Kathiga Gaceru-Gitii-Kanyuambora road that should be tarmacked. Sand and bricks for building come from Mbeere South Sub County and Mbeere North Sub County (PS/AB/POL/01/22, O.I., Mbeere South, 2/10/2022).

The road from Mecca-Kirima-Nganduri posed a real nightmare. Interestingly too, almost all the county rate chargers on sand and bricks in Mbeere South, Mbeere North and Mwea employed by the county government spoke Kiembu language (Leonard Nyaga, O.I., Mbeere South Sub County, 28/08/2022). This kind of scenario was reminiscent of the Rising Expectations = Rising Frustrations Theory (1993) by Huntington and Learner. It promoted high ethnic polarization between the Aembu and the Ambeere ethnic communities.

The six sub counties of Embu County had markets at their sub county headquarters namely: Embu Town, Runyenjes, and Manyatta, Kiritiri, Siakago and Karaba. Of great concern was that the CGE had only been able to build modern markets and privately leased stalls at the rate of 01(Embu Town) in Embu West Sub-County, 02 (Runyenjes and Kianjokoma) in Embu east and 01 (Kiritiri) in Mbeere south. This scenario qualified the Rising Expectations = Rising Frustrations Theory (1993) by Huntington and Learner that encouraged the Ambeere ethnic community to feel sidelined by the CGE which they associated with the Aembu ethnic community. Although the open market was robust, there was a feeling that the residents would make more money if modern stall like those in Embu West could be done in Ishiara because of accessibility.

The SFD and the MGR which were national resources made Embu County to benefit by 25% of the national proceeds and that should benefit the Mbeere South Sub-County and Mwea Sub-County respectively through the most transparent public participation on how such proceeds were going to benefit the particular sub county residents. However, the management of the county government was inward looking at the expense of serving the public; thus glorifying corruption. This was because the institutions which were put in place to curtail such a vice appeared inefficient and ineffective; allowing the corrupt to go on with the vice unabated. The prevalence of such a vice was corroborated (PS/AE/CLERGY/01/22, O.I., Mwea Sub-County, 09/09/2022; Baraza, 2017).

1.8 Conclusion

There were sufficient legal statutory policy documents supported by a robust checks and balances that enabled the CGE and the CAE to seamlessly operate under the helm of a muembu or mumbeere or mkamba Governor from any of the 06 sub-counties in Embu County. The greatest impediment to this trajectory was ethnicity, corruption and sheer lack of political goodwill to bring about balanced development.

1.9 Recommendations

The concept of co-operative farming in honey harvesting, *Miraa*, Mango, Hass Avocado, and horticulture and beef products required urgent implementation in the sub-counties of Mbeere north, Mbeere south and Mwea. An EPZ industrial complex to factor in crafts and tourism sector financial returns was urgently required at Machang'a area of Mbeere South Sub-County which was fairly accessible by all residents of Embu County. The initiative would deflate the passions of polarization among the Ambeere ethnic community. At the same time, modern market stalls needed to be done in at least one sub-county of the Ambeere resident sub-counties particularly in a well-connected place like Kiritiri town in Mbeere South Sub-County. Recovery of stolen CGE equipment from various health institutions needed to be recaptured within legal and fidelity means.

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