



Areas of Ethnic Polarization between the Aembu and Ambeere Communities in Embu County, Kenya (2010 – 2022)

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Abstract: *The study focused on how ethnic polarization influenced governance among the Ambeere and the Aembu of Embu County, Kenya between 2010 and 2022. 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, were invariably used to complement and interpret the findings of the study. Literature was reviewed as guided by the research objective. The review sought to integrate the two theoretical frameworks 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, relevant Kenya National Archives documentations and relevant Government reports. The sample size for random sampling totaled 70 respondents and that of purposive sampling to 60. Secondary data was sourced from books, theses, journals and articles in newspapers from public and university libraries. Online sources were used in order to factor in the most recent and relevant studies in governance as well as ethnic polarization. The study relied on qualitative method of data collection and analysis. Data presentation was portrayed using descriptive statistics such as frequency tables and line graph where applicable for effective understanding of data analysis. The concept of legitimacy and effective legality based on equitable distribution of social infrastructure was one of the robust trajectories to bring about ethnic co-existence and sustainable peace in Embu County.*

Keywords: *Ethnic, Polarization, Aembu, Ambeere, Society*

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1. Introduction

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 II, 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 infamous 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 was 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 and spheres. 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 and constitutionally identified as County no.14 formed the basis of this study.

River Thuci defined the boundary between Embu and Tharaka-Nithi County to the north, Ruingazi 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 6 sub-counties namely: Embu west, Embu east, Embu north, Mbeere north, Mbeere south and Mwea. The County residents were both multi-racial and multi-ethnic. The Swahili, Asians, the Somali and the Europeans in that demographic order mainly lived in Embu West Sub-County. A very small minority ethnic communities such as the Luo, Ameru, Atharaka, Achuka, Abaluhya, Abagusii and the Taita were mainly settled in the sub-counties of: Embu west, Embu east, Embu north and Mbeere south. The larger multi-ethnic communities comprised of the Aembu, the Ambeere, the Akamba and the Agikuyu in that demographic order respectively.

Table 1: Distribution of Population

| 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 blueprints 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 (Bhavnani 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 social, economic and political 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 Hegemonic Exchange Theory (2016) by Rothchild was a governance theory that transferred specific power and authority by the central government to regions through rigid and flexible legal arrangements which made those regions part of the state tiers of governance system as guided by decentralization and devolution. However, the robust development of 9/3/2013 had not abated ethnic polarization among the Aembu and the Ambeere. The Ambeere had for long articulated sentiments of being grossly sidelined by the Aembu community.

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 these 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. 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 social institutions of governance of Embu County had to be investigated on the basis of interrogation of specific social areas of ethnic polarization in Embu County, Kenya between 2010 and 2022.

1.3 Objective of the Research

The objective of the research was:

To examine the social areas of ethnic polarization among the Aembu and Ambeere communities in Embu County, Kenya between 2010 and 2022.

1.4 Research Question

Which were the social areas of ethnic polarization among the Aembu and Ambeere communities in Embu County, Kenya between 2010 and 2022?

1.5 Significance and Justification of Study

This study was significant because of the following factors:

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).

This study was justified by the following factors:

Equitable economic development was a policy value embraced by the CGE as an engine of wealth creation. This was consistent with international development blueprint 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) 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 constitutional thresholds and jurisdictions in playing oversight roles on CGE by the CAE and Senate House were more specific and legally empowering. Wider constitutional and democratic space through the affirmative action had led to increased participation of the female gender in the CAE, through distributive democracy to bring out balanced views of assisting the CGE to succeed in her mandate of service delivery. The media and other aspects of communication technology including human rights participation were more vibrant and accessible under the CGE.

This had enabled the technocrats and the public in general to interrogate CGE issues based on accountability and transparency in the running of the county government. 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.

2. Literature Review

The models of local government were reviewed in: USA, India, South-Africa, Ethiopia, Kenya and ultimately Embu County. Dogra (2013) stressed that decentralization in the USA allowed a broader range of discretionary authority to local government. Extensive reporting and oversight polished the concept of accountability and transparency, particularly in cases of blatant corruption.

However, certain states granted home rule to municipalities through statutory or state constitutional provisions that allowed local authorities to enhance the powers of local self-government but not total autonomy. This was because the general legislatures and court interpretation applied to local government. Local government expounded democratic ideals in that all local legislative bodies and most chief executives were directly elected. Democracy was exercised through the all-inclusive town meetings, levels where mayors in big cities combated the inertia of professionalism and pluralistic interests, patronage by powerful political party machines in some cities, business elites while in other cities, authority was held by independent Boards and Commissions which were invisible to the voters and were partially beyond the control of the Council or the Mayor.

Local government had equally reduced the burden of responsibility to state governments in provisions of local jurisprudence, education and establishment of service infrastructures. Moreover, local government was also used as a training ground and pilot experimentation before macro projects were taken up by the federal government. The transfer of power and authority to the local levels was relevant to the Hegemonic Exchange Theory (2016) by Rothchild, while the intermittent swing between success and failure was relevant to the Rising Expectations = Rising Frustrations Theory (1993) by Huntington and Learner used for this research. My observation was that it had been possible to initiate and monitor health care insurance and provisions in both state and local government, including using the provision as a political campaign strategy for President Obama in 2008 and 2013.

Arvid et al (2014) posited that an efficient local government was the most practical way to administer a large multi-ethnic country because it helped to deflect conflicts. Problems of rural people at grassroots level were better solved. The *panchayat* was also fountains of local leadership. The various socio-economic welfare needs of

the local sovereign were addressed through the institutions of local government. This system of governance ensured equal opportunity for all groups. Thus, any religion or language speaking person reached the top of government. Diverse populations were not usually held together by a unitary authority without the use of force. Regional and sub-culture groups required autonomy for their development. It was only through the growth and development of different regions and sub-cultures groups that India as a whole had developed.

Local government thus built and sustained the unity of polity and simultaneously preserved and promoted the plurality of society. Although like Kenya, India operated on a presidential system, a multi-party-political allegiance and both the central and regional government derived their authority from the Constitution; the same factors also formed the basis of ethnic and religious based polarization to hurt governance in general. Local governments in both India and Kenya engendered specific functions attached to it. However, local government formed the 3rd tier in India while devolution in Kenya formed the 2nd tier of government.

Hueglin (2006) postulated that for harmonious relations, constitutional division of power was allocated concurrently between the national, provincial and local government. The 3-tier system of government in South-Africa embraced division of fiscal resources where the bulk of the taxing powers rested with the national government. The provincial and local governments were entitled to an equitable share of the revenue raised nationally. The 3 categories of municipalities in South-Africa namely: metropolitan (8), district (44) and local (226) all focused on growing local economies, providing infrastructure and service, including disaster management.

However, a co-operative government was the overarching principle vide section 48, 49, 50 and 51 of the Republic of South-Africa Constitution. There were 33 concurrent functions allocated to the national government while there were only 12 allocated to the provincial government. Although specific functions were allocated to the local government, the provincial and the national government still exercised power on them. There was explicit mingling of functions which corresponded to the ideals of integrated system of governance. There was a high level of democracy in the governance framework of local government where there was a choice of the type of executive system between a mayoral executive and collective executive committee system where power was vested in the executive committees. The metropolitan councils held final powers and at times decentralized some powers and functions. District municipalities were manned by district councils while local municipalities were manned by local councils. The district councils were responsible for capacity building and districts' wide planning.

All the local government organs focused on service delivery in areas such as provision of water, sanitation, roads and community lighting; governance, financial management, infrastructure development and fighting corruption. Structured and corporate governance was thus attained added to faster generation of employment opportunities and poverty eradication to the citizens. Both the Hegemonic Exchange Theory (2016) by Rothchild and Rising Expectations = Rising Frustrations (1993) by Huntington and Learner, where communities were more empowered to run their affairs was exemplified in this review.

Although concurrence existed in the functions of local Councils in South-Africa and county governments in Kenya, effective governance in this area could be hampered by bureaucratic vetting and ethnic polarization. The counties in Kenya had a constitutional budgetary allocation guaranteed at 15% of the national budget while equitable share of national revenue between the provincial and local Councils was exercised in South-Africa. Though devolution employed a component of decentralization, unlike the South Africa situation, the CEO was a Sub County Administrator (SCA) who was not a winner in a general election but an employee of the County Government. The SCA had to undergo a competitive interview by the relevant County Public Service Board (CPSB); and not the Mayor or the choice of an executive committee system.

Maasho (2011) portended that the transitional charter of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) affirmed the right of ethnic groups to self-determination, up to and including secession and provided for the establishment of regional and local government on the basis of the nation. The ethnic communities were the constituent units and foundations of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) which came into existence in 1995. Each of the 09 states had its own Constitution, flag, executive government, legislature, judiciary, and police; and made a choice of its own working language. The state further decentralized to the zonal and district (*woreda*) levels. The local government in Ethiopia enhanced inclusive democracy where ethnic communities gave solutions to their local problems. Through the local government, inter-state cooperation was realized. The various needs of the local communities such as roads, availability of water, agrarian renaissance projects and construction of education facilities were better planned and implemented. Like Kenya, Ethiopia was a multi-ethnic state where unity in diversity had worked so well since 1995.

However, ethnic polarization among the Oromo community propelled by the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) and of late the Tigrayans militia of Tigray Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF) based on systemic governance

marginalization made a military alliance to topple Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed in 2020.

The Tigray-Addis War had looped in the Ahmara ethnic community, Eritrea, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Turkey and Iran who had provided Ethiopia with military personnel, equipment and logistic. This incident had destroyed the cordial diplomatic relations between USA and Ethiopia and made a ridicule of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed award of a nobel peace prize in 2019 (Oluoch, 2022). The marginalization embodiments by the Ambeere ethnic community had led to ethnic polarization among the Ambeere and the Aembu communities in Embu County.

Abonyo (2009) opined that devolution had reduced the socio-economic inequalities of the citizens in different regions in Kenya. Devolution took care of disproportionate representations in the national chamber through having bicameral legislatures and the CA where a substantial degree of autonomy was also given to distinct sub-communities. The county residents had constitutionally defined functions on which they made final decisions. This toned down the traces of ethnic polarization and associated ethnic cleansing. Autocracy was substantially reduced and citizens got substantial autonomy and ownership over resources in their county. It was also possible for residents of different counties to experiment with their preferred forms of economic, social and political organizations with the intention of unlocking the tide of organizational creativity throughout the country and in the same vein brought such benefits to the Kenyan people.

Having witnessed autocracy under firm unitary systems, efficient governance under devolution gained legitimacy from the residents. However, equitable economic development may not have easily been achieved due to a skills gap and the fact that all the counties and their ethnic regional residents were not at the same level of development. This review was relevant to Embu County since the Ambeere communities felt marginalized. The devolved governance outlaid a structure of citizen's participation with a requirement that not more than 2/3 of one gender shall occupy public offices. Though the Hegemonic Exchange Theory (2016) by Rothchild was plausible in this review, Rising Expectations = Rising Frustrations Theory (1993) by Huntington and Learner sufficed because common narratives in Embu County doubted the practical benefits of devolution to the county sovereign.

Devolution was instrumental in tackling ethnically motivated violence by lowering the stakes in the competition for presidency which had been a perennial cause of ethnic violence in Kenya. Competition to control power was eventually a zero-sum game since there was a net reduction of inequality and eventual peace between communities. Reducing ethnic polarization promoted

inter-state/regional peace with our neighbours such as Somalia and South Sudan. Regional linkages of governance was likely to be attained in the Horn of Africa where experimentation on various types of decentralization was in practice (Kangu, 2015).

Kabeca (1974) denoted that unity in the diversity of Embu people and the concept of related dialects and source of historical origin brought unique synergies in addressing development issues in Embu people. It was noted that the people of Embu were endowed with agricultural and eco-tourism riches that could be harnessed for further economic rejuvenation of the Embu people. Kabeca elicited the patriotic character of the Embu people to defend their socio-economic wellbeing through popular colonial and post-colonial leaders such as late senior chief Muruatetu and Kombo Munyiri. Though Kabeca’s observations were inclined more on socio-economic and cultural prism, nevertheless political patriotism and galvanization was prominent to the Hegemonic Exchange Theory (2016) by Rothchild, with the establishment of CGE in 2013.

3. Methodology

3.1 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. 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 variables of the research topic. Interviews and written questionnaires were insightfully used for generation of information that was appropriate for generation of research findings. The research findings provided the basis of formulating the research recommendations.

3.2 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. Integrity in handling respondents and indicate valid data was also a factored criterion. Gender balance was equally adhered to in identifying the sample size.

Table 2: Sample Size

| Sub-county | Sample Size |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Embu West | 29 |
| Embu East | 23 |
| Embu North | 18 |
| Mbeere North | 20 |
| Mbeere South | 21 |
| Mwea | 19 |
| Total | 130 |

Source: Field Survey (2022)

3.3 Sampling Techniques

Both probability and non-probability sampling techniques were used to identify the sample size population and come up with relevant and valid data. 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 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 | Cumulation Sample Size | |
|--------------|------------------------|---------|
| | Probability | Purpose |
| 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)

3.4 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), and Embu and internet sources.

3.5 Data Analysis

The data collected was assembled, polished, consolidated and variously coded under broad and specific categorization as guided by the objective of the research and research question; 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. Statistical tools such as mean, average and range were used. The statistical analysis for this objective based research adopted a descriptive and predictive approach. However, to enhance logical insights and inferences, diagrams, tables, plates and verbatim captions were used. Corroboration with published works was used to validate conflicting field data.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Religious Conflicts

Religious conflict has bedeviled humanity for long. Between the 11th and 15th century, the Pope dispatched Christian soldiers known as the crusaders in the Ottoman Empire to fight not only the Muslims but break away sects of the Catholic Church. This was typical of religious nationalism that ended up in the emergence of the Western Christian Church whose headquarters was Rome and the Eastern Christian Church whose headquarters was Constantinople (Cornwell, 1969). The Sunni and Shia/Shiite Muslims have continually wrestled each other on who was the right non-lineage, or lineage to succeed Prophet Mohammed; in the name of Abu Bakr and Ali respectively.

From the 20thc the differences between the Sunni and Shia Muslims had escalated to open warfare on basis of religious and political hegemony (Sarah Pruitt, 2022). The ACK Diocese of Katakwa was hived from the Diocese of Nambale in 1991 out of an inter-ethnic battle between the Iteso and the Luhya that made the former to stage a hunger strike at the All Saints Cathedral in Nairobi in the late 1986, running to 1991. The Iteso had already developed their own local language Bible and hymn book. The Archbishop Nzimbi and Archbishop Kuria Commissions ultimately led to the birth of the ACK Diocese of Nambale under Bishop Eliud Okiring who was an Iteso (*Daily Nation*, 2012). The Anglican Church Diocese of Embu was divided into the ACK Diocese of Embu and the ACK Diocese of Mbeere in 1996, when the Mbeere District was established. The two dioceses were born from the ACK Diocese of Embu purely on ethnic polarization considerations. This had seen 02 Bishops from the Aembu ethnic Community for the ACK Diocese of Embu between 2010 and 2022. Similarly, the trend of ethnic polarization had continued with the election and installation of 02 Bishops from the Ambeere ethnic community between 2010 and 2022. The fact of ethnic polarization was important because when the Church of the Province of Kenya (CPK) Diocese of Mt. Kenya East was dissolved in the 1990s to separate the Anglican ethnic congregations of the Aembu and the Kirinyaga, the ACK Diocese of Embu was established. It was interesting to note that the Provost of the Cathedral who was then from the Ambeere ethnic community and technically with the highest legibility to the office of the Bishop, ACK Diocese of Embu, was defeated in the elections of Bishop by a candidate from the other parishes purely on basis of ethnic polarization. This was in tune with the Rising Expectations = Rising Frustrations Theory (1993) by Huntington and Learner. In both the ACK Diocese of Nambale and the ACK Diocese of Embu, for the Iteso and Ambeere communities, ethnic polarization on basis of past ethnic contempt and marginalization was evident. However, the Ambeere used the excuse of acquisition of the new Mbeere District whose dividends they understood too well while the Iteso fought for it. Although like in the Sunni/Shia polarizations religion and political hegemony applied, ethnic polarization was not openly inclined in the Sunni/Shia Divide.

4.2 Headship of Schools

It should also be understood that those were the years when religious sponsors determined who was to be the Head teacher and Principals of their sponsored schools (PS/AB/MCA/01/2022, O.I., Mwea Sub-County, 10/11/2022). The matter espoused was relevant to the Hegemonic Exchange Theory (2016) by Rothchild from a governance perspective. Thanks to the Teachers Service Commission Act (TSCA, 2012) and the Basic Education

Act (BEA, 2013) for defusing the sponsor's role in their Education Management Reforms (EMR). The sponsor's prominence had become highly abusive. However, meritocracy in the promotion and appointment of school administrators was still a long way in meeting the accountability and transparency values of Article 10 and 232 of the CoK, 2010 among other outlined values and principles of governance.

4.3 Equitable Distribution of Water

The dire need of water for domestic and self-development requirements amid prolonged drought in all the 03 resident sub-counties of the Ambeere ethnic community should be a rallying call to the County Government of Embu (CGE) to distribute this essential social resource promptly and equitably to Mbeere North Sub-County, Mbeere South Sub-County and Mwea Sub-County. The rest of the Aembu ethnic community resident sub-counties of Embu west, Embu east and Embu north were sufficiently served with water and electricity at homestead levels (PS/AC/CHIEF/02/22, O.I., Mbeere South Sub-County, 04/10/2022).

4.4 Inequitable Electric Power Distribution

Although Mbeere South Sub-County was home to the Seven Folks Dam (SFD), it was interesting to note that many homesteads were not connected to the National Electricity Power Grid (NEPG). This was sufficiently done in Embu west, Embu east and Embu north sub-counties.

4.5 Inequitable Distribution of County Government of Embu Housing Project

The Housing project of the 220 units by the CGE was all concentrated in Embu West Sub-County.

4.6 Soccer International Standard Fields

Many of the football clubs in Europe have a tendency to use the names of the city of origin for their club identity. Almost all the soccer clubs in Embu County had adopted this trend. However, in the homogeneous communities of Europe, this was both a measure of identity and patriotism. On the other hand, the identity and patriotism in the soccer clubs of all the 06 sub-counties of Embu County was configured from an ethnic polarization basis.

The leadership of all these soccer teams was also local and ethnic (PS/AC/CCA/E/01/22, O.I., Embu East Sub-County, 08/11/2022). This scenario was inclined to the Hegemonic

Exchange Theory (2016) by Rothchild from a governance prism and the Rising Expectations = Rising Frustrations Theory (1993) by Huntington and Learner from the ethnic polarization viewpoint. It was similarly more expressive to note that an ethnic language in a heterogeneous community itself was a fertile ground for ethnic polarization when shrouded by sentiments such as bias, suspicion, discrimination and hate. In the 2006 World Cup Finals in Berlin, Germany, between France and Italy, the French player Zinedine Zidane got a straight red card for his head-butt to the chest of Italian defender, Marco Materazzi, complaining that the latter uttered demeaning remarks towards him. However, it should be noted that irrespective of all this differences, the rate of inter-marriage between the Aembu and Ambeere ethnic community had persisted to date.

4.7 Inequitable Distribution of Quality Public Primary and Secondary Schools

The education sector provided yet another source of ethnic polarization between the Aembu and the Ambeere ethnic communities. The national secondary school category was evenly distributed at 01 (Siakago Girls) in Mbeere North Sub-County amongst the Ambeere, and 01 (Moi High

School, Mbiruri) in Embu East Sub-County among the Aembu ethnic community. However, extra county category schools had an uneven distribution in the Aembu and the Ambeere resident sub-counties: Embu East Sub-County (02), Embu West Sub-County (03) and Embu North Sub-County (03); Mbeere North Sub-County (01), Mbeere South Sub-County (00) and Mwea (00). In the quality boarding public school's category Embu East Sub-County (04), Embu West Sub-County (01), Embu North Sub-County (01); Mbeere North Sub-County (01), Mbeere South Sub-County (03) and Mwea Sub-County (00). This scenario indicated glaring discrepancies of equitable distribution of quality schools among the Aembu and the Ambeere ethnic resident sub-counties in Embu County (PS/AB/MCA/02/22, O.I., Mbeere North Sub-County, 02/10/2022). From a leadership prism this ambience tends to subscribe to the Hegemonic Exchange Theory (2016) by Rothchild and from an ethnic polarization viewpoint, the Rising Expectations = Rising Frustrations Theory (1993) by Huntington and Learner. However, it was important to understand that the cumulative aggregate of development had to factor the volume for resources for which to base tangible development and dividends of macro-economic scale. This were in abundance in the 03 Aembu resident sub-counties of Embu County.

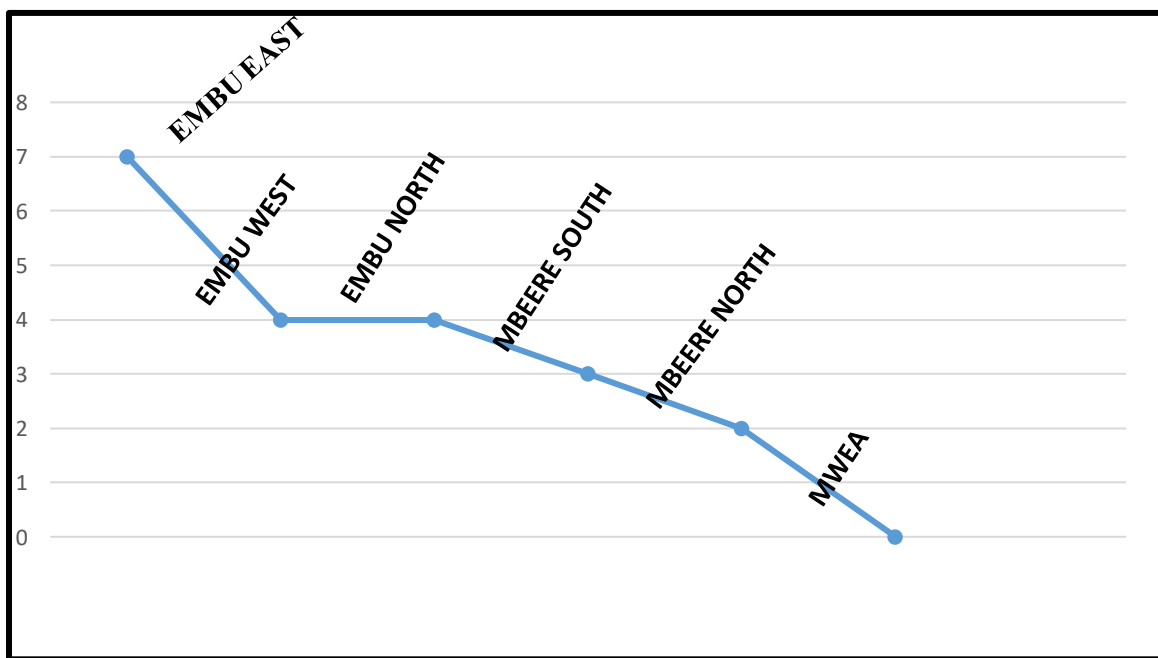


Figure 1: A Line Graph Showing the Distribution of Quality Public Secondary Schools and Quality Public Boarding Primary Schools among the Aembu and the Ambeere Ethnic Community Resident Sub-Counties in Embu County

Source: Field Survey (2022)

From 2009, it was logical for the Ambeere leadership should have drifted from lamentations and complacency to

being proactive. The Ambeere electorates were not interrogative enough to their politicians on the bases of

consolidating sufficient resources to their constituencies and ultimately the sub-counties. Cornell & D’Arcy (2016) argued that when the politicians were able to bring sufficient development resources home, the electorate was least bothered about how effective they were at national level legislation or executive oversight. The consideration for re-election was assured for such politicians because they were in communion with their ethnic community at the local electorate level.

5.1 Conclusion

It was possible to discern from areas of ethnic polarization in Embu County between the Aembu ethnic community and the Ambeere ethnic communities those ethnic polarizations happened in context. Perfect democracy in a heterogeneous ethnic set up never brought outright condemnation or right in issues that brought out such ethnic polarization because such sentiments usually had a bearing to the general livelihood of either the Aembu or the Ambeere communities. Some reasons needed sober negotiations for smooth ethnic co-existence. In governance that was guarded by the state statutes, it would be rational to embrace the notion and value that unity and impartial value addition was even more plausible in ethnic diversity.

5.2 Recommendation

1. The catholic church should explore avenues to separate the Aembu and the Ambeere faithfuls
2. Headship of public schools should not be based on ethnicity.
3. Water resources should be enhanced in the 3 sub-counties of Mbeere north, Mbeere south and Mwea in order to consolidate food sufficiency.
4. Many homes in the Abeere and Akamba homes should be served with electricity.
5. The CGE Housing Project should be evenly distributed among the Aembu and the Ambeere resident communities
6. Modern and standard soccer fields needed to be evenly distributed between the 3 Aembu resident sub-counties to the 3 Ambeere resident sub-counties
7. The colonial pattern of distributing quality public schools should be broken by increasing such model schools in Mbeere north, Mbeere south and Mwea sub-counties.

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