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The Interplay between Ethnic Fragmentation & Economic Development: A Review of Post-Colonial Kenya

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Abstract

Since gaining independence in 1963, Kenya has navigated a complex interplay between ethnic fragmentation and economic development, marked by a myriad of challenges. This research article evaluated these dynamics, shedding light on the hurdles hindering progress and the avenues for advancement. Among the challenges analysed are: political instability and governance issues, resource allocation disparities leading to unequal development, pervasive corruption and rent-seeking behaviour, ethnic favouritism in employment and business, wavering investor confidence impacting economic stability, and the perpetuation of ethnic polarization in public discourse. The article reviews various literatures, gaps identified and field. Two theories Instrumental Marxist theory and Relative Deprivation theory complemented by pragmatism philosophy are utilised to enrich the findings herein. It employs historical research design since its qualitative in nature. The major finding is that the volatile political environment, characterized by contested elections, instances of violence, and power struggles, has created an aura of uncertainty that is detrimental to the economic stability. It concludes that, corruption and rent-seeking behaviour have posed formidable obstacles to Kenya's economic development, siphoning off resources meant for public welfare and distorting the allocation of opportunities.

Keywords: Corruption, Economic, Disparities, Ethnicity and Fragmentation

Introduction

In the Post-World War II era (1945-1970s), the decolonization process led to the creation of new nation-states with diverse ethnic populations, often resulting in ethnic tensions and conflicts that posed challenges to economic development. However, many newly independent countries pursued policies of national unity, emphasizing inclusive development and equitable distribution of resources. For example, Singapore actively promoted social cohesion among its diverse ethnic groups and implemented policies that transformed it into a global economic hub.

Lately in the 2020s, ethnic fragmentation, social divisions, and rising nationalism in various parts of the world present challenges to economic development. These divisions can lead to social unrest, political instability, and hinder cooperation and economic integration. To address this, indeed, recognizing the economic potential of diversity, efforts are being made to promote inclusive growth, empower marginalized ethnic groups, and foster intercultural dialogue. Embracing diversity can lead to innovation, cultural exchange, and economic resilience. From the works of Rosenau, it's important to note that the challenges in the interplay between ethnic fragmentation and economic development in the global perspective are highly diverse and context-dependent. Different regions and countries face unique circumstances, requiring tailored approaches to address ethnic divisions and harness the economic potential of diversity. Therefore, this works made this study to address on issues to do with ethnic divisions and how to harness the economic potential of diversity in Kenya since 1963.

Literature Review

In Kenya, Githigaro narrates that, the interplay between ethnic fragmentation and economic development has had both challenges and opportunities. In the Pre-Independence Era (late 19th century - early 1960s), the colonial rule created divisions among ethnic groups through policies of divide and rule, resulting in interethnic tensions and rivalries. Despite of this, the emergence of nationalist movements, such as the Mau Mau uprising, brought together various ethnic groups in the struggle for independence, fostering a sense of national unity and shared aspirations.

In the post-Independence era (1960s-1970s), ethnic divisions and rivalries continued to be a challenge in the early years of independence. Political competition along ethnic lines often resulted in ethnic-based patronage and exclusionary policies. Due to this the government introduced policies aimed at promoting equitable economic development, such as the Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965, which advocated for a mixed economy and rural development. The establishment of the Kenya African National Union (KANU) as a dominant political party also sought to unite different ethnic groups under a common political platform.

During the Structural Adjustment era (1980s-1990s), indeed, Kenya, like many other African countries, implemented structural adjustment programs under pressure from international financial institutions. These programs led to austerity measures, reduced government spending, and socio-economic disparities. Therefore, despite the challenges, economic liberalization policies introduced during this period opened up opportunities for private sector growth and foreign investment. This period saw the emergence of successful Kenyan businesses in various sectors, contributing to economic development. In the Constitutional Reforms and Devolution (2000s-2010s), ethnic divisions and competition for resources remained significant challenges in Kenya. Political violence following the 2007 elections highlighted the need to address ethnic fragmentation and foster inclusivity. More so, the promulgation of a new constitution in 2010 introduced devolution, which decentralized power and resources to county governments. Devolution aimed to promote equitable development, reduce ethnic tensions, and enhance citizen participation in decision-making at the local level.

By 2022, Kenya continued to face challenges related to ethnic fragmentation, including unequal distribution of resources, political competition along ethnic lines, and periodic outbreaks of violence during elections. However, efforts were being made to address these challenges through initiatives such as the Building Bridges Initiative (BBI), which sought to foster inclusivity, address historical injustices, and promote national unity. The government also focused on initiatives such as the Big Four Agenda, which aims to spur economic growth in key sectors like manufacturing, agriculture, healthcare, and affordable housing.

Therefore, from Githigaro's literature, it's important to note that the challenges and opportunities in the interplay between ethnic fragmentation and economic development in Kenya are ongoing and subject to evolving dynamics. Efforts to promote inclusivity, reduce inequalities, and foster national unity remain crucial for sustainable economic development in the country. It is on this basis that this study addressed this gaps that dwelt on efforts to promote inclusivity, reduce inequality and fostering national unity with reference to interplay between ethnic fragmentation and economic development in Kenya since 1963.

Theoretical Framework

The study utilized two theories; Instrumental Marxist theory (IM) as advanced by the Marxist scholar, Ralph Miliband and Goldstein, and Relative Deprivation theory propounded by Walker & Smith. It further complemented it with the ideas of pragmatism philosophy.

Instrumental Marxist theory (IM)

According to Goldstein, the British sociologist and Marxist author Ralph Miliband is often considered as the main proponent of this theory. Instrumental Marxism posits that, policy makers in government and positions of power tend to share a common business or class background, and that their decisions often reflect their business or class interests. IM focuses on the material conditions in society and how the society affects its people. This is an agent-centred view emphasizing on the policy makers' decisions, where the relevant agents are either individual elites, a section of the ruling class, or the class as a whole.

The IM theory is a conflict hypothesis as proposed by Karl Marx. It emphasizes that the society is always in conflict due to struggle for finite resources. Domination and power rather than agreement and compliance are said to preserve the social order. Miliband argues that there are inequalities in our societies based on a number of factors, such as class differences. IM tries to explain social phenomena within any given society by analysing the material conditions and economic activities required to fulfil human material needs. The theory emphasizes that society is always at conflict as a result of diminishing resources. Accordingly, Miliband saw the state as a society as run by a number of elites who run key institutions. These elites include cabinet ministers, Members of Parliament, Senior Police and Military Officers. Together, they run to protect their class, the ruling class in order to protect private property and yes, capitalism.

In the study, the Instrumental Marxist theory was found relevant for investigating the nexus between ethnic fragmentation and politics, economic freedom, social evils such as corruption and governance. The theory was used to explain the process of ethnic fragmentation within the societies as a state tool, to achieve the government goals and desires. Marx Weber (1864-1920) presents a model that focuses on the struggle between capitalists and the working class. How ethnic fragmentation enhances economic freedom was the general objective of the research article.

Relative Deprivation theory

This theory was propounded by Runciman in 1966. Runciman was interested to see the attitudes to social inequality in the 20th century England. Runciman borrowed the term "relative deprivation" which was originally coined by Merton and Kitt who are the authors of "The American Soldier". The main assumption of the theory is that a people's satisfaction is conditioned by their expectations and measured in parallel with their reference group. Runciman said that "the proverbial way to make oneself conscious of one's advantages is to contrast one's situation with that of others who are worse off than oneself". Runciman supposed that the rate of recurrence of relative deprivation will be low when there is equal promotion or demotion. The equal demotion is labelled as 'absolute deprivation'. However, the assumption that 'absolute deprivation' will slow down the rate of 'relative deprivation' is not convincing according to him. When there is disparity in promotions, demotions, the rate of recurrence of relative deprivation will rise and fall as the people explore available opportunities.

Methodology

The initial research employed historical research design since its qualitative in nature. In the historical research design, the writings are descriptive, and they begin with a chronological recounting of events. Their investigation focuses on the events' explanatory connection and effects. The study targeted all ethnic groups in 47 Counties in Kenya. Despite targeting 47 counties, it was carried out in 7 Counties which included, Bungoma, Busia, Kakamega, Kisumu, Kisii, Homabay, and Siaya which formed the sample size to the study. The study used convenience, purposive and snow ball sampling techniques to identify various respondents to be involved in the study. Secondary and primary data were used in order to enrich the study. Content analysis was used to analyse the data gathered by the researcher.

Discussion of Findings

This subsection underscored the following subthemes: Political Instability and Governance Issues, Resource Allocation and Unequal Development, Corruption and Rent-Seeking Behaviour, Ethnic Favouritism in Employment and Business, Investor Confidence and Economic Stability, Education and Human Capital Development and Ethnic Polarization in Public Discourse. They are discussed as follows:

Political Instability and Governance Issues

It emerged to the study that, ethnic divisions have often fuelled political instability, leading to periodic episodes of violence, electoral tensions, and governance crises. One of the respondents, Peter Baraza, asserted to the study that:

This instability has deterred investment, hindered policy implementation, and disrupted economic planning, adversely affecting economic growth. Political instability and governance issues have intricately woven a tapestry of challenges, leading to ethnic fragmentation and profoundly impacting economic development in Kenya since its independence in 1963. The nexus between political instability, governance shortcomings, and ethnic divisions has been a predominant factor hindering the nation's progress on the economic front.

Kenya's post-independence political landscape has been marred by ethno-political rivalries, often manipulated by political elites to garner support and maintain power. Another responder, Mabonga Dancun, agreed with Peter Baraza sentiments by informing the study that:

This exploitation of ethnic identities for political gain has perpetuated divisions among various ethnic groups, resulting in a fractured societal fabric. Consequently, this fragmented societal structure has posed multifaceted challenges to the country's economic growth trajectory. One of the most conspicuous manifestations of political instability and ethnic fragmentation on economic development is the unequal distribution of resources. The politicization of resource allocation, favouring regions or communities based on ethnic affiliations, has engendered stark disparities in infrastructure development, service provision, and access to economic opportunities. This lopsided distribution has not only stifled regional development but has also hampered the overall progress of the nation.

Moreover, the volatile political environment, characterized by contested elections, instances of violence, and power struggles, has created an aura of uncertainty detrimental to economic stability. The resulting policy inconsistency and uncertainty have dissuaded investors, both local and foreign, from making long-term commitments, thereby impeding the inflow of crucial capital essential for economic growth. Corruption, another by-product of political instability and weak governance, has thrived under the guise of ethnic patronage networks. This has diverted resources away from productive sectors, drained public coffers, and hindered the implementation of critical development projects. Consequently, the erosion of public trust in institutions and the mismanagement of funds have stymied efforts to foster a conducive environment for economic progress.

In addition, an FGD conducted in Busia, educated the researcher based on the discussion put forward by the study. The study was informed that:

Ethnic polarization in public discourse and policy formulation has led to a fragmented approach to national issues. Political discussions often veer towards ethnic allegiances, stifling consensus-building and impeding the formulation of coherent policies aimed at sustainable economic development. The resultant lack of trust, cooperation, and inclusivity among diverse ethnic groups has impeded joint efforts towards economic prosperity. Social and economic endeavours that require collective participation, cooperation, and mutual trust have been hindered, constraining the nation's overall growth potential.

According to the FGD, the only way to overcome these challenges, Kenya needs to embark on a transformative journey towards inclusive governance, transparent institutions, and policies that prioritize national unity over ethnic interests. Strengthening institutions, promoting accountability, and fostering a political environment based on inclusivity and consensus-building are imperative steps to steer the country towards sustainable economic growth.

Therefore the intricate interplay between political instability, governance issues, and ethnic fragmentation in Kenya since independence has posed formidable challenges to economic development. Thus addressing these challenges demands a concerted effort to foster a united and inclusive society, free from the divisive grip of ethnic politics, in order to unlock the nation's true potential for economic prosperity. From the above discussion, Pragmatism philosophy, Instrumental Marxism Theory, and Relative Deprivation Theory have each offered very valuable acumens into addressing political instability and governance issues amidst the challenges of ethnic fragmentation and economic development in Kenya since 1963. Pragmatism's emphasis on practical solutions guided policymakers towards inclusive governance structures and policies fostering collaboration across ethnic lines. Instrumental Marxism Theory exposed how economic disparities were exploited by elites, advocating for redistributive policies to address underlying grievances and promote stability. Relative Deprivation Theory highlighted the role of perceived inequalities in fuelling unrest, prompting policymakers to prioritize social cohesion and equitable opportunities for all ethnic groups. Therefore, by integrating these ideas past efforts aimed to navigate the intricate dynamics of ethnic fragmentation and economic development, striving for stable governance and sustainable progress in Kenya's diverse socio-political landscape.

Resource Allocation and Unequal Development

Ethnic considerations in policymaking have led to uneven resource allocation across regions. Therefore development projects and resources may be skewed towards areas with political favouritism, neglecting others based on ethnic affiliation. This has

resulted in disparities in infrastructure, services, and economic opportunities between regions. Resource allocation and unequal development have been central issues in Kenya's socio-economic landscape since independence, exacerbating ethnic fragmentation and posing significant challenges to overall economic development. One of the respondents Lidya Grace Ouma informed the study that:

The politicization of resource allocation has perpetuated ethnic divisions by favouring certain regions or ethnic groups at the expense of others. This skewed distribution of resources, ranging from infrastructure projects to access to basic services and economic opportunities, has created disparities that directly correlate with ethnic affiliations. As a consequence, the seeds of ethnic fragmentation were sown, impacting the economic landscape in multifaceted ways. Unequal development across regions has been a glaring consequence of this biased resource allocation. Certain areas, often aligned with politically influential ethnic groups, have received a lion's share of investment, resulting in visible disparities in infrastructure and development between regions. This unequal development has not only hindered regional progress but has also fuelled sentiments of marginalization and discontent among underprivileged ethnic groups.

The resultant economic implications are significant. Unequal access to resources and opportunities has limited the socio-economic mobility of marginalized ethnic groups, perpetuating cycles of poverty and inhibiting their participation in the broader economy. Based on the foregoing discussion, an FGD informed the research that:

This economic exclusion, rooted in unequal resource allocation, has widened the socio-economic gap between ethnic communities, exacerbating tensions and deepening the chasm of ethnic fragmentation. Moreover, unequal development has hindered the country's overall economic growth. By concentrating resources in certain regions, the potential for comprehensive and inclusive economic development has been stifled. This lopsided development not only hampers the realization of the nation's economic potential but also breeds resentment and inter-ethnic tensions, hindering collective efforts towards economic progress.

It is worth noting that, the ramifications extend beyond economic disparities. Unequal development has undermined social cohesion by breeding a sense of injustice and marginalization among historically disadvantaged ethnic groups. A responder, Janefavor Wandera (personal Comm., 22 June 2023), gave out her views from the above argument that:

This perception of unfair treatment based on ethnic lines has fuelled grievances and contributed to the fracturing of the national unity necessary for concerted economic advancement. Furthermore, the uneven distribution of resources has entrenched divisive politics along ethnic lines, perpetuating a cycle where political leaders leverage ethnic affiliations to secure resources and perpetuate their dominance. This entrenchment has deepened ethnic divisions, eroded trust in governance institutions, and hindered efforts to build a cohesive and united nation.

The initial research interrogated another respondent on how these challenges can be addressed. The study was thus informed by Paul Dennis Wakoli (23 June 2023) that:

Kenya must prioritize equitable resource allocation and inclusive development policies. Investing in regions based on economic needs rather than ethnic considerations, fostering inclusive growth, and creating opportunities for marginalized communities are pivotal steps. Strengthening institutions to ensure transparent and accountable governance in resource allocation is crucial for fostering unity and promoting shared prosperity.

In conclusion the historical patterns of resource allocation and unequal development have been instrumental in perpetuating ethnic fragmentation in Kenya since independence. Rectifying these disparities demands a concerted effort towards equitable development, inclusive policies, and a national ethos that transcends ethnic divides, ultimately laying the groundwork for sustainable and inclusive economic development.

Therefore, based on the findings, it was clear that, Pragmatism philosophy, Instrumental Marxism Theory, and Relative Deprivation Theory each provided valuable perspectives on addressing challenges of resource allocation and unequal development within the context of ethnic fragmentation and economic development in Kenya since 1963. Pragmatism advocated for practical solutions and inclusive policies that prioritized equitable resource distribution across ethnic lines. Instrumental Marxism Theory highlighted the exploitation of ethnic divisions by elites to control economic resources, emphasizing the need for policies that addressed underlying economic disparities through redistribution and inclusive development strategies. Relative Deprivation Theory underscored the role of perceived inequalities in fostering unrest, necessitating policies that promoted social cohesion and equitable opportunities for all ethnic groups. These ideas, in past application, informed policymakers and stakeholders, guiding efforts to navigate the complexities of ethnic fragmentation and economic development, striving for inclusive growth and tension mitigation for a more stable and prosperous Kenya.

Corruption and Rent-Seeking Behaviour

Ethnic patronage networks have perpetuated corruption and rent-seeking behaviours. The study was informed by a responder, Christine Musole (24 June 2023), that:

Political elites often prioritize ethnic interests over national development, engaging in corrupt practices to maintain power and benefit their ethnic groups. This diverts resources away from productive sectors and hampers economic growth. Corruption and rent-seeking behaviour have been significant impediments to economic development in Kenya since its independence in 1963, exacerbating ethnic fragmentation and posing multifaceted challenges to the nation's progress.

It was therefore clear to the study that, corruption, often intertwined with ethnic patronage networks, has pervaded various sectors of Kenyan society. Based on the preceding discussion, an FGD (21 June 2023) affirmed to the research that:

The misuse of public resources for personal gain, bribery, and embezzlement has thrived under the guise of ethnic affiliations, perpetuating a cycle of nepotism and favouritism. This culture of corruption has eroded public trust in institutions and governance, hindering efforts towards sustainable economic growth. Ethnic-based rent-seeking behaviour has exacerbated these challenges. Political elites, exploiting ethnic loyalties, have engaged in rent-seeking practices to maintain power and control over resources. This has led to a system where access to economic opportunities, government tenders, and employment is often contingent upon ethnic affiliations, perpetuating inequalities and reinforcing ethnic divisions.

It was further noted; the economic consequences of corruption and rent-seeking are profound. This is because; misappropriation of public funds and resources diverts crucial investments away from productive sectors. Another respondent explained (21 June 2023) that,

Development projects are often delayed, poorly executed, or side-lined in favour of projects benefiting politically connected ethnic groups. This unequal distribution of resources leads to disparities in economic development between regions, exacerbating grievances and breeding ethnic tensions. Moreover, corruption stifles entrepreneurship and investment. Business environments tainted by corrupt practices deter both local and foreign investors, hindering economic growth. The prevalence of bribery and favouritism in business dealings create barriers for small enterprises and impedes fair competition, limiting opportunities for economic advancement, particularly for marginalized ethnic groups.

One of the respondents, Angeline Apondi Omolo, interviewed by the study reiterated the above discussion by adding that:

The culture of corruption and rent-seeking behaviour has also eroded social cohesion. Perceptions of unfairness and unequal treatment based on ethnic affiliations sow seeds of mistrust and discord among diverse ethnic groups. This erodes the social fabric necessary for collective economic progress, hindering cooperation and shared efforts towards development. Furthermore, the intertwining of corruption and ethnic divisions in public discourse has perpetuated a cycle of divisive politics. Political rhetoric often capitalizes on ethnic differences to mobilize support, perpetuating a narrative of 'us versus them,' further deepening the chasm of ethnic fragmentation.

Kenya needs comprehensive anti-corruption measures and reforms that transcend ethnic interests in order to address the challenges discussed above. Additionally, it was noted that, strengthening institutions, promoting transparency, and holding perpetrators of corruption accountable are crucial steps towards fostering a fair and just society. Embracing inclusive economic policies that prioritize meritocracy over ethnicity and fostering a culture of integrity are essential for building a united and economically prosperous nation.

In conclusion, corruption and rent-seeking behaviour have significantly contributed to challenges of ethnic fragmentation in Kenya since independence. Therefore there is a need for resolute efforts in order to combat corruption, promote ethical governance, and foster an inclusive and equitable society that transcends ethnic divides, paving the way for sustained economic development and social cohesion.

Finally, the above findings are in tandem with the Pragmatism philosophy, Instrumental Marxism Theory, and Relative Deprivation Theory offer diverse perspectives on addressing corruption and rent-seeking behaviour within the context of ethnic fragmentation and economic development in Kenya since 1963. Pragmatism advocates for practical, outcome-oriented solutions to combat corruption, emphasizing transparency and accountability in governance. Instrumental Marxism Theory highlights how corruption often stems from economic inequalities and elite exploitation, advocating for systemic reforms to address underlying socio-economic disparities. Relative Deprivation Theory underscores the role of perceived injustices in fostering rent-seeking behaviour, prompting policies aimed at promoting equitable opportunities and reducing grievances.

Ethnic Favouritism in Employment and Business

Ethnic affiliations can influence hiring practices and business opportunities, leading to nepotism and discrimination. However, it was observed by the study that, this restricts access to employment and business prospects for individuals outside certain ethnic groups, affecting overall economic productivity. A respondent informed the research that:

Ethnic favouritism in employment and business has been a pervasive challenge in Kenya since independence, significantly contributing to ethnic fragmentation and posing formidable obstacles to the country's economic development. The practice of ethnic favouritism in employment and business has manifested in various forms, influencing hiring decisions, awarding contracts, and determining business opportunities based on ethnic affiliations. This detrimental practice has led to exclusionary practices in the job market and business sphere, perpetuating inequalities and hindering economic progress. In the realm of employment, ethnic favouritism often influences recruitment processes, favouring individuals from specific ethnic groups for job positions or government appointments. This practice undermines meritocracy and creates barriers for qualified individuals from marginalized ethnic groups, limiting their access to economic opportunities and hindering their socio-economic mobility.

Similarly, in the business landscape, procurement processes and contract awards are sometimes influenced by ethnic considerations rather than merit or capability. This was reiterated by another respondent, Bernard Sebebe, who asserted that:

Businesses owned by politically influential ethnic groups often receive preferential treatment in accessing government tenders or business opportunities, excluding smaller enterprises or businesses from underrepresented ethnic communities. The economic consequences of ethnic favouritism in employment and business are substantial. Marginalized ethnic groups face restricted access to employment opportunities, limiting their participation in the formal economy and perpetuating cycles of poverty within these communities. Moreover, the unequal distribution of business opportunities inhibits entrepreneurship and stifles economic growth potential in regions dominated by marginalized ethnic groups.

This practice further deepens ethnic divisions and fosters a sense of exclusion and marginalization among underprivileged communities. Perceptions of unfair treatment based on ethnic affiliations sow seeds of discord and erode social cohesion, hindering collaborative efforts essential for economic development. Furthermore, another respondent, Hellen Ajilla, added her voice that:

Ethnic favouritism in employment and business sector fuels divisive politics in Western region and in Kenya at large. Political elites often leverage ethnic interests to maintain power, perpetuating a cycle where economic resources and opportunities are allocated along ethnic lines. This entrenchment of ethnic divisions in the economic sphere exacerbates social tensions and hampers collective efforts towards sustainable economic growth.

The research study therefore established that, in order to overcome these obstacles and challenges, Kenya needs inclusive policies that promote equal opportunities in employment and business, irrespective of ethnic backgrounds. Strengthening anti-discriminatory laws, ensuring transparency in procurement processes, and fostering a culture of inclusivity and meritocracy are essential steps towards building an equitable and united society.

In conclusion, indeed, ethnic favouritism in employment and business has significantly contributed to the challenges of ethnic fragmentation in Kenya since independence. Therefore, there is a need to dismantle discriminatory practices, promote inclusivity, and create a level playing field for all ethnic groups, fostering social cohesion and unlocking the nation's true economic potential.

It thus emerged to the study that, Pragmatism philosophy, Instrumental Marxism Theory, and Relative Deprivation Theory offer multifaceted approaches to tackling ethnic favouritism in employment and business within the context of ethnic fragmentation and economic development in Kenya since 1963. Pragmatism advocates for practical solutions that prioritize meritocracy and equal opportunities, aiming to dismantle discriminatory practices in hiring and business operations. Instrumental Marxism Theory sheds light on how ethnic favouritism is often a tool used by ruling elites to maintain power and economic control, suggesting the need for systemic changes to address underlying socio-economic inequalities. Lastly, Relative Deprivation Theory emphasizes the importance of addressing perceived injustices to reduce tensions and foster a fairer economic environment for all ethnic groups.

Investor Confidence and Economic Stability

The study was keen on how ethnic tensions and periodic conflicts have eroded investor confidence in Kenya and even in western region. This is because, foreign and local investors are often cautious about investing in regions perceived to have ethnic conflicts, leading to reduced capital inflows and slower economic growth. Investor confidence and economic stability are crucial factors for sustained economic growth. However, in Kenya, challenges related to ethnic fragmentation have significantly impacted these aspects, hindering overall economic development since gaining independence in 1963. Based on

the researchers view, some respondents were interrogated by the study to affirm this scenario. One of the respondents, Joseph Shisia, affirmed to the study that:

The nexus between ethnic fragmentation and investor confidence is palpable. Periodic episodes of ethnic-related tensions, political instability, and occasional violence have created an environment of uncertainty, deterring both local and foreign investors. Ethnic divisions have been exploited by political actors, leading to conflicts that disrupt economic activities, damage infrastructure, and create an environment perceived as risky for investment. Foreign direct investment (FDI) plays a pivotal role in economic growth, but ethnic tensions and instability have often dissuaded investors from committing to long-term ventures in Kenya. The perception of political risk and the unpredictability stemming from ethnic politics have led to a reluctance among investors to inject capital into the country. This hesitancy has deprived Kenya of vital investments needed for infrastructure development, industrialization, and job creation.

Moreover, economic stability is intricately linked to investor confidence. Ethnic fragmentation has led to policy uncertainty and inconsistency, primarily due to the politicization of economic decisions based on ethnic considerations. This inconsistent policy environment hinders long-term economic planning and undermines investor trust, further dampening economic stability and growth prospects. While affirming this, one of the responders, Justine Okumbe, averred that:

The adverse consequences extend beyond investor confidence and economic stability. Ethnic divisions not only deter foreign investments but also hinder local entrepreneurship. Ethnic-based market dynamics and prejudices in business dealings impede fair competition, limiting opportunities for budding entrepreneurs, particularly those from marginalized ethnic groups.

Based on the foregoing discussion ethnic fragmentation's impact on economic stability also involves internal challenges. Unequal distribution of resources and opportunities based on ethnic affiliations breeds socio-economic disparities between regions and ethnic communities. This inequality undermines social cohesion and fosters a sense of injustice and marginalization among underprivileged groups, hindering collective efforts towards economic progress. Furthermore, divisive ethnic politics often overshadow economic discourse, leading to fragmented policymaking. Economic policies that should focus on inclusive growth and development become entangled in ethnic considerations, hindering their effectiveness and exacerbating economic disparities.

From the above findings, Kenya must prioritize measures that foster inclusivity, promote national unity, and create an environment conducive to investor confidence and economic stability. Strengthening institutions, ensuring transparent governance, and depoliticizing economic decision-making are crucial steps towards overcoming the impacts of ethnic fragmentation on economic development. In conclusion, ethnic fragmentation's detrimental impact on investor confidence, economic stability, and overall economic development in Kenya since independence is evident. Resolving these challenges demands a determined effort to build a united and inclusive society that transcends ethnic divides, fostering an environment conducive to sustained economic growth and prosperity.

It is worth confirming that, indeed, Pragmatism philosophy, Instrumental Marxism Theory, and Relative Deprivation Theory have each played a role in addressing challenges to investor confidence and economic stability in Kenya since 1963. Pragmatism can be used to guide policymakers towards practical solutions, prioritizing transparent governance and the rule of law to attract and retain investors. Instrumental Marxism Theory advocated for addressing underlying economic disparities, aiming to create a more equitable economic landscape conducive to investor trust. Meanwhile, Relative Deprivation Theory highlighted the importance of addressing perceived inequalities to maintain economic stability and investor confidence. Past initiatives integrated these theories, aiming to create an environment conducive to investment by promoting inclusive economic policies, tackling corruption, and fostering social cohesion. While progress varied, these approaches collectively contributed to addressing the challenge of investor confidence and fostering economic stability amidst the complexities of ethnic fragmentation in Kenya's developmental trajectory.

Education and Human Capital Development

The researcher was interested in interrogating respondents on ethnic divisions which can hinder equitable access to quality education. From the onset of the discussion, it was observed that, unequal educational opportunities limit human capital development, leading to a less skilled workforce and constraining economic productivity and innovation. Additionally, education and human capital development are pivotal for economic growth and societal progress. One of the respondents, Musa Mogaya Mosei (personal comm., 22 June 2023), interrogated by the research, asserted that:

Ethnic fragmentation has had profound implications for education and human capital development in Kenya. Despite efforts to promote universal education, disparities persist in access to quality education along ethnic lines. Marginalized ethnic communities often face barriers such as inadequate infrastructure, limited educational resources, and socio-economic challenges that impede

their access to quality education. The unequal distribution of educational resources perpetuates disparities in educational outcomes, hindering human capital development. Educational institutions in regions dominated by politically influential ethnic groups often receive more funding and resources, while those in marginalized areas languish due to neglect. This unequal distribution limits the educational attainment and skill development of individuals from underrepresented ethnic groups, hindering their contribution to the economy. Moreover, ethnic fragmentation affects the inclusivity and diversity of the education system. Ethnic-based social divisions spill over into educational institutions, creating segregated environments that hinder inter-ethnic interaction and understanding. This lack of cohesion within educational settings perpetuates ethnic divisions, undermining efforts to build a united and inclusive society.

Based on Musa Museti (personal Comm., 20 June 2023), the consequences of inadequate education and human capital development extend to the economy. A workforce with unequal access to quality education and skills training limits the country's overall productivity and innovation. Furthermore, an FGD informed the research that:

Disparities in human capital development contribute to unemployment and underemployment among individuals from marginalized ethnic groups, hindering their full participation in the economy. Ethnic fragmentation's impact on education and human capital development also influences social cohesion. Disparities in educational opportunities based on ethnic affiliations foster feelings of exclusion and marginalization among underprivileged communities. This sense of injustice and unequal treatment based on ethnic lines fuels tensions and impedes efforts towards societal unity and harmony.

Therefore, ethnic considerations in educational policies and practices exacerbate these challenges. Indeed, ethnic-based politics often influence educational policies, leading to inconsistencies and inefficiencies in the education system. Policies aimed at fostering inclusive and equitable education often get entangled in ethnic considerations, hindering their effectiveness in addressing disparities. Therefore, in order to address these challenges, Kenya needs to prioritize inclusive and equitable educational policies. Ensuring equitable distribution of educational resources, improving infrastructure in marginalized areas, and promoting diversity and inclusivity within educational institutions are crucial steps. Finally, investing in skills development and vocational training programs that cater to all ethnic groups can enhance human capital and contribute to economic growth.

It thus emerged to the study that, for sure Pragmatism philosophy, Instrumental Marxism Theory, and Relative Deprivation Theory have all played pertinent roles in unleashing challenges related to education and human capital development in Kenya since 1963. Pragmatism guided policymakers toward practical solutions that prioritized inclusive education policies, aiming to bridge ethnic divides and promote human capital development. Instrumental Marxism Theory underscored the importance of education in addressing underlying economic disparities, advocating for investments in education to empower marginalized communities and reduce inequality. Relative Deprivation Theory highlighted the role of perceived educational injustices in fostering social unrest, prompting policies aimed at providing equal access to education for all ethnic groups. Past initiatives integrated these theories, resulting in various educational reforms and programs aimed at improving access to quality education and human capital development across ethnic lines. While challenges persisted, these approaches contributed to laying the foundation for a more equitable and inclusive education system in Kenya's developmental journey.

Ethnic Polarization in Public Discourse

Ethnic divisions often permeate public discourse and policy debates. Polarization in public discussions hampers consensus-building on critical economic issues, impeding effective policy formulation and implementation. Therefore, while interrogating a respondent on this matter, the study was informed by Atieno Christine (personal comm., 20 June 2023) that:

Ethnic polarization in public discourse has been a persistent challenge in Kenya since gaining independence in 1963, significantly contributing to ethnic fragmentation and posing substantial hurdles to the country's economic development. Moreover, public discourse in Kenya has often been polarized along ethnic lines, with political rhetoric and media amplifying ethnic identities, grievances, and divisions. Political elites, aiming to mobilize support, frequently leverage ethnic affiliations to advance their agendas, deepening the chasm of ethnic polarization. This divisive discourse creates an environment where national issues are viewed through the lens of ethnicity, hindering collective efforts towards economic progress.

The consequences of ethnic polarization in public discourse are multifaceted. It was added by another respondent, Nifa Kadima (personal comm., 19 June 2023) that:

Firstly, it fosters a climate of mistrust and animosity among diverse ethnic groups. Ethnic-based narratives in public discourse perpetuate stereotypes, prejudices, and mistrust, reinforcing divisions and hindering the forging of cohesive and united communities necessary for economic development. Moreover, ethnic polarization hampers consensus-building on critical

economic issues. Meaningful discourse on economic policies, development strategies, and national priorities becomes mired in ethnic considerations, impeding constructive debates and hindering the formulation of inclusive policies.

Moreover, Nifa Kadima (19 June 2023) informed the study further that, indeed, Ethnic polarization also affects governance and policymaking, undermining efforts to promote national unity and inclusive development. According to her: Politicians often capitalize on ethnic sentiments to garner support, resulting in policies that cater to specific ethnic interests rather than prioritizing national development goals. This politicization of policy decisions based on ethnic affiliations obstructs initiatives aimed at fostering equitable economic growth and perpetuates disparities between ethnic groups.

Furthermore, ethnic polarization in public discourse impacts investor confidence and economic stability. An FGD conducted by the research posited to the study (June 2023) that:

The perception of a divided society, prone to ethnic tensions and political instabilities, deters both local and foreign investors. This uncertainty undermines economic stability and inhibits the inflow of crucial investments required for infrastructure development and economic growth. Additionally, the ramifications of ethnic polarization also extend to social cohesion. Divisionary public discourse creates social rifts, fostering an 'us versus them' mentality that impedes collaborative efforts towards economic progress. It fuels a sense of exclusion and marginalization among certain ethnic groups, hindering social unity and cohesion vital for inclusive development.

In order to address these challenges, Kenya needs to promote inclusive and constructive public discourse that transcends ethnic divides. Furthermore, encouraging dialogue, promoting diversity in media representation, and fostering a culture of inclusivity and tolerance in public discourse are essential. Emphasizing shared national goals and values in public narratives can help mitigate ethnic polarization and create a more cohesive society.

In conclusion, ethnic polarization in public discourse has significantly contributed to challenges of ethnic fragmentation in Kenya since independence. Therefore, concerted efforts are needed to promote inclusive discourse, bridge ethnic divides, and foster a united society committed to inclusive economic development. This will pave the way for a more cohesive nation and unlock Kenya's true economic potential. The above findings resonate well with the ideas of Pragmatism philosophy, Instrumental Marxism Theory, and Relative Deprivation Theory all contributed to addressing ethnic polarization in public discourse in Kenya since 1963. Pragmatism encouraged a focus on practical solutions, advocating for inclusive public discourse that prioritized shared national interests over ethnic divisions. Instrumental Marxism Theory highlighted the role of economic disparities in perpetuating ethnic polarization, prompting policies aimed at addressing underlying socio-economic inequalities to foster a more unified national narrative. Relative Deprivation Theory emphasized the importance of addressing perceived injustices to reduce ethnic tensions in public discourse, advocating for policies that promoted social cohesion and equitable opportunities for all ethnic groups. Past initiatives integrated these theories, resulting in efforts to promote inclusive dialogue, address economic disparities, and reduce ethnic polarization in public discourse. While challenges persisted, these approaches contributed to fostering a more unified and inclusive national narrative, conducive to economic development amidst Kenya's complex ethnic landscape.

Conclusion

In examining the intricate interplay between ethnic fragmentation and economic development in Kenya since its independence in 1963, this paper has unearthed a multitude of challenges, shedding light on the complexities inherent in navigating this dynamic relationship. Drawing upon the insights provided by pragmatism philosophy, the Instrumental Marxism Theory, and the Relative Deprivation Theory, the study have gained a deeper understanding of the underlying mechanisms driving both the obstacles and prospects facing Kenya's socio-economic landscape.

One of the foremost challenges identified is the persistent issue of political instability and governance issues. Throughout Kenya's history, political upheavals and governance shortcomings have hampered the country's progress, creating uncertainties that deter investment and impede economic growth. Similarly, the unequal distribution of resources and the consequent unequal development have exacerbated social disparities, perpetuating cycles of poverty and marginalization among certain ethnic groups.

Moreover, corruption and rent-seeking behaviour have posed formidable obstacles to Kenya's economic development, siphoning off resources meant for public welfare and distorting the allocation of opportunities. Ethnic favouritism in employment and business further exacerbates social tensions, marginalizing certain groups while privileging others based on ethnic affiliation, thereby stifling meritocracy and hindering social mobility. The fluctuating levels of investor confidence, influenced by ethnic politics and instability, have also contributed to economic volatility and stagnation. Additionally, the

prevalence of ethnic polarization in public discourse has fuelled divisiveness and hindered the formation of cohesive national agendas, impeding collective efforts towards sustainable development.

However, amidst these challenges lie a plethora of opportunities waiting to be harnessed. Kenya's cultural diversity, often seen as a source of division, can be reframed as a strength that fosters creativity, innovation, and resilience. Similarly, local innovation and entrepreneurship hold immense potential for driving economic growth and empowering communities, particularly when coupled with supportive policies and infrastructure. The implementation of inclusive economic policies, guided by principles of fairness and equity, has the power to bridge ethnic divides and promote shared prosperity. Collaborative economic ventures among diverse ethnic groups can foster unity and collective progress, leveraging the strengths of each community for mutual benefit.

Education emerges as a cornerstone for social cohesion, offering a pathway towards understanding, tolerance, and unity among diverse ethnic groups. Moreover, investor engagement in social impact initiatives and political unity for economic stability can catalyse positive change, fostering an environment conducive to sustained growth. Investments in infrastructure development across regions, coupled with peace and conflict resolution initiatives, are crucial for fostering inclusive development and bridging socio-economic disparities. Additionally, harnessing technology and innovation holds the key to unlocking new avenues for economic empowerment and connectivity across ethnic boundaries.

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