

Factors Influencing the Efficacy of Decentralization in Ethnic Conflict Resolution in Juba County, South Sudan

Martin Wulla Kwori

Researcher
Programmes
AHD

Abstract

The neoliberal and neopopulists assumptions that decentralization is a panacea for service delivery and conflict resolution sharpened public dissatisfaction with centralized governance in the late twentieth century, evoking a global shift toward decentralization for effective service delivery and management of diversity. However, the empirical literature reveals contradictory outcomes in various contexts, necessitating context-specific studies. This study examines the factors that influence the efficacy of decentralization in resolving ethnic conflicts over public resources and opportunities in Juba County, South Sudan, the seat of the national and Central Equatoria State governments. Embracing a mixed-methods case study design, systematic sampling and survey questionnaires were used for collecting quantitative data from 349 household representatives in Rejaf and Luri *payams*, while qualitative perspectives were generated from 41 purposively selected key informants using an interview guide. The findings reveal that South Sudan's leaders have reversed the democratic decentralization enshrined in the country's governance legal frameworks to severe deconcentration, compromising decentralization's effective contribution to resolution of intercommunal conflicts. The efficacy of local governance in conflict resolution is severely compromised by a deficit in political will, severe fiscal underfunding (with local governments receiving mere 2–3% fund transfers), rampant corruption and sectarian nepotism, and the absence of national land and employment policies. Furthermore, this study brings to light a context-specific factor which the current empirical literature is silent about: the heavily armed transhumance of pastoralist groups, which overwhelms local government authorities and drives violent land disputes. From the lens of the study's conceptual framework that merged John Rawls' theory of justice, Amartya Sen's capability approach, and John Paul Lederach's conflict transformation theory, this study argues that decentralization cannot resolve resource-based ethnic conflicts unless it genuinely empowers subnational structures to enforce distributive justice. The research offers actionable insights for effective policy design and sustainable peacebuilding in post-conflict states.

Keywords: Decentralization; Distributive Justice; Ethnic Conflict Resolution; Juba County; South Sudan; Armed Transhumance.

1. Introduction

The dissatisfaction of the public over the public sector or government during the 1970s primordial era and the early 80s, ushered in a governance framework called decentralization (Schneider, 2003). In this governance framework, citizens expect their governments to be more effective, efficient, and accountable in-service delivery than ever (Grasa & Camps, 2010; Saito, 2011). The public sector or government then endeavored to create appropriate levels of governments called subnational or local governments for sharing power, authority, and responsibilities for the effective realization of this goal (Grasa & Camps, 2010; Saito, 2011).

The citizens' drive for decentralization, according to Saito (2011), is anchored on two worldviews: the neoliberal and the neopopulists. The neoliberals, Saito observed, entice governments to share responsibilities for service delivery with markets. They assume that markets encourage competition and increase the efficiency of the public sector. Whilst, neopopulists advocate for democratization of governance at the local level. Their assumption is that decentralization makes local authorities more responsive to the needs of various social groups such as ethnic and religious minorities than remote central government officials, and resolve conflicts (Saito, 2011).

Consequently, decentralization spread rapidly at the end of the Cold War because of the assumption that it is a panacea for managing diversity and intergroup or ethnic conflicts (Keil & Anderson, 2018). The empirical results, however, are contradicting in the existing literature. Anderson and Keil for example argue that decentralization helped restore a high degree of sanity and peace in contexts such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Aceh, and Colombia although democratization is still under consolidation (Keil and Anderson 2018:5). Schou and Haug's 2005 comprehensive review of decentralization and ethnic conflicts in several countries, too, could not establish the sufficient evidence that decentralization improves efficiency, equity, or service delivery in development. However, they observed promising results in decentralization's ability to enhance equity in redistribution of resources, with varying outcomes in its contribution to conflict resolution in various contexts.

In Nigeria and the Ivory Coast, for instance, Schou and Haug observed that the Nigerian military junta had used its local governments to emasculate state-level political opponents, and the Ivorian decentralization weakened the commune system (Schou & Haug, 2005b:4). As such, Schou and Haug argued that federal governments often adopt decentralization to promote the inclusion and protection of minorities, while unitary governments may implement decentralization to polarize ethnic identity and unity.

Siegle & O'Mahony (2009:1) reaffirmed this controversy with the observation that critics accuse it of weakening central government authority and exacerbation of ethnic conflicts and political polarization. Nevertheless, these scholars established three varying effects of decentralization on ethnic conflicts.

1. Decentralization may reduce ethnic conflicts if the central government supports increased levels of local government expenditures, employment, and democracy;
2. Countries where local governments have more sources of revenue of high value or, where regions are autonomous are, prone to ethnic conflicts; and
3. Contexts where ethnic conflicts previously occurred, or, where the government has limited authority

over the security sector,' and/or, where natural resources are unevenly redistributed are, susceptible to ethnic conflicts (Siegle & O'Mahony, 2009:21).

These findings resonate well with the works of Rondinelli and Okorley who observed that decentralization's success in service delivery, depends on certain factors. For Okorley and his colleagues, Grey and Reid, decentralization's success in service delivery, particularly in agriculture extension services, depends on both external and internal factors. External factors include the political will to decentralize, the level of decentralization of other government departments, the availability of a clear decentralization legal framework, the presence of developed institutions that are committed to supporting the decentralization process, the drivers of decentralization—whether it is an internal or external drive, stakeholders' willingness and commitment to supporting the decentralization process and community participation; and the community characteristics or composition in terms of gender roles and land tenure. Internal factors include stakeholder participation, managerial and technical capacity of staff, operational funding, and accountability.

Rondinelli and others then reaffirmed Okorley's findings above with the observation that the success of decentralization in service delivery depends on four main factors: the level of political commitment and administrative support among the partners of decentralization; the attitudes, behaviours, and the cultural settings where decentralization occurs; proper planning and organization of decentralization programmes, and the adequacy of financial, human, and physical resources.

Nevertheless, scholars of decentralization and conflict resolution argue that decentralization's success in conflict resolution or service delivery depends on the context, with no uniformity in increasing its efficacy in ethnic conflict resolution or service delivery, requiring more context-specific studies.

This research article examines the factors that influence decentralization's efficacy in resolving ethnic conflicts in South Sudan's Juba County, the seat of the Government of South Sudan and the Government of Central Equatoria State. The country emerged from several decades of violent armed conflicts linked to centralization of powers in Khartoum prior to its secession from Sudan in 2011, and it has embraced democratic, decentralized governance for managing diversity. Nonetheless, inter-ethnic conflicts over access to public economic opportunities and resources such as land and public sector jobs, continue to disrupt peace in several parts of the country, including in Juba County which citizens regard as their hub of politics, business, and civilization.

Therefore, conducting this study in Juba County provides policymakers and the public with a quick insight into the successes and failures of South Sudan's decentralization process, in an era of full autonomy from Khartoum, which allegedly had centralized most powers and deprived the South of development. Additionally, the study was conducted in Juba County because it hosts the central government politicians and bureaucrats responsible for decentralization policymaking and implementation, as well as most development partners supporting decentralization and peacebuilding initiatives, whom the researcher accessed easily for interviews.

The findings of the study will help government authorities and development partners make informed policy decisions on decentralization and sustainable peacebuilding in South Sudan, which other post-

conflict contexts could also emulate.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is based on two premises:

- Local governments in decentralized nation-states can resolve ethnic conflicts over access to public opportunities and resources if decentralized governance empowers them to promote fairness in allocations of resources to citizens.
- Local governments that decentralization does not empower to promote fairness in allocations of resources, that is, distributive justice, cannot resolve ethnic or inter-communal conflicts over resources.

If central governments bestow local governments with political, fiscal, and administrative powers, they will enforce distributive justice, which will help them to resolve inter-communal conflicts over resources at the local level. The indicators of local governments empowered to enforce distributive justice include:

- **Equality of Opportunities**—a situation where citizens access public goods on merit and can only exclude themselves by choice rather than by malicious actions of society.
- **Non-discrimination**: Ability to develop and implement a non-discriminatory criterion for allocating resources to their citizens;
- **Protection of Minorities**: Ability to protect the rights of minorities and other vulnerable groups;
- **Development of Human Capabilities**: Institutional ability to develop human capabilities so that citizens can benefit from these resources; and
- **Accountability**: Institutions and leaders are accountable to citizens.

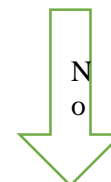
The rationale is that if local governments are fair in allocating opportunities and resources to citizens, they can then resolve local-level conflicts over resources. This will be evidenced by reconciliation, restoration of trust, cooperation, peaceful coexistence, and a strong desire for civic citizenship as opposed to ethnic citizenship because all ethnic groups do not consider the local governments to be favouring a particular ethnic group or tribe. The reverse of which is true when a local government is not fair in the allocation of resources to citizens. Ethnic groups in this scenario will be in conflict, which cannot be resolved easily. The indicators of this undesired scenario are unreconciled conflicting ethnic communities, ever-acrimonious ethnic groups, uncooperative ethnic groups, distrustful ethnic groups, and ethnic groups preferring ethnic virtues to civic virtues.

The conceptual framework was designed because neither theory of decentralization, distributive justice, or conflict resolution could guide the study alone. Therefore, the researcher constructed the conceptual framework from three theories of social justice that have a strong stance on conflict resolution, namely: John Rawls' theory of social justice, Amartya Sen's capabilities approach, and John Paul Lederach's conflict transformation theory. According to Rawls, the basic institutions of a society should be organized in a manner that takes into consideration the needs of the least advantaged. That is, during allocations of land, for example, there should be a non-discriminatory allocation criterion that prioritizes the needs of the least advantaged, for example, minorities. Amartya Sen's capability equality theory then postulates

that a just criterion for resource allocation is not enough to mitigate resource-based conflicts. This is because a just allocation criterion is not an end in itself, but rather a means to an end: the derivation of satisfaction from the resources one desires, such as a piece of land for residential or commercial purposes. Such satisfaction is attained only if beneficiaries are capacitated to derive satisfaction from their resources. Meanwhile, John Paul Lederach posits that true conflict resolution should foster sincere reconciliation and the healing of broken hearts, which is only possible after the fair administration of justice. Figure 3.1 below illustrates the conceptual framework.

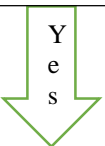
Decentralized Governance with genuine devolution (Independent Variable)

Local governments have the political, financial, and administrative powers to manage their affairs and exercise distributive justice.



Distributive Justice (Intermediate Variable)

- Equality of opportunities.
- Access to opportunities on merit.
- Non-discrimination in allocation of opportunities and resources.
- Protection of minorities.
- Human capabilities.
- Accountability



Ethnic Conflict Resolution (Dependent Variable)

Ethnic Conflicts Resolved

- Conflicting ethnic groups reconciled.
- Ethnic groups peacefully coexist.
- Cooperative ethnic groups.
- Trustful ethnic groups.
- People prefer civic virtues to ethnic virtues.

Peaceful ethnic communities

Ethnic Conflicts Unresolved

- Conflicting ethnic groups are unreconciled.
- Acrimonious ethnic groups.
- Uncooperative ethnic groups.
- Distrustful ethnic groups.
- People prefer ethnic virtues to civic virtues.

Unpeaceful ethnic communities

Figure 2.1. Conceptual Framework.

Source: Constructed by the researcher based on John Rawls’ theory of social justice, Amartya Sen’s human capabilities’ approach, and John Paul Lederach conflict transformation theory.

2. Methodology

Research Design

The study employed a mixed case study design, combining quantitative and qualitative research methods

of data collection and analysis. This approach enabled the researcher to triangulate statistical trends with rich, context-specific narratives about decentralized governance in South Sudan.

Target Population and Quantitative Sampling

The quantitative aspect targeted household representatives aged 18 and older in the Rejaf and Luri *payams* (sub-counties) of Juba County. These specific sub-counties were selected because they constitute the primary periphery where Juba City is rapidly expanding due to a continuous influx of internally displaced persons and migrants from across South Sudan.

A statistically representative sample size of 398 representatives of households, hereinafter referred to as respondents, was determined using the Slovin's formula which Magigi (2015:128) presented as:

$$(n) = N / (1 + Ne^2).$$

Where:

- n = number of samples;
- N = the total projected population for the target payams in 2020 (87,677 people, 45,517 males and 42,160 females according to the South Sudan Center of Census, Statistics, and Evaluation (SSCCE, 2015); and
- e = error tolerance (5% or 0.05).
- Thus, the mathematical computation is as follows:
 - $n = 87677 / (1 + 87677 (0.05)^2)$
 - $n = 87677 / (1 + 87677 (0.05) (0.05))$
 - $n = 87677 / (1 + 87677 (0.0025))$
 - $n = 87677 / (1 + 219.1925)$
 - $n = 87677 / 220.1925$
 - n = approximately 398 respondents.

However, the actual respondents interviewed were 349 representatives of households, selected using the systematic sampling technique instead of a random sampling criterion because, in Juba County, a residential plot of land with rental properties is sometimes inhabited by more than one household, and some areas are purely inhabited by one ethnic community.

Qualitative Sampling

Qualitative data was collected from 41 key informants purposively selected based on their expertise in decentralization policy making and peacebuilding. These included government officials at central, state, and local levels; traditional authorities, civil society representatives, academics, representatives of people with disabilities (PWDs), and representatives of the private sector or business community.

Data Collection Procedure

The collection of data from the field ran from July to October 2020. The quantitative data was collected using structured survey questionnaires administered by four research assistants. The research assistants were trained by the researcher in data collection, and they possessed a good command of the English language and local languages such as Juba Arabic, Bari, Dinka and Nuer.

Simultaneously, the researcher collected the qualitative data using a semi-structured interview guide that

mirrored the survey questionnaire, to preserve thematic consistency and reliability across data streams.

Validity, Reliability, and Data Integration

Validity and reliability of the data and research findings were ensured by piloting the questionnaires with South Sudanese postgraduate students at the University of Dar es Salaam and some civil society representatives in Juba before the actual data collection was carried out, and via triangulation of various sources of data. The piloting of the questionnaires indicated that some variables, for example, the economic status of the respondents and their status of land ownership could easily be interpreted differently by other participants; hence, the study tools were adjusted to ensure consistency and reliability in the data collected.

During the key informant interviews, data credibility was reinforced through iterative probing techniques. Meanwhile, the quantitative data collection matrices cross-referenced the respondents' field experiences against 16 success factors of decentralization in service delivery derived from the decentralization frameworks of Rondinelli (1983) and Okorley (2009). Household respondents rated the extent to which these 16 factors influenced local conflict resolution or service delivery. Finally, these quantitative matrices were integrated and triangulated against the defacto field experiences harvested from the open-ended key informant interviews.

3. Data Analysis

Quantitative data entries were verified, coded, and processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software to generate descriptive statistics. Qualitative field notes were transcribed and analyzed manually through thematic framework analysis, which involved systematic data coding, category mapping, and axial alignment into primary themes and subthemes.

4. Results and Discussion

The case study of Juba County revealed that the efficacy of decentralization in conflict resolution depends on the degree to which all levels of government implement decentralization legal frameworks and programmes in conformity with citizens' desires and expectations. In circumstances where all levels of government adhered to the legal frameworks and desired norms and standards of the society, people perceive decentralization to be influencing conflict resolution positively by facilitating equal access to resources, resulting in civic citizenship, restored group trust, and peaceful coexistence. Conversely, when these institutional standards and public expectations are compromised, citizens associate decentralized structures with failures in peacebuilding, viewing them as drivers of systemic malfeasance characterized by heavy deconcentration of powers, proliferation of armed groups, such as the armed transhumance of pastoralist groups in the country, and ethnic polarization. These institutional standards and public expectations, dubbed as the factors influencing the efficacy of decentralization in conflict resolution or service delivery, are hereafter presented and discussed in detail.

Political Will

Consistent with the findings of Rondinelli and Okorley in other contexts that the success of decentralization in conflict resolution or service delivery depends on a political will. 8% of the 349 household survey respondents and significant number of the 41 key informants confirmed the need for a strong political

will in decentralization. They especially noted that the central government's interest in genuine devolution of powers to local governments and the local government authorities' willingness to implement the various aspects of decentralization increases decentralization's success in service delivery or conflict resolution (Table 4.1 Appendix 1 & Table 4.2 Appendix 2). If the central government authorities are willing to devolve powers to lower tiers and the officials in these lower tiers are willing to implement the decentralization programmes devolved to them, then, decentralization itself will be a blessing to citizens. Planned decentralization programmes will be implemented to the satisfaction of citizens, and the citizens will talk positive about decentralization, increasing the efficiency of local government authorities to deliver social services to their citizens, as well as their capacity to resolve inter-communal disputes over various issues, including disputes over access to resources and opportunities. Unfortunately, the evidence of genuine decentralization is limited in South Sudan. Central government authorities have opted for deconcentration instead of devolution, where the higher tiers of government only transfer temporary powers to the subnational governments, contrary to the devolution of powers enshrined in the Transitional Constitution of 2011 (as amended in 2018) and the Local Government Act of 2009. Some interviewees argued that there was more political will for decentralization during the Comprehensive Peace Agreement period than during the regime after the country's independence, due mainly to three reasons. Firstly, South Sudan's central government authorities have muted democratization of governance. The president, for example, now appoints the state governors and the state governors in turn appoint the county commissioners with executive decrees, instead of citizens electing their leaders through secret ballots in free and fair elections. Secondly, the local government chain of command is disrespected. State governors report directly to the president instead of reporting to the Minister of Federal Affairs, and county commissioners report directly to state governors, bypassing their respective state ministers of local government and law enforcement. Thirdly, the central government has not only deprived the state and local governments of lucrative sources of revenue, for example, withdrawal of licensing of vehicle registration plate numbers. It has also underfunded them (FGD-2, Buluk, 19 October 2020; KII-8, PWD, Juba Town, 2 August 2020 & KII-9, Juba Town, 3 September 2020). A senior government official in the Ministry of Federal Affairs expressed his frustration about the situation:

No budget is approved for the Ministry of Federal Affairs to kill the proposed federal system of governance, yet they claim that federalism is the desired form of government for the people of South Sudan (KII-22, Ministries, 20th October 2020).

This finding aligns very well with the key informants' observation, implying that decentralization programmes cannot yield their desired outcomes without a strong political will. For this reason, the study posits in accordance with its conceptual framework that people must have the political will for genuine devolution before decentralization initiatives can promote conflict resolution. People can reverse the lack of political will by establishing strong institutions where they subordinate self-interest to the interest of the larger society, i.e. promotion of a just society where the least advantaged are key decision-makers and beneficiaries of resource allocations.

Local Autonomy

Both the quantitative and qualitative results are in agreement that decentralization can empower local governments to resolve ethnic conflicts over resources if local authorities have full autonomy, that is, the freedom to exercise their authority with limited or no interference from central and state government

officials. Applied here, the local authorities of Juba County can timely respond to the needs of their citizens, and resolve resource conflicts if their counterparts in central and state governments vested them with full administrative powers for exercising independent authority. 7% of the 2,421 multiple survey responses from 349 households in Rejaf and Luri payams revealed so (10% in Rejaf and 5% only in Luri). See Table 4.1 Appendix 1. This variance shows that the local authorities in Rejaf Payam are more autonomous in their work than their counterparts in Luri Payam, which aligns with the respondents' earlier allegation in Rejaf, during an assessment of decentralization's positive effects on conflict resolution, that their local authorities were autonomous in their work. However, such a claim is questionable. Rigorous propping of key informants revealed that central government authorities had bypassed the Rejaf Payam local authorities as they were responding to resolve a land dispute between a Dinka military officer and some sections of the Dinka Bor community in Sheirikat in June 2020.

This implies that the central government has compromised local autonomy in the county. Local government officers repeatedly complained about the central and state governments' interference in their work. Key areas of concern were the limited authority of local governments to generate revenues from licensing of vehicles, suffocation of traditional authorities or chiefs by unclear mandate, frequent intrusion of county commissioners into local government work, and frequent appointment and termination of state governors and county commissioners by executive decrees instead of a popular vote from the grassroots. A senior local government officer described the situation with vigor:

The Local Government Act of 2009 is clear that citizens shall democratically elect the state governors and county commissioners. However, the law has not been implemented. These political leaders are being appointed and fired with executive decrees, and the government has not empowered the chiefs in conflict resolution or arbitration of land disputes. Unknown armed persons have even worsened the situation by killing chiefs who are vocal and just, due to the high proliferation of small arms (KII-25, Juba Town, 27 October 2020).

Availability of Funds

The study confirmed the empirical findings of Rondinelli, Okorley, and Siegel and O'Mahony in other contexts, that decentralization's success in service delivery or conflict resolution depends on, among other things, the level of fiscal decentralization (Okorley et al., 2009; Rondinelli et al., 1983; Siegle & O'Mahony, 2009). It posits that fiscal decentralization – defined as the degree to which central governments disburse grants to local governments and the level of local governments' autonomy in raising their "own" revenues – determines decentralization's success in resolving resource-based ethnic conflicts. Six percent of the 721 multiple survey responses across Rejaf and Luri payams supported this argument (Table 4.2 Appendix 2), which corroborates well with the qualitative perspectives across the study area. Representatives of civil society organizations, for instance, revealed that local government institutions with sufficient funds and human resources are effective in resolving inter-communal conflicts (KII-1, Buluk, 17 July 2020). Unfortunately, South Sudan's central government still underfunds its local governments. Government officials across the three tiers of government (central, state, and local levels) testified that the inadequacy of funds has reduced local governments to structures for political accommodation rather than channels for service delivery' (KII-19, Juba Nabari, 14 October 2020). A senior bureaucrat in the Ministry of Federal Affairs described the situation with high pessimism.

There is no equitable distribution of resources, most local governments struggle on their own with minimal support from the central government, with just about two or three per cent of funds' transfer. The problem has now worsened due to the expansion of the government. The government channels the resources to sustain the executive: 35 national ministers, 10 governors, 10 deputy governors, 17 state ministers, 79 county commissioners, and 3 administrative areas. The money allocated in the fiscal budget is just used for maintaining politicians: civil servants go for several months without salaries (KII-19, Juba Nabari, 14 October 2020).

A focus group discussion with chiefs too corroborated the alleged underfunding of local governments. Representatives of chiefs claimed that local government officials had not been paid salaries for nine months, claiming that it was a deliberate plan of central government politicians to make the local people sell their land to them cheaply, and they become their slaves. A senior chief expressed his frustration about the situation openly:

We are not benefiting from the dividends of liberation as if we accompanied other people to get their government (FGD-1, Luri, 8 September 2020).

These observations align perfectly with de Simone's empirical findings of an assessment of decentralization's performance in South Sudan's Unity State in 2013, which established that the mechanisms for local councils' generation of own revenues were not in place, grants from the central and state governments were scarce, and service delivery heavily relied on foreign aid. Senior officers in the Local Government Board confirmed this observation. They argued that "fiscal decentralization has not been implemented, forcing people to follow the money to Juba" (KII-25, Juba Town, 27 October 2020). The situation worsened in 2015-2018 when the president of the republic unilaterally increased the local councils from 79 to 237 and the states from 10 to 32 (KII-15, Rejaf, 16th September 2020). The central government hardly paid staff salaries on time, a situation which a senior legislator in the Revitalized Transitional National Legislative Assembly (RTNLA) described with profound sadness.

There is no good remuneration, hence, no motivation for work. I have stayed here for seven (7) months without pay, what do you think the situation of the people at the local level is? Revenue is being collected, but it only enters the pockets of some individuals (KII-22, Ministries, 20 October 2020).

To facilitate the formation of the coalition government after some of the country's warring parties signed the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCISS) in 2018,¹ the President of the Republic, General Salva Kiir Mayardit, reversed the country from 32 to 10 states (RJMEC, 2020:9). However, the central government had not yet reconstituted the local governments at the time of the study. The parties to the coalition government couldn't agree on power-sharing arrangements easily at both state and local government levels, casting doubts about the fate of the peace agreement due to the consummation of the 2015 peace accord in 2016.

Humanitarian Aid

In conformity with Grasa and Camps' postulation that "the debate on the relationship between decentralization and conflict resolution is always inconclusive because of variations in context" (Grasa & Camps, 2010). The case study of Juba County in South Sudan has brought to fore the need for humanitarian assistance by local governments of developing countries in the aftermath of violent armed

conflicts to facilitate the activities of peacebuilders and rehabilitate communities from debris of war. A civil society representative observed that local governments that received adequate humanitarian aid from humanitarian aid agencies such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have been able to timely respond to conflicts with promising results (KII-1, Buluk, 17th July 2020). This reaffirms the need for adequate resources for local government work.

Leadership

The study reveals that individual leadership styles determine decentralization's success in service delivery or conflict resolution to a greater extent. A senior administrator in the Ministry of Federal Affairs and a senior chief in Rejaf Payam, argued that decentralization plays a vital role in suppressing conflicts in a society governed by a visionary, non-corrupt, and non-tribalistic democratic leader. Democratic leaders encourage wider community participation in decision-making processes, and prioritize citizens' welfare over personal interest. This encourages citizens to embrace non-violent conflict resolution techniques and practices such as negotiation, dialogue, compromise, arbitration, and avoidance of conflicts. This in turn prevents citizens' competition over resources from escalating into violent ethnic conflicts, resulting in peaceful coexistence and a peaceful society (KII-19, Juba Nabari, 14 October 2020; KII-24, Rejaf, 22 October 2020).

Conversely, when a society is deficient in democratic leadership, violent conflicts can hardly be eradicated, compromising peaceful co-existence, sustainable peace, and tranquility. This corroborates very well with Christina Rojas's review of decentralization in Bogota, Colombia, which established that a democratic leadership style had created a culture of civic citizenship and peaceful coexistence in the city (Rojas, 2004).

This further confirms Rondinelli and Okorley's empirical findings in other contexts that the political leaders' level of dedication to decentralization determines its success in service delivery (Okorley et al., 2009; Rondinelli et al., 1983).

Therefore, the democratization of decentralization enshrined in South Sudan's amended Transitional Constitution of 2011 should be implemented urgently. South Sudan's leaders should give citizens the freedom to vote for their leaders regardless of ethnic affiliations to promote unity in diversity.

Enforcement of Justice and Rule of Law

For decentralized governance to contribute effectively to resolving ethnic conflicts in South Sudan, the study revealed that all levels of government should enforce social justice and rule of law. Representatives of persons with disabilities and legislators in South Sudan's Council of States, argued that decentralization's effectiveness in conflict resolution increases when the government enforces fair distribution of resources to citizens regardless of ethnicity or social status, meritocracy in public service employment, fair arbitration of cases in courts of law, and appropriate punishment for any persons convicted of crimes without fear or favour (FGD-2, Buluk, 19 October 2020; KII-9, Juba Town, 3 September 2020). A female with a disability further justified her viewpoint, saying:

Equality before the law would promote peace and unity. One tribe monopolizing power at the top makes other tribes feel oppressed, igniting conflicts (KII-9, Juba Town, 3 September 2020).

The above perspectives manifest a high degree of laxity in enforcement of rule of law and social justice by South Sudan's political leaders, embodying limited distributive justice in allocations of public resources and opportunities to citizens. An academic and a senior legislator in South Sudan's Revitalized Transitional National Legislative Assembly (RTNLA) augmented the above observation, saying:

People regard South Sudan's central government as a biased entity: some leaders not only identify themselves with their tribes but also exclude other tribes in allocations of public resources and opportunities (KII-19, Juba Nabari, 14 October 2020).

The quantitative interviews too are in agreement with the above qualitative perspectives. 16% of the 721 multiple survey responses from 349 households in both Rejaf and Luri payams (16% each per locality), depicted that decentralization has not helped Juba County to resolve ethnic conflicts over access to public resources and opportunities due to pervasive tribalism and nepotism (Table 4.2 Appendix 2).

This statistical uniformity of opinions on the pervasiveness of tribalism, nepotism, and limited institutional accountability heralds a high degree of marginalization of the least advantaged, especially minority groups, in allocations of public resources and opportunities across the county – a practice which could be nationwide and manifesting that sectarian nepotism is deeply entrenched in the state's socio-political structure. A local civil servant described this unfortunate situation openly:

Tribalism and nepotism are now normal in South Sudan. If people are dismissed from public positions for whatsoever reasons, their ethnic group mobilizes to enforce immediate reinstatement through armed violence (KII-7, Luri, 17 August 2020).

This negative vice depicts a gross deviation of South Sudan's political leaders from the founding vision of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), which promised a secular democratic state where all citizens are equal regardless of ethnicity, religion or creed, and social status.

While a forensic audit is required to determine the level of the alleged nepotism and corruption. The root cause of the problem is linked to limited implementation of legal frameworks governing devolution of powers to local governments (mainly the amended Transitional Constitution of 2012 and the Local Government Act of 2009), and contradictions and omissions in these laws. Key issues include:

- Section 166-2 of the TCRSS mandates the national government to enact a legislation for standardization of local government, but at the same time assigns the same function to state governments;
- The TRCSS provides concurrent powers without demarcation;
- The Local Government Act of 2009's Section 668-10 provides immunity to local government administrative officers without proper accountability;
- The LGA 2009 lacks the approved general list of local government administration officers, transfer guidelines, and promotion criteria and procedures; and
- The legal framework has not defined the territorial boundaries of local government councils.

Balanced Development

The study depicts that uniformity in service delivery and development, which often depends on effective

fiscal decentralization, determines decentralization's success in conflict resolution to a greater extent. Representatives of legislators in both the National Legislative Assembly and the Council of States argued that decentralized governance can promote harmony among ethnic communities when there is no discrimination in service delivery and development, which is not yet the case in South Sudan (KII-22, Ministries, 20 October 2020). This implies that unbalanced development – characterized by limited fiscal decentralization and discrimination of some regions in service delivery – reduces decentralization's positive contribution to conflict resolution.

This unfortunate situation increases rural-urban migration and ethnic conflicts over scarce resources in urban centers (towns, municipalities, and cities). A senior legislator at the National Legislative Assembly argued firmly in support of this observation, saying: “people migrate from the countryside to Juba in search of better services which rural areas do not have” (KII-22, Ministries, 20 October 2020). Two in the Local Government Board too supported this observation, saying: “people leave the countryside for Juba to look for the centralized money.”

This implies that equitable delivery of social services and development is not apparently guaranteed in South Sudan due to the alleged central government deviation from devolution to deconcentration of powers, and the fiscal starvation of local governments. This disparity in service delivery and development corroborates perfectly with Schou and Haug's 2005 comprehensive review of decentralization's effect on conflict resolution in other contexts, which established limited evidence of decentralization's success in improving development or service delivery in post-conflict states.

From this perspective, unbalanced development mostly arises from injustices in allocations of resources such as development grants, which increases citizens' frustration over the pervasive exclusion, pushing people to access their rights through violence. To avert this problem, this study's conceptual framework urges central governments to empower local governments through genuine devolution so they can resolve inter-communal conflicts over resources in their localities. The need for enforcement of social justice in service delivery and distribution of resources is very urgent.

Empirical literature on ethnic conflicts attributes most inter-communal conflicts in Africa to struggles over access and control of resources. A country with just resource allocation mechanisms can avoid violent ethnic conflicts over resources, and decentralization becomes more of a blessing than a curse.

Institutional and Human Resource Capacity Development

The study reveals that the availability of competent institutions to support decentralization processes determines decentralization's success in conflict resolution. Six percent of the multiple survey responses revealed so (10% in Rejaf and 6% in Luri), as seen in Table 4.1 Appendix 1. The reverse of which is obvious. Decentralization's success in conflict resolution diminishes when the intuitions managing the affairs of the public are weak or driven by incapable personnel. This observation aligns very well with Rondinelli and Okorley's evaluations of decentralization's outcomes in other contexts, which established that decentralization's success in conflict resolution depends on human resource capacity development. Qualitative outcomes too corroborate perfectly with this observation. Representatives of legislators within the Council of States and local government cadres in Rejaf and Luri payams, argued that decentralization can expedite government response to citizens' grievances if local government officials are experts in their

work (FGD-2, Buluk, 19 October 2020). Practically, this implies that decentralization initiatives should adequately empower local government authorities to resolve conflicts effectively (KII-15, Rejaf, 16 September 2020). Unfortunately, this is not the case in South Sudan now. An academic and a senior officer within the Ministry of Federal Affairs, openly disclosed that South Sudan's local governments have inadequate technical personnel for various government functions and conflict resolution. This problem, compounded by sectarian nepotism, has resulted in stagnation of development programmes and continuation of violent ethnic conflicts (KII-17, Juba Nabari, 2 October 2020; KII-19, Juba Nabari, 14 October 2020).

In one payam office, the researcher witnessed a junior officer mocking her boss for drafting an academic research permit poorly, and she re-wrote it for the chief administrator's signature. This shows that the inadequacy of institutional and human resource capacity is very serious across the county. This observation resonates well with Amartya Sen's equality of human capabilities approach, which postulates that "people cannot simply benefit from a just distributive criterion unless they are capacitated to reap maximum benefits from their share of resources. Doing so requires the institutions which devolve the powers to the local level to possess strong monitoring capacities, and the ones which receive these powers should execute the devolved powers effectively. This is consistent with the central premise of this study's conceptual framework that decentralization should empower local governments to enforce distributive justice before they can resolve inter-communal conflicts over access to resources at the local level (Figure. 2.1). An in-depth propping of key experts on this observation revealed that institutional and human resource capacity is not merely personnel technical capacities. It includes key operational instruments for effective institutional delivery of basic services such as administrative powers, funds, and logistics (KII-2, Juba Town, 17 July 2020; KII-8, Juba Town, 27 August 2020).

These observations are in conformity with the GIZ-sponsored presidential review of decentralization's performance in 2011, which established that South Sudan's institutional structures at the national and state levels for the oversight of local governance are inadequately equipped for their role due to limited human resource capacity, budget ceilings, and partial mandates to enforce the implementation of decentralization objectives. Nonetheless, this study posits that the weaknesses of an institution should not be a scapegoat for decentralization's failure in conflict resolution. People can strengthen their institutions by putting in place systems that promote efficiency, resolve conflicts, and increase the capacity of personnel to mobilize funds and logistics for effective service delivery.

Structure of Government and Model of Decentralization

The study also revealed that the structure of government and model of decentralization determine decentralization's success in conflict resolution. A government structure and model of decentralization that devolves more powers and autonomy to the local level, allows the local people to make political decisions together with their local authorities, which helps their local authorities to timely respond to their needs. In South Sudan, however, the *defacto* experience is different. Some people believe that the current structure of government and model of decentralization are conducive for the country's community composition and diversity, while others insist, it is not. For example, 6% of the multiple survey responses from 349 households in both Rejaf and Luri payams hold this view, 5% in Rejaf (52 responses) and 6% in Luri (85 responses). See Table 4.1 Appendix 1. Nevertheless, less than a half of the survey responses held this view, implying that not all citizens of South Sudan are comfortable with the country's current structure of

government or model of decentralization. Government officials across the three tiers of government supported this argument, saying: “South Sudan’s structure of government and model of decentralization lack clarity. People do not know whether the system is unitary decentralization or federalism.” The perception is that in a federal system of government, the Bari are exclusively entitled to public-sector jobs in Juba (KII-5, Luri, 31st July 2020). Such a perception has increased the urge for federalism in the county and other parts of the country, as well as made other ethnic communities’ fear it, crippling the ability of the country’s elites and politicians to choose the appropriate form of government for managing the country’s diversity.

The Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan 2018 (RARCSIS 2018), strongly advocates for federalism. However, its full implementation in the near future is doubtful due to the controversies mentioned earlier. A senior official in the Ministry of Federal Affairs shared about the urge for federalism and operationalization challenges, openly.

In 2013, some citizens thought that the failure of governance in the country was due to decentralization, and they demanded federalism. Through pressure, federalism was included in the 2015 peace agreement. A ministry of federal affairs was established, but it is just an institution by name. The top leadership of the country does not support federalism fearing the secession of some communities or Kokora (KII-19, Juba Nabari, 14 October 2020).

Community Participation

Community participation, defined here as the active involvement of citizens in decision making in policy formulation and service delivery, is one of decentralization’s key success factors in service delivery and conflict resolution. When citizens actively participate in planning and implementation of decentralization and development programmes, they highly regard themselves as the true owners of these policies and development initiatives, resulting in high sustainability of development initiatives. 17% of the multiple survey responses in Rejaf Payam revealed so, indicating that local authorities in this payam sometimes engage citizens in decision making processes. Conversely, when citizens do not participate in decision-making on decentralization, development programming and implementation, they regard themselves as mere objects of decentralization policies and development initiatives. This fuels feelings of exclusion in the community, causing violent conflicts. Consequently, people regard decentralization as a failure in conflict resolution and service delivery. Regrettably, both the quantitative and qualitative outcomes of the study in Luri Payam reflect the latter scenario, which, combined with the limited statistical significance in Rejaf Payam, clearly manifests a high neglect of community participation in decision-making processes across the county. Only 3% of the multiple survey responses in Luri Payam supported community participation as decentralization’s success in conflict resolution, and none of the key informants in the payam recalled community participation in decision-making processes. Representatives of chiefs in the payam cited the president of the republic’s unilateral creation of 32 states between 2015 and 2018 as a prime example of community exclusion in decision-making, a practice which they likened to Governor Amudun’s unilateral aerial survey of the Komiru customary land in the county in the old Sudan. Both unilateral decisions fueled intercommunal conflicts over land. The presidential unilateral decision to dissolve the pre-independence state structure from 10 to 32 states in 2015-2018, for example, increased local elites’ demand for more administrative units so they would be appointed as state governors and county commissioners, exacerbating inter-communal conflicts over boundaries. Therefore, prioritizing

community participation in decision-making processes is urgent in South Sudan. Ensuring wider community participation in governance prevents discriminatory practices in allocations of public resources and opportunities, which resonates very well with the Rawlsian equality of opportunities principle of social justice in the study's conceptual framework.

Democratization of Governance

Democratization of governance, defined here as the need for a citizen-centered approach to managing public affairs, featured as a prominent determinant of decentralization's success in ethnic conflict resolution in Juba County. 11% of the 621 multiple survey responses from 349 households in Rejaf and Luri payams, emphasized the importance of democratic governance in decentralization's success in conflict resolution or service delivery, although Rejaf Payam's respondents supported this observation more than their counterparts in Luri Payam by 4% (Table 4.4 Appendix 4). This statistical variance embodies a lack of uniformity in democratization of governance across the County.

Key experts in the field argued that citizens can hardly engage in violent conflicts when they feel they are part of the government (KII-2, Juba Town, 17 July 2020; KII-8, PWD, Juba Town, 27 August 2020; KII-5, Luri, 31 July 2020). This is particularly so when democratization of governance is not camouflaged as citizens' participation in elections without genuine participation in decision-making about their welfare. When citizens are excluded from decision-making processes, their feelings of marginalization surge, resulting in protracted, violent conflicts. A representative of PWDs illustrated this observation clearly, saying:

The position of president should be rotated region by region because, even if devolution of powers is implemented, other communities will still feel marginalized and struggle to control power at the top by violent means (KII-9, Juba Town, 3 September 2020).

Unfortunately, the case of Juba County manifests the latter scenario. Key experts in the field claimed that citizens of Juba County are rarely involved in making decisions regarding their welfare, therefore, decentralization's success in conflict resolution or service delivery cannot be proven. The democratic, decentralized system of governance enshrined in the Transitional Constitution of 2011 and the Local Governance Act of 2009, is yet to be implemented. South Sudan last had an elected government in 2010 when it was still part of Sudan. Government officials across the three tiers of government said that the first elected government in sovereign South Sudan would have taken an oath of office in 2015, had the senior leadership of the dominant ruling party – the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) – not dragged the country into a civil war in December 2015.

Even though the parties to the 2013 civil war revived the consummated peace agreement of 2015 in 2018, its implementation is quite slow. Key issues such as the enactment of the permanent constitution and the reunification of the military had not yet been achieved by December 2022, compelling the Agreement's signatories to extend its implementation period consecutively by two years. According to the revised peace agreement's implementation roadmap, there will be general elections marking its end in December 2026. However, it is doubtful if free and fair elections will take place and establish a citizen-centered government. The 2015 peace agreement collapsed in sovereign South Sudan in 2016, as were other peace agreements in the old Sudan.

Therefore, for citizens to consider decentralization successful in conflict resolution or service delivery, the Government of South Sudan should urgently democratize governance through regular free and fair elections, and genuine engagement of citizens in decision making processes as the presidential review of decentralization during the interim period (2005-2011) strongly recommended.

Extent of National Unity

Consistent with Jok Madut Jok's study of national unity in South Sudan in 2011, which established that the country lacks a nation-building agenda for inculcating values of national unity in citizens. This study postulates that decentralization's success in resolving ethnic conflicts in Juba County has been compromised by limited social cohesion and national unity. A representative of PWDs argued that decentralization's success in resolving South Sudan's ethnic conflicts is not possible in the short-term. The country lacks a common national language, and local government cadres only work in their states of origin. From this perspective, the Government of South Sudan should guarantee all citizens their right to civic residence and employment in any part of the country without evoking feelings of oppression or conflicts, which is not yet the case. Apparently, local government jobs are exclusively meant for the natives of a particular geographical constituency, for example, all local and state government officials only work in their respective geographical constituencies, contrary to the idea of national unity that transcends tribal boundaries. Although, of recent, the Government of Central Equatoria State appointed a non-Equatorian as deputy mayor in Juba City Council.

While national unity can be strengthened through a common national language and deploying local government cadres to work in any part of the country, it should be noted that these aspects of national unity cannot magically resolve ethnic conflicts over public resources and opportunities without a strong culture of social justice. All levels of governments must, first and foremost, develop a just resource and opportunities' allocation criterion that favours minorities, as well as equitably capacitate all citizens to meaningfully benefit from their share of resources, before they can regard themselves as one people and peacefully coexist.

Even so, the debate on decentralization's success in ethnic conflict resolution through national unity remains inconclusive. There is no clarity on whether or not people should first unite and decentralize, or vice versa. The neopopulists believe that decentralization mitigates conflicts through national unity, while the empirical findings of this study indicate that the effect of decentralization on conflict resolution is triangular in nature. Firstly, it is associated with positive outcomes in conflict resolution. Secondly, its positive outcomes in conflict resolution are sometimes being reciprocated as its failures in uniting diverse ethnic communities, being termed as polarization or disunity, and, thirdly, it is also being associated with determining the unity of ethnic communities that have been divided by conflicts.

Clarity of Territorial Boundaries

Clarity of both internal and external territorial boundaries emerged as a prerequisite for decentralization's success in conflict resolution because decentralization involves the creation of local administrative units for effective service delivery. Where the internal and external boundaries of local administrative units have been clearly demarcated with the prior consent of all neighbouring communities, the government structures created facilitate effective service delivery with minimal latent conflicts.

Conversely, the creation of government structures to facilitate decentralization for effective service delivery creates intercommunal conflicts over territorial boundaries when a wider community consultation is avoided. An academic for instance noted that conflicts ensued between the Mundari in Terekeka County and the Bari in Juba County over Mangala Payam when the President of the Republic unilaterally restructured the country from 10 to 28 states (KII-17, Juba Nabari, 2 October 2020). Local Government Board officials further corroborated this observation saying, “conflicts over administrative boundaries also arose in Western Bahr el Ghazal State in 2015 following the unilateral creation of 28 states, prompting the President of the Republic to increase the number of states from 28-32 (KII-25, Juba Town, 27 October 2020).

These territorial boundary conflicts are not only now localized but internationalized due to the increasing demand for land vital mineral resources. South Sudan’s mineral rich communities bordering neighbouring countries such as Uganda, Kenya, and Sudan, for example, are in constant border squabbles with neighbouring communities in those countries. Thus, decentralized is not a solution for community peace without addressing border conflicts (KII-25, Juba Town, 27 October 2020; KII-17, Juba Nabari, 2 October 2020). Yet, the main dilemma is how to end these border conflicts! In 2016, Schomerus and Allen’s review of decentralization and federalism debate in South Sudan, established that boundaries between local government administrative units were not demarcated but negotiated in the aftermath of a border dispute, a problem which dates back to the British colonial administration. They noted that:

In general, the colonial overnment did not undertake a comprehensive delineation and demarcation of internal boundaries, other than to settle particular grazing disputes or communal conflicts. Even in cases where they did mark a boundary on the ground, such markers have often long since disappeared, other than in the memories asserted by local elders. People often disputed such clear boundary markers as streams or hills. The idea that colonial districts or chiefdom boundaries provide a clear basis for defining contemporary boundaries is, therefore, somewhat misleading (Schomerus & Aalen, 2016).

From this perspective, people greatly link the border conflicts to resource rights, creation of administrative units, and representation in government, just because the nature of organization of South Sudan’s form of decentralization encourages ethnic citizenship as opposed to civic or cosmopolitan citizenship. For example, the current state of allocation of land and local government jobs, reveals that people apparently regard local government jobs as dividends of decentralization for the local people, and allocators of land rarely give land to citizens from other localities other than theirs. People who belong to a particular geographical constituency are more privileged to these opportunities than non-members are; causing identity crisis and pushing minority ethnic communities to demand autonomy. This creates a viscous pattern of violent inter-communal conflicts over access to these rights and privileges.

The main root cause of these border conflicts is the Anglo-Egyptian colonial government’s negligence of communal boundaries demarcation. It mainly focused on delineating international boundaries after the Berlin Conference of 1884 partitioned Africa into Western colonies. By then, the international boundaries which the colonial government delineated in former Southern Sudan were not even meant for mitigation of inter-communal conflicts. They were meant to prevent conflicts among the various colonial administrations then.

Unfortunately, none of the post-colonial regimes demarcated clear inter-communal boundaries in South Sudan too, magnifying a continuum of border conflicts in an era of modernization, where various communities in South Sudan now want to enjoy the fruits of self-rule in a peaceful country. Thus, resolving these border conflicts requires that the creation of new administrative units for effective decentralization should be in tandem with delineation of inter-communal boundaries, which requires the pre-and-prior consent of the ethnic communities whose boundaries are being demarcated, and all levels of government should have a just boundaries' demarcation criterion. This is consistent with this study's key conceptual argument that "decentralization can facilitate the building of a peaceful society when all levels of government embrace social justice and a strong culture of accountability.

Citizens' Understanding and Acceptance of Decentralization

Consistent with Rondinelli and others' argument in the existing literature that one of the contextual factors for decentralization's success in service delivery is "popular acceptance." This study reveals that popular acceptance of decentralization, here defined as the way citizens interpret and embrace decentralization, determines the extent to which decentralization succeeds in resolving conflicts or service delivery. Citizens embrace decentralization if its various types, dimensions, and the form of government in which it is implemented is compatible with their expectations. From this perspective, the reverse is true when citizens neither understand nor embrace it. People will rarely see its benefits or talk positive about it. The household survey in Rejaf and Luri payams indicated so. 10% of the 349 respondents claimed that decentralization is a popular demand of all ethnic communities in South Sudan (Table 4.1 Appendix 1). Rejaf rated this indicator of decentralization's success in service delivery more than Luri by one percentage point, indicating that the urge for decentralization is not uniform across the county. The qualitative perspectives too supported this observation. Key experts across the county disclosed that decentralization and federalism are highly contested in South Sudan, which resonates well with Douglas Johnson's exploration of federalism in the history of South Sudan in 2014, which established that South Sudanese are divided over the choice of unitary decentralization and federalism (Johnson, 2014).

Equatorians, who are a constellation of several minority ethnic groups in southern part of the country, advocate for federalism fearing domination by dominant ethnic communities in access to public resources and opportunities, while dominant ethnic groups from Bahr el Ghazal and Upper Nile think that the Equatorians are xenophobic.

This misunderstanding has prompted endless contestations over the form of government South Sudan should adopt, as well as violent ethnic conflicts over land and public sector jobs (mainly political and senior civil service positions in central government). An academic clarified on this observation as follows:

In South Sudan, people are confused about decentralization. There is a heated debate on whether South Sudan's system of governance is federalism or unitary decentralization. The constitution says that South Sudan shall have a decentralized system of governance. Yet, there is nothing like a 'decentralized system of governance.' A system of governance is either federal or unitary. Until now, people have not decided on whether our system of governance is federal or unitary. Yet, decentralization means delegation of powers to lower levels of government by a central government in a federal or unitary state. In a federal form of government, a constitution protects the powers of subnational governments, which is not the case now. The lack of clarity on our system of governance is due to memories of bad political actions on

decentralization in the 1980s. Some communities advocated for the division of the former Southern Regional Government into three smaller regions of Equatoria, Upper Nile, and Bahr el Ghazal, and non-Equatorians were forced to leave Juba and work in their respective regions, which some communities objected” (KII-3, Juba Nabari, 21 July 2020).

The above vignette suggests that the confusion about decentralization and federalism is interwoven with South Sudanese political history. In the 80s, the Sudan Government under President Jafaar Nimeri hurriedly partitioned the semi-autonomous government of former Southern Sudan into smaller semi-autonomous regions without popular consultation. The results were, and still are, polarization of ethnic relations, viscous civil wars, inter-ethnic conflicts, and perpetual lack of cooperation among tiers of government to implement the decentralization legal framework in letter and spirit.

These contestations corroborate well with Nsibambi’s observation in Uganda where, people confused decentralization with federalism when the Legislative Assembly of Uganda was debating on some citizens’ demand for federalism in 1996, resulting in the rejection of the federalism agenda (Nsibambi, 2003). Therefore, decentralization is not only a nascent political architecture in South Sudan but also other African contexts, and the entry point for its success in conflict resolution or service delivery should be educating citizens about its concept and alignment with various forms of government.

Inter-Governmental Coordination

According to the study, inter-governmental coordination – defined here as the degree to which various levels and institutions of government cooperate on dealing with cross-cutting issues in service delivery – determines the extent of decentralization’s success in conflict resolution or service delivery. If the various levels of government cooperate in addressing cross-cutting issues such as security, complex decentralization programmes whose success depends on the synergy of various levels and institutions of government can succeed, and decentralization yields positive outcomes in conflict resolution or service delivery. Conversely, a lack of cooperation among decentralization’s stakeholders in dealing with cross-cutting issues reduces decentralization’s ability to resolve conflicts. In the case of Juba County, the perspective of one key expert in the field and 5% of the 721 multiple survey responses from 349 households in Rejaf and Luri payams, supported the latter scenario. They argued that intergovernmental cooperation is quite limited in South Sudan due to a lack of trust among political leaders; hence, decentralization programmes whose effective execution requires the involvement of various stakeholders cannot successfully end ethnic conflicts over resources in South Sudan (Table 4.2 Appendix 2). Respondents in Luri Payam articulated this challenge more strongly than those in Rejaf Payam by four percentage points, indicating the severity of limited inter-governmental coordination there.

In 2011, the Office of the President in its review of decentralization’s performance during the comprehensive peace agreement interim period (2005 to July 8, 2011), established that intergovernmental coordination was still weak in the country. The Government of former Southern Sudan established a local government board to coordinate its various levels of government. However, the board does not sit in cabinet meetings where most government decisions are made, hence, it can neither influence government decisions nor present a proposal for the council of minister’s immediate adoption in cabinet meetings (Office of the President, 2011). The limited intergovernmental cooperation resulted in duplication of roles

or fire-fighting in some instances (Office of the President, 2011).

However, whether or not the alleged lack of intergovernmental coordination is a scapegoat for decentralization's failure in conflict resolution is debatable. Intergovernmental coordination like decentralization itself, is, not an end but a means for attaining the end: sustainable development, peace, and prosperity of citizens. Therefore, any failure of both practices (i.e. intergovernmental coordination and decentralization), should not be an excuse for persistent inter-communal conflicts in South Sudan. These systemic inter-communal conflicts embody a lack of South Sudan leaders' commitment to building a peaceful, united nation. Had it not been so, they would have put in place effective mechanisms to address the root causes of these violent inter-communal conflicts.

Accountability

Accountability, defined here as the degree to which people in authority are responsible for their actions, has both a positive and a negative consequence on decentralization's ability to facilitate the resolution of ethnic conflicts. In circumstances where leaders are transparent in managing public affairs and public resources, decentralization is associated with success in conflict resolution or service delivery, while the reverse is true when leaders are unaccountable to citizens. Decentralization in this case is blamed for the persistence of violent inter-communal conflicts and ethnic polarization, reaffirming Saito's postulation in the existing literature that "the debate about decentralization's success in conflict resolution or service delivery is like two opposite sides of a coin." Wherein, what some people consider to be a success is reciprocated as a failure depending on the context. This validates Grasa and Camp's argument in decentralization's empirical literature that "the debate about the effect of decentralization and ethnic conflict resolution is inconclusive, requiring context-specific studies. The case of Juba County in South Sudan, portrays the latter scenario (limited accountability) in service delivery, which thwarts government capacity to deliver social services to citizens. The delivery of social services is mostly funded by non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

While 6% of the 2,421 multiple survey responses from 349 households in Rejaf and Luri payams claimed that local government accountability in the county has helped to resolve conflicts over access to land and public sector jobs (Table 4.1 Appendix 1). 6% others across the two payams and key informants such as legislators and chiefs argued that corruption is widely spread in the country, hence, those who claim that accountability is strong in Juba County are superficial in argument. These legislators and chiefs in particular observed gross misappropriation of block grants for local governments, in which some government officials hired companies with very weak capacities so they can manipulate them for kickbacks, resulting in shoddy work. This observation resonates well with the Office of the President's decentralization review report of 2005-2011, that accountability mechanisms such as the internal controls and audits were still weak because the Audit Chamber had not been decentralized, and county commissioners are immune to corruption: they can't be sued while in office (Office of the President, 2011).

Legislators recommended direct transfers to the counties. However, the graft-proof mechanisms they recommended were interrupted by the 2013 civil war (FGD-2, Buluk, 19th October 2020). Consequently, one of the senior legislators in South Sudan's National Legislative Assembly argued that corruption in South Sudan is pervasive because some people believe they fought and liberated the country from

imperialists (KII-22, Ministries, 20th October 2020). This raises a question on the ultimate aim of most liberation movements in Africa. Is the transformation they promise benefitting all citizens irrespective of social status? Such a question is left for future research because it is beyond the scope of this study.

Community Security

The study shows that decentralization's success in conflict resolution also depends on community security, defined here as the ability of all levels of government to protect citizens from abuse and their property from malicious actions of the weird, for example, armed vandalism and theft (KII-1, Buluk, 17 July 2020; KII-3, Juba Nabari, 21 July 2020). Quantitatively, this observation was supported by 18% of the 721 multiple survey responses from 349 households in both Rejaf and Luri payams, 19% in Rejaf (75 responses), and 17% in Luri (55 responses) (Table 4.2 in Appendix 2). This reaffirms Siegel and O'Mohany's observation that decentralization often fulfilled its promises of conflict resolution in contexts where governments have a full grip of the security sector

Conversely, when all levels of government do not protect citizens from abuse and their property from vandalism. Decentralization rarely succeeds in conflict resolution because violence is not de-escalated. People don't even think about development where there is violence. People are either on the run or are too timid to challenge bad policies and practices, fearing their safety from networks of criminals bred by a culture of autocracy and impunity. The case of Juba manifests this latter scenario: insecurity. Key experts in the field and government officials across the three tiers of government complained about rampant insecurity resulting from several factors, including but not limited to, protracted armed conflicts, various unintegrated militia groups, armed pastoralists transhumance, and unknown armed persons who often terrorize and kill people in unsafe situations, particularly at night.

The unfortunate security situation has not only made the smooth implementation of decentralization and development programmes difficult. It has censored citizens' freedom of expression. The most stunning experience was when a female participant in one of the payam offices refused the research interview for her safety, saying: "Please go and talk to our chief administrative officer because, these days, people who open their lips disappear!"

This expression manifests high insecurity and features of autocracy in the county, which obstruct the real lifelines of democratic decentralization – citizens' freedom of expression and active participation in decision-making processes. Local government officers across the two payams argued that there hasn't been any genuine freedom of expression in the county except during the 2020 National Dialogue. A civil society representative openly shared the level of government censorship of freedom of expression, saying:

It is common knowledge in the country that any public meeting held before the approval of the National Security Service is, tantamount to treason (KII-3, Juba Nabari, 21st July 2020).

Therefore, South Sudan's leaders should implement decentralization in tandem with improvements in both national and human security so that decentralization can fulfil its promise of building sustainable peace in the country.

Enactment and Enforcement of National Policies

The case study of Juba County further indicates that the extent of a government's enactment and implementation of national public policies on, for example, distributive justice, influences the efficacy of decentralization in ethnic conflict resolution positively or negatively. In circumstances where the actions and decisions of a government are guided by people-centered public policies, implemented in letter and spirit, decentralization yields promising results in ethnic conflict resolution. This is mainly because citizens feel these policies are theirs and address their problems. Conversely, where a government does not guide its actions and decisions with people-centered public policies, and/or, the policies are inconsistently implemented irrespective of their goodness, decentralization's perceived efficacy in violent inter-communal conflict resolution is unlikely, unclear, inconsistent, and weak. In the case of Juba County, 7% of the 721 multiple survey responses from 349 households in both Rejaf and Luri payams, revealed that South Sudan's national policies governing distributive justice are not clear (10% in Rejaf, that is 40 responses and 2% in Luri, that is 7 responses). Rejaf Payam had more responses in favour of this observation than Luri Payam, a statistical variation which depicts differences in levels of appreciation and implementation of public policies by the two payams. Luri Payam instead rated tribalism and sectarian nepotism higher than lack of enactment and enforcement of national policies.

Nevertheless, opaque national policies are a leeway for corruption, as well as tribalism and nepotism. A lack of these legal frameworks in regulating human behaviours is not different from driving a car without fuel. A car without fuel can hardly move, and neither can people working without clear policies and direction, build harmonious communities.

Several key informants, including civil society representatives, government bureaucrats at local and state levels, and legislators in the Council of States, argued that local government institutions in Juba County have not resolved inter-communal conflicts over access to resources in South Sudan's current model of decentralization due to a lack of national distributive justice policies. The country lacks national policies for land management and public-sector employment (KII-1, Buluk, 17th July 2020; KII-18, Juba Town, 5th October 2020; FGD-2, Juba Town, 19th October 2020). A senior land officer in Central Equatoria State's Ministry of Housing and Physical Infrastructure confirmed that South Sudan apparently lacks a land policy. The government attempted to draft it during the CPA period but it is incomplete. People disagreed over jurisdictions in land management. In the current Land Act, which is guided by the old Sudan land policy, land management is a collective responsibility of communities, local governments, the states, and the central government. However, ancestral communities currently allocate the land for any purpose, and the state governments survey and register it in conformity with the national law.

For this reason, a civil society representative argued that South Sudan's local government institutions cannot resolve ethnic conflicts over land until the government enacts a policy that enables it to have full control over the land (KII-1, Buluk, 17th July 2020). A public sector employment policy is also an urgent necessity in South Sudan. A woman local government officer said that the government should enact a policy for public-sector employment, claiming that there is favouritism in employment, which discourages people from going to school (KII-7, Luri, 17th August 2020). A representative of persons with disabilities strongly supported this argument, saying, "meritocracy in employment minimizes discrimination in access to jobs, hence, South Sudan should urgently enact a policy on employment (KII-8, Juba Town, 27th August

2020).

The above observation and accompanying vignettes suggest that enacting effective public policies for distributive justice is, a prerequisite for decentralization's success in conflict resolution. This corroborates well with Rondinelli and Okorley's revelations in other contexts that enactment and enforcement of national policies increased decentralization's success in service delivery. Additionally, the empirical evidence aligns very well with the study's conceptual framework, which postulates that "local governments can resolve ethnic conflicts over access to public resources and opportunities if the process of decentralization empowers them to enforce justice in allocations of resources, irrespective of ethnicity or social status.

Drive for Decentralization

The case study of Juba County also reveals that citizens' drive for decentralization – defined here as the citizens' urge for a central government to cede power and authority to the local level (the grassroots) – has a dual effect on decentralization's efficacy in ethnic conflict resolution. Decentralization's contribution to conflict resolution is positive when its need emanates genuinely from the local people. Conversely, its contribution to conflict resolution is negative when its demand is driven by external influence. 10% of the 2,421 multiple survey responses from 349 households in both Rejaf and Luri payams depicted that the demand for decentralization genuinely originated from the local people, which has helped local government authorities of Juba County to resolve inter-communal land disputes (11% in Rejaf, that is, 110 responses, and 9% in Luri, that is, 132 responses) (Table 4.1 Appendix 1). This empirical observation aligns very well with Rondinelli's revelation in other contexts that decentralization succeeded in service delivery due to a strong local demand. The researcher witnessed a community land dispute resolution committee trying to resolve a land dispute in Luri Payam. However, it is not clear if it was a community drive for decentralization that motivated them to resolve the intercommunal land disputes. Fewer respondents in Luri supported the argument that decentralization emanated from a local demand than their colleagues in Rejaf, implying that decentralization in South Sudan is both a product of local demand and external influence.

The country's present model of decentralization was established as a part of a peace accord between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and the then Sudan's ruling political party, the National Congress Party (NCP) during the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) interim period, 2005-2011. By then, several international and regional bodies supported the peace process, including the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which was the chief mediator of the peace talks, and, Troika, a political bloc comprising the United States of America, Norway, and the United Kingdom. Therefore, the belief that these external bodies influenced the parties to the CPA to embrace decentralization alongside a strong demand from some local political elites cannot be underestimated. An excerpt from a female local government officer corroborates this argument perfectly.

Decentralization should be bottom-up. The demand for it should come from communities, not imposed by politicians. However, here, local elites influence communities to ask for administrative areas so that they can become commissioners or governors...we demanded a country but we do not know what to do with it (KII-7, Luri, 17 August 2020).

In the above vignette the female local government officer underscored the fact that the demand for decentralization in South Sudan does not mostly come from ordinary citizens (i.e. the beneficiaries of decentralization policy and programmes). The demand for decentralization comes from local elites, mainly from people who influence citizens with less education to demand for decentralization on the pretext of bringing services closer to them. Yet, in the real sense, it is not. The local elites' agitation for decentralization through the members of their communities with limited education is, for personal benefit, mainly securing jobs as county commissioners or governors – an argument which cannot be totally refuted. The central governments' ceding of power and authority to the local government often involves the creation of administrative units which are led by “local elites.”

Nevertheless, it should be noted that decentralization in South Sudan is both a product of external influence alongside a strong demand from local political elites, as said earlier. As seen in the history of decentralization in South Sudan and the empirical findings of this study, decentralization played out “as a top-down policy agenda without community consultation. The journey began during the Anglo-Egyptian condominium era, where the colonial administration created native administrations and delegated duties on organization of work parties and collection of taxes to native chiefs at their wish, which was deconcentration of powers. (Schomerus & Aalen, 2016:10). They wanted cheap labour and more revenue to support their colonial administration and production units or industries back home. Meanwhile, from the era of one Sudan through South Sudan's post-independence period, decentralization has always been a product of peace negotiations by antagonistic political elites, manifesting itself in the inconclusive debate on decentralization and federalism (Johnson, 2014b).

Stakeholder Engagement

According to 7% of the 2,421 multiple survey responses across Rejaf and Luri payams (10% in Rejaf and 5% in Luri), decentralization could have been more successful in ethnic conflict resolution in Juba County if all stakeholders in South Sudan had the will and commitment to its implementation (Table 4.1 Appendix 1). Luri Payam had less survey responses than Rejaf Payam, indicating it has more limited stakeholder engagements on decentralization than Rejaf. This could explain why the respondents in Luri were more pessimistic about the level of local government autonomy in their area than in Rejaf (Table 4.1 Appendix 1).

These statistical variations in both payams confirm the revelations of decentralization's scholars in other contexts that “decentralization can neither improve service delivery nor resolve conflicts where stakeholder engagement is limited.” Additionally, the variations confirm the argument by decentralization's scholars in the existing literature that decentralization's success in service delivery or conflict resolution is not uniform across contexts (Okorley et al., 2009).

Representatives of PWDs corroborated this observation, saying “decentralization hasn't resolved ethnic conflict in Juba County due to limited stakeholder engagement” (KII-8, PWD, Juba Town, 27 August 2020). This implies that stakeholder collaboration during implementation of decentralization programmes is very important. It prevents failures that could arise from a lack of effective coordination of complex, development programmes.

Pastoralists' Transhumance

According to a senior local government officer and representatives of chiefs in Luri Payam, a significant portion of South Sudan's population lives in the wilderness, rearing large herds of cattle, sheep, and goats, for their livelihood (KII-5, Luri, 31st July 2020; FGD-1, Luri, 8th September 2020). This kind of traditional animal husbandry involves massive, seasonal movement of pastoralists with their livestock from place to place, in search of greener pasture and water, and to escape from outbreaks of epidemics, floods, and violent conflicts (KII-5, Luri, 31st July 2020). Regrettably, the influx of a new cadre of pastoralists equipped with sophisticated weapons (firearms) is a threat to community livelihood and peace in Juba County and other parts of the Equatorial region (KII-5, Luri, 31st July 2020; FGD-1, Luri, 8th September 2020). These pastoralists often graze their animals in people's farms and grab land with a barrel of gun (KII-5, Luri, 31st July 2020; FGD-1 Luri, 8th September 2020). They do this at the watch of all tiers of government, but none of them has fixed the problem (KII-5, Luri, 31st July 2020; FGD-1, Luri, 8th September 2020).

The President of the Republic has issued several decrees for these pastoralists to vacate the area, but the decrees have neither been respected nor implemented (KII-5, Luri, 31st July 2020; FGD-1, Luri, 8th September 2020). As such, chiefs in both Rejaf and Luri payams think that some powerful people in government who want to grab and occupy their land, own these cattle. Additionally, some migrants have renamed some ancestral areas of Juba County in their native languages (FGD-1, Luri, 8th September 2020; KII-20, Rejaf, 16th October 2020).

The issue of pastoralists' obstruction of decentralization's success in conflict resolution, however, appears to be context-specific. The existing empirical literature on decentralization and conflict resolution is silent about it, reaffirming Grasa and Camp's postulation in the existing literature that the debate on the relationship between decentralization and conflict resolution is inconclusive due to variations in contexts.

This continuous influx of armed pastoralists to the county embodies limited decentralization as well as weaknesses in central government's empowerment of local governments in conflict resolution.

The pastoralists, who are mostly from Bor County in Jonglei State, are confronted by insecurity and other hazards back home such as violent conflicts with the Murle and the Lou Nuer, as well as severe seasonal flooding from the overflow of the White Nile – issues which their local government would have addressed if the central government had empowered them to do so – for example through sufficient fiscal decentralization and technical capacity enhancement.

Community Education

Finally, some government officials argued that decentralization can help to resolve ethnic conflicts over land if all levels of government exert more effort on community education about its concept and models. From this perspective, limited investment in community education weakens decentralization's ability to resolve ethnic conflicts. This observation resonates well with an earlier argument by some key informants across the county that South Sudan's legal frameworks on land and employment are not clear. People confuse decentralization with federalism (KII-7, Luri, 17th August 2020; FGD-2, Buluk, 19th October 2020; KII-18, Juba Town, 5th October 2020). Therefore, South Sudanese need community education on the concept and various models of decentralization and federalism, to help them make informed choices on the model of governance they need, considering the continuous perilous debate on federalism and

unitary decentralization in the country.

5. Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

Conclusion

The study examined the factors that influence the efficacy of decentralized governance in resolving resource-based ethnic conflicts in Juba County, South Sudan. The empirical findings reveal that decentralization's conflict resolution capacity in the county has been severely compromised by South Sudan leaders' unilateral reversal of the democratic, devolved form of decentralization enshrined in the amended Transitional Constitution of 2011 and the Local Governance Act of 2009 to severe deconcentration. In the highly deconcentrated outlawed governance structure, central government authorities have withheld local autonomy, substituted democratic elections with unilateral appointments of state governors and county commissions with executive decrees, and monopolized lucrative local government revenue streams. As such, local governments in Juba County apparently function like mere structures for political accommodation rather than viable institutions for effective service delivery or conflict resolution. This increased rural-urban migration to the post-conflict national capital that is not yet fully delineated from customary lands, causing and exacerbating ethnic conflicts over land and public sector jobs in central government, and jeopardizing the country's speedy post-conflict recovery and stability. The main root cause of this problem from the lens of the study's conceptual framework is the lack of central government empowerment of local governments with national distributive justice policies for effective land management and employment. This institutional weakness, compounded by a lack of political will, limited local government financing where local governments only receive 2-3% funds transfer, corruption and sectarian nepotism, severe human resource and institutional capacity gap, and the lack of national policies governing land management and meritocracy in public sector employment, among others, eroded civic trust and the broader citizen-state social contract, making some people hate decentralization in favour of federalism, forgetting that in full federal states, levels of government also decentralize powers and authority for effective service delivery. Additionally, the study established a context-specific structural factor associated with the reduction of decentralization's efficacy in conflict resolution or service delivery in South Sudan: heavy armament of pastoralists transhumance linked to identity politics and high proliferation of arms, which the current empirical literature on decentralization and conflict resolution is silent about, affirming the need for context-specific studies emphasized by the current empirical literature.

In line with John Rawls' theory of social justice, Amartya Sen's capability approach, and John Paul Lederach's conflict transformation theory, this study concludes that decentralization is not a panacea for instability. It is a highly complex governance framework that requires elite commitment to social justice, transparency and accountability, genuine community participation, and substantial devolution of administrative authority and fiscal powers. Neglecting these fundamental elements of good governance makes decentralized governance structures exacerbate political polarization, entrench ethnic citizenship over civic identity, and perpetuate violent inter-ethnic competitions over resources.

Policy Recommendations

Based on these insights, the study recommends these policy interventions for urgent implementation:

- 1. Drop Deconcentration and Embrace Genuine Devolution:** The Office of the President and the National Legislative Assembly must immediately repeal Article 101 of the amended Transitional Constitution of 2011, which gave the president of the republic excessive powers for dissolution of state and local governments, and halt the current practice of appointing state and county executives with executive decrees. Doing so must be in tandem with a free and fair execution of democratic, secret-ballot elections, as enshrined in the Local Government Act of 2009 to restore local accountability, genuine civic representation, and citizen-state social contract.
- 2. Implement Fiscal Decentralization:** The Office of the President, National Legislative Assembly and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning should urgently restructure the current national budget allocations and ensure equitable, direct transfers of block development grants to county accounts, raising disbursements above the current 2–3% thresholds. This should be done concurrently with complete relinquishment of state and local government revenue-generation powers—such as registration of vehicles and issuance of vehicle plate numbers— to ensure administrative sustainability.
- 3. Establish Coherent National Land and Employment Policies:** The National Legislative Assembly should urgently enact a comprehensive National Land Policy that delineates clear land-management roles among ancestral communities, local governments, and state entities. The enactment of the national land policy should be concurrent with a national civil service employment policy to enforce merit-based recruitment, to combat sectarian nepotism in public sector employment across the country.
- 4. Delineate and Demarcate Inter-Communal Boundaries:** The Council of States, in collaboration with traditional authorities and councils of traditional authority leaders (COTAL), should urgently review, map, and officially demarcate disputed internal administrative and inter-communal boundaries based on grassroots-level consultations as opposed to top-down arbitrary decision-making.
- 5. Regulate Militarized Transhumance, and Empower Local Governments and Customary Courts:** The Ministry of Interior and other national organized forces should swiftly enforce the executive decrees for the vacation of armed pastoralists from non-pastoralists communities by establishing secure, migratory routes for their safe and peaceful return to their ancestral homelands. This should be concurrent with comprehensive civilian disarmament, rehabilitation of pastoralists ancestral lands from damages inflicted by both natural and artificial hazards, as well as funding local governments and equipping traditional chiefs with the legal authority, security protection, and logistical assets required to arbitrate local resource disputes.

Credit authorship contribution statement

Martin Wulla Kwori conceptualized and designed the study, acquired the data with support from research assistants, conducted the formal analysis, drafted and revised the manuscript for critical intellectual content, and approved the version of the manuscript to be published.

Declaration of competing interest

The author declares that he has no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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About the author

Martin Wulla Kwori is an Executive Director at Agency for Humanitarian Assistance and Development (AHD), Juba, South Sudan. He holds a PhD in Political Science from the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 2023. He can be reached via martinkwori2@gmail.com.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Decentralization’s Success Factors in Ethnic Conflict Resolution

Table 4.1: Decentralizations' Success Factors in Ethnic Conflict Resolution

N=2421 due to multiple responses

Responses	Payam					
	Rejaf	%	Luri	%	Total	%
Decentralization is driven by a local need	110	11	132	9	242	10
All communities need decentralization.	100	10	133	9	233	10
The model of decentralization is conducive for the community composition and diversity	52	5	85	6	137	6
There is a political will for decentralization	79	8	115	8	194	8
All local government departments make independent decisions in their respective capacities.	57	6	107	7	164	7

All local government departments have adequate funds	32	3	88	6	120	5
All local government departments have the administrative powers to timely respond to citizens' needs	96	10	76	5	172	7
All local government departments are accountable.	41	4	96	7	137	6
There is a clear legal framework for decentralization	48	5	78	5	126	5
The legal framework for decentralization is implemented as planned	45	5	68	5	113	5
There are competent institutions that are willing to support the decentralization process	68	7	85	6	153	6
All stakeholders are willing and committed to supporting the decentralization process	102	10	70	5	172	7
All stakeholders are actively engaged in designing and implementing decentralization programmes.	45	5	71	5	116	5
All local government institutions have the managerial and technical capacities to implement decentralization programmes.	34	3	75	5	109	5
All levels of local government are adequately funded	32	3	76	5	108	4
The local government has the freedom to generate and manage its revenues	39	4	84	6	123	5
Others	2	0	0	0	2	0
Total	982	100	1439	100	2421	100

Source: Field Survey Data (2020).

Appendix 2: Obstacles to Decentralization’s Success in Conflict Resolution

Table 4.2: Obstacles to Decentralizations' Success in Ethnic Conflict Resolution in Juba County

Responses	Payam					
	Rejaf	%	Luri	%	Total	%
1. Lack of community involvement	5	1	3	1	8	1
2. Corruption	75	19	55	17	130	18
3. Tribalism and nepotism	63	16	52	16	115	16
4. Limited qualified staff in the county	7	2	8	3	15	2
5. Conflicts (political instability)	5	1	31	10	36	5
6. Illiteracy	6	1	16	5	22	3
7. Poor leadership	5	1	10	3	15	2
8. Government unable to deliver services	4	1	9	3	13	2
9. Lack of trust among policymakers	14	3	22	7	36	5
10. Poor coordination	2	0	0	0	2	0
11. Insecurity and crime	33	8	4	1	37	5
12. Favouritism	1	0	8	3	9	1
13. Poor communication	9	2	2	1	11	2
14. Economic hardship (poverty)	10	2	1	0	11	2
15. Unemployment	2	0	1	0	3	0
16. Scramble over political leadership	3	1	4	1	7	1
17. Inadequate funds	10	2	32	10	42	6
18. Lack of political will (self-interest)	14	3	10	3	24	3
19. Lack of a common national language	4	1	3	1	7	1
20. Cultural differences	3	1	1	0	4	1
21. Scramble over power and resources	4	1	1	0	5	1
22. Central government interference	6	1	3	1	9	1
23. Discrimination of minorities	62	15	22	7	84	12
24. Unclear division of powers	1	0	2	1	3	0
25. Undemocratic National Constitution	1	0	0	0	1	0
26. Lack of clear policies	40	10	7	2	47	7
27. Weak rule of law	4	1	1	0	5	1
28. Proliferation of arms	4	1	0	0	4	1
29. No freedom of expression	1	0	2	1	3	0
30. Unbalanced development	2	0	1	0	3	0
31. Natural hazards e.g. floods	1	0	0	0	1	0
32. Ignorance of the system	0	0	9	3	9	1
Total	401	100	320	100	721	100

Source: Field Survey Data (2020). N=721 due to multiple responses