

## The Plausible Local Government and Governance Structures for Tanzania: A Proposal

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**ABSTRACT :** The current paper explores plausible government and governance structures fit for purpose to facilitate the attainment of two main initiatives relevant to shape the future of Tanzania. One, is to spearhead the realization of the Tanzania's Vision 2050 goals; and two, is to be included as a chapter in the anticipated draft of the new constitution. It examines the pre-independence era from 1885 to 1961; categorized into the Germany and British periods in 1885 to 1919 and 1919 to 1961 respectively. The study unveils the Germany applied authoritative rule where often they replaced the traditional rulers with military officers. Nonetheless, the British invoked indirect rule which was used in their other older colonies of India and Nigeria. It was during the British era when a formal local government structure was formally introduced. It included national and local governments, that consisted territorial, provincial, district, ward, and village jurisdictions. The paper stated the advantages for this arrangement promoted the extraction of natural resources, and agricultural produce. Also, the structure was a vehicle to dispense law and order, suppress social unrest and uprisings, to deliver justice and improved service to the local citizens.

It narrates lessons learned from seven countries selected carefully respecting global, continental, and regional perspectives namely: Australia, Canada, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa, and USA. The learned lessons are used to devise local government and governance structures giving autonomous powers to subnational governments regarding tax assignment and expenditure responsibilities,

The proposal promulgates the abolishment of the presidential appointments of the current 28 regional commissioners and instead convert these into provincial governments to be managed by elected Regional Commissioners or Governors. Furthermore, introduces the position of elected Senators at the Provincial level. These two positions will total 56 members of the two parliamentary houses with specific and distinct roles and responsibilities. Concomitantly, the presidential appointment of sector ministers from the pool of MPs shall automatically cease together with those of principal secretaries. Firstly, the implication is that the proposed governance structure will minimize the existing 393 MPs into only 56. The current number of Districts is 271 and it is suggested to be reduced to less than 80. Districts shall be devolved subnational governments, that is, are extensions of the provincial governments. Secondly, this will eliminate the presidential powers of appointing numerous local government representatives. Thirdly, it will reduce significantly wasteful expenditure that remunerates the large number of Parliamentarians.

**Key Words:** Devolution, decentralization, governors, governance, senators, members of parliament, subnational governments.

<sup>1</sup>This paper was developed between 2015-2016 period when Prof. Ludovick Leon Shirima was working with the Commission on Revenue Allocation (CRA) in Nairobi, Kenya as a Senior Revenue Advisor under the support of the European Commission. However, it is updated recently to capture the prevailing political events Tanzania is now facing and therefore due for publication.

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## Table of Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	126
<b>2. Study background and its rationale</b> .....	126
<b>3. Literature Review Narrative</b> .....	127
<b>4. The Current Government and Governance Structures in Tanzania</b> .....	132
<b>5. Advantages of the Colonial Provincial and Governance Structures</b> .....	132
5.1 Administrative Efficiency.....	132
5.2 Cost-Effective Governance .....	132
5.3 To suppress social and political unrest.....	133
<b>6. Post-Ante Independence Reforms (1961 to 2025)</b> .....	133
6.1 The Post-independence Tanganyika (1961 - 1964).....	133
6.2 Centralization of Powers (1962–1972) .....	133
6.3 The Establishment of De-concentration System (1972–1982).....	133
6.4 Reintroduction and Strengthening of the Local Governments (1982 –1996) .....	133
6.5 Decentralization by Devolution (1996–Present).....	134
6.6 Reorganization of Dar es Salaam's Local Government (1996) .....	134
<b>7. The Proposal: Local Government and Governance Structures</b> .....	134
7.1 Option 1 Proposal.....	134
7.2 Option 2 Proposal.....	135
<b>8. Main Advantages and Rationale of the Proposed Structure</b> .....	135
8.1 Delivers Relevant and Improved Service .....	135
8.2 Enhanced Democratic, Transparency, Participation, and Accountability Initiatives .....	135
8.4 Strengthened Local Governance and Capacity Building.....	136
8.5 Strengthen Fighting and Mitigation of Corrupt Practices.....	137
8.6 Promotes Local Economic Development .....	137
8.7 Strengthens National Unity and Social Inclusion .....	137
<b>9. Conclusion</b> .....	137
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	138

## I. INTRODUCTION

This paper aims at unveiling plausible structure of Local Government Authorities (LGAs) in Tanzania<sup>2</sup> as a feasible proposal for improved good governance, service delivery, poverty reduction, and economic development. It considers historical evolutions to strengthen its argument by drawing specific examples from the experiences of the Germany and British colonial rules. The paper recognizes the several attempts applied to design a plausible LGAs government and governance structures given the situation that prevailed in the country at that time.

The study is organized in 9 interrelated sections. Section two examines the background and rationale of reforming the LGAs. In section 3 it dwells on literature review consulting both theoretical as well as empirical studies dichotomized into domestic, regional, continental, and international perspectives. It continues by expounding the current government and governance structures prevailing in Tanzania in section 4. Then section 5 outlines benefit of the existed colonial provincial structure of LGAs during the pre-independence era. Discussions on post-ante independence aspects of the reforms carried out forms section 6. Precisely, section 7 is the main section of the study since it postulates the desired and the recommended structure of LGA fit for purpose in Tanzania. Penultimately, section 8 accounts for the advantages and justifications of the proposed structure before concluding in the final section.

## II. STUDY BACKGROUND AND ITS RATIONALE

Tanzania is undergoing serious political and social turmoil with constitutional crisis that if not tackled early enough, may pause difficulties in implementing the recently approved Vision 2050. Aside, the proposal should be considered seriously to be a chapter in the anticipated forthcoming draft constitution. To contain the

<sup>2</sup> Tanzania has an area of 945,087 sq kms (about 364,900 square miles) and a population of 65m according to 2022 census. This makes it the 13<sup>th</sup> largest country in Africa and the 31<sup>st</sup> largest in the world.

situation, not to lead to social unrest, part of the solution lies in transforming the existing structure of LGA along this proposal.

Historically, this paper considers two periods specifically that are pre- and post-colonial times or pre- and post-independence eras. However, for clarity the colonial period is subdivided into two, ranging from 1885 to 1961; nearly 76 years in total. First, the period under the Germany rule from 1885–1919, followed by the British regime from 1919 to 1961, when the country gained independence.<sup>3</sup>

It suffices, to mention that the country carries the name Tanganyika, until 1964 when a new country was born in the name of Tanzania, after uniting Tanganyika with Zanzibar and Pemba Islands. As such, the local government system in Tanzania evolved significantly during these periods, especially under the British administration and the post-Union era; it is the rationale against this paper.

### III. LITERATURE REVIEW NARRATIVE

The Nobel price laureate, Douglas North (North, 1991) once promulgated that if he was to study something new today, that would be history because it provides huge knowledge and insights about the world. Wherefore, in this narrative the study identifies three historical periods that shaped immensely the subject matter under this discussion. These periods are namely, the colonial Germany and British eras, followed by the post-independence especially the post Union experiments. Finally, the section turns to specific country experiences that underpins the understanding of the empirical as well as theoretical knowledge required to advance reforms of the LGAs this study proposes.

#### 3.1. Country Historical Perspective (Tanganyika)

##### 3.1.1 German Colonial Period (1885–1919)

It was during this era where local government structure constructs began formally. The structure was highly centralized and was extremely authoritarian colonial control system. This structure facilitated their goals of extracting raw materials that included agricultural produce, minerals, and promoted slave trade.

The existed roles of the traditional chiefs were either ignored, abolished, or in some localities used as a bridge between the Germans and the local population; that had limited participation to governing their affairs. Administratively, they introduced military rule by appointing mostly military officials as district officers.

##### 3.1.2 British Colonial Period (1919–1961)

The British reigned Tanganyika from 1919 to 1961 applying the *indirect rule* administrative approach.<sup>4</sup> Similar, approach was used in their other colonies like Nigeria, India, etc., Experience from these colonies indicated that the underlined structure included Native Authorities (NAs)<sup>5</sup>, District Councils (DCs), Provincial Governments (PGs), and Central Oversight. In each structure, specific responsibilities and functions were assigned as narrated hereunder.

Firstly, NAs played a pivotal role of administering the local areas via the existed structures and traditional leaders namely chiefdoms, headmen, and tribal elders. NAs were disaggregated into two administrative units that included villages, overseen by village headmen known as Jumbes, and wards managed by Akidas and Liwanis. This structure remained until independence in 1961. The appointment and at times the approval of these traditional leaders relied on the colonial officers who even altered the traditional power structure. Aside, they were administered and managed under the helm of the DCs. Furthermore, NAs main functions were threefold including *collecting local taxes*, administration of *justice* through *Native Courts*, maintaining *local order* and managing provision of basic services.

Secondly, DCs structure were formalized in early 1950s as part of the LGAs. It is during this period DCs began to include elected representatives, but real power remained under the colonial officials. The DCs structure was mandated to providing basic services and infrastructure mainly in the health, education, and roads sectors.

<sup>3</sup>The British colonial system was initially under the mandate of the League of Nations then it was placed under the supervision of the United Nations trusteeship.

<sup>4</sup>It was introduced as part of the indirect rule form of administration that was copied from Lord Lugard's system that was used in Nigeria at that time.

<sup>5</sup> These included villages and wards as part of their lower-level governance structure.

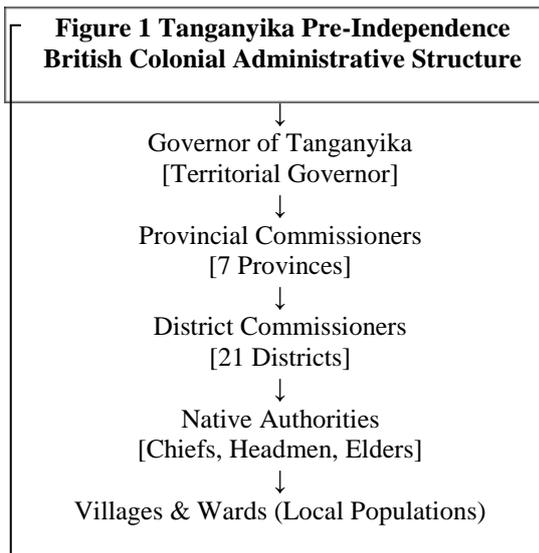
Thirdly, above the districts were the Provincial Governments under the Provincial Commissioners (PCs), responsible to coordinate colonial policies within their provincial areas. Specifically, they oversaw several districts within the province. The provinces were not autonomous; they functioned primarily as administrative units under the control of the central colonial government. In penultimate, was the Central Oversight with ultimate responsibility that rested under the Territorial Governor, who represented the British Crown.

Finally, in 1926 the British government introduced administrative reforms by passing the Districts Proclamation (Tanganyika, 1926(a)). It is this proclamation that established the 21 districts in Tanganyika that underpinned the current LGA structure. The main reason for the provincial and district arrangement in Tanganyika before independence was to enable the British colonial administration to maintain effective control over the territory using a system of indirect rule - governing through existing traditional leaders and a hierarchical administrative structure.

It was during the period between the years 1940s to the 1950s where significant legislative developments evolved that increased pressure to reform the LGA system to allow for more Tanganyikans participation in the decision-making process. This resulted into limited basic democratic reforms like partial elections to local councils in urban areas such as Dar es Salaam.

3.1.3 The Tanganyika Pre-independence Provinces and Districts.

The British colonial administration discussed in the preceding section was subdivided into 7 provinces. These provincial governments were established to facilitate the discharge of authority from the various levels listed above. The provinces were the Northern, Southern, Western, Eastern, Southern Highlands, Central, and the Lake Zone. Each of these was partitioned into three districts to simplify their management (Tanganyika, 1953(b)).



**Table 1 Tanganyika Pre-independence Provinces and Districts**

S/N	Provinces	Districts
1	Northern	Moshi, Arusha, and Kilimanjaro.
2	Southern	Lindi, Mtwara, and Masasi.
3	Western	Tabora, Kigoma, and Shinyanga.
4	Eastern	Morogoro, Tanga, and Pwani
5	Lake Zone	Bukoba, Mwanza, and Musoma.
6	Southern Highlands	Mbeya, Iringa, and Rukwa.
7	Central	Dodoma, Singida, and Manyoni.

Source: Created by the Author

3.2 International Country Empirical Evidence of LGAs

The paper identifies seven best practice countries that have successfully excelled in this endeavor. Three of these are the advanced democracies and economies of the world including the Government of Canada (GoC), United States of America (USA), and Government of Australia (GoAus) that represent the oldest models of LGAs. Next, the remaining two are the regional and continental examples namely the Government of Kenya (GoK) and Rwanda from the East African Community (EAC), then the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) and the Republic of South Africa (RSA) respectively.

The review dwells on two interrelated issues that concern the type of government and the governance structures of the prevailing LGAs (Online, 2025). Under the type it will explore the main structure underlying the construct of the subnational levels (how many tiers the country is) of government in the cited countries. The second aspect will briefly answer the question what governance mechanisms (i.e., executive, judiciary and

parliamentary) are used in the decision-making processes and the formation of the legal framework specifically whether parliamentary and/or senatorial. Each country is examined hereunder.

### 3.2.1 The international country experience

It starts with Canada<sup>6</sup>, which is a federation made up of ten provincial and three territorial government (Canada, 2020). The latter are delegated LGAs by the federal government or are administered directly by it (Humes, 1959). Is the second largest country with an area of 9,976,000 sq km but is the first in having the longest coastline of about 202,100 kms in the whole globe. LGAs are organized in a two-tier system that constitutes provinces that are subdivide into several subnational level governments.

The study is cognizant that Canada is a constitutional monarchy established by the British North America Act of 1867 where a Constitution Act of 1982 is derived (Canada, 1982). It maintains both the Parliament and the Senate. The Parliament has 305 elected members while the Senate has 105 members appointed on a regional basis by the Prime Minister, in consultation with the cabinet. On one hand, the Senate is the Upper House<sup>7</sup> in the country, which unites a diverse group of accomplished Canadians in service of their country, it has important functions in reviewing, amending, approving legislations, ensures accountability, and oversight of government actions. On the other hand, the Parliament is bicameral democracy, which is the federal legislative branch of the government responsible for making laws, approving the federal budget, and overseeing the actions of the government. The structure of the Canadian Parliament consists of three units namely the Monarch (represented by the Governor General), the Senate (Upper House), and the House of Commons (Lower House).

Two, is the USA with both the government and governance structures transcending the federalism<sup>8</sup>, which is enshrined in its constitution.<sup>9</sup> This is unique kind of federalism because it is a dynamic system where powers are shared and contested between the national and the 52 state governments (America, 1892). The arrangement is a two-tier system that involves the division of powers between the federal government and the state governments (Stenberg, 2001). While the Federal Government is responsible for national matters like defense, foreign policy, and interstate commerce, the State Governments handles the provision of local services such as education, law enforcement, and public health.

Then respecting the foregoing, the governance structure rests on the three institutions composed of the executive, legislature, and the judiciary. The executive encompasses the presidency and the federal level government; the legislative embodies the congress with its two structures namely the senate and the house or parliament. The judiciary is responsible to deliver justice via the supreme court and lower federal courts. It is important to understand the State Governments have their own elected governors, state legislatures, state court systems, and state's own constitutions.

Three is the Australian federalism, which is provided for by the constitution (Australia, 1900) drawn on 1900, that came into effect in January 21<sup>st</sup>, 1901, where power is divided between the central or federal government and state governments.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, the Australian government structure is a two-tire system of government with both the national (or federal government) and the State Governments. Nonetheless, the State Governments include six states namely the New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, and Tasmania with each having its own Constitution, Parliament (usually bicameral) with Premier and state cabinet and lastly the state courts. In addition, also Australia has Territorial Governments that are in the mainland and self-governing namely Northern Territory and Australian Capital Territory (ACT). These have similar powers to that of states but derived from federal law (not sovereign) of which their decisions can be overruled by the Commonwealth. It is critically important to mention that both levels maintain their own legislatures, executives, and judiciaries serving the people.<sup>11</sup>

The governance structure includes the Commonwealth level of government, that is responsible for national matters and operates from Canberra city. As usual, it has three components starting with the Parliament of Australia, which is bicameral constituting the Senate and the House of Representatives. Then the Federal

<sup>6</sup>See <https://www.commonwealthgovernance.org/countries/americas/canada/local-government/>

<sup>7</sup>The Senate is the upper house of Canada's bicameral (two-chamber) Parliament.

<sup>8</sup>Federalism is a system of government where power is shared between a central authority and smaller regional governments.

<sup>9</sup>The constitution of the USA mentions the government and governance structures in its Articles I in Section 8, Article VI, and in the 10<sup>th</sup> Amendment.

<sup>10</sup>The Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act 1900; where the Commonwealth here refers to the federal, central, or national government. (Nexus Partnerships, 2024).

<sup>11</sup>Section 109 of the Constitution: If a Commonwealth and state law conflict, the Commonwealth law prevails.

Executive that is led by the Prime Minister and the Cabinet. The final structure is the High Court of Australia and the other federal courts mandated to deliver justice to the citizens.

Under section 51 of the constitution the national (or federal government) is responsible for defense, foreign affairs, trade and commerce, immigration, taxation (concurrent, but dominant in practice), currency issuance, marriage, and divorce. While the States have powers to deliver health, education, transport, policing, housing, criminal law, roads, waste, libraries, planning, etc., and other residual powers not assigned to the Commonwealth but created by state legislations.

### 3.2.2 Regional EAC Country LGAs Empirical Evidence

Kenya is the fourth case study, which the constitution of Kenya of 2010 declared the country as a *unitary state* with devolved governance that is slightly different from federal states arrangements, we discussed in the preceding paragraphs above (Kenya, 2010). It is a two-tier structure of government with both National and 47 County Governments. This government structure of LGA makes Kenya a devolved system and not a federation since the sovereignty of the country remains with the national government where the entire county governments are not sovereign states unlike in a federal system. The counties are devolved structures with specific powers assigned to them by the same constitution (GoK, 2013).

Therefore, the governance structure is reflected by the responsibilities of the National Government that extends across the whole country, which is not uncommon under unitary systems. The constitution recognizes the three governance pillars that are the executive branch headed by the President who is the Head of State and Government, supported by the Deputy President and the entire Cabinet. The next pillar is the legislature which is bicameral parliamentary form with two constituents namely the National Assembly, which is the lower house and the Senate being the upper house representing the counties. The third pillar is the Judiciary, which is assumably to be Independent, with the Supreme Court at the top. The mandates of the national government that are constitutional include foreign affairs, national defense and security, immigration and citizenship, and national economic policy formulation and implementation. However, some responsibilities are shared between the two-tiers of government such as education, transport, health policy.

At sub-national level the forty-seven County Governments each operates under the County Executive and County Assembly. The former is headed by a Governor who is supported by a Deputy Governor and County Executive Committee. Then in the later, there is a County Assembly managed by the Elected Members of County Assembly (MCAs) who are mandated to enact laws and oversee county operations. Nevertheless, there are no separate county constitutions, rather they operate under the national constitution and enabling legislations. The responsibilities of the county governments stipulated in the fourth schedule of the constitution include health services, agriculture, transport (roads, public works), trade development and regulation, pre-primary education, and county planning and development.

Fifthly, the Rwandan government is a unitary presidential republic with a highly centralized governance structure. It has adopted the decentralization policy since 1999, mainly at the subnational level of governments. Regarding the structure of the government the Rwandese constitution of 1997 provides that the country is a unitary state where mostly administratively the power is centralized in the national government (GoR, 1997). Specifically, sub-national governments are not autonomous or semi-autonomous entities and with constitutionally protected powers compared to the federal systems.

The Local government levels entail the provinces<sup>12</sup>, districts, sectors, cells, and villages; where districts are the most used as administrative units to implement all government policies at the sub-national levels. Provinces are known for not having autonomous powers, but they are the administrative arms of the central government (Shirima, 2022).

Concerning the governance structure, Rwanda has the three common pillars found elsewhere in this paper. One, the Executive branch is under elected President who is both Head of State and Government. The President is bestowed with significant powers such as appointing the Prime Minister, other ministers, and heads of public institutions. It is the Prime Minister who supports the President in coordinating government actions. Two, the Legislative branch conducts its business in a Bicameral Parliament with two chambers namely that of Deputies (Lower House) and the Senate (Upper House). Under this arrangement both houses participate in the

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<sup>12</sup>Administratively, Rwanda is sub-divided into 5 provinces namely the Northern, Southern, Eastern, Western and the Kigali City.

law-making process, budget approval, and government oversight. Third, is the Judiciary that is presumably independent and strongly influenced by the executive branch. The judiciary is composed of Supreme Court, judiciary High Council, Court of Appeal, Intermediate, and Primary Courts

### 3.2.3 Continental Country LGAs Empirical Evidence

In penultimate, South Africa pursues a unique form of governing their central and sub-national levels of government (RSA, 1996). This approach is a mix of both federalism and unitarist. Several studies call this "quasi-federal" or cooperative governance. The South African constitution establishes provinces and assigned them specific powers, in a more centralized approach than in classic federations.

The structure of government is enshrined in the 1996 constitution that declares the country is constitutional democracy, which is one, sovereign, and democratic state. Further, it is a unitary structure that embodies the principles of federalism. As such it respects the three levels of government we observed earlier in this paper like the national, provincial, and local spheres of government. Each of which, section 40 of the constitution provides that it is distinct, interdependent, and interrelated.

At the level of Provincial Government, there are 9 provinces listed as Eastern Cape, Free State, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Northern Cape, Northwest, and Western Cape. In terms of local government structures several studies mentions that municipalities, are disaggregated into metropolitans, (e.g., Johannesburg, Cape Town), districts, and local municipalities.

Nonetheless, the three spheres of government structure led to the following governance structures. At the national level government there is the President who is the Head of State managing the executive branch; they are responsible for national policy, defense, foreign affairs, and the national budget. Aside, the Parliament is made up of two governing structures including both the National Assembly and National Council of Provinces (NCOP). The NCOP represents the provinces and ensures that provincial interests are considered in national legislation.<sup>13</sup> It is charged to approve laws affecting the provinces, giving them a formal role in national legislative processes.

Notwithstanding the above, in each province there is a Premier who is equivalent to a provincial governor in the classic federalism leading the executive branch.<sup>14</sup> Then the provincial legislature which is made up of elected members by the people of the province. At the same time the Premier appoints the Executive Council members who become the provincial cabinet. They carry the authority to enact laws in the provincial areas of their mandate such as education, health, housing, agriculture, and transport. At the municipal level they are governed by elected municipal councilors, who are responsible for service delivery to the local communities mainly water, sanitation, electricity, waste management, local roads, and community development like in Rwanda (Shirima, 2020). In context South Africa, implements Cooperative Governance that differs widely to the classic federalism found in Germany, USA, and Ethiopia.

Lastly but note the least, Ethiopia is a federal government sealed by the 1995 constitution, that respects the ethno-linguistic context, diverse groups, and historical marginalization.<sup>15</sup> It is a three-tier system that recognizes the co-existence of the federal, the regional, zones, districts (woredas) and the neighborhoods (kebeles) levels of government, each with its own administration ( FDRE, 1995).

At Federal level the structure is a multi-level with a clear division of powers among them (Shirima, 2021). This level plays the central authority roles managing issues of national interest, such as foreign policy, defense, and economic policy. Hierarchically, this is followed by the Regional States (Kilil) government; divided into 12 regional states and two chartered cities of Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa. Then the regions are further disaggregated into districts (woredas) as part of the sub-national levels of government. The zones and neighborhoods (kebeles) are only recognized for administrative dimensions.

In terms of governance, these regions were established based on ethno-linguistic lines and have their own constitutions, working languages, and regional police forces. The country governance structure is

<sup>13</sup>Considering, which is one of the two houses of Parliament. Is mandated to represents provincial interests at the national level. Its composition includes 10-member delegation (6 permanent + 4 special delegates) from each province.

<sup>14</sup>It is important to mention that provincial governments do not have any sovereignty.

<sup>15</sup>This constitution divides powers between a federal government and regional states, and includes the constitutional right for "nations, nationalities, and peoples" to self-determination, including secession.

formulated and is cognizant of power-sharing arrangements between the three levels of government. The Executive branch is under the stewardship of the Prime Minister who holds the highest executive power as the head of government.

Furthermore, the Legislative Branch consists of the House of Peoples' Representatives, which is the lower house; its members are elected through popular votes. Aside, the House of Federation, which is the upper house represents the country's diverse ethnic groups, each having at least one representative in the house. Its powers include constitutional interpretation and resolving disputes between regional states.

#### IV. THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT AND GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES IN TANZANIA

Literature on the subject states that Tanzania is a three-level or tier government system consisting of a national government, a semi-autonomous Zanzibar government, and local governments<sup>16</sup>. These are disaggregated into rural – urban strata; with three types of urban and two types of rural local authorities for the mainland Tanzania. Mainland Tanzania has 25 regions<sup>17</sup>, 40 urban councils, 132 rural district councils, and about 10,000 villages.

In Zanzibar, there is only urban and rural local governments. However, Zanzibar has 5 regions, with 4 and 7 urban authorities and rural district councils respectively. The responsibilities of these local governments include local services delivery, collecting taxes, and managing development process.

**Table 2 Tanzania Post-independence Regional<sup>18</sup> and District LGs**

S/N	Provinces	Regional Governments	New Regions and Year
1	Northern	Moshi, Arusha, and Kilimanjaro.	Manyara (2002)
2	Southern	Lindi, Mtwara, and Masasi.	
3	Western	Tabora, Kigoma, and Shinyanga.	Katavi (2012),
4	Eastern	Morogoro, Tanga, and Pwani	
5	Lake Zone	Bukoba, Mwanza, and Musoma.	Geita, Simiyu, (2012) Kagera (1984)
6	Southern Highlands	Mbeya, Iringa, and Rukwa.	Songwe (2016), Njombe (2012)
7	Central	Dodoma, Singida, and Manyoni.	

Source: Created by the Author

#### V. ADVANTAGES OF THE COLONIAL PROVINCIAL AND GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

This section highlights the main advantages that justified the colonial governments to establish the foregoing discussions. Aside, it explores the projected advantages that the government of Tanzania will realize if it pursues the advanced proposal as follows beneath. This study identifies five main reasons that justified the observed structure namely administrative efficiency, cost-effective governance, control and surveillance, gradual political development, and colonial economic interests. These will be elaborated below.

##### 5.1 Administrative Efficiency

This study mentioned elsewhere that Tanganyika is large in area that was covered with waters, dry and arable lands. As such, it was vast, diverse, and with limited infrastructure that made accessibility difficult and, in some regions, inaccessible completely. The division of the Tanganyika territory into provinces and districts facilitated decentralized administration, made the structures manageable and to impart the colonial directives at the local level. This permitted the Provincial and District Commissioners to act as lynch pin between the Territorial government and citizens.

##### 5.2 Cost-Effective Governance

The British cleverly used the seven provinces, twenty-one districts and the existed traditional authorities (chiefs and headmen) to govern, collect taxes, maintain order, and enforce laws. It is this approach of governance that was popularly known as indirect rule, which appeared to be cheaper and more practical than deploying many colonial officials.

<sup>16</sup>Local governments are established by the constitution and further supported by legislation.

<sup>17</sup>This was true until 2012 after adding Manyara, Katavi, Geita, and Simiyu in the list.

<sup>18</sup>By 2016 mainland Tanzania had about 28 regions excluding those 5 of Zanzibar.

### 5.3 To suppress social and political unrest.

The designed structure allowed the Colonial Territorial Governor to closely supervise, monitor, and control indigenous populations, mainly in remote, hard-to-reach or resistant areas. This arrangement had the advantage of providing smaller manageable units, easier to detect any surfaced unrest or resistance and quickly be contained.

### 5.4 Gradual Political Development

In the 1950s, pressure for independence gained momentum across Africa, likewise both district and provincial structures were used to initiate limited self-governance and political education. Following this, local councils surfaced in some urban areas with some elected African members as part of a transition strategy toward independence.

### 5.5 Colonial Economic Interests

The earmarked provinces and districts in Tanganyika were largely based on and aligned with geopolitics and economic zones of that time such as coffee in the north, sisal in the east, and cotton near Lake Victoria. Moreover, the entire administration was designed to enable exploitation of natural resource, labor control, and the development of infrastructure like railways and roads that supported colonial trade.

## VI. POST-ANTE INDEPENDENCE REFORMS (1961 TO 2025)

Since Tanganyika's independence in 1961, the country went through several notable local government administrative reforms and structural changes. The local governments in Tanganyika were governed by different statutes and ordinances some inherited from the colonial administration.

### 6.1 The Post-independence Tanganyika (1961 - 1964)

The Post-independence Tanganyika lasted barely for nearly four years to 1964 when the union with the Zanzibar and Pemba Islands was formalized.<sup>19</sup> As an aftermath, the provincial system was abolished where a regional administrative system was established to enhance decentralization, service delivery, and local governance. That is, these changes were to promote administrative efficiency and bring government services closer to the citizens.

### 6.2 Centralization of Powers (1962–1972)

Following the Tanganyika independence, local governments were retained applying similar operational model to that of the British colonial masters, that was highly centralized until 1972. That said, all local government authorities were abolished under the Decentralization (Interim Provisions) Act, 1972. In this arrangement, central government took over all local functions specifically the provision of water, education, and health; just to mention a few.

Thereafter, beyond 1964 Tanzania is governed by the Constitution (URT, 1977) and the supporting pieces of legislations that established and regulate local government authorities (LGAs). It is in this constitution through Articles 145 and 146 where the system of local government is established and the functions of local government authorities, mainly to involve people in planning and implementation of development programs are described respectively.

### 6.3 The Establishment of De-concentration System (1972–1982)

In 1972, the system and structure of local governments were abolished and replaced with a de-concentration system, that aimed at centralization of the administrative powers, which involved integration of local development into national planning. The wider ramifications of this arrangement resulted to the dissolution of district and urban councils, and introducing the regional and district committees under the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

### 6.4 Reintroduction and Strengthening of the Local Governments (1982 –1996)

Ten years later, the shortcomings from the deconcentrated system outweighed the gains, that necessitated the reinstatement of the decentralized local governments to strengthen democratic participation and to stimulate local development. The foregoing was formalized by enacting the two Legislations in 1982 (URT, 1982(a)), that established village councils, township authorities, district councils, and urban councils (URT,

<sup>19</sup>The Union gave birth to the country known as the United Republic of Tanzania (URT) made of the current Tanzania Mainland (Tanganyika), and Zanzibar consisting of the two islands of Unguja and Pemba.

1982(b)).<sup>20</sup> In the political perspective, elections were held in 1983, which paved the way to the operationalization of the local governments in 1984.

#### 6.5 Decentralization by Devolution (1996–Present)

The Decentralization by Devolution (D-by-D) was initiated under the Local Government Reform Programme (LGRP) that begun in 1996. The purpose of LGRP remained to devolve more authority to local governments, improving service delivery and accountability to date. Aside, part of the reform involved political, financial, administrative decentralization, and redefining central-local relations. However, despite dismal progress, ubiquitous challenges and opportunities remain to fully realize meaningful gains from implementing these reforms.

#### 6.6 Reorganization of Dar es Salaam's Local Government (1996)

In 1996 to respond to the growing demands on administrative inefficiencies, the local government of the Dar es Salaam City was reorganized and restructured to improve service delivery. This led to the Dar es Salaam City Council disbandment, and instead three new municipal councils were established namely Ilala, Temeke, and Kinondoni to better manage the city's affairs.

## VII. THE PROPOSAL: LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

The preceding discussion indicates Tanzania's ongoing efforts to reform the LGAs as a vehicle to improve service delivery to its citizens. This paper aims at providing a more robust local structures that will promote service delivery, enhance local investment, and development for Tanzania as a whole. This will largely facilitate the implementation of the recently approved Vision 2050 and underpin the much-needed draft of new constitution any time soon.

We postulate two options that could be considered as part of plausible proposals to reform local government and governance structures in Tanzania. They include:

**Table 3 A Proposal: Local [Government and Governance] Structures**

S/N	Provinces	Regional Governments	District Governments
1	Northern	Moshi, Arusha, Manyara, and Kilimanjaro.	<i>Modified or merged districts per region that aims at reducing the number districts from the current 131 to less than 70 only for administrative purposes and budgetary saving based on population and area.</i>
2	Southern	Lindi, Mtwara, and Masasi.	
3	Western	Tabora, Kigoma, Katavi, and Shinyanga.	
4	Eastern	Morogoro, Tanga, and Pwani	
5	Lake Zone	Bukoba, Mwanza, Musoma, Geita, Simiyu, and Kagera,	
6	Southern Highlands	Mbeya, Iringa, Rukwa, Songwe, and Njombe	
7	Central	Dodoma, Singida, and Manyoni.	

**Source: Created by the Author**

### 7.1 Option 1 Proposal

This involves maintaining the seven provinces but as part of national government extension and not as constituent of local government. Each Province constitutes several Regions as depicted above, 28 in total. Regions shall be managed by elected Regional Commissioners from the ballot box and in addition represented by Senators.

Since under the provinces there will be several elected Regional Commissioners, they will appoint one among themselves to head the Province as a Governor, a ceremonious position. Governorship will not be salaried position but shall receive sitting or coordinating allowances contributed by the Regions under his[er] jurisdiction since [s]he holds the elected office as a Regional Commissioner. Governors shall meet maximum quarterly or thrice in a year or more depending on the prevailing circumstances. Their agenda should be intra- and inter- provincial and regional matters respectively e.g., on commerce, shared services and infrastructure, security, job mobility, joint project, etc.,

<sup>20</sup>The two legislations include 'The Local Government (District Authorities) Act, 1982 [Cap. 287 R.E. 2002]' and 'The Local Government (Urban Authorities) Act, 1982 [Cap. 288 R.E. 2002]'.

On one hand, Regional commissioners are the managers of their Region<sup>21</sup>, and they will be assigned by a legislation their two main roles of governing revenue assignment and expenditure responsibilities. Senators, on the other hand shall also be elected by voters from a competitive process of qualifications and self-accomplished individuals mainly with undoubted legal background, business, or public service. Their main function is to review legislations, contracts and pass the laws of the land.

Therefore, Tanzania will be bicameral Parliament with two houses or chambers where RCs will be our members of Parliament. The second house shall belong to the Senators mandated to pass the laws. This approach is useful and will provide check and balances during passing laws and endorsing government contracts or agreements. Moreover, it will reduce the number and the size of the Parliamentarians hugely; that implies less budget.

In this arrangement, Districts will be part of the local government formulating plans and implementing development projects for the population. Basically, these are extensions of the Regional governments and shall maintain the current Wards, Villages, Ten cell structures for administrative purposes only.

#### 7.2 Option 2 Proposal

This involves ignoring the seven Provinces completely but maintain the Regions<sup>22</sup> and Districts. Under this arrangement merge some districts in terms of population and area sizes to obtain a few, aim at number less than or equal to 80. The smaller the number of districts the better the option because it determines the size local government. This implies that the Regions will be now Provinces managed by elected Governors where Districts will be devolved structures of the provinces. This approach is much simpler with huge implications on budgetary allocations; is the most preferred option.

### VIII. MAIN ADVANTAGES AND RATIONALE OF THE PROPOSED STRUCTURE

The paper highlights somewhere that the country has been implementing D-by-D since 1996 to date. However, it recognizes that there exists several weaknesses and threats that if well addressed potential benefits could be realized. This sub-section outlines what would be advantages if the country changes from D-by-D to fully decentralization<sup>23</sup>. Salient benefits would be grouped into five as follows – administrative, political, economic, governance, and social.

#### 8.1 Delivers Relevant and Improved Service

Decentralization improves the administrative dimensions that leads to efficient service delivery. Citizens know better their needs and can make better choices that approximate more their preferences and wants since the subnational level governments are closer to them. This permit making decisions about services that are accessible and responsive at the local level needs.

#### 8.2 Enhanced Democratic, Transparency, Participation, and Accountability Initiatives

On the political front decentralization will use the current structures namely village assemblies, ward committees, and local councils to promote citizens' participation in local planning and decision-making. This approach will enhance democracy, accountability, and transparency at the grassroots level.

#### 8.3 Ensures Better Resource Allocation and Use

Decentralization is economic and efficient in public resource allocation by focusing on local priorities and needs, instead of national averages. In this regard, it minimizes wastage of resources and ensures that local investments are aligned to reflect community priorities. However, it also encourages community contributions financially and promotes public private partnerships (PPPs) famous to leverage finance, technology, and expertise to the local community.

In this analysis Zanzibar is a special case. Table 4 indicates that the size of the current Parliament is not economical with relatively huge number of MPs with high remuneration and generous pay package whilst representing only a small fraction of the population. Zanzibar has 1,889,773 and 2,460 in population and square kilometers (km<sup>2</sup>) respectively, Nevertheless, Zanzibar on average, a single MP represents only 36,341.8 citizens and covers an area of 47.31 km<sup>2</sup> compared to the national average of 232,109.5 and 3,329.90 respectively. This

<sup>21</sup>They will also manage the budget, account for revenues, hire and fire, and perform all administrative issues.

<sup>22</sup>These Regions could now be assumed to be Provinces or States Governments.

<sup>23</sup>In this context decentralization refers to the transfer of decision-making authority and resources from central to local levels of government or organizations.

says that MPs in the Islands are paid for less work than their counterparts in the Tanzanian mainland. In addition, while Kilimanjaro has almost equal population of 1,861,934 and 13,250 km<sup>2</sup> it commands only small number of 7 and 9 districts and constituents as compared to the Zanzibar Islands with 12 and 52 districts and constituents respectively. Realistically, in this analysis Zanzibar should have less than 5 MPs, otherwise this is a misuse of taxpayers' monies. The table depicts that Zanzibar is extremely lower in terms of land mass and population but ridiculously has the highest number of Districts and Constituents.

**Table 4 Compares Zanzibar and 3 Regions in Terms of Area, Population, and Number of Districts and Constituents**

Region	Area (R <sub>a</sub> )	Population (R <sub>p</sub> ) 2022	Population Density	Number of Districts	Number of Constituents	R <sub>p</sub> /C <sub>n</sub>	R <sub>a</sub> /C <sub>n</sub>
Manyara	44,522	1,892,502	43	6	7	270,357.4	6360.29
Zanzibar	2,460	1,889,773	768	12	52	36,341.8	47.31
Kilimanjaro	13,250	1,861,934	141	7	9	206,881.6	1472.22
Ruvuma	63,669	1,848,794	29	8	9	205,421.6	7074.33

**Source: Created by the Author**

**Note:** \*Area (R<sub>a</sub>), Population (R<sub>p</sub>), Regional Population density (R<sub>p</sub>/R<sub>a</sub>), Regional Number of People per MP or Constituency (R<sub>p</sub>/C<sub>n</sub>), and Regional Area in Km<sup>2</sup> per MP or Constituency (R<sub>a</sub>/C<sub>n</sub>).

Specifically, as depicted in table 4 above, Manyara, Kilimanjaro, and Ruvuma have almost equal size of population of 1,892,502, 1,861,934, and 1,848,794 respectively to that of Zanzibar of 1,889,773 but with far higher number of districts (12) and constituents (52).

#### 8.4 Strengthened Local Governance and Capacity Building

Recently, decentralization has proved to be useful in promoting good governance by building capacity of the local citizens and their institutions like district councils, village governments, and community development committees. It opens opportunities for designing relevant trainings, developing leadership, and management skills that will contribute to more effective and self-reliant local governance. Nonetheless, for optimal results the design of the capacity building initiatives should rely on the findings of Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL).

As this proposal will introduce the positions of elected Governors or Regional Commissioners, and Senators by which the size of the Parliament<sup>24</sup> will be reduced significantly into 28 for each position summing into 56 from the current 393 both elected and appointed members of Parliament (MPs) for both Tanzania Mainland and Islands (BUNGE, 2020). This will be translated into colossal financial budget savings that can be released to fund other pressing local priority needs. Furthermore, decentralization will lower substantially the huge powers vested on the president in appointing the Regional and District Commissioners, Administrators, and Chief Executive Officers. Similarly, the *special seats* MPs should be abolished under this proposal and let the elected RCs [Governors] and Senators exercise their powers to represent their people more effectively and efficiently. Concomitantly, the presidential appointment of sector ministers from the pool of MPs shall automatically cease together with those of principal secretaries. Modalities of appointing them is beyond the scope of the current study.

For instance, in the 2020 to 2025 Parliament, the exact number of MPs was 393, disaggregated as 264 elected from the constituents, 10 appointed by the President, 2 by virtue of their positions, 112 special seats, and 5 Baraza la Wawakilishi Zanzibar (BLW) from CCM respectively (BUNGE, 2023). This implies that 129 MPs do not represent any Constituent but are remunerated and enjoy equal benefits to those elected by the people, this is misuse of public funds. The number for 2025 to 2030 Parliament is expected to be much higher since new appointments are still underway.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup>View the following link: <https://www.parliament.go.tz/constituents> to learn more about the URT Parliament.

<sup>25</sup>In addition to the elected MPs, there are others nominated from the various political parties without constituents to be part of special seats MPs.

### 8.5 Strengthen Fighting and Mitigation of Corrupt Practices.

Most of the decision-making process is at the subnational government level, which becomes more visible to the local citizens. For instance, it allows planning meetings, budget formulation, spending approvals, and project monitoring often to be observed more transparently, enhancing accountability, promoting citizens involvement from planning to program implementation. When this happens, corruption is reduced, and trust is enhanced between subnational government officials and citizens they serve.

### 8.6 Promotes Local Economic Development

Under decentralization, subnational governments develop their own Development Strategy Plan pegged or anchored to the national level government [such as Vision 2050]. This approach allows LGAs to draw strategies relevant to their own local economic context in terms infrastructure, energy, agriculture, tourism, fisheries, small industries, etc. In this regard, coastal districts can invest more in the blue economy, while the Southern highland regions focus on agriculture, and the mineral rich regions deal with mining activities. As this happens it stimulates local economic growth and completion among regions for balanced development across the country.

### 8.7 Strengthens National Unity and Social Inclusion

The current paper recognizes that Tanzania is vast in size and decentralization is needed to enhance socially visibility and voice to the entire regional governments whether rural, remote areas, or hard-to-reach jurisdictions. Secondly, it encourages cooperation between the local population and their local leaders, which promotes social cohesion and consolidating national unity. Moreover, the country has numerous, diverse ethnicity, and social groups that must be involved in decision-making process, which will reduce marginalization and promote both inclusivity and participatory.

## IX. CONCLUSION

The current study aims at advancing a plausible local government and governance structures that could ensure rapid economic growth, social development, and efficient service delivery to the population. Meaningfully, if the proposal is adopted early enough it will be a useful tool in the implementation of the current Vision 2050. Additionally, it should be a key chapter in the forthcoming draft constitution, The paper explores the evolution of LGAs in Tanzania and managed to give succinctly the historical background of the colonial administration. It summarized the two colonials' systems by isolating the Germany era from that of the British empire. The former system, mainly ruled directly by installing military officers in the subnational indigenous chiefdoms. However, the later applied indirect rule which they borrowed from their earlier colonies of Nigeria and India. Both approaches were beneficial to the colonizers because in that way they could exploit the natural resources and enabled to suppress any social and political unrest from the local population.

Furthermore, it successfully provides useful lessons from the experiences of other countries internationally, continental, regionally, and domestically as these applied a varied types LGAs structures. Internationally, Canada, USA and Australia emerged as a useful source of knowledge since they are the oldest and advanced democracies of the world today. We learned that their government structures are federalism with two-tier system of national and provincial levels of government; whilst their governance structures culminated into executive, judiciary, and parliamentary. Our interest is that all have two houses for governing and law making or senators.

In the continental perspective, the study scrutinizes Ethiopia and South Africa where each has its own unique government and governing structures. Ethiopia appears to have three-tiers of government that includes national, regional and district levels of government. While South Africa has "quasi-federal" or cooperative, which is a two-tier governing structure where the sub-national level has semi-autonomous powers.

Regionally and within the EAC, Kenya and Rwanda are carefully studied since they provide useful insights as we share many social, economic, and geopolitical issues. They both appear to have two-tier systems with more powers delegated to the subnational level governments. Contrary to the seven-case studies Tanzania domestically pursues a completely mixed structure where the devolved structure does not fit the cited examples. Powers to tax, spend and make decisions at LGAs are highly limited and their influence to make own decisions are hand capped.

Finally, the paper concludes by providing two options of reforming the government and governing structures that will give more powers to the LGAs. It advances to dismantle the current regional and district governments by nullifying the appointments of Regional and District Commissioners. Instead, Regions (like

provinces in other countries) must now be managed by elected officials in their jurisdictions to be called Regional Commissioners or Governors. Districts will operate under the supervision of their respective Governors/ Regional Commissioners, that is a two-tier structure. Simultaneously, the current positions of the 393 members of parliament will also be abandoned, and to be replaced by electing Senators to represent the Regions as our new law makers. This policy reform will reduce the number of the elected peoples' representatives from 393 to only 28 governors and 28 senators (i.e., 56 only). More importantly, this means that there will be two houses of representatives that will meet at different times to compete in debating on development issues, passing and enacting legislations, and review government contracts. This will provide the required checks and balances in conducting government business at both national and LGAs levels.

The proposal has significant implications in budgetary reduction and eradicates completely powers of the head of state to appoint both the regional and districts officials. Nonetheless, it announces that Regions to be given fully or semi- autonomy (based on national consensus) by providing them with both revenue assignment and expenditure responsibility powers. It argues that, when this happens it will facilitate planning and budgeting, inclusivity and participatory, transparency and accountability at both national and subnational level governments.

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