

Examining The Influence Of Political Decentralisation On Kenya's National Security In A Context Of Clannism: A Study Of The North Eastern Region- Kenya

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Abstract

Political decentralisation is expected to yield context sensitive empowerment and interventions whose benefits have a domino effect on national security. In the north eastern region of Kenya, political decentralization was implemented amid a long history of clan rivalries. However, there was a lack of empirical knowledge on how the influence of clannism affected the relationship between political decentralisation benefits and national security in the region hence this study. The focus is on the Ogaden, Degodia, Ajuraan, Garre, and Murule clans and their role in the devolution period 2013-2022.

Materials and Methods: A cross sectional survey design employing a mixed method approach in data collection was used to study the influence political decentralization on national security in the context of clannism in the North Eastern Counties of Kenya. The region was clustered in to Counties followed by clustering communities into clans. This was followed by proportionate systematic random sampling of household taking into consideration the gender of participants. About 54.2 % (n=484) were male and 45.8% (n=409) were female implying respondents' gender distribution was fairly even.

Results: The findings suggest that clannism is a central factor in the region and appears to have foreclosed the devolution efforts to benefit most of the residents in the region. To this end, the objectives of political decentralisation in the north eastern region appear to be paralyzed by clannism which often is used as a vehicle to political power irrespective of the capability to lead. This results to incompetent leadership that has often compromised service delivery with negative effects on security. Moreover, it has contributed to insecurity due to factors such as perceived inadequate participatory and inclusive governance and clan-based politics.

Conclusion: The study concludes that the reinforcement of clan-based politics, potential inequitable representation of minority clans in governance, biased development in favour of specific clans, lack of inclusivity and participatory governance among other negative factors, have deepened divisions among clans, resulting in local and national insecurity.

Keywords: Political Decentralisation, Devolution, Security, Clannism.

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I. Introduction

Aalen and Murias (2018) describe political decentralization as a process in which political power and authority are ceded to elected governance officials at sub-national level. This in essence, they argue, provides opportunities to people at the grassroots to choose their leaders who shall be responsible for policy formulation at local level. Key to political decentralisation is the underpinning of law and the ceding of power and authority, vested in national governments, to lower-level governance units (Burbidge,2019; Johnson et al.,2005). Such approaches to governance, as envisaged in political decentralization, allow for meaningful participation of all citizenries hence providing opportunities for framing grassroots solutions to priority issues. This may help in consolidating local support for national political and development agendas and hence, security. This view is accentuated by the World Bank (2017) which argues that inclusive governance approaches are imperative in assuring peace and shared prosperity. Accordingly, different countries, in pursuit of their own agenda and/or quest to inclusivity, may have varying forms and levels of political decentralization which suggests varying effect on national security depending on context.

In conceptualisation of national security, Holmes (2015) advances the view that it encompasses freedom of a country from the threat of physical violence and, a situation where the state's and its people's interests are well taken care of. This implies that the interplay of contextual dynamics, devolvement of power

and resources, and realization of decentralization benefits have ramifications for national security. These contextual dynamics include clannism which can be conceptualised as the feeling of belonging to a particular clan for purposes of enjoying the good and advantages that comes with such belonging. In this regard, if membership in a particular clan plays a significant role in determining how political decentralisation is exercised and how the benefits are shared, this may indicate that devolved governance advantages may negatively impact the social fabric, leading to insecurity.

Neuman et al. (2019) highlight that kinship is a key element in supporting social cohesion and stability in traditional civilizations. Therefore, it can be argued that kinship influences the distribution of power. That said, Hudson et al. (2015) claims that in most instances' clans, which are based on kinship, are socialized to hold prejudicial views of others. Therefore, asymmetrical political power distribution could lead to strained inter clan relationship and may trigger violent clashes hence insecurity. For instance, in Palestine, Alijla (2021) states that clans play an influential role in deciding who governs and adjudicates matters in the judiciary. Halabi (2014) also highlights that clannism determine voting patterns and thus dominant clans end up exercising hegemonic power. In this regard, Alijla (2021) elaborates that clannism has been largely to blame for subnational factionalism that beleaguers this fragile state.

In Hungary, Jarabik (2017) claims that through clannism, elected officials in the country have managed to limit requirement for accountability of power and resources entrusted on them. As such, the author contends, the state has been marked with constant periods of political contestations and violence occasioned by different clans' scramble for power. In Ukraine, International Alert (2019) asserts that clannism has been instrumental in establishing social order and governance particularly in the Zakarpattia region. In this regard, clannism in the country is highly politicised to the extent that any agitation, even by civil society, is looked at from a clan lens. The author notes, the continued marginalisation of minority clan (Roma) and political jostling among major clans (Ukrainian vs Hungarian) on control and share of incomes generated from natural resources might lead to conflict. It avers, this presents imminent threat to national security of Ukraine.

In Somalia, Dahir and Ali (2021) despite having a federal system of governance, political power has continued to be in the hands of the largest clans. Due to hegemonic clan power, citizenry from minority clans have realised limited benefits of political decentralisation particularly in service delivery. Accordingly, the authors note, Somalia has been in state of fragility for decades as utility drawn from interclan contestations for equality supersede those for national unity. Chonka and Healy (2020) contend that clannism has been a weak link in enabling representative and responsive governance structures. Therefore, it can be inferred that clannism has a huge impact on deciding governance officials in so doing injuring the prospects of Somalia national unity and thus, security.

In Kenya, Constitution 2010 through Article 1(1), (3) and (4), Article 10(2)(a) and Chapter 11 gives power to devolution, in this case political decentralisation, that is based on two tiers (National and 47 County Governments) which are separate yet mutually dependent. Despite devolution, there has been little reflection on the effect of social dynamics such as clannism on national security. Moreover, Mbori (2021) argues that the Kenya's Constitution 2010 is limited in propagating diversity such as espoused by differences in ethnicities or clans. As such, ethnic and clan prejudices could pervade distribution of power and resources at both national and local governance structures. However, there is limited empirical context specific knowledge on the influence of clan partisan divide on sharing of benefits of devolved governance and subsequent impact on national security. This knowledge gap provided the impetus for this article to analyse the influence of clannism on the distribution of political decentralisation benefits in North-Eastern region and its consequences for Kenya's national security.

II. Materials and Methods

This article limits itself to the role that political decentralisation plays in enhancing and/or undermining security as mediated by clannism in the Counties of Mandera, Garissa and Wajir which make up the north eastern region of Kenya. Accordingly, attention was on the influence of major clans in the region namely Ogaden, Degodia, Ajuraan, Garre and Murule in the political decentralisation and security nexus in the period between March 2013 and 29 May 2022.

Study Design: A cross-sectional descriptive survey research design with convergent mixed technique of data collection, was employed to conduct the study.

Study Location: The study was conducted in In the three counties of North Eastern Kenya namely, Mandera, Garissa and Wajir.

Study Duration: March 2021 to March 2022

Sample size: 893 study participants

Sampling procedure: Political decentralisation on national security in a context of clannism was explored at the household [HH] level in 12 out of 22 sub-counties of the North-Eastern region. In this regard, the study only sampled respondents from HH headed by adults. To draw respondents from the HH, Kenya's North-Eastern region was clustered into three counties: Wajir, Mandera, and Garissa. After that, sub clustering within the Counties based on Sub Counties and major clans namely Ogaden, Degodia, Ajuraan, Garre, and Murule was carried out.

Subjects & selection method: Respondents were sub clustered within the clans based on age and sex categories. This was done to ensure that the sample that was taken was representative. Subsequently, a total of 893 study participants were drawn. About 54.2 % (n=484) were male and 45.8% (n=409) were female implying respondents' gender distribution was fairly even. This was crucial for the study since inclusion of women voices is essential in a clannism context because clans are typically patrilineal and may harbour prejudice against women/girls (Hudson et al., 2015). As for age groups, the sampling reflected fairly well when compared to general population distribution of the region by age groups as outlined by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2019). Views of 39 Key Informants [KI] on various themes of study were also solicited and integrated to inform the study's findings and recommendations. These were drawn from different leadership cadres such as elected officials, clan elders, national government administration officers, police commanders, businesspeople, and senior management of county governments.

Procedure methodology: After obtaining authority from National Commission for Science and Technology (NACOSTI) which is the organization in charge of research in Kenya and informed consent from the participants, three data collection tools were used namely a HH survey questionnaire, an interview guide and a documentary review were used for data collection. The HH questionnaire, which was used to collect data from the HH, was semi structured consisting of both open and closed ended questions. The closed ended questions were of Five (5) Scale Likert type with responses ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. In this regard, indicators from various scholars were customised and adopted by the study as follows, benefits of political decentralization (World Bank Group, 2001) and indicators of national security in its various facets (Barnett et al., 2011; OECD, 2008; Karanina & Loginov, 2017; United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, 2016; Vhurumuku, 2014; Whitzman, 2007). The interview guide consisting of predesigned open questions was used to collect data from KIs. Additionally, data was collected from an examination of legislation/policy files outlining frameworks enacted to effect devolved functions.

Data Analysis: Collected quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics mainly frequency distributions and presented in percentages. On the other hand, Critical Discourse Analysis [CDA] was utilised in analysing qualitative data collected to infer meaning behind the words and further contextualise them within political decentralisation and national security discourse.

III. Result

The quantitative results from the HH survey questionnaire on the influence of political decentralisation on national security are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1: Influence of Political Decentralisation on National Security

Item	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
People choose their local leaders, but clannism impedes effective participation in governance leading to regional and national insecurity	9.6% (86)	12.1% (108)	8% (71)	57.4% (513)	12.9% (115)	100% (893)
Has increased participation in formulating local development goals and actions but this has not brought benefits to all clans hence regional and national insecurity	3.4% (30)	15.9% (142)	16.8% (150)	50.4% (450)	13.5% (121)	100% (893)
Public policies responding to local problems have not been crafted and executed resulting to conflicts among clans hence regional and national insecurity	7.7% (69)	30% (268)	22.4% (200)	34.6% (309)	5.3% (47)	100% (893)

Source: Survey Data, 2022

From Table 1, it can be established that a minority of the respondents (21.7%) either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the assertion that people chose their local leaders, but clannism impeded effective participation in governance leading to regional and national insecurity. In this regard a KI quipped.

Devolution era has seen an increase in the number of contestants and political positions in the region. Consequently, elected leaders have taken up greater roles of ensuring security within their counties, liaising closely with locals to develop appropriate responses to insecurity. The solutions are more suitable to the security needs of the community and take into consideration the cultural and religious dynamics that are dear to the locals (KI 10: December 2022).

The increase in candidates and political positions in the region during the devolution era, as stated in the quote above, is evidence of the devolution of powers and privileges of governance to lower levels, which is what the conceptual and normative assumptions of political decentralisation is based on. The quotation seems to imply that elected officials work with people at the grassroots to create and put into action adaptable security measures.

To further reinforce the minority view, another KI said.

Devolution has given opportunity to the people to elect Governors, Senators, Members of Parliament [MPs] and Members of the County Assembly [MCAs]. In this case, MCAs come from wards which are small political units which are found all over the region. Therefore, all clans are represented in the county assembly albeit in different proportions (KI 6: December 2022).

The quotation above reiterates that political decentralisation had created more political positions. It further stipulates that by having political leadership at the lowest level (the ward), diverse clans have been afforded an opportunity to participate in governance. Nonetheless, two perspectives might also be discerned. It might be the different proportions in representation referred to in the quote by KI 6 reflects equity in that the populous clans tend to have bigger representation vis a vis the smaller ones. It could also mean that minority clans within wards that have presence of dominant clans do not get an opportunity to elect one of their own. As such, due to use of clan lenses in deciding unfairness or fairness of sharing of devolved power, the perceived unfair power distribution among the minority clans in such a situation may lead to insecurity. In line with this view, Mkutu et al. (2014) and Hope (2014) argue that various forms of perceived and real prejudice, such as one referred herein in this article, prevail in various counties in Kenya and has occasioned hostilities hence, insecurity.

Most respondents (70.3%), however, either agreed or strongly agreed with the assertion that people chose their local leaders, but clannism hampered effective involvement in governance, resulting in regional and national instability. To corroborate this finding, a KI had this to say.

Negotiated democracy has been used as systematic way of locking out potential and promising candidates from politics (KI 12: December 2022).

From the concerns of KI 12 above, it can be discerned that consensus candidates are presented for election through a process referred to as negotiated democracy. According to Cheeseman et al. (2019), negotiated democracy is a system in which, prior to an election, a council of clan elders negotiates and nominates candidates for a variety of political offices using ethnic/clan-based formula. The nominees are then fronted as unopposed while barring other potential candidates who were not chosen by the council of elders drawn from the clans. Accordingly, negotiated democracy within devolution denies the general society the opportunity to independently examine the suitability of a candidate in terms of leadership traits/capability instead, imposes political leaders on a community (Abraham, 2021). This, while it does not stop/impede the participation of all in the ultimate voting process, hinders effective involvement in governance and thus could influence security. This is because, political interest at individual level is suppressed and minority clans marginalised which could result in tension in the community with dire ramifications for security. This notwithstanding, poor leadership choices brought about by the imposition made by the council of clan elders may limit the benefits of devolution, such as employment creation, owing to potential weak governance structures due to the election of possible incompetent candidates that are favoured by the council. This then could lead to structural causes of violence with ramifications to both local and national security.

To further collaborate the majority view, another KI remarked.

Most populous clans dominate elected leadership leaving the minorities underrepresented. This has fractured inter clan relationship (KI 24: December 2022).

The remark by KI 24 seems to suggest that voting of candidates to elected governance positions is influenced by the different clans' populations. It also seems to suggest that voters are rallied and whipped to vote along clan lines. As a result, voting along clan lines has perpetuated marginalisation and recentralised power in the hands of majority clans as such, disfranchising the minorities and creating discord amongst the various clans hence, insecurity.

According to Table 1, most study participants from the HH (63.94%) either agreed or strongly agreed to the view that devolution had increased participation in setting local development goals and actions but not all clans had benefited from this, leading to regional and national insecurity. In this context, a KI gave this explanation.

Development goals are meant to be set at the ward level which is a preserve of the MCAs. Some wards are predominantly occupied by one clan. This means that development planning is on clan basis and not on geographical area basis. That said development agenda ought to have input of various people such as elders, religious leaders amongst others. However, the reality on the ground is that is decided by few people especially the executive, the governors, and partly the MCAs (KI 22: December 2022).

An examination of the comment by KIs 22 establishes several inferences as follows; it affirms that development agenda are discussed at ward level but essentially these wards are clan based and that part of the citizenry at local level do not fully and meaningfully participate in the development agenda setting. This implies participation of the ordinary citizens is basically tokenism as only few decide what is to be implemented. It may also mean that MCAs from the majority clan may not effectively represent the interests of the minority clans in their areas of governance. Moreover, it might imply that upon election, MCAs and the governor could be subverting the expectations of clan elders, who in any case, caused their election through negotiated democracy. In this aspect, they pursue partisan clan interests and/or selfish objectives instead of advocating for and following the interests of the larger community. It may also suggest that politicians are preoccupied with clan identification to gain power and beyond that, pursue selfish objectives.

Exclusionary politics often result in the disenfranchisement of those who feel left out, in this case, the minority clans. Besides, the failure to engage citizenry fully and meaningfully in development planning could result to context and conflict insensitive initiatives. This may result in antagonism and violence in some instances. Accordingly, Hedstrom and Smith (2013) argue that the inclusion of all in governance is critical for peace as marginalised groups tend to occasion civil and political strife. Besides, the issue of exclusion from development planning which underpin resource/wealth distribution, intensifies the possibility of violent conflict (Asal et al., 2016).

The results in Table 1 also shows that a minority of the respondents (37.74%) strongly disagreed with or disagreed with the assertion that public policies responding to local problems had not been crafted and executed resulting to conflicts among clans hence regional and national insecurity. To support the minority view, a respondent remarked.

I would say that public policies are generally in place such those on land and natural resources. The issue is that they have not been well articulated to the ground and therefore you find inter clan conflict over water and pasture. Moreover, it is in the law that a Kenyan can live anywhere but some clans feel that some geographical areas are exclusively theirs. This is indicative of our failures because through devolution, it is hoped that people are more well informed (KI 8: December 2022).

The remark by KI 8 indicates that appropriate policies are in place. However, it acknowledges that due to lack of adequate public education and advocacy, the policies remain largely unknown. This view, perhaps, also explains the fairly large number of neutral responses (22.4%) as the public could be generally ignorant either due to low levels of formal education and/or poor public education and advocacy of the policies. The quote by KI 8 also shows probable clan centric tendencies in the maintenance of access to resources such as land by certain clans. Therefore, it could be that politicians in local governments in the north eastern region, who mostly come from dominant clans, have deliberately failed to conduct public education on available policies so as to pursue agenda of their clans and maintain their dominancy over the minorities. Moreover, it is important to note that policies may be reflective of the views and values of those who coin them. As such, in a clannism context, policy making, and implementation can be problematic due to patronage and failure to fully appreciate contextual dynamics (Ajulor, 2018). This has an effect of reducing meaningful participation in governance by the minority clans and fuelling perception of exclusion hence, insecurity. Moreover, it's indicative of suboptimal functioning local governments in the north eastern region. The remark 'that some clans feel that some geographical areas are exclusively theirs' which may not have basis in law, is indicative of failures of local governments to put in place and/or execute enabling frameworks that would assure harmonious living. In the case of KI 8, the poorly articulated and/or implemented policy on natural resources has occasioned dissatisfaction with how land has been shared thus possibly leading to animosity among warring clans with potential of escalating to violence.

The views of KI 8 on promulgation of public policies by local governments were supported by a documentary review which indicated that some policies responding to local issues had been crafted. For instance, because of literacy and disaster management difficulties that affected it, Mandera County, for example, passed the Early Childhood Education Bill 2014 and the Disaster Management Bill 2020. To address school dropout rates, literacy levels, and domestic violence, Wajir County passed the Bursary Act of 2014 and the Sexual and Gender Based Violence Bill of 2019. To ensure the institutionalization of gender views in all its plans and activities and successful disaster management, Garissa County implemented Gender and Disaster Risk Management policies in 2022.

A slight majority of the respondents drawn from the HH strongly agreed with or agreed (39.86%) with the claim that devolved governments' policies intended to address local issues had not been developed and

implemented, leading to disputes between clans and subsequently regional and national insecurity. To support the slight majority view, a KI said the following.

Public policy prior to devolution used to be promulgated at the national level. With devolution, the expectation was that the policies are localised to achieve devolved functions. However, county assemblies have not come up with context sensitive policies at the rate envisaged. Therefore, there are a lot of things that are happening which are not guided by any policy. For instance, food and pasture issues have always been a problem and because we do not have context specific policies, people cannot take their livestock to certain areas because they belong to certain clans. What happens then is that the aggrieved clan forces itself into the prohibited areas which results to conflict (KI 10: December 2022).

From the sentiments made by KI 10, the following inferences can be made, essentially the respondent agrees that policies could be in place, but they are not sufficient to speak to all contextual challenges prevailing in the north eastern region. Accordingly, in a given context the priorities might be so many such as needs for socio-economic equity including interest of elites and thus, there might be trade-offs. The remarks by KI 10 also mean that traditional frameworks could be persisting because the counties are yet to operationalise national legal and policy frameworks to local contexts. This creates potential gaps and opportunities for elites to instrumentalize their clans while selfishly gaining from such legal and policy lacuna. Indeed, it could create opportunities for amongst other negative issues, corruption, nepotism, resource mismanagement, and clan tensions occasioned by agitation for equity. All these are possible realities in the north eastern region. The quote also alludes to possible resource-based conflict due to gaps policies. This inference is supported by another KI who remarked.

My clan, historically, occupies 50-60% land on the banks of Dawa River which flows to Ethiopia. As a result, other predominant clans feel that the resource has been taken by my clan. This has been a source of conflict. For instance, during elections, this has always been an election issue with politicians promising to displace us to Ethiopia so as their clans can take over the fertile lands along the river. As such, successive county governments have always sought to displace my clan from its ancestral land. This has not been resolved and may not be resolved soon (KI 28: December 2022).

The quote by KI 28 underscores the following issues, inter clan conflicts in the north eastern region revolve around the sharing of resources (in this case, land and water), politicians mobilize their clans around emotive issues such as land in order to acquire and sustain political power over them, tensions around resource sharing could escalate to full blown inter clan conflict resulting to displacement, and there is a possibility of enactment of devolved governance policies purely based on clan considerations and not the general good of the citizenries. This is because, policies may reflect the values and ideologies of those who formulate them. In the north eastern region, this values and beliefs might be anchored on traditions of the dominant clans and/or selfish interest of elites. This makes equitable and effective governance problematic to achieve with possible impact on security as the public lose trust in governance and agitate for more equity and justice.

IV. Discussion

The results of this study are discussed thematically in the subsequent sub sections. The thematic areas are the relationship between political decentralisation with participation in choice of leaders, community participation in formulation of development plans and public policies and their impact on national security in a clannism context.

Choice of Leaders and National Security

The theory of decentralization, postulated by Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859), contends that community involvement in local decision-making, such as in choosing political leaders, can foster peaceful coexistence. However, the study established that negotiated democracy, militated meaningful participation of most citizenry in election processes. According to Cheeseman et al. (2019), negotiated democracy can be a crucial tool in bridging social gaps by creating a panacea for settling potential and already-existing communal differences/conflicts through clan elders. As a result, clan elders can reduce tensions between clans through negotiation and compromise while ensuring security through consensus candidates.

However, negotiated democracy can be double edged. In line with this view, through negotiated democracy, clan-based considerations may supersede assumptions of political devolution that guarantee opportunities to a community, regardless of their position in society, to elect individuals of their choice at all levels. This is because, clan elders decide who should be elected and the general community participate only in voting without a voice. In this case, there are hardly situations of open and transparent procedure that allows members of a clan to share opinions and have a say in how decisions are made. Therefore, it marginalises the majority in deciding leadership questions, compromises inclusion and reinforces disgruntlement and social disharmony hence insecurity. The elevation of clan elders' importance in deciding who gets devolved power could result in insecurity.

In line with this view, leaders perform various roles that influence development and security such as formulation of vision and strategies to create an environment for peaceful coexistence (Jabbar & Hussein, 2017). The implication is that, for effective realisation of devolved governance benefits and security, there is need for competent leaders, regardless of the clans they belong to, who can offer strategic direction. Such leaders have qualities that includes honesty, integrity, trustworthiness, and morality (Sifat 2019) which may not be achieved through clanship. Leaders selected based on competency maybe results-based guided by formal rules and a structured working environment which could be favourable to all. Contrarily, choice of leaders based on clans denies communities strong individuals who have ideas that can advance development (Shaked, 2021) in the region. To this end, there is need for selecting competent leaders who can take up roles that will contribute to development and security of all citizens.

Certainly, clan-based leaders are relationship based (Shaked, 2021), suggesting that their key motivation may be maintaining relationship rather than service delivery. To this end, leaders elected based on clannism may not effectively run devolved governments as they may not enforce rules and regulation for a level working ground for all. More importantly, without commitment to service delivery, county governments are unlikely to serve all the citizens in the region. Poor service delivery denies the residents opportunities to improve their quality of life and hence create possible conditions for insecurity through dissatisfaction and disgruntlement.

Moreover, clan-based considerations in choice of leaders can also reduce their effectiveness as they may use tolerance to relax rather than contribute to shared goals (Shaked, 2021). As already highlighted, the desire to sustain relationship facilitates inward looking rather than outward looking strategies which may be more focused on partisan clan values to the detriment of development of the north eastern region. Furthermore, inward looking orientation disregards the needs of other clans thus sowing seeds of discord that may create animosity in the region to influence security in the entire country. Arguably, leaders elected based on clan considerations may pay a lot of attention to the satisfaction and wellbeing of their kin at the expense of service delivery and other clans which negatively affects the security of the Counties. Indeed, when clan identity politics is entrenched, the result is to exclude the minority clans from governance. Consequently, when the minority feel that their voice persistently does not count in governance decisions, they may feel marginalised and may lose faith in the ideals of devolution thus resorting to unlawful means such as violence. As observed by Das (2018) and Kumawat and Kaura (2018), power hegemony practised by dominant social groups tend to precipitate internal strife as minorities seek to have their voices count and this may adversely affect security outcomes.

Reflecting on the integrative model of primordialist and instrumentalist theories of ethnic conflict, premised on the work of Che (2016), identification of belonging to certain clan is mostly motivated by political interests and quest to attain power. In this regard, politicians and clan elders are critical in constructing and reinforcing this social identity with aim of maintaining power hegemony particularly, amongst the dominant clans. Therefore, clans are instrumentalised to assure self-preservation in the benefiting clan(s) while provoking animosity, mistrust, and possible violence from the marginalized. This could then lead to insecurity. Besides, insecurity may result from dissatisfaction with power-sharing arrangements among various clans. In this case, it may foster hostility, sustain notions of marginalization, and consequently give rise to insecurity.

Community Participation in Development Plans and National Security

The study established that clan prejudices and interests precluded minority clans in development planning. Certainly, those who feel excluded from governance processes like development planning may jeopardize the optimal operation of local governments and may cause insecurity because of unresolved complaints. Moreover, fixation with clan identity by the politicians could have negative implication for security. Indeed, such clan identity politics resulted to inter clan violent conflict in Marsabit County, Kenya leading to fatalities of over 250 people (Abraham, 2021). Therefore, inclusive and meaningful participation of all clans/citizenry in development agenda setting is vital for fostering a collective comprehension of the development needs of the residents in a specific area and in assurance of enhanced security.

In line with this view, public participation allows citizens to engage in local debates and contribute to decision making resulting into policies and programmes that reflect the actual needs, aspirations and interests of all communities (Rijal 2023) hence enhancing security. Gutheil (2023) argues that public participation also deepens democracy through inclusive decision-making process which makes programs to be more targeted and effective. Accordingly, through public participation, a devolved government is able to map out and prioritize the needs of the society therefore develop more focused action frameworks that address development thus enhancing security. Moreover, it nurtures and maintains widespread backing from the grassroots for any development plan, while simultaneously reinforcing social cohesion that unites the various clans hence security. Indeed, poor public participation on issues that anchor resource sharing incite violence (Asal et al., 2016). Besides, UNDP (2009) argues that lack of social cohesion results in increased social tension, violent crime,

targeting of minorities, human rights violations, and, ultimately, violent conflict. As such, there is a strong link between social exclusion and insecurity. Therefore, lack of inclusive community participation as portrayed in findings, is a recipe for insecurity in the region and the whole nation of Kenya.

The findings seem to suggest that more needs to be done to enhance and deepen devolution particularly in a clannism setting where meaningful public engagement to the lowest level, such as the village, could be paramount in effecting conflict sensitive governance and thus, development. This may entail promulgating enabling frameworks that demand for public participation, inclusion, and civic education to reduce the attraction towards clan identity politics and reinforce issue-based ones. Based on the results of this study, it may be argued that the northern region of Kenya lags in development as clanship is centralized in County development activities. Skewed development based on the satisfaction of some groups in the region creates room for infight which may spiral to the national security. It is, therefore, not surprising that the north eastern region remains relatively underdeveloped despite the huge financial allocations the counties receive under devolved governance.

Policy Formulation and National Security

Reflecting on the institutional theory, public policies provide the rules of the game. They provide clarity, define roles and responsibilities of each actor involved and outline expected outputs and therefore enables coherence in governance. Moreover, they build on credibility and legitimacy of a governance institution as the rules of the game are known, hence general acceptance by the populace and thus, security. However, for that to happen, it is not enough to have policies, they must be implemented as well for them to have any meaningful influence on the linkage between devolution and security.

Moreover, the formulation of these policies and legislations responding to local issues speaks to decentralisation theory. The theory holds that devolution leads to election of locals who are familiar with their contextual dynamics and through inclusive governance, they can realise responsive policies that speak to the grassroots needs and challenges. Based on the results, devolved governments in the north eastern region have responded to the gaps, challenges, and opportunities within their devolved governance space to enhance and sustain the reaping of devolution benefits. However, clannism, lack of public education, inadequate advocacy of the policies, and general low levels of education could be a challenge in reaping optimal benefits of devolution as policies remain unimplemented and thus national insecurity due to dissatisfaction amongst the citizenries.

Notably, without policy implementation, the operationalization of the set goals of the local governments could be paralyzed. According to United States Agency for International Development (2001) policy implementation contribute to shaping how a country operationalizes democratic governance. It is through policy implementation that the government can achieve its goals. Tshabangu (n.d) argue that achievement of security is one of the goals of public policy. Therefore, to achieve security, public policies must be implemented. This means that the policies formulated must be the transformed into programs or practices that feed into service delivery to achieve the intended objectives (Signe, 2017). Remarkably, implementation of policies requires concerted effort from different groups of people with required knowledge and skills that is necessary to ensure effectiveness. To this end, involving different groups of people to participate in policy implementation, could help cultivate team spirit that would not only provide services but also cultivate trust which is crucial for security of the community. In addition, it is through collective action in policy implementation that the local government is likely to cultivate grassroot political support that is critical for local and national security. In the case of this study, instrumentalising clannism seem to deny the local governments authoritative figures that could unite citizens through providing opportunities for meaningful interactions such as working together. As already highlighted, clan-based approach in development process is relationship based rather than task oriented. Further, there is a likelihood of recruiting individuals who are not competent to drive the local government agenda as they focus on their own selfish interests. Therefore, politicians in the region having instrumentalised clannism, may have aroused animosity, eroded inter clan trust and fuelled conflict.

Generally, evidence by this study seems to indicate that while devolution might have ameliorated vertical inequalities, it has not been responsive to horizontal inequalities due to poor policy implementation. In this regard, it may have led to power hegemonies by dominant clans/ethnic groups at the grassroots. Central to this hegemony is the possible instrumentalization of clans by elites particularly in the north eastern region. In this regard, responsive policies have not been promulgated or where effected, not made known to the public for their effective application thus by design maintaining power and resource access among the dominant clans. In such scenario, devolved governance could end up widening existing inequalities at the grassroots and fuel inter clan conflict due to nonresponsive policies. The key lesson drawn is that, when devolved governance is sensitive to the need of assuring common good, the citizenry become satisfied and thus could not be inclined towards conflict and violence hence, security at local and national level. Contrarily, insensitive governance can result in social disharmony and agitation for equity and justice which might turn violent to catastrophic effect on security.

V. Conclusion

The connection between the benefits of political decentralisation with local and national security was evidenced by the study. In this regard, the reinforcement of clan-based politics, potential inequitable representation of minority clans in governance, biased development in favour of specific clans, lack of inclusivity and participatory governance among other negative factors, have deepened divisions among clans, resulting in local and national insecurity. The findings of this study also challenge the decentralisation theory that stipulates that through devolution, people at the grassroots may be empowered. Instead, the study proposes that a social constructivist framework should be employed to ensure that contextual factors are embedded in policies that seek to guide governance institutions. To this end, without much effort to understand how clannism works in the north eastern region, tensions could persist leaving the communities vulnerable to risks associated with changes that devolution has brought while in the same vein, forgoing the gains that devolved governance could realize.

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