

**The Proverbial Silver Bullet? A Critical Analysis of the Influence of Devolution on the Desecuritization  
of North Eastern Kenya**

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**Abstract**

Since the rollout of the devolved system of governance in Kenya, the three counties of Garissa, Wajir and Mandera which comprise the North Eastern region received over Ksh. 219 billion from the nationally collected shareable revenue between 2013 and 2021 to address her development needs. This allocation is beside the locally raised revenue and conditional grants received from the national government. Despite this flow of resources, there is minimal research conducted on the nexus between the interventions made using the devolved resources and the desecuritization of the people and geographical spaces in the region, a gap that this study sought to fill. The study was premised on the theory of change and a descriptive survey research design. The target population comprised residents, county government officials, elected members of the county assembly and opinion leaders (religious, clan and business leaders) drawn from the three counties, from which a sample of 216 was obtained. Data was collected using document analysis, a questionnaire and interviews. The findings revealed that devolution had contributed to desecuritization by changing the marginalization narrative through availing public goods and services which had triggered local investment, empowerment and timely handling of local grievances and concerns. Devolution was also found to have spurred local participation in the governance and development of the North Eastern region. The findings highlight a reversal of a pre-devolution phenomenon in which the local community could not identify with government actors due to marginalization and securitization. With a p-value of .000, the study rejects the null hypothesis that there is no statistically significant impact of devolution on the desecuritization of North Eastern Kenya's people and geographical spaces. The study recommends timely disbursement of financial resources by the national government, stiff punishment of corruption and increased visibility of the national government to effectively address security concerns of the local community and the geographical spaces they occupy.

**Key words:** *devolution, desecuritization, marginalization, governance, development deficits*

## **Introduction**

In classical international relations, realists present the state as the principal actor in global affairs. Realist thinkers such as Waltz (1979) and Morgenthau (1954) maintain that the power of the state is invoked and exercised by actors created by the state itself. Marshal (2012) describes the state as a political entity characterized by a clearly demarcated territory, the presence of a government, a permanent population, and the acceptance of such an entity by the community of states with whom it can engage as equals on the global stage. It is these four pillars that give life and legitimacy to the state and the absence of any disqualifies an entity as a state or downgrades an existing one to characterizations such as weak or failed state (Rotberg, 2002b; Rotberg, 2002a). Moreover, the territory of a state remains an enduring interest for the government of the day which readily deploys all or any of its instruments of national power to protect it.

The state functions primarily through a government which is the entity that exercises its constituent power. In exercising the power vested in it, the government is expected to provide a range of public goods and services to the citizens of the state. Among the services provided by the government is security, whose absence or compromise presents an existential threat to the state (Mersheimer, 2001). Realist thinkers further concur with the Hobbesian dictum that the anarchical nature of the international system is the basis for governments to build their own capable machinery that can secure the state. The absence of a leviathan to control the actions of states as each pursues its own interests in that anarchical maze and the ensuing insecurities is the *raison d'être* for the establishment of defense and police forces. The standard practice in (most) democracies vests the responsibility of protecting state borders from external aggression in the defense forces while the police and other comparable disciplined forces oversee safety and security concerns within the borders.

The dispersion of populations throughout the territory of a state implies the need to put in place the right institutions and resources to secure people and their properties, hence survival of the state. While vigilance is to be ensured by these institutions in every part of the country as per each agency's mandate, extra attention is given to populations and geographical spaces along the borderlands. This is particularly so because of the suspicion with which states view each other and the potential threats that may filter through the borders. The perceptions of threats are further

aggravated by the fact that most international borders especially in Africa, were arbitrarily set by the Europeans with little regard to the social ties among communities – and African history is replete with examples of social groups who had lived together as one community but were put asunder as the borders arrived at during the Berlin conference of 1884-1885 took effect (Herbst, 1989).

The separation of such communities meant different allegiances in terms of citizenship. This did not however stop cross-border interactions such as trade and marriage among them. Due to their peripheral location from the capital, these border communities, and the areas they occupy have not received an equitable share of resources and services from their national governments, leading to systemic marginalization and the presence of many ungoverned spaces (Mehretu, Piggozi & Sommers, 2000). In that circumstance, there tends to be a strong connection between these border communities informed by the shared kinship bonds. This situation informs overt or covert irredentist attempts by neighbouring states, due to the support they get from the marginalized communities. The consequence of covert irredentist attempts by a neighbouring state, empowered by cessation attempts by border communities, is inevitably met by strong state power and the securitization of such areas and the peoples therein. This is the context in which the North Eastern region of Kenya found itself in the post-independence period.

The paper takes the view that marginalization and securitization of border communities and their areas of residence were the key anchors of the bad relations between such communities and the state authorities in pre-devolution Kenya. Consequently, the paper seeks to make a case for devolution as an avenue for desecuritization. The null hypothesis to be tested in the paper is as stated below:

H<sub>0</sub>: Devolution has no statistically significant influence on desecuritization of North Eastern Kenya

## **Literature Review**

### **The Marginalization and Securitization Context in North Eastern Kenya**

During the colonial epoch, the British isolated the Northern Frontier District (NFD) of Kenya (then East Africa Protectorate) and administered it separately from the rest of the protectorate's territory. Through the Closed District Ordinance (1926), the inhabitants of the NFD were cut off from the

rest of the Kenyan communities, denying them an opportunity to forge a common Kenyan identity. The British feared the Somali interaction with other Kenyan communities could awaken their political consciousness and spur a militant approach to demanding freedom. The 1934 Special District Administration Ordinance sought to limit interaction between groups in the NFD, the objective being to water down the galvanizing power of the Islamic religion that was dominant in the district. Because of the segregation, the NFD was set on the path of marginalization by the British. The ordinances were implemented through strong-arm tactics and the deliberate lack of infrastructural development. The lack of investment in critical infrastructure was consistent with Britain's policy within her colonial enterprise not to expend resources in foreign lands that had no economic value (Wanyande, 2016). Thus, with the North Eastern border lands having neither high-value natural resources nor a favourable weather to support large-scale crop growing, the NFD suffered systematic marginalization.

In the run up to Kenya's independence, various political parties were formed in 1960, among them Kenya African Union (KANU), Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU) and the Northern Province People's Progressive Party (NPPP). While KANU and KADU advocated for nationalist ideals in Kenya, NPPP advocated a secessionist agenda, favouring the uniting of the region to the Federal Republic of Somalia rather than being part of independent Kenya (Mutisya, 2017). This was partly fuelled by the strong kinship and religious ties with the communities in Somalia, the pronouncement by the government of Somalia of her intention to unite all regions occupied by Somali speakers (see Figure 1) under one government and the marginalization of the region by the British colonial administration in charge of Kenya.

Shortly after Kenya's independence in 1963, the military wing of NPPP with the support of the Somalia government launched attacks on Kenya government installations, including a security camp of the Kings African Rifles (Whittaker, 2014). This triggered a declaration of a state of emergency in the NFD by the government of Kenya, marked by the imposition of a dawn-to-dusk curfew and the deployment of enhanced security in the area. By these actions, a violent confrontation between the Kenyan forces backed by the British Army and the Somali insurgent group backed by the government of Somalia was underway. The confrontation, variously referred to as the *Shifita* war of *Daf Daba* took place between 1963 and 1967 and ended after a ceasefire agreement between Somalia and Kenya brokered by the Organization of African Union (OAU)

was signed in Arusha on 14<sup>th</sup> September 1967 (Weitzberg, 2016). The two states agreed to restore diplomatic relations. In the absence of support from Mogadishu and the villagization tact used by the Kenyan forces, the *shifita* war dissipated. It is instructive to note that the agreement was between Kenya and Somalia and did not necessarily involve the dissidents themselves, who were Kenyan. This lends credence to the claims that the dissidents were receiving support from Somalia government in waging the war.

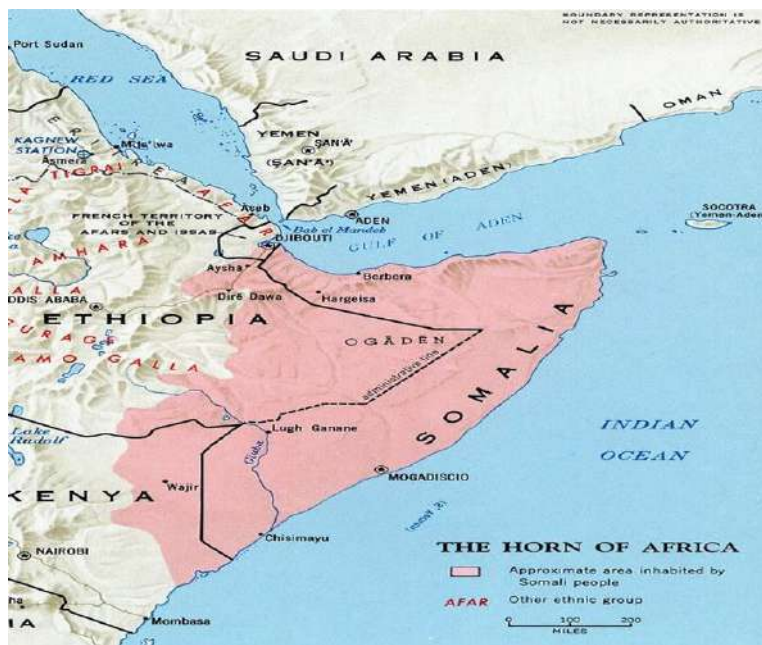


Figure 1: Geographical Spread of the Somali speakers during the colonial era

At the end of the *Shifita* War, the government of Kenya became increasingly sensitive to developments in the NFD. This paper avers that the support for Somalia's irredentist attempts by the local communities contributed to the subsequent securitization of the area and the people themselves. This worsened the already pre-existing marginalization overseen by the colonial government. Government policy tended to mirror that of the British colonial government. One of the often-cited policy documents is Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965 whose thrust was Africanization of the country's economy through approaches such as indigenous industrialization. While the sessional paper provided for special consideration for less developed provinces in terms of development expenditure, it equally rooted for the investment of state resources in areas from

which the government would get a return on investment. The consequence of this practice by the independence government was a worsening of the already existing marginalization and inequalities between the peripheral or border areas compared to those located in the climatic zones that could support tea, coffee or maize growing (Okello, 2015).

The rather contradictory position espoused by Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965 that national resources would be channelled to productive areas is particularly intriguing. It is important to note that at the time, the national economy as conditioned by the British during the colonial era was agrarian in its orientation. Instructively, though pastoralism is within the broader theme of agriculture and indeed the main economic activity for most of the border communities in the larger North Eastern Kenya region at the time, it was considered economically unviable. Could this therefore mean that the independence government may have deliberately perpetuated marginalization of the arid and semi-arid lands in Kenya as begun by the colonial government? This paper contention that this policy approach contributed to the resentment of the independence government by the inhabitants of North Eastern Kenya and the unwillingness of some of the members of the communities in these areas to cooperate with the government. This policy was continued by the Moi government which worsened the state-community relations by overseeing security operations, key among them the *Bulla Karatasi* and *Wagalla* massacres in which over 1000 lives were lost besides leaving a trail of destruction as documented by the Truth Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC, 2014). The *Bulla Karatasi* massacre has been characterized as ‘collective punishment’ undertaken by the military in 1980 in response to the killing of a district officer and seven senior government officials by the *shifita*. The *Wagalla* massacre of 1984 was a military operation to recurrent violent interclan conflicts that undermined peace in the North Eastern region. The massacres alienated the local community from the government.

Despite three changes in the political leadership of the country between 1963 and 2012, most of the developmental grievances voiced by border communities of North Eastern Kenya relating to marginalization were not adequately addressed. With minimal support for socio-economic development from the government based on the unviability of pastoralism, these communities were forced to forge their own socio-economic path by establishing ties with the communities in the neighbouring countries with whom they shared many social characteristics (Little, 2005). The evolving socio-economic ties between Kenyan border communities and those from the

neighbouring countries would evolve over the years to give rise to successive generations of a mixed population and a thriving trade in the North Eastern border lands (Imboywa, Mutungi & Muthomi, 2022). These dynamics along with the presence of many ungoverned spaces persisted and contributed to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, most of which have been used over the years in exacerbating the recurrent inter and intra clan violent encounters as well as transnational terrorism. These acts of violence constitute an existential threat to the people and the territory of the Republic of Kenya. This contributed to the securitization of the people and the spaces they occupied. The securitization became even more pronounced in the wake of the fall of the Siad Barre regime in Somalia in the early 1990s and the influx of refugees, some of whom turned out to have been active combatants in the war in Somalia (Hirbo, 2018). It was further compounded by the rise of terrorism on to global security agenda and the emergence of the Somalia-based Al Shabab terror group. In a nutshell, the North Eastern region was not only marginalized but also securitized under the first three administrations of independent Kenya.

### **The Devolution Turn: Its Legal Grounding**

The promulgation of the constitution of Kenya (CoK) 2010 radically changed the governance model and especially the sharing of national resources. It provides for a devolved system of governance anchored on 47 subnational units called counties, each run by an elected government that exists to serve the development needs of her residents. The counties however work closely with the national government in the provision of certain services, key among them education and security. The CoK has certain provisions that are germane to this study with respect to the desecuritization of border communities and spaces that had been securitized since independence. These provisions include those touching on national values and principles of governance as espoused in Article 10, the Bill of Rights and the devolved system of governance.

These provisions of the constitution respond to aspects relating to marginalization. For instance, Article 10 covers national values and principles of governance as including national unity, sharing and devolution of power, participation of the people in their own governance, equity, inclusiveness, non-discrimination and protection of the marginalized as well as sustainable development. These values and principles find expression in Article 174 of CoK which spells out the objectives of devolution. An analysis of the objectives of devolution presents Article 174 as a deliberate effort aimed at advancing the fundamental freedoms and rights that accrue to everyone



in the country irrespective of their ethnic extraction or regional affiliation as illustrated in articles 26 to 51 of the constitution. Some of the rights that render marginalization illegal while simultaneously making a case for devolution as a viable pathway to desecuritization of border communities and the geographical spaces they inhabit include: equality and freedom from discrimination, security of the person, and equal enjoyment of socio-economic and political rights. These three provisions i.e., national values and principles of governance, the bill of rights and the devolved system of governance serve to highlight the unity and complementary nature of the provisions in the CoK 2010 in terms of emancipating individuals and groups.

Article 174 provides for public participation in decision making, meaning that all residents within a county have every right to engage the county government in determining which development projects should be prioritized and by so doing further their own development. The article further envisages devolution as intended to ensure equity in the sharing of local and national resources so as to promote socioeconomic development by ensuring provision of services closer to the people who need them. This particular article acknowledges the existence of the marginalization grievance in some parts of Kenya, especially in the North Eastern borderlands that are mostly arid or semi-arid and the need to redress the inequalities to attain a balanced national development. The need to redress the existing inequalities is further recognized and measures to redress them are provided for in Article 202 of the CoK which establishes the framework for sharing of revenue between the national and county governments. Other measures embedded in the CoK to help address marginalization include the provision for establishment of an equalization fund vide Article 204 and the demand on the state to institute affirmative action programmes to ensure inclusion of minorities and marginalized groups in governance as well as access to education, economic and employment opportunities as provided for by Article 56.

### **The Place of Devolution in Securitization and Desecuritization Theory**

The concept of securitization is credited to Ole Wæver (1995) but gained academic popularity after its usage by Buzan, Ole Wæver and de Wilde (1998) who likened it to a discursive act where an ordinary issue is articulated through the lenses of security. According to the trio, securitization occurs when state actors present the issue at hand as an existential threat to an audience which buys into the argument made by the securitizing agent, thus giving their approval, whether passive or active to the government to take extraordinary measures to secure the state or the referent object



in question. This in effect means that an existential threat to a state does not necessarily have to be external; it can be located within the territory of the state, threatening the entire state or some referent objects within it and whose duty of protection lies with the state.

Desecuritization on the flipside has been argued as a process rather than an act through which securitized issues increasingly lose their ‘prominence’ in security discourses and their attendant activities (Atland, 2008; Coskun, 2008). Desecuritization scholars such as Hansen (2012) and Mackenzie (2009) aver that the process of desecuritization may comprise one or a combination of sub-processes namely *détente*, replacement, rearticulation and silencing. It is instructive to note that these sub-processes are neither linear nor mutually exclusive but rather complementary and self-reinforcing. While *détente* is characterized by the slow shift of an issue from the dominant security discourse and its attendant military engagements, a process Hansen (2012) calls peace stabilization, replacement happens when a securitized issue is replaced by another. Rearticulation as a sub-process of desecuritization is concerned with the provision of political solutions to the threats and grievances that birthed the issue that became securitized. Silencing is about the cessation by the promoters of a given issue from articulating it as a security threat, which leads to its disappearance from the security discourse. From this description, it is evident that desecuritization only finds its expression in securitization. In other words, an analysis of desecuritization is only possible to the extent that the analyst is clear on what securitization is and how the securitized issues came to be recognized as such.

The advent of devolution to redress marginalization presents one of the avenues for desecuritization of border communities and geographical spaces. Hansen (2012) espouses desecuritization as the shifting of an issue from emergency mode requiring immediate substantive action to ordinary negotiating processes that are political, rather than security, in nature. In other words, the issue at hand moves from non-negotiable security politics to ordinary public policy sphere where government interventions would suffice in addressing it. In the public sphere as propounded by the Copenhagen School, people debate the desecuritized issue with a view to building consensus on how to address it as an ordinary issue that does not necessarily threaten the existence of the referent object. The implication of this eventuality therefore is that the actors within the desecuritization process are more and diverse as opposed to those driving securitization. This difference is informed by the fact that security processes tend to be a matter of high politics,

specialized, command-based and secretive. Normal politics and public policy within which desecuritization happens attract many actors with diverse views and hence broader perspectives.

## **Methodology**

This study examines the contribution of shared revenue, locally generated resources and conditional grants given to the border counties of Garissa, Mandera and Wajir for recurrent and development purposes. These counties are used in this study for a variety of reasons, key among them being the high levels of poverty and infrastructural underdevelopment as reported by national agencies over time prior to the advent of devolution, the recurrent violent conflicts that have attracted forceful intervention from national security agencies and the huge amounts of resources that have been allocated to them since the advent of devolution (Controller of Budget, 2022; NGEC, 2017 & KNBS, 2009). The study is anchored on a convergent mixed methods survey design and uses a sample size of 216 obtained using stratified, purposive and simple random sampling procedures. The target population comprised of local residents, county government officials, Members of the County Assembly, religious, clan and business leaders drawn from eight towns within the region namely: Mandera Town, Takaba, Rhamu, Kutulo, Garissa town, Balambala, Habaswein and Wajir town. Data was collected through document analysis, a questionnaire and key informant interviews conducted through in-person and telephone sessions. The questionnaire, which had closed and open-ended questions that allowed for collection of quantitative as well as qualitative data, was administered to local community other than leaders with the help of research assistants. The assistants helped translate the questions in the Somali language where that was required, given the high levels of illiteracy in the study area (KNBS, 2019). The interviews were administered through in-person and telephone interviews to elected leaders, senior county officials and select religious, clan and businessmen. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics while qualitative data was analysed using content analysis. The two data sets were then triangulated and interpreted simultaneously. In the conduct of the research, ethical imperatives such as anonymity of respondents, confidentiality of the data given and the principle of non-maleficance were observed.

## **Presentation and Discussion of Findings**

Table 1 shows resources received in each of the three counties comprising the North Eastern region from the sharable revenue raised nationally in line with the provisions of article 202 of CoK over

a period of nine financial years, spanning 2013/2014 to 2020/2021. Table 2 indicates own revenue raised within each county over the same period while Table 3 shows the amount of conditional grants that accrued to each of the three counties.

Table 1: County Share from the Revenue Raised Nationally (in Ksh billions)

<b>County</b>	<b>2013/4</b>	<b>14/15</b>	<b>15/16</b>	<b>16/17</b>	<b>17/18</b>	<b>18/19</b>	<b>19/20</b>	<b>20/21</b>	<b>21/22</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Garissa	4.4	5.1	6.3	6.9	7.5	8.1	7.7	7.0	7.9	60.9
Wajir	5.3	6.3	7.4	8.1	8.7	9.4	8.4	8.5	9.5	71.6
Mandera	6.5	7.8	9.2	10.0	10.3	11.2	10.3	10.2	11.3	86.8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16.2</b>	<b>19.2</b>	<b>22.9</b>	<b>25.0</b>	<b>26.5</b>	<b>28.7</b>	<b>26.4</b>	<b>25.7</b>	<b>28.7</b>	<b>219.3</b>

Source (Controller of Budget, 2022)

Table 2: Own Revenue Raised within the County (in Ksh Millions)

<b>County</b>	<b>2013/4</b>	<b>14/15</b>	<b>15/16</b>	<b>16/17</b>	<b>17/18</b>	<b>18/19</b>	<b>19/20</b>	<b>20/21</b>	<b>21/22</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Garissa	35.9	130.7	105.9	82	86.7	108.2	109.9	103.5	65.6	<b>828.7</b>
Wajir	61.03	107.7	81.7	75.9	67.6	60.1	60.4	73.9	52.4	<b>640.73</b>
Mandera	90	87.7	88.2	55.8	61.8	89	124.9	143.3	132.8	<b>873.5</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>186.9</b>	<b>326.1</b>	<b>275.8</b>	<b>213.7</b>	<b>216.1</b>	<b>257.3</b>	<b>295.2</b>	<b>320.7</b>	<b>250.8</b>	<b>2342.93</b>

Source (Controller of Budget, 2022)

Table 3: Conditional Grants from National Government (in Ksh Millions)

<b>County</b>	<b>2013/4</b>	<b>14/15</b>	<b>15/16</b>	<b>16/17</b>	<b>17/18</b>	<b>18/19</b>	<b>19/20</b>	<b>20/21</b>	<b>21/22</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Garissa	0	0	472	490	115	484	133	446	803	<b>2943</b>
Wajir	0	0	158	192	144	284	25	272	413	<b>1488</b>
Mandera	0	0	182	275	178	315	340	431	393	<b>2114</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>812</b>	<b>957</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>1083</b>	<b>498</b>	<b>1149</b>	<b>1609</b>	<b>6545</b>

Source (Controller of Budget, 2022)

The data in Tables 1, 2 and 3 shows that cumulatively, the counties of Garissa, Wajir and Mandera received Ksh 228.3 billion from the three revenue streams over the study period. For the sharable revenue, the allocations per annum were on the increase in the first six years of devolution (up to 2018/19) across the three counties before declining in 2019/20 and then taking an upward trajectory in the subsequent years of the study period. This trend is shown in Figure 2.

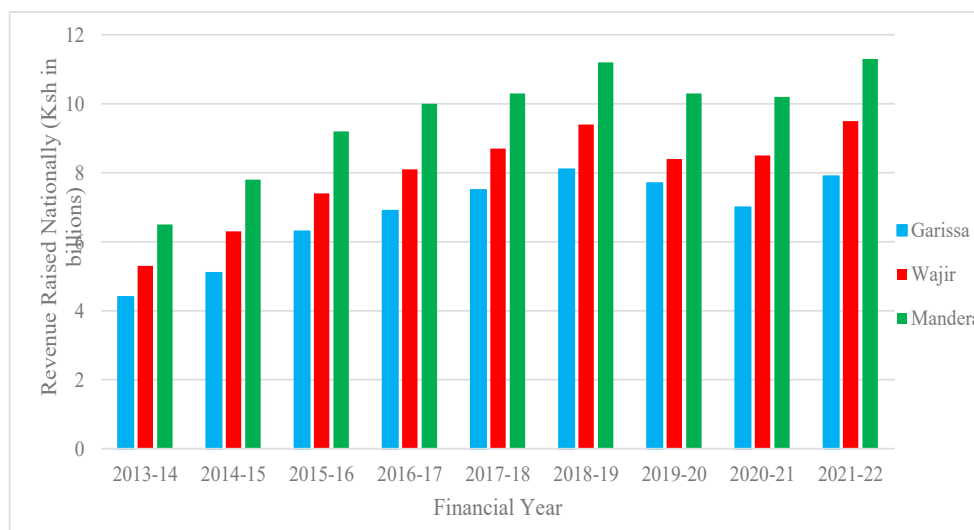


Figure 2: Sharable Revenue Received in the North Eastern Region (Controller of Budget, 2022)

Data obtained from KNBS (2019) shows that the Gross County Product (GCP) per capita increased across the three counties between 2013 and 2017 as shown in Table 4. The concept of GCP is advanced by the KNBS (2021) as a measure of newly created value resulting from economic activities by companies or individuals in a county. Put differently, it may be understood as a county's contribution to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Table 4: Gross County Product per capita, 2013-2017 (in Ksh thousands)

County	2013/4	2014/5	2015/6	2016/7	2017/8
Garissa	49357	49618	50792	51543	52099
Wajir	41652	41998	43455	43864	44712
Mandera	25867	26594	27287	27968	28602
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>116876</b>	<b>118210</b>	<b>121534</b>	<b>123375</b>	<b>125413</b>

Source: KNBS (2019)

The consistently increasing annual GCP per capita over the 5 years arising from increased economic activities implies that there was an increase in the quality of life within the populace in the study area. To the extent that the same was not happening in the pre-devolution period, this study argues that the rise in the standard of living can reasonably be attributed to devolution through which the people were able to obtain employment or business opportunities that gave a boost to their economic security. A county government employee at Mandera town corroborated this argument thus:

I wish devolution came earlier. As a result of it, we have become empowered as a community and as individuals. In my own case, I was employed by the county government and thus I got a salary to supplement my small business in providing for my family. Prior to getting the job, life was difficult as business opportunities were limited. My friend too was lucky to get an opportunity to trade with a company contracted by the county government. So, yes there have been more economic opportunities since devolution was rolled out in 2013.

Besides the improvement in the GCP per capita, the study established that various public goods such as roads had been constructed using the resources devolved to the counties. Such infrastructure supported access to services like healthcare and education as well as establishment of private business enterprises such as public transport. These developments have contributed to creation of more employment and wealth creation for the investors. A businessman in Habaswein reported thus:

The road network in Wajir County was terrible before devolution. However, with resources coming to the county, the county government has constructed a 25km tarmac road and that is something to be proud of. Other roads have been either graded or gravelled besides being regularly maintained, thus making movement across the county easier. Security lighting has also been erected in key areas within Wajir township, supporting businesses late into the night. I'm happy with the progress because I do not have to go to Nairobi to achieve my economic goals or get some services like healthcare which is now being offered by the county government. There is however room for improvement.

These findings are the clearest indication yet as to the potency of the devolved system of government in addressing some of the marginalization grievances that had beset the larger North

Eastern region before the advent of devolution. The finding on the excitement surrounding the construction of the first tarmac road in Wajir County in 2014 is corroborated by Abdul (2018). That some of the respondents who are residents in the study area no longer find it worth travelling to major cities such as Nairobi to seek better economic opportunities highlights the central role of devolution in countering the marginalization narrative. This study argues that the fact that the residents have invested and are reaping the benefits of their investment, in some cases due to the forward and backward linkages with the county government projects, implies that they are willing to work with national government actors in shoring up security because that is in their interest. This is possible through a deliberate process of rearticulation and silencing, which are both sub-processes of desecuritization as explained in section 2.3 of this paper.

While the arguments presented above paint a picture of growth consistent with the revenues coming from the national government in the form of sharable revenue, an analysis of Table 2 on the own revenue raised locally paints a different picture. The expectation is that increased resources and thriving businesses as well as increased income should contribute to more locally raised revenues for reinvestment into the county. The trend of this stream of revenues to the counties is however characterized by inconsistencies as shown in Figure 3.

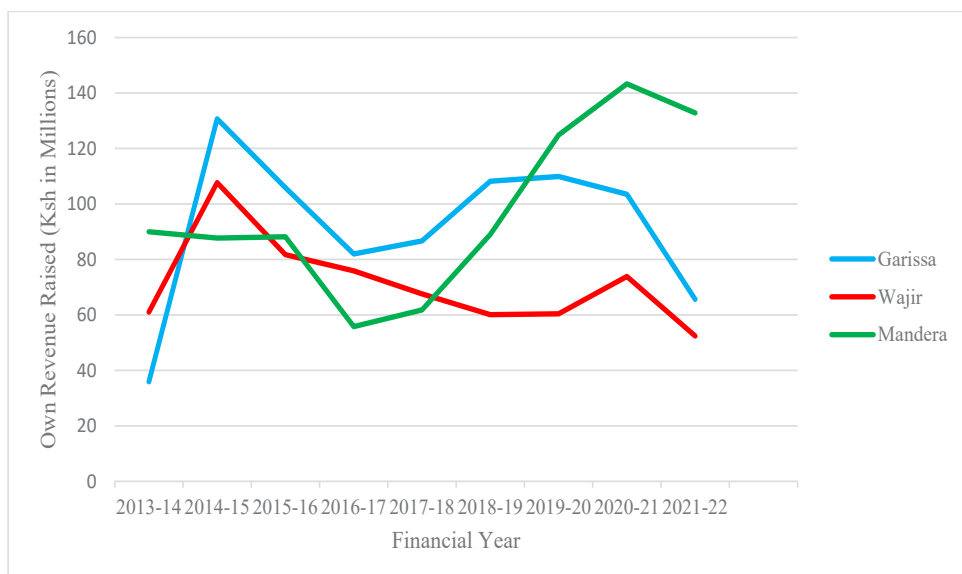


Figure 3: Own Revenue Raised within the County (in Millions)( Controller of Budget, 2022)

Instructively, the dips in the revenue raised locally across the three counties seem to have occurred during the election years of 2017 and 2022. This trend was explained by a Member of the County Assembly of Garissa as attributable to the lack of stability in terms of continuity or change of county government regimes as follows:

During electioneering periods, enforcement of the collection of county revenues tends to slacken or suffer altogether as incumbents give waivers to businesses or property owners to gain their political support. We can also not completely rule out corruption as unscrupulous officials take advantage of the absence of political leaders as they engage in campaigns to defraud the counties at the revenue collection points. This undermines the completion of county projects that had been earmarked for completion with such revenues.

The subject of potential corruption as reported by MCA from Garissa is consistent with Shahow's (2023) assertion that the vice was rampant in the North Eastern counties, although his claims are not supported by any evidence of cases of graft and the amounts involved for further interrogation.

The study further established that apart from the sharable and locally raised revenues, the three counties of North Eastern were also receiving funding for development purposes in the form of conditional grants as presented in Figure 3. The conditional grants are envisaged to support the development of certain budgeted priority projects, hence contributing to addressing the underdevelopment concerns that were equated to marginalization in the pre-devolution era. It is important to note that such allocations cannot be diverted from the intended purposes, hence the reason why the condition must be met before allocation is disbursed.



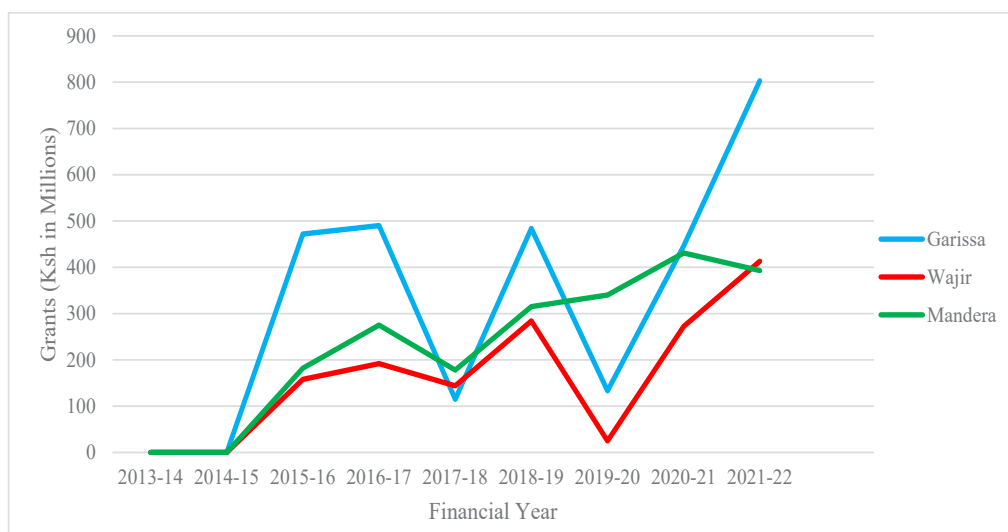


Figure 4: Conditional Grants from the National Government

The presentations in Table 3 and Figure 4 make clear that in the first two years of devolution, the three counties of North Eastern Kenya did not receive any conditional grants because the national government had not fully developed the guidelines for the allocation of such funds. The grants included allocations from the equalization fund as provided for in Article 204 of CoK, reimbursement on level five hospitals and fuel levy fund for maintenance of county roads. The allocations however dipped in the 2017/2018 financial year, ostensibly because of the uncertainty occasioned by the election in 2017 while the 2019/2020 was attributed to the Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19).

Asked about the major development milestones their respective counties had made and which they believed were positively impacting them, the aggregated responses across the three counties on five items of interest to the study as spelt out in Article 43 of CoK were as presented in Table 5. (SA= Strongly Agree, A=Agree, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree)

Table 5: Aggregated Development Indicators in the Counties

Development line	SA	A	D	SD
1. Construction and equipping of hospitals and health facilities	45%	53%	2%	0%
2. Support for education	25%	61%	13%	1%
3. Construction of access roads	52%	48%	0%	0%
4. Support for agriculture	18%	42%	27%	13%
5. Provision of water	24%	46%	30%	0%

The study findings as tabulated in Table 5 indicate that 98% of the respondents agreed that part of the financial resources accruing to Garissa, Wajir and Mandera counties went into construction and equipping of health facilities. On this development item, the study established that conditional grants went into expanding the range of services and facilities in level 5 hospitals while part of the sharable revenue went into construction of level 4 and lower tier health facilities. Each subcounty hospital across the three counties was reported as being manned by a medical doctor with a team of clinical officers and nurses. Further, each subcounty in Mandera for instance was reported as having a dedicated, well-equipped ambulance to take care of emergencies. A religious leader at Kutulo explained the turnaround in healthcare provision in the devolution era as follows:

Prior to devolution, Mandera County and the larger North Eastern region relied on the poorly administered and ill-equipped provincial hospital in Garissa. However, with the advent of devolution, we now have a level 5 hospital that can take care of the medical issues that used to be referred to Garissa or Nairobi. The hospitals have qualified personnel and the equipment needed to attend to various medical issues. So to me, the money from the national government and partners has been useful in supporting the health provision in our county.

These study findings are corroborated by the statistics published by the United Nations Inter-Agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (2020) which indicated a drop in infant mortality from 42 in 2014 to 40.8 in 2019. This study argues that the decline in mortality rate can reasonably be attributed to the investments made by the respective county governments in the health sector within their jurisdiction. All other items of study as indicated in Table 5 registered a response of over 60% in the affirmative, meaning that the respondents had noted a positive change in the listed

sectors of education, roads, agriculture and water, changes which they attributed to devolution. The roads sector for instance received a response of 100% agreement, meaning that respondents had seen roads constructed by the county governments, most of which were either gravelled or graded, with a few segments in major urban areas of the region being tarmacked.

The study however notes that 40% of respondents disagreed that there was support for agriculture. This group of respondents while appreciating the county government's effort, lamented that as a pastoral community, they were not getting the support they needed with their livestock, especially with regards to timely vaccination drives, watering points for their animals as well as sourcing for competitive markets for their animals. A county official at Takaba acknowledged the challenges but noted that some of the herders were expecting more than was realistically possible from the county government. She explained thus:

It is true that there are some challenges faced by our herders such as pasture, frequency of vaccination drives and inadequate abattoirs. However, the herders need to appreciate that the county government cannot offer everything since it is also working with limited resources. It is almost impossible to provide adequate pasture for every herder during the dry season. The important thing is that the political goodwill is there, and we are doing the much we can with what we have to support them as well as the crop growers.

The water sector which also received nearly one-third (30%) of responses disagreeing that there were major developments, pointed to the short-lived nature of some of the interventions. This group of respondents argued that nearly all the water pans that the county governments had developed dried up immediately after the end of the rains. They also noted that the boreholes sunk for home use were far apart and the distribution of the water was not efficient as many families depended on donkeys to fetch drinking water from the nearby sites, some of which could be as far as five kilometres away from their homesteads. The nature of this complaint points to the need for more investment in the water sector to enhance access and use of clean water in the homesteads and by so doing help solve other problems such as waterborne diseases that have been reported as prevalent in the study area (WHO, 2017).

The devolution benefits examined above notwithstanding, the study established that various challenges could render devolution stillborn and especially its potency in desecuritizing the people and the geographical area that constitutes North Eastern Kenya. The challenges that emanated from

the study's respondents include insufficient public participation in critical processes such as budget making, project monitoring among others, lack of awareness of the roles of the citizens within the devolution set-up, corruption and the haphazard way resources were being released to the counties by the national government. These challenges are corroborated by Ndalila (2016).

### Correlation Analysis

A correlation analysis of the study variables was shown in Table 6. The results indicate a significant positive relationship between devolution and desecuritization ( $r=.713$ ,  $p=.000$ ).

Table 6. Correlation Analysis

Variable		Performance of devolution	Desecuritization
Performance of devolution	Pearson correlation	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Desecuritization	Pearson correlation	.713**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	

### Hypothesis Testing

H<sub>0</sub>: Devolution has no statistically significant influence on desecuritization of North Eastern Kenya

Table 7 shows the model fitness results arising from regression analysis.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.784a	0.637	0.603	0.22668

a Predictors: (Constant) healthcare, education, roads, agriculture, water

The findings in Table 7 indicate that devolution (healthcare, education, roads, agriculture and water) can explain 63.7% of desecuritization in the North Eastern region of Kenya. The analysis of variance (ANOVA) results were as shown in Table 8.

Table 8 ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	20.84	5	5.356	112.536	.000b
	Residual	12.741	211	0.046		
	Total	33.581	216			

a Dependent variable: desecuritization

b Predictors: (Constant) healthcare, education, roads, agriculture, water

The study findings presented in Table 8 indicate the p-value as .000 which is less than .005. This means that healthcare, education, roads, agriculture and water which are some of the core functions performed by county governments are significant in explaining desecuritization of border communities and the spaces such communities occupy. Consequently, the study rejects the null hypothesis. This finding is corroborated by the correlation analysis result in Table 6 which indicates a significant positive relationship between devolution and desecuritization of border communities and the spaces those communities occupy.

## Conclusion

This study contends that desecuritization as a process requires a range of intervention measures such as a devolved and well-resourced system of governance. This assertion is informed by the very nature of a devolved system of governance and especially Kenya's which not only decentralizes resources to the counties but also empowers the citizens to play an active role in their governance by electing leaders to office, prioritizing development projects, among others. In the case of the North Eastern region of Kenya, devolution presents an avenue for addressing marginalization through the desecuritization sub-processes of rearticulation and silencing. However, in the absence of a robust governance framework, devolution may not fully achieve the intended benefit of desecuritization of the peoples and the region of North Eastern Kenya.

## Recommendations

The study makes the following recommendations in light of the variables:

The national government through the National Treasury should ensure timely disbursement of resources to the county governments to enable them to avail the services needed by the local community as a way of making the people feel included in their governance and as part of the republic of Kenya.

Actors within the justice system (Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission and the judiciary) need to make corruption undesirable through speedy investigations and delivery of judgements to ensure resources allocated to the counties but stolen by unscrupulous people are recovered and used to address marginalization.

The political leadership within the North Eastern region needs to actively educate their constituents on their role in holding the county governments accountable for the use of the resources allocated to the counties.

The department of civil registration needs to further entrench itself within the North Eastern region and offer identification documents to the citizens to enable them pursue opportunities for their own empowerment.

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