

**DEVOLUTION AND INTERCOMMUNAL CONFLICTS IN MARSABIT  
COUNTY-KENYA**

**BY**

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**C153/OL/EMB/20992/2022**

**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF LAW, ARTS,  
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC POLICY  
AND ADMINISTRATION IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF  
ARTS, PUBLIC POLICY AND ADMINISTRATION OF KENYATTA  
UNIVERSITY.**

**OCTOBER, 2025.**

## DECLARATION

This project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

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This project has been submitted with my approval as university supervisor.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

<b>ASAL</b>	Arid and Semi-Arid Lands
<b>KADU</b>	Kenya African Democratic Union
<b>KANU</b>	Kenya African National Union
<b>KNBS</b>	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
<b>NACOSTI</b>	National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
<b>SPSS</b>	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom

## OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Conflict mitigation:** This is an effort used to curb or reduce conflict and violence through the incorporation of various actions and strategies. In the context of this study, conflict mitigation refers to the efforts and strategies used by the county leadership and stakeholders to reduce or prevent inter-communal violence. The definition of this term is crucial as clarifies the focus on actions intended to manage tension and prevent escalation of conflicts in Marsabit County.

**Conflict:** This is an underlying issue in between two or more groups that can break into hostility if not well mitigated. In this study, conflict is understood as the hostility or disputes between two or more communities in Marsabit County, often arising from competition over power, resources, or social status. Defining conflict ensures that the study specifically examines disputes that have the potential to escalate into violence.

**County leadership:** This refers to the county level leadership that include the governors, members of county assembly, county executives, women representatives, and members of Parliament. In this study, county leadership refers to elected and appointed officials at the county level,

including the governor, members of the county assembly, county executives, women representatives, and members of Parliament. These leaders play a key role in influencing resource management, governance, and conflict resolution in Marsabit County.

**Devolution:**

This is a type of administrative in which governance and administrative functions and responsibilities are dispersed and delegated to regional administrative units. In this study, devolution refers to the transfer of governance and administrative powers from the national government to county governments, including authority over resources and service delivery.

**Governance:**

This refers to the exercise of public authority to enact and implement laws and policies that relate to the public. In this study, governance refers to the exercise of public authority by county leaders to implement policies, laws, and programs that affect communities.

**Inter-communal conflict:**

This refers to the violent confrontation that occur between two or more communities as they vie to dominate the existing economic, social and political resources. In this study, inter-communal conflicts refers to the to violent confrontations between two or more communities in Marsabit County over control of economic, social, or political resources.

**Resource Management:** This is the process of planning, allocating, and utilizing the available resources. In the context of this study, resource management is the planning, allocation, and utilization of county resources, including financial, natural, and human resources.

## ABSTRACT

This study investigated the influence of devolution on inter-communal conflicts in Marsabit County, Kenya. Specifically, it examined the influence of county resource management, county leadership composition, and peace-building initiatives on the occurrence of inter-communal conflicts. The study was guided by conflict theory and adopted a mixed-methods approach, using correlational research design. The target population included 77,495 households in Marsabit County, county government officials, administrative leaders, religious leaders, and individuals involved in peace-building. Data was collected from a sample of 100 household heads. Data was collected using questionnaires for household heads and interview guides for key informants. Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS through descriptive statistics and Chi-square tests, while qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed statistically significant relationships between resource management ( $\chi^2=8.723$ ,  $p=0.013$ ), county leadership composition ( $\chi^2=11.952$ ,  $p=0.018$ ), and peace-building initiatives ( $\chi^2=10.678$ ,  $p=0.030$ ) with inter-communal conflicts. These results indicated that the management of resources, the composition of county leadership, and the implementation of peace-building initiatives have statistically significant influence on inter-communal relations in Marsabit County. The study provided valuable insights for policy formulation at both county and national levels and contributed to the literature on devolution and conflict management in multi-ethnic settings.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

This section covers introduction of the study. It covers the background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, assumptions, justification of the study, scope and limitations.

#### **1.2 Background to the Study**

Devolution has gained increased recognition in the modern governance. This is a type of administrative in which governance and administrative functions and responsibilities are dispersed and delegated to regional administrative units. This form of governance has without doubt emerged as the most ambitious form to ever be invented in the quest of delivering services and availing resources at the state, regional and local levels (Pasquier, 2021). Historically, a large number of governments across the world have adopted this form of governance which has given it much power. This form of governance ensures that resources are equitably distributed from the urban areas to the grassroots levels, it promotes social and economic development at both national and regional levels, it enables the minorities and the marginalized people to reap the benefits of self-governance and to be in charge of their development (Kasyula, 2022).

Presently, devolved form of governance has been adopted in different parts of the world due to the associated benefits. In Europe, the UK and France are good examples that have successfully adopted this form of governance. People in the UK began calling for a devolved form of government in 1970 in Wales and Scotland (Lesch &

McCambridge, 2021). However, this wasn't accomplished until the Scottish people sought a governance system with authority over the collection of tax in their region in 1997. The Welsh Assembly was established as a result of the citizens of Wales taking the same course. Similar to this, in Scotland, the people established their own assembly in 1998, which allowed them to make their own decisions.

In France, the devolved form of governance was enacted in 1982 through the parliament Act known as the Gaston Defferre laws. The purpose of this was to diffuse the diffuse powers from the central government to departments and municipalities, the units that had limited autonomy (Williams, 2022). Prior to this, the central government had the autonomy over decision making at all levels and decisions made at the municipalities were all supposed to be approved by the central government. However, the municipalities kept growing which increased the need for mayors who called for diffusion of powers to sub national governance units. There was a series of legislation which finally led to increased authorities of all the sub-national governance units which gave them autonomy over most of the decisions and policies within their jurisdiction.

In the United States, devolution gained some currency in 1953 when the American Municipal Association proposed an approach to decentralize power and to devolve governance functions to municipals (Ileri & Ochieng, 2022). This approach led to the adoption of 12 states and establishment of various local governments in order to promote autonomous self-governance. The local governments were given the powers and authority to exercise all suitable powers that were within the confines of the constitution, and the local government's charter. Just like in other states, the main aim was to increase freedom and liberties and to make sure the people are in charge of their development and decision making. It was viewed as a way of increasing

inclusivity and as a means of fostering strong relationship between the people at subnational levels and the national government.

In Asia, devolution is gained significance as more and more nations strive to adopt democratic form of governance. It is considered as a key means of including all the people in decision making process through their respective community and political leaders. In Japan for instance, the devolved form of governance was adopted in 1995 after many years of centralized governance (Niikawa, 2019). This followed a number of decentralization reforms that were aimed at giving the local governments more power and increasing citizen participation in decision making. A similar trend was observed in Indonesia and Srilanka. In Indonesia, devolved forma of governance came into play in 1999 after over 30 years of centralized governance form (Green, 2021).

In Srilanka, the decentralization and devolution process have occurred in various pace as the government seeks to address political and socio economic issues in the country. However, the process has not been effective due to bureaucratic support and lack of political will (De Alwis, 2020). In the two countries, just like in other nations, the decentralized form of administration was adopted in order to delegate some of the administration functions to local governments. It was considered as a better way in which service delivery would be improved and as a means of fostering transparency and accountability.

In Africa, situation in regards to devolution differs from other regions as there are only a few countries that have adopted decentralized forms of governance. Most of the countries in the region still bear a centralized form of governance where decision making is solely done by the state government (Nyikadzino & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2020). However, there is increased quest for constitutional reforms in order to diffuse

the immense powers through the introduction of subnational political and administrative units which promote the inclusion of the citizens in decision making, which fosters resource sharing and that promotes accountability and public participation.

In South Africa, devolution was established through the enactment of the 1996 constitution which marked a break from the centralized form of governance that was characterized by abuse of power, inequalities, and underdevelopment (Pieterse, 2020). Devolution was marked by the creation of 9 provinces which were aimed at improving service delivery and social economic and political development. This has enabled the government and other development agencies to invest considerable resources for local community development and to improve the livelihoods at the grassroots.

In Kenya, devolution has been a key aspect of governance since independence in 1963, though the initial efforts were short-lived due to weak institutional foundations. The 2010 Constitution formally established devolved governance under Article 6, creating 47 counties with the goal of decentralizing power, resources, and decision-making to enhance participation and representation at the local level (Ngigi & Busolo, 2019). The purpose of devolution was to unlock the country's economic potential by enabling counties to identify local challenges and plan solutions, improve equity, and reduce marginalization and resource mismanagement. Article 174 of the Constitution emphasizes self-governance, community participation, and local control over development priorities (Munene, 2019). The implementation of the devolved system in 2013 marked a significant shift from centralized governance, offering opportunities to address long-standing inequalities and governance challenges.

One of the main aims of devolution was to improve resource management and allocation to reduce competition and conflict among communities. However, the process has faced numerous challenges, including unequal distribution of resources, political power struggles, and social exclusion (McCollum et al., 2019). Decentralization has, in some cases, intensified intercommunal tensions as communities compete for access to devolved funds and local decision-making spaces. Conflicts now often emerge not only over resources but also along political and ethnic lines, undermining the intended goals of equity, participation, and peace (Mutinda & Mbataru, 2020).

Against this national backdrop, Marsabit County offers a unique context to examine the relationship between devolution and inter-communal conflict. Located in northern Kenya and bordering Ethiopia, Marsabit is one of the largest but least densely populated counties, inhabited by diverse ethnic communities including the Borana, Gabbra, Rendille, Burji, and Turkana (Umuro, 2022). Historically, the county has experienced recurrent conflicts over pasture, water, and other resources. Since the introduction of devolution, these conflicts have evolved, with political competition over county leadership and access to devolved resources becoming increasingly prominent. Political and resource-based competition along ethnic lines has intensified, contributing to tensions and undermining local development.

This context indicates the importance of understanding how devolution has influenced inter-communal dynamics in Marsabit County. Although devolution in Kenya was designed to promote equity, participation, and local development, in Marsabit it appears to have introduced new complexities in conflict relations. These challenges justify the need for this study to examine whether devolution has mitigated or

exacerbated inter-communal conflicts in the county, thereby providing a clear link to the statement of the problem.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

Devolution in Kenya was introduced with the aim of promoting equitable distribution of resources, enhancing citizen participation, and strengthening peace and development at the grassroots (Muwonge et al, 2022). It was designed to correct historical injustices, reduce regional disparities, and ensure inclusive governance that responds to local needs. Ideally, devolved governance should foster social cohesion and create mechanisms for communities to coexist peacefully by providing fair access to political power, public services, and economic opportunities.

However, in Marsabit County, the implementation of devolution has not fully realized these ideals. Instead, the county has continued to experience recurrent inter-communal conflicts, now increasingly linked to competition over political control, county resources, and administrative boundaries (Ali, Nchaga and Wepukhulu, 2021). Ethnic polarization and perceptions of exclusion have deepened, with dominant groups often accused of controlling key county positions and development benefits. These tensions have transformed traditional conflicts over water and pasture into politically driven disputes that threaten peace, social unity, and local development (Abudho, 2024). This situation raises concern about whether devolution has effectively contributed to conflict reduction or inadvertently intensified rivalries among communities.

While previous studies have examined the link between devolution and conflict in other counties, limited research has been conducted in Marsabit to assess how devolved governance structures influence inter-communal relations in this unique multi-ethnic context. Most existing studies have focused on resource conflicts at the national or regional level and have not analyzed the dynamics of conflict under

Kenya's devolved governance framework. This study, therefore, sought to fill this gap by examining how devolution has influenced inter-communal conflict dynamics in Marsabit County.

#### **1.4 Research Objectives**

The study seeks to meet the following specific objectives;

- i. To determine the influence of county resource management on inter-communal conflicts in Marsabit county.
- ii. To establish explore the influence of County leadership composition on inter-communal conflicts in Marsabit county.
- iii. To explore the influence of peace building initiatives on inter-communal conflicts in Marsabit County.

#### **1.5 Research Questions**

- i. How does county policies on resource management influence intercommunal conflicts in Marsabit county?
- ii. How does county leadership composition influence inter-communal conflicts in Marsabit County?
- iii. How do county peace building initiatives influence inter-communal conflicts Marsabit County?

#### **1.6 Assumptions**

The issue of conflict is considered as a sensitive issue and therefore, the respondents might be reluctant to give data. It was presumed that regardless of the sensitivity of the research issue, the respondents would be cooperative and would agree to take part in the study. Also, it was assumed that the respondents would be willing to give correct data and information free from bias.

## **1.7 Justification**

Devolution was introduced in Kenya with the aim of promoting equitable resource distribution, enhancing local governance, and addressing historical marginalization. However, in regions such as Marsabit County, inter-communal conflicts continue to persist despite the devolved system of governance. This study is therefore justified as it seeks to examine whether and how devolution has influenced inter-communal conflict dynamics within the county. Understanding this relationship is critical for identifying the extent to which devolved governance contributes to peace-building, inclusivity, and effective local administration. The study is also justified by the limited empirical research focusing specifically on Marsabit County, a region that presents unique challenges related to ethnicity, resource scarcity, and political competition.

## **1.8 Significance of the Study**

The study would be significant to county and national governments as it will provide empirical insights into how devolution influences inter-communal conflicts, especially in multi-ethnic settings such as Marsabit County. The findings would help policymakers to design and implement more effective governance frameworks that promote equitable resource sharing, strengthen local leadership, and improve peacebuilding structures. This would further guide the formulation of county development and conflict management policies aligned with Kenya's broader national cohesion agenda.

The study would also benefit peace-building organizations, civil society groups, and development partners working in conflict-prone areas. The results would help these organizations to identify the underlying governance and resource-related triggers of conflict and develop targeted interventions to promote peaceful coexistence among

communities. The evidence generated would support advocacy for inclusive participation and fair representation in devolved governance structures.

The study would benefit the local communities in Marsabit County by highlighting practical strategies for promoting dialogue, inclusivity, and cooperation among different ethnic groups. By identifying how devolved governance can be leveraged to promote peace and sustainable development, the study would empower communities to actively participate in conflict resolution and decision-making processes at the grassroots level.

The study will have scholarly contribution as it will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on the relationship between devolution and inter-communal conflicts. It will fill a contextual gap by focusing on Marsabit County, an area that has received limited scholarly attention despite its persistent conflicts. Future researchers and students can use the findings as a reference point for comparative studies and further exploration of devolution and peace-building in other counties or regions. Also, the study suggested research gaps that other researchers can focus on to advance research on devolution and inter-communal conflicts.

### **1.9 Scope and Limitations**

This study examined the influence of devolution on inter-communal conflicts in Marsabit County. This study location was selected because it is one of the most ethnically diverse and conflict-prone regions in Kenya and frequently experience recurrent inter-communal clashes over resources such as pasture, water, and political representation. Despite the introduction of devolution aimed at promoting equitable resource distribution and inclusive governance, Marsabit continues to face tensions

linked to historical marginalization, ethnic rivalry, and competition for county leadership positions. This made the county a suitable case for examining how devolved governance structures influence inter-communal relations and conflict management.

Geographically, the study was confined to Marsabit County, which was selected due to its history of recurrent inter-communal conflicts and diverse ethnic composition. Therefore, the findings are context-specific and may not be generalizable to other counties with different socio-political dynamics. Conceptually, the study focused on four key variables, that is, county resource management, County leadership composition and peace building initiatives which were considered key dimensions through which devolution may influence conflict dynamics.

Methodologically, the study adopted a mixed-methods approach, targeting households, religious leaders, peace-building initiative leaders, county government officials, and administrative leaders as the main respondents. While this approach improved the reliability and depth of the findings, the study faced limitations related to accessibility and respondent bias, especially in conflict-prone areas where security concerns limited participation. Additionally, the focus on Marsabit County limited the ability to make broader comparisons across counties, and the reliance on self-reported data may have introduced subjectivity in responses.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter covers literature review. The first section discusses the theories that underpin the study. The second section reviews other studies related to the role of devolution on inter-communal conflicts. The third section summarizes literature review, highlighting research gaps, while the final section presents the conceptual framework of the study.

#### **2.2 Empirical Review**

Devolution is a specific type of decentralization in which power is transferred from the central government to other divisions at sub-national level. It is a form of governance whereby planning and management of some specific functions are delegated to sub-national administrations (Nyikadzino & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2020). In this form of governance, there is delegation of responsibilities and power to local government for independent implementation. In this system of governance, citizens elect local leaders, and the federal government funds the local government to perform a variety of development projects for the people (Lind, 2018).

##### **2.2.1 County Resource Management and Inter-Communal Conflicts**

Effective county resource management is critical for maintaining peaceful coexistence among communities, particularly in ethnically diverse regions. Mismanagement of devolved resources, perceived favoritism, and exclusion in decision-making processes often lead to mistrust, grievances, and, ultimately, inter-communal conflicts. Empirical studies have demonstrated that equitable distribution and transparent management of natural and financial resources are essential to mitigating communal

tensions. However, the extent to which county resource management influences inter-communal conflicts in marginalized and multi-ethnic counties such as Marsabit remains inadequately explored.

Chikandah (2021) examined the influence of natural resource-based conflicts on security in Tana River County, Kenya. The study revealed that conflicts over water, land, and grazing fields were rampant and often linked to poor resource management and weak institutional mechanisms. Ineffective coordination among devolved institutions and local communities exacerbated competition and insecurity. The study concluded that equitable resource distribution and participatory management could significantly reduce inter-communal tensions. However, the research was limited to Tana River County and did not analyze how formal county-level resource allocation decisions affect conflict outcomes. Thus, there is a gap regarding the direct link between county leadership, resource management processes, and conflict prevalence in other counties such as Marsabit.

Lenareu (2021) investigated the influence of strategy and policy management on resource-based conflicts in Samburu East Sub-County, Kenya. The study found that while resource management policies existed, implementation challenges, weak institutional frameworks, and insufficient community involvement perpetuated conflicts. Moreover, limited oversight and accountability in resource management reduced trust among communities, making conflict resolution difficult. Although the study highlighted the role of policies and institutional structures, it focused narrowly on conservancies and local natural resource conflicts. It did not assess how broader county-level fiscal management and equitable allocation of devolved funds contribute to peaceful coexistence across communities. This presented a gap in understanding

the macro-level implications of county resource management on inter-communal harmony.

Osinde (2023) analyzed the role of resource scarcity in inter-ethnic conflicts in Turkana and West Pokot Counties. The study reported that prolonged droughts, economic marginalization, and weak institutional capacity in resource management increased competition for scarce resources, leading to violent clashes. While this study acknowledged institutional weaknesses, it largely attributed conflicts to environmental and climatic factors rather than the administrative or leadership roles of county governments. Consequently, there remained a gap in examining how county governance practices mitigate or escalate inter-communal tensions, especially in resource-stressed areas like Marsabit.

Ngonge, Nyukuri, and Muigua (2023) explored stakeholder involvement in managing water resource-related conflicts within the Lake Turkana Basin. Their findings revealed that limited stakeholder participation, biased engagement, and weak institutional collaboration contributed to disputes among community's dependent on shared water sources. The study emphasized the importance of participatory and inclusive management of natural resources as a pathway to sustainable peace. However, it focused exclusively on water resource conflicts and did not extend its scope to other devolved resources such as infrastructure development or county budgeting. This created a contextual gap in understanding the broader influence of county-level resource management on multi-sectoral inter-communal relations in northern Kenya

### 2.2.2 County leadership Composition and Inter-Communal Conflicts

Leadership composition plays a pivotal role in shaping social cohesion, equity, and inclusivity within devolved systems of governance. In ethnically diverse regions such

as Marsabit County, the ethnic, gender, and professional composition of county leadership can either promote peace or fuel inter-communal hostility. When leadership positions are perceived to be dominated by one ethnic or political group, other communities may feel excluded from decision-making processes and access to county resources. Conversely, inclusive and balanced leadership promotes equitable development and mitigates grievances that often underlie conflicts.

Extensive research studies has been conducted to determine the influence of leadership on inter-communal conflicts. Aborisade (2020) sought to analyze insecurities linked to inequality in Africa and concluded that unequal distribution of resources was a major cause of conflicts and violence in many parts of the continent. The study established that poor leadership led to skewed allocation of resources, while marginalized communities often resorted to violent resistance as a reaction to exclusion and intimidation. The findings emphasized that weak and biased leadership structures were key drivers of conflict and instability across Africa. While the study offered key insights on the role of leadership on inter-communal conflicts, the study was broad in scope and did not examine localized governance systems such as county governments under devolution, leaving a gap on how leadership composition specifically affects inter-communal conflicts in devolved contexts like Kenya's Marsabit County.

Ajodo-Adebanjoko (2019) analyzed the causes of inter-communal conflicts in Nigeria and identified poor governance and weak leadership as primary triggers of disputes over natural resources. The study revealed that inequality in resource ownership, distribution, and access often influenced by corrupt and nepotistic leadership undermined democracy and human rights, leading to cycles of violence and instability. While the study offered key insights on the role of leadership on inter-

communal conflicts, it focused on the national level and the oil-producing regions of Nigeria.

In another study, Zakarie and Hared (2021) examined the causes and consequences of clan-based conflicts in Somalia and identified poor leadership, corruption, and clannism as major sources of persistent violence. The study found that leadership favoritism promoted inequality and deepened social divisions, while militarization of clans intensified conflicts. Although the authors emphasized the need for democratic governance and inclusive leadership as a path to peace, the study was limited to the Somali context, which lacked a devolved governance system. Hence, it did not address how the composition of county leadership under a devolved framework affected inter-communal relations.

Locally, Ali (2021) investigated the relationship between devolution and inter-clan conflicts in Mandera County and found that devolution had, in some cases, fueled resource-based conflicts due to leadership bias. The study noted that leaders often prioritized members of their own ethnic groups in employment, contracting, and resource allocation. This ethnic favoritism created tensions among excluded groups who felt marginalized, leading to retaliatory conflicts. Although the was relevant to Kenya's devolution experience, it concentrated on Mandera County, leaving a contextual gap on whether similar leadership dynamics influence inter-communal conflicts in Marsabit County, which has distinct ethnic and historical dynamics.

Further, Opiyo et al. (2017) examined the role of conflict management in improving devolved governance in Kenya. The study found that equitable stakeholder participation and inclusive leadership minimized the likelihood of inter-communal conflicts. It emphasized that when citizens are actively engaged in decision-making, counties experience greater peace and social cohesion. While the study contributed

crucial insights on the influence of leadership, it was largely conceptual and did not empirically link leadership composition to the frequency or nature of inter-communal conflicts.

### **2.2.3 Peace Building Initiatives and Inter-Communal Conflicts**

Peace-building initiatives play a key role in preventing, managing, and transforming inter-communal conflicts. These initiatives encompass a broad range of activities such as mediation, peace education, reconciliation forums, and community-based resource management programs. In Kenya and beyond, peace-building has increasingly been integrated into devolved governance systems as a tool for addressing underlying drivers of ethnic and resource-based conflicts. However, the effectiveness of these initiatives varies depending on contextual factors such as local governance structures, community participation, and resource dynamics.

Amina (2020) investigated how non-governmental organizations (NGOs) influence the sustainability of peace-building projects among pastoral communities in Marsabit County. The study focused on four major NGO activities, that is, resource mobilization, mediation, peace education, and capacity building. The findings revealed that peace education and capacity building had strong positive effects on peace sustainability, while mediation had a moderate effect. Resource mobilization was found to be significant but less influential compared to other factors. Overall, NGO-led peace-building initiatives were instrumental in fostering social cohesion and reducing community tensions in Marsabit. While the study provided valuable insights into the sustainability of peace-building efforts, it did not explicitly examine how these initiatives influence the occurrence or dynamics of inter-communal conflicts. In addition, the study concentrated on NGO interventions and excluded county

government-led or community-driven peace-building efforts which created a contextual and variable gap that this study seeks to address.

Golicha (2017) examined the contribution of local peace initiatives toward mitigating conflicts in Moyale Sub-County, Marsabit County. The study explored various peace-building strategies, including peace education, inter-community sports, and cross-border dialogue forums. The findings showed that peace education improved inter-community relations, while sports activities created avenues for peaceful interaction and mutual understanding. However, the study also revealed that small arms proliferation and limited donor support hindered the sustainability of these initiatives. Although this study provided relevant insights into community-level peace efforts, it was confined to a single sub-county and relied primarily on descriptive analysis. The lack of a broader county-wide perspective limited generalizability to the entire Marsabit County. Furthermore, the study did not employ quantitative techniques to measure the influence of peace-building initiatives on the intensity or frequency of inter-communal conflicts, which the current study aims to establish.

Dzinekou and Kabui (2022) conducted a study on children as catalysts for peace building focusing on Pokot and Samburu communities in Kenya. The study documented how symbolic practices, such as cross-community heifer exchanges and joint youth events, served as mechanisms for fostering trust and transforming historical animosities. Findings indicated that these participatory approaches helped build empathy and strengthened inter-community relations by redefining traditional conflict symbols into peace symbols. Although this study offered a creative and people-centered approach to peace-building, it was conducted in a different geographical and cultural context, involving only seven villages. The study focused on children's symbolic roles rather than broader structural or policy-driven initiatives.

Consequently, its findings could not directly apply to the complex political and resource-driven conflicts in Marsabit County.

Atieno (2023) analyzed peace initiatives in resource-based conflicts in the Lower Nyando River Basin, Kisumu County. The study examined the role of local peace committees, community peace networks, and government agencies in mitigating post-colonial conflicts over water and land resources. The results showed that peace committees contributed significantly to conflict resolution through continuous dialogue, civic education, and grassroots mobilization. The study concluded that locally grounded peace structures are more sustainable than externally imposed interventions. Despite the relevance of the insights of this study in peace-building, the study was conducted in a relatively stable region of western Kenya, where ethnic and resource-based conflicts differ in nature and intensity from those in Marsabit. Moreover, the research emphasized resolution mechanisms but did not assess how peace initiatives affect ongoing conflict dynamics *or* inter-communal relations under devolved governance.

### **2.3 Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework provides the foundation for this study, guiding the analysis of how devolution influences inter-communal conflicts in Marsabit County. It links the objectives of the study to existing knowledge and theories and offers a lens to understand the social, political, and economic dynamics that shape relations among different groups.

In this study, conflict theory was adopted as the guiding framework because it explains how inequalities, competition over resources, and power struggles contribute to inter-group tensions within devolved systems of governance. This theory offers a sociolect-ecological perspective that have been developed and expanded over time

by different author. While the theory is not attributed solely to one author, Karl Max is one of the key figures associated with it (Siregar, 2022). The theory views society through a lens of power differentials, social inequalities and conflicting interests among different groups in the society. The theory views society as being in a state of continuous struggles and change whereby, power plays a central role in shaping social structures, social interactions and social institutions (Dahrendorf, 2022). The conflict argues that there are different social classes that exist in the society whereby, each class has its own goals and interests. The differences among the classes are attributed to differences in economic factors such as income, wealth, and access to resources. The theory accentuates that the divisions leads to unequal distribution of resources, unequal distribution of power, opportunities, and privileges within the society.

One of the key concepts in conflict theory is the notion of social stratification. This refers to the hierarchical arrangement of individuals and groups on the basis of different factors such as power, status and wealth (Carchedi, 2023). According to conflict theory, social stratification propagates inequality by creating advantages for some groups while disadvantaging others. These differences in opportunities and resource distribution causes competition, tension, and conflict between different social classes (Mehta, 2020). Additionally, the proponents highlight the role of social institutions such as the government, educational systems, and the media in perpetuating and reinforcing existing power dynamics. According to the theory, these institutions are often controlled by dominant social groups and serve to maintain the status quo by legitimizing and justifying the unequal distribution of resources and opportunities.

Besides the social class, conflict theory emphasizes other types of social inequality such as those based on gender race, and ethnicity (Monk, 2022). Social conflict and

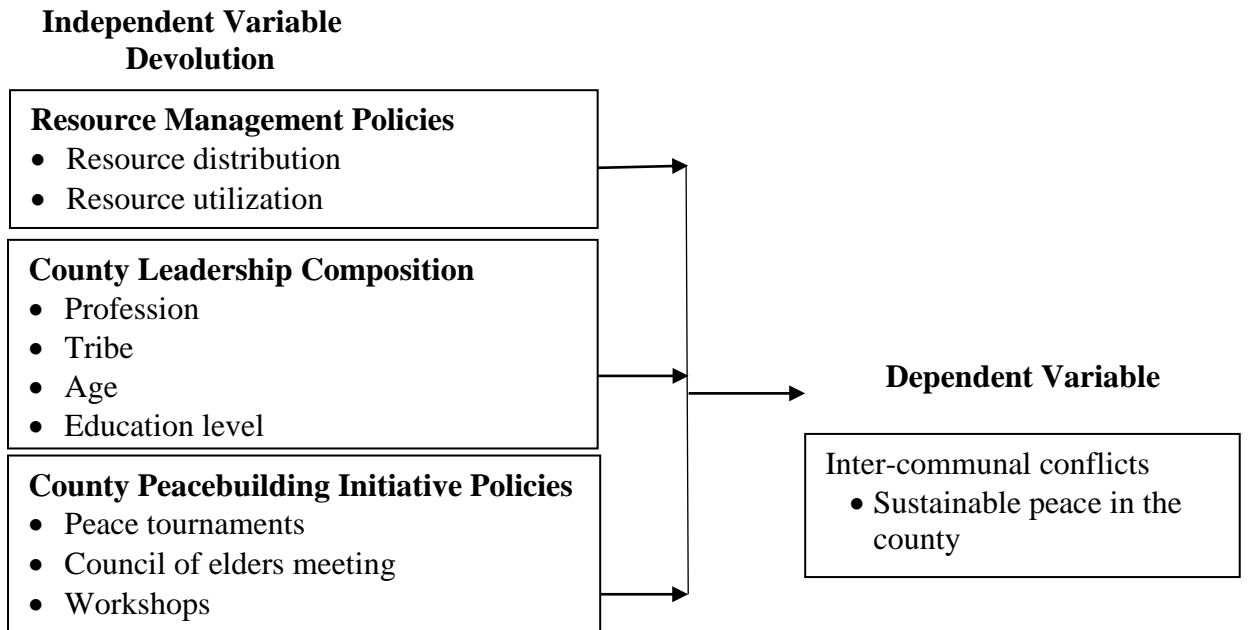
power struggles within society are further aggravated by these intersecting forms of oppression. In addition, conflict theory argues that social change occurs through struggle and conflict between opposing forces, what is known as dialectical change (Mol, 2022). This involves the clash of interests, values and ideas which leads to the emergence of new social norms and structures. According to the proponents of conflict theory, this ongoing process conflict and change is crucial in addressing injustices and attaining a more just and equitable society.

Conflict theory was considered relevant and applicable to this study as it provides a framework for understanding how unequal power relations and competition over scarce resources contribute to inter-communal conflicts in Marsabit County. The theory explains how the transfer of political, administrative, and fiscal powers to local governments can either mitigate or intensify conflicts depending on how equitably resources and opportunities are distributed. Through the lens of conflict theory, the study interprets how devolution influences social relations, governance practices, and community perceptions of fairness, thus shaping the occurrence and persistence of inter-communal conflicts in the county.

#### **2.4 Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework provides a visual and theoretical representation of how variables in the study are related. It illustrates the system of concepts, assumptions, and theoretical perspectives that guide the research process and form the basis for analysis. In this study, the independent variable is devolution. This was operationalized as county resource management policies, county leadership, and county peace-building initiatives. County resource management policies was measured through resource distribution and resource utilization. County leadership was measured in terms of profession, tribe, age and education level. County Peace-

building Initiative Policies was measured in terms of peace tournaments, council of elders meeting and workshops. Inter-communal conflicts was the dependent variable. This was measured using sustainable peace in the county. The conceptual framework is presented as follows;



**Figure 2.1: Conceptual Model of Security Management**

**Source: Synthesized from literature review (2022)**

## 2.5 Research Gaps

The reviewed studies have indicated that much research has been done to determine the influence of devolution on conflict resolution. However, not much has been done in the context of Kenya which gives the research gap the study seeks to fill.

**Table 2.1 Research Gaps**

<b>Author(s) and Year</b>	<b>Study Objective</b>	<b>Key Findings</b>	<b>Research Gaps</b>
Habib (2022)	The Rohingya host community conflict over scarce resources in Bangladesh.	Conflicts arose from disputes over the management and distribution of scarce resources, destroying inter-community relationships.	<p>The study was conducted outside Kenya</p> <p>The study did not integrate a theoretical model linking governance and conflict</p> <p>The study used only qualitative interviews with a small sample and no statistical validation</p>
Aborisade (2020)	Insecurities linked to inequality in Africa.	Poor leadership and unequal resource distribution fuel conflicts and violence across African nations.	<p>The study focused on a continental scale, not devolved governance systems</p> <p>The study failed to examine leadership composition in local governments</p> <p>The study relied on secondary data without empirical validation</p>
Ajodo-Adebanjoko (2019)	Causes of inter-communal	Identified poor governance and	The study was conducted outside

	conflicts in Nigeria.	resource competition as key causes of conflicts, particularly in oil-producing regions.	Kenya The study did not focus on devolved or county-level governance The study purely applied descriptive analysis without inferential statistics.
Zakarie & Hared (2021)	Causes and consequences of conflicts in Somalia and assess conflict mitigation strategies.	Poor leadership, clannism, and corruption were major drivers of persistent conflicts.	The study focused on a failed-state context unlike Kenya's devolved system The study did not integrate leadership structure variables. The study relied only on document analysis with no primary data.
Ali (2021)	How devolution influences inter-clan conflicts in Mandera County, Kenya.	Ethnic favoritism in leadership and inequitable resource allocation under devolution intensified clan conflicts.	The study focused on Mandera County, not Marsabit The study excluded leadership composition and peacebuilding aspects. The study relied on descriptive survey without inferential statistical analysis.

Mumbua (2018)	How devolution has helped resolve conflicts between Meru and Borana in Isiolo County.	While devolution improved service delivery, it failed to eliminate ethnic conflicts over resources.	<p>The study was limited to Isiolo County</p> <p>The study did not analyze leadership composition or peacebuilding as mediating factors</p> <p>The study used qualitative data only without quantitative triangulation.</p>
Opiyo et al. (2017)	The role of conflict management as an aspect of public participation in devolved governance systems in Kenya.	Effective stakeholder participation enhanced inclusivity, equity, and reduced resource-related conflicts.	<p>The study focused on governance participation, not inter-communal conflict directly</p> <p>The study used cross-sectional survey data with limited inferential testing.</p>
Chikandah (2021)	The influence of natural resource-based conflicts on security in Tana River County, Kenya.	Poor resource management and institutional weakness aggravated insecurity and community clashes.	<p>The study was limited to Tana River County</p> <p>The study did not link resource management to leadership or peacebuilding</p> <p>The study used descriptive analysis without testing causal relationships.</p>

Lenareu (2021)	The influence of strategy and policy management on resource-based conflicts in Samburu East Sub-County, Kenya.	Weak policy enforcement and poor coordination led to recurring conflicts over grazing and water resources.	The study focused on conservancies, not county-level policy frameworks The study ignored governance and leadership variables
Osinde (2023)	The role of resource scarcity in inter-ethnic conflicts in Turkana and West Pokot Counties.	Resource scarcity, coupled with weak governance capacity, led to violent inter-ethnic clashes.	The study excluded the role of county leadership structures The study did not incorporate peace-building measures as a moderating factor. The study applied qualitative methods and lacked inferential analysis.
Ngonge, Nyukuri & Muigua (2023)	Stakeholder involvement in managing water resource-related conflicts in the Lake Turkana Basin.	Limited stakeholder participation and biased engagement aggravated water-based conflicts.	The study had a narrow focus on water conflicts only. The study did not analyze broader resource allocation under devolution The study applied case study design with limited sample size, reducing

			<p>generalizability.</p> <p>The study only used descriptive analysis methods.</p>
Amina (2020)	<p>The influence of NGO-led peace-building initiatives on peace sustainability among pastoral communities in Marsabit County.</p>	<p>Peace education and capacity building improved peace sustainability, but effects were moderate.</p>	<p>The study focused on NGO initiatives, not county peace-building efforts.</p> <p>The study did not link peace-building to resource conflict dynamics</p> <p>The study relied on descriptive design without incorporating inferential analysis.</p>
Golicha (2017)	<p>The contribution of local peace initiatives in mitigating conflicts in Moyale Sub-County, Marsabit County.</p>	<p>Peace education and inter-community programs improved relations, though challenged by small arms proliferation.</p>	<p>The study was conducted in a single sub-county</p> <p>The study did not examine resource management or leadership factors.</p> <p>The study used descriptive survey design without inferential analysis.</p>
Dzinekou & Kabui (2022)	<p>To explore the role of children as peace ambassadors</p>	<p>Symbolic cultural exchanges and youth</p>	<p>The study used a small localized sample.</p> <p>The study focused on</p>

	among Pokot and Samburu communities.	participation promoted inter-ethnic understanding.	symbolic roles, not formal peace mechanisms  The study applied ethnographic design with no quantitative data.
Atieno (2023)	Peace initiatives in resource-based conflicts in the Lower Nyando Basin, Kisumu County.	Peace committees were effective in resolving land and water disputes through education and mediation.	The study was conducted in a non-conflict-prone area unlike Marsabit  The study focused on peace resolution, not prevention  The study relied on descriptive survey without regression or correlation analysis.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methods the researcher will use to undertake the study. This section discusses the research area, research design, target population, sample size, and sampling design. It also addresses the data collection tools and procedures, data analysis methods, and ethical considerations.

#### 3.2 Research Design

The study adopted a correlational research design within a mixed-methods approach. The correlational design was considered appropriate because the study sought to determine the relationship between devolution and inter-communal conflicts in Marsabit County. This design allowed the researcher to examine the extent to which variations in devolution-related factors such as resource management, leadership composition, and peace-building initiatives were associated with the prevalence or reduction of inter-communal conflicts.

The correlational design was implemented using both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitatively, data were collected through questionnaires administered to household heads, enabling the researcher to statistically measure relationships among variables using descriptive and inferential analyses, including the Chi-square test. Qualitatively, interviews with key informants such as county officials, administrative leaders, and peace committee members provided deeper insights and explanations for the relationships observed in the quantitative data. The design was thus instrumental in linking devolution processes to patterns of conflict and peace within the county. By integrating both numerical and narrative data under a correlational framework, the

study generated a comprehensive understanding of how devolution influences inter-communal relations in Marsabit County.

### 3.3 Study Location

The study was conducted in Marsabit County. This is the second largest county in the country covering a total area of 66,923.1 square kilometers (Mutanda & Kimaru, 2022). The county shares boundaries with Turkana County to the west, Samburu County to the southwest, Isiolo County to the south, and Ethiopia to the north. The county has four sub counties, that is Laisamis, Saku, North Horr, and Moyale. There are about 459,785 people living in the county, as per the most recent census in 2019. The county is located in Chalbi desert belt, the driest part of the country. As a result, only 3% of the county's total land area is used for arable farming, mostly in the vicinity of Mount Marsabit.

This county is a home to 14 ethnic communities, that is Elmolo, Watta, Konso, Ameru, Samburu, Gabbra, Rendille, Burji, Daasanach, Garreh, Sakuye, Turkana, Somali and Borana. Historically, almost all ethnic groups in the county have made their livings as pastoralists which is the main economic activity. They mainly keep camels, cattle, goats, and sheep. The average temperature in the county ranges between 15 and 26 °C and an annual rainfall between 200 and 1,000 millimeters. The long rainy season occur between April and May and the short rainy season is experienced between November and December. The map of Marsabit county is shown on appendix II.

### 3.4 Target population

The target population refers to the group of individuals or items that the researcher intends to study (Rahi, 2017). The target population comprised of the household heads

in Marsabit County, the officials from the county government of Marsabit and administrative leaders within the county. According to 2019 census data, there are 77,495 households in Marsabit County which will be part of the target population for the study (KNBS, 2019). The purpose of including the households was that they are directly and indirectly affected by inter-community conflicts and they are therefore well placed to give data on devolution and its impact on inter-communal conflicts. The purpose of including the county government officials was that they partake in the implementing the county projects including those linked to peace and conflict resolution. The purpose of involving the administrative leaders was that they are well conversant with the various places within the county as well as all the activities and operations undertaken within the county. The inclusion of different categories of respondents made it possible to obtain varied views regarding devolution and its impact on inter-communal conflicts within Marsabit county.

### 3.5 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

#### 3.6.1 Sampling Techniques

Different sampling methods and procedures were used. Stratified sampling method was used with sub counties forming the strata. The sub counties are Laisamis, Saku, North Horr, and Moyale. Stratification ensured that all the areas within the county were included and that the sample was well representative. In each sub-county, simple random sampling was used to select the households for the study. Religious leaders, ward representatives, county government officials, leaders of peace and conflict resolution groups, and administrative leaders were selected using purposive sampling. This is a sample selection method whereby the respondents are selected based on a predetermined criterion. In this study, the key informants are well conversant with devolution, inter-communal conflicts dynamics and the effects of devolution on the inter-communal conflicts within Marsabit county.

#### 3.6.2 Sample Size

The sample size of households included in the study was calculated using the Taro Yamane formula as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

Where n=the sample size

N=Total population (Total number of households)

e= Error term

The sample size is this calculated as follows;

$$n = \frac{77,495}{1 + 77,495 (0.1^2)}$$

n = 100 Households

### 3.6 Research Instruments

A questionnaire was used to collect data from the households heads. This tool was economical to use to collect data from a large number of households. A 5 point Likert scale was used to measure the respondents' ratings to various statements related to the implementation of safety standards in the schools. Data from the officials from the county government of Marsabit and administrative leaders in different areas was collected using interview guide. The rationale of interviewing the county government officials and the administrative leaders was that they are well conversant with devolution and the inter-communal conflicts dynamics within the county. They were therefore well placed to offer rich insights on the effects of devolution on the inter-communal conflicts within Marsabit county. The interviews were conducted by the researcher using face to face interaction method. This helped the researcher probe more and seek clarifications from the respondents. Data recording was done using audio recorders, field notebooks and interview schedules. Recording made it easier for transcription and analysis later on.

### 3.7 Pre-testing

A pilot study was done before undertaking the research. This was done in the Saku Sub County because of its cosmopolitan nature and thus serving as the best representative of the other three sub counties demographically in Marsabit County. A sample size of 37 participants which comprised of household heads, religious leaders,

local administrators, senior county executive officials, youth leaders and county peace committee. This was justified by the need to assess the accuracy and dependability of the tool. This ensured that research instrument was effective and had the ability to yield reliable findings.

### 3.7.1 Validity

Content validity was determined in this study. This was done through consultations with the supervisors. These consultations contributed to refining the questionnaire, ensuring that it effectively addressed the research questions. Additionally, the questionnaire was reviewed for clarity.

### 3.7.2 Reliability

The reliability of the questionnaires was evaluated using the test-retest approach. This approach allowed the researcher to evaluate the internal consistency and validity of the questionnaires. Cronbach's Alpha statistic was applied to assess reliability, with a threshold of 0.7. The pilot study results (Appendix VII), indicated that all the items in the questionnaire were reliable, with Cronbach's Alpha coefficients ranging from 0.79 to 0.86, all exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.70. This demonstrated that the items consistently measured respondents' perceptions on county resource management, leadership composition, peace-building initiatives, and inter-communal conflicts. Therefore, the questionnaire was deemed reliable and suitable for data collection in the main study.

## 3.8 Data Collection Techniques

The researcher collected data with the help of four assistants. The research assistants were well trained to make it possible to administer the questionnaires and convince the respondents to give data. Introduction was done before commencing data

collection to enable the respondents to give informed consent before being included in the exercise. The interviews were conducted by the researcher himself. This involved a one on one interaction with the respondents, asking them questions and allowing them to give their views and perceptions on how devolution has impacted on the inter-communal conflicts in Marsabit county.

Secondary data collection was done through document analysis. This method involves scrutiny of secondary research materials that are relevant to the research phenomenon. In the case of this study, various publications, journals, books, and reports on devolution and inter-communal conflicts were reviewed. This helped to supplement primary data collected using questionnaires and interview method.

### 3.9 Data Analysis and Presentation

Data was analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative analysis methods. Quantitative analysis was done to analyse data collected using questionnaires. This was done using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 28). Descriptive analysis was used to describe the respondents and to analyze the different perceptions of the respondents in regards to devolution and the effect on inter-communal conflicts. This was done using mean, and percentages. Inferential data analysis was done using Chi square test. This was used to analyze the relationship between devolution and inter-communal conflicts.

Qualitative data analysis was used to examine the data collected through interviews, utilizing thematic analysis. This method involves reading through a data set to identify, categorize and interpret different emerging themes. In the case of this study, thematic analysis involved the scrutiny of the data collected using interview method from the key informants, grouping and interpreting different themes. The findings here were presented as narratives with use of direct quotations in some instances.

### 3.10 Logistical and Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to various ethical guidelines and principles. The researcher received an authorization letter from the university and a research license from NACOSTI, which helped legitimize the study and encourage respondents to take part. Data collection began only after all necessary research permits were obtained. Respondents were fully informed about the purpose of the study to ensure informed consent. Participation was voluntary, with no one being pressured to participate. Additionally, respondents had the freedom to withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason. The researcher assured the respondents that high confidentiality and privacy would be upheld. In this regard, personal identification data was not recorded as a way of protecting them. The data collected was analyzed and interpreted free from the researcher's personal bias.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter covers the analysis of data, presentation of findings, and discussion of those findings. The first section presents the response rate. The second section provides demographic information about the respondents, while the third section analyzes the impact of county resource management on inter-communal conflicts in Marsabit County. The fourth section examines the influence of county leadership composition on inter-communal conflicts, and the final section explores the role of peace-building initiatives in addressing inter-communal conflicts in Marsabit County.

#### 4.2 Response Rates

The researcher distributed 100 questionnaires, of which 77 were dully completed, resulting in a response rate of 77%. According to Mugenda & Mugenda (2003), a response rate of 50% or higher is considered adequate for obtaining reliable findings. Hence, the response rate achieved in this study was sufficient to provide dependable insights into devolution and inter-communal conflicts in Marsabit County, Kenya.

**Table 4.1: Response rate**

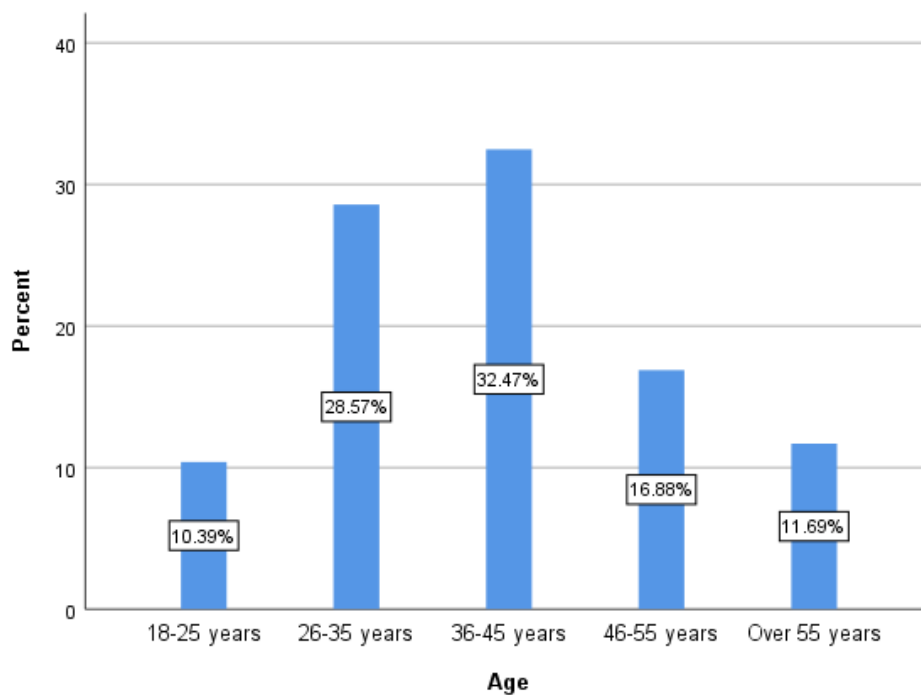
<b>Response and Non-response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Response	77	77%
Non response	23	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### 4.3 Demographic Analysis

The analysis in this section aimed to identify the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The variables analyzed here included gender, age of the respondents, education level, occupation, the sub county and the duration the respondents have lived in Marsabit county.

#### 4.3.1 Age

This section analyzed the age of the respondents. This was crucial as it helped to understand the generational perspectives on devolution and inter-communal conflicts. Different age groups may have different values, experiences, and attitudes towards governance, conflict resolution, and community development.



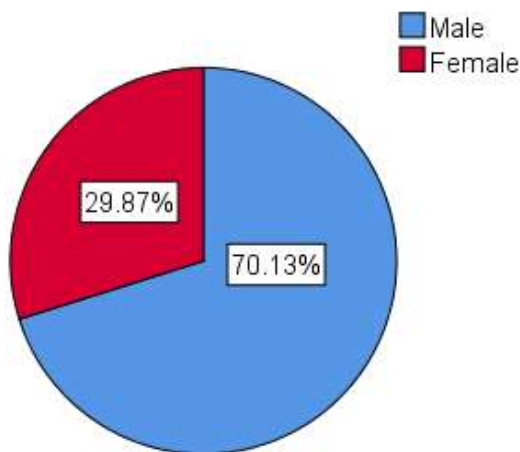
**Figure 4.1: Age of the respondents**

The analysis revealed that 10.39% of the household heads were between 18-25 years old, 28.57% were between 26-35 years old, 32.47% were between 36-45 years old,

16.88% were between 46-55 years old, and 11.69% were over 55 years old. Overall, the majority of respondents were between 26-45 years old. This suggests that most of the household heads in the study fall within the economically active age group of 26-45 years. This group is likely to have a significant influence on decision-making, community participation, and the adoption of new ideas or policies related to devolution and inter-communal conflicts.

#### 4.3.2 Gender

The gender of the respondents was analyzed in order to get insights into how gender dynamics influence how individuals perceive and are affected by conflicts.

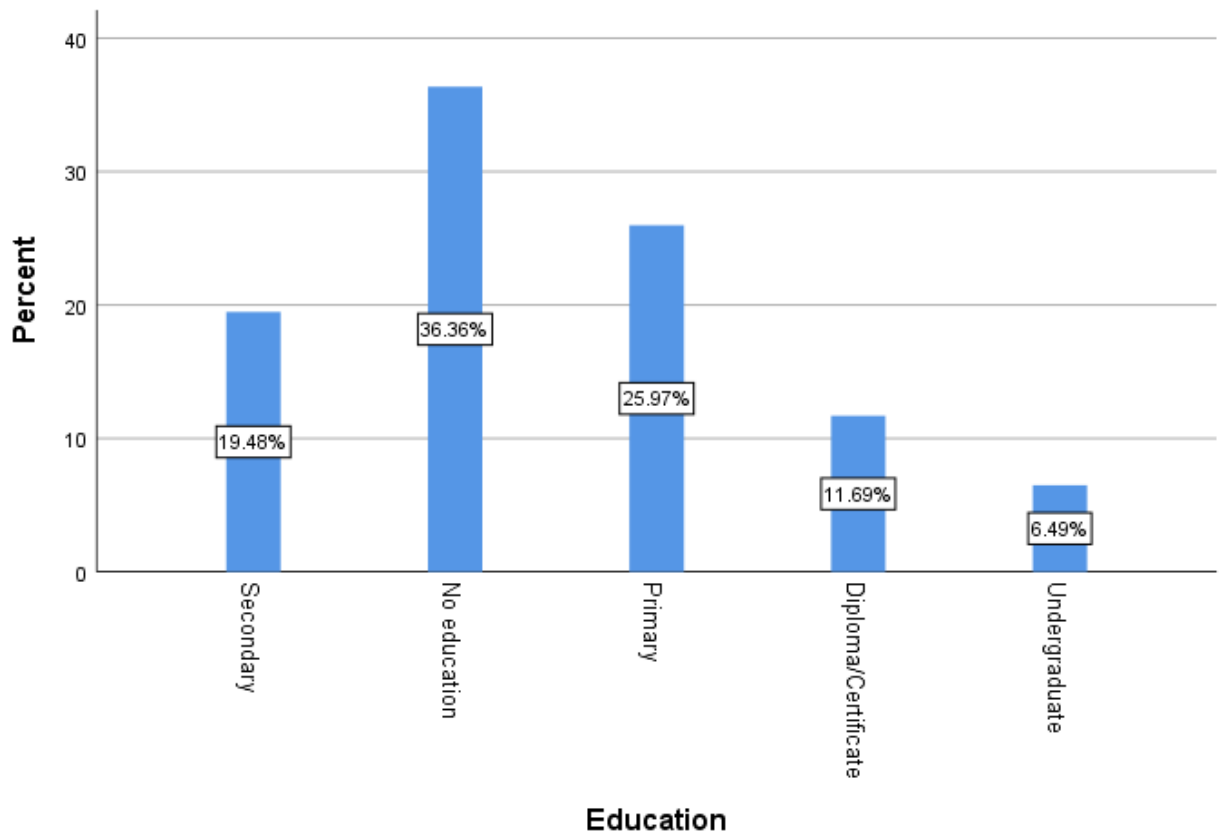


**Figure 4.2: Gender of the respondents**

The findings indicated that 70.13% of the respondents were males and 29.87% were females. The findings imply that the majority of the respondents were males. This can be attributed to the fact that in pastoralist communities, men typically dominate decision-making processes.

### 4.3.3 Education Level

The study sought to determine the highest education of the respondents. Analyzing the education level of respondents was crucial as it provides insights into their awareness and understanding of devolved governance structures and conflict resolution.



**Figure 2.3: Education level of the respondents**

The findings indicate that 36.36% of the respondents had not attained formal education, 25.97% had attained primary education, 19.48% had secondary education, 11.69% had college certificate and 6.49% had undergraduate degrees. The findings indicate that although respondents were distributed across different education levels, the education level was generally low among the agro-pastoralists. A significant proportion of the respondents have not attained formal education, which may limit

their understanding and involvement in issues such as devolution and inter-communal conflicts. The majority have at least primary or secondary education, indicating a certain level of literacy and capacity to engage with governance and community development. However, the relatively small number with higher qualifications suggests that advanced education is not widespread among communities in Marsabit.

#### 4.3.4 Occupation

The analysis in this section aimed to identify the occupations of the respondents.

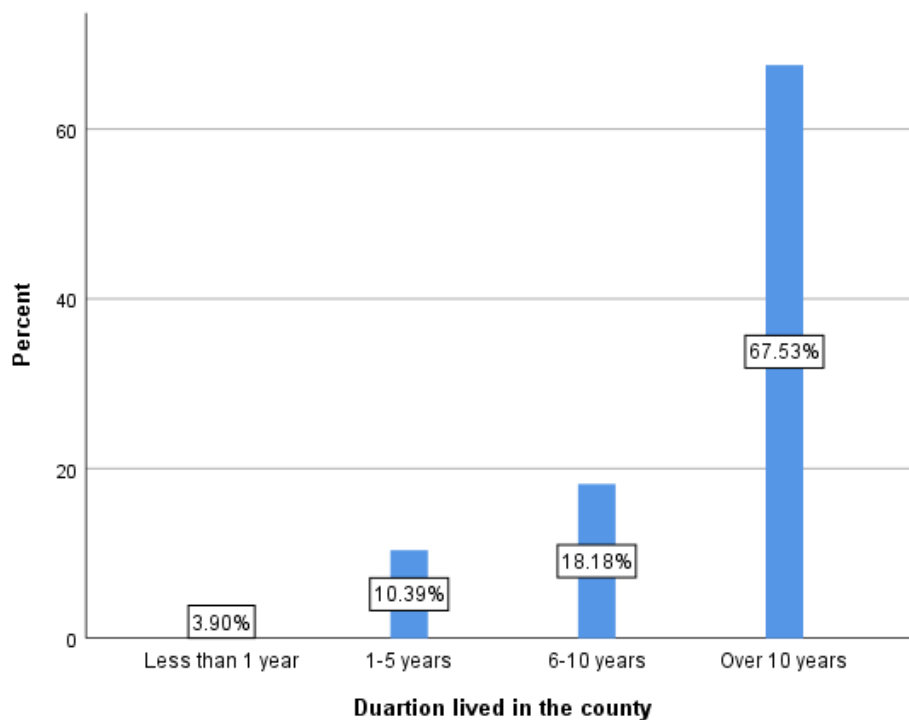
**Table 2.2: Occupation**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Livestock keeping	43	55.8
Agro pastoralism	22	28.6
Trade/own business	7	9.1
Others	5	6.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The analysis indicates that 55.8% of the respondents engaged in livestock keeping, 28.6% are agro-pastoralists, 9.1% are involved in trade and own businesses and 6.5% engage in other occupations. The findings imply that the majority of respondents rely on livestock keeping as their key source of livelihood. This reflects the significance of pastoralism in the county's economy and culture. A notable proportion are agro-pastoralists which suggests that the households to some extent have diversified their livelihoods. The smaller percentages involved in trade, business, and other occupations highlight limited economic diversification.

#### 4.3.5 Duration lived in the county.

Analysis was done to find out the duration the respondents have lived in Marsabit county. Determining the duration lived in the county is important as it provides insights into their familiarity with local issues, governance structures, and historical context of inter-communal conflicts. The findings are presented on the figure below;



**Figure 4.4: Duration Lived in the county**

The analysis results indicate that 67.53 of the household heads who participated in the study had lived in Marsabit county for over 10 years, 18.18% have lived in the county for 6-10 years, 10.39% have lived for 1-5 years and 3.90% have lived in the county for less than 1 year. The results suggest most respondents are long-term residents in Marsabit county which suggests that they have extensive knowledge and experience with the socio-political and economic dynamics within the county including issues related to devolution and inter-communal conflicts.

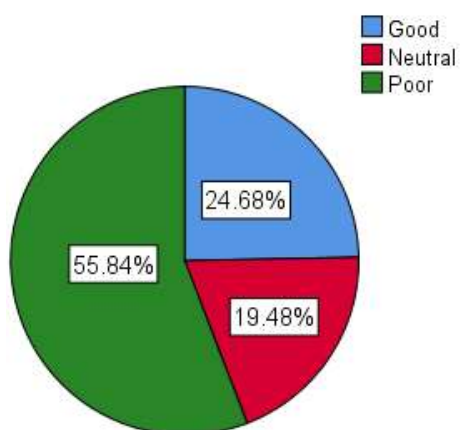
#### 4.4 Intercommunal Conflicts

The purpose of the analysis in this section was to evaluate inter-communal conflicts in Marsabit County. The majority of the respondents (55.84%) were of the opinion that the current state of peace and coexistence among communities in Marsabit County was poor, 19.48% had neutral perception on the current state of peace and coexistence among communities in Marsabit County and only a small proportion had the perception that the current state of peace and coexistence among communities in Marsabit County.

Agreeing to the views given by household heads, one of the chiefs interviewed had this to say

*"As local leaders, we see tensions rise over simple issues that could have been addressed with proactive conflict management and fair resource allocation. We need more structured and consistent peace-building efforts, especially those involving all community members, to rebuild trust and foster understanding between groups." (KI 2, 2024).*

The findings indicate a significant concern regarding the state of peace and coexistence in Marsabit County, with a majority of respondents perceiving it as poor. This suggests that intercommunal conflicts remain a prevalent issue, undermining social harmony and stability in the region. The neutral perceptions from a smaller portion of respondents may reflect either uncertainty or a lack of strong opinion on the matter. The findings are presented on the figure below;



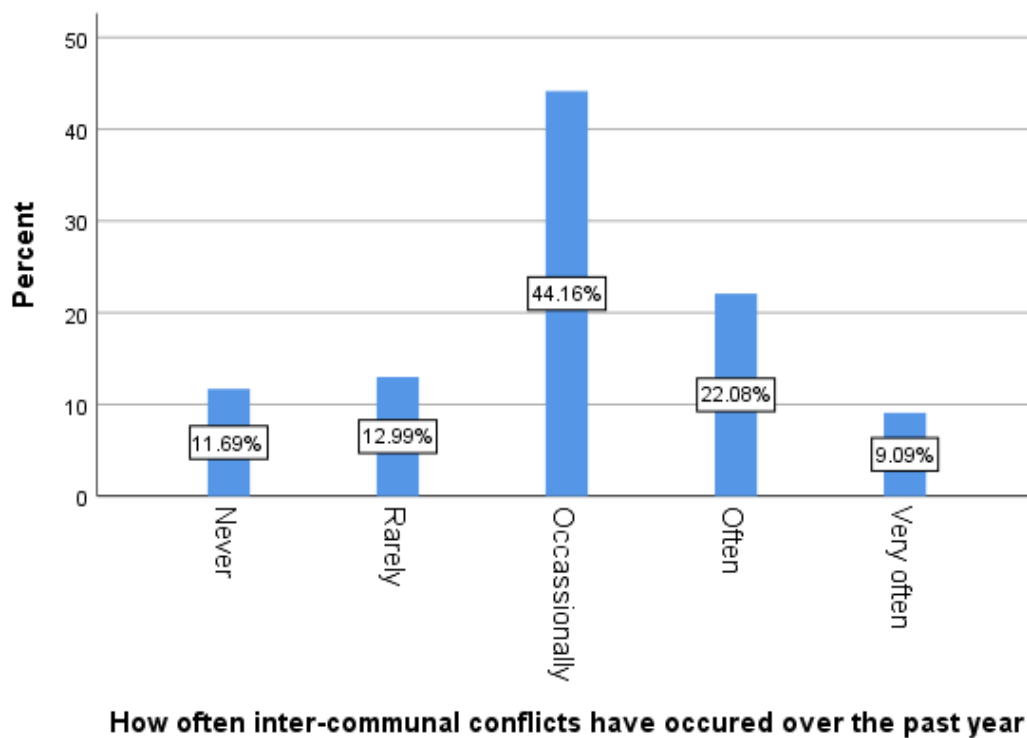
**Figure 4.5: Perception of the current state of peace and coexistence among communities.**

On how often inter-communal conflicts have occurred in the last one year, 44.16% reported that inter-communal conflicts in Marsabit county occur occasionally, 22.08% reported that conflicts occur often, 9.09% reported that conflicts occur very often, 12.99% reported that conflicts occur rarely and 11.69% reported that conflicts have not happened in the past one year. Similar views were raised by the key informants. One had this to say;

*"Although inter-communal conflicts have not been occurring all the time, they remain a persistent problem in our county. We need continuous engagement with communities to identify and address the root causes of these conflicts." (KI 1, 2024)*

The findings imply that inter-communal conflicts remain a recurring issue in Marsabit County, with a significant proportion of respondents reporting occasional occurrences. While some respondents noted that conflicts happen often or very often, a smaller proportion observed rare or no conflict over the past year. This suggests that

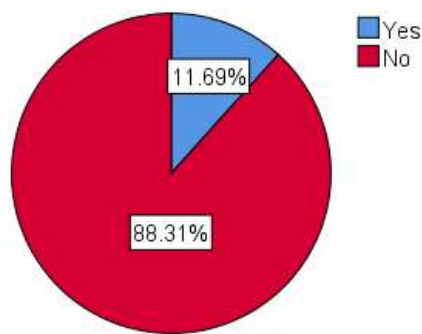
although the frequency of conflicts may vary, inter-communal tensions persist, highlighting the need for sustained efforts in peace building and conflict resolution to address the underlying causes and reduce their occurrence.



**Figure 4.6: How often inter communal conflicts have occurred in Marsabit County in the last one year.**

#### 4.5 County Resource Management and Inter communal Conflicts.

The aim of the analysis in this section was to examine the relationship between county resource management and inter-communal conflicts in Marsabit County. First, the study sought to determine whether the county government of Marsabit has been effective in the management of resources.



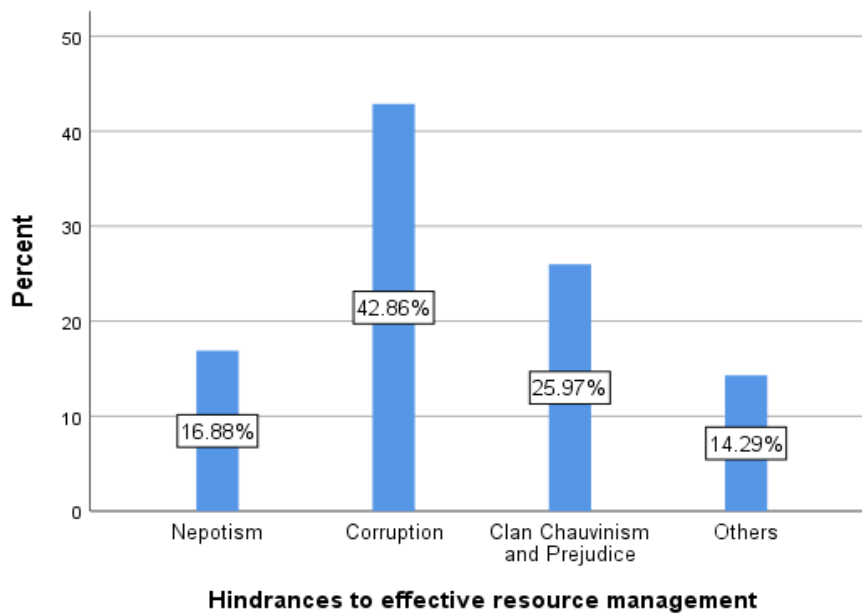
**Figure 4.7: Whether county government of Marsabit has been effective in resource management.**

The analysis findings indicated that 88.31% felt that the county government of Marsabit has not been effective in the management of resources. Only a small proportion felt that the county government of Marsabit has been effective in the management of resources as indicated by 11.69%. The findings imply that the respondents are neutral regarding the county government's efforts to enhance equality among natives as a means of curbing inter communal conflicts. However, they expressed disagreement with the county's efforts in ensuring fairness in resource distribution, inclusive decision-making, and the effectiveness of peace building initiatives in reducing conflicts. This suggests that the respondents perceive significant gaps in the county's approach to addressing inter communal conflicts, especially in terms of fairness, inclusivity, and the tangible impact of peace building strategies.

The findings are in tandem with the results of a study done by Habib (2022) on conflicts over scarce resources in Rohingya host community in Bangladesh. The study identified that conflicts were caused by disputes and disagreements over the management and distribution of the available resources. The disagreement over the resources destroyed the existing relationships between the communities which in turn

threatened peace and coexistence. Similarly, a study by Ali (2021) on the links between devolution and conflicts in Mandera identified that the majority of the respondents from the county were not satisfied with the manner the county resources were distributed. This led to escalated contest and conflicts over the resources.

For the respondents who felt that the county government has not been effective in resource management, 42.86% reported that the major hindrance to effective resource management has been corruption, 25.97% reported that ineffective resource management is as a result of clan chauvinism and prejudice, 16.88 reported that poor resource management was as a result of nepotism and 14.29% reported that poor resource management was a result of other reasons. The findings imply that while there are numerous factors that contribute to poor management of resources by the county government, corruption was reported by majority as the major hindrance. This indicates widespread perceptions of unethical practices and lack of accountability in governance. Chauvinism and prejudice, other factors that stood out, are linked to ethnic or clan biases, which increase feelings of inequality and exclusion. This fuels inter-communal tensions. Nepotism further undermines trust by favoring personal connections over merit, which promotes resentment among communities.



**Figure 4.8: Hindrances to Effective Resource Management**

Corruption, nepotism, ethnic and clan biases emerged also emerged as key concerns among the key informants. One of the local leaders had this to say;

*"In my view the county government is trying as far as resource management is concerned. However, corruption and nepotism are dragging us behind and they are contributing to inter-communal conflicts. Nepotism has made some people to benefit while others have not. Only those connected to the leaders benefit from resources. This caused bitterness and resentment among some communities." ( KI 3, 2024)*

Another informant had this to say;

*"In my ward, I feel that many people are excluded from the benefit-sharing process. This sows a seed of distrust among them. It creates some type of resentment that works against peace campaigns. " (KI 6, 2024)*

The respondents reported that when formulating and implementing resource management policies, there is a need for the county government to promote transparency and accountability as foundational principles. They emphasized the need for eradication of corruption through strict oversight mechanisms, regular audits, and active citizen engagement in monitoring resource allocation and use. Another aspect advocated by the respondents was inclusivity. The respondents advocated for policies that address the diverse needs of all communities within Marsabit. This would involve equitable resource distribution that transcends ethnic, clan, or social divisions, ensuring no group feels marginalized. They also highlighted the significance importance of promoting meritocracy in appointments and decision-making processes to eliminate and curb nepotism and promote public trust.

Another factor stressed by the respondents was the need for community participation in policy making. They reported that there is a need to encourage local stakeholders to contribute insights and solutions tailored to the unique challenges faced by the communities. One ward administrator had this to;

*"Marsabit is home to diverse communities, and unless every group feels included, we will always face tension and conflict. I agree that resource distribution must be equitable and fair, with a deliberate effort to include all communities regardless of tribe or clan. Policies that unite rather than divide are critical for peace and progress." (KI 1, 2024).*

They recommended the need for education and awareness campaigns to make sure that citizens understand the policies and their benefits. This promotes a sense of ownership and cooperation. Furthermore, the respondents emphasized the need for investment in conflict-sensitive approaches to resource management, emphasizing peace-building initiatives that address underlying grievances and promote dialogue

among communities. With such measures in place, resource management will not only meet development goals but also strengthens social cohesion in the county.

*"When we focus on inclusive dialogue and equitable resource management, we're not just meeting development targets. We are also promoting trust and unity among our people. Social cohesion is very important, and it can only be achieved if every group feels their needs are being considered and their voices heard." (KI 1, 2024).*

Analysis was done further to determine how the respondents perceive county government resource distribution policies and the contribution to inter communal conflicts in Marsabit county. The findings are presented in the table below;

**Table 4.3: County government resource distribution policies and the contribution to inter-communal conflicts**

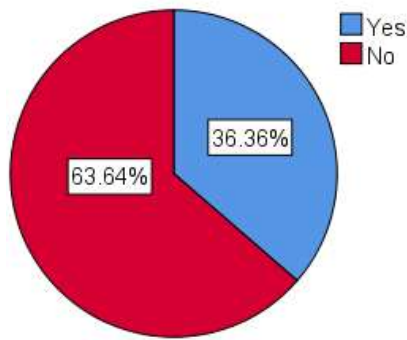
Statement	N	Mean	Std
The county government of Marsabit has been successful in the implementation of policies related to resource management	77	2.0909	.76402
Ineffectiveness in the county government resource management policies has been a major cause of inter communal conflicts in Marsabit County.	77	3.1039	1.15376
Clan and communal politics are the major hindrance to the design and implementation of resource management policies	77	2.4416	.78629
The county government of Marsabit leadership policies make sure that the resources in the county are effectively managed and utilized	77	1.7922	1.00443

The analysis revealed that the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement that the leadership policies of the Marsabit county government ensure the effective management and utilization of the county's resources (Mean=1.7922, Std=1.00443). They disagreed that the county government of Marsabit has been successful in the implementation of policies related to resource management (Mean=2.0909, Std=.76402) and that clan and communal politics are the major hindrance to the design and implementation of resource management policies (Mean=2.4416, Std=.78629). The respondents were neutral on whether the ineffectiveness of the county government's resource management policies has been a significant cause of inter-communal conflicts in Marsabit County (Mean=3.1039, Std=.1.15376).

The findings show a general lack of confidence among respondents in the effectiveness of Marsabit County's leadership and policies concerning resource management. There was a strong perception that the county government has not ensured proper management and utilization of resources, and its attempts at implementing resource-related policies have been largely unsuccessful. Clan and communal politics were also viewed as huge obstacles to the formulation and execution of resource management policies. However, there were divided opinions on whether the ineffectiveness of these policies is directly linked to inter communal conflicts. This reflects some uncertainty about the relationship between the shortcomings of the county government and social tensions in the county.

#### 4.6 Leadership and Inter communal Conflicts.

Analysis was done to determine the influence of county leadership composition on inter communal conflicts in Marsabit county. First the respondents were asked to indicate whether leadership of county government of Marsabit has been satisfactory. The findings are presented on the figure below;



**Figure 4.9: The influence of county leadership composition on inter communal conflicts in Marsabit county**

The analysis findings indicated that 63.64% thought that the county leadership is not satisfactory and 36.36% thought the county leadership was satisfactory. The findings reveal a general dissatisfaction with county leadership in Marsabit, with many perceiving it as ineffective in addressing inter communal conflicts and supporting peace building initiatives.

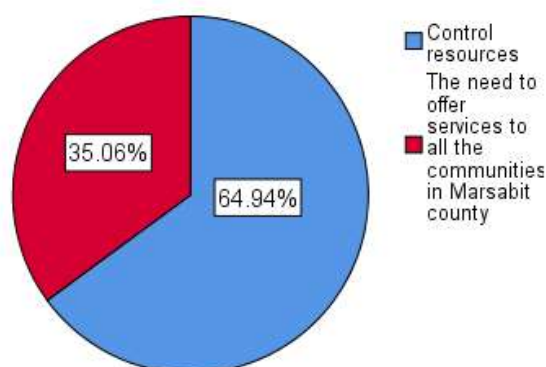
The insights obtained from the households' heads corroborated with the views of the key informants. One informant had this to say in this regard;

*" I am not satisfied with the county government leadership and governance. I feel that leadership positions are dominated by individuals who favor their clans, and this makes the rest of the people feeling excluded. Resources are often directed to areas where their clans live, leaving others struggling." (KI 5, 2024)*

*"Clan-based favoritism is tearing our county apart. Instead of uniting us, I feel that it sets communities against one another because each clan feels like they are being shortchanged." (KI 3, 2024)*

The results indicated that the main inspiration of leadership in Marsabit county government is control of resources as represented by 64.94%. Only 35.06% reported that the county government of Marsabit was inspired by the need to offer services to all the communities in Marsabit county.

The findings imply a perception of leadership that mainly prioritize resource allocation and power dynamics, potentially contributing to inter communal tensions. The relatively smaller proportion of respondents who believe that leadership is inspired by a commitment to serving all communities reflects a lack of inclusivity and equitable service delivery.



**Figure 4.10: Inspiration of leadership in Marsabit county government**

The respondents were further asked to rate the extent to whether they agreed or disagreed with a number of statements pertaining to the Marsabit county government leadership and the contribution to conflict resolution.

**Table 4.4: County government leadership and the contribution to conflict resolution.**

Statements	N	Mean	Std.
The county leadership composition is representative in terms of professional qualification, tribe, age and educational level.	77	3.0260	.87320

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The Marsabit county government leadership has promoted 77 2.1039 .78781  
fairness in the allocation and management of resources.

The Marsabit county government leadership has promoted 77 2.0390 .86514  
transparency in the resource allocation and management

The Marsabit county government leadership has promoted 77 2.0260 .90283  
accountability in the allocation and management of resources.

County leadership has been effective in conflict management. 77 3.0130 .95275

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The analysis findings indicated that the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that county leadership has been effective in conflict management (Mean=3.0130, Std=.95275) and that the county leadership composition is representative in terms of professional qualification, tribe, age and educational level (Mean=3.0280, Std=.95275). They disagreed that the Marsabit county government leadership has promoted fairness in the allocation and management of resources (Mean=2.1039, Std=.78781), that the Marsabit county government leadership has promoted transparency in the resource allocation and management (Mean=2.0390, Std=.86514), and that the Marsabit county government leadership has promoted accountability in the allocation and management of resources (Mean=2.0260, Std=.90283).

Similar views were given by the key respondents. One had his to say;

*" I can say that the county government is trying to manage conflicts, but the efforts don't seem to have lasting solutions. It is hard to say if they're effective or not. What I can say is that the county government is just doing the bare minimum." (KI 2, 2024)*

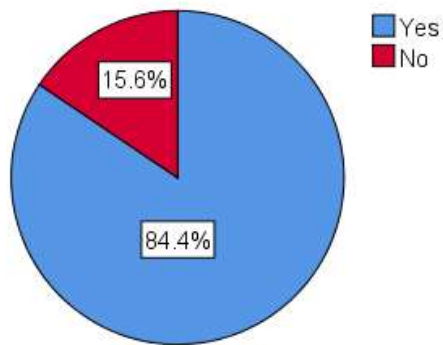
The findings indicate mixed perceptions of the effectiveness of Marsabit County's leadership in conflict management and representation. Although the respondents were

neutral on whether county leadership has been effective in managing conflicts or representative in terms of qualifications, tribe, age, and education, there was clear disagreement regarding its fairness, transparency, and accountability in resource allocation and management. These findings indicate significant concerns about governance practices and suggest a lack of trust in the ability of the county government leadership to transparently and equitably manage resources. This leads to broader social and political challenges in the county.

The findings are in tandem with the results of a study conducted by Zakarie and Hared (2021) who in a study on the cause and consequences of conflicts in Somali as well as the conflict mitigation strategies that have been put in place, it emerged that poor leadership, clan and clannism were the major causes of conflict in the country. Poor leadership created avenues for corruption, clan members' militarization, inequalities and extreme poverty. Similarly, a study by Ajodo-Adebanjoko (2019) on the cause of conflicts between communities in Nigeria established that poor governance and poor leadership have been the key causes of resource related conflicts. Conflicts occurred as a result of resource ownership, distribution, access and rivalry over the existing natural resources mainly petroleum resources. Poor leadership facilitated abuse of human rights and created a conducive environment for corruption and nepotism.

#### 4.7 County Peace Building Initiatives and Inter communal Conflicts

The analysis in this section sought to determine the influence of county peace building initiatives on inter communal conflicts. First, the study sought to determine whether there are local mechanisms put in place to resolve inter communal conflicts and disputes in Marsabit county.



**Figure 4.11: Existence of local conflict resolution mechanisms.**

The analysis results indicate that 84.4% reported that there are local mechanisms put in place to resolve inter communal conflicts and disputes in Marsabit county and 15.6% reported that there are no local mechanisms put in place to resolve inter communal conflicts and disputes in Marsabit county. The findings imply that a significant majority of respondents acknowledge the existence of local mechanisms for resolving inter communal conflicts and disputes in Marsabit County. This suggests that the communities within Marsabit county rely greatly on community-based and traditional conflict resolution strategies to address disputes.

The key informants had similar views as households' heads. One county official had this to say;

*"Our policies on conflict resolution exist, but enforcement is weak. Many people feel their grievances are not heard or addressed transparently, which escalates tensions. Strengthening these systems should be a priority."(KI 1, 2024)*

Similar views were shared by one of the chiefs interviewed.

*"As local leaders, we are often called upon to mediate disputes that arise because of these gaps. What is needed is stronger oversight, clear communication about resource distribution processes, and better inclusion of all*

*stakeholders in decision making. Only then can we rebuild trust and reduce tensions in our communities." (KI 4, 2024)*

Analysis was done to determine how the respondents perceive the effectiveness of various mechanisms used to resolve inter communal conflicts in Marsabit county.

**Table 4.5: Effectiveness of conflict resolution mechanisms**

<b>Conflict resolution mechanisms</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std</b>
Clan elders	77	1.5844	1.18489
Peace tournaments	77	1.4675	1.00766
Workshops	77	1.4935	1.07144
Religious sanctions	77	1.6104	1.19380
NGOs	77	1.5974	1.18388
County peace initiatives	77	1.6883	1.30040

From the analysis, the respondents reported that clan elders are slightly effective in resolving conflicts (M=1.5844, Std= 1.18489). Other mechanisms were rated as slightly effective in resolving conflicts included religious sanctions (Mean=1.6104, Std= 1.19380), NGOs (Mean=1.5974, Std=1.18388) and County peace initiatives (Mean=1.6883, Std=1.18388). Peace tournaments (Mean=1.4675, Std=1.00766) and workshops (Mean=1.4935, Std=1.07144) were reported as ineffective in solving conflicts.

The key informants raised similar concerns regarding the effectiveness of conflict resolution mechanisms. They reported that while there are mechanisms put in place, they are not very effective in addressing the root causes of conflicts. One respondent had this to say;

*"Us local leaders together with others such as church and mosque leaders, village elders and NGOs try to help, but in many cases, our impact is not much felt because we don't always have the money and resources needed. We need stronger collaboration with the government to make our efforts more effective."*  
(KI 4, 2024)

Similar views were given by the peace and conflict resolution group leaders, ward representatives, and youth leaders.

*"Our efforts are often affected by a lack of resources and the inability to engage all communities consistently. Although we do what we can, greater support from the county government can help us to achieve better results."* (KI 2, 2024)

*"The council of elders hold respect and they play a huge role on conflict resolution. But it is good for them to be offered enough resources and their decisions must be implemented by strong policies that are enforceable on the ground. This will offer long lasting solutions"* (KI 1, 2024)

The findings suggest that existing conflict resolution mechanisms in Marsabit County are perceived as only slightly effective, with no approach standing out as particularly impactful. Clan elders although are traditional pillars of conflict resolution, are considered as providing limited effectiveness. Similarly, religious sanctions, NGOs, and county peace initiatives were not perceived as sufficient in addressing the complexities of local conflicts. Peace tournaments and workshops, often used as community engagement tools were viewed as particularly ineffective in resolving conflicts. These results imply a need for more effective, inclusive, and innovative

approaches to conflict resolution that address the underlying causes of disputes and build on existing frameworks.

The findings corroborated the results of a study by Krause (2017) on the role of the non-violence and civilian agency in communal war in Jos, Nigeria whereby the findings indicated that the community elders were instrumental in peace building. Community elders play a crucial role in restoring peace by emphasizing forgiveness and reconciliation between those directly affected by the perpetrators of conflicts and the wider community. Similarly, a study conducted in Lake Chad, Congo Basin among the Mbororo pastoralist by Nagabhatla et al (2021), the findings indicated that the community elders promoted security by promoting peace and coexistence among the pastoral communities. The study revealed that most of the groups experienced a reduction in tension due to the resource management agreements made by the elders on behalf of the communities.

Analysis was further done to find out the extent to which the county government of Marsabit undertake various measures to resolve inter communal conflicts in Marsabit county.

**Table 4.6: Conflict Resolution measures adopted by the county government**

<b>Conflict Resolution measures adopted by the county government.</b>			
	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std</b>
Advocacy	77	3.0519	.35895
Mediation	77	3.0779	.31482
Improvement of local peace building strategies	77	3.0130	.54996
Mapping out conflict resolution strategies	77	3.0126	.59590

The respondents reported that the county government has a moderate extent adopted advocacy measures to resolve inter communal conflicts in Marsabit county (Mean=3.0519, Std=.35895), mediation (Mean=3.0779, Std=.31482), improvement of local peace building strategies (Mean=3.0130, Std=.54996), and mapping out conflict resolution strategies (Mean=3.0126, Std=.59590). The findings suggest that while the county government of Marsabit has put efforts such as advocacy, mediation, improving peace building strategies, and mapping conflict resolution approaches, these initiatives may not yet be fully effective or widespread.

The findings by the household heads corroborated with the views of the key informants. One had this to echo in this regard;

*As a county government official, I acknowledge that we have made some progress in addressing inter communal conflicts through advocacy and mediation efforts. For example, we have organized several forums to bring communities together and improve dialogue. However, in my opinion, these efforts are not enough and we need to do more." (KI 2, 2024).*

Similarly, one of the local leaders had this to say;

*"Although the county government is trying its best, more needs to be done to make these initiatives more helpful. The initiatives need better funding, coordination, and collaboration with community leaders, NGOs, and other stakeholders." (KI 1, 2024).*

The respondents were also asked to evaluate several statements regarding the role of the Marsabit county government in mitigating conflicts within the county.

**Table 4.7: County government contribution towards mitigation of conflicts in Marsabit county**

Statements	N	Mean	Std
The county of Marsabit enhances equality of all communities as a means of curbing inter communal conflicts	77	3.0000	.16222
The county of Marsabit ensures there is fairness in distribution of resources as a means of curbing intercommunal conflicts	77	2.2078	1.11612
The county government of Marsabit ensures that all communities are included in decision making on matters of development as a means of curbing inter communal conflicts.	77	2.0130	1.06984
The county Government of Marsabit peace building initiatives have been effective in curbing inter-communal conflicts.	77	2.7013	1.06456

Respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that the county of Marsabit enhances equality of all communities as a means of curbing inter communal conflicts (Mean=3.0000, Std=.16222). They disagreed that the county of Marsabit ensures there is fairness in distribution of resources as a means of curbing inter communal conflicts (Mean=2.2078, Std=1.11612), that the county government of Marsabit ensures that all communities are included in decision making on matters of development as a means of curbing inter communal conflicts (Mean=2.0130, Std=1.06984) and that the county Government of Marsabit peace building initiatives have been effective in curbing inter communal conflicts (Mean=2.7013, Std=1.06456).

The administrator could further elaborate:

*"The peace building initiatives we have seen so far are well-intentioned, but they do not adequately address the root causes of conflicts. To truly reduce inter*

*communal tensions, we need more inclusive and transparent governance, where every community feels represented and valued. The county government must actively involve stakeholders at the grassroots level to create solutions that resonate with the people and address their unique challenges." (KI 3, 2024).*

The findings imply that the respondents are neutral regarding the county government's efforts to enhance equality among natives as a means of curbing inter communal conflicts. However, they expressed disagreement with the county's efforts in ensuring fairness in resource distribution, inclusive decision-making, and the effectiveness of peace building initiatives in reducing conflicts.

#### 4.8 Inferential Analysis

The purpose of the analysis in this section was to determine the relationship between devolution and inter communal conflicts in Marsabit county. This was done using Chi square tests. The results indicated that there was no statistically significant relationship between resource management policies and inter communal conflicts in Marsabit County. This is because the p value=.013 was less than 0.05. The findings imply that resource management practices significantly influence the occurrence of conflicts. The findings indicate the critical role of equitable and effective resource management in promoting peace and reducing conflicts in the county.

**Table 4.8: Resource Management Policies- Chi-Square Results**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.723 <sup>a</sup>	2	.013
Likelihood Ratio	7.667	2	.022

Linear-by-Linear Association	6.252	1	.012
N of Valid Cases	77		

On the relationship between county leadership composition and inter communal conflicts in Marsabit County, the p value obtained was 0.018 which is less than 0.05. This implies that there was significant relationship between county leadership composition and inter communal conflicts in Marsabit. The findings imply that there was a statistically significant relationship between county leadership composition and inter communal conflicts in Marsabit County. The findings suggest that the composition of county leadership potentially in terms of representation, inclusivity, or fairness—plays a critical role in influencing the dynamics of inter communal conflicts.

**Table 4.9: County leadership composition- Chi-Square Results**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	11.952 <sup>a</sup>	4	.018
Likelihood Ratio	12.303	4	.015
Linear-by-Linear Association	.559	1	.455
N of Valid Cases	77		

On the relationship between peace building initiative policies and inter communal conflicts, the p value obtained was 0.03 was less than 0.05 implying that there was statistically significant relationship between county peace building initiatives and inter communal conflicts in Marsabit County. The findings imply that county peace building initiatives play a meaningful role in influencing the state of inter communal relations.

**Table 4.10: County leadership Composition-Chi-Square Results**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	10.678 <sup>a</sup>	4	.030
Likelihood Ratio	12.073	4	.017
Linear-by-Linear Association	10.001	1	.002
N of Valid Cases	77		

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter concludes the study on devolution and inter-communal conflicts in Marsabit County. It provides a summary of the key findings, draws conclusions, offers recommendations, and suggests areas for further research.

#### **5.2 Summary of the Findings**

The purpose of the study was to determine the role of devolution on inter communal conflicts in Marsabit county. The first objective of the study was to explore the influence of county resource management on inter communal conflicts in Marsabit county. The analysis findings indicated significant shortcomings in fairness and inclusivity in resource distribution, decision-making, and peace building initiatives. Most of the respondents stated that the county government's approach to resource management lacked fairness and transparency, hindering its ability to effectively mitigate conflicts. The key barriers identified as hindrances to effective resource management included corruption, nepotism, and ethnic or clan biases. These systemic issues contribute to feelings of exclusion and increase tensions. This creates an environment where conflicts thrive. The findings imply that poor and inequitable resource governance undermines social cohesion and fuels mistrust among communities, making devolution less effective as a peacebuilding tool. Ensuring fairness and transparency in resource management is therefore essential for reducing inter-communal hostilities and promoting inclusive development.

The second objective of the study was to investigate the impact of county leadership composition on inter-communal conflicts in Marsabit County. The majority of the respondents viewed the leadership as prioritizing resource control over equitable service delivery, which further deepens divisions and promote distrust. The respondents raised concerns over lack of fairness, accountability and fairness in leadership practices. Although leadership structures in the county government met basic representational standards, lack of proactive conflict resolution mechanisms and equitable policies hindered the ability of the leadership structures to effectively address communal tensions. The findings implied that representation alone is not sufficient to prevent inter-communal conflicts, that is, leadership must be both inclusive and accountable. Effective county leadership should focus on equitable service delivery, transparency, and participation of all ethnic groups to rebuild trust and promote unity among communities.

The third objective of the study was to examine the impact of county peace-building initiatives on inter-communal conflicts in Marsabit County. The respondents reported that there are various local mechanisms for conflict resolution in the county including clan elders, councils of elders, religious leaders, NGOs, and county peace initiatives. These mechanisms are deeply rooted in community traditions and play a major role in dispute mediation and promoting dialogue. However, the respondents reported that the impact of these mechanisms was not significant and were insufficient in addressing the root causes of conflicts. There was no adequate support and modern mechanisms were not fully integrated with community-based approaches. The findings imply that although traditional mechanisms are crucial and play a key role in promoting peace, their limited coordination and weak linkage with formal governance structures reduce their overall effectiveness. Strengthening collaboration between

traditional and modern systems, alongside adequate funding and institutional support, would enhance conflict resolution and foster sustainable peace in the county.

### 5.3 Conclusions

The study sought to determine the role of devolution on inter communal conflicts in Marsabit county. The study concludes that the county government of Marsabit has struggled to implement effective and equitable resource management strategies. Inefficiencies, coupled with systemic challenges such as corruption, nepotism, and ethnic biases, have significantly hindered efforts to promote peace and coexistence among communities in the county. As a result of these inefficiencies, trust in governance has been eroded which has in turn increased feelings of exclusion and created an environment that promote inter communal tensions.

Leadership practices emerged as another significant factor that contributes to the occurrence and persistence of inter communal conflicts in Marsabit county. The study concluded that the county leadership in the county mainly prioritizes resource control over equitable service delivery. The lack of focus on fairness and inclusivity has increased divisions and diminished trust in the county leadership and governance structures. Generally, the study concluded that the county leadership structures has not embraced more transparent, accountable and community driven approaches to governance to rebuild confidence among constituents and lay a foundation for sustainable peace and coexistence among communities in the county.

Inter communal conflicts in Marsabit County have also been influenced by county peace building initiatives. Traditional mechanisms led by clan elders and religious leaders, although culturally significant, lack the necessary integration with modern governance structures to provide sustainable peace and coexistence among communities in the county. Additionally, the existing peace initiatives are often not

adequately funded and are not well coordinated. This limits their effectiveness in curbing inter communal conflicts in the county.

#### 5.4 Recommendations

- i. The study concludes that the county government of Marsabit has struggled to implement effective and equitable resource management strategies. The county government is therefore recommended to prioritize the implementation of effective and equitable resource management strategies. The county government is recommended to ensure transparency and accountability in resource allocation processes in order to rebuild trust among the communities. The county government is recommended to establish effective oversight mechanisms to eliminate and curb corruption, nepotism, and ethnic biases in order to promote inclusivity and fairness in governance.
- ii. The study concluded that the county leadership in the county mainly prioritizes resource control over equitable service delivery and has not played significant role in curbing inter communal conflicts in Marsabit County. The county government leadership is thus recommended to have a transformative shift toward transparency, inclusivity, and accountability. There is a need for the county government to institutionalize community-driven decision-making frameworks that involve diverse ethnic and cultural groups in governance. Also, there is a need for the county government of Marsabit to introduce or improve leadership training programs to equip leaders with conflict-resolution skills and an understanding of the value of inclusivity in promoting coexistence among communities.
- iii. Inter communal conflicts in Marsabit County have also been influenced by county peace building initiatives. Traditional mechanisms led by clan elders and religious leaders, although culturally significant, lack the necessary integration with modern governance structures to provide sustainable peace and coexistence among communities in the county. Additionally, the existing peace initiatives are often

not adequately funded and are not well coordinated. This limits their effectiveness in curbing inter communal conflicts in the county. The County government is recommended to fund and support and coordinate traditional peace building mechanism and integrate with modern governance structures to attend a lasting peace within the county

#### 5.5 Suggestions for Further Studies

This study examined the influence of devolution on inter-communal conflicts in Marsabit County. Future studies could replicate this research in other counties such as Elgeyo Marakwet, West Pokot, Baringo, Turkana, and Samburu, which also experience persistent inter-communal conflicts. Such comparative studies would help determine whether the patterns observed in Marsabit are consistent across other devolved units or are unique to its socio-political dynamics. Additionally, future research could focus on the effectiveness of specific devolution policies or peace-building frameworks in mitigating conflicts, thereby providing deeper insights into how governance structures can be strengthened to promote lasting peace and equitable development across counties.

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## Appendices

### **Appendix I: Introduction letter**

My name is Guyo Gufu Wato, a student at Kenyatta University. I am doing a study on the effect of devolution on inter communal conflicts in Marsabit county. The main focus is to determine whether the county leadership policies, county resource management and distribution policies and county peace building initiatives have contributed to inter communal conflicts within the county. As a resident in this county, you have been identified as a suitable respondent and you are hereby requested to participate. Your role is to offer responses to a set of questions in the questionnaire. You are assured that high privacy and confidentiality will be upheld and your data will be used strictly for academic purposes. Your participation will be highly appreciated and will enable me to successfully complete my scholarly program.

## **Appendix II: Questionnaire**

The aim of this research is to determine the effect of devolution on conflicts in Marsabit county. You have been identified as a suitable respondent and you are hereby requested to participate. The data you will give will be utilized for scholarly purposes. Be assured that high confidentiality will be upheld.

### **SECTION A: Demographic Information**

1. Gender of the respondent

Male [ ]

Female [ ]

2. Age bracket (Years)

18-25 [ ]

26-35 [ ]

36-45 [ ]

46-55 [ ]

Over 55 [ ]

3. Education level

No education [ ]

Primary [ ]

Secondary [ ]

Diploma/Certificate [ ]

Undergraduate [ ]

Post graduate [ ]

4. Occupation

Livestock keeping [ ]

Farming [ ]

Trade/own business [ ]

Employed [ ]

5. Sub county

Laisamis [ ]

Saku [ ]

North Horr [ ]

Moyale [ ]

6. How long have you lived in Marsabit County?

Less than 1 yr [ ]

1-5 yr [ ]

6-10 yrs [ ]

Over 10 Yrs [ ]

**SECTION B: County Resource Management and Intercommunal Conflicts In Marsabit County.**

7. In your view, do you think the county government of Marsabit has been effective in the management of resources

Yes [ ]

No [ ]

b) If No, what do you think as been a major hindrance?

Nepotism [ ]

Corruption [ ]

Clan Chauvinism and Prejudice [ ]

Others [ ]

8. In your opinion, what aspects do you think the county government of Marsabit should consider when formulating and implementing resource management policies?

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9) Please rate the statements below regarding county government resource distribution policies and the contribution to intercommunal conflicts. Use the rating criteria where SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, N=Neutral, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree

<b>Measures</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>
The county government of Marsabit has been successful in the implementation of policies related to resource management					
Ineffectiveness in the county government resource management policies has been a major cause of intercommunal conflicts in Marsabitcounty.					
Clan and communal politics are the major hindrance to the design and					

implementation of resource management policies					
The county government of Marsabit leadership policies make sure that the resources in the county are effectively managed and utilised					

**SECTION C: Leadership and Intercommunal Conflicts in Marsabit County.**

10. Do you think the leadership of county government of Marsabit has been satisfactory?

Yes [ ]

No [ ]

11) How can you describe the leadership of county government of Marsabit?

Agenda based [ ]

Clan-based [ ]

Others [ ]

12) In your view, what is the inspiration of leadership in Marsabit county government?

Control resources [ ]

The need to offer services to all the communities in Marsabit county [ ]

Others .....

13) Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements on leadership and the contribution to conflict resolution. Use the rating criteria where SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, N=Neutral, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree

<b>Measures</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>
The county leadership composition is representative in terms of professional qualification, tribe, age and educational level.					
The Marsabit county government leadership has promote fairness in the allocation and management of resources.					
The Marsabit county government leadership has promoted transparency in the resource allocation and management					
The Marsabit county government leadership has promoted accountability in the allocation and management of resources.					
County leadership has been effective in conflict management.					

**Section D: County Peace Building Initiatives and Intercommunal Conflicts**

17) Are there local mechanisms used to resolve intercommunal conflicts and disputes in Marsabit county?

Yes [    ]

No [    ]

b) If Yes, please elaborate

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18) How effective are the following mechanisms in conflict resolution in Marsabit county. Use the criteria where **1=Not effective at all, 2=Slightly effective, 3=Moderately effective, 4=Effective, 5=Very effective**

<b>Mechanism</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Clan elders					
Peace tournaments					
Council of elders meetings					
Workshops					
Religious sanctions					
NGOs					
County peace initiatives					

19) In your opinion, do you think the available inter communal conflict resolution mechanisms are sufficient?

Yes [ ]

No [ ]

b) If no, kindly explain how the mechanisms can be improved in order to resolve inter communal conflicts.

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20) To what extent does the county government undertake the following measures in a bid to resolve inter communal conflicts in Marsabit county. Use the criteria where **1=No Extent, 2=Small Extent, 3=Moderate Extent, 4=Large Extent, 5=Very Large Extent**

Measures	1	2	3	4	5
Advocacy					
Mediation					
Improvement of local peace building strategies					
Mapping out conflict resolution strategies					

21) Please rate the following statement regarding how the county government of Marsabit has contributed towards mitigation of conflicts in Marsabit county. Use the criteria where, **SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, N=Neutral, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree**

<b>Measures</b>	<b>DS</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>
The county of Marsabit enhances equality of all natives as a means of curbing intercommunal conflicts					
The county of Marsabit ensures there is fairness in distribution of resources as a means of curbing intercommunal conflicts					
The county government of Marsabit ensures that all communities are included in decision making on matters of development as a means of curbing intercommunal conflicts.					
The county Government of Marsabit peace building initiatives have been effective in curbing intercommunal conflicts.					

**Section E: Intercommunal Conflicts**

22. How do you perceive the current state of peace and coexistence among communities in Marsabit County?

Poor [ ]

Neutral [ ]

Good [ ]

23. How often have inter-communal conflicts occurred in your area over the past year?

Never [ ]

Rarely [ ]

Occasionally [ ]

Often [ ]

Very often [ ]

24. Do you think the measures implemented by the county government and other stakeholders are addressing the root causes of inter-communal conflicts to achieve lasting peace?

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Strongly agree

Agree.

25. How would you rate the level of trust between different communities in Marsabit County? (Options: Very high, High, Moderate, Low, Very low)

26. What do you consider to be the primary drivers of inter-communal conflicts in Marsabit County? (Open-ended or options such as resource disputes, political differences, cultural issues, or other)

27. Do you believe the measures taken to resolve past conflicts are sufficient to prevent future conflicts?

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neutral

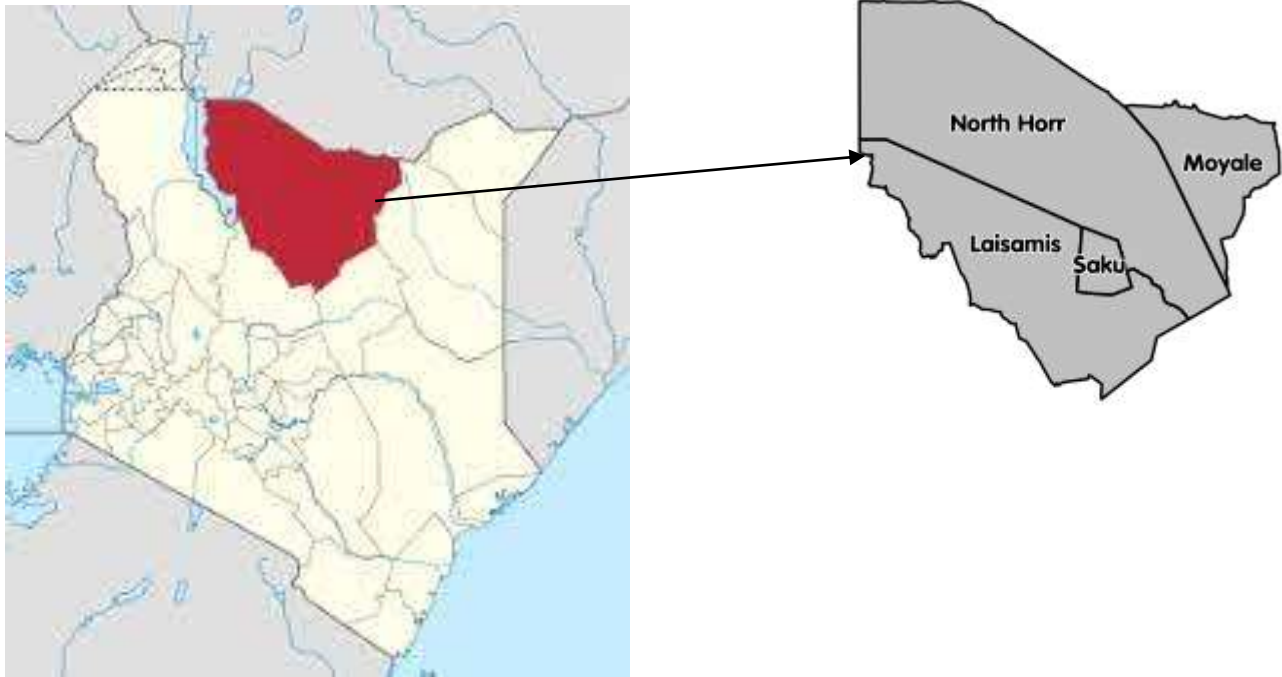
Strongly agree

Agree.

### **Appendix III: Interview Schedule**

1. Which sub county do you come from?
2. How can you describe the security situation in your sub county?
3. How satisfied are you with the county government service delivery?
4. How can you describe the leadership at the county government of Marsabit?
5. How effective is the county government leadership in promoting equity in resource management and distribution?
6. Do you think nepotism, corruption and clan chauvism in leadership interferes with resource management and distribution in Marsabit county?
7. Do you think the county government of Marsabit leadership has been effective in promoting fairness in resource management and distribution?
8. Do you think the county government have been successful in the implementation of policies related to resource distribution?
9. Are there local peace building mechanisms used to resolve inter-communal conflicts and disputes in Marsabit?
10. Do you think clan elders, NGOs, religious leaders and county peace initiatives have been effective in resolving inter-communal conflicts in Marsabit?
11. In your opinion, do you think the available inter-communal conflict resolution mechanisms are sufficient?
12. How do you think the available conflict resolution mechanisms can be improved in order to resolve inter-communal conflicts.

## Appendix IV: Study Map



### Appendix V: Pilot Study Results

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Number of Items</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha (<math>\alpha</math>)</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
County Resource Management	4	0.81	Reliable.
County Leadership Composition	5	0.84	Reliable.
Peacebuilding Initiatives	6	0.86	Highly reliable.
Inter-Communal Conflicts	4	0.79	Reliable.

## APPENDIX VI: Research Approval Letters

  
**KENYATTA UNIVERSITY  
GRADUATE SCHOOL**

E-mail: [dean-graduate@ku.ac.ke](mailto:dean-graduate@ku.ac.ke) P.O. Box 43844, 00100  
Website: [www.ku.ac.ke](http://www.ku.ac.ke) NAIROBI, KENYA  
Tel. 810901 Ext. 4150

**Internal Memo**

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**FROM:** Executive Dean, Graduate School      **DATE:** 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2024  
**TO:** Guyo Gufu Wato      **REF:** C153/OL/EMB/20992/2022  
C/o Public Policy and Administration Dept.

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**SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF RESEARCH PROJECT PROPOSAL.**

This is to inform you that Graduate School Board at its meeting of 16<sup>th</sup> October, 2024 approved your Research Project Proposal for the MPPA Degree Entitled, "Devolution and Intercommunal Conflicts in Marsabit County Kenya."

You may now proceed with your Data Collection, Subject to Clearance with Director General, National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation.

As you embark on your data collection, please note that you will be required to submit to Graduate School completed Supervision Tracking and Progress Report Forms per semester. The Forms are available at the University's Website under Graduate School webpage downloads.

Also, please ensure that you publish article(s) from your project before submitting it to Graduate School for examination as per the Commission for University Education and Kenyatta University guidelines.

Thank you:

  
**ELIJAH MUTUA**  
**FOR: EXECUTIVE DEAN, GRADUATE SCHOOL**

c.c. Chairman, Public Policy and Administration Department.

Supervisors:

1. Dr. Edna Jemutai Moi  
C/o Department of Public Policy and Administration  
**Kenyatta University**

ENC 0

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Kenyatta University is ISO 9001:2015 Certified 

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KENYATTA UNIVERSITY  
GRADUATE SCHOOL

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P.O. Box 43844, 00100  
NAIROBI, KENYA  
Tel. 8710901 Ext. 57530

Our Ref: CI53/OL/EMB/20992/2022

DATE: 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2024

Director General,  
National Commission for Science, Technology  
and Innovation  
P.O. Box 30623-00100  
**NAIROBI**

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION FOR GUYO GUFU WATO - REG. NO. CI53/OL/EMB/20992/2022**

I write to introduce **Guyo Gufu Wato** who is a Postgraduate Student of this University. The student is registered for **M.PPA degree** programme in the **Department of Public Policy and Administration**.

**Guyo** intends to conduct research for a **M.PPA Project Proposal** entitled, "**Devolution and Intercommunal Conflicts in Marsabit County Kenya.**"

Any assistance given will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

**PROF. ELIUD NJAGI**  
**EXECUTIVE DEAN, GRADUATE SCHOOL**


ENC:


*Transforming Higher Education... Enhancing Lives*  
Kenya University is ISO 9001:2015 Certified



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**Appendix VII: Resarch Permit (NACOSTI)**

  
REPUBLIC OF KENYA

  
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR  
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Ref No: 549203 Date of Issue: 28/November/2024


**RESEARCH LICENSE**




**This is to Certify that Mr. GUYO GUFU WATO of Kenyatta University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Marsabit on the topic: DEVOLUTION AND INTER-COMMUNAL CONFLICT IN MARSABIT COUNTY-KENYA for the period ending : 28/November/2025.**

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