Title: The social, cultural and economic impact of ethnic violence in Molo Division, 1969 - 2008.

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Abstract: This study investigates the social, cultural and economic impact of ethnic violence in Molo Division, Nakuru County, Kenya in the period 1969 - 2008. The Division is inhabited by several ethnic groups although the Agikuyu, the Kipsigis (a sub-group of the larger Kalenjin) and the Abagusii are the most populous. Since the introduction of multipartyism in 1991, their political and cultural differences have been exploited by politicians; the result has been ethnic based violence that has led to social, cultural and economic transformations that are worth investigating. After providing some historical background to the study, an analysis of the causes of violence in the period the period 1992 - 2008 is made. The literature reviewed showed that although there is much literature on ethnic violence at the international, regional and national levels, little effort has been made to interrogate the social, cultural and economic consequences of the violence in specific areas such as Molo Division. This gap justifies the proposed study. The study is guided by four objectives: to analyze the causes of violence in the area of study, to investigate the social, cultural and economic ramifications of the violence, to critique current peace building efforts and suggest potential strategies that can lead to a de-escalation of conflicts in the Division. The study is predicated on four fundamental premises. First, ethnic violence in the area has always been politically motivated. Besides slowing down the economic growth of the Division, it also assumes that the violence has adversely affected the socio-cultural aspects of the local communities. Finally, there exist avenues for inter-ethnic cooperation that can be used to build sustainable peace in the area. The study employs an integrated approach that utilizes several concepts derived from conflict and postcolonial theories to analyze data. From conflict theories, the power relations tradition has been used to explain the role of politicians in fomenting conflicts. On the other hand, the struggle for scarce resources such as land and employment opportunities in the public service has been analyzed using the concept of competitive struggle developed by classical economists. Variants of conflict theory such as Coser Lewis' conflict functionalism and Randall Collins' analytic conflict theory have also been used in data analysis. On the other hand, the concepts of allocation and transfer, derived from Achille Mbembe (2001) have been used to interrogate the crisis of the postcolonial subspace of Molo Division. In this study, the period 1969-2008 is taken as a postcolonial regime in Kenya's history. Ethnic violence in this period is considered as a manifestation of the various struggles and contestations formerly colonized people engage in in an attempt to confront political, cultural, economic and social forms of domination. The study argues that ethnic violence has led to deaths, family breakdown as well as a general increase in the social distance between ethnic groups. Similarly, communities have been compelled to devise survival strategies to cope with conflict situations. Moreover, violence led to cessation of joint inter-ethnic initiation ceremonies, interfered with the religious practices of the Ogiek and led to a relaxation of the rigid rules that govern relations between the In-Laws. At the economic level, the study demonstrates that there has been immense destruction of resources due to the violence, slowed the economic growth of Molo Division and disrupted trade and agriculture. In terms of methodology, the study employs oral
interviews, focus group discussions, archival and library research to collect data. The study finishes by critiquing current approaches to peace in the area and argues that strategies such as memorialization, restitution and reconciliation can complement existing peace initiatives in the Division.