THE ROLE OF PSYCHO-CULTURAL FACTORS IN ETHNIC CONFLICTS IN AFRICA:

By

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September 2011
Declaration

I hereby declare that this academic project is my original work and has not been presented for examination in any other University.

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This Research Project has been submitted for examination with my approval as University Supervisor

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Acknowledgement

First and foremost I would like to thank the Almighty God who gave me the energy and good health without which I would not have been able to undertake this study.

This study has been through the support and assistance I got from various people. My heartfelt thanks go to my parents who always believed in me.

I would like to thank my wife Zipporah, my sons Wilfred, Nelson and Daniel for their patience, encouragement and moral support as I struggled to finish the study.

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To all those I got in touch, and gave me interviews, that gave me insights into the ethnic conflicts in Kenya.

Finally, to all those not mentioned but who helped me in one way or the other.

Nairobi.

September 2011.
Dedication

I dedicate this work to my parents SAMUEL and GLADYS who instilled in me the value of education, to my wife Zipporah, my sons Wilfred, Nelson and Daniel for their encouragement.
Abstract

The post cold war era witnessed an upsurge of internal conflicts not only in Africa but internationally. These internal conflicts were basically ethnic in nature whose consequences and costs have been a subject of concern to scholars, researchers and policy makers alike. There is hardly any part of the African continent where violent ethnic conflict has not been witnessed. The violent ethnic conflicts have far reaching consequences in terms of socio-economic growth and development of African states, development and growth of democratic states, violation of the fundamental human and community rights, psycho-social consequences, emergence of internally displaced persons and refugees, environmental degradation made worse by the vagaries of climate change. This study critically analysis the role of psycho-cultural elements/attributes as causal factors of ethnic conflicts in Africa, the case of Kenya from 1990-2009. Psychological and cultural attributes are deeply rooted in individual and ethnic groups and influences their behavior. The study postulates that the deep-seated psychological and cultural differences, perceptions of discrimination, fear of domination, of exclusion in a competitive socio-economic and political environment, the use of ethnic identity in the struggle for scarce resources, stereotyping and denigration have contributed to the ethnic violence that African states have experienced and continue to experience. The individuals and ethnic groups should be the unit of analysis with a view to unearthing the deep-rooted nature of these perceptions and dispositions.
### List of Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>ACTS</td>
<td>African Centre for Technologies</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIPEV</td>
<td>Commission of Inquiry into Post Election Violence</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organizations</td>
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<td>CBO</td>
<td>Community Based Organizations</td>
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<td>ECK</td>
<td>Electoral Commission of Kenya</td>
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<td>FBO</td>
<td>Faith Based Organizations</td>
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<td>HRW</td>
<td>Human Rights Watch</td>
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<td>ICRC</td>
<td>International Committee of the Red Cross</td>
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<td>ICG</td>
<td>International Crisis Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>IPPC</td>
<td>United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change</td>
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<tr>
<td>KAMATUSA</td>
<td>Kalenjin, Maasai, Turkana and Samburu</td>
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<tr>
<td>KANU</td>
<td>Kenya African National Union</td>
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<td>KADU</td>
<td>Kenya African Democratic Union</td>
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<td>KNCHR</td>
<td>Kenya National Commission on Human Rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>KRCS</td>
<td>Kenya Red Cross Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>KNCHR</td>
<td>Kenya National Commission on Human Rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>KRCs</td>
<td>Kenya Red Cross Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>KCA</td>
<td>Kikuyu Central Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>LU</td>
<td>Luhya Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>ODM</td>
<td>Orange Democratic Movement</td>
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<tr>
<td>OHCHR</td>
<td>Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights</td>
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<td>PNU</td>
<td>Party of National Unity</td>
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RPF
Rwanda Patriotic Front

TJRC
Truth Justice and Reconciliation Commission

UNDP
United Nations Development Programme

UNEP
United Nations Environment Programme

UMM
Ukambani Members Association

YKA
Young Kavirondo Association
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Chapter One

Introduction to the Study

1.0 Introduction

The subject of ethnicity and what causes ethnic conflicts has dominated scholarly debates especially after the end of the cold war. Although ethnic conflicts have always been there, the Post Cold War era witnessed an upsurge of internal conflicts mostly ethnic in nature not only in Africa but also in many countries of the world. Intra-state conflicts especially when they take an ethnic dimension have far reaching consequences bordering on crimes against humanity, genocide, rape, mass internal displacements and generally environments of complex emergencies.1

Ethnic conflicts have adversely affected Africa is several ways. The growth and development of the African state has faced enormous challenges, there is for example mass violation of human rights, attempts at the social-economic developments initiatives faces challenges whenever there are renewed ethnic skirmishes, which also have environmental consequences.2 The African continent has been the theatre of protracted and intractable conflicts which are basically ethnic in nature.3 For example, of the total 16 wars occurring in Africa in the seven years between 1990 and 1997, only two Chad/Libya and Rwanda/Uganda were interstate, the rest were mainly intra-state.4

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According to International Crises Group Reports, the internal conflicts in DRC for example have claimed well over 5.4 million lives, two civil wars in Liberia claimed upwards of 250,000 lives and displacing millions, civil war in Sierra Leone left over 50,000 dead while decades of war and genocide in the Sudan has killed nearly over a million.

In his acceptance speech during the award of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2001, Kofi Annan, the former United Nations Secretary General reminded the world that, “The 20th century was perhaps the deadliest in human history, devastated by innumerable conflicts, untold suffering and unimaginable crimes”.5

However, scholars such as Paul Tiyambe have emphasized the need for more balanced debate and commentary in order to put African conflicts in both global and historical perspective.6 The intra-state nature of the conflicts leads to the disintegration of states, made worse by the intractable and protracted nature of the conflict.7 Azar further postulates that the disastrous consequences are magnified by the multiple and complex underlying causes.8

Ethnic conflicts have been attributed to several factors. There are those who argue that it is the unmet basic human needs, identity, recognition, and survival, needs that are psychological and therefore deep-rooted in individual members.9 African countries are multi-ethnic in nature a fact that makes ethnic conflicts inevitable. As such the struggle to fulfill the unmet needs becomes critical in the daily lives of both individuals and communities.

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4 Ibid,E.Azar, ”The Theory of Protracted Social Conflicts and the Challenge of Transforming Conflict Situations “, p.80
There are those who base their arguments on the fact that after the end of the cold war, Africa lost its strategic significance which coupled with the liberal ideology and globalization process has exposed the continent to all forms of conflicts. Once a country or region has been engulfed by conflicts, it takes time before things return to normal because the country finds itself in a cycle of violence that takes time to break.

This research study seeks to analyze the role of psycho-cultural attributes in explaining the ethnic conflicts in Africa. The study starts with the introduction as the first chapter which lays the foundation for the role of psycho-cultural elements in ethnic conflicts in Africa, chapter two is a brief theoretical discussion on psycho-cultural conflict theory and its applicability in explaining ethnic conflicts while chapter three is on the case study of Kenya from the 1990 to 2009. Chapter four is a critical analysis of the emerging issues from the case study followed by chapter five on conclusions on the findings of the study, recommendations and the suggested possible directions for further research.

1.1 Background

The numerous studies from across the ideological divide points to different sources of conflicts in Africa. There are those who perceive the African conflicts as unique and peculiar, a perception that has complicated the study of conflicts in Africa. Some scholars such as Mazrui, Zeleza have argued that there is a need for a balanced debate and commentary to put African conflicts in both global and historical perspectives.

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There are those who postulate that the internal conflicts in Africa have a colonial basis. This is because there is hardly any zone of conflicts in contemporary Africa that cannot trace its genesis to colonial history.\textsuperscript{13} Out of the fifty-four African countries, one third have experienced large scale violence or war characterized by complex histories that exhibits multiple and multi-dimensional causes, course and consequences.\textsuperscript{14}

The sub-division of the African continent by colonialists has been blamed for the persistent ethnic conflicts. Ethnic groups with common heritage found themselves in environments where the artificial colonial state boundaries have separated them a factor that is behind the internationalized nature of internal conflicts in Africa.\textsuperscript{15} This has been aggravated by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and increase in population which tend to make the violence more intense. The end of the cold war, coupled with the effects of the globalization process exposed the continent, to all types of conflicts.\textsuperscript{16}

In Kenya, the struggle for independence reflected a struggle between the minority ethnic groups and the larger communities and a systematic campaign for a federal system of government known by the Swahili name of “majimbo”mainly to protect the interests of each ethnic group. The issue of land has all along been an emotive one and although the constitution states that one can own land anywhere, the creation of more districts after the 1990’s have been ethno-specific leading to creation of ethnically homogenous effective “native reserves”.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid. P.T.Zeleza,The Causes & Costs of War in Africa; From Liberation Struggles to the ‘War on Terror’,2008, P.2
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid P.T.Zeleza,The Causes & Costs of War in Africa; ‘From Liberation Struggles to the War on Terror’,2008,p.3
\textsuperscript{17} Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Post-Election Violence (CIPEV);The Waki Report, October 2008, P.33.
What makes Kenya’s case unique is the fact that the country since independence has experienced relative peace only to fall into the class of many African countries that have or continue to experience violent ethnic conflicts. Every corner of the country is haunted by actual or potential ethnic conflict. Communities continue to rely on ethnicity to perpetuate their dominance and hegemony in an atmosphere characterized by scarce resources, continued population increase, increasing rate of unemployment where a high percentage of the population is composed of the youth, and social structures that cannot sustain the increasing demands.  

The speed at which the violence erupted in 2007 was in itself surprising, an indication of a deeper problem that can only be discerned through interrogating the social fabric which is the foundation of any society. The Post Cold War era from the 1990’s saw Kenya, like many other countries in Africa, undergoing tremendous social, economic, political, environmental changes. The multi-party politics and the elections that followed have since then been characterized by heightened tensions and violent ethnic conflicts. The disputed election results of 2007 points to some underlying causes that require interrogation. The proximate causes of the conflict triggered what had been going on in the minds of individuals and ethnic groups.

The country is classified as one of the most unequal countries in the world as illustrated by the UNDP development index (2007-2008). The index indicates that 45.9 % of the population lives under a threshold of absolute poverty, 20% experience hunger, and high rate of unemployment, violation of fundamental human rights, social, economic, political rights and high gross inequalities. It is also a country where the richest 10% of the household controls more than 42% of the country’s income and despite the encouraging statistics on economic growth of

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19 Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Post-Election Violence of 2007,October,2008,p.25 (Waki Report)
6.4% in 2007; this co-existed with depressing 58% of population living under less than two dollars a day.\textsuperscript{20}

This research study postulates that the psychological and cultural perceptions related to identity, false consciousness, irrational myths, stereotypes, fear, mistrust, and historical myths over social, economic political interests are the main causes of ethnic conflicts in Africa.

\textbf{1.2 Statement of the Research Problem}

With the increase in global population, the demand for resources will continue to grow posing a threat to international peace and security. Conflicts and especially internal conflicts increase as pressure is exerted on the dwindling resources.\textsuperscript{21} This creates environments prone to massive violation of the fundamental human rights; socio-economic decline, political and environmental consequences as well as a threat to democratic developments.\textsuperscript{22}

The increase in population and the dwindling resources creates environments where all forms of conflicts thrive. Human beings compete to meet the basic needs of survival such as shelter, food, clothing as well as the psychological needs of satisfaction, recognition and security. How individuals and groups relate to each other depends on how easily they access and control the resources.

The struggle to satisfy the basic needs makes individual and ethnic communities develop fear, which is exacerbated by the historical myths that have been passed over generations, stereotyping and denigration of individuals and communities takes shape crucial creating

\textsuperscript{20} UNDP DEVELOPMENT INDEX, 2007-2008, NEW YORK.
potential environments for violent ethnic conflicts. The relationships between individuals and ethnic communities become strained and the ethnic differences increasingly deep-rooted.

The nature and magnitude of the ethnic conflicts have direct consequences at the national and international level. Such crimes as crimes against humanity, genocide, war crimes, rape, internal mass displacements, committed in violent internal conflicts are now recognized under international law as they are a threat to international peace and security. Concepts such as individual criminal responsibility and those bearing the greatest responsibility in such violent ethnic conflicts is recognition of the threat to international peace and security.

The use of negative ethnicity in societies with diverse cultural and traditional practices, the increasing population, diminishing resources and the vagaries of climate change are potential sources of conflicts. The increasing pressure on the pastoral communities, their economic activity that require vast tracts of land and water resources, the threat of climate change and environmental degradation increases the potential for ethnic conflict even more. The competition between the pastoralists, agriculturalists and other formal activities such as creation of national parks and game reserves and urban development’s increases the potential for ethnic conflicts.

The high percentage of the unemployed youth are easily mobilized and recruited into illegal ethnic based gangs that exerts a heavy toll on the developmental potential and democratic possibility of the continent. Sophisticated means of warfare and especially the proliferation of small arms and light weapons with ready youth for mobilization are a challenge to the stability of

states. The porous borders are easy points of entry for weapons and small arms. Armed militias and ethnic based gangs are potential challenges to the stability and peaceful co-existence in Africa.

The study examines the role that psycho-cultural attributes plays in fuelling violent ethnic conflicts in Africa. Ethnic conflict has been identified as one of the current challenges to international peace and security. It is an affront to the socio-economic, democratic growth, the fundamental and basic rights of both the individual and the communities, the rule of law, and a threat to the existence of the state as well as peaceful co-existence.

Ethnic conflicts are a reality that cannot be ignored and requires urgent action to mitigate. Ethnic conflicts are a challenge to international peace and security because what takes place within the state boundaries have far reaching consequences in interstate relations. This study identifies and examines the role played by psycho-cultural factors in ethnic conflicts and discusses issues and priorities for conflict management and makes recommendations for policy making.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The overall objective of the study is to critically analyze the role of psycho-cultural attributes as causal factors of ethnic conflicts in Africa using the case study of Kenya from 1990 to 2009. More specifically the study aims at:

1. Providing an overview of the psycho-cultural debate in ethnic conflicts.

2. Analyzing the impact of psycho-cultural elements in ethnic conflicts.

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26 Commission of Inquiry into Post-Election Violence, October 2008 (WAKI REPORT, 2008)
3. Exploring the theoretical linkage between psycho-cultural factors and ethnic conflicts.

1.4 Literature Review

The literature review revolves around the following issues which also form the sub-titles: psycho-cultural factors, ethnicity, ethnic groups and ethnic conflict, social structures as the basis of psycho-cultural attributes and ethnic conflicts in Kenya.

1.4.1 Overview of Psycho-Cultural Attributes.

The section is on the analysis of the psycho-cultural elements, how they develop and how they influence ethnic relations. Psycho-cultural attributes develops out of the psycho-cultural dispositions and stereotypes that have a historical and mythical basis which over time defines the relationships between the different ethnic groups. They are manifested through discrimination, ethnic nepotism, fear especially of the future and domination which shapes the perceptual lenses of who an enemy is.

Northrup using a psychological conflict escalation model postulates that historical memories, suspicion and mistrust and threats, rigidifies the ethnic relations through what he calls a “psychological conflict escalation process”. The role of culture, shared, profound oppositions, how enemies are conceptualized and the deep-seated dispositions about human beings from the earliest developments have also been emphasized by scholars such as Ross.

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30 Ibid., Northrup, The Dynamics of Identity in Personal and Social Conflicts, pg.70.
Ethnicity refers to a subjective perception of common origins, historical memories, ties and aspirations. These form the basis of fear of domination, fear of the future and mistrust with every ethnic group seizing every opportunity to express its identity. Racial terms, denigration, discrimination and stereotyping become ways of expressing anger against each other.

Vanhanen states that members of an ethnic group tend to favor their group members over non-members because they are more related leading to ethnic nepotism. A study by the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission of Rwanda revealed that ideological convictions of racial inequality and natural domination have sown the seeds of social injustice that has undermined the social fabric resulting in frustrations and a sense of belonging to an identity.

The expression of political demands and their formulation in ethnic terms and the claim of the right to emancipation is an affirmation of the social-economic inferiority based on racial terms and stereotypes. Horowitz postulates that ethnic conflicts in Africa have assumed a pathological dimension based on false histories and experiences.

The oppressed people fear to be dominated which is a threat to the ethnic group’s original identity. Lake and Rothschild further claims that the reaction to these threats and fears leads to distorted behavior and rigidified relationships and an environment not amenable to reason. The environments that are characterized by harsh living conditions, deep violations of human needs

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34 D.Horowitz, Ethnic Groups in Conflict (Berkely;University of California Press), 1985 p.182
36 D.A Lake and D, Rothschild: Containing Fear; The Origins and Management of Ethnic Conflict, Vol, 21, No.2 (1996); pp.41-75.
results into syndromes of “US” versus “THEM” and a sense of frustration and crystallization of belonging.\(^{38}\)

In the new democracies and deeply divided societies, cultural attachments matters when deciding on how to vote.\(^{39}\) Horowitz coined the term “ethnic census” to describe elections in which racial, linguistic or tribal solidarities so strongly predict voting behavior that amounts to a head count of identity groups. Herdeson argues that decolonization contributed to the political, economic and cultural disparities giving rise to domestic conflicts and culture, the primary criterion for political association and political competition.\(^{40}\)

### 1.4.2 Ethnicity, Ethnic Groups and Ethnic Conflicts.

The concept of ethnicity, ethnic groups and ethnic conflict has for a long time elicited intellectual debates by scholars and researchers. Concepts such as nationality, tribe and clan have been interchangeably used with that of ethnic group making it difficult to distinguish between them.\(^{41}\) Ethnicity is viewed as an inclusive concept that defines groupings on the basis of indicators such as color, appearance, language, race, religion, common ancestry, height, complexity, body structure.\(^{42}\)

It is an ascriptive phenomenon based on the myth of common ancestry belief systems, physical settlement, group affiliations and relationships.\(^{43}\) The debate as to the dynamics of ethnicity, ethnic group and ethnic conflicts has revolved around two approaches, the primordialists and the instrumentalists.

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38 J.A. Jinadu; Explaining and Managing Ethnic Conflicts in Africa: Towards a Cultural Theory of Democracy, Claude Ake Memorial Papers’No.1, Uppsala University & Nordic Africa Institute.
39 D.L Horowitz; Ethnic Groups in Conflict (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).
40 Op cit, pp 55.
41 H. Assefa.Ethnic Conflict in the Horn of Africa: Myth and Reality
42 Ibid
According to Smith, an ethnic community is a named human population with a myth of common ancestry, shared memories and cultural elements, perceptions, homeland and a measure of solidarity a link with a historic territory, group consciousness that makes people think of themselves in terms of "we" versus "them." 44

Scholars such as Smith, 45 Horowitz, 46 emphasizes the concept of kinship and argues that this "kinship makes it possible for ethnic groups to think in terms of family semblances". However, instrumentalists argue that the concept of ethnic conflict is a myth because ethnic conflict does not involve ethnicity but rather institutional, political and economic factors. Horowitz further postulates that ethnicity in essence refers to the behavior and feeling (about oneself and others) that supposedly emanates from membership of an ethnic group. 47 Smith postulates that ethnic identities and cleavages between groups causes ethnic conflict 48

The persistence of ethnic conflicts as also been attributed to the actions of community leaders who use their cultural groups to mobilize them in their competition for power and resources because they are viewed as more effective. 49 However, according to Brown, 50 there is a lot of variation between the primordialists and instrumentalists because some groups have deep historical roots while others do not. Brown further postulates that some have fairly static identities while others are dynamic posing problems of generalizations about very different types of groups.

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46 Ibid. Horowitz, Ethnic Groups in Conflict, p.50.
1.4.3 Social Structures as the basis of Psycho-Cultural Attributes.

This section explores the role that social structures play in the development of psychological elements. The social, economic, political, and constitutional and the legal structures to a large extent have a role in the psychological and cultural dimensions of ethnic conflicts. The failed policies of state leaders in response to the dual challenges of state building and nation-building are a challenge in multi-ethnic societies of Africa. The curving of states by the colonialisits which regrouped different and often mutually hostile entities within the same territorial boundaries are fertile grounds for ethnic animosity

The intra-state and interstate conflicts in post colonial Africa are the result of groups or regions’ seeking to secede from colonial arrangements whose aim is to create independent nation states. Ethnic groups desire to be united or re-united with the country to which it is ethnically or historically related leading to the waging of the irredentist’s struggles.

The violent and armed inter-communal insurrections are caused by specific incidents rooted in long simmering antagonisms, anxieties and aggressions worsened by economic stagnation, politicization and manipulation of ethnic differences by the political class.

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55 See G. Prunier, The Rwanda Crisis; History of Genocide. C, Hurst

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perceptions of economic and social injustice, discrimination and social injustice fuels the persistent deep-rooted and identity related conflicts.\textsuperscript{56}

The erosion of the constitutional structure also contributes to the presence of structural violence in that a lack of trust in state institutions brings in crises of governance.\textsuperscript{57} The lack of trust in state institutions brings in crises of governance. This has been emphasized by Okoth-Ogendo who states that there is a correlation between the constitution and the constitution making processes and ethnic conflicts'.\textsuperscript{58}

The constitution of a country is the bedrock of structures and institutions that determines the direction and momentum of development processes, serves as a covenant that guides or expresses peoples hopes' and aspirations according to Okoth Ogendo. He however notes that African states have constitutions but "constitutions without constitutionalism"

Greed rather than grievances informs the mobilization of ethnic groups, a situation that aggravates ethnic conflicts.\textsuperscript{59} Where ethnic groups are mobilized in the struggle and competition for scarce resources, territorial disputes, and greed, ethnic conflict are inevitable. This is because exploitation of grievances based on marginalization, exploitation, agitation, economic dependency and insecurity fuels ethnic and resource based conflicts.\textsuperscript{60}

\textsuperscript{56} L.A.Jinadu Explaining & Managing Ethnic Conflict in Africa: Towards a Cultural Theory of Democracy, Claude Ake Memorial Papers No.1, Upsalla University & Nordic Africa Institute.


The ethnic conflicts normally have a spill-over effect in that what affects the community in one country also affects it in the other country. Mwagiru calls this internationalization of domestic conflicts where ethnicity is one of the major agents.61

1.4.4 Ethnic Conflicts in Kenya

Kenya like many other African states is a multi-ethnic society. In order to put the dynamics of ethnic conflicts into perspective, this subsection will briefly look at the historical background, the composition, characteristics and the extent to which this has informed the ethnic relations and ethnic conflicts in Kenya.

Kenya has a total population of about 40 million according to the 2009 population census. The most populous ethnic groups are the Kikuyu 22%; Luyha 14%; Luo 13%; Kalenjin 12%; Kisii 6%; Maasai 1%; others 32%.62 It should also be noted that about 80% of the country is arid and semi arid where the source of livelihood is mainly pastoralist. Pastoralism involves moving over wide areas in search of pasture and as a way of honoring their values and traditions.63 On the other hand, the remaining about 20% is occupied by the dominant communities who are basically agriculturalists.

This has consequences on ethnic relations as each ethnic group tries to survive in an environment where the resources are dwindling and becoming scarce. The competition over the resources such as land, water, between the pastoralists, agriculturalists, wildlife, urban land use exacerbated by the vagaries of climate change have negative consequences on ethnic relations.64

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61 Ibid.p.65, M.Mwagiru, Conflicts in Africa, Theory, Processes and Institutions of Management.
64 Ibid
The colonial policy of divide and rule through ethnically defined administrative jurisdictions, alienation of the fertile land in the Rift Valley previously occupied by pastoral Kalenjin and Maasai and the invitation of the experienced labor from outside the province such as Kikuyu, Luyha, Luo, Kisii altered the composition and land tenure system in the Rift Valley. This clash between the mainly pastoralists’ Kalenjin and Maasai and the immigrants has been a divisive factor that fuels ethnic tensions between these ethnic groups.

Previous regimes have openly showed favoritism through privileged access to state resources, financial and legal protection, land, public positions and the ethnic manipulation by political elites which have been the basis of discriminative policies and marginalization. There is a feeling among certain ethnic groups of historical marginalization which has arisen from perceived inequities as regards allocation of land and other resources, access to public goods and services. This creates an underlying climate of tension and hate and the potential for violence.

The country experiences an increasing problem of growing population of poor, unemployed educated youth easily recruited into organized militias and organized ethnic gangs ready to be engaged for violent activities. This is made even worse by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons smuggled through the porous borders of the unstable neighboring states.

A lot of research and studies have been done on the subject of ethnic conflicts but the emphasis has been more on the immediate causes of the ethnic conflicts. This has to a large extent informed the management approaches to ethnic conflicts. The official approach centers on disarmaments of the warring communities and short term settlement oriented policies. These

65 F.Holquist and M.Ford „Kenya :State and Civil Society, the First Year After the Election”, Africa Today (Vol.41.No.4).P.11
69 Commission of Inquiry into Post-Election Violence, October 2008 (Waki Report2008), P.25
approaches address the immediate causes without taking into consideration the underlying factors which normally have psychological and cultural dimensions. The ethnic conflicts are deep-rooted and require interrogating the psychological dimensions and perspectives as well as their cultural basis.

There is therefore a need to further explore and investigate the role of psycho-cultural aspects in ethnic conflicts which are equally critical in the effective management of ethnic conflicts in Africa. This research study endeavors to provide an overview of psycho-cultural debate on ethnic conflicts, analyse their impact and the theoretical linkages between psycho-cultural elements and ethnic conflicts.

1.5 Justification of the Study

Psychological and cultural attributes such as fear, discrimination, stereotyping, denigration causes tensions as people compete for the scarce resources worsened by the increasing population. Psychological tendencies created by real life experiences, mythical-histories, misperceptions and fear in environments of scarce resources make conflicts inevitable as individuals and ethnic groups compete in order to enhance their livelihoods.70

The last two decades of Kenya’s history have witnessed increased ethnic animosity and hatred that almost degenerated into genocide in the post 2007 general elections, a trend that is detrimental to the development of the country. The two decades have witnessed increased fear of, for example domination, recognition, security as well as stereotyping and denigration of individuals and ethnic groups.71

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71 Commission of Inquiry o into Post-Election Violence,October,2008 (Waki Report).P.25
The study explores and investigates the role of psycho-cultural elements and the extent to which they contribute to ethnic conflicts in Africa. It is hoped that this research study will give enough information to investigate the plausibility of the main hypotheses that the psycho-cultural attributes are the main causes of ethnic conflicts in Africa and suggests areas for further research.

The study also identifies policies and mechanisms that will address the deep-rooted causes of ethnic conflicts therefore provoking further study on ethnic conflicts. The study illustrates how psycho-cultural attributes hinders African states from developing unified states and how embracing the psycho-cultural perspective can be the basis for long term socio-economic and democratic development. The research study has therefore both academic and policy implications.

At the policy level, the research findings will enable governments, policy makers, donor agencies, non-governmental organizations, local and international civic institutions, traditional community institutions and other interested parties in appreciating and identifying the psycho-cultural and structural factors that challenges national, regional and continental stability.

Without peace, there cannot be sustainable developments and therefore researchers and policy makers require theoretical tools oriented to the specific needs of Africa to propel the developing economies of the continent forward. The impact of ethnic conflicts in Africa is enormous and challenging and requires theoretical frameworks that take cognizance of the complexities of ethnic relations in the continent.

At the grassroots level, an in-depth understanding of the basic human needs and identity based issues that are psychological and cultural in nature need to be incorporated into management strategies. The many donor agencies involved in conflict management and humanitarian assistance programs both local and international should have their policies based
on a clear understanding of the local culture to avoid perpetuating the conflicts because of failure to consider the local environment.

At the academic level, the study will contribute to the developments in the discipline of conflict studies and peace building especially in disciplines related to ethnic conflict studies. Researchers and scholars must provide answers to the perpetual violent ethnic conflicts that have defied traditional approaches and mechanism. Violent ethnic conflicts are an impediment to sustainable development of the developing economies of Africa. The subjective dimension of ethnic conflicts analysis requires further research that will compliment the already existing literature.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

Theories are perceptual lenses through which scholars, researchers or policy makers view and interpret the world, how we make judgments on how human beings govern themselves. Human behavior is goal-oriented and originates from unfulfilled needs. In multi-cultural societies of Africa each ethnic community strives to fulfill the unmet needs such as economic, political and social needs. These needs produce tension which is released through certain behavior.

There are many theories on ethnic conflict but this study is based on the psycho-cultural conflict. Psycho-cultural conflict theory emphasizes the role of culture, shared, profound oppositions, the conceptualization of enemies and deep-seated dispositions about human action stemming from earliest developments. The psycho-cultural framework in this case seeks to

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73 See J.Burton, Human Needs Theory.
explain and make generalizations on the role of psycho-cultural attributes in ethnic conflicts dynamics.

The theory provides a socially rooted psychoanalytical framework that gives a central role to culturally rooted social psychological processes which produce dispositions-shared images, perceptions of external world, and motives for individual and group behavior. Psycho-cultural conflict theory is distinguished from other theories such as structural theory by its emphasis on the human person and ethnic group as the units of analysis.

The theory takes into consideration the subjective elements in conflict analysis. These are non-negotiable, psychological dispositions and interpretations created and embedded in individual and group consciousness. The threat to individual and group identity is more pronounced when the fulfillment of one group's identity is viewed as a threat to the existence of the other.

Knutson in her conception of the psychology of victimhood postulates that the feeling of being a victim undermines human needs, safety and security of human beings. This influences the behavior of individuals and ethnic groups. She continues and postulates that historical experiences and past interactions lead to distortions of behavior and a tendency towards violent behavior.

The psychological conflict theory postulates that the behavior and beliefs of groups is based on the past where myths, the origins of different groups, the nature of their relationships

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73 T. Northrup, "The Dynamics of Identity in Personal and Social Conflict" in Kleisberg et al (Ed) Intractable Conflicts and Their Transformation (Syracuse, Syracuse University Press), pp 68-75.
74 Ibid.
75 Ibid.
76 Ibid.
77 Ibid.
78 Ibid.
79 T. Northrup, ibid.
and their place in the social structure are presented. These histories are usually distorted, exaggerated overtime portraying one group as superior while disparaging the other.

The psycho-cultural conflict theory aims at addressing the deep-rooted mutual fears that surrounds the issues of identity and security matters that leads to reconciliation. The theory does not deny the relevance of either power inequalities or interests based proposals for peacemaking but sees the critical first steps as changing the mutual hostile interpretations that antagonists holds against each other. The psycho-cultural framework of analysis explains how deep-seated mutual fears, ethnic identity, the “we” versus “them” conceptualization influences the behavior of individuals and ethnic groups.

1.7 Hypotheses

1. The increase in violent ethnic conflict in Kenya is directly related to psychological and cultural attributes.

2. Understanding the psycho-cultural attributes of conflicts can lead to a better management of ethnic conflicts in Kenya.

3. Psycho-cultural factors are not the only main causes of ethnic conflicts in Kenya.

1.8 Research Methodology

The research is investigative and exploratory in nature based on both secondary and primary data. The secondary data will be sourced from academic journals, and reference books, government policy documents and papers. Document analysis from resource centers basically on

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issues of conflict and conflict management both from the government, civil society organizations, United Nations Agencies whose reports are credible.

The primary data will be obtained through direct interviews of the internally displaced persons from identified camps, the civil society personnel, faith based organizations and provincial administration personnel. The research is thematically arranged into chapters;

1.9 Chapter Outline

The study comprises of five chapters. It commences with the introduction to the study. The introduction is generally on the background of ethnic conflict in Africa, the statement of the research problem, objectives of the study, literature review, the hypotheses to be tested, the theoretical framework and the methodology to be applied and the chapter outline of the study.

Chapter two provides a theoretical discussion of the framework of analysis presented in chapter one. It critically discusses the theory, its dimensions, perspective, applicability and its limitations in the study of ethnic conflicts.

Chapter three forms the case study and discuses the link between psycho-cultural attributes, socio-economic and political factors and ethnic conflicts. The chapter specifically looks at land as a resource, the place of competitive politics, the media, multi-party politics and the majimbo debate (federal) system of governance, the role of psycho-cultural attributes, their formation and role in perpetuating ethnic animosity. Chapter four is a critical analysis of the emerging issues; chapter five is the conclusion that summarizes the study, the findings, recommendations and suggested direction for further research.
Chapter Two

Psycho-Cultural Conflict Theory: A Theoretical Discussion.

2.0 Introduction

Chapter one was an introduction to the study which gave a snapshot of what the study is all about. The chapter defined the problem statement, the objectives of the study and its justification. The literature review is basically an attempt at the definition of ethnicity and the persistence of ethnic conflict as presented by scholars, the psycho-cultural and the socio-economic and political basis of ethnic conflict, and an overview of the psycho-cultural attributes’. The theoretical framework, an aspect that is crucial in the analysis of any social science problems is introduced, the hypotheses to be tested and the research methodology are discussed and finally a chapter outline of the research study.

Chapter two is an in-depth discussion of the psycho-cultural theory of conflict, its dimensions, and perspectives. The salient features of the theory and its applicability in explaining ethnic conflicts in Africa is introduced, the contribution of various scholars, researchers and policy makers, the limitations of the theory in explaining ethnic conflicts and ends with the concluding remarks on the aspect of the psycho-cultural theory of conflict.

2.1 Psycho-Cultural Conflict Theory

Different theories have been developed in trying to understand conflict and how it can be mitigated. This study tries to understand ethnic conflict using the psycho-cultural conflict theory. Scholars such as Azar,84 Ryan85 have described ethnic conflicts as intractable and protracted and

suggested that a comprehensive approach that identifies and tackles the multi-causal factors as necessary. Azar further postulates that environments characterized by socio-economic, political and structural deprivation and victimization forms the basis of ethnic discrimination, which are fertile grounds for hostile and violent actions.\textsuperscript{86}

Psycho-cultural conflict theory emphasizes the role of culture, shared profound “we-they” oppositions, how enemies are conceptualized, the deep-seated dispositions about human actions that stems from earliest developments.\textsuperscript{87} According to this theory communities that feel discriminated against or deprived of satisfaction of their basic human needs on the basis of their communal identity will develop conflictual tendencies.\textsuperscript{88} They will strive for the physical security, political and economic participation as well as recognition and protection of their identity.\textsuperscript{89}

The theory recognizes the role of identity because it is important in the escalation, duration and intensity of the conflict. Identity forms an important aspect in the evolution of psychological processes that ultimately creates psycho-cultural dispositions that cause ethnic groups to enter into violent interactions.\textsuperscript{90}

Ethnic conflicts are identity driven as a result of an underlying fear of extinction that grows out of an experience of being a vulnerable ethnic group living with memories of

\textsuperscript{85} Ethnic Conflict and International Relations (Aldershot, Dartmouth, 1990), p.xxvii
\textsuperscript{87} M. Ross, The Management of Conflict: Interpretations and Interests in Comparative Perspective (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993)
\textsuperscript{88} M.H. Ross; Psycho-Cultural Interpretations and Dramas; Identity Dynamics in Ethnic Conflicts, Political Psychology, Vol: 22; No.1 (March, 2001), pp.157-178.
\textsuperscript{89} J. Burton (Ed) Conflict: Human Needs Theory (London Macmillan), 1990.
persecution and massacre. \footnote{91 E.Croghton,E and Martha Mac Iver,The Evolution of Protracted Ethnic Conflicts ;Group Dominance and Political Underdevelopment in Northern Ireland and Lebanon , Comparative Politics Vol.23 No. 2,January 1991,p.127.} Fear has been identified as one factor that perpetuates the psychological perceptions of one ethnic group towards the other. Horowitz for example emphasizes on the fear of extinction. \footnote{92 See D.LHorowitz, Ethnic Groups in Conflict, Berkely;University of California Press,1985.} Rothschild on the fear of the future which has an underlying element of the fear of the threat of a loss of identity. \footnote{93 D.Rothschild and A. Roth: Pathological Dimensions of Domestic and International Ethnic Conflict; Political Science Quarterly, Vol 110 No.1 1995.}

This fear real or perceived, emanates from a history of humiliation, oppression, victimhood, feeling of inferiority, persecution of one group and other kinds of discrimination constituting what Rothschild calls the “pathological dimensions of ethnicity” \footnote{94 ibid D.Rothschild and A. Roth, Pathological Dimensions of Domestic and International Ethnic Conflict.} According to Jeane Knutson in her analysis of psychology of victimhood, human needs in term of identity, affection, self esteem and esteem of others are components of a safety and security humans require for normal development.

The theory postulates that the past is based on mythical-histories often referring to a distant past which are often distorted, exaggerated over time portraying one group as heroic while disparaging the other. In Africa, colonialism played a great role in the formation of ethnic group psychology and the subsequent hostile behavior.

2.1.1: The Dimensions of Psycho-Cultural Conflict Theory.

Psycho-cultural conflict theory brings out the holistic approach which addresses various levels and actors in conflict. It is multi-track-multi-dimensional oriented and recognizes the need to involve multiple actors, roles in order to establish a lasting peace. \footnote{95 J.P.Lederach, “Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation Across Cultures” (London: Macmillan, 1995), p.21.} The theory emphasizes the underlying causes of conflict which are critical in achieving lasting peace. Its multi-dimensional
Psycho-cultural conflict theory involves processes of change that are supposed to transform conflict from being destructive to being constructive. Peace builders should therefore aim at transforming the conflict so as to handle conflict without using violence. Galtung adds that the incompatibility which arises between parties can be eliminated by transcending the contradiction, by compromise, by deepening or widening the conflict structure and by associating or dissociating the actors. Peace builders should therefore try to transform conflicts to enable the parties involved to handle the conflict without using violence.

According to this theory the past often refers to history of inequality, discrimination, persecution and in the extreme massacre. The question that needs to be asked is how these psychological dispositions develop and their role in ethnic conflicts. Burton postulates that communities that are discriminated or deprived of their basic needs on the basis of their communal identity of these human needs will cause conflicts. The understanding of identity is therefore crucial in the evolution of psychological processes from which psychological dispositions develops that ultimately causes ethnic groups to enter into violent interactions. The duration and intensity of ethnic conflict and therefore its outcome is the outcome of a psychological escalation process. The different stages in the escalation process according to Northrups' model involve threat, distortion, rigidification and collusion. A threat to group and

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97 J. Galtung, Peace by Peaceful Means, (London; Sage Publications 1996)
individual identity, either real or perceived, leads to fear and a belief that the ethnic group’s existence is threatened by the existence of the other. As a result, there emerges a psychological aggressive response which is distorted and defensive.

Northrup continues and postulates that rigidification process leads to crystallization and hardening of what is construed as self and non-self which in essence widens the gap between groups as each tries to secure its boundaries. An image of others characterized by suspicion, hostility and mistrust and at worst a process of dehumanization follows. Through collusion, the conflictual relationship becomes institutionalized. This results in hardening of relationships between groups.

Accordingly a psychological process, that originates from a history of discrimination and a feeling of threat results in the creation of psychological dispositions embedded in group consciousness. In order to become overt, or manifest, proximate factors will have to operate as triggers that transform the potentially violent situation into deadly conflicts.

According to the theory, practitioners and peace builders should be involved in unearthing the individual perceptions and behavior in an environment of discrimination. By so doing, it aims at altering the mind set and embracing diversity of cultural differences. Ethnic conflicts as a whole is not a linear process but dynamic which over a long period of time escalate, explode, de-escalate, and re-escalate.

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102 S. Utterwulghe, Rwanda’s Protracted Social Conflicts op cit p.22
103 Hong Jeong Hong, Understanding Conflict and Conflict Analysis; Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, 2008p.3.
2.1.2 Perspectives of the Psycho-Cultural Conflict Theory

The psycho-cultural conflict theory takes a subjective approach to conflict analysis. It aims at exposing the underlying issues and uses these in understanding the reasons behind the behavior of some of the worst atrocities committed by individuals and communities in conflict. Scholars such as Brown\textsuperscript{104} and Ross\textsuperscript{105} have emphasized that the causes of ethnic conflict are both objective and subjective. Both see the conflict as the outcome of incompatible interests based on scarce resources and because it is defined as largely independent of the perceptions and emanates from power structures and institutions.

The theory is analytical that seeks to trace the genesis, creation and evolution of psycho-cultural dispositions of individuals and groups that may have important consequences to conflict behavior.\textsuperscript{106} Much of the existing literature has emphasized more on the structural dimensions but as stated by scholars such as Ross ethnic conflicts need to be looked at objectively as well as subjectively. The psychological and cultural elements are by their nature ill-defined and narrowly conceived and often overlooked in the process of designing remedial measures to ethnic conflict management.

Psycho-cultural conflict theory incorporates individuals and the identity group of individuals as the unit of analysis aimed at sustainable and long lasting peace based on consensus and trust.\textsuperscript{107} Commenting on the complexity of conflicts, Michael Banks notes that, “We live in a

\textsuperscript{107} D.Horowitz, Ethnic Groups in Conflict (Berkeley; University of California Press, 1985), p.182
world in which conflict is rarely understood and often mismanaged. De Reuck notes that "in ethnic conflict enemies have mutually exclusive psychological frames of reference that predispose them to zero-sum interpretations of their relationship and block co-operative search for constructive outcome. The theory also involves creative problem-solving that searches for ways of redefining, fractioning or transcending the conflict so that positive sum or win–win solutions which leave both parties better off can be discovered. This helps in lowering the psychological barriers between antagonistic parties and set a stage for official negotiations on political and economic reconstruction.

The changing nature of contemporary conflicts and their apparent ability to resist negotiated agreements is an indication of the fact that violent conflicts are not generally resolved. This is a challenge to the traditional approaches to conflict resolution and management. The realist or power politics approach for example, takes the state as the unit of analysis that leaves no space for consideration of the fundamental underlying roots that define people’s behavior. This approach to conflict management is inadequate in that it is elite based and state centric and does not take into consideration the value-laden nature of ethnic conflicts.

According to Vayrynen it is important to understand that conflicts are transformed and not settled. The psycho-cultural conflict theory involves a multi-dimensional approach to conflict which aims at altering the perceptions of individuals, parties and recognizing the

111 ibid
112 J.P.Lederach,”The Little Book of Conflict Transformation-abridged version”, (Colorado: Colorado University Press,2003), pp 4-25
existence of others. The conflict transformation in this case involves the participation of the
civil society, community based organizations aimed at lowering psychological barriers.

The other traditional method is the structural theory of conflict which basically
concentrates on economic and political reconstruction in its conflict management efforts. However; this cannot be implemented in isolation because ethnic conflicts are the result of a
complex combination of structural and psycho-cultural factors. The aim of any peace-building
is for long term sustainable peace and stability both at the local and international level. The
psycho-cultural theory of conflict moves away from the state-centric and incorporates the
individual and identity group of individuals as the unit of analysis. Intense psychological
processes of escalation in individual makes relationship between parties and the perceptions of
parties towards each other more rigid in the process intensifying the mythical-histories, mistrust
and fear.

Any sustainable and lasting peace in Africa and especially in Kenya should be based on
consensus and trust, which can be attained by considering the psycho-cultural attributes in ethnic
conflict.

2.2 Psycho-Cultural Conflict Theory and its Applicability.

Ethnic conflicts in Kenya revolve around many factors. This includes historical factors,
the post colonial system of governance, the scramble for scarce resources, the weak social

\[\text{References:}\]
115 Ibid
116 S.Utterwulghe, Rwanda’s Protracted Social Conflict; Considering the Subjective Perspective in Conflict
118 S.Utterwulghe; Rwanda’s Protracted Social Conflict: Considering the Subjective Perspective in Conflict
119 Ibid, p.25
120 T.Northrup, The Dynamics of Identity and Social Conflict in Kliesberg et al (ed) Intractable Conflicts and Their


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structures and increasing population that exerts pressure on the dwindling resources, and the competitive nature of politics.  

This study looks at the role of psycho-cultural attributes in explaining ethnic conflicts in Kenya by adopting the approaches advanced by various scholars of conflict studies. According to Ross culture, shared, profound “we-they” oppositions, the conceptualization of enemies and a deep-seated dispositions about human actions stemming from earliest developments plays a significant role in ethnic conflicts. The history of discrimination, competition over scarce resources, increasing population and the competitive nature of politics makes ethnic groups conceptualize each other as enemies.

Rothschild’s theory on the subjective perception of common origins, historical memories, ties and aspirations brings in the element of ethnic identity and ethnic consciousness and states their crucial role in ethnic conflict. An ethnic group is characterized by a myth of common ancestry, shared memories and cultural elements; and a link with a historic territory or homeland, with a measure of solidarity. Since each ethnic group defines itself in terms of its identity and of its background, conflict is inevitable.

John Burton’s theory on human needs defines the human relationships at all societal levels in terms of unmet needs. In multi-communal societies each ethnic group strives to fulfill its communal needs in an environment of competition especially for the control of scarce resources.

122 See M.Ross, The Management of Conflict: Interpretations and Interests in Comparative Pespective,New Haven; Yale University Press,1993
Using a cultural theory of conflict, Jinadu observes that ethnicity should be viewed as an inclusive concept that defines groupings on the basis of indicators such as color, appearance, language, race, religion, common ancestry, height, and complexity, body structure based on the myth of common ancestry, belief systems, physical settlement, group affiliations and relationships. Africa is highly multi-ethnic and multi-communal with different cultural backgrounds divided by colonial boundaries, a factor that partly explains why ethnic conflict cuts across national boundaries.

Different ethnic communities in one way or the other refers to a history of inequality, discrimination, persecution and even massacres that forms the basis of the development of psycho-cultural dispositions, and negative stereotypes which sets in motion a psychological escalation process that eventually leads to ethnic violence. The threats to group and individual identity lead to a psychological aggression and a feeling of threat and fear about ethnic identity that is embedded in group consciousness. Such statements like “it is our time to eat” or “it is our time to take control of power” are common during political campaigns, an indication of the extent of group consciousness.

Lake and Rothschild’s theory of collective fears of the future brings in strategic dilemmas and collective fears. The fear of being left out or not having one of theirs at the top political positions has characterized the Kenya political life making politics a competitive venture.
Conflict is deeply rooted in human needs making it difficult to resolve especially intra-state and inter-group conflicts where identity, recognition, basic human needs and security are interrelated. Conflicts must be probed and opened up by means of a profound psychological examination of the unmet or inadequately fulfilled basic human needs of the parties and their individual's.

Participation in decision making, material needs and identity makes out-groups feel dissatisfied, frustrated, marginalized and excluded from the social, economic and political participation resulting in protracted and intractable ethnic conflicts. The fundamental issues underlying the causes of violence according to Manwello are the human person. He postulates that people cannot wake up and start killing one another just because of a contested election as it happened in Kenya immediately the election results were announced. There is a need to interrogate the human person as a unit of analysis.

Psycho-cultural dynamics in ethnic conflicts emphasizes that ethnic identity connects individuals through group perceived common past experiences and expectations of shared future where identity is concerned with group judgments and judgments about groups and their motives. The psycho-cultural theory takes the individual as a unit of analysis and interrogates the human person in terms of his/her needs. The theory takes into consideration the local conditions that should not be taken for granted but incorporated into intervention measures designed to resolve any form of ethnic conflict.

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134 M.H.Ross;The; Psycho-cultural Interpretations and Dramas: Identity Dynamics in Ethnic Conflict; Political Psychology, Vol.22, No. 1 (March,2001),pp.157-178
2.3 Other Causes of Ethnic Conflicts: The Structural Conflict Theory Dimensions.

Although this study is aimed at exploring the role of psycho-cultural factors in ethnic conflicts, the social structures in one way or the other are the basis upon which the psychological and cultural attributes develops. This section therefore is an attempt at demonstrating how they fit into the framework using the structural conflict framework of analysis.

As pointed out earlier in this study, the social structures have a bearing on the psycho-cultural elements. Scholars such as Azar, Burton have attempted to contextualize this contention, and therefore demonstrating the multi-dimensional approaches to conflict management. Utterwulghe, in his analysis of the role of the subjective approach in explaining the Rwanda genocide of 1994, states that the colonial social structural framework should be blamed for the deep-rooted psychological dispositions has made that country experience the serious ethnic conflict.

Structural conflict is defined as an outcome of incompatible interests based on the competition for scarce resources and is independent of the perceptions of participants. Azar contends that environments characterized by underdevelopment, structural deprivation leads to ethnic discrimination which turns into hostile and violent actions. Analysing psychological elements therefore in the context of the structural framework allows for greater understanding of the nature and consequences of ethnic conflicts.

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137 See J. Burton, The Human Needs Theory, 1990
Smith postulates that ethnic groups are usually stable but at times mobilized for purposes of competition for power and resources because they are viewed as instrumental identities organized as means to particular ends. The competitive nature of politics in Kenya is informed by the control of resources where each strives to control power, a position that is critical in the use and distribution of state resources. The fact that no country in the world is homogenous in terms of ethnic composition implies that ethnic conflicts are a phenomenon that is widespread and not necessarily confined to the African continent.

The ethnic identity becomes a way of bargaining for the ethnic entitlements, a process that eventually entrenches the perception in the daily lives of individuals and ethnic groups. Many societies in Africa are characterized by persistent deep rooted and identity related conflicts fuelled by identity based factors that indicates a close relationship to the economic and social injustice regarding the distribution or means of sharing economic, social and political resources within the state. This deepens the consciousness of the ethnic differences in terms of goals, interests and objectives partly blamed on the colonial rule.

According to Mitchell, conflict is defined as the incompatibility of goals between parties and occurs when objectives, goals, values, needs or interests of individuals and groups clash, sometimes resulting in aggression and violence. Ethnic conflict is therefore the result of the

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different ethnic groups competing for the satisfaction of the needs and interests in multi-ethnic communities.

Smith postulates that pre-modern ethnic ties and modern nations needs to be examined in terms of cultural and social exclusion, national ideology that encourages national solidarity and self-assertion which underlies the many current political conflicts. This is relevant in the ethnically heterogeneous nations of Africa where resource mobilization and ethnic competition encourages political violence. The level of democracy, political change and economic development are instrumental in fostering ethnic conflicts.

Galtung’s theory of structural violence captures the salient features that causes ethnic conflicts in Africa and defines it as follows; “Violence is present when human beings are influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realizations. The potential level of realization is that which is possible with a given level of insight and resources. If insight and/or resources are monopolized by a group or class or used for other purposes, then the actual level falls below the potential level, and violence is present in the system”.

Physical violence involves the deliberate use of force to injure, subdue or kill another human being while structural violence is a type of conflict which is embedded in the structure of relationships and interactions. Where the underlying structure of relationship is unjust and inequitable; it breeds conditions of structural violence which is the cause of the difference

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between the potential and the actual. It is normally difficult to identify structural violence because it is deep-rooted in the structures which in the process generate a cycle of physical violence.  

Kimenyi looks at ethnicity, governance and the provision of public goods and defines ethnic groups in terms of interests groups. The in-group-out-group perception in terms of ethnic needs and identity defines the ethnic relationships. The view that ethnic groups are interests groups and the in-group-out-group perception implies that peace building in Africa must revolve around all issues identified as crucial in the conflicts by all the actors in the conflicts. These includes but not limited to community leaders, civil society organizations, humanitarian organizations and international aid agencies.

The security and development processes are related in that there can be no long term security without development while also developments cannot take place in environments where security is not guaranteed because the two are inter-linked. Developments cannot take place in environments characterized by violent conflicts.

Conflict and economic activity are inter-linked in that they provide the spark for increased probabilities of internal and external conflict and in turn chances of recession creating a poverty-conflict trap like environment. Once a country stumbles into conflict, powerful

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forces tends to lock it into a syndrome of further conflicts and ultimately a conflict trap that has consequences on development of the country.\footnote{N.Sambanis, Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy (Washington D.C: World bank 2003.) pp 53-91:p.53.}

In ethnically divided societies, members of an ethnic group tend to favor their group members over non-members because they are more related to their group members than outsiders especially when it comes to competition for the scarce resources leading to ethnic interests conflict which are more in ethnically divided societies.\footnote{T.Vanhanen, Domestic Ethnic Conflict and Ethnic Nepotism: A Comparative Analysis, Journal of Peace Research, Sage Publications, 1999, 35; 36.}

Institutional failure and ethnic conflicts are interrelated because a cycle of violence is created and maintained as rulers try to hold on to power while the oppressed categories of the population claim their fair share in national resources.\footnote{L.Ndikumana; Institutional Failure and Ethnic Conflicts in Burundi; Africa Studies Review, Vol. 41, No.1 (April, 1998) African Studies Association, PP 29-47.} Restoration of peace and stability in this case will require an extensive reform of key institutions to ensure equity and protection of rights and property for all citizens.

The peace negotiations in Kenya after the post election violence was possible with the entry of the African Union through the Eminent African Personalities led by Kofi Annan, former United Nations Secretary General. There was pressure from other interested parties such as the European Union, United States of America and the immediate neighbors of Kenya to have the conflict resolved fast.\footnote{See M.Mwagiru, The Water’s Edge; Mediation of Violent Electoral Conflict in Kenya; IDIS Publications on International Studies,3, WAB ARTISTIC WORKS, July 2008.}

A brief historical perspective of the Kenyan case reveals that much of the current ethnic conflicts lie in the colonial past which was characterized by the use of threat of violence to
acquire land, population displacement and oppressive rule.\textsuperscript{158} The impact of colonialism on Kenya's history therefore becomes critical if the current ethnic conflicts experienced have to be analyzed in the correct perspective. It is a historical fact that the indirect rule by the colonialists of divide and rule polarized the various ethnic groups in Kenya. This was later to contribute to the incompatibility of the ethnic groups within the one nation-state Kenya. The early nationalist struggles against colonialism were basically ethnically distinct ethnic unions.

At the dawn of independence, African leaders ascended to government structures intended to preserve colonial administrative legacy. These included for example a western based constitution, ill-trained manpower in a country with diverse ethnic groups with varying interests, inadequate socio-economic infrastructure. The net effect was the scramble for scarce resources with ethnicity as the vehicle through which the dominance and preservation of power and resources could be achieved. Indeed the leadership in post colonial Kenya has heavily relied on ethnicity to remain in leadership or use the ethnicity to deal with their perceived enemies.\textsuperscript{159}

The colonialists in search for political control, economic exploitation and cultural domination strengthened and polarized group differences, creating feelings of victimhood, new mythical-histories and eventually strong ideologies.\textsuperscript{160}

\section*{2.4 The Limitations of Psycho-Cultural Conflict Theory.}

The psycho-cultural conflict theory defines conflict in terms of psychological and cultural forces that frame the beliefs about the self, others and behavior.\textsuperscript{161} As Horowitz puts it, the

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{161} ibid
\end{thebibliography}
sources of ethnic conflict are not to be found solely in the psychology of group juxtaposition, but they cannot be understood without a psychology, thus emphasizing the importance of the emotional concomitants of group traits and interactions. According to Mwagiru, the frustration-aggression component is useful in explaining aggression at the individual level but does not explain much at the social level. The relative deprivation component that seeks to explain the social aspects of conflict is highly subjective and cannot be measured by any objective criteria.

The limitations however seem to be outweighed by the holistic approach the psycho-cultural conflict theory adopts. It is multidimensional and advocates for the analysis of the values because ethnic conflicts are value-laden. This provides a framework within which the ethnic conflicts can be addressed.

2.5 Conclusions

This chapter discusses the psycho-cultural theory of conflict and its principles. The literature in this case looked at the theory in contrasts to other approaches in conflict such as the realist and the structural theories of conflict. The chapter also looked at the dimensions and perspectives of the theory in addressing the nature of ethnic conflicts that Africa faces. The multi-dimensional approach of the theory has been captured in the context of the African experiences. The chapter also looks at the structural factors as a way of illustrating the role that structural factors plays in the development of psycho-cultural elements and how in essence perpetuates ethnic animosity. The limitation of the theory forms the last part of the chapter. The psycho-cultural theory takes the individual and the ethnic group as the unit of analysis.

Chapter Three

Psycho-Cultural Attributes as Causal factors of Ethnic Conflicts in Africa: The Case of Kenya 1990-2009

3.0: Introduction

Chapter two is on the discussion of the psycho-cultural conflict theory, its dimensions and perspectives in analyzing ethnic conflicts. The chapter also looked at two contrasting theories, the realist theory and the structural theory in the context of ethnic conflicts. The applicability of psycho-cultural conflict theory and its limitations is also analyzed.

Chapter three looks at the psycho-cultural attributes as causal factors of ethnic conflicts in Africa, narrowing down to the case study of Kenya from 1990-2009. Specific themes on the socio-economic, political, environmental and resource based aspects, the competitive nature of politics, land resource, the media in the context of the psycho-cultural theory of conflict are the areas that this chapter is concerned with.

3.1 An Overview of Ethnic Conflicts in Africa.

Africa has been afflicted by violent conflicts of one type or another with disastrous consequences on the continents societies, polities and economies, robbing them of their developmental potential and democratic possibilities. The causes are complex and present enormous challenges in resolving them. The wars are either intra-state or inter-state and further categorized as secessionists, irredentist, wars of devolution, wars of regime change, and wars of

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social banditry armed inter-communal insurrectionists. Most and major clashes appear to be related to cultural demarcations for example the Hutu and Tutsi struggles in Rwanda and Burundi.

The protracted and intractable ethnic conflicts are characterized by periodic explosions of genocidal violence as in Rwanda and Burundi most notably the 1994 Rwanda genocide. Other areas that have experienced intense conflicts are the Niger Delta in Nigeria, The Somalia, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Kenya among others. This study seeks to illustrate the role psycho-cultural attributes plays in explaining these violent protracted and intractable ethnic conflicts.

The colonial system of administration of divide and rule or assimilation did not provide a durable territorial nationalism for effective nation building. This illustrates a close relationship between efforts at nation-building and the competing interests that are pursued by ethnic groups. The conflicts between northern and southern Nigeria that are persistent, the Sudan between the Arab dominated North and the Christian and animist south also scenes of intractable violent conflicts and persistent civil wars are partly because of the perceived discrimination which is a fertile ground for psychological dispositions.

The competition for scarce resources especially in environments characterized by underdevelopment, structural deprivation leads to ethnic discrimination which normally turns hostile and violent. The D.R Congo with its vast mineral and timber resources, the Southern Sudan and the oil resources, Liberia, Sierra Leone and the diamond minerals in West Africa, the

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166 Ibid, P.T.Zeleza, The Causes and Costs of war in Africa,p.6
168 D. Welsh;” Ethnicity in Sub-Saharan Africa”, International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944), Vol.72, No.3, Ethnicity and International Relations (July 1996), Blackwell Publishing pp 477-491.
169 Ibid p.478
Niger Delta and the oil resources are some examples where conflicts based on the distribution and control of resources continue to wreck the African continent.

The democratizing states of Africa often have militarized ethnicity which arises from the competitive nature of politics creating underlying tensions entrenched in identities, idioms and institutions of ethnic solidarity. There is a close relationship between ethnicity and political life in Africa to the extent that the political class uses ethnicity in promoting their interests.

Ethnic identity in Africa is the focal point around which groups are mobilized in order to effectively compete for the state-controlled power and resources. The ethnic group in power employs all it takes to maximize the political, economic and social interests of the community or a coalition of ethnic groups. The colonial structures, proliferation of small and light weapons, population pressure, advancement in technology and the individual and communal needs exert pressure on the scarce resources that eventually become the basis of threats, distortions and competition.


The emphasis here is on the role of psycho-cultural factors in explaining the ethnic conflicts that Kenya has experienced over the years and especially during the Post Cold War era. The psycho-cultural dispositions and perceptions have a historical dimension traced from the colonial system of divide and rule. A history of discrimination, marginalization and injustice has

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172 Agbu Osita, op cit
been a feature of the country’s development process leading to feeling of deprivation, regional disparities, ethnic alienation, and a sense of victimhood that stems from earliest developments.\textsuperscript{173}

The ethnic identity and consciousness is perpetuated by the deep-seated dispositions causing ethnic violence. What is of concern in this study is therefore how the nature and course of ethnic violence illustrates the psycho-cultural dimensions and manifestations in relation to resource mobilization, the role of the media, multi-party politics, ethnic based militia’s, the minority and marginalized groups. Also critical in this case is the role of land as a resource in ethnic conflicts and the debates on the federal system of governance and its historical origins.

3.2.1 Psycho-Cultural Dimensions of Ethnic Conflict in Kenya.

In order to have a clear understanding of the role of psycho-cultural attributes on ethnic conflicts in Kenya, a critical analysis of its historical background is crucial. This dates back to the colonial rule when the divide and rule system of administration in itself discriminatory was introduced.

The ultimate result was the ethnic consciousness that emerged since then and through post independence Kenya with each ethnic community struggling to safeguard its interests in one nation-state called Kenya.\textsuperscript{174} This is illustrated by the nature and composition of the political groupings that were formed during the colonial period and during the struggle for independence which was basically ethnic based and have maintained the same structure.

The history of discrimination, feeling of threats and fear has over the years led to the development of psychological dispositions and negative stereotypes in the individual and ethnic

group's consciousness.¹⁵ These psychological dispositions mainly latent only require a catalyst to transform the potentially violent situations into deadly conflicts.¹⁶ Since the 1990's this has been expressed for example through the media, the arguments for or against multi-party system of governance and the call for federal system of governance (majimbo) that dominates the Kenyan political life.

Throughout Kenya's history, ethnic communities have regarded each other in terms of "we"-"they" perceptions as concerns the benefits that accrue from the control of the scarce resources. The result has been discrimination or a feeling of deprivation in terms of the satisfaction of the basic human needs on the basis of communal identity, which is a fundamental human right entitlement.

The Kenyatta Administration for example favored the Kikuyu ethnic community at the expense of other communities in terms of access to social, economic and political participation in the affairs of the state.¹⁷ This was to be the basis of hatred, suspicion, perceptions and negative stereotypes that communities labeled against each other. The regional disparities in terms of the social, economic developments were to have serious repercussions in terms of ethnic violence.

Ethnic identity consciousness is a crucial element in the evolution and escalation of psycho-cultural dispositions that ultimately causes ethnic groups to enter into violent interactions.¹⁸ Over the years Kenya experienced a growing politicization and proliferation of

violence, specifically the institutionalization of violence following the legalization of the multi-party democracy in 1992.\textsuperscript{179}

The feeling among ethnic groups of historical marginalization, arising from perceived inequities concerning allocation of resources created an underlying climate of tension and hate.\textsuperscript{180} The Moi regime, with pressure from donor countries, reluctantly agreed to multi-party politics in the 1990's arguing that it will cause ethnic animosity and violence and that Kenya was not ready for it. The nature of political campaigns during the first multi-party elections in 1992 and the calls for majimbo, a loose federal arrangement along ethnic lines was an attempt at polarizing the country along ethnic lines.

War-like speeches practically against all non-KAMATUSA (Kalenjin, Maasai, Turkana Samburu ethnic groups) in the Rift Valley, a multi-ethnic region in Kenya, was for example followed by destruction of homes and property of the victims in the hope that they would flee to their ancestral lands.\textsuperscript{181} According to a provincial administrator in Nakuru and later Narok at the height of the 2007 election violence, the political class financed the unemployed youth to attack and destroy property belonging to the so called "foreigners" a term referring to the immigrant communities especially in the conflict epicenters of Rift Valley and Coast Region. This was followed by retaliations and counter-retaliations in the process solidifying the suspicions and hatred.

This kind of behavior leads to the development of psychological dispositions and negative stereotypes because of discrimination that become dangerous when triggered for

\textsuperscript{181} Report of the Parliamentary Select Committee to Investigate Ethnic Clashes in Western and Other Parts of the Country (KILIKU Report, 1992).
example by a hotly contested election as it happened in 2007 elections. The period from the 1990’s up to the 2007 elections and the subsequent ethnic violence that followed can be viewed as the climax of a process of solidification of the ethnic hatred, suspicion, stereotyping and denigration.

According to Human Rights Watch Report\textsuperscript{182}, tensions over land ownership and other issues have long been a source of mistrust and violence between the majority Kalenjin and the minority groups in the Rift Valley. The politicians have always used this issue to mobilize political support among their ethnic kinsmen, a trend that leads to build-up of ethnic consciousness and ethnic related identity dispositions.

The 2007 campaign rhetoric centered on the belief that a win for Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) party was to provide an opportunity to chase away the so called foreigners.\textsuperscript{183} According to interviews by the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, derogatory statements such as “we have a snake we have to get rid of”, victory would mean “remove the roots of local kikuyu communities” were common.

The main grievances were the issue of land, fear of domination as a result of the increasing population in the fertile Rift Valley, easy access to arms and light weapons and the diminishing opportunities because of competition from those considered as foreigners mainly from outside the region.

In some areas, there was dislocation of communities without valid reasons. In Narok, a minister in the government declared a settlement scheme at Enosopukia, trust land on the ground

that it was a catchment area.\textsuperscript{184} Non-KAMATUSA of voting age were denied identity cards and thereby registration as voters, a process aimed at dislocating them to their ancestral lands.\textsuperscript{185} Such moves amount to mass dislocation of ethnic groups and internal displacements using the electoral processes.

This “we-them’ perception became the basis of ethnic tensions and therefore the nature of the ethnic conflicts experienced in this region. This was exacerbated by the ecological degradation resulting in diminishing water and pastureland for the Maasai’s, and the increase in population because of the encroachment by the agriculturalists which added to the demands from the region.\textsuperscript{186}

Political rhetoric by the political class and ethnic entrepreneurs all along advocated for the chasing away of the non-indigenous people.\textsuperscript{187} The country was undergoing political and economic change with the advent of multi-party politics and the effects of the structural adjustments programs.\textsuperscript{188} As a result of the resource mobilization and ethnic competition in a multi-communal country such as Kenya, ethnic conflict is inevitable. It is therefore clear that what took place in Kenya throughout the 1990’s was a deliberate use of violence that led to a culture of impunity and constant escalation of violence.\textsuperscript{189}

Violence came to be applied in every other election year since then by the state, as a way of influencing voting patterns in some regions especially in the Rift Valley region of the country.

\textsuperscript{186} Ibid. KHRC.
\textsuperscript{189} Waki Report, P.24.
The genesis of psychological dispositions can be traced from the resettlement programs put in place after independence which was discriminatory in nature. There has therefore been a history of conflict where ethnic identity and the cultural rights especially with regard to land have played a significant role in ethnic relations.

There is fear by the minority groups that the continued encroachment of their land interferes with their livelihood. The livelihood and culture is based on exploitation of natural resources from the forest and any interference is heavily resisted. The minority and marginalized communities such as the Ogieks of the Rift Valley and the pastoral communities such as those of North-Eastern parts of the country have all along complained of discrimination. This fear of the threat to the loss of identity, real or imagined emanates from a history of humiliation, oppression, persecution of one’s group and other kinds of discrimination which has been referred to as “pathological dimensions of ethnicity”.

The ethnic conflicts since 1992 were aimed at crippling the economic engagements of some community’s especially in the Rift Valley and therefore psychologically traumatizing them and ultimately chasing them away. Investigations and reports given by the Akiwumi Report indicated that the clashes were politically instigated by the regime of the day for purposes of regaining what the indigenous ethnic group perceived as having been taken away by colonialists and later by non-Kalenjin communities.

The indigenous communities felt the need to protect their identity which had been threatened. The memories of hurts and psychological woods illustrate the significant role that

191 Waki Report,p.24
192 Op cit B.N.Nyukuri;The Impact and Potential Ethnic Conflict on Kenya’s Stability and Development.
194 Human Rights Watch Report; From Ballots to Bullets, March 2008
historical experiences and memories plays in inter-ethnic relations. The belief and behavior of
the different communities and groups, whether real or imagined, determined their relationships
and especially in pursuit of communal interests.

According to the Waki Report, the 2007 violence in the North Rift, unlike the 1992 case,
was the result of spontaneous anger by ODM’s Kalenjin candidates, land hunger, the desire to
evict the outsiders and therefore assume the power. They felt that they were being denied the
opportunity through the ballot to evict the so called “outsiders” as well as desire to assume
power. Therefore irrespective of the outcome of the elections, there was bound to be violence
directed at removing the immigrants.

The deep-seated historical grievances and the psychological dispositions triggered a
conflict escalation process that eventually became the basis of the ethnic conflict. The Rift
Valley region has been undergoing this conflict escalation as evidenced by the numerous threats
which required only a trigger in the form of a hotly contested election.

According to interviews and testimonies given by the internally displaced people at an
IDP Camp at BETAFARM in the outskirts of Eldoret town, the campaign meetings evidently
expressed ethnic hatred and biased ethnic rhetoric. This was an outright expression of the extent
of the ethnic hatred despite the violence having been contained.

The ODM party, which was supported by the majority Kalenjin ethnic group, was
perceived as a party through which land grievances could be remedied if it formed the next
government implying that the party was to win the election at any cost. The threats and
aggression had been rigidified to the extent that it required collusion of those involved for the

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95 Commission to Inquire into Post-Election Violence in Kenya (Waki Report, 2008). p.78
96 Human Rights Watch Reports, From Ballots to Bullets 2008.
violence to be ignited. The psychological conflict escalation process had reached full cycle and violence was therefore inevitable.

The attitudes and perceptions between the indigenous and the so called foreigners in this environment of scarcity and competition influenced the beliefs about individuals and ethnic group’s behavior. This means whatever the outcome of the 2007 elections, the situation on the ground was tense and ripe for ethnic violence to occur.

After the elections, perceived to be flawed, there was a feeling of betrayal and therefore a desire to use violence to achieve what they failed to achieve through the ballot. The violence was more intense in the settlement areas inhabited by immigrants such as Kimumu, Yamumbi in Uasin Gishu as evidenced by the Kiambaa Church incidence where about 35 people were burnt having sought refuge inside. In one way or the other the Kalenjin community, based on the historical land injustices as a result of colonialism had developed psychological dispositions, perceptions and negative stereotypes against the minority inhabitants who occupied their land. Every election year since the introduction of multi-party politics was characterized by fierce tribal clashes that expressed ethnic grievances.

The psychological dispositions were based on the inequality, discrimination over land that was alienated by the colonialists and the status quo maintained by the successive regimes when in actual fact they expected the land to revert to them after independence. The fact that it didn’t happen, was to be the beginning of ethnic tensions and hatred.

The traditional leaders and elders also played a significant role in fuelling the ethnic animosity and tensions. According to The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Fact Finding Mission to Kenya Report, the attacks in the Rift Valley were partially organized, reportedly by political and/or traditional leaders eager to settle long-held grievances over land issues and other real and perceived forms of discrimination.

The report further states that the attacks were allegedly blessed by Kalenjin village elders who exploited the fairly common initiation ceremonies to rally their community youths around the common objective of evicting all the non-Kalenjin communities. The systematic evictions were followed by the renaming of villages, an indication of the intentions to evict any perceived “outsiders’ for good. In mixed marriages, there was a tendency to dehumanize the immigrants. The use of cultural practices such as initiation ceremonies and reference to traditions illustrates the depth of the ethnic identity consciousness.

The emergence and use of ethnic based militia groups contributed to ethnic conflicts. The politicians have been contracting the services of the illegal groupings for political purposes. Such illegal groupings included the dreaded Mungiki sect; a quasi-religious organization claiming to further the interests of Kikuyu community. The political entrepreneurs and ethnic activists have been using the ethnic based militia groups for political expediency. This was the case during the retaliatory moves in Naivasha and Nakuru at height of the 2007 post election violence directed against the non-kikuyu ethnic groups

\[^{199}\text{OHCHR Fact Finding Mission Report; February 2008.}\]

\[^{200}\text{KNCHR Report. On the Brink of the Precipice 2008.PARA.32.}\]

\[^{201}\text{Interview from a prominent farmer of kikuyu ethnic group in Uasin Gishu held on 28th June 2010.}\]


\[^{203}\text{Human Rights Watch Report: From Ballots to Bullets. March, 2008.}\]
The organization emerged in the late eighties as a principally cultural and spiritual movement promoting kikuyu heritage and culture but increasingly became involved in organized crime. This was out of the conception of being victims of the violence which undermined their human needs, safety and security. The behavior of individuals and ethnic groups based on historical experiences and past interactions leads to distortions of behavior and therefore tendency towards violence.\textsuperscript{204}

The group was used for purposes of retaliation after evictions from the Rift Valley and the Coast Region. The use of cultural practices, in this case initiation ceremonies, and ethnic based militia groups as a way of mobilizing the communities against each other was evident in other parts of the country.\textsuperscript{205} Historical memories, discrimination, mistrust and suspicion especially in environments of scarcity, competition for resources, social and structural constraints creates psychological perceptions that are easily mobilized and causes tensions.

The conflicts in the coastal region of Kenya between the upcountry and the indigenous coastal people from the 1990’s over what the coastal people perceived as the domination by upcountry people over long held grievances in the liberalized political environment became the sources of ethnic conflicts. The presence of the upcountry people and their dominance in all fields of development has been viewed as a threat to the indigenous people especially given the background and circumstances under which they settled there.\textsuperscript{206}

The coastal people wanted to have a greater control over their social-economic and political destiny. The local ethnic groups complained of exploitation and exclusion by the non-indigenous communities (WATOKA BARA-outsiders or people from upcountry) especially

\textsuperscript{204} T.Northrup, The Dynamics of Identity in Personal and Social Conflict; in Kliesberg et al (ed) intractable Conflicts and Their Transformations(Syracuse, Syracuse University Press)
\textsuperscript{206} The Waki Report.,2008,P. 46
given that their presence was due to the perceived discriminatory policies of the previous
generations. The multi-party politics introduced in 1991 led to political polarization along ethnic
lines with a “we”-“them” perception that fueled the already existing latent tribal animosity and
intimidation.207

The clashes at the coast were politically instigated to ensure that the so called outsiders
do not vote.208 It was a way of ensuring the in-group, in this case the indigenous group’s locks
out the out-group (watokabara-outsiders) from the control of the local resources and political
participation, a process that was manifested in other hot spots of the country.

Cattle rustling in the arid and semi arid parts of the country have always been a source of
ethnic and inter-clan conflicts.209 In the North Eastern and Eastern provinces, ethnic conflicts are
attributed to cattle rustling, a cultural practice which is inter-tribal and inter-clan in nature. This
is worsened by droughts and the resultant inadequacy of water and pasture, the proliferation of
small arms and light weapons from the neighboring countries.210 The practice is both internal
and external which explains the internationalization of domestic conflicts and the role that
ethnicity plays in this process.211

There is a close relationship between climate change, cultural practices and ethnic
conflicts. Climate change in the marginal areas has led to ecological degradation resulting in
environmental stress as a result of demographic factors, dwindling resource base coupled with

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207 KNCHR Report: From Ballots to Bullets, 2008
208 Report of the Judicial Commission Appointed to Inquire into Tribal Clashes in Kenya (Akiwumi Report)
209 F. Fukui and J. Markakis (ed) Ethnicity and Conflict in the Horn of Africa (London and Ohio University, 1994);
pp 212-234.
210 Ibid, pp 2229.
211 M. Mwagiru, Conflicts in Africa, Theory, Processes and Institutions of Management, A CCN
socio-economic political factors. This has serious consequences on the economic wellbeing and cultural practices of the pastoral communities.

Resource based conflicts are frequent not only between the pastoral communities but also between agriculturalists who have encroached into fragile pastoral ecological zones. The climate change, cultural practices have a bearing on the nature of ethnic violence experienced in the marginal areas of the country.

The threat to the individual and group identity causes distortions that lead to a buildup of tensions and animosity. The arguments presented by the government, before and after the reintroduction of multi-party politics in Kenya in the 1990’s was that ethnicity was bound to increase and lead to disintegration of the country along ethnic lines and therefore chaos. Those individuals and ethnic groups that advocated for multi-party were viewed as enemies of the country. The ruling party KANU and the individuals as well as groups or communities allied to it engaged in a debate of distorting the issues and indeed instigating clashes in the mainly multi-ethnic regions of the country such as the Rift Valley, and Coast provinces.

This was the beginning of a rigidification, a psychological process in the escalation of the conflict that caused ethnic tensions and subsequently the conflicts. The ethnic groups positioned themselves in terms of their interests perceived to be under threat. This was to be the beginning of the process of crystallization and hardening of the threats and subsequent collusion that ultimately led to full scale ethnic violence.

WAKI Report,PP.26
An image of others was created; characterized by suspicion, hostility, and mistrust and at worst a process of dehumanization, further solidifying the conflict. The ethnic group’s identity factor became a crucial element in the prolonging of the conflictual relationship and the institutionalization of the conflict.

Although, ethnic factors mostly define the election pattern in Kenya, there is evidence that this cultural phenomenon was weakened during the 2002 election. The introduction of multi-party politics had led to fragmentation of the ruling and opposition parties along ethnic lines. However the 2002 elections saw the support of a broad coalition of ethnic groups supporting Mwai Kibaki, an indication that apart from ethnic considerations, other factors count in deciding the voting patterns.

3.2.1.1 The Role of Psycho-Cultural Factors in Multi-Party Politics.

Psycho-cultural perceptions played a great role in the way the multi-party system of governance was re-introduced and practiced in Kenya in the 1990’s. At independence, the country adopted a multi-party form of government but then the reverted to a single party rule. This was to change in 1991 with the amendment of section 2A of the Kenyan constitution.

Political transitions since the advent of multi-party system of governance in Kenya in the 1990’s have been characterized by group mobilization along ethnic lines. The period has been characterized by escalation, explosion, and de-escalation of ethnic conflicts. There has been evidence of recurrent violence during every election year since the 1990’s. The leaders mobilized

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216 T, Northrup, The Dynamics of Identity in Personal and Social Conflicts”, op cit pp 68-76.
218 KNCHR REPORT, 2008.
their groups for action, a process that preoccupied the electioneering period.\textsuperscript{219} The ethnic activists and political entrepreneurs polarized the country by manipulating the psychological dispositions of their groups, magnifying myths and emotions during election years and therefore exaceraberting ethnic anger.\textsuperscript{220}

Ethnic conflict as a whole is not a linear process but dynamic and takes place over a long time. It escalates, explodes, de-escalates, and escalates in the process becoming solidified and more of dehumanizing ideologies emerging and consolidated, a situation that is dangerous because it is the basis upon which genocidal slaughter takes place.\textsuperscript{221} Every election year since the re-introduction of multi-party politics has been characterized by episodes of violent ethnic conflicts.

The competitive nature of elections is a factor that has always heightened ethnic tensions in Kenya. The number of political contestants during the 2007 election for example is an indication of the extent to which political competition along ethnic lines is related to the violent ethnic violence in Kenya. The 2007 general election returned a historic best in terms of registration of voters-14.2 million or 82 for the 210 parliamentary seats and nine presidential candidates.\textsuperscript{222}

The incumbent was facing a serious challenge which in essence meant the election generated its own interests in the event that President Kibaki (a kikuyu) lost the presidency and Raila Odinga (a Luo) winning but losing the Langata parliamentary seat. This means that the election had unique dynamics characterized by unprecedented political mobilization in political

\textsuperscript{219} Kliegler Report.
\textsuperscript{220} Evidenced By the political agenda and ethnic rhetoric during political meetings.
\textsuperscript{222} ECK-ELECTORAL DATA, KNCHR REPORT AUGUST 2008, PARA. 32
rallies: the use of the media especially the ethnic based media organizations to mobilize the voters intensified the negative ethnicity.

Ethnic groups’ desire to protect their interests makes the political engagements a competitive affair because control of the political power means control of the means of production. The introduction of multi-party politics and the social, economic and political liberalization made ethnic communities start redefining and repositioning themselves in relation to the changing environment.\textsuperscript{223} The liberalized political environment brought with it the principles of human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law which became the norm.\textsuperscript{224} Years of discrimination, ethnic identity needs such as security, recognition, competition and the control of scarce resources became the defining factors in ethnic relations.

With the advent of multi-party politics, the pastoral communities of the Rift Valley engaged in a revenge exercise aimed at evicting the “outsiders” from their ancestral lands.\textsuperscript{225} The Moi regime (the in-group) had engaged on a policy of manipulating the structures to benefit his Kalenjin community at the expense of the kikuyu formerly the “in-group”.\textsuperscript{226} This was to far reaching consequences in terms of the internal nature, scope and dynamics of the ethnic violence that characterized Kenyan society especially with the advent of multi-party politics.

This is because the past always shapes the present and future beliefs and actions of individuals and groups.\textsuperscript{227} Communal and sectarian violence always causes communities to lose their traditional values and relationships. According to the findings of the WAKI REPORT,\textsuperscript{228} O Osamba, Violence and the Dynamics of Transition: State, Ethnicity and Governance in Kenya, \textit{Africa Development}, Vol xxiv Nos 1 & 2, 2001.pp.37-54.\textsuperscript{228} Ibid.p40

\textsuperscript{224} Ibid.p40

\textsuperscript{225} Commission to Investigate the Post-Election Violence in Kenya, Ocober, 2008. ( WAKI REPORT, October 2008.)


\textsuperscript{227} T.Northrup, The Dynamics of Identity in Personal and Social Conflicts.op cit .p.70.
violence was turned into an institution and part of political process following the re-introduction of multi-party politics in Kenya.

### 3.2.1.2 Other Dimensions of Ethnic Conflicts

Kimenyi asserts that grievances triggers violence by marginalized groups especially those claiming that there has been historical discrimination and injustices or those in extreme poverty. Using the case of Kenya, he argues that the sporadic violence seem to have been triggered by desire to control the state's instrument of power. He asserts that the political class exploits the land and ethnic issues to distort voting patterns with violence subsiding immediately the elections are over. This is because there are no more positive political returns to further the violence.

The concern in this case is the extent to which the social, economic, political structures contribute to the development of psychological dispositions and how the same is manifested. The unequal development opportunities that is discriminative in nature or skewed allocation of resources leads to mistrust, suspicion and eventually ethnic conflicts. The participation and representation in the development processes, the allocation of the scarce resources in circumstances creates a competitive environment for the development of the psycho-cultural elements that fuels ethnic conflicts.

There is a close relationship between development and security because each ethnic group feels that its security is guaranteed in being part of the control of the political and by

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extension the allocation of the resources. Security in this case is broadly defined to include
human security in terms of basic human needs. The victims of the ethnic clashes suffered
psycho-social, economic, political consequences. The Kiliku Parliamentary Select Committee of
September 1992, indicated that 62,000 people had been displaced which continued to rise in
every election year. The 2007 post election violence led to the killing of over 1300 people and
650,000 internally displaced.

Psychological needs such as identity, security, recognition, autonomy, self esteem and a
sense of justice are central to the behavior of individuals and characteristic for individuals’ and
ethnic identity groups, forums in which these powerful driving forces of psychological and
material needs are articulated. Every election year since 1992 was followed by internal
displacements, psycho-social and economic consequences.

The re-introduction of political pluralism and multi-party elections in Kenya of 1992
precipitated profound changes in the political, social, economic, constitutional and legal
structures of the country. For example, the international financial Institutions; the World Bank
and the IMF, introduced the economic reforms (structural adjustment programs) with disastrous
consequences on the economies of developing countries. The fear of domination in a
liberalized political system led to agitation for majimbo system of governance (regionalism) and


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Bluckman,H.B.B,Hauck and S.Reigewith (ed)From Conflict to Regional Stability and Development
232 KILIKU Parliamentary Committee Report .September 1992
233 Human Rights Watch; From Ballots to Bullets,2008,p.2-3,
236 O.Ogachi,Economic Reform, Political Liberalization and Economic Ethnic Conflict in Kenya, Africa
political liberalization. The failure by the successive regimes to address grievances that had bedeviled the country intensified community animosity.

The violence was therefore the outcome of decades of political manipulation of ethnic tensions and impunity intertwined with longstanding grievances over land, corruption, inequality and other issues. The fact that the violence was targeted to the economic interests of the ethnic communities referred to as “outsiders/foreigners” in such areas as the Rift Valley, illustrates the connection between the ethnic grievances and the nature of the violence experienced in the epicenters of conflicts.

The weak national legal and constitutional framework could not guarantee equitable distribution of the national resources and especially land which turned out to be a sensitive resource. By the 1990’s, the country had gone through decades of political manipulation that served to advance ethnic and individual interests creating a volatile ethnic environment in Kenya that became the basis of intense ethnic animosity and tension.

The net effect was further centralization of state power in the hands of the president, erosion of powers of other constitutional organs and institutions of the state and a creation of an entirely unaccountable government. The fundamental institutions were undermined and rendered weak to the extent that everything was centered on the president with powers to determine the distribution of the national resources in a country with diverse ethnic composition and ethnic interests. This was to be the genesis of the discriminative structures that further set the country towards a protracted ethnic violence experienced since the 1990’s.

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237 ibid.
Kenya had what Prof Okoth-Ogendo refers to as, "a constitution without constitutionalism". At this time the constitution had been amended to consolidate the political power in the process devaluing the very instrument that informs the stability of state. This was to have serious consequences with the political liberalization in the 1990's because the internal conflicts experienced in the country were attributed to constitutional inadequacies that could not meet the ideological demands of a liberalized environment.

The scramble for the scarce national resources and facilities intensified with ethnicity as the vehicle for the domination and preservation of power and the resources. Since then, the leadership in Kenya has continued to rely heavily on ethnicity to remain in leadership positions or settle disputes with their perceived enemies. The ethnic manipulation and systematic discrimination depending on the regime in power also intensified ethnic animosity and tensions.

Studies on the effect of the economic reforms demonstrate a close relationship between the levels of poverty both in the rural and urban areas that tended to follow ethnic and gender lines. Ogachi has further demonstrated that there is a nexus between economic reform and ethnic conflict and sees the basis of ethnic conflicts on the interplay of the forces of ethnicity, economics and class.

The need to safeguard the acquired privileges by the elites and any threats is met by re-asserting ethnic consciousness or takes advantage of the situation to claim privileges that may have been denied. Ethnicity provides for the individual togetherness, identity and promotes

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242 Ibid
security for each other and a solution to the problems of exploitation, oppression, deprivation and alienation. Those communities that feel excluded from the material and social resources, controlled by the state, starts to wage a struggle at the political level which reflects interests of the elites.

According to reports by the Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Fact-Finding Mission to Kenya from February 6th to 28th February 2008, the patterns of violence varied from region to region and greatly depended on region-specific dynamics. In the informal settlements in urban areas, violence was due to cumulated grievances due to poor living conditions. In the Rift Valley, the target was the communities of small farmers and land-holders aimed at driving them away and in this case the violence was partially organized by local political and/or traditional leaders seeking to settle long-held grievances over land issues and other real and perceived discrimination.

According to UNDP report 2008, 45.9 % of the Kenya population lives under the threshold of absolute poverty while 20% of the population experience hunger. The persistent and unsatisfactory fulfillment of the economic and social rights, coupled with youth unemployment, gross inequalities makes Kenya one of the ten most unequal societies in the world with the richest tenth of the household controlling more than 42% of the country's income. The encouraging statistics about economic growth (6.4 % for 2007) co-existed with depressing figures of crushing poverty (58 % of the population lives on less than two dollars a day). In such an environment, ethnicity plays a great role because of the competition for the scarce resources.

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The political contests are competitive because those who achieve political power benefit from the widespread abuses including impunity for political manipulation of violence, criminal theft of land and the corrupt misuse of public resources at the expense of the out groups.\textsuperscript{247} The structural violence as a result has a strong relationship with ethnic conflict because people’s basic needs and interests are frustrated such as personal identity and recognition.

The social re-engineering as a result of the internal displacements generates conflicts especially in the internally displaced camps. According to the Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) reports, by the end of January 2008, there were 291 camps spread all over the country. There was mass exodus of people to their ancestral lands especially from the North Rift, the epicenter of the violence. Interviews with the program officers of the organization reveal that there was deep hatred and suspicion amongst the communities and co-existing even in the internally displaced camps was a problem.

The introduction of competitive politics stimulated ethnic tensions and the use of ethnicity as a political resource because the ethnic group or association can readily be assimilated into the concept of an interest group.\textsuperscript{248} In Kenya political parties are based on ethnic affiliations which are used as platforms of agitating and demanding for the so called ethnic rights. The political entrepreneurs and ethnic activists use the ethnic identity in demanding for a share of the resources which results in resource competition and allocation.

Political parties are more of a composition of one or more ethnic groups depending on what each of them wants to achieve by being part of the winning team or joining another one in

\textsuperscript{247} KNCHR Report, From Ballots to Bullets, March 2008.
\textsuperscript{248} op cit, p.485. D.Garmet and P.James, The United Nations at 50 years: Managing Ethnic Crises-Past and Present, p.63
order to push for its agenda. The access to the state and privileges deriving from it ends up heightening and deepening the ethnic consciousness.

Ethnic groups are politicized for personal interests by appealing for ethnic solidarity and also invoking the traditional sentiments. The environment is characterized by intense ethnic conflict caused by collective fear of the future which in the process leads to each group trying to strengthen and put in place ways and means of ensuring its survival. The political entrepreneurs and ethnic activists normally take advantage of such environments to push for their agenda. It is on this basis that psycho-cultural stereotypes and prejudices builds.

3.2.1.3 The Role of the Media in Ethnic Conflicts.

The media, both the print and electronic, contributed greatly to the escalation of ethnic violence throughout the 1990’s. This was worsened by the politicians who exploited the ethnic apprehension as a basis for political mobilization and competition. This illustrates the extent to which the social structures in place perpetuated and entrenched psychological dispositions and stereotypes in an environment characterized by historical myths of discrimination and marginalization.

From independence, Kenya was a de facto one party state and later a de jure one-party state where the media was under the control of the government. When multi-party and political liberalization was introduced in the 1990’s, the media was turned into a tool of insults, threats and accusations which ranged from corruption, through ethnic supremacies, ethnic cleansing, murder and genocide with substantive policy issues taking a back stage.

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The liberalization of the media led to emergence of ethnic based electronic and print media houses which were to become instrumental in fuelling ethnic tensions and animosity. Local vernacular radio stations sprung up, which became tools of propaganda, examples of which include the Cooro FM broadcasting in Kikuyu, Kass FM broadcasting in Kalenjin, Ramogi FM broadcasting in Luo among the many that were established.

Each of the local based vernacular radio stations was used for purposes of promoting ethnic hatred, stereotypes and denigration of individuals and communities. This served as a way of fulfilling collective needs through their collective identity such as political access needs, security needs and acceptance needs and therefore influencing the behavior of individuals and ethnic groups.

The electronic and print media incited ethnic and community hatred leading to inter-communal violence. This inflamed fear, suspicion and advocated for violence against “others”, a move that perpetuated psychological dispositions and negative stereotypes detrimental to positive ethnic relations. The passions of the 2005 referendum in which robust language, ethnic hate speech, violence were seriously applied, were high up and went on to be used during the 2007 elections.

In every subsequent election year since the first multi-party elections of 1992, the media depending on which side of the political divide, utilized local grievances, ethnic stereotypes, insults and fear of “others” to mobilize votes, boost attendance at rallies and mobilize demonstrators. In such an atmosphere of distrust, suspicion, fear, violence became a persistent
phenomena in Kenyan politics especially where ethnic stereotypes was used to denigrate individuals and communities.256

This was so during elections, periods of political tensions and in land disputes were the language used was aimed at incitement of violence. The use of cultural differences and negative stereotypes meant stigmatization, di-humanization and hatred, a fertile ground for psychological conflict escalation processes to thrive and subsequently ethnic tensions and ethnic violence.

The effect of the commercial FM stations was to ignite ethnic consciousness among their listeners leading to negative stereotypes and perceptions that greatly contributed to ethnic conflicts. The media therefore became another instrument in the battle for political power. Kenya’s political culture is characterized by the use of all means, viewed as legitimate in the winner takes it all approach to politics and the distribution of economic benefits.257

3.2.1.4: The Majimbo Debate.

At independence, Kenya adopted a multi-party system of governance up to 1966. It was a de facto one party state up to 1982 when it became a de jure single party state. The clamor for multi-party system of governance through the amendment of section 2A of the constitution ushered in political pluralism in early 1990’s. What is of relevance in our case is the extent to which the clamor for multi-party and its interpretation meant in as far as ethnic relations and the subsequent ethnic conflicts were concerned.

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The advent of pluralism was misconceived as the advent of democracy expressed through political slogans and ideologies propagated by the various ethnic groups. The proponents of single party system presented pluralism as a panacea to chaos and anarchy and that among others it will bring ethnic conflicts. Psycho-cultural dispositions, stereotypes based on historical myths played into the majimbo debate a phenomenon that had far reaching consequences on ethnic relations in Kenya.

The advocates of federalism (majimbo) called for the expulsion of all other ethnic groups from the land occupied before colonialism by Kalenjin and other pastoral ethnic groups in the case of Rift Valley and the Coastal Region. This is illustrated by one KANU (the party in power then) political leader from the Rift Valley, Nicholas Biwot whose sentiments in defense of Kalenjin interests stated that the Kikuyu’s who were threatening the interests of the Kalenjin should know that the Kalenjin were there to stay even after president Moi’s tenure has expired.

The revival and call for regionalism (majimbo) based on ethnicity was the beginning of politically instigated tribal clashes whose aim was to ensure that the so called foreigners were deprived of voting rights and therefore a win for the government.

The mass displacement and balkanization of the country led to ethnic conflicts both in the source and destination areas. This involved forcing immigrants from areas such as the Rift Valley, Coast Region to their ancestral lands. This was to ensure electoral victory through denying foreigners electoral rights since they could not participate.

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259 ibid
263 KNCHR REPORT, From Ballots to Bullets, 2008.
The consequences were internal displacements, refugees, and rise in levels of poverty, psycho-social problems, political and economic problems. The calls for majimbo (federalism) heightened ethnic consciousness as opposed to national and democratic consciousness. Communities who earlier had migrated to other parts of the country were forced to return to their ancestral homelands by the indigenous communities.

During this time, the country was undergoing serious economic difficulties because of the international institutions conditionalities. The relationship between the economic reform, political liberalization and ethnic conflicts imposed by international financial institutions (structural adjustments), contributed to ethnic conflicts. The call for economic and political liberalization resulted in poverty, marginalization of the poor providing a basis for anti-social groupings along ethnic lines. The fear of political and economic domination of the smaller communities by the bigger ethnic groups led to the call by the smaller groups for a majimbo system of government.

The competition for the scarce resources and the debate on regionalism demonstrates a struggle between the “in-group(s)” who felt threatened because of a likelihood of losing the acquired privileges, while the “out-group” seeks to take advantage and claim privileges that have long been denied in the process causing ethnic tensions and conflicts.

The widespread extreme poverty and politicization of ethnicity as a result of expulsion drove the country to a “tipping point”, arrived at once a country has been experiencing or

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characterized by tensions.\textsuperscript{268} Ethnic groups have been treated as “permanent interests groups that compete in the market for wealth transfers and seek to maximize group welfare “through the transfer of resources from other groups.”\textsuperscript{269}

In Kenya communities continue to rely on ethnicity to perpetuate their dominance in an environment of scarce resources at the expense of national interests.\textsuperscript{270} The effects of this are the development of psychological dispositions, fears and stereotypes that perpetuate ethnic tensions and animosity. It is therefore in no doubt that the debate that ensued immediately after the re-introduction of multi-party politics generated debates aimed at settling historical grievances.

The debate and the subsequent use of political rhetoric based on ethnic identity demonstrated and revealed the deep-seated ethnic tensions and the level to which the psychological dispositions and perceptions had reached in the Kenyan society. It is from this background that the psychological conflict escalation process takes place. The 2007 post election violence that almost plunged the country into genocide can be viewed as the culmination of a psychological conflict escalation process.

\textbf{3.2.1.5 The Issue of Land.}

Land as a resource has been an emotive issue in the Kenyan politics and the nature of the ethnic relations in the multi-communal Kenyan society. The issue of land and the related problems can be traced from colonialism. This means the psycho-cultural perceptions, stereotypes, mistrust, suspicion in relation to land have a historical basis.


\textsuperscript{269} Post-Election Chaos Insight, DN, JULY 31, 2008, PP. 14

The ethnic conflicts that Kenya has experienced are partly the result of the psycho-cultural factors whose genesis is the land tenure system. This issue still continues to generate tensions. Indeed after the 2007 post election violence, issues related to land tenure were perceived as central to the understanding of the root causes and dynamics of the conflict.271

Land as a resource always contains potential for physical violence especially in conditions of skewed distribution. Homer-Dixon distinguishes between three forms of scarcity-demand-induced scarcity arising from increased population growth, supply-induced scarcity from depletion or degradation of a resource and structural scarcity which originates from the distribution of the resource.272 In the case of Kenya it is fundamentally induced by structural scarcity.

The inability to address the land question implied that the basic needs of the majority Kenyans are not met. The high expectations that after independence every community that lost land would regain it led to conflicts especially when it became apparent that there was no free land. Since then the issue of land has been an emotive one and to a large extent informs ethnic relations in Kenya.

The local purchase programs established to assist Africans access capital to buy the settler farms on a “willing buyer—willing seller” framework immediately after independence, in effect meant there was to be no free land as anticipated.273 The purchase programmers’ initiated by the government favored those with finances and certain ethnic groups through land buying companies.

The willing buyer-willing seller system was discriminative because much of the prime and rich agricultural land was taken by the political class. The Kikuyu ethnicity from Central Province gained access to the settlement schemes across the country, in the Coast, Rift Valley and other locations through arrangements of land buying companies and co-operative societies. This discrimination on the distribution of the vital land resource was to become the basis of hatred, stereotyping, denigration.

In Central Kenya, those who fought in the forests during the liberation wars were to return only to find that their land had been allocated to the government royalists. They moved to other parts of the country such as the Rift Valley, and urban centers to join their kin and kith earlier settled there and working as squatters in the settler farms. Land issues are fundamental in that land as a resource generates a lot of conflicts and is intertwined and embedded within the political social-economic dynamics in which the interests of every community are propagated.

The rapid population growth, environmental degradation, and slow rates of economic development have exerted pressure on both rural and peri-urban areas. There is also competition between land uses such as conservation areas, access to minerals and other resources privileged by the government and also land under customary tenure systems.

The historical land injustices led to threats of violence to acquire land, population displacement, corruption, nepotism, political patronage. Every community lost some land and many were restricted to “native reserves” which today form the administrative boundaries which are ethnically defined. This explains the ethnic conflicts across the administrative borders over

275 ibid
276 ibid
277 ibid
land issues as illustrated by the conflicts between the pastoralist communities of the Maasai and the Kipsigis, cattle rustling in Northern and North-Eastern and Upper Eastern provinces of the country.

3.3 Conclusions

This chapter extensively looks at the psycho-cultural attributes as causal factors in ethnic conflicts. It starts with an overview of ethnic conflicts in Africa, a psycho-cultural perspective of ethnic conflicts in Kenya from 1990 to 2009. The chapter specifically looks at the socio-economic and political dimensions, the multi-party politics, the media, the debate on regionalism (majimbo) and land resource in the context of psycho-cultural framework. Ethnic relations in Kenya are informed by the psychological and cultural attributes that have a historical basis.
Chapter Four


4.0 Introduction

The previous chapter was an in-depth analysis of the psycho-cultural attributes as causal factors in ethnic conflicts. It presented an overview of ethnic conflicts in Africa before narrowing down to the case study of Kenya between 1990-2009. The case study looked at specific themes which includes the psycho-cultural dimensions and perspectives of the ethnic conflicts in Kenya, the multi-party politics, socio-economic, political issues, the media, the majimbo debate, land issue all in the context of psycho-cultural dimensions.

Chapter four is a link between the psycho-cultural attributes, ethnic conflicts and analysis of the emerging issues. The emerging issues identified in this case includes the debate on ethnic conflicts in the context of psycho-cultural conflict theory, the impact of psycho-cultural attributes on ethnic conflicts, other underlying causes of ethnic conflicts in Kenya and the current attempts at ethnic conflict management in Kenya, and a conclusion.

4.1 Emerging Issues

4.1.1 The Psycho-Cultural Debate in Ethnic Conflicts.

The upsurge of internal conflicts and especially ethnic conflicts in the Post Cold War era is a phenomenon that has been of concern to scholars, researchers and policy makers. Debates, theories, and conceptual frameworks have been presented in trying to understand the upsurge of ethnic conflicts in the Post Cold War period, their effects and the possible solutions. The Post-
Cold War upsurge of ethnic conflicts has been a challenge to the developing economies of Africa because of the devastating consequences.\textsuperscript{278}

This calls for theoretical frameworks, concepts, principles that are relevant to this emerging trend whose consequences are tragic. What seems to be emerging from the study is the fact that causes of ethnic conflicts goes beyond what has traditionally been thought as the case. Conflict analysts and peace-building initiatives must interrogate the deep-rooted and underlying issues that are psychological and cultural in nature.

The question that is emerging from this study is the role of the psycho-cultural elements in explaining the intractable and persistent internal conflicts that have defied the pragmatic traditional approaches. This study postulates that there is a need to go beyond the traditional approaches and interrogate the underlying psychological and cultural elements, their role and how they influence the social structures.

According to Mwagiru, the debate is whether the conflict management should be settlement oriented or resolution oriented because each approach is based on contrasting views.\textsuperscript{279} Ethnic conflicts according to psycho-cultural conflict theory are the result of psychological attributes and the debate is whether by looking at only these variables policy makers are able to come up with conflict management strategies that transforms the emerging threats of ethnic conflict both at the national and international level.

Ethnic conflicts as noted in the first chapter are the result of some psycho-cultural attributes. In situations where one ethnic group has been discriminated in terms of access to some benefits, conflicts are inevitable. Kenya experienced intense violent ethnic conflicts since the


1990's becoming intense in each successive election years. The subjective nature of psycho-cultural theory should provide information as far as escalation, duration and intensity of the ethnic conflict is concerned despite the problem of quantifying them.

The conceptual lenses conditions how approach to conflict analysis, resolution, management or transformation in society is viewed. Theories inform and influence the practice according to Groom. The debate should be on the identification and understanding of the underlying causes of ethnic conflicts and especially on values of each of the multi communal societies. 

**4.1.2 The Impact of Psycho-Cultural Attributes in Ethnic Conflicts**

The impact of ethnic conflicts in Africa generally has been tragic and enormous. There has been systematic violation of the fundamental basic and human rights both at the individual and community level, denial of the basic human needs, political, economic, psycho-social effects, internal displacements, refugees and environmental consequences. This has been made worse by the vagaries of climate change which have affected Africa more than any other continent.

In any environment of violence, the first consequence is the denial of the most basic necessities of life with women and children suffering the most. Most of the victims are left homeless, landless, destitute, injured, abused. Much of the effects at first are felt at the individual and family level. The Kiliku Report of September 1992 came out with the following statistics that demonstrates the extent of the ethnic clashes in terms of abuses in Kenya. The dead, 778,

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281 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Geneva:1992 p.4
injured 654, and those displaced at 62,000.\textsuperscript{282} This was the trend throughout the period to the 2007 post election with the consequences becoming worse in every election year.

The 2007 post election violence resulted in over 1300 people dead and the displacement of over 650,000 people without counting the refugees who crossed the national boundaries.\textsuperscript{283} This indiscriminate loss of life and the traumatized victims creates environments for further psychological conflict escalation processes and deepening of dispositions, hatred, and suspicion considering that the root causes of the conflicts were based on ethnic animosity.

The forced movement and displacements from areas prone to violence has negative impacts in both the source and destination areas especially in terms of psychological impacts.\textsuperscript{284} This forms the basis of further psychological conflict escalation processes considering that conflict has memory, a phenomenon that always reminds the victims of the violence.\textsuperscript{285}

The denial of the basic human needs has been prevalent and systematic throughout the Post Cold War era in Kenya. This is evident from the number of the internally displaced people who are yet to be resettled. According to the USAID,\textsuperscript{286} by 20\textsuperscript{th} February 2008, there were 347,000 internally displaced persons, 12,000 refugees in Uganda, 1,000 dead, which increased tremendously with the continued violence and the displacement that occurred since the 1990’s. The internally displaced people were denied the most basic necessities of life, a situation that adds to the psychological woods and hence increased ethnic hatred.

\textsuperscript{282} The Kiliku Parliamentary Select Committee
\textsuperscript{284} KNCHR REPORT, from Ballots to Bullets, 2008
\textsuperscript{286} USAID, Kenya; Complex Emergency Fact Sheet No.5 (FY, 2008). Kenya Red Cross Society, February 12\textsuperscript{th} 2008.
The impact of ethnic violence is even more felt in terms of the social-re-engineering that takes place. This is because as people move to communities where their ethnic group is the majority, the ethnic jingoism increases and tensions raises as victims narrate their stories. This has disastrous consequences in multi-ethnic societies. The impact of this social re-engineering must be addressed if the country is to maintain stability in terms of ethnic relations.

The nature of the political life that the introduction of multi-party politics brought about exposed the long suppressed grievances and concerns of the various ethnic communities in the country. This was because the anomalous social structures contained constraints that could not address the Post Cold War concerns because they are discriminative.

4.1.3 Psycho-Cultural Attributes as Causal Factors of Ethnic Conflicts in Kenya

As noted earlier in chapter two of this study, Kenya’s ethnic relations from the colonial period through post colonial period have been characterized by ethnic tensions that have remained overt. The ethnic factor has been instrumental in the control and competition of the scarce resources and its allocation. The political structure at independence demonstrated the struggle between the minority and the dominant groups in terms of the control of political power a situation that has continued throughout the post independence period. This is an illustration of how psychological predispositions have developed and evidence of the persistent ethnicity in the political life of the country.

The threats that characterized ethnic relations in Kenya depend on the political life of the day. This leads to emergence of permanent threats and fears, distorted behavior, rigidified
relations becoming the norm. The Post Cold War events in Kenya illustrate a political life where the psycho-cultural attributes defined the nature of ethnic relations because everything was geared towards defending the ethnic identity.

It is evident that ethnic identity played a major role in determining the voting intentions in the successive multi-party elections since its introduction in the 1990’s. It was also clear that ethnic identity has all along been used to mobilize voters and establish political alliances which eventually lead to ethnic violence. With multi-party politics and the competitive nature of political life in Kenya, several things did take place concerning ethnic relations.

The long held and suppressed ethnic animosity that all along characterized the Kenyan society was exposed by the political liberalization. It demonstrated the extent to which ethnicity had been entrenched in the day to day life of the people, the effects of historical injustices, mistrust, suspicion and the social structures that ignores the ethnic element in the social, economic, political life of the country.

The political parties and processes that emerged were based on ethnic groupings; ethnicity became a dominant factor in explaining voting patterns and the violent clashes where much of the violence occurred during the campaign. This trend is likely to lead to more ethnic animosity, fears, and security dilemmas because of marginalization of the out-group’s and especially the smaller minority groups who are not able to effectively compete in the struggle for the control of the scarce resources.

It is therefore prudent that the country strives to adopt a structure to remedy this trend.

The proposed constitutional structure should be the basis by providing for the devolution of the

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management of resources, an inclusive political participation, entrenched bill of rights that safeguards human and community rights.

The fear, mistrust, suspicion that characterizes the ethnic relations especially with the events since the introduction of multi-party politics serves to entrench the feeling of threats in the process rigidifying the ethnic relations. This grouping along ethnic line poses a threat to national unity. Since the liberalization of the political system, the call has been the expulsion of some ethnic groups back to their ancestral lands. Tensions have been high and still continue in the Rift Valley with calls for the expulsion of the non-Kalenjin and non-Maasai’s meaning that the psychological escalation processes are very much in place. This volatile environment is prone to violent conflicts because it will require another trigger for the violent ethnic conflicts to be manifested.

This is illustrated by cabinet minister’s remarks on 23rd September 1996 who predicted chaos in the Rift Valley and reiterated that before colonialism the region was inhabited by the two ethnic groups and any intruders were infringing on the rights of the indigenous people. Such expressions are the basis of the fears, suspicion and mistrust that defines the ethnic relations in the region and a basis for further psychological conflict escalation processes.

The effects of the continued ethnic clashes in every successive year since the introduction of multi-party politics has been the psycho-social consequences. According to reports by the civil society and faith based organizations; the conditions in the internally displaced camps were deplorable. The most affected were the women and children in terms of sexual abuse, spread of Hiv/AIDS, and denial of the most basic needs of survival.²⁹³

²⁹² Daily Nation, 24th September 1996.
Land, as pointed out elsewhere in this study has informed the nature, course and consequences of ethnic conflicts in Africa and Kenya in particular. This is because as a resource, it is also a basis of other derived resources. For example, the conflicts among the pastoralists are the result of competition for pasture, grazing grounds, watering points and related pastoral needs. This means the competition for resources in an environment of scarcity on the livelihoods of pastoralists will always be the source of inter-tribal and inter-clan conflicts.

Other land uses by the government for purposes of tourism, mining, private ranches are favored at the expense of the pastoralists. The remote parts of pastoral Kenya have been described by scholars such as Mazrui as the results of the struggle “between marginalization and globalization”.

When ethnic groups are forced to return to their ancestral lands instead of having a national outlook, then efforts at nation building are challenged. The eviction of the so-called foreigners by the indigenous people in the Rift Valley and other parts of Kenya has implications in terms of national cohesion and integration and harmonious ethnic relations because it increases ethnic tensions. The social re-engineering becomes the basis of further psychological conflict escalation processes eventually leading to protracted and intractable social conflicts.

The media both electronic and print are mediums easily manipulated especially in a liberalized political atmosphere. The Post Cold War era provided an environment under which

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these mediums were to play a significant role in ethnic relations in Africa. A Case in point is the infamous Radio-Television Libre de Mille Collines (RTLM) in RWANDA where it played a significant role in fuelling the genocidal tendencies that led to killing of over 800,000 Tutsi's and moderate Hutus.298

The Kenyan media particularly the vernacular radio stations had tragic consequences in disseminating fear, hatred and incitement to murder, the use of such terms as genocide, ethnic cleansing, ethnic hatred and tribal animosity.299 The medium was widely used by commentators and politicians to incite ethnic violence where ethnic stereotypes were widely utilized to denigrate opponents.300

Since the 1992, violent rhetoric and the dehumanization or denigration of opponents was dominant during elections, periods of political tension and in land disputes. These psychological wars characterized the whole period to the 2007 election whose outcome was tragic in terms of ethnic relations. It is therefore evident that psycho-cultural attributes plays a significant role in ethnic relations and the nature of the ethnic conflicts that the country has been experiencing.

4.2 Other Underlying Causes of Ethnic Conflicts in Kenya.

Although this study is centered on the role psycho-cultural attributes as causal factors in ethnic conflicts, other factors also play a significant role in explaining ethnic conflicts. As pointed out in chapter two, these includes structural factors such as social, economic, political, constitutional, legal, environmental, historical and factors that have international dimensions.
The ethnic conflicts in Kenya have a historical basis from the colonial times where the system of divide and rule polarized the various ethnic groups. The nature of political groupings at the time of the struggle for independence was based on ethnic affiliations and the interests of the groups. A more detailed analysis of the underlying causes is found in chapter two on the literature review but of concern is the inadequate social, economic and political structures inherited from colonialism. These inadequate structures had structural constraints which were perpetuated by the successive regimes and eventually driving the country to a tipping point.

The issue of unequal distribution of resources has often caused tensions in the country. The extent of this inequality is demonstrated by the UNDP Report on human development index. According to this report, 45.9% of the population lives under the threshold of absolute poverty, 20% of the population experience hunger in an environment of persistent and unsatisfactory fulfillment of the economic and social rights, coupled with unemployment. The richest tenth of the household controls 42% of the country’s income.

The encouraging statistics on economic growth of the year 2007 co-exists with depressing figures of crushing poverty while 58% live on less than a dollar per day. It is therefore crucial that if not addressed properly, the social structures will continue being a basis for the development and perpetuation of psychological dispositions, negative stereotypes detrimental to harmonious ethnic relations.

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303 UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP report), 2007, 2008, NEW YORK.
4.3: Current Attempts at Ethnic Conflict Management in Kenya

Various approaches have been applied in trying to manage ethnic conflicts which range from official to non-official. The official attempts involve the government through policies designed to address the roots as well as the immediate causes of ethnic violence commonly referred to as track one level in conflict management strategies. The un-official strategies involve the civil society, faith based and community based organizations as well as international organizations and humanitarian organizations or track two conflict management strategies.

This section will attempt to analyze some of the management approaches and strategies with a view to coming up with appropriate recommendations. At the official level, the government has always set commissions and committees to investigate the causes of the ethnic violence whenever there is renewed ethnic violence especially in the eve of election periods. These included the Kiliku report of 1992, the Akiwumi report of 1999, the Waki Report 2008.

The findings of these investigations normally take time to be released and the recommendations implemented. This puts the seriousness of the government efforts at managing the persistent ethnic conflicts into question. The net effect of this has been impunity, a situation that is likely to entrench the psycho-cultural dispositions.

The government having noted the serious threats that ethnicity poses for the national security and development has come up with policies specifically aimed at addressing these issue. For example the VISION 2030, a policy document that set the governments objectives in

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Footnotes:

305 Report of the Judicial Commission Appointed to Inquire into Tribal Clashes in Kenya, Nairobi 1999

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achieving sustainable development in the next thirty years considers security as the foundation of good governance and economic development.307

The unofficial actors involves the civil society organizations, the faith based organizations who also partner with the government in addressing the ethnic issues whenever they occur especially on humanitarian efforts. However, it should be noted that, most of these rely on donor funding and are accountable to them. The psycho-cultural attributes by their nature take time to be addressed and the results to be appreciated. This means donor funded initiatives because of their nature may not be appropriate in addressing these psycho-cultural attributes.

The approaches should be able to reach the grassroots which makes the community based initiatives more reliable though they also depend on donor funding. These includes the women groups, the youth groups who are direct victims of any conflicts and who given opportunities are better placed to come up with homegrown solutions.

4.4 conclusions

This chapter is a critical analysis of the psycho-cultural attributes as causal factors in ethnic conflict. The case study of Kenya from 1990-2009 has been analyzed in the context of emerging issues from the study. This includes the role of the psycho-cultural theoretical framework in analyzing ethnic conflicts and the debates surrounding the arguments, and the challenges in its application. The chapter also looked at the impacts of the psycho-cultural aspects on ethnic conflicts and their causal effects.

The study also appreciates the fact that there are other underlying factors that cause ethnic conflicts and these have been briefly discussed. The various attempts at ethnic conflict

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management by the relevant stakeholders have also been discussed. The fifth chapter is the conclusion which is the summary findings of the study and the recommendations, challenges, and suggestions on the possible directions in terms of further research.
Chapter Five

Conclusions

5.0 Summary

This study set to establish the role of psycho-cultural attributes in ethnic conflict in Africa using the case study of Kenya from 1990-2009. The study has five chapters namely: The Introduction to the Study, A Theoretical Discussion of the Psycho-cultural Conflict Theory, Psycho-cultural attributes as Causal Factors of Ethnic Conflicts in Africa and specifically Kenya, Critical Analysis of the Findings and the Emerging issues and finally chapter five on the conclusion which is a summary of the study, key findings of the study, and recommendations on the way forward.

5.1 Key Findings of the Study

Chapter one was the introduction to the study and a brief historical background followed by the statement of the research problem. It also states the general and specific objectives, the literature review, definition of ethnicity and ethnic community and overview of the psycho-cultural attributes and ethnic conflicts in Africa, other underlying causes of ethnic conflicts. The chapter also provides the justification for the study, the theoretical framework, hypotheses to be tested, research methodology and a general chapter outline of the study.

Chapter two is a theoretical discussion of the psycho-cultural conflict theory which starts the introduction to the chapter and a background to chapter two. The focus is on the dimensions and perspectives of the psycho-cultural conflict theory and its applicability in conflict studies. The study takes note of the fact that there are other underlying causes of ethnic conflicts. The
study briefly analyzes the structural conflict theory as a way of demonstrating the social structural basis of psycho-cultural attributes. The chapter also examines the limitations of the theory and the conclusions.

Chapter three looks at the case study that is Kenya, but first looks at an overview of ethnic conflicts in Africa as a way of laying a foundation to the psycho-cultural attributes as causal factors of ethnic conflicts in Kenya. The chapter discusses specific themes with regard to ethnic conflicts that include: the dimensions of psycho-cultural attributes in ethnic conflicts, the multi-party politics, other underlying causes of ethnic conflicts, the media, the majimbo debate, and the issue of land, all in the context of psycho-cultural theoretical framework and how these have defined ethnic conflicts and ethnic relations in Kenya.

Chapter four is the critical analysis which discusses and analyses the emerging issues. These are the debates on the psycho-cultural conflict theory in ethnic conflict studies, the impacts of the psycho-cultural attributes on ethnic conflicts, other underlying issues and the current attempts at ethnic conflict management. Chapter five is the conclusion which is a summary, findings of the study and recommendations on the way forward.

5.2 Recommendations

5.2.1 Collaborative Inter-Governmental Initiatives.

The ethnic diversity and the nature, causes and course of the ethnic conflicts that Kenya and indeed many of the African countries experiences calls for a concerted effort in their management. The psycho-cultural framework of analysis provides that the attributes and variables involved must be understood at their cultural and psychological levels. The unit of
analysis should be the level of individual and community in order to analyze and contextualize
the variables using the psycho-cultural theoretical framework.

Official initiatives at the government level should be informed by the investigations and
recommendations of the various taskforces such as committees or commissions. However, this
poses a challenge especially where there is no official commitment.

The official approach however is inadequate because it concentrates on the quick fix
solutions that are settlement oriented and leaves underlying psychological and cultural
dimensions which involve the value systems of the communities concerned. The ultimate aim
should be the resolution of the conflict, a process that goes beyond the immediate benefits.

There are also those initiatives by the inter-governmental organizations, international
humanitarian organizations that should collaborate with the official government process to avoid
further conflict. The civil society, the faith based and community based organizations plays a
significant role in that they are able to penetrate into the communities and influence their
behavior by use of women groups, youth groups, the traditional leaders/elders, and opinion
shapers.

The organizing of peace initiatives through participation by the different warring groups
has become an important aspect with the support of corporate bodies as part of their corporate
social responsibility. These include sports for peace initiatives, mediation efforts at the
community level using the village elders. The significance of these initiatives is that the psycho-
cultural dimensions such as the values, identity, recognition and security concerns are taken into
consideration.

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Nairobi, 2006, pp.120-140: 130.
In essence the collaboration, partnering strategies between the official efforts and the non-official efforts should be strengthened in order to address the value laden concerns of the ethnic groups. Much of the efforts at ethnic conflict management in Kenya from the 1990’s can be said to be official if the number of the commissions and committees set up are anything to go by yet every successive election year has been characterized by renewed ethnic violence.

5.2.2 Capacity Building in Coping Mechanisms.

The basis of any capacity building initiatives should of essence take into consideration the psycho-cultural attributes that are behind the violent ethnic conflicts for sustainable conflict management strategies.\textsuperscript{310} For a long lasting solution, issues such as the ethnic identity, the basic human rights, human needs at the basic level and guaranteed human security must be integrated into the policies, institutional framework aimed at the settlement and resolution of the ethnic conflict.

There should be national cohesion and integration policies that promote a sense of nationhood among the various ethnic groups.\textsuperscript{311} This should involve and encompass and encouraging of informal approaches such as grassroots level initiatives using women groups, youth groups through sports for peace, encourage the youth to engage in small entrepreneurial activities with the support of the government through soft loans and marketing avenues, intercommunal visitations to learn basic economic and business management skills. The national and not be used as instruments of hatred and denigration.\textsuperscript{312}

\textsuperscript{310} Northrup, The Dynamics of Identity in Personal and Social Conflict, in Kliesberg et al (ed) Intractable Conflicts and Their Transformation, Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 68-75:73

\textsuperscript{311} ibid

\textsuperscript{312} Kenya National Commission on Integration and Cohesion
The building of local capacity at the community level that involves the community members aimed at achieving basic human needs, recognition and protection of the fundamental cultural elements without compromising the national goals of integration and cohesion. African states need to devolve the resources from the national level to a defined local level to instill a sense of ownership, security, recognition without compromising the principles of national unity and cohesion. The proposed Kenyan constitution for example contains provisions for devolution of resources, protection of the fundamental human and community rights which if properly implemented will go a long way in addressing some of the reasons behind the violent ethnic conflicts in Kenya.

5.2.3 Addressing the Root Causes of Psycho-Cultural Attributes.

As discussed in chapter two, the basis of psycho-cultural attributes are rooted in historical myths, mistrust, fear, suspicion and the social structures that have over time promoted a feeling of discrimination borne out of the historical injustices that a particular ethnic group suffered or continue to suffer. There is a need to adopt policies that will address these historical injustices through some form of mechanism that is transparent, open, participatory and all-inclusive. Such mechanisms include Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commissions (TJRC) aimed at healing, and restorative justice.313

In Kenya the government for example through the National Commission on Integration and Cohesion (NCIC) is trying to address the problem of ethnicity and seek to discourage the use of ethnic stereotypes, negative ethnicity, hate speech and dispositions that are bound to ignite ethnic hatred. The communities need to be empowered through devolving the resources and their

315 Kenya’s Truth Justice and Reconciliation Commission
management to the grassroots a process that will instill a feeling of security, recognition, participation and the basic needs catered for.

The findings of this study points to the relevance of psycho-cultural attributes in explaining the violent ethnic conflicts that the African continent suffers from. The hypotheses this study to test that the increase in violent ethnic conflict in Kenya is directly related to psycho-cultural factors, that understanding the psycho-cultural attributes of conflict can lead to better management of ethnic conflicts in Kenya have been proved while the assumption that psycho-cultural attributes are not the only causes of ethnic conflicts should further be explored and analyzed. The question that scholars, researchers and policy makers should address is, given the significance of psycho-cultural attributes, what is the future of ethnic relations in Africa, and the possible research options for their effective management?
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