



Public History and Memory-Making in Post-Conflict Kenya: An Ethnographic Inquiry into Contemporary Cultural Narratives

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Abstract

Public history and memory-making are crucial in shaping societal identity and understanding in post-conflict contexts. In Kenya, following decades of conflict, there is a growing interest in how communities document and interpret historical events to inform contemporary cultural narratives. The research employs participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and archival work as methods to gather data from diverse community groups in post-conflict regions. Ethnographic techniques are used to understand the lived experiences and perceptions of these communities towards historical events and their collective memory. Participants frequently engage with public history through oral traditions and communal gatherings, often emphasising themes of reconciliation and shared heritage. A notable theme is the use of traditional storytelling as a medium for conveying complex narratives across generations. The proportion of community members actively involved in these practices ranges from 40% to 60%, indicating their significant role in maintaining historical continuity. This study underscores the importance of public history and memory-making in fostering shared cultural identities and social cohesion among post-conflict Kenyan communities, offering insights into how such processes can be supported for broader societal benefit. Public institutions should facilitate spaces that encourage community participation in historical dialogue and storytelling to ensure these practices remain vibrant and relevant. Educational programmes could also play a crucial role in preserving and promoting these cultural narratives. public history, memory-making, post-conflict Kenya, ethnographic study

Keywords: *Kenyan, Oral history, Ethnography, Community memory, Heritage studies, Reflexive anthropology, Postcolonial theory*

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