

**DECENTRALIZATION AND POLITICS IN NAKURU COUNTY KENYA, 1963-2015**

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT  
FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE IN HISTORY OF  
MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY.**

**OCTOBER, 2016**

## **ABSTRACT**

This study examines the history of decentralization and politics in Nakuru County from 1963 to 2015. The study investigates the genesis of decentralization, its development and impact on politics; and resource allocation. Given that many of the county governments are not ethnically homogenous, it is important to understand how this contributes to ethnic inclinations. The study examines the various challenges associated with decentralization since 1963. Nakuru County has been chosen as a case study because of its volatility in ethnic politics. A case study design was adopted for this study to determine the impact of decentralization on politics and resource allocation. The study relied on two types of historical evidence; namely primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through field research and the Kenya National Archives. The secondary data was obtained from several libraries. The selection of informants was done using the non-probability sampling methods specifically purposive and snowballing. Data analysis was done qualitatively and presented in descriptive format. Decentralization in Kenya went through several transitions such as federalism, special programmes for rural development, district focus for rural development, constituency development fund and devolution. The study found that in all these periods, decentralization faced many challenges that includes ethnic politics and skewed resources allocation among others. The study established that ethnicity is one of the factors that influences county politics in terms of voting patterns for the members of national and county assembly. The study also found that the challenges of limited resources and governance impacts negatively on development. The study established that despite the negative impacts, there are some positive aspects of decentralization in regard to resource allocation. It has promoted development and provided some basic services which the central government may not have been able to provide.