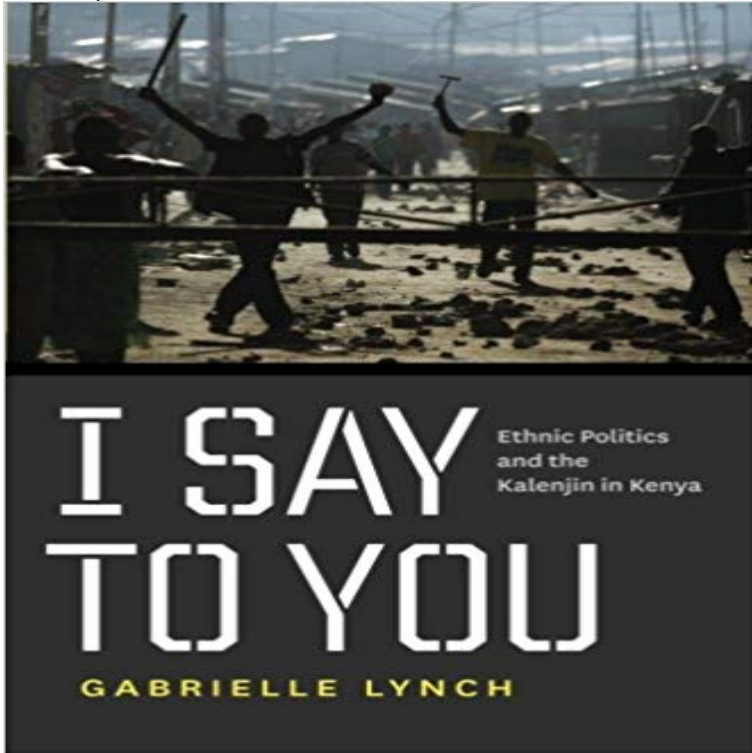


## I Say to You: Ethnic Politics and the Kalenjin in Kenya



In 2007 a disputed election in Kenya erupted into a two-month political crisis that led to the deaths of more than a thousand people and the displacement of almost seven hundred thousand. Much of the violence fell along ethnic lines, the principal perpetrators of which were the Kalenjin, who lashed out at other communities in the Rift Valley. What makes this episode remarkable compared to many other instances of ethnic violence is that the Kalenjin community is a recent construct: the group has only existed since the mid-twentieth century. Drawing on rich archival research and vivid oral testimony, *I Say to You* is a timely analysis of the creation, development, political relevance, and popular appeal of the Kalenjin identity as well as its violent potential. Uncovering the Kalenjins roots, Gabrielle Lynch examines the ways in which ethnic groups are socially constructed and renegotiated over time. She demonstrates how historical narratives of collective achievement, migration, injustice, and persecution constantly evolve. As a consequence, ethnic identities help politicians mobilize support and help ordinary people lay claim to space, power, and wealth. This kind of ethnic politics, Lynch reveals, encourages a sense of ethnic difference and competition, which can spiral into violent confrontation and retribution.

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