Building Bridges: Changing the Meaning of Places as Spaces for Human Security

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Abstract

Building Bridges: Mechanisms of Trans-local and Gender Cooperation in Changing the Meaning of Places as Spaces for Human Security is the reworked title of my forthcoming book, which is based on my Ph.D. Thesis[1]. In the write-up, I analysed how, despite violent conflicts of an ethnic orientation, spurred by ruthless political power garnering, through their agency, social groups from different ethnic backgrounds formulate mechanisms for making peace. These mechanisms, which I conceptualized as trans-local and gender cooperation at different levels, have enabled groups achieve a level of security and engage in both political and social economic activities.

However, the question that begs a deeper analysis is, why at the advent of political power garnering, these socially embedded peace making efforts are abandoned and groups fall into a new state of conflict? Conceptually, the question is why is it that such socially embedded mechanisms for making peace have not translated to a strong in built peace that offsets the divisive capacities emergent when politicians contest for political power and representation?

Contextualising this conceptual analysis in the Rift Valley Province of Kenya, an area that has witnessed violent conflicts of an ethnic nature with each consecutive national elections and analyzing land as a contested entitlement, I will argue from the premise that for socially embedded mechanisms of peace making to translate to strong peace building mechanisms, a civic consciousness that we all belong despite our ethnic differences has to be nurtured. I conceptualise this as political ethnic pluralism. Secondly, the issue of entitlement and mechanisms for sharing and redistribution of these is critical. Thirdly, how third parties, be they civil society groups, UN bodies, or third sector groups can come in and contribute to further enhance the strong sense of peace building in a community making peace with itself will be explored.

Key Words

Security, political ethnic pluralism, civic consciousness, redistributive justice, translocal gender and ethnic cooperation, violent conflicts, peace making, peace building,

[1] The thesis is titled "Home away from home?" Internally displaced women and their translocal and gender cooperation in changing the meaning of places – Langas and Burnt Forest, Rift Valley Province, Uasin Ngishu District, Eldoret, Kenya

Introduction: Flash Back

> It is December 2007, both Radio and TV news broadcasting services are awash with news that the incumbent president Mwai Kibaki has won the presidential elections. In a matter of minutes, the country turns into mayhem as different ethnic groups fight each other- the motto being , you are from the opposite camp …. you do not belong' (own observations).

So reminiscent of 1992 and 1997:

> This time round, the scene is in the Rift Valley province of Kenya. The then incumbent president Daniel Arap Moi sees defeat glaring him in the face. The opposition parties in his constituency are gaining ground. Almost overnight, cries of 'you do not belong' echo the streets. Groups from non-Kalenjin ethnic groups are forced to pack their belongings and leave their farms and homes. Violence is unleashed *en mass* as different ethnic groups previously sharing the same space hitherto become enemies on the basis of their primordial allegiance to 'belonging to the same blood' (own observations).

Rift Valley - Bedrock of Conflict and Peace Making Efforts

Several ethnic groups occupy the Rift - Valley province of Kenya. These are the Kalenjin ethnic groups, the Kikuyu, the Luhya, the Luo, and the Turkana**.** The Rift-Valley province is thus a convergence point of the different ethnic groups bordering each other. Apart from its multi-ethnic nature, the Rift-Valley is the most productive region of Kenya, hosting many agricultural pursuits. Moreover, the Kenya – Uganda highway and railway cut across this region connecting the coastal and main lands of Kenya to the other land locked countries of Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and Congo. This makes this area one of the vibrant trading regions of Kenya. It was also in this region that the 'conflict of an ethnic nature' was and continues to be most rampant. This conflict began in 1992 and consequently repeated in 1997. Within this period, Kenya held its national and parliamentary elections. In 2007-8, this 'conflict of an ethnic nature' was experienced at a nation wide scale[2]

A reading of certain salient literature identifies streams of thoughts that provide explanations for the upsurge of violence either presiding or following national/ parliamentary elections. I have grouped these perspectives, which are inter-twined, into five broad branches.

[2] See various newspaper coverages from November 2007 – April 2008

Conceptual Explanations to the Mounting Tension and the Eventual Upsurge of Conflict

1. The instrumentalization of ethnicity perspective

Asingo (2003:19) contends that during the colonial period, there was a concentration of capital and socio-economic influence in the 'geographical area' of two ethnic communities that make up the largest group in the Kenyan population, i.e. the Kikuyu and the Luo. At independence, the two communities constituted a population that was more educated, urbanized and more politically mobilized. The independent Kenyan government was, consequently, largely formed by these two major ethnic groups. Shortly after independence, other minority ethnic groups, which had been bypassed by the colonial economy and therefore tended to be less educated, less urbanized and less politically mobilized, feared that if the two larger ethnic groups continued to dominate the political scene, then this domination would be entrenched in the economic sphere. A coalition of these minority ethnic groups formed a political party, the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU). This party was basically formed to fight for both political and economic rights (Asingo 2003:20).

Ogachi (1999:94) counteracts that from the beginning the ruling party, the Kenya African National Union (KANU), established itself as a patron-client party. Using the promise of carrots and sticks, that is the promise of cabinet posts for the two party leaders and no posts for those who were against his ideas, Kenyatta, in 1964, managed to merge the Kenyan African National Union (KANU) with the Kenyan African Democratic Union (KADU). The deputy chairman of the Kenyan African Democratic Union (KADU), Daniel arap Moi, was made the vice president of the Kenyan African National Union (KANU) and Kenya in 1966 (Throup 1985, Ogachi 1999, Asingo 2003:21). In assimilating the opposition, Kenyatta eliminated any opposing voices once and for all!

After effectively eliminating political opposition, Kenyatta set out to address some problems he saw as crucial in post-independent Kenya. These were the land issue and the Africanisation of the civil service. He addressed the land issue by settling a large number of people from his ethnic community, the Kikuyu, on farms purchased from white settlers (Ogachi 1999). Some of these farms were in areas previously occupied by the Kikuyu. However, those in the Rift Valley were in areas historically occupied by the Maasai and the Kalenjin. Following Kenyatta's land resettlement policy, large numbers of Kikuyu migrated into the Rift Valley, threatening the economic interests of

non-Kikuyu ethnic groups. Anyang' Nyong'o (1989) Ogachi (1999) and Odhiambo Mbai (2003) observe that having captured the State, Kenyatta fell back to tending to the needs of his basic community - the Agikuyu. He secured for them the State government, a vast homeland in the Rift Valley, the control of commerce, and in this manner, guaranteed their security. There was no notion of a moral community in coexistence. The authors conclude that Kenyatta, without foresight, sowed the seeds of division.

When Moi came into power in 1978, following the death of Kenyatta, his first project was to redistribute resources away from the Kikuyu. Towards this end, the phenomenon of "Kalenjin" ethnicity was launched as a political project (Ogachi 1999:97).. Notably, the Kalenjins were placed in all relevant sectors of the government and economy (Asingo 2003:21, Odhiambo Mbai 2003:65). Members of ethnic groups from the old Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU) alliance replaced members of the Kikuyu community. There was, yet again, political manipulation to advance ethnic and individual economic interests. Lonsdale (1995:97) calls this kind of development, political tribalism. Wimmer (1997) analyses it as instrumentalization of ethnicity for political gains.

With the calls for economic and political liberalization, a situation of winners and losers was created. In order to consolidate their power against the rising discontent, Moi and his inner circle of compatriots adopted a calculated policy against ethnic groups associated with the political opposition (Asingo 2003:21). Writing from this perspective of instrumentalism of ethnicity by State elites for political gain, the Kenya Human Rights Commission Report (KHRC) (1998) discusses the ethnic conflicts in Kenya prior to the elections of 1992 and 1995, as a politically instigated ethnic cleansing by political leaders fearing the usurpation of their power. *Majimboism,* which means regionalism, was advocated by the then formed coalition of Kalenjin, Maasai, Turkana and Samburu leaders or in short the KAMATUSA group. They declared the Rift Valley a Kenya African National Union (KANU) zone. Multipartyism was shunned as an anti-Kalenjin movement aimed at removing the then President Moi from power simply because he was a Kalenjin (Finance 15th October 1994, KHRC 1998: 12). The Kenyan Human Rights Report (1998) asserts that the aim of the violence that erupted in this period was to alter, to the advantage of Moi and his followers, the political demography of this multi-ethnic province ahead of the multiparty elections (KHRC 1998: 13). Within this period, the government unleashed terror, provoked displacement, and expelled certain ethnic groups *en masse* from their long-time homes and communities in Nyanza, the Rift Valley and Western provinces, on the pretext that these other groups did not belong to these

respective areas (National Council of Churches of Kenya 1992, Daily Nation 1993,Human Rights Watch 1997, UNDP 1993). The cry that was advanced to support this type of regionalism was the slogan "*madoa madoa"* or *"*cast off strangers" from the "indigenous" communities because they were encroaching on the treasures of the "natives".

Observing events from a wider African political arena, Geschiere and Nyamnjoh (2001) assert that one can better explain events happening in Africa from a political liberalization perspective. Clarifying this assertion with a Cameroonian example, the two authors observe that political liberalization seems to lead to an intensified obsession with *autochthony* and the politics of belonging which demands the exclusion of "strangers", paradoxically, people with the same nationality, on the basis that they are *allogenes* (Geschiere and Nyamnjoh 2001:210).

2. The political liberalization perspective

In the early 1980's, as the crises in many African countries deepened, the international financial institutions came up with Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPS). These were programmes aimed at introducing producer price reforms, the removal of subsidies, the liberalization of internal and external trade, the introduction of cost sharing for State-supplied services, the privatization and restructuring of government institutions. These structural and institutional reforms aimed at supplying an 'enabling environment', were supposed to be the cornerstones for 'Africa's development' as Gladwin (1991), Bangura and Gibbon (1992), Olukoshi (1996, 1998) ironically articulate. According to these authors, Structural Adjustment Programmes were premised on the assumptions that economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa could only be realised through a contraction of State activity and the development of liberalized markets. Political liberalization, so it was hailed, was one of the preconditions for effective economic liberalization and consequently sustainable development. Good governance, political accountability, the rule of law, and grassroots participation in government were the then buzz words (World Bank 1989, Bangura and Gibbon, 1992:12). Geschiere and Nyamnjoh (2001:209) explicate that the paradox in this process is that although political liberalization in the name of democracy and opening up of markets by African governments was embraced, the counter effect on African populations was an almost pathological fixation with autochthony and ethnic citizenship, that is, who belonged where and who is a stranger. Political liberalization, invariably led to the politics of belonging.

In Kenya, the re-introduction of political pluralism, which culminated in the holding of multi-party elections in 1992, precipitated a certain discourse by pro-establishment politicians, who were part of the then financially endowed business elite. Ogachi (1999) describes these talks as statements that suggested that the political and economic reforms were a scheme by foreigners to undermine Kenya's political and economic sovereignty. Ethnic conflicts and mass poverty were said to be the eventual outcomes of such neo-colonial schemes (Ogachi 1999:84). Those who were pro-reform were viewed as imbibing foreign culture and wanting to take over the economies of the *mwananchi* (the citizen). Pro-reformists were seen as enemies of the government and of the sovereignty of the people. Multi-party politics was shunned as dividing Kenyans into ethnic lines with the eventuality that it would lead to ethnic conflicts.

By way of contextualisation, one can embed the unfolding events in Kenya in the political liberalisation perspective thus: By then the ruling party Kenya African National Union (KANU) was largely a Kalenjin dominated party with a minimal representation of other ethnic groups. Most notably, the larger Kikuyu and Luo ethnic groups had moved out of this party. Political pluralism meant that the other ethnic groups amalgamated to form opposition groups to challenge the hegemonic ethnic nature of the one-party system of governance. In order to counteract such a stand and to ensure a complete dominance in their areas of jurisdiction, the Kalenjin leaders formed the KAMATUSA group (referred to above) and coined the term *KANU zone* to refer to the ruling party only areas. These were notably in the Rift Valley and Coastal province of Kenya. This meant that, any other ethnic group living in the area had to be within the KANU fold and submit to KANU norms or be removed from the area (Akiwamu 1999, Mbogori 2000). The same leaders argued for the re-introduction of *majimboism*, which is a re-fabricated form of federalism (KHRC 1998:10). This Kenyan style federal policy, though adopting some of the tenets of a federal system, had, however, in the foreground, the aim of dividing Kenya into regions characterized by a non-mixing of ethnic groups. *Majimboism* was hence tantamount to regionalism as against federalism. Under the *majimbo s*ystem, all ethnic groups would be required 'to go back to their regions' and only come to a particular region with permission from a region's governing body.

As a result of these two policies, that is, the creation of a KANU zone and the calls for *majimboism* versus pluralistic politics, rampant violence of an ethnic nature became the order of the day (KHRC 1998.11, Akiwamu 1999, Mbogori 2000). Just before and after the 1992 elections, it was evident that the Kikuyu and most of the other migrant communities were anti-establishment and had voted

for the opposition. The Rift Valley, however, recorded the highest number of pro-KANU voters and was hence declared a KANU zone. Pro-opposition groups were cast off as aliens or "dirty spots" (*madoa madoa*) and oppressors of the autochthones (*wenyeji*) (Akiwamu 1999:55, Mbogori 2000). The fight for a multiparty system quickly degenerated into 'tribal' conflicts, resulting in a huge number of internally displaced women and men especially from the coastal region (mainly the Luo) and the Rift Valley region (mainly the Kikuyu).

Why did the cries for aliens as against the natives find so fertile ground? This is what the political-economic perspective explores.

3. The political-economic perspective

The political-economic point of view explains the events that occurred in Kenya as based on the long-time history of the struggle for land as a scarce resource (Mbogori 2000:42-44). This is similar to the analysis by Richards (1996) of the Sierra Leonean conflict, where he argues that one cannot understand this conflict without first understanding the significance of the forest and its resources.

Mbogori (2000) explicates that the then government capitalized on the un-addressed and competing land ownership issues between Kalenjin and Maasai, whom the British settlers ousted from land and their agricultural labourers, mainly Kikuyus, who subsequently settled on the land after independence (Kanogo 1987, Furedi 1989, Throup 1985, Presley 1992). It is notable that many of these farms were at the centre of the 'land clashes', as they later came to be known (Daily Nation 1993, Weekly Review 1993, Finance 1994, UNDP 1993, 1994, Mbogori 2000)[3].

One can however ask, if the relationship between the communities settled in the Rift Valley was cordial, why then did the fiery statements of resource ownership, strangers vs. natives receive so much acceptance among a certain ethnic group?

4. The moral ethnicity perspective – 'a view from below'

In his article, Lonsdale (1995:94) starts by lamenting the explanatory impasse existing in the analysis of group conflicts and which does not look at how actors grapple with the question of ethnicity. He explains that those analyzing the issue of ethnicity or ethnic relations have tended to focus on forces from within, that is, some timeless cultural essence. Other analysts look at the

[3] The newspaper articles and reports cited above carried news on a daily basis of the on going conflict in most of the up country and coastal regions in Kenya that were affected by the conflict as it occurred. In the bibliography, I only mention selected newspaper articles that I chose to review for my analysis.

forces from without or at the high politics of State patronage. To Lonsdale (1995:94), ethnicity is fostered by interaction. It is a theory of social and political relations. He conceptualises this as moral ethnicity. The idea of moral ethnicity emphasizes renegotiated relations with ourselves as much as relations with others. Moral ethnicity leaves open the issue of boundaries, their formation and maintenance between a dichotomous "we" and "you" (Lonsdale 1995:99). A moral ethnicity allows others to remain or become trusted strangers. The concept allows for a continued negotiation of the boundary crossing that marked personal relations between ethnic groups whether by marriage or clientage and against a background of commercial exchange.

He draws another level in which he asserts that ethnicity is also a theory of political relations. In Africa, he explains, it is inextricably tied to inequalities of State power. Power is a scarce resource, which its holders try to multiply yet conserve by loaning out to their most useful and thus dangerous-followers, to the exclusion of the weaker others. A principal of division, it requires categorization, which fosters stereotypes. Ethnic attributions work better than most as a means to ration out the benefits and costs of power. Political tribalism is thus the management of ethnic clienteles from above (Lonsdale 1995:100). It's manipulative and co-optive potentials, especially in regard to an obsessive competition for scarce resources, is what is used to overshadow an existing moral ethnicity. The creation of a privileged few with ties to resources above a desperate rest, tears apart the rudiments of a moral ethnicity, where out of desperation, everyone tries to get a bit and keep it for themselves.

Within the Kenyan scenario and in contextualizing and conceptualizing conflict of an ethnic nature, this view is the least explored. One could rule it out as outdated as it builds on pre-colonial ethnic relations and does not take into account the present day issues. Moreover, one could argue that the way urban ethnic relations are evolving and how these have fed into rural ethnic relations is over-looked in this perspective[4]. However, the conceptual thrust of Lonsdale's analysis, which builds on Scott's (1976) analysis of a moral economy, is what I adopt in this analysis. I explore how the issue of resources and how sharing these resources equitably across ethnic groups is being practiced as a way of restoring peace after the violent conflict. Conceptually, how trans-local gender and ethnic relations as a mode of negotiating and enabling a moral ethnicity is practiced across places, is what my contributions seek to explore.

[4] Lonsdale (1992) has used the *Mau Mau* uprising as his empirical analysis of the ethnic relations that were.

I, nonetheless, query why these rudimentary forms of a moral ethnicity practiced by groups negotiating peace after a violent confrontation, does not succeed in changing the face of political tribalism that permeates and divides ethnic relations and thereby hindering the formation of a civic consciousness that we all belong despite our differences.

5. The inherited decentralized despotic system: a post-colonial predicament

Undeniably, Mamdani's thesis of an inherited decentralized despotic system (Mamdani 1996, 2001) offers useful insights in contemplating the above-mentioned impasse. Writing from a political science perspective, the author argues that explanations to the various post-colonial predicaments, chief of which has been the increased level of social conflict, cannot be sufficiently accounted for by solely cultural, political economy, instrumentalization of ethnicity or social institutional explanations (Mamdani 2001:21-24). He asserts that we have, of necessity, to look at the political-governance sphere and more especially the failure of the post-colonial political State to institute a democratic despotic system by overhauling the inherited decentralized despotic system stemming from pre-colonial and colonial times. The author maintains that all post independence regimes were determined, to one degree or another, to do away with the stigma of race that they associated with colonial rule. The tendency of the post-colonial state was to de-racialize civic identity. Consequently, civic citizenship ceased to recognise any difference based on race. However, the post-colonial State continued to reproduce native identity as ethnic. This lack of de-ethnicization of especially local governance systems continued to reproduce a bifurcated citizenship – that of ethnic indigenous and ethnic strangers (Mamdani 1996: 37 – 61 and Mamdani 2001: 19 – 31). These two identities are in constant conflict with each other. The author maintains that as long as the current definition of citizenship as ethnic is upheld, and there is lack of a wider conceptualisation of citizenship as civic then the bifurcation of citizens and subjects will be perpetuated. The negative consequence will continue to be an inherent system of ennoblement, where a few are privileged at the expense of the majority. As a result, the much sort after social cohesion will be illusionary and susceptible to the whims and manipulation of these ennobles.

The task at hand, especially in negotiating strong peace-building mechanisms, is how a definition of citizenship as ethnic can be overhauled and a wider conceptualisation of citizenship that is pluralistic and takes account of different ethnic and regional differences can be instituted. The section that follows analyses this search for a new definition of social relations and interactions as

a move from a closed community to an open pluralistic society practiced through acts that show a moral ethnicity and seeks a civic consciousness that is broad based.

Land: The Contested Entitlement and Backdrop to Insecurity

Burnt Forest[5] lies at the heart of the Rift Valley. It is the area that first witnessed conflict. The backdrop of land as an entitlement to obtaining food and thereby maintaining livelihood, coupled to the need in maintaining ties to what both the Kikuyu and the Kalenjin call community is significant. These I conceptualise as searching for security at two levels.

Burnt Forest is marked by two agrarian systems living side by side and yet interlinked in many subtle ways. On the one hand, there are the Kikuyu who organise their social life predominantly around land. They are mixed farmers tilling land and mainly engaged in zero-grazing i.e. keeping one or two heads of cattle. Much of what they grow is both for home consumption and for sale in the market. The Kikuyu mainly grow food crops.

Their neighbours are the Kalenjin, who are an ethnic group comprising of 9 smaller ethnic groups. The Nandi, Tugen and Keiyo keep large herds of cattle and mainly engage in the cultivation of wheat, maize and barley on a large scale. This is mainly for commercial purposes. They are also involved in food crop farming but more for home consumption. Despite engaging in cultivation, for these groups, cattle still hold a strong social meaning[6]. These two agrarian systems existing side by side but in interaction meant that there were lots of tensions, competing and overlapping rights and claims to land, that were regulated by certain mechanisms.

Competing Relations and Obligations not Honoured

According to one of my interviewees from the Kalenjin community, there were certain actions that the Kikuyu were engaged in, which went against the socially 'unspoken' regulatory mechanism and which ensured that all in the community are treated in a just way. I call these relations and social obligations that were not

[5] Burnt Forest is a part of the so called white highlands. Before the forest was called *Mutarakwa*, Kikuyu name for cider tree. It acquired its name Burnt Forest around the late 40s to 50s when the eastern side of the forest was engulfed in a big fire. None of my respondents could explain the cause of the fire. Some said it was accidental, others say it was set by the colonial masters who were trying to curb *Mau Mau* activities that were rapidly spreading at this time.

[6] Several authors have discussed the social meaning of cattle for groups engaged in a pastoral or nomadic system. Building on Herskovit's (1926) The cattle complex in East Africa, Schareika (1994) has shown how the Fulbe of Benin build their whole social, economic and political organisations around cattle, Diallo (1996) has shown the same of the Fulbe of Northern Côte d' Ivoire. Schultz (1996) in her study of the Turkana in Kenya holds similar views, whilst Schlee (1989) discusses the meaning of camels for the Oromo and the Rendillle of Kenya.

honoured, post-independence agreements on interactive resource utilisation. From the interviews undertaken, I deduced that the increased tension for cultivating land on the part of the Kikuyu and the need for pasture on the part of the Nandi increasingly led to the violation of the code that held and interactive resource utilisation. Secondly, there was the issue of water as a resource. Thirdly, the land labour relation became yet another issue of contestation. Lastly, the struggle for accessing the market escalated the tension between these two ethnic groups.

Threatened in One's own Fields

Tensions escalated when the Kikuyu began to encroach on the pasturelands of the Nandis. The Kikuyus had a need to increase the land available for cultivation as they only held 4-10 acres of land[7]. They thus sought to get more and diverse cultivating land. They started to ask to buy land from the Nandi and formalize this through registration of their existing land and the newly acquired ones. The Nandis felt threatened as more and more of their land was encroached upon. Furthermore, the sense of insecurity was increased with the move to register land. Whereas the Kikuyu could easily register their fields, as they were small and easier to survey, the Nandi had huge tracts of land. Such huge tracts of land presented problems in surveying and registration[8]. Formalization of access to land through individualization and acquiring title deeds or seeking 'exclusive' ownership rights meant violating the internal logic that governed access to land.

Writing on land regulation in Kenya, Okoth Ogendo (1986:89) and Berry (1993: 120) have noted that land registration does not appear to have created exclusive individual rights to land. Despite the letter of the law, land tenure remains heterogeneous and divisible, meaning multiple rights and access to land. Extrapolating onto a broader context, Berry (1993:16-19) in her analysis of the social dynamics of agrarian change in sub-Saharan Africa, has argued that no condition is permanent. She asserts that the commercialization of transactions in particular rights to plant annual or permanent crops, to hunt or gather, to alienate land or improvements on it , did not result in the consolidation of rights to private property, that is, exclusive control over land either by individuals or by corporate groups.

The mechanisms analysed by the two authors are some of the contributing factors which made the Nandi feel threatened in their 'own land' as they increasingly saw the Kikuyu violating the principle that held the

[7] I ha of land is equivalent to 2.5 acres.

[8] Oboler (1985:191 - 237), in discussing Nandi social structure and organization remarks, that the Nandi have an intersection of both traditional and modern land access systems. She presents what she calls the family estate system found among the Nandi of Kericho as an illustration of this intersection. In Burnt Forest region, I did not observe many families who owned a title deed and called their land "estates".

two communities together. This was the principle of giving and taking and the obligations implied therein, that ensured that no one went without land.

Pasture for grazing was another resource that was regulated in a certain manner to allow for an equitable distribution of animal fodder. The Kikuyu are involved in farming and own from 2- 5 heads of cattle. Some of them possess small ruminants (goats and sheep). Cattle ownership is individual with zero-grazing being the mode of animal farming. The Nandi, on their part, have a great interest in cattle husbandry. Many of them owned more than 30 heads of cattle and were involved in milk and meat production. Tensions began to mount when the Kikuyu with-held permission to have the Nandi graze their cattle on their former lands as the latter needed this for their own animals. The Kikuyu put up barbed wire around their fields to ensure that no animals would trespass and destroy their crops through animal foraging and stumping. Moreover, when crops were damaged, the Nandi were required to pay heavy fines to the Kikuyu owners. Restricting transhumance implied less land for grazing and the rapid spread of infectious animal diseases. The Kikuyu on their part did want manure for their crops but were more sceptical of the destruction of their crops. The refusal to allow grazing of animals on the land led to an increase in tensions. Diallo (1996), has, in a similar light, analysed the tension between the Fulbe of Northern Cote d'Ivoire and the Senufo peasants, and also between the Fulbe cattle owners and the young Fulbe men they employ to take the cattle to the bush in search of fodder[9].

The money-maker, wells and the river

With the introduction of the money-maker[10] as an agricultural technological device, the Kikuyu, given their prowess in agricultural pursuits, were apt to adapt this agricultural technology. This meant the digging up of individual wells. This led to drying up of some water-sources, especially uphill, where the Nandi had their farms. Some Kikuyu tapped water from the main river running through the village, storing this in individual water tanks and using this to water their crops. The Nandi did not have this possibility[11] This meant that in

[9] Azarya (1999) and Diallo (1996) have also analyzed Fulbe societies confronting change in West Africa in a similar light. Lachenmann (1985) has done a similar analysis of Mali, whilst Schlee (1990) has observed the same of the Rendille and Oromo of North-Eastern Kenya. These are typical agro-pastoral conflicts where there is agricultural intensification and cattle holding remaining extensive. In several parts of Kenya where such a scenario exists different forms of crop and animal rotation are being practiced.

[10] This is the common name given to a water pump that is worked by pedaling. This is the main difference to a hand pump. The end of the pump is then connected to a water pipe whose nose may have a sprayer.

[11] This is again discussed in the section named, *the instrumentalization of ethnicity perspective*. The Kikuyu were enabled by the first regime to develop and secure entrepreneurial networks. Such networks enabled them to acquire and use services that other ethnic groups could only aspire to but not easily acquire.

the dry season, the river would dry out and the Nandi livestock would not have enough to drink. Water rights were beginning to pose a problem.

Of being lazy as cattle people (watu wa ng'ombe)

Land-labour relations were also another point of contestation. The Kikuyu preferred paid labourers *(vibarua)* from within the villages, who were either their relatives or their friends. They could also go to neighbouring Kikuyu villages to look for paid labourers there. The main reason the Kikuyu gave for not employing Nandi farm labourers was that the latter were considered to be lazy, did not know anything to do with farming as they were *watu wa n'gombe* – the people of the cattle and did not know how to till land.

Sellers (watu wa biashara): getting hold of the market

Contestations at the market took the form of buying and selling the products of the Kikuyu only. The stereotypical image of the Kikuyu in Eldoret is *watu wa biashara,* meaning sellers. This is because the Kikuyu have well founded business networks in the main town of Eldoret. They can transport their farm produce to town easily as they own the *matatus* (the local means of transportation) and have nodal selling points in town that spanned a wide breadth. They were so well entrenched that it was difficult to break into the market. The struggle for markets in Eldoret and for major products was one of the reasons that the Nandi felt the need to drive the Kikuyu out of the Rift Valley back to their former 'homes' as the latter were getting rich at the expense of the former.

From the above discussion, one can conclude that a violation of the co-operative mechanisms that had held the two communities together occurred. This was the principle of give and take that was supposed to hold the two communities together. These were not being honoured. The mounting insecurity and the escalation of inter-relational tensions, that was as a result, became fertile ground to sow the seeds of disruption that led to the conflict of 1992. It took a political twist when political elites, following the political currents of the time and with the knowledge of the historical and contextual background of the land issue, capitalized on the stereotypes that marked interaction between the two groups and the tensions that were growing. Indeed, literature has so far ignored the inter-relational group aspects and the unspoken codes that hold different groups together (this is what characterizes the moral ethnicity view point), preferring the political economic and the politicization of ethnicity views as more plausible explanations.

Searching for Security through acts that show a Moral Ethnicity

"It's about taking the bull by the horns": the 'new' trans -local ethnic and gendered arrangements to access land

"Kuchukua dume kwa pembe" – taking the bull by the horns is how one Kikuyu woman described the way they are re-negotiating new arrangements to access their former lands after the conflict. She explained that it is very difficult even dangerous to hold the bull by its own horns. One needs to have skills to bring the bull round. The bull can be understood metaphorically to stand for strength, stubbornness, fierceness. This can be further understood to mean male cattle holders.

The new land arrangements are based on a shrewd knowledge and usage of the gendered co-operation and division of activities on land, transportation of the farm produce and the markets. This gendered division and the co-operation of work in crop production is exemplified through interaction in four places

- Kikuyu women living in Langas and Kikuyu women married within the Nandi ethnic group (the 'sisters')
- Kikuyu women living in Langas[12]
- Kikuyu women living in Langas and young Kikuyu-Nandi men (their 'nephews')
- Kikuyu women living in Langas and their husbands or male next of kin living at the shopping centre in Burnt Forest

Co-operation with the Kikuyu-Nandi women: the 'sisters'

Kikuyu women living in Langas normally request the Kikuyu women married within the Nandi ethnic group (Kikuyu-Nandi women – usually a sister or sister-in-law, a cousin, or a former neighbour or distant relative) to talk to their men about the possibility of getting someone to cultivate fallow fields in the more insecure places. From interviews collected, it appeared that Nandi men allow their Kikuyu wives to help 'their sisters' till, plant and harvest the fields. This kind of arrangement was termed *mkono* or hand (in the sense of to lend a helping-hand).

Co-operation among Kikuyu women living in Langas

The second level of mutual help was among Kikuyu women living in Langas. In Langas, the women would organise themselves in groups of 3 – 5 comprising of relatives but usually also friends. This follows the traditional institution of helping each other called *ngwatio.* They could then work each other's land in turn. Work that followed such an arrangement was weeding, harvesting, and preparation of maize and beans. In

[12] Langas is the rural slum area that most of the displaced women and men from Burnt Forest ran to. They built informal shelters. It is also here that the current Internally Displaced People's camp is located.

other cases, the traditional institution of *wira* was followed. Here, a specific kind of work was organised where payment of some kind was expected. This is where Kikuyu women from Langas would ask for *mikono* among the Kikuyu-Nandi women to join them. Wacker (1996:56) gives the description of these two kinds of solidarity and continues to show how these forms of traditional solidarity are still followed in peasant self-help groups in rural development in Laikipia today. More often in order to lessen the cost of labour and maximize work, a mixture of *ngwatio* and *wira* was followed. This is in the sense that among Kikuyu women themselves, they could work each other's land in turn while at the same time employing Kikuyu-Nandi women to help them on the farm as *mikono*.

Women often used their former Church based groups to negotiate access to their former lands. Kikuyu women usually travelled to Burnt to attend service. Through such prayer groups, the women found the opportunity to talk, not only to their next of kin living with the Nandis, but also with the Nandi women themselves about the different possibilities. They asked for advice on whom to approach and where. In this way, prayer groups had the double meaning of worship and as a forum for negotiating access to land.

Co-operation with Kikuyu – Nandi young men: the 'nephews'

The other strategy was to engage young Kikuyu- Nandi men as paid labourers (*vibarua)*. Young men among the Kalenjin ethnic groups are the warriors (*morans*) or the guardians of the community and its resources. They are the ones who 'open the door'. In this sense, they permit or restrict entry. Furthermore, young men, like women, do not own land until they are married. For land relations, it means that they can work on other people's land. I stretch the argument further by saying that it might be that the Kikuyu-Nandi young men are seen as 'in between' in the sense that they are seen as not belonging to either Nandi or Kikuyu ethnic groups. On the other hand, it means that they can 'belong' to both ethnic groups. Their identity is dependent on the situation. The paradox is that through this 'quasi' status, they are not allowed full access to entitlements in either group. Berry (1985) in her analysis of socio economic changes captures this aspect in her discussion of accumulation, mobility and class formation in the Yoruba community of Nigeria. She explains that relations of authority and subordination governed relationships. Group membership and relations therein were organised in terms of seniority. People of junior status owed service, obedience and loyalty to their seniors. There were obligations to be fulfilled and in return, something was offered, say maintenance or protection. Seniority in turn was not based solely on age, sex or demographic status, it could be achieved. This was through demonstrating one's ability to command the loyalty and service of others, especially those of agnates or male relationships (Berry 1985:8). The inference one draws here is that given the subordinate state of their relationships, i.e. the Kikuyu women and the Kikuyu-Nandi young men, contact is facilitated. The two groups are the junior status groups in these two communities. Among this status group, there is negotiation of protection, maintenance and service. Power relations are

negotiated through introducing the above named exchanges and honouring these. One can again here see the trans -local gendered co-operation that is now called into existence. Moreover this co-operation is multi-ethnic.

"It's important to know that I have land as I can put food on the table"

There are several questions flowing from the earlier discussion. Firstly, if the situation is disparaging, why do women not create other ways of earning a livelihood? Why do they go to such lengths to ensure a continued relationship to former lands? Why do they not give up this land and engage in some other activity, for example, in the sale of second-hand clothes in Eldoret? Lastly, why is that it is only women who negotiate this kind of access, what about men?

The thesis I put forward is that Kikuyu internally displaced women's meaning of Burnt forest as home is based on their continued access to their former land. Having this entitlement means that the women are able to put food on the table, which further means a continued sustenance of production and reproduction and therefore security of livelihoods. Having land also means continued ties to what the women (and some men) consider their community. In this way, women are negotiating an identity and recognition as belonging to the larger Kikuyu- Kalenjin community. In my view, they are negotiating a multi-ethnic identity that is based on recognition of their ethnic pluralistic characteristic. Having access to land among the Kalenjin is thus a marker of this kind of multi-ethnic belonging that enables different translations of, and access to, entitlements. As one woman put it, "It is important to know that I have land as I can put food on the table".

Not filling up the bowl is not the only risk being avoided. In my opinion Kikuyu women are struggling to gain access to their former lands so that they can identify with the community there. They are negotiating a continuity of being seen as belonging to the Burnt Forest community despite their being of a different ethnic group. They view Burnt Forest as their place, which they identify with and belong to. This belonging is shaped by the reason that they have shared life with the Nandi they had interacted with them, gone to the same markets and belonged to the same women groups or Church groups. What I see is a fight to define their community not in terms of belonging to the same ethnic group, the same kinship group and therefore sharing the same blood (*damu yangu*), but rather a move toward interaction and staying in the same region as being the factors that should define and identify an inter-ethnic community. That is an ethnic pluralism based on identifying with people staying in the same region despite their different ethnic 'belonging'. This is what I conceptualize as a trans-local ethnic identity. In my opinion, it is this type of trans-local identity that is at the base of a moral ethnicity that the Kikuyu women are negotiating. It is this type of trans-local identity that ensures their security of livelihood, of movement and of interaction. Scott (1976) has analysed this kind of relationship as a moral economy. Lonsdale (1995:97) building on Scott's thesis talks of a moral ethnicity,

which is based on enacting a discursive core across different ethnic groups. This discursive core is centred around reconstructing unequal social relations. This decides the moral question of who eats at whose expense, which in my view determines access to entitlements and thus security of livelihood or human security

The Contradiction

A question that one is immediately forced to ask is: why do these acts from below not translate into a strong force to withstand the coercive, manipulative power garnering tactics of a few? The thesis I put forward is that we are faced with a situation where we still have a huge majority of people without entitlements to crucial social-economic resources. Because of this discrepancy, canny politicians, mainly with personal agendas, short sighted visions of society or none at all, easily manipulate the majority, who without entitlements, often desperate and with nothing to loose, are quick to take arms and fight. Indeed, very telling in this respect is van Walraven's analysis of leadership styles that characterized the Organisation of African Union (OAU) and its member States (van Walraven 2010:pp.35-55)

Coupled to the above mentioned is the concept of power in Africa. One cannot even begin to analyse power in a Foucauldian sense. Power is a means to acquire scarce resources, which politicians make even rarer in order to secure their places. Of course, such an analysis immediately brings to the fore the skewed civic consciousness that we still embody. We still are not fully conscious that we belong by virtue of sharing the same space. This is what Mamdani (2001) in his unfinished thesis calls democratic despotic system. I call it political ethnic pluralism.

I argue that it is at the intersection of these contradictions, that is, lack of entitlement by the majority, a misconstrued conceptualization of power and a lack of consciousness that we belong by virtue of sharing the same space, that further conceptualization of human security can be undertaken

Refocusing the Lens

For peace making mechanisms, variously explored in this paper, to translate to a strong concept of peace building and consequently human security at varied level From a commonsensical perspective, redistributive justice means sharing. Analytically, redistributive justice as a concept interrogates the different levels in society and how principles of sharing of societal common goods (redistributive alliances) and their regulatory mechanisms (trans-local ethnic and gender co operation as a basis for social citizenship) operate to ensure that the least members in society are accorded access to a decent level of entitlement to ensure quality of life. It is at this level that third sector groups i.e. civil society groups with philanthropic and entrepreneurial foundations (social entrepreneurs) can best contribute to ensure that socially embedded mechanisms emergent of a context as quickly taken up, supported and sustained.

Furthermore, redistributive justice has as its agenda, the formation of redistributive alliances and networking groups for the exercise of voice especially at the level of the public sphere. This is with a view to changing sectarian politics and capitalizing on social policy issues for overall development. I argue that it is at this level that civic action emergent of contexts should be supported especially by international bodies that have 'political' muscle to sway decisions at the negotiation table. UN bodies, especially those based in the Continent, and which have a contextual knowledge of the undercurrents are a case in point. The Ivorian case is very telling in this respect.

As an ethos redistributive justice necessitates us to confront ourselves, our ways of doing and our current ways of living in relations to others. This is with a view to reinstating a moral consciousness and principles of living with others in a cohesive manner.

Two questions are however still at large. These are: on the one hand, the kind of governance institutions emergent of the life-world and which would work hand in glove with third sector groups to regulate a practical redistributive justice. Secondly, is the question of concrete policy issues that are context specific and which need to be debated upon. These concerns necessitate critical dialogue among social analysts (especially sociologists, economists and political scientists) and between social analysts and policy advisory bodies.

In Conclusion

This paper set out to analyse socially embedded peace making efforts emergent of groups in a post conflict situation. In it, I have shown how such groups negotiate a moral ethnicity through translocal ethnic and gender cooperation in accessing critical entitlements. I have argued that although this peace making efforts are evident, they do not translate to a strong sense of peace building. Two theses have emerged: On the one hand, I have proposed the concept of political ethnic pluralism, which I have argued is the kind of civic consciousness that have to be nurtured and enhanced especially by third sector groups that have both a civic and entrepreneurial agenda. I have further argued that it is at this level that international bodies could act as checkmates in ensuring that actions mushrooming at the societal level are not usurped by canny politicians and manipulated to the latter's benefit at the peril of the rest of the communities. On the other hand the thesis that I have put forward is that for peace making efforts emergent of communities to translate to a strong sense of peace building, redistributive justice as a concept, agenda and ethos could be adopted. This is with a view of not only conceptualizing human security mechanisms at various levels, but also how different actors could take up the agenda at different levels to not only sustain efforts that communities come up with, usually under duress, but also buttress these in several significant ways.

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