Not Set in Stone: An Assessment of the Impacts of Ethnicity on Statehood and Social Cohesion in Kenya, 1963-2022

Benson Nyamweno

Egerton University

ABSTRACT

This paper revisits challenges facing Kenya as a multi-ethnic society. While ethnicity have been important thematic and policy issues for scholars and policy makers in the recent decades, very few studies have focused on the efforts dimension, statehood and social cohesion in Kenya. Given the importance of statehood and social cohesion, this study will try to question the legacies of successive regimes which were largely responsible for the lack of social cohesion by examining the regime's reinforcing narratives which are illustrative of the success of propaganda and disinformation machinery meant to obfuscate subjugation of the masses and justify crushing of dissent. The author argues that the challenge of identity in Kenya has been exacerbated by failure in nation-building and the creation of a national identity. To demonstrate the challenges facing Kenya's statehood and social cohesion, the paper examines efforts by previous successive governments toward nation-building. It examines academic publications, government strategy documents, media reports, and archival sources. The paper finds that despite efforts by the Kenya's four consecutive regimes to promote national unity, a vicious cycle of ethnic cleavages has undermined these efforts and instead created new points of ethnic animosities. The paper concludes with some policy recommendations.

Keywords: ethnicity, conflict, nationhood, cohesion, integration, identity

INTRODUCTION

The Kenyan Constitution and the Kenya Vision 2030 asserts Kenya's aspiration, to be a middle income country and to be a peaceful and prosperous nation. They also advocate the importance of equity and national cohesion and integration for a long term developments prospects and sustained nationhood (Awino, & Kithinji, 2012). Despite its importance for national development, statehood and social cohesion is a challenge for Kenya, as has been witnessed in the past.

The Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation Agreement (2008), which restored order, following the Post-Election Violence of 2007/08, identified broad factors which were responsible for lack of statehood and social cohesion to include; (1) constitutional (2) institutional and legal challenges (3) lack of consolidation of national unity, and (4) mismanagement of diversities. The above factors have prominently contributed to the erosion of the sense of belonging, nationhood, and public trust in government and political institutions. Such factors are historical since Kenya as a post-colonial state that experienced the British colonial government divide and rule policy, independence was not going to guarantee national cohesion and integration unless institutionalized efforts and processes were to be adopted (Kiruthu, and Mbataru, 2014). Secondly, weak governance systems and practices produced an authoritarian but also disproportionate political system that could not easily be erased by policy amendments but necessitated proactive cohesion and integration strategies, especially in the post-2000s era.

Despite being a regional hub of peace, Kenya's political stability increasingly deteriorated over the years with the country experiencing some of its worst acts of ethnic violence in 1991(Akiwumi, 1999) and post-election violence of 2007/08 (Truth, J. and Reconciliation Commission, 2008) and later in the mid and late 2010s when the country began to grapple with the terrorist menace (Kanyinga, 2013). Scholars and policymakers have blamed Kenya's state of vulnerability to internal conflicts on ethnic and identity-related animosities (Kisaka & Nyadera, 2019). This assumption is not farfetched given the role of identity in various other conflicts in Africa and more prominently during the Rwandan Genocide between the Hutu and the Tutsi communities in 1994. It is perhaps this background that has seen a plethora of publications associating ethnicity and conflict in the context of Kenya.

The study argue that while this assumption could have a strong basis for understanding conflicts in Kenya, the impact of ethnicity on statehood and social cohesion should not be taken for granted. The paper, therefore, presents a case that ethnicity has been and continues to be a stumbling block to statehood and social cohesion, and extension worsening the already fragile social bonds leading to violence.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Hoeffler and Collier's Greed versus Grievance Theory

Greed and Grievance are twin words put together by these two scholars of armed conflict on the causes of war though the use has been extended to other forms of war including rebellion, insurgency, violent conflicts etc. Greed for example is the desire of the combatants to better their situation through cost benefit analysis of rewards of joining the war and not joining the war. Grievance on the other hand explains that people argue on certain identity issues including background, cultures, religions, economic status, political ideologies, which posit serious identity affiliations which overlook economic factors.

In practice, these opposing arguments results to the development of conflict. For instance, Kenya just like many African states is a multi-ethnic society and conflict always arises as a result of unequal distribution of resources (Akiwumi, 1999). The presidency which is the highest position in the country determines the resource allocation across the nation. This has made the position to be hotly contested more than any other elective position leading to post election violence.

The choice of this theory is relevant because the aim of the communities in Kenya or a coalition of communities to acquire presidency is to better their situation there fore they will try at all cost to acquire the position. Some of these communities feel like they have been neglected, despised and marginalized for a long period of time. This situation is prone to conflict after election as some feel that their destiny has been denied due to electoral injustices. The argument has been on whether greed or grievance is a major cause of war but the common factor has always remained to be the perception of certain deprivations. If it is economic deprivation, the inequality will be a vertical inequality and the cause of war will remain greed. If deprivation is caused by ethnic, religion, age, gender, etc. the inequality will be a horizontal inequality and therefore the cause of conflict will be grievances.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is no dearth of studies around ethnicity. Scholars have sought to investigate the nexus between, colonization and ethnic consciousness, ethnicity and politics, ethnicity and development, ethnicity and religion, ethnicity and identity etc. However, little efforts have been made to try and examine efforts towards statehood and social cohesion especially in African countries. Yet, a deeper examination of the protracted conflicts and state fragility in the continent reveal the complex relationship between the absence

of strong nationalism, statehood and social cohesion.

National Unity (nationalism) is a philosophy and a movement that believes in a nation that is congruent with the state. As a philosophy, it intends to promote and protect the interest of a particular nation (as in a group of people), with the sole objective of attaining and maintaining the sovereignty of a nation (self-governance) on its homeland and creating a nation-state. It holds that each nation should develop self-determination, that a nation is an ideal basis for an organizational structure of the government of a state, and that a nation is the only legal source of political power (Emmanuel, 2012). It aims at achieving solve objective of maintaining a single nation's identity which is an amalgamation of social characteristics of ethnicity, geographical location, culture, language, politics, traditions, religions and beliefs in a shared single history, and promotion of national cohesion and solidarity.

Nationhood and social cohesion have been important thematic and policy issues for scholars and policymakers in recent decades (Dukes & Mustered, 2012; Mason, 2010). This attention can be attributed to among other things, the rapid rise of multicultural states after the Second World War and its impact on a global scale of the decolonization process as well as increased mass migration following among other events, the collapse of the former Yugoslavia, the Arab Springs and climate instigated displacements because of global warming. All these instances have seen the movement of people with different backgrounds, cultures, religions, economic statuses, and political ideologies but who have deeply-rooted identity affiliations.

The significance of Nationhood and social cohesion on a country's socio-economic and political progress cannot be over-emphasized. Indeed, a study by Lentz (1995) reveals that unity in a country provides a good platform for leaders to achieve their manifestos objectives and goals. Such findings have also been echoed by (Mikhaylov & Mikhaylova, 2017) who opine that Nationhood and social cohesion has the potential to reduce geospatial and interregional economic inequalities which negatively affect national development. In the political sphere, Nationhood and social cohesion can also shape a country's political culture and system or sometimes even lead to its collapse (Osaghae, 1999; Booysen, 2014). Looking at the collapse of the Former Yugoslavia from a historical vantage point, Vuckovic (2018) argues that Nationhood and social cohesion is an integral part of the modern state and attributes the collapse of the former powerful country to a lack of nationhood and social cohesion.

In addition, looking at the polarized nature of political systems across the world, especially democracy which requires citizens to directly participate in the election of leaders, many countries have become vulnerable to identity-based mobilization by politicians and political parties thus affecting Nationhood and social cohesion (Sircar,2020; Valenzuela& Michelson,2016; Hamayotsu,2011). This is further worsened by political cultures that exercise 'winner takes all' electoral systems (Cheesemanet. al., 2019; Gyampo, 2015).

In such political systems, the winner of an election takes all the political power and resources, leaving the losing parties with little to no representation in government and this often contributes to weak social cohesion and integration as a result of polarization of society, exclusion of certain groups from the political process, and exacerbation social divisions along identity-based lines. In this study, we argue that countries with a lack or low level of Nationhood and social cohesion are likely to experience the winner takes all political system more than countries that have a strong sense of national unity. The implication of this is that elections become more polarized in countries that have lower Nationhood and social cohesion and can result in serious violence before, during, and after elections.

Several studies on election-related conflicts have already attracted the attention of scholars who have examined the nexus between identity and conflicts (Daxecker & Fjelde, 2022; Bratton &Kimenyi, 2008; and Mulubale, 2017). Other scholars have also examined the role of issues such as land (Klaus, 2020), the impact of climate change (Solomonet. al., 2018), economic (under) development (Herbst, 2000) as well as

natural resources (Alao, 2007). However, few of these studies have sought to examine the interplay between these variables raised and NCI. This gap could be better illustrated in a future study; however, we opine that most of the widely discussed causes of conflict (natural resources, poverty, underdevelopment, elections, and identity/ethnicity) have a bearing on the state of Nationhood and social cohesion in fragile countries.

A Systematic Review of the Research Methodology Approach

This study majored in systematic research methods which chronologically divided the study into three phases. Phase I and II focused on sources, reliability, and their validity plus arguments and claims which surfaced in the existing number of literatures reviewed. Phase III was used to give further details on the conceptual and theoretical approaches of the existing studies and to point out some of the challenges and gaps with the current application of nationalism, statehood, and social cohesion doctrine. Phase I was important in giving ground to this study within the general view of existing studies. From this phase, it was possible for the author to explore various trends in conflict more so those that are occurring in Kenya. This involved having a keen interest in research questions and objectives that characterized previous studies. From this perspective, this study was capable of identifying issues that have dominated conflict research as well as those that have been downplayed.

An in-depth analysis of available literature revealed existing debate circumnavigating causes of conflict in Africa and Kenya to be exact from both policy and academic dimensions. From the findings of existing trends in conflict research, this paper was able to ground its objectives and goals on areas that have been ignored generally. In addition to the theoretical and conceptual aspects of conflict studies, Phase I also offered a deep understanding of the conflicts in Kenya and how academia from various disciplines and backgrounds has researched the country and its challenges.

From the findings, there is a clear indication of the inadequacy of using the nationalism, statehood and social cohesion approach in understanding the state of affairs and dynamics of Kenya, yet the country has the potential strength and weaknesses of nationalism, statehood, and social cohesion as both strategy and doctrine of conflict prevention and resolutions. To adequately meet the research objectives in Phase I, the research was guided by the following questions; first, what is the historical dimension of the conflict in Kenya? Second, what have scholars looked at and concluded as the major issues in conflicts? What have been the efforts of various governments to address the challenges of conflict in Kenya since independence? What are some of the implications of overlooking nationalism, statehood, and social cohesion in our broad understanding of intractable conflicts currently dotting many parts of the world?

Phase II focused keenly on finding relevant policy platforms and databases where relevant information to this research could be extracted. By use of these databases, the research was able to generate books, articles, reports, formal publications, and other valuable publications relevant to our study. Some of the major databases found and used in the study included University libraries, Web of Science, Scopus, JSTOR, Ebsco, and institutional and government digital libraries.

DISCUSSION

The very social organization of the Kenyan people was disrupted immediately after independence. The country inherited a weak governance systems and practices which produced an authoritarian but also disproportionate political system that necessitated proactive strategies for nationalism, statehood and social cohesion. This paper therefore, gives a chronology of events in Kenya's regimes which threatened nationalism, statehood and social cohesion and the measures they introduced to enhance nationalism, statehood, and social cohesion.

Jomo Kenyatta (1963-1978)

Ideological differences between KANU and KADU

Coming to power and managing Kenya's political system was not an easy task for Jomo Kenyatta. Putting in consideration that governance structure inherited by Kenya after independence could not guarantee its cohesion and integration. Issues started bedeviling Kenya ranging from leadership wrangles (power struggle), land, ethnic animosities, and border disputes between Kenya and its neighbors. Jomo Kenyatta had to contend with these challenges to ensure Kenya's state of cohesion and integration was ensured. Forming government was one of the biggest challenges as he was to ensure total inclusion of Kenyan communities. Jaramogi Oginga Odinga becomes his vice president in the process.

Jaramogi Oginga Odinga was a communist sympathizer, who becomes Jomo Kenyatta's great friend and later great political rival to Jomo Kenyatta who was a capitalist sympathizer (Otenyo, 2023). Forty years before they fell off in 1969, Jomo Kenyatta was a great journalist for the communist party. In 1929, 40 year old Jomo Kenyatta had traveled to London after being sent by Kikuyu Central Association (KCA) to agitate for the Agikuyu land rights. Upon his return, he published a long article for the Sunday Worker on October 27, 1929-the Communist Party Newspaper in Britain. The paper's theme "Give back our land" and included salient sentences like "discontent has always been live among natives and will persist until they govern themselves" (Moskowitz, 2022). Jomo Kenyatta came back to Kenya in 1930 after receiving western orientation engulfed with thoughts and nationalist aspirations. He shifted from being just Agikuyu representative from the Kikuyu Central Association to a national figure. He had learned leadership skills from the experience he acquired while working oversees as journalist, political commentator and a communist correspondent.

Things went well until Jomo Kenyatta and Jaramogi Oginga Odinga were caught up in cold war intrigues. Jomo Kenyatta liked delegating responsibilities that is why provincial commissioners become very powerful at his time (Moskowitz, 2022). Then there are people who surrounded him including security most of whom were upbeat and illiterate. But Kenya was not an island; the western countries were on check on the spread of communism and the communist ideologies and they were not ready or willing to surrender the newly formed independent state to the communist (East) (Moskowitz, 2022).

Kenya, like other newly formed independent states, was nevertheless to be caught up in the so called ideological war of the 1960 between the capitalist West and the Communist East. The intrigues of the complex cold war hit hard the heart of Kenyan government dividing the President Jomo Kenyatta and his close friend and vice president Jaramogi Oginga Odinga (Amutabi and Hamasi, 2023). This fallout between Kenyatta and Oginga was devastating to newly formed independent state. Some scholars have argued that the fallout was due to cold war (Barkan, 1993). While others argue that the fallout was engineered by international environment for example, the west governments painted Jaramogi Oginga as Jomo's greatest opponent (Lamb, 1969). In as much as Kenyans including policy makers were silent about it, the problem was instigated from outside. The struggle was between the capitalism and the communism. Two ideological believes wanted to test their political and military might in Kenya (Wamwere, 2003).

Tragic events followed the fallout between Kenyatta-Oginga. First one was the assassination of Pio Gama Pinto, a freedom fighter of Goan descent and a great strategist for Jaramogi Oginga Odinga and therefore his elimination aimed at weakening the opposition (Manners, 1962). Naturally, Jaramogi believed he could succeed Jomo Kenyatta who he termed as a second god (Manners, 1962). Years after assassination of Pio Gama Pinto followed a series of political liquidation of Jaramogi Oginga Odinga who was not only the vice president of the country but also for the ruling party. Jaramogi Oginga Odinga did not realize the extent the liquidation process had gone (Nasong'o, 2016). He was an openminded person and a champion for

democracy. Despite all the intrigues, the fight was all about power (Nasong'o, 2016). Tom Mboya himself could not stay for long after proving to be vibrant and articulate in the political scenes (Nasong'o, 2016). At the age of 39, he was assassinated through a gunshot and died in the ambulance while on the way to the hospital. The killing of Tom Mboya gave the Kenyatta-Odinga intrigues the ethnical dimensions

A ceremony to launch newly opened and Soviet-built New Nyanza Hospital in Kisumu turned to be a political battle field for the Luo against the Kenyatta government. Kenyatta had travelled to Kisumu in October 25, 1969 to open newly built hospital. This event comes barely four months after the death of Tom Mboya. The meeting ended in bloodshed with the presidential security opening fire shooing people and over 50 people were reported dead when the commotion occurred at the presidential dais.

The ideological differences were cascaded down to political parties pitting stiff wrangles between ruling party KANU and the opposition KADU. KANU and KADU were two national parties formed at the independence in 1963 with clear ideological clarity. Sadly, they differed prematurely in 1964 and in 2002 respectively (Maloba, 2018). The ideological division between KANU and KADU were of minor importance, the division being mainly ethnic. In recruitment, KANU fetched members from numerous and politically most advanced ethnic communities, Kikuyu, Luo and Akamba of which had participated in local political formations. KADU on the other hand, fetched members from the coastal region and the cattle raring communities including the Kalenjin.

KANU campaigned on total independence of Kenya under the majority rule of the newly formed independent constitution by Africans (unitary systems). KADU on the other hand, with its delegation from the Lancaster House Constitutional Conference, negotiated for and managed to attain federalism (majimbo system). KADU plan was welcomed by not only the Europeans but also the British government. All these happened in Jomo Kenyatta's watch who represented the KANU delegation. At the end, KANU abandoned its plan and adopted the British model advocated for by the KADU which provided for a bicameral legislature and for eight 'jimbos' with regional presidents (Maloba, 2018). At the independence, the concept of Majimbo became relevant in Kenya's political spheres. Since then, the concept has developed in such a way that today it determines the political atmosphere of the country when election approaches (Amutabi and Hamasi, 2023).

The Land Question

The issue of land in Kenya is complex, multilayered and highly politicized. Understanding land dynamics in Kenya invites discussions on the colonial and post colonial political contexts. This has formed the structure of property rights and across time and space, and an understanding of how political elites have used land and land access rights to change the narratives to land ownership and control (Maloba, 2018).

The process of colonization and the brutal experience of the Mau Mau left the country wounded and in a sorry state. When the country attained independence in 1963, Jomo Kenyatta inherited a scarred nation (Kenyatta, 1964). The majority of Africans were in detention. According to the demographic study done by John Blackers, about 50,000 people died. David Anderson's work indicates that 10,000 Mau Mau soldiers died due to conflict. About 7.5 million acres of land were alienated during colonization and were held in the trust of white highlands. Most of these were in the Rift Valley and Central provinces. This was followed by the declaration of about 20 percent of the valuable land as crown land with no reciprocal compensation to Africans who had been dispossessed (Kenyatta, 1964). As a result, many Africans became landless in their territory. Africans had been forced to provide free labor and denied the right to grow cash crops.

Jomo Kenyatta took over a country already torn apart because of land issues. The country was divided politically, economically, and socially following the colonial experience. During the decades of colonization, European powers had granted some favors to some small Africans. Some of these were

considered landed African bourgeoisie, who received support for political interests (Kenyatta, 1964). This according to Europeans was a perfect deal to conclude the process of independence in favor of Europeans.

The terms of independence established during the negotiation stated that redistribution of land will not be for free. That meant squatters and landless Africans, those who had no right or means to acquire or recover land, those who had no land rights, or those who had no right to acquire plots of land through traditional inheritance, were detached from Kenya's agricultural economy (Kenyatta, 1964). This led to a surge in the number of squatters. By the year 1948, it was estimated that this number surged to about 220,000 and this number continued to surge during the emergency. On the eve of independence, 92 percent of the population of Kenya then was domiciled in rural areas. The land ownership system was still collective, communal, and familial.

The *Shifta* Menace

This is one of the greatest challenges Jomo Kenyatta faced in his regime. In 1964, few months after independence, the Kenya Defense Forces waged a war against a group regarded as rebels in the then Northern Frontier District (NFD). This came to be known as *Shifta* war (Ichani, Matheka, and Wario, 2019). This was Kenya's first and only war against rebels since independence. This war lasted for 4 years with probable over 10,000 deaths. This was one of the Kenya's deadliest and bloodiest wars. The major cause of this was war was socio-economic agitations by the residents of the Northern Frontier District (NFD), who reside in both Kenya and Somalia that ignited the war thus warranting military interventions (Alio, 2022). The immediate cause of *Shifta* war was the desire from two opposing perspectives of secession and counter-secession. Throughout history, the proponents of secession and counter-secession have always clashed over internal legitimacy of unilateral declaration of independence.

Shifta war therefore, was an irredentist attempt by the members of the Somalia community residing in the NFD, who expressed their desire to join their fellow kinsmen in the republic of Somalia. Kenyan authorities adopted the name *Shifta* which is an *Amhaaric* word for bandits to depoliticize the irredentist movement and to conceal violence used to suppress military campaign (Kirui, 2019). By irredentism this work mean, a type of succession where members of an ethnic group seek to annex part of the territory of one state to the territory of another state because of common ethnicity or prior historical links. In the eve of independence in Kenya, 1963, the Somalis living in Kenya had made up their minds to separate and to join the larger part of the republic of Somalia. They were prompted by the government of Somalia to secede by Kenyan government could hear none of it. The desire to secede was catapulted by cultural feelings. The Somali living in the then Northern Frontier District (NFD) of Kenya exhibits the social cultural characteristics as their kinsmen living in Somali or Ethiopia (Brankamp, and Glück, 2022). They speak same language with very little dialectical variation. They belong to the same clan and further united by the same Islam.

Shifta war erupted as a result of failure to implement the report of the commission of inquiry which was set up to carry out a referendum to verify the desires of the Somalis in the NFD. According to the commission, five out of six sub-districts that is, Garissa, Wajir, Mandera, Isiolo and Moyale favored secession. This was approximately 86% of the total population in the NFD (Nzau and Guyo, 2018). The British administration failed to recognize the results of the referendum. The British argued that the wish of the people in NFD was against the international practice of the state, that is, the international rights outlawed the right of people to unilaterally separate from the state of which they form a part by just a mere wish.

Daniel T. Arap Moi (1978-2002) – 'Nyayo Era'

Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi served as the third vice president before ascending to become the second president of Kenya in 1978. Moi managed to take up a top position devoid a plethora of attempts from political factions to deter his ambitions. At some point, this deterrence turned to harassment from

government officials and other politicians. At some point, he thought of resigning but before he handed in the letter, his boss convinced him to keep up the faith and solder on (Mabeya, 2023). Otherwise, if he did, Kenyan history could have taken a different trajectory from the one in the records.

President Daniel T. Moi, the official second president of Kenya, 1979-2022, ruled Kenya for 24 years. This era was famously known as 'Nyayo' era, a word coined from a Kiswahili word that means footsteps. Through Nyayo philosophy, Moi presented himself to Kenya and the world as a conscious leader who would follow the footsteps of his predecessor- demised Jomo Kenyatta- in his bid to transform Kenya socially, economically and politically (Park, 2020). Indeed, to some scholars, the actions and inactions indicated clearly the intention to achieve the dreams started by his predecessor and to some scholars, this was an era marred with authoritarian rule and violation of individual's rights and freedom (Park, 2020).

Under the leadership of first president Jomo Kenyatta, the party had received some internal criticism and debate over its platform which the party tolerated, albeit to a gradually diminishing level (Muthuma, 2020). The party rarely used its loyalty pledge and its leadership structure was a myriad political upbeat that were well organized and able to endure 'factional' divisions nearly 'corporate' in character. Provincial administration was Kenyatta's tool for securing compliance with government policies and stances.

During Moi's era, the relationship between the party and the government started to change. The president was not at ease with the rising existence of other alternative means of political expression and socializations and therefore moved with speed to curtail regional and ethnic welfare societies that had long served as the political springboard for political candidates (Winder, 2023). In 1982, Moi brought to an end to all the ethnic and regional associations to a de-jure one-party system. The intention according to him was to bring to an end factional division in the ruling party KANU by creating an internal disciplinary committee within the party and proposed a system of party schools which was never saw the light of the day to instill rules of behavior and fidelity to the ruling party and the government of the day.

In June 1982, the constitution of Kenya was amended by the national assembly, making Kenya a de-jure one party state. This was closely followed by the parliamentary elections which took place in 1983. The election of 1983 was unique since the country was a one party state with the Kenya African National Union (KANU) having been made the only party the previous year through the constitutional amendments. About 750 KANU candidates stood for elections for 158 positions for National Assembly (Thomson, 2022). President Daniel Moi went further away from the political strategy that had been developed by predecessor Jomo Kenyatta in 1960s by playing an active role in the selection of the party officers and supports them, on and off, a 'youth wing' which acted as a watchdog or provided surveillance responsibilities (Park, 2020). In short, between 1980 and 1989 when the proposed office tower came to be, the party had acquired a fresh and stronger role in pursuit of political order and started to merge its boundaries with those of the office of the president or the state house. The proposed building with its statue of the president would enshrine the new order in stone and steel (Winder, 2023).

The 1982 Kenyan attempted coup

The 1982 Kenyan coup d'état attempt was a failed attempt to overthrow 'Nyayo' regime under President Daniel Moi (Goodstein, 1982). It was on 1st August, 1982 on a Sunday at 3am, when a faction of soldiers emanating from Kenya Air Force took control of Kenya airbase based in Eastleigh, few miles away from Nairobi and by 4am, the nearby Embakasi airbase had been captured. At 6am, senior officers and Sergeants captured the Voice of Kenya (VoK) radio station based in central Nairobi from where they broadcasted both in Kiswahili and English that the government has been overthrown by the military. Corporals, who worked at the behest of senior officers, led a team in an attempt to capture and bomb the Kenya's state house and the General Service Unit headquarters based in Laikipia airbase in Nanyuki. The coup was organized in a manner to coincide with the ongoing war in Lodwar- a remote town in Kenya- where senior leadership and

army units were away from Nairobi (Muellar, 1984). This worked in their advantage since no senior officer was around to break their plan.

Unfortunately, a broadcaster, Voice of Kenya (VoK) that had earlier been captured and announced the overthrowing of government by the military later turned and announced that the rebels had been defeated and President Daniel Moi was back at the helm of leadership as president (Kebschull, 1994). General Ochuka who claimed to have ruled Kenya for 6 hours and later fled to Tanzania was extradited back to Kenya. He was tried and found guilty of leading a tried coup and was hanged in 1987.

In 1991, Kenya experienced heartbreaking ethnic violence along the rift valley (Akiwumi, 1991). Tribal clashes in the then Rift Valley province started on 29th October 1991 in a farm called Miteitei located in Tinderet Division in Nandi District. The clashes involved the Nandi, one of the Kalenjin tribes against communities of Kamba, Kikuyu, Luo, Kisii, and Luhya. The clashes swiftly spread to other neighboring farms including Owiro which was historically dominated by the Luo and Kipkelion division of Kericho dominated by a multi-ethnic composition of groups of Kikuyu, Kalenjin, and Kisii. Later on to areas of Olenguruone, Molo, Londiani, and other parts of Kericho, Trans-Nzoia, Uasin Gishu, and other areas of Rift Valley. In every violent area, the targeted people were non-Maasai and non-Kalenjin communities. These groups were suddenly attacked, maimed and some injured, their properties looted and destroyed and some killed using weapons such as bows, arrows, Pangas, Swords, etc. These attacks were well coordinated and organized. They were under the cover of darkness and where attacks took place during the day, the attackers could smear their faces to hide their identities. These were aimed against the Kikuyu, Luo, Luhya, and Kisii.

The attacks were barbaric and aimed at driving away the targeted communities from their farms, thwarting their economic activities, and psychologically torturing and traumatizing them. The violence was also aimed at changing the boundaries of communities. The victims were forced to seek refuge in market centers, schools, and churches. Some improvised temporary structures were made of polythene and iron sheets. They experienced starvation as there was no food and water to drink. Their children could not go to school. Generally, there was no concern from the provincial administration and police officers regarding their welfare and security.

Unresolved Political Assassinations

This was not until 1990 when shocking news was made of the assassination of then foreign minister Robert Ouko. This was another high profile political assassination which shocked not only the nation but the whole world (Chege, 2008). On the morning of Tuesday February 13, 1990, Kenyans were thrown into shock by the news of murder of then foreign affairs minister Robert Ouko. The minister was first announced to be missing before his mutilated body was discovered by the herders at the foot of Got Alila near Muhoroni, just 2.8km from his Koru farm (Branch and Cheeseman, 2008). He was shot and his body had been partially burnt and become faceless in fact there was no more face to bury and was buried with face masks.

Mwai Emilio Kibaki, 2002 to 2012

Mwali Emilio Kibaki was the fourth Vice President of Kenya before he became the third president. Before 2002, Mwai Kibaki had tried two times both in 1992 and 1997 to be the president. During the 27 December 2002 polls, the opposition alliance named National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) won the election. Mwai Kibaki became the president and has been the party's flag bearer. The 2002 polls marked a great turn-around in the politics of Kenya ever. Formation of political alliances behind it and after the election led to the ousting of the ruling party KANU which had enjoyed an atmosphere of authority and dominance since independence. The Kenya African National Union conceded defeat in a historical proclamation. It marked the first-time political alliances were formed unanimously to challenge the dominant political party devoid

of tribe or clan. Both Mwai Kibaki and Raila Odinga, who were on the opposition front united to defeat KANU.

The historic post-election violence of 2007/08 tested Kenyan political stability (Truth, J. and Reconciliation Commission, 2008). The experience almost plunged the country into civil strife, which reached its full-blown. It exposed the country's rotten system (Klaus, 2020). It ruptured wounds of irregularities and inequalities on various issues, including land allocation, a pervasive culture of impunity, the overbearing presidency and ethnic-based power, dishonesty of the largest scale among the political elites, malfeasance, and rabble, which pushed the country over the precipice. Post-election violence is a norm in Kenyan politics since the advent of multi-party politics in 1991 although the violence experienced in 2007 was unprecedented (Truth, J. and Reconciliation Commission, 2008). Post-election violence of 2007/08 was the most destructive and deadly ever experienced in Kenya. It was also the most widespread violence ever experienced in Kenya. On the side of state security agencies, the agencies failed institutionally to anticipate, prepare for as well as contain the violence. This was evidenced as most personnel in the security sector were found guilty of not only committing human rights violations but also committing certain acts of violence on innocent citizens. This process exposed the rotten system of security systems in the country.

Post-Election Violence of 2007/08 had the same resemblance to ethnic clashes experienced in 1991. It gave clear evidence of the institutionalization of violence among Kenyan communities over the years (Truth, J. and Reconciliation Commission, 2008). The 1990 ethnic clashes exhibited some armed militias which were mobilized on ethnic extractions. The government failed to demobilize such groups. Business groups and political elites took advantage by reactivating them for violence experienced after the general election. The personalization of power in the office of the presidency is a major factor that causes election-related conflict. A lot of benefits follow ethnic groups associated with the person of the president. This makes various communities exert power to acquire and maintain the position of president. Economic marginalization and inequalities were viewed in ethno-geographic terms. For instance, Slum areas of Nairobi exhibited PEV mores compared to the rest of the country.

The experience called the attention of international communities and the United Nations. Kofi Annan, former secretary general of the United Nations was sent to find a truce between worrying parties. This led to the signing of an agreement leading to the formation of a coalition government. The coalition government had both incumbent Mwai Kibaki as the president and Raila Odinga as the Prime Minister. This was one of the first processes of achieving national cohesion and integration.

Uhuruto regime, 2013-2022

Kenyan democracy was tested for the first time after the promulgation of the 2010 constitution during the lead-up to the 2013 election and after (The Constitution of Kenya, 2010). This was a tense but relatively peaceful general election that occurred on 9th March of the same year. The Independence Electoral and Boundary Commission (IEBC) announced Uhuru Kenyatta as the president-elect under the Jubilee coalition after having garnered 50.07 percent of the total votes cast. He was elected on a joint ticket with William Samoei Ruto as his running mate who became a de-jure deputy president. His greatest competitor, then Prime Minister Raila Amolo Odinga went to court in a bid to challenge his win court. Irrespective of all the allegations of technical failures, electoral malpractice, and irregularities, the Supreme Court of Kenya validated the election of Uhuru Kenyatta.

Although Mr. Odinga accepted the court's decision on the electoral petition, civil society and Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) continued to raise questions concerning shortcomings in electoral processes and their impacts on Kenyan democracy. It was upon the elected president Uhuru Kenyatta and his running mate William Ruto to restore people's confidence in the electoral process and show total commitment to the implementation of the 2010 constitution more so on matters of devolution, land reforms, national

reconciliation, and total fight against corruption. Failure to do so the country was going to be polarized and alienated from the international community

In as much as there were clashes preceding the elections of 2013, and following the verdict of the Supreme Court, the country tried as much as possible to abstain from a repeat of the 2007/08 post-election violence. Several factors contributed to this peaceful election. Some of them include, a consensus reached by political elites and entire citizens not to turn the entire country back to the brink of war. Pressure from the international community more so the International Criminal Court (ICC) cases, restriction of freedom to assemble, media self-censorship as well as the imposition of security personnel on hot spots helped in averting unrest

Table 1: Previous Efforts towards Nationalism, Statehood and Social Cohesion in Kenya

Nation building efforts by previous presidents in Kenya			
Year	**President**	**National cohesion strategy**	**Approaches**
1964–1978	**Jomo Kenyatta**	– Harambee Philosophy -National language policy -African Nationalism and Conservatism	– Unity of the country – Introduction of English and Swahili as national languages – Promote African cultural values – Sessional Paper No. 10
1978–2002	**Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi**	– Nyayo Philosophy -Eradicate wayward cultures -Youth programs (4k clubs) -Environmental conservation	– Free milk, -End FGM and Promote girl child education – KANU -NDP merger in 1997 -Promote regionalism and regional integration
2002–2013	**Mwai Kibaki**	-Inclusive development and Free education -National development plans – Coalition government 2010 New constitution	-Establishing the National Cohesion and Integration (Act No. 12 of 2008) -Truth Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC) – Constitution referendum – Power sharing government (NARC Coalition – Kenya Vison 2030 – Attempted reforms in the judiciary

2013–2022	**Uhuru Kenyatta**	-Implementation of the 2010 constitution – Handshake -Distributed development	-Operationalization of devolved system of government – Reconciling with political adversaries – Massive infrastructure projects

CONCLUSION

There are many discussions over the need for political reforms in Kenya and how such changes are likely to impact on the country. In fact, since 1964, Kenyans have been preoccupied with the discussions about political reforms with numerous efforts starting with the abolition of the Westminster model of government just a year after independence to the introduction of the devolved system of government in 2013. Yet, despite the many political reforms in the country, they seem to be inadequate when it comes to national cohesion and unity. Perhaps we can lay the blame on lack of innovative political reforms that will take into account not only the unique structural and demographic features of Kenya, but also the aspect of human nature which is often ignoed. The complexities of Kenya's ethnic composition and decades old stereotypes need to be dismantled in the new political dispensation and a new understanding of who is a Kenyan, what obligations do they have towards the republic as well as the roles they have to play in ensuring the caliber of leaders governing the country constitutes the best the Kenya can offer will contribute immensely towards the rebirth of a new nation, one where its citizens are united and there is cohesion.

Whereas the spirit and changes in the country's development agenda aim at achieving national cohesion and integration, the attempts remain sound and committed mainly because it displays tendencies and strategies toward national unity in Kenya. Various commissions of inquiries into national unity have laid down major steps which need to be implemented. Some of them include the Kriegler report on 2007 election malpractices and Waki report of 2007 on Post Election Violence (PEV) and Ndungu's report on land questions.

Kenyan leaders need to take these reports and initiatives by revisiting and converting these recommendations into actionable plans. In as much as most of these recommendations focused on land, there are some which involved constitutional reforms such as the Building Bridges Initiatives which came about after the historic handshake in March 2018. Other constitutional reforms led to the promulgation of the 2010 constitution which has served the country very well.

However, there are vital issues that are yet to be addressed. A plethora of reforms focusing on systematic and structural conflict drivers, unemployment rate, resettlement of internally displaced persons (IDPs), land reforms, regional and socio-economic inequalities, weak institutional framework, ethnic tensions, and culture of impunity are factors that are yet to be implemented. Up to now, accountability for 2007/08 post-election violence is yet to be solved. Cases are still resting with the International Criminal Court.

Major causes of conflict during and after President Daniel Moi's regime include competition for socio-economic resources and getting access to and control of limited resources. Increased unemployment among the youths makes them vulnerable to being recruited into militia groups and bandits who are used to raid the neighboring communities for resources. Other intentions include meeting their cultural obligations and another selfish economic aggrandizement.

Poor or limited infrastructural development for mobility like roads, railways, air, and water make it difficult for security agencies to respond to various contingency services. This acts as an inspiration for inter-ethnic violence to persist unabated. Environmental factors put pressure on limited economic resources and thus

precipitate ethnic violence. Stereotypes attitudes and the role of media sometimes play a major role in precipitating ethnic animosity which ultimately results in ethnic conflict.

Finally, the presence of small and light weapons and other sophisticated guns is a major factor in precipitating inter-ethnic conflict across the country. There are important psychological and Historical factors that enable the use of weapons viable. This is the best reason to explain why some illegal ownership of guns takes place among communities in Kenya. This is an issue that needs to be investigated.

REFERENCES

1. Awino, Z. B., & Kithinji, C. N. (2012). Bottlenecks in the execution of Kenya vision 2030 strategy: An empirical study.
2. Akiwumi, A.M., 1999. Report of the judicial commission appointed to inquire into tribal clashes in Kenya. The Commission.
3. AMUTABI, M. and HAMASI, L., 2023. Interviews with people who had political consciousness after independence have revealed the deep-seated suspicion between KADU and KANU and their support for federalism on one side and centralized administration on the other. Informant 8 said: KADU supported federalism because there was evidence in how positions were. The Palgrave Handbook of Contemporary Kenya, p.71.
4. Alio, M.S., 2022. Kenyan NFD Muslim Communities: The Painful Past and Pending Justice. International Journal of Islamic Thought, 21.
5. Barkan, J.D., 1993. Kenya: Lessons from a flawed election. J. Democracy, 4, p.85.
6. Brown, S. and Sriram, C.L., 2012. The big fish won't fry themselves: Criminal accountability for post-election violence in Kenya. African Affairs, 111(443), pp.244-260.
7. Brankamp, H. and Glück, Z., 2022. Camps and counterterrorism: Security and the remaking of refuge in Kenya. Environment and Planning D: Society and Space, 40(3), pp.528-548.
8. Emmanuel, C., 2012. Quick reading history and government.
9. Herring, P.M., 2010. Historically Black college and university presidents: Personal and professional challenges, career paths, and leadership characteristics (Doctoral dissertation, Fayetteville State University).
10. Himbara, D., 1994. Kenyan capitalists, the state, and development. East African Publishers.
11. Ichani, X.F., Matheka, R.M. and Wario, H.A., 2019. Debating on Success of the Kenya Counter Insurgency on the Shifta War: Between Double Success and Little Consolation.
12. Kebschull, H.G., 1994. Operation" Just Missed": Lessons from failed coup attempts. Armed Forces& Society, 20(4), pp.565-579.
13. Kiruthu, F. and Mbataru, P., 2014. Globalization and conflict in central Kenya: the case of Nyeri county, 1980-2010. Research on Humanities and Social Sciences, 4(19), pp.64-72.
14. Kanyinga, K., 2013. The legacy of the white highlands: Land rights, ethnicity and the post-2007 election violence in Kenya. In Kenya's Uncertain Democracy (pp. 66-85). Routledge.
15. Kisaka, M.O. and Nyadera, I.N., 2019, December. Ethnicity and politics in Kenya's turbulent path to democracy and development. In Journal of Social Policy Conferences (No. 76, pp. 159-180). Istanbul University.
16. Kirui, P.K., 2019. Being a Kenyan-Somali: A Security Threat or Neglected Citizen?.
17. Lawton, W.C., 1901. The republic of Plato: an ideal commonwealth. Co-Operative Publication Society.
18. Moskowitz, K., 2022. Power and the Presidency in Kenya: The Jomo Kenyatta Years by Anaïs Angelo.
19. Mabeya, D., 2023. Recognition Ambiguity! Kenya's Foreign Policy Towards Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Israel, And Palestine Under Moi Era (1978-1990). Qeios.
20. Mueller, S.D., 1984. Government and opposition in Kenya, 1966–9. The Journal of Modern African Studies, 22(3), pp.399-427.

21. Nasong'o, W.S., 2016. Kenya at fifty and the betrayal of nationalism: The paradoxes of two family dynasties. In Kenya After 50: Reconfiguring Historical, Political, and Policy Milestones (pp. 165-187). New York: Palgrave Macmillan US.

22. Nzau, M. and Guyo, M., 2018. The Challenge of Securing Kenya: Past Experience, Present Challenges and Future Prospects. The Journal of Social Encounters, 2(1), pp.37-59.

23. Otenyo, E., 2023. Power and the presidency in Kenya: the Jomo Kenyatta years: by Anaïs Angelo, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2020, ix+ 306 pp., £ 22.99 (paperback), ISBN 9781108713832.

24. Park, J.K., 2020. Blaming the Moi era: Memories of bad governance among Eastlands residents in Nairobi, Kenya. Memory Studies, 13(4), pp.691-707.

25. Truth, J. and Reconciliation Commission, 2008. Commissions of Inquiry-CIPEV Report (Waki Report).

26. Travis, A., 2016. The leave campaign made three key promises–are they keeping them. The Guardian, 27.

27. Wam were, K.W., 2003. Negative ethnicity: from bias to genocide. Seven Stories Press