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Kissing the Cadaver: Elite Manipulation and Ethnic Violence in Kenya, 1960 – 2008

Paul Njoroge Muiru

Assistant Lecturer, Department of History, Kenyatta University, Kenyatta University, Kenya

Ph.D. Student, Kenyatta University, Kenya

Department of Arts and Humanities, Chuka University, Kenya

Abstract:

When the post-election violence erupted immediately after the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) announced the December 2007 presidential results, many people were shocked at how fast the country descended into a Hobbesian war of all against all. Yet, a careful reading of the country's post-colonial history was replete with vital pointers to the precarious nature of inter-ethnic relations and how such relations jeopardized the nation building project. This research, conducted in Njoro, Rongai and Molo areas of Nakuru County, former Rift Valley Province demonstrates that elite manipulation, not land, remain the most serious threat to peace in the Rift Valley. Through a combination of both primary and secondary sources, the study displaces the narrative of historical injustices such as land as the main cause of violent ethnic based conflicts in the County. Oral interviews, archival records, reports of inquiry on ethnic violence, land commission reports all seem to indict the political class. To interpret data, the study used the elite manipulation approach.

Keywords: Elite, ethnic violence, post- election violence, cadaver

1. Introduction

1.1. Context of the Problem

The making of modern Kenya, beginning in 1895, when the territory became part of the British East Africa Protectorate, entailed an elaborate process of land alienation to pave way for the construction of the railway line linking Mombasa and Uganda. More land was needed to put up administrative offices of the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC). The forcible removal of Africans by the incoming regime was accompanied by unprecedented use of violence against the people of Kenya (Lonsdale, in Ochieng, 1989). Recent studies have demonstrated that violence and a criminal law was part of British society and that its export throughout the world was a significant, though, under-examined part of imperial history (Wiener, 2009: ix). The use of violence by the ruling colonial elite continued up to the time the *Mau* rebellion was crushed in 1956. (Anderson, 2005; Elkins, 2005; Branch, 2009; Hewitt, 2013). Tragically, the ideals that *Mau* had fought for so hard were betrayed by the negotiations that took place at Lancaster (1960 -1962). These negotiations were not meant to prepare Africans for independence; rather, they were designed to prepare a Britain friendly African elite to take over the state. Kanogo aptly refers to the whole post-Mau Mau decolonization program in Kenya as Europeanization of the transfer of Power (Kanogo, 1987). The betrayal of the independence aspirations, coupled with the vicious struggle for political power among the elites have made violence part of Kenya's body politic (Oyugi; 1994; Murunga & Nasongo, 2007).

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The role of elite manipulation in violent ethnic conflicts in Kenya has not been significantly appreciated by scholars. In Nakuru County, conventional studies trace the root of the problem to historical injustices, primarily land. However, the events that followed the indictment of Six Prominent Kenyans at the International Criminal Court (ICC), debunk the narrative that land issues lie at the heart of ethnic conflicts in the region. Within a year after the naming of Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto (both influential Kikuyu and Kalenjin politicians respectively), the two crafted a political alliance that brought together their two communities in a way hitherto unimagined in Kenya's political history. What happened to the alleged land issue that divides the Kikuyu and the Kalenjin? Whether genuine or not, the two leaders (now President and Deputy President respectively) have pledged that never again will their ethnic groups fight over elections. Their repeated public declaration opens a space within which the role of elite manipulation in ethnic violence can be examined.

1.3. Research Question

This research was guided by one fundamental question:

- i. How has political elites in Kenya hijacked critical transitional moments and manipulated their ethnic groups to take up weapons against 'ethnic enemies'?

1.4. Objectives of the Study

- i. To discuss the legacy of *Mau Mau* on Inter – Ethnic Relations
- ii. To examine the role of elites in shaping ethnic relations in the period 1963 – 1991.
- iii. To interrogate how pluralism impacted on identity politics

1.5. Review of Literature and Theoretical Framework

1.5.1. Review of Literature

Ethnic conflicts have received substantial scholarly attention in the post-Cold War period. Goldstein (2003) points out that the end of the Cold War led to a proliferation of ethnic warfare in many parts of the world. In this study, selected works are reviewed because they shed more light on the nature of ethnic conflicts wherever they occur.

Toft (2003) interrogates the primacy of territory in ethnic violence in the former Soviet Union and argues that to an ethnic group, the homeland is sacred, eternal and indivisible. Therefore, two groups that claim the same piece of land are bound to fight. In the area where this study was done, the Kalenjin and Kikuyu ethnic groups have contesting claims over land. While the former argue that they are the indigenous group in the Rift Valley, the latter argue that it was their labor and sweat built the White Highlands during the colonial period (Kanogo, 1987; Furedi, 1993). Curiously, the first two waves of violence in 1992 and 1997 were initially framed as land clashes. It was only after the Post-election violence of 2007-8, that the categorization of the conflict as ethnic violence received wide acceptance. This research acknowledges that in Nakuru County, land has been a source of violent conflicts between the Kalenjin and the Kikuyu, it goes a step further and privileges the role elites have played in ethnicization of the land issue in the area.

Drakulic (2004) novel is an examination of the war criminals prosecuted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia at The Hague. Until 1991, Yugoslavia's people belonged to six different nationalities, spoke three different languages and had three different religions who had worked together, went to school together, married each other and lived in relative harmony for forty-five years. Between 1991 and 1995, the country fell apart in a terrible and bloody war that left two hundred thousand dead, displaced two million and produced a number of new states. While the world and Yugoslavs were surprised by the outbreak of violence, the author opines that there was a recorded history of bloodshed which could easily be manipulated by elites to antagonize ethnic groups against each other. The work emphasizes that even though the atrocities committed during the war was executed by people who seemed so ordinary, politicians such as Slobodan Milosevic, Radislav Krstic, Biljana Plavsic played a key role in mobilizing for ethnic cleansing. Without them, the massacres that attracted the attention of the whole world would not have occurred. Kenya too, and Nakuru County in particular has a violent past that politicians have taken advantage of to advance their personal ambitions.

Biziouras (2014) explores the political economy of ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka and examines how rival political leaders are able to convince their ethnic group members – the Tamil and Sinhalese - to follow them into violent conflict. Just like Kenya, Sri Lanka was, at the point of independence in 1948, predicted as a success story in the developing world. However, in July, 1983, a violent ethnic conflict that pitted the Sinhalese against the Tamils began and did not come to an end until 2009. The conflict claimed 90,000 lives and displaced more than a million. Bizioura informs this study in the way it connects elite manipulation with the goal of controlling the state. The assertion that successful ethnic mobilization drives can pay off materially resonates well with the politics of exclusion championed by many Kenyan politicians since independence.

Tishkov and Rupesinghe's work (1996), explores conflict in the Horn of Africa, former Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, India, the Basque region of Spain, Northern Ireland among other areas. They argue that in a new post-Cold War order, it is necessary to redesign the state and its institution so as to accommodate new forms of governance in multi-ethnic societies. The work also points out that some ethnic conflicts occur because of historically disputed territories. Moreover, the authors also interrogate the role played by political elites in ethnic violence. For the purposes of this study, the role of elites in mobilizing their ethnic groups to attack perceived enemies is important.

Mamdani (1996) informs this study because it analyses the concept of citizenship in post-colonial Africa and Rwanda in particular. To him, ethnic citizenship appears to be stronger than civic citizenship. This research notes that to ascend or retain power, the Kenyan politician have readily invoked ethnicity and frustrated the growth of a supra-ethnic consciousness.

A number of articles in Adedeji's (Ed) work (1999) looks at the role of elites and argue that a conflict started by the elites engulfs entire ethnic groups. Contributors to the book observe that competition for resources, myths and stereotypes that degrade other ethnic groups as well as the notions of insider-outsider dichotomy are at the center of ethnic conflicts in Sub Saharan Africa. Over the years, scholars interested in conflict in Nakuru County have identified competition for resources as being at the root of violence among resident ethnic groups. However, little attention has been made to research how elites have invented and circulated ethnic stereotypes that create insider – outsider categories responsible for the expulsion of certain groups from the County. This study notes that derogatory names such as *madoadoa* (stains, spots) and *sangara* (weeds) were often used by politicians to refer to those considered as foreigners in the Rift Valley.

Koigi (2008) attempts to analyze the role of negative ethnicity in fanning ethnic violence. He opines that the way politics has been organized in postcolonial Kenya – along ethnic lines - is responsible for the seemingly intractable ethnic conflicts in the country. He views ethnic conflicts as a struggle between political elites camouflaged as an ethnic struggle for resources. More fundamentally, he

observes that the banning of the socialist based Kenya People's Union (KPU) by the first President, Jomo Kenyatta in 1969, marked the end of class based politics. Henceforth, ethnicity became the new avenue for political mobilization. Koigi's work is important to this study as it highlights the central role elite manipulation plays in violent ethnic conflicts in the area of study.

Akiwumi's Report (1999) connected ethnic violence in Rift Valley, Coast and Western Provinces with the system of land administration and the politicization of ethnicity in the run up to the 1992 and 1997 General Elections. The Report named prominent individuals in President Daniel Arap Moi's government and recommended that they be investigated further. However, none of them was ever interrogated.

The Commission of Inquiry into Post- Election Violence (CIPEV, 2008) commonly referred to as the Waki Report noted that the 2007-08 violence resembled the ethnic clashes of the 1990's. According to its findings, violence has become institutionalized in Kenya since 1991 because the ethnic militias involved in previous massacres were never demobilized. Consequently, political and business leaders can make use of the militias for a variety of reasons, including but not restricted to, winning elections. Among the reasons identified for ethnic violence was that there is a feeling among certain ethnic groups of historical marginalization in land allocation, national resources as well as access to public goods and services. This has been used by politicians to create an atmosphere of tension and hatred that ultimately lead to inter-ethnic violence. The Commission's acknowledgement that violence has been part and parcel of Kenya's electoral processes since the restoration of multiparty politics in 1991 and that elite manipulation was largely to blame for the PEV is a critical entry point for this research.

Branch (2011) is a bird's view of Kenya's political history since independence in 1963. The work attempts to locate contemporary Kenyan struggles with the country's post-independent governance. The author is vociferous in his belief that Kenya had a false start. Every government since 1963 has betrayed the people of Kenya. The State has been captured by a clique of self-serving elites that have impoverished and balkanized citizens along ethnic lines. He points out that the ethnic clashes witnessed in Kenya in the last twenty-five years were politically sponsored for an obvious political end – to capture or keep political power. This is an argument that this study sought to subject to an empirical study.

The literature that has been reviewed reveals that wherever ethnic conflicts occur, there are genuine grievances that need to be addressed. Such issues include land and providing democratic alternatives in times of rapid political transitions such as the end of the Cold War. However, the presence of those grievances do not necessary imply that they can only be sorted out through violence. In any case, how comes that the outbreak of ethnic violence coincides with periods of high political activities such as General Elections? Who frames an issue as important to an ethnic group? Who retrieves such grievances from obscurity and makes them part of public discourse in uncertain times? Who circulates divisive narratives? These are some of the questions the literature reviewed fails to adequately respond to.

1.5.2. Theoretical Framework

There exist a number of theories that attempt to explain why ethnic conflicts degenerate to violence. The theory of indivisible territory emphasizes the importance of territory/ land in ethnic violence. According to this theory, control of territory is key to understanding violence between groups. However, empirical evidence seems to suggest that violence would be limited in scope and short lived in the absence of an outside mobilization.

A number of scholars have also interrogated ethnic violence by focusing on the material conditions of ethnic groups within a state. This perspective is hoisted on three major planks: development and modernization, relative deprivation and intrinsic worth. Political development and economic modernization arguments look at the relative development of regionally concentrated ethnic groups within a state's borders. As the economy and state structures modernize, individuals should transfer their loyalties from their ethnic group to the state, leading to a demise in ethnic identity. This in turn should cause ethnic conflict and violence to diminish. In this theory, any ethnic conflict and violence that remain are the product of uneven development and modernization. Equalize economic development and ethnic conflict disappears. This approach has been tested and found wanting. Development and modernization did not lead to a decline in the salience of ethnic identities or regionally based ethnic conflict and violence in Spain and North Ireland.

The group of scholars who argue for relative deprivation focus on resource competition among individuals who identify with a group. They claim that violence stems principally from perceptions of a decline in economic or political conditions after a period of improvement. The resulting competition for resources sparks collective action among individuals, who invariably form groups. As one group mobilizes, other groups are spurred into action. As these groups compete, conflict and violence erupt. The Achilles Heel of relative deprivation is that it is difficult to test this theory adequately. Within any given society, individuals and groups have different notions of what constitutes a relative decline or improvement in their standard of living. The theory provides no guidelines on how to measure the perceptions of individuals in a society and how to aggregate those perceptions across groups.

Ancient – hatred (A.H) arguments explain violent conflict as stemming from long – standing historical enmities among ethnic groups. They tend to place great weight on the linguistic, cultural, racial and religious ties of individuals within a group. These ties are passed down from generation to generation. Individuals so socialized are considered as being inside the group – they, together with “me”, constitute “we”. Those outside this socialized group are “they”. Because individual identity is so directly tied to that of the group, when the group is threatened, individuals, as members of that group, also feel threatened. Ethnic violence emerges when each group attempts to maintain its boundaries against what it perceives as the depredations of historical enemies. The ancient – hatred argument suffers on three accounts. First, many ethnic conflicts are not ancient. They may be modern phenomena that can be traced back for only decades as opposed to centuries. Second, this argument cannot explain why a group that fights wars also cooperates with the group it is fighting against some of the time. Ethnic groups cooperate with one another most of the time. Third, this explanation cannot account why some cases escalate to violence and others do not.

A third approach, Elite Manipulation (E.M), emphasizes the role of political leaders in exhorting the masses to violence. Elite Manipulation (E.M) approaches straddle material and non-material explanations. Some scholars focus on the material incentives that leaders use to rally support, and others turn to non-material incentives, such as a leader's charisma and ability to evoke history and national identity. Elite manipulation approaches assume that passive masses can be stirred to violence by the oratorical skills of charismatic leaders. Thus nationalism is a tool used to maintain power. Their privileged access to the State media enables them to reconstruct national identities, placing themselves at the vanguard of a new national mobilization. Slobodan Milosevic, for instance, invoked both the history of the Serbian nation as a victim of atrocities dating back for centuries and the threat by the secessionist republic of Croatia and Slovenia to the well-being of Yugoslavia. According to Milosevic, Serbs needed to rally to avoid falling victim again to the Croats and to save the Yugoslav economic system from collapse. This explanatory approach, although with inherent weaknesses, has a strong prima facie appeal. Nationalist leaders certainly appear to have been responsible for much violence in the 20th century.

2. Methodology

2.1. Area of Study

This research was carried out in three constituencies of Nakuru County; Molo, Kuresoi and Rongai. The County has eight constituencies; Nakuru Town, Subukia, Molo, Njoro, Gilgil, Kuresoi, Rongai and Naivasha. The County has been synonymous with ethnic and political conflict in the 1992, 1997 and 2007 General Elections. The various reports of inquiry established to investigate ethnic violence noted that the genesis of violence revolved around the re-introduction of multi-party politics in 1991. Non-Kalenjin communities especially the Kikuyu, Kisii, Luhya and Luo supported the return of plural politics but the Kalenjin and Maasai communities, then supporters of the ruling Kenya African National Union (KANU) were opposed to any challenge on KANU's hold on power. A total of thirty-six oral interviews were conducted. The oral interviews were complemented by archival sources. The Reports of the various commissions of inquiry on ethnic violence were also relied to determine the causes of ethnic violence in the County. Published and unpublished works such as books, theses and articles in books and newspapers were also employed in order to shed more light on the subject under investigation, that is, the role of elites in Kenya's ethnic violence.

3. Discussion of the Findings

3.1. The Legacy of Mau Mau revolt on Inter-Ethnic Relations (1960 – 1962)

A major motive for the outbreak of the *Mau Mau* rebellion was land. The movement wanted to effect forced land transfer from European settlers in the White Highlands to Africans, especially the Kikuyu. Indeed, soil/ land was mentioned in a number of *Mau Mau* songs and oaths. Even though the Kikuyu were not residents of the Rift Valley at the time of European annexation of the territory, they had come to see themselves as entitled to the region's fertile land (Kanogo, 1987). Yet, there were other actors that were also interested in the Rift Valley. Such groups included the European settlers, African businessmen and landless Africans from other ethnic groups. These competing interests over land made the transition to independence difficult (Furedi, 1989).

The military defeat of the *Mau Mau* in 1956 and the start of constitutional conference at Lancaster whose aim was to come up with an arrangement for handing over power to an African leadership raised the stakes for land even higher. For one, the *Mau Mau* leadership was left out in the negotiations. Second, militant *Mau Mau* leaders were aware of the limitations inherent in constitutional political parties. Third, the formation of Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU) and the Kenya African National Union (KANU) split the African community along ethnic lines. It is also worth noting that the Kalenjin Political Alliance (KPA) was one of the tribal organizations that had come together to form KADU (Kyle, 1999).

KADU advocated for regionalism (*majimbo*) where minority ethnic groups such as the Kalenjin and the Maasai would have control of land in the Rift Valley. On the other hand, KANU rooted for a centralized government where decisions would be made in Nairobi, not in the *jimbos* (regions). The perception that KADU was close to the settler led political party, the New Kenya Party (NPK) increased its abhorrence among the big tribes, the Luo and the Kikuyu. In particular, the Kikuyu thought that KADU was determined to lock them out of the White Highlands.

Consequently, in the period 1960 – 1962, ex- *Mau Mau* detainees regrouped under the banner of the Kenya Land and Freedom Army (KLFA). The KLFA was composed of hard core ex- *Mau Mau* leaders and followers who were prepared to use physical violence to achieve their objectives: land in the White Highlands and national independence. The organization sought to ensure that land in the Rift Valley did not get into the wrong hands, such as the loyalist Kikuyu, the Kalenjin, the Maasai or even the settlers who might have wanted to stay after independence (Kanogo, 1987). Chege (O.I, 2010) was categorical that 'a fresh war would have broken out had KADU won in the independence bargain'.

Kyle (1999) connects KLFA activities with the million – acre scheme, an ambitious resettlement programme that was aimed at providing Kikuyu families with land. The political objective behind this scheme was to ensure a smooth transition to independence. By mid-1962, intelligence reports showed that "KLFA was conducting oathing and drilling its members in readiness for war. The oath takers were to steal guns, eliminate KADU and kill Jomo Kenyatta if he sells (betrayed) the country" (Kyle, 1999).

While KLFA was doing this, Kalenjin political leaders such as William Murgor were warning that the Kikuyu should move out of the Rift Valley. At a meeting in Iten, Murgor is reported to have said that:

- If the government cannot move the Kikuyu squatters from the Kapsabet forest, we shall have to take steps to do it. Do you support me? (Cries of 'Yes! Yes!') ... The school opened for the Kikuyu children should be closed... if Kenyatta orders the Kikuyu in Nakuru to declare war on the rest of the tribes we are ready for them" (Kyle, 1999).

The above excerpt provides insight into ethnic relations between the Kikuyu and the Kalenjin during the decolonization period. It is clear that as the country prepared for independence, ethnic demagogues were already beginning to drive a wedge between various communities that would ultimately have to live side by side in the post-independent period. Besides, the activities of the KLFA in Nakuru District in the period 1960 – 1962 helped to heighten ethnic tensions in the area. KLFA was exclusively Kikuyu formation. It had operational cells at Molo, Njoro and Elburgon (in Nakuru district) from where it administered an oath to its adherents.

Ethnic consciousness was further heightened by the hearings of the Regional Boundaries Commission. The aim of the commission was to look into the details of defining the future areas of the regions (so as to comply with the quasi federal arrangement proposed at the Lancaster House Conference). In its public hearings, the leaders of the various ethnic groups attempted to assign the Rift Valley within their sphere of influence (Wanjala, 2000). The fear of ethnic violence large scale ethnic violence was so real that members of the various ethnic groups in Nakuru carried two party cards at all times- one for KANU and the other one for KADU. Instructively, ethnic clashes broke out in Nakuru Town in January 1961. A joint Kikuyu, Luo and Kamba armed resistance against the Kalenjin seemed very real during this period (Furedi, 1989). By the time of independence in 1963, there was widespread mutual suspicion among the various ethnic groups; this suspicion spilled over into the post-independence period.

3.2. Elites and the shaping of Ethnic- Relations, 1963 – 1991

Soon after independence, there were internal changes within KANU and KADU. Both parties suffered from internal factions. In KANU, a group of prominent leaders such as OgingaOdinga, Fred Kubai, BildadKaggia and AchiengOnoko differed with the way Kenyatta and his allies fiddled with the land question (Kanyinga, 2009; Materu, 2015). This group, 'constructed from below' was eventually forced out of government through the machinations of Kenyatta's allies. On the other hand, the same group worked hard to ensure the collapse of regionalism. The regions (*jimbos*) were denied funds by the central government. KADU leaders were persuaded to defect to KANU. Moreover, leaders in KADU differed on whether areas like Trans – Nzoia should be in Western or Rift Valley Provinces. In this circumstances, many in KADU crossed the floor and joined KANU.

In 1966, Kenyatta dropped OgingaOdinga as his vice president. After a brief stint with Joseph Murumbi as Vice President, he appointed Daniel ArapMoi, a senior Kalenjin member of parliament, as his second in command. By this appointment, the president was playing an ethnic card. As argued earlier, the Kalenjin were opposed to Kikuyu acquisition of land in the Rift Valley. The appointment of Moi was meant to silence Kalenjin opposition while at the same time make the province safe for the Kikuyu (Muiru, 2012). Asked whether it was impossible to resettle the Kikuyu in their native Central Province, respondents to this study pointed out that Kenyatta and his allies such as MbiyuKoinange had all along been keen to inherit the vast coffee and tea estates left by the departing settlers. Land upon which such plantations stood had initially belonged to thousands of Kikuyu rural families. This land had been appropriated by the colonial government six decades earlier. To deal with the landless Kikuyu, the Kenyatta government decided to settle them far away in areas such as Olenguruone in Nakuru district (Olengoywo, O.I, 2010). Kenyatta and his allies were more interested in scattering potential Kikuyu resistance than in resettling them. It is not a wonder that areas like Olenguruone became theatres of ethnic violence in the early 1990's.

3.3. The Assassination of Tom Mboya

The assassination of Thomas Joseph Mboya, the Minister for Economic Development and Planning on July 5, 1969 is said to have increased ethnic intolerance particularly in areas of the Rift Valley where the Kikuyu had been settled in large numbers after independence. For instance, on July 17, 1969, a group of armed Kalenjin youths from Turbo beat up two of their Kikuyu counterparts. Local Nandi (a sub-group of the Kalenjin) at Turbo were also accused of burning down Kikuyu homes and beating Kikuyu settlers (July 18, KNA KA/6/52). Although a Luo, Mboya had endeared himself to Kenyans across ethnic groups as a patriot who had transcended ethnic loyalties. Matters were made worse by the suspicions that President Kenyatta's close Kikuyu ministers were involved in the murder. Branch, (2011) notes that:

- As more and more of his (Mboya's) supporters turned up at the hospital (Nairobi Hospital) the crowd became overwhelmingly Luo in composition, and proceeded to shout anti-Kikuyu slogans at bystanders. A Kikuyu priest called to administer the last rites was forcibly removed from the hospital ward by the angry mourners. When Mboya's body was taken to his hospital home, a number of Kikuyu who tried to pay their last respects were beaten up.

In the same month, Jean Marie Seroney, member of parliament for Tindiret, a constituency in Nandi district led other Nandi leaders in issuing the Nandi Hills Declaration that laid claim to all Nandi land occupied by non Kalenjins. The declaration, made at Kapng'etunymade it clear that the Nandi would use force to resist further encroachment on their land and recover that which had been lost to migrant communities. Many respondents recalled that it was around this time that the Kalenjin began to refer to them as '*bunyiot*' which means an enemy. It was also around the same time that the concept of '*madoadoa*' (spots) evolved. To drive his point home, Seroney said that '*Sisi Wanandihatutaki Cheplang'et* (We, the Nandi people, have rejected to live with the leopard). The symbol of a leopard was powerful. It pointed out the spots of a leopard's skin as something undesirable, created the imagery of the vulnerability of the Nandi while at the same time implied that ethnic homogeneity was a desirable objective. The *madoadoa* discourse would be rekindled by latter day Kalenjin leaders to counter the calls for pluralism in the early 1990s.

The year 1991 fundamentally changed inter-ethnic relations in the area. The struggle to restore multi-party democracy in Kenya was made emotive and divisive by political elites. President Daniel ArapMoi was outrightly opposed to pluralism. He argued that many

political parties would divide Kenyans along ethnic lines and plunge the country into bloodshed (Gecaga, 2007). Some informants for this study were careful to note that President Daniel Arap Moi, though in KANU since 1965, remained a KADU man (CucuwaJogoo, 2010). (KADU had, out of fear of domination by the majority Kikuyu and Luo ethnic groups, advocated for regionalism as Kenya moved towards independence. This fear dominated Moi, even when he was vice president. When he eventually ascended to presidency in 1978, he held the GEMA (Gikuyu, Embu and Meru) responsible for his exclusion from political prominence despite having been vice president. Between 1979 and 1988, punitive measures were put in place by the clique around him to destroy the Kikuyu economic base (Murunga & Nasongo, 2007). It is in this context that his reaction to the call for pluralism that culminated in the *Saba* (7th July) riots of 1990 should be understood. Influential Kikuyu leaders such as Kenneth Matiba and Charles Rubia were among politicians calling for an end to one party rule.

In general, members of the Kikuyu ethnic group overwhelmingly supported the call for pluralism while the Kalenjin were opposed to it. Politicians opposed to pluralism, mainly drawn from the ruling party, the Kenya African National Union (KANU), re-ignited the calls for *Majimbo* (ethnic federalism) to counter those activists calling for pluralism. Branch, (2011) argues that as talk of multipartyism gathered pace, an older (but just as fraught) discussion resurfaced. As a subject of national debate, *majimboism* had been moribund since shortly after the absorption of the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU) by KANU in 1964 (KNA/DC/NKU/2/1/2 Dec. 1962; KNA/DC/NKU/2/4/2 – 1960: 1-2, 8). It was re-ignited by Noor Abdi Ogle, a member of parliament from Wajir. During a speech in parliament in July 1991, Ogle explicitly connected implementation of *majimboism* with the survival of KANU and the one party system.

Majimbo was not federalism in the real sense of the word, but an arrangement in which each community would be required to return to its ancestral district and if for any reason they would be reluctant or unwilling to do so, they would be forced to do so (Akiwumi, 1999). Politicians mainly drawn from the Kalenjin, Maasai, Turkana and the Samburu (KAMATUSA) ethnic groups organized public meetings where they circulated their idea of *majimbo*. They matched this doctrine with the eviction of all those who opposed and refused to accept that Rift Valley was a 'KANU zone'. The *majimbo* debate created conflict solidarity and conflict ideology within the KAMATUSA group. In the larger Rift Valley Province, KANU politicians succeeded in portraying the Kikuyu, the Abagusii, the Luhya and the Luo as enemies of the Kalenjin, Maasai, Turkana and the Samburu. *Majimbo* became a major theme of discussion among the locals. The common view was skewed toward the opinions of the politicians who advocated for expulsion of those who supported the calls for multipartyism. Consequently, Kikuyu, Abagusii, Luhya and Luo communities living or bordering the Rift Valley became targets of Kalenjin and Maasai warrior's violence (Murunga&Nasongo, 2007).

From the beginning of 1992, this policy of limited ethnic cleansing for political purposes was put into practice. In Nakuru district, the first massacres occurred in Molo division (Maupeu, 2005). Political rallies that were held in September 1991 at Kapsabet (in Nandi district), Kericho and Narokfuther heightened ethnic tensions in the country (Akiwumi, 1999; CIPEV, 2009). Willy Kamuren, KANU politician and Member of Parliament for Baringo North aptly captured the gist of those pro-*majimbo* rallies:

- "...Kalenjin are not tribalistic but only rejected people bent on causing chaos... let them (non Kalenjin and opposition supporters) keep quiet or else we are ready for introduction of *majimboism* whereby every person will be required to go back to his motherland" (Akiwumi, 1999).

It is this conceptualization of federalism that has led to mass displacement of 'unwanted' communities in several parts of Kenya since 1992. What made the *majimbo* debate so emotive was the intended impression it created: a settler – indigenous binarism. The term indigenous is derived from the French word *indigene* which means a 'son or daughter of the soil', not someone who has settled as a result of immigration or conquest (Mbembe, 2001). Nakuru district is inhabited by people from diverse ethnic backgrounds who have migrated into the area since the colonial period. The forcible transfer of non Kalenjins was aimed at instilling fear and thus discourage many of them from going back to vote and thus ensure that none of the leading opposition candidate garnered 25% of the presidential votes cast in at least five of the eight provinces as provided for by the election laws (Throup & Hornsby, 1998).

3.4. The Making of the 2007-08 Post-Election Violence

The 2007-08 post-election violence was a climax of a process of elite manipulation of ethnic groups, a process that had been spiraling out of control with every general election since 1992. While some pointed out at the absence of ethnic violence in Nakuru county in the 2002 elections, it must be pointed out that even then, ethnic mobilization was very strong. Non Kalenjin politicians, having lost to President Moi and KANU in the 1992 and 1997 elections due to their unwillingness to unite, had learnt an important lesson. A non Kalenjin coalition, the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) was formed. It brought together the Kikuyu, Luo, the Luhya, the Kamba and for the first time, significant Kalenjin voters also supported it. Second, President Moi was constitutionally barred from contesting, he handpicked Uhuru Kenyatta to succeed him. NARC had settled on Mwai Kibaki. Both candidates came from the Kikuyu ethnic group. Both the ruling party elites and those in the opposition were campaigning for a Kikuyu candidate. It was a unique dilemma. Mwai Kibaki won with 62% of the total votes cast.

In his inauguration ceremony, the new president made a very hard hitting speech against the outgoing president Moi and inadvertently antagonized allies and communities that had voted for Uhuru Kenyatta. The outgoing president had served for 24 years and therefore he had a wide network of friends in public service, in industry, in business and in other areas. The new president sacked many officials of the former regime. Many of the policies he pursued in his first years in office won him many enemies, especially those who served in his predecessor's regime. Instead of pursuing a more inclusive policy, the new president succumbed to the ethnic trap. Key dockets were reserved for his friends from the Mount Kenya region. Parastatals were staffed with his Kikuyu, Embu and Meru kinsmen. Many Kenyans were disappointed. They were ignorant of the man they had voted for:

- “When Kibaki and his liberal colleagues traversed Kenya, preaching fairness and change, people were transfixed. They thought a new redeemer following on the footsteps of Pio Gama Pinto, Joseph Murumbi, OgingaOdinga and BildadKaggia had arrived; and they gave him two thirds of the 2002 election votes...the voters did not know Kibaki. Indeed, very few Kenyans knew Kibaki well... (his) attitude and thinking were, in fact, very close to those of his earlier friends, the late Jomo Kenyatta and Tom Mboya. He had no socialist or humanist inclinations (Ochieng, 2013).

The president's unwillingness to honor a pre-election agreement he had made with the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) led to mutual suspicions within the NARC coalition. A constitutional referendum scheduled for November 2005 provided an opportunity for LDP to punish the president. It also provided an avenue to create a coalition that would lock out and eventually defeat the exclusivist and intransigent ruling Kikuyu elite. The LDP brigade brought together all Kenyan ethnic groups but isolated the Kikuyu. It is instructive that the Kalenjin were brought in as the Kikuyu's were thrown out. As the 2007 elections approached, the political atmosphere had been so polarized. 41 against 1 became a political cliché. It meant the coming together of forty-one tribes against an arrogant Kikuyu clique and by extension, all Kikuyu. Outside their ancestral Central Province, many Kikuyu felt under siege. Matters were made worse by the calls for *ugatuzi* (ethnic federalism). Elites were first inventing a Serbia in Kenya. The derogatory terms of *madoadoa*, *sangara* (weeds), snakes were again used to define the Kikuyu. In his book, #Rhodes MustFall#, Cameroonian scholar Francis Nyamnjoh, although referring to Post-Apartheid South Africa, aptly captures the horrible experience of discrimination on the basis of colour or ethnicity:

- “[The] *makwerekwere* often comes uninvited and without seeking consent from those who regard themselves as bona fide sons and daughters of the native soil at or homeland. He or she has little mastery of local cultures, tends to stutter in local languages or to speak in foreign tongues, has an unmistakable nose for a public fortune at all costs, and is usually perceived to be ruthless and greedy in his or her pursuit of self-interest”.

The Kikuyu were depicted as fortune hunters and their continued domination of the state were inimical to the interests of all the other groups. They were afraid of losing power while the opposition was afraid of not being allowed to exercise power even after winning the electoral contest slated for December 27, 2007. Consequently, when the incumbent, MwaiKibaki was declared the winner, even after trailing the opposition candidate RailaOdinga for the better part of the tallying process, violence broke out on 30th December. Between then and February 28, 2008, 1,333 people would be killed and more than 600,000 would be displaced. It would take the intervention of the International Community to bring Kenya's warring elites to the negotiating table. Surprisingly, the arrows, spears and stones would stop flying immediately a grand cabinet, accommodating as many elites as possible would be announced by President MwaiKibaki and his foe turned ally Prime Minister RailaOdinga. The cabinet-the largest in Kenya's history- had 96 members. Again, this sudden fall of ethnic violence once cabinet positions were shared among the elites buttresses the findings of this study – that elite manipulation is key to understanding ethnic violence in Kenya.

3.5. Conclusion and Recommendation

This paper has attempted to examine the role of ethnic elites in Kenya's political processes since 1960. Critical transitional moments such as the *Mau Mau*, the *Uhuru* (independence) moment as well as the re-introduction of multi-party democracy have been betrayed, hijacked, misrepresented and corrupted by elites for their own petulant ends. Consequently, many citizens have been traumatized by politically instigated ethnic violence over the years. This research has demonstrated that while historical injustices such as land dispossessions cannot be regarded as mere red-herrings in Kenya's politics, elite manipulation has been, and remains the most important threat to peace and stability. The rise and fall of violence just before and after elections is a poignant indicator of elite's manipulation of the nation's politics. In-between the elections, ordinary citizens go about their routine without much thought about their identities. Yet, in all the places where this study was done, the desire for peaceful co-existence remains very strong. They (citizens) are not helpless, isolating and rejecting ethnic jingoists would be a starting point to the realization of that goal.

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