After Negative Ethnicity: The Future of Voting in Kenya

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ABSTRACT

More than any other demographic, the question of negative ethnicity has been a scourge on the African continent. In Kenya, the ethnicisation of politics has plagued the nation since it gained its independence from the British. Ethno-politics persisted and reached its zenith in the 2007 post-election violence which left more than 1000 people dead. This paper interrogates ethnicity's ties to geography; the power inhering in its situatedness. Using Appadurai's concept of 'deterritorialization' and Appiah's 'cosmopolitanism' the paper problematizes the idea that the space within ethnic boundaries is home in a bid to illustrate how the more open, transferable concept "good place that is no place" of Utopianism can help Kenyans detach from a localization. The adoption of this concept as a frame of reference would then disrupt the ethnic voting patterns of ethno-politics and finally usher in the age of voting based on issues and ideas.

Keywords: Utopianism, Negative Ethnicity, Cosmopolitanism, Kenya Elections, Thomas More, Deterritorialization

INTRODUCTION

The identity of Kenyans is fundamentally ethnic. It manifests itself every 5 years during elections and has remained static despite our changing world. The shared space available where the different ethnic groups can interact and establish social relationships is scarce. Instead, they are content to live within their own individual ethnic boundaries. Though this retreat to our homelands conveys well-meaning solidarity with our ethnicity, it inevitably leads to negative ethnicity. Kenyans are happy to be associated with their ethnicities before anything else and the powerful social processes have proved feeble to maintain, modify or even reshape it as they are wont (Searle 1995). A state mired in negative ethnicity, with little room for modification or reshaping of identity, will ever be divided; it cannot work toward a common objective that benefits all, and has as its fate turbulent election seasons.

The purpose of this paper is to interrogate ethnicity's ties to geography in the Kenyan context and how this leads to negative ethnicity as evidenced particularly by the 2007 post-election violence. It is in five parts. The first part offers an overview of the 2007 election violence paying attention to the function of ethnic boundaries. The second explores the origins of negative ethnicity; it bases it in ethnicity's penchant for attachment, more so its attachment to specific geographic boundaries. In the second it problematizes these ethnic boundaries through the lens of contemporary theories of movement: deterritorialization and cosmopolitanism. The third part brings in utopianism in a bid to offer an alternative to geographical attachment. In the literary genre established by Thomas

More (1516/2003), Utopia is a 'good place that is no place', in other words, it is a detached and preserving space. The final part contains brief concluding remarks about utopianism and its prospects for the future of voting in Kenya.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE 2007 POST-ELECTION VIOLENCE

Over the years, Kenya's ethno-politics have included the strategy of multi-party coalitions. Two or more political parties, also largely based on ethnicity, merge toward a shared goal. During the 2007 elections the two main competitors were the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) and the Party of National Unity (PNU). The latter was a coalition of KANU, Ford-Kenya, Ford-People, Democratic Party and others, and its stronghold was among the Kikuyu Central region of Kenya. Whereas ODM's support was focused in Luo Nyanza and also in the Rift Valley owing to the presence of the Kalenjin politician, William Ruto.

Consequently, when the violence erupted it pitted, primarily, the Kikuyu against the Kalenjin and Luos. The two latter groups, including the Luhya who had supported ODM, attacked suspected PNU supporters who inhabited the ethnic boundaries of the ODM supporters, such as Eldoret—a significant city in what is now Uasin Ngishu County, both politically and economically. In the rift valley, the pieces of land owned by the 'foreign' Kikuyu were expropriated by the 'local'. There was also mass vandalism of their property, and burning of crops in the field. One cannot forget the mass death by burning inflicted on the 35 women, children and the disabled who had sought refuge in the Kenya Assemblies of God (KAG) church in Kiambaa, Eldoret (Kigumba 2011). In Central Kenya, the land of the Gikuyu, "ethnic militias threatened to bum down the Tigoni holding centre, one of the many centers hosting an estimated total of 8,889 non-Kikuyu IDPs across central Kenya and Nairobi" (Kigumba 2011:78) as the Gikuyu sought to expunge Luo and kalenjin from their ethnic boundaries.

Foucault (1967/1984:4) referred to these types of places: the church, the police station, among others where people sought refuge as "crisis heterotopias" because they were "reserved for individuals who are, in relation to society and to the human environment in which they live, in a state of crisis." It is worth noting that, according to Foucault, crisis heterotopias are exclusive to primitive societies (Foucault 1967/1984). Regardless, ethnic conflict affect neighboring states, poses a threat to both regional and global security and stability, and emerges as a key concern for policymakers. Indeed, ethnic conflict has been elevated to the domain of high politics, a realm previously occupied by international crisis, ideological conflict, and interstate war. (Kigumba 2011: 6).

In any case, it would be erroneous to claim that the violence was clearly delineated in terms of who was fighting against whom. This is because political associations were not as rigid as the ethnic associations. The individual ethnic groups put their needs before those of the political parties. As Kigumba states, "There were also reports of attacks on the Luo and Kisii settlers by the Kalenjin taking advantage of the collapse of law and order to rustle animals and take land from their neighbours irrespective of political loyalties (2011: 78).

Following the promulgation of a new constitution the elections held in March, 2013 demonstrated that political coalitions based in inter-ethnic affiliations are temporary owing to the power of shared ethnicity. In said elections, 5 years after the post-election violence, political associations had altered drastically. Ruto, formerly of Orange Democratic Movement had joined with The National Alliance's Uhuru Kenyatta and others to form the Jubilee Party. Ford-Kenya under the leadership of Moses Wetangula switched allegiances from PNU to form Coalition for Reforms and Democracy (CORD) with ODM and others. Also, Kalonzo Musyoka, formerly presidential candidate of ODM-Kenya was now Raila Odinga's running mate, representing the Wiper Democratic Movement. The states of affairs remained constant, more or less, in the 2017 elections but will change inevitably in 2022.

The Roots of Kenya's Negative Ethnicity

In her study of the role of ethnicity in Kenya's post-election violence, Kigumba (2011) writes: Ethnicity is the essential bond that unites kinship weaves through the social fabric, in the sense that, ethnic group identities flow from an extended kinship bond, sharing common behaviors and transmitting across generations. In Kenya these bonds date back to even pre-colonial times but were made more evident by the British colonial masters (84).

These bonds are apparent during presidential elections; none more telling than the disputed one of 2007 that ended in ethnic violence. However, it is not only in Kenya that we find issues of ethnicity. As Wolff (2006:64) states, "ethnicity is a fact of life almost everywhere". In addition, the prevalence of multiple ethnic groups in a particular geographical area does not automatically lead to ethnic conflict. Despite ethnic identities being thought to be fluid across time and social contexts, even leading to the transfer of the feature of one ethnic group to another (Alba, 1990; Nagel 1995), the longstanding bonds of ethnic kinship among Kenyans are far from being broken. If anything, the bonds among members of a similar ethnic group lead to a perpetual ethnic isolationism. This, in turn, devolves into negative ethnicity.

There is glaring scarcity of inter-ethnic interaction in Kenya, more so within the purported 'ethnic boundaries'. These types of boundaries are, according to Sanders (2002) "patterns of social interaction that give rise to, and subsequently reinforce, in-group members' self-identification and outsiders' confirmation of group distinctions" (327). Sanders' study was on plural societies and his definition of 'ethnic boundaries' attests to this. The definition used in this paper will refer to territorial demarcations—products of British colonialism. The case of Gikuyu land ownership outlined in Facing Mount Kenya reflects the contemporary problem of ethnic boundaries. Celarent (2010) writes: "The Gikuyu follow a trusteeship model: the current tenant manages the property for past and future generations of his family but is nonetheless the undisputed "owner" of the land in the present" (724).

This generational management of land doubtless reinforces the idea of ethnic boundaries. However, Kenyatta doesn't tell us that the Gikuyu often practiced agriculture in one area until it became infertile or that there was a good deal of tribal movement (Celerant 2010). The fact is there were rampant migrations within Kenya, and settlements were not constant before colonialism.

Sometimes there were fewer ethnicities than there are today, sometimes there were more. As Ndege (2009) quoted in Kigumba (2011) intimates, we owe the current stability of ethnic boundaries to colonialism. But we cannot blame them for remaining within and carving our identities out of them. Each ethnic group lives within their ethnic boundaries; which is not to say that there are no geographical locations where inter-ethnic interaction occurs; Nairobi is perhaps the archetype of such a location.

Aside from the capital city and very few others, the majority of spaces all over the country are populated overwhelmingly by a single ethnic group. From the Kaya Kinondo forest at the coast, through the Mount Kenya forest in Central Africa, all the way to the Kakamega forest, physical features have been used as ethnic identifiers since before the colonialists. From the above three one can learn about the Mijikenda, Kikuyu, and Luhya, respectively. It is not only forests which act as geographic boundaries. Lakes Turkana and Victoria are also some of the many physical markers of Kenya's many ethnic groups.

Each group considers the above-mentioned areas to be their home; it is where they have their metaphorical roots, their literal "good place". In December it is a commonplace to overhear in random conversations across the capital city such keywords as "upcountry", *ushago* and *nyumbani* all which denote home or homeland. During this period the Luo will travel to Lake Victoria, the Maasai will go back to the Mara, the Kalenjin will go to Sergoit , and the Kamba to Tsavo East. Each person seeks solace from its own within its delineated geographic boundaries. Granted, these are only some of the more known physical features and the ethnic groups are in no way clustered either on or within them.

This essay suggests that this self-imposed exile; the exclusionary identification with space is, finally, responsible for the scourge of negative ethnicity. Attachment to space betrays a lacking openness among the ethnic communities in Kenya which cuts across. This leads to the desire to go "home" of Kenyans which implies an inability to "feel at home" anyplace beyond the limits of our ethnic boundaries. Put another way, it is as though we hold our breath all year long, to breathe at last when we are in the proximities of our roots. As this analogy implies, attachment to a particular space is an injurious and at the same time arrogant, act. This paper will offer as a counter viewpoint the unconstrained freedom to wander of utopianism. But for now let us find out how the attachment philosophy of ethnic boundaries fares when viewed through contemporary theories of mobility in an increasingly globalized world.

ETHNIC BOUNDARIES IN A WORLD WITHOUT BORDERS

Late last year, the president of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta in a speech at a national holiday addressed the issue of the restrictions of borders to movement among East Africans and Africans in general. It was a bold idea, and he shares it with the AU chairman, Paul Kagame and reflects what is going on in the rest of the world with Europe as the archetype. Some Kenyan citizens lauded the effort while others who were concerned about the ramifications of this to the security of the country were not sure if it was a good idea. This section deals with the problem of boundaries within Kenya, specifically ethnic boundaries. Increasingly, the global cultural economy is tending toward a

borderless future. This section therefore assumes that Kenya is a participant in the global cultural economy and uses two global trends to examine whether or not this participation has impacted the people's views of these boundaries. The two trends are deterritorialization and cosmopolitanism. Let us now turn to the first.

From the proliferation of international trade and human rights activism to the adoption of the Western ideas of democracy and capitalism, globalization is visible in the mechanisms of Kenya. The movement of people and capital is also at an unprecedented level. The former is most perceptible. And where movement of people is not obvious, the apparent immobility 'is everywhere shot through with the woof of human motion, as more persons and groups deal with the realities of having to move, or with the fantasies of wanting to move" (Appadurai, 1990: 297).

Appadurai includes the movement of people or 'ethnoscapes' among the five dimensions of global cultural flow. The others comprise: mediascapes, technoscapes, finanscapes, and ideoscapes. The multifaceted flow among these five landscapes or "imagined worlds" is what Appadurai refers to as "deterritorialization" and it varies from state to state. This paper will use the term when referencing movement of a particular individual or ethnic group outside their ethnic boundaries to a territory where they are no longer the majority.

This is not to say that there is no movement of the other four dimensions; it is simply to state that in the Kenyan context the movement of people is most prominent than any other. For instance, there can be movement of Gikuyu from Gikuyu land to Kalenjin land for one reason or other. In this new land the Gikuyu, stereotyped as 'money lovers', set up entrepreneurial endeavors in Eldoret or establish their own exclusively Gikuyu church. Similarly the Luo stereotyped to love fish, may leave Luo land to work in the Bata shoe factory in Limuru, Kikuyu land, and set up fish markets. The reasons for movement may also be religious: the leadership of a certain denomination may decide to shuffle its clergy thus requiring that a Kisii move to Luhya land. In all this, the ethnicity of the mover remains unchanged.

Deleuze and Guattari (1991/1994) offer a conceptualization of deterritorialization that would prove radical if appropriated in the Kenyan context because of how it imagines the change in form of that which has deterritorialized. For them deterritorialization is always followed by reterritorialization and the thing or feature which undergoes this movement is urecognizable. They write that from birth the hominid:

Deterritorializes its front paw, wrests it from the earth to turn it into a hand, and reterritorializes it on branches and tools. A stick is, in turn, a deterritorialized branch. We need to see how everyone, at every age, in the smallest things as in the greatest challenges, seeks a territory, tolerates or carries out deterritorializations, and is reterritorialized on almost anything-memory, fetish, or dream (67-68).

Essentially, under this view, the Kikuyu who deterritorializes from Gikuyuland to reterritorialize in Luo land would not be the same person. She or he would not have the same biases and would therefore be free from the plight of negative ethnicity associated with ethnic boundaries.

The reality of deterritorialization in Kenya, however, is that the group which departs from its ethnic boundaries to a different one keeps their original homeland with them. As Wa Wamwere (2010) writes:

When Africans travel to and settle in Europe and America, despite their small numbers, they bring with them the baggage of negative ethnicity. Abroad, ethnic hate continues to weaken Africans by separating them into ethnic enclaves as it has back in Africa. Observing Kenyans abroad, I have noticed that despite their common passports, they travel and settle out of Kenya not as nationals of one country, as Kenyans, but as members of their forty-two respective ethnic communities (27).

In Kenya, where you come from is more useful than where you are going, or where you are currently. Put another way, the past is more revered than both the present and the future, a fact which frustrates the benefits of deterritorialization. When the future is discussed it is in reference to the past: people are buried in the same space where they were born. Increasingly, more and more children are being born in hospitals situated in urban heterogeneous areas but still this has not altered the longstanding trends in voting. Having been socialized by their immediate influences—family and community—they carry on the baton of negative ethnicity.
Though a global phenomenon, deterritorialization has had a difficult time reaching its full potential because it disrupts the concept of "home" which many Kenyans ascribe to; that of home as a space within specific boundaries. As Canclini (1990) writes: "Deterritorialization speaks of the loss of the "natural" relation between culture and the social and geographic territories" (quoted in Hernandez 2002: 93). It is just not powerful enough to put an end to ethnic boundaries. The Kenyan voter may leave his boundaries but he keeps his metaphorical roots intact. Such a person will be hard-pressed to change her voting habit in the new context owing to his or her socialization early in life. This implies that the deterritorialized voter will have first to unlearn the socialization of family before she can open her mind to the socialization of college. The former is invariably more rooted than the latter.

Our homes in *ushago* are fixed in much the same way that the roots of a tree are fixed deep in the ground and deterritorialization endangers that. As Hernandez (2006) explains:

The ambiguous or ambivalent character of deterrritorialiation must not be forgotten, as, while it generates benefits, it also produces evident costs such as feelings of existential vulnerability or of cultural rootlessness, especially if you consider that individuals have ties to a locality, and this locality remains important for them (94).

One way to grapple with this state of affairs has to do with understanding the psychology of the ethno-political voter. How does one explain how a politician can go for long without visiting his or her homeland without compromising his or her votes? Moreover, how is it that politicians can underperform, get involved in scandals, or do absolutely nothing by way of developing their homeland and still get voted in? It is to these questions that we now turn in light of cosmopolitanism.

From the cosmopolitan rights of dissident writers and political activists as illustrated in Derrida

(2001) to a study of Barack Obama as a cosmopolitan Werbner (2012), the reaches of cosmopolitanism have expanded so that it no longer necessitates investigation in the limited sense of international boundaries. In the Kenyan context the most evident form of cosmopolitanism concerns the concentration of multiple ethnic communities in a particular space so that a city like Nakuru acquires the qualifier. But as Keguro (2008) writes, this form of cosmopolitanism proved a weakness during post-election violence.

Presently, with ethnic divisions and the concomitant talks of cessation, a cosmopolitanism that focuses on ‘the other’ is relevant or as Papastephanou (2009) states: ‘Cosmopolitanism is more than just free circulation; it is not just about the encounter or agreement with the other, it is about the treatment of the other’ (19). It is for that reason that this paper employs the cosmopolitan ideas of the ethicist, Kwame Appiah (2007). In this section the paper examines the problem of ethnic boundaries within the definitions of Appiah’s cosmopolitanism.

Kenya’s ethnic divisions are often blamed on a lack of sincere dialogue among different ethnic groups which an engagement with cosmopolitanism should be able to remedy. Cosmopolitanism believes that through the avenue of conversation “you can learn from people with different, even incompatible, ideas from your own” (Appiah 2007:2378). Cosmopolitanism requires openness to ideas and people. In this it is similar to deterritorializatiom. It does not seek shelter within ethnic boundaries or ethnic narratives; it is not about, as Fine and Boon (2007) in Krossa (2012) write: “cosiness or the warmth of intimate community but rather about the risks involved in disclosing oneself publicly in the world…Cosmopolitanism is a demanding and difficult way of life” (9). This difficult way of life would in turn prove a demanding philosophy because of the regrettable state of the ethno-political voter

As in a mob, the person whose identity is fundamentally ethnic is overrun by this collective of people so that in the end she loses her individuality and becomes an uncritical voter. However, cosmopolitanism acknowledges difference, and one would add, differentiation, even as it recognizes universality of people. According to this concept, “each human individual is charged with ultimate responsibility for his or her own life” and in the end, “the standard that determines whether I am doing well, whether I am flourishing, is, in part, set by aims that I define for myself” (Appiah 2007:2380).Within ethnic boundaries, oppressive unity abounds: the struggling grocer agrees with the wealthy doctor about whom to vote for. The jobless youth pledge allegiance to the same politician as do the well-to-do businessmen. In a sense, ethnic identification requires self-abnegation and even to a more extreme extent, self-erasure.

In addition to liberating the individual from the group, through its respect for diversity of culture, cosmopolitanism helps us get out of our ethnic cocoons. In Kenya, the post-election violence and other recurrent violence such as that in Laikipia County and the Mt. Elgon area reveal a certain hierarchy among the priorities of an ethnic group. It is that: local cultures matter primarily, next, people of shared culture matter, and finally cultures and people of other ethnicities matter the least. However, cosmopolitanism believes that “cultures do not matter in themselves, but because people matter and culture matters to people” (2379). As a result, the harmful aspects of ethnicity such as the propensity to negative ethnicity and wholesale disregard for life are disturbed even as the

beneficial actions such as transculturation are encouraged.

All the above mentioned positive outcomes of cosmopolitanism remain unrealizable and negative ethnicity persists because while at the core of cosmopolitanism is the "recognition that we may be mistaken even when we have looked carefully at the evidence and applied our highest mental capacities" (Appiah 2007) those individuals steeped in ethnic biases do not consider themselves fallible. They are first ensnared and blinded by their ethnic loyalties so that they are convinced that no truth can come out of a rival ethnic group. In a globalized world, where interaction among people of all ethnic groups and religions dominate, "the recognition of the shortcomings our human capacity to grasp the truth" (Appiah 2007) is an invaluable one which the tribal individuals flout. For them winning the contest is more important than the truth.

Another explanation for why negative ethnicity trounces the good will of cosmopolitanism is found in the power inhering in ethnicity's situatedness in a particular geography. As was stated of deterritorialization, this is also of the things cosmopolitanism would have to contend with if it is to replace the deep-seated idea of ethnic boundaries. Both cosmopolitanism's regard for 'the other' and its affinity for movement have to be seen to be more beneficial to the individual than his or her ethnicity and homeland because it is out of these that negative ethnicity emanates. And when ethnicity degenerates thus it subjugates all other associations cosmopolitanism pays obeisance. As Kamaara (2010) writes:

During the period preceding the 2007 national elections which culminated in violence, the Roman Catholic church in Luo Nyanza was on one end of the political divide while the Roman Catholic church in Gikuyu land was on the extreme side…Thus political polarization became synonymous with Christian polarization (136).

So far ethnic boundaries are still very influential in Kenya and ethnicity remains the fundamental identity. It would seem, therefore, that either the project of cosmopolitanism has failed or it has yet to reach a point where it can challenge Kenya's ethnic boundaries effectively. Otherwise, perhaps one need not replace the other; there could be a way to reconcile the program of cosmopolitanism with Kenyans' concerns for ethnic boundaries. It is with this in mind that we turn to our discussion on utopianism.

The term "utopia" was coined by Thomas More (1516/2003) but the concept appears as early as 380 BC in Plato's Republic. The concept has been theorized for centuries and may be theorized for centuries more. Among realists and anti-utopians, all this appears a waste of time, resources and faculties. For them utopia is merely wishful thinking, an unrealizable dream. As Papastephanou (2009) astutely points out:

For most lay people, the utopian is equated with the unrealizable, the impossible in principle, or the impossible for most human beings over which one should not waste time or energy. Apart from being presented as futile, the utopian has been accused of having pernicious political implications (3).

The aim of this section is not to start a polemic against the critics of utopianism; rather it is to illustrate how the concept may be the solution to the problem of ethnic boundaries which remains challenging in the face of globalization. We begin with some pertinent views of utopia.

For Mannheim (1936), it was necessary for utopia to take on a revolutionary function and effect change in the present Social conditions and Bloch (1954/1986) wrote voluminous and convincingly of the pervasive nature of the utopian. Such conceptualizations of utopia present a challenge to common conceptions of it as not only forever unrealizable but also as limited to the imagination. Utopianism challenges the status quo; it is subversive. And this is what is needed in Kenya currently with the problem of negative ethnicity and ethno-politics. There is need to think beyond the present state of affairs, to outline a better future. Only then can we, in the words of Geoghegan (2008), "undermine the complacency and overcome the inertia of [the current society] by showing that it is neither eternal nor archetypal but merely one form amongst many" (16). But what exactly are these concerns that necessitate the need for utopianism as alternative?

As the paper has described in the previous sections, there is among the Kenyan ethnicities a tendency to consider a specific geographical space as home which leads to a feeling of homelessness in all other spaces. We have seen how this manner of thinking leads to negative ethnicity. For instance a Maasai may feel at home in Narok but homeless in Isiolo. While in Isiolo, he longs for Narok or in other words, feels homesick for Narok. If he stays outside Narok long enough he may become nostalgic for it. According to Coleman (2005):

The Swiss-German 'heimweh' or homesickness is the original meaning of nostalgia. Taken together, these terms denote an intense longing for (a) home. Constructed homes can be as much the locus of nostalgia as is the land of their location. Home and land are idealized through the longing for them (26).

Within Kenya's different ethnic boundaries, constructed homes or houses of various forms are in plenty but this is not the provision for one to refer to such spaces as home. For instance, children who still live under their parents' roofs are encouraged to consider these as their homes. Another common occurrence is that of parents proffering to their children pieces of land on which to build their own houses. In such an instance the piece of land is metonymic for a house and of course, a home. This concern of attachment to space though it begins harmlessly as ethnic identification leads to negative ethnicity and therefore requires an alternative.

More's (1516/2003) term 'utopia' was a result of a play on two Greek words so that utopia is the good place 'eutopos' that is no place 'outopos'. In utopianism, location is immaterial; what is important is the quality of the place. The idea of a home in a particular space acts as the sole good place for many Kenyans but utopianism seeks to expand this view. It assumes that a good place can be found anywhere and encourages the search for such a place. Kenyans' reverence for the past plays a part in the attachment to physical space. Rather than promote fluid concept of the 'no place' among ethnic groups, it keeps the groups bound within the same boundaries. This in turn stifles thoughts of the future, thoughts about what society is capable of becoming. As Quarta (1996)

explains, "to exist in no place, in truth, belongs to the projective, since this latter, if it did have a place, if it were already realized, would no longer be projective" (155).

The concept of the 'no place' may convince people to migrate freely out of their ethnic cocoons but can it settle the recursive problem of roots? This paper has already addressed the cases of the deterritorialized voters who seem to figuratively carry their roots with them to their new spaces. These people, when they are of voting age, retain their ethnic biases; it is difficult to change their minds. In utopianism, the 'outopia' goes hand in hand with the 'eutopia', the 'no place' and the 'good place' follow each other necessarily. The individual who moves from his homeland is keen to find a place just as good if not better than where he comes. We have already established the reasons why the movers are disinclined to change their old habits: mob mentality, credulity and socialization; all which are related to negative ethnicity.

Unlike negative ethnicity, utopianism is concerned with the individual, first and foremost. Thus, the good place ought to be where the individual feels liberated from the mob; anywhere he or she can exert him or herself free from exteriorities. The individual is free to think for herself and is improved "ethically in accordance with his or her both recognizable and malleable human nature and the pursuit of political ideals, such as freedom, justice, and the absence of social conflict" (Cojoracu 2012:47).

Ideological discourse finds audience in utopianism so that a poor voter and a rich voter cannot share a political candidate on superficial terms as ethnic identity, no matter how fundamental it may be. Utopianism ensures that the voter is critical and knowledgeable, considering everything about the candidate: values, morals, beliefs, before voting them in. The effects of socialization are also counteracted because the utopian anthropological assumptions recognize "the priority of egoism over altruism" (Papastephanou 2009: 7). The voter is no longer there for sale to the highest bidder; nor is her vote to a member of her clan assured.

Once the age of elections based on ideas on issues is initiated through utopianism, conflicts which accompany elections will likely come to an end because, at least in Kenya, they are ethnically instigated. Even as it keeps the individual at its centre, utopianism recognizes the dignity of the other. In More (1516/2003), "the utopians think…that no one should be considered an enemy who has done no harm, that the kinship of nature is as good as a treaty, and that men are united more firmly by good will than by pacts, by their hearts than by their words" (84-85). The only harm most of the victims of the 2007 post-election violence had done was being born of a different ethnicity. Slashing a neighbor with a machete is no way to treat the other. We should emulate the inhabitants of *Utopia* and be open-minded in our relations with the other. Further, as Navaud (2016) reminds us of utopians, we should be curious and humble enough to learn whatever we can from our neighbors even as they learn from us.

CONCLUSION

Kenya was a multi-ethnic country long before the European set foot on the continent of Africa. Interaction among them by way of trade, wars, and marriage influenced the material of individual cultures and continues to do so albeit in a minimal capacity. When the British drew borders throughout the country, families, clans and tribes were separated; but the larger body of ethnicity was not affected much. In fact, ethnicity became a primary means of identification and it was situated in a specific geographical spaces. These spaces were home and they were metonymies of ethnicity. Eventually, this attachment to space leads to negative ethnicity and was responsible for the 2007 post-election violence. Though largely absent year round in social and economic interactions, the power of ethnicity is paraded in Kenya during the election season and this has brought about the current ethno-politics.

Violence over the outcome of an election is completely unacceptable and should be prevented through encouragement of intermingling among the different ethnicities in Kenya. Already the country has experienced considerable deterritorialization or the movement of individual or group out of their ethnic boundaries to a place where they are no longer the majority but this has been futile in eradicating negative ethnicity because the people are unwilling to change their outlook in the new land. The voters who migrate from their homes to other territories maintain their biases of ethno-politics which frustrates the aim of deterritorialization.

Kenya has also experienced cosmopolitanism in various forms and we have seen that the type advocated for in this article, the type that is concerned about the other, is still unable to free Kenyans from the captivation they have with ethnic boundaries. Even when they are born in cities where the different ethnic groups interact, the individual acts in accordance with the behavior of the people most responsible for her socialization. The metaphoric roots of ethnicity transcend ethnic boundaries and the fear of rootlessness ensures that people maintain some level of connection even in their spatial disconnection.

The perspective of utopianism offers an alternative to the tendency of Kenyans to base their identity on ethnicity in an effort to end negative ethnicity. Negative ethnicity is more concerned about the group whereas utopianism caters for the desires of the individual. The goal of utopianism is to enable the individual to be free to wander, free to uproot and replant elsewhere. It encourages the voter to think about his own interests before casting a vote for a politician and preserves him when he leaves the comfort of solidarity with fellow ethnic affiliates.

In More (1516/2003) we read of the utopian spirit that compelled the young Hythloday to give his possessions to his relatives and travel the world (50-51). If it were not for his selflessness we would have never heard of this commonwealth. Utopia teaches one to be comfortable anywhere, not to let any one place stand out among others. It demystifies the attachment to homelands and thus pre-empts a future of negative ethnicity.

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