Ethnic Mixing and Tolerance in Urban Kenya: A Case Study of Mathare Informal Settelment in Nairobi City

Stellamaries Kyuvi
University of Nairobi, Kenya
Department of sociology, social work and African women studies
Charles Nzioka
University of Nairobi, Kenya
Department of sociology, social work and African women studies
Elias O. Ayiemba
University of Nairobi, Kenya
Department of Geography, Population and Environmental studies

Abstract

For any multi-ethnic society, tolerance is regarded as an integral element for social, economic, and political stability of the nation. Today, majority of the multi-ethnic nations in Africa still face the challenge on how to promote ethno-cultural tolerance and acceptance among the diverse populations. As a result, many African nations are entangled in inter-state conflicts and civil wars related to ethnic differences that pose a dilemma on whether to promote ethnic pluralism or not. In this study we examined whether ethnic mixing in the city can be a potential tool for promoting ethnic tolerance and peaceful co-existence, which can then be diffused to the rural regions and subsequently to the whole nation. The study adopted integrative study design that allowed use of mixed methods in the collection and analysis of data where eighty participants were interviewed in the initial survey and twenty-four in the in-depth interviews. Consistent with the contact theory the study found a compelling evidence that ethnic group exposure promotes cultural learning and out group accommodation, resulting to individuals who are more open to diversity. The study proposes ethnic

mixing and the creation of ethnic diverse spaces as an alternative strategy for promoting ethnic understanding and nationhood. The paper is an excerpt from the author's post-doctoral thesis on the role of rural-urban migrations in promoting ethnic integration in Kenya.

Keywords: Ethnicity, Tolerance, Nationhood, Diversity, Cohesion

1.0   Introduction

> *"We need to develop the ability to listen to each other and understand the reasons for   the differences among ourselves in our opinions. We may not always agree but we can find common grounds that enable us to work together for the good of all. we need to understand that our way is not the only way"* (Desmond Tutu 2012)

African continent is celebrated for its rich diversity of cultures, religion, linguistic differences, and beliefs. While these differences are treasured as valuable assets, almost all African countries have experienced ethnic tensions and conflicts leading to loss of life, property, and economic regression. Themnér and Wallensteen (2014) observe that Sub-Saharan Africa contribute more than half of the nations across the world experiencing intra-state conflict. Such data portray African nations as having failed in their efforts to abate divisions within and across ethnic groups and to develop shared sense of national identity (Miguel 2004). These undesirable experiences much of which have been related to ethnic differences have prompted scholarly and policy researches on ethno-cultural diversity and social cohesion. While some allude that diversity is deleterious to social cohesion (Putnam, 2007; Letki, 2008; Fieldhouse & Cutts, 2010) other scholars have praised diversity for reducing prejudice and negative stereotypes creating an opportunity for out-group cooperation and nuanced understanding of the other (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006, Brown & Hewstone, 2005, Demange and Wooders, 2005). These divergent views on the potential effect of ethnic pluralism poses a policy dilemma on whether to promote or discourage ethnic pluralism. Moreover, the growing rate of migration coupled with urbanization and globalization (IOM 2020; Karsten, 2020), has continually proven the inexorability of multicultural societies hence the need to device ways to promote ethnic tolerance and peaceful co-existence. Uitermark, et. al (2005:627) assert that in modern day world cities have emerged to be a primary site for generating, managing, negotiating, and contesting cultural diversity. This study is a deliberate attempt aimed at exploring how the interaction of different ethnic groups in urban areas could provide an opportunity for promoting peace and ethnic integration within the

nation. We hypothesize in this study that as individuals migrate to urban areas, they are bound to mix with members of other communities in residential spaces, work places, religious spaces among others. These interactions are likely to lead to reduced inter-ethnic suspicions, greater understanding, and more lasting meaningful co-existence prompting further inter-ethnic engagements.

1.2   Background of the study

Kenya, like many other African countries presents an interesting case of ethnic diversity. The country is home to more than 44 ethnic communities. Each of these ethnic groups has its distinct culture, language, beliefs and socio-cultural practices (Lynch, 2006; Ghai, 2013; Kanyinga, 2013). Each of the diverse ethnic community occupy a particular geo-spatial region which it regards as an ancestral land that has to be jealously guarded and protected. Despite the growth of capitalism and a thriving market economy which allows willing–buyer willing seller of land, selling of land to 'outsiders' particularly in the rural ethno geo-spatial areas is often frowned upon. The rule of thumb is that members of the local community should be given priority in the sale of land in order to preserve the geo-spatial locality for the 'indigenous' or 'native' community (Kasomo, 2012; Nyaura, 2018). In urban areas, however, land sale is based on a free market economy implying anybody can buy and own land in the towns and cities. Urban spaces are therefore highly heterogeneous attracting migrants from within the country and across the national borders. In normal life situations these diverse urban populations live together in harmony. However, a majority of rural-urban migrants consider themselves as temporary inhabitants of the city and tend to maintain strong ties and networks with their rural folks, frequently traveling to their rural places maintain and solidify these links (Owuor 2007; Francis, 2002). Ethnic identities remain a distinctive point of reference where individuals identify their in-group members directly or indirectly by among others names, dialect or accent, rural origin and sometimes physical appearance. The peaceful co-existence between different ethnic groups however often gets strained during political campaigns and general elections leading to inter-ethnic clashes. In such periods, inter-ethnic peace is often disrupted as neighbors and friends turn to each other and thousands get displaced as homes and houses are torched (Kasomo, 2012).

Ethnic intolerance in Kenya dates back to the pre-colonial period, the colonial period, and has continued even in the post-colonial period (Mutie, et. al, 2015; Wamwere, 2003; and Lynch, 2006). Ethnic hostilities in Kenya have been linked to variety of causes including: politicization of ethnicity (Miguel, 2004; Wanyande, 2003); selective development by the government and alleged marginalization of some ethnic groups or regions (Kioli, 2012)

and the proliferation of small arms (Wepundi, 2012). To date, the ethnic land territories developed during the colonial era still exist and continue to be a point of reference in the distribution of national resources, appointment to civil service, and in defining political and administrative boundaries. Moreover, the forty-seven counties, formed after the promulgation of the nation's 2010 Constitution seem to have retained ethnic land boundaries drawn by the colonialists. This seemingly reinforces the notion of ethnic resources, territorial spaces and entitlements. Today, most ethnic groups perceive the resources within their ethnic land spaces as legitimately theirs and stand to guard them from other groups.

Kenya's ethnic conflicts are not nationwide but are often more pronounced in some regions than others. In the culturally pluralistic urban areas, ethnic conflicts tend to flare up mostly in the sub-urban informal settlements during the nation's general elections. In the rural areas, ethnic clashes also appear to occur along ethnic fault lines or boundaries such as in Rift valley especially in Molo, Laikipia and Samburu; Western region around Mt Elgon and Baringo; and Coast province especially in Tana River. Rural ethnic conflicts have been associated with negative perception, cultural bias and hatred of the other and tend to be more pronounced at times of prolonged drought and famine as communities' jostle for scarce resources such as pasture water especially in the pastoral communities or ethnic land boundaries. Such conflicts include; the 1992 conflict between Kalenjin and Kikuyus at Rift Valley, the 2012-2013 ethnic conflict between Orma and Pokomo in Tana River in Coastal region, and the recurrent Samburu-Turkana ethnic conflicts over land and cattle (IRC 2008; UNHCHR 2008; KNCHR; 2017:5). Such experiences seem to depict ethnic diversity as bad in itself and a threat to national peace.

Despite the undesirable experiences of ethnic hostility, there are numerous occasions when Kenyans have demonstrated 'Kenyan-ness' and the consciousness of belonging to one tribe ''Kenya''. This has been demonstrated mainly at times of national crisis such as during floods, starvation, and terror attacks. At these times, Kenyans often rally together in response to the distress appeals by the government and humanitarian agencies in assisting fellow Kenyans with blood donations, or financial support. In such occasions, slogans such *as Kenya for Kenyans, I stand with Kenyans, and One Kenya, one people* continually remind the people of their single national identity. Other occasions when Kenyans demonstrate oneness and solidarity is when they are celebrating national achievements such participating and winning a game at the international level. A case in point is Eliud Kipchoge a Kenyan marathoner who won the Ineaos1.59 challenge, Lupita. Nyong'o, first Kenyan to win Oscar Award not forgetting Barack Obama the first African-American president of United States of America

with Kenyan roots. It is during such times when the consciousness of being one tribe ''Kenyan'' emerge and mantras such as *Najivunia kuwa Mkenya* (Proud to be a Kenyan) are reinforced.

Kenya's experience is not different from that of many other multi-ethnic African countries. Themnér and Wallensteen (2014) observes that half of the nations across the world experiencing intra-state conflict were from sub-Saharan Africa much of which has been related to ethnic differences. In Nigeria the ''*indigene-settler*'' narrative has been cited as the major cause of civil unrest and ethnic land related conflicts that has troubled the nation for decades (Ibeanu O.& Onu 2001; Uchendu, 2007; Sijuwade, 2011). In Rwanda, the 1994 genocide was as a result of ethnic rivalry between the three indigenous groups; Hutus, Tustis and Twa (Nowrojee, 1996). Other nations that experienced ethnic related conflicts include inter alia Burundi, Uganda, Sudan, Rwanda and south Africa.

In this paper, we examined the potentiality of cities as conceivable spaces for learning to co-exist and to embrace diversity aimed at fostering nationhood. Fully aware that globalization, migration and technology have turned the world in to a small village, and increased chances of interactions and diversity, the paper explored the possibilities of embracing the *''Salad bowel[1]''* rather than advocating for the *''melting pot''[2]*. The hypothesis of the study was that, as people from different ethnic identities converge in the city, they are likely to form new social networks, modify and/ or adopt new ways of life. This 'natural' convergence is likely to ease ethnic and cultural prejudice and stereotypes and give forth to individuals who are open minded and more tolerant to ethnic diversity and cultural pluralism. Therefore, in the wake of the growing pluralistic spaces resulting from migrations, urban diversity in terms of ethnicity can be used as a fortress for learning ethnic tolerance and promoting nationhood without undermining ethnic identities and attendant ethnic cultural diversities. The study was conducted in Mathare informal settlement in Nairobi city Kenya. Participants were rural-urban migrants who had previously been accustomed to a rural mono-ethnic cultural environment before re-locating into the ethnically heterogeneous city of Nairobi. The paper therefore explored the potentiality of cities as conceivable spaces for learning how to live with, tolerate and embrace cultural diversity and promote nationhood. Drawing from this objective the study sought to answer the following questions:

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[1] Salad bowel is metaphor used to refer to contexts where different cultures are mix together—like salad ingredients—but do not dissolve into a single homogeneous culture; each culture keeps its own distinct qualities

[2] Melting pot, a metaphor used to refer to a context where a variety of individual cultures practices beliefs and identities assimilate into a cohesive whole.

i. What are the migrants' interpretations of ethnicity and nationhood?
ii. What are the existing avenues for inter-ethnic engagements in the City?
iii. What impact do inter-ethnic interactions and engagements have on ethnic-relations?

1.3 Theoretical Framework

The study is premised on contact theory by Allport (1954) and Pettigrew (1998). The theory avers that when people of diverse cultural practices are exposed to each other in a variety of ways, they are likely to become more accommodative and less likely to display prejudicial behavior. Pettigrew builds on the views of Allport (1954) on the power of contact in promoting understanding and acceptance of the other. The theory provides compelling evidence on the power of interactions among diverse groups. Pettigrew suggests that interpersonal relations between groups of varied cultures have the potential to increase positive attitude and reduce prejudice among opposing groups. Pettigrew further argues that intergroup contact; I) Facilitates learning about other out groups that lead to reduction in prejudice and stereotypes about the other, ii) Reduces the fear and anxiety people have when interacting with other out groups, which in turn reduces their negative evaluations of the out group and iii) Increases people's ability to take the perspective of the out group and to empathize with their concerns (Pettigrew 1998). Allport on the other hand highlighted four key factors that facilitate the reduction of prejudice and negative stereotypes among interacting outgroup namely: common goals, equal status, inter-group cooperation and the support of authorities, laws or customs. The contact theory has, however, been criticized for over emphasizing on positive outcomes and not specifying the conditions that are favorable for the positive outcomes. For instance, Paolini, et. al (2010) submit that inter group contacts can yield both positive and negative outcomes and in some cases may result to prejudice thus increasing effects of negative contact to outweigh the prejudice-reducing effects of positive contact (Barlow et. al. (2012). This paper however supports Pettigrew's standpoints on the power and effect of contact by arguing that ethnic mixing is likely to impact positively on ethnic relations.

1.4 Methodology

The study was contacted in Mathare informal settlement in Nairobi city, Kenya. Mathare is among the most preferred locations in the city by first time migrants and low income earners due to its close proximity to the city center and other informal employment centers (Kyuvi, 2017). It is densely populated with migrants across all ages and from diverse ethnic backgrounds with children and young people occupying the largest

population. The high population in a considerably limited space gives little room for private life and anonymity and forces the residents to all sorts of inter-ethnic encounters fostering daily practices of urban co-existence (Amin and Thrift 2002). Participants for the study were drawn from three Mathare villages namely Kiamutisya, Mashimoni, and 3C. The study employed an interpretive study design that allowed the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods in the collection and analysis of data was used. The study was carried out in two phases. In the first phase, a total of eighty purposefully selected rural-urban migrants with diverse characteristics (ethnicity, length of stay, age, and level of education) who had resided in the city for a period of more than five years were interviewed. In the second phase the researcher made use of the survey findings obtained in the first phase to select twenty-four participants for the in-depth interviews. More qualitative data was obtained through three focus group discussions one in each village. Before commencement of the study the researcher obtained a legal permit from the relevant authority (National Commission for Research, Technology and Innovation). Similarly, all respondents voluntarily committed themselves to participate in the study by signing a consent form.

2.0   Findings and discussions
2.1   Migrants' interpretations of ethnicity and nationhood

The study interrogated migrants understanding of ethnicity and what it means to them to have good ethnic relations. We also examined how ethnic socialization, beliefs, cultures and experiences influenced their interactions with other groups. Participants were migrants from different ethnic groups. This implied difference in rural regions of origin, difference in cultural beliefs and practices and also differences in economic practices. Only two out of eighty participants interviewed were of the view that ethnicity is the major cause of internal conflicts in Kenya. The rest, seventy-six cited past social injustices, politics, social-economic inequalities, weak policies and unresolved disputes as the key contributors to ethnic conflicts. None of the participants agreed on the proposition of dissolving their ethnic identities to form a single national identity. All participants strongly believed that it is possible to achieve national cohesion without dissolving the unique ethnic identities and demonstrated high acceptance of diversity. Eleven participants besides mentioning their ethnicities went further to identify themselves with a certain region or specific tribe within that ethnic group. Similarly, none of the participants regarded ethnic identities as a threat to national cohesion. Out of the eighty participants interviewed seventy-two defined ethnicities in reference to the diverse dialects and cultural practices. Only two felt that ethnic diversity was harmful to national peace. However, both of them reported to be enjoying the benefits of diversity in the city. The rest seventy-

eight were of the opinion that social cohesion can be achieved even within multi-ethnic nations like Kenya. Only three participants agreed that ethnic diversity was the major cause of conflicts in the nation. Out of the twenty-four in-depth participants seventeen were of the same opinion that the major distinctive features in ethnicity was the plural dialects, the cultural practices and histories of the people

Migrants reported to have been enjoying the benefits of diversity in the city through sharing and exchange of skills, and knowledge. Consistent with the social construct views on ethnicity, participants did not regard ethnicity as fixed or acquired only through ancestry or blood lineage. Rather, marriage, migration, individual preferences and choices were cited as influencing individual ethnic identity choices. For instance, three migrants identified themselves with more than one ethnic tribe due to their parental origins while another identified with more than three ethnic groups due to marriage and migration. One of the respondent who had parents from different ethnic back grounds made the following remarks.

*''You see I have always wanted to identify myself as a Kamba and a Kisii at the same time. My mother is a Kamba and my father a Kisii. Am fluent in both languages as I have lived in both rural places. If it were my wish I would be referred to as a Kisii-Kamba from Nyamira and Kangundo because both of these places are my rural homes and I have relatives in both of them. I keep wondering why people keep insisting that I am a Kisii not a Kamba yet that's not what I feel. I think we should be given an opportunity to choose who we feel we are……. My mum has been married for so long yet still in Kisii land she is referred to as a Kamba yet she has lived with them and become like them in Language, culture and residence. I think this is something that needs to change'' (*Nyaboke 33, years old female).

Nyaboke's sentiments provide a unique lens through which ethnic identities are formed further suggesting that ethnic identities are not regarded as permanent and unchangeable but an aspect influenced and dictated by a number of individual life events such as marriage, migration, and even choice. These findings resonate with Ochieng (2010) argument that it is impossible to get a pure ethnic identity (pure Maasai, pure Kalenjin, pure Kamba …and so on) because most of the so called communities have blended to form complex mixture of blood, cultures, beliefs, and languages that can hardly be identified with pure ethnicity. All except two agreed to the influence of life events in acquiring new ethnic identities confirming to the preposition that there is no pure ethnic identity (Suliman, 2011). Besides the

recognized ethnic groups there existed some sub-groups within the same ethnic groups based on history, origin, ancestry, and dialects that also influenced group identification and members' relationships causing them to see themselves as different from the larger ethnic group.

2.2   Existing Avenues for Inter-Ethnic Engagements in the City

The argument that ethnic diversity is harmful to the harmonious living of the people has been supported by quite a number of scholars (Alesina and La Ferrara, 2000; 2005; Estaben and Ray, 2017). Kenya's ethnic communities engage in diverse socio-cultural and economic activities. These diversity of activities is influenced by the groups' cultural beliefs, historical back grounds and the climatic condition of their native rural areas. Ethnic amalgamation in the urban areas convey the diverse skills and competences together. This convergence, provides an opportunity for individuals to learn from and complement each other. The interactions and exchange of social goods and services have the potential to improve relationships, boost understanding, and overcome stereotypes and misconceptions among the diverse groups (Pettigrew 1998). In his study on medieval India, Jha, (2008) observed that ethnic groups engaged in different forms of businesses had the tendency to form business associations that strengthened the bond between the outgroups and helped prevent inter-group conflict. Similarly, Demange and Wooders, (2005) opine that social mixing has the ability to bring about multiplicity in abilities, experiences, productivity and attract a wide range of talent. Jha (2007:3) further notes that, when ethnic groups provide complementary goods or services to one another positive inter-relationships flourish and the incentive for antagonism against each other decrease.

We identified and examined six different forms of inter-ethnic engagements/interactions happening in the three villages (Mashimoni, 3C and Kiamutisya villages) namely; Voluntary community self-help groups; Residential plots, Business ventures, Exogamous marriages, Places of worship, and Learning institution. These six were constantly stated by participants as having opened doors to understanding the beauty of their diverse cultural practices and beliefs causing them to embrace each other's differences. Out of the twenty-four in-depth participants, twenty-one had first-hand interaction with other out group in the city. The intended and unintended ethnic mixing and exposure to diverse cultures in the informal settlement opened a window for migrants to accept and live with diversity.

2.2.1   Mixed voluntary community groups

In this study we found out that voluntary associations and social welfare groups acted as an important avenue for ethnic mixing and learning

(See table 2.2 below). All the respondents were members of at least one voluntary community welfare groups popularly referred to as *Chamas* with mixed ethnic membership. These organizations provided buffer zone for cultural learning and experience that extended to the rural regions. Participants described community group membership as a means of broadening social network for support in time of need and a form of security in case of ethnic attacks. Participants reported to have taken advantage of their diversity of skills to create joint inter-ethnic ventures within the groups. They praised the mixed ethnic income generating ventures as attracting clients across all ethnic divide contributing to customers' satisfaction, as well as opening doors for extended ethnic bonding.

Group activities	Reasons for joining community groups	How groups started
- Merry go round - Table banking - Savings - Food mobilization - Children advocacy - Garbage collection - Burial coverage - Community project - Home improvement - Dowry payment - Fundraising - Mental health and emotional welfare - Rural visitations	- For unity purposes - To identify with others - Be able to access funding - To mobilize funds and initiate income generating activities and community projects. - Encouragement by government and NGOs - To save money - Psychological support - Means to access handouts such as food, household items, grants etc - Get access to campaign money - Wanted to belong - For security purpose especially during campaigns	- Own members' initiative - Facilitation by local NGO - Referrals and invites by friends - Church initiative - Political influence

Source: Author's research data

2.2.2 Residential plots

The residential plots came out as powerful areas for ethnic and communal kind of life where ethnic mixed plots were seen as a form of security in case of ethnic conflict. Ethnic segregated areas were described as easy target by rival ethnic groups in case of ethnic conflict. None of the plots was occupied by a single ethnic group. In

the same way, there were no ethnic restrictions in the residential plots hence every individual was allowed to choose where to reside as long as they were able to pay. This was cited by majority of the respondents (78%) as one of the key reasons for the commendable peace among the diverse ethnic groups.

> *''Here you can't avoid mixing with other tribes, even if you hate them you learn to live with them. No one forces you to but circumstances…We meet in the washrooms, water points, foodstuff kiosks, drinking dens, pool tables……like almost everywhere. You see like majority of these structures here are owned by kikuyus, so other tribes cannot go looking for houses that are owned by their people or plots occupied by their tribe only. The owners of the plots can't say they will rent to their people only because its business. Same thing when you are a tenant you can't dictate on who rents the next room……I remember around 2007 there was a wave among the house owners around here to evict Luos because they feared that if their candidate won the election they will not pay rent. But this trend did not go for a long time. They realized that it can't work!''* George 46-year-old male from Nyanza region

Besides mixed ethnicities in the residential plots, there were also shared community structures such as sanitary blocks, water points, community libraries, churches, and kiosks. Similarly, overpopulation that seemingly gave no room for private life, provoked both intended and unintended interactions cultivating health relationships among residents.

2.2.3   Religious institutions
Ninety-four percentage of the respondents were members of ethnic heterogeneous religious groups, only two participants had churches with single ethnic group the rest four percent did not belong to any religious organization. Participants praised religious institutions for promoting ethnic mixing, ethnic learning and cultural accommodation in various ways including; accepting and promoting inter-ethnic marriages, integrating cultural events such as circumcision in church, offering relief and support for needy people regardless of their ethnic background, among other activities. Eight out of the twenty-four in-depth participants cited the integration of some cultural activities such as rites of passage in religious institutions as promoting close inter-ethnic bonding and creating long term relationship among different cultures especially among the youths. One of this cultural activities happening in the church was boys' circumcision which

traditionally is regarded as an ethnic cultural event that marks the transition to adulthood.

> Joseph had this to say;
> *''......you know in the recent times churches introduced boys' rite of passage (circumcision) in church. This is bringing a big transformation among our youths. When the boys go through the rite of passage together they form a special age set that is not defined by a particular ethnic group, the teachings they receive are not ethnic biased too. So they graduate to adulthood as brothers and friends...... In some way it also saves some boys from particular ethnic groups from public ridicule and negative stereotypes that their culture does not promote male circumcision. It earns them some respect too…….''* Joseph, 61 years old.

Iminza, 57 years and a resident at Mashimoni village seemed to agree with Josephs views adding that, churches pave way for exogamous marriage, teach diversity by adopting various cultural practices in church and not discriminating on grounds of ethnicity as well as teaching peace and stressing on brotherly love. Iminza too pointed out on the initiation of boys in church as not only providing areas for cooperation and inter-ethnic bonding among the youths but also as a relief to parents from unreasonable cultural demands. These views suggested that the multi-ethnic nature of religious institution as well provided opportunities for ethnic learning and engagement to varieties of social-cultural activities that further made them learn to accept and accommodate diversity

2.2.4 Work place

The work place emerged as yet another avenue where ethnic diversity was encouraged and adored. More than 90% of the participants who reported to have developed strong social bonds with migrants from different ethnicities also reported that it is in the city that they had for the first time experienced living and working with people of other ethnicities and to have developed close relationships with individuals from other ethnic groups at the work place and learnt much about other cultural beliefs, norms, values, and practices. Respondents seemed to acknowledge the competence and skills associated with different ethnicities and the importance of bringing these skills together. Majority of the respondents preferred mixed ethnic work place than working with a single ethnic group.

2.3   Impact do inter-ethnic interactions and engagements on ethnic-relations

Existing literature juxtaposes on what happens when people of different ethnicities interact. A number of studies have depicted ethnic activities in ethnic diverse cities as contributors to spatial concentrations and segregation rather than opportunities for interactions and peaceful co-existence. Alesina and La Ferrara (2000) found out that, inter-ethnic mixing reduced cooperation and the prospects for collective action among ethnic groups. Wessel, (2009) posits that having diverse group interacting or at close proximities has the potential to reinforce divisions along cultural and ethnic lines. Putnam (2007) alludes that in ethnically diverse neighborhoods trust among people decline, mutual help and friendships become rarer as people turn inwards to themselves a phenomenon he describes as ''hunkering down''. At the same time, a bulk of literature has demonstrated that individuals who live in multi-ethnic spaces are most likely to develop positive cross-ethnic relationships. Jha (2008) notes that ethnic mixing can lead to positive interethnic bonds thereby reducing the likelihood of animosity among the outgroups. Pettigrew, (2008) agree that inter-group contacts may bring out both positive and negative results depending on the conditions of their exposure.

Study findings established that ethnic mixing and constant interactions in the informal settlement had yielded positive results leading to pluralistic individuals who were more tolerant to diversity Consistent with Bisin et al. (2008) and Amin & Thrift (2002). Participants' accounts demonstrated that inter-ethnic mixing in the urban spaces created opportunities for migrants from different ethnicities to interact, and build relationships with people from other ethnic backgrounds which cemented bonds that extended to their rural folks. All participants enthusiastically commended on the new cultural learning opportunities and alluring fascinations presented by inter-ethnic interactions in the slum and shared multiple positive outcomes of their interactions with people of other ethnic groups. More than 90% of the participants who reported to have developed strong social bonds with migrants from different ethnicities also reported that it is in the city that they had for the first time experienced living and working with people of other ethnicities. This demonstrated that having people from diverse ethnicities live side by side helped in dealing with negative stereotypes, myths and misconceptions about the other and provided an opportunity for the migrants to re-write their stories differently from their own experiences rather than what they had heard about them.

We found increased trust among ethnic groups, cultural exchange of goods and services and increased appreciation of cultural diversities. Doris, a member of a community group noted the following;

> *''…………As I told you, when we are making our products we divide tasks according to our skills…. at the end of the day it's like our cultural background play part in what we are efficient in. You see, our Kamba members are very good in making the beaded necklaces and earrings with very good patterns. Have tried to learn from them but I still can't beat them in that, same to my Luo fellows. But you see this paintings (pointing at some wall hangings) I can paint like three of them when they are struggling with one…. Others are good in making Kiondos, and two of us are very good at convincing customers and looking for market than making the products. So we know when we don't work together our production goes down and subsequently our profits. This is why we embrace our ethnic uniqueness…''.* Doris, 52 years' old

Five participants reported to have learnt and adopted some cultural practices of other ethnic groups. This process of acculturation took place naturally as migrants interacted with each other. Three of the participants reported to have completely disregarded some of their cultural practices and adopted others from different ethnic groups. This process of acculturation happened voluntarily as none of the participants reported to have been forced to adopt other cultural practices. Participants gave diverse reasons for learning and adopting other cultural practices from that of their own as presented in table 2.3 below

Reasons For Learning /Adopting Other Cultural Practices	Number of Participants
Because they were more convenient to them than their own	18
Were more rational and non-discriminative compared to their cultures	14
Wanted to experience other cultures and develop a sense of belonging	21
Are not oppressive like their own cultures	2
Created opportunity for earning income	8
For fun	4

Table 2.3. Reasons for community group membership. Source: research data (Source: Author's research data)

Positive outcomes of ethnic mixing were also registered in the three focus group discussion where members seemed thrilled to share their experiences and views as majority nodded their heads in agreement.

Among the twenty-four participants in the in-depth interviews, only two registered some fears of possible absorption of the minority groups that they belonged to. Nonetheless they also recorded a number of benefits accrued from ethnic mixing. These findings challenge an array of diversity studies (Alesina and La Ferrara, (2000; 2005, Estaben and Ray, 2017) findings that link ethnic diversity to negative social consequences.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The peaceful co-existence happening in the urban as demonstrated in this study confirms that ethnic diversities do not amount to hostility and provide evidence that it is possible to achieve national cohesion amidst ethno-cultural diversities. Further, study findings demonstrated that ethnic mixing in the urban do promote ethnic understanding and peaceful co-existence. These urban experiences bring to the fore the numerous positive sides of cultural diversity and cultural pluralism. Given the cyclic nature and temporariness of urban migrations and the increasing popularity of rural regions following the introduction of devolved governance, the Kenyan government and other peace promoters can adopt this as strategy to promote peaceful co-existence among the diverse ethnic communities and national unity. Encouraging ethnic mixing, doing away with the so called ethnic land regions and resources can go a long way in promoting a sense of nationhood and reduce the tendencies of thinking along tribal lines. Similarly, past unresolved grievances touching on ethnic identities must be dealt with conclusively. Political leaders must refrain from ethno-political mobilization and ethnic profiling as this instigates hostility and violence among outgroups. Equally, policy narratives must shift from which ethnic group to which citizen in which region.

This paper further demonstrates that ethnic diversity is not bad in itself, neither is it the root cause of conflict and instability in Kenya as migrants did not regard their ethnic identities as permanent or more superior than others. Rather, migrants demonstrate their openness to the possibility of acquiring and identifying themselves with other ethnicities in the course of their lives especially through intermarriages and migration. This shows that Kenyans and especially those living in multi-ethnic urban spaces can and do embrace diversity and this can be a solid ground for promoting nationhood.

Lastly, given the fluidity of ethnic identities and the findings of this study, we posit that just as there is no pure ethnicity, ethnic diversity cannot be the single cause of ethnic hostility. Nations faced with what is labelled as ethnic hostilities should identify the underlying causes of ethnic hostilities rather than demonizing ethnic heterogeneity.

Human studies
Prior to the study, the researcher satisfied the law of the land by obtaining a legal permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology and innovation (NACOSTI) and observed highest ethical standards throughout the study.

Data Availability: All data collected was carefully analyzed and informed the final findings of the study.

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