The Gusii Block Vote

Philosophers believe that a good relationship between individuals originates from two main sources: instinctive liking and common purpose. The former, is the feelings which make biological beings to take pleasure in another’s company, find exhilaration in the other’s presence, wish to communicate with the other, and work and play with the other; however, the two complement each other and when one is in operation minus the other, collaboration is lost between two or more biological beings. It can then be argued that if the instinctive liking serves our biological needs, the common purpose serves our physical needs.

Kenyans cannot deny that the instinctive liking between all Kenyan ethnic groups has been developed. They need each other in their day-to-day interactions. This has given birth to inter-ethnic relationships through institutions like marriage. However, the common purpose of building an integrated nation is yet to be achieved. A close scrutiny of voting pattern in 1992 and 1997 shows that instinctive liking is just ornamental and citizens practice it only when a must. It shows that ethnicity will always be a key determinant of an election outcome in Kenya; more than other factors like popularity of the political party, political experience and credibility of party leaders, and even party values. In this arrangement of unwritten truce between politicians, the voter is the tool of trade where the politician is an entrepreneur. However, the ethnic groups who have not yet identified a presidential candidate from within their group use their political representatives to negotiate with other ethnic groups that have a presidential candidate.