

Reforming Privilege, Extending Opportunity and Transcending Culture in Postmodern Kenya through the “Big 4” and the Bill of Rights

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Abstract

Kenya has lived through three main cultural contexts: traditional/pre-colonial context, colonial context and the postcolonial/neo-colonial context. The latter two are modernist and post-modernist in nature. Each of the contexts have unique and, in some cases, overlapping qualities. The traditional context was overwhelmingly socialist even as it provided for individual initiative. The modern culture, conversely, is mainly driven by capitalism characterized by individual gain, economic social clusters and extremely unequal societies with widespread alienating bourgeoisie excesses and decadences. This paper argues that the “Big 4” agenda—with its emphasis on affordable housing, food security, affordable healthcare and manufacturing—coming on stage in the backdrop of “Vision 2030 and the promulgation of the Kenya 2010 constitution, is the closest the country has come to transcending our past and present experiences as a people and disrupting social networks and organizational structures that undermine our success as a people. Coupled with the inalienable provisions in the Bill of Rights (2010), further argues the paper, the “Big 4” provide an opportunity to realize sustainable development as well as realize far reaching social transformation founded on a dynamic balance between free-market economics and stronger social safety nets in modern Kenya. Such social transformation would then pave the way for the desirable equitable balance and access to power, reduced poverty and hunger, general well-being, peace, justice, among other things as outlined in sustainable development goals and Kenya’s vision 2030 social pillar. Guided by various existentialist and social realism theories and strands, and while viewing access to education and the Bill of Rights as the panacea to social inequality in Kenya, the present study seeks to propose ways of achieving and sustaining equitable development in Kenya.

Key Words: Bill of Rights, Equity, Social Realism, Existentialism, Sustainable Development, Universal Education, Equality