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Markets, Civil Society and Democracy in Kenya

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Markets, Civil Society and Democracy in Kenya

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Copenhagen, March 1995

Peter Gibbon

Map of Kenya

Markets, Civil Society and Democracy in Kenya

Peter Gibbon

The extended studies in this volume deal with three of the most central dimensions of grassroots development and change in Kenya over the last decade and a half. The first, by Gerrishon Ikiara, Mohamud Jama and Justus Amadi concerns continuity and transformation in the cereals marketing chain, the centrepiece of World Bank, European Community and USAID efforts during the 1980s and early 1990s to liberalise Kenyan economic institutions on the basis of aid conditionality. The second, by Karuti Kanyinga, examines the nature and political role of local-level development institutions, before and after the re-emergence of multi-party politics in 1991–92. The third, by Mutahi Ngunyi, examines the complex relation between recent political developments and religious organisations, described by one recent commentator (Bratton, 1994) as the most important institutions in contemporary Kenyan “civil society”.

Unlike Tanzania and Zimbabwe, covered in sister volumes to this one, Kenya has not in recent years been presented as a “success story” by the international financial institutions. Rather it has been regarded as something of a miscreant, and between November 1991 and December 1992 it was subjected to frequent suspension of disbursements of ongoing aid programmes and pledges of new aid by most of the important bilateral and multilateral donors (see Swamy, 1994). This was all the more surprising given that not many years earlier Kenya had been widely regarded by many of these same donors as a positive economic and political example to the rest of Africa. This transformation in international perceptions of Kenya had complex roots which will be examined in the next section. However, it can be stated in advance that part of it involved the partial abandonment amongst donors of the previously-held belief that Africa’s main problem was its flirtation with “socialism” in different forms. In place of this came a belief that there were certain deeply-rooted “organic” features of African social and political organisation (for example, “patrimonialism”) which were responsible for its economic and political difficulties. This partly accounted for a shift of donor agendas to include political democratisation as well as economic liberalisation.

Since Kenya is regarded as a problem child rather than a success story, and since it began to systematically implement adjustment policies only at the end of 1993 when these studies had just been completed, these studies

could not and do not provide us with evidence to evaluate the effectiveness of economic adjustment policies. They do however provide evidence which allows us to reflect on the convincingness of the donor diagnosis of the central policies and practices which preceded economic liberalisation. They also allow us some provisional insights into the effects, if any, of the (multi-party election) form of political liberalisation which Kenya adopted under perceived donor pressure in 1991–92.

KENYA'S TRANSITION FROM ORNAMENT TO EYESORE

The sharp conflicts between donors and the Kenya government which emerged in the public arena in 1991 reflected subterranean tensions which had existed for a considerable time. However, for most of the 1980s these had been hidden behind a cloak of eulogisation of the Kenyan experience by a broad swathe of "donor-friendly" western academic commentators. For these commentators, Kenya was one of Africa's few economic and political ornaments, a country to be held up, admired and analysed mainly in order to detect what might be transferable in its "exceptional" performance.

Kenya's economy, and especially its agriculture, attracted particularly great commendation. In a book published as late as 1989 Lofchie for example referred to Kenyan agriculture as "the envy of both its immediate neighbours and other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa" (1989:148). Export volumes had "steadily grown ... Contrary to the views of those who felt that Kenya had exhausted the potential for expanding the land area under cultivation it has also been able to achieve substantial increases in (export crop) acreages ..." (ibid.:155), while on the food crop side the country had achieved an "unsurpassed record of national food self-sufficiency" (ibid.:159). In an observation that would have surprised employees of the international financial institutions, Lofchie suggested that the reason for this was that "Kenya has sought assiduously to implement the policy recommendations of World Bank and IMF advisers. Today it is generally regarded with respect by both these lending institutions for its concrete achievements in having adopted the sort of policy framework they advocate" (ibid.:17). The basic constituents of this framework were said to consist of a land policy centred around the creation of a free market in land, a producer price policy based on world market/import parity prices for both export and domestic crops, a flexible exchange-rate policy and a set of well-managed agricultural sector parastatals promoting the "best features of administered ... markets" (ibid.:164). The presence of such a framework was in turn attributed to "the extent to which Kenya's elite has economically invested in the rural areas ... Kenya's political leaders are also farmers and ... Kenya's farmers are ... also its political leaders" (ibid.:187). This essentially meant that the "urban bias" which was said to undermine agricultural policy in most other African countries was never allowed to influ-

ence it in Kenya. It also meant that incentives for parastatal mismanagement were sharply reduced: "though elite politicians may benefit from using parastatals as sources of political patronage and as vehicles for the extraction of political rents, they benefit as farmers when these corporations function responsibly and at low levels of operating overheads" (ibid.:191).

The Kenyan political system also attracted great praise. In a contribution published the same year as Lofchie's, Barkan and Holmquist, for example, argued that the Kenyan state was "more accountable to its public than its neighbours are and ... appear(s) to be regarded as more legitimate by its citizens" (1989: 359). Part of the reason for this was said to be found in its relatively high degree of political stability and the predictability of its main forms of political competition. However Barkan and Holmquist chiefly ascribed it to the existence of an active local-level politics organised around the institution of *harambee*. According to these authors *harambee* has been a means whereby essential social services in rural areas have been provided on the basis of a thriving self-help system. Proposals for self-help projects are initiated, financed and organised locally, and popularly based on the small and middle peasantry. Different categories of rural people contribute to them and benefit from them in a manner which justifies them being regarded as a progressive form of local taxation. The rural community then uses the projects to "tax" the state. In return for offering to play client roles in relation to particular local political patrons, communities obtain state resources for project recurrent costs. The standard means by which political leaders seek to advance their careers and obtain power is thus to raise funds for self-help projects, personally and by lobbying. Barkan and Holmquist denied both that the system had been used by the state or locally powerful elites to "co-opt and tax" the peasantry and that coercion played any significant role within the system.

These contributions were published at a time when major economic and political problems were already clearly evident in Kenya, however. At the centre of the economic difficulties was a sharp decline in agricultural performance. Whereas agricultural growth had averaged nearly 6.2 per cent per annum between 1965 and 1973, between 1980 and 1988 it averaged only 3.3 per cent, or around zero in per capita terms. The index of per capita food production (1979-81=100) declined from 199 in 1964-66 to 101 in 1987-89. Annual wheat imports averaged around 120,000 tonnes per annum for most of the 1980s and reached 300,000 tonnes in 1990. There was no clear trend in production of the main cash crop, coffee, over the decade but yields per hectare fell between 1980-81 and 1990-91 from 1057 kg to 930 kg on estates and from 848 kg to 540 kg on smallholdings, almost certainly in response to declining application of inputs. Sugar production increased during the 1980s but that of cotton and pyrethrum plummeted. Only tea production experienced an unambiguous upward trend in production, acreages and yields. Even here however, con-

straints to future growth were already clear in the form of limited quantities of suitable land for expansion, falling crop and rising input prices, and increasing controversy over the running of the relevant parastatal (all data from Ikiara et al., 1993). Of course, these problems were less chronic than in most other African countries. But the fact was that Kenya was definitely suffering an economic malaise.

Politically it was also increasingly difficult to justify an impression of greater state legitimacy in Kenya than in its neighbours. Even during the Kenyatta period state legitimacy in Kenya was ethnically partial and almost certainly did not extend to much of western part of the country, where the Luo ethnic group had been excluded from many of the fruits of independence, or to parts of the Rift Valley, where much land had been passed over the heads of some indigenous populations from white settlers to members of Kenyatta's own Kikuyu ethnic group. A significant section of the intelligentsia was also strongly opposed to the regime. This section shared a critique of the Kenyatta state not only as a vehicle of ethnic politics generally and for massive enrichment by a small group of Kenyatta's own family and friends, but also for its concentration of power in an increasingly unaccountable president and an essentially tribalistic organisation of close cronies (the Gikuyu-Embu-Meru Association (GEMA)).

After Moi's accession, and more particularly after the abortive coup attempt of 1982, a concerted presidential attempt began to redistribute many of the advantages hitherto enjoyed by the Kikuyu. Consequently the geography of regime legitimacy and illegitimacy changed substantially. However within those areas where feelings of illegitimacy were now present, they existed in probably more intense forms than before. Or at least they were capable of being expressed more concertedly, since the Kikuyu tended to have a strong presence in the political and administrative classes and the free professions. This in turn contributed to new measures taken in the late 1980s by the Moi government to restrict Kenyan political freedoms. The most controversial of these was the abolition of the secret ballot in favour of a queue voting system for KANU primary elections in 1987. Others comprised a series of interventions with respect to the judiciary in 1988. These made the Attorney General's position a presidential appointment, made the renewal of judges' appointments a matter of presidential discretion and obliged all practising lawyers to apply for annual licences.

These measures brought the Kenyan government's international political legitimacy increasingly into question. Complaints about human rights in the country previously taken up only by small, scattered and divided groups of exiles now became matters of concern to a much wider constituency. In 1988 in the US for example, reference to "the decline in freedom of political expression, increased intolerance of critical elements, increased use of political detentions and ... mistreatment of prisoners in Kenya" became incorporated as a section of the human rights bill pushed by the Chairman of the House Committee on Africa, Howard Wolpe, through both houses of Congress for further discussion by various committees.

Although this section was removed from the bill's final version, following lobbying by a public relations firm hired by the Kenya government, the "Kenya question" was not to disappear from mainstream American politics. Early in 1989 the Appropriations Sub-Committee of the House Foreign Relations Committee refused to approve new aid to Kenya on account of its human rights record.

It is of considerable interest that the main campaigning plank amongst members of Congress employed by the public relations consultants mentioned above was the Kenya government's pro-western orientation, especially but not only in the context of Mombasa's strategic relation to the Gulf. With the fall of the Berlin Wall and the subsequent implosion in the rest of central and eastern Europe this argument no longer carried much weight. The immediate result however was not so much greater international pressure on Kenya for political reform, but more the open surfacing of differences between the World Bank and Kenya over the non-implementation of aspects of Kenya's structural adjustment programmes. These differences had intensified since around 1986.

The Kenya government received its first Structural Adjustment Loan (SAL) from the World Bank in 1980, in the context of delays in the finalisation of a Kenya government-IMF agreement, itself a response to a balance of payments crisis (Mosley, 1991). At this time Kenya enjoyed the basic confidence of the western powers, not only with regard to its economic and political fundamentals but also as a site for direct investment. No serious macro-economic problems were identified with the Kenyan economy and the loan's main conditions concerned the implementation of a more outward-oriented industrial strategy. Moreover in the next two years the Kenya government undertook two important macro-economic reforms at its own initiative. The exchange rate was devalued and then transferred to a crawling peg, effecting a continuous slight depreciation of the shilling over the following years. Secondly, the Central Bank tightened control over monetary aggregates and introduced real positive interest rates (Mosley, *ibid.*).

During this same period however, the World Bank undertook a comprehensive review of the Kenyan economy (World Bank, 1983) which formed the basis for the conditionalities attached to a second SAL in 1982. These centred on trade liberalisation and agricultural sector reforms, and these have formed the two main themes of all subsequent Kenyan adjustment.

The Kenyan government was initially given considerable leeway as to how trade liberalisation should be implemented, despite the fact that it was already running large fiscal and balance of payments deficits. Mosley (*ibid.*:286) attributes this leeway to the high level of donor confidence in the small group of Kenyan officials responsible for the implementation of macro-economic policy in these years (Philip Ndegwa at the Central Bank, Harris Mule at the Ministry of Finance and Simeon Nyachae, head of the civil service). Although trade liberalisation was only partly implemented in

the first phase of adjustment and little was done on export promotion, the significant worsening of internal and external balances accompanying the policy elsewhere was averted by Kenya government-initiated reductions in many areas of public expenditure. A second attempt at trade liberalisation occurred in 1988–91. This resulted in almost all imports becoming de-restricted, technically at least, and the level of effective protection dropping sharply (Swamy, 1994:234).

From the donor viewpoint agricultural sector reform proved far more “difficult”. Kenya was asked to set all producer prices on the base of import parities and to partially privatise maize marketing. There were no problems with the first of these conditions. Most producer prices had been close to import parity during the late 1970s and even when they had drifted away from them around 1980 they were still set at levels implying what the World Bank would probably have regarded as negligible levels of taxation (see the discussion in Gibbon et al. (1993:32)). But with regard to the second, as Mosley points out, in challenging maize controls the World Bank was “attempting ... a feat of political muscle which had defeated all liberalising pressure ... for over 40 years” (op.cit.:285). Why maize controls should prove such a problem is discussed at length by Ikiara et al. (this volume) and later in this introduction. At the moment what is important to note is that, as Mosley (*ibid.*:291) underlines further, donor objectives on this front were rendered all the more difficult by the realities which underlay donor-Kenyan government relations at this time: the Kenya government knew “that if the Bank was not able to lend effectively for development in Kenya, it was not clear where else in Africa it might do so ...”

Initially the Kenya government agreed to commission an independent study on grain marketing with World Bank money. This recommended that the National Cereals and Produce Board (NCPB) be reduced from a monopsony purchaser of all grains to a buyer and seller of last resort. The response of the Kenya government was to commission a second study, which concluded that there was no real distortion in the maize producer price, and to enlarge the level of permitted unlicensed inter-district trans-shipment of maize to 4 tonnes—a measure however which was never implemented. In reaction to this perceived non-compliance the US and British governments suspended negotiations on further programme grants. At the end of 1983 the Kenya government apparently gave in and agreed to implement the original recommendations and the programme grant timetable was reactivated. All that happened on the maize marketing front though was the formation of a state-organised cooperative, the Kenya Grain Growers’ Cooperative Union, ostensibly to compete with NCPB but actually to act as its agent.

Donor efforts to pursue maize marketing reform and Kenya government efforts to resist it were to continue for the next decade (see Ikiara et al., this volume), with degrees of maize decontrol being promised but not delivered at least four times. The result was increasing donor frustration.

This frustration increased as donor agendas widened to include reform of other agricultural sub-sectors (e.g., fertilisers, agricultural finance, etc.) and marketing institutions (particularly those concerned with cotton and coffee) and of parastatals more generally. A pattern emerged whereby Kenya would agree to conditionalities, bank the resulting flows of programme aid and then find reasons for non-compliance. Other than in regard to trade liberalisation, where compliance did occur it tended to be in sectors or sub-sectors basically marginal to the interests both of government and donors, or in areas where the Kenya government was already planning changes (e.g., selective price decontrol of manufactured goods). Even in trade liberalisation certain key clients of the political elite retained the possibility of extracting monopoly rents through the preservation of explicit or implicit licensing systems. Another trend was for the Kenya government to use conditionalities to actually tighten presidential control over state or semi-state institutions which had previously enjoyed a degree of independence from central interference. This occurred most notably in the coffee industry. According to Mosley these tendencies all increased after the mid-1980s, when the triumvirate of local technocrats in charge of macro-economic policy was broken up.

The role of the end of the Cold War in the exposure of the Kenya government to public criticism over its failure to conform to donor-set norms and policies has already been mentioned. A second factor was its growing regional isolation in this respect. Relative to Kenya, Tanzania and particularly Uganda were demonstrating greater compliance with the agendas of the international financial institutions, just as Kenya was demonstrating "intransigence". A third was a series of increasingly flagrant instances of what Swamy (1994:195) politely calls "lack of transparency and accountability in the use of public funds". Of particular concern here was the question of Kenya's large number of "political banks" (including Pan African Bank, Exchange Bank, Trade Bank and others). These were banks with very low capital ratios but with which prominent political figures had a close connection, and which attracted large deposits from public organisations, usually parastatals. These deposits, which were often at below-market level interest rates, were then lent out at similarly low interest rates to the political figures themselves or their associates. These loans were also frequently non-performing, leading to liquidity crises in the banks and to bail-outs by the Central Bank of Kenya—whereupon the cycle started again. Most "political banks" were also involved in other scams, sometimes of gigantic proportions. The most popular of these was obtaining advances from the Central Bank for non-existent exports, under different export credit/compensation schemes. Exchange Bank was said to have obtained USD 365 million in four days in April 1993 in this way, a sum equivalent to a quarter of Kenya's current money supply. Meanwhile the company owning Exchange Bank, Goldenberg, also obtained a further USD 145 million in the same way.

The Kenya government had meanwhile, in December 1991, taken a major step towards what it believed would appease its donor critics. Section 2a of the constitution, forbidding the organisation of opposition parties, was repealed and multi-party elections held a year later. Contrary to the impression formed by the Kenyan government this was not a major donor priority at the time. Donors nevertheless welcomed it. But by calling elections in a situation where it was unlikely to be able to gain a majority of votes or seats, the ruling party either had to resign itself to losing power (and possibly worse) or was obliged to bring about a favourable outcome by political engineering. The latter course of action was adopted, with consequences—notably the so-called “ethnic clashes” in the Rift Valley—which only served to alienate donor sensibilities further.

DIAGNOSES OF THE KENYAN “MALAISE”

As external perceptions of Kenyan realities have been transformed in the last few years, so the question has been posed of “what went wrong?” The literature arising in relation to this question has been accompanied by another, less developed one, trying to identify positive “civil society” forces amongst the many current trends seen as negative.

Of course the question “what went wrong” assumes, without substantive evidence, that all was well before the 1980s. On the other hand, even if this question has a built-in (Kenyatta-ist) bias it is probably still worth asking it in another way, namely what has changed in the last decade and a half. In any event, the literature on this question, and on that of “hopeful” signs for the future—as well as the wider debates they refer to—comprises the most important discursive background to the studies in this volume.

Interpreting changes in the economy

One of the first, and certainly the most important figure to have tried to develop an explanation of what had changed problematically in the Kenyan economy—or at any rate, Kenyan agriculture—was Robert Bates. Bates is of course best known for his earlier, narrowly rational-choice and neo-classically influenced *Markets and States in Tropical Africa* (1981), in which it is argued that—with severely adverse effects—African governments have suppressed (a neo-classically defined) “economic rationality” in economic policy making in favour of (a rational-choice theory-defined) “political rationality”. The latter involved them setting low agricultural prices and investing in inefficient rural development projects; low agricultural prices ensured the support of relatively well-organised urban constituencies like manufacturers and consumers while the “projectisation” of

rural areas divided up and selectively rewarded/punished the less organised peasantry.

In his later work on Kenya Bates (1989) presents a more nuanced and sophisticated argument. The notion that "economic" and "political" rationality inhabit separate spheres of reality is abandoned in favour of an attempt to show how specific economic and political circumstances give rise to particular combinations of economic institutions, some of which then become the objects of political struggles, whose outcomes are themselves partly determined by the ways in which politics is locally institutionalised.

Bates's argument begins with the contention that an economic interest in land provided the main driving force of the political struggle against colonialism. However the form of indirect rule resulted in the land question necessarily taking an ethnic guise, since people could only gain access to land through "tribal" institutions and could only even campaign against colonialism within their own "home" areas, i.e. through ethnically-based local political leaderships. As the colonial period drew to a close the issue of the post-independence distribution of land came to dominate Kenyan politics and ethnic political leaderships opposed/allied with each other on the basis of their location, size and wealth. The Kikuyu emerged from the colonial era "centrally positioned in Kenya's ... rural economy (and with) the desire and the means to register their demands for land" (*ibid.*:51). The lands it was most obvious for them to claim were the neighbouring ones with which they had a variety of historic ties. The introduction of a parliamentary form of rule in 1960 meant that it became necessary for the leaders of individual ethnic groups to advance their claims for new lands or defence of existing territories firstly on the basis of alliances with the representatives of different ethnic groups and secondly on the basis of "national" programmes addressed to the land issue.

Kikuyu political leaders in the Kenyan African National Union (KANU) allied with Luo ones because both groups wanted to expand into Kalenjin areas. The Kalenjin allied with the Luhya, for both had claims conflicting with the Kikuyu and Luo. Both then sought and formed wider alliances, in the shape of KANU and the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU) respectively. Since the Kikuyu were economically powerful enough to buy their way into neighbouring areas the KANU programme espoused a free market in land. Since the Kalenjin were economically too weak to resist them, the KADU programme espoused strong regional authorities which could regulate access to land on an ethnic basis.

KANU, which won a parliamentary majority, managed to both get its way on the land question and avoid an ethnic explosion—the latter by a combination of exploiting ethnic differences within KADU while simultaneously providing significant incentives to defect to leaders of both its major ethnic factions. KADU subsequently dissolved and for the rest of the 1960s Kenyan politics revolved around class-based distributional issues (articulated by Odinga's Kenya People's Union (KPU)). Kenya's commit-

ment to a capitalist development path, albeit a state-nurtured one, was strengthened in the process. At the centre of this nurturing was smallholder and estate coffee and tea production in the Kikuyu heartland, but other branches of capital were also supported.

Throughout the period from its defeat of KADU until the mid-1970s, KANU remained a loose but stable coalition of ethno-regional notables under the unchallenged domination of Jomo Kenyatta. Only when Kenyatta's death approached did it begin to dissolve as its different internal factions jockeyed for leadership. Moi, a former leader of KADU, was backed by one of the two factions closest to Kenyatta himself, but having become president soon struck out on an independent path.

Support to Kenyan agriculture was organised through a series of monopsonistic bureaucracies (marketing boards, etc.), most of which could be traced back to the colonial period and all of which, Bates recognises, there were originally good economic reasons for (lack of alternatives to deductions from crop sales for securing loans for land purchases, reducing costs to bulk purchasers, realising economies of scale, etc.). However, "though created in efforts to rectify problems that inhibit the operations of markets" (*ibid.*:82) these institutions made it easy for "special interests" to easily alter the structure of markets through lobbying or other means. Some of these special interests have been the large-scale actors within particular industries who according to rational choice theory normally benefit from successful lobbying. But others have been strictly political interests.

According to Bates, Kenya has seen two basic forms of "predation" by political interests on economic bureaucracies. The first form, which he implies has been chronic at least since the demise of the KPU, involves local-level politicians gaining access to these institutions and using them for personal scams of one type or another, normally to build up their own political capital. It also involves these same politicians building up local political support by organising constituents to bargain economic concessions (e.g., higher crop or lower input prices) out of these bureaucracies. The second form, which Bates appears to date from Moi's accession to power, involves wholesale central manipulation of these bureaucracies to (re)constitute a new national political coalition from scratch.

The prevalence of the first form of "predation" Bates blames on Kenya's combination of a single party system with intense local competition for who is to carry the local party flag. This meant a decline in "big" politics and ideological divisions at the expense of competition between local politicians "to do things of immediate local value" (*ibid.*:92). The prevalence of the second, much more far-reaching and economically dangerous form Bates blames on the nature of Moi's political base. Founded like Kenyatta's on an ethno-regional branch of landed property—albeit the landed property of a weaker ethno-regional grouping—it could only establish a national base without disturbing the foundations of landed property itself by using the agricultural bureaucracies to promote a fundamental ethno-regional redistribution of resources.

Bates lists a number of new forms of "predation" which, it is implied, have basically destabilised agricultural bureaucracies generally. These all involved NCPB. The grain crises of 1979–80 and 1984–85 were used as excuses for appointing a large number of inefficient cooperatives in Luhya areas as agents for the NCPB, to the benefit of certain Luhya populist politicians. It was also used to break the power of the Kenya Farmers' Association, the main base of politicians in the Rift Valley independent of Moi. It was thirdly used to consolidate the bases of Moi's "home area" allies in Nandi by tripling the number of NCPB employees there and increasing farmgate prices to uneconomic levels. Finally, the cost of this predation was transferred to the coffee and dairy farmers of the Kikuyu areas, who were forced to transfer the savings' accounts of their cooperatives to the Cooperative Bank, which had run up large losses in covering the NCPB's grain purchases. Moi thus "seize(d) economic resources from the centres of export crop production and distribute(d) them to the less favoured", meanwhile "striving to defend class privileges": "under Moi, Kenya has (therefore) come more closely to resemble her African neighbours" (ibid.:149).

Bates's work generally has been subjected to a series of critical appraisals, most however dealing with elements in his methodology which already had been relegated to a minor role by *Beyond the Miracle of the Market*. In probably the most telling critique of the latter work, Sara Berry (1993) focuses on the artificial limitations Bates tends to impose on the range of factors explored in his explanations, pointing out his glossing over of ongoing donor responsibility for the design and reproduction of African agriculture's institutional framework, and Bates's silence on all exogenous and/or non-policy and non-institutional sources of Africa's economic problems (e.g., falling terms of trade, limited levels of productive resources, competing demands on farmers' time, etc.). She also questions his analysis of agricultural success during the Kenyatta period which, she argues, could hardly have been based on the existence of a free land market since there were still major "traditional" constraints on land transfers even in the most commoditised areas.

It could be added that Bates's suggestion that the succession from local and smaller-scale to national and grander scale predation corresponds precisely to the accession of Moi and emanates mainly from his personal political strategy is one-sided and excessively voluntaristic. On the first point, it is clear even under Kenyatta that there were pressures to shift the burden of patronage disposal to state economic institutions as the "soft" resource available in such quantities at the outset—land—became increasingly scarce. This became an increasingly attractive option as the donors flooded the agricultural parastatals with funds and resources from the mid-70s onwards. Secondly, the attribution to Moi of a consummately skilled mode of "political" intervention in bureaucratic operations, albeit against the background of a supposedly inherently populist system of nominating parliamentary candidates, ignores the whole issue of the maturing and

consolidation of the (sub-) ethnic identities of previously neglected peoples in western Kenya. The latter was clearly encouraged both by Moi and by the local rules of political competition but it also fed off real local economic and political grievances against the Kenyatta regime and "immigrant" Kikuyu seen as dependent on it, as well as also reflecting the local emergence of increasing numbers of well-educated non-Kikuyu able to articulate such grievances.

Interpreting political changes

The literature on Kenyan political "decline" is extensive and heterogeneous. Commentators vary both in their views of what the important political changes have been and in why they have occurred. For Jennifer Widner (1992) the main feature of recent politics has been a transition from single party rule to what she calls a "party state". The chief characteristic of the latter is that the political system becomes concerned only with securing short-run political order. This in turn is accomplished through a heightened manipulation of ethno-economic divisions. These appear for Widner to be general features of all "party states" and come about through the breakdown or removal of external rules or informal institutions or forces serving as a check on untrammelled elite power. One such check—a the central one in pre-Moi Kenya—is said to have been informal institutions making elites bargain across ethnic and regional boundaries.

The most important of these institutions was that of *harambee*. *Harambee* is said by Widner to have been traditionally important in Kenyan post-independence politics not only for the reasons described by Barkan and Holmquist but also because it was supposedly instrumental in the constitution of inter-ethnic coalitions. In order for local politicians to establish or maintain their local clienteles they not only had to procure central funding for *harambee* projects but were obliged to supplement this personally. Demands on them to do so were typically high enough to force them to appeal for sponsorship to senior politicians with different ethno-regional identifications. The resultant cross-ethnic patronage networks which emerged ensured that some kind of "proportionality rule" was established in centralised patronage dealings, whereby less favoured communities received some compensatory rewards whenever new opportunities were opened up for more favoured ones. Under Moi however a successful attempt is said to have been made to seize central control of *harambee*, in order for the politically weak new president to simultaneously assert his dominance in KANU and gain direct access to the grass-roots. This broke the cross-ethnic patronage networks which are said to have previously flourished, and removed all remaining constraints to "power block monopolisation" (ibid.:23–24).

Widner's analysis appears to borrow important elements from Barkan's own (1992) revision of his argument from 1989. Barkan introduces this revision by providing a more developed characterisation of what are said to have been the central features of the "classical" Kenyan political system. These were not only locally-based political competition linked to *harambee* but also loose but stable ethno-regionally based political coalitions with well-defined leaderships, essentially incorporative and again stable relations between the coalitions and the political centre, a rule-bound means of renewing the middle- and upper-ranking national political leadership (promotion to assistant ministerships after winning two successive elections and to cabinet after winning three), general observance of the rule of law in the election process and of the independence of the judiciary, and the toleration of semi-autonomous civil society organisations. Together these elements made up what Barkan calls a "governance realm"—a type of regime characterised by legitimacy, predictability and a degree of reciprocity between rulers and ruled.

Barkan now identifies these elements of the Kenyan political system exclusively with the Kenyatta period. By contrast, the Moi period is said to be characterised by a de-institutionalisation of local politics and a centralisation of control over it, a destabilisation/breaking-up of the Kenyatta-era ethno-regional coalitions and a centrally-orchestrated undermining of their leaders and local representatives, a basically disincorporative relation to ethno-regional coalitions as such, an undermining of the rule of law (especially as it applied to elections) and attacks on civil society organisations.

This characterisation of political change under Moi is broadly shared by two other important contributors to the literature, Throup (1987, 1993) and Lonsdale (1992). The latter's works are distinguished however by a less idealised depiction of the Kenyatta era than that provided by Barkan. According to Throup, certain structural features of a potentially damaging kind were already evident quite early in the Kenyatta period. These included a refusal by government to accept as legitimate any concerted challenge to its rule, a tendency of political alliances to revert to an ethnic basis given the absence of any other effective ideological cements, and the moribundity of local party institutions—leaving them open to subsequent centralising strategies of usurpation/domination. Lonsdale goes considerably further, arguing that the Kenyatta era was furthermore characterised by a complete politicisation of the location of public and private investment and by the fairly rapid institutionalisation of a fundamental division between a manipulative "political tribalism" (related to inclusion/exclusion from state power) and the more democratic and/or accountability-related aspects of ethnic organisation ("moral ethnicity") which had coexisted with it both in the colonial era and in the independence struggle. Lonsdale furthermore implicitly attacks Barkan's account of *harambee*,

pointing out that it served to underline ("politically tribalistic") differences between areas as well as strengthening their links to the centre.¹

Widner advances as an explanation for these changes the supposed law that "single party" states have an inherent tendency to degenerate into "party states", in the absence of countervailing elements of various kinds—most commonly strong cross-ethnic coalitions or independent business elites. However, her argument is circular since the reason for the disappearance of strong cross-ethnic coalitions in Kenya turns out to be ... the rise of the "party state" itself. While not circular, Barkan's argument is hardly more convincing. The main burden of explanation is carried by the supposed differences in personal disposition of Kenyatta (said to be tolerant, pluralistic and favourable to predictability) and Moi (said to be intolerant, etc.) (op.cit.:188–89). Throup's explanation meanwhile echoes important parts of Bates's. The basic rationale of Moi's interventions was to reconstruct political domination in Kenya on the basis of a general ethno-regional redistribution of rewards. But this redistribution took place against a background of declining patronage resources, relative to those available to Kenyatta. This decline was exacerbated by the deepening economic difficulties of the 1980s, which made more urgent his attempt to take control of all possible levers of power. Lonsdale's argument is similar, except in its emphasis on how the "absence of any shared language of (individual) rights and justice" inevitably pushed centrally-directed redistributive efforts in the direction of "political tribalism".

Elements of the criticisms of Bates offered earlier in this introduction could perhaps be repeated here. There is a tendency for explanations of new directions in Kenya's political development to be even more focused on the preferences and intentions of a single individual than those of the country's economic changes. This focus on the centralised command of high politics, while partly justified, systematically deflects attention from more local bases of change.

NEW DIRECTIONS, NEW FORCES ?

By the end of 1993 most—but not all—donors had resumed a semblance of cordial relations with the Kenya government. The incoming finance minister, Musalia Mudavadi, had removed all controls on maize prices and movements, floated the Kenya shilling, eased controls on forex transactions and increased incentives for exporters. He had furthermore appar-

1 A pioneering discussion of this issue was Wallis's (1982). Wallis points out that over the period 1967–73 annual per capita contributions to *harambees* were Ksh. 69.6 in Central Province and only Ksh 29.8 in the next most "generous" province, Rift Valley. He also states that Kenyatta personally donated Ksh 314,400 to projects between January 1971 and April 1974. Over half of these donations were for *harambees* in Central Province, and over a quarter for those in one district, Kiambu.

ently forced the removal of the head of the Posts and Telecommunications Corporation, which had been at the heart of many of the allegations concerning deposits in "political banks", and presented to the November 1993 Consultative Group meeting a Policy Framework Paper which committed the government to substantial reductions in public sector employment, tighter macro-economic policies and a "new system of corporate governance" in the parastatals.

Even if the Kenya government systematically sticks by these reforms, doubts must remain whether they will stimulate a recovery in broad-based economic growth. Time does not permit a general analytical interrogation of structural adjustment policies and their intellectual foundations, but the naivety of at least two of their assumptions is worth underlining. The first is that market deregulation will lead to increased competition and therefore efficiency. As Bates shows, markets—including grain markets in Kenya—are not natural phenomena waiting only to be "unleashed", but social constructs whose character tends to be determined both by the structure of production relations and by the relations between producers and various external forces including donors themselves. Moreover, this social construction unites both public and formally "private" players in a single set of activities, making it just as problematical to ascribe various pernicious qualities, such as "rent-seeking", only to one set of them—and to correspondingly believe that they will disappear with the "rolling back" of the public sector itself.

The nature of what the "correct" relation must be between the state and the economy in order for development to come about has been the subject of endless debate. Without going into structural adjustment's assumption that the ideal relation between these two entities is that of no relation at all, it is nevertheless worth questioning the assumption that the link between economics and politics can be broken by an act of political will, i.e. that a "depoliticised" economic sector can emerge as a result of policy declarations and their implementation. This assumption is particularly questionable when in the same breath as urging such a change, the state itself is ascribed a "patrimonial" character. If the state indeed has patrimonial characteristics then the obvious corollary of its withdrawal from direct patronage intervention in public sector enterprises would be an increased patronage intervention with respect to other forms of public assets, such as land or other constituents of the national patrimony. In fact, such interventions are arguably already underway in Kenya, as the ongoing "ethnic cleansing" in the Rift Valley is often little more than an informal state-approved land redistribution.

The other side of neo-liberal enthusiasm for and hopes about free markets is enthusiasm for and hopes about "civil society". The basis for this enthusiasm however, turns out to be the self-fulfilling prophecy of defining "civil society" as the range of organised social life in Africa not only occupying the space between family and state, as in Hegel's definition, but also actively contesting statist tendencies to monopolise control of the

social arena—qualities whose attributions to civil society would have raised in Hegel a wry smile. In the process, pluralising qualities become ascribed to all organisations in this space, independently of any systematic assessment of whether or not they really exhibit them. This is the case for example with local non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Michael Bratton has been not only the most prominent and systematic proponent of the views that NGOs in general “by their very existence ... help to pluralise the institutional environment and ... promote a democratic political culture” (1989). He is also the author of the view that the *self-consciously* pluralising elements in African associational life represent not only a force for democratising the “political culture” as such but for the reconstruction of the entire state-civil society relationship along liberal democratic lines. In the process he tends to idealise the agendas of these organisations by detaching them from the social and political conditions under which they have been produced, while also attaching qualities to whole classes of them which in reality—if they apply to any—only apply to a few. This is nowhere clearer than in his analysis of churches in Kenya. By virtue of the important role played by the National Christian Council of Kenya (NCCCK) in the movement for political liberalisation, the churches in general are said to have led a reassertion of autonomy by civil society as a whole—one moreover concerned entirely with “questions of social justice” and the articulation of a new set of political ethics based upon an “abstract, rights-based” discourse (1994: 67–68).

Alan Fowler (1991) has supplied some general reasons why hopes that NGOs as a category could play such a role are unfounded. NGOs tend to be small, concerned primarily with issues of immediate resource allocation, constituted in a project form, dependent on powerful bodies such as the state and/or donors, often have only tenuous local roots and often themselves have only weak forms of internal accountability.

Of course, some NGOs, particularly large, independent umbrella ones, may play the role suggested by Bratton. But this is only another way of underlining the need to avoid the ascription of generic properties to amorphous and differentiated categories of organisations. Much the same objection could be made intuitively to the ascription of a much grander role to the highly diverse phenomenon of Kenyan churches. Even the most basic reflection on the latter should suggest the likelihood that they will probably enjoy a wide variety of different relationships to the state and thereby to the political liberalisation process. Moreover, in both cases any analysis of the ideological and political dispositions of these organisations needs to be empirically-based rather than intuitive.

THEMES FROM THE PRESENT STUDIES

Public and private sector—a relation of mutual structuration and dependence

Several interesting themes arise from the work of Ikiara, Jama and Amadi, all related to the complex nature of the public sector, and its inter-relation with and influence on the structure of the private.

Cereals marketing organisations in Kenya are analysed in a manner broadly following the lines of Bates (see above). Partly they are the organised embodiment of a genuinely “national economic” rationale. Their prime aim is to secure the national food supply—first and foremost through the modernisation/intensification of cereals production but if necessary (for example in drought years) also by a forcible concentration of national resources. Both goals require the elaboration of a dense set of institutional and legal interventions to organise producers and regulate their relations with other groups. At the same time, like all other “national economic” interventions, not all sections of those organised in the process benefit equally. As Bates points out, the main beneficiaries of large-scale organisation and regulation tend to be those larger-scale operators themselves who are left with clearly defined roles—in this case large-scale wheat and maize farmers. As a result parastatals such as the NCPB play a crucial role in maintaining support for the regime amongst this important constituency. Finally, the maintenance of a generalised system of institutional and legal intervention creates all kinds of opportunities and niches for public resources to be used in the selective reward of favoured private individuals, or groups of individuals. The latter may, of course, lead to such large-scale predation that the effectiveness with which the state agency pursues its other functions becomes impaired. Something of this kind has clearly occurred on a major scale with the lesser parastatals in the cereals sector like the Kenya Seed Company, the Agricultural Development Corporation and the Agricultural Finance Corporation. It has also continuously threatened to bankrupt NCPB. On the other hand, the broader economic and political objectives of NCPB have been too important to allow the organisation to be bankrupted. The result has been not a curtailing of predation however, but its ongoing toleration within a situation of steadily increased resources.

While being explicitly employed by Ikiara et al., Batesian modes of exposition—where an identification is made of NCPB’s distinct “national economic”, economic class and political patronage dimensions—are also implicitly criticised by them. For they show that in practice these analytically distinct functions are always and only found in combined and interwoven forms. Patronage has become incorporated into the institutional design of NCPB’s interventions and is not something merely grafted onto them; simultaneously aspects of this patronage may meanwhile fulfil “national economic” and class-promotional objectives. The specifics of

another kind of interweaving in the cereals trade, that between the public and private sector, is a related theme of Ikiara et al. Public resources are habitually put to private uses while the private sector is simultaneously smothered and nurtured in the public sector's interstices.

However the central theme of Ikiara et al's research findings is how, in and through this last contradictory process the private sector is structured: that is, structured by branches and functions and also in its generally dependent nature. The simultaneous reproduction of a general system of regulation and controls and the privileged reproduction of the large-scale farmer interest within this system have led to private trade in cereals having a very particular form. In the actual purchase of farm products from farmers it is found in only a minor way. Rather it is concentrated on the wholesale/retail side; and where it is found on the purchase side one of its two important forms bears a heavily non-specialist imprint.

The great bulk of private purchases of farm products from farmers, probably not only by volume but also by value, are made from small-scale farmers lacking their own transport or the means to hire it, or marketing so little that it is uneconomic to hire transport to NCPB depots/buying points. At the same time these purchases are made by very small-scale traders or "brokers", who have the working capital to deal in only very small quantities (one to ten (90 kg) bags), work on very thin margins which require supplementation by systematic cheating, and who themselves find it more convenient to sell to NCPB rather than to wholesalers or market traders or retailers.

Contrary to "market populist" hopes, the bulk of both farmers and traders exhibited little interest in changing this picture, despite liberalisation. Farmers generally preferred dealing with NCPB where this was possible, mainly (but not only) because in 1993 at least the latter offered better prices than private traders. Wholesalers and market traders exhibited little interest in adopting "brokerage" roles, especially in areas where small-scale farming predominated, because the margins were so narrow. In any case, of course, they lacked the working capital, storage facilities, transport etc. needed for bulk purchasing.

There were however a few large-scale traders dealing in cereal products. These were "paired" with a few large-scale farmers, just as small traders were paired with small farmers. The large-scale traders only intermittently and selectively engaged in this trade though. For they were general, i.e. unspecialised, transporters/distributors whose comparative advantage lay precisely in being able to rapidly move between transporting whatever items were in short supply or offered good short-term profits. Such forms of large-scale private trading, constantly shifting between items and always on the borderline between legal and illicit activities and often contracted to the state or to individual big men within it, are broadly typical of poor countries—especially those with regulated or semi-regulated economies. While not lacking in working capital it too tends to be lacking in large-

scale or appropriate storage facilities; more seriously however it has an interest precisely in not being tied down to any specific branch of trade.

Given the fragmented and dependent nature of the private cereals trade it is hardly surprising that it has failed to "unleash" itself as deregulation of wheat marketing was being completed and deregulation of maize marketing was in train. Ikiara et al. observe that the only major consequent change in the structure of the cereals chain was the enhanced role played by large-scale millers, who moved into the market for purchasing from medium- and large-scale farmers with their own transport. But despite liberalisation the government was still able to easily constrain the extent even to which this happened, firstly by allowing millers to buy (relatively) cheap imported wheat in large quantities, secondly by allowing NCPB to offer farmers a premium which the millers could not match and thirdly by instructing NCPB to take a large loss by unloading some of its own purchases onto millers at sub-market prices. In the process—and because this process was coupled with a deregulation of the flour price—the large-scale millers may have benefited more than they would have done through purely free market operations. On the other hand, had free market conditions reigned, it is likely that the millers would have exploited their potentially oligopolistic status and pushed prices down in a dramatic way. Another side-effect of private trade in poor countries being thin on the ground is that cartelisation is both an attractive option and easy to bring about. Developments on the private sector-run input supply side of the cereals chain seemingly confirm this. The conclusion is that there is no straight path to a free market, and possibly no path to a really free one at all.

The dynamics of modern Kenyan politics

Besides laying bare, in an extremely rich way, the internal dynamics of local development politics in five districts with very different economic and political characteristics, Kanyinga's study complements Ikiara et al's by providing the materials for a reconsideration of some familiar propositions about Kenyan politics.

The first proposition which Kanyinga's work demonstrates as needing to be reformulated is that which identifies the Moi period with a successful demolition of the edifice of Kenyatta-era politics through a centralisation of control over patronage. The results of the multi-party elections of December 1992, when KANU secured barely over a third of the popular vote, already cast serious doubt on this proposition's validity. But Kanyinga shows what actually happened. Under Moi the government indeed managed to centralise control over the distribution of state patronage. On this basis Moi was to consolidate his grip over his own "natural strongholds" (the old KADU-dominated areas). It is unclear whether this was entirely necessary, since these areas would probably have remained

loyal anyway. At the same time their favouring caused widespread resentment elsewhere, which was in turn to form probably the main basis of the appeal of the opposition parties in 1992.

In relation to the areas where the Kenyatta regime had had its own strongest base the centralised control over patronage was used to attempt to break up the informal system of political organisation which Kenyatta and his subordinates had operated through and to install new local patrons loyal to Moi who could build up alternative networks. The first aspect of this strategy was largely successful but the second was an utter failure. At very considerable cost new local patrons were promoted in the hostile areas, who succeeded in accumulating many clients. But not everybody could become a client, most of the clients assembled carried little influence with the wider population, and many clients did not prove especially loyal when the great test came.

Kanyinga really demonstrates the limitations of patronage as a political instrument in the African, or at least Kenyan, context. Clearly the major obstacle it ran across was ethnic identities. Yet, against the general drift of Lonsdale and Throup's arguments, Kanyinga also succeeds in showing the ways in which ethnicity is also qualified and limited as a source of political identity. In the 1992 general elections political allegiance normally included ethnicity as a *necessary* determinant. That is, normally a candidate had to represent a party which at a national level was broadly identified with the "cause" of the local ethnic group. He or she did not personally have to belong to this group—they might even be a European, as in Taita Taveta—but it further helped if they were. In many situations however—with the possible exception of the Luo—there was more than one party claiming to champion the interests of specific ethnic groups. Here criteria of party political lines and political styles and individual history and reputation as a development agent (or failing this, a personal source of largesse) normally functioned as *sufficient* determinants. Moreover, Kanyinga shows that different social classes and strata had very different appreciations of what were desirable qualities in these respects.

A third important point which Kanyinga's study demonstrates is the contradictory forces set in motion by the central importance of "development" to politics. This issue has too often been approached in the past on the basis of the over-simplistic formulation that an acknowledgement of the importance of *harambee* and other local development initiatives by both voters and their representatives enabled local populations to exercise some control over the latter, and that this in turn promoted democracy, or at least good governance. This formulation's close relation is of course that described a moment ago, which sees Moi's centralisation of control over patronage as undermining this happy situation. But Kanyinga's contribution forces us to think through the ambiguous nature of the type of "social contract" implied by *harambee*—ambiguous that is for sustainable democracy. Another reading of the centrality of local development issues to political life is that while reproducing what Lonsdale calls "moral

ethnicity" at the local level itself, it simultaneously created the conditions at the central level for the triumph of what he calls "political tribalism". That is, it reinforced an intense political fragmentation, pitched one area against another and emptied national politics of serious "national" issues. Towards the conclusion of his contribution Kanyinga observes that this localism is so entrenched that it forced all the new political parties to adapt to it, even those which set out to avoid it.

A perhaps clearer way in which this point may be expressed is to say Kanyinga's work demonstrates that it is not the presence, or even the extent, of social pluralism which determines whether democracy can emerge—but rather the type of this pluralism. The plural institutions which decorate Kenya's countryside—self-help groups, *harambee* project groups, cooperatives, NGOs, etc.—share a common corporate form, whose governing principle is the cultivation of highly restricted and parochial economic interests. The articulation of these interests not only leaves intact the divisions between localities, but those between decision-makers and decision-takers, between patrons and their subjects, and between the "big" decisions and the little ones. The former remain beyond popular control and the population remains obstructed from organising around or in relation to them.

Civil society, religious institutions

Ngunyi's contribution to this volume demonstrates—with reference to religious institutions—that the by now orthodox view of civil society as intrinsically pluralistic needs to be critically developed, while that of it as intrinsically opposed to the state needs to be completely revised. In both cases, revision of the orthodox view needs to be founded on an acceptance on the one hand of the organic relation between civil society and the division of labour in the social formations in which they are found, and on the other of the continuous and fundamental pattern of interaction between civil society and state. On the basis of this position Ngunyi shows that Kenyan civil society is characterised more appropriately as structurally differentiated rather than as simply pluralistic, and that it has systematically been subject to state initiatives of a disorganising nature—although these have generally no more than reinforced or rationalised its existing polarisations.

More specifically, Ngunyi shows religious institutions to have played roles in the process of Kenya's political liberalisation which have been differentiated basically according to the ethno-regional and social class basis of those institutions. Religious groups became implanted in Kenyan society mainly through their provision of public education. The mainstream formerly European churches attained a near monopoly in the heartlands of settler and African commercial agriculture and correspondingly amongst the first generation of Kenya's local political elite. The evangelical

churches generally arrived later and were obliged to concentrate themselves in the historically more economically marginal areas. Consequently a basically bifurcated ethno-regional pattern of church "ownership" has arisen, complicated to some extent by the presence of large concentrations of Moslems in urban areas and along the coast and by the recurrent emergence of "Africanist" churches throughout the country.

This economic geography of popular religion has profound implications for the socio-political roles taken up by particular religious institutions, especially in a context in which power has been systematically transferred from the first generation local elite based in the old settler and African commercial farming areas to one hailing from areas which have been traditionally agro-pastoralist. The older and more mainstream churches have become characterised to varying degrees by the presence of articulate lay elites exercising a form of collective leadership over church bodies and excluded from political power, while the newer evangelical churches have tended to become characterised by relatively undifferentiated laities, and church leaderships dominated by *bwana kubwas* with high levels of autonomy from their congregations and dependent relations to the new political elite. Political dependency relations of an even more heightened form are found where evangelical churches continue to be led by foreign missionaries.

These differences rooted in the ethno-regional and class division of labour are underpinned by differences in belief systems and religious "style". The mainstream churches tend to be more open to "social theology" than do the evangelicals, who rather favour rhetorics and practices of personal salvation. Correspondingly the mainstream churches have acquired an emphasis on supporting local development activities of a capacity-building form, while the evangelicals have tended to emphasise individual and institutional acts of charity. Although the latter differences are to some extent characterisable as deep historical and international tendencies, they also reflect the locally differential presence in the various churches of educated and politically excluded laities and of foreign missionaries or local leaders dependent on their and others' grace and favour.

Ngunyi goes on to show the specificity of Kenyan-style "Islamic militancy" in this context. The latter phenomenon, as mirrored in the Islamic Party of Kenya, is actually best understood as a parallel trend to socially-engaged Anglicanism and Catholicism, since it is basically the expression of political claims by another ethno-regionally differentiated, highly educated and sophisticated but simultaneously politically excluded laity. Although movements like the Algerian FIS evidently played some role in inspiring its foundation, and although the party apparently has a fundamentalist wing, the IPK's rhetoric is dominated by discourses about exclusion and inclusion *vis-à-vis* secular institutions rather than ones about heaven and hell. Indeed, a considerable part of its leadership comes from a clearly secularised intelligentsia rather than from Islam's religious functionaries.

As a result, the presence of Bratton's "abstract, rights-based" discourse tends to be both highly concentrated, and found in some surprising places. Moreover, as Ngunyi more than once observes, it has been produced only by a highly specific conjuncture. This in turn makes it highly fragile. A redistribution of political power might easily see its general elimination rather than a change in the identities of its carriers. For while its present advocates might in such circumstances easily prefer another rhetoric, both ideological and social reasons disfavour those who currently reject it from ever adopting it.

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The Cereals Chain in Kenya: Actors, Reforms and Politics

Introduction

Gerrishon K. Ikiara, Mohamud Jama and Justus O. Amadi

The cereals production and marketing chain has stood at the centre of conflicts between donors and the Kenya government since the beginning of the 1980s. The chain is extremely important to the Kenya government both since it is the main channel for the country's food supplies and because it has apparently become increasingly central to the national political patronage system since the death of President Kenyatta. It became important to donors because it was initially seen as the last remaining significant distortion in an otherwise well-functioning market economy. As the years passed and a more accurate picture of the economy came to prevail its importance was redefined as the central site of the Kenyan government's resistance to economic liberalisation generally (at least a dozen failed reform attempts have been recorded).

While there have been at least two serious attempts by researchers to come to grips with Kenya government and donor strategies and struggles in this area (Bates, 1989; Mosley 1991), neither these nor the more explicitly policy-related work on the subject have set the nature of marketing institutions in the sector against the background of the general economics and politics of the cereals sector as a whole. This study attempts to illuminate discussion about both markets and politics in Kenya by providing a survey-based snap-shot account of the cereals chain, as a whole and in its main dimensions, in the last quarter of 1993.

Certain features of the marketing element of the chain a year earlier had been established in a short pilot survey carried out in Nakuru district, in which different players were sampled and interviewed. These included farmers (both small- and large-scale), traders, millers, and officials of the National Cereals and Produce Board (the main parastatal) and the Kenya Grain Growers' Cooperative Union (effectively, its main agent), of other cooperative unions, and of the Ministry of Agriculture.

In 1992, as in 1993, the sector had recently undergone a "reform process" designed to open up the market to private trade. However from the pilot survey it emerged that maize and wheat marketing was monopolistically controlled by the National Cereals and Produce Board (NCPB) and the Kenya Grain Growers' Cooperative Union (KGGCU), together with a few

individuals with powerful political connections. It was observed that there was no maize movement of any amount allowed in spite of the gazetting of a legal notice allowing 88 (90 kg) bags of maize to be freely moved by anybody and without requiring movement permits, as had earlier been the case. Unless it was carried out by the small number of agents mentioned above, the only maize movement at the time was small-scale and through bribery at police roadblocks.

Secondly, it was also observed in 1992 that grain supply to millers was being politically regulated for financial gain by the provincial administration. Supplies were diverted to favoured millers while at the same time others were kept starved of mill feed. Considerable proportions of the marketed crop were as a result "saved" for sale in neighbouring countries by favoured private transporters.

Thirdly, the only aspect of liberalisation evident in the marketing chain at this time was the decontrol of input prices. Since producer prices had been neither deregulated nor adjusted upwards, farmers were complaining bitterly about reduced margins.

In a nutshell, cereals reforms announced shortly before by the government—largely as a result of pressure from donor institutions—had hardly been implemented in Nakuru by September 1992. Instead cereals marketing remained very much influenced by a certain form of interest group politics and intermeshed with a political patronage network controlled by a few individuals.

The current study, which followed the onset of a further round of reforms, aimed to trace the nature of the cereals marketing chain, in both its economic and political dimensions, in greater detail and with greater precision. It was carried out between September and December, 1993 mainly in grain growing areas, but also in one grain deficit area. Interviews were also conducted in Nairobi and elsewhere with other important actors.

THE CEREALS SECTOR IN KENYA—INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE AND HISTORY

When it was founded in 1979 the NCPB, an amalgamation of the old Maize and Produce Board and the Wheat Board, controlled over 30 per cent of total maize production. 60 per cent of total maize production was estimated to be retained by producing households and the remaining 10 per cent was marketed through private traders. NCPB also controlled most input distribution, wheat marketing and all wheat imports through an agency agreement with the KGGCU—a state-controlled cooperative with 70 depots in the wheat-growing areas—and through a system of licensed private traders.

This cereals marketing structure is to a considerable extent a colonial legacy. The colonial government used marketing boards to protect white farmers and subsidised them through guaranteed prices and cheap inputs.

These measures were backed up by restrictions. The Native Foodstuffs Ordinance of 1922, reinforced by the Marketing of Native Produce Ordinance, made it illegal to sell food crops outside the districts of their production without the local District Commissioner's permission. The original objective was to control competition to the settler community from Africans. A later one was to create an export surplus for the (second world) war effort.

After independence the services of the cereals boards were extended to Africans. In the process, some controls were intensified. Fairly soon, both the Kenyatta and Moi regimes also realised the significance of the cereals boards as an instrument of political control, patronage and favour (Ikiara et al., 1992). Although not documented, it is well known that board members and top management staff of the boards were appointed to suit changing political interests. Shifts in the hierarchy of individually and regionally-based patronage networks were demonstrated by the arbitrary sacking of individual members or representatives of groups which fell out of grace with the major political power brokers. Over the years, these boards have also been used by politicians and senior government officials to extort rents through financial "mismanagement" and the allocation/acquisition of licences to import wheat annually and maize in times of drought. Probably more significantly the cereals boards followed historical precedent by pursuing policies which allowed key domestic interest groups, defined mainly economically but with important ethnic dimensions, to prosper. Primarily these comprised large-scale grain growers. The latter have systematically paid a disproportionately low amount of NCPB's administration, storage, processing and transport costs and have been favoured by prices consistently above export parity and sometimes also well above import parity.

During the Kenyatta era, the boards were dominated by the Kikuyu (Kenyatta's ethnic group) and a few from other tribes who served Kenyatta politically in their provinces. Currently, NCPB and other agricultural marketing boards are dominated by the Kalenjin (Moi's ethnic group) and a few from other tribes. Large-scale grain growing has traditionally also been dominated by these two groups.

Leaving aside their "political" character, the boards have also historically proved to be extremely inefficient. Not only have their overheads been unreasonably high but they have failed to provide an adequate service to either consumers (recurrent shortages) or producers (inability to purchase all of the crop in bumper years; delayed payments). The latter are two of the many reasons for the historically significant illegal trade. The combination of high overheads with sometimes unrealistically high prices and an accumulation of bad credit has meanwhile led to the boards becoming a major drain on the exchequer—especially in surplus years when grains had to be exported at a loss.

Responding partly to this, but more directly to the drain by the boards on the exchequer, numerous commissions of inquiry appointed by the

government have down the years recommended that the state reduce its support to or role in the wheat and maize marketing business. More recently, over the last decade and a half, the World Bank and other donors (particularly USAID and the European Community) have also put a lot of pressure on the Kenya government to privatise food marketing and other trade. In particular, they targeted NCPB to abandon its monopoly in food marketing. The provision of Kenya's second structural adjustment loan in 1982 was made contingent on the restructuring of maize marketing institutions. This began the latest round of shadow-boxing in the sector. A pattern emerged whereby conditionalities were introduced and compliance promised, then withdrawn. Sometimes the donors appeared to go along with this pattern of events, agreeing to "studies" whose terms of reference were clearly designed to reinforce the Kenya government's defence of the trade's structure. On other occasions sufficient reforms were undertaken to meet initial donor expectations but then excuses were found to go no further or even revert to the status quo.

Only in the late 1980s, in the context of growing general tensions between donors and the Kenya government did the former become more insistent. The first major agricultural reforms in Kenya to be systematically implemented were the complete removal of subsidies on fertilisers and inputs in early 1990. This was followed by the liberalisation of fertiliser importation and distribution in 1991.

Under an Agriculture Sector Adjustment Operation agreed between the Kenya government and the World Bank, it was simultaneously agreed that maize movement would be liberalised in three stages. Firstly, by late 1990, the government was to increase the amount of maize which could be transported without a permit to 44 (90 kg) bags; this amount was to be increased to 88 bags by 1991, while complete liberalisation was scheduled for 1992. The Kenya government fulfilled the first stage of the agreement as specified by raising the amount of maize that could be moved between districts without a permit from 2 to 44 bags (1990-91). The government continued along the path of reform by increasing the maize movement ceiling without permit to 88 bags in late 1991. Implementation was not carried out on the ground, however. Police roadblocks and harassment of traders were rife. Nevertheless this agreement marked a major step forward in policy reforms and an initial stage in a far-reaching cereals market liberalisation.

Broad donor dissatisfaction with Kenya government lack of progress in both political and economic liberalisation had set in by this stage and culminated in the crucial Consultative Group meeting of November 1991 in Paris, when the donors announced the suspension of a significant proportion of disbursements of existing loans and a suspension of granting new ones. In the short term this may have speeded up the implementation of the reforms in some places (obviously excluding Nakuru), but in the run-up to the 1992 election President Moi officially reimposed curbs on inter-district maize movement. The official explanation for this restriction

was to protect consumers from unscrupulous traders. A different view was expressed however, that famine relief food was being used as a tool for soliciting votes from the electorate by KANU government. Interviews later with a wide range of people in Kitui, a maize deficit area, confirmed that the provincial administration—especially the chiefs and district officers—had used the distribution of maize to famine stricken people as a means of influencing the electorate to vote for the ruling party, KANU.

In February 1993, following yet further donor pressure, a major liberalisation of the economy was announced, including the pricing and marketing of cereals. Despite a rare public announcement on the reform process shortly after, when President Moi declared that Kenya would “as a sovereign nation, ... no longer submit to economic arm twisting of any kind”, (*Sunday Standard*, April 11, 1993), there appears by November 1993 to have been a genuine implementation of the 88 bag rule, plus a complete liberalisation of the wheat trade and a liberalisation of maize imports and cereal seed prices. Not long after this (December 1993) the complete liberalisation of the grain trade was announced. The survey described here took place in the three months prior to this last change.

The main institutional victim of the liberalisation which had been implemented by the time of the research was the KGGCU. Granted an agency agreement to act as a monopsonist wheat buyer and input distributor in order to sideline the politically troublesome Kenya Farmers' Association (KFA) in the mid-1980s, the 60,000-strong KGGCU subsequently suffered repeated managerial and operational problems. By 1992 it had accumulated losses worth Ksh. 1.6 billion. A large part of these were the result of non-performing loans the Cooperative Union had made to other parastatals, government ministers, other politicians and its own managers. Later in the year some of its major suppliers withdrew credit facilities to it. KGGCU thus not only lost its wheat buying monopoly but it could no longer extend credit to farmers for the inputs it supplied. By the time of the research its wheat buying section had been abolished and it was struggling to reduce its operational costs, but its days seemed numbered. State-controlled wheat buying in 1993 occurred via NCPB.

PRODUCTION AND PRICE TRENDS

Maize is the most important staple food for Kenyans and in urban areas wheat is the second most important. As elsewhere in Africa, the latter's consumption has been growing fast since independence—in Kenya in recent years at 10 per cent per annum.

Partly as a result of the subject's (increasing) political sensitivity, few studies of the structure of commercial cereals production have been conducted in recent years. Even the major 1983 study by the World Bank of the Kenyan economy was dependent on statistics from 1970 in this regard (World Bank, 1983:200). Defining large-scale cereals-producing farmers as

those with over 20 hectares (50 acres), medium-scale ones as those with 9–20 hectares (22.5 to 50 acres) and small-scale ones as those with 8 hectares (20 acres) and below, it stated that there were respectively 20,000, 270,000 and 10.3 million farmers in each category. No subsequent figures appear to be available, but it is highly probable that the numbers in the first two categories have diminished considerably as subdivision has proceeded.

The same World Bank report states that large- and medium-scale farmers normally produced 20–30 per cent of the total crop and that large farmers account for around half of total NCPB purchases. Smallholders are also a major source of sales and purchases however. The study went on to state that despite the fact that 95 per cent of Kenyan smallholders grow maize, they typically purchase an average of half of their total food requirements. In the predominantly cereals growing areas this proportion obviously falls. Sometimes (e.g., drought years) even these areas may require substantial imports though. Table 1 below shows hectareage and production trends in respect of the two crops for the period 1964–93. Acreage under the two crops shows little clear trend, but large declines in production occurred in drought years such as 1980, 1984 and 1993.

Table 1. *Production of maize and wheat ('000 tonnes)*

Year	M a i z e		W h e a t	
	ha	tonnes	ha	tonnes
1964	1130	1104	121	160
1976	950	1800	140	187
1977	853	1743	140	200
1978	1002	2080	140	184
1979	875	1740	105	175
1980	839	1604	86	155
1981	1120	1768	100	212
1982	1208	2502	190	250
1983	1236	2340	120	242
1984	1200	2070	110	135
1985	1130	1411	110	194
1986	1370	2430	-	225
1987	1430	2890	-	148
1988	1440	2450	-	234
1989	1420	2628	-	244
1990	1460	2480	-	190
1991	1420	1985	-	195
1992	1300	2106	-	126
1993	1250	1596	-	87

Source: *Kenya Government, Statistical Abstract* (various issues)

Between 1986 and 1990, there was a spell of increased maize production due to good weather and increased producer prices. Total output of maize rose from 1.41 million tonnes in 1985 to 2.48 million tonnes in 1990. It is however worth noting that the proportion of maize marketed through NCPB has fallen over the last decade. While for the period 1983–90 the proportion of total maize production that was marketed through the marketing boards averaged 26.6 per cent, although this varied considerably from year to year, for the period since 1990 it has averaged only 15.3 per cent. Both the NCPB's declining share of maize production and the variability of this share are partly related to the subdivision phenomenon mentioned above (smaller surpluses produced and corresponding needs for greater total retention stocks). However variability is also no doubt an effect of the fact that NCPB prices are fixed before the start of marketing seasons, which means that in shortage years a parallel market premium will exist, drawing off a significant proportion of total production—unless compensatory measures are taken.

Table 2. *Total production of maize and amounts marketed through Marketing Boards 1983–1990 ('000 metric tonnes)*

Year	Total production (A)	Marketed through board (B)	B as percentage of A
1983	2340	637	27.2
1984	2070	561	27.1
1985	1411	583	41.3
1986	2430	670	27.6
1987	2890	652	22.6
1988	2450	485	19.8
1989	2628	626	23.8
1990	2480	509	20.5
1991	1985	303	15.3
1992	2106	324	15.4
1993	1596	242	15.2

Source: *Kenya Government, Statistical Abstracts* (various issues)

Performance of wheat production in the 1980s was mixed, fluctuating between 135,000 and 254,000 tonnes annually. Since 1991 it has fallen well below this. This stagnation/decline in wheat production can also be partly attributed to sub-division of large-scale farms, as well as to increasing utilisation of marginal areas and inadequate equipment for preparation and harvesting on the farms (Kenya Government, Sessional Paper No. 3, 1993). Invariably, the country has experienced deficits in domestic production, requiring regular imports to meet the demand. The decline in wheat production in the country has also been occasioned by a shift by farmers from wheat to barley production, since Kenya Breweries have paid better and more promptly than KGGCU and NCPB. Imports as a proportion of

total consumption of wheat have varied considerably from year to year but experienced a sharp rise between 1989 and 1993, during which time they increased from 33.7 per cent to 80.3 per cent

Table 3. *Domestic production and imports of wheat, 1981-1992 ('000 tonnes)*

Year	Domestic production (A)	Imports (B)	Total consumption (C)	B as percentage of C
1981	214	139	353	39.4
1982	248	154	402	38.3
1983	251	82	333	24.6
1984	144	140	284	49.3
1985	201	150	351	42.7
1986	257	115	372	30.9
1987	207	218	425	51.3
1988	234	76	310	24.5
1989	244	124	368	33.7
1990	190	323	513	63.0
1991	195	450	645	69.8
1992	126	382	508	75.2
1993	77	314	391	80.3

Source: Kenya Government, *Economic Survey*, (various issues)

The low production of maize and wheat in 1993 was caused partly by drought. According to the 1994 *Economic Survey* (Kenya Government, 1994), during the 1993 long rains accumulated rainfall totals from 11 agromet stations west of the Rift Valley recorded deficits varying between 19 and 73 per cent; the 1993 short rains "were also poor, less intensive and unevenly spread. The short rains started late at the end of October allowing planting and initial crop development. However, dry spells in early November and the termination of rains in December prevented crops from developing properly, causing widespread withering and crop failure in several parts of the country" (ibid.:120).

Given the existing sharp fall in maize sales to NCPB, official producer prices for the latter had been raised very considerably to Ksh. 729/90 kg bag before the buying season (Table 4). This was raised further to Ksh. 946 at the start of the buying season; in practice NCPB was often paying Ksh. 1,050.

Table 4. *Average gross commodity price for 90 kg bag (Ksh.)*

	1989a	1990a	1991a	1992a	1993a	1993b
Maize	247	235.5	275	427.2	729	1050
Wheat	308.6	405	450	504.3	508.5	1400

Sources: a: calculated from *Economic Survey*, 1994; b: survey data

The NCPB/KGGCU price for wheat was raised more dramatically, during the 1993 buying season itself. Sometime before fieldwork started it was raised to Ksh. 600/90 kg bag, as against an import price of Ksh. 850. Just as fieldwork began NCPB began offering Ksh. 1,400.

These prices generally exceeded what private buyers were prepared to pay. This allowed a stabilisation of NCPB's share of the market and implied a direct reward to cereals farmers, who otherwise were experiencing some difficulty. In the process the state was to weather some of the potential political costs of cereals liberalisation—at least temporarily.

STUDY OBJECTIVES, METHODS AND AREAS

A primary objective of the study was to establish in detail the real identities, character and interactions of the key official and non-official players in the cereals trade. It has been quite clear that the organisation of production and trade on the ground in this sector has been directly and indirectly shaped by a myriad of interested parties of different ranks and statuses and with varying degrees of real influence. It was thus important for the study to clearly establish who these key players were and to analyse how they influenced and were in turn influenced by the implementation of economic liberalisation. A related objective was to determine the relation of these players to the national and local sources of political authority and to show how the exercise of such power influences the chain.

A second objective was to situate such an analysis against the background of a general and detailed overview of social and economic relations within the sector. On the cereals production side, for example, most existing studies discuss producers only as members of a single category ("farmers") occupying what is assumed to be an identical relation to NCPB. At the other end of the chain the role of millers tends to be neglected. More curiously still, the category of "private trader" has itself rarely been subject to serious empirical analysis.

Given historical implementation problems (see above) this study further attempted to determine which announced reform measures had actually been effectively (or less effectively) implemented, overall and in different regions, and where there were differences what accounted for them. Finally the study set out to investigate the impact of those reforms which had been implemented and on this basis assess whether the on-going reforms will eventually affect the sector's future development positively or negatively.

A variety of methods of data collection, ranging from questionnaire-based interviews through direct observation to group discussions and archival work were employed during the fieldwork. Interviews using structured schedules were conducted by a team of researchers comprising the authors and four research assistants. In addition, the team was accompanied by a guide or two whose main task was to make contact with farmers

especially in the three main research districts, that is Nakuru, Uasin Gishu and Trans-Nzoia. The guides were field-based employees of KGGCU, Nakuru and Eldoret offices.

Structured interviews were carried out with three groups, that is, farmers, millers and traders. A total of 151 structured interviews were undertaken covering 88 small, medium and large-scale maize and wheat farmers; 45 traders including open market, retail and distributors/wholesalers of maize/wheat flour/grain; and 18 millers comprising both large- and small-scale millers (the latter commonly referred to as "posho" millers). The farmers were sampled in a stratified manner from populations of small-, medium- and large-scale wheat and maize farmers, in order to explore differences in the relation of these groups to the cereals chain. The sampling frame was constructed on the basis of information supplied by KGGCU field officers in the three districts and the sampling carried out by the researchers themselves. While some KGGCU officers served as field guides to the research team, they were not involved in actual interviews, and thus cannot be held to have influenced farmers' responses.

A very much larger and nationally representative sample of farmers would have been more ideal; the resources at the disposal of the researchers were however limited. The size and nature of the sample should therefore be borne in mind when assessing the extent to which generalisations can be made based on the conclusions. Whatever their limitations however, they so far constitute the only available source of data on the issues under exploration.

Most farmers were interviewed in their homesteads or farms while a smaller number was interviewed at market centres, KGGCU offices and NCPB depots as they delivered the 1993 grain harvest to the Board. This meant that apart from observing activities at market centres and NCPB depots, the research team also had a chance to observe on-farm activities during the harvest, including modes of harvesting, storage, drying, threshing, bagging, etc. On the other hand interviews with millers and traders were carried out at the respondents' business premises, that is, at their mills, shops or market stalls.

Each interview lasted between 30 minutes and one hour depending on how busy the respondent was. In most cases the interviews lasted longer especially at wholesale shops and market places as respondents attended to their customers while being interviewed at the same time. At the market places interviews had to be interrupted many times as the host frequently became engaged in bargaining with his/her customers. Although this was time consuming it enabled the research team to observe business transactions fairly closely.

The farmers' interview schedules were designed to solicit a wide range of information including personal details of the respondent; their farming activities and production trends for the last few years; their on-farm storage facilities, vehicles, equipment and tools on the farm; marketing and prices of their farm produce; the general problems faced by the farming

community and knowledge of structural adjustment programmes or reforms already implemented or which were due to be implemented in the sub-sector. Apart from the schedules, information was also gathered by the researchers through unstructured informal discussion with farmers. Such discussion mainly centered on general problems faced by the farming community, like poor quality seeds from ADC and Kenya Seed Company (KSC) and their relation to low crop yields in most parts of the country; ineffective, poor quality and highly priced fertilisers, farm chemicals and other inputs; lack of credit facilities especially for the small-scale farmers who appear non-creditworthy in the eyes of financiers; delayed payments by NCPB and millers, and farmers' views on the reforms introduced in the sector.

Other issues that featured in the discussions were the recurrent drought in most grain producing areas, which had led to poor harvests or even complete crop failures and consequent immense losses and hardship for farmers; and mismanagement of farmer related institutions such as NCPB, KGGCU, KSC and other bodies.

The traders' interview schedules on the other hand were designed to gather a wide range of information on marketing of cereals and cereal products. They covered traders' personal details; quantities of cereals and flour traded over specific time periods; acquisition and disposal of merchandise at hand; pricing and modes of payments and transportation; bottlenecks and related problems and lastly, knowledge of and opinions on reforms in the cereals market.

Similar issues were covered in the millers' questionnaire, which amongst other things attempted to capture information on the biography of the miller and mill; trends in milling charges over the last few years; capacity utilisation levels; problems faced by millers and again, knowledge of adjustment efforts and opinions on their effects on cereals production and trade. The information gathered using these research instruments was analysed using the SPSS computer statistical programme to produce frequency tables and cross-tabulations.

Two structured small-group discussions with farmers were organised at the KGGCU offices in Nakuru and Kitale. They consisted of about five large and small-scale farmers each, drawn from different parts of Nakuru and Trans-Nzoia districts. Questions for discussion were put to the farmers by one of the principal researchers.

Direct observation constituted another research instrument used during the fieldwork. Direct observations were made at various points including market centres, NCPB depots, KGGCU buying points, mills, farms and border crossings. Interactive interviews, on the other hand, were held with various officials or managers of institutions such as NCPB and KGGCU, donors like the World Bank, USAID, FAO, and EEC, Ministry of Agriculture officials at district level and customs officials at border points.

The study covered four main districts in Kenya. Three of them are the main cereal producing areas in the country—Nakuru, Uasin Gishu and

Trans-Nzoia. Both maize and wheat are grown by small- medium and large-scale farmers in the three districts. The fourth district, Kitui, is a cereals deficit area with limited production of maize during good rainfall years. The fieldwork in Kitui was confined to traders, millers and transporters of cereals and did not cover farmers.

Kitui

Kitui district is situated in Eastern Province and has a total area of approximately 30,000 square km. It is one of the ten districts in Kenya classified as "semi-arid lands". The district receives annual rainfall amounts ranging between 500 mm to 700 mm which is inadequate for most food/cash crops due to its unreliability and irregular pattern. Ecologically, the district lies largely within Ecological Zone IV though the drier parts of the district lie in Ecological Zone V.

In terms of land use the district exhibits areas of interaction between pastoralism and cultivation, encompassing the margins of rain fed cultivation and dry season grazing. In fact most parts of the southern side of the district lie in the Tsavo National Park while the northern parts of the district lie in the Kora National Reserve. This means that over 30 per cent of the district is part of the "conservation estate".

Due to poor and unreliable rainfall, the district does not practise commercial cereals farming. The cereals farming that does go on is mainly for domestic consumption. Kitui is therefore classified as a grain deficit district and in many years depends on government food relief programmes to alleviate rampant famine.

Nakuru

Nakuru district is in Rift Valley Province and has a total area of 7,200 square km. It is bordered by seven districts. The total population of the district was 291,000 in 1969 but increased by 6 per cent per annum to 522,000 in 1979. The 1969-79 growth rate was almost double the national one of 3.8 per cent. However, more than half of this increment was accounted for by immigration from outside the district. The population had probably reached over one million by 1994.

The altitude of Nakuru ranges between 1520 to 2740 metres, which strongly influences climatic conditions. There are two rainy seasons: long rains fall between March and June, while short rains are normally in October to December each year. The amount of rainfall ranges between 1000 and 1500 mm. but varies from year to year. There are three main climatic zones—humid to semi-equatorial, dry sub-humid equatorial and semi-arid. Agro-ecologically it is divided into a tropical alpine zone suitable for cattle and merino sheep, an upper highland zone which is suitable

for wheat and pyrethrum, and a lower highland zone which is suitable for wheat, maize and barley.

Nakuru district is a major commercial cereals (maize/wheat) farming/production area besides being the site for other crops such as coffee, tea, sisal, pyrethrum, barley, potatoes, beans, various horticultural crops and vegetables. It also doubles as a major commercial dairy/beef production region. The district has large-, medium- and small-scale wheat/maize farms. There has been widespread sub-division of landholdings since independence with large farms being divided into much smaller units. Many former European-owned farms were bought by Africans organised in companies and cooperatives. After a few years of operations, the majority of these farms tend to be sub-divided and then allocated to individual members of the society or company. This trend, although contrary to government policy is widespread in Nakuru district. Sub-division of large farms is said to have reduced markedly the proportion of the total crop which is marketed. Former European farms have also been acquired by the government and turned into settlement schemes.

The district was chosen as a research site for a number of reasons. First it is a region with predominantly large-scale wheat farming. Second it also comprises a mixture of large-, medium- and small-scale wheat and maize production. Third Nakuru is a base for many institutions dealing directly with wheat/maize marketing such as NCPB and KGCCU as well as the KSC, the Agricultural Finance Corporation, and large millers such as the Milling Corporation and Unga Ltd.

Trans-Nzoia

Trans-Nzoia district is the smallest district in Rift Valley Province and the second smallest in Kenya. It has an area of 2,468 square km, 80 per cent of which is arable land. The present population is estimated to be 400,000, distributed between the three divisions (Cherangani, Kwanza, and Saboti) and the district's administrative headquarters, Kitale town.

Trans-Nzoia's mean average temperature is 18.3 degrees centigrade and its mean annual rainfall is 700–1200 mm. Rain lasts from March to November–December. The altitude is between 1400–2600m and the plateau is mainly between 1800–1900m. The plain becomes drier towards the north due to the rain shadow of Mount Elgon and the Cherangani Hills.

It is difficult to divide the district into well-defined zones because many areas are transitional. The plain is bordered by foot-hills, parts of which are wet enough for coffee and tea. The upper limits and most of the plain are under commercial maize cultivation, which centres on Kitale. As late as 1989 Bates (1989:100) referred to this area as one of large farms, but at the time of the survey most land holdings were less than ten acres and very few large-scale farms remained, due to continued sub-division between

family members. Nevertheless, as it did when Bates wrote, the district still leads the country in commercial maize production.

Uasin Gishu

Uasin Gishu is also in Rift Valley Province. The district covers an area of 3,784 square km of which 62 per cent is high potential agricultural land and the remainder is medium potential. The population of the district is estimated at 500,000. Annual rainfall ranges from 900 to 1200 mm. There are two rainfall seasons, the long rains lasting from March to June and the short rains from September to December each year. Wheat and maize are grown mainly on large-scale farms owned by capitalist farmers. Historically between 25 per cent and 30 per cent of Kenya's wheat is produced in Uasin Gishu but in recent years this share has risen very considerably. In 1993, a total of 43,995 hectares were under wheat cultivation with a production of 923,590 bags—accounting for almost half the national wheat harvest. 55,460 hectares were under maize with a production of 942,820 bags. Maize production had fallen by almost a third from 1992 even though the maize area had increased by 23 per cent. Productivity was said to have decreased due to inadequate rainfall, poor quality seeds, and reduced application of fertiliser because of high costs. Apart from the above factors identified by the government-controlled *Kenya Times* (March 3, 1994), one may also add that the tribal land clashes probably contributed significantly to the drastic decline in maize production. Many farmers left their farms unattended after planting. The tribal fighting had also affected labour-supply during the weeding period as many able-bodied persons became engaged in the clashes or sought refuge elsewhere for personal safety reasons. It is unclear why wheat was apparently less affected by some of these trends.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FARMER SAMPLE

As noted above, a stratified sample of cereals farmers was constructed in order to provide information on the relation of different categories of cultivator to the various links in the cereals chain. In order that there should be a large enough group in each category for conclusions with some claim to reliability to be drawn, the sample included much higher proportions of large- and medium-sized farmers than are present in the population at large. For example, although those cereals farmers with holdings of over 50 acres are only a fraction of one per cent of all Kenyan cereals farmers, they constituted 43 per cent of this sample. Conversely while those farming less than 20 acres made up over 96 per cent of all cereals farmers nationally, they contributed only 35 per cent of this sample. The full composition of the sample is described in Table 5 below.

30 farmers were interviewed in Nakuru, 33 in Trans-Nzoia and 25 in Uasin Gishu. Almost certainly because of the strong bias toward intermediate and large-sized farms there was a major over-representation of persons for whom secondary (39.8 per cent) and post-secondary (26.1 per cent) education was their last stage of education. A majority of those interviewed (60.2 per cent) were between 30 and 50 years, with those between 41 and 50 years alone constituting 35.2 per cent of the sample. 21.6 per cent of respondents were women. A majority of these had also had secondary or post-secondary education and the largest single category of them was also aged 41 to 50 years.

Table 5. *Size of land holdings*

Acreage	N u m b e r		Total	Percentage of total
	Male	Female		
1-5 acres	10	7	17	19.3
6-10 acres	7	1	8	9.1
11-20 acres	4	2	6	6.8
21-50 acres	15	4	19	21.7
51-100 acres	4	0	4	4.5
Over 100 acres	29	5	34	38.6
	69	19	88	100.0

It should be noted that those interviewed were those actually responsible for farming on the holdings concerned. In a number of cases (all large farms) the cultivator in question was an employee of an absentee owner. Interestingly, many of these managers were also full-time employees of the Agricultural Development Corporation, the parastatal responsible for state farms. The owners, often senior political figures, were thus obtaining their services at a subsidised rate.

All but three of the sample grew some maize in 1993. A little less than half (40) grew some wheat. 37 of the 88 grew maize and wheat. Those growing only maize outnumbered those growing only wheat by a factor of more than 10.

When the sample was asked what they had grown five years earlier (i.e., in 1988) the number who had grown maize was significantly less (65) while the number who had grown wheat was almost the same. In particular there had been an increase in the category of farmers cultivating 11-50 acres of maize (see Tables 6 and 7).

85.4 per cent of all the farmers surveyed hired in seasonal labour (modal number 6-10 labourers) while 61.6 per cent hired in permanent labour (modal number 1-5 labourers). 11 of the 88 farms had more than 20 employees and five had more than 50.

Table 6. *Trends in acreage under maize*

Acreage	1 9 9 3		1 9 8 8	
	No. of farmers	%	No. of farmers	%
1-5	35	42.2	29	44.6
6-10	13	15.2	14	21.5
11-20	12	14.1	5	7.7
21-50	10	11.8	4	6.2
51-100	5	5.9	6	9.2
Over 100	10	11.8	7	10.8
Total	85	100.0	65	100.0

Table 7. *Trends in acreage under wheat*

Acreage	1 9 9 3		1 9 8 8	
	No. of farmers	%	No. of farmers	%
1-5	7	17.5	9	25.0
6-10	5	12.5	6	16.7
11-20	4	10.0	5	13.8
21-50	5	12.5	1	2.5
51-100	2	5.0	2	5.6
Over 100	17	42.5	13	36.1
Total	40	100.0	36	100.0

The most widely used types of farm machinery in the three districts were tractors and combine harvesters, which were either owned or hired by the farmers. About 95 per cent of all the farmers interviewed used tractors. 40 per cent of the farmers owned them. Combine harvesters were used by close to 43 per cent of the farmers with 13 per cent owning and the rest hiring them. Ox-ploughs were not much used; only 5.3 per cent of the farmers owned or hired them. Heavy dependence on tractors and combine harvesters by wheat and maize commercial farmers made petroleum fuel a major input, and changes in its price were felt strongly.

Ownership of large machinery was predictably concentrated on those owning over 100 acres. A large majority of farmers in the other land holding categories hired tractors and combine harvesters. Even a majority of farmers with 51-100 acres hired tractors.

About 49 per cent of the farmers interviewed owned some means of transportation: besides tractors, 26 per cent had lorries, 34 per cent pick-ups, three per cent matatus, 22 per cent bicycles, five per cent donkeys, five per cent saloon cars, and three per cent oxen. However, an overwhelming majority of the farmers, 67 per cent, said they depended on hired transport (lorries, tractors, pick-ups) to deliver their produce to the point of sale.

Almost every farmer owned storage facilities of some kind, usually in-house or in the form of a traditional granary. Only 20 per cent owned a

modern permanent store on-farm, although a further 19 per cent owned a semi-permanent store. Individual farmer's storage capacity ranged from 4 bags to over 50,000 bags. While about a quarter of those sampled had storage capacity of less than 100 (90 kg) bags, around 30 per cent had storage capacity exceeding 1,000 bags and over 5 per cent had capacity exceeding 20,000 bags.

Only 20 of the farmers currently had loans from the Agricultural Finance Corporation (AFC), the main credit agency for large-scale farmers. The AFC credit facilities were strongly biased in favour of farmers with larger landholdings and male farmers. Of the 30 farmers in the sample with landholdings of between 1 and 20 acres, only 1 had an AFC loan (Table 8). The proportion of farmers with AFC loans generally rose with size of land holding from one out of six for 11–20 acre category to 2 out of 5 for farmers with 51–100 acres and then fell slightly to 1 out of 3 for farmers with over 100 acres. About 65 per cent of all the farmers with AFC loans were those with more than 50 acres. Loans ranged from Ksh. 20,000 to Ksh. 3.5 million (USD 52,250).

Table 8. *Distribution of AFC loans by size of land holding*

Size of land holding (acres)	Total no. of farmers	Farmers with AFC loans			
		%	Male	Female	Total
1–10	24	0	0	0	0
11–20	6	17	1	0	1
21–50	19	26	3	2	5
51–100	5	40	2	0	2
Over 100	34	35	8	4	12
Total	88	23	14	6	20

A further 24 per cent had borrowed from AFC in the past. Many farmers interviewed accused AFC's lending programme of having heavy political and ethnic biases. This is hardly surprising given what is known of the corporation's lending portfolio and its high level of non-performing loans.

FARMERS AND THE LIBERALISED CEREALS CHAIN

As already noted, the liberalisation picture in the cereals sector between 1990 and 1993 mainly comprised the reform of the input supply and part of the output marketing links of the cereals chain.

Fertiliser use

Liberalisation of the fertiliser trade, taking the form of subsidy removal, and liberalisation of import licensing, distribution and prices occurred mainly in 1990–91. There was an immediate and sharp consumption re-

sponse. The fertiliser input index (1982=100), which had averaged 149.9 during the three years 1989–91 dropped to 93.9 in 1992 (Kenya Government, 1994: *ibid.*).

This study asked farmers about fertiliser application in 1992 and 1993. All farmers in the sample used some fertiliser in both years. While only a relatively small proportion (17.3 per cent) had used less than 200 kg in 1992, almost a third did so in 1993. Most of those moving into this level of application in 1993 appear to have been amongst those using 201–1000 kg in 1992. However, the proportions of those using most other units listed in Table 9 were quite similar in both years, except in the category applying over 30,000 kg, whose proportion of the total fell by about half its previous level.

Table 9. *Fertiliser consumption by wheat/maize farmers*

Amount (kg)	Percentage of farmers (%)	
	1993	Previous season
1–50	14.5	4.6
51–100	8.0	8.1
101–200	10.4	4.6
201–500	12.5	15.0
501–1000	6.8	15.0
1001–2000	18.2	13.9
2001–5000	9.1	12.9
5001–10,000	6.8	6.9
10,001–30,000	9.0	8.2
30,001–100,000	3.6	6.9
Over 100,000	1.1	5.0
Total	100.0	100.0

(N=88)

As far as other crops in Kenya are concerned, the pattern of application in 1993 seems to have represented a partial stabilisation from an earlier sharp fall (the national fertiliser input index fell further to 88.4 in 1993, but much less drastically than in the previous year (Kenya Government 1994:*ibid.*)). One possible reason is that higher producer prices in 1993 encouraged farmers to roughly maintain their levels of application, even though prices were continuing to rise. On the other hand, the overall index in 1993 was still over 40 per cent lower than the average for 1989–91, a matter of grave concern.

Wheat marketing

About 83 per cent of those producing wheat marketed the crop in both 1992 and 1993. The remainder were prevented from doing so by drought.

Of those who marketed wheat in 1992, 24.3 per cent sold between 1 and 100 bags, 51.4 per cent between 101 and 5000 bags and 24.3 per cent sold between 5001 and 50,000 bags. The figures for 1993 were very similar: 30.4 per cent sold between 1 and 100 bags, 45.3 per cent between 101 and 5000 bags and 24.3 per cent between 5001 and 30,000 bags.

During the 1992 harvest, wheat had not been fully liberalised and direct sales to millers needed special permits from the NCPB Managing Director based in Nairobi. 69.4 per cent of farmers sampled sold that year only to NCPB or KGGCU. Despite the fact that liberalisation had been effected only a few months before the 1993 harvest, there was noticeable diversification of wheat marketing channels. In 1993 only 47.5 per cent of wheat farmers said they still sold their wheat only to NCPB or KGGCU (Table 10). Private traders were the other main buyer before liberalisation measures were implemented and continued to be the second most important buyer after liberalisation. However, the proportion of farmers selling wheat to private traders rose only slightly from 27.8 per cent to 30 per cent between 1992 and 1993. On the other hand, while only 2.8 per cent of the sampled farmers had sold wheat to millers directly in the 1992 season, 12.5 per cent of them sold only to millers in 1993, and another 10 per cent said they were selling to both millers and NCPB.

Table 10. *Proportion of sample using different wheat marketing channels, 1992 and 1993 (%)*

	1 9 9 3	1 9 9 2
NCPB/KGGCU	47.5	69.4
Private traders	30.0	27.8
Millers	12.5	2.8
Millers & NCPB	10.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0
	(N = 40)	(N = 36)

Table 11 below demonstrates the distribution of different marketing channels in 1993 by size of wheat acreage. Farmers growing under 10 acres overwhelmingly used private traders; those between 11 and 100 acres used only NCPB and millers, or a combination of the two. A large majority of those with over 100 acres also sold only to NCPB and two thirds sold some of their crop to NCPB. However, around one fifth sold some amount to millers and another fifth sold only to private traders. This in turn suggests a bifurcation of private trade, with a very small number of larger traders buying from very large farmers and a large number of much smaller ones buying only from very small farmers.

Table 11. *Distribution of wheat farmers by area under wheat and type of buyer*

Buyer	No. of farmers in various categories of acreage under wheat 1993 (acreage)					Total
	1-10	11-20	21-50	51-100	Over 100	
NCPB	1	1	2	4	11	19
Private traders	8	0	0	0	4	12
Millers	0	1	1	1	2	5
Both NCPB and millers	0	0	0	2	2	4
Total	9	2	3	7	19	40

Maize marketing

While virtually all of the sample had some land under maize in both 1992 and 1993, only 77.3 per cent and 75 per cent marketed any of their output in these two years respectively. Drought was the most frequently mentioned reason for not marketing maize, especially in 1993. In addition in 1993 some of the farmers had still not sold their product at the time the interviews were conducted. In 1992, 43.8 per cent who marketed maize sold amounts ranging from 100 to 10,000 bags, with the remainder selling less than 100 bags each. The figures were almost identical for 1993.

Unlike wheat, maize marketing had still not been liberalised at the time fieldwork was completed in December 1993. This was an important reason for the continued dominance of NCPB in the maize trade. In 1992 58.8 per cent of sampled maize farmers sold their crop either to NCPB, KGGCU or the Kenya Seed Company while only 19.1 per cent sold to private traders. In 1993, of the 66 farmers who had sold their maize by the time of the interviews, the proportion selling only to NCPB had actually risen slightly, to 62.1 per cent, while that selling through private channels correspondingly fell (to 18.2 per cent) (see Table 12). These figures seem consistent with data presented above on NCPB's share of the total maize crop over the 1992-93 period. Apart from NCPB and private traders, other less important marketing destinations included own sales in the open market and sales to schools. In 1993 none of the farmers interviewed had sold direct to millers, although in 1992 4.4 per cent had done so after obtaining the necessary clearance. Amongst the rest of the sample, between 10 and 12 per cent of maize growers planted the crop only for their own and/or their workers' consumption, while between three and four per cent used their maize wholly or mainly for animal feed.

Table 12. *Proportion of sample using different maize marketing channels (main destinations only), 1992 and 1993 (%)*

Type of buyer	1 9 9 3	1 9 9 2
NCPB/KGGCU	62.1	57.3
Kenya Seed Company	1.5	1.5
Private trader	18.2	19.1
Own/workers' consumption	12.2	10.3
Open market	1.5	1.5
Millers	0	4.4
Schools	1.5	1.5
Own animal feed	3.0	4.4

Farmers' perceptions of different marketing channels

The sample as a whole was asked to say which buyer provided the best deal to cereal farmers. 55 per cent of respondents said it was NCPB, while 33 per cent said it was private traders. 6.2 per cent mentioned millers and 2.6 per cent the Kenya Seed Company. 3.2 per cent could not identify a best buyer.

Analysis of wheat farmers' perceptions of the best buyer, with regard to the size of their wheat acreage, showed some significant differences in the proportion of farmers who regarded certain buyers as providing the best deal. About 66 per cent of those growing 1–10 acres said that NCPB provided the best deal, while 25 per cent thought it was private traders. The rest said that NCPB and private traders provided deals of equal merit. As already noted, marketing channels for this group were dominated by private traders, against whom this response was clearly a form of protest.

Among the medium-scale farmers with 11–50 acres of wheat, 47.8 per cent thought NCPB provided the best deal while 30.4 per cent thought that private traders were the best, and the remainder said that NCPB and private traders provided deals of equal merit. Only amongst the larger farmers (those with 51 acres and above under wheat) was opinion more evenly divided. But even here the largest number (36.7 per cent) said NCPB provided the best deal, while 33.2 per cent said that private traders did.

Discussion with farmers showed that while full liberalisation of wheat marketing had led to increased sales to purchasers other than NCPB, the majority still preferred the latter for several reasons. Firstly NCPB dominated the country's wheat handling facilities, especially their storage and drying components. This dominance was particularly pronounced in the case of its much greater ability to handle cereals with high moisture content (wheat with a moisture content of more than 13 per cent is termed wet).

Secondly, the liberalisation of wheat marketing had included greater freedom for millers and other entrepreneurs to import wheat for their own

needs. Hence large millers like Unga Ltd., who were expected to be the most important competitor for NCPB, had instead imported large quantities of wheat just before the harvest of local wheat. It was clear that millers who had previously operated without adequate supplies of wheat took full advantage of the liberalisation by acquiring large stocks of cheaper imported wheat. The imported wheat cost about Ksh. 850 per 90 kg bag compared with Ksh. 1,400 that NCPB was paying for local wheat. NCPB's announced prices tended to broadly determine the price of cereals for other local dealers. In view of their large purchases of imported wheat and their limited storage capacity, local millers could not have bought large amounts of the 1993 wheat harvest even if they had wanted to.

Thirdly—when they eventually came into the local market—local millers attempted to reduce prices to farmers to about Ksh. 1,300 per 90 kg bag in their efforts to reduce the price of wheat flour and thereby revive falling consumer demand. After removal of price controls on wheat and its products the price of a 2 kg packet of wheat flour had risen from about Ksh. 40 to over Ksh. 70 per packet. This had significantly reduced the demand for wheat flour to a level that was causing concern to the large millers. At the time of the field interviews, the retail price of the 2 kg packet of wheat flour had fallen to about Ksh. 50. However, by trying to reduce the price paid to the farmer, the millers became less attractive to farmers who were now preferring to sell to NCPB. Nor could millers compete with NCPB as a buyer of maize, for which NCPB was actually paying the astronomical price of Ksh. 1,050/bag as against the official price of Ksh. 946.

Fourthly—and presumably as the result of injecting huge amounts of liquid central government funds—NCPB succeeded in cutting payment delays to those selling to it. This was in contrast to millers, who seemed unable to pay promptly for wheat delivered.

Discussions with farmers further showed that there were some farmers who regarded selling their produce to NCPB as more or less a demonstration of their support for the government, both in its stand on cereals reform and more generally. The government had made it clear that it was implementing reforms reluctantly and at the local level was propagating the view that those who were pushing for the removal of the NCPB monopoly were “anti-government agents based inside and outside of the country”. Thus, to some farmers, continued loyalty to NCPB and KGGCU was a demonstration of patriotism—or at least their support for the president. These views became more entrenched as the inadequacies of NCPB's competitors became increasingly apparent.

NCPB was of course not idealised even by the majority of farmers who—in 1993 at least—preferred to stick with it. Recalling the 1992 crop season, only 27.7 per cent of those who had then sold to NCPB stated that they had been paid promptly, and while a large majority of the remainder had been paid within a month, a further quarter had not been. Some farmers stated that they had had to bribe NCPB officials in order to be paid

quickly. However, the principal complaints against the organisation were the predictable ones of "unfair" deductions for high moisture content, delays in off-loading at peak delivery times and "low prices(!)".

Private traders had a good reputation for prompt payment, with 80 per cent of those selling to them reporting they had been paid instantly and the remainder within six weeks. But complaints were frequent and serious. These mainly concerned the supposed propensity of private traders to cheat farmers by improperly weighing produce or refusing to weigh it at all, but also touched on the generally oligopolistic character of local-level private trade. Private maize traders were paying less than NCPB prices during the survey, usually by about Ksh. 100/bag. Moreover they would not buy maize with high moisture content as they had no facilities to dry or store it.

Prior to the abolition of NCPB/KGGCU's wheat buying monopsony all wheat farmers had to obtain a licence to sell their wheat, even to KGGCU itself. They further needed a special licence if they were to by-pass KGGCU and sell direct to a miller and a third one if in the process the wheat needed to be transported across a district boundary. The same applied to maize producers. Obtaining the second and third type of permit or licence depended on being able to mobilise a political connection. In the case of the second type of licence this connection had to be at a high level, since only the most senior NCPB managers in Nairobi could issue them.

Since the interview schedule had been drawn up prior to liberalisation occurring, a question was included asking respondents if they had needed any "help" to sell their crop, from administrators or anyone else. Farmers invariably interpreted the question as referring to the present and answered in the negative. Sales to millers no longer commanded a premium and had been legalised anyway. But more interestingly, a follow-up question revealed that very few farmers were interested in marketing their produce across district borders, which—in bulk form at least—was still a troublesome exercise. It was mainly private traders who were keen to search for ways of moving maize within the country.

The reluctance of both small-scale and large-scale farmers to market their produce outside their home district could be attributed to a number of factors. Firstly, discussions showed that many farmers saw themselves as specialists in this role alone and did not like to spend a lot of time selling their produce. Large-scale farmers generally produced substantial quantities of wheat or maize which, given the fragmented nature of the private wholesale trade, would normally take many days to sell through local channels in different parts of the country, even if the latter could readily be identified. By contrast, NCPB had easily accessible depots in most parts of the country, both in cereal-surplus and deficit areas. Most large buyers and institutions preferred to buy cereals from those depots in any case.

Secondly, except in times of very serious shortages, cereal prices set by NCPB tended to influence prices in most parts of the country. This limited

the profit margins that farmers could make by themselves selling their produce outside the district. Thirdly, the existence of stringent controls in the marketing of cereals and police harassment had stifled development of a well-functioning cereal market capable of absorbing large amounts of cereals from farmers in a short period of time. Finally a significant proportion of medium and large-scale cereal farmers had loans from AFC or KGCCU which compelled them to sell produce through state channels.

Some of the farms included in the sample belonged to top politicians in the country, from both the ruling party and the opposition. Farms belonging to very senior civil servants were also included in the sample. Discussions with people managing these showed that cereals from those farms were also sold to NCPB, partly because such politicians and senior civil servants had large AFC or KGCCU loans and partly because of the other reasons given above. On the other hand, as will be seen later in the discussion, those who wanted to move their produce across district boundaries could now openly buy a licence to do so, without directly mobilising the services of a politician.

Farmers perceptions of the reform process and their intentions for the future

Despite the fact that there had been considerable reform in the maize trade and general deregulation in the wheat one, around 29 per cent of the respondents were not able to name any specific recent reform which had taken place. However, a small majority were aware of the relaxation of restrictions on intra- and inter-district wheat and maize movements and of the general deregulation of the consumer price of wheat flour. But some maize farmers simultaneously complained that some inter-district movements were still unlawfully restricted by policemen in search of bribes, and about the discrepancy which at the time allowed them to sell wheat but not maize direct to millers. Predictably, an aspect of the reform process which was strongly opposed was the removal of subsidies and decontrol of prices on fertilisers.

Higher producer prices, whether in the true spirit of liberalisation or not, had given a large proportion of farmers a degree of optimism about the immediate future. 47.7 per cent of wheat farmers expressed an intention to plant more in the 1994 season, as against 38.6 per cent who said they would plant the same and 13.6 per cent who said they would plant less. Almost the same proportion of maize farmers (46.6 per cent) expressed similarly expansive intentions, as against 27.3 per cent who would plant the same acreage and 22.7 per cent who would plant less. Those who said they would plant the same or less cited high costs of inputs (labour and fertiliser), an absence of available additional land, physical insecurity (see below) and—in the case of wheat—poor seeds.

Farmers' concerns about high input prices were also reflected in their ranking of the main problems they confronted. 69.3 per cent of wheat farmers and 67 per cent of maize ones cited the latter as their most pressing difficulty. Perceptions of the expense of inputs were probably heightened for those farmers who had ceased selling through NCPB/KGGCU and who thus no longer could obtain them on credit.

Small group discussions with farmers provided an opportunity for these issues to be followed up in more detail. The depth of resentment on the input price issue was quite severe. According to official sources the fertiliser price rose in real terms by only 10 per cent in the first year following liberalisation (1992) and a further 33 per cent in 1993 (Kenya Government, *ibid.*:119). But according to farmers the widely used DAP actually went up from around Ksh. 600/50 kg bag in 1992 to over Ksh. 1,200 in 1993. Farmers recognised that the devaluation of the Kenyan currency had contributed to this but still complained bitterly about the unscrupulous nature of Asian businessmen controlling the farm input market, who acted in an oligopolistic manner and arbitrarily increased input prices every time producer prices were raised by the government. Farmers warned that unless the government controlled and/or restored subsidies on input prices, more and more of them would plant maize/wheat without fertiliser or other essential chemicals, leading to a collapse of yields. Farmers who had not applied adequate fertiliser and chemicals on their farms during the 1993 crop season were said to be getting yields as low as three to seven bags of maize/wheat per acre while those who applied these inputs were harvesting over 20 bags of maize/wheat per acre, other factors remaining constant. All the farmers were of the opinion that input prices should be controlled since some other activities in the cereals sub-sector were at this time still not fully liberalised. They argued that decontrol of input prices could only work in a situation where there was full liberalisation of the sub-sector, although even then they were quick to point out that the quality and quantity of fertilisers and chemicals should be continuously checked by the authorities lest unscrupulous traders sell substandard or short-measured fertilisers or chemicals.

While the fertiliser price was the major difficulty farmers were experiencing on the input side, there was also great concern about seeds. This did not relate to the liberalisation programme but to the deterioration of one of the lesser parastatals operating in the sector, the Kenya Seed Company (KSC).

KSC is the main source of seed for maize, wheat, barley, oats and some flowers. These seeds are produced on contract by selected and monitored farmers and then disseminated. Seed maize and wheat commands a premium and contracts to produce it are therefore highly sought after. The farmers surveyed complained bitterly about the improper granting of these contracts to senior politicians, other influential persons and KSC employees and a subsequent lack of their adequate monitoring—which was said to be associated with a toleration of chemical misapplication to and

lack of proper quarantining of seed grains. The resulting problem of poor quality seeds is admitted in general terms in the 1994 *Economic Survey* (Kenya Government, 1994: 123) but nothing is said of its origins.

Credit was said to have become more difficult and time-consuming to obtain than in earlier periods, as a result of AFC'S new insistence that all seasonal credits (annual loans) to farmers had to be backed by adequate collateral (especially title deeds), a requirement earlier applied only to development loans. The problem with this system, according to farmers, is that in cases of crop failure the farmer would be unable to pay back the loans and in effect would not be eligible for further loans since the AFC would hold onto the title deed until earlier loans were fully repaid. On the other hand, these sentiments can be seen as reflecting certain universal features of farmer attitudes to credit.

General preference for marketing output through NCPB/KGGCU did not in the least imply general satisfaction with the grain purchasing parastatals. In particular, wheat farmers felt strongly that KGGCU should have been run purely by farmers, as had been the case with the disbanded Kenya Farmers Association, and that it should have been devoid of political interference. They felt that if KGGCU was organised as a truly independent farmers' institution, it would be much better able to reduce the exploitation of the farming community by "greedy middlemen" and suppliers of farm inputs. Some of the farmers said that KGGCU should also be divorced from political influence in order to reduce machinations by people with political connections who acquire huge loans, some of which are never paid back. Such loans left the organisation financially crippled and "unable to serve needy and deserving farmers".

MILLERS AND THE LIBERALISED CEREALS CHAIN

A total of 18 millers were interviewed during the survey. Of these six were proprietors of large-scale enterprises and 12 of small-scale posho mills. Some posho mills dealt only with maize, although in wheat-growing areas they tended to deal with both. The categories proved to be sufficiently distinct in character to merit separate treatment.

Large-scale milling in Kenya dates back over 80 years, and most large-scale millers have been established for some time. This accounts for the relatively low start-up costs of even the largest visited (Ksh. 1.5 million or USD 22,400). Asians owned three and Europeans two of these mills. Three of the six employed more than 20 persons. Most mills were operating at capacities of 50 per cent or less. Only one, Milling Corporation, was operating at over 70 per cent capacity. The main reason for this low capacity utilisation was lack of raw material—despite the large-scale imports which some millers had carried out.

The large millers were mainly supplied with wheat by KGGCU up to 1990, as well as with both wheat and maize by local NCPB depots, private

middlemen, some ADC farms and direct by a few large private farmers. However, although before liberalisation millers could theoretically buy up to one third of their requirements direct from farmers, the numbers of private farmers given licences to deliver direct to the millers was always very small. Private middlemen with political connections, like ABC Foods of Nakuru, were however allowed to act as NCPB agents by purchasing wheat direct from farmers and delivering directly to the millers. Since liberalisation KGGCU is no longer a supplier. One each of the major wheat and maize millers will be discussed in detail below.

Wheat milling was started in Kenya in 1908 by Unga Ltd., which today controls 20–25 per cent of the whole market through its mills in Nairobi, Nakuru and Eldoret. The Nakuru mill's capacity is 6,000 (2 kg) bags/day, and the Eldoret mill's slightly less than half this. When Unga Ltd. was visited by the researchers in 1992 it had been closed down for days due to lack of supply from NCPB. However its local competitors, Nakuru Flour Mills and Kisumu Flour Mills, were fully operational due to political connections. At the time of the survey Unga was operational again, and entirely supplied by NCPB—although theoretically it could now buy from any source. Unga's end-product is packed into 24 kg bales and picked up at the mill by Unga Distributors, local bakeries including Elliot's (a sister company taking about a quarter of Unga's production) and by private lorry traders.

The price of wheat flour was liberalised in 1993. Unga Ltd. played a leading role in price setting, taking into account the speed of movement of flour from its warehouses. During slow movement, the company adjusted the price downwards and vice-versa. After an initial post-liberalisation surge, the price of a 2 kg bag of Unga flour fluctuated between Ksh. 50 and 85, generally settling at around 60. Other brands such as Golden Flour from Golden Harvest Mills have been selling as low as Ksh. 48 per 2 kg bag. The pre-liberalisation price was Ksh. 26.

The main large-scale maize millers in Kenya today are again Unga Ltd., which started production in 1928 in Eldoret (330 tons/day capacity), Milling Corporation (also theoretically 330 tons/day but effectively only 280 due to ageing plant), and United Millers (100 to 200 tons/day capacity). Other large-scale maize millers include Kenya Grain Mills, Nairobi Flour Mills, Kabansora Ltd., Nyeri Central Millers and Dandora Millers.

Milling Corporation was established in Nakuru in 1977 and went into production in 1979. The corporation is 100 per cent government-owned partly through NCPB. It has two plants, a maize mill and an animal feeds plant producing feed for cattle, horses, poultry, pigs, pets, etc. The corporation buys maize mainly from the NCPB depot located in the neighbouring compound. The mill and the depot are connected by a conveyer belt which shifts maize from the silos. Maize supply is guaranteed even during times of shortage, due to the simple fact that the Corporation is part-owned by NCPB. Milling Corporation is currently slated for privatisation under the World Bank reform programme and bids had been re-

ceived, which at the time of writing were being processed by the Parastatal Reform Committee. Whether the possible change of ownership will affect the relationship between NCPB and Milling Corporation remains to be seen, though it is already apparent that most of the present employees will lose their jobs when privatisation occurs.

Although large-scale maize millers were theoretically free to purchase 20 per cent of their needs direct from farmers, this facility had been under-utilised. In 1993 farmers were still reluctant to sell direct to both wheat and maize millers for the price reasons already mentioned. Moreover, as also already indicated, NCPB had been uncharacteristically prompt in payment, besides—as usual—taking advantage of its excellent and unique drying facilities to buy maize with high moisture content, which the private millers could not. This implied that NCPB still possessed very strong advantages over other competitors, allowing it to remain easily the largest grain buyer.

Kenya has thousands of small-scale posho mills. These are typically owned by Africans and employ one to five persons. Currently start-up costs are about Ksh. 30,000 (USD 500). Posho mills normally run only a few hours a day, since a reasonably-sized group of customers with small quantities of mealies must gather before the mill can be operated. The mill then runs for 30–60 minutes before closing again for another waiting period. Some larger posho mills have contracts with schools and hotels and a more active purchasing policy at local markets or NCPB depots. Posho mills sometimes combine to set prices. For example, in Kitui in early 1993 a number agreed to increase milling charges from Ksh. 1.50 to Ksh. 2 per kg of maize, following an increase in fuel prices. However, these prices are largely notional, for the great majority of transactions occurring at posho mills are in barter form, whereby maize is exchanged for a given proportion of milled flour. Posho millers require licensing by government (trading licence), local authorities and the Ministry of Health (health certificate). About a third of the posho millers stated that it was necessary to “know somebody” of District Commissioner rank or to pay a small bribe in order to obtain some of these licences.

Few of the posho millers had any knowledge of current reforms in the cereals sector. This was presumably mainly because little had changed on the ground at the time of the survey. Nevertheless, they were mostly enthusiastic about decontrol of cereals movements, imports and prices of mealies and flour. These they saw as allowing them to increase their profit margins and/or capacity utilisation. But simultaneously they predictably favoured price controls on their own spare part and fuel costs, as well as state credit and intervention to maintain NCPB stock levels.

Apart from the interlude of heavily subsidised NCPB sales to large-scale maize millers, large-scale wheat millers probably benefited much more from liberalisation than either the former or posho millers. The large-scale wheat millers enjoyed the resources and freedom to buy relatively cheap imports and the freedom to sell wheat products at unregulated prices—

whose formation they could strongly influence. None of these advantages was open to the others.

TRADERS AND THE LIBERALISED CEREALS CHAIN

45 private traders were interviewed in the four districts, that is, Nakuru, Uasin Gishu, Trans-Nzoia and Kitui. These traders were not sampled randomly but were identified on an availability basis when the researchers visited NCPB depots or town markets. However an effort was made to assemble a group which reflected the main divisions of labour within the trade. Observations were also made at two border posts, Malaba and Namanga, and a few remarks based on the latter will be made at the end of this section.

Of the traders interviewed about 60 per cent were male and 40 per cent female. A majority (over 70 per cent) had attended secondary school. A very large majority (over 90 per cent) maintained a home in the districts in which they were trading, reflecting the highly localised nature of the activity of most participants.

The traders fell into four main categories: transporters-distributors (who sometimes became temporarily engaged in large-scale wholesaling); large market traders (mainly wholesalers); retailers and smaller market traders; and "brokers".

Some market-based wholesale traders dealt in over 20 (90 kg) bags of wheat/maize per week, had working capitals of up to Ksh. 20,000 (about USD 400) and bank loans. They typically obtained their supplies from NCPB depots or occasionally transporters-distributors. Most market traders and retailers functioned on a considerably smaller scale, handling no more than 10 bags per week, implying working capitals of Ksh. 10,000 (USD 200) or less. Some dealt in only five bags/week. The great majority of the latter operated with their own funds only. Almost all of the types of traders described so far operated singly. Typically they combined the wheat/maize business with buying and selling of other cereals such as beans, millet, sorghum, rice, cassava and potatoes. Green maize (maize on cobs) was also openly sold by some, despite the fact that this is illegal.

Most traders in these categories depended on hired transport to shift cereals from their buying to their selling point. The most commonly hired means of transport were "matatus", tractors, "mkokoteni" or handcarts, pick-ups and occasionally lorries. Charges by those hiring out the transport are based on the number of sacks ferried and range between Ksh. 30 and Ksh. 50/90 kg bag, depending on the distance covered within the district. Charges within towns for a three kilometre ride varied between Ksh. 10 and Ksh. 25/bag.

A third group of traders are known as "brokers". Their operations are mostly on a par with market retailers and there is some shifting back and forward between the categories. They use cycles, donkeys and sometimes

hired pick-ups or matatus to buy from (small-scale) farmers at the farm gate. It is an open secret that they exploit farmers, since they avoid carrying certified weighing scales with them in the course of their trade. Instead, they use a 2 kg tin widely known in most parts of the country as a "gorogoro" as a measure. Other cereals may be measured in smaller tins from 500 gm. upwards. In remote parts of the districts visited, brokers tended to act jointly when buying maize from farmers in small quantities (1–5 bags) at farm gate and then transport it using bicycles, "matatus" or hired pick-ups to the nearest NCPB depot for sale. It was a common sight at NCPB depots visited to see individual brokers with between 1–5 bags of maize lining up to deliver their merchandise to the board. As already indicated, prices paid to farmers for (90 kg) bags of maize were uniform at Ksh. 950/bag (cash).

Maize which brokers do not sell to NCPB is resold to the first two categories of traders in local markets, or to millers, or (in small quantities) direct to consumers. Brokers are normally paid cash by each of these purchasers, except at NCPB depots where they may wait for a few days before payment is processed. In 1993 brokers selling maize to NCPB depots received Ksh. 1,100/bag, implying a margin of only Ksh. 150/bag.

The final group of traders are the transporters/distributors. This group, which included many Asians, are usually general transporters and distributors and may temporarily carry out large-scale wholesaling functions with a wide variety of products. They own their own lorries (which they sometimes also hire out) and may trade not only unprocessed maize and wheat but also flour. At the time of the survey some were engaged in importing maize/mealies from Uganda and Tanzania. At the time of the 1992 pilot survey some however had been transporting processed flour from Kenya to Uganda. These are the only private traders systematically involved in inter-district trade, usually on others' account but sometimes on their own. When functioning as transporters alone they levied charges of Ksh. 150/bag for any cross-border movement, Ksh. 80–100/bag for transport from Eldoret to Nairobi and Ksh. 100–130/bag for the Kitale-Nairobi trip. It was notable that specialised large-scale grains wholesalers were rather thin on the ground in Kenya, even compared with neighbouring parts of Uganda, where specialist wholesalers dealing in 200-plus bags a week were present (Sørensen, 1995).

Amongst traders as a whole approximately equal numbers were operating with and without licences. Basically, those who possessed licences were wholesalers and retailers of the two commodities while those who did not were brokers and market traders. The latter group can evade licensing requirements as they do not have permanent premises to conduct trade from, but operate in a mobile fashion. Nevertheless they pay County Council Levy at market gates every time they go to the market. The council fee is levied irrespective of the quantity of maize traded.

Wholesalers on the other hand require a trading licence from NCPB, a county council or municipal or city licence and sometimes a health certifi-

cate in order to carry on with trade. According to the wholesalers these licences are not difficult to obtain so long as all the formal requirements have been met.

Although the great majority of those engaged in inter-district cereals marketing encountered occasional police harassment at road blocks, a sizeable majority agreed that there was reasonably free movement of maize within given districts with only sporadic police harassment or no harassment at all as long as one had a movement permit from NCPB which had themselves become easier to obtain. Only around a fifth of traders disagreed with this view. This is in contrast to the findings of the pilot survey carried out in September 1992 where an overwhelming majority of traders felt that both intra- and inter-district maize movement was almost impossible irrespective of possession of a NCPB permit, and that the only movement allowed was through bribery at police road blocks.

According to traders themselves, and on the basis of a comparison of the two surveys, it appears that police harassment receded a great deal during 1993. Most of this change may be attributable to government policy with regard to importation of maize from Uganda and Tanzania. In order to avert mealie shortages in the country the police may have received express orders from above to facilitate the passage of maize from the neighbouring countries into NCPB depots, and accordingly may have relaxed their grip on traders moving mealies. The relaxation of limits in quantities of maize which could be transported across borders did not seem to have produced a reduction in roadblocks or harassment on the other hand. When it occurred, the nature of police harassment according to traders often does not actually concern checking for the presence or absence of documentation or any breach of laid down rules but is simply a quest for bribes. For crossing a national border, the going police rate is said to be Ksh. 500–1,000/load, depending on the quantity moved.

Traders generally welcomed market liberalisation and believed that it should be extended. But few if any envisaged private trade displacing NCPB, at least in the foreseeable future. Not only did they lack the working capital/credit to trade on a large-scale or finance the construction of storage space or purchase of new lorries, but they were also aware that they lacked the collateral to obtain it privately. In any case the only element of the cereals trade where they considered real profits to be available was in retailing. At least in the grain deficit areas, where small farms predominate, buying direct from farmers at farm gates was considered unremunerative. Discussion with traders in Kitui indicated that most appeared to wish that NCPB could actually maintain higher stock levels to save private traders from having to perform any "brokerage" functions at all in this grain deficit district.

The structure of private trade at border posts mirrored the general features described above, with most activity in grains on the Ugandan border. At both Namanga (Tanzania) and Malaba (Uganda) border points, goods of all descriptions were being constantly ferried in tiny quantities back-

wards and forwards. "Messengers" working on commission, mostly young children, criss-crossed the border with small single items such as a 2 kg bag of sugar, a tin of cooking fat, a box of soap, a bottle of soda, a packet of wheat flour, etc. The children were paying bribes of Ksh. 1/item to the customs officials manning the border gates. At the same time at Malaba, it was an open secret that large quantities of maize from Uganda were being off-loaded from large Ugandan lorries and reloaded onto Kenyan ones just within the customs premises. Most of the Kenyan lorries were bound for the NCPB depots nearest to the border.

It was further observed that, after a long spell of idleness and lack of business, "mkokoteni" (hand-cart), bicycle, and wheel-barrow owners were doing a roaring business transporting maize across this same border via *panya* (cycle pannier) routes, all the while cunningly dodging security officers. The sight of over-loaded hand-carts, bicycles and trucks shuttling between collection points in Uganda and distribution points in Kenya with maize spilling along the way, has become a permanent feature since late 1992.

There were big profits to be made in this trade. According to Odhiambo (1994:47), local market maize prices in eastern Uganda were only roughly 60 per cent of the NCPB purchase price in 1993. For larger-scale trade the official licensing constraints had also been relaxed and simplified on both sides of the border, although the Malaba observations suggested that most large-scale trade was still being conducted "unofficially". A physical majority of all trade was probably dominated by small wholesalers, who at Malaba were Ugandans (according to Sørensen (*ibid.*), at Busia however Kenyans dominated).

THE CEREALS CHAIN AND PATRONAGE POLITICS

The discussion has shown how the Kenya government has maintained many controls in the marketing of cereals for most of the post-independent period and has strongly resisted pressures from some local interests as well as donor institutions to liberalise this trade. The arguments commonly advanced by the government to justify these controls have generally dwelt on the need to maintain strategic food reserves (especially during droughts), the protection of farmers' interests through guaranteed producer prices, the improvement of crop quality and quantity through dissemination of technical advances, ensuring availability of inputs at prices farmers could afford and protection of consumers from exploitative traders.

These reasons indeed played some part in the design of the controls that existed in the cereal marketing chain. So too did factors such as the need for a mechanism to ensure the repayment of credit advanced against purchases of land and inputs, and to incorporate economies of scale into the mechanisms for agricultural modernisation just described. Yet our study shows that besides these "national economic" factors and motives,

political ones have also always played a crucial role in Kenya's cereal marketing chain and these to a considerable extent independently explain the reluctance of the government to liberalise the cereal trade.

The relatively high political interest shown in cereals in the country is thus not only a reflection of the strategic nature of crops like maize and wheat in the national food supply, but also of the importance of some of the players involved in cereal production and marketing in the political system.

Since independence, cereals farmers in areas like Nakuru, Uasin Gishu, Trans-Nzoia, Narok and elsewhere have included senior figures in the political system and government service including presidents, cabinet ministers, permanent secretaries, senior police and military officers as well as prominent personalities in Kenya's private sector. Such individuals acquired large pieces of land in many parts of the former White Highlands, both at the time of their original redistribution and subsequently. Some of the farms were acquired by people of means who could afford to buy them in commercial transactions while some were and continue to be literally given away to influential people for political patronage reasons. As already noted, our own sample of "farmers" turned up certain top leaders in the ruling party, some key opposition leaders and a number of senior civil servants. Our discussions during the field interviews showed that sub-division of former Agricultural Development Corporation-run state farms was still going on and that the beneficiaries shared the profile described above.

As has been indicated by a number of authors (e.g., Lofchie, 1989) this has predisposed the state towards generally supportive policies toward agriculture as a whole and the cereals sector in particular. However the cereals chain also intersects with politics in a number of other important ways of a destructive nature.

Personal patronage interventions

Dispensing rent-generating or sinecure-type patronage has for a long time been one of the motives for keeping tight controls on cereal marketing, and maintaining a large bureaucracy for this purpose. The restrictions involved enabled the political establishment to grant political favours in many ways. One of these was to offer senior posts to cronies in public institutions that handled cereals especially NCPB, KGGCU, Kenya Seed Company and others. With changes of the guard at national level, changes followed in the occupants of these posts. At all the NCPB depots and KGGCU branches visited in the three districts and Nairobi all but two were headed by managers from the president's ethnic group, the Kalenjin. People offered such positions are expected to show total loyalty to the political establishment. Those appointed tended in turn to keep their "own" people, whom they could trust, in key sections or departments of depots or branches.

Another way in which political favours could be granted in the controlled marketing regime was in granting permits for moving produce from one area to another or selling produce directly to millers. Selling wheat direct to millers prior to liberalisation commanded a premium and was also associated with prompt payment on delivery. Permits for such sales have not been required since 1993. However, from interviews with traders and farmers it was clear that even in the semi-liberalised conditions of late 1993, still only a few people had *direct* access to the permits allowing movement of maize or wheat from one district to another. A narrow circle of middlemen obtained these permits and sold them to cereal traders or farmers for a fee of Ksh. 2,000 each. The researchers were told that virtually all the people who were known to be dealers in these permits were from the same ethnic group.

Patronage had also been exercised *vis-à-vis* millers in respect of guaranteeing supplies. As already mentioned one of the leading milling companies in Kenya, owned by people outside the political elite and unable or unwilling to make an appropriate connection with it, has suffered considerably from excess capacity. In 1992 this firm was supplied with grains equivalent only to about 40 per cent of its installed capacity. At the same time, a parastatal company had all the grains it required.

While on the subject of milling, the rent-seeking niche created by the temporary 1993 subsidy on NCPB sales to millers is worth underlining. Certain unscrupulous individuals posing as millers were as a result able to buy grain "worth" Ksh. 900-plus from NCPB and then, posing as farmers, sell it back to the organisation at almost 50 per cent profit. This niche was closed after its exposure in the national press.

Appointments as agents of the Kenya Seed Company for purposes of producing certified seed was another area in which political patronage was being practised according to some of the farmers interviewed. It was said that in the last few years, some of the agents were not appointed purely on merit, but largely due to how powerful they were or how well known to the management of Seed Company. As already noted, some farmers complained that agents currently included politicians from senior national to more lowly local levels, as well as senior personnel of the Seed Company itself. Nobody dared to effectively supervise these agents to produce seed according to the required standards. The sale of large amounts of poor maize seed in 1993 was to a considerable extent attributed this problem.

Finally, manipulation of domestic producer and consumer prices of wheat and maize has also been common in the past, enabling a small number of private importers of wheat and maize (usually well-connected politically) to enjoy larger profit margins.

Political interventions to support the market position of NCPB

While NCPB/KGGCU enjoyed effective legal monopsony and legal monopoly status in most branches of the trade, their "market leadership" really only needed to be enforced by the provincial administration and the police. As liberalisation has eventually unfolded it has become clear that the state is still committed to support for this "market leadership". However, today the latter depends less on the provincial administration and police than on the built-in economic advantages of the NCPB and on essentially political interventions to artificially extend them.

Most large-scale farmers for example remain tied into the state marketing system via its seasonal credit arrangements. This has broken down in the case of KGGCU, along with its role as a privileged input and machinery supplier, but is still intact in the case of NCPB. Indeed, in the foreseeable future it is only a heavily state-supported organisation such as NCPB which could contemplate using farm produce as collateral to maintain such arrangements. Private traders simply do not have the resources to make the necessary advances or carry the risk that they imply.

Nor of course do they have the capacity to handle or store large quantities of grain, or maintain a nation-wide system of depots and branches to collect it. Curiously, despite the heavy pressure for liberalisation, donors were still assisting NCPB to increase its silo capacity in 1993. Private traders moreover remain particularly unlikely to purchase grains with high moisture content alongside dry grains, as NCPB does, both because it is probably uneconomic (more water means less grain per sack) and because high moisture content increases the likelihood of mildew and rotting in storage.

In the liberalisation phase these built-in advantages of NCPB were complemented, as has been seen, by heavy government intervention to provide NCPB with both a price advantage and enough liquidity to speed up its payments system. Efforts to secure their upstream monopsony were moreover accompanied by ones to secure a downstream one. NCPB simultaneously undermined private trader and direct farmer sales to millers by taking a loss on its own mill feedstock price for maize.

Political interventions for strategic political objectives

The government has also sometimes intervened in the marketing of cereals for certain strategic "national political" reasons. A good example was its implicit and explicit relaxation of controls over movement of maize across Kenya's borders in 1993. For as long as could be remembered, traders from Kenya and neighbouring countries have not been allowed to freely transport maize or wheat across national boundaries. However, by mid-1993 when it had become obvious that Kenya was going to suffer a major deficit in maize, and while the country was still suffering from a foreign exchange crisis due to the suspension of donor assistance, the government

quietly relaxed restrictions on cross-border cereal trade to allow maize from Uganda to enter Kenya. According to the information obtained from some of the traders, the police were instructed not to harass Kenyan or Ugandan traders transporting maize from Uganda. NCPB depots were also instructed to accept such maize without raising questions and to process payments to the traders within two days of delivery.

Although the trade soon became dominated by medium-scale players, those who initially benefited were mainly individuals with political connections. Estimates by NCPB officials in Eldoret indicated that by December 1993 Eldoret and Moi's Bridge NCPB depots had received about 500,000 (90 kg) bags of maize from Uganda which, unlike Kenya, had a bumper maize harvest. Visits to other NCPB depots in western Kenya such as Bungoma showed that they had also received large amounts of maize from Uganda.

The "tribal clashes" and their impact on cereals production

All three main study areas were heavily affected by the tribal clashes which have afflicted the Rift Valley since 1991. Reports by independent bodies such as the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK) and the government-appointed Kiluku Committee show clearly that the clashes affecting the main cereal growing areas of the country were officially instigated and that the government displayed little interest in stopping them. The clashes are widely seen as a process of ethnic cleansing to throw out non-Kalenjin tribes from parts of Rift Valley, which in turn is a preparation for the formation of *majimbo* (regional-based) government structures.

While the full impact of tribal clashes on the cereals sector has not been quantified, there is evidence that it had immense direct and indirect negative effects on both production and marketing of cereals in the country.

The large shortfall experienced in cereal production in 1993-94 has been officially attributed to a combination of unfavourable weather, reduced fertiliser application and poor seed quality (Kenya Government, 1994: 123). The tribal clashes were not referred to at all in the discussion in question, despite the fact that they displaced 100,000 people from the prime cereal growing areas in the country, especially in Nakuru, Uasin Gishu, Trans-Nzoia and Narok.

The displacement has not only reduced the volume of production from the affected areas, but has created a major problem of theft of unharvested maize and wheat. The theft problem was more pronounced in Nakuru area, where destitute people displaced from Molo and Mau Narok become a menace to farmers around Nakuru town. Some of the farmers interviewed said they were planning to stop growing maize because it was more prone to petty theft. The problem had also affected wheat which in the past had never suffered from theft before harvest. Farmers said that hungry

displaced people were stealing wheat from the farms for their own consumption.

CONCLUSION

The state-owned and government-controlled NCPB continued to be the main player in the cereals trade at the end of 1993, as it had been at the start of the year before serious reforms commenced. The principal development which has subsequently occurred is that millers became major buyers of wheat. Otherwise, new developments were rather limited. Further direct government intervention on the price and payment system sides, and both the structure of cereals production generally and the private sector itself meant that no more fundamental changes followed. The outcome of the complete liberalisation of the maize trade, which was announced after both the research and the 1993 harvest were completed, seems likely to be much the same—at least if the government can command the necessary resources to sustain the further enormous losses which NCPB must be running up as a result of its new interventions. If on the other hand it cannot command these resources, the outcome is very uncertain. The private sector appears unable to take over NCPB's role unless it is assisted to do so. And this would require a political intervention on at least as large a scale as those which, as has been seen, established and sustained NCPB in its present role.

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The Changing Development Space in Kenya

Socio-Political Change and Voluntary Development Activities

Karuti Kanyinga

Analysis of economics and politics in Africa emphasises the post-colonial state as a central variable. In the 1970s scholarly debate centred mainly on the nature of and interests represented by this state (Alavi, 1972; Leys, 1976; Saul, 1979). The debate resurfaced in the second half of 1980s, this time focusing specifically on state's limitation in delivering development. Some argued for the revitalisation of non-state institutions as a condition for resuscitating the political sphere and the economy, since the state was said to have retarded their growth.¹ Others have argued that the state should be "rolled back" from all development activities and instead confine itself to creating "enabling" conditions for other development actors. The World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), among others, articulate this position and increasingly cast the objectives of structural adjustment in terms of such a rolling back process.

Most claims about the negative implications of "statism"² centre on its effects on macro level economic and political processes. But African states have tended to exhibit the same predatory tendencies at the micro or local level. On the other hand, spontaneous popular initiatives—mainly in the form of avoidance but sometimes also in that of resistance—undermine or countermand these tendencies. Moreover, the local level is also the site of different forms of organisation which the state does not control, at least not directly. Amongst the latter are voluntary development initiatives of various kinds, from savings groups to Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).

In Africa the alignment of these "development" initiatives and organisations *vis-à-vis* the state is of the highest political importance, since the construction and defence of basic political identities and loyalties, as well as national political hegemony and legitimacy take place in the development arena. The state has an advantage in securing a favourable alignment

¹ See, for example, Chazan (1988) and the contributions to Chabal (ed.) (1986).

² "Statism" here means the phenomenon of state monopolisation of the right to organise not only economic but also social and political activity.

of these institutions. It has financial resources as well as the legal apparatus and political power, and authority, to secure compliance from them.

For most of the 1970s and 1980s, many observers heralded Kenya as a country in which the state had played a less interventionist role than in most of its neighbours. This position was said to apply also in the local development sphere where voluntary development initiatives, such as *harambee* (literally, pulling together) were considered to occupy an almost uniquely autonomous and therefore significant role. Many observers also linked this situation to the country's apparent economic success. Although scholars acknowledged that *harambee* had some connection to national politics and the state more generally, they saw this for the most part in terms of the former's creation and sustenance of avenues of popular accountability (e.g., Barkan and Holmquist, 1989).

Towards the end of the 1980s a consensus emerged that Kenya's economic performance was actually problematic. A more critical view of the local development arena also emerged. Studies increasingly emphasised the latter's politicisation and argued that the development space in Kenya differed from the mainstream African case only in emphasis. Local development initiatives in Kenya were extremely extensive and had a popular dimension but state patronage and political influence strongly militated against the latter. Indeed they often redefined the role of voluntary initiatives into channels for extending political patronage to the grassroots.

Recent events suggest that the state's ability to dominate the development space is increasingly constrained—particularly at the local level. In the first place "statism" has become unfashionable amongst donors and the end of the cold war triggered changes in relations between donors and African governments which rendered the latter more susceptible to pressure. Secondly, and relatedly, the early 1990s have seen a rebirth of political pluralism in Africa. Ostensibly at least, this also implies restrictions on the state's ability to exercise domination and monopoly in the development sphere, as a space is opened for greater competition, transparency, and accountability. This may also imply a change in the political salience of development issues as other dimensions of politics now take on greater significance.

This study addresses the question of the changing nature and significance of local development politics in Kenya in the new conditions of economic and political liberalisation. It does so on the basis of an attempt to establish the defining features of the Kenyan development space (its principal formal and informal elements and the relationship between them), both historically and in the present multi-party period. Secondly it aims to answer the question of whether new forms of local politics can be said to have arisen in contemporary Kenya, and insofar as they have, to trace their content.

RESEARCH METHODS

In order to undertake this study, the author has combined fieldwork techniques with historiographical methods. Fieldwork (conducted between March and December 1993) helped to map the contemporary development space and its ongoing changes in selected districts. Historiographical methods (consulting newspaper archives, proceedings of parliamentary debates, local and central government records and biographical interviews with key actors) helped to trace developments in the 1980s. The fieldwork methods employed included direct observation of "self-help" activities of various kinds, and interviews concerning the current situation with a variety of development actors including members of local elites, leaders and ordinary members of cooperative organisations, self-help groups, the formalised NGOs, and religious organisations. More informal discussions were held with elected officials of the main political parties, local provincial administration officials, and other local notables. In order to reinforce the popular dimension of the study's sources, focus group discussions were held with small groups of ordinary citizens and members of the political parties, self-help groups and other development organisations.

The study chose five districts for fieldwork: Kiambu, Siaya, Nakuru, Elgeyo Marakwet and Taita Taveta. These were chosen purposively to represent the different political contexts of current development activities. A detailed description of the districts will follow later. However, opposition political parties dominate three (Siaya, Nakuru and Kiambu), and the state party, KANU, dominates the other two (Taita Taveta and Elgeyo Marakwet). Nakuru and Kiambu have—or have had in the past—what might be regarded as a strategic national political role; hence the choice of areas was meant to capture what was novel in the present situation rather than what is strictly typical. Some districts studied were large, with some very remote tracts. This presented transport difficulties. Consequently, fieldwork there tended to be more geographically concentrated than in other districts. In all, the study is based on 157 interviews divided roughly evenly between the districts and the different categories of respondent listed above. In addition, 16 focus group discussions were held, again roughly evenly divided among the five districts.

The survey encountered two practical problems. Some respondents, particularly those in KANU-dominated districts, discussed political issues only reluctantly. Some respondents clearly feared punishment from sub-chiefs or chiefs for responding to "sensitive" questions. Provincial Administration officials were also found to be cautious in their responses in these districts. A simple explanation for this is that the one party state and all that it implies has yet to disappear in the KANU areas. By contrast, in opposition dominated areas, people freely discussed all manner of questions. A second general problem was that whereas it was possible to explore most issues in depth with ordinary people, local elites—pro-government and opposition—were sometimes so busy in their multiple (profes-

sional, business and agricultural) economic roles that they had little time for extended discussion. On the whole however, the general response was frank and extensive enough to counterbalance these difficulties.

POLITICS AND DEVELOPMENT IN INDEPENDENT KENYA

While researchers differ considerably concerning the extent to which the state has historically dominated the local development sphere in Kenya, they all agree that relative to most other African countries Kenya has had a dense network of local self-help activities, and that this has had important political consequences. Only a few like Ngau (1987) have however gone on to draw the seemingly obvious conclusion that politics and struggles for control over local development institutions have been inseparable from the outset in Kenya. An important qualification to this statement is that the content of this relationship has changed significantly over time, with major implications for local contributions to and benefits from development initiatives. The most important landmark in mapping this change is the transition from the Kenyatta to the Moi era.

The Kenyatta era

High economic and political expectations accompanied the anti-colonial struggle before independence in 1963. But especially politically, these were not to be satisfied. The new government took over intact the apparatus of the colonial state including the centralised civil service and the highly coercive provincial administration network. From the sub-locational to the provincial administration headquarters level, the sub-chiefs, chiefs, District Officers (DOs), District Commissioners (DCs) and Provincial Commissioners (PCs) wielded immense powers over formal decision-making, from which elected councillors and Members of Parliament (MPs) were largely excluded.

Deprived of statutory authority or influence in their constituencies, elected officials turned to community development initiatives as a strategic base for power outside the central administration. Politicians involved themselves in community activities as a means of establishing local influence. The provincial administration quickly detected this turn of events and moved to counter it. Self-help institutions became highly penetrated by both politicians and the provincial administration officials and, in many cases, became a source of tension between these groups, (Lamb, 1974).

Kenya had attained independence in 1963 with a multi-party political system dominated by two major parties: the Kenya African National Union (KANU) and the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU). In 1964, KADU dissolved itself to "enhance national unity", and its leaders were incorporated by KANU (Gertzel, 1970; Anyang Nyong'o, 1989;

Throup, 1987). Multi-partyism was implicitly abandoned in favour of a strongly "presidential" single party system. At this stage, KANU still included groups with divergent economic and ideological interests, jockeying for position around Kenyatta. Some comprised elites who had been marginal during the independence struggle but who had been subsequently incorporated. This incorporation, in turn, accompanied a diminution of the party's popular content. The party came to comprise several semi-corporate groups and organised interests that ranged from ethno-regional coalitions and ideologically defined factions to personal followings. Eventually in 1966 KANU split into two main forces (usually referred to as KANU-A and KANU-B) led by Kenyatta and Odinga respectively. Odinga's faction founded the Kenya People's Union (KPU) as an opposition political party. But the state proscribed it in 1969, detained its leaders, and cracked down on its followers.

Subsequently the mass content of the party faded and the provincial administration assumed many mainstream party functions. KANU's internal politics came to revolve around ethno-regional and personal divisions. Kenyatta's Kikuyu ethno-regional group (and to some extent the related Meru and Embu ones) dominated positions in both the state economic institutions and the political sphere. But the elites based in Kenyatta's own Kiambu home district were the most politically influential in dispensing positions and prebends. Besides Kenyatta himself other important power brokers from Kiambu included Mbiyu Koinange (Minister of State in the Office of the President), James Gichuru (Minister of Defence), Njoroge Mungai (Minister of Defence and later Foreign Affairs) and Charles Njonjo (Attorney General) (see Karimi and Ochieng, 1980, for more details). This elite clique constituted Kenyatta's inner circle both in public and private life, and were therefore strategically placed to obtain key public resources by which they improved their own social standing and Kenyatta's political stature. Other Kikuyu, Embu and Meru constituencies had subordinate positions in the circle, while those from other ethno-regional groups stood outside it completely.

The power of the Kikuyu ethno-regional group was visible at the local level even outside Central Province. For instance, in 1972 four out of eight PCs and 15 out of 44 DCs were Kikuyu (Nellis, 1972). Officials of the provincial administration remained as feared as they had been in the colonial era. This was particularly true of the chiefs whose authoritarianism had the backing of the law—the Chief's Act—which authorised chiefs to enforce compliance in whatever ways they deemed necessary.

In lieu of organised party politics *harambee* became not only a base for clientelism but also for political competition. Both the president and his inner circle became key patrons in local and national development initiatives. Those local representatives who could join the inner circle, and form

constituencies based on its assistance, enhanced their political stature.¹ In the process, contributions to *harambees* became levers with which local level patrons edged into wider political coalitions. Local elites also competed for contributions from the centre because of growing demands from constituents and an increasing political need to be seen to be close to the "inner circle" if they were to retain local influence. *Harambee* thus became a vehicle for the articulation of patron-client networks, and mechanisms for control by the centre through the selective distribution of benefits to the grassroots (Wallis, 1978; Ng'ethe, 1979; Ngau, 1987).

During the Kenyatta period, *harambee* activities remained partly autonomous of state and party manipulation in spite of the political and administrative tensions that typically developed around them. In particular, the processes of project formulation, planning and implementation exhibited this autonomy since they remained largely under the control of local elite members who were not politicians. However, once formulation and planning had begun, interventions by political and administrative elites normally followed.

The formalised NGOs, cooperatives and churches enjoyed similar autonomy. Most NGOs were relief- and welfare-oriented or affiliates of religious bodies. They tended to concentrate their activities in areas stricken by drought, famine or floods, and only shifted their location according to such needs. On the other hand most also worked only via "relevant" government departments like the Ministry of Culture and Social Services and functionally were in effect complements to the state. One important field observation is that the concept "NGO" is of quite recent origin at the local level. Some informants said that, before the mid-1980s, the term was simply never applied since the organisations concerned were themselves not really distinguished from the state. Community development activities run by NGOs were basically "franchised" to them by and closely integrated with local government (County Councils), government ministries or local churches.²

Cooperative organisation made up the largest number of formalised popular organisations. The main types of cooperatives were crop marketing and land-buying ones. Agricultural marketing cooperatives spread in the high potential agricultural areas of Central Province long before independence. Land-buying cooperatives also featured mainly in Central and Rift Valley Provinces, but amongst an initially different constituency. Population growth, land alienation and land shortage in Central Province led Kikuyu to settle in Rift Valley as squatters. They later organised them-

¹ Kenyatta regularly received delegations at his Gatundu residence in Kiambu. Leading KANU figures, MPs and senior civil servants sometimes led the delegations. Common themes of Kenyatta's responses included the need to consult with the provincial administration in the resolution of local development problems. Leaders close to Kenyatta's inner circle were of course advantaged in this regard.

² For detailed discussion of the NGO phenomenon in Kenya see, *inter alia*, Kinyanjui (1985), Fowler (1990), Ng'ethe (1992) and Kanyinga (1993).

selves (as cooperatives), often with state assistance, and bought land from the white settlers.

As with *harambee*, politics was inseparable from the activities of co-operative organisations. More often than not elites infiltrated local co-operatives so that they could build a client base for electoral competition as either local government councillors or National Assembly MPs. Others guarded their electoral positions through supporting certain cooperative "causes" relevant to the needs of their constituencies or by creating causes within the cooperatives. Lamb (1974) and Wanjohi (1984) examined coffee farmer cooperatives in Murang'a and land-buying cooperatives in Nakuru districts respectively. They argue that cooperatives were not only a breeding ground for local politicians but also community factionalism. The cultivation of "causes" by leaders of certain community factions or interests often in practice subverted the objectives of cooperative organisations. The current study confirmed this and also noted persistent tendencies towards misappropriation of funds and other corrupt practices by leaders of cooperative organisations. Politicians habitually both raise these issues but also shelter the guilty parties when they are their clients.

Besides *harambee*, NGOs and cooperatives, the other major dimension of voluntary development activity consolidated during this period was permanent or semi-permanent community development or self-help group activity. In the Kenyatta period thousands of such groups emerged, usually female in composition, dedicated to one or another form of income generating activity. Many formed under the general umbrella of the national women's organisation—*Maendeleo ya Wanawake*. Politicians also sought to establish patron-client relations with these groups as with the less permanent *harambee* groups and the cooperatives.

As already suggested, under Kenyatta the Kiambu elites sought a base in the broader clique of the Gikuyu, Embu and Meru Association (GEMA), ostensibly an ethno-regional "welfare" organisation. GEMA was in reality rapidly transformed into a focus of ethnic political activism, unlike other ethno-regional welfare bodies such as the Luo, Kalenjin and Luhya Unions. GEMA's political role was further enhanced when Kenyatta's inner court, alarmed by his old age and imminent death, sought to change the constitutional provision on succession. The consequent "Change the Constitution move", initiated in 1976, aimed at blocking the incumbent vice president Daniel Arap Moi from ascending to the presidential office. However this project also created tensions within the GEMA constituency itself. To avoid further divisions and possible disenchantment from other ethno-regional groups, Kenyatta (through Charles Njonjo) warned against further campaigning and got the matter shelved (Karimi and Ochieng, *ibid.*).

In this dispute Kiambu was pitted against Nyeri and Murang'a, who viewed the campaign's aim as the retention of Kiambu's position as the country's centre of political influence. Moreover, elite Kikuyu were pitted against their ordinary "tribesmen". In class terms, ordinary Kikuyu people

did not obtain many benefits from GEMA. Several Kikuyu respondents in Kiambu and Nakuru districts repeated this view during the survey. In Nakuru for instance, a group of ordinary Kikuyu in Bahati complained that in the mid-1970s they made contributions through GEMA to acquire land in the area. But local GEMA officials either embezzled the funds or diverted them to the Change the Constitution campaign.¹

The Moi era

From the outset Moi held the GEMA clique responsible for his exclusion from political prominence despite having been vice president. This exclusion deprived him of political exposure and specifically deprived him of the experience required for high office. Thus after assuming office upon Kenyatta's death in 1978, he took the first opportunity to form his own "inner court" and contain the GEMA factionalists while establishing his own hegemony. But he lacked political confidence and an established clientele. This prompted him to rely extensively upon non-GEMA members of the Kikuyu group to manage day to day affairs, while simultaneously charting a course to popularly legitimise his leadership. His new clique comprised Mwai Kibaki (Nyeri), Charles Njonjo (Kiambu), Joseph Kamotho (Murang'a) and G.G. Kariuki (Laikipia in the Rift Valley). Through this coterie Moi attempted to spread his influence in Central Province where he had no socio-political base. The new clique helped in reaching certain non-receptive Kikuyu strongholds. *Harambee* fund drives provided a major instrument in this respect. Besides the creation of clientage relations with specific constituencies, the drives also became fora for populist pronouncements aimed at enriching the president's popularity and legitimising his leadership.

Certain populist pronouncements became translated into official government policy. These included free primary education and state-sponsored free milk programmes for primary schools. The pronouncements raised public expectations concerning state and Moi's own intentions as president. Over time, it became more difficult for the state to meet these rising expectations. This failure eventually had serious implications in the form of disillusionment and disenchantment in the districts.

Moi also began to court the support of the numerically strong Luo and Luhya ethnic groups in order to expand his power base. Throughout the 1970s these communities had been excluded from most of the "fruits of independence" by the Kikuyu political leaderships. Promises of providing them with new opportunities were enthusiastically welcomed: at last a messiah had come. Aware that Kikuyu domination and corruption caused

¹ A similar story is told in Ngugi's famous novel *Petals of Blood* (1977). The Bahati group observed that in the late 1980s title deeds were eventually issued to the purchasers on orders from Moi.

super-hatred of them by these ethnic groups, Moi also enunciated a plan to end corruption. This preceded a change of faces in the police and provincial administration, in which Luo, Luhya, and Kalenjin officers were appointed to fill positions vacated by the compulsorily retired Kikuyu. Kalenjin, the president's kinsmen, of course comprised most of the new appointments.

Moi gradually established hegemony by playing off one ethnic group against another. This accompanied a narrower strategy of playing off one politician against another. The new combined strategy entailed (amongst other things) the use of particular politicians for specific missions, followed by their discarding and later—if necessary—their recycling, i.e., a “personality moulding, disengagement and recycling strategy”. This became the practice from about 1983 when he sought to construct a Luhya coalition to replace certain previously key Kikuyu politicians, whom he accused of “selfishness” and “advancing foreign interests”. His ability to construct such coalitions partly rested on the rising popular support he enjoyed as a result of his populist pronouncements. However a longer-term aim was to replace his Kikuyu immediate allies by a more dependent inner circle composed of Kalenjin, whom he was simultaneously gradually moulding. The “disloyal” Kikuyu were largely excluded from Moi's coalition through the 1983 “snap” general election, held a year before schedule.

The results of these elections saw an unprecedented increase in the number of MPs from Kalenjin and related agro-pastoralist groups in the cabinet.¹ Similarly, new faces appeared in the provincial administration at the level of District and Provincial Commissioners and in the Office of the President. These appointees owed special allegiance to Moi and had new powers: supervising local development through the institutions of District Focus for Rural Development (DFRD), inaugurated in 1983. The ostensible intent of the latter was to enhance a more equitable distribution of national resources and for this reason at first received popular support from many disaffected ethno-regional groups. Later it became a cause of their alienation as political patronage infused its various structures (Barkan and Chege, 1989; Ng'ethe and Kanyinga, 1993).

In the early 1980s the political party, moribund during Kenyatta's time, was rejuvenated to enhance presidential political support both at the rural grassroots and in urban areas. District KANU branches were revived and full time local party officials were engaged. Through the party machinery, the president broke up existing clientage networks and moulded new ones linked directly to himself. Onto the scene came District Party Chairmen of enormous political power. Their status became formally equivalent to that of DCs while they enjoyed greater or better access to the president. In some districts DCs effectively became subjects of party chairmen. Some cabinet ministers and MPs who managed to read the new situation con-

¹ For details see Alhuwalia (1985), Mwangi (1993) and *Nairobi Law Monthly*, September 1991.

tested for chairman positions but their success depended on their proximity to Moi. In Nakuru for instance, Kariuki Chotara (a former freedom fighter) became the District Party Chairman, and godfather to district politicians and local administrators. In many other districts veteran politicians were sidelined and relatively new ones emerged.¹

The size of the president's immediate political clientele decisively increased after the 1988 elections when electoral rules and procedures were altered to give room for concerted administrative manipulation.² Several disengaged individuals were recycled into leading positions through the elections. The "losers", the churches and some professional associations contested the results. Popular protest against the results of the elections was not limited to any one ethno-regional area. There was protest even in Kalenjin constituencies, especially in Nandi and Kericho districts, which showed that here also factionalism based on clan, class, and the social division of labour (Nandi and Kericho are populated by successful agriculturalists while other Kalenjin areas are largely pastoralists) was important. The courts threw out most of the election petitions, especially cases against cabinet ministers.

Moi generally promoted new people who had little ambition, offered little political challenge and had no allegiance at the grassroots. Indeed he discarded those who attempted to build a base on their own. The project also had a populist tinge: representatives of various neglected segments of the population were incorporated in the process—illiterates, former freedom fighters, women's leaders and others.

A number of changes in the structure of politics and development activity in the Moi era are evident. The nature of *harambee* changed with an increasing tendency towards large-scale projects. Alienation of ordinary people from project planning also set in (Ngau, op.cit.) as politicians sought to directly establish more *harambee*-based projects. Numbers of *harambees* rose disproportionately in areas associated with politically powerful individuals, especially those who could extract resources from the state. Furthermore, complaints increased concerning the use of coercion to extract resources from community members. Simultaneously, the declining ability of the state to deliver essential services meant that *harambees* organised by ordinary people were increasingly focused on more mundane matters (e.g., individuals' medical costs and education expenses). Such activities also became the object of politicians' interest.

¹ Paul Ngei lost his party chairmanship in Machakos to Mulu Mutisya, who was apparently illiterate. Masinde Lutiru lost his Luhya leadership to Moses Mudavadi, supposedly Moi's former schoolmaster.

² Primary elections under the new rules were conducted with queue voting (*mlolongo*). Where no candidate could muster 70 percent of the vote at the primary stage a secret ballot was held. Massive rigging accompanied this change, as Moi sought to ensure a parliament owing allegiance to him personally. Many of his close associates won with the support of as little as 20 percent of the registered voters in their constituencies.

Meanwhile, proliferation of development NGOs (foreign and local) now accompanied these changes. Many of these NGOs became patrons in their own right through establishing clientage relations with local self-help groups. The latter also continued to expand in numbers and political significance, as competition amongst politicians to patronise them increased.

An examination of socio-political changes in Kiambu during the 1980s illustrates some of these points in a fairly dramatic way.¹ Kiambu presents a picture of an area in which the central state authorities intervened systematically to break up hostile patron-client networks and establish new ones. By 1983 it had become evident that the Kikuyu political lieutenants, initially delegated by the president to reduce the influence of the Kenyatta inner circle, had failed in the task. Some out-of-favour politicians were recycled and new ones moulded to establish a personal base through organisation of *harambees*. Meanwhile, the president himself became personally involved in local campaigning against corruption in land-buying companies and agricultural marketing cooperatives.

While these tactics succeeded in discrediting established KANU figures in Kiambu, the new generation of politicians failed to make much personal headway in areas of the district other than their own constituencies. In the mid-1980s central state sponsorship therefore shifted from them to a new set, led by Joseph Karanja—traditionally an arch-rival of Arthur Magugu, the MP for Githunguri. Karanja's resources were strengthened further when, after the 1988 elections, he replaced Mwai Kibaki as vice president. From this point, hitherto totally unknown politicians with bountiful funds emerged throughout the district. *Harambees* were organised to "familiarise" these politicians with their electorates. They carried donations from the president and his close associates. Further they used *harambees* as the leverage for, inter alia, attacking the "disloyalty", "treachery" and "irresponsibility" of other development actors like the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK), which had complained about the abuse of the electoral process in 1988.

Frenetic development project planning marked the 1988–1992 period in Kiambu but little real development took place as most projects never got beyond the planning stage. Sometimes this was because politicians envied and sabotaged genuine projects organised by their opponents. More often it was because the politicians associated with the projects were experiencing the disengagement stage of their political cycle. Moreover, the politicians were possibly never serious with the projects in the first place because community members, stimulated by substantial funds slushing around Kiambu during the period, increasingly put forward projects for personal survival or accumulation purposes.

As Karanja had made little impression in developing a durable new patronage network, a search for a substitute for him occurred. As a result a virtually unknown former government motor mechanic, Kuria Kanyingi

¹ For a detailed account see Kanyinga (1994).

from Limuru, attained prominence. In addition to the now familiar tactic of operating through *harambees*, Kanyingi made attempts to gain access to the women's self-help groups. He sponsored groups' income generating activities including a grand passenger road transport project in Limuru and Kikuyu, where he encouraged groups to pool their resources to obtain deposits to buy buses. In 1989, groups of around 300 women each contributed Ksh. 1,000 (USD 33 each, or around USD 10,000 in all) to buy buses. The women were promised a share of returns on a dividend basis. This venture catapulted Kanyingi to national political prominence. But it also inadvertently created a front amongst other Kiambu politicians to forestall him from attending *harambees* or reaching grassroots development organisations in their own bailiwicks.

Systematic mismanagement of the bus project brought ignominy to the Kanyingi camp and probably contributed to his poor performance in the 1992 general elections. So too, it appears, did increasing public disillusionment with the development process in Kiambu. Development results, especially from 1988, were poor. According to one local source, self-help groups proliferated during major political struggles but then wound down again. Politicians turned off funds when political competition was low, in order to make sure that there was still a project to mobilise support around later. Group members revived dead projects when they believed that there was new money around. For example in 1992 several water projects in Gatundu, incomplete since the 1983 election, had again become a focal point for both established and rising politicians.

THE COALESCENCE OF POLITICAL PROTEST AND EMERGENCE OF MULTI-PARTY POLITICS

The architects of the move to change the constitution were sidelined with Moi's ascent to power. They were certain, however, that he was a "passing cloud" and of no consequence since he lacked experience. The Kikuyu generally, on the other hand, were content with the new president's promise that he would follow Kenyatta's *nyayo* (footsteps), which they interpreted as meaning that he would maintain an alliance with certain Kikuyu segments. Popular disenchantment followed when it dawned on the Kikuyu that Moi had re-interpreted the underlying meaning of *nyayo*: advancement of his own political interests and those of his kinsmen, as Kenyatta had advanced the Kikuyu's. Luo and Luhya constituencies, and several other groups, thought that Moi would adopt them in the wake of these new openings. Their disappointment also translated into formidable dissent, especially after the realisation that *nyayo* meant not only disengagement of the Kikuyu from political and economic dominance but also disengagement of legitimate leaders generally and their replacement by people lacking grassroots support, who moreover were increasingly Kalenjin rather than Luo or Luhya.

Moi's populist approach not only raised public expectations in a period of economic decline, but alienated important sections of the bureaucracy. Civil servants were particularly disillusioned by the manner in which policy was made without prior consultation through public addresses. Policies were supposed to be implemented immediately although there were often no resources to do so. Civil servants attracted considerable opprobrium in the process but eventually this rubbed off on the president too.

The effect of pursuing personal political interests, exemplified by placing individuals with special allegiance to Moi in vital sectors, was felt particularly in the agricultural sector. Key farmer cooperative organisations had experienced officers removed and replaced with Kalenjin or members of related groups. This trend of events and the mismanagement subsequently associated with it demoralised many better-off farmers. However in the same process Moi began to establish an institutional base to support his patron-client networks. This base was supported by new sources of "patronage capital". Asians necessarily became a major source since Moi had an antagonistic relation to the Kikuyu private bourgeoisie. He courted Asian businessmen, especially those who had already achieved entrepreneurial success independent of patronage and in spite of competition and outright harassment from state-supported Kiambu businessmen during the Kenyatta era. He gave several political and economic concessions to Asians, of course at the expense of the Kikuyu bourgeois class.

Through a coalition with Asian capital, Moi and his Kalenjin associates spread their economic interests from farming to the manufacturing and banking sectors. A new Kalenjin section of the bourgeoisie sprouted in the process. Simultaneously, Kikuyu influence in the economy was greatly reduced. Asians, fronting for Kalenjin interests, bought several formerly Kikuyu-owned economic institutions which suffered economic difficulties in the mid-1980s.¹

State land and public corporations were another source of patronage resources extended to the elites who surrounded the president or contributed to the contraction of Kikuyu political influence. Public assets such as land were given to politicians who in turn sold them at inflated prices either to state corporations or to Asian and European businessmen. The "amount of gratitude" involved was dependent mainly upon the amount and kind of support that could be delivered to the president. Those who shouted most against "disgruntled elements" (i.e., the Kikuyu and Odinga) and in support of the God-given leader (Moi), were rewarded with prime

¹ Examples here include the Rural and Urban Credit Society, formerly owned by Andrew Kimani Ngumba, then an Assistant Minister. The bank collapsed and Ngumba fled to Sweden in fear of reprisals. Madhu Paper International, also a Kikuyu-owned company, was placed in receivership in 1986 and finally sold to some Asian businessmen loyal to Moi—despite the owner making some payments to the state bank. For details see Mwangi (*ibid.*), *Daily Nation* 29 September 1992, and *The Standard* 4 September 1992.

beach plots on the coast, where Italian hoteliers were ready to re-purchase them. Inner court members and relatives received prime land in the city.

The rise of political dissent and subsequent re-introduction of political pluralism was basically a product of politics as practised in the Second Republic. The growth of dissent was not confined to one factor or one ethnic group. Dissent was the result of multiple concerns ranging from the inability to meet public expectations aroused by Moi's populism to his narrower Machiavellian "high political" strategies. Every ethno-regional group and most segments of the population had something to protest against. This dissent translated itself into pressure for political liberalisation.

The Forum for Restoration of Democracy (FORD) and Democratic Party of Kenya (DP) were the major parties formed after the reintroduction of multi-partyism. FORD was an offshoot of a pressure group founded by experienced politicians, businessmen, lawyers and other professionals to lobby for political liberalisation. DP's main founders were disengaged KANU politicians mainly from GEMA areas. FORD later split into two and registered under the names of FORD-Kenya and FORD-Asili. FORD-Asili broke further; some senior members switched to a smaller party, the Kenya National Congress.

Most opposition parties publicly stated that their mission was to remove KANU and Moi through the ballot box, restore democracy generally and facilitate economic growth. The parties' manifestos emphasised KANU's deviation from the rule of law, its institutionalisation of fear and its denial of the popular liberty necessary to pursue development goals. There were no sharp ideological divisions between them, although there were some differences in approach and emphasis. For instance, all parties addressed the excessive size of the local administration and the personalisation of state institutions. But while FORD-Kenya put forward a case for doing away with the Provincial Administration, DP emphasised the need to improve it.

Divisions such as ethnic and class interests and allegiance to certain personality cults tore the movement apart, however. What initially appeared to be a united opposition with a common cause became factions with varied interests. In turn, factionalism caused disenchantment with the opposition generally in some grassroots constituencies.

In FORD, Kikuyu, Luo and Luhya factions soon emerged, fronted their own notables for leadership and demanded control of the party. The Kikuyu fronted the former cabinet minister and detainee, Kenneth Matiba; the Luo, Oginga Odinga; and the Luhya, Masinde Muliro. These three factions soon resolved into two on the death of Muliro.

Odinga took with him most of the professional lawyers (the "Young Turks") and the bulk of Luo politicians. Matiba captured most of the FORD founder members, the Murang'a and a few Kiambu businessmen and politicians. The Luhya mostly polarised to Matiba, although substantial numbers remained with KANU and others switched to Odinga.

FORD's initial unity and mass following had been a cause of trepidation for KANU: the split was a relief and the factions' KANU-inspired formal registration as separate parties institutionalised it.

A majority of DP's founder members were experienced and "disengaged" senior KANU politicians some of whom had been prominent in various GEMA factions. The Kenyatta family had several members in the party and it was suspected that it provided funding for DP's organisation. Besides the wealthy elites from certain GEMA areas, DP was supported by a sprinkling of Kamba and coastal groups. There was a conspicuous presence of certain Kalenjin and Maasai individuals disengaged through Moi-supervised Kalenjin feuds. At the grassroots, membership of the party was confined to educated middle and high income groups. However, DP was at least a united group, "demarcated" from others by organisational acumen, and a sense of wealth and elitism which it displayed at public functions and political rallies.

Ethno-regional concerns took charge in all opposition parties as each leader appealed to his own ethnic group for support. Odinga stated that in the 1960s he gave a chance to the Kikuyu to lead but the 1990s were his turn, implying a turn for the Luo. Though the Kikuyu themselves also shared a common ethnic power claim, Matiba and Kibaki could not compromise on who should stand down for the other. Their conflict over opposition leadership rekindled traditional sub-ethnic and class rivalries. The result was that Matiba won support mainly from the Kiambu and Murang'a areas and amongst the poor while Kibaki's base was confined to Nyeri, some of the Kikuyu diaspora, and the middle class, (cf. Kanyinga 1994 for details).

Odinga's FORD-Kenya influence spread in mainly Luo areas and parts of the coastal and western regions. In Luo areas support was generally homogeneous and support for Odinga was the "religion" that shaped local politics. On the coast, FORD-Kenya's alliance with the unregistered Islamic Party of Kenya (IPK) led to some gains. IPK had been founded by Muslim intellectuals and youths on the platform that previous Christian governments had denied Muslims an equal share of participation in national affairs and treated them as second class citizens.¹

KANU's advantage of incumbency and use of vast resources, in addition to the backing of the provincial administration,² facilitated an expansion of the party's influence in several parts of the country, particularly undeveloped areas inhabited by agro-pastoralists and smaller communities. KANU's conquest of these places followed from a successful appeal to

¹ Personal communication from the Secretary General of IPK. The latter added that before announcing the formation of the party the interim officers had requested that FORD include items of specific interest to Muslims in its manifesto. Several requests for meetings with FORD leaders were turned down.

² Cf National Election Monitoring Unit (NEMU)(1993) and Andreasson, Geisler and Tostensen (1993).

small ethnic groups to defend themselves against the dangers of domination by larger ethnic groups.

Additionally, KANU formed two "youth" organs to facilitate its campaign: Youth for KANU (YK '92) and Operation Moi Wins (OMO). Using enormous resources put at their disposal by KANU, these organisations selectively bought off several opposition figures. With the backing of the provincial administration and police, they further conducted campaigns in opposition strongholds, aimed at detaching sections of the opposition. The 'youth' organs also disbursed funds to women's and youth groups to carry out projects of their own choice. On the other hand, both the police and the local provincial administration denied the opposition parties this free space of operation. Moreover the opposition lacked the financial resources to 'buy' such groups or penetrate KANU zones.

The president himself also disbursed state resources. In November 1992 for instance, he gave a total of Ksh. 20 million to Luhya cane farmers to compensate for lost crop payments. The police and most senior civil servants were also press-ganged into becoming KANU campaign agents, the latter being given money for the purpose. KANU money became a centre of political attention and probably a major source of Moi votes.

THE STUDY AREAS

Table 1 provides a socio-political profile of the five districts studied.

Table 1. *Study areas' administrative profile*

Indicator	Kiambu	Elgeyo Marakwet	Siaya	Taita Taveta	Nakuru
Land area (sq km)	2 451	3 053	2 518	16 959	7 200
High potential area (sq km)	1 544	946	576	420	1 786
Population (1993)	1 076 000	241 951	726 396	264 060	1 034 334
Adm. units divisions	7	6	10	4	10
Locations	31	26	49	16	38
Sub-locations	142	115	173	54	70
Parliamentary constituencies	7	4	5	4	5
Local authority wards	44	32	55	26	54
No. of hospitals	11	3	4	3	13
Health centres	25	9	19	5	24
Dispensaries	36	26	23	27	57
Pre-primary schools	574	84	410	240	563
Primary schools	346	279	600	171	427
Secondary schools	145	48	87	39	95

Source: Republic of Kenya, Office of the Vice President and Ministry of Planning and National Development: *District Development Plans, 1994-96*

Kiambu

Traditionally, Kiambu (Central Province) lay at the centre of Kenyan politics. It also had an extremely widespread base of voluntary development efforts. However, with the displacement of the Kikuyu from political domination and Moi's efforts to fragment the political networks established by Kenyatta, its centrality was lost. Nonetheless, Moi's efforts ensured that since the early 1980s politics in Kiambu have been highly competitive.

The district is a high potential agricultural area. As a result of sub-division, household land holdings average only between 1.2 and 2.5 hectares. Export crops including coffee, tea and pyrethrum are grown in large quantities. The area under tea in the district is about 667 hectares or 11 per cent of the national tea area. Food crops, dairying, poultry keeping and horticulture are also important activities. Growing and selling of food crops has been a widespread activity since the early 1940s. Most farmers sell their food crops in the relatively large urban centres in the district and in the neighbouring city of Nairobi (Republic of Kenya, Office of the Vice President: 1994a). The city of Nairobi, and the industrial towns of Thika, Ruiru and Limuru offer trade and employment opportunities to the area's residents.

The district's infrastructure is well developed with, for example, 716 kilometres of tarmaced roads linking all the market centres. There are four hospitals, 14 health centres and 17 dispensaries run by the government. This is in addition to seven private and mission hospitals, a number of non-state run health centres, and 19 dispensaries run by private individuals and/or institutions. In 1993, there were 145 secondary schools and 346 primary schools in the district.

When multi-party politics re-emerged in Kiambu in 1992, the area polarised sharply to the opposition parties. Disenchantment with KANU and Moi in particular arose from the ethnically-founded downgrading of the district from its previously politically and economically supreme status. However there was also widespread dislike of the way this was carried out. In particular, people resented the sidelining of legitimate leaders and their replacement with appointees owing allegiance to Moi personally. They also deeply resented Moi's political interventions in coffee marketing organisations. A majority preferred a party government which would create a "level playing field" on which the Kikuyu could reassert their "natural" political and economic leadership, and in which the autonomy of agricultural marketing organisations would be restored.

In Kiambu *FORD-Asili* eventually attracted a majority following in spite of *DP's* initially high rating. This resulted from sub-ethnic intra-Kikuyu rivalry and a popular feeling that only "men with courage" could force Moi out of power—a courage that Matiba displayed on his campaign trail. Some Kiambu respondents observed that the district had suffered the most from Moi's stratagems to deconstruct the Kenyatta power realm and therefore what they required were not good economic policies (*DP*) but

specificities on the “forceful” removal of the president. Moreover, many felt that the DP leader Mwai Kibaki had been party to Moi’s strategy of pulling down the Kikuyu from their previous position. They also questioned Kibaki’s silence after being dropped as vice president during the 1988 elections. Many felt he was a coward, and indeed referred to him as such—*General Kiguoya* (“General Coward”). Matiba’s belligerent attitude to Moi was popularly attractive compared to Kibaki’s “yellow bellied” posture. Also significant was the fact that, as his supporters pointed out, Matiba was married to a Kiambu woman and had a home in the district. This led to popular assertions that since Matiba was a resident of Kiambu, “a Matiba presidency would be a presidency at home”.

Matiba’s fanatical attack on the character of Moi proved the main basis on which voters switched from DP to his party. The first to rally to him were working-class or lower petty-bourgeois youths engaged in economic activities with a strong “grassroots” flavour—hawkers, petty traders and some retailers, and *matatu* operators and workers—i.e., the centre of gravity of Kiambu’s non-farm economy. Matiba’s local candidates turned out to be these very same people: unseasoned politicians lacking links to the traditional social-political bases of power but with considerable potential for reaching the grassroots because of their “micro-economic” location. Dissatisfied peasants, the formal sector business community, teachers, civil servants, women’s groups, and all others who felt oppressed by Moi’s brand of politics slowly rolled over to his side. FORD-Asili supporters apparently attached importance to the person of Matiba rather than party policies, which in any case were not articulated in its manifesto. Matiba himself emphasised the need for his followers to vote in a “three-piece-suit style” i.e., for FORD-Asili candidates in civic, parliamentary and presidential elections. In Kiambu, therefore, politics centred on personalities and not party politics: the contentious issue was not KANU as a party but Moi as a president.¹

Siaya

Siaya district in Nyanza Province is the heartland of Kenya’s second largest ethnic group, the Luo. It has furthermore been the fulcrum and traditional centre of national opposition politics. Kenya’s traditionally

¹ Better educated people in Kiambu sometimes referred to Moi not as a KANU but as a KADU president. Moi had been leader of KADU before its integration with KANU, but the point they were making was more subtle. In the only election in which KADU opposed KANU its programme promulgated a constitution (known as *majimbo*) which called not only for devolution of power to the provincial level but also for restricting ethnic groups to their “original” home areas. See further the discussion on Elgeyo Marakwet.

dominant opposition figure, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga,¹ hailed from the district.

In Siaya, only about 37 per cent of land is agriculturally productive. Unlike Kiambu where several cash crops are grown, only cotton and small quantities of sugar cane are produced. The diminishing returns from cotton and competition with synthetic fibre has over the years led to drastic declines in the production of the crop. The main food crops include maize and cassava, while fishing is a major activity along the shores of Lake Victoria. Infrastructure is relatively underdeveloped; in 1992 only about 150 km of roads in the district were tarmaced. The same year the district had 87 secondary schools, a majority of which were financially supported by church organisations; four hospitals (two privately owned); 19 health centres and 23 dispensaries. The bulk of economic activity is in the informal sector and small-scale agriculture and there is heavy out-migration. Accumulation is only evident in retail trade. In 1993 the district's population was estimated at 726,396 (Republic of Kenya, Office of the Vice President: 1994b).

Local level politics in Siaya continued to centre around Oginga Odinga even after his political marginalisation from the national stage in the 1960s. His influence cut across all the Luo districts in Nyanza Province as well as Luo-inhabited urban areas of the country. Even in the 1983 general elections he could determine who would represent the district on behalf of KANU by the act of "anointing" a favoured client during the nomination process.

Feelings of collective political subjugation among the Luos, first under Kenyatta and then under Moi (cf., Cohen and Atieno Odhambo, 1988: 82), and popular comparisons with a "golden age" of the early 1960s when Odinga still played a central role in national politics, helped to shape and sustain the Odinga religion. People in Siaya specifically saw the provincial administration in Nyanza as the repressive instrument of this subjugation and the district's poor infrastructure and the government's failure to guarantee adequate support and returns to cotton farmers and fishermen as its most important effects.

The manner in which this resource deprivation combined with external political manipulation and corruption in the district heightened resentment. Individual politicians who renounced loyalty to Odinga acquired state resources, ostensibly for development projects, but actually for personal consumption. Local politicians apparently high in the national hierarchy failed to promote local causes, since their election was guaranteed by other factors. There were bitter complaints in Alego Usonga constituency

¹ Odinga died in January 1994. Before his death he was the official opposition leader and had just agreed to collaborate with KANU in development activities, an idea widely opposed. The large and distinguished attendance at his funeral demonstrated that he was not only a "religion" among his followers but also a figure of national and international reputation.

that although the area MP was a long-serving Minister for Education and presided at school-funding *harambees* throughout the country, few local schools benefited from government support. Some claimed that a school in the neighbourhood of the minister's home was almost closed down because of the poor state of its basic facilities. Moreover, the minister had allegedly also frustrated efforts to hold a *harambee* for the school by failing to attend as chief guest.

Because of the Odinga religion, FORD-Kenya gained more support than any other party in Siaya. As in the Kikuyu areas, the Siaya people felt obliged to vote for a Luo presidential candidate because this meant a "presidency at home". Residents in Siaya explained that most local people were FORD-Kenya members because Odinga was its presidential candidate. Local elites instead preferred to mention Odinga's "consistent opposition to injustice and bad governance". They portrayed him as the father of opposition politics in Kenya, and emphasised his close association with political liberalisation. However, a commoner position was that if FORD-Kenya could capture the state it could use its resources to foster Luo ethno-regional interests. Local hopes were that Luo, like Kalenjin and Kikuyu before them, might obtain a "turn" to feed on the fruits of independence. Thus even after political liberalisation, and even by the opposition, the presidency continued to be primarily viewed as a prebend or the source of resources to "develop" specific communities at the expense of others.

Nakuru

Nakuru district in Rift Valley Province is a multi-ethnic area. Several groups inhabit the district but the Kikuyu and Kalenjin make up the majority—60 per cent and 16 per cent respectively—(Republic of Kenya, Office of the Vice President 1994c). Nakuru is a rich and fertile part of the former White Highlands where, after independence, the government established schemes to settle Kikuyu squatters and landless. Kikuyu and other immigrants bought land through cooperative societies and/or land-buying companies. Land ownership has for a long time been a contentious issue in the district especially between the Kalenjin (and to some extent the Maasai) and the Kikuyu.

Since the 1960s, ethnic factionalism has given a special intensity to politics in the district. This fact has contributed to its acknowledged status as the hot-bed and capital of Kenyan politics. Both Kenyatta and Moi enhanced the political stature of the district. They promoted local representatives of their respective ethnic groups to occupy major national political roles and to consolidate local bases by reigning over others on local development issues.

Farming is the main activity in the area. Wheat and barley are grown on large-scale farms. Other crops include pyrethrum, and dairying is also

important. In 1992, the district had 13 hospitals, 24 health centres and 57 dispensaries. In the same year there were 95 secondary schools in the district, which also has 607 km of tarmaced roads (*ibid.*).

In the build up to the multi-party elections of 1992, serious clashes over land ownership broke out in Nakuru and elsewhere in the Rift Valley. These clashes mainly took the form of the destruction of Kikuyu property and expulsion of Kikuyu from areas deemed to belong to "indigenous" ethnic groups. The identity of the attackers has never been satisfactorily established. A Parliamentary Select Committee headed by Kennedy Kiliku was set up to investigate the clashes and concluded that leading figures in KANU instigated them.

Acute polarisation along ethnic lines dominated the district's local politics in 1992. Most non-Kalenjin were in support of the opposition political parties, in which there were few Kalenjin. Among the majority Kikuyu population allegiance divided between DP and FORD, before the latter's split. Disillusionment with rivalries in FORD led to DP extending its Kikuyu support substantially but temporarily. The Luo and Luhya groups maintained their support for FORD, and the Kalenjin-backed KANU.

FORD-Asili eventually acquired a majority following in Nakuru basically for similar reasons to those in Kiambu. The Kikuyu were mainly concerned with electing a Kikuyu president who would put a halt to their dispossession by the Kalenjin. They widely interpreted land clashes as a way of permanently forcing them out from the Rift Valley, a province which the Kalenjin laid traditional and historical claims to. The Nakuru Kikuyu inhabitants therefore eventually supported a more radical posture than that offered by DP. They preferred aggression and outright violence against Kalenjin to polite requests to end the clashes. While DP and FORD-Kenya visited the clash areas and pleaded with the government to end the clashes, Matiba not only promised to "arm the victims and lead a retaliatory mission", but also asked the victims to attack specific aggressors whom he named as "provincial administration officials and KANU stalwarts". The older generation of voters in particular saw in Matiba a leader who would protect the Kikuyu diaspora and their (land) gains in the Rift Valley, gains that neither FORD-Kenya nor DP appeared especially committed to.¹

¹ As in Kiambu, a frequently heard sentiment from local Kikuyu was that they could not vote for Odinga because he was a *kihii*, a contemptuous Kikuyu expression for uncircumcised (and therefore non-adult) males. Nor could they vote for Kibaki since he was an opportunist who had only joined the opposition when it seemed that KANU would lose the election.

Elgeyo Marakwet

Elgeyo Marakwet in the Rift Valley is a predominantly Kalenjin district and some of Moi's close confidants and inner court clients hail from it.¹ Like Kiambu in an earlier period, the close association of the district with the political centre under Moi has led to a significant improvement in the district's development profile. Between 1987 and 1993 for instance, the number of schools in the district rose from 355 to 411, the length of classified road increased from 213 to 529 km and of unclassified road from 128 to 468 km, while the number of piped water projects increased from 21 to 32 (Republic of Kenya, Office of the Vice President 1994d).

The district lies at the centre of the western escarpment of the Rift Valley. Over 60 per cent of total land area is high potential land: maize production and livestock keeping are the main agricultural activities. Two Kalenjin sub-ethnic groups inhabit the district: the Keiyo in the south and the Marakwet in the north.

The inter-relationship between politics and development is interesting to observe, since the district has a now unique relation to the political centre. District politics tends to revolve around the issue of providing Moi with an acknowledged "subaltern" elite. Both the Keiyo and Marakwet ethnic sub-groups have sought to dominate the local politics of the area through attempting to attain greater proximity to the centre of state power and Moi himself. This domination has been used to promote the factional monopolisation of access to public land. Keiyo politicians have been able to use their now acknowledged proximity to the president to allow their clients to settle in the Kipkabus and Kaptagat forests, while the DC has been evicting Marakwet who had settled in Embobut forest on the pretext that the latter were endangering water catchment. This issue was brought to national attention by the MP for Kerio East, then an assistant minister. This led to the area's senior Keiyo politician mobilising the entire local KANU leadership and the provincial administration to discredit the MP and force his removal from national office.

The multi-party elections provided a *raison d'être* for plastering over these differences. Although the Marakwets complained about domination by the Keiyo they nonetheless supported KANU. Like the Kikuyu and Luo communities, these Kalenjin groups were "obliged" to vote for Moi because he was one of them. The major difference however is that the Kalenjin voted to safeguard their current domination of the political space. Local elites felt obliged to vote for KANU and Moi—and to mobilise

¹ Nicholas Biwott comes from the district. Biwott is apparently one of the most influential politicians to have emerged in Kenya during the Second Republic. His influence includes the ability to incorporate, marginalise and recycle other politicians. After being dropped from the cabinet in 1992 he insisted that his power was still intact, despite being investigated over the death of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Robert Ouko. Challenged over these remarks he observed that he was a "total man" and that as such he had nothing to fear.

others to do so—because the opposition “would have deprived them of their acquisitions”. Thus while the mass of the local population voted for Moi because he was a Kalenjin, the elites were more concerned with what they could lose, should any of the opposition parties come to power.

These latter feelings became expressed in the revived popularity of *majimbo* (federalism), a slogan put forward by KADU in the early 1960s. But the local elites had now changed the emphasis of the meaning of this slogan. As clearly perceived by some of its opponents (see above, page 86, footnote 1), the long-buried proposal to confine ethnic groups to their districts of origin was disinterred. Under Kenyatta, the Kikuyu and related groups had expanded into the Rift Valley, motivated *inter alia* by easily available public resources (former European farms). By the early 1990s decreasing levels of such resources alarmed the Kalenjin elites, who now devised strategies to acquire more from other ethnic groups in Rift Valley. Some thought that if “migrant” inhabitants were forced out of the province then Kalenjin could acquire the property of the deserting groups. The continued occurrence of “land clashes” in the Rift Valley was partly premised on this.

According to many residents, ethnic preoccupations characterised opposition parties and therefore it was folly for the Kalenjin to abandon KANU, a party led by one of their own. Switching to other parties would have meant joining with forces aimed at pulling down the Kalenjin and paving the way for the total control of the district’s economy by “foreigners”. Some residents observed that locally, not even marginalised ex-KANU notables supported the opposition. Rather, the latter comprised only the community’s “nonentities”, or those with roots outside the district. One woman opposition candidate who did not easily fall into either of these categories was nonetheless referred to as a “sell out”, and even a “child-woman” who had no respect for traditional Kalenjin culture.¹ Since 1992, the district has in effect been sealed off to leaders of opposition parties seeking to campaign there.

Taita Taveta

Taita Taveta in Coast Province is inhabited mainly by the Taita and the Taveta, relatively small ethnic groups thinly spread over a poor resource base. Only 30 per cent of the land is agriculturally productive. Under both Kenyatta and Moi the district has been politically marginal, in the sense of missing the experiences both of high level political competition and close connection to the centre.

Livestock keeping and food crop production are the main agricultural activities, but cross-border trade is vibrant in the Taveta area bordering

¹ The implication of the label “child-woman” is that the woman it was appended to had not been circumcised—still a stigmatised situation in the district.

Tanzania. People in the district living on the plains and the highlands respectively grow sisal and coffee although coffee production is low. Tsavo National Park (Tsavo East and Tsavo West) occupies most of the land area. Tourism is the main income earner for the district and the main source of revenue for the local authorities (county, urban and town councils). The district has an estimated population of 226,000 people, 39 secondary schools and 171 primary schools. There are relatively few health facilities—three hospitals and five health centres and 27 dispensaries. Similarly, the district has relatively few kilometres of tarmaced roads (Republic of Kenya, Office of the Vice President, 1994a).

In the 1992 elections, even though both the Taita and the Taveta had senior opposition leaders, the district largely voted KANU. The reasons attributed locally for this included the observation that those in the opposition had not done anything for the community in terms of local development when they were in government, and that they had instead used their positions for self-enrichment. This observation by a disappointed opposition activist was corroborated by a woman school teacher who asserted that people had already rejected the local opposition leaders while they were in KANU because of their poor development record. Whether in opposition or the state-party, the issue was their ability to initiate development projects. A former cabinet minister and a senior DP official for instance, had been both frequently challenged to show what they had done during their long tenures in parliament.

Although party differences were not the main issue in Taita Taveta, the local population still viewed opposition parties with suspicion. Some people felt that “large, up-country ethnic groups” had founded them in order to dominate smaller ethnic groups like the Taita and the Taveta. Moreover, Taita Taveta had a history of allegiance to KANU dating back to the party’s formation, which allowed a successful evocation of “shared historical interests”. Local people hence viewed KANU, and especially Moi, as the appropriate electoral choice and fenced off the area from the opposition. They viewed multi-partyism as a political change relevant only to “up-country” people observing further that they would more strongly welcome change that was relevant to local development leadership.

During the elections, the Taveta expressed anxiety about possible domination by “non-indigenous” populations of Kamba and Kikuyu. All the same, they threw their support behind a sisal plantation owner of Greek origin. Their choice of the Greek rested on the fact that he had helped settle squatters on his farm as well as having the usual KANU financial ability to satisfy the immediate needs of the community. This contrasted with the former cabinet minister who had many squatters on his farm but had not extended a similar gesture to them. Local support for KANU exemplified a protest against such individuals. Political “dissent” in Taita Taveta was therefore not against the state’s inability to provide services but the perceived inability of former elected leaders to translate their positions into actual development projects or benefits. This did not hold for all

social strata in the community, but it did for the decisive ones. Some opposition figures had the backing of the area's professionals and youth but their support was outweighed by the numerically large and more instrumentally-minded peasantry.

Conclusion

The discussion earlier indicated that, during both the Kenyatta and the Moi periods, local development initiatives and organisation were crucial to the articulation of national political coalition-building, and more generally to the articulation of national political change. It further basically supported the contention of those authors who have argued that—at least up to 1992—the Moi period was characterised by systematic efforts to replace the earlier partly “micro-” and partly “meso-level” direction of these initiatives by a much more centralised one.

The discussion then went on to show the complex and variegated bases on which particular local communities subscribed to the different political formations during the 1992 elections. These all involved the invocation of ethnic identity (their own, that of particular national parties and that of local candidates for these parties), but these were cut across and sometimes negated by questions of political “style” (mode of challenging or upholding ethnic domination), degrees of largesse of particular candidates, known connections to major government or opposition figures and so on. As far as “ability to bring development” was concerned, this capacity was sometimes an additional factor weighed by communities in deciding on allegiance to particular individuals or parties, but more commonly a composite way of summing up all the others. That is, because of the centrality of ethnicity to the identity of national political coalitions and the tendency for particular coalitions to monopolise “development” at the expense of others, “ability to bring development” was mostly perceived as an overall outcome of a candidate's and/or party's central qualities.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

Turning from the general character of national and local politics, attention will now be focused on local forms of community self-organisation and local outposts of other non-state organisations, which for local people constitute mechanisms of “development”, and for local politicians constitute means for establishing clienteles or destroying those of their rivals. As will be seen however, the nature of these institutions is far from being determined by politics alone.

The country's development space contains various types of development actor. These include government institutions; local socio-economic development organisations—such as cooperatives, self-help groups,

and self-help *harambee* projects—formalised NGOs and the churches, among others. In all the survey districts, self-help groups dominate both in terms of projects and total membership.

Self-help groups

There are several categories of self-help groups. Women's groups are the most frequently encountered: women in a village or workplace, or who share any other common identity, organise themselves collectively to help each other or their families. Most such groups organise on a village or sub-locational basis. Members of these groups pool labour to work on each others' farms, participate in "merry go rounds",¹ and involve themselves in off-farm income generating activities.

Women's groups have diverse aspirations and activities but all express a commitment to cooperation and mutual assistance. The tradition of communalism is the basis of their inspiration. But amongst present day groups, collective activities are not only directed at providing "modern" as well as "traditional" (labour) inputs to individual households, but also at cooperative commercial activities. Hence alongside mutual assistance activities aimed at supplying home improvements (e.g., *mabati*)² and water tanks, or providing loans on a rotating basis, are others involved in commercial agriculture.

Most women's self-help groups register with the Ministry of Culture and Social Services. There are of course many others not registered either because they are new or do not need the ministry, especially if they have welfare as their main activity. The District-Level Annual Reports of the Ministry of Culture and Social Services record only the registered groups. Furthermore some groups remain in the register even if they have become inactive. Documentation of accurate numbers of the groups is therefore difficult. In 1991 the ministry's Women's Bureau conducted a census which showed that Siaya and Kiambu had the highest number of women's groups among the study districts. Siaya had a total of 1,434 groups with a membership of over 62,000. Kiambu had 1,147 groups and a membership of 74,165. There were 181 groups in Elgeyo Marakwet and 313 in Taita Taveta while Nakuru had 846 (Republic of Kenya, Ministry of Culture and Social Services, 1993a-e).

¹ "Merry-go-rounds" are reciprocal arrangements of various kinds involving exchanges of labour or the contribution of fees to a common fund, which members then have access to in turn.

² *Mabati* are corrugated iron sheets. Groups contribute money to a *mabati* fund and then receive the sheets in rotation. Members who already have *mabati* use the money to construct water tanks (see Mazingara Institute (1992), and Republic of Kenya, Ministry of Culture and Social Services (1993)).

Information in the annual reports of the ministry, though different to that in the census, gives a comparatively clear picture of the growth of groups in the districts (see Table 2).

Table 2. *Numbers of registered women's groups by districts surveyed*

District	1990	1991	1992
Kiambu	988	1052	1224
Nakuru	831	988	1047
Siaya*	1176	1776	2105
Elgeyo Marakwet	253	261	**
Taita Taveta	219	313	359

*Figures from District Development Plan, 1994-96

**No information

Source: Republic of Kenya, Ministry of Culture and Social Services, 1993 a-e

In Elgeyo Marakwet the reports show that the number of registered women's groups was 253 in 1990 and rose to 261 in 1991 though only 197 were said to be active. Additionally, there were 154 self-help groups registered with the ministry. In Taita Taveta 219 women's groups were registered by 1990. The figure rose to 359 in 1992. Nakuru had 831 groups in 1990 and another 167 registered in 1991. In 1992, the number rose to 1,047. In Kiambu the reports show a rise from 988 groups in 1990 to 1,052 in 1991 and to 1,224 in 1992. Siaya reports lack this numerical information but the District's Development Plan for 1994-96 notes a rapid growth of groups during the period. Despite the discrepancy between the census and the reports from the districts, it seems certain that the number of groups, and perhaps range of activities, has grown sharply over the years.

Most groups in Siaya, Elgeyo Marakwet and Taita Taveta districts are of a simple mutual aid kind. Groups in Kiambu and Nakuru however are involved in many income generating activities of a comparatively complex nature. Some engage in real estate speculation (including construction of houses for rent), in light manufacturing, in group livestock keeping schemes, in transport and in other business ventures. This reflects socio-economic conditions in the different districts. Kiambu and Nakuru are high potential agricultural areas, which have a significant level of accumulation. These two districts are also dominated by the Kikuyu, well known for their business orientation. Thus groups in these districts have transcended traditional cultural and gender divisions to engage in business, an activity reserved in the past for men.

Throughout the districts, questions about the main issues and problems confronting the groups were met by complaints about lack of funds. This common response dwarfed replies referring to internal factionalism, embezzlement of funds or political manipulation. Presumably this emphasis implies that the activities of most groups are not self-sustaining. This may

suggest a culture of dependency and a dynamic of being external resource-driven.

Men's, Youth and "Home Area" groups

There are other less prominent varieties of community development groups, for example youth groups and "men's clubs". The youth groups bring together local "youth", not necessarily to pursue development objectives. Some are sporting or leisure oriented. Formalised "men's clubs" are relatively rare, and are also leisure oriented. But it is in this category of organisation, or informally amongst men in general, that ideas for *harambee* projects are often nurtured. One male respondent in Nakuru observed that "we (men) need not form special groups to discuss ideas". According to this respondent, social clubs were a place where men discuss development problems and devise strategies for solving them. They agree, for instance, on who to call as a guest of honour for a *harambee* and on the appropriate form and level of contributions. These groups however lack a clear organisational structure or a clearly defined leadership, save when efforts reach the stage of implementing some ideas. Furthermore, as with *harambee* groups themselves, their lifespan is coextensive with that of the project. Once a project is completed the group dissolves, at least formally, although it may re-form again to convert another idea into a project plan. The social composition of these men's groups will be returned to in the discussion of *harambee* below.

Another type of group, whose influence is felt in rural communities, although they are not based there, are urban-based "home area" welfare groups. In Siaya for instance, some respondents pointed out that the elites living in urban areas such as Nairobi and Mombasa can maintain a local influence despite not being members of any local group because they are members of welfare bodies in the areas where they work. These welfare bodies constitute another avenue of assistance to the rural areas. This is true of Kiambu, Nakuru and Taita Taveta. The elites in these districts regularly send collective donations to various *harambee* functions or preside as special guests. In Siaya on the other hand, such elite bodies are narrower in ambition, welfare oriented in character and usually only "assisting in burial, marriages, and a few donations up-country".¹

Harambee self-help project groups

Self-help *harambee* project groups—whose membership is not gender specific—are also significant. Such groups usually engage in one-off basic

¹ A respondent in Alego, Siaya, stated that he was opposed to Luo welfare bodies because "they are only active in funerals but contribute little to development".

service delivery projects such as the construction of schools, health centres, cattle dips, boreholes and water schemes. These groups arise out of communal needs and aspirations and to solve certain basic needs and problems. In most cases, such groups are male controlled, in that women occupy less prominent roles at both committee and ordinary membership levels. The fact that the groups have been involved in the provision of basic services has made them central to development politics and, more generally, to socio-political relations at the local level. It is in these groups that one finds a concentration of political forces striving to capture leaderships and manipulate project objectives. The discussion here will focus on trends in the content, frequency, financing, leadership and politics of *harambee*.

Table 3 describes the number and purpose of *harambees* conducted in Taita Taveta, showing that of 50 recorded *harambees* conducted in 1992, 19 (38 per cent) assisted in the construction of schools or were to raise funds for students; 8 (16 per cent) assisted women's groups; 15 (30 per cent) were held for churches; two (four per cent) were held for health centres and six (12 per cent) for other activities such as the payment of individual medical bills. The previous year (1991) had witnessed a similar distribution.

Table 3. *Taita Taveta: Number and purpose of harambees conducted in 1992*

Purpose	Distribution	
School Bursaries/construction	19	(38%)
Women's groups	8	(16%)
Churches	15	(30%)
Health centres	2	(4%)
Others	6	(12%)
Total (N)	50	

Source: Republic of Kenya, Ministry of Culture and Social Services, 1993d

Annual reports for other districts do not record the nature of *harambees* in this way. Indeed, except for Kiambu, other districts provided scant information and little documentation. Some Ministry of Culture and Social Services district annual reports record amounts of money collected from *harambees* but not by the categories of fund-raising objective.

Respondents observed that a majority of *harambees* continued to be concerned with the initiation or completion of basic public service facilities. In Siaya the best attended *harambees* are said to be those raising money for education-related projects, and—to a lesser extent—church development activities. Church and women's group *harambee* fund drives seemed to attract fewer people than those for construction of classrooms or other educational purposes since people perceive benefits in women's groups to be member-confined. Community members not directly connected to the groups hesitate to attend and contribute. There is even con-

siderable cynicism toward new education projects, since incomplete ones already dot the landscape.

In Kiambu major *harambees* for the completion of water or education projects were the most common, and indeed almost the only type of *harambee* by 1993. The most noticeable trend here was a steady decline in numbers of *harambees* (see Table 4) and the highly uneven attendances at those which were held. Since around 1991 *harambees* organised by those associated with the ruling party have been very badly attended indeed.

Table 4. *Trends in number and levels of contribution to harambees in Kiambu, 1990-93 (million Ksh.)*

	'90	'91	'92	'93
Number	47	14	18	3
Amount raised	23	6	9	1.3

Source: Republic of Kenya: Ministry of Culture and Social Services, 1993a

There is also evidence of a declines in the number of major *harambees* in Nakuru. Although not recorded officially, a systematic study of the press indicates that there were seven held in 1992, raising Ksh. 2.1 million, and only four in 1993, raising Ksh. 1.5 million. The number of *harambees* increased in Elgeyo Marakwet, from eight (raising Ksh. 1.6 million) in 1992 to 11 (raising Ksh. 5 million) in 1993. Here however attendance was said by respondents to be low, while popular participation was extremely passive: "those who contribute are only the guests and others sitting on the official dais". As in other KANU areas such as Taita Taveta, only leading members of KANU could occupy such seats—"opposition leaders cannot get permits to conduct *harambees* even for simple development activities, for fear that they will build themselves politically".¹

Only in Siaya does it seem that KANU and the opposition collaborated in the organisation of *harambees*. Here presidential donations through KANU politicians in the area played a role even though some of the *harambees* had FORD-Kenya officials as guests of honour. At one *harambee* (1993) in Bondo, Odinga's constituency, the president sent Ksh. 100,000 (USD 1,500) through a former area MP and KANU official. The chief guest was Paul Muite, the FORD-Kenya former vice chairman.

Presidential donations always played a major role in "important" *harambees*. Table 5 presents information from the daily press on such contributions in 1992-93 in the districts surveyed. No presidential donations were reported in Kiambu, although they were known to have occurred. Donations were concentrated in KANU areas and in Siaya.

¹ FORD-Kenya party official in Voi, Taita Taveta. Other respondents observed that opposition activists in the district were not allowed to lead development programmes.

Table 5. *Presidential donations to harambees* (June 1992 to November 1993)

District	Donation in Ksh. (USD)	
Siaya	450,000	(6,500)
Elgeyo Marakwet	380,000	(5,500)
Taita Taveta	450,000	(6,500)
Nakuru	180,000	(2,500)
Kiambu	nil	

Compiled from *Daily Nation* and *Kenya Times*

The basis of Siaya's exceptionality was that Odinga had opted to co-operate with KANU and had invited the president to the area to review development needs. Personal presidential donations helped cement this unique marriage. Other opposition leaders, including some leading members of FORD-Kenya itself, abhorred this relation. Nakuru's comparatively low level of donations was the result of a lack of established KANU elites in the district. Indeed, donations in Nakuru were through individuals of minor political stature or those who were being "moulded".

Throughout the country during the last years of single-party rule, and apparently still in some KANU-dominated zones, the provincial administration played a key role in "implementing" *harambees*. In Taita Taveta some residents asserted that before multi-partyism, chiefs—sometimes on instructions from the DO—would determine how much each household should contribute to given *harambees*. Subsequently the chiefs and sub-chiefs went from house to house collecting the money. Residents who could not afford to contribute had their property confiscated or were forced to supply labour to the chief. But there were some community members who did not relent to such pressures. These included teachers, the better-off and those of above-average education. The latter would question the legality of forced contributions. However this only meant that *harambee* collections bore down still heavier on the meek, vulnerable and illiterate.

The provincial administration also drew criticism in its role as the custodian of local *harambee* funds, as well as in its management of development and relief resources generally. Almost everywhere respondents stated that they did not (and usually still did not) know what happened to this money. Incompletion of projects was often popularly blamed on this—"numerous *harambees* are held to complete the same projects because of embezzlement of previous collections". As for other development activities, members of a cooperative interviewed in Taita Taveta had had the piece of land allocated to them for development purposes exchanged for an inferior one by the chief, while in Njoro division (Nakuru) the chiefs were said to have sold relief supplies meant for distribution to victims of the land clashes. In no case was there any source independent of the provincial administration to which an appeal could be made. Several respondents observed that the chiefs and sub-chiefs were able to make excessive demands on the population and intimidate those who tried to question their action because

they were protected by politicians. In other cases though, local political leaders without much influence at higher levels seem to have been unable to restrain the chiefs, even when they sought to.

Given the infusion of *harambee* by politics—often of more than one variety and from more than one source—it is important to underline that local economic factors also shape the voluntary development arena. Recession has meant an increase in self-help group activities as households struggle to cope with falling real incomes from traditional sources such as agriculture, wage labour and salaried employment. Simultaneously, economic differentiation allows some self-help groups whose members have already succeeded in accumulating to accumulate further. Cultural and/or ideological factors giving greater or lesser local primacy and legitimacy to business activities also play a role here.

At the same time recession has also meant that there are less local surplus resources to contribute to *harambees*. A pattern of popular selectiveness in donations has therefore emerged, although this is also influenced by the identity of the political forces with which a *harambee* is associated. Rewards for political loyalty to KANU intervene to complicate this picture. Only in KANU areas are *harambees* still increasing in number. On the other hand, KANU areas also tend to be those better protected by the state from recession (see Ikiara et al, this volume) and hence also preserve a better local economic base for *harambees* to flourish.

Harambee projects and self-help group activity, while saturated by politics, are thus by no means reducible to it. The different forms of articulation of (different kinds of) *harambee* to local politics will be discussed in a later section.

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

There were various types of NGOs operational in the survey districts. The forms of activity they engaged in also varied. It appears that their numbers have increased dramatically during the last few years, in line with donors' increased appreciation of their methods of work and displeasure with the government's administration of development projects.¹

Foreign NGOs (those with their origins outside Kenya or branches of international ones) have more projects than their indigenous counterparts. Further, while foreign NGOs have activities widely spread over many sectors, most of the local NGOs confine their activities to a few sectors that match their resources. In lieu of figures on actual resource levels and expenditure one can still safely observe that the resources of foreign NGOs

¹ A respondent from an NGO in Taita Taveta observed that after the freezing of government aid by donors in 1990, aid to NGOs went on increasing. In Nakuru another respondent attributed the growth in NGO numbers to easy access to donor funds.

are substantially greater than those of indigenous ones, not only in terms of number of projects but also these projects' scale and professionalism. Table 6 shows the growth of NGOs in the survey districts. Information from 1988 may be incomplete, as the registration of NGOs was at this time dispersed between different government departments. In 1990 legislation to "coordinate" NGO activities was enacted. This provides for a centralised NGO information and coordination unit, under the Office of the President (Department of Internal Security). All NGOs are now required to register with it (Ndegwa, 1993).

Table 6. *Registered NGOs in the survey districts, 1988 and 1993*

District	1988	1993
Nakuru	16	38
Siaya	11	15
Elgeyo Marakwet	6	14
Taita Taveta	8	14
Kiambu	14	24*

*1990

Source: KNCSS (1988); Republic of Kenya, Ministry of Culture and Social Services, 1993a-c

Among the indigenous or Kenyan NGOs, one finds two distinct categories. Some are local in the sense that they are district-based and have activities confined to this district. Others are national and have offices and projects elsewhere in the country. The extent of difference between these types of organisation mirror those between foreign and indigenous NGOs.

In Nakuru district, there were about 38 NGOs by 1993 registered with the Ministry of Culture and Social Services, while in 1988 there had been only about 16. Notwithstanding the difficulties encountered in collecting data on NGOs in Kenya¹ all available records show that there were fewer foreign NGOs in the district than indigenous ones. Few as they were, however, the activities of the foreign NGOs were many: they touched on nearly all development sectors—health, education, agriculture, water and sanitation, relief and welfare, and general community development. On the other hand, most of the local NGOs in Nakuru engaged in activities relating only to relief and welfare. Some supported homes for the physically disabled, others gave free health care, while a host of others supported street children and provided financial and material assistance to small-scale self-help *harambee* and women's group projects.

In Taita Taveta district, there were about eight NGOs in 1988 but the number had grown to 14 by 1993 according to the register of the ministry. Out of these organisations only two were foreign. Again notwithstanding the accuracy of these records and inconsistencies in the definitions of

¹ See Fowler (1990) and Kanyinga (1993).

NGO, all the organisations were involved in basic service delivery activities. The indigenous NGOs were involved in activities such as primary health care, "family life education" (usually a euphemism for family planning, with or without contraceptives) and agricultural activities. Some supported needy community members and others assisted women's groups by offering business education. By contrast, the two foreign NGOs concentrated their work on large-scale projects. In Mwatate and Wundanyi divisions, for instance, one organisation assisted in constructing water schemes, health centres, and schools to the tune of about Ksh. 15 million (USD 283,000) in 1990. Another organisation spent close to Ksh. 1 million (USD 18,800) in providing materials to youth polytechnics in the area in the same year. These organisations provide services to about 5,000 households in the two divisions.

In Kiambu, 14 NGOs (eight foreign and six indigenous) were recorded in the 1988 directory. In 1990, a further 16 NGOs (four foreign and 12 indigenous) started development projects in the district. However of the original 14 NGOs in the 1988 directory, only eight were recorded as still currently active by the Ministry of Culture and Social Services. Others might have shifted to other districts or be working via other government departments.

Elgeyo Marakwet had six NGOs in 1988 (two foreign and four indigenous). Another eight were noted by the ministry to be operating in 1993, mainly in the semi-arid parts of Kerio Valley. The NGOs support women's groups and basic service activities. Construction of schools, health facilities and training in agricultural methods are some of their activities. Siaya had 11 NGOs in 1988 and another four started operating in the district in 1990. These NGOs have operated via self-help groups and the churches.

Not only do foreign or international NGOs control vast resources compared to their indigenous counterparts, but indigenous NGOs are also dependent on some of the foreign NGOs for funding and assistance in the implementation of projects. In addition to working via local people's organisations, NGOs work in collaboration with international donor agencies. The latter also sometimes work independently. In Taita Taveta, DANIDA was by 1990 directly running several livestock, agriculture, water and forestry projects in Voi, Mwatate and Taveta.

The Churches

The mainstream churches have various development departments aimed at reinforcing the link between their evangelical functions and their target groups. In Nakuru the Catholic Diocese is actively involved in projects in several parts of the district and has social welfare programmes covering youth rehabilitation, relief, "family life education", and women's development. The African Inland Church (AIC), the (Anglican) Church of the Province of Kenya (CPK) and the Salvation Army have projects similar to

those of the Catholic church. The typical method of entry of churches into "virgin" areas is not only by establishing places of worship but also by constructing pre-primary school facilities, making some contributions to *harambees* and simultaneously identifying self-help or welfare projects to associate with.

CPK is the most active church in Siaya. Through its Christian Community Services Department, the church provides community-based health care in all divisions of the district. Similarly, community development activities are spread widely. Like other local development actors, the church identifies women groups and self-help *harambee* projects as an appropriate entry point to new areas of operation. Here they "compete" with donor organisations. The Canadian state agency, CIDA, for instance, provided over 600 women's groups in Boro divisions with revolving loan funds while IFAD provided funding to farmer's groups and material donations (fertilisers and seeds) to the Ministry of Agriculture for distribution to farmers in the area.

The church's projects are generally free from the more blatant forms of political patronage. Local leaders rarely influence church development activities although they may assist politically favoured churches with resources (see Nguny, this volume). Politicians relate to the churches more importantly through seeking influence over their national leaderships or by responding to the church's own political strategies (*ibid.*). In Siaya cordial relations exist between the CPK and opposition politicians, basically because of the former's general oppositional stance, particularly towards the provincial administration. Moreover, CPK was at the forefront of the campaign for multi-partyism, which led to its being dubbed the "Church of Politics of Kenya".

Cooperative organisations

Cooperative organisations are dense and widely spread in Kenya. Some women's groups register as cooperatives, because the cooperative label potentially broadens their base of financial support. Crop marketing, primary cooperatives and saving and credit cooperative societies (SACCOs) comprise the majority of Kenyan rural cooperatives, however. Most of these organisations operate as corporate business organisations, albeit with a formal framework of equitable distribution of returns between members.

Partly because of their political significance and large membership, cooperatives are sites of struggle between conflicting forces representing different local and national political interests. This is especially true of the economically stronger cooperative societies, whose strength is interpreted as a possible threat to the state. This explains the state's political intervention in coffee and small-scale tea growers' organisations in Central Province which began in the mid 1980s. During the period coffee and tea growers in Central and parts of Eastern Province threatened to abandon

their cash crops because of delayed payments for their produce from the Kenya Planters' Cooperative Union (KPCU) and the Kenya Tea Development Authority (KTDA). Peasants further correctly suspected that the state was using their accumulated earnings to prop up the Cooperative Bank, and through it the National Cereals and Produce Board (see Bates, 1989: 149 and Gibbon, this volume). Some in the coffee industry argued that there were too many state middlemen in the industry and wanted both the KPCU and the state-owned Coffee Board of Kenya (a marketing body) merged. Some also felt that the district cooperative unions should be dissolved because their work could be done at primary society level. The government intervened and forced the retirement of several KPCU directors as well as some in the Cooperative Bank—the main financier of the cooperative sector. Government nominees replaced these directors: a relative of the president took over the vice chairmanship (later the chairmanship) of the Cooperative Bank while a commission headed by a close confidante of the president was established to run KPCU.

The tea industry was similarly manipulated. Ostensibly in response to alarm concerning the possibility of the main tea growing areas failing to deliver produce to KTDA, a state owned tea corporation was hurriedly formed. The Nyayo Tea Zones Corporation acquired public land in forested areas adjacent to the tea areas, in the name of increasing tea production.

The cooperative environment has been a turbulent one. Most cooperatives are disrupted by repeated conflicts, and constant struggles and manipulation by elites and politicians. This in turn creates openings for selective state disciplining and replacement of cooperative officers at all levels. In spite of this, the state often blames ordinary members for repeated failures. The state intervenes through the Ministry of Cooperative Development. Cooperative members in some districts highly resent the ministry and feel that the officials are of little help in dealing with cases of mismanagement or embezzlement of funds. Some respondents intimated that the ministry's officials usually collude with cooperative leaderships to cover up such embezzlements and "rarely call for (new) elections when members ask for them unless an influential politician is on the members' side".¹

Agricultural marketing societies made up the majority of cooperatives until 1987. But Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies (SACCOs) based in both rural and urban areas have now taken the numerical lead. In Kiambu, for instance, there were 187 cooperatives in all in 1987, including 50 active agricultural cooperatives and 42 active SACCOs. By 1992 there were 272 cooperatives in all. Of these 130 were active SACCOs with a total membership of 29,750 (compared to 19,000 in the 1988–89 period). SACCO turnover in Kiambu also grew from Ksh. 6 million in 1987 to

¹ A cooperative society member in Taita Taveta stated that the society's officials had embezzled funds but that the ministry had taken no action, since officials in the ministry were in league with the guilty individuals.

KSh. 225 million in 1992. While SACCOs in the district experienced rapid growth in turnover and membership, coffee societies saw their turnover reduced from Ksh. 219 million in 1987 to Ksh. 146 million in 1991 (Republic of Kenya, Ministry of Cooperative Development, 1992). Nonetheless, the coffee societies remain politically the most influential segment of the cooperative movement in this district and other coffee growing areas.

Disillusionment with state intervention in farmers' organisations such as KPCU and the transfer of primary society funds to the Cooperative Bank contributed significantly to this rapid decline in turnover. Respondents in Kiambu stated that because of these facts, peasants had turned to dairy and other livestock activities and channelled the proceeds into the mushrooming SACCOs. At least in Kiambu, the rapid growth of SACCOs is therefore associated with the dereliction of the coffee and tea industries. Furthermore, unlike the crop marketing cooperatives, the SACCOs are open to popular participation by members through a democratic committee system and have enjoyed greater autonomy from the state than the coffee societies since they are largely funded by donor agencies. While it is debatable whether the donor influence encourages their general independence it has at least enabled them to withstand the pressure of patronage from the state. Though they were initially largely a phenomenon of urban centres in the first two decades, they have witnessed a fast growth in rural areas in the last few years (Alila and Obade, 1992). However, compared to the producer cooperatives, many SACCOs are not very well established. Some are new and others are elitist in character because their membership comprises mainly the salaried in the more urbanised areas.

Other districts have experienced a similar rapid growth of cooperatives. In Nakuru the number of cooperatives grew from 216 in 1987 to 332 in 1993. But again much of this growth is accounted for by increased numbers of SACCOs, which grew from 87 to about 127. Land-buying cooperatives enjoy relative prominence here, accounting for 20 per cent of the total cooperatives in the district.

In Taita Taveta a growth of cooperatives can also be noted, though not as rapidly as in Nakuru and Kiambu. Between 1987 and 1992 the number of cooperatives in the district grew from 39 to 70 and that of SACCOs from 13 to 19. Some of the SACCOs were initially dormant but by 1992 a majority were active and their membership had increased. Some residents of the area attributed this phenomenon to political competition prior to the 1992 elections. They observed that each political party tried to win local support by reviving dormant economic institutions.

Siaya and Elgeyo Marakwet have relatively small numbers of cooperatives compared to other areas. In 1987, there were only 45 cooperatives in Siaya compared to 187 in Kiambu and 216 in Nakuru. By 1991 the number had grown to 58. Elgeyo Marakwet had only 30 in 1987 and 42 in 1992. Dairy societies in the two districts are more common than other societies. Factors responsible for these low numbers and slow growth rate

are many. Most important is the poor resource base of the districts and limited public education on cooperatives, especially in Siaya. The same reasons apply to Taita Taveta where numbers are also low.

Complaints about poor management and corrupt practices in cooperatives featured not just in Kiambu but in all the districts. In Elgeyo Marakwet for example, the dairy societies were cited by many respondents to be inefficient in collecting milk and delivering payments on time. Equally, local politicians appear to play a significant role in the internal electoral politics of societies throughout the country, especially those with significant resources. Politicians influence the elections so that people allied to them can be elected to oversee the management of cooperatives. The consequence of this is that employees of the cooperative organisations divide their loyalties between the organisation and their political patrons, creating a climate allowing for mismanagement and embezzlement of funds. A respondent in Siaya summarised this relationship most succinctly: "there are so many people interested in the affairs of the cooperatives in the area. There are the politicians, the chiefs, the cooperative members, and employees of the societies". It is difficult to say with any certainty "to whom the cooperatives are accountable".

Conclusions

NGO and Church interventions in the development arena are not directly shaped by local economic conditions in the same way as self-help groups and cooperatives are, nor are they as politically saturated as the latter. NGOs have yet to promote the emergence of independent voices in local "civil society" and although the churches are a clear component of national civil society, their influence at the local level is more a religious and economic one.

Cooperatives continue to increase in numbers in Kenya. As in the case of self-help group formation this is largely driven by the availability of national-level resources. In areas like Kiambu, where cooperation initially at least sprang from genuinely local economic roots, the recent spurt is instead partly attributable to efforts to safeguard locally accumulated cash resources. This is basically a matter of preventing a recurrence of the looting of the resources of local coffee farmers. However it also reflects a shift to new forms of economic activity, some of which would have been necessitated by the decline of coffee prices, even if the industry had been better managed.

THE POLITICAL STRUCTURE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Having examined the main trends in organised party politics at local level, and having identified the main local-level development actors and the prin-

cial recent changes in their make-up, attention will now be turned to the relation between local politics on the one hand and the organisation of these development actors as an ensemble. The obvious starting point for such a discussion is the formal administrative mechanism regulating the operation of and interactions in the local development space, District Focus for Rural Development (DFRD).

This "decentralisation" initiative was introduced in 1983 as a result of recommendations made the year before by a presidential commission on government expenditure. The commission had observed that "one of the major problems in the management of rural development is inadequate and uneven delegation from the centre and that most decisions are made in the head offices of various ministries by planners with little relevant knowledge of the needs of the districts" (Republic of Kenya, 1982). It went on to recommend the creation of relevant district-based development institutions—District Development Committees (DDCs) under the chairmanship of DCs and sub-DDCs chaired by subordinate provincial administrative officials. The government accepted the recommendations of the working party and rapidly implemented the strategy (Republic of Kenya, 1983).

In theory the objective of DFRD was to shift development planning from the headquarters of the ministries to the districts. The activities of all development actors at the local level were to be integrated into locally generated DFRD programmes, through the core institutions of DDC. Membership of the latter also included District Development Officers (DDOs), heads of ministerial departments, MPs, chairmen and clerks of local authorities, District Officers, and KANU officials. Representatives of other organisations were also to be invited to DDC meetings. Ordinary citizens were to participate indirectly through their elected leaders in the sub-DDCs i.e. sub-locational, locational and divisional development committees. Thus DFRD was also supposed to be a measure towards the democratisation of development activities.

As noted by other authors, any serious scrutiny of DFRD nevertheless shows that it has been an integral part of state politics. The strategy was inaugurated after an abortive military coup, at a time when Moi was frantically reconstructing the political sphere. An explicit DFRD goal was the allocation of national resources on a "more geographically equitable basis" by directing them to regions which had not been favoured by Kenyatta. These also proved to be regions with which Moi's personal political links were strongest (Barkan and Chege, 1989). Through DFRD-based manipulation of development management, Moi has maintained support in districts of political interest to him and has also moulded support in other areas by promoting local brokers and assembling clienteles around them (Ng'ethe and Kanyinga, 1993). Thus Moi has used DFRD as a political tool to win compliance and dispense punishment.

Under DFRD, district administrations were gradually transformed into the main avenues of state and political patronage in that the strategy required MPs and local councillors to approach sub-DDCs and DDCs for

formal approval of "their" development projects. In the past, they would personally solicit assistance from central government ministries, the Treasury, or even directly from the president through delegations. In other words, DDCs have become instruments for the centralisation of state patronage. In the process, the strength of links between localities and the president himself became very important. Areas that are represented by "influential" people draw more benefits than those without. DDCs have furthermore caused considerable popular de-participation, since senior politicians and administrative officials have increasingly overshadowed ordinary people in decision-making. Moreover, the fact that all local development actors have to channel their development proposals through DFRD and its institutions has led to undue tension and conflict between DDCs and other types of statutory authorities and organisations. The local government authorities—county councils—are one example. Councils' independence is established in law but they are now generally required to operate under the control of DDCs (Ng'ethe and Kanyinga, 1993). Councils are accountable to the Minister for Local Government but at the district level, DDCs require that councils be accountable to them. This is even the case with their non-development functions. In Kiambu, for instance, a councillor stated that the DDC constrained their revenue collection activities, because although the law gave them power to collect revenue from various sources, the DDCs (and the DC) had the power to issue exemptions. Further, when the council raised user-charges for its basic facilities, the DDC forced the council to delay the measure. This example illustrates the kind of conflict arising between established local authorities and those founded recently to reinforce central state interests. The contest also is between the rule of law and politics, with the latter tending to predominate. It is also worth noting that the relatively cumbersome framework of DFRD is anyhow by-passed by actors who have politically influential persons behind them.

DFRD's introduction has been associated with several other changes in the management of community development. Prior to the inauguration of DFRD, ministerial departments were responsible for preventing overlap between local community development initiatives. Community Development Officers (CDOs) coordinated social service provision by NGOs and self-help groups. Most CDOs were then employees of local authorities seconded to the Ministry of Culture and Social Services. DFRD has meant that CDOs now straddle DDCs and the ministry: the CDO is answerable to both the District Development Officer (DDO) and the Ministry of Culture and Social Services. Coordination of activities by CDOs is therefore hampered when there are conflicting demands on the CDO or divisional Social Development Officers (SDOs) who remain employees of local authorities. This is often true of decisions related to funding *harambees* and women's group activities. On the one hand, a politician, a chief, or the provincial administration official might pressurise the DDC (through the DDO or the DC) to fund a certain group. On the other

hand, the CDO might find funding the group difficult especially if the group is dormant or does not meet the required conditions, e.g., registration with *Maendeleo ya Wanawake* or the Ministry of Culture and Social Services. For example in Taita Taveta, a CDO complained that at one time in the early 1990s he was requested to draw up a "merit list" of women's groups to be recommended to donors for material support. His list then had its merit rank order turned upside down at the DDC level, when a senior politician insisted that his "own" groups should benefit. While the CDO did not contest the new list he "implemented" the decision by personally visiting the groups, some of which proved to be already dormant.

DDCs are faced with the issue of who should make up their membership, especially from among elected representatives. Since the multi-party elections in 1992, state-party stalwarts in some districts have openly stated that DDCs are the property of KANU and opposition party officials should be barred from participating in them.¹ In Elgeyo Marakwet virtually no opposition party officials are permitted to attend DDC meetings because the district is a KANU-only zone and "people speak with one voice". This observation by a councillor in effect means that opinions contrary to those of the leaders in the district are not tolerated. Even when it comes to prioritisation of projects in the district, discussion is absent and decisions are reached along the lines of informal agreements concluded before DDC meetings. DDC meetings therefore rubber-stamp decisions made elsewhere. It is not a surprise therefore that some leaders do not bother attending most sub-DDC or DDC meetings.

In Taita Taveta, some opposition party officials in Wundanyi and Voi divisions were found to have been barred from sub-DDC meetings through the influence of DOs and area MPs. According to opposition party supporters, initiation of development activities is highly monopolised by KANU, with the side effect of making it appear that the opposition political parties are uninterested in development.

In Nakuru, Kiambu and Siaya, opposition parties do participate in DDC deliberations however. These districts are strongholds of FORD-Kenya and FORD-Asili and are as dominated by a single party as the KANU zones. But some respondents observed that DDCs in these opposition districts have insufficient government funds to arouse much interest or consequent competition amongst the political parties. Sub-DDC and DDC meetings only convene to attempt to organise completion of existing projects and/or to launch *harambees*. The only impediment witnessed in this connection is the control and regulation of these activities by DCs and DOs who have the authority to license *harambee* meetings. In the absence of an organised state-party "opposition" in these districts, the provincial administration has assumed an increasingly authoritarian character, per-

¹ The government is yet to issue a statement on the representation of opposition parties on DDCs and sub-DDCs. In some districts opposition leaders are excluded from them.

haps to create a base for a gradual re-assertion of influence by the state party.

The purpose of excluding opposition parties from DDC meetings is essentially to detach them from relations with the grassroots. The state party is using its financial and political control of the DDCs to cause disenchantment with the opposition parties. Indeed, officials of KANU, including the president, have underlined the need for opposition parties to "co-operate" with it or even switch parties in order to ensure development resources for their constituencies.¹

The nexus of forces organised in and through DDCs are therefore provincial and district-level officials and those local figures of sufficient status to have a direct connection to the political centre. Occupying a local representative function—even that of MP—does not confer influence, while the mass of the local population is systematically excluded. On the other hand the DDC relates to its jurisdiction mainly in ways which establish an overall pattern of resource allocation (with special reference to the really major resources) and an overall hierarchy of local political influence. Within this broad overall framework there is often considerable flexibility and room for manoeuvre, both for specific local groups who have assembled to formulate projects and for brokers and lesser patrons involved in constant efforts to establish, consolidate and diversify their bases.

Most brokers and lesser patrons are drawn from local business elites. It is to these that self-help groups must turn first to organise minor *harambees* on their behalf. These elites form the link between the groups and senior members of the community such as MPs, party officials and senior "home area" civil servants, and use such approaches to exert influence on their own behalf or on behalf of their senior patrons. Local businessmen usually officiate in such minor *harambees* and bring a token donation from their patrons.

The fieldwork revealed that those who were frequent ordinary guests at minor *harambees* were normally people who contested local authority elections or who were active in nominating candidates for these elections. Such people would definitely attend every *harambee* having a connection to "their" ward. As noted, the same goes for MPs in relation to more prestigious *harambees*. This was an especially common observation in Taita Taveta and Elgeyo Marakwet, where the nature of the development space had changed least. Though opposition leaders in Kiambu, Nakuru or Siaya can be approached, in Taita Taveta and Elgeyo Marakwet this would be pointless, partly because they would not get the required permit and partly because they have comparatively few resources.

Many self-help groups, or at least their leaders, are aware of patterns of competition between brokers and minor patrons and try to exploit them.

¹ Many opposition MPs and councillors who have switched back to KANU since the 1992 elections cited the inability of the opposition to ensure development as their reason.

At the same time they try to exploit implicit fashions for particular sorts of projects or initiatives by tailoring or adjusting the content of their requests for assistance. It is not unusual for a self-help group to rapidly shift from their initial objectives to new ones that relate to the content of speeches by guests of honour or to promises of further funding.

Groups initiating projects normally only seek to involve politicians of MP level or above in those projects which require comparatively large resources. Basic women's group activities like finding a small business premises would have a minor guest of honour, unlike those for construction of a school or for a constituency-wide education fund. Similarly, MPs would themselves really only be interested in large-scale projects. In Kiambu, for instance, some opposition MPs contribute through their associates to minor functions but restrict their own attendance to functions for schools or certain local churches. The latter provide these politicians with access to a more influential stratum of clients.

A different pattern was observable in Taita Taveta, where social differentiation is generally much lower and the populations involved in basic self-help groups are consequently of direct interest to quite senior politicians. By the same token, self-help groups in such relatively poor areas tend to be much more dependent on politicians for their survival. An opposition activist in Taita Taveta observed that the most senior politician in the district, Darius Mbela, had developed such strong personal ties to local women's groups that when he was dropped from the cabinet in 1992 "women wailed all the way to his home, as if somebody had died". Their grief was based on a realisation that, outside the cabinet, Mbela could not command the resources which they had been accustomed to. Eventually however Mbela was reinstated to the cabinet. His relationship with the groups became even closer as the area's Greek MP had by now attracted a following of potentially significant size.

Another different pattern can be detected in Elgeyo Marakwet. The latter also has relatively little social differentiation, but a more decisive factor is the lack of competition between brokers and lesser patrons and the presence of much more centralised control over patronage generally. Particularly in Kerio South constituency the local MP, Nicholas Biwott, has established a settled clique of clients (chiefs and some councillors) who are guests of honour at nearly all *harambee* functions regardless of the status of the project. Several respondents complained that no members of the local business elite could officiate at a *harambee* without consulting first with the MP or his allies. They pointed out that those who have made such attempts have faced serious sanctions, such as transfer in the case of civil servants or premature recall of loans in the case of businessmen.¹

¹ Many residents were able to draw up lists of the punishments meted out to opponents. Some saw these as a means of "creating a constituency of beggars for political ends".

While patronage in Kiambu was not centrally controlled in this manner, and active competition existed between patrons and brokers at all levels, it was nevertheless the case that basic popular antagonisms to KANU excluded its representatives from effectively competing for identification with major projects. Hence KANU had to fall back on those events called by individuals or very small groups, for the raising of medical or school fees. Perhaps aware that the turnout and general contributions from the highly resentful community would be low, KANU guests made handsome personal contributions. Kuria Kayingi for example officiated at several functions in Limuru where his contributions averaged Ksh. 50,000 for each function, with similar donations from the president.

In a similar manner there were also major variations in the way in which local development committees worked. Chaired by representatives of the provincial administration, these make decisions on the planning of intermediate-sized project such as new primary schools, health centres, or water projects. In Nakuru, Kiambu and Siaya, local sub-DDCs which included opposition party supporters were quite active in project prioritisation. In Taita Taveta and Elgeyo Marakwet, the process was entirely in the hands of the chiefs and councillors since consultation meetings were rarely held. Respondents in these districts observed that their development projects usually come from above (the senior politicians) and could not recall ever attending a meeting to discuss the planning of such projects.

In Elgeyo Marakwet, decisions concerning cattle dips, water projects, and construction of new schools are made without any visible popular input. Nor is the DDC aware of some of these projects, essentially because the area MPs directly organise them. As a result, some new projects are a duplication of existing ones in the same area. This is often deliberate. One MP duplicates projects by other local actors simply to dampen down the popularity of such actors—notably a rival who was working with an NGO. The opponent initiated several NGO-based projects and later opposed the MP in the 1983 and 1992 elections.

Between 1988 and 1992 the MP is also said to have exhibited anxiety concerning the rising popularity of a local church and certain other NGOs in the area. The Reformed Church of East Africa had planned and implemented a health centre in collaboration with the local population but the politician organised a *harambee* for a bigger health centre encircling the church's project. The Catholic Church also initiated a water project and the MP laid a parallel water line. Through the assistance of the provincial administration, people were also supplied with orange tree seedlings to supplant those supplied by a Christian NGO. The sub-DDCs did not discuss many of these projects. They were imposed on the area with the predictable result of popular disinterest. In the same district some cattle dips were non-operational essentially because people view them as government property.

The best indicator of the absolute centralisation of control over development in Elgeyo Marakwet is that the area's "super patron", probably

the second most powerful person in Kenya, is trailed from hotel to hotel in Iten township by members of his inner circle wishing to discuss minor development initiatives or to receive minor rewards for previous services. School leavers and the unemployed also allegedly wait outside these hotels, or travel to Nairobi to hang around the precincts of parliament to gain an audience with him.

Generally speaking, it was evident from the fieldwork that where opposition parties had triumphed, although development was still politicised and ethnicised, it had at least become subject to an increased level of public scrutiny and transparency. There had been a weakening of state control and of the ruling party's monopoly over the development space. Of course, this was not general. In Elgeyo Marakwet the state party was still the sole agent of politics and the leading one of development. Dissent remained curtailed or tainted by association with "up country groups". Yet in Kiambu and Nakuru people no longer fear the chiefs or DOs. One respondent noted that "thanks to multi-partyism we can ask questions in chief's *barazas* (public assemblies) without intimidation". In the past it had been difficult to even request the production of financial accounts of school development committees. This opening up suggests a real expansion of the democratic space where the views of ordinary people can be legitimately expressed.

In Nakuru, Siaya and Kiambu it is now impossible for the provincial administration to simply impose decisions on the people, while even in KANU-controlled areas demands for forced contributions seem to have diminished and those refusing contributions suffer less repression. Nonetheless, in the opposition-controlled areas, the opposition parties are resorting to much the same forms of patronage of development activities as KANU did. The main difference is that the opposition parties have relatively meagre resources to distribute. However, it is noticeable that only those opposition leaders who have significant levels of resources have managed to gain access to "grassroots" community development groups, and hence compete with KANU on its own terrain.

Despite apparent declines in their popularity and in their significance as instruments of patronage, the major point of intersection between organised local politics and development activities in Kenya remains *harambees*. This is because they have taken on new roles even as their former ones have suffered partial eclipse. While traditionally a means of establishing clienteles through the dispensing of largesse, in some rural areas at least *harambees* have now also taken on the role of popular public fora, or at least public spectacles.

In Taita Taveta large crowds turn out only when a prominent personality is a guest of honour or when a project arouses significant political interest in the form of participation by politicians from the main political parties. People now attend such functions mainly to see the prominent personalities officiating at the function, to listen to the content of their speeches (which are usually political in character), to witness the nature of

political interactions among the different players and to discover how much each of the key political actors in the area has contributed.

In Kiambu and Nakuru some respondents stated that they attend *harambees* for these same reasons but underlined that their main interest was in their political aspects. They observed that *harambee* functions were basically platforms for political expression by opposition elites; indeed because opposition political parties are generally not permitted to convene political meetings, *harambees* were their only platform. Licensing of political meetings is by the DC's office and an application through the chief and DO must be submitted a fortnight in advance. Opposition parties have not been regularly licensed to hold public meetings although KANU has held several poorly attended crusades. People attend *harambees* therefore out of political curiosity. Turnouts are slightly larger for opposition officiated functions.

In the late 1980s great enthusiasm was evident amongst certain academic commentators to the effect that NGOs would serve as agents of political as well as social pluralisation. As already noted, in Kenya they seem not even to have been perceived by ordinary people as having played a social pluralising role—although the state certainly viewed them in this way. Nonetheless there have been several important ways in which NGOs intersect with local politics.

It was assumed at the outset of this study that the main one of these would relate to NGOs' choices of location. It was thought that this would be politicised since NGO resources might play a significant role in enhancing local development and thus bring glory to councillors or MPs in the areas in which they operated.

In fact it seems that NGOs were mostly free to locate where they saw fit and had not experienced pressure to choose to locate, for example, in the home areas of influential politicians, or senior civil servants in the Ministry of Culture and Social Services. According to the organisers of most foreign NGOs, political pressures were felt only at the original "screening" phase when the decision was taken whether to allow the NGO to register in Kenya at all.

Where perhaps politicians did exercise some influence over location was in the choice of specific locations within general areas chosen by NGO leaderships. Some observers pointed out that politicians and senior civil servants from Kiambu and Taita Taveta had influenced a foreign NGO with field officers in the two districts to concentrate on specific divisions within them.

On the other hand, in some areas where patronage is highly centralised, the presence of a "wild card" NGO may be perceived by local patrons as a threat rather than a blessing—in much the same way that their presence in the country generally is regarded by certain important figures in national government. The deliberate duplication of NGO-provided services by government ones in Elgeyo Marakwet has already been mentioned. The senior local politician saw the NGO's projects as detracting from the om-

nipotent image he was cultivating and even ordered the local provincial administration to trail the NGO's workers. The provincial administration arrested some of the officials of the NGO for allegedly holding illegal meetings, but released them later. The development work of the NGO became increasingly frustrated. Chiefs started closing field offices and refusing to approve projects that solicited assistance from the NGO.

The chiefs similarly frustrated another NGO and a church project because their source of funding was said to be "questionable". CPK's small-scale business programmes and water projects initiated in the area in 1988 were also wound down because they lost the approval of the patron-politician and the chiefs therefore could no longer sanction their operation. One reason was of course that the churches, including CPK, had begun campaigning for "good governance" and questioning the wisdom of changing the electoral rules to introduce *mlolongo*. Politicians close to the centre dubbed the churches "agents of foreign masters" and "enemies of development", adding for good measure that their dissent was unholy.

The second important way in which NGOs intersect with local politics is through struggles over the content of or micro-level location of their activities once they have taken the decision to locate in a particular constituency. To this end various local-level political factions compete intensely for positions of leadership on NGO project committees. Once on them they may try to use their position to ensure funding to their "own" projects and clients. For example, in 1991 in Kiambu an indigenous NGO was influenced to allocate revolving loan funds to women's groups in one particular division, where a senior (female) politician was preparing an electoral base. Such moves lead to other politicians adopting blocking strategies, which may in turn paralyse the implementation of any projects. Sometimes paralysis is induced at an earlier stage, if the issue of project committee leadership fails to be resolved.

NGOs have become broadly aware of these problems and have adopted strategies to minimise their impact, most obviously by setting project support criteria aimed at disqualifying activities which may become victim to such divisions. However, the price of this is usually an increasing distance from real grassroots interest or involvement, for political factionalism has succeeded in embedding itself at precisely this level.

A possible danger of such analyses is that they tend to imply that local-level political divisions are mainly the "artificial" product of competitive politics and/or the inventions of politicians for their own ends. Of course this has an element of truth, but expressed in this way it merely echoes another typically "professional politician's" discourse, deployed precisely to discredit political competition (local and national) in general, and more particularly certain specific political competitors.

In fact, even apparently homogeneous local communities are often internally divided along class, religious and clan lines reflecting personal networks or even personal jealousies, and these become spontaneously expressed in development politics. This has always been the case and the only

difference now is that an opportunity exists for it to take on a party political guise. An example from before the multi-party era illustrates the point.

Sometime in the early 1980s, the Kiambu-based Wereita Dairy and Pyrethrum Cooperative Society formed a SACCO—the Wakulima Cooperative Bank. The objective of the bank was to advance loans to farmers and provide other credit facilities. But in 1986, richer members of the society caused a series of rifts. Their argument was that their milk production was higher than that of other members and therefore they were entitled to a separate transport van. This group then acquired the backing of the local MP, Kuria Kinyanjui while the small milk producers became allied to the former one, Turuthi Mungai. Eventually the intervention of the umbrella national milk cooperative body—Kenya Creameries Cooperative (KCC) resolved the differences in the society.

It seems that Kinyanjui threw his weight behind the small group of rich milk producers because of their resources and their prominent position in the industry. Perhaps he counted on them to provide resources for his re-election. Mungai on the other hand seems to have supported the small producers because of their numerical strength which he thought would count in the elections. Mungai was to lose to Kinyanjui in the 1988 elections however, partly because of his low participation in development activities and partly because Kinyanjui succeeded in affixing blame on him for causing rifts in projects such as this.

Likewise, members of particular community development projects may spontaneously decide to use political differences as an excuse for excluding individuals they dislike or are jealous of from the benefits of these projects. In the same area members of the Kambaa Vegetable Growers' and Marketing Group used the support of Kinyanjui to buy several lorries to transport their produce to market. In the 1988 election those members of the group who did not vote for Kinyanjui could easily be identified through the queue voting system. These members were then ostracised by the others, declared to have "shown that they can do without communal transport" and prevented from using it.

SOME CONCLUSIONS: THE MULTI-PARTY ERA AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

Prior to the 1992 multi-party elections some opposition activists had asserted that meaningful national development could only follow the removal of KANU from political leadership and from "a new type of politics". At the time they boycotted local development initiatives. But nowadays the same people complain that the opposition's failure to oust KANU and Moi has meant that local development will be stalled because KANU is back in power. The earlier argument seemed to imply a rejection of patronage-based local politics. The current one seems to accept it. For example, a member of FORD-Kenya recently observed that if the party

had formed the government, its stated objective of abolishing the institution of the provincial administration would have been interpreted to mean "replacing it with something more responsive to local challenges".

The failure of opposition parties to win national elections has been accompanied by the growing fear of losing support due to an inability to "promote local development". This is of course anyway rendered difficult in opposition areas since the state-party is in control of all the main development instruments—the design, implementation and supervision of projects by the provincial administration. Arguably however, given popular expectations there is no space for the parties to differentiate themselves in terms of development politics and initiatives. Multi-partyism has seen an intensification of the old politics rather than the birth of a new one. The old politics of course carries built-in advantages to whoever controls the state apparatus. For this reason, more profound changes seem further away than ever.

Underlying this is the fact that development leadership and political leadership are still not popularly distinguished in most areas. Most people continue to argue that "effective leadership" means effective in addressing "communal needs". People who identify with the community's development problems and aspirations, were generally said to be good leaders. (Other valued qualities were education, impartiality, honesty and an indication of self-sacrifice.)

Respondents widely recognised that many "leaders" involve themselves in community activities only in order to promote their own stature. They could endlessly cite instances of local elites and aspiring candidates promising to assist various development projects in their areas but failing to live up to these promises. In Kambaa constituency in Kiambu an aspirant was said to have bought water pipes for a *harambee* project but then to have reposessed the pipes after failing to win election. In Elgeyo Marakwet, they observed that sometimes at *harambees* local leaders gave cheques which banks later failed to honour, either because the drawer's account was empty or because of a deliberately unrecognisable signature. They could also endlessly quote accusations made by politicians against each other, in order to polarise community members or strain relations between them and rival patrons. Yet such trends also seemed to be viewed as an unavoidable part of the politics and development package.

In areas like Kiambu and Nakuru there was an undercurrent of griping that the new breed of locally elected official who had emerged (as part of Matiba's "three piece suit")¹ in the wake of the multi-party elections of 1992 was insufficiently oriented to or competent in patronage-based development politics. Local councillors and some MPs had been elected on party rather than personal tickets during the multi-party elections. Their "character had not been properly studied" and they had subsequently turned out to be "ineffective". Some respondents even looked back with

¹ See paragraph 2, page 86 (Editor).

nostalgia to the era of single party rule, when a KANU disciplinary committee would have been constituted to reprimand such individuals or throw them out of the party altogether. No party however has an established procedure for replacing "ineffective" leaders before the end of the five year electoral period. A contrast was drawn between this and the self-help groups, where members may pass a vote of no confidence in ineffective leaders and call new elections to fill their positions.

These local priorities only seem to be absent in Kenya where apathy reigns instead. The alternative to "development politics" is not debates about ideological questions, but individualism and despair. Apathy is found especially in areas where highly centralised patronage systems coincide with low levels of agricultural surpluses, and is connected to the experiences of long periods of dependence on purely external resources and over-reliance on a handful of patrons to capture and distribute them.

Contrasting to what might be expected from much of the academic literature, the role of NGOs has probably strengthened rather than weakened these tendencies. NGOs have tended to promote "development" in the narrow sense, rather than democratisation, and have systematically sought to "fit in" with the socio-political structures which define and reproduce it.

Furthermore, NGOs tend to avoid working through groups that are involved in political change or controversy, internally or externally. And although NGOs have usually been able to protect themselves from political patronage, the role they play in insulating their local development partners from it is quite minimal. Though their impact on local development may be argued to be enormous, their contribution to the "pluralisation of civil society" is thus a deeply ambivalent one.

The new national politics has many different local dimensions, but ethnicity and patronage continue to be the common threads which link them together. National party coalitions construct themselves around ethnicity, with other factors subordinate. However its combination with these many other factors makes political competition in Kenya extremely intense at both the local and national levels. Competition over resources continues to drive the whole political system. Multi-partyism has been associated not only with increased competition over these resources but also, in the process, with further ethnic polarisation. The likelihood of political pluralism producing an alternative scenario in Kenya seems open to doubt. On the other hand, there is some evidence that this pluralism has been associated with some degree of increased accountability in national and local-level development, and is therefore to be welcomed.

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Religious Institutions and Political Liberalisation in Kenya

Mutahi G. Ngunyi

Studies of African civil society have in the past tended to be confined to its relationship with the state. In analysing this relationship, several theoretical divisions have emerged. One constituency has argued that civil society is and can only be the state's antithetical counterpart and is furthermore constituted in a "... process by which society seeks to 'breach' and counteract the simultaneous 'totalisation' unleashed by the state" (Bayart, 1986:111).

An opposing constituency contends that state and civil society relate to each other in what Antonio Gramsci called a "balanced opposition". On the whole assuming a less radical stance than that of Gramsci, this constituency depicts the relationship between the state and civil society as one of ambivalence. In his "incorporation-disengagement" thesis, Victor Azarya (1988) depicts the state-civil society relationship as "precariously balanced". Depending on the situation and the stakes, segments of civil society will choose to either "incorporate" themselves into or "disengage" from the state.

Although expressing reservations about Azarya's thesis, Michael Bratton reinforces its basic argument that civil society does not necessarily derive its *raison d'être* from perpetually doing battle with the state. Rather "... state-society relations ebb and flow as state and social actors each exercise a range of engagement, as well as disengagement, options" (Bratton, 1989:415).

Few of the contributions to this debate, however, delve into the actual nature of specific states and civil societies beyond definitional descriptions. Relationships between the different social forces situated within the purview of "civil society" are for instance undiscussed. In some formulations, it is actually assumed that all forces situated within civil society are democratic, that their interests and goals have a high level of concurrence, that their mechanisms for interest articulation are based on a democratic ethos, and that there exists a reasonable measure of harmony in their interaction.

There are a handful of studies however which express scepticism both about the homogeneity and harmony of civil society and its potential as a site for democratic struggles in Africa. To Mamdani (1990) civil society in Africa approximates the Marxian "bourgeois society" and is a site in which it is mainly the dominant interests which are represented and repro-

duced. The peasantry for example is effectively excluded. He falls short of explicitly recommending an "uncivil" society in which interventions from below would articulate their interests free from elite patronage but this constitutes the general drift of his argument.

While Mamdani's study is based on empirical investigation, Peter Gibbon (1993:26-27) attempts to provide a theoretical understanding of how particular civil societies are formed and transformed. Among the social processes Gibbon claims are involved in this is the division of labour and particularly its class dimension. He argues that the "post-developmental" civil society¹ is not only weakly separated from the state but is increasingly differentiated and disorganised by declassing and social exclusion. The dynamic of civil society formation through social exclusion derives primarily from state contraction. The process of contraction has coincided with heightened elite competition for state resources and resulted in both the masses and significant elite elements becoming excluded. This is significant because in the process "an important source of civil society's politicisation has tended to become driven by this (i.e., the sub-elite, M.G.N.) part of the state's 'own' civil society" (p.26). Gibbon suggests that this accounts in part for certain processes of polarisation within civil society in the "post-developmental" era.

The differentiated and disorganised nature of civil society as depicted by Gibbon is seen by other contemporary commentators as pluralism. Indeed, civil society for certain writers is said to be intrinsically plural in nature (Bayart, 1986:112; Bratton, 1989:418), and this is what guarantees its opposition to the supposedly monolithic state. Diamond (1988:26) further asserts that this pluralism is "... the cutting edge of the effort to build a viable democratic order". Corresponding to the assertion of this linkage the forces conditioning pluralism in civil society are not analysed. The nature of this pluralism is also undiscussed.

This limitation in analysis probably derives from a wide gap existing between theory and concrete investigation. That is, little empirical work has been undertaken by the champions of "civil society" to substantiate or elaborate their theoretical assertions. On the other hand, as a result of the process of political liberalisation, particularly the introduction of multi-party politics and the conduct of general elections in some African countries, certain of the features of actually existing civil societies have become both clearer and easier to study. This has apparently put theory at variance with practice.

For instance, certain champions of "civil society" have tended to demean the influence and power of the African state, some even predicting its "withering away". Yet in the countries where incumbent regimes have been re-elected, the state has re-emerged stronger than predicted and has

¹ This is the civil society constituted after the collapse of the "developmentalist" state in Africa.

continued to dominate civil society. Similarly, civil society has been revealed in less romantic colours in practice than it appeared in theory.

Kenya provides a good example. Here, in the post-election period, state power has been renewed and has already begun taking advantage of the fragmentation of civil society. It has assumed a preponderant position over civil society by re-incorporating "tired" segments of this society and repressing the efforts of the more oppositional elements.¹ This has happened because of the absence of an autonomous dynamic within civil society itself, capable of sustaining opposition to the state. The relatively resourceful state, taking advantage of deep divisions in civil society, has moreover itself sponsored certain activities within the latter whose intention is both to undercut and further disorganise oppositional civil institutions.

The result has been an increasingly destructive and polarised form of pluralism in civil society. For every vibrant civil institution involved in effective advocacy, there are not only quietist or politically conservative institutions but also parallel state-sponsored ones commissioned to disrupt the former's work. For the most part, these parallel institutions are not so much created to directly compete with the oppositional institutions or to mobilise social forces in favour of the state. Their reason for existence is rather to act as "spoiling agents" to the genuinely popular forces.

For instance *New Era*, a journal sponsored by the state to disorganise the more strident opposition press (e.g., *Finance*, *Society* and *Nairobi Law Monthly*), appeared with a bang during the run-up to the December 1992 elections but wound up its operations soon after them. Likewise, given the high level of political consciousness among women during the election period, the state sponsored a "National Convention on Women in Kenya" to rival oppositional women's organisations like the National Committee on the Status of Women, Mothers in Action, etc.

However the state typically attempted to create parallel institutions only when it could not incorporate "willing" established institutions as silent denigrators of the activities of the more vibrant ones. For instance, given the involvement of the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK) in the struggle for political liberalisation, the state incorporated the Evangelical Fellowship of Kenya (EFK) to counter it. Although the subsequent antagonism between the two church bodies has been subtle, its impact on the general dynamics of civil society cannot be underestimated.

We should note at this juncture that the state's attempt to deepen the polarisation of civil society is not only a "post developmentalist" state affair. It existed also in the developmentalist period, although to a different extent. In both eras, civil society might have weathered this deliberate disorganisation in the absence of two socio-political processes which independently rationalise and reinforce polarised pluralism. The two, political

¹ For example, it has refused to register trade unions for various professional groups, including university lecturers, and has banned various publications, including Kenneth Matiba's *Kenya: Return to Reason*.

patronage and "ethnicisation", date back to the colonial period, but have acquired an accentuated role since independence (see Ngunyi, 1993a).

Given its *ex-nihilo* creation and the often very tenuous legitimacy of its first leaders, the independent African state distributed both economic and political resources to selected social forces, in order to secure or widen its base. Such distributions have tended to proceed in two stages. Following the co-optation of those major power centres which could have played a role in checking the excesses of the state however, the subsequent distribution of resources was focused primarily on containing political dissent.

In Kenya this second phase of post-colonial patronage has been most evident in the Moi era, following the emasculation of civil society under Kenyatta. In this "Nyayo era"¹ new clients of the president were created in the strongholds of the old power centres to police the latter's loyalty. At the same time clients of the president have also been created amongst previously relatively marginalised groups, to mobilise the latter along the lines of the "tribe"—and in the service of the state.

The advent of political pluralism might have been thought to provide an opportunity for certain clients to break their links with the patronage chain, thus creating a political order independent of the elaborate form of clientelist politics found in the "Nyayo era". But while this proved to be the case with some of the old power centres, the effect was relatively limited and temporary. No equivalent of the benefits previously accruing to clients could be found from civil society's own meagre resources. Given the centrality of political patronage even in the reproduction of basic economic relations in Kenya, a thin resource base in civil society could not sustain a protracted struggle against state domination. This material "poverty" of civil society has allowed the post-developmental state to remain a pole of attraction to many forces.

In the absence of far-reaching political change and lacking alternative ways to reproduce themselves, some break-away clients have had to resort to their pre-pluralism political patrons. The state has welcomed this return from a position of advantage. Instead of accepting the old client in his previous status, the state has embraced these segments of civil society on the tacit condition that they take on the role of socio-political *denigrators* within civil society. This explains in part the current extreme disorganisation within civil society in Kenya.

Ethnicisation—the tendency for institutions, social groups and social divisions to take an ethnic form—is the other, linked, socio-political process that underlies this disorganisation. Like political patronage, it was an important feature of the colonial era, when for example whole social classes were organised and controlled by the state on a "tribal" basis, and gained access to state resources nationally on the basis of an unofficial hierarchy of "tribal" groups and through "tribal" institutions such as the chieftaincy. This created a pattern whereby ethnicity became a central stra-

¹ Nyayo means "footsteps" and comprises the official philosophy of the regime.

tegy for formulating and legitimising claims on state resources by various sections of the population—mainly elites but also ordinary people. In the process, ethnicity became embedded in the process of economic and political resource allocation. This process was continuously reinforced through the fact that “native” secular politics was only allowed expression through District Political Associations, in order to forestall the emergence of national political consciousness and organisation. National oppression in Kenya therefore tended to be synthesised with and articulated by ethnic issues and interests.

In the post-colonial period, there has existed a direct relationship between ethnicisation and ethnic conflict on the one hand and the fluctuating size of the state’s resource base on the other. As the resource base has shrunk, the more intense have ethnic claims and counter-claims become.

As an increasingly central social force in civil society, ethnic communities have proved themselves only likely to support broadly-based interventions in politics where these promise something for the “tribe”. In the absence of obvious material and political gains for themselves, the involvement of such communities will depend on their perceptions of the gains that might accrue to others.

The salience of ethnicity is also typically entrenched by the increasing scarcity of viable political institutions which owe their existence to forces other than the “tribe” and whose operations go beyond “tribal” landscapes. Even where civil institutions exist independent of direct ethnic forms of constitution, class interests (mainly elite) within such institutions may tend to sway their activities towards the pursuit of certain ethnic goals. This process tends to be heightened by declassing and other spontaneous sources of social disorganisation.

As the legal space for politics widens and political competition gains in tempo there is a tendency for certainty and confidence about the existing ethnic division of spoils to diminish. Since this takes place in the face of an increasingly impoverished state, a protracted ethnic showdown may ensue. In the absence of established secular political institutions which could serve to dilute these tendencies they feed into a further process of civil society fragmentation.

The period since 1991 has seen these different tendencies interweaving and coalescing in Kenya. Strategies of denigration, popularly based on “tribal” anxieties and designs, and ambitious clients seeking out new rewards, may both serve to polarise the activities of those institutions that are national or supra-ethnic, but which attract suspicion on the grounds that they appear sympathetic to the cause of a certain ethnic community. A case in point is the growing rivalry between the EFK and the NCKK mentioned above.

The EFK represents a basically feeble Luo-Kalenjin alliance¹ with the Kalenjin faction assuming a preponderant position. The NCKK on the other hand is a multi-ethnic institution with a strong Luo and Kikuyu, Embu, and Meru presence. During the push for political pluralism in Kenya, the status of EFK was enhanced (through state patronage) in order to rival the activities of NCKK. It was then promoted by Kalenjin clergy in concert with other forces seeking state patronage, with a view to protecting "their" ethnic community from the "Kikuyu-engineered" activities of NCKK.

INVESTIGATING RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS' RELATION TO POLITICAL CHANGE

The process of reconstituting civil society in Kenya commenced in the last quarter of the 1980s.² In the face of a retreating state, certain hitherto suppressed social forces regrouped as pluralising agents in civil society. The general response of such forces to the summons of change was however differentiated. While the labour movement for instance worked in cohort with state forces in suppressing interventions from below, the role of many religious institutions was one of advocacy.³ But even then, the socio-political profiles taken by the religious institutions differed markedly.

Three notable profiles in this regard interest this inquiry. There are those institutions which played an "activist" and oppositional role, those who took a "loyalist" position and allied with the state, and those who largely kept aloof. The activist category saw itself both as supporting oppressed groups and questioning the role of the state. It claimed the role of enhancing social and political dignity and decency in the face of a protracted economic and political decline.

The "loyalist" group took a polarised position. Their argument was that churches should confine themselves to the purely religious sphere. This category supported the state's opposition to political liberalisation and related antagonistically to the forces for change in civil society.

A third group, which will be referred to here as "Africanist", comprised organisations blending certain tenets of the Christian faith with those of traditional African religions. This category was largely indifferent to socio-

¹ The Luo element here is largely from South Nyanza, the home of Tom Mboya and an ethno-regional constituency which Odinga always found it difficult to penetrate.

² This reconstitution presupposes a (partial) destruction of civil society under both Kenyatta and Moi (see Ngunyi, 1993a).

³ Advocacy here refers to a process of political engagement on behalf of those deprived of socio-economic assets or political rights. In the case of the religious organisations this engagement will normally take on a "spiritual" language or guise.

political developments in both state and civil society, responding to the summons of change only (if at all) through the medium of prophecy.¹

It is interesting to note that within each of these categories, there was further differentiation. In the activist group for instance, some organisations straddled both advocacy and collaboration with the state, while others oscillated between mild and radical forms of advocacy. In some instances this differentiation corresponded to ethnic divisions. In the Islamic Party of Kenya (IPK) for instance, an alliance between African Muslims and the "Afro-Shirazi" has pursued a separate trajectory from that of Kenyans of Arab origin based in Mombasa.²

The task of this investigation is to understand the forces responsible for this scenario and to examine in detail its practical implications. More specifically, it sets out to answer the question why religious institutions, operating on apparently very similar terrains within civil society should respond to socio-political happenings so differently.

Following the earlier discussion it has been assumed that the socio-political role occupied by different religious institutions will reflect their general historical relations to the forces of ethnicity and political patronage. However, it was also assumed that this would further depend on the religion's belief system and on certain structural features of the organisations themselves. Regarding the latter, four considerations were considered to be most important.

Firstly, the nature of the institution's internal decision-making structures. Secondly, the institution's form and level of involvement in local-level development. Thirdly, the general social (and not only ethnic) character of its leadership and adherents, and fourthly its autonomy from parent/umbrella organisations. While some of these structural features have strong links to the historical development of patronage and ethnicity in Kenya, they are also normally sufficiently relatively autonomous of them to be considered separately. The first two, for example, derive in part from the theological content of religions themselves. An effort will also be made to acknowledge and distinguish between the role of the leadership of particular institutions and their membership, and the different roles played by the lower and upper clergy. The relationship between these groups has its own internal dynamic, which tends to differ from institution to institution.

¹ Legio Maria, as will be seen, prophesied a presidential election victory by Odinga Oginga, as well as numerous local victories by FORD-Kenya.

² The use of these terms here does not imply endorsement of claims about biological race implicit in their use in certain other circumstances. Rather, as in the case of terms like "Kalenjin" it is simply meant to indicate ethnic or racial categories as they are popularly understood and as they enter into Kenyan political discourse. The term "African Muslims" covers those communities like the Mijikenda who converted to Islam; the "Afro-Shirazi" by contrast is that community which is held to be of mixed African-Arab descent.

In this investigation eleven religious institutions are examined. These include at least one pan-church umbrella organisation in the first two of the categories identified above. From the "advocacy" institutions NCCCK was chosen, and from the "loyalist" ones, the EFK. Individual churches from the first category comprise the Church of the Province of Kenya (CPK), the Catholic church and the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA). From the second category they comprise the African Inland Church (AIC), the Reformed Church of East Africa (RCEA), the Kenya Assemblies of God (KAG), and the African Gospel Church (AGC). Two Islamic organisations, one "advocacy"-oriented and one "loyalist" were also chosen, namely the Islamic Party of Kenya (IPK) and the United Muslims of Africa (UMA), respectively. From the "Africanist" category, the Legio Maria sect is examined.

For each of the Christian churches fieldwork was conducted in one of their dioceses/parishes and in one particular congregation within it. For the CPK, Maseno Diocese in Nyanza and its St Stephen's Cathedral congregation were studied. For the Catholic church, we chose its diocese in Machakos and its Machakos town cathedral congregation. For the PCEA, we chose Dagoreti Parish and its Githima church congregation. For AIC, we chose its Nairobi District and the Ziwani church congregation; for RCEA, we chose its Eldoret Parish and its Emmanuel church congregation. For KAG, we chose its Nairobi District and its Bahati church congregation; for AGC, we chose its Kericho parish and its Emmanuel church congregation. Since the IPK and UMA have no branches, we focused upon their headquarters. For the Legio Maria sect, we examined its Kisumu church congregation.

We interviewed at least three leaders of the chosen organisations at the national and diocese levels. In each chosen diocese/parish we talked to the priest/bishop in charge, the co-ordinator of development projects, and the head of the peace and justice commission where one existed. In the chosen congregations, we interviewed the priest/provost in charge, one church elder, two youth members and two members of the women's organisation in the diocese. We also interviewed the Secretary General in the case of the EFK, and the head of research in the case of the NCCCK. We also talked to the chairs of both's national-level Peace and Justice Committees, and their national co-ordinators of development projects. In UMA and IPK, we talked to the three top national officials and five ordinary members of each of the organisations. In each case the five comprised one male elder, two women and two young men. In Legio Maria we also interviewed the leader of the church in Kisumu District, once church elder, two women and two youths. Members of congregations interviewed were typically introduced to us by the priest/provost but were not selected by them. Rather, in most cases, they were people who happened to be around the precincts of the churches/organisations when they were visited.

RELIGION AND POLITICS IN THE THIRD WORLD

Polarisation of churches into politically oppositional and loyalist camps is of course not unique to Kenya nor to the last few decades. But it is in the Third World over these last decades that the phenomenon has been most notable. In many developing countries economic decline and ongoing crises of political legitimacy have led to a reconstitution of segments of certain religious institutions as "new social movements", pressuring governments and lobbying for the interests of excluded groups. In many cases these movements have roots in popularly-based development activities and the organisation of previously voiceless groups in these activities.

The profiles assumed by these religio-social movements tend to reflect the different nature of the terrains on which the central political and social conflicts are being fought out in different countries. In Latin America for instance, these movements have been historically closely linked to the agrarian question although in more recent years their base has visibly shifted to the new urban poor. In some parts of Nigeria, Islamic religio-social movements have been prompted in urban areas by the eclipse of customary forms of social and ideological reproduction amongst poor males. In Uganda, they appear to have been prompted by a combination of unresolved regional questions and the massive socio-economic and psychological dislocation associated with years of remorseless civil war. The defining feature of all these movements is that they broadly constitute "... an aggregate of dissent ... from official politics ... (and) the officially chosen path of development", whose returns fail to reach the poor and/or ethnically marginalised (Lehmann, 1990:151).

Not all churches in all developing countries reflect this process, and often the same church can have very different "faces" in different parts of the same region. In Argentina for instance, Lehmann (*ibid.*) observes that the Catholic church remained mute in the face of the military regime between 1976 and 1984. In contrast, in Chile and especially Brazil it assumed a high political profile in the political upheavals of the 1980s. The church's involvement with the "devoiced" masses in these countries meant it "... gradually became the *de facto* sponsor of a parallel welfare state apparatus financed by international charitable donations" (*ibid.*:150). This eventually resulted in the reconstitution of various grassroots religious self-help groups into forms of "new social movements".

In Southern Africa, differentiated relations to "advocacy" politics have also been registered. In Botswana, although churches have been involved in local level development, they have assumed a "shy" profile on the political front. Even the involvement of the Botswana Christian Council in fighting for the human rights of the Basarwa people has for instance been low-keyed (AACC, 1992). But in Zimbabwe and South Africa, certain religious institutions have through the years been closely linked to popular struggles from below. During Zimbabwe's liberation war sections of the Catholic church played an important supportive role, and it has continued to play a

major role in the defence of human rights there since independence. In South Africa, the involvement of religious institutions in politics needs little emphasis. It dates back to the Cottesloe Consultation¹ of the 1960s and the South African Council of Churches' call for civil disobedience in 1968. In the 1970s this was largely overtaken by an emergent black theology, as the New Consciousness Movement sought to redefine the role of Africans in separatist terms (Rose, 1992:26).

The initial response of the mainstream churches to this outflanking was the "status confessions" of 1977, in which they declared that apartheid was an affront to the Christian faith. In this document, "... opposition to apartheid became enshrined in (the) churches' confession of faith" (ibid.:28). A later and more important response was the *Kairos* document of September 1985, in which some churches declared that black people had been provoked to the point of defying the apartheid regime, more so because the people had reached a *kairos*—a moment of truth (ibid.).

In East Africa, religion-based forms of advocacy politics have also emerged, albeit in a highly uneven manner. While certain churches have assumed a vocal stand on matters of politics in Kenya and Uganda, the same is rather less true of Tanzania. This is probably because of the dominance there of the religious polarity between Muslims and Christians, and the manner in which the *Ujamaa* government stripped most civil society forces of even minimal independence.

Islamic religious organisations have also shown a differentiated relation to political advocacy. While "popular Islam" with political overtones has emerged in most parts of north and some parts of west Africa, there are other important Muslim tendencies which enjoy close relations with government—notably in Senegal. There is also a greater tendency for each of these trends to be more identified with different social classes (lumpenproletarian and merchant respectively) than where similar polarisation has emerged amongst Christian churches. As will be seen, Kenya provides an exception to the general situation regarding political Islam.

RELIGION AND POLITICS IN KENYA PRIOR TO THE MULTIPARTY ERA

Prior to Kenyan independence most religious institutions were hardly differentiated from the state. The churches originating in Europe appeared as a wing of the state, supporting through their teachings the pacification of potential as well as actual dissent. As peasant uprisings increasingly crystallised into organised protest movements, the position of the churches

¹ These consultations were made by the World Council of Churches on the de-segregation of worship. They proved too radical for the apartheid churches, especially the Dutch Reformed Church and the Hervormel Nederlandse Kerk, which both withdrew from the council (AACC, 1992: 27).

became even more explicitly defined. A majority were increasingly vocal in condemning peasant rebellion and nationalist movements, and actively preached loyalty to the state and obedience of the law.

This was hardly surprising, since both the colonial state in Kenya and the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) sprang directly from the Imperial British East African Chartered Company. The PCEA started after the company invited a group of Scottish missionaries to Kenya in 1891. Operating as the East African Scottish Mission and later the Church of Scotland Mission, their initial areas of operation were in Kikuyu and Tumutumu in central Kenya, and Chogoria and Kibwezi in Eastern Province. Some of these areas were to be the sites of the Mau Mau wars of the last quarter of the 1940s and the 1950s. The PCEA was an effective force in organising state opposition to Mau Mau. Indeed, many of the most prominent "home guard" families in Central and Eastern Provinces were not only members of the PCEA but were also heavily patronised by its missionary clique.

As with the PCEA, the relationship between the CPK and the colonial state was also extremely close. The CPK has its roots in the missionary work of two German explorers, Dr Ludwig Krapf and Johann Rebman, who jointly established the Church Mission Society (CMS) in 1844. Unlike the PCEA, the CMS's activities were generalised throughout the country, beginning with efforts to convert the Kamba in Eastern Province and the Mijikenda in Mombasa (where the first CMS Diocese was created in 1898), and later extending to the Kikuyu in Central Province and the Luo in Nyanza. By 1920, the CMS had managed to translate the bible into the vernacular languages of all these communities and had recruited a territory-wide following.

With the eclipse of German influence after World War II, the activities of the CMS were in 1950 handed over to the Anglicans. The Anglican Church was the official church of the colonial regime, and the residence of its bishop was situated directly next door to that of the colonial governor, but the church itself had until this time little mass following. The "new" CMS, from which the CPK was to later develop, was to become the central part of the state church. However, unlike the PCEA which devoted its energies to the outright suppression of protest movements, especially Mau Mau (probably because the latter's activities took place in its main area of operation), the Anglican Church was also involved in recruiting a "successor group" through the education system. Nevertheless, when the colonial state was threatened by nationalist forces, its loyalty was to the former.

While the Anglican Church (CPK) and the PCEA were directly linked to the state either functionally or historically, the Catholic Church had a relatively weak relation to it. Its foothold in the territory had been established as far back as the end of the sixteenth century, when its first congregation of 600 converts from coastal peoples first met under the Augustinian priests. But it was not for a further three centuries that the church began

efforts to expand its catchment area by establishing mission stations at Nairobi, Tuthu in Nyeri and Kisumu, staffed mainly by Italians. By 1927 African converts were ordained as priests and owing to its expanding horizon, in 1953 four dioceses were set up in Nairobi, Nyeri, Kisumu and Meru. Barely four years later the first African bishop was appointed. While the Catholic church had no formal linkages with the state, there were equally no instances of strained relations between it and the state. Similarly, although it did not support the nationalist forces, it had no role in suppressing them—or attempting to form an alternative elite.

Amongst the most influential church organisations in colonial Kenya was the Christian Council of Kenya (CCK), which later became the NCCCK. The CCK's initial function was to bring together the numerous missionary societies in Kenya, including the Church of Scotland Mission/PCEA, the CMS/CPK, the African Inland Mission (later known as the African Inland Church), the Gospel Missionary Society (GMS) and the Methodist Church. From its inception, the CCK had a high profile. The council was formed at the peak of the Mau Mau uprising and therefore attracted much international attention both as a relief and evangelical organisation. It was the first church organisation in the Third World (apart from those working with Palestinian refugees) to receive funding for emergency activities and reconstruction. Its first Secretary General, Samuel Morrison, came to CCK after having done similar work in Palestine (Aboum, 1994:9).

The CCK followed the Anglicans in a concern to cultivate a "successor" group. In a direct parallel with the Swynnerton Plan (1954), which aimed at detaching sections of the peasantry from Mau Mau and the nationalist movements, the CCK encouraged its member churches to appoint a majority of "responsible" African bishops. Among those consecrated for this succession in 1955 were Bishops Obadia Kariuki and John Kamau—both from central Kenya (*ibid.*).

Together with liberal missionary forces, these two began however to lobby for dialogue between CCK and the nationalists. In 1959, Bishop Kariuki visited Kenyatta in Lodwar, where he had been confined by the colonial government, thus identifying the council with the struggle for independence. In 1961, on Kenyatta's return to Gatundu from political detention, the council and other church leaders were among those who received and "baptised" him (*ibid.*:12).

Kamau was meanwhile assisting in the publication of a CCK journal—*Rock*—edited by the organisation's most prominent European liberal, Stanley Booth-Clibborn. The primary objective of the magazine was to create an environment "... that would make it possible for Africans and Whites to discuss their problems and find solutions ..." (*ibid.*:10). Other Europeans attacked *Rock* and accused it of being communist, especially when it pointed out the injustices perpetrated against Africans.

Meanwhile, alongside the PCEA, those church organisations with roots in American missionary societies tended to oppose nationalism almost

"religiously". The African Inland Church (AIC), founded in 1895 by the Rev. Peter Cameron Scott, was the first and most prominent of these. Its first missionary activities were in Ukambani and among the Kalenjin, and this remained its main geographical base. Together with another American organisation, the Assemblies of God,¹ the Inland Church opposed CCK's meeting with Kenyatta in 1961. The World Gospel Mission, which is also American, and its Bomet-based African offshoot the African Gospel Church, similarly collaborated with the colonial state during the struggle for political independence.

As with the Catholic church where few links existed between the Italian missionaries and the state, the Boer missionaries' primary concern was survival. Hence, their church organisation, the Reformed Church of East Africa (RCEA) had a low social and political profile in the colonial period. Its origin was in the Dutch Reformed Church set up by Boer settlers in Rift Valley Province following the 1902 Anglo-Boer war in South Africa. In 1955, it changed its name to Reformed Church of East Africa as it opened its membership to black workers in Boer settlements in Uasin Gishu and Trans-Nzoia Districts. Given Anglo-Boer bad blood resulting from the 1902 conflict the leadership of the RCEA, now operating in a British colony, could not openly oppose the colonial state. Nevertheless, the RCEA did not so much condemn the nationalist movement as ignore it.

It is worth noting at this point that although we refer to the forces opposed to colonial rule as "nationalist" not all of them were mainly concerned with political independence. Most actually pursued social and cultural rather than political concerns. Paramount amongst these social and cultural concerns was a defence/revival of the worship of traditional gods and the practices such as female circumcision, polygamy, and wife inheritance, as well as certain traditional rituals such as the killing of twins.

Given that the suppression of these practices was mainly delegated by the colonial state to the "modern" churches, the resulting protest movements were themselves largely directed against these churches. It is no wonder therefore that as civil institutions emerged to fight discrimination, land alienation and forced labour, African separatist churches also emerged to give shape to these protests. Although the Africanist churches initially limited their agenda to an Africanist "cultural apologetics" within Christianity, as the nationalist movement gained in currency they also took up a political agenda.

Hence the African Independent Protestant Church of Africa, initially constituted as a base for those who wanted to be "Christians in the tribe" (see Ngugi wa Thiongo, 1964), was to later take up some of the Mau Mau popular claims. In fact, this church was seen by many as an expression of Mau Mau's appropriation of Christianity. Similarly, *Dini ya Musambwa*

¹ This is not the same church as the current Kenyan Assemblies of God, mentioned earlier. The Assemblies of God referred to here later changed its name to the Pentecostal Assemblies of God.

operating in Western Province, was initially aimed at restoring the traditional religious practices of the Luhya community within a Christian framework but gradually took up popular political claims in the face of an intensifying struggle for independence.

While in the colonial period the Africanist churches embodied protest against both the colonial state and those mainstream churches vacillating between support for the regime and the nationalist forces, the role of Islamic organisations in this period was politically relatively insignificant. In spite of Christian penetration into Islamic areas and the possible conflict arising therefrom, the relationship between the Islamic organisations and the state remained cordial. This might be explained on the basis that there was little colonial penetration north of Mombasa into heartlands of the Swahili and Mijikenda peoples or those of the Somali, Boran and Galla peoples in the Islamic north-east.

The low socio-political profile adopted by the Islamic organisations was to extend to most of the post-colonial period. Although there were occasional political demands raised by organisations like the Young Muslim Association, a really active involvement of Islamic organisations in socio-political concerns in Kenya came only after the latter transformed itself into the IPK. The rise of popular Islam in Kenya is thus a phenomenon of the period of multi-party politics.

Although the post-colonial period saw some of the ex-European churches eventually emerge from their colonial cloak and become vocal exponents of social justice and equality, this process was also a slow and hesitant one. Throughout the Kenyatta era, no clear pattern of relationship emerged between the church and the state. Each exercised great caution in its dealing with the other, a situation that is well captured by Chepkwony (1981). Formally, the government, the mainstream churches (CPK, PCEA, Catholic) and the NCCCK espoused similar secular goals of promoting the social-economic welfare of the citizens. But in some cases it may have been that certain churches recognised that they had been too closely identified with the colonial regime for any protests against the post-colonial one to carry conviction. Furthermore, many churches remained under the control of foreign missionaries, and these were terrified of confronting the state.

Two other factors were perhaps more important than these however. Firstly, both the churches and the state shared a common anti-communism and anti-socialism, Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965 (on "African Socialism") notwithstanding. Secondly—and probably contrary to colonial hopes—there was little or no social distinction between the clerical and political African elites. As a result of these factors the two sets of institutions naturally complemented each other's work. Church leaders could be invited to play roles in national functions and on the other hand politicians could be invited to participate in church functions including raising funds for churches through *harambees*.

Only when an African clergy assumed full control of the largest churches, and when the regime began to gravitate towards political mono-

lithism did advocacy politics emerge amongst the churches. Nonetheless, the church still censured the state on several occasions during the First Republic. When the government proposed to build a prestigious and expensive party headquarters in 1966, *Target*—a magazine owned by NCCCK—carried a critical editorial against it. This briefly drew the wrath of the state on the NCCCK. In 1970, NCCCK is also on record as having criticised the promulgation of the Hanging Act. Furthermore, the lower clergy and church members generally sometimes used church institutions to criticise the state. Following the state-sponsored murder of a legislator (J.M. Kariuki) in 1976, and a subsequent spate of oathings, the PCEA Gathaithi choir composed a protest song *Mai ni Maruru* (the water is bitter) expressing the generally disenchanted mood of the country. This song was banned by the government.

In general though, at this stage, little opposition could be detected between churches and the state, the new African high clergy and the lower clergy, or the clergy generally and the laity. Moreover, although certain churches were more closely identified with some ethnic groups than others, this was not reflected in any systematic links between particular churches and KANU on the one hand or KADU on the other.

The only church that showed a consistent level of (apparently ethnic-based) politicisation in this period was Legio Maria which had been registered with the help of Odinga in 1962. During Odinga's formation of the Kenya People's Union in 1966, Legio Maria—which draws most of its members from Odinga's political constituency—repaid this debt. However, setting a trend for the future, its political stance took the oblique form of prophesying a bright political future for Odinga.

Even during the first four years of Moi's rule the relationship between the churches and the state was fairly cordial. Moi strongly identified himself with Christianity and became a regular church-goer, unlike Kenyatta (Kenyatta's wife, Mama Ngina did become a Catholic however, and her brother Father George Muhoho was prominent in the same church). This endeared Moi to the Christian population and led the churches to exercise restraint in censuring state action.

This state of affairs gradually changed. An important turning point in this respect was the retirement of the increasingly conservative NCCCK secretary, John Kamua, in 1985 and his replacement by the Rev. Samuel Kobia. In his maiden speech Kobia set as a guiding theme a text from Luke 4:18–19:

the spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has chosen me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, and announce that the time has come when the Lord will save his people.

Kobia went on:

Considering that Christians are at the same time citizens, and taking into account that churches are social institutions alongside others within the na-

tion, it follows that political issues are an integral part of our witness and mission (NCCCK, 1987).

Subsequently the older mainstream Christian churches have been a major source of political opposition in Kenya. However, the Moi years have been also marked by a further proliferation of American evangelical organisations. Although many of these had entered the country in the mid-1970s, they took actual organisational shape only in the following decade. These include, among others, the Kenya Assemblies of God (KAG) which was founded in the last quarter of the 1980s when the Assemblies of God (AG) congregations were granted "independence" from missionary administration, Youth with a Mission, Youth for Christ, Campus Crusade and The Navigators.

Most of these American church organisations are members of the Evangelical Fellowship of Kenya (EFK) which was formed in 1976 but remained moribund until the early 1980s when it was apparently revived to counter the activities of the NCCCK. As we hope to show later, the leadership of most of these American-derived church organisations and that of the EFK are clients of the regime and present a theological apologia for the state whenever the latter is attacked by church organisations sympathetic to opposition.

SOCIO-THEOLOGICAL PROFILES OF KENYA'S RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

In order to understand the relation of Kenyan religious institutions in political liberalisation, we must place them in their socio-theological contexts. We must look at their size, social composition and character in terms of their ethno-regional, class, gender and age profiles, and at their internal politics. We must also look at their dominant doctrinal themes, their religious "trademarks" and the basis of their popular appeal.

The Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA)

The PCEA claims about 1.8 million members. As already noted, this church was first established in central and eastern Kenya, which means that most of these members were drawn from the Kikuyu, Embu and Meru peoples. In spite of a much wider current catchment area, its leadership has remained largely drawn from these three communities. Its current Moderator is a Meru while most of its headquarters staff and clergy are Kikuyu. Interestingly almost all of its parishes, including the Nairobi ones, have services in Kikuyu.

The PCEA has from its early years attracted the elite among these so-called GEMA tribes. Its leaders and most of its clergy attended the cream of the areas' schools and so have the upper echelons of the laity. It is worth

noting that not all its members are highly educated or educated at all, though. Nevertheless, those who fall within these latter categories also belong to the business class or are "progressive farmers". The distinctiveness of the PCEA audience became even clearer after the rise of American-based evangelism in the 1980s. The latter tended to draw away the more "wretched of the earth" from the mainstream churches, leaving a rump of rural and urban elites. We shall elaborate this statement below.

It is also worth noting that the generally conservative mode of worship in the PCEA mainly attracts an old, as opposed to young membership. Equally interesting is the overwhelming presence of women in the church organisation as compared to men. Women are organised in the development-oriented "Women's Guilds". These bodies occupy a central role in the life of the PCEA, similar to that of youth associations in the evangelical churches. The "Women's Guilds" are involved in economic projects and in preserving certain (mainly Kikuyu) cultural values such as *itega*.¹ They also tend to have a distinct dress code which includes a headscarf with the guild's logo and specially designed pleated dresses.

Doctrinally, the PCEA has maintained a conservative theological position. It has remained indifferent to liberation theology but is equally vehemently opposed to the "charismatic" practices of American evangelism, especially the highly popular "speaking in tongues" and hand-clapping during hymns. Instead its services are restrained affairs, prayers led in a moderate tone by the minister alone and with singing accompanied only by a piped organ (where one exists). According to some respondents, it has been this unexciting mode of worship which has led to many younger members of PCEA congregations defecting to the charismatics.

Church of the Province of Kenya (CPK)

The CPK claims a membership of about two million. Unlike the PCEA's flock, this is drawn from all over the country. Although the membership is also elite in nature, it is not dominated by one ethnic community as in the PCEA. The elite composition of the membership reflects, as in the PCEA, a very long-established emphasis on the importance of literacy and education. From as early as 1906 CPK and its predecessors recruited followers via its own school system.

The membership of CPK is more diverse than PCEA's not only in terms of ethnicity but also age. Although its mode of worship is also non-charismatic, the church has successfully attracted young adherents through its

¹ According to Kikuyu custom, when a child is born women in the neighbourhood take gifts to the mother. These range from food to cash. Although the tradition is dying, especially in urban areas, the Women's Guilds strive to keep it alive. Incidentally, because of its economic implications—and given a situation of increasing social differentiation—*itega* has become an elite custom.

development activities. The latter, especially the income-generating ones, also account for CPK's attraction to peasant and urban working-class households.

Doctrinally the CPK is neither liberal nor conservative. The fact that its dioceses are relatively autonomous from the House of Bishops allows the coexistence of considerable variations in theological position and pastoral styles. A parish priest is permitted to subscribe to liberation theology and teach it so long as it does not contradict the organisation's basic articles of faith. In some parishes, liberation theology is blended with evangelical-style presentations, especially where youth programmes are concerned. Yet in others, traditional Anglican teachings and practices prevail. This doctrinal diversity accounts in part for the CPK's broad appeal.

The provision of development projects and "ministering to the material needs of the individual" are seen by CPK as an organic aspect of the Church's work. This is legitimised by reference to the so-called "Total Gospel for the Total Man (sic)" in which the individual is seen to require both spiritual and material assistance.

The Catholic Church

The Catholic church is probably the largest in Kenya. It claims a following of 5.4 million people in 18 dioceses. It is also the most geographically extensive running from Mombasa on the coast to Eldoret in the Rift Valley, from Busia on the border of Kenya and Uganda to Isiolo in the north-east.

Although the Catholic church in Kenya also provided many schools in the colonial era these were seen primarily as a means of fishing for souls rather than cultivating a future elite. This in turn partly explains the fact that although the Catholic church is as old as the CPK and the PCEA, it is not elite-dominated. Its less strict behaviour code also accounts for its appeal to the peasantry, the urban worker and in particular to the male members of these classes. Unlike in the CPK, the PCEA and the Evangelicals, the Catholic church accommodates smoking cigarettes, drinking cheap alcohol, wife-beating, and moderate use of prostitution—all of which constitute important dimensions of the lifestyle of the poor in Kenya.

The mode of worship in the Catholic church is less emotionally involving than that in the evangelical churches, and less intellectually demanding than that of the PCEA and CPK. This is largely because it is ritualistic. In addition the Catholic church does not demand as much financial commitment in terms of tithes and offerings as other churches, nor any great time commitment to church activities. This does not mean that it places no demands on members, but the price in terms of money, time, practice of ritual outside church premises and modification of behaviour is affordable to most of its followers.

The National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK)

The NCCCK is the umbrella organisation for most of the mainstream churches. Until recently it also counted among its members a group of evangelical churches, some of whom renounced their membership in favour of EFK as NCCCK became increasingly politicised. Currently it has a membership of about 37 churches and para-church organisations with memberships of between 10,000 and two million each. The dominant church organisations in NCCCK are still those with colonial missionary roots—particularly the CPK and the PCEA. It is not by coincidence that the two top jobs in the NCCCK, i.e., the Chairman and Secretary Generalship alternate between these two organisations. It is therefore also not surprising that the political profiles of the three organisations (CPK, PCEA and NCCCK) do not differ enormously.

To a certain extent the NCCCK has been dominated by both Kikuyu and Luo interests, although it would be far-fetched to argue that it is an exclusively Luo-Kikuyu affair. This dominance has its roots in the historical geography of the two organisations. It will be recalled that the activities of the East African Scottish Mission (later PCEA) were confined to the GEMA areas during the colonial and immediate post-colonial periods. Those of CMS, later CPK, were in the Kikuyu, Luo and coastal areas.

From these areas these churches drew most of their African clergy. Even those from other communities passed through the famous CPK or PCEA schools in Kikuyu or Luo areas, such as Alliance High School or Maseno School. Such people as Bethuel Kiplagat, a Kalenjin and a former Permanent Secretary in Kenya's Foreign Affairs Ministry, was one of NCCCK's council members and a product of Alliance High School. Similarly although its sitting Secretary General Rev. Mutsava Musyimi is from neither the Kikuyu nor Luo communities he was ordained and served his apprenticeship in a Kikuyu CPK diocese—Mt. Kenya South.

In spite of this ethno-historical formation, the NCCCK has shown concern about issues of governance and democracy irrespective of the ethnic affiliation of its leadership. It does not have a specific theological stance since its function is meant to be essentially ecumenical. However, its leadership occasionally displays a form of liberation theology not articulated by any of the mainstream or evangelical churches who make up its membership. Like the CPK, its broad theological stance is also linked to its development agenda.

The Kenya Assemblies of God (KAG)

The KAG is probably one of the fastest growing churches in Kenya. In a span of twenty years, it has acquired almost half the number of followers the PCEA has taken since the nineteenth century to recruit. It currently has 800 congregations and close to 600,000 members. In the urban areas, most of the congregations are situated in high density areas, targeting the

urban worker. Where such church congregations are found in middle class suburbs their appeal seems to be confined to the domestic workers. Many congregations have very short life spans and some find no audience at all. One such church in the middle class suburbs of southern Nairobi has barely taken off sixteen years after its foundation. However, there is a continuous process of growth in new areas which more than counterbalances this.

The main adherents of this church are the rural peasantry and the urban proletariat. There exists a very small group of elite urban dwellers and rural bourgeoisie within its ranks, and where such classes are present they either occupy positions of leadership or are in transit to other church organisations. There also exists a reasonable gender balance, at least in the urban congregations. In the rural congregations most members are women. This is probably because of its strict behavioural code which condemns many practices commonly indulged in by rural men—e.g., drinking locally brewed liquor, polygamy, wife-beating, etc.

In the urban centres, a majority of its followers are young. This is largely because of its “contemporary” mode of worship. Most of its churches have modern musical equipment with proficient musicians. Worship is lively, as the congregation dances to contemporary and improvised “traditional” songs. The mode of prayer is intensely participative. Everyone simultaneously says his or her “own” prayer aloud, sometimes gesticulating, and when the noise subsides, the priest concludes with a single prayer, whereupon the congregation responds in agreement.

Interestingly if youths rise in economic status and particularly if they manage to join the middle class, either through acquiring formal white-collar employment or via successful involvement in informal business, they often migrate to more mainstream churches in search of a more “refined” environment. Those of higher status who choose to remain, apparently do so to take up leadership in the organisation’s different departments.

As was the case with the PCEA in the 1940s, when the Overseas Presbytery of Kenya (OPK) gave separate voice to the interests of the missionaries, in the KAG a missionary group has an established and organised presence. These missionaries are employed by the parent church, Jimmy Swaggart’s US-based Assemblies of God. They run their own missionary church in Nairobi, the International Christian Centre, which is also meant to serve the mission personnel and KAG’s “international community”. Interestingly, it also houses the KAG elites who would rather not migrate to the mainstream churches like the PCEA and the CPK. The minister in this church is appointed directly by Swaggart’s Springfield headquarters. Note that the KAG has absolutely no control of this congregation.

In the area of doctrine, the KAG cannot accept a member into its congregations unless he/she is a “converted Christian”, practises monogamy, has promised in writing to donate one-tenth of his/her total monthly income in cash or kind, and is “filled with the Holy Spirit with the evi-

dence of speaking in other tongues" (KAG Constitution: 2). Very few of those who attend KAG services meet these exacting qualifications. Official members of KAG are therefore usually only about one-fifth of the congregations.

We must note that above all else, it is the "doctrine of the tithe" that is emphasised most. Hence, even though most KAG faithful are not church members, most of them are still regular contributors. It is unclear how the receipts are distributed or what subventions KAG receives from the US. In any event, its ministers tend to be flamboyantly dressed and to be conspicuous consumers.

The Reformed Church of East Africa (RCEA)

The current membership of the RCEA is about 17,000, including four Boer farmer families. It is mainly drawn from the peasant and squatter farmers of Uasin Gishu and Trans-Nzoia in the Rift Valley. Although its name suggests it has activities elsewhere in East Africa, its only congregations outside Kalenjin areas are in neighbouring Bungoma District.

Insofar as we were able to establish, the RCEA is a stagnant church organisation. It is formally run by peasant farmers, but the latter seem to have little clear conception of what the church's role is or what its future course should be. Nor is it clear how much power they really have, since the RCEA's property is still under the control of the Boers.

The church leaders themselves still personally practise subsistence farming to subsidise their meagre incomes from offerings and the thin support they receive from the Boer farmers. There is no clearly defined theological position or even style of pastoral activity. The mode of worship blends conservatism with the local forms of American-style evangelism. This lack of coherence probably exists because the RCEA was created to cater for the needs of the Boer community in the area, and once the Boers withdrew from running the church they in practice took its "theology" with them.

The Africa Gospel Church of Kenya (AGC)

Until the last quarter of the 1970s, the AGC operated only in rural areas. It then established parishes in urban centres in Eldoret, Nakuru and Nairobi. Currently, it claims a total membership of about 300,000 people. This membership is both elite and mass. This is largely because of certain historical factors.

Like the PCEA among the GEMA communities, AGC was responsible for the education of most of the Kalenjin elites from Kericho and Bomet districts. Some members of these elites (and their families), many of them currently in high political office, are members of the AGC churches in the rural areas and in Nairobi. Meanwhile the mass of the Kalenjin have

stayed poor and these make up the majority of members. Its headquarters is still in Kericho, close to the rural poor.

In the rural areas, most members are women. This is true of most other churches and can be mainly explained by the fact that in many rural areas up to 80 per cent of the adult population is made up of women. The urban congregations are more balanced with respect to gender and attract members of all ages. However, unlike in the other evangelical churches whose membership is predominantly young, in AGC the middle-aged predominate. It is not entirely clear why this is so.

Although cast in an evangelical mould, AGC's doctrine actually approximates that of the CPK. "Pentecostalist" speaking in tongues is denounced, recruits are accepted into the fold even if they have not been publicly "saved", and there is less emphasis on "tithing".

The African Inland Church (AIC)

The AIC is the product of an early round of American evangelism in Kenya. Its membership which currently stands at 1.2 million, and like that of the PCEA, the AGC and the CPK it appears to be predominantly middle-aged. This is largely because the younger generation prefers the less staid form of American evangelism found in the KAG. The AIC encompasses some sections of the Kamba and Kalenjin elites. These are largely (if not wholly) products of AIC schools, which are concentrated in Kamba and Kalenjin areas.

With respect to style, in spite of its American roots, the AIC espouses a conservative mode of worship. Like the AGC but unlike the KAG the AIC is opposed to faith healing, speaking in tongues, and public prophecy in church. However, like the other evangelical churches it is also doctrinally opposed to confronting state authority.

The Evangelical Fellowship of Kenya (EFK)

The EFK had an informal existence prior to 1976, when it was registered. But it only acquired organisational flesh and bones in 1980 when it established a secretariat to run its corporate activities. Currently, the EFK has 16 church and para-church members. The most prominent of these are the mainly Rift Valley-based African Inland Church (AIC) and the African Gospel Church (AGC). Of the 14 church organisations that are members of the EFK, eight have their headquarters either in Kericho or in Nyanza. Furthermore, nine out of the organisation's 13 branches are in the Rift Valley or Nyanza Provinces. Of the remaining four, most are not operational anyway.

The EFK did not come into the limelight until 1990-91 when some of its members joined from the NCKK arguing that the latter's political pro-

file was incongruent with biblical teachings. This was followed by a visit by the leadership to State House which apparently resulted in its co-optation by the regime for purposes of competing with the activities of NCCK.

Unlike in the NCCK where the organisation has maintained a fairly consistent doctrinal position independent of the identity of those who have led it, it is difficult to distinguish between the theological positions of the EFK as an organisation and those of its leaders. For the most part, the doctrines of a clique of its leaders pass as those of the entire organisation and its member churches. These doctrines have little theological rationale and instead reflect a blind wish to defend the regime and to keep politics at bay from the evangelised Christian (see Aboum, 1994:13).

Legio Maria

Legio Maria is an Africanist religious institution founded in Suna-Migori in the 1950s in protest against the Catholic church. Its original constituency seems to have been former adherents of Catholicism but the precise grounds of the schism are unclear. The organisational structure mirrors that of the Catholic church, as do titles. Through the years, its main following has been drawn from among peasants and a few urban workers. There are nonetheless a few members of local and even national elites in the organisation, including former Assistant Minister Archbishop Ondiek. The organisation has a following evenly divided between men and women but most of its members are middle-aged or elderly. Most young members are present by virtue of their parents' involvement in its activities. Currently, it has an approximate membership of about half a million.

The doctrine of the church is personally elucidated by its "Pope", Baba Mtakafilu Timotheo Blasio Ahitler. There is a pattern of practices which are fairly stable except when denounced by the Pope. As with the KAG, but probably with even greater intensity, there are "noisy" prayers and incorporation of exotic practices like exorcism. Interestingly, most of its members are preoccupied by witchcraft and there are special prayers in each church session to "cast out and bind the powers of witches". Unlike in most of the organisations described above, Legio Maria tolerates polygamy and most of its followers, including Pope Ahitler, are themselves polygamists.

The Islamic Party of Kenya (IPK)

Unlike many parts of the world where Islamic organisations have been at the forefront of political struggles from below, in Kenya these institutions until recently have been mute. To understand their belated appearance in popular struggles, we must take note of Kenya's specific religious history.

Historically Islam in Kenya was implanted over a very long period along the coastal strip. In this area, it was not only introduced by Arab traders as a religion, but also came with a culture and a corresponding education system. Hence, by the time the British settled on the coast between Bagamoyo and Mombasa, Islam as a religion and its corresponding culture had taken deep root. Given the breadth of the British system of education, as opposed to the muslim *madrassa* one—not to mention its superiority as a job ticket in the service of the new colonial masters—European-style schools rapidly became more attractive to the coastal people. But since Muslims could not renounce Islam in order to take up the colonial form of education, a conflict ensued. This saw different elements of the coastal population respond in different ways.

One group decided to straddle by embracing both Islam and Christianity. This group benefited from the colonial system of education and finally became an educated elite among Muslims. The other group rejected Christianity and its corresponding system of education. A section of this group deepened their involvement in Islam, taking over from Arabs the roles of “sheikhs” and “khadhis”. The current upsurge of Islamic organisations in Kenya reflects this division. Despite its “fundamentalist” image, the Islamic Party of Kenya (IPK) apparently represents the first group. The United Muslims of Africa (UMA) aspires to represent the second.

Meanwhile, Kenyan Islam has a second base in North Eastern Province, amongst Kenyans of Somali descent. However, in this province although Islam might have been expected to have had an impact on political processes, the Somali nationalist pre-occupation with secession has predominated instead.

The IPK differs from the other organisations described because it is both a political party and a religious organisation. It is founded on the basis of the argument that, despite having the same (or better) qualifications as Christians, Kenyan Muslims have been systematically discriminated against in the provision of state jobs and assets. An initially secondary emphasis was the promotion of Islamic beliefs and traditions. During the struggle for democratisation in Kenya the Young Muslim Association (YMA) sought to constitute a lobby within an already established opposition party (the pre-split FORD) but the interest was not reciprocated. Apparently strongly influenced by the success of FIS in the aborted Algerian elections three months before, the leadership of YMA decided to form their own political forum. This resulted in the IPK, whose religious angle—and its international resonances—gave it a very high profile.

The IPK has subsequently become a multi-racial Muslim group basically articulating the interests of the “westernised” segment of Muslims. Although its membership is largely drawn from among the youth, it has an appeal that encompasses all ages. Its illegal status probably prohibits the older generation, including Muslim capital, from identifying openly with

it. Spatially, its activities are confined to the coastal towns although of course there are Muslims living elsewhere in Kenya.

After the 1992 elections, when some IPK candidates stood on FORD-Kenya tickets, a schism began to emerge. The two tendencies were identified on the one hand with the *bona fide* leadership of Mr. Mwinyi and Mr. Wandati, and on the other with the highly vocal IPK "emissary", Sheikh Balala. Given the personal support that Balala appeared to enjoy as a spokesman of the IPK, he declared himself the chairman of the organisation—ousting its "mute" official leadership in the process.

The underlying factor behind this coup was however a conflict between "orthodox" Islam as embodied in the *bona fide* IPK leadership and a variety of fundamentalism, as preached by Balala. Although the rift between the two camps is now closing, the struggle between them has left IPK "slow-punctured". It is worth underlining the fact that fundamentalism in Kenya, despite its international orientation in an "eastward" direction, is basically only present amongst westernised Muslims.

The United Muslims of Africa (UMA)

Although basically orienting itself to the non-westernised and more lumpen segment of the Muslim population of the coast, the UMA is actually an off-shoot of Youth for KANU '92, and was formed in 1992 under the auspices of "KANU stalwarts" in Mombasa. The justification for its formation was ostensibly that black Muslims in Kenya were underprivileged because of their historical exploitation by Arabs. Hence, the need for an organisation which would "champion the rights of the black Muslim in Kenya".

According to its founder Omar Masumbuko it was also formed to fight Islamic fundamentalism. From the "black Muslim" supporters of UMA whom we were able to interview however, we established that UMA was formed only to disorganise the activities of IPK—primarily by identifying the latter as exclusively fundamentalist and by claiming to be the only group that could contain Islamic fundamentalism in Mombasa. It has no definite membership or doctrinal position as such. Similarly, its constituency and purported membership is unknown.

ETHNICITY, POLITICAL PATRONAGE AND RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS IN THE 1990s

Ethnicity has naturally continued to influence both political and religious differentiation in Kenya in the 1990s: in fact its influence on political differentiation has almost certainly intensified. In these capacities it also influences the political stances of religious institutions. But this does not mean that the advocacy politics they embrace is, as a result, confined to

the championing of ethnic claims. Indeed, their involvement in political liberalisation has been driven by forces greater than ethnicity and is normally expressed in appeals to wider issues of justice and democracy.

On the other hand, such issues also have ethnic dimensions in Kenya, meaning that it is virtually impossible to distinguish between "secular" and "ethnic" political claims. A perhaps more important observation is that the "advocacy"-oriented religious organisations are mostly elite dominated, and that their *form* of ethnic politics therefore has clear elite traces.

As already noted, ethnicity and patronage have an intimate political relation. If the democratic agenda of the advocacy-oriented religious institutions corresponded in part to elite forms of ethnic politics, then this section of the elite had precisely been mobilised in this direction through its exclusion from state patronage. Moreover they have been displaced as state clients by the elites of the communities amongst which the evangelical churches had a considerable hold. This relation was consolidated in the 1990s through an extension of state patronage to these churches. In the process a set of "loyalist" religious institutions were created.

Ethnicity and the mainstream churches

One of the most interesting features of those religious institutions taking up an advocacy role in Kenya is that the social class and ethnic base of their leadership is very similar to that of the national political leadership of the Kenyatta period. In fact, these organisations have a more pronouncedly narrow ethnic base than do some religious organisations which have not taken up an advocacy stand.

As already noted, the interplay between ethnicisation and politics in Kenya dates back to the colonial period when the population was divided and administered in "tribal" units and confined politically to District Political Associations. These tribal units were organised in a status hierarchy with differential access to state resources, with those "tribes" living in closest proximity to settlers and missionaries acquiring a pre-eminent status. These tribes later became the raw material from which was groomed a successor group that would ensure a smooth transition to an independent African state. The main challenge to this group came from popular organisations like Mau Mau which articulated grievances both against colonialism and against the successor group itself, or elements of it. Fear of such popular forces in turn propelled elite politics further into ethnically-based coalition building. The nationalist coalition at independence was therefore jammed with ethno-regional notables flying the ethnic banners of "their" communities and organising local politics along ethnic lines.

The indigenous elite which came to dominate politics did not differ in social background, education, socialisation or general outlook from that which came to dominate the formerly European-based and missionary-run

mainstream Christian churches. In many of the churches in question, the political elite moreover formed the dominant layer of the laity.

It was not until inter-elite ethnic competition increased in the second half of the 1970s, and especially when Kikuyu-Luo rivalry was most intense (following the assassination of T.J. Mboya and the disengagement of Oginga Odinga from KANU) that segments of the clergy assumed a really vocal political profile. In this period for instance, Bishop Henry Okullu, then editor of the NCKK magazine *Target*, became one of the most vocal critics of the Kenyatta regime.

Under Moi these same elites and their successors still dominated the ranks of the clergy and the laity in the original European churches. For instance, in the CPK today Mr. Samuel Arap Ngeny, the Lay Secretary to its Provincial Synod (the top decision-making organ in the organisation), is a former Assistant Minister and Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly. Other leading ethno-regional notables and ex-members of the government like the former Minister for Health Jeremiah Nyaga, have also been lay leaders in the organisation's rural parishes.

The same can be said of the PCEA where formerly prominent Kikuyu political engineers also acted as lay leaders. In the 1980s for instance, among the most active church elders in the PCEA's St Andrew's Church in Nairobi were the then Attorney General Mr. Kamere and the University of Nairobi's Vice-Chancellor, Professor Maina Mungai. Of course, it was precisely this elite, in both its clerical and lay/political guises, who became severed from the reins of power under the Second Republic, as the new president sought to construct a new power bloc from which both the Kikuyu and Luo were excluded. It is no accident that the first call for a multi-party system of government in Kenya was made at St Andrew's Church in Nairobi, one of the most elitist Kikuyu-dominated churches in the country.

Given this historically produced and politically sustained proximity between the traditional political class and the activist clergy, the political interests of ethno-regional elites have often found expression through the church. It is significant therefore that it was the bishops from the excluded ethnic communities, the Luo and the Kikuyu through Dr Henry Okullu and Dr Timothy Njoya, who kicked off the debate on multi-party politics in Kenya in 1991.

It was in this context that the original European- and missionary-based churches came to assume an advocacy role, formally on behalf of the whole population, but inspired by a sense of the injustice suffered by their particular communities. The correlation between these churches and the communities listed can be gathered by recalling that of the two million CPK adherents, 0.67 million are from Kikuyu areas. Of the 5.4 million Kenyan Catholics, 1.7 million are from Central Province. As for the PCEA, over 80 per cent of its activities are among Kikuyus in central Kenya and the "diaspora".

Most layers of the "activist" clergy typically saw themselves as supporting the political causes dominant in their own areas of operation. These were typically causes reflecting "community interests". This was most explicitly the case in Nyanza, where it was also longest established. According to interviews in the CPK's Maseno diocese the banning of the Kenya Peoples Union and the failure of the KANU "New Development Agenda for the Luo", inevitably saw the diocese assume the role of a political party furthering the interests of the Luo community both nationally and "at home". The diocese assumed this role until the formation of FORD.

By 1990, forbidden political activities of all kinds were taking place in the sanctuary of the activist churches, in the guise of "prayer meetings". For instance, the hunger-striking "Mothers of the Political Prisoners" camped at the All Saints' Cathedral for months, demanding the release of their sons. Similarly, prayer meetings were held in the same church for Paul Ngei after he was declared bankrupt and sacked from the cabinet, and for a group of lawyers eventually released from detention in 1991. (In more recent times, in December 1993, a prayer meeting was held in the same church for the unregistered University Academic Staff Union). Similarly, those seeking political legitimacy as oppositionists clamoured for close working relations with these churches.

Although initially using the churches to stamp their own brand of politics on the political opposition, the upper clergy soon lost control of the torrent of popular feeling that the struggle for liberation was to let loose. New popular leaders emerged whom they had to adjust to. In Central Province the elite's preferred son, Mwai Kibaki, was swept away by the support of the masses for the more aggressive Kenneth Matiba. The upper clergy were indeed forced to come to terms with this situation. A prayer meeting was arranged in Matiba's honour after his return from London and was attended by most CPK Bishops who were Kikuyu. The main speech was by Archbishop Manases Kuria. Falling short of prophecy, the latter nonetheless declared that Matiba had a "high calling" from God and that his political record distinguished his leadership qualities from those of other aspirants.

Of course, several of the higher clergy supported democratisation in its own right and not merely as a sectional claim. This was most obviously the case with the Anglican Bishop Alexander Muge. Muge was a Nandi, historically a community central to the Moi coalition of Rift Valley peoples. In the early stages of the multi-party debate Muge opposed political change, apparently "on his community's behalf". Later he became convinced of the need for liberalisation and joined his fellow CPK bishops in demanding it. He was then assassinated.¹ Ironically his previously "radical" successor, Bishop Stephen Nyorsok, underwent a political voy-

¹ Four years after its appointment, the government-appointed Commission of Inquiry into his death had still not met.

age in exactly the opposite direction and changed cloak to support the regime.

Political patronage

It may be argued that in a situation where politics is thoroughly polarised and churches have taken up positions in both camps, then it is unfair to attach the label of "advocacy" merely to one set of them. Yet it is actually the case that only on one side, that of the oppositional churches, has a link been made between ethnically-defined community interests and wider "civic" issues. The stance of the pro-government churches has *not* been to link community concerns with a different set of civic issues (for example, respect for constitutional authority) but rather to argue that the churches have no political role to play at all.

There is one exception to this rule, the mainly Kalenjin-based AIC. The AIC is as old as the "activist" churches. Because of its geographical base outside the old settler-missionary heartlands however, its leadership was never recruited for a "successor" role. Nevertheless it seems to have seen itself as a spokesman for community interests. This role was crystallised with the adoption of an activist pose by churches which could be identified as articulating positions consistent with Luo and Kikuyu interests. In these circumstances the AIC stood up to be counted for the defence of Rift Valley peoples and "their" government.

The AIC was to go on to play a much more important role. Through its bishop, a close ally of the president, it was to become the prime mover in setting up a coalition of non-mainstream churches to mount an attack on the "confusion of politics with religion" by the mainstream ones. While the Kalenjin clergy's stakes in this undertaking were largely ethnic and solidaristic in nature, the other loyalist churches saw in it an opportunity to present themselves to the regime as potential clients. Unlike the AIC, most of the churches in this category were formed in the 1970s and early 1980s following an influx of American missionaries and had previously enjoyed insecure relations with government.

The local leadership of this group of churches is largely drawn from the upper strata of the urban proletariat and the peasantry, while the membership they attract is multi-ethnic. As a result they are possibly more likely to be attracted by political patronage than swayed by ethnicity.

If the previously politically insecure status of most of these churches drove them into the arms of the state, then the interest of the state in them was reflected in the growth of a new form of patronage. As already noted, under Kenyatta—when resources were somewhat more substantial—the recruitment of clients was based primarily on the "politics of inclusiveness", while Moi's recruitment has been based solely on the "politics of denigration" (Ngunyi, 1993(b)). Kenyatta's concern as he recruited clients into his patronage network was to forestall the formation of an opposition

force by those sections of the elite who had been excluded from formal positions of power. By *informally* including them in an outer circle of his coalition, he was assured of the support of their constituents. In this way, he was able to co-opt potential oppositionists and their followers. His inner circle, those in formal positions of political power, meanwhile had enough resources at their disposal to act as major patrons in their own right.

To address the potential of the mainstream churches for opposition, Kenyatta typically opted to form a tacit alliance with their leadership by including them as clients in his broad coalition. As already indicated, this was made easy by the facts that in the early years of his rule the grip of the African clergy over these churches was still not strong and because a substantial part of the new African upper clergy now taking over the reins of power hailed from exactly the same strata and geographical areas as his own (mainly Luo and Kikuyu) ethnic coalition.

Of the members of Kenyatta's inner circle, only Odinga cultivated clerical clients of his own (see above). Both this, and memories of the Mau Mau days when Africanist churches helped create a generally subversive ideological ferment, led Kenyatta to become a patron of the African Independent Pentecostal Church of Africa, which had been most strongly associated with Mau Mau. He also deregistered another Africanist sect, the politically volatile *Dini Ya Musambwa* operating in western Kenya. He detained the sect's leader Elijah Masinde under house arrest until the euphoria which it created amongst peasants had died down.

Under Moi, political patronage has proliferated. He has recruited clients from all sectors in society and the polity ranging from the churches, ethnic communities, and the *jua kali* (informal) sector to football clubs. Many of these clients have no real constituency of their own because they are his own creation, charged simply with the task of denigrating and disorganising popular forces. We have argued elsewhere (1993 (b)) that the most important of these clients are the ethno-regional denigrators.

These are situated in the "tribe" and act as conduits for the disbursement of patronage to a given ethnic community. For the most part, they are unpopular and unelected leaders, but are meant to tip the balance in ethnic politics in favour of the regime. Unlike under Kenyatta, the Moi clients have a very short leash to allow for effective control by the chief patron. Their lifespan is equally short as it is determined by the political dynamics in the ethnic community they are "accredited" to.

Moi's relation to religious institutions follows this same pattern. When he assumed power, the Kenyatta clients from the mainstream churches were part of the coalition he had to disband in order to settle on the presidency. He therefore systematically disengaged them from state patronage, picking instead a few clients from the newly founded churches. Excluded from state patronage and with their ethnic communities repressed, the disengaged clergy gravitated toward opposition.

To counter the oppositionist activities of these institutions by a process of denigration, Moi had to intensify his recruitment of an alternative group of clients. These were mostly drawn from churches with strong roots in his home area and from among the most respected clergymen in the evangelical churches. Among them were the Rev. Birech of the AIC and the Redeemed Gospel Church Bishop, Arthur Gitonga. These clients, in concert with other forces, then mobilised support in religious circles for the regime. They were responsible for the withdrawal of the eight church organisations from the NCCK in 1991.

Until the formation of IPK, Moi had a much firmer grip on the coastal Muslim population than the highland Protestant and Catholic ones. The Chief Khadhi has traditionally owed his appointment to the head of state, and the Muslim Supreme Council has been dominated by "state-friendly" Muslim leaders. Moi has also been able to contain the main Muslim sects by befriending their external leaders. His alliance with the Aga Khan has for instance won him the loyalty of the Ismaili community.¹ The same can be said of his closeness to the external spiritual leaders of the Bohra community.

Following the liberalisation of political forces in Kenya, and the subsequent rise of "popular Islam" through the formation of the IPK, Moi had to recruit clients to denigrate the new development. To justify the activities of the denigrators, he picked on the question of race, arguing that "black Muslims" had been marginalised not by the state but by Arabs and Afro-Shirazis.

Overall, we can argue that those institutions pursuing advocacy politics are also those excluded from political patronage under Moi, although it would be inexact to argue that these institutions pursued advocacy politics solely because of their exclusion. On the other hand, it can be argued that inclusion in state patronage networks largely accounts for the position taken by the "loyalist" institutions in their defence of the regime.

SOCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS OF RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

Other factors besides religious organisations' ethnic composition and in- or exclusion from state patronage networks are also important in explaining their differentiated responses to political liberalisation. Primary amongst these is the belief system of the religious organisation itself, particularly as it affects questions of social and political responsibility. But they also include institutions' patterns of organisational governance, their in-

¹ Although the Aga Khan's daily newspaper, the *Nation*, is for the most part critical of the Moi regime its operations cannot be directly associated with him, for the newspaper has always been run at arm's length.

volvement in local level development, their level of autonomy from parent organisations and the social class character of its clergy and leadership.

These factors can also be said to contribute to the adoption of advocacy politics amongst the mainstream churches (and in a different form in the AIC) and its absence among most of the "loyalist" institutions. The more an institution's internal decision-making process followed democratic procedures, the greater its involvement in local level development, the greater its autonomy from its parent organisation, and the more middle-class its leadership and its flock, the higher was its likelihood to take up issues that were unpopular with the state. By contrast, those institutions with more authoritarian systems of governance, lower involvement in local level development, less autonomy from parent organisations and more socially dependent leaderships were more susceptible to political patronage.

Religious belief systems

In the last thirty to forty years a major schism has opened up between the mainstream churches and the evangelical ones concerning issues of personal and group political responsibility. The most obvious instance of socially and politically engaged Christianity is that of Catholic "liberation theology". The central postulate of the latter is that it is first necessary to be "humanised", that is, released from degradation and poverty, before entering fully into spiritual salvation. Such "humanisation" is said to presuppose "conscientisation", that is, understanding and overcoming the conditions which negate humanity via broadening one's social and political participation. The latter is said not only to promote greater individual social dignity—an important precondition of genuine faith—but also to involve breaking with passively "magical" conceptions of the social and natural order (cf. Roelefs, 1988).

Liberation theology has far deeper roots in Latin America than in Africa. But it has nevertheless had a pervasive influence on the mainstream churches in the Third World generally. In Africa it has typically been diluted and crossed with more orthodox clerical concerns about charity, but the result has still commonly been a combination of a commitment to participative development activities and a heightened concern with questions of justice.

The evangelical churches by contrast have traditionally been concerned with an insistence on and defence of the literal truth of the bible and efforts to spread and enforce what are seen as the central moral commandments it embodies. Within this set of beliefs the meeting of individual material needs is completely separated from issues of faith, or is simply seen as mediated by the latter only in terms of individual personal choices to behave "righteously" or not. Individuals, not the state or the church, are

thus responsible for their own personal situations and politics is basically an irrelevance.

There is of course one exception to this last belief. Communism and socialism (rarely distinguished or internally differentiated) are regarded as explicitly evil since they seek to break the relationship between the individual and God. Thus it is perfectly in order to support anti-communist politics. Many evangelical groups, particularly those emanating from the US, have indeed done just this, and in the process—according to some commentators (cf. D'Antonio, 1990)—have linked themselves, particularly in Latin America, to the CIA. Most prominent amongst the anti-communist crusaders have been Swaggart's Assemblies of God (*ibid.*:159).

As will be seen, this system of beliefs also tends to be expressed in the nature of evangelicals' relations to development activities, and in their internal systems of governance.

Organisational governance

Apart from establishing how different forms of organisational governance account for the extent to which churches can play an advocacy role, this investigation also sought to establish the nature of the relationship existing between the leadership and the membership of the different religious institutions. Our premise was that an accountable and responsive church leadership was more likely to contribute to the articulation of the socio-political needs of its congregation in the political realm.

To compare the nature of the accountability and "responsiveness" of leaderships, attention was paid to whether it was elected; if it was elected, to how often it sought a fresh mandate from its electorate and to how free and fair this was; to what the nature of dialogue between the leadership and its membership was (how and how often it took place and, more importantly, whether there were functioning organisational structures linking the laity to the institution's governing body); and finally to the relationship between the lower and the upper clergy. Given that the lower clergy tends to be much closer to the people than the upper clergy, the extent to which the voice of the lower clergy is articulated may be decisive in influencing the political stance of a religious organisation. Broadly speaking, it appears that governance was more accountable amongst the "activist" churches than the "loyalist" or Africanist ones.

The "Activist" Churches: This is nowhere more apparent than in the CPK. The latter's structure embodies provision for accountability at all levels from the diocese to the Provincial Synod. Also important to note is the level of lay involvement in the governing process of the institution. The Provincial Synod is the top-most decision-making organ in the CPK. In it sit all bishops and the lay leaders elected by its different dioceses. This organ meets every two years although the Provincial Week, a smaller

version of the synod, meets once a year. The archbishop is the head of this body.

There are three important organs which inform opinion in the Provincial Synod. These include the House of Bishops which comprises all the bishops, the House of Clergy which includes the middle-grade clergy elected from each diocese, and the House of Laity which comprises elected lay leaders from each diocese.

Directly below the Provincial Synod is the Standing Committee. This mainly comprises chairmen of different committees in the church who are usually the bishops, but elected lay members of the Provincial Synod also sit on this committee. Other members include the heads of various departments and diocesan representatives. Technically, decisions made in this committee have to be ratified by the Provincial Synod. Below this committee is the Provincial Secretariat which is the implementing committee of the CPK. There is also at this level a consortium of departmental boards which bring together the key personnel in each department at the national and diocesan levels. Those in the consortium include the technical personnel, elected lay leaders and nominated representatives of each diocese. The CPK has 14 dioceses with each diocese having numerous Deaneries and each Deanery administering at least 10 churches. The diocese is an important administrative unit in the CPK and its organisational structures reproduce those of the churches as a whole (Synod, Standing Committee, etc.).

The entire leadership of the CPK is elected, apart from the middle-grade clergy who are normally appointed. Church members reported that the outcomes of these elections usually reflect the wishes of the membership. Where this is not the case, those attaining office by other means cannot act arbitrarily because of the many checks they are subjected to. For the most part, they also end up representing the interests of the membership for lack of room to do otherwise.

According to the interviews we conducted in the CPK Maseno diocese, and its St. Stephen's Cathedral congregation, following the exclusion of Odinga and the increasing isolation of the Luo during the Kenyatta era, the diocese gradually assumed the role of articulating their political interests through Dr. Henry Okullu. Because its organisation was receptive to lay pressure in this way, the CPK enjoyed legitimacy among the Luo and eventually took on a very active role in political liberalisation. This role also accounts for Okullu's ability to lay claim to the late Odinga's mantle in 1994.

Although, as we have argued, the organisational governance of the CPK is democratic it should be mentioned that the influence on its operations of the elite is greater than that of the rest of the laity. This tends to limit its level of real accountability. The democratic structure of the CPK is also limited by the fact that the lower clergy, which is most in touch with the grassroots, has no direct role in decision-making processes. This is the preserve of the upper and middle clergy, who are influenced by many other forces.

The governance of the Catholic church is also relatively democratic. Although the top leadership in the institution is not elected the membership of its top decision-making organisation, the Kenya Episcopal Conference, is elected. Unlike with the CPK however, the lay leaders of the Catholic church are not generally drawn from the political class. They are however drawn from a population which is politically active. Many of the laity on the conference serve also in the Lay Apostolic Department, which promotes lay participation at all levels of church life, educates the laity about their role in church life, and assists in the formation of church councils at the grassroots. The membership of both is drawn from a cross-section of the petty bourgeoisie and bourgeoisie, ranging from better-off peasants and school teachers to the top layer of the elite. The effect is that decision-makers are acquainted with a broader range of popular interests than in the case of the CPK.

The executive arm of the conference is the Kenya Catholic Secretariat and is composed of several departments and commissions, each headed by a bishop. Although the secretariat allows the bishops to thereby mediate the decisions of the conference, lay input (especially regarding development-oriented services) occurs also in this process.

In Machakos Diocese it was apparent that the bishop had regular *barazas* (public discussions) not only with his own staff, but also with the lay leadership of all the departments in his diocese. In this way, popular pressures can be expressed and the bishop has to respond to the moods, views and needs of the people his church serves. Requests raised at these *barazas* led to the involvement of the diocese in civic education during the last election.

The mode of organisational governance in the PCEA differs from that in both the CPK and the Catholic churches. Although it is arguably responsive to the needs of the people, it is rather conservative. It is also much more centralised. There is a strict institutional framework within which all ministers in the PCEA must operate. This accounts for Rev. Njoya's disciplining in 1990 for acting outside this framework.¹

The top decision-making organ in the PCEA is the General Assembly, which meets at least once every three years. In it sit the upper clergy and an equal number of elected lay church elders as well as communicant members co-opted from the diverse departments of the church, who may vote on all issues except matters concerning doctrine. Alongside the lay church elders, the communicant members' presence adds to the influence the laity has in the PCEA.

¹ Rev. Njoya issued several political statements from the pulpit without consulting the church's leadership. When Charles Njonjo (a once powerful associate of both Kenyatta and Moi) was disengaged from KANU, Njoya called on the faithful to pray for him. In January 1991 Rev. Njoya was also the first prominent figure to call for a return to multi-party politics.

The Moderator is the Chairman of the Assembly and the church's "chief executive". The assembly's executive arm is the General Administration Committee, headed by a secretary general. At the lower levels and below the assembly are the Presbytery and the Kirk Sessions. These are composed of both the clergy and the laity in the same proportions as in the assembly. They report to the latter through the secretary general and the moderator.

Like the Catholic church, the PCEA ostensibly believes in taking a collective stand on matters of politics. This has to be done either through the secretary general or the moderator with the blessing of the assembly. However, the moderator in consultation with the secretary general can make comments or take part in certain political activities without necessarily passing through the assembly or the committee. Such an arrangement in fact leaves the profile of the church on matters of politics at the effective discretion of the moderator. By leaving decision-making on such matters to only two individuals, the church's internal democracy and transparency is thereby limited. This limitation was made manifest in the punishment of Rev. Njoya's form of advocacy politics and the moderator's persistent aloofness on matters of politics, in spite of pleas to get involved from some quarters of the church. Thus the PCEA stood apart from the church-led meetings seeking to reconcile the opposition just before the 1992 election, basically because its moderator did not think it was appropriate to participate. The church was equally aloof on issues of civic education.

Despite the fact that the leadership of the activist institutions is structurally obliged in different degrees to be responsive to its membership, this does not mean that the former are completely untainted by political patronage. One of our respondents, the editor of *People* magazine Bedan Mbugua, claimed that a prominent CPK bishop was a "court regular" and a trusted client of Moi.

The "Loyalist" churches: The general conservatism of the Assemblies of God parent organisation (see above) is reflected in its Kenyan affiliate, structurally as well as politically. The top leadership is completely detached and relates to the members only as the latter's source of "spiritual exaltation and stimulation". None of the leaders are elected by the faithful.

The top decision-making organ in KAG is the General Council. On this sit all ministers and all members of the parent body's Missionary Council working in Kenya. All national departmental heads are also members. This is the organ that selects the national leaders of the KAG. However candidates can only be nominated by the National Executive Committee which is the administrative wing of the organisation. This committee is chaired by the General Superintendent and on it sit his assistant, the General Secretary and Treasurer, all district superintendents and their assistants, the area missionary directors and the chairman of the Missionary Council.

The pastors of local assemblies are normally appointed by the officers of the General Council with great influence being exercised by the General Superintendent. These pastors in turn select the Sectional Presbytery leadership, which in turn selects the District and ultimately the General Presbytery leaders. To qualify as a voter in the most basic of these processes, one has to have been an ordained church minister for at least three years. Unlike in the CPK, there is absolutely no participation by laity in the election of church officials.

As far as we were able to establish, the election of office bearers by the clergy is less than transparent. The powerful hand of the General Superintendent and his apparent manipulation by missionary interests gets in the way of free and fair elections. The result is a rigid structure in which even the leadership cannot make decisions prior to taking into account the General Superintendent's interests and possible reactions from missionary quarters.

The election of the General Superintendent and his national officials is also usually heavily manipulated. According to the KAG constitution, if a candidate running for a national office musters two-thirds of all nominations he or she shall be declared the winner of the election.¹ The General Superintendent has never in the history of KAG faced an actual election. Because in practice the National Executive Committee nominates a candidate for General Superintendent,² any candidate contesting against the incumbent has always found it difficult to gain nominations. This is usually because of the influence of the incumbent on the other members of the National Executive Committee. It was established that in the recent past, two ministers who indicated intentions to stand against the incumbent General Superintendent were disengaged from the church organisation altogether before they could muster enough support to challenge the present office-holder, the Rev. Peter Njiri. These were the Rev. Stephen Mulatya and the Rev. Patrick Mungai.

The organisational governance of the local assemblies is as undemocratic as that of the national organisation. While the constitution demands that on appointment pastors should seek a vote of confidence from the local assembly Annual General Meeting, this has never happened in any KAG church according to our sources. In fact, Annual General Meetings only take place in some assemblies and even then they are sporadic.

We also established that local church boards are normally nominated by the pastor as he deems fit. For the most part this has resulted in pastors appointing their clients to these positions. Similarly, while some positions

¹ This is uncannily similar to the queue voting arrangements prevailing in KANU from 1986-91. In both, nominations were a public event.

² The procedure for the election of the General Superintendent is described in the KAG Constitution (Article II, Section 2). But the constitution does not say who qualifies to stand in such elections. In practice however it seems that a candidate must be of at least District Superintendent level.

of specialist departmental head are elective, either the pastor or his "elder" sits on these departmental committees. For instance, the pastor tends to be the sponsor of the Youth Department, while his wife is either the leader of the Women's Department or its sponsor or both.

The organisational structure as a whole can therefore be depicted as having a patron-client character. The missionary clique act as the General Superintendent's patron and the rank and file clergy act as his clients. According to one respondent, whenever the activity of a pastor of a local assembly becomes controversial and the constitution has to be consulted to offer guidance, the pastor has always argued that the constitution in question is out-dated and a new one is in the pipeline. There is therefore "always another constitution to replace the existing one", to weather any perceived crisis. Accusations concerning the organisation's attempts to keep its membership in the dark over its rules and statutes were corroborated during a trip to KAG headquarters. As we tried to purchase a copy of the constitution from the organisation's bookshop, we were informed that only ordained pastors were entitled to buy a copy of the document.

Rank and file members interviewed were however apathetic about this state of affairs. Given that most of the men involved in the lay leadership of local KAG assemblies are working-class, it can be argued that their leadership positions in the church give them status and a milieu for self-actualisation. This may account in part for their uncritical position. Where dissatisfaction surfaced, little tended to materialise from it. The reaction of some women who have been dissatisfied has been to stay on and attempt to change things from within "through prayers", while some of the more dissatisfied youth have migrated to other more open church organisations.

It would appear that, even though hardly favourably disposed from the outset to political liberalisation, the KAG's leadership had insufficient popular legitimacy to warrant meaningful participation in socio-political processes. Furthermore, below the level of the General Superintendent most leaders are preoccupied by internal jostling for power.

Until May 1993, when Kobbus Henniphan resigned as the organisation's "Treasurer", the RCEA was largely under the influence of the South African Dutch Reformed Church and its Netherlands counterpart. Although the church had a complex independent organisational structure, in which on paper the laity play a major role, this was either still-born or has become defunct. Its operations had been suppressed by Henniphan, who ran the church single-handedly and without reference to it. His successors seem both timid and unassertive.

This state of affairs may be related to the fact that a large number of the church's adherents are or have been squatters, some on the farms of the Boer farmer church owners. This classic relation of dependency appears to mean that those Africans who reach the leadership of RCEA typically view their positions as sufficient reward and providing sufficient self-actualisation in themselves. They would therefore not want to endanger their elevated status by "indulging in politics", a syndrome similar

to that present in KAG. Even where the interests of the squatters it ministers to are over-ridden, the church fails to confront the provincial administration or the regime. RCEA's nature may also be influenced by the fact that the organisation is still in the process of transition. In any event the regime appears to regard its activities as too inconsequential even to warrant the recruitment of its leaders as clients.

The Central Church Council, based at Kericho, is the Africa Gospel Church's top decision-making organ. It is headed by an elected chairman and on it sit three representatives from each of its 16 parishes. Also sitting on the council are the National Directors for the Youth Ministry, Christian Education, Women's Ministry, Tenwek Hospital, as well as the principal of the church's Kenya Highlands Bible College in Bomet and representatives of the parent body, the World Gospel Mission. The latter play a less prominent role than missionaries in the KAG, and there is less evidence of a relationship of patronage and clientage between them and the AGC leadership.

The lay representatives on the council are non-voting members, apart from those representing the interests of the parent organisation. Since the church leaders are elected by the council, this also means that the laity does not participate in the election of either the moderator or other church leaders. Operating parallel to the council is a secretariat that handles the daily running of the organisation. This is headed by an appointed secretary general who is the second most powerful figure in the AGC, after the moderator. Apart from doubling in his role as the organisation's financial controller and a signatory to all its accounts, he is also its official spokesman in the absence of the chairman. The secretariat takes its directives from the council and appears to be responsible for appointing local pastors. In the local assemblies, the pastor is answerable to the local church council on which sit all the heads of the local assembly's departments.

According to lay members the AGC leadership nevertheless did display a degree of responsiveness to them, and even though they could not vote in local or national councils they appeared to feel the latter reflected their views. For example the respondents, especially from the rural assemblies, agreed with AGC's withdrawal from NCCK arguing also that the latter was a "political party in disguise". On the other hand it was not surprising that the leadership and membership of AGC had a high level of agreement on this issue. After all, both were defending a regime they consider their "own", given AGC's essentially Kalenjin constituency.

It would be interesting in this regard to conjecture on the nature of the relations between members and leaders in a hypothetical situation where the regime in power was oppressive to the Kalenjin community. We have our doubts that the AGC would offer responsive leadership to its hypothetically oppressed membership. Arguably, the leadership is currently responsive to its membership only because the political setting is convenient. Otherwise, the fact that the laity has little real say in the running of the in-

stitution would probably lead to the leadership adopting stances that are not necessarily representative of the membership. Similarly, the simple organisational structures, headed by appointed leaders, may also become clogged to pressure from below if the interests of the government and Kalenjin diverged. In other words, the AGC has adopted a form of advocacy politics—albeit of a loyalist kind—but in the absence of an activist dimension. Rather, it is an advocacy in which the membership remains politically passive, and in which the leadership is linked to the political system largely through patronage mechanisms.

In the AIC, the lowest level of decision-making is the local church council. This is composed of the nominated pastor, about four elected members, and leaders of programmes in the local church. Several local church councils together elect a branch church council from among their deacons, elders, etc., and these bodies in turn elect the District Church Councils which then constitute the Regional Church Council. It is the latter who finally elect the top decision-making body in the AIC, the Central Church Council.

The Central Church Council meets once a year and elects a new bishop every five years. But while lay leaders are voting members in all the administrative structures in the AIC's hierarchy, when it comes to voting for the bishop, only ordained pastors are enfranchised. This however does not necessarily mean the AIC leadership is insensitive to the demands of its membership. The fact that the other structures in the organisation have a relatively high lay representation creates a space for the demands of the members to be reflected upwards. However whether this actually occurs depends on the pastor in charge of the structure in question. Much as in the AGC, it is difficult to distinguish whether the adoption of an ethnic advocacy politics in the AIC was as a result of unilateral decisions by its KANU-connected leaders or reflects a more general openness to popular pressure. The AIC's bishop was heavily patronised by the state and happened to share common political goals with the ruling elite.

As has been already noted, the EFK is an ecumenical alliance whose leading constituents are the AIC and the AGC. But according to the EFK constitution representation of different organisations in its top body, the General Assembly, depends only on their proportional contribution to the EFK annual budget. According to Rev. Simbiri, the Secretary General of EFK, the AIC and the AGC make the biggest contributions to the EFK's annual budget. They therefore have the largest number of representatives in its assembly.

The Executive Committee and the Secretariat of EFK are both elected by the assembly. Given the dominance of the AIC and AGC in EFK, most positions in the latter are occupied by members of these two church organisations. Thus, the EFK chairman and secretary general are both AIC ministers and its secretariat is housed at the AIC headquarters in Nairobi.

The dominance of AIC and AGC has strongly influenced the operations of the organisation. Although the EFK has neither an explicit advocacy

politics nor a specific ethnic agenda—largely because of the diversity of ethnic communities it incorporates—its involvement in politics is nevertheless “state-friendly”. This is a result of its client status.

It is the influence of AIC and AGC bishops in the EFK which mainly accounts for this clientage. However, other factors could explain it as well. Firstly, most EFK member churches are sponsored by American contributions and have American missionaries personally involved in their running. These missionaries typically feel extremely insecure, especially as the state has shown itself extremely sensitive to any hint of foreign influence on Kenya’s political scene. In any case, most of them have probably shared the (at least until recently) popular view in the US of the Moi government as a bastion of international anti-communism, and therefore worthy of support in its own right. Their clients, the Kenyan clergy, have to follow suit. This scenario lends the indigenous leadership of these organisations as potential clients to the state.

Secondly, many organisations in EFK are still in their formative stage. They are not institutionalised enough to have the capacity to risk confronting the state. Hence, as the state shops around for clients to forestall the aggression of the activist churches, these institutions see in the state’s “friendliness” an opportunity to acquire resources for their nascent organisations and themselves. The Bishop (and owner) of the Redeemed Gospel Church, Rev. Arthur Gitonga, has for instance acquired several plots of land in Mathare Valley for his church organisation by becoming a client of Moi.

Thus the position taken by the EFK during the process of liberalisation has been one of consoling the state rather than confronting it, while receiving prebends in return. During the 1992 election period the EFK was tacitly “contracted” by the regime to disorganise the activities of the NCKK. On its behalf Bishop Arthur Gitonga officiated at the prayer session during the private presidential swearing-in ceremony after the 1992 December elections. It is also significant that in the post-election period, both AIC and EFK church ministers have taken over the traditional role of saying prayers during national celebrations, formerly occupied by ministers of the PCEA, CPK and the Catholic church.

Some of the local congregations of the churches represented by EFK have however questioned this coalition with the state. For instance, according to an informant in the Deliverance Church, this church’s Board of Elders censured its bishop for apparently representing the church in a meeting between the EFK and the president. While it is arguable that a few other local assemblies would have wanted to take a similar position as that of the Deliverance Church, the domination of the pastors over their congregations in most member churches in EFK makes this unlikely.

The “Africanists”: The top decision-making body in the Legio Maria sect is the Apostolic Council founded in 1967 and modelled on the Catholic Church’s Episcopal Conference. Officials on this council are hand-picked

by the Legio Maria Pope, Baba Ahitler, "through the help of the Holy Spirit". These officials are in turn answerable exclusively to him as the spiritual leader.

Parish officials are elected by Parish Councils chaired by the Father Vicar (or pastor). They are identified and nominated by the congregation before the Parish Council selects or approves them. They must however get the approval of the Pope before assuming office. According to one of our respondents, a leader in Kisumu parish, regular elections to check the popular legitimacy of these leaders are not necessary. His argument was that the organisation was "not like a club" and therefore did not require such rules.

Unlike the membership of some of the other organisations described above, that of Legio Maria is not recruited by evangelisation or conversion. As far as could be established, close to three-quarters were recruited after attempted "divine healing" interventions. The church "specialises" in exorcising evil spirits. Most of its members therefore enter it in situations of intense personal/spiritual dependency. There is a lot of talk amongst the members about "spirits" (good and evil) and most respondents interviewed considered that the sect's direct involvement in politics might introduce "evil spirits" into the mission of their church.

It is nonetheless interesting to recall that despite this Legio Maria's leadership has always been involved in politics. The relationship between its Pope and Oginga Odinga was an intimate one and the former repeatedly prophesied Odinga's political success. Moreover, Odinga's successor as leader of FORD-Kenya, Kijana Wamalwa—and his rivals for Odinga's political mantle like James Orengo—have all gone to seek the blessing of Ahitler. Another leading Legio Maria figure—Archbishop Ondiek—was himself a professional politician, sitting for KANU until the 1992 elections and serving as a client of Moi.

Nonetheless Legio Maria as such plays neither an activist nor loyalist role, and nor can the church be said to be incorporated into the state's patronage network. Rather, the general influence of this sect among Luo peasants gives it such a social profile that politicians clamour for its blessing in order to be legitimised among its followers.

Muslim organisations: At the time of writing the IPK was still an unregistered organisation and its internal decision-making procedures were either non-institutionalised or deliberately shadowy. It is this which has created conditions for rival groups to emerge claiming the organisation's leadership. To what extent this trend also reflects the presence of real internal tensions is less clear. Certain informants, including a leading member of the organisation, suggested that divisions within it had an ethnic dimension, with the group associated with Sheikh Balala being identified with Muslims of mainly Arab descent.

UMA is basically a one-man show. Mr. Omar Masumbuko, the "trustee" of the organisation's fund runs it like a private foundation from

his business offices. During an interview conducted in the course of my fieldwork, he stated that UMA has a national committee and a nascent organisational structure. Nothing is known about its numbers of members, although Masumbuko claims (with apparent seriousness) that it encompasses all black Muslims. Ordinary members of UMA who were interviewed indicated that the association is by and large the personal property of Masumbuko. He is not elected and other officials are hand-picked by Masumbuko himself—a fact he openly admitted. Moreover he went on to make clear that his relationship with the members is on his own terms.

As UMA's life-blood, Masumbuko is apparently answerable only to the KANU stalwarts in Mombasa who are ironically themselves led by a Kenyan of Arab descent, Sheriff Nassir. That Masumbuko and his association owe their existence to KANU was corroborated by his appeal to me (as a "researcher from a government institution") to convince the regime not to proscribe UMA as it did Youth for Kenya '92.¹ He further requested me to convince the government that his was the only organisation that could fight Islamic fundamentalism in Mombasa and its environs, and that in this connection, the government should give him more financial support.

Masumbuko treats the officials of the association with open contempt. While conducting our interview, Masumbuko conceded to me in the presence of the association's chairman that the latter's existence as an office bearer was merely decorative, and that the only reason the chairman wanted his position was because of the rents and hand-outs he drew from Masumbuko as the "trustee" of UMA funds.

The members interviewed corroborated Masumbuko's view of "his" officials. Some openly agreed that they had joined UMA only because there were hand-outs available from the association. They saw little substance in the association's claim to unite black Muslims, even observing that Muslims world-wide were one by virtue of their common belief in Allah.

It is impossible to escape the conclusion that UMA is a creation of the regime aimed at disorganising the activities of IPK. It is constituted on a patron-client basis with Masumbuko as an ethno-regional sub-patron for KANU and "black Muslims" as his supposed clients. Unlike IPK whose relationship between leaders and members is based on common objectives, that in UMA is based on rents. It is this which has attracted a number of less educated lumpen elements to it.

Given Masumbuko's fear that UMA might be abandoned by KANU now that the "Islamic threat" in the coastal region is perceived to be ebbing, he has decided to broaden his patronage base by appealing to other

¹ Youth for Kenya '92 was an important intermediary during the 1992 elections for funnelling funds from state and parastatal institutions to various important clients of the regime (particularly defectors from other parties). The apparently powerful group was however banned shortly afterwards, as its leadership was identified with an intra-KANU struggle over the Vice-Presidency. Masumbuko thought it likely that the off-shoots of Youth for Kenya '92 would suffer the same fate, since they had outlived their usefulness.

donors sympathetic to the Islamic cause. This in fact accounts for the organisation's rather grand title. UMA aspires to spread its influence to the rest of Africa and thus have a better justification for funding by Islamic regimes in the Middle East and North Africa. In his quest for more patrons, Masumbuko asked me to circulate my findings to the embassies of different Islamic republics in Kenya for purposes of publicising the activities of UMA and hence marshalling resources for its activities.

While UMA related to the process of political liberalisation in Kenya, its role was merely that of a parallel institution implanted in civil society to denigrate democratic forces. It also existed as a conduit for the disbursement of state patronage to the "black Muslim" community during election time.

Involvement in development activities

As will be seen, those churches most involved in the development process are those whose theology most encompasses social rather than individual spiritual concerns. An emphasis on the latter is rather associated with charity. On the other hand, involvement in the development process in turn tends to strengthen a church's popular base and increases both its own and the latter's autonomy from state patronage interventions. It also lends a certain measure of popular legitimacy to any political claims which are voiced.

The "Activist" Institutions: Most activist religious organisations apart from IPK had extensive local level development programmes ranging from the provision of health and family planning services to complex banking activities like the CPK's Victoria Finance institution. The broadest range of such activities appears under the banner of NCCCK. The latter's development activities fall into three categories: (Christian) education and training; relief, rehabilitation and resettlement; and Christian service and urban development. As part of "Christian education and training", the NCCCK is involved in both formal and informal education and was actually the initiator of the village polytechnic programmes now taken over by the government. Under this category also, the NCCCK has been involved in civic education in concert with other religious forces. The National Election Monitoring Unit was partially sponsored by this department of NCCCK.

Under its "Relief, Rehabilitation and Re-settlement Programme" the NCCCK has set up several projects including Rural Training Centres, whose aim has been to train farmers from areas formerly receiving relief in new methods of agriculture. The urban development project has largely involved the provision of social services and economic inputs to informal sector operators. The construction of *jua kali* sheds (shelters for informal operators) is part of this programme. Not only NCCCK's programmes but also its

projects are linked and integrated, so that many populations are recipients of more than one of them.

As the state withdraws from welfare and development activities, its place is increasingly occupied by institutions like the NCKK, and symbolically, some of the state's popular legitimacy is also appropriated by these institutions of civil society. NCKK's advocacy activities rely on this base, and have largely found expression through its Peace and Justice Commission.

Like the NCKK, the Catholic church has very extensive development programmes. These reflect its doctrinal position that the role of the church should be both ecclesiastical and practical, in the sense of promoting the social status of those it ministers to. The development programmes are administered through a number of departments. An education department, set up in 1950, runs a number of education institutions including a fully fledged university. Health care interventions are co-ordinated by a medical department set up in 1957, which runs hospitals, health centres, maternity centres, dispensaries, mobile clinics, and training programmes for nurses, midwives and laboratory technicians. Also included in this programme is a "Natural Family Planning" section and a Community Based Health Care programme.

The church supports social service and income generating activities country-wide. In Machakos District these included *inter alia* water and sanitation provision, agricultural and bee-keeping projects, a community based health care programme and a cooperative society. Most of these projects seem to have been designed largely by the beneficiaries themselves and were currently run by them with minimal supervision from the diocese. The diocese however provides occasional in-service training sessions for the leaders of the projects, intended to keep them abreast with changing practical and managerial techniques. In Machakos at least, the diocese has consequently assumed an authoritative profile on the district's political stage.

CPK is also involved in extensive development interventions. These are not managed by specialised departments as in the Catholic church or NCKK, but through a single development coordinator's office. As already noted, in Maseno diocese from the early 1970s, the CPK consciously took up Odinga's mantle. This applied not only to the political but also the development arena. As a result CPK is the only church in Kenya to run a bank—Victoria Finance. This bank is a joint venture between the church membership and diverse local capitals in Maseno and Kisumu. Arguably, these development efforts have allowed the CPK space to develop a very high profile in national politics.

The development activities of the PCEA are not as widespread as those of the other activist churches. Most of them have been inherited from the Scottish missionaries and include the Chogoria hospital, Tumutumu hospital, and Kikuyu hospital. Apart from its Masaai project in Narok, the PCEA has not initiated any recent substantial projects in its areas of ope-

ration. Most of its smaller-scale projects are simple in nature and mainly geared towards helping the laity reproduce itself. Few of them are local capacity building. The parish we visited in Dagoreti had a nursery school and a village polytechnic. Apart from this, its other activities included a revolving fund and a handicraft project run by the Mothers' Guild. This both reflects a lower theological priority for social development and in turn contributes to an inability to sustain a significant "advocacy" profile.

The "Loyalist" Institutions: The involvement of loyalist institutions in local level development was found, with one exception, to be minimal. Where they existed, development projects were mostly service-oriented, completely dependent on missionary donors, and restricted to one specific place. The more complex ones were the exclusive domain either of the missionaries themselves or of the church national leadership, at least in terms of management and apportioning of proceeds. Thus they generally reproduced the classical features of charitable interventions.

The AIC represented an exception to this pattern, just as it differed from the other evangelicals more generally. Like the mainstream churches it has a long history and a well-established "development record". Traditionally this has been centred around the provision of hospitals, homes for destitute children and schools. More recently it has come to feature community based health care programmes, agricultural projects, and other income generating activities.

From our observations in the field, the AIC's projects have a local capacity building content, and are spatially spread (although mainly in the Rift Valley and Eastern Province). We should however note that, as in the case of the PCEA, most of these projects have been inherited from the white missionaries. Hence the people served by AIC do not attribute the success of the projects to its leadership.

It should be mentioned at this point that *initiating* projects in a rural setting has more political value for an organisation than simply running inherited projects. This is so because the initiation of new projects exhibits a recognition of the changing needs of the beneficiary often on the basis of some negotiation with them. The fact that the AIC has itself initiated only a few projects since the exit of the white missionaries means that they have a weaker basis of legitimacy for independent political intervention. On the other hand, having a development record means that some credibility does accrue to its "advocacy politics" in favour of the regime.

The only projects which the KAG has in most of its parishes are nursery schools. In some rural parishes there are a few agricultural projects, but only in a nascent form. In any event they play second fiddle to the programmes run by its parent missionary organisation. These include bible colleges, Christian literature programmes and a rural development programme in Narok. Essentially, the KAG cannot get funds for development programmes from the Assemblies of God in the US as long as the latter is operational in Kenya. This has probably strengthened the

tendency for the parent organisation's projects to be confined mainly to matters of spiritual interest. Interestingly, their local assemblies have been forced to collaborate as junior partners with other churches doing development work in their localities. The KAG Mathare assembly has for instance collaborated with other church organisations doing rehabilitation work in the slums of Mathare and Korogocho, according to one of our respondents.

According to one KAG clergyman interviewed, rivalry between the central office and the parishes also accounts for low levels of involvement in development. Given the problems of legitimacy of the church's top leadership, anybody at a local level doing development work with the help of an external donor is deemed a threat. This source revealed that the collaboration between Rev. Patrick Mungai of Calvary Temple Church and some non-Assemblies of God US-based donors contributed to his disengagement from the KAG. It should also be mentioned that the second minister disengaged mainly for challenging the KAG General Superintendent for the top seat in the organisation had strong connections with World Vision.

The AGC's development activities are rather more extensive than the KAG's. As in the case of the KAG, it is the foreign missionaries who run the major projects like the Tenwek Hospital in Bomet. Together with a few dispensaries in Bomet and Kericho these are funded by donors such as USAID in concert with the Kenya Government. According to Rev. Rono, the organisation's financial controller, up to 80 per cent of the budget of these projects is externally financed. The projects run by the AGC assemblies themselves are basically agricultural and include extension services to peasant farmers, poultry keeping, zero grazing, and other income generating activities.

As in the case of the AIC it could be argued that the AGC's profile in rural development was sufficiently high to legitimise a certain advocacy profile. But granted that it is situated mainly in the regime's political stronghold, such advocacy is anyway only likely to be designed to enhance the regime's status. Once again it is difficult to believe that the AGC would or could maintain a political profile if KANU lost power.

The development component of RCEA is almost non-existent. Although the church does provide some extension services to peasants and sponsors certain schools and village polytechnics, these activities are not co-ordinated directly by the RCEA Secretariat. They are undertaken instead either by individual local patrons or women's groups in local congregations.

Although the RCEA has one or two rudimentary hospitals and clinics in Uasin Gishu and Tanzania these are the exclusive domain of Dutch missionaries. After the recent "Africanisation" of the church's leadership, the more advanced development component was transferred to an informally constituted missionary clique who use the RCEA title but whose activities continue to be independent of it for all practical purposes.

According to one of our respondents, this is one area where the Dutch missionaries could not let go, as otherwise "they would have nothing to do".

Hence if a development profile provides the possibility of a political platform for the development agent, in the case of RCEA this platform could be occupied only by the Dutch missionaries and one or two individual patrons. Given their precarious existence in Kenya, because of their connection to the South African Boers, the former cannot use it to pursue advocacy politics.

Reflecting the fact that the member organisations of EFK have relatively few development activities, the development profile of the umbrella institution is also fairly low. For the most part, EFK has worked as a manager for the projects of its member churches and also those of parachurch NGOs, such as World Vision (Kenya), Mission Aid, and the Life Ministry.

The EFK has some projects of its own however, including a community based health care project amongst the Masaaï in Ngong and relief and education activities in North Eastern Province. Its pride however is an irrigation scheme in Nyanza which is still in a formative stage, as the organisation still needs funds for it to become operational.

In spite of its comparatively low level of development activities, the fact that EFK is party to a broader patronage network organised by the state gives its actions as a political denigrator some level of substance. However, standing on its own without support from the state, the EFK would have little platform to pursue advocacy politics.

The "Africanists"; Muslim organisations: In so far as we were able to establish, the "Africanist" institution examined had no development activities. The only project identified with Legio Maria are two schools in Kisii District, which are actually the personal property of Archbishop Ondiek. The IPK has also no development undertakings.

According to the "Trustee" of UMA, the organisation has several development projects which include school fee sponsorships, the building of a mosque, and relief. The members of the association we interviewed denied knowledge of these activities. Another of the organisation's "officials" expressed misgivings about the existence of these projects. He observed that while they were present on paper, they had as yet not materialised. As for the school fee sponsorship programme, he argued that it simply consisted of the hand-outs given to "begging black Muslims" by Mr. Masumbuko. Given that UMA is an explicitly political association, it is not dependent on a development component to maintain a profile. Nevertheless, something other than ad hoc individualised donations would ensure its political profile was more sustainable and effective.

Class backgrounds of leaders and followers

One key aspect of the social background of the leadership and following of different religious organisations, namely ethnicity, has already been dealt with at length. So too, in a general way, has the presence or absence of political and socio-economic elites or ex-elites in these organisations. The latter aspect of the question will now be addressed more broadly through an examination of the general social character of the institutions.

In Kenya, as in many other countries on the continent, class differentiation amongst Africans has until fairly recently been associated with a series of quite specific indicators. Given the major role played by the state as an economic agent and employer, and the tying of entry to different levels of state employment to educational qualifications, education is easily the single most important aspect of social differentiation and a major indicator of class. At the same time education tends to be associated with increased personal intellectual resources, a broadened world-view, and so on. On this basis special attention has been paid to it in the following discussion.

The "Activist" institutions: Besides the links provided by the education system between these institutions and the explicitly political segment of the "successor group", the link with education arguably also stimulated a complementary liberal democratic response to the current political situation.

An outstanding feature of the activist institutions is the educational level of their leadership. The CPK archbishop for instance is a Ph.D. holder, while most of his staff in the CPK Secretariat are also Ph.D. holders. These include Dr. Agnes Abuom, Development Co-ordinator, Dr. Chadrin, head of Research and Dr. Ireri, head of the Peace and Justice Department and a graduate of Yale and Princeton Universities. Of the eight bishops in the church, five are Ph.D. holders from prestigious universities. Many other members of the CPK clergy are equally well educated at both secular and theological institutions.

In the CPK diocese examined in this study, the bishop had a Ph.D., as had the warden of the diocese's main church, Dr. (Mrs) Ndonga, while the provost of this church (St. Stephen's Cathedral) was an M.A. holder. The high social status of the church's leadership was replicated in the nature of the congregation of the cathedral. This was basically an elite group of local businessmen, university lecturers, secondary school teachers, "progressive farmers" and bank clerks. In the rural parishes, the clientele of CPK normally comprises managers of large farms, primary school teachers, cooperative union clerks and shop-owners/small-scale businessmen. This is the group used by the ethno-regional political leadership to recruit and mobilise the mass of the population. In the multi-party period, they were used to recruit for the opposition in the (relatively recently) politically marginalised areas of central Kenya and Nyanza.

The Catholic church shares a similar elite clientele to the CPK church. But unlike the CPK where the laity mainly belongs to one social strata, in the Catholic church, there is also a substantial non-elite laity. The parishes situated in the rural areas attract both the peasantry and the rural elite, and the same applies to the urban parishes.

Most of the Catholic upper clergy have both secular and theological training from universities in Rome. Those priests who are locally trained are also well-grounded in socio-political issues from seven years of seminary training. In Machakos, the bishop was an M.A. holder while most of his development work staff and other functionaries were either graduates or M.A. holders from recognised universities. The laity observed at Machakos Cathedral was mixed, ranging from bank managers in the township to newspaper vendors.

The leadership of PCEA is a mixture of well-educated people and others with good basic education. The Moderator of the institution (Rev. Muindi) has a Theology M.A. while the Secretary General (Rev. Mwaniki) has a Ph.D.. Of the ordained parish priests, there are a few Ph.D. and M.A. holders both in secular and theological studies. There are however also holders of diplomas and certificates in these ranks.

As already noted, the PCEA laity is mainly drawn from the Kikuyu middle-class, especially the business class. Observations at Githima Church in Dagoretti Parish indicated that the laity here in fact comprised the local elite, drawn from as far away as Kikuyu Location (about 15 km). This elite included capitalists from Dagoretti township and the area's progressive farmers.

The NCK leadership is likewise a highly educated one. Its last Secretary General (Rev. Sam Kobia) has a Master's degree in civil engineering as a graduate from MIT. He also holds a Ph.D. in Theology. The incumbent Secretary General (Rev. Mutsava Mutsimi) has both secular training and an M.A. in Theology. The staff in the NCK's secretariat is similarly well educated. The membership of NCK basically comprises a wide variety of churches but as indicated earlier, the most important are the CPK and PCEA, organisations that are led by excluded sections of the elite.

The "Loyalist" institutions: The social status of both clergy and laity in the loyalist churches was relatively lower than those of the activist ones, and came from strata with much weaker traditions of political involvement. This tended to reinforce a bias toward a narrow definition of "issues of interest to the church".

There were few real social status differences separating the mass of the clergy from the congregations in these churches. Both tended to be plebeian. This does not mean that the clergy did not try to differentiate itself from the laity in various non-religious ways: rather the reverse. The clergy distinguished themselves instead, *inter alia*, by adopting the dress code of high-profile American evangelists. The clergy and top male laity in

many of these churches were normally seen in loud checked suits, and shiny white shoes. We were given to understand that these came as part of American *mitumba* (second-hand clothes) donations to the poor in these churches, but were skimmed off by the clergy. In the densely populated areas where these churches are situated, this form of dress obviously made them distinct. Interestingly, this clergy also addressed their flock with Americanised accents and forms of expression during their rather repetitive sermons.

Although the populations of the evangelical urban constituencies have no great political traditions at least in recent times, it was nonetheless mainly they who thronged to the pro-democracy rallies of 1991–92. Yet these churches seem to be under no pressure from this laity to express their opposition to the political system. Indeed, in most cases the leaderships of these churches have lined up with the incumbent regime without incurring popular lay sanctions. This seems partly explicable by their laity's traditionally non-institutionalised relations to the political process, whereby spontaneous and unstructured responses seem to predominate.

Nonetheless, there are some variations within this general picture which are interesting to trace. Even though the general status of the leadership of AIC cannot compare to that of leaders of the mainstream churches, it is still much higher than that of the newer evangelical organisations. Most AIC ministers have average-length secondary education with Diplomas or Certificates in Theology from the in-house Scott Theological College, and a handful are graduates.

The class composition of AIC congregations is varied and depends on an assembly's location. If an assembly is situated in an urban centre, its laity is likely to be drawn from migrants who were members of the AIC church "back home". But in the rural areas themselves, such congregations are normally elite. Indeed, as already noted, the AIC is largely the church for ethno-regional elites from among the Kamba and the Kalenjin.

The local congregation observed in Ziwani (Nairobi) had an elite membership from three ethnic communities, the Kamba (who were the majority), the Kalenjin and a small group of South Nyanza Luo. Most of these sections of the congregation were also members of the church "back home".

Levels of education in the KAG leadership were much lower. Its bishop is a lower secondary school graduate and the holder of a Certificate in Divinity from a correspondence college in Kisumu. Most members of the National Executive and General Council are either primary or secondary school graduates with minimal theological training. Similarly, its pastors and heads of District Councils are of limited secular and theological education. Amongst the thousand or so clergy only two hold M.A.s. These have had to adopt a very low profile as their intellectual background might be (negatively) "misinterpreted" by the church leadership, according to one respondent.

The churches of this organisation are situated mainly in high-density areas and attract the working-class. In the rural areas, the laity largely consists of peasants and squatters. The rural assemblies of the KAG, especially in Central Province and the Rift Valley, assume the character of a traditional religious sect, with a specific prayer mode and dress code. In apparent resistance to sexual "temptation", the women in these churches dress in ankle-length pleated dresses covering the lower parts, and thick sweaters buttoned to the neck covering the chest area. This dress code is common to other Pentecostal peasant movements in rural Kenya.

"Africanist" and Muslim institutions: The social status and formal educational level of the leadership of the Legio Maria is quite low with a few exceptions. The leadership is however well-grounded in traditional beliefs and mythology and some aspects of conventional Christianity. This expertise provides the basis for their legitimacy within Legio Maria itself. The institution mainly appeals to the rural peasantry and particularly those subjected to physical and mental illnesses.

Since the communities these populations come from are nonetheless relatively politicised ones, the leadership of such organisations does have to take up a certain political role. This is played mainly by making prophecies about political events. Prophecy generally plays an important part in the religious life of these institutions, so in this way, politics enters this church's mainstream activities. It is a form of politics however, which does not involve taking other than an oblique political stance or making any political demands on members, leaders or the state. On the other hand, prophecies are supposed to come true, and hence a kind of political statement or commitment is being expressed when they are issued.

The relatively high social status of the leadership of the IPK has already been alluded to. Apart from Sheikh Balala, all the main figures are either graduates or lower professionals. However the content and credibility of the IPK platform is only partly influenced by this. Though fundamentalism is not the dominant trend it is a clear strain and possibly the major source of its support from coastal youth.

By contrast the UMA "Trustee" and effective leader is a lower secondary school drop-out. Mr. Masumbuko insisted that our interview be conducted in Kiswahili. Although he claimed that this was because Kiswahili was "the natural language of the black man", it was evident that he had a hard time expressing himself in English.

Members of the UMA committee who were interviewed had no formal education at all, although all were *madrassa* graduates and teachers of *sharia* (Islamic law). The nature of the leadership—and even the membership—of UMA is probably not a particularly important factor in examining the stance it has taken however. The latter almost certainly was conceived outside the organisation, within Youth for KANU '92 instead—which was itself an appendage of the state.

Levels of organisational autonomy

Of the "activist" institutions, it is only the Catholic church that is not completely autonomous from its parent organisation. Nevertheless, we did not consider the dependence of the Catholic church of Kenya on the Vatican as constraining its pursuit of advocacy politics. This is largely because the Vatican has not had the power to systematically censure the political activities of national Catholic churches, as is exemplified by the continuing advocacy politics pursued by Catholic churches in the Philippines and Latin America.

It was apparent that lack of autonomy was only a really constraining factor in some of the loyalist institutions, mainly the KAG, the AGC and the RCEA. To this group, we might want to add UMA, but in this case the lack of autonomy was from a political "parent" (Youth for KANU '92) not a religious one.

In the KAG, the significant presence of missionaries has left its organisational structures completely dependent on the Assemblies of God. For instance, in the top decision-making council of 12 officials, six are still from the missionary side. Similarly, the KAG General Treasurer is a missionary, controlling the finances of the organisation. Furthermore, although KAG formally owns all former Assemblies of God property in Kenya, and controls it through a group of trustees, it is widely known that effective ownership is still with the Assemblies of God. The missionaries are also known to be subsidising part of the mainstream KAG budget, and paying some of the pastors. This dependency makes it impossible for the church to take an independent political stance, as its every decision is monitored by missionary headquarters. Coupled with other factors already discussed, this partly accounts for the muteness of KAG in the process of political change in Kenya.

Although the AIC and AGC are autonomous organisations, their missionary elements or counterparts still manage the operation of some of their projects and/or have a say in its operations. The Africa Inland Mission is supposed to have dissolved itself and passed all its assets to the AIC in 1979, for example. Although this technically occurred, "AIM International" opened a Nairobi branch to take care of the interests of the same missionaries immediately afterwards. Moreover, in the now reconstituted AIC, they retained key posts including personnel recruitment and management of the medical services.

Given their subservient squatter background, the leadership of the RCEA is largely dependent on the Dutch missionaries in the running of both the church projects and the general management of the organisation. As noted, until May 1993, the church treasurer was a Boer farmer who operated completely obliviously of the local membership. Although the finances of the organisation are now under the management of the local church council, the "invisible hand" of the Boer settler in the daily management of the RCEA can still be felt. This has completely incapacitated the

local leadership in its attempts to proselytise, let alone making comments on issues of politics.

CONCLUSIONS

The emergence of different political stances on the part of the leadership of different churches during the process of political liberalisation in Kenya was largely a function of ethnicity and political patronage. The social base of most of the "activist" institutions was ethnic groups with strong political traditions but who had been excluded from power. The "loyalist" institutions tended to have bases amongst ethnic groups incorporated in the ruling coalition or without strong political traditions or both. As for the "Africanists", a very diluted form of political stance emerged, broadly reflecting local ethno-politics, but heavily religiously mediated. Among the Muslim institutions there was some differentiation, but much less than expected. This reflected not only the unifying pull of social exclusion but also the fragmentation *within* the different "racial" constituents of the IPK, along ethnic, clan and—not least—sectarian (Sunni/Shia, etc.) lines. For these reasons there proved to be no self-consciously "black Muslim" group who Masumbuko could easily detach.

With respect to patronage, "activist" institutions had been excluded from state patronage, while the "loyalists" and UMA had been more or less explicitly included in order to polarise the activities of the opposition. The "Africanists" were courted by the dominant forces in their own ethnic groups, and as a result Legio Maria supported FORD-Kenya and Odinga's presidential candidature. The relationship between Odinga and the leadership of Legio Maria was however not one of a patron and client in the strictest terms.

Turning to more general issues, the evidence presented here underlines the need for a proper refinement of the notion of civil society as intrinsically "pluralistic". On the basis of a consideration of religious institutions/organisations in Kenya, (civil) societal pluralism can hardly be denied. But the term "pluralism" suggests a general atmosphere of mutual toleration, peaceful competition, and a general commitment to freedom to organise and democratic rights. Such a picture is hardly borne out. Rather, it is clear that religious institutions, and social institutions and organisations more generally, while having more than one orientation, are by no means universally favourable to democratic rights. Rather, they tend to pursue distinctive agendas often as if they were the only such organisations which existed. Moreover, when they have pursued questions of democratic rights they have done so in situations and in ways which mainly demonstrate the sharp lines of social division in Kenya.

These lines of division should not need repeating again here. It should however be stressed that religious institutions have been involved in their drawing from the very start. Religious differences in Kenya originated in

different modes of colonisation (Christian/Muslim, European/Arab) and unevenness within the development of particular modes themselves (highland-settler and mainstream missionary-dominated versus lowland-economically marginalised and later evangelical-dominated areas). These unevennesses corresponded to the economic advancement or by-passing of specific ethnic groups. Such advancement and by-passing was then buttressed by the institutionalisation or absence of efficient western education systems run by the churches, and through this to the differential distribution of elites amongst laities which to different degrees were educated and informed or uneducated and ill-informed laities.

A second general point which bears repetition is that the state has consistently intervened in this process from colonial days. The mainstream Christian churches received state support in their education, and through this their missionary activities, precisely because the latter were seen as playing an at first ideologically neutralising and later grooming role amongst ethnic groups who for various reasons became defined as strategic *vis-à-vis* colonial interests. The colonial state extended little or no assistance to missionaries from those European or American sects which in the industrialised world were less closely articulated to the dominant social forces. In Kenya's first republic this pattern was reproduced largely undisturbed, while in the second it has gone into reverse in important respects. Probably the major continuities in state-religious institution relations have been the negative ones of the exclusion of "Africanist" and Islamic religious interests from a favoured relation to the state.

It has been on this basis that ethnicity has become intertwined with religion. Since ethnicity has also been intertwined with politics, religion has acquired a specific political dimension of its own. However, the relation is more nuanced than religious organisations simply being the mouthpieces of particular ethno-political groups. At the heart of this nuancing is the manner in which the more "advanced" and differentiated nature of specific ethno-regional groups became reflected back in the internal organisational structures of the religious institutions which had nurtured the very progress of these groups in the first place.

Unlike most of the rest of Kenya, and partly as a result of the twin presence of settlers and missionaries, Central Province acquired a dynamic and diversified African social structure. This was dominated by, but not confined to, an educated and articulate peasant-cum-commercial-cum-government servant elite. The density of this lay elite imprinted itself on the organisation of the local churches in a manner which ensured a church leadership sensitive and responsive to the full range of their interests. Little of this occurred in those areas where the African elite was much thinner or non-existent. Here missionaries and their successors continued to lord it over undifferentiated and until recently generally uneducated flocks.

These fundamental differences have in turn fed into and fed off the specific theological and social "trade marks" of the churches concerned. Everywhere in the northern hemisphere, except the former Soviet bloc,

state churches and the Catholic church (where this is itself not a state church) have over the last thirty years embraced issues of social conscience as part of a wider modification of their social and political roles which can hardly be explored here. Part and parcel of this adjustment has been the flourishing of socially-inclined theology. As noted earlier, this found a ready echo in parts of the Third World, where it was further elaborated into a more general social mission which included the "formation of humans" as well as the saving of souls. In Latin America, or parts of it at any rate, this "formation of humans" implied an affirmation of collectivism and radical struggle against the state; its more diluted African form emphasises a need for development projects which can serve as means for building individual and group capacity to undertake more general economic and social change.

By contrast, the evangelical tradition has tended to increasingly differentiate itself by its professed concern with strictly religious issues. Accompanying this has been an insistence on the importance of demonstrations of faith. What counts as such a demonstration varies tremendously from one sect to another, but acts of social commitment are generally excluded in favour of a combination of conspicuous places and forms of worship and "grace". Also strongly emphasised is the role of charity and therefore of big men as its bestowers.

Kenyan-style "Radical Islam" does not really depart from this pattern. Despite the appearance and some trappings of fundamentalism, the leading carriers of this particular "faith" turn out to be those members of the traditional coastal elite who became most socially and politically integrated in the late colonial period, but have subsequently suffered relative exclusion. As a result, some of them are almost certainly only peripherally or formally involved in Islamic religious practices. The presence of such a laity, and its continued political exclusion under the second republic, cannot be contained by traditional Islamic religious institutions and requires a novel, ostensibly FIS-style form. However, its religio-ideological content seems far from FIS's-or at least from those sections of FIS which have grabbed the headlines.

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About the authors

Justus O. Amadi teaches Economics at the University of Nairobi.

Peter Gibbon is a researcher at the Centre for Development Research, University of Copenhagen.

Gerrishon K. Ikiara teaches Economics at the University of Nairobi.

Mohamud Jama is Coordinator of the Environmental Economics Network of Eastern and Southern Africa, based in Nairobi.

Karuti Kanyinga is a researcher at the Institute of Development Studies and a Ph.D student at Roskilde University Centre.

Mutahi G. Ngunyi teaches Politics at the University of Nairobi.