Primordial groups of Kenya

Philip Gordon Favero

The University of Montana

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.umt.edu/etd

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.
PRIMORDIAL GROUPS OF KENYA

By

Philip G. Favero

B.A., University of Montana, 1965

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

1970

Approved by:

[Signatures]
Chairman, Board of Examiners

[Signature]
Dean, Graduate School

Date

May 11, 1970
Much of the information required in writing this thesis was acquired during my service as a Peace Corps volunteer in Kenya from January 1967 to December 1968. My work in Kenya as a government officer in agriculture took me to many different areas of the country where I met a great variety of people. I spoke kiSwahili, the lingua franca of East Africa, as well as smatterings of the Kikuyu, Abaluhya, Kalenjin and Masai tribal languages. I drank "sundowners" of scotch and soda with European settlers on the veranda overlooking the garden and moonshine whiskey (changa) with Africans in the slums of Nairobi. I ate roast turkey with the Indian High Commissioner at the American Ambassador's residence and roast mutton with spear-carrying Masai over an open fire somewhere north of Ngorgaishi. I had what is known as a "cross-cultural experience." It is to the many people of Kenya who helped make that experience so memorable and fine that I dedicate this thesis.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PREFACE</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Chapter

### I. PRIMORDIAL GROUPS OF KENYA

- A Short Introduction to Kenya | 4
- The Idea of "Kabla" or Type | 5
- The Asian Racial Group | 7
- The Asian Caste-Sect Group | 10
- The African Racial Group | 15
- The African Tribal Groups | 16
- The European Racial Group | 19
- Summary | 22

### II. A PRIMORDIAL GROUP ANALYSIS OF KENYA'S MODERN HISTORY

- Background: The Pre-Colonial Period | 23
- Early Tribal Relations | 24
- Early Asian-African Relations | 25
- The Colonial Period (1888-1963) | 27
- Initial African-European Conflict | 27
- European-Asian Relations | 29
- Asian Caste-Sect Relations and the Weakness of the EAINC | 39
- Final African-European Conflict: The State of Emergency and Independence | 40
- Kenya Since Independence | 49
- Constitutional Organization | 49
- Government Policy: African Socialism | 50
- Problems in the Policy of Equitable Distribution | 53
- Summary | 58
TABLE OF CONTENTS (Cont'd.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>III. THE CONTEMPORARY ASIAN AFRICAN RELATIONSHIP</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background to the Relationship: A Question of Citizenship</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudinal Determinants</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African Attitudes About Asians</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Attitudes About Africans</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Factors Affecting the Relationship</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Precarious Economic Position of the Asians</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Asian Economic Response</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Complications: The Possibility for an Educational Response</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Problems and Prospects for Asian Political Participation</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Asian-African Conflict: Functions and Risks</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. THE CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN TRIBAL RELATIONSHIPS</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Crucial Question of National Unity</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Background to Contemporary Relationships</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current African Relationships</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Possibility and Implications of the Emergence of Classes in Kenya</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African Overconfidence Before Independence</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Connection Between Economic Development and Political Legitimacy</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Danger in the Correlation of Class with Tribe</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. PRIMORDIAL GROUPS IN KENYA AND ELSEWHERE</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya As a Plural Society</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primordial Groups As Political Groups</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative Distinctions of Kenya's Primordial Groups as Political Groups</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE OF CONTENTS (Cont'd.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Social Basis</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primordial Groups and Common Social Values</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Primordial Groups and Kenya's Boundaries</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Performance of Interest Articulation by Kenya's Primordial Groups</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latent and Manifest Interests</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associational and Non-Associational Articulation</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific and General Interests</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible Benefits of Using the Primordial Group Concept</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Ill-Defined Boundaries of Political Systems</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Basic Problem in Plural Societies</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Territorial integration</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value integration</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elite-mass integration</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrative behavior</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Possibility for Cross-National Comparisons</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX A</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX B</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Percentage of Asian Population in Kenya's</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ten Largest Towns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The Asians of Kenya</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Major African Tribes of Kenya</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Figures on Asian Citizenship</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Income in Kenya By Race (1962)</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The intent of this thesis is to present an analytical description of the society of Kenya, with emphasis on the politics of that country during the current century. The principal tool of analysis chosen to accomplish the description of Kenya is the social group: a collection of people bound by "formal, institutionalized rules and characteristic, informal behavior."¹

In selecting what seem to be the significant social groups in Kenya, the author discerned that all of the groups chosen shared a similarity relative to the bindings which hold each group together in itself and apart from other groups. These group bindings proved to be a social phenomenon called "primordial attachments."² Primordial attachments, or bindings or ties, stem from the "givens" (or assumed "givens") of social existence such as kinship,


language, race, religion and custom. Primordial ties exist wherever there is an assemblage of people living together and regenerating themselves. But in Kenya certain primordial bonds, such as those of race, religion, caste and tribe, have served as bases for a recruitment of individuals into social groups. Since not all social groups are based on primordial ties (class ties, for example, also promote social groups), those social groups which are based on primordial ties may be said to constitute a special class or type of social group. It follows reasonably that this special type of social group should be called the primordial group. Thus it may be stated that in selecting what seem to be the significant social groups in Kenya the author discerned that all of the groups selected were primordial groups.

It is the assumption of this thesis that the concept of primordial groups provides a useful tool for social analysis in Kenya. A description of the social relationships between and among the primordial groups provides an instrument for understanding Kenya's society. Such a description serves, moreover, to define the type of society characteristic in Kenya. Generally, this society has been one of distinct primordial groups which lacked a common value consensus. It has been a society of primordial groups

---

whose relationships were specific and limited and often conflicting in nature. Such a society has been termed by some authors a "plural society."^4

The order of this paper will be to introduce the primordial groups in Kenya, to utilize these groups in an analysis of Kenya’s recent history, and to conclude with a discussion of the distinctive qualities of primordial groups as political groups and the possible benefits to be gained in utilizing primordial groups in the analyses of other societies.

^4See p. 108, footnote 1 below.

CHAPTER I

PRIMORDIAL GROUPS OF KENYA

In this chapter the author will first introduce the subject for analysis, the Republic of Kenya. An attempt will then be made to identify and describe five sets of primordial groups in Kenya.

A Short Introduction to Kenya

The Republic of Kenya is a Texas-size country situated on the equator and the eastern coastline of the African continent. The northern three-fifths of the country is arid, but the southern portion contains a lush coastal belt and a 3,000- to 10,000-foot interior plateau where most people engage in agricultural activity, the main source of Kenya's income.

Some writers combine Kenya with two neighboring countries--Tanzania and Uganda--and refer to this as East Africa,¹ an area which shares a similar history and some common economic and political ties. Our concern, however, is with Kenya per se and although the roots of the story

¹Called British East Africa before the three countries became independent African nations.
extend deep into pre-colonial history, the boundaries of our unit of analysis are the borders which the British drew in making Kenya a protectorate and colony near the end of the 19th Century.

The Idea of "Kabla" or Type

British rule established borders or divisions not only between Kenya and neighboring countries, but also between people living in Kenya itself. The essence of colonial rule in Kenya, as in the remainder of Africa, was "not economic or political domination . . . but racial subordination."\(^2\) The idea of racial divisions\(^3\) according to skin pigmentation served as the foundation for the colonial social system and set patterns for psychological, social and political behavior in Kenya. Cultural and economic differences also coincided with racial boundaries and created ritualistic caste-like relationships such as


\(^3\)"Race" as it is utilized in this paper means "... a human group that defines itself and/or is defined by other groups as different from other groups by virtue of innate and immutable physical characteristics. These physical characteristics are in turn believed to be intrinsically related to moral, intellectual, and other non-physical attributes or abilities." Pierre L. van den Berghe, *Race and Racism: A Comparative Perspective* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1967), p. 9.
Since the beginning of colonial days, the most common and important racial groups as perceived by the people of Kenya themselves are the Asians, Africans and Europeans. Thus the society can, to a remarkable degree, be defined by the relationships which have developed among these three groups.

It would be a mistake, however, to limit the social analysis to the racial groups only; for subgroups, found within the racial boundaries, are also important. The Swahili word *kabla*, meaning literally "type" or "kind," has a common and interesting usage in Kenya and the questions "Wewe ni kabla gani?" (What kind are you?) and "Yeye ni kabla gani?" (What kind is he?) are often heard. If an African is asked what "kind" he is, he will invariably give his own "type" as one of tribe. Thus: "Mimi ni Gikuyu (au Masai au Elgeyo)" i.e. "I am a Kikuyu (or Masai or Elgeyo)." If an African is asked about another African, the answer will once again be one of tribe. If he is asked about a non-African, however, his answer will be one of race. Thus: "Yeye ni Mzungu (au Muhindi)" i.e. "He is a European (or an Asian)."

The author found himself doing much the same in Kenya. He answered that he was an American and other whites were Britishers or Germans or Italians or whatever. Non-Europeans were, before the author began to recognize subracial groupings, obviously Asians or Africans. The point here is that, while people in Kenya consider others of a different color to belong to racial groups, they consider themselves and those of a similar color to belong to subracial divisions. Very clear-cut subracial groups are found among the Africans in their tribes and among Asians in their caste-sect bodies. The Europeans, who have been and are yet today predominantly British, have exhibited an overall group behavior common enough to preclude any distinct subracial groups.

The Asian Racial Group

The term "Asian," while commonly used in Kenya, is not always carefully defined. Sometimes Arabs are called Asians and sometimes the Roman Catholic Goans are not. For this paper, however, the Asian racial group will comprise all those people (including Goans) who came from or trace their ancestry to the countries of India and Pakistan.

5There is one interesting inconsistency to this racial, subracial group analysis. A black American is invariably termed a European by everyone in Kenya; yet an African, though he may be American-educated and American-dressed, is always and forever an African.
Some confusion results also from the fact that before the 1947 partition of India into the two separate countries of India and Pakistan all Asians had been called "Indians." Thereafter, because of the new restricted meaning of the term "Indian," the expression "Asian" came into wide use throughout all of East Africa. Much of the research material used in this study was written before 1947, however, and even some of that material written after 1947 persists in using the term "Indian." Thus the reader will note that in several quotations the author has pointed out that "Indian" as it is being used is synonymous with "Asian" as the author wishes to use it.

The latest official census in Kenya puts the Asian population at 176,613, which is approximately 2.0% of the nation's total. Approximately 85% of the Asians live in Kenya's five largest cities, and the following table shows the high Asian percentage of the populations in Kenya's ten largest towns.

---


TABLE 1
PERCENTAGE OF ASIAN POPULATION IN KENYA'S TEN LARGEST TOWNS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Asians</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Asian Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nairobi</td>
<td>86,453</td>
<td>266,794</td>
<td>32.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mombasa</td>
<td>43,713</td>
<td>179,517</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nakuru</td>
<td>6,203</td>
<td>38,181</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kisumu</td>
<td>8,355</td>
<td>23,526</td>
<td>35.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eldoret</td>
<td>3,758</td>
<td>19,605</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thika</td>
<td>2,336</td>
<td>13,952</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nanyuki</td>
<td>982</td>
<td>10,448</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitale</td>
<td>2,065</td>
<td>9,342</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyere</td>
<td>1,147</td>
<td>7,857</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kericho</td>
<td>593</td>
<td>7,692</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td>155,605</td>
<td>576,972</td>
<td>26.9 (ave.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures taken from Morgan and Shaffer, Table 3, p. 5.

Yet, although the Asian population is urban, it is also spread throughout the country. Each of the forty administrative districts in Kenya showed some Asian population in 1962, ranging from three Asians in a total of 75,526 people in Mandera District (in the extreme northeast section of the country) to 86,922 Asians in a population of 314,760 in Nairobi Extra-Provincial District. Anyone traveling the remote backcountry of Kenya can anticipate a duka (general store), Dukawalla (the Asian owner and operator), and his family at the next settlement or crossroads.

---

8Morgan and Shaffer, Table 1, p. 3.
Several factors have tended to promote amalgamation and unity in the Asian group. These are:

1. A predominant language—Gujerati—which originates from the Gujerat region of Northwest India and is spoken by about 70% of the Asians in Kenya.

2. A similar socio-economic position; for although there are richer and poorer Asians, the group in general has been situated somewhat above the Africans in the hierarchy and somewhere below the Europeans.

3. The tendency already mentioned for both Africans and Europeans to view the Asians as a single group.

4. The common practice of the government to treat the Asians as a single group.

The Asian Caste-Sect Groups

In spite of such unifying pressures, internal divisions have developed and persisted among the Asians.\(^9\) Religious differences account for a Sikh Group, a Roman Catholic Goan Group, and several sect groupings within the Muslim religious category.\(^10\) Within the Hindu religious

---


\(^10\) A category is a mere classification of a collection of people and should not be confused with a group as the author uses this latter concept.

The major caste groups among the Muslims are: the
TABLE 2

THE ASIANS OF KENYA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Category</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Place of Origin</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Principal Occupations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>Several castes</td>
<td>Gujarati</td>
<td>Gujarat</td>
<td>97,800</td>
<td>Traders, government officials, craftsmen, businessmen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Several sects</td>
<td>Gujarati</td>
<td>Gujarat</td>
<td>40,100</td>
<td>Teachers, professionals, traders, plantation owners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman Catholics</td>
<td>Goans</td>
<td>Konkoni</td>
<td>Goa</td>
<td>16,000</td>
<td>Clerks, professional people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikh</td>
<td></td>
<td>Punjabi</td>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>21,200</td>
<td>Mechanics, carpenters, railwaymen, businessmen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\)This table is adapted from Table 16, p. 132, Irving Kaplan et al., Area Handbook for Kenya (Washington, D.C.: The American University Foreign Area Studies/, July 1967). The population figures are from the 1962 Census.
category are found several groups which formed along traditional caste lines.\textsuperscript{11} Table 2 above shows a breakdown of the Asians.

The interesting division along caste rather than religious lines among Hindus resulted probably from the system of social exclusiveness in India which was "institutionalized in the caste system and not in religion."\textsuperscript{12} The traditional caste system in India is based upon a ranked division of social labor but all that remains in Kenya is the caste exclusiveness.

Hindu religious leaders also lack the group-building tool available to Muslim and Christian leaders in the ability to promise exclusive salvation to one's followers and everlasting damnation to non-believers.\textsuperscript{13}

Multiple reasons exist for the divisiveness of the Asian racial group generally, and for strong subracial

\textsuperscript{11}The most prominent of the Hindu caste groups are: the Brahmin, Vania, Lohana, Patildar and Jains. (H. S. Morris writes that: "Strictly speaking Jains are not Hindus, though in East Africa they are counted among the Hindus as opposed to Muslims." See Morris, \textit{The Indians in Uganda}, p. 190.)

\textsuperscript{12}Morris, \textit{The Indians in Uganda}, p. 62.

\textsuperscript{13}Ibid.
caste-sect groups which have developed. These are:

1. The proximity of Kenya to India and Pakistan with a resulting ease in communications. Old divisions could thus remain relevant and social exclusive policies such as caste or sect endogamy were made possible.

2. The size of the Asian racial group, which became large enough to allow for factions.

3. The ambitions of factional leaders.

4. Business ties, which came to correspond to religious and caste ties.

5. The existence of a "pace setter" group, the Shia Imami Ismailia Muslims. This group began early and in earnest to develop sect schools, hospitals and churches.

6. Inadequate government support in the development of Asian schools. The burden for school construction thus fell to the caste-sect groups and the resulting segregated school system served thereafter to strengthen and maintain the subracial ties.

7. An early failure and resulting lost opportunity to unite before social conflict developed between Asians and the other two racial groups in Kenya. This provides a key to understanding why Asians have not united in the

---

face of pressures from Europeans and Asians.

Lewis A. Coser in his book The Function of Social Conflict writes: "The degree of group consensus prior to the outbreak of the conflict seems to be the most important factor affecting cohesion. If a group is lacking in basic consensus, outside threat leads not to increased cohesion, but to general apathy, and the group is consequently threatened with disintegration."\(^{15}\)

An important activity carried on by the caste-sect groups has been that of political interest articulation and pressure. They have attempted to influence government policies and programs especially on issues of education, sectarian mosque and temple land, and sectarian graveyards. As very small minorities with vulnerable business interests, the caste-sect groups did not press hard on sensitive issues such as government immigration laws and racial segregation. Their very smallness, too, prevented these groups from functioning as political parties.\(^{16}\)


\(^{16}\)For a description of caste-sect group political activity see Morris, The Indians in Uganda, pp. 25-44. See also George Bennett and Carl G. Rosberg's comment on Asian "political communalism" below, pp. 85-86.
The African Racial Group

The Africans in 1962 constituted 97% of Kenya's population with a total of 8,365,942 people. Africans in Kenya are often classified into four large language categories: Bantu, Nilo-Hamitic, Nilotic and Hamitic. R. C. Thurnwald has devised what is probably a more useful method for social analyses by dividing Kenya's Africans into two broad collections: Pastorals i.e. livestock herders, and Peasants i.e. mixed agriculturalists. This Pastoral-Peasant partition has meaning in that the economic activity of each category is attached to distinct socio-political patterns. Traditionally, the nomadic Pastorals have been stronger and better organized in war than the more sedate Peasants.

For this study, however, the African tribal groups are more important than either the linguistic divisions or Thurnwald's socio-economic categories. Relatively little

17Morgan and Shaffer, p. 4.


meaning can be attached to the fact that President Kenyatta and opposition leader Oginga Odinga belong respectively to the Bantu and Nilotic language divisions or that they are both members of the Peasant category. It is important to realize, however, that Mr. Kenyatta is a Kikuyu and Mr. Odinga a Luo. The development of each man's personality was largely conditioned by a fostering tribal culture; and the position of each man today (one in power and the other under arrest) is the result to a large degree of different tribal membership.20

The African Tribal Groups

Anthropologists have correctly pointed to the fact that the concept of "tribe" is rather inexact. Thus Paul Bohannan writes:

Some African tribes are what have been described as village states; others are empires of several million people spread over hundreds of thousands of square miles. Some African tribes are language groups; some are congeries of indefinite or indiscriminate groups that have been classified under a term, usually pejorative, by their neighbors.21

In the process of colonizing Africa, the Europeans, who did not understand the ambiguity of the tribal concept, drew "tribal" boundaries which did not necessarily correspond

---

20 This importance of tribal membership will be discussed in Chapter IV.

to social reality. These boundaries were made sharp in Kenya in accordance with the British policy of Indirect Rule whereby the colonists utilized tribal political institutions (or created them if necessary) in order to administer the African population.

British "divide and rule" tactics also served to crystallize unstable tribal relations. The late Tom Mboya, a former African leader in Kenya, wrote:

The European colonial powers and even missionaries for a long time tended to build up tribal antagonism. It made it easier to influence people if they could find an amenable tribe to use against another tribe which was hostile.

Evidence of British use of "divide and rule" tactics was found in the preponderance of certain tribes in and the exclusion of other tribes from the colonial army and police in Kenya.

An important point here is that whatever their historical roots and however they were changed or crystallized by foreign manipulation, tribes are important in Kenya today. Individual Africans think of themselves as belonging to a certain tribe. Tribal membership has,

---

22 Mr. Mboya was assassinated in Nairobi on July 5, 1969.

23 Tom Mboya, Freedom and After (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1963), p. 65. It is Mboya's position thus, that tribal antagonisms were the result, at least in part, of deliberate British practices.
moreover, a definite effect on the behavior of the individual. A Kibuyu does not talk, dress, act or think exactly like a Masai, or Nandi, or Taita. Each tribe has some distinct social institutions which regulate behavior both within the group and with outsiders.

The ambiguity of the concept of tribe has prevented writers from agreeing on how many tribes exist in Kenya. A tribal distribution map found in the Kenya population study by W. T. W. Morgan and N. Manfred Shaffer (which is reproduced as Appendix A for this paper) shows forty-five tribes.24 Carl Rosberg and John Nottingham in their book *The Myth of Mau Mau* write of "twenty-seven main tribal groupings."25

Table 3 contains, however, the largest and most commonly recognized (by both Kenyans and outsiders) African tribal groups. Included also are both language categories and Thurnwald's basic economic activity. These economic activity designations should, however, be viewed with caution. The manner in which Africans acquire food and money is rapidly changing in Kenya.26 This Pastoral-Peasant

24Morgan and Shaffer, p. 33.
25Rosberg and Nottingham, p. 2.
26A good example of this change is found in the Kipsigis Tribe which was originally pastoral. Many Kipsigis are now tea farmers.
label should be viewed mainly as the traditional major economic activity of a tribe.

TABLE 3
MAJOR AFRICAN TRIBES OF KENYA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tribe</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Language Category</th>
<th>Basic Economic Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Somali</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>Hamitic</td>
<td>Pastoral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galla</td>
<td>181,378</td>
<td>Nilo-</td>
<td>Pastoral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>170,085</td>
<td>Hamitic</td>
<td>Pastoral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkana</td>
<td>154,079</td>
<td>Nilo-</td>
<td>Pastoral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masai</td>
<td>170,085</td>
<td>Hamitic</td>
<td>Pastoral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nandi</td>
<td>341,772</td>
<td>Bantu</td>
<td>Peasant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kipsigis</td>
<td>414,887</td>
<td>Bantu</td>
<td>Peasant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abaluhya</td>
<td>1,086,409</td>
<td>Bantu</td>
<td>Peasant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gusii</td>
<td>538,343</td>
<td>Bantu</td>
<td>Peasant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kikuyu</td>
<td>1,642,065</td>
<td>Bantu</td>
<td>Peasant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamba</td>
<td>933,219</td>
<td>Bantu</td>
<td>Peasant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luo</td>
<td>1,148,335</td>
<td>Nilotic</td>
<td>Peasant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The population statistics for this table come from Rosberg and Nottingham, pp. 1-7.

The European Racial Group

The Europeans do not have distinctive subracial groups such as those found within the Asian and African racial groups. Separate and exclusive institutions for education or religion or the family system are not clearly visible within the total European group. What has always existed among Europeans in Kenya, on the contrary, is a
general attitude which has established a common pattern of action and a common response to the questions of why Europeans were in Kenya and how they should act toward other people there. This general attitude is prevalent enough and so well established that it may be termed the European Racist Syndrome.27

The Syndrome is basically a justification for British existence in Kenya as the bearers of Western civilization, progress and religion. Toward the Africans the Europeans practiced (after the initial conquering effort) a paternalistic racism,28 wherein the African was thought of as "friendly, patient, cheerful, rather stupid, lazy, but likeable, and of course entirely 'primitive...'"29 Toward the Asian the practice was one of competitive racism, wherein the Asians were thought of as poor but dangerous

27The European Racist Syndrome is most clearly defined (and defended) in the writings of Elspeth Huxley, a Kenyan settlerwoman. See especially her two-volume biography of the European settler leader in Kenya, Lord Delamere (White Man's Country /London: Chatto and Windus Ltd., 1935/) and the book Race and Politics in Kenya (London: Faber and Faber, 1955) which contains an exchange of correspondence between Huxley and Margery Perham, a critic of European race politics.

28For a discussion of the concepts and practices of paternalistic and competitive racism see van den Berghe, Race and Racism.

examples for ignorant Africans and obstacles to the white man's effort and burden of "civilizing the natives."³⁰

Some attitudinal variations are clustered around the four main European occupational categories: agriculture, the civil service, mission work and commerce. Kenya's white settler farmers have performed a function for the Europeans similar to that of the Imami Ismailias in the Asian group as "pace setters" for the race.³¹ Early settlers such as Lord Delamere worked closely with British colonial officers in defining and establishing the European Racial Syndrome. And although some missionaries and civil servants have been in sympathy with Africans as the recipients of the ill effects of racist colonial rule, this fact did not compromise their basically racist notions about Asians and Africans or their participation in the general European position. They did not reject the Syndrome during colonial days and many of those still in Kenya cling to its basic racial tenet.

³⁰See pp. 29-39 below.

³¹This is true even though the settlers have constituted only about 25% of the European group (and 10% at Independence) and are themselves somewhat heterogeneous in that they contain a large minority (about 30%) of South African whites (called Kaburus by Africans in Kenya). See Kaplan et al., p. 57 and pp. 135-139.
Summary

The most significant social groups in Kenya have now been identified. Listed once again, they are:

1. The African Racial Group
2. The African Tribal Groups
3. The Asian Racial Group
4. The Asian Caste-Sect Groups
5. The European Racial Group

This chapter has also contained a description of the primordial attachments which bind the individuals of each group—the attachments of race, tribe, caste and religion. Thus these five sets of groups may now be termed the primordial groups of Kenya and utilized in the following discussion of Kenya's history.
CHAPTER II

A PRIMORDIAL GROUP ANALYSIS OF KENYA'S MODERN HISTORY

An attempt is made in the following chapter to analyze Kenya's modern history (since the late 19th Century). The method used is to focus on the relationships between and among the five sets of primordial groups introduded in Chapter I.

Background: The Pre-Colonial Period

It is certain that man has been living in that area of Africa which was to become Kenya for many thousands of years. Some archeologists believe, in fact, that man in his present form originated in the East African region.¹ Firm archeological evidence shows that early iron-age civilizations existed in Kenya around 700 A.D. and possible evidence puts iron-users there at a much earlier date—in about the

Early Tribal Relations

The study of early African history is made difficult by a lack of written records. It seems certain, however, that by 1500 A.D. or earlier the direct ancestors of the modern African tribes in Kenya were already there and increasing in numbers. After 1500, and more especially after 1800, tribal conflict expanded in Kenya. These struggles were probably the result of growing populations which demanded more livestock and an increased grazing area. Notable successive expansive movements were made southward into Kenya by the Masai, Turkana and Somali tribes. The strength of these pastoral peoples made them very difficult for the agriculturists to repel.

Several different types of internal tribal authority existed at this time, but the general trend was toward a centralization of the political system as the conflict increased. The strongest tribe in Kenya before the European ingress was, however, the Masai, who never did develop a system of centralized political control. At the height

2Davidson, pp. 8-10, 34.
3Ibid., pp. 37, 167-177.
4Ibid., pp. 167-177.
5A discussion of the Masai system of authority based on laibons or priests is found in Davidson, pp. 72-73.
of their power (early in the 19th Century) the Masai con­trolled an area of Kenya about 500 miles long and 150 miles wide.6

Early Asian-African Relations

Asians have been in contact with East Africa and the people living there for at least two thousand years. The earliest reference to their presence, which was as traders along the coastline, is found in a Greek merchant's guide book written in approximately 120 A.D. and entitled Periplus of the Erythraean Sea (Guide to the North-West Indian Ocean).7 Asians cooperated with Arabs in commercial ventures (including slavery) both before the 8th Century A.D. when Arabs made temporary settlements along the coast and afterwards when they began to construct permanent cities.

Asian economic activity continued in East Africa through the Portuguese domination of main coastal cities during the 1500's, through a subsequent Arab resurgence, and into the development of British occupation which began

6Rosberg and Nottingham, p. 4. The Masai are described in this book as the tribe having "... undoubtedly played the most important role in shaping the political geography of Kenya before the British occupation" (p. 4).

7Davidson, p. 26. Authoritative histories of the Asians in Africa can be found in Davidson and in Hailey.
in the late 19th Century.

A pattern emerges from this long history of Asians in Africa. Chanan Singh, a Kenyan Asian, writes:

Concentrating upon economic enterprise, they had adapted themselves in turn to the indigenous coastal chiefs, to the Arabs, to the Portuguese, to the Arabs again and . . . to the British and Germans. This German presence was in Tanganyika. To all these regimes they had been to a greater or less degree, economically indispensable.

Yet although they "adapted themselves" to the regime of the day, Asians never merged to become an integral part of either the powerful alien or the indigenous African social system. Throughout this period the Asians remained separate, a group apart. Unlike the Arabs and Portuguese, they did not marry Africans, and unlike all of the other foreigners they did not exert a political influence. They limited themselves, rather, to business affairs and to the few social contacts inherent in that activity.

The seed of African dislike for Asians must have been planted near the very beginning of their relationship. The Asian brought exotic goods, cloth and matches and metal pots for the African to purchase. He did not mix well or easily, however, and his conversation was usually limited

---

to bartering or to ordering other Africans who carried his wares. He must have been, from the very beginning, tolerated but distrusted.

The Colonial Period (1888-1963)

This historical epoch contains the story of the British establishment of a plural society in Kenya. The era begins and ends with European-African conflict, the former over the formation of Kenya as a colony, and the latter in the achievement of Kenya's independence. A European-Asian struggle dominated group relationships during much of the time inbetween.

Initial African-European Conflict

"... There were few sections of the country that did not experience some violent confrontation with European-led expeditions against them."^9

Under the auspice first of the Imperial East Africa Company and later of the British Foreign Office, the Europeans moved in to take Kenya by force. Rosberg and Nottingham list thirteen different tribes (ten of which are included among the major tribes in Table 3) which attempted to resist the British but which were eventually overcome.\textsuperscript{10}

\textsuperscript{9}Rosberg and Nottingham, p. 7.

\textsuperscript{10}Ibid., pp. 7-16. The hardest fight was put up by the Kalenjin group of tribes, especially the Nandi. Resistance was not offered by the Masai, who bargained rather than fought.
Two divergent pressures resulted from the European victory. The first was toward a greater unification among the African tribes. Colonial status meant a central government at Nairobi with a relatively general administrative system for taxes, budgeting, crime, etc. throughout the country. The common languages of English and kiSwahili were spread, and there was finally decreased tribal conflict under British rule.

The second pressure was toward the preservation and strengthening of tribal division through the employment of the concept of Indirect Rule, a practice which was discussed above (pp. 16-19). Kenya's international boundaries, moreover, were later to cause problems. The international lines as drawn in London split several tribes and related tribal groupings. The most notable of the divided tribes were the Masai, Somali and Abaluhya. The case of the Somali division resulted eventually in war, when many of the 275,000 Somalis residing in Kenya at independence\(^1\) took up arms with the aid of the Somali Republic Government and fought against Republic of Kenya forces. Although the Kenyatta Government never acknowledged the fact (the rebels were always termed shif\(\text{t}\)a /Bandits/), this was a civil insurrection which resulted directly from the British-drawn boundary between Kenya and the Somali Republic.

\(^1\)Kaplan et al., p. 368.
European-Asian Relations

Europeans were not always unhappy about Asians living in Kenya, although that attitude soon developed. Early colonial administrators encouraged Asians to move inland from the coast, and even settlers, later to become bitter antagonists of Asians, were said to have initially appreciated the need for Asian traders. This early British hospitality for Asians rested on a need to develop the Kenya Colony into an economic asset. Initial British investments were heavy in Kenya and the colonists looked to Asians for assistance in opening up a market economy for the country.

The most expensive of the early British investments in Kenya was a railway, begun in Mombasa in 1895 and constructed across Kenya at a cost of £9,500 a mile. Some 32,000 Asians were recruited in the British colony of India and brought to Kenya for the construction effort, as it was felt that Africans lacked even the basic skills required for the work. Under the terms of the work contract, the Asian coolies were granted the option of a return passage to India or the right to stay in Kenya. When the railroad


was completed after reaching Kisumu on Lake Nyanza (Victoria) in 1901, 6,724 Asian workers stayed in Kenya, a figure which added 19% to the Asian population.14

The intermingling of the Asian and European elements in Kenya produced eventually a conflict centered around four issues:

1. The reservation of the Highland Region for European farmers only.
2. Urban racial segregation.
3. "Communal" i.e. racial legislative representation.
4. Immigration policies.15

An influx of white settlers into Kenya, beginning around 1900, was quite important for the country's history. Colonies throughout Africa which contained white settlers

14 Of the remaining workers, 2,000 died in Kenya and the others returned to India. For a discussion of and statistics on the railway construction see Morris, The Indians of Uganda, p. 8, and George Delf, Asians in East Africa (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), pp. 10-14. A common misconception among both Africans and Europeans in Kenya is that all of the Asians in Kenya came originally from this construction crew. (See, for example, Elspeth Huxley, White Man's Country 2 vols.; London: Chatto and Windus Ltd., 1935/, I, pp. 64-65.) Morris comments on this myth in The Indians in Uganda, p. 9.

have been qualitatively different from colonies which did not. White settlers quickly tended to develop loyalties to their new home and sought to exert an influence on its future progress. In Kenya (as elsewhere) the settlers began early to demand a voice in the Colonial Government. This demand did not upset colonial officials because there was originally little difference between settler and official views on expanding white power in the colony.

The Highland area which attracted European settlement comprises about 7,000,000 acres of land suitable for agriculture, and lies at an elevation high enough to give it a temperate climate. It was from this area that settlers sought to bar Asian land purchases. They initially accomplished the prohibition through a partnership of Sir Charles Eliot, the chief British representative in Kenya from 1901 to 1904, and Lord Delamere, the leading settler spokesman from his arrival in Kenya in 1903 to his death in 1931. In 1903, Eliot restricted Asian land ownership to small plots outside the Highland region, and in

---

16 See Leonard Thompson's article on "tropical" colonies and "temperate" colonies in Africa for an interesting discussion of this point.

17 St. Clair Drake, "Some Observations on Intercultural Conflict As One Type of Intergroup Conflict," Conflict Resolution, I, No. 2 (June 1957), 167.

1905 a Land Commission chaired by Delamere stated that while there was

... no objection to the general proposition that Indians /i.e. Asians/ should hold land in the Protectorate . . . considering only a small area of the Protectorate is suitable for European settlement and colonization, it is desirable that land within that area /the Highlands/ should be reserved for the support and management of a white population. 19

These actions were then followed by the Elgin Pledge of 1906 wherein Colonial Secretary Lord Elgin stated somewhat lamely that:

It is not consonant with the view of His Majesty's Government to impose legal restrictions on any particular section of the community, but as a matter of administrative convenience grants in the upland area should not be made to Indians /i.e. Asians/. 20

The policy of land discrimination was then firmed up by the Crown's Land Ordinance of 1915 which gave the Governor in Kenya a veto power over cross-racial land exchanges, thus, in practice, effectively barring Asians from the White Highlands. 21

The question of political representation centered on membership in the Legislative Council. The Council,

---

19 Quoted in Singh, p. 6.
20 Quoted in Huxley, p. 209.
21 See Sorrenson, pp. 680-682.
which was in part locally elected, was created to advise the Governor. Many Europeans and Asians regarded it as the forerunner to a parliamentary body under eventual self-rule. As the larger of the two contending racial groups, the Asians pressed for representation in proportion to population. This ambition was successfully fought by the Europeans.

The Asians did gain early representation on the Council (1909) in the person of Mr. A. M. Jeevanjee. But the communal type of representation employed in deciding Council membership always left the Asians with many fewer delegates than the Europeans. For Kenya as a whole, of course, the reverse is true, as the Asian population has always greatly outnumbered the European population.22

Immigration policies and urban residential segregation were challenged by Asians on the principle of equality before the law.23 Here again, however, they met

22The African group was not considered an important or very worthy element in Kenya's society at this time. The first African to serve on the Council, Mr. Eluid Mathu, did not join the body until 1944.

23Immigration policies, unlike residential segregation, did not, however, discriminate against Asians per se. They did work a difficulty on the relatively poorer Asian group by establishing a fee test. This fee was £50 prior to 1938 and £500 thereafter. See C. Kondapi, Indians Overseas: 1838-1949 (Madras: Oxford University Press, 1951), p. 195.
with little success. Inequality was, in fact, ingrained throughout the law and custom of the land. Discriminatory legal distinctions were made in ordinances, judicial administration and taxation as well as in political representation and residence. Unofficial discrimination was practiced in the imposition of unequal wage scales for Asian and European personnel.\textsuperscript{24}

Much heated European rhetoric was directed against the Asians for other reasons, too. Lord Delamere spoke of the discouragement Asians gave to white settlement and African economic development by "monopolizing" many low-income jobs and small businesses. Delamere proclaimed the Asians to be a bad moral and religious influence on the Africans.\textsuperscript{25} An Economic Commission Report of 1919, which was signed by five settlers (including Delamere) and two British colonial officials, publicized supposed Asian moral depravity and cited them as carriers of disease and inciters to crime and vice. Elspeth Huxley describes the Asians in 1935 as the most "persistent problem" for the colony.\textsuperscript{26} Throughout all of this rhetoric, the European Racial Syndrome may be discerned. The position taken by the

\textsuperscript{24}See Kondapi, p. 355.

\textsuperscript{25}Huxley, I, pp. 206-208.

\textsuperscript{26}Ibid., pp. 64-65.
Europeans was that they themselves had come to Africa with the good of the African in mind and that the Asians constituted a threat to that good.

The Asian-European struggle led to two British Government actions in the early 1920's: the Wood-Winterton Agreement and the Devonshire White Paper. The Wood-Winterton Agreement is interesting in that it reveals the prevailing mood among the settlers. In 1922, the Colonial and Indian Offices in London made an attempt to settle the European-Asian conflict by drawing up a report which was named after Mssrs. Wood and Winterton, the Parliamentary Under-Secretaries of the two offices. This report called for:

1. The prohibition of urban segregation.
2. An end to restricted immigration.
3. A common European-Asian voting roll based on education and property, and insuring at least 10% of the Asians would be franchised.
4. Four seats for Asians on the Legislative Council.27

Settler reaction to Wood-Winterton was furious. It created among them what Huxley called the "old Bostonian

27Rosberg and Nottingham, pp. 65-66.
A vigilance committee was formed to make contingency plans for armed action against the colonial government. There were plans to seize the railway and telegraph and to kidnap the Governor. Before any of this could be put into effect, however, delegations from the government and the European and Asian groups traveled to London to aid the British Government in producing the important Devonshire White Paper of 1923.

This Paper, which was a declaration of policy by the British Government, stated that:

1. The European monopoly on the Highlands would remain.
2. There were to be no immigration restrictions on Asians as such.
3. The official policy of urban segregation was to end.
4. Eleven Europeans, five Asians and one Arab were to be elected to the Legislative Council.
5. African interests were paramount.\(^\text{29}\)

This final provision, dealing with African interests, has in retrospect been the most important. The key sentence of the White Paper reads:

\(^{28}\) For a detailed discussion of the reaction see Huxley, I, pp. 110-139.

\(^{29}\) Hollingsworth, pp. 99-108.
Primarily, Kenya is an African territory, and His Majesty's Government think it necessary definitely to record their considered opinion that the interests of the African natives must be paramount, and that if, and when, those interests and the interests of the immigrant races should conflict the former should prevail.

In announcing African paramountcy the British Government rejected for Kenya, by strong implication at least, what eventually came about in both South Africa and Southern Rhodesia: the emergence of political rule by a small European minority.

In their colonial-period struggle with Europeans, the Asians both gained victories and suffered defeats. The most obvious failure was in never achieving equal status with the Europeans whom they greatly outnumbered. The Asians received only five members in the Legislative Council by the Devonshire White Paper of 1923 and one member thereafter. The imbalance was made more grievous by the fact that during the same period of time, from 1923 to 1963, the Asian population increased eightfold. When a common roll was finally achieved in 1960, it was primarily a result of African rather than Asian pressure. It was the Africans, too, who broke the racial barrier to land purchase in the Highlands. Another Asian failure is demonstrated in the fact that the principle of integrated

---

30 This discussion of success and failure is based on Delf, pp. 41-42.
education was never fully accepted while Kenya was a colony. It may be concluded thus that in general the disadvantages for the darker races in Kenya either remained or were solved by reasons other than Asian pressure.

Much of the explanation for Asian failures springs from the certainty that in combating the Europeans, and especially the settlers, the Asians were up against a foe which fought with unusual energy, fierce self-interest and only slightly restricted tactics. The Asians, meanwhile, were conscious of India's poverty and colonial status, were often relatively poor and ill-educated, and were, most importantly, internally divided.

The greatest contribution of the Asian group in its struggle was the restraint placed upon any European movement toward "self rule." As the historian George Bennett writes: "It may well be that it was only their rivalry which prevented the Europeans from establishing their position in Kenya as in places further south." Asian opposition to the Europeans combined with smallness of the European Racial Group and the insistence of Africans to bring uhuru.\(^{32}\)

\(^{31}\)Bennett, Kenya: A Political History, p. 47.

\(^{32}\)Uhuru is the Swahili word for freedom, and in this common context it refers to freedom from colonial rule or to independence.
A few Asians, such as M. A. Desai (a journalist), Isher Dass (a politician) and Makan Singh (a labor organizer), gave outright aid to radical Africans, but it was the indirect aid of Asian opposition to European domination which counted most. The significance of restraining the European group was recognized early by Asians. Thus in 1929, the President of a common Asian organization known at the time as the East African Indian National Congress (EAINC) commented on the 1923 Devonshire White Paper:

However galling the decision of the Imperial Government regarding the claims put forward by Indians might have been to Indian self respect, it was felt that the acceptance of the paramountcy of native interests as the cornerstone of British policy in East Africa removed the danger of control passing into the hands of an oligarchy of alien settlers.34

Asian Caste-Sect Relations and the Weakness of the EAINC

The EAINC was created in 1914 to act as an intermediary in communications between the Kenya Government and the Asian caste-sect groups and to serve as a voice of appeal to the British and Indian Governments.35 The EAINC,


35India was of course at this time a British colony, and the appeal went to the Secretary of State for India in the British Cabinet.
rather than possessing significant central authority, however, was based upon strong local organizations. This localism in combination with the social divisiveness of the Asians rendered the association to the position of no more than a very weak spokesman. The EAINC was renamed the Kenya Indian Congress in 1952, but this did not change its lack of vigor.

**Final African-European Conflict:**  
**The State of Emergency and Independence**

The final decade of colonial rule in Kenya was marked by a violent struggle of African guerrilla fighters called the Mau Mau against British forces. This fight did not suddenly appear without a process of maturation, of course, for although the European-Asian conflict had held center stage, there had been for many years a growing African resentment over European policies in Kenya. The

36 For example, the Indian Association of Mombasa, which was formed in 1900, long before the EAINC.

37 A discussion of the EAINC is found in Yash Tandon, "A Political Survey," in Portrait of a Minority: Asians in East Africa, ed. Dharam P. Ghai (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 71-75. Tandon stresses "divide and rule" tactics used by Europeans as a source for EAINC division, but I doubt its importance and look rather to the basic social divisions within the Asian group.

38 A good description and analysis of this struggle is found in Rosberg and Nottingham's The Myth of Mau Mau. The term Mau Mau is of uncertain and disputed origin.
discontent centered especially on the European settler land acquisition and on economic and social restrictions which impeded African development.

The animosity was not limited to one tribe, but among Kikuyus resentment ran deepest and it was within this tribe that organized opposition to European rule developed.

It would be difficult to overestimate a peasant African's feeling for his shamba (farm or land). This attachment, which goes beyond economics to include emotion, is well expressed by Jomo Kenyatta in his anthropological study of the Kikuyu tribe:

... to anyone who wants to understand Gikuyu problems, nothing is more important than a correct grasp of the question of land tenure. For it is the key to the peoples' life; it secures for them that peaceful tillage of the soil which supplies their material needs and enables them to perform their magic and traditional ceremonies in undisturbed serenity, facing Mount Kenya.

It was the Kikuyu especially who felt that many of the European farms were set illegally on their ancestral land. And it was the Kikuyu who gradually and increasingly began to demand the return of this land.

In addition to the question of land, Africans began

---

39The spelling of Kikuyu with a "G" (Gikuyu) is a local variation.

to develop an awareness that they were being blocked by Europeans from fulfilling new and rising expectations in life. The sociologist, St. Clair Drake, offers these examples of "new rights" which Kenya's Africans began to demand.

1. Buying small items of consumption goods.
2. Providing education for the children.
3. Occupying new status which has been created in an expanding social structure.
4. Earning money.
5. Going into business.
6. Buying and selling land.\footnote{Drake, pp. 167-168.}

Tom Mboya analyzed the African feelings in writing that "... Mau Mau was the child of economic and social problems which had accumulated over the years and which had not found any solution through constitutional channels."\footnote{Mboya, p. 40.}

The fact that most of the organized African opposition and virtually all of the Mau Mau rebellion itself was confined to the Kikuyu tribe was to have lasting significance. The reasons behind the confinement are twofold.

1. The Kikuyu felt most deeply the loss of traditional land.
2. As the most progressively oriented tribe in Kenya, they were most bitter about economic and social restrictions.

The other Africans held a rather ambivalent feeling about Mau Mau.\textsuperscript{43} Doubtless there was sympathy for the guerrillas as champions of the African cause. But there was jealousy, too, over the state of Kikuyu progress. The government restrictions which were placed on the Kikuyu during the fight opened up new opportunities for other Africans. As a result of African ambivalence, the Colonial Government was easily able to recruit and deploy African troops against the Mau Mau.

Systematic opposition to European rule in Kenya began with the formation in 1922 of the East African Association (EAA), directed by a Kikuyu government clerk named Harry Thuku. Thuku was arrested and exiled in 1922 and the EAA was followed by a second organization of protest in 1923 called the Kikuyu Central Association (KCA).

The KCA dispatched Johnstone (later Jomo) Kenyatta to London in 1928 to act as a lobbyist for African interests. It wasn't until 1946 that Kenyatta returned permanently to Kenya to take up the leadership of the African cause and eventually the reins of government.

From its formation in 1923 to its official banning in 1940, the KCA pursued a two-pronged strategy. There was an effort, first, to win over Kikuyu elders, Christians and partially educated youth. An attempt was made, secondly, to establish contact with dissidents in the remaining tribes. African unhappiness was increasingly demonstrated in anti-European religious movements and anti-missionary African schools.\textsuperscript{44}

Military service during World War I led to cross-tribal and cross-national contacts for African soldiers, and the resulting socio-political sophistication probably contributed to the anti-European organizations of the 1920's. Similarly, after World War II a new association quickly arose to replace the prohibited KCA. Known as the Kenya Africa Union (KAU), this organization was headed by Jomo Kenyatta after his return to Kenya. The KAU pressed for reforms beneficial to Africans. Frustration in this attempt brought on in 1952 the Mau Mau uprising, the imprisonment of Kenyatta and other African leaders, and a declaration of a State of Emergency by Kenya Governor Sir Evelyn Baring.

The specific incident which prompted Baring's declaration was the October 7, 1952, murder of Kikuyu

\textsuperscript{44} These African educational institutions were confined mainly to the Kikuyu tribe.
Senior Chief Waruhiu by unknown assassins. The Governor then announced on October 20, that "a public emergency has arisen which makes it necessary to confer special powers on the Government and its officers for the purpose of maintaining law and order." But the declaration had just the opposite effect, and both sides mounted a campaign of terror which was to last for some four years.

In addition to the imprisonment of Kenyatta and other KAU leaders, the government program consisted of the following measures:

1. The deployment of European and African armed forces.
3. A reinstitution of "tribal discipline" with an emphasis on the authority of tribal chiefs and subchiefs.
4. A system of photographs used in identification checks.
5. The call for British troops and British General Sir George Erskine to lead government forces.
6. The use of "cleansing oaths" to remove anti-European oaths taken at a government estimate by 90% of the Kikuyu tribe.

---

45 Under the system of Indirect Rule, chiefs were government officers.
46 Quoted in Rosberg and Nottingham, p. 277.
47 See Rosberg and Nottingham, pp. 277-319.
An analysis of statistics from several sources shows the bloody cost of the conflict. To the end of 1956 there were:

**Rebel Losses**
- 11,503 Kikuyu killed
- 1,035 Captured wounded
- 1,550 Captured unwounded
- 26,625 Arrested
- 2,714 Surrendered

**Civilian and Government Casualties**
- 95 Europeans killed (about 65% of whom were police or military personnel)
- 127 Europeans wounded
- 29 Asians killed
- 48 Asians wounded
- 1,920 Africans killed (about 25% of whom were police or military personnel)

The deployment of British troops during the Emergency was to have a profound effect upon the course of Kenyan politics, for power passed effectively from the European group to the British Government. As George Bennett writes, the "Imperial Factor" returned then, and decisions were more

---

48 Rosberg and Nottingham, p. 303; Mason, p. 328; and Delf, p. 39.
and more made in London. These decisions centered around a rapid but late series of reforms, the purpose of which was to create undivided loyalty among Africans not actually participating in the uprising.

In June 1955, African political associations were allowed at the district level and under the Lyttleton (1954) and Lennox-Boyd (1958) constitutions African influence was increased within a multiracial concept of government. African politicians, however, followed the leadership of the then young Luo trade unionist, Tom Mboya, in pressing for more radical demands. Six of the eight African members elected to the Legislative Council by the first direct African elections in March 1957, opposed the idea of multiracial government and demanded majority rule instead. In June 1958, Mr. Oginga Odinga shocked the Europeans by asking in the Legislative Council that Jomo Kenyatta be released to assume political leadership for Africans.

With an increasing prospect for independence, the African racial group began to split along tribal lines and the smaller tribes, fearful of a Kikuyu-Luo hegemony, formed in 1969, a political party known as the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU). Important KADU leaders were Masinde Muliro (an Abaluhya), Ronald Ngala (a Mijikenda) and Daniel arap Moi (a Kalenjin). The opposition party, Kenya

African Nationalist Union (KANU) was headed by James Gichuru (a Kikuyu) and the Luos, Mboya and Odinga.

Elections which were held in 1961 gave KANU over two-thirds of the vote, but KANU party chief Mboya refused to form a government except under Kenyatta's leadership. The Governor, Sir Patrick Renison, fearful of Jomo Kenyatta as the leader of "darkness and death," then attempted to help KADU (which had received less than one-fifth of the vote) to govern the country. This attempt lasted for two years until Kenyatta, who was released in 1961, led KANU to an African majority government in June 1963, and to independence from Britain on December 12, 1963.

Throughout the decade of African-European conflict leading to independence, the Asians played a very minor role. Only in 1960 was any organized effort made by Asians in support of majority rule based on a common role with "open" rather than "communal" (racially assigned) legislative seats. The organization formed in 1960 (called Kenya Freedom Party) was, however, clearly the political expression of but a minority of the Asian group.

The Kenya Freedom Party later merged with KANU.
Kenya Since Independence

Constitutional Organization

The most obvious political fact of post-independent Kenya is the charismatic strength of President Jomo Kenyatta. Mzee (the Old Man), as he is called, became Prime Minister with independence in 1963 and President in 1964 when Kenya discarded dominion status and became a republic within the British Commonwealth. Criticism of the Kenyatta Government has, until very recently, been directed not at Mzee but toward other officials or KANU leaders.51

The Kenya Constitution provides for an independent judiciary, but administrative and legislative functions are joined through the President and his cabinet, all of whom are members of Parliament. The President is the leader of the largest party in Kenya's 175-member Parliament and chooses as ministers of his cabinet other Parliamentary members to head the several departments of administration.

Two political parties have challenged KANU rule: KADU, which existed before independence, and Kenya People's Union (KPU), which was formed in 1966. KADU disbanded when its leaders joined KANU on the first anniversary of

51Recent departures from this mode are described in Chapter IV below.
independence in December 1964. KPU, which was led from the outset by former Vice President Oginga Odinga was banned and its leaders arrested in late 1969.

An administrative reorganization in 1966 raised the number of administrative Provinces from six to seven, but left the Number of Districts at forty. Each Province and District has a Nairobi-appointed chief administrative officer along with staff members from each of the ministries.

Government Policy: African Socialism

The policies of the Kenyatta Government are framed in reference to and given direction by a broad ideology termed African Socialism. As described in official speeches and publications, African Socialism includes as its main features:

1. Political democracy.
2. Mutual social responsibility.
3. Various forms of ownership.

52 Of the three prominent KADU leaders mentioned previously, Masinde Muliro is now Chairman of the Kenya Maize Marketing Board (and a member of Parliament), Ronald Ngala is Minister for Cooperatives and Social Services, and Daniel arap Moi is Kenya's Vice President.

53 See the map in Appendix B.

54 By "mutual social responsibility" the Government means a spirit of common duty shared by all Kenyans to care for the general welfare. This idea is most often expressed in the official slogan of the Kenyatta Government--"Harambee" or "Let's all pull together."
4. A range of controls to ensure that property is used in the mutual interests of society and its members.

5. Diffusion of ownership to avoid concentration of economic power.

6. Progressive taxes to ensure an equitable distribution of wealth and income.

7. Central planning and direction.\textsuperscript{55}

The twin themes continuously stressed by the Kenyatta Government are economic development with just or fair distribution. Thus the KANU Manifesto published in November 1969, states:

The fundamental objective of Kanu Government is to achieve independence for Kenya. We shall therefore strive to attain the fastest rate of economic growth and to secure a just distribution of the national income, both between different areas of the country and between individuals.\textsuperscript{56}

The same objectives are found in the opening sentence of \textit{African Socialism and Its Application to Planning in Kenya}:

"With independence, Kenya intends to mobilize its resources to attain a rapid rate of economic growth for the benefit of its people."\textsuperscript{57}


\textsuperscript{56}Published in the \textit{East African Standard}, November 19, 1969, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{57}\textit{African Socialism}, p. 1.
In addition to setting broad goals, the KANU Manifesto of 1969 lists central yet specific policy objectives of the Kenyatta Government. These are:

1. Government control of developmental finances.
2. Free medical care for all.
3. Seven years' free education.
4. Land consolidation, increased agricultural output and resettlement of landless Africans.
5. Self-sufficiency in food supplies.
6. Provision for "fresh clean" water for humans and livestock.
8. Development of internal communications.
9. Kenyanization of ownership and management of commerce and industry.
10. Africanization of the Civil Service.
12. Maintenance of strong armed forces.
13. Promotion of ties with Uganda and Tanzania.
14. Greater African economic and political integration throughout the continent.
15. "Positive non-alignment" in foreign policy.  

---

Problems in the Policy of Equitable Distribution

An evaluation of progress made by the Kenyatta Government in achieving the twin goals of economic development and equitable distribution shows that while development has advanced fairly rapidly since independence, distribution has lagged behind.\(^5^9\)

Equitable distribution is seen by the Kenya Government as the means to prevent the emergence of a social class system. Thus an official publication states that:

"The sharp class divisions that once existed in Europe have no place in African Socialism and no parallel in African society. No class problem arose in the traditional African society and none exists today among Africans. The class problem in Africa, therefore, is largely one of prevention, in particular--

(i) to eliminate the risk of foreign economic domination; and

(ii) to plan development so as to prevent the emergence of antagonistic classes."\(^6^0\)

But the fact that economic divisions which give rise to class distinctions are growing in Kenya is readily


\(^6^0\)African Socialism, p. 12.
apparent. This author remembers remarking to an African farm laborer, Mr. Arap Tari, that because of limited nutrition most Africans were rather slender, but that a few Africans stood out from the norm by their obesity. Arap Tari replied that these few were clearly either government officials or businessmen. The explanation, he said, was Wananyonya (they are suckling).

Opposition leader Oginga Odinga and his KPU have used the failure of equitable distribution as the main attack on KANU. Opposing this in 1967 on post-Uhuru Kenya, Odinga commented:

Their interpretation of independence and African Socialism is that they should move into the jobs and privileges previously held by the settlers. If Kenya started uhuru without an African elite class she is now rapidly acquiring one. Ministers and top civil servants compete with one another to buy more farms, acquire more directorships and own bigger cars and grander houses.

And again he remarks:

In six months an M.P. receives more money than the average peasant earns in half a life time. This salary scale reflects nothing like the true

---

61 Odinga's autobiography Not Yet Uhuru presents his personal history and philosophy and a history of KPU.


63 Annual salaries for M.P.'s have risen from a flat £620 (about $1770) to £1200 ($3430) plus daily sitting allowance, mileage and other allowances. The salary for Junior Ministers is £2260 ($6460) and for the President £15,000 ($42,860) tax-free.

The author's experience with farm laborers puts their average annual salary at about $150.
economic standards in the country, and can only encourage the emergence of a governing group that is almost as remote from the mass of the people as were the former colonial administrators.  

Finally, Odinga concludes:

Many have begun to use their positions in politics to entrench themselves as a propertied economic group. A self-entrenched class of politician-businessmen is growing up in the cities, and in the countryside a large land owning class.  

The obviously political statements made by former Vice President Odinga might be questioned to some degree, but other critics, both foreign and domestic, say the same thing. Thus the American University publication, *Area Handbook for Kenya*, states:

Among Africans, an elite has emerged which exercises power and enjoys a level of living substantially different from that of the rural African, the ordinary wageworkers, and the fairly large number of unemployed characteristic of the country in the middle 1960's.  

In Kenya itself, a revealing report was published in 1968 of a study made under the auspices of the National Christian Council of Kenya (NCCK). Among other things, this report entitled *Who Controls Industry in Kenya* comments on the previously mentioned Government plans to eliminate the "risk of foreign economic domination" and to "prevent .

---

64 Odinga, pp. 302-303.
65 Ibid., p. 303.
66 Kaplan et al., p. 162.
the emergence of antagonistic classes."\textsuperscript{67}

Addressing itself to the first point of these plans, the study reveals that of the top fifty directors of private business concerns in Kenya (i.e. those men having the most directorships) only seven are Kenyans, and of the seven only four are Africans.\textsuperscript{68}

What the working party that made the study feared, in fact, was that in the Kenyatta Government's all-out attempt to bring about development, too little attention was being paid to distribution. The study quotes a former Research Fellow at University College, Nairobi, Mr. Peter Morris, as writing: "A purely economic logic of national growth would probably lead, in a decade or so, to the consolidation of a professional, managerial and political elite."\textsuperscript{69}

Morris goes on to predict that without special efforts at dispersing Kenya's wealth the country will find large slum areas developing around the cities. These impoverished areas would, Morris believes, necessitate heavy-handed punitive efforts by government to control

\textsuperscript{67}See p. 54 above.

\textsuperscript{68}National Cristian Council of Kenya, Department of Christian Education and Training, \textit{Who Controls Industry in Kenya} (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1968), p. 257. This work will hereafter be referred to as WCIIK.

\textsuperscript{69}WCIIK, p. 261.
restive and crime-prone unemployed residents. For the rural areas Morris foresees the possibility of a growing "marginal landless" labor group in what are apparently prosperous areas and hard and increasing poverty in the less-developed regions of the country. He concludes that: "The national economy will be making encouraging progress; but the nation will be falling apart."70

Another commentator, Mr. A. O. Menya, is quoted from a speech he gave at an NCCK Conference in 1966 as saying:

There is a clear class division in Kenya's society which is based largely on the share of economic wealth of the nation. Kenya's society provides a very good example of the haves and have-nots. . . . Kenya's economy is growing very rapidly, but the gap between classes or between the haves and have-nots seems to be widening. There is clear evidence of a few African political and bureaucratic elite who are slowly merging with the commercial elite to form an apex at the top of the socio-political and economic élite, while the majority of Africans linger helplessly below the totem pole. This trend may defeat the very tenet of African socialism which in effect may lead to another revolution of an unanticipated nature and which may end up in the disintegration of the whole Kenya society.71

A paragraph from the study summarizes this deep problem for Kenya:

Perhaps two points are most crucial: First, we must recognize that development inevitably

70Ibid., p. 262.
71Ibid., p. 259.
brings inequalities; it is bound to increase social tensions, to widen gaps, to reward some more than others. Secondly, we may ask whether more needs to be done to share the fruits of development, to increase the social cohesion of the nation, and to prevent an undue portion of power being concentrated in too few hands.\textsuperscript{72}

\textbf{Summary}

This chapter contained an attempt to analyze Kenya's modern history by concentrating on the relationships of the primordial groups. The analysis is not complete, however, for there remains the task of investigating current primordial group relations. As an introduction to this investigation, the last section of this chapter (entitled Kenya Since Independence) provided an account of recent events. We are now able, therefore, to proceed with the next two chapters, both of which deal with current primordial group relations in Kenya.

\textsuperscript{72}\textit{Ibid.}
CHAPTER III

THE CONTEMPORARY ASIAN-AFRICAN RELATIONSHIP

One result of Kenyan independence was a sharp decline in the power of the European racial group. This decline of European strength allows the description of primordial group relations since independence to concentrate on the Asians and Africans. Chapter III takes up the important African-Asian racial group relationship. The chapter contains, first, a discussion of the attitudes and actions of each group toward the other. Also included in this chapter is an account of recent economic pressures put on the Asians by the Kenyatta Government. The chapter concludes with a summation of possible recourses for Asians in the face of this official pressure.

Background to the Relationship:
A Question of Citizenship

Some Asians had, before independence, balked at the idea of African rule; a few others chose the opposite direction, formed the Kenya Freedom Party and supported uhuru. Most, however, remained passive and failed to take
any action at all. But with independence came a necessary
test of Asian attitudes in the form of choice of citizen­
ship.

Incoming African leaders and outgoing colonialists
devised a system whereby automatic Kenyan citizenship was
granted to any Asian born in Kenya who had at least one
parent who was also born in Kenya and who (the parent) was
at the date of independence a British citizen or British­
protected person.\(^1\) A two-year grace period beginning at
independence was allowed for all remaining Asians to regis­
ter for Kenyan citizenship. No dual citizenship was
allowed, but for those Asians not choosing Kenyan citizenship
the alternative of a British passport was offered.

No official Kenya Government figures have been
published on the exact numbers of Asians in the different
categories. The statistics offered by Noel Mostern in
Reporter magazine and shown in Table 4 are probably, how­
ever, fairly accurate. The statistics in Table 4 are com­
plicated, however, by the fact that many Asians who were
granted automatic Kenyan citizenship could have a parent who
chose to obtain or retain British citizenship. These Kenyan
citizens could not then be regarded as truly permanent
citizens.

\(^1\)Yash Ghai, "The Future Prospects," in Portrait of
a Minority: Asians in East Africa, ed. Dharam P. Ghai
TABLE 4
FIGURES ON ASIAN CITIZENSHIP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Automatic Kenyan Citizens</td>
<td>60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applications for Kenyan Citizenship 1963-65</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Applications processed by the Kenyan Government)</td>
<td>(13,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance, i.e. British, Pakistani or Indian Citizenship</td>
<td>100,000-120,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Asians in Kenya at Independence (approx.)</td>
<td>190,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\(^b\)Most sources place the number of Asians in Kenya holding British passports at somewhere near the 120,000 figure. See, for example, *Africa Report*, XIII, No. 4 (April 1968), 22; and *The New York Times*, January 7, 1969, p. 3. At least one estimate, however, was as high as 150,000. See *Newsweek*, September 25, 1967, p. 55.

The Asian group has been frightened since independence by the avowed policy of the African government to change the political, economic and social structure of Kenya. The Kenyatta Government has been significantly ambivalent in terming this policy both "Kenyanization," i.e. the process of putting Kenyan citizens into positions of importance, and "Africanization," i.e. the replacement of Europeans and Asians regardless of their citizenship with Africans.\(^2\)

\(^2\)For a detailed discussion of this policy see pp. 68-72 below.
The uncertainty of this policy has caused Asians to fear a loss or limitation of occupational possibilities in Kenya. Thus, within one month after Uhuru, 1,400 Asians left civil service posts and the country; and the average annual rate of departure from 1963 to 1968 was about 7,000 Asians. During 1967, however, the Kenyan Parliament passed two acts which stimulated a massive outflux of Asians during the early part of 1968. Both measures were major steps by the Kenyan Government to Kenyanize the private sector of the economy.

The first measure, known as the Immigration Act, authorized the Ministry of Labour to establish a Kenyanization of Personnel Bureau, the duty of which is to study the position of non-citizens in commerce and industry. All non-citizens were required by this act to apply for new work permits. The government acknowledged that the intent of the Immigration Act was to eventually permit only those non-citizens essential for the economy to remain in the country.

The second legislative step, known as the Trade License Act, required that all trading activity in Kenya be

5 Discussions of the acts can be found in Mostert, p. 27, and WCIIK, p. 257.
analyzed. The government was authorized, on the basis of this analysis, to decide whether having a non-citizen trader in a specific area of Kenya was of benefit to the country or not. Certain regions, known as General Trading Areas, were to be set aside for both citizen and non-citizen trade activity. Other regions (which will probably be enlarged in the future) were to be established for Kenyan citizen traders only.

During the early days of 1968, about 20,000 Asians left Kenya to enter Great Britain. The exodus resulted partly from fears generated by the economic restrictions placed on Asians by the Kenyan Government. But there was Asian apprehension, too, that Britain would soon shut off the influx of Asian immigrants. The apprehension became fact when on February 27, 1968, a combination of Labourites and Conservatives voted in the face of charges of a compromise of British good faith and a broken solemn promise, to pass the Commonwealth Immigrants Bill.

This bill restricts Asian immigration into Britain from Kenya to a yearly maximum of 1,500 family heads and their dependents. The lopsided margin of passage (372 to 62 with 180 abstentions) reflects the fears of many British whites over a growing "coloured population" which stands at

6Parliamentary opposition was led by the Liberal Party.
about 2% of the total British population.\(^7\)

The large majority of non-citizen Asians in Kenya were thus effectively cut off from entry into Britain by this act. Other possible countries of resettlement were, moreover, closed at the same time. Both India and Pakistan, the countries of origin for the Asians, and Uganda, a neighboring African country with a significant Asian minority, refused responsibility for resettling the Asians who wished to leave Kenya. India and Pakistan, in addition, passed restrictive immigration legislation to coincide with the British policy.\(^8\)

These actions by the Indian and Pakistani Governments may appear surprising, but both countries have consistently maintained that the question of citizenship for Asians in all of East Africa was a British problem.\(^9\) The reluctance of these countries to accept responsibility for Asians in Kenya may stem from fears of setting a precedent for Asians in other countries such as Fiji, Mauritius and Ceylon.\(^10\) In India's case, for example, the number of


\(^8\)See Mostert, pp. 27-28.


people in Kenya who can trace their ancestry back to India amounts to only about 3% of the total figure of Indians living abroad.  

Attitudinal Determinants

African Attitudes About Asians

One example of the lack of social scientific data on East Africa is in the scarcity of attitudinal surveys. J. E. Goldthorpe, however, made a survey in 1955 of the attitudes of 52 African graduates of Makerere College in Kampala, Uganda, which covered among other things the views of these men toward Asians. Included in the sample group were 9 Kenyans, 41 Ugandans and 5 Tanzanians. The sample could not, for very obvious reasons, be called representative for the whole Kenyan African population, but the results are rather revealing indicators of African attitudes.

Of the 46 graduates who expressed a definite view on Asians, only 2 were termed "friendly," 19 of the answers were "tolerant or ambivalent" and 25, or 54%, showed "hostility." Common opinions were that Asians as supervisors in government service were uniformly bad ("sarcastic, nagging and demanding"), Asians as traders were regarded as

11 See Kondapi, pp. 527-528.

12 The graduating date for the sample group was the mid-1930's. See J. E. Goldthorpe, "An African Elite," The British Journal of Sociology, VI, No. 1 (March 1955).
selfish and dishonest, and Asians as progenitors were seen as too prolific. On the positive side there was respect for Asian skill and industry, and some agreement that younger Asians were less race conscious than their elders and more likely to make informal social contact.

Goldthorpe writes:

Indians /i.e. Asians/ were frequently compared with Europeans, the feelings being apparently that while some Europeans are in Africa for the benefit of Africans all the Indians are there for their own ends. "Their coming into the country was treacherous" said one member of the sample.13

The author's experience in Kenya would tend to confirm a general African dislike for Asians. In expressing antipathy, the Africans offer both social and economic explanations for their attitude. Africans, first, are suspicious and resentful over the independent social and cultural life of Asians. Informal contacts between the two groups are generally restricted to the elites who meet at bars. Tom Mboya scornfully labeled this type of contact "cocktail integration."14 Otherwise, the typical African-Asian relationship is buyer-seller or often servant-master.

---


14Mboya, p. 109. Mboya also made a remark in 1962 about the rightful place of intermarriage in an integrated society. This caused widespread indignation throughout the Asian group. One Asian leader wrote to the East African Standard that: "Shahs will not give their daughters to Patels, and they will not give them to Africans." This quotation reveals both racial and caste-sect Asian grouping. Quoted in Delf, p. 5.
Educated or semi-educated Africans see the Europeans as a source of Kenya's progress, while Asians are viewed as foreign competitors.

Communications between Asians and the vast majority of Africans are further limited by the fact that both groups must speak kiSwahili, which is a second language for each. Asians have, moreover, adopted a habit similar to that of the Europeans in utilizing an ungrammatical pidgin version of kiSwahili. The imprecise use of this indigenous language strikes many Africans as condescending. In two years of living in Kenya, the only non-Africans the author heard using the Swahili term Bwana (Mr. or Sir) with genuine respect when addressing Africans were American and other foreign volunteers.

Asians hold a comparatively and conspicuously rich position in Kenya, but this position is not now beyond the expectations of many Africans. Africans feel, moreover, that Asians have restricted the chances for upward mobility by refusing to open their businesses to African participation. There is also a widespread feeling, finally, that Asians have been bleeding Kenya by exporting capital to

---

15 The term "educated" is used here in reference to a formal or Western-type education.

16 See Delf, pp. 63-71.
friends and relatives in India and Pakistan.  

Asian Attitudes About Africans

The Asian view of Africans is more difficult to assess than the reverse African attitude. The colonial racial hierarchy put Asians a step above Africans, and the continued habit of that position is evidenced in a common Asian rudeness when dealing with Africans. The author had the interesting experience of meeting and conversing with several Asians in Kenya who assumed by the common relative lightness of skins an entente in "enduring" the Africans.

But the Asians realize that they are living in an African country now, and they are apprehensive and uncertain about what steps the government will take to rectify the inequities of colonialism and bring about a new social and economic order. They wonder if it will be a policy of Kenyanization, which will develop new opportunities for Kenyan citizens, or Africanization, with a new order based on race. They recognize, finally, that the Kenyatta Government is being forced between the pressures of needed Asian skills on the one side and African political pressure on the other.

While there is no hard data on this point, authors such as Morris (The Indians in Uganda, pp. 134-135) and Tandon (p. 122) have discounted any real or significant losses to East Africa by Asians removing capital from this area.
The cross-pressures are seen in official pronouncements such as that of the East African Udoji Commission of 1963.\(^\text{18}\) The Commission listed the following reasons for Africanization of the civil service in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania:

1. For historical reasons; the African Racial Group was accorded discriminatory treatment during the colonial period.

2. For political considerations; the hiring of expatriates\(^\text{19}\) is embarrassing.

3. For functional reasons; an indigenous staff is more permanent.

4. For economic reasons; the expatriates are expensive.

5. For social and long-term motivations; expatriates leave with their experience.

Of these five reasons, only the first applies to Asians, and even here the Asians maintain that they, too, suffered somewhat in the imbalance of colonialism. The Commission goes on to assert, however, that: "Africanization is not merely a policy of equalization, it is also


\(^{19}\)Expatriates are foreigners, usually whites, working in Africa.
that all key and policy-advising posts in the Civil Service should be held by Africans.²⁰

Statements by Kenyan Government officials are rather ambiguous. Often the term "Africanization" is used but then qualified. The following examples are from speeches by President Kenyatta.²¹

In a House of Representatives speech of July 23, 1963, he stated:

It is the policy of the Government to Africanize the Civil Service as quickly as we can. But at the same time, what we need to remember is not the colour of a person's skin, nor anyone's race. We want experienced people. Some of these people--whom my friends regard as imperialists or colonialists--have experience which we need. Until we train our people to hold these posts, we cannot--in a day, as soon as we achieve Independence--scrap every post and say we will put black men in them because they are black.

In my Government, I want experience, and I do not care where I get it. Unless we have a Government with capable Officers to run it, then our Government will fall. I want the people to understand this: that we have this policy of Africanization, that people are being trained for various posts, and that when they are ready we shall give them responsibility. But we cannot take people just because they are black.²²

This speech indicates that the Kenyatta Government intends to follow a policy of Africanization as soon as Africans are capable of assuming responsible positions.

²¹For a collection of speeches made by Mr. Kenyatta during 1963 and 1964 see Jomo Kenyatta, Harambee!
²²Kenyatta, Harambee!, p. 110.
Yet in the same month, July 1963, Kenyatta spoke in a somewhat different vein before a group of Asian business- men in Mombasa.

"The Government . . . is for every citizen of Kenya. Irrespective of what race or religion you belong to, we will work for you all. . . . We want to retain your skills and business experience, and wish you to continue to work as you have done in the Colonial days." 23

In spite of this benign pose, the President has on occasion had tough words for Asians. Thus in a Nairobi speech of June 1964 he warned:

"Indians [i.e., Asians] must learn as well, and must adapt themselves to live with our people. They must obey the African rule.

I say that if there are any Asians who are unwilling to work with us, they can pack their bags and go." 24

And at his residence at Githunguri in September of 1964 Kenyatta said:

"Speaking as the leader of my Party, I would like to pose this question: when we were fighting for freedom and human dignity, how many non-Africans died in this struggle? The non-Africans must abandon their old strategy. They must realize this was consigned to the flames, with all other vestiges of imperialism, on Independence Day. We do not want such people to change their colour. To them I simply say: turn and become Africans in your hearts, and we will welcome you with open arms." 25

In what is probably one of the most revealing and

23Ibid., pp. 109-110.
24Ibid., p. 110.
straightforward statements by an African leader to Asians, Tom Mboya spoke the following words before the Kenya Indian Congress in July 1962.

There is no intention to replace present privilege with African privilege, but a true Kenyan--irrespective of his race or creed--must be entitled to some privilege in his mother country. In the past the African has been underprivileged and therefore in the early stages at least, "localization" is bound to give the appearance that it is primarily Africanization, and indeed by force of numbers it is.\(^\text{26}\)

Radical statements advocating Africanization have been limited thus far to Parliamentary Backbenchers and labor union spokesmen,\(^\text{27}\) but Kenya's Asians wonder how long the Kenyatta Government can resist political pressures which are directly connected with rising African expectations.

**Economic Factors Affecting the Relationship**

**The Precarious Economic Position of the Asians**

The trend among young Africans in Kenya, as elsewhere, is a movement away from rural areas and into the cities. This generation of Africans thinks of agriculture as undignified and backward. Freedom and indeed civilization demand jobs in commerce or, more especially, in public service. It is precisely in these commercial and government

\(^{26}\text{Mboya, p. 109.}\)

\(^{27}\text{Yash Ghai, p. 140.}\)
occupations that 60 to 70% of Asians throughout East Africa make their living.\(^\text{28}\) The fact that so many Asians are working in the choice occupations and so many Africans desire these jobs serves to put the Asians in a difficult position. Can a push for total Africanization, they wonder, be far off?

Goldthorpe's study of attitudes alluded to an African unhappiness over relative Asian affluence. Such Asian affluence does not mean, of course, that every Asian is rich and all Africans are poor but, rather, that Asians are generally richer. This fact is revealed in the following statistics.

1. Although they number around 2% of Kenya's population, the Asians' percentage of the national income is about 20%.\(^\text{29}\)

2. The average 1962 cash earnings for Asian males in Kenya was £551 (about $1575), which is about seven times that for Africans.\(^\text{30}\)

3. In 1966, Asians controlled 80% of Kenya's

---

\(^\text{28}\) Dharam P. Ghai, pp. 106-108.


wholesale and retail trade.\textsuperscript{31}

4. A 1967 estimate places Asian holdings in real estate, commercial buildings and investments at 75% of all urban property.\textsuperscript{32}

Table 5 shows by race the percentage of taxpayers in different income brackets for 1962.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{lcccc}
\hline
Income Group & Africans & Arabs and Somalis & Asians & Europeans \\
\hline
Under £120\textsuperscript{b} & 91.4\% & 86.0\% & 11.0\% & 1.5\% \\
£120-£159 & 4.7 & 7.2 & 4.3 & 3.2 \\
£160-£199 & 1.7 & 1.9 & 3.3 & 0.6 \\
£200-£399 & 1.7 & 2.0 & 13.0 & 2.5 \\
£400 and over & 0.5 & 2.9 & 68.4 & 92.2 \\
\hline
TOTALES & 100.0\% & 100.0\% & 100.0\% & 100.0\% \\
\end{tabular}
\caption{INCOME IN KENYA BY RACE (1962)\textsuperscript{a}}
\end{table}

\textsuperscript{a}Gupta, p. 307, from the Development Plan of Kenya 1962-70, p. 34.

\textsuperscript{b}£ = $2.86.

The demonstrated Asian economic success is based upon what one author has termed their "Quasi-Protestant

\textsuperscript{31}Henry Reuter, "You Can't Run a Duka Without Hundis \textsuperscript{sic}," New York Times, January 31, 1966, p. 62.

\textsuperscript{32}Kaplan \textit{et al.}, p. 135.
Ethic," which includes a strong commercial sense, a capacity for work, a low propensity to consume and a passion for accumulation of capital. R. C. Thurnwald lists the following six reasons for Asian prosperity.

1. They follow a simple life, a kind of "economic asceticism."
2. They have a very close knit family life arrangement.
3. They save their money.
4. There is familial aid among them.
5. They astutely position themselves on main lines of commercial traffic.
6. They have developed abilities in English, reading, writing and mathematics.

Many Europeans and Africans alike have degraded or ignored the contribution made by Asians to the development of the Kenya economy. But the opening up of a monetary economy in several sections of the country and the availability of skilled manpower and capital necessary for economic expansion have resulted from the Asian presence.

The East Africa Royal Commission Report (Cmd 9475, 1955)

---

34 Thurnwald, p. 283.
clearly enunciated the Asian contribution.35

The growth of modern commerce in East Africa has been almost entirely due to the activities of non-African members of the population and in particular to the Indian (i.e., Asian), Arab and Goan traders and to the large European firms with their trade connexions in the western world. Indeed, the remarkable tenacity and courage of the Indian trader has been mainly responsible for stimulating the wants of the indigenous peoples even in the remotest areas, by opening them to a shop window on the modern world and for collecting for sale whatever small surpluses are available for disposal.

And again:

A new and emergent people cannot, in a short period acquire the technical skills and organizing capacity which other older people have acquired only after long periods of tradition and experience. . . . The knowledge and experience which suitable immigrants can bring to East Africa are assets with which it is impossible to disperse with in any foreseeable future.

Estimates made in 1962 on skilled manpower in East Africa show about 18,000 professional men of graduate or equivalent level, senior administrators and senior managers in industry and commerce. Of this total, Asians account for 40%. A second estimate on technicians and sub-professional grades, executive grades in civil service, middle management in industry and commerce, and teachers with secondary education but not degrees puts their number at about 49,500 men of which Asians make up

35Quoted in Goldthorpe, Outlines of East African Society, p. 112.
These figures would support the argument that the Asians are needed in Kenya. It is equally apparent that their presence tends to develop new economic opportunities, for the Asians lend aid both in the contribution of manpower needed for development and in the example they set of successful business methods. Yet pressures against the Asian group have continued to mount since independence.

Some authors are optimistic that given economic growth the pressures will subside. Thus Bert F. Hoselitz, writing about all immigrant minorities in newly independent nations, comments:

"...as these countries achieve political independence and take moderately successful steps toward modernization, economic growth will improve the social and economic position of the indigenous people. More than any other factor, this tends to make possible the integration of foreign ethnic minorities into the social structure of newly developing countries. Some phases of the integration of ethnic minorities may be complex and difficult, however, leading to violence or other forms of social conflict. But in the long run ethnic "dualism" will disappear as a structurally more simplified and

36The two categories of skilled manpower and the population estimates come from Guy Hunter, The New Societies of Tropical Africa (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), and are quoted in Dharam P. Ghai, "An Economic Survey," p. 102. While figures for Kenya per se are not available, the Asian percentage of skilled manpower is probably much higher for that country alone than the figure for all of East Africa. Approximately one-half of all the Asians in East Africa reside in Kenya. The total population for East Africa in 1962 was about 24,500,000. This puts the combined skilled manpower figures at .28% of the total.
better integrated society emerges.\textsuperscript{37}

Social and economic facts, in Kenya at least, do not support Mr. Hoselitz's optimism, however. Granted, much does depend on the growth of Kenya's economy, and the record thus far is good. But two other equally important factors are involved. First, economic growth does not necessarily mean equitable distribution of the fruit of that growth. Many observers are highly critical of Kenya's lack of progress is achieving a just distribution.\textsuperscript{38}

Second, the process of economic growth and development is intricately coupled with a parallel process of rising economic and social expectations.\textsuperscript{39} As the idea for economic advancement is pushed in Kenya, many Africans--some for the first time--become aware of their own relative poverty. One direct result of this new and profound sense of poverty is friction between poorer Kenyans and richer outside national groups, and between poor Africans in Kenya and richer internal social groups--both Asians and Africans.


\textsuperscript{38}See pp. 53-58 above.

\textsuperscript{39}This idea will be more fully amplified in relation to the stresses which it places on tribal relations. See pp. 101-106 below.
The Asian Economic Response

The Asian response to hostile African attitudes and increased governmental restrictions on Asian economic activity is, as has been mentioned, one of ambivalence. Asians are caught between an emotional attachment to Kenya as their home and a rational assessment of their position as a small immigrant minority marked by wealth and color in a newly independent nation seeking to bring about socio-economic change. The whole thought, moreover, of making a meaningful economic response to the increased economic restrictions by opening Asian businesses to a significant African participation is most disturbing. The thought works against natural non-altruistic business inclinations among the Asians. Africans are regarded as economic risks, since most cannot contribute capital, experience or skill to any joint business venture. For small Asian businesses there is a final added factor in that most of these ventures are family enterprises, a combined socio-economic activity into which Africans would not easily or happily fit.

Alternative job opportunities are quite limited. Asians must seek occupations which Africans find inaccessible by reason of the necessary qualifications or outright undesirability. Agriculture must also be largely excluded because of an understandable African reluctance to sell land to non-citizens. Some Asians are hoping to initiate or
expand wholesale trade operations. \(^{40}\) This hope by the very limitations of the Kenyan economy, however, must be restricted to a minority of the Asian group.

**Educational Complications: The Possibility for an Educational Response**

The quality of Asian education in Kenya has been adversely affected by several factors. First, colonial administrators discriminated on a racial basis against both African and Asian educational programs. Second, the Asian caste-sect group division limited the resources that Asians might contribute to their own educational advancement. The financial assets and trained personnel needed to build and staff schools were not combined in any united Asian effort to promote high-quality education. \(^{41}\)

A study made by A. A. Kazimi in 1947 on Asian education in East Africa \(^{42}\) revealed these common problems in the Asian schools:

1. Facilities were severely overcrowded.
2. Teachers were poorly qualified. In Kenya, only one-third of the teachers in government-run schools for

\(^{40}\)See Delf, p. 46; and Hunter, p. 156.

\(^{41}\)Raymond Gold, "The Educational Systems of East Africa" (unpublished manuscript; Missoula, Montana, 1969).

\(^{42}\)This study is quoted in P. M. Rattansi and M. Abdulla, "An Educational Survey," in Portrait of a Minority, ed. Dharam P. Ghai, pp. 117-118.
Asians had degrees or qualifications. In the private schools only 54 teachers of a total of 213 were college matriculates.

3. Courses were too literary. Kazimi found too great an emphasis on the passage of the Cambridge School Certificate examination and too little emphasis placed on useful technical education.

4. There were few opportunities for higher education.

Under the Colonial Government in Kenya the whole system of education was racially segregated, including separate government administrative sections, syllabuses, comprehensive examinations and school facilities. 43

Government expenditures for education for this period were, moreover, racially discriminatory. The 1955 public appropriation for each European student was £85 (about $245.00), for each Asian student £21 (about $60.00) and for each African student £6 (about $17.00). 44 Under the Kenya Development Programme of 1957-1960, Europeans (1% of the population) received 19% of the education budget funds; Asians (3% of the population) received 28% of the funds; and Africans (96% of the population) received 53% of the funds. Such discrimination was compounded by the

43See Gold.
44Delf, p. 44.
fact that Asians and Africans were, of course, the two racial groups least able to counterbalance insufficient public funding by their own private means. The Asians tried to take up the financial slack through caste-sect schools. In 1960, only one-third of the Asian schools were government run, while one-third were partially aided and one-third were totally private.\(^5\) The effect on the quality of Asian schools by the inadequacy of this approach is documented in the unhappy conclusions of the Kazimi Report.

Asians now see some hope in the non-racial and integrated school system established since Uhuru. Not only do they realize that the future quality of Asian-African relations lies with the Asian youth, but they also desire to see better relations develop between the youngsters of both races through contacts in schools. There are increased contacts, too, between Asian teachers and African students. This latter relationship may well impress Africans as a demonstration of Asian willingness to participate in the development of an African country where education is highly prized.

Asians recognize that the key to adjustment to programs of Africanization lies in developing the abilities through education to fill Kenya's skilled and professional manpower requirements.

\(^45\text{Ibid.}\)
But while Asians hold hopes for social and economic advantages in the post-independence school system, they realize that the government is intent upon reversing the inequities of colonial educational policies. This realization causes apprehension among Asians, because there is uncertainty over what future tack the Kenyan Government will take toward the education of Asian youngsters. Funds may be cut, for example, for Asian-run schools which are partially supported by public grants. Some Asians feel that caste-sect schools will need to expand to furnish new opportunities for Asian students and to provide insurance against possible government discrimination.

The caste-sect groups, however, have only limited resources to contribute. The real hope for Asian education in Kenya and elsewhere lies with the African governments. P. M. Rattansi and M. Abdulla conclude in their survey of Asian education in East Africa that:

The control of education is primarily in the hands of the governments, and in this sense the future of the Asians is also in the hands of the governments. If the governments adopt policies which discriminate against the Asian school children and effectively reduce their opportunities for education, the future for the Asians will be terribly bleak.47

46 See Rattansi and Abdulla, pp. 125-126.

47 Ibid., p. 124. The governments referred to here are, of course, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.
The Problems and Prospects for Asian Political Participation

... if the Asians can integrate effectively at the political level, then many of their social and economic problems will be dealt with more sympathetically and successfully.48

This statement by an Asian author demonstrates a recognition of opportunities flowing from political integration or participation. But there are both historical legacies and contemporary difficulties which may prevent such effective political integration.

The historical contribution of the Asians to the achievement of Kenya's independence was minimal, and Africans are aware of this fact. The Asian-European conflict during the colonial period was for Asians an anti-European rather than a pro-African effort. The restraint which this conflict put on the Europeans was beneficial, of course, to the African cause of independence. But everyone in Kenya knows that most Asians did not have African interests in mind when they struggled with the Europeans.

George Delf makes the point that Asians were probably surprised by the early achievement of uhuru in Kenya.49 Such surprise is understandable, for many observers both inside Kenya and out did not expect Kenya's rapid movement

48 Yash Ghai, p. 143.
49 Delf, pp. vii-ix.
toward self-government during the late 1950's. But Asian uninvolvement in the promotion of this movement runs deeper than mere surprise. The Asians were a relatively privileged group in the colony and were naturally unwilling to jeopardize this privilege by supporting rule by the Africans who, under the colonial system, had not been allowed to develop or to demonstrate either intellectual or political leadership.

Asians were hindered, also, in the formation of a coherent policy with respect to uhuru by their caste-sect divisions. This divisiveness, mentioned before in terms of caste-sect group political activity and the weakness of the EAINC, has plagued Asian political activity throughout Kenya's history.

George Bennett and Carl G. Rosberg in their book on the 1961 elections in Kenya write of the political disunity among Asians, a phenomenon they term "political communalism."

However much leaders may proclaim that it must and should end, all Asian elections in Kenya in the

As expressed to this author, the typical settler reaction to the rapid achievement of independence in Kenya was one of great surprise and a feeling that the British Government had betrayed European interests there.


past--and this was no exception--have been dominated by communalism. The first document noticed on many an Asian candidate's desk, and the first subject of conversation with the agent of any candidate, was the breakdown of the voters' role by communities. Muslim and non-Muslim candidates alike knew that their first task was to seek and obtain support from the leaders of the various groups: Patels, Shahs, Punjabi Hindus, Sikhs, Goans, etc. on the non-Muslim side, with, on the Muslim, Sunnis, Ismailis, Bohras, Menons, Ithnasharis, etc.53

All of these factors, then--surprise, fear and disunity--contributed to Asian inability to assist uhuru. These factors also help to explain the Asian failure to follow strong exhortations by Prime Minister Nehru and other Indian and Pakistani leaders to East African Asians to support anti-colonialist movements.54

The ability of the Asians to participate effectively in the Kenyan political system since independence has also been limited by several factors. Emigration has meant a decline in numbers and political strength; Asians are now

53Bennett and Rosberg, p. 115.

54A final possibility for Asian inaction is offered by Tom Mboya who wrote that he believed the Asian leaders had "betrayed the interests of their people in not supporting Uhuru vigorously." Mboya felt that: "The overwhelming majority of the Indian [i.e. Asian] community in Kenya supported the African stand and wanted to adhere to the standards set by Nehru and Gandhi as friends and allies in the struggle for freedom and democracy" (Mboya, p. 10). Mboya's belief is difficult to assess in that this author found nothing to support this position, but rather observed marked Asian-African differences which would obviously tend to discount such "overwhelming" Asian sympathy for independence. Mboya had, however, both the insight and experience to validate his position.
divided by a new citizen - non-citizen cleavage; and, finally, African majority rule has limited the range of political options open to Asians. This limited range of options results from the fact that aspiring Asian politicians have become more dependent on the support of African voters and less able to appear to champion Asian causes.

The Asian dependence on African voters would be lessened if a one-party system were to develop in Kenya. Indeed, there may be much hope for Asians in the development of such a system. If the Asians were to become a strong supporting faction in a dominant party, they might have a much better opportunity to influence government policies. Their participation in such a party would probably, moreover, be welcomed. There is a realization among top African leaders of the significant Asian contribution to the Kenyan economy. This realization is not shared with the African masses who see Asians as obstacles to their own economic progress. In a dominant one-party government in Kenya, Asian political participation would not be subject to the approval of the African masses in the role of voters to such a degree as it is now.
The Asian-African Conflict: Functions and Risks

Whether the Kenyatta Government consciously pursues the consequences or not, certain sequels, both functional and risky, have resulted from the governmental pressures and the maintenance of the Asian-African conflict as a national issue. The functional consequences go beyond the expressed intent of the Government to eliminate colonial inequities which restricted African socio-economic development. Desirable consequences (in the Government's view) from continued Asian-African strife include the following:

1. A promotion of cross-tribal African group unity. Sociologist Lewis A. Coser writes:

   Conflict serves to establish and maintain the identity and boundary lines of societies and group. Conflict with other groups contributes to the establishment and reaffirmation of the identity of a group and maintains its boundaries against the surrounding social world.55

2. A safety valve for African frustrations prompted by limited economic and social gains in the face of rising expectations. Asians can easily be made the scapegoats for the unmet expectations.

3. An indebtedness to the government by new African businessmen who have, with official aid, moved into economic positions formerly held by Asians.

55Coser, p. 38.
The risks entangled in the Asian-African conflict go beyond the obvious danger of an economic loss if talented and productive Asians were to move out of Kenya \textit{en masse}. Three risks involved by placing too much pressure on the Asians include:

1. Possible violence by Africans against the Asians.

2. A decreased incentive for the Kenyatta Government to fulfill the pledges of African Socialism. When the Asians are made economic scapegoats, the focus is taken off policy failures in, for example, the program of equitable distribution.

3. The establishment of a dangerous policy precedent for heavy-handed government action towards a minority group in Kenya. The legacy of colonial rule in Kenya, as in the remainder of Africa, has been described by Victor C. Ferkiss as "habituation to centralized, undemocratic political rule."\textsuperscript{56} If the Kenyatta Government deals harshly with Asians and, more especially, if the mistreated Asians include Kenyan citizens, the "habituation" of unrestricted political rule will be extended and intensified. If such a precedent is established, there is little reason to believe that target of such treatment could not one day be one of the African tribes.

\textsuperscript{56}Ferkiss, p. 78.
Summary
In this chapter the author has endeavored to analyze the current Asian-African relationship in Kenya. Cross-racial attitudes were described, and an account was given of the increasing political and economic pressures placed on the Asian group by official actions in Great Britain, India, Pakistan and Kenya. The governmental pressures have generated Asian hopes to respond, and these hopes were analyzed by describing possible economic, educational and political adaptations open to the Asians. The chapter then concluded with a description of possible and probable results of recent Kenyan Government policies toward the Asians.
CHAPTER IV
THE CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN TRIBAL RELATIONSHIPS

The purpose of this chapter is to examine in some detail the complexities of current African tribal relationships. In the plural society of Kenya, the quality of relationships within the dominant African group will have a profound effect on the as yet uncertain achievement of a stable and viable political system.

The Crucial Question of National Unity

The morning after independence has brought a "shock of recognition" of fragile underpinnings. Building a new nation is a rough, unchartered journey with many unanticipated problems.1

The most crucial social question in Kenya today is whether or not the country can hang together. The dynamics of the problem lie within the great African majority and the relationship of the primordial tribal groups. Will

tribalism, the conflict of these tribal groups,² destroy the unity of Kenya?

While sporadic cross-tribal violence broke out soon after independence in 1963,³ the first serious blow to African national unity came when Vice President Oginga Odinga withdrew from the government in April 1966.⁴ Shortly thereafter, Odinga and several other members of Parliament formed the Kenya People's Union (KPU). The basis for the KPU was primarily tribal in nature, for most of the leaders including Odinga are Luos and the party is strongest in the western area of Kenya around Lake Nyanza (Victoria) where the Luos predominate.

A second setback for post-independence African unity came on July 5, 1969, with the assassination of Mr. Tom Mboya, the Minister for Economic Affairs and Secretary-General of KANU. Mboya was an important and

²"Tribalism," as it is used here, is only one of several definitions of the term. Tribalism has also been used to refer to "traditionalism" or "cultural conservatism" and to "ruralism" as opposed to "urbanism." For a discussion of this multiple usage see Pierre L. van den Berghe, "Introduction," in Africa: Social Problems of Change and Conflict, ed. Pierre L. van den Berghe (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Co., 1965), p. 440.

³Fighting was reported in July 1964 along the Rift Valley and Western Region boundaries which left 1,200 homeless, one dead and several injured. The New York Times, July 22, 1964, p. 21. Oginga Odinga describes the same incident in his book Not Yet Uhuru as being between the Maragoli and Nyangori tribal groups.

⁴See Odinga, especially pp. 275-315.
perhaps essential agent in the maintenance of cross-tribal unity in Kenya under the Kenyatta Government. For although he was a Luo, Mboya was a strong voice in Kenyatta's cabinet and party. He had personally built for himself a multitribal backing that he demonstrated by his election to Parliament from a predominantly Kikuyu constituency. Mboya was commonly recognized, moreover, as having great economic and political planning ability. His murder (by a Kikuyu) brought to the surface violent tribal conflict.

The violence was in evidence as President Kenyatta's car was stoned by Luos as he attended funeral ceremonies for Mboya in Nairobi. A similar stoning occurred later in the year when Kenyatta visited Mboya's home area in Nyanza Province. In the second incident, police protecting Kenyatta opened fire on the attacking crowd, killing 11 and injuring 78. Given the strong charismatic nature of Kenyatta, these violent attacks represent a dramatic breakdown in tribal relations. Mzee himself was reportedly extremely shaken by the experiences and began to initiate a practice of oathing by fellow Kikuyus. The oaths, which invoked memories of the Mau Mau days, were supposedly pledges by the Kikuyu to seek or keep control of Kenya in

---


their own hands.  

Masinde Mulurio, an M.P. and leader in the Abaluhya tribe, Kenya's third largest, commented in Parliament in August that "the whole country felt unsafe and was asking what the Kikuyu were doing." By October 1969, The New York Times reported that: "Church sources with wide acquaintance in Kikuyu-land report that 90% of the tribe's members have taken part in the illegal ceremonies." 

The news emanating from Kenya in late 1969 told of increasing tribal conflict. The prospect that President Kenyatta could hold the country together without resorting to force was increasingly diminished as he lost cross-tribal appeal.

---


10Members of the Kipsigis tribe, for example, were said to have forced out all Kikuyu living near the Kipsigis home area around Kericho.

Historical Background to Contemporary Relationships

Tribal conflict has probably existed to some degree in Kenya ever since the ancestors of the modern tribes came into contact—about 500 years ago. Some authors believe that early tribal relationships, although mistrustful or even hostile, were characterized by little violence. This assertion cannot be proven with any certainty, but it is known, however, that in the early 19th Century conflict between tribes grew. This friction probably resulted from the pressures of overpopulation and the aid given by some Africans to Arab and Portuguese slavers.

British entry into Kenya, although it brought an end to slavery, eventually created a new division between African tribes which has current significance. The British brought to Africa as part of the "white man's burden" the "Western Way," which introduced individualism, science, technology and the desire to accumulate wealth. The African response to the Western Way was not uniform. The Kikuyu, for example, quickly adopted and adapted the new way to their traditional behavior. Paul Bohannan terms the

12See pp. 24-25.


14See Davidson.
modern Kikuyu a "driven people" who act much like 18th or 19th Century capitalists with goals of "greater achievement, wealth and ease."\textsuperscript{15} James Coleman attributes the Kikuyu response partly to certain traditional culture traits such as a "general absence of chiefs, smallness in scale and the democratic character of indigenous political organization, \textsuperscript{16}and\textsuperscript{17} emphasis on achieved status and individualism," all of which parallels similar traits among the Ibo people of eastern Nigeria.\textsuperscript{16}

In general, it may be said that Peasant tribes such as the Kikuyu\textsuperscript{17} more quickly and readily adopted the Western Way than did Pastoral tribes such as the Masai, Turkana or Galla. The Pastorals have resisted change for several reasons.\textsuperscript{18}

1. Traditional special work functions among the Pastorals have somewhat inhibited work activities in a modern economy.

2. Pastorals have a traditional aristocratic

\textsuperscript{15}Bohannan, pp. 27-28.

\textsuperscript{16}James S. Coleman, "Nationalism in Tropical Africa," \textit{The American Political Science Review}, XLVIII, No. 2 (June 1954), 413.

\textsuperscript{17}See Thurnwald's Peasant-Pastoral divisions on p. 15 and Table 3 above.

\textsuperscript{18}For a discussion of this resistance see Thurnwald, p. 102.
self-opinion which was approbated during British rule.

3. There is a continuing attraction to the traditional ways among the Pastorals because it was through this traditional manner of life that they had acquired power and prestige during precolonial days.

As African reaction to the Western Way was uneven, so too was their reaction to British rule. Dr. Gikonyo Kiano, Kenya's Minister for Education, remarked before Uhuru that: "The desire to be rid of the colonial government is the nearest thing we have to 'one-ness' or to being a nation."¹⁹ This statement, while true, must be qualified with the fact that even in the anti-colonial struggle there was not total African unity; for that struggle was in great part a Kikuyu struggle. As Coleman writes: "In Kenya, Mau Mau and all earlier proto-nationalist movements have been predominantly Kikuyu endeavors, even though the name Kenya has been employed."²⁰

Current African Relationships

Despite official government avoidance of the term "tribe," the tribal social group carried over into the period since independence. This persistence may be


explained in part by general theory on the nature of social groups. Thus Abner Cohen writes:

... traditional groups are highly tenacious in the face of change. And when their members are held together not only by common customs and values but also by vital economic and political interests, these groups struggle hard to retain their autonomy.21

Lester G. Seligman says much the same in his comment on primordial group reaction to the phenomenon of nationalism:

... the new nationalism itself stimulates and reinforces the old parochial loyalties. In many instances traditional groups become more apprehensive and militant about preserving their own identity and status.22

Tom Mboya offers an explanation for continued conflict or tribalism in writing:

When a leader feels himself weak on the national platform he begins to calculate that the only support he may have will come from his own tribe; so he starts to create an antagonism of this sort, to entrench himself as at least a leader of his tribe.23

Mboya's point here is that the persistent strength of the tribal unit and the incidence of cross-tribal hostility may be deliberately manipulated from above. Thus tribal


22 Lester G. Seligman, p. 345.

23 Mboya, p. 66.
identity and strife may be promoted by both the calculated effort of leaders and the spontaneous tribal group reaction to social change.

Whatever the explanations, tribalism is a commonly acknowledged fact of the Kenyan society today. Since 1963, the Kikuyu, as members of the most educated and "modern" of the tribal groups, have fallen heir to government business and agricultural positions vacated by the departing British. The extent of this take-over is difficult to document, but what is evident is a widespread resentment among other Africans at what they consider to be tribal favoritism in job hiring and farm and business establishment purchase. For example, a recent poll cited in a book written in 1967 showed that 68% of the Kenyan people felt that tribal favoritism existed in the Kenyan civil service.

Additional evidence of tribalism in Kenya today can be found in stereotype comments which Africans make about other tribes. The author heard many such comments, usually

24 John S. Roberts, A Land Full of People: Life in Kenya Today (New York: Praeger, 1967), p. 63. What Roberts did not reveal, unfortunately, was a tribal breakdown, if one existed, of this 68%. It would have been interesting to see, for example, how many Kikuyu were included among this category.

The author remembers many incidents in which Africans spoke of favoritism for Kikuyu. One young Nandi government farm administrator, for example, said with bitterness but resignation that he had been in line for a promotion but was passed over through such favoritism for a Kikuyu subordinate.
phrased as well-intentioned admonishments for the uninitiated foreigner. Thus in reference to the Kikuyu one hears: "Don't marry a Kikuyu; she'll run away and steal all your money and children." Another common statement about the Kikuyu is: "Don't enter into any business agreements with the Kikuyu; they'll cheat you." The assumption of such statements is that the Kikuyu (who are called "Kukes" by some urban Africans) are dishonest.

Comments about the Masai and other more traditional tribes by more "educated" or urbanized Africans show an assumption that the traditional tribes are backward or savage. Thus the author has been told: "I pity you living with the Masai; you'd be better off with some 'civilized' Africans."

Many Africans, in talking about the Luo people, reveal their feeling that all Luos are unclean. This idea stems from the fact that the Luos, unlike the members of almost every other major tribe in Kenya, perform neither male nor female circumcision. Thus one hears the comment: "Never marry a Luo; they're a dirty lot."

---

25Another major exception is the Turkana tribe. Female circumcision, or clitoridectomy, is probably much less common in Kenya today than it was before the arrival of the British.
The Possibility and Implications of the Emergence of Classes in Kenya

In an earlier section, the possibility was discussed of the emergence of classes in Kenya as a result of government failures to implement the distributive aspect of African Socialism. The relevance of such an emergence to the current Asian-African conflict has also been examined. But growing economic and social differences between Africans have implications, also, for current African tribal relations.

Several authors have examined the widespread desire for a better quality of life which emerged in colonial areas after World War II. This desire, often termed the "revolution of rising expectations," has not been limited to a yearning for consumer goods, but has included aspirations of education for oneself and one's children, improved health, and opportunities for new acquaintances, skills and respect.

---

26 See pp. 53-58 above.

27 See pp. 77-78 above.


29 Millikan and Blackmer, pp. 43-44.
In addition to its material, non-material aspects, the concept of rising expectations is further complicated by the fact that the desires are aggravated by a growing realization of poverty in relation to other richer men. Before the arrival of Asians and Europeans in Kenya, the Africans there did not feel relatively poor or deprived. The tribes in Kenya, as elsewhere in Africa, were on a relatively equal level of development. Even within the tribes, economic class distinctions were absent. In the subsistence economy only rudimentary differentiations of labor existed. Wealth, even if accumulated, was consumed rather than stored; the status divisions were based on sex, age and demonstrated leadership ability rather than wealth.31

Africans have become aware of their relative deprivation through personal contacts with foreigners and the spread of mass communications. But following independence, new meaning has been lent to the sense of deprivation by


growing socio-economic divisions within the African racial group itself. Initially, distinctions of wealth between Africans probably did not create hostility; on the contrary, poorer Africans must have felt pride in observing that other Africans could succeed in the new system of the Western Way. As time goes on, however, as lines become more clearly drawn between rich and poor, the sense of deprivation must surely grow and class conflict will begin.

African Overconfidence Before Independence

Africans believed, prior to independence, that such class conflict could be avoided once Kenya gained uhuru. They knew, of course, that class conflict had not been a part of the traditional tribal societies. Many Africans were very optimistic, too, that Kenya would be able to satisfy the new expectations once the Europeans left. Thus the feeling among Kenya's Africans was that an independent government could, by combining traditional classless values with the profitability of running one's own country, avoid a society of African classes after Uhuru. This feeling lies at the root of African Socialism.

The African optimism preceding independence was a phenomenon not limited to Kenya. Such optimism was in evidence in several African colonies. The more informed Africans felt that the colonists had reaped huge profits in
Africa and that independence would make these profits available for distribution to the inhabitants of the former colonies.\textsuperscript{32}

Among the African masses economic anticipations were more fanciful than among the more informed. Thus Oginga Odinga writes:

Some people thought that independence meant the end of the struggle and all would be in order in a new Kenya. Some people in the villages thought that there was lots of money in the bank and Kenya would give it all to us, that money could be printed easily enough.\textsuperscript{33}

Now, several years after independence, the hard realistic facts which make economic development an arduous task are being recognized by the African governments. The new nations are facing difficulties in finding the capital and developing the skills, energy and initiative necessary for development.\textsuperscript{34}

\textbf{The Connection Between Economic Development and Political Legitimacy}

The challenge of surmounting economic difficulties and of meeting rising expectations is of crucial importance for Kenya and the other newly independent societies of the

\textsuperscript{32}See Ferkiss, pp. 74-75.

\textsuperscript{33}Odinga, p. 242.

world. To fail would be to jeopardize the very legitimacy of the new governments. Max Weber has identified three approaches by which an authority may gain legitimacy. These are:

1. Through tradition.
2. Through charismatic appeal.
3. Through rational legal authority.

The newly independent Kenyatta Government had, of course, precious little tradition upon which to rely. Never before had other tribes experienced leadership by a Kikuyu. The charismatic method of gaining legitimacy is dependent upon Kenyatta's ability to maintain and develop his image in Kenya's plural society as Mzee, the "Father of Kenya,"


and indeed on his ability at an old age\textsuperscript{37} to continue living. The third method of gaining legitimacy, through rational legal authority, hinges on a government's ability to demonstrate its effectiveness. If it is true that "for the new nations today, demonstrating effectiveness means one thing, economic development,"\textsuperscript{38} then this third method of gaining legitimacy is dependent on economic development. The proof of economic development, for the people of Kenya and the other new nations, will be found in the satisfaction of rising expectations. This fact is what makes the fulfillment of the expectations so crucially important for Kenya.

The Danger in the Correlation of Class with Tribe

The importance of rising expectations and emerging classes in Kenya has great relevance for the relationship of the African tribes. If a correlation begins to develop between emerging classes and traditional tribal groups, then a dangerous threat will also develop for African unity and harmony. Even in old established societies such as those of the United States and Northern Ireland the coincidence of primordial distinctions of race or religion with


\textsuperscript{38}Lipset, p. 46.
socio-economic class differences produces dramatic tensions. In the plural society of Kenya, if one tribe begins to outdistance other tribes in its economic development (as the Kikuyu tribe may well be doing), then tribal conflict is imminent and the legitimacy of the political union in Kenya is threatened. To go one step further, if the Kikuyu attempt by oathing or by other means to buttress the threatened government by seeking to consolidate their own tribal hegemony, then the government will only be preserved through a great effort of force and repression. Socio-economic differences in correlation with primordial divisions are at the core of the Asian-African conflict, and they may well lead in the near future to an intensified African tribal struggle.

**Summary**

The attempt in this chapter has been to focus on the very important African tribal relationships. The quality of these relationships and the outcome of the effort to avoid a class structure in Kenya will be of primary importance to the unity of that country.
In this final chapter the author reverts to the theme of primordial groups first presented in the Introduction. The attempt here will be to analyze primordial groups as political groups, to show their qualitative distinctions and possible uses in future studies.

Kenya As a Plural Society

The idea that Kenya possesses a plural society was first presented in the Introduction, and the discussion which followed was, in part, an attempt to demonstrate or prove this plural nature for Kenya's society. Several pertinent observations may be drawn from the discussion:

1. Because of a relative absence of value consensus, conflict rather than consensus characterizes Kenya's society.

1See pp. 1-3. For an introductory work on the theory of plural societies see Leo Kuper and M. G. Smith (eds.), Pluralism in Africa (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969). Significant writings on plural societies include those by Smith, Kuper, van den Berghe and Furniwall. (See bibliography for complete listing.)
2. There exists in Kenya a relative rigidity and clarity of group definition.

3. Kenya's society also displays a relative segmentation in the character of group relationships. Integrated behavior is not typical in Kenya. Social institutions correspond to rather than overlap the primordial group boundaries. The manner in which individuals of separate groups act toward one another is restricted and ritualized.

As evidence of the social cleavages and divisions in Kenya, five different sets of primordial groups were examined:

1. The Asian Racial Group
2. The African Tribal Groups
3. The Asian Racial Group
4. The Asian Caste-Sect Groups
5. The European Racial Group

Primordial Groups As Political Groups

All social groups have interests, and because primordial groups are a special type or category of social

Thus Arthur F. Bentley writes: "There is no group without its interest. An interest ... is the equivalent of a group. We may speak also of an interest group or a group interest, again merely for the sake of clearness in expression. The group and the interest are not separate. There exists only the one thing, that is, so many men bound together in or along the path of a certain activity." Arthur F. Bentley, The Process of Government: A Study
groups, they too have interests. Some, but not all, social groups are also political groups, that is, they direct their interest or activity in an attempt to influence government policy. The discussion of Kenya showed primordial groups in that country performing such an activity. A qualification must be recognized here in that it is theoretically possible to conceive of a relatively weak primordial group out of one of the five aforementioned sets which is apolitical. Such apolitical behavior is not likely to be the case, however, and it is certainly not the norm. Whenever there is contact between a primordial group and government, that primordial group takes on a political interest. The very act of claiming official recognition as a group (even if it is only to be recognized as such in a census) makes the primordial group political. The primordial groups of Kenya can, with justification, be called political groups.

The act of raising Kenya's primordial groups to the level of political groups makes possible the comparison of the primordial groups with other types of political groups. Differences and distinctions can be demonstrated in a consideration of political group origins and activities.

Qualitative Distinctions of Kenya's Primordial Groups As Political Groups

A Social Basis

In societies less plural than Kenya's, the origin of political groups is more likely to center on economic rather than social cleavages. Thus in the relatively homogeneous American society no student of politics could afford to ignore such significant political groups as the labor unions, business associations or occupational organizations. Even before the United States had its Constitution, it was concluded in Federalist Number 10 that "... the most common and durable source of factions has been the various and unequal distribution of property."³

In Kenya, however, economic groups play a far less important function and the prime factor in political group formation thus far has been primordial social attraction. Several reasons account for this tendency for primordial groups to form and become politically active.

1. Economic and social differences have often coincided in Kenya. When the racial pyramid was formed with Europeans on the top, Asians in the middle and Africans on the bottom, the hierarchy was both economic and social in nature.

2. Primordial sentiments have often coincided with territorial possession. Each African tribe had its own traditional area, and the Europeans looked upon the Highlands as their own region. The Mau Mau struggle was to a great degree a dispute based on conflicting land claims.

3. Some primordial groups have been intentionally made participants in the political system. Through Indirect Rule the colonial government recognized the African tribes as political units. Through communal representation all three racial groups participated in the governmental policy-making process.

4. One set of primordial groups, the African tribes, had at one time their own separate and distinct societies.

**Primordial Groups and Common Social Values**

Value consensus, by very definition, exists to a greater degree in a more homogeneous society than it does in a more plural society. The degree of value consensus in a society is directly related to the range of activities of political groups in that society. When a high degree of consensus exists in a society, the political groups will be much more likely to accept as "given" the legitimacy of the political system and the "rules of the political game."
The evidence does not indicate that the primordial groups of Kenya have yet accepted common social values. The European group, for example, came close to revolution in its reaction to the Wood-Winterton Agreement of 1922.\(^4\) During the Emergency and Mau Mau rebellion the Kikuyu tribe, or at least a large percentage of that group, attacked the legitimacy of colonial rule. Since independence, the Somali tribe has fought inclusion within the Kenyan society. Thus the repertory of possible political actions by the primordial groups includes violent action against government in an attempt to overthrow the political system or to opt out of society altogether.

The Primordial Groups and Kenya’s Boundaries

The case of the Somali tribe of northeast Kenya points to another distinctive socio-political feature of the primordial groups in Kenya. Some of the primordial groups, such as the Somali, overlap into neighboring countries and are thereby cut by the international boundaries. Primordial groups which are so split fall into two different categories:

1. Groups which are divided by the fact that the border cuts a primordial group population and its traditional territory. Examples include the Somali, Masai and 

\(^4\)See pp. 35-36 above.
and Abaluhya tribes.

2. Groups whose population only is divided. Examples here include the Asian racial group and the Asian caste-sect groups.¹

The tendency for primordial groups which are completely contained within Kenya's national boundaries is to fear and resist the political power and authority of the national government. This tendency is much more marked for those primordial groups which have traditional territories. The tendency to resist the national authority was quite evident, for example, in the initial tribal response to British attempts to colonize Kenya.

For those primordial groups which are divided by Kenya's national boundaries and are residing therefore in both Kenya and a neighboring country there have been two separate tendencies. The groups have tended either to resist the authority of both national governments or to resist one government and accept the other. These tendencies have, once again, been more marked for those primordial groups which have traditional territories (i.e. the groups of category 1).

The Masai tribe provides one example of a divided primordial group from category 1. The Masai, who are

¹There were in 1960 about 87,000 Asians in Tanzania and about 75,000 in Uganda. Delf, pp. 54-48.
divided by the boundary between Kenya and Tanzania, have tended to resist the authority of both national governments. A second example of a primordial group from category 1 is the Somali tribe which is divided by the Kenya-Somali Republic boundary. The tendency for the Somali tribesmen has been to resist violently the attempts by the Kenyan Government to extend its authority over them. These tribesmen have not tended to act similarly, however, towards the national government of the Somali Republic. Because of an attachment to the Somali society (an attachment based on common primordial ties), the Somali tribe has given evidence of an eagerness to become part of the Somali society and to accept the authority of the Somali Government.

The Performance of Interest Articulation by Kenya's Primordial Groups

Latent and Manifest Interests

The interests of the primordial groups in Kenya have, at times, been conspicuous or manifest. The African tribes openly fought British imperialism. The Asian EAINC

---

overtly resisted colonial racial policies. The Europeans publicly protested the Wood-Winterton Agreement.

Very often, however, the primordial group interests have been concealed or latent. Such concealment reflects, in part, a repressive political history in Kenya. The full resentment of the Kikuyu tribe, for example was only made manifest when frustrated tribal members were motivated to turn to violence and Mau Mau activities for the expression of their rejection of colonial racism.

But in addition to the repressive nature of Kenya's political system, the common inclination of primordial groups to have latent political interests reflects a distinctive quality of these groups. Clifford Geertz has perceived latent articulation to be a common feature of primordial political groups (he terms them "political solidarities") throughout the newly independent nations of the world. "Primordially based political solidarities," he writes, "have a deeply abiding strength in most of the new states, but it is not always an active and immediately apparent one." Rather, the political interest is latent, "...lying concealed in the enduring structure of primordial identification, ready to take explicit political form given only the proper sorts of social conditions." 7

7Geertz, p. 114.
Two examples of primordial group political interest latency in Kenya are found in the activities of the Asian caste-sect groups and the Kipsigis tribal group. The existence of the Asian caste-sect groups explains for the most part the political weakness of the Asian racial group. Because the Asians are divided into so many strong subgroups, they have not been able to take a united political stand. The fact that the Asian caste-sect groups have strong interests is not, however, readily apparent. Very often these interests have remained well-concealed and the only surface evidence has been the political weakness of the Asian racial group.

In somewhat similar fashion, the interests of the Kipsigis tribal group have remained concealed since independence. The Kipsigis people, like many other Kenyans, have become increasingly resentful of the growing political and economic strength of the Kikuyu tribe. This resentment was hidden for the most part, however, until the recent upsurge in tribalism when the Kipsigis ejected Kikuyus from the traditional area of the Kipsigis tribe. Only then did the group interests surface.

There is a politically secret or latent aspect to Kikuyu oathing as well. No one knows for sure who has taken the oath and who has not. The political interest of

\[8\] See footnote 10, p. 94.
these oaths remains concealed, "ready to take explicit political form," as Geertz writes, "given only the proper sorts of social conditions. . . ."

**Associational and Non-Associational Articulation**

Sometimes, when the political interest of the primordial group was expressed, it was done so in an organized manner. The primordial group could then be called politically associational. The EAINC, for example, performed the function of political articulation for the Asian Racial Group.

KANU, the present ruling party, has enough of a multigroup membership to preclude calling any primordial group associational on the basis of the party's existence. It might be argued, however, that the KPU performed a political interest articulation function for the Luo tribe. If so, then the Luo tribe was politically associational until the KPU was banned in 1969.

**Specific and General Interests**

An important feature of Kenya's primordial groups is that while they have expressed specific interests, i.e. interests pertaining to a particular policy, these specific interests are very often only parts of more broad

---

9See p. 92 above.
or general interests.

This tendency toward general interests is demonstrated in the activities of the three racial groups in Kenya. The European group, for example, demanded specifically that Asians be excluded from land in the Highlands, but this demand was only part of a general European group interest. In this paper the general European group interest has been termed the European Racist Syndrome.¹⁰

In a similar manner, the Asian group fought against the specific colonial policy of urban segregation. Once again, however, this Asian action was but a part of a general Asian group interest in rejecting the whole range of colonial racist policies.

The African group, under Mboya's leadership, fought the specific policy of multiracial rule for Kenya. But as with the Europeans and Asians, this specific African action was only part of a general group interest. In this case, the general African interest was in achieving independence.

James Coleman emphasizes the general interests of primordial groups throughout underdeveloped nations in observing the "critical fact" of these nations is that "interests still tend to be defined predominantly in terms of tribe, race, religion, or communal reference

¹⁰See pp. 19-21 above.
Possible Benefits of Using the Primordial Group Concept

The reference to primordial groups has, to this point, been limited to the five sets of primordial groups in Kenya. This limited reference was done with purpose, for although other authors have written about "primordial attachments," "primordially based political solidarities" and "primordial loyalties," the concept of primordial groups is original with this paper. The proof of the usefulness of the primordial group concept, it was felt, must first come in a demonstration of its productive application in the analysis of a single country's socio-political system.

The fact, however, that authors such as James Coleman, Clifford Geertz and David E. Apter have employed the idea of primordial attachments in discussing several countries\(^{12}\) suggests that the concept of primordial groups


\(^{12}\)See the quotations by Geertz (p. 116) and Coleman (p. 119) above. Apter writes that: "The first problem faced by the new nations is that of creating over-arching loyalties that will transcend the primordial ones of ethnic membership, religious affiliation, and linguistic identification." David E. Apter, The Politics of Modernization (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965), p. 294.
might have further significance.

The following discussion lists three possible applications for the primordial group concept in political science.

The Ill-Defined Boundaries of Political Systems

The primordial group concept is useful in that in many countries such as Kenya boundaries between the political system and other systems within the society are not clear cut.

Gabriel Almond writes:

Political scientists know in a general way that political control in a society is just one of a number of social control systems, such as religion, the family, the economic organization, and the like. What he [sic] is less likely to be aware of is the fact that the form and control of the political system in a society will vary with the form and content of the religious, family, and other systems in a society. . . . The essential point here is that crucial interrelations which we may miss when we examine the fully differentiated, more or less autonomous political system in the West stand out more clearly in primitive and non-Western contexts.  

By utilizing primordial groups we can easily get at

---

13 Gabriel Almond's definition of political system is employed in this paper. He writes: "... the political system is that system which performs the functions of integration and adaptation (both internally and vis-a-vis other societies) by means of the employment, or threat of employment, of more or less legitimate physical compulsion." Almond and Coleman, p. 7.

14 Almond and Coleman, p. 10.
these "crucial relationships" between political and other control systems. Such relationships were demonstrated for Kenya to the extent that the five sets of primordial groups played political functions.

The relevance of primordial groups to the political systems in non-Western nations varies somewhat from country to country. In Africa such relevance is dependent especially on the nature of the colonial rule; the nature of the integrative influence; the size, cohesion and compatibility of the groups; and the stability or fragility of national institutions. But the relevance of even non-associational, latently articulate primordial groups in Africa and elsewhere should not be overlooked.

The Basic Problem in Plural Societies

A second reason for the employment of the primordial group concept is that it clearly exposes the basic problem in plural societies such as Kenya's--the problem of holding together. As Clifford Geertz writes:


16 This fact has not, of course, gone unrecognized. See the works of such students of non-Western societies as Munger, Fallers, Skinner and Southall. (See bibliography for complete listing.)
Economic or class or intellectual disaffection threatens revolution, but disaffection based on race, language, or culture threatens partition, irredentism, or merger, a redrawing of the very limits of the state, a new definition of its domain.  

It is an interesting historical fact that the approach of independence for colonial societies very often brought about an unstable social situation leading to increased rather than decreased primordial group conflict. A new self-awareness of social group identity was fostered during this period which coupled with growing demands for self-determination. Often times the social group boundaries did not correspond to colonial-drawn national boundaries, and the push for self-determination threatened to destroy those boundaries. Ideas of self-determination may be rooted, also, in fears of continued domination by a new group or coalition of groups. This fear took expression in Kenya in the formation of KADU by several smaller tribes which were apprehensive about a possible Kikuyu-Luo hegemony at independence.

In many of the new nations, and especially in Africa, unity is still threatened by the micro-nationalism

---

17Geertz, p. 111.

of primordial groups and the syncretic process is still menaced by primordial attachments. An understanding of primordial groups is basic to the study of these nations because it locates the social units which produce the plural societies and reveals the ties and conflicts between these units. James Coleman and Carl G. Rosberg write:

... in the new states of Africa, the politically relevant cultures are not those of the new nations the state builders are seeking to create; rather, they are those of the hundreds of heterogeneous ethnic communities and tribal societies arbitrarily bunched together within the artificial boundaries imposed during the colonial period.19

Myron Weiner has distinguished five types of integration being pursued today in the new nations.20 These are:

1. National integration, the unification of "culturally and socially discrete groups."

2. Territorial integration, the extension of the authority of the national government over the national territory.

3. Value integration, the acceptance of procedures for conflict resolution.

4. Elite-mass integration, the bridging of class

19Coleman and Rosberg, p. 2.

5. Integrative behavior, the acceptance of procedures for working together.

Overcoming primordial group differences is a function of #1, national integration, but the following examples from Kenya illustrate the fact that the existence of primordial groups in Kenya affects every type of integrative effort.

Territorial integration.—The dispatch of Kenyan troops to the northeast area of the country to quell the Shifta uprising is clearly an attempt at territorial integration (#2). The root of the problem, however, lies in the primordial attachments of Somali tribesmen with their brothers in the Somali Republic.

Value integration.—The Kenyan Government action in maximizing uniformity by banning KPU is an effort to bring about value integration (#3). The basis for KPU, however, was largely as an interest-articulating organization for a primordial group—the Luo tribe.

Elite-mass integration.—The endeavor at elite-mass integration (#4) in Kenya is, once again, complicated by primordial group problems. The new African elite in Kenya comes mostly from peasant (mainly Kikuyu) rather than pastoral tribes. The significance of restricted recruitment for the elite is shown in this quotation by Coleman and
Rosberg:

When primordial loyalty coincides with, and is therefore enormously fortified by, other interests of an economic, social or class character, the resulting combination is powerful, and virtually indestructible. Throughout Africa, certain tribal, linguistic, or ethnic groups are in a more advantageous competitive position than others.21

**Integrative behavior.**—The great interest shown by members of the Asian Racial Group in involving themselves as students and teachers in Kenya's educational system demonstrates an attempt at Weiner's fifth type of integrative behavior, the acceptance of procedures for working together.

Before leaving the discussion of the relationship of primordial groups to the problem of integrating plural societies, mention must be made of the fact that primordial groups can play a functional role in these dynamic new societies. This role was not mentioned in the discussion of Kenya's society, but some authors have seen benefits in the existence of primordial tribal ties in the new African states.

Tom Mboya and Max Gluckman both comment on the fact that with rapid urbanization now taking place in Africa some of the social, psychological and economic burdens in the new states have been shouldered by the traditional

---

21 Coleman and Rosberg, p. 690.
tribal groups. Immanuel Wallerstein and James Coleman have commented, in addition, on the political advantage for an African nation in possessing a multiplicity of small tribes (such as is the case in Tanzania, the country to Kenya's immediate south). These authors see more possibility for authoritarianism in a country which has many small tribes.

A Possibility for Cross-National Comparisons

A final benefit to be gained from using the primordial group concept is that it opens possibilities for cross-national comparisons. Such comparisons could be either of two types.

1. Comparisons could be made between primordial political groups and political groups in more integrated societies. A start in this direction was made in this chapter with the introduction of the idea that as political groups the primordial groups of Kenya had some distinctive features. A logical next step would be to compare primordial groups as a type with descriptions of political groups drawn largely from the American sample--descriptions possibly by authors such as Arthur F. Bentley, Earl Latham, and Max Gluckman, "Tribalism in Modern British Central Africa," in Social Change: The Colonial Situation, ed. Immanuel Wallerstein (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1966).
2. A second cross-national comparison could be made between plural societies which contain primordial groups. Both Clifford Geertz and Pierre van den Berghe see promise in such comparisons. The process would involve a gathering of data on the number, size and relationships of primordial groups in several societies. Comparisons then would hopefully reveal something of the contrasting natures of those societies and expectations for their futures.

23 See the bibliography for relevant works by these authors.

24 See Geertz, especially pp. 114-118; and van den Berghe, Race and Racism.
APPENDIX A

Tribal Distribution in Kenya

KIKUYU Over 1,000,000
KISII 500,000 - 999,999
NANDI 250,000 - 499,999
EMBU 100,000 - 249,999
SAMBURU 50,000 - 99,999
Gabbra 10,000 - 49,999
NJEMPS Less than 10,000
APPENDIX B

Kenya's Provinces and Districts (1966)

KEY TO DISTRICTS
1. Nyeri 13. Laikipia
3. Nakuru 15. Nandi
5. Bungoma 17. Nandi
7. Trans-Nzoia 19. Kisumu
10. West Pokot 22. Nandi
11. Turpal, Marakwet, 23. Nandi
15. North 27. Nandi
17. East 29. Nandi
18. South 30. Nandi
20. South 32. Nandi
22. South 34. Nandi
23. East 35. Nandi
25. East 37. Nandi
26. South 38. Nandi
27. East 39. Nandi
28. South 40. Nandi
29. East 41. Nandi
30. South 42. Nandi
31. East
32. South
33. East
34. South
35. East
36. South
37. East
38. South
39. East
40. South
41. East
42. South

Note: Nairobi Area has the status of a province.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


---


