

The Social Structure of the National Assembly in Kenya, 1963-83

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THE STUDY of elections and parliamentary behaviour in Africa has become a neglected topic. Whilst the emergence of political élites during and after the colonial period has been examined carefully, little attention has been paid to the structure and functioning of the modern one-party state. Emphasis has tended to shift towards the analysis of political economy and of the nature of class relations, partly as a consequence of the close linkages between economic and political relations within developing states.¹ However, studies of post-1969 politics in Kenya are now scarce, and basic knowledge of the operation of the political system is often absent. In order to help redress the balance, this article presents and analyses data about the socio-economic background of the Members of Parliament.



Kenya became independent from Great Britain in 1963 with a Westminster-style constitution and under the leadership of Jomo Kenyatta as Prime Minister and then President. Despite the imposition of a one-party state in 1969, the country has otherwise retained political institutions similar to those bequeathed in 1963. Politics has continued to function within a recognisably similar institutional structure, through 20 years of social change and a new President in 1978, when Kenyatta died and was constitutionally succeeded by the Vice-President, Daniel arap Moi. The monopoly of power within the Kenya African National Union (K.A.N.U.), the dominant party when

* Lloyd's Register of Shipping, Croydon.

¹ See, for example, Steven W. Langdon, *Multinational Corporations in the Political Economy of Kenya* (London and New York, 1981), Anon., *(In)Dependent Kenya* (London, 1982), Diana Hunt, *The Impending Crisis in Kenya: the case for land reform* (Aldershot, 1984), Christopher Leo, *Land and Class in Kenya* (Toronto, 1984), Gavin Kitching, *Class and Economic Change in Kenya: the making of an African petite bourgeoisie, 1905-1970* (New Haven and London, 1980), and Nicola Swainson, *The Development of Corporate Capitalism in Kenya, 1918-77* (London, 1980).

independence was achieved, has never been seriously challenged. One-party rule was not encapsulated in legislation until 1982, but was enforced in practice by state authority after the banning of the only opposition party, the Kenya People's Union (K.P.U.) in 1969.¹

In the period from 1960 to 1964, Kenya was a multi-party state, with K.A.N.U., supported by the largest ethnic groups, notably the Kikuyu and Luo, opposed by the Kenya African Democratic Union (K.A.D.U.), with its main support amongst the Coastal, Rift Valley, and Western Province peoples. After K.A.N.U.'s victory in the 1963 elections, K.A.D.U. was dissolved and absorbed into the ruling party, and Kenya became a *de facto* one-party state. In 1966, however, the division between the 'moderates' and the 'radicals' in K.A.N.U. reached a crisis, and the latter broke away to form the K.P.U. Facing both an increasingly politicised bureaucracy and the power of ethnic solidarity, the new organisation's active support soon became restricted to the Luo of Nyanza Province.² Since the banning of the K.P.U., and the detention of its leaders in 1969, Kenya has remained strongly capitalist and pro-western in its foreign policy.

The Government consists of the President, the Vice-President, approximately 20 ministers, and more than twice as many assistant ministers who do not sit in the Cabinet. In practice, under both Kenyatta and Moi, Kenya has increasingly been dominated by the institution of the Presidency, and the authority of the other organs of government has been seriously weakened.³ The Kenyan system is a peculiar hybrid of the Westminster model and the typical African presidential structure. The President must be a Member of Parliament, and since 1968 must also be directly elected.⁴ However, as a candidate can only be nominated by a party, no such poll has ever taken place because the K.A.N.U. incumbent (Kenyatta, then Moi) has always been elected unopposed and by acclamation.

THE RÔLE OF M.P.S AND THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The National Assembly has been in existence throughout the period since independence, having replaced the colonial Legislative Council in

¹ Charles P. W. Hornsby, 'The Member of Parliament in Kenya, 1969-83', D.Phil. dissertation, Oxford University, 1986, ch. 5.

² Susanne D. Mueller, 'Government and Opposition in Kenya, 1966-9', in *The Journal of Modern African Studies* (Cambridge), 22, 3, September 1984, pp. 399-427.

³ On the growing power of the Presidency during the 1960s, see Yash P. Ghai and J. P. W. B. McAuslan, *Public Law and Political Change in Kenya: a study of the legal framework of government from colonial times to the present* (Nairobi, 1970), ch. vi.

⁴ *The Constitution of Kenya (Amendment)* (No. 2), Act No. 45 of 1968.

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1963. The electoral system is based on the British model; universal suffrage, with elections held in single-member constituencies, under the first-past-the-post system, and with the vast majority of the members directly elected. Until 1967, the Assembly was bicameral, with a House of Representatives of 117 members elected on a common-roll, and 12 specially-elected members; plus a Senate of 41 members, one per district. However, the regional constitution of 1963 was swiftly dismantled, and in 1967 the Senate was abolished and its members were allocated newly created constituencies in the unicameral National Assembly. From 1967 until the 1988 election, when boundary changes were finally implemented, Kenya had 158 elected M.P.s, with (since 1968) 12 nominated members, plus the Speaker, and the Attorney-General as an *ex-officio* member.

The importance of the legislature as an institution has declined greatly since independence. Whilst serving initially as a battleground between rival parties, and in the early 1970s sometimes acting as the country's 'conscience', criticising and occasionally overturning governmental policies, since the late 1970s its rôle has become, in terms of the traditional collective functions of a legislature, more marginal. Few issues now reach a vote, and the Assembly has become in effect an advisory council, to which the executive pays great heed, but which seldom exerts its authority. The traditional responsibilities of supply and the initiation of legislation were never really relevant to Kenya. There has only ever been one private-member's bill enacted into legislation, the 1968 Hire Purchase Act, though other attempts were made. There were hardly any parliamentary divisions, and only constructive criticisms were tolerated – except during a few exceptional crises.

In the absence of a strong national party, the Assembly became an important instrument for legitimacy, and to this can be traced both its survival and its comparative freedom. There is no doubt that the attitude of the legislature was dependent on the nature and identity of the individuals elected. The 1983 Assembly was probably the quietest; the 1969–74 members the most hostile. Some individuals made far more use of parliamentary facilities and privileges than others, and certain M.P.s maintained a consistently confrontational posture towards the central régime. Throughout the period, the Assembly served as a debating chamber, as an informal forum for pressure on the Government, and as a means of allocating development resources and highlighting local problems. M.P.s regularly opposed legislation, forcing or inspiring amendments, and defeating Government bills almost every year from 1964 to 1979 – for example, of the 41 introduced

in 1970, three were defeated and one withdrawn. The Assembly also retained substantial 'residual authority' in times of crisis.

In practice, the rôle and significance of M.P.s as individuals in the community has tended steadily to become greater than their importance inside the Assembly. They (i) comprised the vast majority of the important politicians in Kenya, and were at the centre of all crises and conflicts; (ii) acted as a 'transmission belt' as regards the implementation of governmental policies in the rural areas; (iii) helped to inform the Government, albeit to a limited and variable extent, about the strongly-felt opinions of constituents on local issues; (iv) provided channels for the collection, distribution, and use or misuse of self-help development funds; (v) included some of the country's most wealthy men; and (vi) were the only people who could be made Ministers or Assistant Ministers by the President. As one part of the élite – along with the civil service and business leaders – the study of Parliament's composition and behaviour also reflects the tensions within modern Kenyan society, and the nature of political power at the centre.

The multi-party electoral system of 1963 was adapted to suit the requirements of the one-party state in the national parliamentary elections held in 1969, 1974, 1979, and 1983, all four of which, by developing world standards, remained relatively free and fair. Only members of K.A.N.U. could stand (and only life-members in 1979 and 1983), but there were between one and 15 candidates in a constituency, and almost every seat (excepting that of the President) was seriously contested. In addition, hundreds of other candidates initially declared an interest, but withdrew prior to nomination. All adults had the right to vote, not just party members. Despite widespread malpractices in every general election, the fairness of most contests was not destroyed, and party 'clearance' was rarely used to directly prevent opponents standing.

Although elections did not immediately determine major governmental decisions and actions, they did affect the strength of the factions competing for power at the centre, and thus influenced both policy and the distribution of rewards. Ministers and other powerful figures were regularly defeated, and each campaign resulted in a high turnover amongst the incumbents, although the proportion of M.P.s re-elected consistently increased.¹ In the absence of an opposition party, and with K.A.N.U. little more than a shell, elections were fought on a great variety of issues, relating primarily to the characteristics, abilities,

¹ Hornsby, *op. cit.* chs. 4 and 8.

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¹ The most significant biog *Who's Who in East Africa, 1963–1968*; *African Yearbook and W* and J. Dickie and Alan Rake
² A. B. Rouyer, 'Political R *Areas* (Macomb. Ill.), 9, 4, 19

achievements, and alliances of the various candidates. Their ability to help a constituency, and to represent it effectively in Nairobi, was generally the central issue. Incumbent M.P.s tended to do better than challengers in elections, and government members were re-elected more often than backbenchers. It was possible to identify not only a variety of electoral agreements between candidates in different constituencies, and between them and local dignitaries and power brokers, but also larger-scale factional alliances at district and national levels. These together merged into a web of competing and interlocking conflicts, which ensured continual tension and associated local political and social change.

THE BACKGROUND OF M.P.S IN KENYA

The information presented here has been obtained from a variety of sources, notably all published *Who's Who's*, local newspapers and magazines, the national archives, and interviews with Kenyan M.P.s.¹ However, the hostile attitude of the Government to research in contemporary politics, and the absence of true election studies or good biographies, means that although some relevant information has been unearthed on 473 of the 487 directly-elected Members of Parliament between 1963 and 1983, it is inevitably incomplete, particularly in the isolated North-Eastern Province.

1. Age

As expected from studies elsewhere, the M.P.s in Kenya are generally in their middle years. The average age of all rose from 36 in 1963 to 47 in 1983, and that of new entrants from 35 to 44. Whilst the age of the latter actually declined during the 1960s, this was reversed with the introduction of the one-party electoral system. At independence the traditional respect for age does not seem to have influenced the choice of the new political élite, but since then the correspondence has become closer.

There are several reasons for the ageing of the parliamentarians. First, it must be recalled that the youthfulness of the leaders during 1957-68 was associated with the age-related variation in schooling,²

¹ The most significant biographical sources are *Who is Who in Kenya, 1982-3* (Nairobi, 1982); *Who's Who in East Africa, 1963-64* (Nairobi, 1964), *1965-66* (Nairobi, 1966), and *1967-68* (Nairobi, 1968); *African Yearbook and Who's Who, 1977* (London, 1976), *Africa Who's Who* (London, 1981); and J. Dickie and Alan Rake (eds.), *Who's Who in Africa* (London, 1973).

² A. B. Rouyer, 'Political Recruitment and Political Change in Kenya', in *Journal of Developing Areas* (Macomb. Ill.), 9, 4, 1975, pp. 543-4.

and not surprisingly, this factor has declined in importance with the great expansion in educational opportunities since then. Secondly, the detention of many thousands of politically active Africans during the mid- to late-1950s created a vacuum, and this tended to be filled by younger leaders, such as Tom Mboya, who remained in politics as independence approached. Thirdly, the great expansion in the number of political posts available in 1963, when combined with the small size of the eligible élite, meant that competition was in many constituencies less severe than in later elections, thereby allowing many young men who might not have succeeded later to be elected.

In addition, the removal of any alternative to K.A.N.U. in 1969, and the abolition of the procedure whereby local party committees selected their prospective representatives, left the decision on their age directly in the hands of the voters. Candidates consider age a significant factor, young and old respectively emphasising their vigour and their maturity, and there is evidence that Kenyans take such factors into account during the election campaign. Particularly, there is a strong hostility to potential representatives not yet aged 30, and some slight tendency to favour those who are about 20 years older.¹ One reason this is not more obvious in election results is that the vast majority of candidates as well as M.P.s are middle-aged. Voters are encouraged to choose a representative who will 'fit in', and who will have the experience and maturity to treat Ministers and officials as equals, as well as the drive to represent the constituency actively. The need for wealth and experience both favour older candidates, and the importance of age cannot be fully disentangled from that of related factors, such as education and past record. The growing youthfulness of the Kenyan population, combined with a reduction of the minimum voting age from 21 to 18 in 1974, did not produce a large number of young candidates, or strong support for those who did stand.² At the same time, there remained a great variation in age, from those in their early 20s (the minimum age for a candidate remains 21) to the late 70s. No group is entirely unrepresented, though there are few M.P.s at the extremes.

It has also proved possible to examine the regional variations. The results for 1963 show a close relationship between the average age of the elected parliamentarians and the level of socio-economic development and political awareness amongst the population. The more politicised

¹ Hornsby, *op. cit.* ch. 7.

² Kenya has probably the highest population growth rate in the world. See the *Kenya Population Census, 1979* (Nairobi, 1981).

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'reserves' of the larger ethnic groups, the Kikuyu, Luo, and Luhya, as well as the settler areas of Nakuru and Trans-Nzoia, elected older M.P.s, with an average age in the ex-reserves of 37. The voters in the Rift Valley, the Coast, and the North-East (in 1964) elected younger M.P.s, with an average age of 30, thereby reflecting their relatively recent national political involvement, the importance and rarity of education amongst the pastoral peoples, and the dearth of suitable urban élites. Since that data, there has been a strong tendency for the age of the representatives from less-developed areas to rise faster than those from elsewhere. The age of M.P.s has become a function not only of available talent, but also of voter satisfaction with incumbents. However, the youngest parliamentarians have still tended to come from the semi-arid and pastoral areas.¹

As yet no M.P. has been born since independence, but by the end of 1983 as many as 57 were known to have reached adulthood since 1963. It is likely that their lives have been motivated by different considerations to those of earlier generations, whose political concerns were primarily those of independence, equality, and the need for African self-assertion and advancement. The younger M.P.s appear in general to be less impressed by the achievement of independence, and more concerned with the nature of the resulting society.

The tendency for the post-colonial generation to take power has, however, been restricted by the persistence of control in the hands of older politicians, and by the high rate of attrition amongst this younger, more radical group. Of the 57 M.P.s born during or after 1942, as of March 1987, five were already dead, 22 had been defeated or expelled, or had fled the country, 21 were backbenchers, five were Assistant Ministers (plus the Secretary to the Parliamentary Group and the Chief Whip), and only two were Ministers.

At the same time, the vast majority of those who steered Kenya to independence, and who became members of the Government during 1963-6, have departed from the political stage.² By 1984, not a single

¹ Charles P. W. Hornsby, 'Regional Variations in Socio-Economic Background Amongst M.P.s in Independent Kenya', typescript. For information on regional imbalances, see David Court and Ken Prewitt, 'Nation versus Region in Kenya: a note on political learning', in *British Journal of Political Science* (Cambridge), 4, 1970, pp. 109-20, and Donald Rothchild, 'Ethnic Inequalities in Kenya', in *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 7, 4 December 1969, pp. 689-711.

² Jomo Kenyatta, James Gichuru, Tom Mboya, Mbiyu Koinange, Clement Argwings-Kodhek, Ronald Ngala, and Bruce McKenzie are all dead. Bildad Kaggia, Oginga Odinga, Julius Kiano, John Konchellah, Ramogi Achieng-Onoko, Joseph Otiende, Joe Murumbi, Dawson Mwanjumba, Eliud Mwendwa, James Nyamweya, Lawrence Sagini, and now Charles Njonjo have either lost their parliamentary positions (and most of their power), or have retired from politics.

Kikuyu leader from the independence Cabinet remained in the Assembly. Power passed from the K.A.N.U. victors of the nationalist struggle in 1963, not to the next generation of younger politicians, but to the K.A.D.U. leaders, notably Moi, Justus ole Tipis, Stanley Oloitipiti, and Robert Matano, and to such wealthy administrators and businessmen as Kenneth Matiba, Eliud Wamae, Peter Okondo, Moses Mudavadi, Titus Mbathi, and John Michuki. To some extent this development may be no more than the tendency for those in power to keep members of the same age-group as themselves as close allies. But it can also be explained by Kenyatta's ability in 1963-4 to bring the K.A.D.U. leaders into the Government, by the electoral process, which strongly favours those with wealth and experience, and by a deep fear of younger radical politicians.

2. Sex

Members of Parliament in Kenya have been almost exclusively male. Of the 386 elected from 1969 to 1983, only six were women, and before them there had been none. The executive has been similarly unrepresentative: no woman has ever become a Minister, and only one was made an Assistant Minister during the period. Despite their invaluable contributions to a variety of local organisations,¹ and their nominal political equality, the rôle of women at the élite level in Kenyan politics has continued to be peripheral. There is no reason to believe that the selection process reduces the electoral participation of women, as it does, for example, in Great Britain.² There also seems to be little active discrimination by sex in the election itself. Voters are not unconcerned about gender; this is an important campaign issue for women candidates, and there is a slight tendency for fewer of them to be successful (19.5 per cent in 1969-83) than men (22.7 per cent).

The primary explanation for the lack of women in Parliament is their under-participation. Only a tiny number ever present themselves for election: six candidates of 600 in 1969, rising to a maximum of 17 of 744 in 1979. The situation appeared to be improving, both in terms of the number of female candidates and those who were successful, until a sudden drop in the 1983 election. This revealed the extent to which the

¹ For an example of this, see G. C. M. Mutiso, *Kenya Politics, Policy and Society* (Nairobi, 1975), ch. 13.

² See J. S. Rasmussen, 'Women's Role in Contemporary British Politics: impediments to parliamentary candidature', in *Parliamentary Affairs* (London), 36, 3, 1983, pp. 300-15, and Elizabeth Vallance, 'Women Candidates in the 1983 General Election', in *ibid.* 37, 3, 1984, p. 303.

level of participation by women remains dependent on the decision of a tiny minority of politically involved individuals. Also indicative of the weak basis of Kenyan women in politics is the fact that a large proportion of the leaders in this field have been the wives or relatives of politicians and other senior figures, encouraged to participate by their family connections.

The first reason for this under-participation by women appears to be their lesser access to educational opportunities from secondary level upwards.¹ The second is their lack of equal opportunities in the formal wage and business sectors,² and resulting financial weakness. The third is the paternalist attitude towards women in Kenyan society in general. Women participate in politics less than men,³ and those that wish to become leaders often face strong cultural hostility, most obviously in the North-Eastern Province, where there has never been a woman candidate.

3. *Ethnicity*

Kenyan politics were dominated in the colonial period by race and ethnicity. Within the African majority there have always been tensions between ethnic groups as they came into contact – whether over land and cattle, or jobs and services – and since independence, ethnicity and sectionalism have continued to influence the majority of electoral contests.

Almost all candidates in the rural areas are members of the ethnic group or sub-group which predominates in the constituency, and those who come from small minorities or from outside (such as a Kikuyu in Luoland) seldom stand. Only a local candidate is considered qualified to represent the constituency, and his support will tend to be concentrated in the community with which he has the closest links, from where his family originates. The result is that there is a close match between the ethnic composition of the Assembly and that of the population. National imbalances exist only as a consequence of the over-representation of certain pastoral peoples established by the

¹ During this period only 15 per cent of the students of the University College of Nairobi were females, according to the annual reports of that institution and the Ministry of Education.

² See Cynthia Butterfield, *Women in the Modern Wage Sector* (Nairobi, 1977), I. D. S. Discussion Paper No. 256.

³ This was independently shown by Richard Berg-Schlosser, 'Modes and Meaning of Political Participation in Kenya', in *Comparative Politics* (New York) 14, 4, July 1982, pp. 402–3, and by Marc Howard Ross, *Grass Roots in an African City: political behavior in Nairobi* (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1975), Appendix A.

district and constituency boundaries of 1963, and the differences in population growth rates. Similarly, most M.P.s are thus long-term residents of their constituency. Joel Barkan presented data for 28 in 1974 showing that three-quarters had lived in their constituency for over 21 years.¹

In addition, voting is almost always influenced by the ethnic origins of the candidates, or by clan and locational factors. The precise nature of this conflict is determined not by pre-colonial ethnic patterns, but by the dynamic interplay of economic relations, political events, and local and individual loyalties. However, in nearly four-fifths of constituencies, namely the so-called 'ex-tribal reserves', one group is overwhelmingly dominant. Although clan or locational competition plays an important part in elections in these areas, particularly amongst the Somali, the Kisii, and the Luhya, ethnic competition is essentially absent.² Significant clan conflict seems associated with the lack of a single overriding electoral issue, and with large numbers of candidates, rather than with the dominance of one or two individuals. In the Kikuyu 'home' districts, clan conflicts appear less significant than elsewhere, and to be supplanted to an extent by factors relating to development, national faction-politics, and money.

A long-standing ethnic heterogeneity has existed in other constituencies, including Nairobi, Mombasa, and Nakuru Town, as well as the settlement areas which were early on divided between communities, such as Nakuru and Trans-Nzoia districts, and constituencies which when established contained other large minorities. Here 'tribalism' is an important electoral phenomenon. In addition, as a result of recent settlement schemes, migration, and land-buying, a few constituencies are becoming less homogenous because of increasing ethnic multiplicity, with a corresponding electoral impact. Whether or not ethnic sentiment is growing less significant in Kenya generally, the number of constituencies in which politicians of different groups are competing is growing. For example in 1983, for the first time, the Taveta elected not one of their own kinsmen to represent them in Parliament but a Kamba. Despite the fact that voters are naturally interested in the ability of a candidate to aid them materially and to assist in the development of their constituency,³ it is noticeable that there is still the

¹ Chong L. Kim, Joel D. Barkan et al., *The Legislative Connection: the politics of representation in Kenya, Korea and Turkey* (Durham, N.C., 1984), p. 54, Table 4.1.

² Hornsby, 'The Member of Parliament in Kenya', ch. 7 and Appendix 13, Table 2.

³ An idea of the important work done in this area can be gained in Joel D. Barkan (ed.), *Politics and Public Policy in Kenya and Tanzania* (New York, 1984 edn.).

tendency in many areas to prefer the poorer local man to the rich stranger.

Ethnicity is also a crucial element in political affairs within the Assembly. Politics in each ethnic community has tended to be fought out with only limited reference to external influences, whilst the allocation of governmental positions takes close account of the overall representation of communities. Although the Kikuyu dominated the Cabinet from 1963 until they were equalled in number by Moi's Kalenjin in 1983, every one of the eight largest ethnic groups in Kenya has had a Minister in the Cabinet since it was first reshuffled in 1964.¹

4. *Birthplace and Parents*

Roughly four-fifths of M.P.s were born in the constituency which they represented throughout their political life. Despite the weakness of the actual requirement that a candidate need only have resided, worked, or owned property for at least five months in the last year in the constituency, his home area is in most cases the only one in which he has a chance of success. Although this closely follows the pattern found in other African states, including Tanzania,² there are some interesting exceptions. A few M.P.s were born outside their constituency but within the same district – for example, in Kiambu, where powerful Gatundu and Kikuyu-born members have long represented Limuru and Juja. More surprisingly, 10–15 per cent of M.P.s were not even born in the same district in which they were elected. This was primarily because most urban M.P.s were born outside the towns, with almost all in Nairobi coming from the old reserves, mainly in Central Province.³ Amongst migrants into the capital from Kiambu, families from Kikuyu and Gatundu constituencies have again played a disproportionate rôle. Almost all the representatives of the old settler areas were born in the reserves, and there have been a few Kikuyu and Luhya from the Rift Valley who have stood in their traditional family homes.

Whilst localism is important everywhere, it appears that the linkage between birthplace and constituency is weaker amongst the Kikuyu. This is probably due to the latter's greater spread under colonial rule,

¹ See, for example, Hornsby, 'The Member of Parliament in Kenya', ch. 9, section 4, and Vincent B. Khapoya, 'Kenya Under Moi: continuity or change?', in *Africa Today* (Denver), 27, 1, 1980, pp. 17–32.

² Helge Kjekshus, *The Elected Elite: a socio-economic profile of candidates in Tanzania's parliamentary election, 1970* (Uppsala, 1975), S.I.A.S. Research Report No. 29, pp. 12–13.

³ Two came from Kakamega, one from Machakos, one from Kirinyaga, three from Nyeri, two from Fort Hall (now Murang'a), and five from Kiambu.

their economic predominance, and their importance in the urban and scheduled areas before the emergency. It may also be linked to a lesser rôle for 'clanism' and localism in the Kikuyu areas in elections.

The majority of elected representatives have come from ordinary peasant families, having made their way through education, business, or politics to the top. However, several M.P.s have emerged from a more privileged background, and they have played a political rôle disproportionate to their number. As emphasised by B. E. Kipkorir, it was the children of those who first became socially differentiated from the peasant mass under colonial rule (the 'collaborators') who dominated the nation's leadership after independence.¹ An analysis of the parental background of Ministers reveals this particularly clearly. There has been an almost equal split numerically between the sons of (i) peasant farmers, (ii) mission teachers, early Christian pastors, and church members, and (iii) colonial chiefs, the latter being particularly strong in Kiambu, Kenyatta's home district. Ministerial office, even more clearly than parliamentary position, has thus been dominated by those with early access to education and social status.²

5. *Education*

Bearing in mind the many changes that have taken place since the 1920s, and especially since independence, the education of M.P.s after each general election has been analysed by means of a simple tripartite categorisation, not least because of the scanty and sometimes inaccurate information to be found in their biographies. The results of this study of educational levels both for all and for new M.P.s (by date of first election) are given in Figure 1.³

The crucial importance of education to the political élite of the pre-independence era has been widely recognised. Education was the key to employment, money, and influence, and many of these leaders were highly qualified. The attitude was reflected in the preservation of the educational qualification for membership of the National Assembly, used as a means of demonstrating their language proficiency in English, and recently also in Swahili. By comparison, the new M.P.s in 1963

¹ Benjamin E. Kipkorir, 'The Inheritors and Successors: the traditional background to the modern Kenyan African élite. Kenya c. 1890-1930, in *Kenya Historical Review* (Nairobi), 2, 2, 1974.

² Hornsby, 'Regional Variations in Socio-Economic Background Amongst M.P.s in Independent Kenya'.

³ A more detailed breakdown of all these results can be found in Hornsby, 'The Member of Parliament in Kenya', Appendix 14.

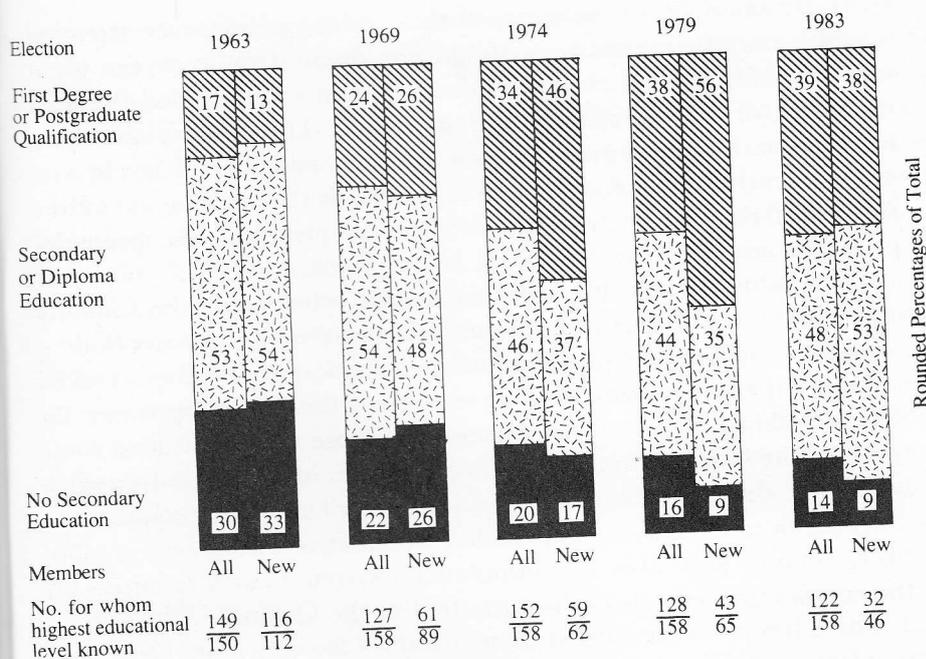


FIGURE I
Educational Levels of All and New Kenyan Members of Parliament

had relatively little formal schooling, and the overall educational level of the Assembly was low. Since then, the education of M.P.s has slowly but consistently risen, notably amongst new entrants. The proportion with more than a secondary or diploma education more than doubled from 1963 to 1979, when for the first time over half the new M.P.s had either a degree and/or a post-graduate qualification. Very few members admit to having had no education at all, and a declining group has never attended a secondary school. By comparison with Tanzania, parliamentarians in Kenya have been significantly better educated, especially judged by the numbers who have studied at the tertiary level. Only 8 per cent of the legislators in Tanzania fell into this category in 1970, compared with 24 per cent in Kenya in 1969.¹ The surprising fall in the percentage of new M.P.s in 1983 with post-secondary qualifications may be explained by the inclusion of so many businessmen.

The membership of the Assembly thus remains very different as regards educational qualifications from the mass of the population. In

¹ Kjekshus, op. cit. p. 15.

1979, for example, the majority of those over 35 had never attended school,¹ and there remains a significant division between the great majority of Kenyans and the educated minority, despite the vast expansion of this sector since independence. The latter is the main explanation for the growth in parliamentary educational levels, and one reason they have not risen more rapidly is the growing age of the Assembly, because its 'catchment' remains primarily the pre-independence adults.

There is no doubt that candidates as a whole are educationally unrepresentative of the population, as elsewhere in many developing countries. The literacy qualification, the advantage of having achieved some social and economic success, as well as the popular pressure for better-qualified members, has discouraged those without at least some secondary education from contesting. Indeed, the better-educated a candidate, the greater his chance of election, all else being equal, since voters appear to consider that such a Member of Parliament is more likely not only to be able to manipulate the system to gain resources for the community, but also to be admitted to the Cabinet.

There has also long existed a great respect for education *per se*, and university qualifications have been used as a campaign weapon in elections. Some have even campaigned on the hustings in their academic robes, such as a candidate in Kandara in 1979.² However, the electoral importance of higher education appears to have declined as its availability has widened, and it has not bought automatic electoral success, as it did in the 1950s and early 1960s, as shown by the defeat of many university lecturers in 1979. An analysis of the election results in 1983 revealed that the voters seemed to favour the better-educated candidates, and the evidence for this tendency might have been reinforced if there had been more data on their lesser-known rivals.

A break-down of the educational levels of members by district and province for each election reveals that these are closely associated with socio-economic and political development. Improvements have been concentrated in a limited number of districts, with the less-developed Coast, North-Eastern, and Rift Valley Provinces showing no substantial or significant change.³

It is also interesting to note the extent to which those M.P.s with

¹ *Kenya Population Census, 1979*, Vol. 1, p. 229, Table 4.

² See photograph of Waweru Ng'ethe in *The Standard* (Nairobi), 6 November 1979, p. 2.

³ Hornsby, 'Regional Variations in Socio-Economic Background Amongst M.P.s in Independent Kenya'.

degrees have received their further education abroad. Until 1953, when Makerere College in Uganda began to confer degrees, university education could only be obtained outside East Africa. The Royal Technical College in Kenya was upgraded to become the second inter-territorial University College in 1964, and following the dissolution of the University of East Africa, the University of Nairobi was inaugurated in 1970. In response to this, there has been a dramatic shift in the origin of the degrees obtained by M.P.s. In 1963, the vast majority had received their awards from outside East Africa, including 30 per cent in Britain and 25 per cent in India. In contrast, over half of the degrees held by M.P.s in 1983 had come from inside East Africa, with 15 per cent from the United States, and only just over 10 per cent from Britain. This indicates both the shift in international relations which began with the end of colonialism, and the extent to which the system of higher education is now firmly established in Kenya.

6. *Occupation*

A study of the longest-held (and hence main) occupations of M.P.s after leaving full-time education provides data on the broad origins and nature of this political élite, while a parallel study of their last occupation focuses particularly on their route to electoral success. The results are given in Table 1 and summarised in Figure 2.¹ They are influenced by the regulations covering 'clearance' to contest elections, which required in 1979 and 1983 that candidates be life-members of the party (which involved, amongst other things, the payment of a £50 deposit), and by the requirement that civil servants (including teachers) and parastatal employees resign by a certain date before standing.

The number of M.P.s whose main occupation has been business has dramatically grown from only 10 per cent in 1969 to 27 per cent in 1983. This group was dominated in the early years by people running their own small-scale operations, such as rural shops and stock trading, and by junior employees in larger firms. By 1983, just over half had been managers or senior executives in much bigger enterprises, and many candidates also moved from other occupations into business prior to election. Overall, this reflects the emergence in the urban areas of

¹ The categories reflect the self-descriptions of occupation used by politicians, aggregated together to form the following categories: 'professionals' include teachers; 'administration' consists of those who are in senior or junior positions, either provincial or local, plus chiefs; 'business' is an aggregation of senior/managerial and junior/own businessmen, plus individuals combining business and agriculture.

TABLE I
Main and Last Occupation of Kenyan Members of Parliament

Election	percentages									
	1963		1969		1974		1979		1983	
Occupation	Main	Last	Main	Last	Main	Last	Main	Last	Main	Last
Teachers	37	28	29	18	19	11	24	18	24	17
Other Professionals	9	9	9	10	13	13	13	12	11	10
Senior Administrators	0	0	3	2	3	4	5	5	8	3
Junior Administrators	8	7	11	6	8	6	7	4	8	2
Chiefs	1	3	3	2	2	2	1	0	1	0
Local Council Officials	4	4	2	3	3	3	4	2	3	1
Senior Businessmen/Managers	2	2	2	6	5	8	7	11	14	17
Junior Businessmen/Own B.	1	6	8	12	14	14	11	24	12	19
Business and Agriculture	3	4	1	3	3	7	2	3	1	4
Agriculture only	1	4	2	7	3	3	2	3	3	6
Clerks/Workers	6	2	4	1	3	2	2	1	2	1
Trade Unionists	5	4	7	4	6	6	4	4	5	5
Full-Time Politicians	4	25	5	20	6	13	5	11	4	9
Others	18	4	15	7	11	8	11	11	4	6
Number for whom information is known	143	142	136	122	147	121	135	119	135	127
	150		158		158		158		158	

large-scale industry and commerce after independence, the state's emphasis upon the importance of capitalist growth, and the power of money in elections. Despite the controls introduced in 1979 on what can be spent, campaigns are extremely expensive, and since the cost of maintaining a Member of Parliament's position is high, many do not gain financially as a result of their election. Just over half of the new entrants in 1983 were businessmen.

Many of the political leaders in Africa before independence were teachers,¹ and with the widening range of occupations open to Kenyans, as well as the growing importance of finance, national contacts, and the high status in electoral success, their numbers might have been expected to fall dramatically after the 1960s. However, teaching has remained an important avenue for élite membership, particularly now in the less-developed areas. As in the colonial era, teachers have remained as extremely important members of their

¹ See L. A. Dove, 'Teachers in Politics in Ex-Colonial Countries', in *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* (London), 17, 2, July 1979, pp. 176-91, on the importance of teachers in early assemblies in Africa, including Kenya.

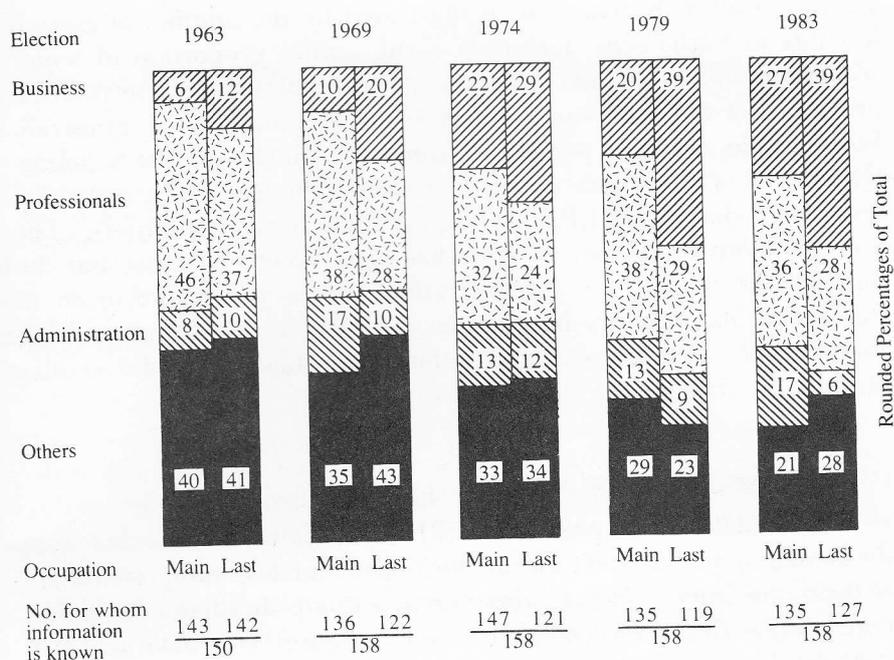


FIGURE 2
Principal Occupational Categories of Kenyan Members of Parliament

community, identified with local interests in a way that chiefs, for example, who are little represented in Parliament, are not. The proportion of teachers amongst new entrants plummeted after independence, and their parliamentary total fell from 28 per cent in 1963 to 11 per cent in 1974. However, since 1969, ex-teachers, lecturers, doctors, and lawyers have comprised a steady one-third of all M.P.s.

The independence Parliament was dominated by politicians who had apparently no other occupation, and they have continued to survive as a small group, although few newcomers are now full-time politicians. As in most other countries with contested elections, very few constituencies in Kenya have chosen low-status clerks, manual workers, and peasant farmers to represent them. However, a small but consistent number of M.P.s have found their route to power through the trade-union movement, as full-time officials of, for example, the Dock Workers Union or the Central Organisation of Trade Unions.

The close relationships between politics and administration is visible

at every level in Kenya. This is illustrated by the number of ex-civil servants in Parliament, including a substantial proportion of senior administrators who had previously been permanent secretaries, provincial or district commissioners, or professionals in the ministries. For example, of the 22 permanent secretaries (including the Solicitor-General) as of May 1966, 12 stood for election between 1974 and 1983, seven were elected as M.P.s, and four of these became Ministers.¹ The representation of ex-civil servants has been slowly growing, but the number for whom the administration was a direct precursor to Parliament has actually fallen since the early 1960s. Before making their first attempt, many went into business, whilst others did so after an initial defeat.

(i) *Occupation and electoral success*

When looking at the population of Kenya as a whole, it is clear that the great majority of candidates are socio-economically unrepresentative of their constituents. In fact, there exists a group that has a far higher than average rate of success, namely 'senior figures' who have achieved considerable prominence prior to standing for election as important civil servants, heads of big enterprises and parastatal bodies, mayors of large urban areas, and (less automatically) university lecturers and trade-union officials. An intermediate group of lawyers, businessmen, junior executives, secondary-school teachers, and other public servants regularly win seats in the rural areas. Finally, there is a substantial minority of candidates with little or no chance of success, primarily those without prestigious local or national positions, such as students, bank clerks, and journalists, as well as peasant farmers, who although being numerically the largest component of the population, find it particularly hard, as in Tanzania, to get elected to Parliament.

(ii) *Senior figures*

By examining the number of 'senior figures' that are elected for the first time, as shown in Table 2, we can identify the relationships between success outside and inside Parliament. Those in this category have grown consistently, both absolutely and as a proportion of the total new entrants in each election. There has also been a shift in the

¹ See *East African Standard* (Nairobi), 4 May 1966, p. 1, and *Kenya Gazette* (Nairobi), 11 May 1966, G.N. 1611.

TABLE 2
 'Senior Figures' Entering Parliament for the First Time, 1963-83

Election	1963 or before	1969	1974	1979	1983
Businessmen, Mayors, Civil Servants	2	7	8	11	16
University Lecturers	5	3	6	4	1
Trade Unionists	6	6	0	3	1
Total	13	16	14	18	18
Percentage of new M.P.s	8.4	18.0	22.6	27.7	39.1

areas in which they gained their position; in the early years, education (often working abroad) and trade unionism were the main vehicles by which an African could gain national status. After independence, the members of the élite financial and administrative groups seized the opportunities offered by Africanisation, then later moved into national politics, buttressed by their contacts and their wealth. Thus Parliament has increasingly become a means to secure or maintain rather than to achieve national prominence.

Of course, the 'top people' that become parliamentary candidates are by no means always successful. Indeed, the majority of senior civil servants and university lecturers standing for election have actually been defeated. Nevertheless, the socio-economic composition of the political élite is narrowing in response to the electoral advantages of those who are already influential, and as might be expected, the great majority come from Nairobi, and from the Central, Western, and Nyanza Provinces. Impressionistic evidence suggests that these 'senior figures' are less interested in actually representing their constituencies than in becoming heavily involved in economic development, national politics, and associated factional conflicts.

(iii) *Local notables*

Despite the manifest advantages of electing an M.P. who is already well-known in the country, the desire for grass-roots representation, the resistance to ostentatious wealth, and concern for the poor have all encouraged the continued existence of a stratum of 'local notables', without great financial resources but with close local contacts. They tend to perform differently in Parliament, and face limited career

prospects (they never become Ministers), while a few show signs of having a strained relationship with senior government figures.

An attempt was made to identify one part of this particular group by studying all the M.P.s whose main or last occupation was teaching. They are closely identified with local rather than national issues, they serve as community representatives at the lowest levels of administration and they are unlikely to possess the financial resources for high-spending campaigns or for electoral malpractices. No teacher has ever been successful in a general election in Nairobi, where wealth and national position are most important. For the reverse reason, virtually none have become M.P.s in the North-Eastern Province where there are so few educated and trained individuals. After this, the most developed and politically important Central Province has the lowest proportion. By way of contrast, teachers have consistently represented many of the rural and rather backward constituencies in the Rift Valley and Eastern Provinces, and few nationally important persons have emerged in these rather inward-looking communities. Although the political power of 'local notables' is less, so that their ability to aid a constituency materially is consequently smaller, their association with its preferences and local issues is greater. Elected ex-teachers were also regularly found in certain of the densely-populated ex-reserves, and Western Province, the Rift Valley, and the Coast all saw a rise in the proportion elected in 1983, although the reasons for this are unclear.

7. Party Position

It is hard to give an accurate analysis of the relationship between Members of Parliament and K.A.N.U., because given the chaotic state of the party throughout the period, the facts themselves were a bone of contention between rivals for branch positions. However, there is no doubt that in the early 1960s, party office was an important route to power. It brought public prestige and attention, and the nomination process for seats, based on party branches and sub-branches, clearly favoured office-holders. A. B. Rouyer shows that in 1963-8, branch and national officials constituted nearly 60 per cent of the successful candidates for the Assembly.¹

In the one-party state with no party pre-nomination selection procedure, the position held in K.A.N.U. ceased to be a major advantage, though candidates were still required to be members, and

¹ Rouyer, loc. cit. pp. 558-60.

for life since 1979. Large numbers of officials stood in elections; in 1983, for example, candidates included 30 of the chairmen in the 41 districts (each of which has had one branch since the late 1960s), 25 secretaries, and 19 treasurers. However, since the majority were actually incumbent or ex-M.P.s, this meant that party office at sub-branch, branch, and national level had become a consequence of, or a reward for, electoral success, not an avenue to Parliament. Branch officials who have never been M.P.s performed badly in elections (only 9 per cent being successful in 1983, compared to 11 per cent of non-incumbent non-officials). Electorally, party office was of little value to existing members, or to challengers who have never been in the Assembly, but some ex-M.P.s made use of such a position to remain in the limelight.

This demonstrates the electoral irrelevance of K.A.N.U. at the local level, which was also seen in the actual organisation of the campaigns. Being a branch official might be useful in national politics, a symbolic representation of local power, but it was hardly likely to win many votes. Corruption is known to have been far more widespread in branch than in national elections, since party membership was controlled by the access of local officials to party receipt-books, whilst the validity of meetings held and decisions taken was subject only to the sometimes partisan control of the local administration and party headquarters. In other words, victory in party elections was a reflection of organisational strength and national power as much as local popularity. This situation could change rapidly due to the recent revival of K.A.N.U. and the introduction of public preliminary elections for party members only.

CONCLUSION

When compared with the mass of the population, Members of Parliament form a clearly-defined and distinct group. They are male, middle-aged, well-educated, from high-status occupations (particularly business), and they hold or have held a large number of formal positions in the institutions of party, state, and local government. The tendency which appeared at independence for a democratisation of the legislature, with young, less-educated but politically-active representatives, has been wholly reversed since 1969. The élite now corresponds closely to that found in most other African and western states. The Assembly has been increasingly dominated by successful figures from other fields, particularly business and the administration,

and it is clear that wealth has become the main route to power in Kenya, rather than *vice versa*.

Whilst M.P.s generally represent the occupational structure of society in their parental backgrounds, the most successful include a disproportionate number of those whose fathers were members of the colonial élite. The one characteristic that they all share with their constituents is ethnicity. With elections still decided in the main at the local level, communities want to be sure that a candidate will represent their interests, and this is most likely if voters feel that he is one of 'us'.

It is equally important to recognise the internal differences within the élite, including some regional variations in age, education, and occupation. Whilst older, well-educated, occupationally 'high status' M.P.s dominate Nairobi and Central Province, the North-Eastern, Rift Valley, and Eastern Provinces are represented by those who are younger, less-educated, and of lower status. This variation relates closely to the political importance and socio-economic development of the areas concerned. The growing dominance of the ex-senior civil servants, city mayors, big businessmen, and incumbent Ministers, is mainly due to the perceived advantage of a constituency having a wealthy and powerful M.P. However, it should be emphasised that there is a continuing desire for the committed representation of communities, which often leads them to elect local notables such as teachers, whose attitudes and rôle are preferred by the voters. Finally, one explanation of the changing relationship between past and future success amongst members of the parliamentary élite was the increasing electoral unimportance of K.A.N.U. during the period studied.

All these trends seem to be closely associated with three crucial features in Kenya: a political system which remains primarily peasant-orientated, albeit resting on substantial economic inequality, both between individuals and communities; national competitive elections without party choice of candidates; and the growing importance of power at the centre, reflected in the success, by fair means or foul, of wealthy well-established Kenyans who have close governmental contacts.