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THE POLITICS OF LAND, ELECTIONS,
AND DEMOCRATIC PERFORMANCE IN KENYA:

A Case Study of Nakuru District.

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RN 322580

IDS

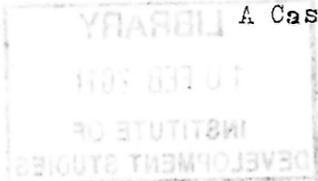


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IDS/WP 412

THE POLITICS OF LAND, ELECTIONS,
AND DEMOCRATIC PERFORMANCE IN KENYA:

A Case of Study of Nakuru District.



By

N. Gatheru Wanjohi

ABSTRACT

The extent to which regular elections can be used as a measure of democracy has for some time now been a matter of serious debate. The main source of controversy seems to derive from the manner in which different rulers interpret the concept of democracy and hence the means by which it should be realized. However, even after some common grounds are established, the role of electoral process still remains a matter of sharp disagreement. This type of difference has made a micro study of elections imperative with a view to explain the role they play in a developing country such as Kenya.

This paper deals with Nakuru District generally, and Nakuru Town Constituency in particular. The role elections have played in the assertion of people's belief in democratic practices has been explored for the period between 1960 and 1983. An attempt by a minority group to use elections in an effort to thwart democracy is also used as a demonstration of what could happen to the whole country should a similar situation be widespread.

In addition, the nature of the voters' attitude and behaviour suggests a high development premium in the minds of the electorate, except when their right to make a choice of their own is at stake. The voters' attitudes towards the party, the government, and the entire electoral process suggest a general but very consistent cautious approach in the way people in Kenya view their political system. In this case, regular elections seem to provide a basis for a hope that things may improve some time economically and socially.

IntroductionScope and Methodology

The purpose of this paper is to give some idea of the operational context within which the relationship between the politics of elections and democracy has manifested itself in Kenya since independence. Our main focus for the time being will be Nakuru District where we examine the role of the politics of land, ethnicity and sectionalism in electoral competition in that district. The paper also includes a micro-case study of elections in Nakuru Town Constituency in 1979 and 1983. In both years a survey research was conducted and the findings have been analysed on a comparative basis. This analysis forms the second part of the paper, while the first part is largely based on historical, usually secondary data.

Although the methodology used in our research is apparent this may not be the case with the difficulties encountered in the exercise. The first difficulty was logistical as we attempted to cover simultaneously two sets of constituencies which were more than 250 kilometres apart. These were Nakuru Town and Nakuru North in Nakuru Districts as the first set, and Kangema and Mbiri in Murang'a District as the second set. As it turned out, close supervision of all 4 research assistants became an impossible task and given the virtual lack of training on the part of the assistants, half the work, involving Nakuru North and Mbiri was less than reliable. Only Nakuru Town and Kangema data was reliable, a thing to be explained by the greater number of times that the assistants concerned were reached and hence supervised. We hope other researchers will learn from our mistake as they set to plan their research.

The other difficulty encountered in this research is related to the one just seen. It concerned the inadequacy of the time in which the survey had to be done as well as the inadequacy of the briefing which the research assistants were given regarding how they were to collect the data. The time allowed

for the survey in 1979 was one month and given that only one research assistant was allowed per constituency, only about 75 questionnaires could be administered. In a constituency like Nakuru Town with over 79,000 registered voters in 1979, reliability of the research findings could have been greatly enhanced if at least 150 questionnaires were administered and if two research assistants were involved. The adequacy of resources, in particular time and personnel should be given serious consideration in the planning period, and perhaps reduce the areas to be covered.

One of the most important ways of improving the reliability of research data is to have well trained research assistants. More so where the sample, even though it may be random, is not to be taken by the researcher himself due to logistical difficulties as was the case with our research. The two surveys of 1979 and 1983 were not preceded by such a training, and the briefing that was given was far from adequate. This made close supervision all the more required with the consequence that this could be done only in half of the areas being covered.

In future, however, it may be proper to consider instituting arrangements for election survey as soon as it is clear as to when the elections are to take place. This would be easier if the various agencies providing financial support understood the importance of availing the funds early enough so as to allow sufficient time in which a good survey could be undertaken. It would also greatly benefit the reliability of the data if they provided adequate resources as to enable the employment of at least two research assistants per constituency to be studied. Resources provided in good time, at least a three days' briefing or training for the research assistants should be mandatory in respect of understanding the questionnaires, the method of recording responses, sampling method to be used, etc.

In the past two surveys, the agencies provided too little money for use in the data analysis and in the preparation of reports. No wonder that several of the papers that were produced had very little in terms of survey data and they could not therefore be more than the

work of some good journalism. Given the resources spent in the survey, better utilization of elaborate survey data would have made the exercise more justified. Perhaps this would have been the case if the resources for data analysis and preparation of reports were adequate.

In all therefore, we probably bit more than we could chew. All the same, the data collected for Nakuru Town in 1979 and 1983, and the one collected for Kangema in 1983 were highly reliable. However, as stated above, a larger number of cases would have greatly improved our degree of confidence. It is with these remarks in mind that the survey data should be read.

With these few remarks on methodology, a brief theoretical statement of the study at hand would be proper. In particular one would be interested in looking at the theoretical context of the relationship between elections and democracy.

Elections and Democracy

For several centuries now so many theories have been expressed regarding the relationship between elections and democracy that one can hardly review but only a handful of them. Aristotle tried to conceptualize how a democracy should work, but Baron de Montesquieu seems to have led the way in relating the electoral rights of the people and republican democracy. According to him, democracy represents a republican system of government whereby the body of the people is possessed of the supreme power of choosing their rulers and directing the performance of those rulers¹. It represents a society in which there can be no exercise of sovereign except by the people's votes, and these votes express their own will.

According to Rousseau on the other hand, elections in a democracy represent "a way of making choice that is unfair to nobody" one that leaves each member of the electorate a reasonable hope of having his alternative selected.²

(1) Baron de Montesquieu, *De L'Esprit des Lois* (The Spirit of the Laws) II, (in W.T. Jones, *Masters of Political thought*, George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd., London, 1960, Volume II, p. 223.

(2) Jean - Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract and Discourses*, (J.M. Dent Dent & Sons Ltd., London, 1973) p. 251.

These founding fathers of modern democratic theory treat democracy in terms of individual citizen's involvement in the choice of their rulers or the policies by which they should be governed. Other theorists adopt a different approach. Harold D. Lasswell, for instance, considers democracy as a function of group relations. According to him the procedure of a democratic society is to clear the way to the presentation of various demands by the interested parties, leaving room for bargaining and compromise to take place, or for creative invention and integration to be undertaken.³

Whether or not it is approached from an individual or group thesis, the idea of elections in a democracy is to create governments which, as John Locke would put it, derive their authority from the free consent of the governed.⁴ In setting up democratic governments, some theorists would argue, room should also be left for those who wish to express their feelings about such governments by abstaining from participation. The people who reserve their opinions by abstaining in an election, for instance, seem to effect some caution on the leadership as well as the rest of the electorate regarding the use of political power by a given government.⁵ More so as A.W. Gouldner would argue, when a good section of the electorate turns to be "pragmatists" who, usually with contempt, resign themselves to elite competition or to hierarchical social and economic domination by other groups.⁶ Absention or apathy as part of democratic process has therefore the role of denying the rulers the full confidence which might eventually turn them against their constituents and electorates by being undemocratic and usually claiming, against John Stuart Mill's good advice, that they are out to protect the people.⁷

One of the key limitations of several democracies, therefore, is that once elected, the rulers tend to subject the constituents and the electorate alike to the wishes of the governments instead of the vice versa. Quite often they also lose touch with the growing demands and needs of the majority of the constituents, thus turning to serving the interests of the minority, which Marx calls the ruling class, against the majority interests. It is for this reason that in a democracy, according to Marx, the immense majority

(3) Harold D. Lasswell, "Preventive Politics", in Henry S. Kariel, *Frontiers of Democratic Theory*, (Random House, New York, 1970) p.91.

(4) See Kariel, *op. cit.*, p.2

(5) Bernard Berelson, "Survival Through Apathy" in Kariel, *op. cit.* p. 72.

(6) Kariel, *op. cit.* p. 96.

(7) John Stuart Mill advises that in a democracy, the nation does not need to be protected against its own will. See Masters of Political Thought, Volume III, 1961, p. 128.

of the people must be involved in the interests of the immense majority in the society. Elections in a democracy then involve facilitation of adoption of majority decisions regarding the majority interests.

One would cite several other theories of election and democracy, but they all seem to demonstrate that in a democracy, elections involve a lot more than sheer numbers. Numbers are undoubtedly important as they may indicate the sway of the electorate, but they are by no means decisive in determining what is democratic and what is not. In several democracies, for instance, elections are nothing but a ritual that gives the electorate the satisfaction of participation in the choice of the leaders even if participation in policy formulation by way of meaningful debate about relevant issues may be minimal. Voting in such situations is therefore a means "by which those in power seek to confer legitimacy on their rule".⁸ In addition, as in the case of several developing countries, the incidence of electoral fraud has practically watered down electoral numbers as a measure of democracy⁹. In many of these countries elections could be said to be largely vindictive and oriented to status quo maintenance by careful management of election ritual. They could also be said to be hegemonic as they serve to extend the electoral realm under the control of the dominant classes.

Yet every one of them professes democracy, thus once again raising the problem of conceptual imprecision and hence the difficulties of constructing evaluative criteria of universal applicability.

In spite of such difficulties, the search for universality is still theoretically imperative. In this regard, the "particular" continues to serve as a basis without which conceptual operationalization would be an impossible task. Hence the importance of case studies, be they at macro or at micro level of analysis. They help in the improvement of theoretical universality upon which human development will be best guided socially, economically and politically.

(8) M. Rush and P. Althoff, *An Introduction to Political Sociology*, (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd. 1972) p.82. Also see Robert E. Dorris and John A. Hughes, *Political Sociology*, (London: John Wiley and Sons, 1972) p.330.

(9) For electoral Frauds in Africa, see Henry L. Bretton, *Power and Politics in Africa*, (London: Longman, 1973) p. 264.

As a delve is made into the issue of electoral relationship with democratic performance in Kenya, a summary of the operational basis of the concept democracy as used in this paper is important. In this paper democracy is viewed as a political system in which the elected leaders or government listen and attend to the needs and demands of the majority of its people. It is a system requiring that the elected leaders or government subject themselves to the social, economic and political needs and demands of the majority of both the electing and non-electing members of the society. In a democracy, therefore, elections become a tool or a means by which the electorate selects the people to form the government which is sensitive and responsive to the ultimate interests of the majority of the members of the entire social system.¹⁰ Alternatively, democratic elections are a tool of indicating the people's choice in important issues affecting the majority of the members, a choice which is binding to the leaders and the government alike. It is in the light of such a definition that a study of electoral process in a democracy becomes meaningful.

Inherent in the idea of democracy is the ability of the citizens to make a rational choice. This in turn calls for availability of all the relevant information about the choice to be made. It also calls for an opportunity for discussions and debate involving both the electorate and the leaders in respect of the available alternatives and the consequences that are likely to follow the choice of each of those alternatives. The effective meaning of democracy in an election therefore is not the sheer casting of the vote, but rather the casting of an informed or educated vote.

The other important element of the idea of democracy is the recognition of the phenomenon of diversity and the competition thereof. Even the most homogeneous social group has always been riddled with differences of varying kinds and degrees of intensity and any efforts to achieve absolute unanimity has practically amounted to self-deception. Some societies have turned to exploiting the benefits to be derived from diversity in their composition and

(10) Also see Dowse and Hughes, op. cit. pp. 237-238.

the results have been spectacular. Even in politics diversity can be exploited by way of bringing together different ideas and expectations from which the very best will be adopted for application to the entire society. In the exercise, competition and disagreement are recognized as essential attributes in a democracy while agreement through an informed majority choice becomes the wheel by which the society moves.

In modern political systems competition and disagreements are championed through organized groups representing different views about the issues at hand. In multiparty systems different political parties represent such groups. In single party systems informal groupings emerge to represent different views. Whichever system a society may prefer, the important thing for a democratic principle to be upheld is to accord recognition to different groupings and the views they represent, and subject them to the electorate which will make the choice on a majority basis. Once a group is defeated in a free majority choice, it should recognize the choice and give it the chance of being tested. The winning group on the other hand should be sensitive to the views of the losing group and see if they cannot be accommodated at least in part. The fair play implicit in a democratic principle ~~not only~~ permits diverse views and encourages debate or discussions about them. It also ultimately seeks to accommodate the dissenting views.

One of the most **startling** political phenomena in developing countries, however, is the amount of effort spent in ~~restricting~~ and even muzzling public debate on the central issues touching on the policy by which the people are ruled. Sometimes debate is allowed and encouraged, but it is often so channelled as to render it inconsequential in terms of material aspects of policy. Either way, the effect has been increased limitation of democracy to a point where the people feel alienated. They develop political ~~an-~~ ~~omy~~ with the consequence that habitual political apathy takes root as may sometimes be manifested through repeated low voter turn out in elections, and low political participations in other forms. The question is how relevant has all this been in single constituencies in Kenya and in the country in general. An attempt to answer this question will constitute the bulk of these two papers.

Finally, one may observe that perhaps one of the important limitations of several democratic theories is the fact that, while they dwell a lot on how a democratic system should operate, rarely do they indicate how the system comes about in the first place. This notwithstanding, it is increasingly clear that inherent in the foundation of a democratic system is the characteristic of the struggle by the majority of the people in a bid to assert their position vis a vis a minority that is bent on perpetual domination. It might also be added that the preservation of a democratic system rests on a never-ending struggle by the majority members of the society against any minority bids to deprive them of the right and ability to decide by whom and by what means they shall be ruled. As it will be shown shortly, Kenya is no exception to this model.

PART I

THE POLITICS OF LAND AND ELECTIONS

IN NAKURU DISTRICT, KENYA

Colonization and the struggle for land

Nakuru politics is largely a product of the struggle for land as a means of production and a basis for social satisfaction for people of diverse ethnic and regional backgrounds. When Kenya was colonized at the end of 19th century, the district was largely occupied by the Masai people who had to be moved en masse in order to make room for European settler occupation. European alienation of land was immediately followed by the development of commercial farming which converted the district into a major agricultural producer. Since those early days, the district has arrogated itself the title of "the granary of Kenya".

Having led the way in the attempt to introduce a new system of agricultural production, Nakuru also became the source of a wide range of policies regarding the relationship between the European settlers and the African population. Some of the most vocal and politically influential settlers had their farming interests in the district.¹¹ They included people like Lord Delamere, Lord Scott, Dr. Atkinson, Chamberlain and Flemmer. They became the architects of various legislations in respect of land alienation for European occupation, as well as the chief architects of nearly all laws and regulations aimed at forcing the Africans to provide their labour for the European farm production. Such laws and regulations included hut and poll tax laws; squatter, kipande and labour contract laws.

Due to the immensely oppressive and exploitative nature of these laws and their excessive application by the settlers, it was inevitable that a conflict should arise between them and the Africans most of whom had migrated from other parts of Kenya, but mainly from Central Kenya. The nature of the conflict has been treated in several works and need not hold us here. What is important for us now is that

(11) N. Gatheru Wanjohi, "Socio-Economic Inequalities in Kenya: The case of Rift Valley Province", (M.A. Thesis, University of Nairobi, 1976), Chapter III.

it mainly involved the Kikuyu workers and squatters who resisted the settlers' efforts to dehumanize them all the more. This was the conflict that culminated in the attempts to expel the Kikuyu squatters from the district which, together with the other workers, they had contributed so much to build. It was the conflict that greatly contributed to the outbreak of the armed Mau Mau revolt in 1949. In spite of the several efforts by the colonial administration in Kenya to cover up the existence of the revolt, this could not be done for long. In 1952 the government therefore officially recognized the revolt and met it with the declaration of a State of Emergency. That recognition gave the Africans, especially the Kikuyu, a lot of confidence in their efforts to shake the European government in Kenya. They therefore engaged the government armed forces in a war that was to last for seven years.

Perhaps the most important contribution of the Mau Mau armed struggle was that it forced the British Government to recognize that it would no longer be possible to govern Kenya against the wishes of the African majority population. It forced the Colonial Office to its senses requiring that the number of the African seats in the Legislative Council be expanded beyond the current two, and that some form of direct elections be used to fill them.

In 1954, Colonial Secretary Lyttelton accepted the demand and came up with the Lyttelton Constitution which increased the number of African seats in the Legislative Council to eight. It also agreed to the idea of direct elections to fill the seats. By that dint, the Africans realized that more could be won, particularly in the light of the fact that Mau Mau struggle was now ranging more than ever. They therefore turned down the offer on the grounds that the number of eight seats was far too inadequate. The stalemate that ensued was to be broken in 1957 when the new Colonial Secretary Lennox Boyd applied more pressure and got the first direct elections for Africans held that year under the Lyttelton Constitution. It was in this election that the Africans in Nakuru District could be said to have chosen their first representative in the person of Daniel arap Moi who won the African Rift Valley seat against Justus K. Ole Tipis and J. M. Ole Taneno. (12).

(12) In this election, Daniel arap Moi polled 4,773 votes, J.K. Ole Tipis 1,340, and J.M. Ole Taneno 527 votes out of 6,640 votes cast where there were 8,847 registered voters. E.A. Standard, 14/3/57

If Lennox Boyd had succeeded in pressurizing the Africans into elections which they considered inadequate, he failed to get their elected members to recognize the Lyttelton Constitution. The African members boycotted ministerial positions demanding that Constitutional Reforms in the Legislature be secured to give "everyone effective and real representation".⁽¹³⁾ A demand that was practically equivalent to demanding independence and an African majority government.

Meanwhile, the growing world opinion against colonialism, as well as the human and material cost of a prolonged conflict in Kenya, made it difficult for the British Government to hold Kenya as a colony for much longer. In 1959 therefore, the state of emergency was lifted and in the following year the British Government accepted the principle of independence for Kenya under an African government. It was clear the settlers did not expect things to move that fast and they were therefore set looking for ways of delaying independence or at least of making arrangements that would safeguard their interests and those of other capitalist investments against whatever African government that may be formed.

The end of Colonial Rule and the Settlement Schemes for Africans

One of the most important steps the settlers took to protect their interests against a future African government was the establishment of a programme under which Africans could be settled on land alongside the Europeans in the Highlands, and in Nakuru particularly. Initially this was to involve the landless most of whom were Kikuyu who had lost their land to the Europeans in the early days of colonial rule or who had been dispossessed by the powerful fellow Africans collaborating with the colonial forces during the Mau Mau armed struggle.⁽¹⁴⁾

To the Kikuyu emerging out of the harsh conditions of the

⁽¹³⁾ African Elected Members' Organization (AEMO) Press Statement of 13th March, 1957, quoted in David Goldsworthy, Pol. Memo: The Man Kenya Wanted to Forget, Nairobi: Heinemann, 1982) p. 73.

⁽¹⁴⁾ For more information on the nature and the politics of African settlement programme, see Gary Wasserman, Politics of Decolonization Kenya Europeans and the Land Issue, 1960 - 1965, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1965); Colin Leys, Underdevelopment in Kenya, (Nairobi: Heinemann, 1975); Wanjohi, op. cit.

state of emergency, the settlement programme spelt victory resulting directly from their armed struggle against the Europeans. It would be difficult to stop them from trying to acquire the former settler farms in Nakuru or anywhere else in the country.

After whetting the Kikuyu appetite for land with the first small part of the settlement schemes which became formalized as a British Government financed Million Acre Scheme, the European settlers sought to exploit the heat of the moment. They sought to replace the racial factor in Kenya's politics with the "tribal" factor, and nowhere was the game better played than in Nakuru District where the Kikuyu were allocated settlement land on the Eastern side of the District, while the Kalenjin people were allocated land on the Western side. Thus juxtaposed the scene was set for the settler-encouraged animosity between the Kikuyu on one side, and the rest of the African societies on the other side, over the issue of who should replace the Europeans in the remaining parts of Nakuru District in particular.

The Policy of "No free things"

A formula by which the incoming African Government would prevent an open conflict over this issue was not only urgently needed but also difficult to devise. Somehow the initial settlement projects all of which were based on the purchase of European settler farms for allocation to the Africans seemed to offer a clue to both Kenyatta and his advisers alike. Thus, although Kenyatta and his advisers including Tom Mboya, Paul Ngei, Oginga Odinga, and Bildad Kaggia initially considered the purchase of the settler farms by Africans to be logically unacceptable, the purchase formula now lent itself as the only one, short of force, capable of ensuring smooth transfer of land to the Africans irrespective of their ethnic base.

This and, in our view, not the principle of private property enshrined in the independence constitution, was the basis of Kenyatta's policy of "no free things" in independent Kenya. It was a policy of convenience, aimed at making settler farms accessible to those best able to raise finances for the purchase-price.

The policy of "no free things" became instrumental in the mushrooming of massive cooperatives and companies whose members sought to pool resources together for the purpose of buying the settler farms. Most of these cooperatives and companies were mainly made up of Kikuyu membership and they were able to raise monumetous sums of money.⁽¹⁵⁾ Given the huge sums of money these cooperatives and companies commanded, they were able to obtain long-term loans from the Agricultural Finance Corporation (AFC), the Land Bank, and the Settlement Fund Trust (SFT) in order to buy many more farms from the outgoing settlers. When the loans were not immediately obtained, the Kikuyu cooperatives and companies were able to reach an agreement with several European farm owners to the effect that they were the only people to whom the land would be sold once sufficient funds were collected from the members.

By the time the other groups, especially the Kalenjin groups, realized what was happening, and by the time they organized themselves into cooperatives and companies, a lot of land had already either been bought fully, was bought but still mortgaged under a long term loan, or was just "booked" for purchase by the Kikuyu cooperatives and companies. The Kalenjin also hurried to do the same, thus recognizing the validity of the rules of the game used by the earlier "players".

Land "empires" and the new political struggle

What we have described above gave birth to numerous "empires" in Nakuru District and in other areas formerly occupied by the European plantation owners, mixed farmers and ranchers, especially in the Rift Valley Province. These included the famous Kihika Kinani "empire" in the name of Ngwataniro/Mutukanio Farmers Company, the Ndeffo Company, and the Kalenjin Enterprises Ltd,

(15) For an idea of the size and the role of the hand purchase companies and cooperatives in Nakuru District, see Wanjohi, op. cit. Chapters IV and V.

among others. Not only did they greatly influence the political trends in Nakuru rural constituencies and in Nakuru Town, but they, at times, also tried to force national politics into certain directions. Their leaders have either been powerful politicians themselves or have wielded a tremendous amount of political influence behind the curtain.⁽¹⁶⁾ Political competition sometimes took the ethnic form, it also took the form of competition among the leaders of different groups belonging to the same ethnic base, and at times, it took the form of class conflict between the leadership and the wealthy in these groups on one side, and the exploited, oppressed and neglected poor members of the cooperatives and companies, squatters and workers on the other side. However, the main general effect of the settlement programme, has been to establish a peasant peasantry in the former settled areas of Nakuru, thus greatly expanding the total size of national peasantry. This has grave political implications which, are, unfortunately, beyond the scope of this paper.

(16) Some leaders of the large land - purchase cooperatives and companies were behind a wave of political harassment that swept across the Rift Valley in 1975 and 1976. They also led the way in the abortive constitutional amendment bid in 1976. Their power continued unabated until the death of Kenyatta in 1978. Thereafter, President Moi's government has been keen on how these companies are led. He has also embarked on having them wound up by having all their land subdivided for their members. However, one would always be cautious about the effect of this exercise for even when they are dissolved as legal entities, the membership of these cooperatives and companies still remain united by the common bond of original struggle to buy the land. However one tries to manipulate them, one must bear in mind that they will continue to be a political force to reckon with for a long time to come. Also see Wanjohi, op. cit. Chapters IV.

Ideology and breathing space

Political conflict over land, did not come out in the open until after 1969. This was mainly so because nearly all other conflicts were practically subsumed within the more urgent national conflicts of the period since independence. Initially there was the struggle between the "unitarists" and the "regionalists", the former being mainly led by Kanu while the latter were led by Kadu. In 1964, Kadu was dissolved and its leadership integrated within Kanu, thus bringing to an end one of the most sensitive political issues in Kenya. The dissolution of Kadu and the adoption of a unitary system did not mean an end of political rivalry. In fact it enabled the country to enter into the more controversial issue concerning the ideological road Kenya would take in its attempts to develop under independence government. The ensuing conflict brought with it new alignments the most important one being the marriage of convenience between the pro-western Kikuyu and Kalenjin Kanu leaders against the leftist Kanu leaders. The pro-western won the day when they forced the leftist leadership into forming the KPU in 1966 after leaving Kanu. The final battle, however, was not won until 1969 when KPU itself was proscribed and its leaders detained.

In the meantime, the one man that had become the concern of all interested in national leadership was Tom Mboya, himself a leading pro-western Kanu personality and perhaps the most influential government minister nationally. His open drive for national power had set several groups coalescing against him, though they always used him in the struggle against the leftist leadership in Kanu. Thus, in the words of David Goldsworthy,

As long as the radical threat was there, his position with the inner clique was secure. Once it was removed, Mboya himself became the threat. He was still "indispensable", but at all costs, his succession to the presidency had to be prevented. (17)

(17) Goldsworthy, op. cit. p. 246

So, after he had helped edging the leftists out of Kanu and in harassing them to a level of virtual ineffectiveness, Mboya had outlived his usefulness. Instead he was seen as a threat in national power struggle and was assassinated in July 1969, to be followed by a ban of the KPU later on in the year.

Mboya's death was largely blamed on the Kikuyu leadership, a thing that tended to unite the Luo people than ever before. Small wonder that Sibi-Okumu was able to pose such a big threat in December 1969 elections when he nearly ousted Mwithaga from Nakuru Town.

Sub-dued Ethnic Rivalry and Sectionalism

Having settled ideological battles in favour of the pro-western Kanu leadership, and having the struggle for national power temporarily concluded with the elimination of Tom Mboya, the country now turned its attention to the substantive issues of economic growth and resource allocation. As one might expect, the most important issue was land and the struggle for it was once again most intense in Nakuru District.

Since the settlement schemes for Africans were initiated in the 1960's, the district experienced massive migrations of people of diverse ethnic origins. The momentum increased when the land purchase cooperatives and companies were formed after 1965 and the outgoing European settlers became replaced by individuals or groups of individuals who were able to raise the required finances for land purchase. In the final analysis, the district was heavily occupied by the Kikuyu as the dominant group numerically, to be followed by the Kalenjin as the other ethnic group involved in land purchase in the area. (Table I) Although the Luo and Luhya followed thereon numerically, only a few of their members have acquired land and other property in Nakuru District as compared to the Kikuyu and Kalenjin. That notwithstanding, the two ethnic groups have established themselves as a force to reckon with politically, especially in Nakuru Town.

It would be important to observe at this point that although the ethnic factor has played an important part in Kenya's politics, its prominence has officially been successfully contained and therefore prevented from coming up in the surface in independent Kenya. In Nakuru District, therefore, the efforts have been directed at explaining both political and economic allocative activities in non-ethnic terms. Thus for instance, intra - Kikuyu Competition tended to overshadow ethnic suspicions and potential caninositities throughout the Kenyatta era as Kenya's President.

However, in the last five years of Kenyatta's regime, a welfare organization known as Gikuyu, Embu and Meru Association (GEMA) developed as a powerful group socially and economically and it was inevitable that it should be felt politically too. When a few of its members constituted themselves into a small informal group known as the "Big 36", it became difficult to distinguish between Gema, Kanu and Government. Given the great numbers some of the Kanu and Gema leaders were able to command as heads of the most populous land purchase companies, and given the inclusion within Gema of some of the senior government officials and police officers, there developed the tendency of such leaders and officials to see themselves as Gema, Kanu and Government, all at the same time. Consequently any bids to oppose or challenge them, even individually, were conveniently assumed to mean opposition or challenge to Kanu or Government, a thing that was met with the most brutal force to be encountered in an independent country.⁽¹⁸⁾ In the process, the competition was not so much inter-ethnic, but sectional. Thus, the Gema leadership in Nakuru was largely made up of pro-southern Kikuyu who sought to hold on to power in the event of Kenyatta's death. Their competition were the northrners who sought to be more involved in national politics and in resource allocation. Such sectional competition was perhaps the most important aspect of the last years of Kenyatta regime.

(18) In Nakuru North, Koigi wa Wanwere who was set to win the election against Kihika Kinani was arrested and charged with "behaving in a manner likely to cause a breach of peace". and was remanded in custody for most of the campaign period. Daily Nation, 6/9/74.

These are but a few examples of the tremendous impact the programme of land transfer had on the politics of a single district in Kenya. The development of a wealthy group at the head of land - buying cooperatives and companies was followed by the expansion of this group into business activities in Nakuru, thus hastening the concentrations of economic power in a few individuals. The next step was to capture political power which in the case of Nakuru was grossly abused at the expense of the majority of the residents in the district and in Nakuru Town in particular. As we see shortly, this power was used in a bid to force the people to cast their votes against their interests. When the people resisted this pressure a most brutal treatment was meted on them under the pretext that they had demonstrated an anti-Kanu and anti - government attitude and behaviour. In other words, the ruling wealthy clique of the "Big 36" was out to trample on the democratic wishes of the majority, thus clearly demonstrating how easily a few people may be tempted to deprive the majority of their democratic choice even when the right to such a choice is guaranteed in the constitution.

The Pattern of Elections in Nakuru Town

Mwithaga replaces Oneko, but limps on

The first member of Parliament for Nakuru Town was Wafula Wabuge who narrowly won the seat in 1961 on a Kadu ticket (Table 2). At independence elections in 1963, the seat went to a Kanu candidate, R. Achieng' Oneko, who won the seat with a comfortable majority of 7,536 votes against Wafula Wabuge, his nearest rival who polled 4,905 votes where 12,497 voters cast their votes out of 14,238 registered voters. Oneko, who also became the Information and Broadcasting Minister in Kenyatta's independence government, held that seat until 1966 when he joined the KPU party and was forced, by a constitutional amendment, to seek a fresh mandate through a by-election. In what came to be known as the Little General Election covering the constituencies affected by the constitutional amendment in 1966, Oneko polled 2,325 votes against Mark W. Mwithaga, the winning candidate, who polled 3,822 out of 6,147 votes cast. Oneko has never tried to

recapture that seat since that election which gave Mwithaga the highest percentage he was ever to win in respect of votes cast or total registered voters.

Having ousted a Luo candidate, it was obvious that the Luo community should try to recapture the seat at the next possible opportunity. In 1969, a Luo candidate in the name of John I. Sibi-Okumu emerged and posed a great threat to Mwithiga who won by some 227 votes over Sibi-Okumu. In that election Mwithiga, who had climbed the political ladder from a Kanu youth winger, demonstrated his vulnerability, a thing that greatly encouraged his challengers in future elections.

Mwithaga had barely settled down as the MP for Nakuru Town when the pro-southern Ngwataniro-Gena leaderships became interested and threatened his political career. Although his overthrow by Kihika Kinani as the district Kanu Chairman in 1972 gave an idea of the danger ahead, Mwithaga could not estimate the force with which his attempt to cling on to the Nakuru seat would be met. Moreover, he was bent on believing that given the presence of Isiah Mathenge (a fellow northerner) as the Provincial Commissioner for Rift Valley at least some measure of a fair play would be done. Mwithaga's calculation was proved right, at least for a while, and in 1974 he therefore won the Nakuru Town election polling some 5,589 votes, against seven challengers the two main ones being Anos Kabiru Kinemia, the "Big 36" favourite with 5,280 votes, and C. Kiprotich, a Kalenjin candidate with 4,581 votes, (Table 2). A close run indeed, and one that reflects the typical competition in the district. In particular, the Kalenjin seem to have aimed at exploiting the deep rift between the northern and the southern Kikuyu on the one hand, and one between the "Big 36" together with their followers and the rest of the population in the town.

Mwithiga's victory in this election caused a lot of anger among the "Big 36" who saw it as a direct defiance of the Government by the electorate. They therefore resorted to their supporters in the police force, particularly two very senior officers who were themselves members of the "Big 36", and practically placed the entire

town under a police rule of the most brutal type. This state of police harassment and brutality continued unabated until 1978 when, after the death of Kenyatta, the new centre of power in the country declined to allow the continuation of concentration of power in the Gena-Ngwataniro leadership which was united under the title of the "Big 36".

Inprisonment as a solution to political conflict

Unsatisfied with the people's decision, the "Big 36" encouraged Kinemia, the closest loser of the 1974 elections, to challenge the results in a petition. The defendants in this petition were Mwithaga and Isaiah Mathenge, the Rift Valley Provincial Commissioner. The petition went through without finding Mwithaga guilty of an election offence. When Mwithaga stood for the by-election against Kinemia in 1975, and when it became clear that he would win again, the "Big 36" sought to stop him from being the Nakuru Town MP at all cost. They therefore had him arrested and charged with assault and damage of property. He was also charged with stealing Shs. 100,000/-. The previous case may have involved a petty offence, but it was blown to the magnitude of a serious crime. The latter case was also suspicious and no wonder that in spite of the opposition from the prosecution, the Magistrate, Mr. Edward M. Greedy, granted a token of bail of 1,000/- only, adding, in his words,

I consider it harsh and oppressive to refuse bail in a case where the alleged crime is lacking in specification. (19)

Mwithaga was found guilty in the first case and was imprisoned for two and half years. The other case was later on withdrawn, apparently because the custodial sentence that the "Big 36" sought for

(19) Daily Nation, 16/9/75.

through their influence in the police force had been granted. (20)

The jail sentence was passed on the eve of the by-election polling day. When the votes were counted, Mwithaga was declared the winner against Kabiru Kinemia the only rival. This victory by a man in jail caused a lot of anger to the "Big 36" who had been confident that, due to their underhand manoeuvres and harassment of the voters and the rival candidate, Kinemia would win.

The August 1975 by-election winner being in jail, yet another by-election had to be held. It involved two candidates, Kabiru Kinemia, the "Big 36" candidate, and William K. Koenen, a Kalenjin lawyer from Nakuru West. The electorate chose (Koenen) rather than the "Big 36" candidate. They argued that Koenen would warn the seat for Mwithaga whom they hoped to return to parliament when he finished his jail sentence and when the next elections were called. On the other hand, they felt that Kinemia was trying to force himself on the electorate by applying extra-democratic manoeuvres like having Mwithaga and his supporters harassed through the police and the other instruments of state coercion.

Mwithaga loses as a consequence of delayed solution to sectional rivalry

When the 1979 elections were called, Mwithaga was ready to recapture the seat. As in the previous occasions since 1969, he scored a narrow margin over his closest rival and once again became a minority winner in the face of both the total votes cast

(20) Apart from being a northerner and opposed to the undemocratic manoeuvres of the "Big 36", Mwithaga antagonized them further through his active role as the Deputy Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee probing into the murder of J.M. Kariuki, the former M.P. for Nakuru North in 1975. Kariuki was himself a northerner too, and was highly critical of the government on account of corruption, and economic policies that allowed existence of massive poverty in the country. The report which came out in June 1975 and which was enthusiastically articulated by Mwithaga, specifically implicated some members of the "Big 36" in the murder. In a way it also implicated all the members of that group as well as the government itself. Seeking to have Mwithaga jailed was a punitive measure devised by the "Big 36" who would have preferred their role in the affair to remain officially secret although in Nakuru it appeared to be a common knowledge.

(32%) and the registered voters (17%). He seems to have retained his main supporters from the northern Central Kenya origins together with some other voters sympathetic with what they perceived to be an unfair politically-motivated imprisonment.

In 1983, however, things shifted against him slightly. The Nakuru Bus Company the formation of which he was behind, had threatened Matatu business in town and this meant alienating a small but very vocal section of his previous supporters among the poor and underprivileged. It was largely behind the loss of his seat to Kinemia who now posed as the leader of oppressed small-businessmen and Matatu operators, who begged the electorate to allow him only one chance in parliament in which he would demonstrate his abilities in relation to solution of the town's problems. In other words, Kinemia's is a probationary term. He may be returned or rejected in the next elections depending on how well he demonstrates his sensitivity to the problems, needs and demands of the Nakuru residents the majority of whom are very poor indeed. His political career will also depend on how he uses his position as a member of the business class, and on whether he can manipulate his wealth in a manner that will boost rather than weaken his image in the eyes of the electorate.

One candidate who came up very well in 1983 was R.J. Nyabinda, a legal practitioner in Nakuru. He had tried to win the seat in 1979 but without much avail largely due to a handicap in public speaking. By 1983, his public speaking had changed little. He was, however, able to persuade a large number of his Luo fellowmen and the Luhya sympathizers to come out and vote for him in a bid to break the long occupation of the seat by the Kikuyu. He therefore stood second in the votes polled, surpassing Mwithaga's total votes, and thus demonstrating his position as a political contender worthy the name. His future political advance will, however, depend largely on his ability to transcend the ethnic border lines and in particular on his ability to attract a substantial section of Kikuyu and Kalenjin voters in Nakuru Town. By no means will this be an easy task.

In concluding this section one could perhaps observe that, rather than promote positive political development in Nakuru Town, ethnic and sectional strife has tended to bog-down any meaningful political debate that would appeal to the electorate and thus attract the voters to casting their votes in big numbers. Consequently, there has developed a non-voting tradition in this constituency, such that a vicious circle of apathy has at times encouraged a few individuals to try to have their way undemocratically. One wonders how widespread this type of situation could be in Kenya. Its implications on democracy would, without doubt, be very grave.

For now, however, let us turn to the question of the voters' attitude and behaviour in respect of the incumbent and the challengers in 1979 and 1983 elections, the role of voting, the party and the government in general.

PART II

Parliamentary Elections in Nakuru Town Constituency:
An analysis of survey data for 1979 and 1983.

Nakuru Town in the 1980's

Like most other urban constituencies in Kenya, Nakuru Town Constituency is made up of ethnically a mixed electorate. The main ethnic groups include the Kikuyu, Luhya, Luo, Kalenjin and Kisii, followed by the Meru and Kaaba as well as the Asians. The bulk of the electorate also seems to be made of relatively young people of less than 40 years old. This is also an urban characteristic in Kenya where the rural-urban migration involves the young and relatively more educated members of the society. The other main characteristic of Nakuru Town electorate has already been referred to above regarding the southern and northern Kikuyu differentiation which has had a big impact on the electoral politics in the Town and in Nakuru District at large.

The majority of the Nakuru Town residents are workers who are employed mainly in the fast growing industrial sector and in the commercial sector servicing the surrounding farming sector. Some of the workers are employed in the Provincial and District Headquarters while the Municipal Council and County Council also employ a sizable number each. The bulk of the other population is either self-employed as petty traders or remains unemployed or partially employed mainly as casual workers. As Tables 3 and 4 for instance would demonstrate, about one third of the town's voters are unemployed who are mainly women. A few are students or self-employed professionals. All this makes Nakuru Town a one place of considerable variety of people whose response to political issues such as elections, the role of the party and the government is also uniquely urban.

Like many other urban centres one of the main problems facing Nakuru Town is unemployment. It may be worth observing that more than 67% of the unemployed voters in Nakuru are below the age of 30, and that, as noted earlier, about 84% of all the unemployed voters may be women, (Table 5). It is also interesting to note that only a handful of male respondents were not employed in one way or the other, and they appear to be of below 31 years of age. The case of unemployed women should not, however, be overstretched. A large proportion of them are married and are therefore occupied in their houses as housewives or in petty trades. All the same they too are largely dependants on the employed males, thus leading to a reduction in incomes of the entire society. For this reason, unemployment still remains the most intractable problem that the politicians in Nakuru and elsewhere have to battle with, in addition to striving to provide social services which are still far from adequate especially in view of the fact that such services also cater for the impoverished rural areas surrounding the Municipality.

The town has a small wealthy business class of Africans who, after taking business premises from their former Asian and European owners, started their own commercial and trading activities alongside the remaining few Asian traders. Having been the centre of European settler farming in the Rift Valley, the town experienced the setting up of a number of foreign commercial and industrial operations many of which were owned by British Multinational Corporations. Perhaps the most important of these have been the branches of the leading banks in the country. These have been most instrumental in the continuation of profit oriented private production in the town and in the surrounding areas. They have contributed immensely to the growth of the African businessmen and commercial farmers whose tremendous economic expansion has facilitated their rise to great heights of political power as manifested by the "Big 36" already referred to above. In fact it is very doubtful whether without these banks and other related financial institutions

like the AFC, the SFT and the Land Bank, the kind of electoral politics that has characterized Nakuru would really be possible.

It is with this background in mind that some meaningful analysis of electorate's behaviour and attitude towards elections in Nakuru Town can be undertaken.

Paradoxical Evaluation of the MP by the Electorate

One of the problems that urban MPs have had to face in Kenya is the generation of an adequate number of development projects that would popularize them to the voters. Taking Nakuru Town Constituency, for instance, it becomes clear that most of the projects in the town have been undertaken either by the central government or by the local authority - the Nakuru Municipal Council. Some of these projects may have been initiated by the MP - Mark Mwithaga or William Komen (1975 - 1979), but the electorate is unable to associate the MPs with such projects. This was perhaps the reason why only 7.3% and 18.8% of the electorate in 1979 and 1983 respectively thought that the sitting MP had done most for the area's development (Table 6). In 1979 the biggest section (56.4%) of the electorate thought that some other politician, and not William Komen the sitting MP, had done most for the area's development. A large portion of the section mentioned Mwithaga as the person that had done most in development and thus gave the impression that they rated him highly in developmental terms.

All the same one is struck by the high percentage of respondents who did not know who had done most for the development of Nakuru Town. As Table 6 shows this portion represented about 34.8% in 1979 and 54.1% in 1983. Many times this kind of response represents indifference rather than lack of knowledge with respect to the issue at hand. However, when a great percentage of the respondents giving a "don't know" response is made of people who are simultaneously satisfied with the sitting MP as was the case in 1983 (89% of "Don't Know"), one feels there exists a kind of paradoxical thinking in the minds of the electorate and wonders

how it can be explained. In this particular case Mwithaga's role in 1975 in the Parliamentary Committee Probing into the murder of the late J.M. Kariuki, the former MP for Nyandarua North who was also a northerner in Kikuyu sectional strife, may have greatly endeared him to the voters of different backgrounds. He was identified as a champion of "truth" regarding the assassination of a person who had a fairly wide national following and who had been associated with people's true interests. In addition, the 1975 suffering that befell Mwithaga at the instigation of the "Big 36" as a result of his role in the J.M. Kariuki's Committee, and his persistent refusal to be cowed by the southerners' threats, confirmed him a political martyr. In the 1980's however, that kind of martyrdom had become a thing of the past, especially so in view of the fact that most of the members of the "Big 36" had fallen into disfavour politically after Kenyatta's death in 1978. As such, the voters thought Mwithaga's record was faultless as indicated in 1983 by a very high level of satisfaction with him as an MP, (Table 7). But the tangible developmental fruits of his stay in parliament were not easily identifiable. Under the new circumstances it was not difficult to sway the electorate into giving most of the votes to the contestants who might appear to promise improved living and economic conditions for the individual and the entire electorate in general.

One cannot therefore be surprised that Kinemia and Nyabinda could score more votes than Mwithaga for the first time since 1966. Both of them attacked Mwithaga for inertia in terms of tangible projects which could improve the social and economic well-being of the electorate in Nakuru Town. In particular, Kinemia pointed at the massive unemployment in the town and the need for a new leadership to deal with it.⁽²¹⁾ The promise to address themselves more to the problems of the town, as opposed to Mwithaga's approach of seeing people's problems in a diffuse national form, was very important in scoring the many votes both Kinemia and Nyabinda had over Mwithaga.

Interview with Anos Kabiru Kinemia and Richard Juma Nyabinda in Nakuru September, 1983. In an interview with Mark Waruiru Mwithaga in the same period, he was found to be lacking in any specific development programme he had promoted or was planning to promote for the constituency. A tragic situation for a politician with so many years of experience.

When this conclusion is looked at alongside the variable "voters' view of the factor determining the way people vote", one notes that in 1979 30.8% of the electorate considered education to be an important factor, (Table 8). But another 30.8% did not know what the determinant would be, while 17.4% believed wealth would be important. In all the three categories, the largest group of voters were dissatisfied with the sitting MP, William Komen, thus suggesting they would not vote for him.

The electorate's view, however, changed over the next five years and by 1983 some 68.6% of them considered that voting would now be determined by the candidate's new ideas (Table 9). This group included the 56.9% who were satisfied with Mwithaga, but nevertheless would accept a person of new ideas. In fact, 28 out of 38 respondents satisfied with Mwithaga as Nakuru Town MP indicated that the most important factor determining how people voted in this constituency was "New Ideas". This was the position of respondents in all age groups (Table 10), and in virtually all occupations especially the unemployed and lowly paid workers (Table 11). This factor more than anything else, may be the most crucial in explaining why Mwithaga lost the election to Kimemia who posed as a man of ideas. In fact it may also partly explain why even the younger Nyabinda scored more votes than Mwithaga in 1983. In other words, Mwithaga was bound to lose the seat to any of these two challengers who portrayed him as a bankrupt leader as far as the ideas for the development of the town were concerned.

The right of "recall"

One should on the other hand note the substantial electorate preference for change of their parliamentary representative every time an election took place. Although this preference by 70.3% of the respondents may have been aimed at Komen in 1979, (Table 12) practically it also turned out to be consistent with the removal of Mwithaga himself in 1983. Indeed the electorate in 1983 were very cautious in responding to this variable. Thus, among the 77.3% of the respondents who were satisfied with Mwithaga as their MP, only 30.2% preferred returning the same person to parliament at every election, (Table 13). The remaining 47.1%

was made up of 34% who took a cautious stance and answered that it would all depend on who the incumbent was, and only 7.5% who outrightly preferred changing the MP everytime there was an election. On the overall, only 35.9% of the respondents favoured returning the same person as their parliamentary representative every time.

Taken together, Tables 12 and 13, seem to suggest that the voters are out to assert their right of ~~repealing~~ or even removing any person that holds a position of power on account of their votes. As we have seen earlier, the voters resisted pressure and even force aimed at forcing an MP on them through their vote. Thus they rejected Kinemia from 1974 and only elected him in 1983 when he stood independently, given the dissolution of Gema and the removal of the "Big 36" from political power. His persistence was finally rewarded, but he will be retained in the next elections only if he introduces new viable ideas on how the problems of unemployment, poverty and diminishing incomes can be solved in Nakuru Town. By no means will this be an easy task for Kinemia, though he seems to be sensitive to the urgent need to solve the problem of unemployment and organize self-help projects in the constituency. (22)

(22) Interview with Kinemia, September 1983.

The electorate, KANU and the Government

At this juncture one may wish to know the attitude of the electorate in relation to KANU, the Government, the role of voting in a democracy, and the effectiveness of the present electoral system. In countries where party politics is active, there tends to be a strong association between the people's attitude towards their MP or any other political representative and their attitude towards the party. In Nakuru Town there is practically no association between the two attitudes of the electorate. Thus, a gamma test of association between the voters' satisfaction with their MP and with KANU was found to be (positive). 04 for 1979 and (negative) -.03 for 1983. This means that the voters see the representatives and KANU in very different terms.

This is strange in view of the fact that the representatives are KANU members, they are cleared for elections by KANU, and they form the KANU Government in the National Assembly. If the electorate who are very satisfied with KANU are simultaneously dissatisfied with the MP as was the case in Nakuru Town in 1979, (Table, 14) they seem to be saying that they elected him in the absence of an alternative or as the least evil of the available alternatives. It would mean KANU was not sensitive to people's feelings. This would be true of Komen whom, as we have seen earlier was elected to parliament after the "Big 36" forced the nullification of Mwithaga's election in 1974, and after he was imprisoned through the same pressure when it became clear that he would win the by-election in August 1975. He won the by-election but he was already in jail. It was in the next by-election that Komen was elected, as we have seen, to warm the seat for Mwithaga.

It should be noted that the virtual absence of association between voters' satisfaction with the MP and with KANU in 1979 may also derive from the fact that Mwithaga was Nakuru KANU Branch secretary and as such the party could be highly rated while his opponent, the incumbent, was lowly rated.

If what has been said so far is true, the gamma association for the same variables in 1983 should be positive, and highly so, for that matter. As Table 15 shows, however, this did not follow. And to make it worse it once again gave a virtual absence of association at gamma -.03. For political leaders this is a worrying situation as it means that the attitudinal rating of the party in the minds of the electorate had fallen in

the five year period between 1979 and 1983. Thus, the majority of the respondents were satisfied with Mwithaga but they were not very satisfied with KANU, (Table 15). Only 3 out of 42 respondents satisfied with Mwithaga were very satisfied with the party, while 9 chose the more indifferent reply of "don't know".

Given this shift, one wonders whether the treatment of the two survey periods in terms of totals would give a different picture. Such totals are summarized in Table 16 which emphasizes the shift in the attitude of the electorate towards the party. The difference in the percentages for the two years is so great that it gives us a statistical significance of less than .001, thus confirming the authenticity of the finding given that only one case out of 1000 cases would have occurred by chance. As such, in 1983 Kanu was less rated by the Nakuru voters than it had been rated in 1979. The question now is how to explain the shift.

It will be recalled that more or less the same people occupied the party's leadership in 1983 as in 1979. Our survey had not anticipated the shift and an explanation based on survey response would therefore be difficult. All the same there appears to be something basic which the electorate did not like about the party's policies, activities, or leadership behaviour and attitude in the period between 1979 and 1983. However, the electorate were not dissatisfied with the party as such, for out of 57 respondents, only one indicated dissatisfaction with the party. This notwithstanding, one also notes the 23% of respondents in 1983 who intimated that they "did not know" whether they were satisfied with the party or not. May be this section of the electorate opted for this response as a polite way of saying they were not really satisfied with the party and therefore suggesting the need for party leadership to review some of their policies and thus avoid self-deception and misplaced complacency. Once again the need for the leadership in a democratic society to pay constant attention to the people's needs and demands cannot be overemphasized.

The wide difference in electorate's attitudinal rating of the party in 1979 and 1983 is maintained in relation to the performance of KANU and Government in the country (Tables 17 and 18). Once again, in 1983 no respondent disagrees with the statement that Kanu and Government has done a lot for the country, (Table 18). But in this year's survey, as in 1979, only a small proportion of

respondents gives a "Don't know" reply to the statement. In 1983, the difference in the "Don't know" replies in relation to KANU (23%, Table 15) and to KANU and Government performance (4%, Table 18) seems to suggest that a good portion of the voters tend to differentiate between the party and the Government performance for the country. Alternatively, the performance of the Government in the eyes of the voters has overshadowed the party such that one does not see the party in operation. Whatever conclusion one reaches, it is clear that while the electorate is not dissatisfied with KANU and Government performance, it is not very satisfied in this respect. The same conclusion is to be met in the case of Kangema and it would not be surprising if it holds for the whole country as well.

Voting and influencing the Government

The other thing one may want to know is the confidence the electorate have in the electoral process and the way it is administered. In this paper this is measured in terms of the attitude of the voters towards the secrecy of elections and the effectiveness of voting in influencing the government.

In spite of what we have seen above in relation to KANU and Government, one notes that while in 1979 only 25% of the respondents in Nakuru Town believed voting in the General Elections to be completely secret, the equivalent for 1983 was 62%, (Tables 19 and 20). The skepticism observed for 1979 may be a product of the past experience of harassment of the electorate by the security forces in a manner that may have suggested leakage of the way individuals voted. In 1983 there was repeated assurance of fair play on the part of the administrative and security officials, a thing that may explain improved confidence in the secrecy of voting by all ethnic groups and by all age groups, men and women, (Table 21). It is, however, worthy noting that in 1983 nearly all the respondents who did not believe voting to be secret were men and women below the age of 40, (Table 21). As we shall see later, this is also the trend in Kangema where 50% of the respondents below the age of 40 indicated they did not believe voting in General Elections was secret. In Nakuru Town the same observation holds for the electorate's belief regarding the government being influenced by voting. Thus in 1983 nearly 90% of the respondents in all ages, men and women alike, believed voting influenced the government, while about 10%, all in the 18-40 years age group, believed it did not, (Table 22)

The question one asks, at this point, is why such a high confidence in the electoral process in 1983 and its influence on the government was not matched by a high voters' turn out in the General Elections in Nakuru Town. It should be noted that in Kangema where the confidence in the secrecy of voting was the same as in Nakuru (62%) for 1983, the confidence of influencing the government through voting was only 56% compared to 90% for Naku. Yet it was in Kangema that one of the highest voters' turn out of 74.5% was recorded.

The explanation for this differential seems to be in the fact that Nakuru Town has a very poor tradition in terms of voters' turn out and it seems that voting has been based on personal and other very close relationship with the candidates. As an urban constituency, very close or intimate association with the candidate has been difficult for the majority of the registered voters who in all probability therefore feel ~~disinterested~~ and anomic in relation to voting for any candidate.

The explanation may also be found in the absence of debate relating to the issues that matter to most voters. As we have seen earlier, the main attempts to win the voters have been along ethnic and sectional (northern and southern Kikuyu) lines, which have made little appeal to the majority of the poverty stricken, low income workers and the unemployed in Nakuru. Ethnic and sectional appeals have little actual effect on the majority of the voters whose main interests in an election debate would be socio-economic. Debate on the latter has been at a ~~minimal~~ in Nakuru Town and hence the perpetual apathy. In Kangema, on the other hand this type of debate has been on since 1974 with the result that the voter turn out has been consistently high, ranging from 71.6% in 1974 to 79.1% in 1979, with a 74.5% for 1983. In Kangema therefore one finds that a great number of people are involved in the debate about the political leadership in relation to the socio-economic problems facing the constituency. Their level of participation in the pre-voting days is already high and no wonder they turn out in great numbers to fulfill the easiest form of political participation by casting their votes.²³

23. Rush and Althoff, op. cit., p. 79.

As we shall come back to this issue in our next paper, let us conclude this part by observing the most salient features of electoral politics and process in Nakuru Town Constituency and Nakuru District as a whole.

Conclusion

Electoral politics in Nakuru has been greatly affected by the historical developments whereby the colonizing European settlers alienated land in the district and the Africans mounted an armed struggle that eventually led to independence. After independence different ethnic and sectional interests have struggled to replace the Europeans in land ownership and their struggle has found expression in the election battles. The powerful Gema-Ngwataniro axis emerged and tried to control the entire life of the district by force. Although this group was resisted successfully on the vote, (small as this vote was anyway), it turned to yet more force that increasingly turned the struggle into a kind of intra-elite or intra-class struggle championed by the leadership of different ethnic (especially Kikuyu and Kalenjin) and sectional (especially northern and southern Kikuyu) groups. But, as we have seen, these struggles did not impress the majority of the Nakuru Town voters who did not differentiate themselves ethnically in terms of any of the variables we have examined above.

Yet the people were interested in elections as indicated by the great number of them that registered as voters since 1974. Their hopes, however, have been frustrated by the candidates who have not been able to transcend the ethnic/sectional competition, and who therefore have failed to address themselves to the needs and demands of the majority of the constituents. The question one may ask at this juncture is how the situation can be rectified in order to make elections truly democratic on exercise, i.e. one whereby the majority interests take priority over other interests. The answer to this question is attempted in the final part of our next paper. For now, let us see how the situation has been like in Kangema constituency of Murang'a District.

Table I: Population of Main Ethnic Groups in Nakuru District by year 1962 - 1983.

Ethnic Group	Year and Population			
	1962	1969	1979	1983 (Estimates)
Kikuyu	141,644	169,363	317,855	357,900
Kalenjin	29,390	32,770	81,651	98,900
Kisii	2,989	3,861	12,319	14,000
Luhya	21,177	24,154	36,142	39,600
Luo	17,189	20,606	36,217	40,600
Masai	4,242	3,892	4,540	4,600
Ndorobo	7,612	10,636	3,979	3,907
Turkana	1,594	2,989	6,002	6,094
Asian	8,069	4,829	1,775	1,475
Europeans	5,839	2,102	1,438	1,200

NB: The term Kalenjin is, for our purposes, taken to include Nandi, Kipsigis, Elgeyo, Marakwet, Pokot, Saboot and Turgen.

Source: Republic of Kenya, Kenya Population Census, 1962, 1969 and 1979 (Ministry of Economic Planning, Nairobi).

Table 2: Historical Electoral Chart for Nakuru Town Constituency, Nakuru District, 1961 - 1983.

Year	Distribution of Votes	Voters Turn Out	Winning (W) Votes as percentage of Reg. Voters	Winning (W) Votes as percentage of Votes Cast
1961	W. Wabuge (Kadu) 2124			
	E.P. Geteta (KanU) 2097			
	Z. Adholla (KanU) 1521			
	G.L. Bellhouse (Ind.) 1129			
	A.A. Ochwada (KanU) 311			
	Total Votes cast 7182 Registered Voters			29%
1963	R. Achieng' Oneko (KANU) 7536			
	W. Wabuge (Kadu) 4905			
	R.A. Kuboka (APP) 20			
	Spoilt 36			
	Total Votes cast 12,497 Registered Voters 14,238	88%	53%	60%
1966	Mark W.Mwithaga (KanU) 3822			
	Achieng' Oneko (KPU) 2325			
	Total Votes cast 6,147 Registered Voters			62%
1969	Mark W.Mwithaga 6,391			
	J.I. Sibi-Okumu 6,164			
	J. Mwangi (Kiko) 2,309			
	Mohamed Adam 242			
	Wallace Wamagata 113			
	Geoffrey Kamau 15			
	Javan Charanga 13			
	Total Votes cast 15,247 Registered Voters			42%

1974	Mark W. Mwithaga	5,589			
	Amos K. Kimemia	5,280			
	C. Kiprotich	4,581			
	Wangari Njuguna (Mrs)	345			
	Peter N. Kamau	332			
	Shem K. Sadalla	147			
	Paul K. Waithaka	52			
	Wesley K. Chesire	40			
	Total Votes cast	16,366	20.6%	7.1%	34%
	Registered Voters	79,217			
1979	Mark W. Mwithaga	8,224			
	A.K. Kimemia	4,013			
	J. Opande	3,872			
	W.K. Kamau	2,633			
	J. Nyabinda	1,170			
	P. Njoka	759			
	E.K. Ndume	751			
	P.K. Waithaka	303			
	P. Rugu	97			
	Total Votes cast	21,822	45.19%	17%	32%
Registered Voters	48,285				
1983	A.K. Kimemia	10,482			
	Mark Mwithaga	7,615			
	J. Nyabinda	7,640			
	P. Babu Wood	827			
	Total Votes cast	28,252	37.79%	13.3%	37.1%
Registered Voters	79,217				

Source: Supervisor of Elections, Files, 1974-1983
 Baraza, Newspaper, 1961
 Daily Nation, Newspaper 1963-1983
 The Standard, Newspaper 1961-1983
 Weekly Review, 1975-1983
 Electoral Survey, Nakuru Town, 1979 and 1983.

Table 3: Voters' Occupation and Sex, in Percentages, 1979
(n = 74)

Occupation	Male %	Female %	Total %
Unemployed	7	27	34
Business/Hotel/Shopkeeper Attendant	15	6	21
Farmer/Peasant	-	1	1
Casual Worker, Messenger/Servant	15	4	19
Office Clerk/Typist	8	1	9
Busaa/Changaa, Brewer/Hawker	0	0	0
Teacher	3	7	10
Driver/Conductor, Matatu/Bus/Lorry	1	-	1
Student	3	-	3
Engineer/Mechanic	1	-	1
Accountant	1	-	1
Government Employee	0	-	0
Total	54	46	100

Source: Electoral Survey, Nakuru Town 1979.

Table 4: Voters' Occupation and Sex, in Percentages, 1983
(n = 59)

Occupation	Male %	Female %	Total %
Unemployed	3	29	32
Business/Hotel/Shopkeeper/Attendant	5	15	20
Farmer/Peasant	2	0	2
Casual Worker/Messenger/Servant	14	3	17
Office/Clerk/Typist	5	2	7
Busaa/Changaa Brewer/Hawker	0	0	0
Teacher	2	3	5
Driver/Conductor/Matatu/Bus/Lorry	0	0	0
Student	2	2	4
Engineer/Mechanic	5	0	5
Government Employee	5	3	8
Total	43	57	100

Source: Electoral Survey, Nakuru Town, 1983.

Table 5: Age and Sex of the Unemployed Voters, 1979 and 1983.

Years	Year and Sex of the Unemployed						
	1979		1983		T o t a l		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male & Female
18 - 25	2	7	1	7	3	14	17
26 - 30	2	8	1	1	3	9	12
31 - 35	0	2	0	2	0	4	4
36 - 40	0	1	0	4	0	5	5
41 - 45	1	1	0	1	1	2	3
46 - 50	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
51 - 55	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
56 - 60	0	0	0	1	0	1	1
61	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
All ages	5	20	2	16	7	36	43

Source: Electoral Survey, Nakuru Town, 1979 and 1983.

Table 6: Voters' Views on Who has done most for the Area's Development 61 and over

Person named for most contribution to Area's Development	1979 (n = 69)	1983 (n = 48)
	%	%
Sitting MP	7.3	18.8
Other Politicians	56.4	16.7
Local Person	1.5	10.4
Don't know	34.8	54.1
Total	100	100

Source: Electoral Survey, Nakuru Town, 1979 and 1983.

Table 7: Voters' Attitude Towards the Sitting MP, 1979 and 1983

Satisfaction with Sitting MP	1979 (n = 69)	1983 (n = 48)
	%	%
Satisfied	21.7	81.3
Dissatisfied	50.7	18.7
Don't know	27.6	0
Total	100	100

Source: Electoral Survey, Nakuru Town, 1979 and 1983.

Table 8: Association of Voters' Satisfaction with Sitting MP and Factor Determining Voting, (1979)

(n = 52)

Factor Determining Voting	Satisfaction with Sitting MP		
	Satisfied %	Dissatisfied %	Total %
Traditional Leadership	1.9	7.7	9.6
Education	7.7	23.1	30.8
Wealth	3.8	13.6	17.4
Religion	3.8	3.8	7.6
New Ideas	0.0	3.8	3.8
Don't know	15.4	15.4	30.8
Total	32.6	67.4	100

Source: Electoral Survey, Nakuru Town, 1979.

Table 9: Association of Voters' Satisfaction with Sitting MP and their View of the Factors Determining Voting, (1983)

(n = 51)

Factor Determining Voting	Satisfaction with Sitting MP		
	Satisfied %	Dissatisfied %	Total %
Traditional Leadership	9.8	2.0	11.8
Education	3.9	0.0	3.9
Wealth	5.8	3.9	9.7
Religion	0.0	2.0	2.0
New Ideas	56.9	11.7	68.6
Others/Don't know	2.0	2.0	4.0
Total	78.4	21.6	100

Source: Electoral Survey, Nakuru Town, 1983.

Table 10: Voters Satisfied with Sitting MP, by Age in Years and by View of factors Influencing Voting, 1983

Factors Influencing Voting	Age in Years					All Ages
	18 - 30	31 - 40	41 - 50	51 - 60	61 & Over	
Traditional Leadership	1	3	0	1	0	5
Education	0	1	1	0	0	2
Wealth	1	2	0	0	0	3
Religion	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Ideas	12	9	5	1	1	28
Total	14	15	6	2	1	38

Source: Electoral Survey, Nakuru Town, 1983.

Table 11: Occupation and Voters' View of Factors Influencing Voting

Occupation	Factor Influencing Voting				
	Traditional Leadership	Education	Wealth	Religion	New Ideas
5 Unemployed	2	0	0	0	16
2/4 Business/Shop/Hotel keeper	1	1	0	0	9
1 Farmer					
11 Casual worker, Messenger, Servant	1	1	0	1	5
9 Office Clerk/Typist	0	0	0	0	3
6 Teacher	1	0	1	0	1
10 Student	0	0	0	0	2
13 Engineer	1	0	2	0	0
12 Govt. Employee	0	0	2	0	2
Total	6	2	5	1	38

Source: Electoral Survey, Nakuru Town, 1983.

Table 12: Voters' Attitude Towards Sitting MP and Preference for Retaining or Changing MPs at each Election, (1979)
(n = 55)

Preference for Retaining or Changing MPs Frequently	Satisfaction with Sitting MP		
	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Total
	%	%	%
Retain Same MPs	16.4	9.1	25.5
Change MPs	14.5	56.3	70.8
Don't know	3.7	0	3.7
Total	34.6	65.4	100

Source: Electoral Survey, Nakuru Town, 1979.

Table 13: Voters' Attitude Towards Sitting MP and Preference for Retaining or Changing MPs at Each Election, (1983)
(n = 57)

Preference for Retaining or Changing MPs Frequently	Satisfaction with Sitting MP		
	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Total
	%	%	%
Retain Same MPs	30.2	5.7	35.9
Change MPs	7.5	11.3	18.8
Depends on MP	34.0	5.7	39.7
Don't know	5.6	0.0	5.6
Total	77.3	22.7	100

Source: Electoral Survey, Nakuru Town, 1983.

Table 14: Association of Voters' Satisfaction with the Sitting MP and with KANU (1979)

Satisfaction with KANU	Satisfaction with Sitting MP			
	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Refused Ans.	Total
Very Satisfied	8	23	11	42 (57%)
Satisfied	9	10	7	26 (35%)
Dissatisfied	1	2	2	5 (7%)
Refused Answer	0	0	0	0
Don't know	0	1	0	1 (1%)
Total	18	36	20	74 (100%)

Gamma = .04 (last row excluded because cannot be ranked)

Source: Electoral Survey, Nakuru Town, 1979.

Table 15: Association of Voters' Satisfaction with the Sitting MP and with KANU, (1983)

Satisfaction with KANU	Satisfaction with Sitting MP			
	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Refused Ans.	Total
Very Satisfied	3	3	0	6 (11%)
Satisfied	30	5	1	36(63%)
Dissatisfied	0	1	0	1(1.5%)
Refused Ans.	0	1	0	1(1.5%)
Don't know	9	2	2	13(23%)
Total	42	12	3	57(100%)

Gamma = -.03 (last row excluded because cannot be ranked).

Source: Electoral Survey, Nakuru Town, 1983.

Table 16: Voters' Attitude Towards the Party, 1979 and 1983

Satisfaction with KANU	Year	
	1979 (n = 74)	1983 (n = 57)
Very Satisfied	57.0	11.0
Satisfied	35.0	63.0
Dissatisfied	7.0	1.5
Refused Answer	0.0	1.5
Don't know	1.0	23.0
Total	100	100

Source: Electoral Survey, Nakuru Town, 1979 and 1983.

Table 17: Voters' Age and Sex, by Attitude Towards Performance of KANU and Government, 1979

Age in Years	KANU & Government done alot for Country									
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Don't know		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female		
18-30	12	12	5	11	1	0	0	2	43	
31-40	6	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	12	
41-50	7	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	13	
51-60	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	
61+	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	
All Ages	28 (39%)	19 (26%)	10 (14%)	12 (16%)	1 (1%)	0	0	2 (3%)	72 (100%)	

Source: Electoral Survey, Nakuru Town, 1979.

Table 18: Voters' Age and Sex, by Attitude Towards Performance of KANU and Government, 1983

Age in Years	KANU & Government done alot for Country									
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Don't know		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female		
18-30	0	2	14	11	0	0	1	0	28	
31-40	0	1	5	9	0	0	1	0	16	
41-50	0	0	2	6	0	0	0	0	8	
51-60	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	
61+	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	
All Ages	0	3	24	27	0	0	2	0	56	

Source: Electoral Survey, Nakuru Town, 1983.

Table 19: Voters' Ethnic Group and Belief in Secrecy of Voting, (1979)

Voters' Ethnic Group	Belief in Secrecy of Voting			Total
	Yes	No	Don't know	
Kikuyu	14	21	9	44
Luhya	2	8	3	13
Luo	2	3	6	11
Kalenjin	-	1	1	2
Kisii	-	-	1	1
Meru/Kamba	-	1	-	1
Asian	-	-	-	0
Total	18 (25%)	34 (47%)	20 (28%)	72(100%)

Source: Electoral Survey, Nakuru Town, 1979.

Table 20: Voters' Ethnic Group and Belief in Secrecy of Voting, (1983)

Voter's Ethnic Group	Belief in Secrecy of Voting			Total
	Yes	No	Don't know	
Kikuyu	17	12	3	32
Luhya	8	3	-	11
Luo	4	4	-	8
Kalenjin	3	-	-	3
Kisii	2	-	-	2
Meru/Kamba	1	-	-	1
Asian	1	-	-	1
Total	36 (62%)	19(33%)	3 (5%)	58(100%)

Source: Electoral Survey, Nakuru Town, 1983.

Table 21: Voters' Age, Sex and Belief in Secrecy of Voting
(n = 55)

Age in Years	Belief in Secrecy of Voting				
	Yes		No		Total
	Male %	Female %	Male %	Female %	%
18 - 30	18.2	14.6	7.3	9.1	49.2
31 - 40	3.6	9.1	7.3	9.1	29.1
41 - 50	3.6	10.9	0.0	0.0	14.5
51 - 60	3.6	0.0	0.0	1.8	5.4
61 & over	0.0	1.8	0.0	0.0	1.8
All Ages	29.0	36.4	14.6	20.0	100

Source: Electoral Survey, Nakuru Town, 1983

Table 22: Voters' Attitude Towards Voting and Its Influence on Govern-
ment, 1983.

(n = 48)

Age in Years	Believe Voting Influences Government				
	Yes		No		Total
	Male %	Female %	Male %	Female %	%
18 - 30	25.0	20.8	2.1	4.2	47.9
31 - 40	8.2	12.5	4.2	0.0	29.1
41 - 50	4.2	10.4	0.0	0.0	14.6
51 - 60	4.2	2.1	0.0	0.0	6.3
61 & over	0.0	2.1	0.0	0.0	2.1
All Ages	41.6	47.9	6.3	4.2	100

Source: Electoral Survey, Nakuru Town, 1983.