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Ethnicity In The Electoral Process: The 1992 General Elections In Kenya

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Abstract

The primary concern of this essay is to explain the nature of the 'transaction' between electoral politics and tribalism, especially with reference to the multi-party elections of 1992. It argues that the politics of the 1992 general elections show how ethnicity continues to be a major force influencing the behaviour of politicians and voters alike. What is more, where power and wealth were at stake, ethnic relations became conflictual. The elections also manifested how the elites can mobilise ethnic passions to defend and or promote what is otherwise their narrow sectional interests. The masses followed their leaders because of the lingering belief that only 'one of your own' can best serve communal interest if placed in a position of power. But it was also clear that ethnic ideology has its limitations. Intra-ethnic divisions were manifest where narrow sectional interests came into play. The emergence of splinter parties led by members of the same ethnic group was the inevitable consequence of such contradictions.

Introduction

Many Kenyans believe that tribalism is a canker which is deeply lodged in the Kenyan body politic. Yet the same people are usually reluctant to make it a subject of discussion across ethnic boundaries because of its emotive force: it is always other people's problem and not ours. As a writer once put it, we feel more at ease discussing other people's tribalism and not our own. And that is the problem in Kenya today.

The primary concern of this essay is to explain the nature of the 'transaction' between electoral politics and tribalism, especially with reference to the multi-party elections of 1992. It carries forward a discussion already started by the writer in an earlier study which addressed the problem of ethnic politics in Kenya

generally (Oyugi 1993). Considering that ethnicity (tribalism) was a major influence on voters behaviour during the 1992 elections, there is need to assess its effects. Furthermore it is intended to use the experience of the 1992 elections to demonstrate the saliency of ethnicity in inter-elite political competition.

Ethnicity (or tribalism) involves a common consciousness of being one in relation to the other groups (Nnoli, 1989 : 10). The ideology of tribalism defines "the loyalties and identification of people engaged in conflict" (Gulliver 1969). It implies, Gulliver adds, divisiveness and unscrupulous partisanship. What is more, I should add, it connotes group antipathy against others. Ethnicity manifests hatred, suspicion, envy and mistrust. Elsewhere I have contended:

It is not a neutral concept merely depicting and signifying the act of interactive relations that is expected to take place in a multi-ethnic society. To speak of ethnicity is to speak of inter-ethnic interactive situations characterised by suspicion, competition, rivalry and often conflict as well (Oyugi, 1993).

It is, as one writer puts it, a blame-pinning devise, according to which it is other people's tribalism that is responsible for one's own difficulties, perplexities and failures (Parkin, 1968). And it is generally agreed that tribalism is an ideological weapon often used in economic competition and political conflict (Nnoli 1978, 1989, Gulliver 1969, Leys 1975, Horowitz 1985, Bates 1974, etc.).

A detailed discussion of the origin of the problem of tribalism in Kenya is unnecessary here since it is well covered elsewhere (e.g. Oyugi 1993, Leys 1975, Horowitz 1985, Dirk Berg-Schlosser 1992). A brief sketch of it is however, in order. The origin of the problem in Kenya (and Africa in general) is colonialism. It is the institution of colonialism that created a common centre that all the existing ethnic groups in given colonial states are at once required to relate to. The emerging relations soon became relations of competition over access to goods and services associated with modernity. Ethnic consciousness was further accentuated as the tempo of modernization accompanied by urbanization gave rise to free movement and settlement of peoples in areas other than their own. The notion of 'a people's own area' which resulted from the formal politico-administrative regimentation of the colonised people into ethnic administrative enclaves was later to lead to the heightening of ethnic self-identity or sense of belonging. It also in the process, created a sense of exclusiveness which sooner or later manifested itself in the rejection of 'outsiders'. In the meantime, shared involvement in the colonial economy increased, thereby preparing the ground for the eventual conflict based on inter-tribal competition. Leys's much-quoted statement is apposite:

The foundation of modern tribalism were laid when the various tribal

modes and relations of production began to be displaced by capitalist ones, giving rise to new forms of insecurity, and obliging people to compete with each other on a national plane for work, land and ultimately for education and other services seen as necessary for security (Leys 1975 : 199).

A combination of colonial attitudes and strategies and the response to them by the various ethnic groups were later to provide the setting for future competition and conflict. The colonial authorities regarded the attitudes of some groups as anti-‘modernization’ and marginalized them. Accordingly, the ‘development’ strategies devised tended inevitably to benefit some groups at the expense of others. ‘Open’ areas with more missionary stations received early and relatively better education as the ‘closed’ areas (inhabited mainly by nomads) lagged behind. It has been observed that in the process, the Kikuyu, the Luo, the Luhya and a few other agricultural communities became early beneficiaries of especially modern education. Education was later to prove crucial as a criterion of access to gainful employment and other economic activities. But it has also been observed that in the process of colonial ‘development’ some groups adapted much earlier than the others. The Kikuyu are said to have been the first to adapt their social structure and culture to the capitalist mode of production (Leys, 1975 : 200). This enabled them to be more mobile and to adapt to different local situations outside Kikuyuland in search of economic opportunities, especially land and business. Many years later, their aggressive economic presence would become a source of resentment by their ‘hosts’.

The Luo and the Luhya also became mobile but for a different reason. Unlike the Kikuyu, the primary concern of these groups was the search for wage employment in urban centres and on European farms. It is in this area (of wage employment) that their rivalry and competition against the Kikuyu was later to be experienced. Indeed, it can be argued that up to the time of independence, ethnic conflict at the national plane was confined to the struggle among the three groups in search of employment and access to other basic needs and services, especially in the urban centres. But the situation changed soon after independence. The struggle for the control of the new state brought with it new competitors as well as new areas of potential conflict. Over the years, this conflict has tended to assume ethnic characteristics and intruded in the political sphere.

Background to the Elections

Kenya has had only limited experience with competitive multi-party elections; and the experience is confined to the first three years of independence. At independence, a multi-party contest involved the Kenya African National Union (KANU) and Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU) — the two parties formed in 1960 in anticipation of independence. Up to that year, countrywide political organiza-

tions had been proscribed following the declaration of a state of emergency in October 1952 and the banning of the Kenya African Union (KAU) (intended to contain the Mau Mau revolt). Between 1955 and early 1960 only district based political parties or associations were allowed in non-Mau-Mau areas. And in districts where they were formed, they became the organizational outlets through which the nationalist agitation for independence found expression. In addition, purely ethnic based political associations such as the Kalenjin Political Alliance, the Masaai United Front, were formed during this period. Later it was these associations — both ethnic and district based, that were required to disband in preference for one united national party. KANU was formed with that aspiration in mind. But that was never to be. The stakes were just too high. Ethnic and interest group calculations had led the so-called ‘minority’ tribes to withhold their support for KANU. The settlers, fearful about the security of ‘their’ land if such a united party came under Kikuyu-Luo leadership, exhorted the ‘minority’ tribes to have nothing to do with it.¹ Land ownership became a major political and constitutional issue with the ‘minority’ tribes made to believe that they could only secure their rights under *majimbo* (regional) type of constitution and with a party of their own. Unity in the nationalist movement in the run-up to independence elections was not possible in those circumstances. Therefore, KADU was formed as a counterpoise to KANU.

In the ‘mid-term’ elections held in March 1961 the nature of ethnic support for the two parties became evident. KANU received support from the Kikuyu, Luo, Meru, Embu, Kamba and Kisii. KADU on the other hand received support almost exclusively from the pastoral tribes: the Kalenjin, Masaai, Giriama and a few other minor tribes (Bennett and Rosberg 1961; Bennett 1963). The Luhya, one of the three major ethnic groups (after Kikuyu and Luo) were divided between KANU and KADU. This pattern of support would hold (except for the Kamba) during the 1963 elections leading to independence.

Feeling marginalised in KANU right from KANU’s formation in 1960, the Kamba leader Paul Ngei succeeded in mobilizing his fellow Kamba elites into forming yet another party in 1962 — the African Peoples Party. Their intention was obviously to create an organizational framework within which to bargain for inclusion in the government after the 1963 independence elections. The trick worked, and Ngei and other Kamba elites were appointed to ministerial posts after APP’s eight MPs (out of ten Kamba MPs) had rejoined KANU. Soon after, APP died a natural death. The seeds of ethnic calculations in electoral politics had thus been sown.

The polarisation into KANU and KADU followers did not last long, for in October 1964 KADU was ‘voluntarily’ disbanded and Kenya emerged as a *de facto* one party state.² But the unity was not to last long; for in 1966 an open split in KANU between the ‘moderates’ and the ‘radicals’ over the control of the party and

government, led to the removal of the radicals from the party and government and the formation of Kenya Peoples Union (KPU) by Oginga Odinga. The by-elections held in 27 constituencies in that year revealed two influences in the electoral process. Firstly, the regime was determined to portray the opposition as a Luo tribal formation by ensuring its defeat in non-Luo constituencies through electoral malpractices.³ Secondly finding themselves on the defensive, the Luo became victims of ethnic ideology by perceiving the contest as one between them and their adversaries in KANU: they returned all the KPU candidates in Luoland to office.

Three years of sustained marginalisation and isolation of the Luo led to increased tension between KPU and the KANU regime, which later exploded into violence during Kenyatta's visit to Kisumu in December 1969. Following the incident, KPU leaders were arrested and detained and the party banned. Kenya once again became a *de facto* one party state. It was to remain so until 1982 when the *de facto* situation was given legal basis through a constitutional amendment. Therefore, between 1969-1991, the five general elections held during the period (1969, 1974, 1979, 1983, 1988) were 'KANU-only' elections.

The threat posed earlier by an ethnically based party (KPU) was to lead the KANU regime to resort to a strategy of denial and exclusion. Thereafter, any politician whose loyalty was doubted or who was considered as a potential threat to the regime was at once denied the chance to stand in an election. The ruling party introduced a mechanism through which all aspiring candidates were subjected to a clearance process. And all cleared candidates had to pledge loyalty to the (state) president (who incidentally was also the party president), the government, and the ruling party — KANU — as a condition for nomination.

The strong-arm tactics employed by the regime thus destroyed the prospect for the formation of a viable opposition; and the ruling party encountered no organised opposition throughout the 1969-91 period. In the circumstances no presidential contest was possible. The leader of the sole party was always assured of automatic nomination, and since intra-party challenge for that office was also inconceivable then, the president was always 're-elected' unopposed. The multiparty movement of 1990-92 should be seen against this background.

Up to the late 80s, any serious challenge to the authority of the regime was a sure way of earning a term in detention or frequent harassment by the political police. Fear was by and large institutionalised. Many Kenyans would pick up courage only from the late 80s. The collapse of the Soviet empire had much to do with the new development. The enunciation of *glasnost* and *perestroika* by Gorbachev, and their application in the Soviet Union from 1986, the extension of the same to Soviet Eastern Europe, and the eventual collapse of the Soviet empire at once led to a global attack on centralism and authoritarianism of the left and right. African authoritarian regimes (military or one party) became natural targets of the West.

The USA, the Scandinavian countries, Germany, the World Bank and the IMF especially led the way. But even reluctant world powers like France and Britain were forced to also apply pressure later when the movement gained momentum from within individual African states.

In the case of Kenya, the stimulus given by the changes in the external environment was to be reinforced by a number of domestic events. The most important ones were the introduction of *queue voting* in 1988 which was aggressively opposed by many civic groups — especially the Church. Then came the massive rigging of the (1988) elections where candidates with long queues were declared losers and those with short ones declared winners in the full view of the electorate. The outcry that followed these events was sustained both by the external and domestic mood for change. The critics thus felt increasingly more secure as they challenged the legitimacy of the regime. Much sooner than had been expected, a crack developed in the regime. The first cabinet resignation in more than twenty years occurred over the rigged elections. The resignation of Ken Matiba provided a golden opportunity for the political opposition, some of whom began to see him as a rallying point for their cause.⁴

The much-talked-about Luo-Kikuyu alliance began to show signs of picking up again after 1993; for early in 1990, several meetings were reportedly held between Matiba and the Odingas (Oginga and his son Raila) before Matiba, Charles Rubia (both of whom had then been expelled from KANU for their opposition to the regime) and Raila were detained following the abortive pro-democracy rally on 7 July 1990 which ended in rioting in Nairobi and the surrounding towns in Kikuyuland.

Scared of the manoeuvres by Matiba, Rubia and the Odingas, the regime mobilised MPs to pass a resolution rejecting the idea of allowing multiparty politics contending that such a system would encourage tribalism (*Nation* 29.3.90). A few months later, as Moi himself hit at critics of the one-party system and threatened them with detention (*Weekly Review* 18.5.90), pro-single-party rallies addressed by KANU MPs were conducted in non-Kikuyu and non-Luo areas (*Ibid*).

The detention of Matiba, Rubia and Raila instead of nipping in the bud what had by then assumed the proportion of an opposition movement, helped to intensify the attack on the regime by the civic and political opposition. As the movement gathered momentum the idea of launching an opposition party became real, when Odinga announced the formation of his National Democratic Party (*Daily Nation* 3.1.91) which was immediately denied registration. This response by the state forced some elements in the opposition movement to return to the drawing board. The result was the birth of an opposition alliance (not a party this time) to mobilize the populace for change. Behind the alliance was a group of 'young' professionals and intellectuals in the movement — later to be referred to collectively as the 'young turks'. Prominent actors included: Gitabu Imanyara (lawyer-journalist)

Kituyi (Social anthropologist); Paul Muite (lawyer, then also Chairman of the Law Society of Kenya); Anyang-Nyong'o (political scientist); James Orengo (lawyer); Raila Odinga (Engineer, former political detainee) etc. It is this group that turned to the more experienced and widely known politicians to lead the alliance. The interim leadership went to Oginga Odinga, a Luo (Chairman) Masinde Muliro, a Luhya (Vice-Chairman); Martin Shikuku, a Luhya (Secretary General); George Nthenge, a Kamba (Treasurer). Others were Gachoka, a Kikuyu, and Bamaritz, a Kenyan of Arab descent.

Founded in July 1991, the Forum for the Restoration of Democracy [FORD] had by December of that year emerged as a national movement whose support base cut across major ethnic boundaries — Kikuyu, Luo, Luhya, Kamba, Kisii, Meru, Embu especially. By then it was only the Kalenjin (and kindred tribes) and the Masaai that were still hanging-on to KANU.

With the formation of FORD, the opposition to the regime now assumed an organizational form. Donors were now also in a position to determine whether indeed the quest for change had popular support. Apparently convinced that the need for change had wide popular support, donors (both bilateral and multilateral) became openly involved in the movement for multiparty policies. The following examples are illustrative. Barely a month after the formation of FORD, a visiting IMF official made it clear in Nairobi that the Fund preferred to do business with regimes which practised participatory democracy (*Standard* 15.8.91). The involvement of the USA ambassador, Smith Hempstone, became increasingly open. On several occasions he had to intervene on behalf of arrested opposition politicians (see e.g. *Standard* 26.9.91). And when a number of opposition politicians were arrested in mid-November 1991, fourteen US Congressmen sharply criticised the arrests (*Nation* 20.11.91). By this time even Britain, which is usually cautious, had begun to take a tough stance against the regime. In a BBC interview, Overseas Development Minister, Lynda Chalker, gave warning that Western donor countries would take tough action (at the Paris donors meeting soon to be held) to ensure that President Moi ended one party rule and respected human rights (*Sunday Nation* 24.11.91). Indeed, when the meeting was held, donors decided to withhold financial assistance to Kenya pending political reforms. It is against this background that the relevant organs of KANU met in early December 1991 to scrap Section 2(a) of the Constitution of Kenya, thereby effectively ending a decade of *de jure* one party rule.

But the opposition unity that had influenced the change was not to last. With the country's constitution amended to allow for the restoration of multiparty politics, FORD was registered as a political party. At once personal and ethnic considerations began to influence the decisions and actions in the party. A month or so later, two new parties were launched both with an ethnic agenda. By the time of the 1992 elections up to eleven parties had been formed — none of which could claim to be

national on the basis of the structure of popular support. It is against this background that the 1992 elections were held.

Ethnic Influences On Electoral Politics

According to Lakemann elections in a democracy are justified on the principle that “the rulers whom the people are expected to obey should not only rule in their interests, but also rule according to their wishes; and that the rulers should be accepted by the ruled — this acceptance being no mere acquiescence but conscious choice ...” Thus, it has become increasingly accepted, he continues, that the governed should elect their rulers, and that they should have the power to renew at intervals the authority they give to such rulers (Lakemann, 1994). In the ‘developing’ ethnically plural societies of which Kenya is one, the situation is however different. Elections in such societies are seen as an opportunity to compete for control of the state, precisely because of the discriminative use to which the state is usually put by the group that happens to control it. Larry Diamond observes that in “ethnically divided societies ... elections ... become not only the vehicle for protecting the general process of capitalist accumulation but also for promoting accumulation by one cultural section of the dominant class in competition with others. Thus, they become a major expression of ethnic conflict” (Diamond 1986). His further contention is that because manipulation of mass ethnic feelings is often the surest instrument of electoral success, democratic participation (in elections) serves to fan ethnic conflict at the mass level as well. The ethnic conflict in the Rift Valley during the 1992 elections in Kenya as well as the many clashes in the urban constituencies such as Langata in Nairobi and several others elsewhere e.g. Mombasa and Nakuru, are good examples.

To be specific, during the 1992 elections, the Kalenjin (the ethnic group of President Moi) believed that the capture of the state by the opposition would at once mean the loss of economic privilege which they had enjoyed for over a decade. Similarly, every major ethnic actor believed that their party’s victory would end their relative deprivation. These perceptions were functionally conflictual. Indeed, what Wolpe and Melson said of the Nigerian experience is equally true of Kenya, namely that competition for material goods and hence for control of the state which governs access to them accelerate the ethnicization of society.⁵

The 1992 multiparty elections in Kenya were a living manifestation of these fears. Indeed, never before had ethnic considerations so directly influenced the electoral process. It was the first time in the country’s history that the post of president was openly contested and by implication, the first time the electorate were given a chance to determine who and consequently which group would control State House, together with the benefits that go with it; for after the creation in 1964 of the institution of executive presidency under a one party system (initially *de facto*, and later *de jure*), the president of the ruling party (Kenya African

National Union — KANU) always received automatic nomination for the position of State President and was formally pronounced elected at the nomination stage in all the subsequent elections (1969, 1974, 1979, 1983 and 1988). As such general elections had no bearing on who would control state power and patronage.

The 1992 contest was perceived differently by key ethnic actors. For the incumbent ruling coalition — the Kalenjin and their kinsmen in the Rift Valley, it involved the defence of the existing structure of privilege, on the one hand, and the possibility of deprivation, on the other. For the former rulers — the Kikuyu — it presented an opportunity for politico-economic 'resurrection'. For the others (the Luo and the Luhya especially), 1992 was their turn "to eat also". The Luhya elites were quick to remind the nation of their tribe's numerical strength (the second largest group after the Kikuyu since 1969) and therefore their right to vie for the highest political office in the land. The Luo who have never hidden their 'legitimate' claim to leadership once the Kikuyu whom they regard as their equal adversary had had their chance, expected the opposition alliance to support their bid this time without any challenge. At the same time, the possibility of controlling State House which the 1992 elections presented to the various communities acted as a disincentive to rational behaviour. Intra-elite contest within the opposition movement soon assumed ethnic dimensions as each ethnic group increasingly coalesced around one of their own. Contrary to the wishes of ordinary opposition supporters, reaching a consensus about one opposition candidate to challenge the incumbent president became increasingly remote with the passage of time. None was ultimately agreed upon.

The Struggle for FORD

The moment the prospects for removing Moi and KANU through democratic elections became real, the struggle for FORD also began in earnest. At once the political elite began to calculate their fortunes within the movement, wondering if indeed staying in it would serve their own interests individually and collectively. The structure of leadership of FORD became a subject of great interest and concern. Of the six interim leaders, only Odinga, Muliro and Shikuku were well known nationally. The rest were not. Therefore, as one would expect, the first group to develop a sense of concern and denial were the Kikuyu. Their concern was based on the fear that the Luo and the Luhya in the interim leadership of FORD might take advantage of the situation to dig themselves in, thereby preempting the leadership contest when the party was registered and party elections called.

The sense of urgency among the various contenders regarding the leadership of FORD was heightened when in January 1992, FORD was registered with the former interim officers as its substantive leaders. This writer was reliably informed of the manoeuvre by some powerful former GEMA functionaries who felt their interest could not be well served in the existing leadership structure of FORD. It

is these people who had earlier on prevailed on Mwai Kibaki (then Minister of Health) to resign from the government to lead an alternative party. Hence within a few weeks of the formation and registration of FORD, the Democratic Party of Kenya was launched with Mwai Kibaki as its interim chairman. There were others who also felt they should not be left behind; for within the same month, the Makau, MP for Mbooni in Kambaland, quit KANU to form the Social Democratic Party. At the time, Makau was a fairly popular MP and might have hoped to use his popularity and his new party to mobilise support from his Kamba people and ultimately use that support, as Paul Ngei had done on the eve of independence with his APP, as a bargaining weapon for a bigger stake. Launched in the same month also was the Islamic Party of Kenya which at once gave the Muslim fundamentalists especially in Mombasa, an organizational framework for letting out their hitherto suppressed political passions.

With the formation of the DP, the Kikuyu masses began to wonder whether it was a signal for them to begin withdrawing their traditional support for FORD. But the signals they received at the time were rather mixed. Some of their senior politicians who had defected to FORD were still staying on. These included Kenneth Matiba (a former cabinet minister who had been detained during the early stages of multi-party movement (mid-1990), released from detention after suffering a major stroke, and was in early 1992 still recuperating in London after being hospitalized there). Former vice president J. Karanja, former MPs Charles Rubia, Andrew Ngumba, Maina Wanjigi, Matu Wamae etc. and others such as Mungai Njoroge were on the other hand moving back to KANU after receiving a cold reception in the opposition movement.

What were the costs and benefits of joining this or that party? This appears to have been the dilemma which the ordinary Kikuyu in particular faced at a time when their leaders were dispersed among the three main parties — KANU, FORD and DP. For the highly politicised urban Kikuyu masses, Matiba appeared to be their man. He was regarded as a brave fighter in remembrance of his decision to resign his cabinet post on a matter of principle when he disagreed with the government over the conduct of the 1988 elections. He was also associated in their minds with the 7th July 1990 mass civil disobedience in Nairobi which had resulted in the so-called *saba saba* riots of that year. On the other hand, Kibaki, the interim leader of DP had for a long time been portrayed as a cowardly and hesitant leader who had failed during his tenure as vice-president to protect Kikuyu interests when the same came under attack.⁶ In the circumstances, and with KANU virtually deserted by the Kikuyu masses, most of the Kikuyu elites chose to remain in FORD, hoping to capture it and use it as a vehicle for making a political come-back at the centre. To succeed in this regard, the Kikuyu needed to identify one of their own with a national stature. No such a person was readily available in the then existing leadership structure of FORD. And even outside the leadership structure of FORD,

some of the possible Kikuyu contenders such as former vice president Karanja lacked popular appeal nationally in comparison with non-Kikuyu contenders such as Odinga, Muliro and even Shikuku. Hence the decision to turn to Matiba in spite of his poor state of health.

In the meantime, the strategy was to push the incumbent FORD leaders into taking some precipitous action that would tarnish their public standing. One such action involved the instigation of a national strike in April 1992 in demand for the release of all political prisoners. The strike was poorly organized and it failed miserably. Another call for a boycott of *Madaraka* festivities on 1st of June 1992 was also ignored by Kenyans. It now appeared as if FORD and the entire opposition movement was beginning to lose ground to KANU. These developments encouraged the Matiba supporters in FORD who now saw him as the only man that could put the opposition back on track again.

Revelations were later made of secret delegations to Matiba by some of the Kikuyu elites still in FORD. The *Week End Mail* (18.2.93) named some of the persons involved as Nyanja, Kimani Nyoike, Charles Rubia, Matu Wamae and Bedan Mbugua. Their intention was to block Odinga from becoming both chairman of FORD and its presidential candidate. Matu Wamae on returning from one of his many visits to Matiba declared at a public rally in Muranga town that he had recently travelled to London at the behest of a section within FORD to see Matiba, and that he had found him fit and healthy (*Weekly Review* 21.2.92 : 8). This statement was made at a time when Matiba could neither read nor write, according to subsequent revelations by one of the principal actors, Nyanja (*Kenya Times* 30.9.92 : 2) who revealed this in Kiambu District following disagreements between himself and Matiba over FORD-Asili leadership. He revealed further that the new party was in fact formed after a split in the original FORD which occurred following Matiba's return from London.⁷

For the Kikuyu, the struggle for FORD involved targeting Odinga; for earlier in the year he had declared his interest in the (state) presidency if Kenyans gave him a chance (*Standard* 23.1.92). He later reaffirmed his interest on the same day that Matiba was being accorded a hero's welcome by his supporters on his return from London (*Daily Nation* 2.5.92). Odinga and his Luo backers especially were on record as having reminded the Kikuyu that without Odinga's support, Kenyatta might not have been released from detention let alone become president.⁸ This historical fact was now to be denied by some Kikuyu politicians such as Njenga Mungai and Wa Nyoike. Odinga's Luo-ness also became the subject of derision. George Nyanja (later to become MP for Limuru) declared publicly: "Odinga cannot lead anybody because he is not circumcised."⁹ It is these forces that apparently prevailed on Matiba to declare his candidacy for the presidency in February 1992 when he was still recuperating in London (*Standard* 5.2.92).

Indeed, the manoeuvres by the advocates of ethnic interests were to deal a final

blow to the fragile unity in FORD. Odinga and Shikuku and their followers were equally guilty. Odinga for one began to surround himself with his kinsmen in a manner that openly gave signals of things to expect in the event that he became president. It is not a trivial matter that he opted to make his daughter-in-law his personal assistant through whom all those seeking to see him had to pass. She remained in that position until after Odinga's death. As if that was not enough, Odinga proceeded to influence the appointment of a fellow Luo, Professor Peter Anyang Nyong'o to the key position of Executive Director of FORD. Some of the FORD insiders later complained that the director had usurped all the functions of the Secretary General Martin Shikuku¹⁰ thus precipitating the belligerence of Shikuku's supporters and also his threat to quit FORD before the final show-down. The alleged active participation of Odinga's son in party affairs at the headquarters where he did not hold any position before the party elections was also often cited as a source of friction. Indeed, Martin Shikuku openly complained that the headquarters was being run by Odinga as a family affair. As a result of such open Luo manoeuvres Shikuku and Muliro also came under great pressure from the Luhya to be more assertive in their quest for leadership positions in FORD. Elijah Mwangale, for example, criticised Muliro and Shikuku (whom he claimed were the initiators of the crusade for multipartyism) for betraying the Luhya by allowing themselves to be relegated to obscurity when they were supposed to have assumed the leadership of the largest opposition party (*Daily Nation* 29.1.92). But the two were known not to be on good political terms. Each one of them struggled for a prominent position in FORD against the other: for they knew that it could ultimately be either of them who would succeed. Obviously, Muliro had an edge over Shikuku and that might explain why Shikuku chose to seek an alliance with the Matiba faction of the party even though their political values were known to be poles apart.¹¹

The final split in FORD came within two months of Matiba's return to Kenya. His return had been organised by the Kikuyu elites in FORD to give him maximum publicity. And it was hoped that the occasion would be used as a launching pad for Matiba's leadership challenge. The other factions in FORD would have nothing to do with the arrangements and Odinga for example chose to be out of Nairobi on the material day.

Matiba's handlers must have given him the impression that the party needed him more than he needed it, for soon after his return, he chose to go solo. Within two months he had, with Shikuku's support, managed to lure the majority of the six interim leaders of the party to his side and therefore felt strong enough to announce the suspension of Odinga on 11.8.92 (*Weekly Review* 14.8.92) and to convene a meeting of the National Executive Committee of the party to ratify the decision as well as designate himself as the new party leader. The move did not succeed as many bonafide members of the Committee ignored the call. But the damage was

irreparable. The party split into two factions and were later registered as Ford-Kenya and Ford-Asili under Odinga's and Matiba's chairmanship, respectively. The split marked the end of the only movement since pre-independence that had succeeded in bringing most of the Kenyan masses into an enthusiastic political collaboration.

The Grand Ethnic Strategy

Up to around April 1992, there was very little hope of KANU ever returning to power. But with the return of Matiba from London in May and the subsequent split in FORD in July, some life seems to have returned to KANU. By then KANU had been abandoned by the GEMA (Kikuyu, Embu, Meru) communities, the Luo, the Luhya, Kisii, Coastal people, the Somali and to a large extent the Kamba. By the middle of 1992, therefore, KANU was essentially a Kalenjin-Masaai, Turkana, Samburu (KAMATUSA) party.¹² The prominent politicians from GEMA, Luo and Luhya who chose to stick with KANU had done so primarily after realising that defection could not save them from eventual defeat during intra-party nominations. Some of them were later to engage in the kind of desperate and divisive political campaigns reminiscent only of the *majimbo* elections of 1963.

Earlier on, that kind of campaign had been started by the KAMATUSA coalition in KANU. Expecting at the time to be humiliated at the polls, they got together and decided that those ethnic groups that had 'betrayed' them should be taught a lesson. The lesson in question involved their expulsion from especially "Kalenjin-Masaai lands" in the Rift Valley. Apart from this being a good lesson for betrayal, it would also rid the Rift Valley of anti-KANU, anti-Moi voters. The series of meetings held by the Rift Valley politicians during 1991 were intended to achieve those objectives by mobilizing the Kalenjin and their political allies against other communities living in the Rift Valley. At a meeting held in Kapsabet in Nandi district, the notion of multi-partyism was condemned and FORD was portrayed as an anti-Moi and anti-Kalenjin movement (*Weekly Review* 13.9.91 : 6). At the said meeting, two Kalenjin ministers reportedly began their speeches by claiming that the Kikuyu represented the main opposition to Moi. Successive speakers threatened that if *majimboism* were introduced, all the Kikuyu who had settled in the Rift Valley would have to pack and leave. Others asked all government critics in Kalenjin areas to move back to their "motherland". Besides the GEMA, these threats were aimed especially at the Luo, Luhya and Kisii. At subsequent meetings, the need for Kalenjin unity in the face of opposition threat was stressed (*Weekly Review* 27.9.91 : 5). Earlier on (*Nation* 9.9.91) at a meeting attended by Kalenjin MPs and other politicians the need to protect the Moi presidency and the Kalenjin land was emphasised. The Minister of State in the Office of the President, Kipkalya Kones, for example, called for the appointment of more Kalenjin staff in the

Ministry of Lands in order to save their land from being grabbed by 'outsiders' and also warned that the Kalenjin would fight to the last man to protect Moi's government. The call for political pluralism was thus perceived by the Kalenjin leaders as a call for the end of the Kalenjin leadership. And on 21.9.91, 19 Rift Valley MPs led by Biwot, Ministers Cheruiyot and Mibei and assistant minister Paul Chepkok pledged to counter any attempt to relegate them from leadership; Chepkok on his part urged the people to arm themselves with sticks, bows and arrows and destroy any FORD member on sight. Such rallies and speeches continued throughout the period leading to the December 1992 elections. For instance as late as a few weeks before the elections, a leading Kalenjin pastor — the Reverend Elija Kiprotich Yego (he had at one time tried to become the Anglican Bishop of Eldoret Diocese) did on 2.12.92 give the non-Kalenjin communities resident in Nandi District 26 days ultimatum to vacate the area if they should fail to vote for Moi and KANU on December 29, 1992. He told an audience of about 4000 at Kapsabet: If the president loses, make sure there are no more (of these 'foreigners') in our Nandi land. (*Daily Nation* 3.12.92). It is against the background of such inflammatory speeches that the ethnic clashes which began in late 1991 and have continued sporadically since then should be seen. As intended, they did have the effect of driving many registered and potential non-Kalenjin voters out of the Rift Valley during the elections.¹³

Elsewhere in the Rift Valley, similar threats were issued against "foreigners", especially by one Masai Cabinet Minister, Ole Ntimama (*Daily Nation* 24.12.92; 25.12.92). The politicians were later to be joined by some local Kalenjin administrators in threatening non-Kalenjin voters (*Daily Nation* 23.12.92 : 5).

Apart from this strategy of riding the Rift Valley of opposition voters, Moi also took advantage of the disunity within the opposition movement to build new coalitions in divided opposition areas. Four areas were central to this strategy: Kisii, Luhyaland, Ukambani and Meru. It is believed that a vice presidential offer was made to prominent politicians from these areas as a way of persuading them to stick with KANU. And aware of the vulnerability of KANU, some of these actors chose to exploit the situation to their personal advantage by resorting to the use of ethnic ideology. Former cabinet ministers, Elijah Mwangale and Burudi Nabwera from Luhyaland in particular merit mention here. In numerous rallies during the campaign, they stressed separately the need for Luhya support for KANU and Moi as the surest way to be rewarded (*Daily Nation* 25.11.92 : 5; 2.12.92 : 4; 29.12.92 : 2). The vice presidency was often mentioned; and so was the presidency itself after Moi's departure. For instance, at a rally in Ikolomani in Kakamega district on 29.9.92, Mwangale reportedly declared:

Luhya must be total in demanding for the second top post. We will resist any attempt to stop a Luhya from ascending to the top. The community will bid

for the Vice Presidency when President Moi and KANU form the next government (*Kenya Times* 30.9.92 : 2).

Taking advantage of the tension between the Kikuyu and the Kalenjin, Mwangale and Nabwera considered that an all out attack against the Kikuyu would be the best way to demonstrate their loyalty to the regime. They exploited popular prejudices and stereotypes and condemned the alleged Kikuyu domination of business in Luhya land. At one rally, Nabwera 'reminded' the Kikuyu that time had come for them to leave the Western Province to the Luhya to run business and raise their living standards (*Daily Nation* 2.12.92 : 4).

The idea of electoral alliances also emerged in speeches by other politicians. For instance at a rally in Nyamira, the Kisii bureaucrat turned politician, Simeon Nyachae, reportedly said that the Kisii had agreed to vote for President Moi and KANU "on condition that the community was given its rightful share in the country's leadership". He then added that because they had been promised a number of things, they should unite and vote for Moi and KANU (*Standard* 27.10.92 : 4). These alliances must have been entered into in furtherance of especially the requirement that a presidential winner must, besides having the highest number of votes, win 25 percent of the votes cast in at least five provinces. Sure of losing the Luo votes in Nyanza and the Kikuyu votes in Central Province, Moi must have considered these alliances as being critical to his success at the polls; and indeed they turned out to be.

Meanwhile, Moi did not waste any time in exploiting the simmering rift within the opposition movement. His decision to invite FORD Secretary General Martin Shikuku (before the fateful split in FORD in July 1992) for dinner was a calculated move because of its timing. At the time, there was a lot of feud between Shikuku and Odinga over the management of party affairs and on the method of electing a presidential candidate on FORD ticket. Moi must have calculated that his move would at once bring the simmering rift within FORD to the boiling point and thereby cripple it. Although the disclosure of the visit did not lead to an immediate split, it exacerbated the crisis and eventually sealed the split a few months later.

Immediately before and during the campaign, Moi's supporters resorted to what essentially amounted to ethnic cleansing of the Rift Valley. Non-Kalenjin candidates or would-be candidates were openly harassed. Those with debts were arraigned before the courts. The case of one Stephen Ngali Waimaithori who had declared his intention to contest the Eldoret South seat illustrates a trend. (*Standard* 5.11.92 : 4). The grand strategy also involved declaring all KAMATUSA constituencies as KANU zones. Those who offered themselves as opposition candidates were harassed regardless of their ethnic affiliation. For instance in Tinderet (in Nandi District) Kimaiyo Arap Sego, a Kalenjin, narrowly escaped death when a group of political thugs attacked him in order to prevent him from presenting his

nomination papers (*Standard* 11.12.92 : 5). In Londiani (Kericho District) the houses of DP council candidates were set on fire (*Daily Nation* 12.12.92 : 4). And on 28.12.92, DP candidates for Eldoret South, Charles Murgor and Uasin Gishu (DP Chairman) were reportedly attacked by KANU supporters (*Daily Nation* 1.12.92 : 17). Many of such cases were reported before and during the campaign period. And on nomination day, opposition candidates were physically prevented from presenting their papers as a result of which seventeen candidates (in mainly Kalenjin and kindred group areas) were returned "unopposed" (*Daily Nation & Standard* 11.12.92). In the meantime, tribal clashes continued, thus forcing many prospective non-Kalenjin voters to flee their respective constituencies. In the end, the strategy of declaring the Rift Valley a KANU zone seems to have worked. Of all the Presidential votes cast in the province, the opposition received only 29 percent. The rest went to Moi.

Persistent Disunity of the Opposition

For the opposition movement, the formation of the DP and the subsequent split in FORD had put into question the chance of dislodging KANU. This realization led to many frantic efforts at unity by some organizations sympathetic to the opposition such as the Church and Professor Wangari Mathai's Middle Ground group. But a combination of ethnic calculations and obstinacy of the party leaders rendered these efforts futile.

Of the three leading opposition candidates, Kenneth Matiba (Ford-Asili), Mwai Kibaki (DP) and Ajuma Oginga Odinga (Ford-Kenya), Kibaki was the only accommodating leader. However, his efforts were frustrated by Matiba and Odinga for whom unity without them as leader was inconceivable. Indeed, both were prisoners of their own ethnic constituencies. There were those in Ford-Asili, mainly the Kikuyu, who believed that without Matiba as a presidential candidate, their own electoral chances would come to naught. And Matiba himself not being in a position to assess the political situation independently, had been persuaded by his advisers that he was the strongest of the opposition candidates. Accordingly he increasingly became belligerent and obstinate. Similarly, Odinga refused to believe that none other than himself deserved to lead the opposition. At a rally in Busia in May, he reminded the nation that he could not be expected to surrender the presidency again having done so at independence (*Nation* 3.5.92). Odinga and the Luo believed that this was their turn. They had supported the Kikuyu in 1963. It was now the turn of the Kikuyu to pay back their 'debt'. But the Kikuyu would have none of this: some senior Kikuyu politicians such as Kimani Nyoike and Njenga Mungai chose to publicly deny that Odinga ever relinquished the presidency in favour of Kenyatta (*Daily Nation & Weekly Review* May 1992). To the Luo elites, and masses these denials only helped to strengthen their support for one of their own as they accused the other side of selfishness. What Ojuang

Kombudo, then MP for Nyakach, said in parliament on 16.9.92 captures the mood of the Luo:

Luo have been blocked by Kikuyus who have been cheating them for a long time. Kikuyus have misled Luos for many years and Luos should know this and take action.

He then advised the Luo to block the Kikuyu from taking over Kenya's leadership by rejoining KANU (*Kenya Times* 17.9.92). The Luo did not rejoin KANU: they chose to remain in FORD-Kenya and prepare for any eventuality.

What further complicated the situation in the opposition movement was the struggle for the Kikuyu votes between Matiba and Kibaki. It is this struggle that made Kibaki hesitant in coming out decisively for an alliance with Odinga. He must have feared that such an alliance might erode his ethnic power base. More importantly, his party candidates from GEMA territory are said to have strongly cautioned against it, fearing the consequences of such a pact for their own electoral chances. A further irony is that Kibaki's options were quite limited. He could not enter into an alliance with Matiba or vice versa without the dreaded GEMA ghost being brought to the fore. The '25 percent formula' made that kind of a pact highly impolitic, because of its potential for scaring other tribes away. What followed was a vicious struggle for the Kikuyu votes between Matiba and Kibaki. By allowing themselves to be forced into that situation, the Kikuyu political elites betrayed the interests of the Kikuyu masses that they were supposedly out to promote. In the end, the division within the opposition movement played into the hands of Moi and his KANU party. Moi astutely exploited these divisions to the advantage of his presidential bid as well as that of his party's parliamentary candidates. The result was the KANU victory in both the presidential and parliamentary contests.

The Election Results:

In this section, the results of the presidential and parliamentary contests are explained in terms of how they were affected by ethnic loyalties. For reasons to be explained later, the focus excludes the minor presidential candidates.

Presidential Contest

For the four major presidential candidates (Moi, Matiba, Kibaki and Odinga), the results of the presidential contest show a strong correlation between a candidate's ethnic origin and the number of votes obtained in his ethnic region and in other regions. In every case, a candidate's ethnic affiliation secured him overwhelming support from his own group. In assessing the degree of ethnic support, the coverage has been restricted to rural districts usually predominantly inhabited by a single dominant ethnic group. A number of districts so inhabited constitute in our analysis

the 'heartland' of a given group.

In Kalenjin heartland, comprising Kericho, Bomet, Nandi, Elgeyo-Marakwet and Baringo districts, Moi obtained 96 percent or 794,806 of the 829,367 votes cast. This represented 41.2 percent of the total votes he received throughout the country. In the Kikuyu heartland, which consists of the Central Province districts of Kiambu, Murang'a, Nyeri, Kirinyaga and Nyandarua, the votes were shared between Matiba and Kibaki who together received 95 percent of the votes cast there, representing about 40.2 percent of the votes the two together received countrywide. And in the Luo heartland - Siaya, Kisumu, Migori and Homa-Bay districts - Odinga received 549,464 or 95 percent of the 577,946 votes cast, representing 58.2 percent of the total votes he received nationwide. What emerges from these figures is that the Kalenjin, the Kikuyu and the Luo voted mainly on ethnic lines. In the process, the parties to which their ethnic candidates belonged were exposed as ethnic parties. Consequently, such candidates performed poorly in one another's territory as the following data indicate:

Moi: received about 0.4 percent of the votes cast in Luo heartland and 0.2 percent in Kikuyu heartland.

Odinga: received 1.1 percent in Kalenjin heartland and 1 percent in Kikuyu heartland.

Matiba and Kibaki: together received 1.35 percent in Kalenjin heartland and 0.8 in Luo heartland.

Table 1: % of Votes cast for Principal Presidential Candidates per Province

	Nairobi	Coast	NE	Eastern	Central	R Valley	Western	Nyanza
Moi	16	62	72	37	02	71	39	15
Matiba	44	11	11	10	60	16	38	01
Kibaki	18	10	05	50	35	07	02	06
Odinga	20	14	08	02	01	05	17	75

Table 2: Hypothetical Cases

	Nairobi	Coast	NE	Eastern	Central	Rift Valley	Western	Nyanza
Matiba & Kibaki	62	21	16	60	95	23	40	07
Matiba, Kibaki & Odinga	82	35	24	62	96	28	57	82

A focus on the regional configuration of the votes tell more or less the same story. In Kenya as is in many African countries, regional divisions coincide with ethnic divisions. The central province is Kikuyu, Nyanza predominantly Luo, the Rift Valley is occupied predominantly by Kalenjin and kindred groups (Masaai, Turkana, Samburu); the Western is Luhya; and the North Eastern predominantly Somali. Only three regions are multi-ethnic in any significance sense: Nairobi, Coast and Eastern provinces. An attempt is made in Table 1 to analyze the pattern of regional support received by the respective candidates in the election.

The significance of regional support has added dimension because of the constitutional requirement that to be elected as president, the winner besides receiving the majority or plurality of the votes cast, must receive at least 25 percent of the votes cast in at least five of the eight provinces. From Table 1, Moi received 25 percent or more in five provinces, Matiba in three, Kibaki in two and Odinga in one.

We shall explain the structure of regional support of the unsuccessful candidates first. For Kenneth Matiba of Ford-Asili the two provinces where he received better than 40 percent are predominantly Kikuyu. The 38% of the vote he received in the Western Province is attributed largely to Shikuku who was his running mate. Shikuku was perceived as the effective number two to Matiba in the party and his Luhya supporters were made to believe that in the event of a Matiba victory, he would become his Vice-President. In the remaining five provinces he received only 16%, or less.

Apart from the Central Province, Kibaki secured the 25% vote only in the Eastern Province where, as the GEMA torch bearer (it was believed at the time that the DP was financially backed by wealthy GEMA business interests), he pulled behind him the two GEMA communities of Meru and Embu, and also managed to do extremely well in Ukambani, especially in the old Kitui district where he had very strong catholic grassroots support¹⁴ in the hope of putting a catholic in State House. The Kamba support was possible perhaps only because there was no Kamba presidential candidate.

Of the four serious presidential candidates, Odinga turned out to be the least likely to be elected. He got 25% only in his home province of Nyanza even though his party was the only one to receive at least a parliamentary representation in all the eight provinces. At the age of 81, Odinga was generally considered to be too frail for the demanding task of the presidency. His frailness was quite manifest during the campaign. Therefore, his potential non-Luo supporters seemed to have had some doubts about his ability to effectively cope with the demands of the office he sought to occupy. Added to that is, of course, the 'social distance' between the Luo and many ethnic groups in Kenya (Berg-Schlosser 1992) which appeared to have worked against Odinga.

For the victor, Daniel arap Moi, a number of factors worked in his favour at a

time he had almost lost any hope of being re-elected. The division in the original FORD (for which he was partly responsible) drastically increased his chances at the polls. Taking advantage of his incumbency, he reportedly made offers of Vice Presidential appointment in the event of victory to the Luhya (Mudavadi), Kisii (Nyachae), Meru (M'mkindia), Kamba (Kalonzo Musyoka), and possibly to others as well (*Weekly Review*). These assured him of votes in those communities. He also used the bureaucracy (the Provincial Administration) to ensure that his adversaries were denied license to address meetings in certain areas for alleged "security" reasons (*Weekly Review* January 1, 1993 : 27). This was the case especially in North Eastern Province and in some parts of the Coast Province.¹⁵ Opposition candidates were also cajoled and lured to pull out of the race in return for material benefits (*Ibid*) at the 11th hour thereby further increasing the electoral chances of Moi and his party. The psychological impact of these tactics was immediate and rewarding. Having passed the 25 percent mark in five provinces, all he now needed was a plurality which he managed to get with 36.4% of the votes for himself, 25.6% for Matiba, 19.6% for Kibaki, 17.1% for Odinga, 0.3% for Chibule wa Tsuma, 0.3% George Anyona, 0.16% Mukaru Nganga and 0.12% J. Harun. Allegations of vote rigging were to be heard from losers and winners alike; but none could be proved.

The other presidential candidates — Anyona, Chibule wa Tsuma, John Harun and Mukaru Nganga were generally regarded as mere spoilers if anything. With the possible exception of Anyona they all lacked a national stature and block ethnic support necessary to put them in power. But even Anyona, a Kisii and once regarded as a radical politician was on the eve of the elections, a political loner pursuing essentially a personal agenda. He had also been compromised after coming out of detention by allegedly consorting with some of the opposition people to whom he had earned his radical image — establishment figures such as his kinsman Simeon Nyachae, and Chibule wa Tsuma. His presidential candidature was incidental and came about with the last minute defection of the leader of his party. Therefore, he was not regarded as a serious candidate. John Harun Mwau was also unknown — not even among his Kamba people (his political base was Nairobi where he even failed to win a Parliamentary seat). The other candidates — Mukaru Ng'ang'a, like Tsuma, Anyona and Harun entered the race simply because he had his own party to represent. But the party had no following anywhere in the country not withstanding his Kikuyu origin. The four were merely '*the also ran*' presidential candidates.

Some Hypothetical Cases

I wish now to address two hypothetical cases. The first is about what would have happened had the Kikuyu fielded one candidate. The second is about the prospects of a united opposition against Moi. (See Table 2.)

The Kikuyu have been heard to lament after the elections that had they put up only one candidate, the result would have been a Kikuyu president. This lamentation is based on the combined strength of the presidential votes for Matiba and Kibaki: 1,354,856 + 1,035,507 or 45.2%. According to this scenario, Moi with his 36.4% would have come second! What were the realities?

The merger between Ford-Asili and DP under Matiba and Kibaki respectively would have completely changed the voting equation. Such an alliance would have been seen as a Kikuyu or GEMA alliance and would have scared away many non-GEMA voters who still felt it was too soon for another Kikuyu president. Shikuku for example would have found it difficult to remain in the group, for it is unlikely that he would have remained the only vice presidential hopeful in such an alliance. It is therefore unlikely that the Luhya supporters of Shikuku who voted for Matiba and Ford-Asili in large numbers (16% of Matiba's total votes) would have done so. Therefore, the voting equation would have been entirely different. Furthermore, it should be recalled that a combination of Matiba and Kibaki votes passed the 25 percent mark only in Central Province, Eastern, Western and Nairobi, and would certainly have been reduced to three provinces with the loss of Shikuku on the ticket. In the event, even if they received a 'winning' plurality, the 25% requirement in 5 provinces would have either forced a run-off with all sorts of possible realignments thereafter. For the same reason it could be argued that if such realignment took place, it would have most probably not worked in favour of the Kikuyu.

A second hypothetical case involved an alliance between Matiba, Kibaki and Odinga — in other words Kikuyu-Luo alliance. Such an alliance would have, according to the results, assured them victory both in terms of plurality of votes and secured 25% of the votes in seven of the eight provinces. However, the chances are that such an alliance would have scared most of the so-called minority ethnic groups. In the event, the alliance would most likely have lost the Western and possibly Rift Valley provinces (by losing Luhya votes in the Rift Valley especially Trans Nzoia and Uasin Gishu) in addition to the North Eastern province. All the same, that would have left them with the five required provinces to romp home. Indeed, had the original FORD remained intact as a national movement, it could have got the 25% of the votes required in all the provinces. But that was never to be. Personal aggrandisement and ethnic calculations combined to ensure the collapse of the united opposition movement on the eve of the elections and thereby guaranteed the victory of Daniel arap Moi in the presidential elections.

Parliamentary Results

Kenya's electoral law provides for single member constituencies where the candidates with the highest number of votes regardless of the percentage scored is

Table 3: *Parliamentary Seats won by Individual Parties Per Province*

	NBI	Coast	NE	Eastern	Central	RV	Western	Nyanza	Total
Kenya African National Union	1	17	8	21	0	36	10	7	100
Forum for the Restoration of Democracy (FORD-KENYA)	1	2	1	1	1	2	3	20	31
Forum for the Restoration of Democracy (FORD-ASILI)	6	0	0	0	14	4	7	0	31
Democratic Party	0	1	0	9	10	2	0	1	23
Kenya Social Congress	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	01
Kenya National Congress	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	01
Party of Independent Candidates	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	01
Kenya National Democratic Alliance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	8	20	10	32	25	44	20	29	188

Source: Daily Newspapers

declared the winner. The operative electoral practice is one of the many colonial imports left behind by Britain at independence.

In 1992, a total of eight parties contested the elections. The results are presented in Table 3. A number of factors combined to explain the defeat of the opposition in the parliamentary elections as well. First was the assumed strengths of the parties according to region. It was assumed that KANU candidates would generally do well in the former KADU areas (Rift Valley, Coast and to some extent Western Province) and in N. Eastern where the KANU government had denied the opposition the right to campaign. KANU's best performance in both presidential and parliamentary contests were to emerge in those provinces (see Table 1 for presidential contest and Table 3 for the parliamentary). Of the 100 parliamentary seats won by KANU, 71% came from these regions. Nairobi, Nyanza and Central were regarded as opposition bastions and indeed the opposition received from these provinces 55 or 62.5% of the total number of seats they won. Eastern province that was expected to be closely contested (this was also true of Western) was captured by KANU when it won 21 out of the 32 seats or 66%. It should be noted however that most of the seats came from non GEMA districts of Ukambani, Isiolo and Marsabit (18 out of 21 or 85.7%). In the GEMA districts of Embu and the old Meru, the opposition, (i.e. DP (6), Ford-K (1), KNC (1) obtained 8 out of 11 or 72.7%. It is noticeable from the statistics that there is a close relationship between presidential and parliamentary performance by region and ethnic group. In the Parliamentary and Presidential elections KANU led in Rift Valley, North Eastern and Coast Provinces. It lost Nairobi, Central Province and Nyanza to the opposition (especially Ford-K and Ford-Asili), shared Western in both Parliamentary and Presidential contests and lost Eastern to the opposition in the Presidential votes but won in the Parliamentary — mainly from Ukambani where it was alleged by the

opposition that the elections had been rigged in favour of KANU by especially senior Civil Servants from the district.¹⁶

Again it is evident that there was direct relationship between ethnicity and voting in the parliamentary contest as well. All the 24 central province seats went to Ford-Asili and DP. All the 19 seats from Luo Nyanza went to Ford-Kenya, and all the 17 seats from Kalenjin heartland went to KANU. And in Nakuru district which is predominantly settled by Kikuyu but is in R. Valley, three out of the four seats went to Matiba's Ford Asili.

The votes cast for the various parties compare well both in presidential and parliamentary contests. A glance at the statistics (Table 4) indicates a difference of about 8% between presidential and parliamentary votes in favour of KANU. That difference could however be explained by the excessive "high voter turn out" in the Kalenjin heartland in the presidential contest.

Table 4: Total votes in Belt The Presidential and Parliamentary Elections

Party	Presidential	%	Parliamentary	%
KANU	1,962,862	36.3	1,400,549	28.4
FORD-A	1,404,266	26.0	1,356,065	27.5
D P	1,050,617	19.4	1,127,489	22.9
FORD-K	944,197	17.5	894,952	18.2
KNC*	15,393	0.28	77,844	1.6
PICK*	6,449	0.12	51,505	1.0
KSC*	14,253	0.26	16,370	0.3
KENDA*	8,527	0.16	771	0.02
SDP*	—	—	105	0.00
	5,406,664	100	4,925,650	99.9=100

Source: WR 1.1.93 P.5 and other Dailies.

* approximations for the minor parties.

During the elections and before, there was a lot of talk by some politicians to the effect that the distribution of seats were disproportionate to the population and tended to favour certain areas. But available evidence tends to suggest only marginal differentials that could not be said to favour any group or region.

According to these statistics, the regions (provinces) which show under-representation in relation to the others are Central 02, Eastern 01, Nairobi 05, Nyanza 01, Western 03. Those showing over-representation are Coast 04, R. Valley (01), and North Eastern (07). What is evident here is that Nairobi has been

Table 5: National Assembly seats as a % of Provincial Population

Province	Population	%	Seats	% of Total	% Under or over Representation
Central	3,626,000	14.5	25	13.3	- 1.2
Coast	2,155,000	8.6	20	10.6	+ 2
Eastern	4,334,000	17.4	32	17.0	- 0.4
North	408,000	1.6	10	5.3	+ 3.7
Eastern	1,678,000	6.7	8	4.3	- 2.4
Nairobi	4,041,000	16.2	29	15.4	- 0.8
Nyanza	5,690,000	22.8	44	23.4	+ 0.6
Rift Valley	3,035,000	12.2	20	10.6	- 1.6
Western					
Total	24,967,00	100	188	100	—

Source: Population see figures in column 2 — *1994/96 National Development Plan*, Nairobi: Government Printer, 1994, p. 27.

under-represented and North Eastern has been over-represented. These figures are only indicative and suggestive. They suggest that were the seats to be distributed according to population size, 7 seats would have gone to the opposition (Nairobi and Central). The six seats in Nyanza, Western and Eastern would have gone either way as the results of the election reflect. On the other hand, on the over-representation side, the 12 seats for Coast, North Eastern and Rift Valley would have led to a loss for KANU — leaving KANU with 88 (100-12) as opposed to oppositions 95 (88+7). The result would then have been determined by the 5 seats for Nyanza, Western and Eastern. Hypothetically, it would have been too close to call. But as we all know, there is no country in the world where demarcation of constituency boundaries is only determined by population factor. That might explain the apparent over-representation of regions that are largely arid or semi-arid i.e North Eastern and Coast provinces.

Indeed, it would be wrong to analyse the electoral results in terms of the performance of KANU versus the opposition. Opposition parties were fragmented and in being so, put up candidates against one another thereby giving the ruling party a margin of advantage in contested areas (i.e areas not under the influence of

a particular ethnic group such as Eastern and Coast; and Western which did not have a presidential candidate from the area). In one case, there was even intra-ethnic contest (i.e Matiba's Ford-Asili versus Kibaki's DP in Central and in the Kikuyu diaspora in Rift Valley). Table 6 shows the number of candidates put by each party per province and nationally.

Table 6: Distribution of Candidates per Party per Province

PARTY	Nairobi (8)	Coast (20)	NE (10)	Eastern (32)	Central (25)	R.V (44)	NYA (29)	Western (20)	Total 188
KANU	8	20	10	32	25	44	29	20	188
Ford-A	8	17	9	29	24	22	15	18	142
DP	8	19	9	32	24	27	16	18	153
Ford-K	8	17	8	27	14	16	29	17	136
KNC	6	8	2	10	12	5	01	02	46
Pick	5	1	1	4	5	5	5	03	29
KSC	1	—	2	2	—	—	4	—	09
Kenda	—	—	—	—	04	—	—	—	04
SDP	01	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	01

Source: *Daily Newspapers and Weekly Review* 1.1.93.

Several malpractices in the electoral process arising from the absence of a level playing ground also worked against the opposition. In certain areas, the Provincial Administration in collusion with the ruling party directly interfered with the conduct of the campaign, for example denying opposition candidates the freedom to move freely and to meet the voters in the process, insisting that they could only address 'licensed gatherings'. But the same Administration turned a blind eye when KANU candidates were involved. Furthermore, the state electronic media gave full coverage of the activities of the ruling party and would mention the activities of the opposition parties only where doing so served the interest of the ruling party.¹⁷ And in the so-called KANU zones, especially in Kalenjin heartland, opposition candidates were prevented from presenting their nomination papers in full view of electoral officials and security forces. As a result, all the seats in the Kalenjin heartland except one in Kericho with mixed population of settlers (i.e Chepalungu) were uncontested. A total of 17 candidates were elected unopposed (*Weekly Review* 1.1.93).

Other Factors

Elsewhere especially in North Eastern Province and parts of Coast Province such

as TANA River District, 'security' reasons were used to deny opposition parties access to the electorate. As one *Weekly* put it with regard to North Eastern,

While KANU appeared to hold rallies at will in the province, opposition parties permits for similar functions were always invariably cancelled at the last minute because of what were termed as 'security reasons'. There were also several incidents when trips to the province organised by opposition figures were marred by lack of clearance from the police department for aircraft meant to be used by the party leaders (*Weekly Review* 1.1.93).

These moves were calculated to work to the advantage of the ruling party; and indeed they did. With the opposition virtually locked out of the electoral process, it was quite easy for KANU to manipulate proceedings to its advantage. This and the general frustration the opposition candidates faced at the hands of the state forced many opposition candidates to defect to the ruling party at the eleventh hour thereby denying the opposition parties the opportunity to field replacements. These tactics were responsible for the so-called 'massive' victory of KANU in arid and semi-arid areas of the country. Eight out of the ten seats in North Eastern for instance were won by KANU. By virtue of these tactics KANU also won all the 17 seats in the other districts generally characterised by insecurity Tana River (3), Turkana (3), West Pokot (3), Samburu (2), Isiolo (2), Marsabit (4).

The behaviour of the Electoral Commission (appointed by the President shortly before the opposition parties were legalised in December 1991) also left a lot to be desired. Even where electoral malpractices were committed in their full view (e.g. prevention of opposition candidate from presenting their nomination papers by sections of the security forces and KANU supporters) they looked on helplessly. A case in point was when six of those prevented from presenting their nomination papers petitioned the Courts and the judges ordered that no election should take place in the six constituencies concerned. The order was ignored, elections held and KANU candidates declared or elected unopposed (*Weekly Review* 1.1.93 : 47). At issue also was the public standing and credibility of the Commission's Chairman, a man who had been twice retired as a judge under compromising circumstances and therefore was not morally strong enough to resist pressures from the ruling party.¹⁸

Summary and Conclusion

The politics of the 1992 general elections in Kenya, demonstrates that ethnicity continues to be a major force influencing the behaviour of politicians and voters alike. What is more, where power and wealth were at stake, ethnic relations became conflictual. The 1992 elections involved the choice of power holder(s) and in the process, the determination of the structure of access to state patronage — the major

source of wealth in Kenya. The ethnic conflicts in various parts of the country during the elections should be viewed in this light. The elections also manifested how the elites can mobilise ethnic passions to defend and or promote what is otherwise their narrow sectional interests. The masses followed their leaders because of the lingering belief that only 'one of your own' can best serve communal interest if placed in a position of power. But it was also clear that ethnic ideology has its limitations. Intra-ethnic divisions were manifest where parochial interests came into play. The emergence of splinter parties led by members of the same ethnic group was the inevitable consequence of such contradictions. Ethnic solidarity nevertheless still remained a major factor influencing both presidential and parliamentary elections. The ethnic groups that were regarded as being in opposition remained loyal to their ethnic leaders just as those perceived to be in the ruling party did.

Notes

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- 1. See also Bennett 1963 for a different viewpoint.
- 2. See Gertzel 1970; Okoth-Ogendo 1972; Oyugi 1994 for a discussion of the woes of KADU before it was disbanded.
- 3. For more on this see Mueller 1984 and Gertzel 1970.
- 4. As if by fate, Robert Ouko, a popular Minister of Foreign Affairs from Luoland was killed in cold blood after being taken away from his home in February 1990 and the Commission set up by the Government to probe the killing increasingly received evidence suggesting complicity by individuals well placed in the regime. The regime's moral authority was again put under scrutiny.
- 5. Quoted in Josseph. (1987).
- 6. The problems which the Kikuyu-controlled financial institutions faced in the late 80s have often been cited in this regard.
- 7. Indeed, Matiba's inability to read and write was later to be confirmed during the swearing-in of the MPs after the elections when it turned out that he could not actually read the prescribed text.
- 8. This was in reference to Odinga's call for Kenyatta's release on the floor of the Legislative Assembly in June 1958 at a time when no politician dared to do so. Soon after, the release of Kenyatta became a national movement with Odinga in the forefront.
- 9. *Weekly Review* 9 October 1992 quoting statement made early in the year.
- 10. Personal communication.
- 11. Matiba being a wealthy politician who for a long time had been associated

- with 'establishment' politics and Shikuku being a populist politician known for his anti-establishment crusade.
12. The acronym was coined by the press in the mid-90s as a collective name for the four ethnic groups during their (initially) clandestine peace meetings with a select group of GEMA business and political elites aimed (supposedly) at finding a lasting solution to the problems of (Kikuyu) victims of the clashes in the Rift Valley.
 13. See NEMU report on 1992 elections and Daily papers.
 14. Kibaki is a practising Catholic and many catholic bishops are reported to have openly campaigned for DP.
 15. Note that it was in these two provinces that he received the highest percentage of votes after Rift Valley.
 16. Ukambani was one of the areas where vote counting and announcement were inordinately delayed (*Weekly Review* 1.1.93 quoting election monitors) to justify such allegations.
 17. It should be noted in this respect that Kenyan rural voters rely mostly on the radio for news which is fully controlled by the State communication network. Therefore such bias in the media was bound to influence the electoral choices of rural voters.
 18. His appointment had been seriously challenged by the opposition leaders on that ground.

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