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Political Legitimacy In Kenya

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Grant No. 5733—Penrose Fund (1970), \$1,100. Political legitimacy in Kenya.

Most Kenyans involved in the modern economy are satisfied with the personnel, policies, and procedures of their government. This conclusion is based on a survey of a random sample of 485 Kenyan adult males living in or near Nairobi and Mombasa. Interviews carried out in July-September, 1971, were conducted in Swahili, vernacular, or English by trained university students. The organization of the study was facilitated by the Society's grant which supported travel to Kenya. Complete results of this study are available from the grantee.

Excluding the 7 to 10 per cent who expressed no opinion, roughly 80 per cent of interviewed Kenyans indicated satisfaction with various aspects of the regime. This satisfaction seems to be related to trust in the government; 75 per cent trusted the government "most of the time." In fourteen of eighteen specific areas of expectations toward government, 50 per cent or more of those responding indicated that the government was likely to do what they considered rightful or unlikely to do what they considered wrong. The four areas in which a majority distrusted future actions of the government were two cases of failing to act rightly by not prohibiting politicians from having income from outside jobs or interests (as done in neighboring Tanzania) and by not limiting salaries of rich Kenyans so as to redistribute income, one case of acting wrongly by showing favoritism to relatives, and one case of a mixture of errors of omission and commission regarding the question of limitations on the amount of land a man might own.

Another basis for attitudes supportive of the government seems to be the power the government is perceived to wield. Seventy-one per cent indicated the government was "able to do anything," compared to only 40 per cent who described the rather authoritarian colonial regime in this way.

Since the author assumes that support for a government depends primarily on what a populace expects from a government and then perceives the government doing, these findings indicate that a basis for legitimacy has been established by the current regime. While the sample was deliberately skewed toward interviews with those better educated, better paid and more exposed to "modern life" styles than Kenyans as a whole, there was a wide variation among those interviewed. Moreover, in such a new, relatively poor country, acceptance and support by this more modernized segment of the populace is particularly critical.

General attitudes regarding the future and the problems faced individually and by the nation are another set of factors that, in the long run, will affect support. On the whole, respondents were more optimistic than pessimistic about the future, but there were distinct areas of concern and misgiving.

The most frequent personal desire was for a chance to get ahead economically rather than more modest aims of finding or keeping employment or meeting basic needs. Forty-one per cent of those responding foresaw economic growth of some kind in the future. However, the total combination of pessimistic views of the future—those that foresaw future shortages, conflict or strife—was over half (66 per cent) the number of respondents. This indicates a latent factor of misgiving of sizeable proportion.

The most important problems respondents saw for the nation were (in order): unemployment (83 per cent), educational opportunities (40 per cent), and rural development (33 per cent). Tribalism and corruption were mentioned by 22 per cent of the respondents as a national problem. Responsibility for solving such problems was placed on the government by most respondents. More government spending, for instance, was suggested as a solution by 35 per cent while only 13 per cent looked to hard work or dedication by people to solve problems. The government was also a major agency that the people saw for assisting them with personal problems. Approximately 30 per cent looked to government assistance for each of their problems.

Since independence, 67 per cent have seen at least some improvement in their lives, and 84 per cent saw an improvement in most people's lives. Although those interviewed are people who would have benefited from minimum wage and labor legislation and the building of new housing and other amenities, as a whole, improvements are seen in their own lives less often than in society generally—another possible problem area. While 10 per cent of those interviewed were unemployed or students, 50 per cent have one or more relatives unemployed. Thus satisfaction with government's efforts was fairly high, but if the government were not seen to be handling the problems of employment and welfare as expected of it, this support would be subject to deterioration.

HOPKINS, RAYMOND F. 1972. "Securing Authority: The View from the Top." *World Politics* 24, 3: pp. 271-292.

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The grant was used to study manuscript materials of eighteenth-century lawyers and jurists as background for an almost completed book tentatively entitled "The Transformation of American Law, 1780—1860."

The following archives were consulted: Columbia University Library (papers of James Kent); Columbia Law Library (papers and precedent books of eighteenth-century lawyers Joseph Murray and John Cham-