

THE ETHNIC GEOGRAPHY OF KENYA ON THE EVE OF INDEPENDENCE: THE 1962 CENSUS

With 1 figure, 4 tables and 1 supplement (III)

WILLIAM T. W. MORGAN

Zusammenfassung: Ethnogeographie Kenias am Vorabend der Unabhängigkeit: Der Zensus von 1962

Der Zensus von Kenia erfaßte 1962 die Bevölkerungszahl von 36 verschiedenen ethnischen Gruppen auf der Grundlage von 510 räumlichen Einheiten. Während die allgemeine Verbreitung der Ethnien bekannt war, war es jetzt erstmals möglich, den ethnischen Homogenitätsgrad der Siedlungsgebiete zu bestimmen und eine quantifizierende Verteilungskarte dieser Gruppen auf der Basis kleinerer räumlicher Einheiten zu entwerfen. Der Zeitpunkt, ein Jahr vor der Unabhängigkeit, macht das Belegmaterial besonders wertvoll. Berücksichtigt man die Definitionsprobleme von Stämmen, bleiben die Ergebnisse so bemerkenswert, daß sie eine Erklärung erfordern. 85% der kenianischen Bevölkerung lebt in ländlichen Siedlungsgebieten, in denen in mehr als der Hälfte der Fälle 95% der jeweiligen Nachbarn demselben Stamm angehören. Nur drei kleinere Stämme besitzen kein deutlich erkennbares Siedlungsgebiet, in dem sie über 50% der Bevölkerung stellen. Häufig können die Siedlungsgebiete physischgeographischen oder ökologischen Raumeinheiten in groben Zügen zugeordnet werden. Bemerkenswerte Gebiete mit einer ethnischen Mischstruktur sind einzig mit einem geringen Bevölkerungsanteil die Städte bzw. die *Highlands*, in denen sich verschiedene Stämme in der Nachbarschaft zu europäischen Siedlern niedergelassen haben, um dort eine Beschäftigung zu finden. Der Zensus dokumentiert die Situation im vorletzten Jahr der Kolonialverwaltung, die von 1895 bis 1963 dauerte. Danach entstand auf der Basis der aufgezählten unterschiedlichen ethnischen Gruppen ein souveräner, unabhängiger Staat, innerhalb dessen Grenzen aber die Verteilung der einbezogenen Bevölkerungsgruppen räumlich stabil blieb und zur Ursache gegenwärtiger und zukünftiger Probleme wurde. Dies bestätigt der Zensus von 1989 ebenso wie die zwischenethnischen Landstreitigkeiten, die mit Heftigkeit und Bevölkerungsverdrängung ausgetragen werden.

Summary: The 1962 census of Kenya recorded the numbers belonging to 36 different African 'tribes' within 510 geographical units. Whereas the general distribution of such tribes was familiar, it was possible for the first time to calculate the degree of ethnic homogeneity among local populations and to construct a map showing their distribution within precise boundaries and in quantifiable terms. Its timing, on the eve of independence, makes this evidence particularly valuable. Problems of the definition of tribes are acknowledged but the results are so striking as to require explanation. Of the Kenya African population, 85% were living in rural areas where, on average, 95% of their neighbours were of the same tribe. Only three small tribes did not have a recognisable 'homeland' where they numbered 50% or more of the population. Most such homelands can be broadly related to a physiographic or ecological setting. The only significant areas of ethnic mixing were in the small proportion of the population in towns or in the 'Highlands' alienated to European settlers where different tribes had entered to gain employment. The census showed the situation in the penultimate year of the colonial administration, which lasted from 1895 to 1963. A sovereign, independent state had been created from the separate ethnic groups enumerated but the communities which had been enclosed within its borders remained strongly localised, a source of contemporary and subsequent problems to its peoples. This was confirmed by the 1989 census and continued inter-tribal land disputes with associated violence and displacement of population.

Introduction

Ethnic groupings are an inheritance which is a major constituent of the political and socio-economic life of Kenya, as of many other African states, and which encapsulates much of its history and culture. The state of Kenya was a colonial creation resulting from a formative process which may be said to have commenced with the establishment of a British Protectorate on 1 July 1895 and which ended, or at least entered a new phase, with independence on 12 December 1963. It is fortunate therefore that the first comprehensive census, taken in 1962, supplies us with a quantitative and spa-

tial record of the ethnic groups at that time, providing a base line for comparison with previous and subsequent situations (KENYA 1964–1966). It was less fortunate that it was a period of particularly intense ethnic rivalry which threatened the stability of the emerging independent state. The removal of race restrictions on land ownership in the "White Highlands" (Fig. 1) in 1960 had focussed attention on which African groups were already in residence there or taking over the farms, and the political parties had strong tribal bases (BENNETT a. ROSBERG 1961; OKUMU 1975). Although the detailed map presented here was compiled in 1963, the author judged that its publica-

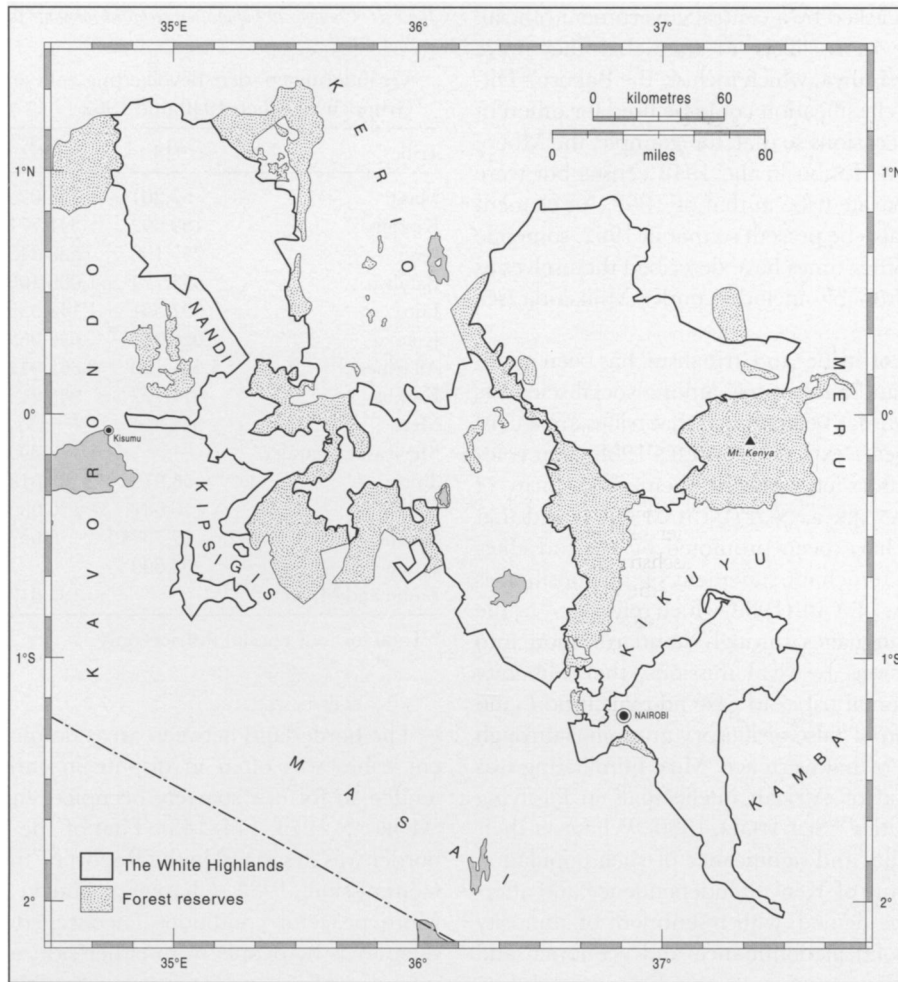


Fig. 1: The 'White Highlands': The heavy line encloses the 'Scheduled Areas' plus an area of Asian farming near Kisumu.

Die 'White Highlands': Die starke Linie umschließt die 'Scheduled Areas' sowie ein Gebiet asiatischer Landwirtschaft nahe Kisumu

tion at that moment could have exacerbated the situation and should not be done. This is consequently its first appearance.

1 'Tribe' and tribal lands

The census of 1962 allocated the indigenous African population (including Somali) between forty 'tribes', which was the ethnic category and term which was specified and which will therefore be used here. A tribe is a unit which evades satisfactory definition but which was widely recognised. It may be said to be a group to which the individual feels a strong sense of belonging and which is usually distinguished by a common language and culture and, since marriages are mostly

within it, may have inherited traits. Sometimes, of course, our social group is as much determined by our neighbours' responses as by our own inclinations. For this study we have to accept the classification used in the census, for which no justification was published. The ascriptions were those routinely used by the administration and which appear to have presented few problems to those recording or those being recorded. They were the socio-political groups encountered by the colonial power upon its entry and with which it had to deal. Administrative boundaries were normally constructed to contain them and this probably increased the sense of tribal identity at that level. Thus at an earlier stage, or in relation to neighbours, people might think of themselves as Bakusu but during the colonial

period or when asked by a central government official, they would be more likely to state that they were Baluhya (of the Luhya, which include the Bakusu). Different levels of classification could be used for different purposes and occasions so that, for example, the Mbere were classified as Embu in the 1948 census but were treated as a separate tribe in that of 1962. An element of choice may also be present so that in 1962, someone who would at other times have described themselves as Swahili were probably included under Mijikenda (see below).

The concept of 'tribe' and 'tribalism' has been a subject of debate and controversy among social scientists and historians. It has been argued that tribes are a construct of European 'experts' (HARRIES 1988), that colonial administrators encouraged them as a form of regionalism (SANGER a. NOTTINGHAM 1963) and that they may also have been promoted by African elites (VAIL 1989). A trenchant statement of this position is given in a review of VAIL (1989) which refers to: "... the invention of languages through standardisation into competing versions by rival missions, the deliberate creation of colonial tribes to ease administration, and the precipitation of false or illusory groupings through obstinate error or inadvertence. Most humiliating was the co-operation of African intellectuals in falsifying their own identities" (SOUTHALL 1990). Whatever their origins, the reality and significance of such population groups at the time of Kenyan independence and afterwards cannot be denied, with resentment of minority tribes at the political dominance and economic and other advantages accruing to the Kikuyu and Luo leading to complaints of 'Kikuyisation' (ROTHCHILD 1969). The relevance of ethnicity to the development process has subsequently become more widely recognised (DWYER a. DRAKAKIS-SMITH 1996; BERMAN 1998).

The identification of tribes was recognised as a problem in the earlier 1948 census. If the names of clans or sub-tribes had been given, the analysis would have been greatly prolonged since they were generally only known to persons conversant with the area. The tribal names to be used were therefore specified but even so they totalled some 340 in the three East African territories (MARTIN 1949, 312 and 317). In Kenya however, the thirteen main tribes accounted for 86.8% of the total African population. The close relationship between a tribe and a home area was demonstrated in the report on Geographical and Tribal Studies of the 1948 Census which listed the main tribes in each location (KENYA 1950). Outside of the "White Highlands", most locations recorded 90–100% membership of one tribe.

Table 1: Changes in population recorded for some tribes between 1948 and 1962

Veränderungen der Bevölkerungszahl einiger ethnischer Gruppen zwischen 1948 und 1962			
Tribes	1948	1962	Change %
Masai	67,201	154,079	+129.3
Kipsigis	159,692	341,771	+114.0
Kisii	255,108	538,343	+111.0
Baluhya	653,774	1,086,409	+ 66.2
Luo	697,551	1,148,335	+ 64.6
Kikuyu	1,026,341	1,642,065	+ 60.0
All tribes	5,251,120	8,365,942	+ 59.3
Kamba	611,722	933,219	+ 52.6
Meru	324,894		
Meru and Tharaka		478,395	+ 47.3
Taita	56,912	83,613	+ 47.0
Nandi	116,681	170,085	+ 45.8
Swahili	12,757*	8,657	- 32.1
Embu	203,690		
Embu and Mbere		133,819	- 34.3

* Total for four coastal districts only

The borderland between areas dominated by different tribes was often in dispute in earlier times and tended to form a sparsely occupied "no-man's land" (MORGAN 1973, 144–145). That of the Kikuyu-Masai border was described in the Report of the Kenya Land Commission, 1933, Chapter 2 and in the Evidence. More peaceful conditions encouraged settlement of such areas by people from either side, a feature widespread in Africa and characterised as "the descent from the hills" (GLEAVE 1966). In traditional society, expansion of the home area also took place by incursion into that of a neighbour, peacefully or otherwise. In this way, it was possible for a tribe with an increasing population to take more land for its maintenance from that of a weaker neighbour, most likely one with a diminishing population. Tribal boundaries would thus be adjusted to accommodate differences in rates of population growth. The colonial government attempted to stop such disputes over land by a system of reserves or "native land units" allocated to specific tribes. Since land within such reserves was held by customary law, often with strong communal rights, it was generally impossible in practice for individuals to move from their own reserve to one belonging to another tribe. The boundaries of reserves were only very rarely varied, while the population within them grew at different rates, so that after a time, population densities got out of step with natural resources.

The tribal nature of land holding was recognised by the creation of these reserves restricted to one tribe.

Although some were of an earlier date, most such tribal areas were defined in 1926 and placed under the Native Lands Trust Ordinance in 1930. The important Report of the KENYA LAND COMMISSION (1933) (the "Carter Commission") maintained this tribal basis to land allocation and extended it to the boundaries of the European Highlands which were also to be defined by Order in Council and subject to safeguards analogous to those of the African reserves (Report 1933, par. 2077 and 2152). Despite minor exceptions, including 'Native Leasehold Areas' and 'Class D' lands, tribal and customary rights remained the basis of African land policy until the Report of the EAST AFRICA ROYAL COMMISSION 1953–1955 (1955), which recommended a new law to promote private ownership of land and the abandonment of policies which maintained customary tenures and sectional land reservations (Conclusion, para. 18). Legal restrictions on land ownership by tribe or race were removed from African lands by the Native Lands Registration Ordinance and the Land Control (Native Lands) Ordinance in 1959 and from the European Highlands by the Land Control Regulations made in 1961 under the authority of the Kenya (Land) Order in Council, 1960 (MORGAN 1963).

Many unofficial studies of tribal populations and their distributions had been made, mostly of individual tribes, in studies usually conducted by social anthropologists. Useful summaries of these up to the 1950s were contained in the volumes of the Ethnographic Survey of Africa published by the INTERNATIONAL AFRICAN INSTITUTE (1952–1962) and edited by DARYLL FORDE. A tribal map of Eastern Africa in two sheets at a scale of 1 : 3 million was drawn and published by the Base Survey Company, East African Engineers, 1943, and a volume on Tribal maps of East Africa and Zanzibar by GOLTHORPE and WILSON (1960) was published by the East African Institute of Social Research in 1960.

2 Population records before 1962

An account of the censuses of Kenya and official estimates of the African population up to and including that of 1962 is given in Vol. III of the 1962 Report (published 1966), with more detail of the earlier records in KUCZYNSKI (1949) and MARTIN (1949). Following the transfer of the Provinces of Kisumu and Naivasha from Uganda to the East Africa Protectorate in 1902, the native population was estimated at 4 million, which figure remained in the subsequent Colonial Office Lists, although the Annual Blue Book for 1911–1912 gave only 2,483,500. The Province of Jubaland was

ceded to Italy in 1915, leaving Kenya approximately within its present borders, for which the official estimates of the native population rose from 2,549,300 in 1925 to 3,825,533 in 1944 (KUCZYNSKI 1949, 144–145).

Official estimates of African population before and between censuses were based principally on Hut and Poll Tax returns and records under the Native Registration Ordinance, 1915, which became operative in 1920, by which every male native apparently over the age of 16 years should have been registered and been issued with a registration certificate (a "kipande"). The inadequacies of these sources were examined by KUCZYNSKI (1949, 133–143). Of the registration records he emphasised that "their demographic value is nil" (p. 143), but it may well be that in limited geographical areas a detailed examination of both these sources would be a fruitful field for research in historical geography.

The first complete census of the population of Kenya was taken in 1948, the only one prior to that of 1962 (EAST AFRICAN STATISTICAL DEPARTMENT 1950 and KENYA 1953). The total population was given as 5,407,599 of whom 5,252,753 were classified as Africans and 154,846 as non-Africans. This included estimates of the population for certain northern areas totalling 219,000. The previous estimate of the African population for 1948 had been 4,055,000, a discrepancy mostly attributable to an underestimate of the ratio of dependants to adult males in the tax registers (Census 1962, III, p. 2).

3 The 1962 Census

The census of 1962 was taken on the night of 15/16th August and was followed by a detailed sample census. Special arrangements were made for the sparsely populated and largely nomadic inhabitants of the Northern Province where the count was effected in parts on a *de jure* basis and also partly by sampling. An account of the enumeration and the care taken to check the results is given in Vol. III of the Report. The total population, including in transit, amounted to 8,636,263 of whom 8,365,942 were recorded as African and Somali, 176,613 Asian, 55,759 European, 34,048 Arab and 3,901 others. A geographical introduction to the census of 1962 was published by MORGAN and SHAFFER (1966) including maps at a scale of 1:1 million showing the distribution of the whole population by dots and its density in rural areas by shading, based on 510 location, wards, divisions or communities.

The African and Somali population was grouped into 40 tribes. Over half (57.8%) of the population consisted of four tribes, Kikuyu, Luo, Luhya and Kamba and over three quarters (78.3%) of the eight largest, including the Kisii, Meru, Mijikenda and Kipsigis. A comparison of tribal populations as recorded in the Censuses of 1948 and 1962 provides a warning of their inexact nature. Table 1 shows the totals for some of the major tribes, from which it can be seen that the rate of inter-census increase was reasonable for some but for others it was unlikely (e.g. Kisii, Kipsigis, Masai, Embu and Swahili). One cause of error is illustrated by the decrease of 34% in the number recorded as Embu. Most of this is explained by the large number of Kikuyu residents in the part of Embu which, following the report of the Regional Boundaries Commission, 1962, was subsequently excised to form Kirinyaga District. In 1948 most residents in the relevant divisions, Ndia and Gichugu, were reported as Embu but in 1962 as Kikuyu. Similarly, in 1948 the four coastal districts alone recorded 12,757 Swahili but in 1962 there were only 8,657 for the entire country. This was a category where the element of personal choice was more than usually present and some who would have referred to themselves as Swahili in 1948 may have described themselves as either Arab or by the omnibus term Mijikenda in the changed political and social climate of 1962 (MORGAN 1973, 169–171; WILLIS 1993).

4 Mapping the tribes

Tribal affiliation was reported by location, ward or township in Vol. III of the Census Report. Very few of these boundaries were available in published form but they were obtained, largely through the co-operation of District Commissioners, and reproduced in MORGAN and SHAFFER (1966) and were used in the accompanying maps of the total population. For each location, the percentage accounted for by the most numerous tribe was calculated and is represented by four categories of shading: 90–100%, 75–89.9%, 50–74.9% and less than 50% (Supplement III). This enabled a heavier boundary line to be drawn around areas within which every location contained a majority of the same tribe (which we may call 'homelands') while leaving the location or ward boundary shown. The population of townships was not included. Out of the total population of 8,318,070 African, only 420,459 (5.0%) were recorded in townships. The only tribe significantly affected by this exclusion was the Swahili, which was 49.3% urban and which is not represented on the map. Previous

accounts of tribal distributions were generalised by being related to the extensive Districts. By using the smaller units, the concentration of the tribal populations and the sharp boundaries between them could be mapped with greater precision and quantified, for the first time across the entire country.

A summary of the tribal populations is provided by Table 2. In Tables 2 and 4 the sub-divisions of the Somali have been amalgamated. Of the Kenya African population, 85.1% lived in a location or ward in which 50% or more were of their own tribe, with 5.0% in townships (some being within the tribal area) and 9.9% elsewhere. The homelands were defined by the 50% boundary but within them the average dominance was as high as 94.7% (7,075,859 out of 7,473,329). The fact that in 1962, 85% of the African population lived in a tribal homeland where, on the average, 95% of their neighbours were of their own tribe is very relevant to our understanding of the political and social problems of the time (BENNETT a. ROSBERG 1961, 27–29).

The area, population and density of the homelands varied greatly, as was to be expected in a country containing extremes of very sparsely populated arid plains and intensively settled areas of high and reliable rainfall on very fertile soils (MORGAN a. SHAFFER 1966). The surprisingly low density given for the Kikuyu homeland was because it included so much of the relatively sparsely populated "White Highlands" in which Kikuyu lived but did not own the land. In the traditionally Kikuyu Districts of Kiambu, Fort Hall and Nyeri, the densities were much higher (1,444, 1,272, and 1,108 p. sq.km.). The meaning of the density of population also became imprecise where the population was concentrated along a river, as with the Pokomo, or where there was a gradation into wilderness along a border, as with the Mijikenda, in which cases the alignment of an administrative boundary greatly affected the density shown.

5 Tribal homelands

Most tribal homelands can be seen to have had an inexact but real relationship to environmental features of relief, rainfall and ecology. They are themselves ecological features but being of human rather than animal populations, factors of culture and history were also involved. Cultural features, including language, writing, marriage and land arrangements and mobility in general, influences whether a tribe grows by accretion and remains united as it grows, or divides into separate entities. Historical influences include demographic trends, relationships with neighbours and the length of

Table 2: *Tribes of Kenya and their homelands in 1962*

Ethnische Gruppen Kenias und ihre Siedlungsgebiete 1962

Tribe	Population	% in Homeland	% in Towns	Homeland area sq.km	% majority tribe	Density p.p.sq.km
Kikuyu	1,642,065	80.4	8.6	18,192	91.5	90.3
Luo	1,148,355	86.6	5.2	9,559	95.2	121.4
Luhya	1,086,409	80.6	5.6	7,291	92.6	149.0
Kamba	933,219	88.7	5.9	25,809	98.2	36.2
Kisii	538,343	94.8	0.7	1,942	99.1	277.2
Meru	439,921	96.4	1.1	5,170	97.7	85.1
Mijikenda	414,887	88.0	11.0	17,879	93.2	23.2
Kipsigis	341,771	78.6	1.2	5,074	94.9	67.4
Nandi	170,085	62.9	1.9	1,906	90.7	89.2
Masai	154,079	80.1	0.9	34,566	90.2	4.5
Tugen	109,691	93.2	0.9	5,157	97.5	21.3
Elgeyo	100,871	88.7	0.5	984	96.2	102.5
Embu	95,647	85.6	5.5	487	96.2	196.4
Taita	83,613	81.0	13.6	1,676	93.9	49.9
Pokot	76,537	95.7	0.2	8,780	92.7	8.7
Iteso	72,357	58.6	1.3	575	90.1	125.8
Marakwet	66,965	96.8	0.3	881	95.3	76.0
Kuria	41,885	90.3	1.8	572	97.4	73.2
Tharaka	38,474	75.1	0.7	1,831	87.5	21.0
Mbere	38,172	95.5	1.0	1,494	95.3	25.6
Sabaot	28,012	41.7	0.1	158	52.3	177.3
Nderobo	14,378	71.0	0.4	1,010	92.4	14.2
Bajun	11,280	65.9	15.0	2,776	74.0	4.1
Swahili/Shirazi	8,657	—	49.3	—	—	—
Taveta	4,855	—	3.0	—	—	—
Boni/Sanye	4,797	—	2.4	—	—	—
Njemps	4,681	88.0	0.3	715	78.3	6.5
Northern Province:						
Somali	275,241	97.0	1.8	127,775	99.0	2.2
Turkana	181,387	92.0	1.2	63,188	99.7	2.9
Boran	58,346	95.8	2.2	39,780	97.5	1.5
Samburu	48,750	96.5	0.5	18,542	97.2	2.6
Pokomo	30,350	93.1	1.0	5,682	89.1	5.3
Rendille	13,724	97.6	1.8	22,805	100.0	0.6
Orma	11,646	89.0	1.3	30,021	96.6	0.4
Gabbra	11,478	97.9	0.6	32,458	99.7	0.4
Sakuye	1,681	83.5	5.3	925	94.9	1.8
Not stated	15,481	—	11.9	—	—	—
TOTAL	8,318,070	85.1	5.0	495,660	94.7	16.8

time a tribe has been in occupation. They help to determine whether a tribe fits into a geographical unit, shares it with others, or expands beyond it. Some tribes occupied a distinctive feature so that, for example, we can describe the Taita of the Taita Hills or the Tugen of the Kamasia Ridge. Where the natural unit is extensive or the tribal population relatively small, it may be shared by more than one tribe, such as the division of the northeast of the country between Somali, Boran, Gabbra and Rendille or, on a more

compact scale but with larger populations, the division of the eastern slopes of Aberdare-Mt. Kenya between the Kikuyu, Embu and Meru. It may well be that with populations with little internal mobility and not traditionally literate, the undisturbed occupation of an area over a long period would encourage fission as families, clans and dialects grow apart, e. g. Luhya. By contrast, a group which has entered and taken over an area within the last few generations might be expected to have more cohesion, e. g. Luo (OGOT 1967). The loca-

tion of a tribe within an area mostly containing one type of natural ecology would seem to be the most usual. Since they are rural communities, this provides opportunities for an agricultural or pastoral system common to the majority of the tribe to emerge with a consequent degree of homogeneity in material culture.

A critical situation appeared to exist where a tribe was occupying a homeland which straddled two major ecological zones. In this case, the two portions of the tribe were finding themselves exploiting a different environment with different techniques and thus developing a contrasting life-style which leads to some social differentiation. Thus the Kamba recognise the distinction between those of the more hilly and moist Machakos District (Ulu or 'the high country') and those of the drier and more low-lying Kitui District who were sometimes referred to as Adaisu or Athaisu (MIDDLETON a. KERSHAW 1965, 97). The Pokot, (formerly known as Suk) contain a stronger contrast between the *pi pa pax*, the 'corn people', of the hills and the *pi pa tic*, the 'cattle people' of the plains (HUNTINGFORD 1969). If this situation had continued unchanged, it can be hypothesised that culture, language and group identification would have diverged sufficiently for the dichotomous sections to become recognised as separate tribes. Just such a process may have divided the Embu and the Mbere, and the Meru and the Tharaka.

Five tribes are shown as occupying more than one homeland but in each case one of these was clearly the original homeland supporting the great majority of the tribes-people. Of the 933,219 Kamba, 823,963 (88.7%) were living in the homeland extending from the margins of the highlands eastward to the boundary of the unpopulated *nyika* bushland. However, they traditionally maintained links with the coast and formed trading caravans across the intervening empty belt and they took advantage of a government settlement scheme in the coastal Shimba Hills after 1953, where they only numbered 2,586 but comprised 73.6% of that one location. The small outliers of the Kipsigis and Masai homelands (containing 6,263 and 5,015 respectively) occurred in the Trans-Mara area where there was a mixture of Masai (Purko), Kipsigis and Nandi, complicated by official efforts to improve the pastoral system by ranching and tsetse control and with some cultivation introduced (KENYA MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE 1962).

The Kikuyu homeland was a special case, consisting of the major area with three separated segments. The traditional Kikuyu heartland lay in the Districts of Kiambu, Fort Hall and Nyeri and the western portion of Embu, subsequently excised as Kirinyaga District. These contained the middle and lower slopes of the

eastern Aberdares and the southern side of Mt Kenya which, in 1962, were occupied by well over 90% Kikuyu with individual divisions at over 1300 per sq. km. With the alienation of land for European settlement in adjacent Districts, it is not surprising that much of the labour in such Districts was Kikuyu (MORGAN 1963; SORRENSON 1968; FUREDI 1976; WAMBAA a. KING 1976). Thus, by 1962, the Thika Plains to the east, northern Nyeri and Nanyuki to the north and the central Rift Valley from Naivasha to Nakuru and Thomson's Falls contained a majority of Kikuyu. These contiguous areas contained 1,294,869 Kikuyu out of a Kenyan African population of 1,396,569 (92.7%). On the western side of the Highlands were three isolated locations which held over 50% Kikuyu, namely Kipkabus-Lessos (18,766 out of 36,374 – 51.6%), Ravine (6412 out of 9545 – 67.2%) and a small portion of Njoro location separated from the remainder by a forest reserve. Most of these areas were in the occupation of the Masai before the imposition of colonial rule and the change from a population of predominantly pastoral Masai to agricultural Kikuyu was forecast in a remarkable passage in ROUTLEDGE, W.S. a. K. (1910, 349). Writing of the Masai, they said: "The nations that he formerly drove back into the forest – the Akikuyu and the Akamb'a – will now rapidly creep out again and re-occupy the country under the aegis of the white man, whose purpose they serve, and the Masai will remain but a name."

Another special case, for very different reason, is that of the two very widely separated locations which contained a majority of Nderobo: Olungerone, on the southern margin of the Mau upland (5,453 out of 5,918 – 92.1%) and Mukugodo, hill land on the northern edge of the Laikipia Plateau (4,769 out of 5,130 – 92.8%). These account for 71% of the tribe who appear to have been a widespread hunting and gathering people in the past but who elsewhere had been absorbed by other communities.

Only three small groups were completely without a homeland, in the sense of a location or ward in which they numbered a half or more of the inhabitants. The Bonyi/Sanye are a scattered hunting and gathering people, comparable to the Nderobo. They were few in number and were dispersed in Kilifi-Malindi, Lamu, Tana River and Garissa Districts. Of the 4,855 Taveta in Kenya, 4,636 were living in the Taveta Division/Location in Taita District on the border with Tanzania, but they only accounted for 35.3% of the total. Taveta is a border railway settlement and it was shared with Taita, Kamba, Luhya, Luo and others. More Taveta were living in the Pare highlands across the border. Nearly a third (32.7%) of the Swahili/Shirazi were in

the large town of Mombasa, with the remainder widely dispersed in Coastal Province, although with notable concentrations in the far south (15.9% in Msambweni, Vanga and Pongwe) and in the north, around Lamu. It is striking that nowhere did the ancient Swahili/Shirazi community occur in the majority while in two places at the Coast over fifty percent declared themselves Arab.

Areas where no one tribe was in the majority were widely scattered and mostly occurred in the 'White Highlands' in areas at one time occupied by Masai and into which migration had taken place in search of employment. The Highland areas with a Kikuyu majority have been mentioned above but there were also two wards, Trans-Nzoia North West and Turbo-Kipkarren, where migration had created a Luhya predominance. Mixed populations outside the Highlands were at Taveta (see above), Witu/Mkunumbi (Bajun/Orma/Boni-Sanya), the Mombasa hinterland and the Uasin-Gishu/Emarti area of the Trans Mara (Masai/Kipsigis, see above).

6 Homelands and the physical environment

Despite the above qualifications, an environmental influence on the location of tribes is persuasively suggested by a broad relationships between their homelands and their boundaries with physiographic and climatic patterns (MORGAN 1973; KESBY 1977). This may be described in summary form.

6.1 Eastern flanks of the Aberdare Range and Mt Kenya

Traditional homeland of *Kikuyu*, *Embu* and *Meru*, from about 1500 m to 2200 m with mean annual rainfall (m. a. r.) of 1000–1500 mm on deep red lava-derived loamy soils carrying montane forest cleared for cultivation. On the lower slopes and plains at 1000–1200 m were *Mbere* and *Tharaka* with variable m. a. r. of 500–800 mm or less with soils derived from crystalline rocks bearing savanna with grazing and scattered cultivation. The dry rain-shadow to the north is occupied by the largely pastoral *Samburu*.

6.2 Eastern hills and Plains

Occupied by *Kamba* from the edge of Kikuyu lands (1500 m) eastwards with decreasing altitudes (to 600 m) and m. a. r. from over 800 mm to 500 mm and increasing temperatures. More hilly in the west, with better soils and more cultivation, to plains and more grazing eastwards giving way to tsetse-infested bush, a distinction associated with social differentiation (see above).

6.3 Western highlands

High, originally forested, western shoulder of the Rift Valley, with lava-derived soils. *Elgeyo* and *Marakwet* at altitudes up to 3000 m and m. a. r. up to 1500 mm: largely cultivators, including with irrigation channels down the Rift scarp. At generally lower altitudes, but above 1800 m, with m. a. r. of 1000–1500 mm in areas originally forested are the *Nandi* and *Kipsigis* with cultivated lava-derived soils but culturally favouring cattle-keeping. The *Sabaot* homeland is comparable, on the slopes of Mt Elgon. Distinct physiographic units are occupied by the *Tugen* homeland on a large ridge running into the Rift Valley and the *Kisii* homeland on a dissected plateau at 1950–2200 m rising 300 m above the surrounding plains and receiving a higher m. a. r. (1500–2000 mm). The homeland of the *Pokot* people is on the drier, rain-shadowed, northern edge of the highlands with a range of altitude from 1000 to 2000 m and of m. a. r. at the margins down to 500 mm, giving rise to contrasting ecologies and intra-tribal differences (see above). The *Nderobo* people occupy two hilly and partially forested homelands at the southern edge of the western and at the northern edge of the eastern shoulders of the Rift Valley.

6.4 Lake basin

Most of the drier plains rising gently from the shores of Lake Victoria (1133 m) to the edge of the higher ground represented by the Nyando Scarp and the Kisii Highlands (1500 m) are within the *Luo* Homeland with a range of soils derived from alluvium, young sediments or old crystalline rocks and with moderate m. a. r. of 750–1000 mm supporting a mixed cultivation and pastoral economy. Between the Luo land and the highlands represented in part by the Nandi Escarpment (1800 m) is an area of subdued relief occupied by the *Luhya* people with particularly well distributed and reliable rainfall of 1200–2000 mm, which permits intensive cultivation supporting very high densities of population. On its drier western border, a small section of the *Iteso* homeland extends from Uganda. Further south, the *Kuria* homeland extends from Tanzania in a zone of higher rainfall (over 1250 mm m. a. r.) between the drier area near the Lake and the dry, tsetse infested, Masai Mara Game Reserve to the east.

6.5 Dry plains

The plains surrounding the Highlands to the north, east and south decline from about 1500 m to sea level with an unreliable m. a. r. typically from 500 mm to 200 mm, supporting vegetation of bushland, semi-desert

scrub, herbs and grass, only inhabitable with the use of nomadic livestock. The colonial government attempted to stabilise the frontiers between mobile populations. Broadly, the *Turkana* occupied the area between Lake Turkana (Rudolf) and the escarpment forming the boundary with Uganda and the Karamojong. East of the Lake is shared between the *Gabbra* and the *Rendille*, with the *Boran* further east, who are able to use water draining from the Ethiopian highlands and Mt Kenya. The *Orma*, related to the *Boran*, were encouraged to move south and west of the Tana river to avoid the encroachment of the Somali groups and a "Somali Line" was administered to separate the *Boran*, the *Orma* and the small *Sakuye* group on the one side and the *Somali* on the other (MORGAN 1973, 216 and Fig. 7.1). The Somali clans extended from Somalia, with a nomadic pastoral economy based especially on the use of camels. The *Masai* (or *Maasai*) were now occupying grazing lands south of the Highlands but formerly extended into some of its better watered grasslands during the dry season but had surrendered them to the "White Settlers" after 1904. A section of the tribe had occupied the Uasin Gishu plateau at an even earlier period.

6.6 The coast region

This region of good rainfall (e. g. 1200 mm m. a. r. with ten months over 50 mm) and access to fishing and maritime trading was occupied south of the Tana by a number of sub-groups forming the *Mijikenda* homeland with a m. a. r. diminishing to 500 mm in the interior (the "Taru Desert"), and to the north of the Tana, with poorer rainfall, by the *Bajun*. The *Pokomo* bordered the Tana River, bounded by the Somali and Orma lands away from its banks. Within the administrative Province of the Coast, the *Taita* inhabited a physically distinctive unit, the Taita Hills, rising from 700 m altitude and 200 mm m. a. r. to over 1500 m and a m. a. r. of 1200 mm.

7 Homelands and the international boundaries

Many homelands on the borders of the country are bisected by an international boundary, thus truncating their representation on our map. These borders are inherited from the colonial origins of Kenya as a state and it is commonly observed that such colonial boundaries have an imperfect relationship to ethnic groupings. Three of Kenya's international borders conform to this general case, being established by negotiation by the United Kingdom with other states recognised in

international law, i. e. Germany, Italy, Zanzibar and Ethiopia. Their alignment was influenced by four factors; the strength of the competing claims of each state, widespread ignorance of the detailed human and physical geography of the interior, and the convenience of administration, qualified by consideration for ethnic groupings, sometimes involving treaties or agreements with indigenous tribal leaders. The other two international boundaries form a special case, those of Kenya with Uganda and the Sudan being established when they were controlled by the same power. These colonial boundaries persist except for very minor adjustments. Member states of the Organisation of African Unity affirmed in 1964 that they would respect the borders existing on their achievement of independence, although the Kenya-Somali border dispute, that existed prior to independence, remains unresolved. The legal status of Kenya's international boundaries were described in a very detailed study by MCEWAN (1971) and their evolution is depicted by the maps in the Atlas of Kenya (KENYA 1970, 84–85).

In East Africa, the colonial powers entered from the coast, where the extent of the Kenya portion derives from agreements with the Sultan of Zanzibar by Germany, Britain and Italy, or by their trading companies, confirmed between the latter three governments. The border with Tanzania cuts through the Swahili/*Mijikenda* inhabited belt and then follows two straight, offset lines, at first through a zone of negligible population and later partitions the *Masai*, the *Luo*, the *Kuria* and *Kipsigis/Masai* zone. The areas near the Lake would have been little known to the German and British boundary negotiators. Only the small stretch east of Kilimanjaro was influenced by treaties made with tribal rulers, keeping separate *Chagga* (Tanzania) and *Taita* (Kenya) people. The northern limit of the Kenya coast similarly divides the *Swahili* (*Bajun*) between Kenya and the Somali Republic, formerly an Italian colony and previously part of the domain of the Sultan of Zanzibar. Inland, agreements between the British and the Italian governments bisect Somali population, mostly along a meridian or other straight lines. The boundary with Ethiopia was negotiated with the Ethiopian emperor based on competing claims of effective occupation rather than tribal affinities and essentially divides the arid nomad-inhabited plains from the rather better watered and more settled margins of the Ethiopian highlands.

The international boundary with Uganda was established between two British dependencies, so rivalry between the powers was absent and more consideration could be given to keeping tribal areas intact. A curious anomaly was the administration, for reasons of conve-

Table 3: *Population composition of towns, 1962*

Bevölkerungszusammensetzung der Städte 1962

Towns	Total population %	No %	Kenya African %	Asian %	European %	Arab %	Other %	Total %
Nairobi	266,794	1	56.6	32.4	8.0	0.4	2.6	100.0
Mombasa	179,575	1	57.1	24.3	2.9	9.9	5.8	100.0
5,000 to 100,000	175,574	16	72.3	16.7	4.1	3.9	3.0	100.0
2,000 to 4,999	48,991	16	81.9	11.2	1.8	1.0	4.3	100.0
Total	670,934	34	62.7	24.6	5.2	3.9	3.6	100.0

nience, of a portion of Pokot tribal territory (Karasuk) by Uganda although recognised as part of Kenya. This continued until July, 1970, long after the independence of both countries. The boundary between Turkana District and southern Sudan involved another special administrative arrangement to allow for changes in seasonal grazing in the Ilemi Triangle. In reviewing the accordance between international boundaries and those of tribal areas, allowance must be made for temporary or permanent migration and for the difference between residence by individuals or small groups and entire communities. On the ground and in detail agreement is seldom perfect.

8 *Ethnicity in towns*

Only 7.8% of the total population of Kenya, of all races, was recorded in towns in 1962, even with a lower limit of 2000 inhabitants, and only two exceeded 100,000, namely the capital, Nairobi and the port city of Mombasa (Table 3). They contained a very different ethnic mix from the rural homelands. It was only in the towns that the immigrant communities occurred in substantial proportions, in aggregate over a third of the inhabitants. The proportion increased the larger the settlement, from only 18.7% in towns less than 5000 population to 43.4% in Nairobi. Although the African component normally reflected the tribal composition of the adjacent or surrounding homeland, in Nairobi the Kikuyu were only 24.6% and in Mombasa the Mijikenda only 23.4% of the total of inhabitants. Of the smaller towns, 15 out of the 32 had a preponderance (over 50%) of one tribe, five being Kikuyu, three Kamba, one Luhya and one Mijikenda. This reflected the greater urbanisation of the Highlands in general (MORGAN 1969). The substantial presence of more than one tribe in most urban areas was associated with a degree of inter-action not always comfortable and in contrast to the Homelands (TAMARAKIN 1973). The alignment of township boundaries affect the statistical

evidence in that some towns had a peri-urban fringe of dense settlement just beyond the limit of urban regulations, of which Kisumu provided a striking example.

9 *Ethnicity, regions and the nation*

The census of 1962 has enabled us to quantify and map the extent to which the population and the land of Kenya were ethnically differentiated on the eve of independence. Of the Kenya African population, 85% were living in rural areas where 95% of their neighbours were of the same tribe. Of the total land area, 85% was comprised of such tribal "homelands", where one of the tribes was in a majority: over 50% of the inhabitants. The only considerable areas not so dominated were parts of the "White Highlands" inhabited by migrant labour from several tribes, or they were essentially uninhabited forest or wildlife reserves. Descriptive accounts make it clear that a similar pattern was met when the colonial administration was established in 1895. The only major change had been the creation of the "Highlands", diminishing the area occupied by the Masai and forming a curious variant of a tribal homeland where land rights were exclusive to Europeans but the greater number of the inhabitants were Africans of varied origins. Outside of the Highlands, the creation of 'Native Land Units' and 'Native Reserves' had been a recognition of ethnic localisation and helped to maintain it. Ethnic mixing was primarily restricted to the small urban populations. At its demise, it could be seen that while the period of colonial administration had brought great changes to the areas which had become the state of Kenya, it had done little to alter the regional pattern and intensity of ethnicity.

10 *Ethnic geography following independence*

In the decades following independence in 1963, the broad pattern of the ethnic geography of Kenya expe-

Table 4: Tribal predominance by Districts, 1962 and 1989

Dominanz ethnischer Gruppen in Distrikten 1962 und 1989		
Most numerous tribe as % of District population	Population as % of Kenya total	
	1962	1989
90 – 99.9	52.01	41.32
80 – 89.9	17.48	24.53
70 – 79.9	13.19	8.47
60 – 69.9	1.15	4.62
50 – 59.9	7.53	9.08
40 – 49.9	1.48	2.12
30 – 39.9	1.43	7.10
20 – 29.9	5.73	2.76
Mean predominance (50%)	91.88	87.98
Number of Districts	40	41

rienced only modest change, and its significance remained considerable. In the absence of detailed mapping comparable to that for 1962, the statistical evidence of change can be examined by a comparison of the District totals in the 1962 and 1989 censuses. Boundary changes qualify the precision of the comparison but it remains usefully indicative.

The Districts have been ranked by the proportion of the population belonging to the most numerous tribe present (Tab. 4). The predominance of any one tribe in the District occupying the mean population point fell from 91.88% to 88.98%. In some Districts of the former 'Scheduled areas', where land ownership had been restricted to Europeans, predominance actually increased. Between 1962 and 1989 the proportion of Kalenjin in Uasin Gishu increased from 31.0% to 55.0% and of Kikuyu in Nakuru from 53.4% to 59.7%. In the two largest towns, Nairobi and Mombasa, the predominance also increased but this was associated with an extension of boundaries into adjacent tribal areas.

Tribal allegiance remained a major factor in party politics, and hence of government, following independence. Negotiations with the colonial government had been complicated by the presence of two major African parties, the Kenya African National Union (KANU), perceived to be dominated by two large tribes, the Kikuyu and Luo from the centre and west, and the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU) essentially representing the smaller tribes, with its leader originating from Coast Province. This division continued through the first general election in 1961 and continued after independence, although KADU disbanded itself in 1964 and merged with the government party, KANU. Without detailing the convoluted political

history of the country, no meaningful political analysis could be made without reference to tribal dispositions. These changed over the years but remained of pervasive significance. In 1963–1964 the Swahili term "majimbo" expressed the fear of smaller ethnic groups of being dominated by the Kikuyu and Luo (OGOT a. OCHIENG 1995, 258) whereas by 1997 it stood for a federal system based on the ethnic settlements and self-determination of the various tribes inhabiting the country although it was also accused of being, in effect, a specific policy for the expulsion of all other ethnic groups from the land occupied before the colonial era by the Kalenjin and other pastoral groups allied to them (ABDULLAHI 1997, 202).

We have noted that the intense attachment of tribal communities to what they regarded as exclusively their land and its potential for conflict with others had been recognised by the colonial power in setting aside 'native reserves' for individual tribes. By 1959 it had been made legally possible for a member of any race or tribe to purchase or lease land in the African areas to which title had been registered and by 1961 similarly in the former European Highlands. The problem was that these legal de-restrictions did not diminish the resentment of the tribal communities to any incursions by members of another tribe, which eventually led to bloodshed. Accusations of political incitement were made and violent incidents became numerous just before a general election in 1992 and afterwards. ABDULLAHI (1997) quotes reports of 1,500 dead and 250,000 displaced. Violence and population displacements continued up to and beyond another election in 1997, reported in the local media. The relevant point is that most of these disturbances were in the Rift Valley Province and concerned claims that Kikuyu, Luo or Luhya had moved into the lands rightfully belonging to the Kalenjin or Masai. Considering the statistical evidence, its political relevance and the associated violence, the ethnic geography of Kenya had much the same characteristics and no less significance than that shown by the map of the census of 1962.

References

- ABDULLAHI, A. M. (1997): Ethnic clashes, displaced persons and the potential for refugee creation in Kenya: a forbidding forecast. In: *International Journal of Refugee Law* 9, 196–206.
- BENNETT, G. a. ROSBERG, C. G. (1961): *The Kenyatta Election: Kenya 1960–1961*. London.
- BERMAN, B. J. (1998): Ethnicity, patronage and the African State: the politics of uncivil nationalism. *African Affairs*. In: *African Affairs* 97, 305–341.

- DWYER, D. a. DRAKAKIS-SMITH, D. (Ed.) (1966): *Ethnicity and Development: Geographical Perspectives*. Chichester.
- EAST AFRICAN ROYAL COMMISSION 1953–1955 (1955): Report Cmd 9475. London.
- EAST AFRICAN STATISTICAL DEPARTMENT (1950): *African Population of Kenya Colony and Protectorate; Geographical and Tribal Studies* (Source: East African Population Census, 1948). Nairobi.
- FUREDI, F. (1976): The Kikuyu squatters in the Rift Valley, 1918–1929. In: OGOT, B.A. (Ed.): *Economic and Social History of East Africa* Hadith 5. Nairobi.
- GLEAVE, M. B. (1966): Hill settlements and their abandonment in tropical Africa. In: *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 40, 39–50.
- GOLDTHORPE, J. E. a. WILSON, F. B. (1960): *Tribal maps of East Africa and Zanzibar*. Kampala.
- HARRIES, P.(1988): The roots of ethnicity: discourse and the politics of language construction in south-east Africa. In: *African Affairs* 87, 25–52
- INTERNATIONAL AFRICAN INSTITUTE (1952–1962): *Ethnographic Survey of Africa, East Central Africa, Parts 3, 5, 7, 8, 12, 13*. London.
- KENYA (1953): *Report on the Census of the Non-native Population of Kenya 1948*. Nairobi.
- (1970): *Atlas of Kenya*. Nairobi.
- (1992): *Reports of the Parliamentary Select Committee to Investigate Ethnic Clashes in Western and Other Parts of Kenya*. Nairobi.
- (1994): *Kenya Population Census 1989*. Nairobi.
- KENYA DIRECTORATE OF ECONOMIC PLANNING (1964–1966): *Kenya Population Census 1962. Advance Report of Volumes I and II, Tables 1964; Vol. I. Populations of Census Areas by Sex and Age Groups, Tables 1964; Vol. II. Populations of Locations and County Council Wards by Race, Tribe and Sex, Tables 1965; Vol. III. African Population 1966; Vol. IV. Non-African Population 1966*. Nairobi.
- KENYA LAND COMMISSION (1933): *Report*. Nairobi.
- KENYA MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (1962): *African Land Development in Kenya, 1946–1962*. Nairobi.
- KESBY, J. D. (1977): *The Cultural Regions of East Africa*. London.
- KUCZYNSKI, R. R. (1949): *Demographic Survey of the British Colonial Empire. Vol. II East Africa etc*. London.
- MCEWAN, A. C. (1971): *International Boundaries of East Africa*. Oxford.
- MARTIN, C. J. (1949): *The East African population census; planning and enumeration*. In: *Population Studies* 3, 303–320.
- MORGAN, W. T. W. (1963): The ‘White Highlands’ of Kenya. In: *The Geographical Journal* 129, 140–155.
- (1969): Urbanization in Kenya: origin and trends. In: *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 46, 167–178.
- (1973): *East Africa*. London.
- MORGAN, W. T. W. a. SHAFFER, N. M. (1966): *Population of Kenya, Density and Distribution*. Nairobi.
- ODINGO, R. S. (1971): *The Kenya Highlands, Land Use and Agricultural Development*. Nairobi.
- OGOT, B. A. (1967): *History of the Southern Luo*. Nairobi.
- OKUMU, J. J. (1975): The problem of tribalism in Kenya. In: VAN DEN BERG (Ed.): *Race and Ethnicity in Africa*. Nairobi.
- OMINDE, S. H.(1965): *The Ethnic Map of the Republic of Kenya, Occasional Memoir no. 1, Department of Geography, University College, Nairobi*. Nairobi.
- (1968): *Land and population Movements in Kenya*. London.
- ROTHCHILD, D. (1969): Ethnic inequalities in Kenya. In: *Journal of Modern African Studies* 7, 689–711.
- ROUTLEDGE, W. S. a. K. (1910): *With a Prehistoric People*. London.
- ROYAL COMMISSION 1953–55 (1955): *East Africa Royal Commission 1953–55 Report, Cmd. 9475*. London.
- SANGER, S. a. NOTTINGHAM, J. (1963): The Kenya general election of 1963. In: *Journal of Modern African Studies* 2, 1–40.
- SOUTHALL, A. (1990): Review of VAIL (1989), in: *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 28, 341–342.
- SORRENSON, M. P. K.(1967): *Land reform in the Kikuyu Country*. Nairobi.
- TAMARAKIN, M. (1973): Tribal associations, tribal solidarity and tribal chauvinism in a Kenya town. In: *Journal of African History* 14, 257–274.
- THROUP, D. A. a. HORNSBY, C. (1999): *Multiparty Politics in Kenya*. Oxford.
- VAIL, L. (Ed.) (1989): *The Growth of Tribalism in Southern Africa*. London, Los Angeles.
- WAMBAA, R. M. a. KING, K. (1976): The political economy of the rift valley: a squatter perspective. In: OGOT, B. A. (Ed.): *Economic and Social History of East Africa, Hadith 5*. Nairobi.
- WILLIS, J. (1993): *Mombasa, the Swahili, and the Making of the Mijikenda*. Oxford.

