

*Government and Rural Development in East Africa:  
essays on political penetration*

# INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL STUDIES

SERIES ON THE DEVELOPMENT  
OF SOCIETIES

VOLUME II



INTERNATIONAAL INSTITUUT  
VOOR SOCIALE STUDIËN - 'S GRAVENHAGE

# GOVERNMENT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN EAST AFRICA

Essays on Political Penetration

Edited by

L. CLIFFE  
J.S. COLEMAN  
M.R. DOORNBOS



MARTINUS NIJHOFF / THE HAGUE / 1977

© 1977 by *Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, Netherlands*  
*All rights reserved, including the right to translate or to*  
*reproduce this book or parts thereof in any form*

ISBN-13: 978-90-247-1884-9 e-ISBN-13: 978-94-010-1030-6  
DOI: 10.1007/978-94-010-1030-6

## CONTRIBUTORS

### CHAMBERS, ROBERT

Fellow of the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex, specializing in rural development. Experience includes the management of rural development projects, lecturing in public administration, rural research in East Africa, Sri Lanka and India, and rural consultancies in Ghana, Kenya, Burundi and Botswana. Until 1977 was Evaluation Officer with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

### CLIFFE, LIONEL

Worked for ten years in East Africa; at one time as Research Fellow at Makerere University, then at Dar es Salaam University, finishing up as Director of Development Studies. Until 1976 Reader in Politics at the University of Zambia. At present lectures on problems of underdevelopment at the University of Durham.

### COLEMAN, JAMES

Formerly Professor of Political Science at the University of California, Los Angeles, and currently with the Education for Development Programme of the Rockefeller Foundation at the National University of Zaire.

### DOORNBOS, MARTIN

Research Fellow, Makerere Institute of Social Sciences 1965-67; now teaches political science at the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague and at Leiden University.

### HARRIS, BELLE

Tutor in politics at Kivukoni College, Dar es Salaam 1964-68; lecturer on Local Government at the Institute of Administration, Ahmadu Bello University 1970-73, on secondment from the Institute of Local Government Studies, University of Birmingham 1973-75. Currently Tutor in Public Administration at the North East London Polytechnic.

### HYDEN, GORAN

Has spent the last twelve years in East Africa teaching at the universities in Kampala, Nairobi and most recently in Dar es Salaam as Professor of Political Science. Has done research on rural development and administration, and management of public institutions in East Africa.

HELLEINER, GERALD

Has been Assistant Professor, Yale University; Research Fellow, Nigerian Institute of Social & Economic Research; Director, Economic Research Bureau, Dar es Salaam; Visiting Fellow, Institute of Development Studies, Sussex; currently Professor, Department of Political Economy, University of Toronto.

LAMB, GEOFF

Studied at the Universities of Witwatersrand and Sussex; has done research in East Africa, the Caribbean, and on British administration. Currently Fellow and Deputy Director of the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex.

LEONARD, DAVID

Has done teaching and research at the University of Nairobi 1969-73, and at the University of Dar es Salaam 1974-76. Currently Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of California, Berkeley.

MAFEJE, ARCHIE

Former Head of the Department of Sociology, Dar es Salaam University and Visiting Professor of Social Anthropology and Sociology of Development, Institute of Social Studies, The Hague. Did field work in Uganda in 1966-67 while working as Research Fellow at the Centre of African Studies, Cambridge.

MUTISO, GIDEON

Associate Professor, Department of Government, University of Nairobi. Studied and taught in the USA 1960-70.

RIGBY, PETER

Professor of Sociology, Makerere University 1968-74; Visiting Professor, New York University 1967-68; Foreign Visiting Fellow, Churchill College, Cambridge 1973-74; Visiting Professor, Princeton University 1974. Currently Professor of Sociology, University of Dar es Salaam.

SHARMAN, ANNE

Associate of the Makerere Institute of Social Research 1965-67. Since 1969 lecturer in Sociology at the University of East Anglia.

SWARTZ, MARC

Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, San Diego. Worked among the Bena in Western Tanzania in 1962-63 and in 1967; is at present completing a study among the Swahili of Mombasa.

THODEN VAN VELZEN, H.U.E.

Professor of Cultural Anthropology at the University of Utrecht. Research Fellow of the Afrika-Studiecentrum, University of Leiden 1966-71.

VINCENT, JOAN

Professor of Anthropology at Barnard College, Columbia University since 1975. Visiting lecturer in Political Science, Makerere University College 1966-67; Fellow, East African Institute of Social Research 1966-67; Burgess Fellow, Columbia University 1967-68; John Simon Guggenheim Fellow 1973-74; Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex 1976.

## CONTENTS

Contributors	v
Preface	xI

### I. INTRODUCTION 'PENETRATION' AND THE EAST AFRICAN CONTEXT

James Coleman, <i>The Concept of Political Penetration</i>	3
Lionel Cliffe, <i>'Penetration' and Rural Development in the East African Context</i>	19

### II. THE COLONIAL LEGACY AND THE DYNAMICS OF POLITICAL CONTROL

Joan Vincent, <i>Teso in Transformation: colonial penetration in Teso District, Eastern Uganda, and its contemporary significance</i>	53
Peter Rigby, <i>Local Participation in National Politics: Ugugo, Tanzania</i>	81
Archie Mafeje, <i>The Legitimacy of the Uganda Government in Buganda</i>	99

### III. INSTITUTIONS AND STRATEGIES FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Robert Chambers, <i>Creating and Expanding Organizations for Rural Development</i>	119
Gerald Helleiner, <i>Economics, Incentives and Development Penetration</i>	139
Belle Harris, <i>Leadership and Institutions for Rural Development: a case study of Nzega District</i>	151



## IV. DISTRICT POLITICS AND RURAL TRANSFORMATION

Geoff Lamb, <i>Promoting Agrarian Change: penetration and response in Murang'a, Kenya</i>	171
Goran Hyden, <i>Political Engineering and Social Change: a case study of Bukoba District, Tanzania</i>	183
Ann Sharman, <i>Improving Nutrition in Bukedi District, Uganda</i>	201

## V. THE DYNAMICS OF RURAL SOCIETIES

H.U.E. Thoden van Velzen, <i>Staff, Kulaks and Peasants: a study of a political field</i>	223
David Leonard, <i>The Social Structure of the Agricultural Extension Services in the Western Province of Kenya</i>	251
Marc Swartz, <i>Legitimacy and Coercion in Bena Politics and Development</i>	273
Gideon Mutiso, <i>A Low Status Group in Centre-Periphery Relations: Mbai Sya Eitu</i>	293

## VI. CONCLUSION

Martin Doornbos, <i>Recurring Penetration Strategies in East Africa</i>	317
---	-----

## PREFACE

The gestation period of this collection has been lengthy even by academic standards. Some of our long-suffering contributors prepared their original drafts for a workshop held in Nairobi in 1967, and although they have all up-dated their contributions they are still essentially reporting on research conducted in the late 1960s. However, we feel that their various findings and analyses of the issues they respectively treat have a continuing validity in our comprehension of the problem of rural development. Other contributions reporting on more recent work have been incorporated at different times since, most of them not commissioned especially for this symposium but all adding something to our understanding of the problem.

The slow accumulation of material which makes up this final collection parallels an evolution in our own collective thinking, if indeed not that of most students of 'development' over the past decade. The progression has not been towards final clarification of the complex and changing East African realities, nor towards formulation of an accepted model for their analysis; rather, it has been marked by the questioning of the initial, somewhat simplistic assumptions with which some of us started out and a continuing debate and widening polarization of views about the significance of that process of government 'penetration' of the rural areas which is our focus, about the positive or negative value of 'development' policies in East Africa and, indeed, about the appropriate theoretical approaches to the study of 'development' in general.

When this project was first conceived in 1967 the editors were all members of a political science research unit in the Institute of Social Research at Makerere University College in Uganda. The term 'penetration' then seemed to offer a possible rubric under which to group much research, typical of the period, on which they and several others were engaged. There had been in the mid-1960s a shift in scholarly attention away from the overarching studies of national political systems to more detailed explorations of more specific fields. Many of these focussed on local politics or central-local relations, on the politics of a particular institution or of some social or economic programme, and inevitably the structures and processes involved were for the most part concerned with rural development. Many of the researchers shared a perspective that welcomed the recent achievement of independence and sympathised with the new national states and their aspirations – although in retrospect that translated perhaps too readily into support for the new national power-holders.

In these circumstances it was not surprising that the general research climate was characterized by the hope that investigations might make some 'practical' contributions to 'development' – in a socio-economic sense by indicating how official bodies could implement and replicate programmes more 'effectively'; such improvements in the 'capacity' of institutions in running their administrations or handling populations were in turn seen as contributive to a process of 'political development'.

Given such a perspective the new theoretical tools of American political science which attempted to isolate the conditions and components of this process of 'political development' were assured of a sympathetic initial reception. But while some of our colleagues used a methodology based on this functionalist approach and have continued to uphold it, others have favoured a different perspective. Indeed, the present volume benefits considerably from the fruits of analyses by sociologists, social anthropologists and others who bypassed rather than confronted the functionalist models. However, even in the early stages of this enterprise various participants were stimulatingly sceptical not so much of the concept of 'penetration', but of an approach which tended to see problems from the perspective of the 'elite', the 'modernisers'. In fact, it was evident that the model that derives most directly from that view, i.e. which conceptualizes the penetration process as simply a relationship between a 'centre' and the citizenry at the 'periphery', was no adequate base on which to organize our case studies. Thus the very ordering of the essays has recognized the need to understand relations between at least three different levels: from the face-to-face contacts within a local community through various strata of sub-national political organization to the national level and beyond. And far from seeing power as residing merely at the centre, analyses have to see power-holders as operating at each of these levels, and view them as representing groups and interests within the society rather than as elements withdrawn from, or situated above, it.

Beyond the negative conclusion that rejects an elite-mass view of politics as simplistic, no new consensus is represented here. The actual post-independence trends in East Africa have prompted various contributors to make more fundamental and controversial departures from the 'orthodoxy' of the 1960s. They have pointed to the privileged, class character of the elites who have come to power, and to the exploitation and inequality resulting from a pattern of economic growth which they prefer to term 'underdevelopment'. Indeed, most of the assessments of rural development programmes contained in the later essays clearly document the inequalities that are generated, even if they disagree about the causes and prescriptions for these tendencies. For these authors, the key questions are not concerned with the capabilities of the state to achieve *any* objective but *who* is doing the penetrating and for what *purposes*. These two issues have been given further significance within East Africa ever since Tanzania began to set itself apart from its neighbours and to attempt a

very different development path, one that seeks to promote equality through a nationally integrated economy and which relegates the 'elite' to being a central part of the *problem* and not the solution. Not surprisingly, with a socialist alternative at least on the agenda, in assessing these different development experiences and the conditions which gave rise to them, some analysts have been influenced by the methods of historical materialism rather than those of comparative history.

In addition to the separate substantive themes dealt with in the various contributions, some clusters of papers, if read together, reflect some of the dialectic noted above. Thus, the two papers in the Introductory section provide some background, one theoretical, the other of the actual East African context, but they also represent two different approaches to the analysis of politics and development. Then follow three case studies, each concerned with the imposition of new types of institutional arrangements in different localities. In discussing the Teso experience Vincent stresses the economic concomitants of colonial administration and the changing social structure. Rigby and Mafeje explore the reactions to external initiatives of particular societies with different social structures: Rigby discusses what he sees as the comparatively homogeneous, *cultural* response of the Ugogo of Tanzania, whereas Mafeje illustrates the differential *socio-economic* responses among the Baganda due to the divergent interests in their highly articulated class structure.

The two following essays are concerned with the effectiveness of selected structures and mechanisms at a national level in stimulating rural development. Chambers argues for the utility of an 'institutional conservatism' while Hel-leiner advocates utilization of market rather than administrative mechanisms, even in Tanzania during the early stages of its transition to socialism. Harris then discusses the attempts in Tanzania to develop alternative structures to those inherited from colonialism and their appropriateness for a transition to socialism.

The focus in the next set is on the district level, that critical nexus where agents of central authorities, government or party, confront leaders or other actors thrown up by local socio-political forces. Lamb, Hyden and Sharman all examine the nature of the relationships and of the respective actors in this confrontation. Their foci and emphases differ, but all suggest that those relationships, and particularly the problem of 'resistance' to central government programmes, are determined more significantly by the status or class interests of the actors – both bureaucratic agents of the centre and the local political activists with whom they interact – than by any 'traditional' 'cultural' traits characteristic of a particular 'tribe'.

In the last four contributions, this examination of the relative significance of cultural factors versus socio-economic status of the actors is pursued further at the grassroots level. Thoden van Velzen and Leonard reach similar conclusions, based on totally different kinds of evidence, regarding the uneven

distribution of the benefits of government agricultural services; however, their analyses of the reasons for such an unevenness differ significantly. Swartz and Mutiso, on the other hand, are both concerned with the determinative importance of the cultural characteristics of their communities, but both show that these can be seen as facilitating rather than necessarily constraining or obstructing certain kinds of rural development. Finally, the concluding essay pulls together some of the main lines of analysis, pointing to a sobering re-assessment of the role and structural position of the bureaucracy in East African rural development.

It is our hope that readers may get as much out of the presentation of these controversies as did the participants in these academic debates over development theory, development strategy and the politics of rural development during a period when East Africa provided a remarkable stimulus for creative research.

Lionel Cliffe  
James Coleman  
Martin Doornbos