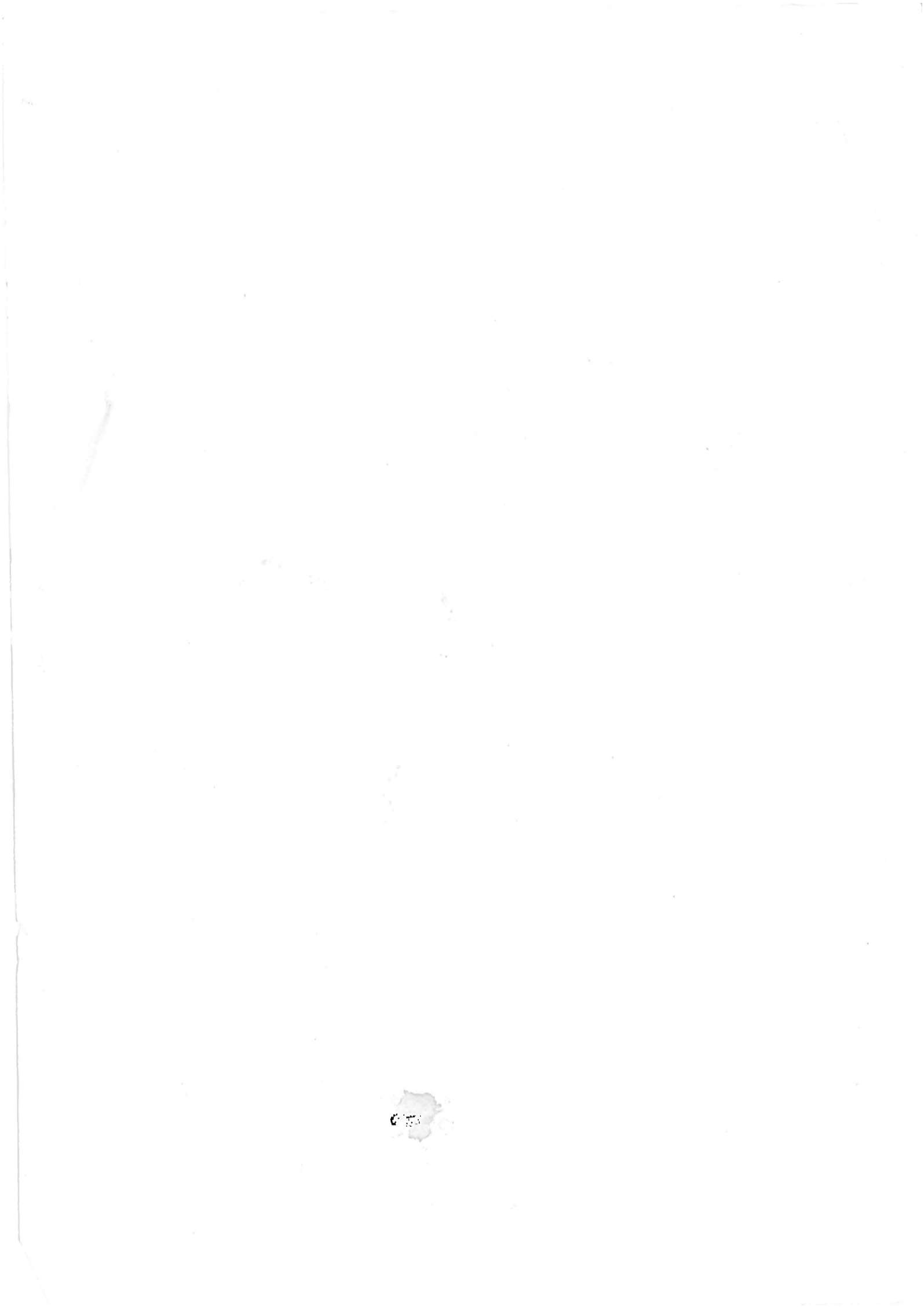


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RESERVE (832)

HARAMBEE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN KENYA
TOWARDS A POLITICAL/ADMINISTRATIVE RE-INTERPRETATION

By

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WORKING PAPER NO. 302



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A: Introduction

The study of Harambee movement - Kenya's version of self help - has received relatively little attention compared with other phenomena like villagisation in Tanzania. This is surprising and at the same ^{time} /somewhat expected. First, unlike villagisation in Tanzania, Harambee appears to be an unsystematic and almost ad hoc response to the problems of rural poverty in Kenya. It was not ushered in as part of a systematic ideology for rural development. Rather, it has developed in its own momentum, first from a political slogan in 1963, then to small and medium sized projects such as cattle dips, access roads, schools and health centres by the late sixties, and finally to the present ambitious Institutes of Science and Technology. The momentum has continued despite a realisation by the Government in the later sixties that the movement was getting out of control and, therefore, needed to be incorporated into central planning. The rapid pace with which Harambee has expanded, and the fact that it started at a time when most indications were that the Government would be committed to planning means that scholars might have found it something of an aberration without a handle.

Another reason why Harambee has not attracted so much attention might be that until recently the Government may have found the movement embarrassing due to its political overtones. Certainly the Government has not in the past encouraged critical analyses of Harambee activities. Recently, however, (March 1977) the Government has indicated that there is a need to study Harambee activities at least from the planning point of view. Consequently, the Ministry of Finance and Planning is contemplating some studies, with the view, one assumes, to assessing the planning and development implications of Harambee. ('Standard' March 11, 1977) The current official enthusiasm is characterised by newly found confidence which is reflected in such statements as "Harambee is a good model for development in the Third World" (Ibid.)

The building blocks of the model are, however, yet to be fully understood. It is, therefore, perhaps premature to talk of a "model" for the "Third World" when it is not yet clear what type of a model is being discussed and whether it is even uniformly applicable to Kenya as a whole, let alone the entire "Third World". One suspects that the enthusiasm is a result of the hope that Harambee has now sufficiently evolved to a stage where it is not possible to separate its political, social, administrative, and economic components.

The major problem, however, is not separating Harambee into its constituent components though the problematic aspects in this connection should not be underestimated. In our view, the primary problem is one of conceptualising Harambee in such a way that its many facets can be viewed as sub-concepts of one rural development concept. Only afterwards can we then assess the limits and potentials of its applicability on a wider scale. The choice whether to start with analysis before attempting any synthesis is precisely that viz. an individual choice. So far, most of the students of Harambee seem to have approached the phenomenon analytically without much attempt to synthesise their empirical findings. But before we look into this problem, a few words on the general character of self-help in Kenya.

The self-help movement in Kenya has been characterised by increasing expansion and expectations. Though the call for Harambee was made in 1963, the movement did not really pick up momentum until three years later when what was at the beginning a political slogan for unity, started being translated into development projects.

This, of course, does not mean that the idea was allowed to lie dormant for a period of three years. In those three years, more than 9,600 kilometres of access roads and over 1,000 small bridges were constructed by self-help. During the same period, more than 145 kilometres of pipeline, 50 dams and rock catchments, and 500 protected springs were installed through the same method. In addition, over 2,500 community facilities such as schools buildings, nursery centres, health centres and dispensaries were built. (Kenya Government: Second Development Plan, p. 523)

The momentum gathered in first three years began to be reflected in 1967. In that year alone, over 3,600 community facilities were completed, 119 piped water supplies were installed, and 410 wells and protected springs were built. In addition, 1,659 fish ponds were built and stocked. The same year saw the first attempt by the Government to break down the nature of the inputs that went into Harambee projects, an exercise that has continued ever since. In that year, the peoples contribution to self-help projects in terms of labour, cash and material amounted to approximately Kf.2 million, quite a substantial sum. The Government's contribution was, however, quite small. It constituted only 4% of the total value of projects completed in 1967. But, despite the small, almost negligible, Government contribution, the latter took Harambee seriously enough so put aside Kf444,000 for part-financing of self-help schemes during the period of the Second Development Plan, 1970-1974. (Ibid)

A year by year presentation of data on self-help inputs and outputs perhaps not necessary at this stage. Suffice to say that after 1967, the self-help movement continued to expand to the extent that the Government was obliged to take a serious view of the phenomenon as a planning problem. This was done in the second Development Plan. During this plan period, it was estimated that the peoples contribution in cash and kind amounted to Kf 8.5 million. The current plan estimates that the total value of self-help projects will Kf11.5 million between 1974 and 1978. Of this amount the Government expects to contribute Kf815,000 (Third Development Plan, p. 482) The rest is expected to be contributed by the people and any other volunteer agencies that would interested. No doubt, the major share of the total cost is expected to be contributed by the people. Overall, it is now estimated that Harambee activities constitute about 30% of all capital formation in the rural areas. (Voice of Kenya January 1977)

It is ironic that despite the obvious expansion of Harambee activities, the movement is still surrounded with a great deal of mystery, and few people are able to say exactly what the movement represents.

B: Impressions

A listing of all the ideas associated with Harambee, confirms the view that there is still no consensus as to the social, political, economic and even theoretical meaning of Harambee. A random listing attributes the following meanings to Harambee.

1. A continuation of an old tradition under the umbrella of African socialism.
2. A social movement for rural development
3. A form of rural savings and capitalisation
4. A political slogan calling for a spirit of cooperation which has accidentally been translated into projects, with a peculiar method of financing.
5. A Political favour to the President
6. A means for politicians to ingratiate themselves with the President
7. A means for politicians to ingratiate themselves with the Peasants
8. A method of forced taxation
9. An irrational behaviour by the individual peasant contributors
10. A community phenomenon which comprehends the contradictory principles of voluntarism and coercion

11. A community reaction to "felt-needs"
12. A political mechanism for rural participation
13. An economic mechanism for utilising local resources.

The list, though not exhaustive, is perhaps enough to show the bewildering array of meaning that have been attributed to Harambee. In an attempt to put some order to the above list, we shall first discuss the official view of Harambee and secondly we shall discuss the views and research findings of academics who have analysed the phenomenon.

The Official View

Administratively, Harambee activities come under the Department of Community Development, Ministry of Housing and Social Services. The administrative arrangement gives us a clue as to the Government's view of Harambee. The Department of Community Development is supposed to work "essentially from the basic principle that sound, self-generating economic and social growth arises from participation of the people at all levels". The Community Development approach to social/economic development is supposed to be most effective "amongst the smallest collective groups." (Plan 1970-74, p. 523) Thus, we can see that the Government views Harambee first and foremost as a form of community development whose basic function is to create participatory mechanisms especially for the smallest collective groups. This, at least, is what can be inferred from the Second Development Plan.

Administrative and political participation is however, only a means to a goal. The goal is social/economic development and it takes capital investment to effect it. In this respect, the Government views Harambee as a means of promoting "domestic savings and investment". While the major burden of creating the savings would fall on the people, the Government would be a co-partner by making small capital injections as a means of "maintaining the momentum" of projects. (Ibid) Although the capital injections by the Government would increase in time, and one assumes in proportion to the total Harambee inputs, the central idea would remain still remain "to encourage the enormous demonstrated capacity of the people to develop through self-help".

The Government also takes a social-psychological view to Harambee in addition to the political/economic views. Thus, as well as people getting tangible social/economic benefits as a result of development through self-help, intangible benefits are also supposed to accrue to the people. These would include "social confidence" as the people participate

and become "more economically self-reliant". It is in this connection that immediately after independence i.e. during the First Development Plan, the emphasis was placed on the "stimulation of the self-help spirit". Put differently, the focus was on "motivation per se, as opposed to planning". The focus had to be shifted to planning during the second Development Plan.

The shift in focus was facilitated by a number of factors which have also been noticed by academicians, (see next section) in their attempts to explain Harambee. First, "lack of community development or technical personnel to give advice at both the planning and execution stages and a lack of area targets" meant that projects were allowed drift. Secondly, many self-help groups had acquired "a degree of autonomy so great" that they had forward on projects "where it was doubtful that recurrent costs of operation could be ensured". Thirdly, "political and personal considerations ... sometimes influenced the initiation and location of projects often to the detriment of good overall planning". (Plan 70-74 p. 524). On the surface, these factors appear to be explanatory. However, without a concept of what type of development strategy Harambee is meant to be or has become, it is difficult to assess the explanatory value of the "deviations" which have necessitated some re-thinking on the part of the Government.

Some academicians have noticed the problem and consequently have tried to put forward what might be called "partial-explanations". They are "partial" because at this stage, they cannot be construed as propositions without an overall conception of Harambee. Rather, they seem to constitute a check-list of items to be expected by a student of Harambee.

At the broadest level, the main question seems to be: why the "facts" of concern isolated by the Government might fall into place. As it is, the Government assumes that the factors are of equal importance. Furthermore, no attempt is made to try and explain the factors, in the context of social/political and economic development in Kenya. The Government further assumes that "the people" are a homogeneous category that is able and willing to participate. Perhaps the people are willing, but certainly they are not a homogeneous category. Their ability to participate cannot be taken for granted and neither can the benefits. It is these and other questions that academicians have addressed themselves to in an attempt to explain Harambee as a social, political and economic phenomenon.

The Academics' Interpretations

One should re-emphasise at the outset that so far, no overall explanation of Harambee has emerged. Rather, what we have are a number of themes - what we have called a check-list - usually found in studies of Harambee. The themes, as we have pointed out constitute only partial explanations. They are explanations because they go further than the the Government in the conscious attempt to answer the question: why Harambee? They are partial because, so far no one has attempted an overall conceptual integration of the themes.

1. The Social Tradition Theme

This theme is common in what might be called the community development approach to the study of Harambee and it can be summarised as follows. Harambee is among others, a form of traditionally sanctioned informal cooperation i.e. a traditional mode of operation is being utilised to correct the orthodox community development approach whose major fault has been its failure to combine planning and implementation at local levels leading to a situation whereby rural changes have been imposed on the peasants. Accordingly, Harambee is an ingenious participatory mechanism because it utilises traditional structures of cooperation like a clan, thereby alleviating the need for new participatory institutions and at the same time correcting the faults of textbook approaches to community development. (Askwith 1966; Holmquist 1970; and especially Mbithi 1972).

As can be seen, this theme comes very close to the official view although it might be unfair to criticise it without having expounded it in full, a few questions might be raised. First, it might be accurate to say that Harambee is a form of traditionally sanctioned cooperation, but it would be premature to conclude, like some politicians in Kenya have done, that Harambee and traditional self-help are the same phenomenon. This is an issue that can only be settled after an examination of traditional self-help in Kenya or a particular part of Kenya, something that so far has not been done in any detailed form. The same argument applies to the claim that Harambee has managed to correct some faults associated with the community development approach. The extent to which Harambee facilitates local planning and implementation is still largely unassessed, something which will become evident later on.

However, despite the fact that the two issues can only be settled empirically, one can argue that although traditional structures might have been incorporated into the Harambee movement, we cannot equate it with

traditional communal self-help for at least two reasons and possibly more. First, except in the colonial period - and even this applied only to an aspect of self-help at that time viz. The government supervised community development activities in Central Nyanza, North Nyanza, Machakos, Kitui and Kiambu - the State was not involved. Secondly, traditionally, contributions were made mainly in the form of collective labour, but the gains were individual. Thus there was little chance of an individual contribution and not getting any personal benefits, something which is likely to happen today. Thirdly, the community development approach, whether orthodox or modified, can itself be, and has been questioned especially because of its exclusion of politics (Krammer.) and a general tendency to assume away intra-community conflicts, whatever their causes may be.

2. The Development Theme

This theme has a number of sub-themes. At the broadest level, it has been argued --

that the one criterion that distinguishes Harambee from self-help activities in other countries, is its rural nature, i.e. Harambee is first and foremost a rural development strategy. (Polnick 1974) A modified form of the argument is that Harambee is not an alternative to rural development in Kenya, but part of the whole strategy of rural development in the country. (Mbithi 1972) But what type of rural strategy is Harambee and on what social group should it be predicated? The second question will be discussed in the next section.

One answer to the first question is that Harambee is a non-developmental type of strategy for a number of reasons. First, through its own dynamics, or through some phenomenon that has as yet not been discovered, the strategy encourages financing of consumer projects such as Schools, community halls, health centres, etc as opposed to farm oriented productive projects whose surplus can then be ploughed back into the farm, thus in increasing productivity. (Mbithi 1972) Second, Harambee increases rural differentiation because money is raised from everybody, including the very poor, to finance projects which are inaccessible to the poor. This is particularly true of schools and institutes of technology which charge fees above the ability of the poor. Thus, the contributors are not necessarily the beneficiaries, and this leads to increased inequalities among the peasants. (Mutiso & Godfrey 1973; Anderson 1971) Third, depending on the nature and the site of the projects, Harambee can lead to a situation where the country becomes increasingly indebted to outsiders, both in terms of providing the initial capital and in terms of

providing the staff and the running expenses. Again, this is particularly true of the Institute of science and technology. (Mutiso & Godfrey 1973; Godfrey 1973).

Another answer to the question raised above is that Harambee is developmental but it takes the form of pre-emptive development. Pre-emption has several characteristics. First it is characterised by the tendency to choose a project unlikely to be initiated by the Government, but likely to be taken over. (Mutiso & Godfrey 1973) Second, groups try to pre-empt the field of contestants by convincing the Government that it is politically and economically unwise to deny support to a superior local effort, and in the process any central plan that may exist is ignored or what amounts to the same imposition, self-help groups purposely go beyond the plan because they probably would not receive aid without pre-emptive local effort. (Holmquist 1970) Third, there is a tendency to initiate projects before defining the goals and strategies, thus sharply contrasting community needs with the priorities defined by policy-makers. (Mbithi 1972) The political implications of the pre-emptive strategy will be discussed in the next section when we try to answer the second question raised above viz. on what social group should Harambee be predicated?

The issue of whether Harambee is basically rural in nature can be settled easily if one uses the criterion of the geographical location of the projects. However, it becomes a little more complicated if one uses other criteria. First, if one uses the criterion of provision of service, then one might discover that the larger the project, (e.g. an Institute of Science and Technology) the more likelihood that it will provide service for people from the urban areas as well. Fortunately, the very large projects are few, and the medium ones such as schools and health centres are forced to serve rural communities. First by their geographical location and secondly by the tendency of ^{the} urban people to perceive the services provided through Harambee as being inferior to the urban services. Secondly, if one uses the criterion of origin of inputs that go into constructing the projects, then it is not so obvious that the majority of the projects are rural in nature. For both small and large projects, there has always been a substantial amount of inputs originating from the urban areas, though the labour is usually provided by the local peasants.

As to whether the distinguishing criterion of Harambee is its rural nature or not one would argue that this cannot simply be asserted. It would require one to first establish that Harambee is actually rural in nature and secondly that self-help activities in other countries have a much bigger urban content. Thus, one would have to at least make a survey of self-help

activities in other countries. The study of Eastern Nigeria by David and Audrey Smock (1972) and of Acholi District, Uganda by Colin Leys (1967) suggest that rural-orientation of self-help activities in Africa, is a widespread phenomenon.

The question of whether Harambee is developmental or not depends first on the available evidence. If the evidence shows that most of the projects benefit a section of the Peasants, with the effect of increasing inequalities, then one would have to reassess the developmental claims made for Harambee. So far the evidence available from analysis of large and medium projects suggests that these projects contribute to rural differentiation.

With reference to the distinction made by Mbithi (see above) between farm-oriented projects and consumer oriented projects (with the latter being non-developmental) one can argue that there is no dominant reason why rural development should be conceived solely in terms of directly productive projects. Increased farm productivity might be desirable. However the problem of rural poverty is also social and political in addition to being economic. There is even some evidence (Smocks; Ibid) suggesting that to the peasantry, development means provision of social amenities rather than amenities which will lead to immediate increased productivity. Mbithi's distinction would be relevant, however if it were possible to show that consumer projects, by their very nature lead to the exploitation of some groups by other, something which was nearly impossible in traditional farm - and individual oriented self-help.

The question of external indebtedness, which is raised by some students of Harambee, should be taken seriously. However, as pointed above, this is only applicable to very large projects and these are few in the country.

Finally, whether and why harambee is a form of pre-emptive strategy is basically a political issue that calls for an examination of the nature of planning and resource distribution in the country, with a view to finding out why the peasants would resort to this type of strategy. One would however, have to ascertain that the strategy should be predicated on the peasantry as a whole, or even a stratum of the peasantry, as opposed to the urban bourgeoisie and petit bourgeoisie.

3. The Political Theme

Like the development theme, the political theme has several strands which can be looked at separately. First, we shall deal with the issue raised above, viz. whose development strategy is Harambee.

One answer which is readily derivable from those who have analysed Harambee from the point of view of community development is that Harambee is basically a peasant strategy for rural development. Thus, the peasants, by deciding to do something about their "felt needs" (Omugi 1974) are in fact making a political statement. They are in effect expressing dissatisfaction with the ways developmental resources are being allocated at the centre, and thereby questioning the wisdom and the priorities of the central planning mechanisms. (Mbiti and Rasmusson 1974; Colebatch 1973) Seen from this point of view, Harambee assumes aspects of social protests, though some people would argue that protest, more often than not manifests itself through withdrawal, than through active participation, thereby legitimising the very institutions that the protest is aimed against. (Migot-Adholla, 1977)

A variation of the argument above is that Harambee is basically a peasant strategy, but the peasantry is clever enough to know that there is no reason why "perceived need will correlate with action". (Holmquist 1972) Thus, in order to correlate perceived needs with action, the co-opt both local and national elites as the main sponsors in exchange for political support. (Mutiso & Godfrey 1973; Anderson 1973; Holmquist 1972

Still at the community level, it has been argued that politically Harambee represents a symbolic mechanism for identifying with national development. (Mbiti, 1972) In this sense, Harambee is a "responsive" kind of behaviour as opposed to "initiative" behaviour. Whether this can be translated into power relations is not clear. Politically, symbols perform an integrative function and are nearly always created by the ruling elites to serve their interests. Mbiti is not clear on this point as he does not examine the direction of the symbol. However, if we accept the interpretation that Harambee is a result of manipulation of symbols, from the top, then this is consistent with the nature of political symbolism.

Perhaps the most popular political interpretation of Harambee is that it is an arena for elite competition, both at the local and the National levels. From the community perspective, it is argued that one characteristic of the Kenyan political system at the national level is that it has gradually become depoliticised, thereby increasingly relying on the legitimating role of the President. The result is that "Political

process devolved from national centre to the periphery and Harambee activity has become an important arena within which political leadership at the local level is determined. (Colebatch 1973; Mutiso & Godfrey 1973 P. 1) Thus Harambee has become a vehicle for personal ambitions. (Holmquist 1973)

An extension of the same argument is that the elites are not simply manipulating the peasants. The peasants are aware of what is taking place and they in turn make use of Harambee as a means of forcing accountability on politicians. Furthermore it is not simply aspiring political leaders competing with each other. There are the additional elements of local elites competing with national elites (Oyugi 1974) and the Political elites competing with administrative elites. (Nyangira 1970; Wallis 1973) All the affected elites in this situation are aiming at legitimising their roles if not personal positions and this is how competition develops.

The elite competition can easily develop into conflict and attempts to control each other. Thus the administrative elites, citing the need to stay "within the plan" or "security reasons" would, for example, refuse the political elites the licenses to hold Harambee meetings, and the politicians would react by sending extra-large donations through local clients who do not need licenses to hold meetings. Thus, despite local initiative, the fate of a project can end up by being resolved at the centre (Colebatch 1973) especially when a project needs a sponsor like an M.P. who has access to national resources. In this case the competition and control are by proxy. As can be seen, the extended argument is really that it does not matter "whose" strategy Harambee is. Different strata in the political system make use of it depending on their immediate and particular interests.

The various political interpretations outlined above are a little confusing because it is not clear what the main argument is. If for example, we accept that Harambee is a peasant strategy, how then do the elites feature so prominently? One goes even further and pose the question: what does it mean to say that Harambee is a peasant strategy? Does it mean that the peasants are always the main beneficiaries in social-economic terms, or does it mean that regardless of who the eventual beneficiaries are, the peasants take the initiative both in planning and in implementation and then coopt the elites as some writers argue? These are basically empirical questions that can only be answered after analysing actual projects.

One can argue however that the answer as to whether Harambee is a peasant or an elite strategy is not either or! It would depend on many

factors which would include the nature and degree of political competition and also the size of a particular project. The more severe the political competition and the bigger the project, the more likelihood that both local and national elites will try to control the project and make it appear as their own. The only problem here is that one would have to decide on a criteria for "bigness". One such criteria could be the ratio of capital to labour inputs. The higher the ratio, the more important the role of elites, both in initiation and implementation.

But even if one were able to show that contrary to popular opinions the Harambee is really a grass-roots phenomenon, the question still remains: why is it that even elites who do not appear to have anything to gain - politically or otherwise - from a particular project appear to be willing to send large donations and have their donations publicly announced in an area hundreds of miles from their own home area? This shifts the discussion from the local level to the national level.

In respect to the question raised above one would have to disagree with the argument (Mutiso & Godfrey, 1973) that leadership battles in Kenya are fought at the local level which would partly explain the donations from outside the community. In its place one could substitute the argument that the issue is not simply a question of personal power and leadership. Rather, we have to look at the ideological character of Harambee. At the national level, it can be argued that Harambee serves the ideological purpose of mystifying the inequalities between the various societal strata by making it appear legitimate to accumulate so long as one is doing ones duty by "participating" in development through contributions outside ones home area. In other words; the idea of Harambee serves the political interests of a particular stratum in the political system, and it should be possible to identify the particular stratum and the interests that Harambee serves. Thus, although on the surface, and at the national level, Harambee appears to be predicated on the wealthy individual, it can serve the collective interests of the wealthy political stratum.

4. The Theoretical Theme

There is very little deliberate theorising on Harambee, and the little there is centres on the question; why do the peasants contribute to Harambee projects? Is it really due to felt needs? More specifically, are individuals being rational when they contribute? As would be expected, field researchers have attempted to answer the first version of the question since it is amenable to empirical analysis. The second version has largely been left unanswered, one suspects because of its philosophical overtones.

One of the most popular arguments is that Harambee contributions are not entirely voluntary, though it is impossible to estimate the extent of coercion. For example, in Central Province, during the construction of Kiambu Institute of Science and Technology, receipts of contributions to the Institute had to be produced before transaction of any official business like paying school fees, purchase of a licence etc. At the Coast workers and teachers unions agreed to a 25% deduction from the members salaries (Mutiso and Godfrey 1973). Even for very small projects, it has been noticed that Chiefs tend to be authoritarian in their demand for contributions. (Walis 1973, Colebatch 1973- Nwangira 1970)

A second argument is that though there might be elements of coercion, Harambee contributions are by and large voluntary. They are voluntary because their analysis cannot be based on individuals. In other words, they are a group phenomenon. For example, citing evidence from the organization of groups movements (Bittner 1963) Mbithi (1973) argues that group movements like Harambee have dynamics of their own which manifests itself through hostility to individualism. Thus individuals have to conform as a result of articulated and sometimes unarticulated group pressure.

A somewhat similar argument is that though people contribute as a result of what appears to be group pressure, the pressure is really instigated by bearers of "new ideas" like national leaders and local leaders. (Bolnick 1974) Thus the contributions are neither a result of community "felt-needs", nor of pressure by the entire community, since the latter is never a homogeneous entity.

Whether one accepts the second argument and its variation as being sufficient, or not, it seems that there is a need to be clear first on the dynamics of Harambee contributions and secondly (and perhaps more important) on the nature and meaning of coercion. Is coercion simply pressure from someone who is in a position to evolve the powers of his official position or does one include pressure from opinion leaders and prominent personalities? I would argue that the definition of "pressure" should be broadened to include opinion leaders and prominent personalities. This is because, in my experience, this category of people is seen by the peasants as being "semi-official" because of its ready access to the officials proper.

Whatever definition of coercion one chooses to accept, theoretically, one has to allow some kind of pressure, be it from officials, non-officials or even some segment of the community. However, the theoretical acceptance of some kind of pressure is only applicable to some types of projects.

viz. those projects that fall under the category of collective consumption goods.

According to the free rider "theory," rational individuals will not voluntarily support a collective consumption service when exclusion from use of the good as a penalty for failure to contribute to the cost of the project is technically impossible (as with national defence) or impracticable (as with a road). In this circumstance (non-excludability) one's benefit is largely independent of one's contribution. Thus each individual has a choice of donating or not donating with approximately the same benefits. In either case, "rationality" dictates that one not contribute. (Polnick 1972 and 1974)

It is in recognition of the free rider problem that some students of Harambee have argued that peasants make contributions as a result of a number of factors which include inter alia, social influence, and the fact that the peasant community might be so small that one's contribution is significant relative to the whole and would therefore be noticed and missed. This argument however is limited to the community and sociological levels. Furthermore, as we have pointed out it applies when the rationality of contributions for collective consumption goods is under question. If we now take contributions for all types of "goods", shift the level of analysis from the community to the national level, and re-interpret the contributions then the question becomes: Is it probable that the idea of Harambee has, politically, like ujamaism, acquired ideological weight, that is, something that one must not be seen or appear to be against, and if so why?

C: Summary: Political Implications

The political origins of Harambee as we know it today are clear enough not to merit an extended discussion. In 1963, when the call for Harambee was made, it was not obvious that Kenya would continue holding together after independence. In addition to centrifugal ethnic forces, there was the problem of the Majimbo constitution which the country had just inherited from Britain. Rightly or wrongly, the President, as the spokesman of both the Government and the ruling party KANU, felt that the regional constitution was not compatible with national unity. Hence the political slogan of Harambee.

Up to now, it is not clear whether the call for Harambee was meant to be translated into development projects, or whether it was meant to operate solely at the level of an integrating slogan. This, however, is a different issue altogether. For the Present purposes, the main issue

is that Harambee projects originated with active Government encouragement and this is what calls for an explanation. We have already seen that the need to motivate the people to help themselves so that they may acquire confidence in the process. This explanation is, however, not sufficient.

A more satisfactory explanation would have to take into account a number of factors which must include, inter alia, a very weak planning machinery, lack of any participatory institutions for example a well organised political party, lack of a grass-roots developmental ideology and the high public expectations at that time. Politically, the last point is perhaps the most important. It can be argued that under conditions of general scarcity and high public expectations - conditions which prevailed in 1963 - an institution like Harambee serves the political purpose of encouraging demands at the communal level, thereby shifting the locus of demands from the National level where they might be more concerted and therefore destabilising. Furthermore, and perhaps a bit cynically, when the policy of self-help becomes generally alerted, the people can always be referred to themselves whenever they make any demands. In this sense, an institution like Harambee serves the purpose of political control. (Biennen 1974)

While an extended argument along the lines sketched above might explain politically the origins and the immediate evolution of Harambee, it does not explain the subsequent enthusiasm that surprised even the Government, and neither does it explain the present day operation, an issue that has bothered academics as we have seen.

The Government explains the subsequent enthusiasm in terms of "personal political considerations", (other planning problems being (1) lack of technical personnel and (2) relative autonomy of self-help groups. These two problems do not address themselves to the issue of expansion) which could be re-interpreted as an individualised way of saying that the political strategy outlined above has been effective. This, of course, does not mean that Harambee was imposed on the people by ambitious leaders as a means of controlling the peasants. It did not need to. Political control could have been exchanged for tangible social/economic projects, and this leads us to the dominant concept in the political interpretations of Harambee viz. the patron-client mode of exchange.

Clientelism has been applied to Harambee sometimes without pausing to draw out its full implications.¹ It is a handy concept to apply to Harambee especially because it seems to explain some of the problems which have bothered researchers who have analysed the Harambee phenomenon. For example, it might explain the role of traditional and ethnic structures in facilitating self-help.

However, if we should accept that Harambee operates on a patron-client basis, then we must also entertain the possibility that we are looking at a mode of exchange which is unequal by its very nature. An assumption that is often unquestioned in applying the concept of clientelism to Harambee is that the patron-client relation operates on a basis of reciprocity. Reciprocity, however, does not mean equality. It has been argued, for example, that an "imbalance in reciprocity" is inherent in patron-client relations. The patron is in a position to supply unilaterally goods and services which the client needs for survival and well-being. (Blau 1964) Furthermore, like an insurance company, the patron can afford to get rid of one or even a few clients without too much loss. The client is not in such a position.

Even without resulting to a detailed theoretical analysis, it is evident that clientelism is based on asymmetrical linkages between individuals of unequal wealth and power (Maquet, 1966) The asymmetry is crucial as any significant shift of resources moves the relationship toward greater equality of status and the transformation of clientelism into bargaining relationships among equals. Clientelism is thus a relation of domination perpetuating the inequalities between patrons and clients. Furthermore, it is conservative and status-quo oriented. This serves the interests of the patron elites. However, to maintain loyalty of clients, some resources and benefits must be distributed. (Lemarch and Legg, 1972; also Scott 1972)

One of the conclusions arrived at from theoretical analyses similar to the ones just outlined is that clientelism is a form of exchange which is characteristic of situations of underdevelopment. (Cotler, 1972) In terms of stratification, clientelism creates a form of vertical stratification, either along ethnic lines or along regional lines. This, it can be argued, serves an ideological/political purpose through its

1. The methodological problems inherent in the concept of clientelism are discussed by Robert R. Kaufman: "The Patron-Client concept and macropolitics: Prospects and problems" Comparative studies in Society and History, Vol. 16(3) June 1974.

blurring of any class divisions that might be developing. In a situation where national bourgeoisie and petit bourgeoisie are developing, it would be expected that the vertical stratification would not cut all the way up all of the time. Most of the time, the vertical stratification would keep the workers and the peasants mystified as to their class interests. The bourgeoisie and the petit bourgeoisie too could be mystified except when it comes to an issue that borders on their survival as an economic group. (de Kadt, 1970 and Salvati, 1972)

The mystifying weight of clientelism is such that even reputable social scientists have been tempted to always juxtapose it with any other form of stratification and particularly stratification along class lines (Graziano 1973) Sometimes the argument is quite explicit to the effect that clientelism is incompatible with class formation.¹ (Johnson, 1973) Still, others, have argued that a patron-client relationship is developmental, at least in the political sense as it offers a stable reciprocal relationship. (Powell 1970) Furthermore, it is integrative politically, socially and economically since the middle men serve the integrative function. (Weingrod: 1968; Smith 1960)

The point here is that depending on ones views about development, clientelism can be viewed either as developmental or non-developmental. Thus, if ones conception of development is premised on stable exchange relations, regardless of the inherent inequalities and the political functions of such an exchange, then the conclusion that clientelism is developmental is at least consistent.

The few comments above are perhaps enough to show that it is not enough to simply mention that Harambee is based on a patron-client relations, without attempting to draw out the implications of such relations, and the complexities of the very concept of clientelism. At the very least, one must be clear on what is being exchanged for what, the political implications of the exchange, and the equity implications of a system based on a series of patron-client exchanges.

While the discussion so far cannot claim to have exhausted all the problematic aspects of Harambee it, at least, raises research issues that would hopefully be of interest to students of Harambee. Below are research issues that are of interest to the author. Some of the issues

1. See Peter Flynn "Class, Clientelism and Coercion" Comparative politics XII (2) July 1974 where he draws out the political implications of class and clientelists modes of stratification.

can be approached empirically, while others will have to be approached theoretically. Hopefully this would lead to a more politically oriented conception of Harambee.

D: Research Issues

1. To what extent and in what respects is Harambee a unique rural development phenomenon? Is it accurate to claim that its distinguishing characteristic is its rural orientation? This would require putting Harambee in the context of self-help as a much wider phenomenon. The emphasis would be on the political aspects of self-help and case studies would be drawn from Africa as far as this is possible. This would also afford the opportunity to evaluate the community development approach to rural development in light of experiences from other countries.

2. While it is expected that a comparative approach would yield some useful information, it is also expected that this information would have to be supplemented with some historical information. What then are historical and traditional roots of Harambee?

The term "Harambee" has only been applied to self-help activities in the post-independence period. However, the authors summarised above are right in arguing that to a certain extent, Harambee has what might be called traditional legitimisation, especially in the rural areas. But what is the extent of this legitimisation? One cannot assume that the phenomenon has remained the same, in terms of for example, who participated, the nature of contributions, the nature of the output and work performed, the nature of reciprocity, the effect of new factors emerging during the colonial era and the underlying and shifting ideologies. For example, it is evident that there was a shift in organisational structures and ideological intentions during the colonial era.

Before the colonial period, the organisational base of rural self-help among the Kikuyu for instance was the clan, and the principals of reciprocity and voluntarism were closely adhered to. During the colonial period, the organisational base was expanded to include most of Kikuyuland and for the first time, the emphasis was on social gains, and the movement acquired an ideological meaning. This was during the thirties and the forties when Kenyatta and Mbiyu Koinange (the present Minister of State in the President's Office) started organising Karinga Schools (Kikuyu Independent Schools) as a general protest against missionary education.

(Koinange 1955) Thus the movement had a political purpose, and an ideological purpose viz. creating solidarity. Mbihi (op cit) argues that present Harambee also serves the purpose of creating solidarity, at the grassroots level. The circumstances are, however, different and one cannot assume continuity. However, the assumption of continuity could serve political and ideological purposes. It would be to the interests of the patron-elites to assume the continuity, for then it would serve an integrative function, and consequently their interests.

3. Answers to the first two questions would hopefully supply useful contextual information for answering our main question viz. to what extent is present day Harambee mechanism for grassroots participation and to what is it performing a political function for the elites who act as patrons? Even if we were to discover that Harambee has such traditional legitimisation that we can partly explain the willingness to participate at the grassroots level, there is one aspect of Harambee which is different from traditional self-help activities. This is its national character. More specifically, the involvement of the elites either acting on their own behalf, or through individuals acting as members of the bureaucracy makes the present phenomenon different from its traditional predecessors. The nature of the interaction between the elites and the peasants would to a large extent determine the participatory or the non-participatory nature of Harambee. This is the central issue in the politics of Harambee. At the national level, it is self-evident that the best way for politicians, high-ranking civil servants, and even businessmen to gain national exposure is to attend a Harambee meeting and make large donations. However, it is not certain that there is a similar degree of involvement with smaller local projects that do not offer the same possibility of exposure. The exception to this would perhaps be the local member of parliament, who is likely to be involved in the small projects in his own constituency, as a means of maintaining political support. Concentrating on state agents, while not entirely ignoring elites acting in other capacities we would try, to get information about their interaction with the peasants on:

1. Initiation of projects
2. Planning of projects
3. Implementation (actual work done)
4. Contributions (especially decisions on nature and amount)
5. Any linkages the peasants might have with outside groups.

The information sought should be able to get partly through a questionnaire at the grassroots level and partly through analysis of documents and public statements. The information would be utilised in trying to assess the extent of local involvement in Harambee projects, the degree of elites involvement and their occupational characteristics. This exercise would be restricted to one district, through secondary materials from other districts will be used. In the analysis of the data, special attention will be paid to the degree of involvement by the bureaucratic and political elites.

4. What are the developmental characteristics of Harambee and to what extent are these dependent on the political characteristics? Some of the developmental information will be sought through the questionnaire, especially information on type of project, benefits of projects, costs of projects etc. However, since this information would be restricted to one district, it would obviously have to be heavily supplemented with what is already known about Harambee in the rest of the country. Depending on the political characteristics, it should be possible to draw out the developmental implications and compare these with actual developmental characteristics with a ^{view} to assessing the determinative or non-determinative role of the political characteristics.
5. What type of rural development strategy is Harambee? The answer to this question would, of course, depend on the type of answers we get for the other questions. We hope that no matter what answers we get, they would facilitate a conceptualisation of Harambee in political - economic terms. It is expected that the emphasis would be on the equity implications of the political economy of Harambee.

5.3 Conclusion

No doubt Harambee movement is a complex phenomenon and it is not always easy to isolate the political, administrative, and economic elements. It is even more difficult to synthesise the elements into a concept for rural development once they have been isolated. This problem, notwithstanding one hopes that by employing comparative, historical, empirical and theoretical approaches, one would meet with some measure of success. It is to be appreciated that emphasis on any one of the constituent elements of Harambee would be out of choice, rather than any overriding theoretical, empirical or even logical reasons.

* A modified version of a questionnaire used by Prof. Mbithi. With kind permission of Professor Mbithi, Department of Sociology, Nairobi.

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