9 Protecting Education from Ethnic Politics

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9.1 Introduction

An educated population is both a development goal and an instrument for development. Education improves a country's stock of human capital and its rate of economic growth (Barro & Lee, 2010; Hanushek & Woessman, 2007). It unlocks economic opportunities for individuals and increases household incomes (Krueger & Lindahl, 2000), while also improving a range of non-market outcomes, notably the health of educated adults and their infants and children (Gakidou et al., 2010; Grossman, 2006). By equipping individuals with the skills they need to make effective choices and live productive, meaningful lives, education is an essential part of what it means to be free (Sen, 1999; World Bank, 2018).

By fostering an informed citizenry, education is essential for active political participation and improving the quality of governance (Bleck, 2015; Brady et al., 1995; Dahl, 1971; Lipset, 1959). Educated individuals are, moreover, more likely to support democracy and express democratic values (Diamond, 1999). Closer to the concerns of this volume, modernization theory suggests that increasing education may be associated with a reduction in individual attachments to localised ethnic identities and a concomitant increase in social cohesion. Indeed, survey evidence from a number of African countries shows that more educated individuals feel a stronger connection to their national identity relative to their ethnicity (Robinson, 2014). To the extent that building a common sense of identification with the nation is an important element of development (Gellner, 1983), education is likely to play a key role. (See Chapter 3 for a case study of Tanzania.) Insofar as education provides opportunities for upward advancement for economically disadvantaged individuals and groups, it may also play a role in reducing both vertical and horizontal inequality. (Chapter 10 discusses language in education as a means of fostering social cohesion.)

Education is thus central to economic and political development. Yet precisely because of its importance to people's current and future well-being (and also because of the size of the budgets and the number of jobs located in the education sector, as well as the number of interest groups with stakes in educational policy decisions)[1] education policy tends to be highly politicised. This leads to inefficiencies, distortions, inequalities in education outcomes, and a general lack of prioritization of student learning. Hence the importance – but also the challenge – of protecting education from politics.[2]

Politics can undermine educational outcomes through multiple channels (World Bank, 2018). One is through corruption and the leakage of funds allocated to build schools, provide educational materials or pay teachers (Reinikka & Svensson, 2004). Where governments are unable to reduce the leakage of funds or where they permit (or even promote) such leakage for political purposes, the quality and quantity of educational services – and with it the quality of learning and the degree of human capital formation that schooling generates – are diminished. Politics can also pervert educational outcomes through partisan and interest group favouritism. The demands of electoral politics may create incentives for governments to disproportionately target educational resources to important voting blocs, thus leading to inefficiencies. Teachers' unions and other organised interest groups may resist educational reforms that might improve children's learning (Bruns & Luque, 2015; Kingdon & Teal, 2010; Taylor et al., 2003).

In this chapter, we focus on a particular – and, in the context we study, particularly important – type of political favouritism: that directed along ethnic lines. Specifically, we investigate whether presidents in Kenya have disproportionately favoured members of their own ethnic groups in the allocation of resources that affect educational outcomes. We focus on ethnic favouritism by the president because the literature on African politics has long assumed that African presidents

[1] Education has comprised between 15% and 20% of Kenya's total budget since the 1970s. The government employs roughly 240,000 teachers, making the Kenya Teachers Service Commission the largest public sector employer in East and Central Africa (Hornsby, 2013, p. 650).

[2] In some settings, the politics surrounding education extend to the contents of the educational curriculum – for example to questions about how the country's history is to be taught or about the language(s) of instruction used in schools. We limit our focus in this chapter to noncurricular issues.

enjoy substantial discretion over the distribution of government resources (van de Walle, 2007).[3] Although ethnic favouritism (by the Kenyan president and other power holders) has long been assumed by both Kenyan citizens and scholars, it turns out to be tricky to document empirically, because doing so requires comparing the patterns of resource distribution that we observe with the counterfactual pattern that we would have observed had a leader from another ethnic community been in office. This is, of course, impossible because history only provides us with one leader at a time. Our empirical strategy, which involves comparing the fortunes of citizens when a member of their own ethnic group is in power with their fortunes when a member of a different ethnic group is in power, provides a very close approximation to the ideal, but impossible, comparison.

Using data on the educational attainment of about 50,000 Kenyans since independence in 1963, we show that children who share an ethnicity with the president are substantially more likely to attend primary school, to complete primary school and to be literate as adults. Although these measures do not capture the full set of ways in which the president's co-ethnics may have benefited educationally from their political connection to the leader – and certainly not the full set of ways they may have benefited in other spheres (Kramon & Posner, 2013) – they capture central aspects of educational attainment. They have the virtue of permitting an analysis of change over time (which, as we explain below, is crucial for estimating the causal effect of having a coethnic president).

We then discuss the broader implications of such ethnic bias. We emphasise that the most important impact may stem not from the direct effect of educational favouritism itself but from the effect it has in reinforcing perceptions of a more general ethnic bias in government allocation decisions. Especially in a context of weak social cohesion, such perceptions can foster resentments between ethnic groups, undermine trust in government and, by making prospective electoral losers fear exclusion from government benefits, raise the stakes of elections. This, in turn, may promote tensions between ethnic groups at election-time, incentivise political actors to engage in corruption to amass campaign war chests, and increase the likelihood of political violence.

[3] In other work, we also explore favoritism by the minister of education and other political actors. See Kramon and Posner (2016).

Indeed, post mortems of the post-election violence that swept across Kenya in early 2008 and, to a somewhat lesser degree, in 2017, implicate precisely these factors as having contributed to the conflict (Chege, 2008; Mueller, 2011).

We conclude with a discussion of how education might be protected from ethnic politics in countries such as Kenya. We emphasize three potential channels: institutional changes, such as devolution, that limit executive power and discretion over the distribution of resources; the creation of public awareness and social mobilisation in favour of more equity in the education sector; and the promotion of private schools as an alternative to the state-sponsored educational sector. (See Chapters 7 and 13 for related discussions.)

9.2 Inequalities in Education Outcomes in Kenya

The pledge to provide universal primary education has been a promise of every Kenyan president since independence (Nungu, 2010; Sifuna, 2005). It featured prominently in the Kenya Africa National Union's post-independence manifestos of 1963 and 1969 and in the country's first 5-year development plan (1964–1969) (Oketch & Rollenton, 2007). It was the rationale behind President Jomo Kenyatta's abolition of school fees for the first 4 years of primary education in 1973. It motivated Kenyatta's successor, Daniel arap Moi, to scrap building levies and introduce a free school milk programme in 1979 (Amutabi, 2003; Oketch & Rolleston, 2007). It inspired the curricular reforms that Moi initiated in 1984, which were designed to reduce dropout rates by making primary schooling more practically oriented (Nungu, 2010). Universal free primary education was a major campaign promise of President Mwai Kibaki, whose Rainbow Coalition defeated the Kenya Africa National Union in the 2002 elections. More recently, President Uhuru Kenyatta has announced the extension of free education to secondary schools by 2019 (*The Star*, 2016).

Yet, despite these policy promises and initiatives, access to education in Kenya is far from universal. Substantial inequalities in educational attainment persist across Kenya's citizens, with inequalities across ethnic groups being especially pronounced. In the 1990s, members of Kenya's largest and best-educated ethnic group, the Kikuyu, had on average 20% more years of schooling than members of minority ethnic groups and 11% more years of schooling than the national

average.[4] Adult literacy rates are similarly imbalanced, with a gap of 16 percentage points between the Kikuyu and members of minority groups.[5]

Cross-group differences in primary school attainment are, of course, driven by multiple factors, with ethnic favouritism being only a part of the explanation. Differential rates of access to education during the pre-independence era gave some groups a leg up in terms of educational attainment, and this early access to schooling has had long-term consequences (Gallego & Woodberry, 2010; Nunn, 2014; Oyugi, 2000; Rothchild, 1969). For example, the Kikuyu have a long history of building their own schools through the colonial era's Kikuyu Independent School Association, and many of these schools continue to operate today. The economic advantages afforded by the growth of agriculture also provided the Kikuyu (along with the Luo and Luhya) with a distinct advantage in the educational realm, in part by providing the resources to support harambee schools, which were a major source of school construction during the first decade after independence.[6] Thus, observing that Kikuyus are still advantaged educationally today could simply mean that these early advantages were perpetuated over time, not that public policy or a biased allocation of educational resources favoured the Kikuyu during the post-independence era.

Educational attainment is also shaped by a range of private and social factors unrelated to politics and policy such as a family's socioeconomic status, religious affiliation, local norms about girls' education, and the expected returns to investing in schooling (Clemens, 2004). The challenge in estimating the impact of ethnic favouritism on educational inequalities thus lies in controlling for these other potential explanations. The strategy we outline below accounts for

[4] Minority ethnic groups are defined here as groups other than the five largest (Kikuyu, Luo, Kamba, Luhya and Kalenjin). In the 1990s, Kikuyu children completed an average of 6.7 years of primary school compared to 5.35 years for members of minority groups and 5.96 years for all Kenyans. Calculations are based on DHS data, as described.

[5] Literacy rates among the Kikuyu in the 1990s were 89, compared to 73 among members of minority ethnic groups (as defined). Calculations are, again, based on DHS data, described elsewhere herein.

[6] So close was the link between the growth of agriculture and advances in education that Lonsdale terms it the "agrarian-educational revolution" (see Chapter 1).

these historical factors and provides an estimate of the *additional* contribution made by ethnic favouritism to the patterns of cross-group inequality we observe today.

9.3 Testing for Ethnic Favouritism in Education

To empirically test for ethnic favouritism in primary education in Kenya, we use data from multiple rounds of the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS). DHS are periodic, nationally representative surveys that collect information on population, health, and nutrition at the household level in more than 85 developing countries. We pool the individual-level data from the DHS surveys from the Kenyan survey years of 1989, 1993, 1998, 2003 and 2008. The DHS interviews every woman in the households it samples, along with male household members in a subsample of households. We combine the male and female data sets, generating a master data set with more than 50,000 observations that includes age cohorts, based on the year in which an individual began primary school, that stretch from the mid 1950s to the late 1990s.

In this chapter, we focus our analyses on three outcomes that capture different aspects of primary school attainment: primary school attendance, primary school completion and adult literacy. To measure primary school attendance, we create a dichotomous variable that takes a value of 1 if the respondent attended any primary school and a value of 0 if the respondent did not. To measure primary school completion, we create another dichotomous measure indicating whether or not the respondent finished primary school, conditional on having started. To the extent that finishing primary school constitutes a real achievement – providing the opportunity to attend secondary school and increasing employment options – this measure has the advantage of capturing something tangible and potentially important for real-world outcomes. Finally, we generate a measure of each respondent's literacy, using responses to a DHS question that asks each respondent to read a simple sentence in the language of his or her choice. We code a person as literate if he or she is able to read the sentence completely. The literacy measure is important, because the ability to read and write is what links access to education to improvements in income and well-being more generally, and schooling attendance is no guarantee of actual learning (Uwezo, 2014).

Our main explanatory variable, which we use to test whether ethnic favouritism might help to explain variation in these outcomes, is an indicator variable that takes a value of 1 if the individual was a member of the same ethnic group as the president who was in office at the time that the individual attended primary school, and a value of 0 otherwise. Following Franck and Rainer (2012), we determine an ethnic match with the president by connecting the ethnicity of the individual to the ethnicity of the president when the individual was between 6 and 13 years old.[7] Integrating a 2-year time lag into our coding rule to account for the fact that policies put in place by a president are not likely to have an immediate impact (and that policies put in place by a president's predecessor are likely still to shape educational outcomes for a period of time after he has left office), we code a presidential ethnic match based on the ethnicity of the president when the respondent was aged 4 to 11 years.[8] If a change in the president occurred during a child's primary school years, the match is coded based on the ethnicity of the president who was in power for the majority of the time that the child was in primary school (i.e., for 4 or more years, subject to the 2-year lag).

A drawback of using the DHS data for our purposes is that the DHS surveys are administered to adults, whereas the main outcome we are interested in – primary educational attainment – took place when the survey respondents were children. Because a survey respondent's circumstances may have changed between childhood and the time that he or she was interviewed, we (unfortunately) cannot use most of the rich individual- and household-level information that the DHS collects to control for the circumstances facing an individual's family at the time he or she was of primary school age.[9] Our models are therefore by

[7] The Kenyan education system is designed for students to begin at age six (or sometimes seven) and to last for 7 (until 1985) or 8 (after 1985) years. Primary school age is thus roughly ages 6 to 13. To the extent that students delay entry into primary school, withdraw for a period and return when they are older or acquire literacy after their primary school years this will bias our analyses against finding an effect of ethnic favoritism

[8] Our results are robust to changing the lag to one year, as well as to omitting the lag altogether. Extending the lag to 3 or 4 years weakens the results. For robustness tests, see Kramon and Posner (2016).

[9] An analogous issue complicates our interpretation of the literacy results. Literacy may have been acquired after a person left school, in which case the ethnic match between the person and the president during the person's school-aged years may have little to do with the literacy they acquired later on. For this reason, we attach less weight to our literacy findings than to our findings with respect to primary school attendance and completion.

necessity sparse, although we can and do control for whether the individual spent his or her childhood (and thus attended primary school) in a rural area and for the individual's religion (Catholic, Muslim or Protestant).

As noted, the major challenge in estimating the impact of ethnic favouritism on educational attainment is to isolate the effects of such favouritism from individual- and group-specific (including historical) factors that might also affect schooling outcomes. For example, if we found that, on average, members of the president's ethnic group completed more years of primary schooling than members of other ethnic groups, it would be difficult to know whether this association was a product of ethnic favouritism by the president or of deeper causes such as the group's earlier exposure to colonial education, its proximity to the national capital, its higher than average wealth or greater job opportunities (both of which might affect the cost–benefit decisions families make about whether to send their children to school), or some other group-specific natural advantage.

Our strategy for solving this inferential problem is to leverage changes in the ethnicity of the president (which happened in 1978, when Kenyatta, a Kikuyu, was succeeded by Moi, a Kalenjin, and in 2002, when Moi was succeeded by Kibaki, a Kikuyu) and to run our models with ethnic group fixed effects, which control for unchanging group-specific factors that may predispose members of one group to over- or under-perform others. This set up allows us to study the changing fortunes of each group over time, comparing the group's primary school attainment rates (and other outcomes) during periods when it has a president in the state house and when it does not, thereby holding group-specific characteristics constant. Kikuyus whose primary schooling years took place under Kenyatta and Kibaki receive an equal advantage from their history of Kikuyu Independent School Association and harambee schools, their generally greater wealth and their closer proximity to Nairobi compared with Kikuyus whose primary schooling years took place when Moi was president. By comparing their fortunes, on average, during these different regimes, it becomes possible to separate the relative contributions of having a coethnic in power from the

presumably unchanging group-specific factors that are positively (or, in the case of some other groups, negatively) associated with educational achievement.

In addition to ethnic-group fixed effects, each of our regression models also include age cohort-specific fixed effects, whose inclusion helps to control for time-specific shocks that might impact primary education attainment differently across different age cohorts. This might be an issue for the associations we are trying to estimate if, e.g., a president's tenure in office coincided with a severe economic downturn that caused parents to keep their children home from school (because they could not afford school fees or uniforms, or so that the children could help to generate income for the household). In such a scenario, it would be hard to separate out the impact of the president's efforts to help his group from the impact of the negative shock that happened to coincide with his presidency. The inclusion of age cohort fixed effects helps control for this possibility.[10]

9.4 Evidence of Ethnic Favouritism in Primary Education

To test for the effect of having a coethnic president during childhood on our three primary school outcomes, we ran a series of logistic regressions in which the outcomes are primary school attendance, primary school completion and adult literacy. Figure 9.1 presents the main results.[11] We calculate and plot the average marginal effect of co-ethnicity with the president on each outcome (the solid dot). We also plot the per cent change over the mean of each outcome implied by these average marginal effects (the triangles).

On each dimension, we find evidence that co-ethnics of the president achieve better educational outcomes.[12] With respect to primary school attendance, co-ethnics are on average around 6 percentage points more likely to have ever attended primary school, which represents a 6% increase over the mean (in the full sample, the attendance rate is already quite high at 88%). With respect to primary school completion, co-ethnics of the president are on average about 3 percentage points more likely to complete primary school. This effect represents an almost 6% increase over the full sample completion rate of 56%. Finally, with respect to literacy, adults who had a coethnic as president when they were children are about 9 percentage points more likely to be literate, an improvement of 12% over the full sample literacy rate of 72%. This last finding is particularly striking, because adult literacy is likely a product of language acquisition that continues long after one's

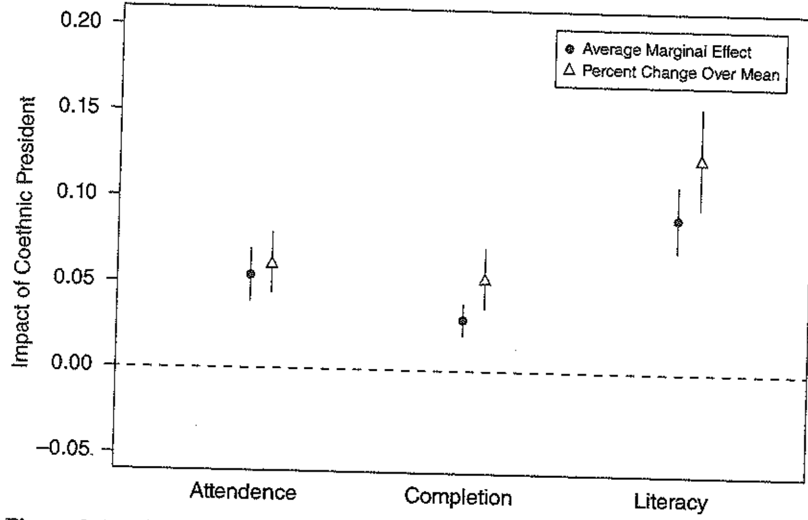

Figure 9.1 Ethnic favouritism in primary education outcomes

Note: The figure presents the effect of an ethnic match with the president during one's primary school-age years on the probability of attending primary school, completing primary school, and being literate as an adult. Estimates are derived from ordinary least squares regression models that include controls for childhood in a rural area and religion, ethnic group fixed effects, and age cohort fixed effects. The solid dot represents the average marginal effect of having a coethnic president. The triangles represent the per cent change over the mean implied by each average marginal effect.

[10] We also include robust standard errors, clustered at the ethnic group-president level (because this is the level at which the treatment – presidential favoritism – is applied). Our results are robust to alternate specifications in which we cluster at the ethnic group age cohort and ethnic group levels and when we compute standard errors using block bootstrap, as suggested by Bertrand, Duflo and Mullainathan (2004). In addition, our findings are robust to the inclusion of ethnic group-specific linear and quadratic time trends. See Kramon and Posner (2016) for details.

[11] For complete regression results, see Kramon and Posner (2016).

[12] In Kramon and Posner (2016), we show that ethnic favoritism extends beyond the president's own ethnic group to his broader ethnic-political coalition (e.g., to the Embu and Meru under Kenyatta/Kibaki and to the Maasai, Turkana and Samburu under Moi). This finding underscores that there is nothing special about ethnic categories as commonly defined in census classifications: what matters is the affinity group writ large, and this group can be defined in multiple ways.

primary school years. Hence, a coethnic president's contribution to an adult's literacy – at any rate the contribution that runs through the president's impact on primary schooling – is less direct than for the other outcomes we discuss.

These effects are roughly comparable to the effects of a number of other policy interventions designed to improve educational outcomes in developing countries. In Kenya, for example, Miguel and Kremer (2004) find that improvements in student health achieved by the allocation of de-worming drugs decrease absenteeism by 7 percentage points. Evans et al. (2008) find that distributing free school uniforms increases attendance by about 6 percentage points. Vermeersch and Kremer (2004) analyse the impact of a school breakfast programme in preschools in Kenya, and find that enrolment in schools where the breakfast was served was about 30 percentage points higher – an effect substantially larger than our own. In Mexico, Schultz (2004) leverages the randomised nature of the Progresa conditional cash transfer programme and finds that the cash payments to parents increased enrolments by about 3 percentage points. And in Colombia, Angrist et al. (2002) find that a lottery that randomly subsidised private schooling for some students increases completion of the eighth grade by 10 percentage points. That the effect of having a coethnic president is of similar magnitude to policy initiatives deliberately designed to improve educational outcomes attests to the importance of ethnic ties in the Kenyan context.

Another way of thinking about the importance of our results is to recharacterise them in terms of the total human capital accumulated by the president's ethnic group as a consequence of his having occupied the presidency. To do this, we use data from the Kenyan census to estimate the number of the president's co-ethnics whose primary school years coincided with his tenure (subject to the 2-year lag). We then multiply this by the average number of years of additional schooling that we estimate are associated with having a coethnic president. These calculations suggest that the Kikuyu ethnic group acquired an extra 236,000 person-years of schooling as a consequence of having had a kinsman in the state house for 16 years and that the Kalenjin community acquired an extra 357,000 person-years of schooling owing to its control of the presidency from 1978 to 2002. Viewed in this way (which allows for the possibility – no doubt borne out in fact – that the benefits of having a coethnic occupying the presidency manifest themselves not as an additional fraction of a year of schooling for every one of the president's coethnics but as many additional years of schooling for an elite subsection of the president's community), the benefits that accrue to an ethnic community from having a coethnic in a position of high power are unambiguously large.

9.5 The Broader Impact of Ethnic Favouritism in Primary Education

What is the broader impact of the ethnic favouritism we have documented in the educational sector? With the data at hand, it is difficult to speak to direct effects. Access to education, especially primary education, has gradually expanded for all groups in Kenya since independence, despite the ethnic favouritism we identify. Average years of primary schooling rose from 4.19 years in the colonial era to 6.13 years by the 1980s, though it dropped to 5.96 years in the 1990s. Adult literacy rose from 20% at independence to 91% by 2005 (Hornsby, 2013, pp. 446; World Bank Development Indicators). Whether this net amount of human capital formation in Kenya would have been greater without ethnic favouritism is hard to establish. But it is almost surely the case that the increase in the average number of years of schooling provided to Kenyan children matters at least as much for the country's development fortunes as whether children from some subgroups received more schooling than others.

Moreover, it is not clear that an equitable distribution of educational resources would even be optimal from an economic development point of view. Lavishing more educational resources on children who already have higher than average levels of schooling (or whose parents have had more education) may be more economically efficient than investing resources in children with lower schooling levels (or in children of poorly educated parents). On the other hand, it is equally plausible that channelling resources to children with lower levels of educational attainment will generate more poverty reduction and better long-term development outcomes. The point is simply that, from a contribution-to-economic-development standpoint, the large increases in levels of schooling *on average* are almost certainly a much more important feature of Kenya's postindependence history than the (more modest) inequality in schooling attainment across ethnic groups.

In addition to bolstering economic development directly, the general increase in schooling may also have an indirect (and positive) impact

on development outcomes through its effect on social cohesion. In Western Europe, the growth of education went hand-in-hand with the breakdown of parochial group loyalties and the fostering of national identities. To the extent that increasing citizens' access to education has this effect, and to the extent that the weakening of subnational identities increases social cohesion and reduces the likelihood of intergroup conflict, the increase in schooling since independence could be development promoting – even if the increase is distributed in a biased way.

On the other hand, recent research suggests that, rather than increase social cohesion, education may actually reinforce or exacerbate ethnic divisions in society. In a study in Kenya, Friedman et al. (2016) find that increasing educational attainment was associated with an increase in the importance that people attached to their ethnic identities, although this result is not statistically significant. Miguel (2004) argues similarly that the curriculum and language policies in Kenyan primary schools may contribute to ethnic tensions (although it is not clear from his paper whether this is in absolute terms or simply relative to Tanzania, his comparison case). Because most of the beneficiaries of ethnic favouritism in education – and of the expansion of educational opportunities more generally – do not advance beyond primary school, it is possible that the increase in access to primary education that has occurred in Kenya over the past 50 years has had the effect of exposing more students to an experience that *reinforces* ethnic division and *undermines* social cohesion.[13]

There are also concerns about the quality of the education that students receive – an important issue that our data on educational attainment cannot address.[14] If expansions in educational opportunity do not correspond with increases in the quality of education (as research by Harding & Stasavage [2014], among others, suggests is often the case – or worse, are associated with decreases in the quality of

[13] As is emphasized in the Introduction to this volume, Europe's experience points to how the fostering of national identities can generate costly interstate conflicts – even if such identities may generate national social cohesion in the longer term. So, to the extent that education fosters identifications with the nation, it can be conflict generating.

[14] Groups like Uwezo have documented broad shortcomings in children's learning in Kenya, notwithstanding significant increases in the number of children in school and the number of years they attend. See, for example, Uwezo (2014).

education), then we should not expect education to have much of an impact on broader patterns of ethnic politics (or development more generally). The impact of education on ethnic politics is thus debatable. It will be important for future research to examine this potentially complex relationship in greater detail.

An impact that is much less ambiguous, however, is the effect of the kind of ethnic bias we have documented on perceptions of the government's (lack of) even-handedness in distributing public resources – perceptions which have a direct impact on social cohesion and ethnic relations. Survey data in Kenya reveal strong perceptions of ethnic favouritism, with perceptions of fair treatment by the government strongly associated with whether or not the respondent is a member of the president's ethnic group. For example, in a 2008–2009 survey, whereas fully 90% of Luos and 82% of Luhyas reported that members of their group were at least sometimes treated unfairly by the government, just 60% of President Kibaki's Kikuyu co-ethnics reported feeling this way (Afrobarometer, 2008–2009). Although these perceptions are no doubt driven by factors that go beyond the ethnic imbalance in educational attainment, inequality in the education sphere does nothing to weaken these perceptions, and quite likely reinforces them.

Perceptions of ethnic favouritism in the distribution of government resources have a number of important consequences for development and social cohesion. First, they can undermine trust between ethnic groups and between out-of-power ethnic groups and the state. As Lonsdale argues in chapter 1, "only a widespread trust in the state's protection of a common citizenship could usher in a fifth stage of ethnic relations, in which cultural difference is of no consequence". Survey evidence suggests that levels of interethnic trust in Kenya are low: 22% of Afrobarometer respondents report that they trust members of other ethnic groups "not at all" and a further 44% report that they trust members of other groups "just a little". Strikingly, only 7% of Kenyan Afrobarometer respondents trust members of other groups "a lot" (Afrobarometer, 2005–2006).[15] In the Kenya Institute of Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA, 2014) study

[15] The 2005–2006 Afrobarometer surveys were the last versions to include questions about trust in members of other ethnic groups.

described in Chapter 7, the results are somewhat more optimistic, but still suggest that interethnic trust is weak.[16]

This lack of trust extends to the political arena. Whereas 78% of Kikuyus polled in 2012 said they trusted President Kibaki, a fellow Kikuyu, "a lot" or "somewhat", only 29% of Luo and 40% of Luhya reported such levels of trust in the president (Afrobarometer, 2012). Meanwhile, whereas only 37% of Kikuyu reported trusting Prime Minister Raila Odinga "a lot" or "somewhat", 76% of Odinga's coethnic Luos reported such levels of trust in the prime minister (Ibid).

Such sentiments have implications for economic and political development. A large literature suggests that low levels of interpersonal trust are associated with lower rates of economic growth (Beugelsdijk et al., 2004; Knack & Keefer, 1997). Low levels of trust also diminish the ability of politicians to make credible programmatic and policy promises to voters from other ethnic groups. This may undermine democratic accountability by reinforcing patterns of ethnic voting and incentivising clientelist mobilization and vote-getting strategies (Keefer & Vlaicu, 2008).

Real and perceived ethnic favouritism by presidents also substantially raises the stakes of presidential elections, as people fear exclusion from future benefits should the candidate associated with their group lose the election. This has led to the emergence of a "do or die" mentality surrounding elections in Kenya (Mueller, 2011). This mentality has a number of problematic side effects. In the first place, it generates incentives for vote buying, electoral fraud, and other forms of election-related corruption. The need to amass resources to win a campaign can provide a justification for other sorts of corruption as well (Wrong, 2009). Such election-inspired corruption may be particularly hard to stamp out, because voters – or at any rate voters who are co-ethnics of the corrupt politician – may be less likely to object to illegal activities carried out in the name of protecting the livelihood of their ethnic community. The political elite can thus exploit voter fears of exclusion by out-group leaders in order to engage in corruption and extract rents without losing support from their ethnic electoral base (Padro i Miquel, 2007).

[16] In the Kenya Institute of Public Policy Research and Analysis study, 13.7% of respondents say they trust people from other ethnic groups "not at all" and only 38.3% say they trust people from other ethnic groups "completely".

High-stakes elections can also fuel election violence, which has been common to each of Kenya's multiparty elections held since 1992 (Mueller, 2011). More recently, this was manifest in the violence that killed more than 1,000 people and displaced roughly 700,000 after the disputed elections of 2007. Though the proximate cause of the violence was a dispute over the true winner of the election and allegations of fraud, the underlying grievances that facilitated the violence were in large part related to perceptions of biased and inequitable distribution of resources across Kenya's ethnic groups. Thus, to the extent that ethnic favouritism in the education sector contributes to the perceptions that power holders will discriminate on behalf of their kin, it may undermine development by generating mistrust, corruption and instability.

9.6 Protecting Education from Ethnic Politics

Given the significant development implications of ethnic favouritism in the education sector, it is natural to inquire how education might be protected from ethnic politics. Three broad responses appear promising. The first involves the introduction of institutional reforms that limit executive discretion. In Kenya, a series of institutional changes in the postindependence period centralised power in the office of the president and led to the emergence of what many Kenyans refer to as the "imperial presidency" – a system in which the president enjoys almost limitless power (Widner, 1992; Hornsby, 2013). The combination of this unconstrained power and the desire to favour one's ethnic kin – born from a combination of in-group affection, social pressure and strategic political considerations – has led to the patterns of favouritism and horizontal inequality we have documented in this chapter.

Kenya's new constitution, adopted through popular referendum in 2010, contains a number of provisions that, if fully implemented, hold promise of constraining executive power and promoting a more equitable distribution of resources (Kramon & Posner, 2011).[17] For example, the constitution devolves significant powers to forty-seven county governments, which are responsible for primary health care,

[17] Whether these provisions will be fully implemented is an open question, however. As Ranis makes clear in Chapter 10, the implementation of Kenya's devolution has been weak and uneven. Further, devolution can also create new more localized forms of ethnic conflict over resources (Cheeseman et al., 2016).

agricultural policy, and the provision of a number of other public goods. Also, whereas budgetary power was previously centralised in the executive, and hence subject to presidential manipulation, under the new system a set percentage of the national budget is disbursed to the countries, with the allocation formula determined by an elected Senate. Although primary education remains under the purview of the central government, the constitutional reforms create less favourable environment for ethnic favouritism – at least centralised ethnic favouritism controlled by the president.[18] (See Chapter 7 for a further discussion of devolution.)

In addition to formal institutional constraints on presidential power, ethnic bias in the education sector may be reduced by increased transparency regarding both how education-related resources are distributed and the unequal outcomes that result. Greater citizen awareness about the extent of the bias, generated through enhanced media coverage and civic education campaigns, can lead to social mobilization on behalf of a more equitable distribution of resources and, perhaps, a growing wiliness of voters to sanction politicians that have engaged in ethnic favouritism and to reward those who have not.

An additional solution is to provide opportunities for students to exit the government education system altogether through the promotion of private schools.[19] The development of a viable exit option can both create pressure on government to improve the quality of traditionally disfavoured schools and offer opportunities for children from disfavoured ethnic groups to receive educational training closer to that of their favoured peers.[20]

9.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, we provide empirical evidence of ethnic favouritism in the education sector in Kenya. Drawing on data on the educational

[18] For a further discussion of the effects of decentralization in ethnically diverse settings, see Ranis, Chapter 7.

[19] In some poor neighborhoods in Nairobi, more than 40% of the poorest families send their children to private schools, in part because they believe that private schools provide better education at comparable costs, once one has accounted for the informal fees charged in public schools (World Bank, 2018).

[20] To the extent that such schools have a religious orientation or provide instruction in a language other than the national language, however, they may undermine state legitimacy and social cohesion (Bleck, 2015).

attainment of roughly 50,000 Kenyans since independence, we document that Kenyans are substantially more likely to have attended and completed primary school and to be literate as adults if their primary school-age years coincided with the tenure in office of a president from their ethnic group.

Given the strong empirical connections between education and a range of desirable development outcomes (including increased income, better health and greater democratic political participation), such favouritism may exacerbate existing horizontal inequalities between ethnic groups. Additionally, and in part through its impact on these other outcomes, favouritism in the education sector can reinforce perceptions of ethnic bias by the government, thereby reducing trust between ethnic groups, undermining faith in government, destroying social cohesion, and creating a "do or die" mentality surrounding presidential elections. The impact of ethnic favouritism in education thus extends well beyond the education sector and constitutes a major challenge for development. Protecting education from ethnic politics will require both institutional change and vigilance on the part of citizens to ensure that institutional reforms translate into greater equality in education's provision. Attending to these tasks will be an important ingredient in moving Kenya from an ethnically divisive past to a more cohesive future.

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