

Contents

<i>List of maps</i>	<i>page</i> ix
<i>List of tables</i>	x
<i>Preface</i>	xi
1 Introduction: staging politics in Kenya	1
A political spectacle	1
Beyond images of reversal	4
National political culture and local realities	8
Organization of the book	11
Improbable fiction?	14
2 Shattered silences: political culture and “democracy” in the early 1990s	15
Introduction	15
Winds of change: Africa’s re-emergent multiparty politics	18
Aid donors rediscover politics	20
Political upheavals: Kenya, 1990–3	22
“Seditious” music	28
Theatre as contemporary political satire	31
Some economic origins of the early 1990s protests	33
The ethnic dimension	38
Patron–client politics	45
Conclusions	50
3 Open secrets: everyday forms of domination before 1990	56
Introduction	56
Embu: a brief introduction	60
<i>Baraza</i>	61
An implicit moral contract: paternalism, authoritarianism, “development”	71
Weapons of fear	76
Politics of the devil, politics of redemption	79
“Follow the footsteps”: political culture under Moi	81
Down with (home-brewed) beer	86
A politician sneaks in an “unofficial” message	92
Less pliant <i>baraza</i> audiences	96
Conclusions	99
Transcription key	107
	vii

viii	Contents	
4	Moral economy and the quest for wealth in central Kenya since the late nineteenth century	108
	Introduction	108
	A pre-colonial snapshot: caravans, brokers, and farmers	111
	Colonial wealth differences and patronage	122
	Conclusions	134
5	The dove and the castor nut: Embu household economy in the 1980s	139
	Introduction	139
	Upward and downward mobility	141
	The dove and the castor nut	143
	Patron–client pyramids	145
	Rich and poor in Embu	147
	Diversification and the uncertainty of agricultural output	154
	The instability of households	159
	Interpersonal conflict and relations within households and families	162
	Relations between rich and poor	176
	Disappearing small farmers? Debating agrarian change	182
	Conclusions	190
6	Conclusions: the showpiece of an hour	192
	<i>Notes</i>	201
	<i>Bibliography</i>	238
	<i>Index</i>	258