Migrants, Commuters, and Townsmen. Aspects of Urbanization in a Small Town in Kenya.

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Aspects of Urbanization in a Small
Town in Kenya.

I hereby declare that this thesis has been composed by myself, and that the work is my own.

Brian Lang.
November, 1974.

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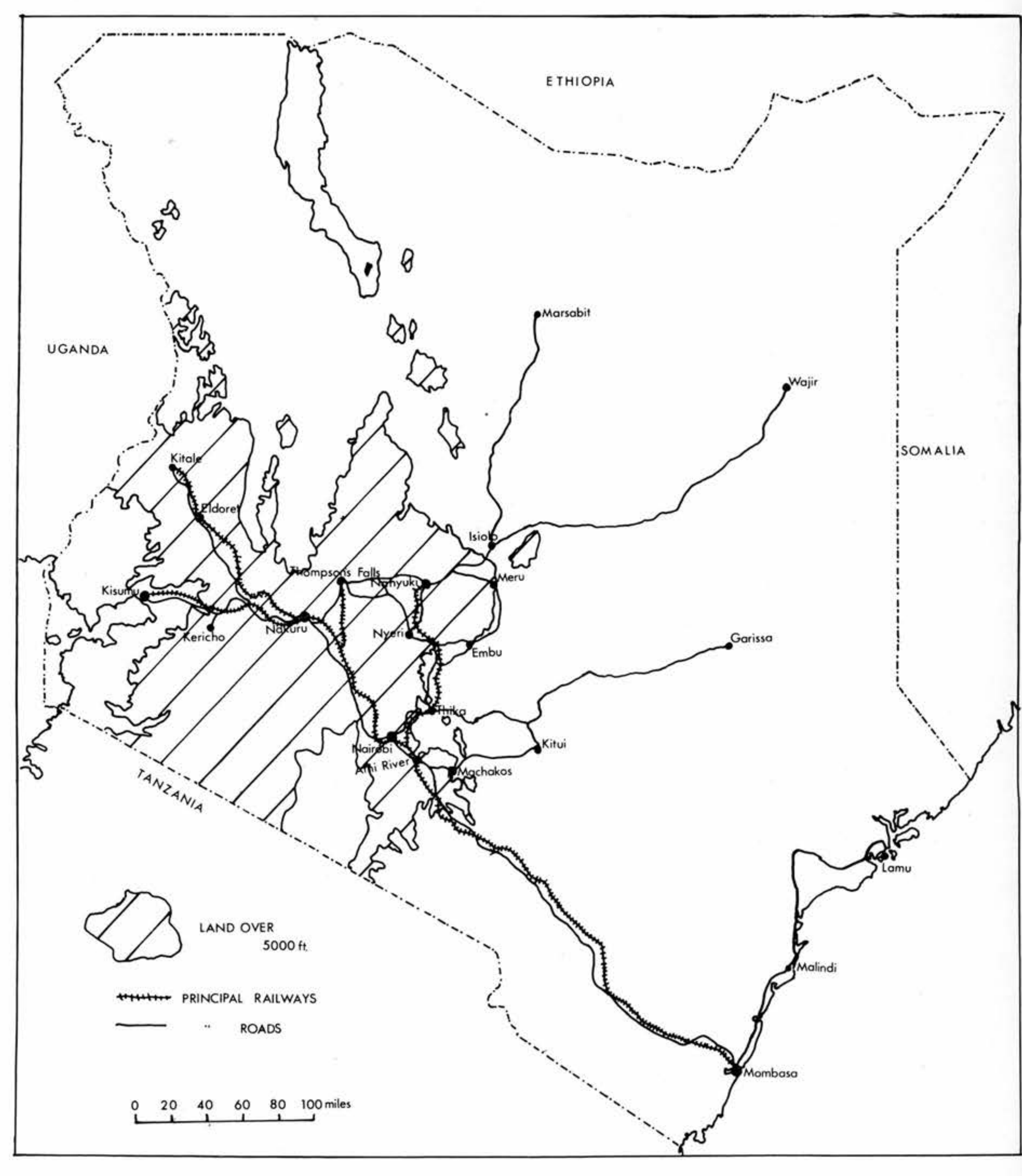


KENYA - PRINCIPAL TOWNS

Summary

Machakos is a small town in east-central Kenya, an administrative and commercial centre which grew slowly but steadily after being founded as the first up-country European trading post in East Africa.

The African population is incorporated in the town in varying ways, ranging from those who were born in the town and are 'fully urbanized' (the core of this category being a community of Muslims) through circulatory migration between the town and the rural areas of Kenya, to a category of 'commuters', who work in town by day and return to homes in the immediate hinterland every evening. This thesis seeks to examine the nature of the African population and labour force in Machakos, people's motives for being in town and their attitudes to urban life and work. It also seeks to place the town in the wider context of the socio-economic system constituted by Kenya as a whole, and to provide a historical dimension to contemporary situations by seeking to understand these in terms of the emerging patterns of social stratification in Kenya.

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

This thesis concerns Machakos, a small town in Kenya. The results of my fieldwork in Machakos show that small towns like this require a different approach from the type of town for which the methodology of urban anthropology in Africa has been developed. More ethnographically, I describe the types of involvement of African people in this town, and how this involvement is related to the circumstances of the town's history, which is in turn part of the history of Kenya.

When I carried out fieldwork in Machakos in 1969-70, I had to face up to what appeared then to be inadequacies in the methodology, which seemed to have been developed to handle what Southall termed 'type B' towns - the large, industrial, European-created towns and cities of very rapid growth, whose African populations are tribally heterogeneous and demographically disproportionate.[1] Machakos, although founded by Europeans, has no 'industry' to speak of, and is an administrative and commercial centre. Population growth has been relatively slow, and in 1970 the resident population was only 6,300. This is drawn from near at hand, the labour force being predominantly members of the Kamba tribe, within whose traditional territory Machakos lies. The relationship of Machakos to the surrounding countryside is very close, demonstrated not only in the town's administrative and market functions, but also in the fact that many urban workers do not live in town, but travel in daily from the surrounding farmland. In Machakos I was faced by the knowledge that to treat the town as a social situation in itself would considerably distort the reality I was trying to understand and describe,

1. Southall (1961) pp. 5-13.

so continual was the flow of people between the town and rural homes sometimes only a few minutes' walk away. This concerned not only the labour force but many other people who came to town for a variety of reasons. A basic assumption had to be the lack of any sharp division between town and country.

A first task for the study of African towns had been seen, however, as the establishment of the town as, if not a social whole like a 'tribe', then at least as capable of description and analysis without constant recourse to explanation by external factors. To enable this, the 'situational approach' was developed, by which it was possible to hold the external factors constant, and thus to set them apart from immediate concern.[2] According to Clyde Mitchell, social relationships in towns

> "operate within a framework which, while determining the nature of the pattern of social relationships within the town, need not be part of the study of the town itself." [3]

Therefore it is possible

> "to take them for granted and to examine instead the behaviour of individuals within the social matrix created by these factors ...." [4]

Mitchell also said that

> "the tribal origins of the population in so far as these imply tribal modes of behaviour must - not 'may even be' - regarded as of secondary interest." [5]

This approach was useful because it allowed anthropologists to get on with isolating the distinctive characteristics of African urban social organisation, to show that there was, in fact, organisation, and to describe and analyse urban institutions and activities - trade unions, tribal associations, concubinage patterns etc.

2. Gluckman (1961); Mitchell (1966).
3. Mitchell (1966) p. 48.
4. Mitchell (1966) p.49.
5. Mitchell (1966) p.48.

One notable contribution of this approach was the notion of 'situational change'; migrant workers, in moving from country to town, do not automatically become 'detribalized', but may switch between alternative sets of behaviour patterns relevant to either urban or rural situations.[6] 'Town' and 'country' are here separated conceptually in order to underline the essential differences between two sets of behaviour, relevant to two distinct types of social system. The danger remains, however, of overemphasising the social discreteness of the African town, and of neglecting the continuing interrelation between the town and the countryside around it. In some situations, as Machakos demonstrates, this relationship may be very close indeed. Similarly, the East London described by P. Mayer has close ties to its hinterland,[7] and Mayer is concerned to include these in his analysis of urban social relations.

The separation of town and country was also facilitated by the idea of 'situational change'. This was considered a major contribution to the study of circulatory labour migration and urbanization in that it described the nature of the movement of individuals from one social system into another, with neither the individual nor the systems necessarily being 'changed'. As Mitchell says

> "We may view the social systems operating in towns and tribal areas as <u>relatively stable and enduring</u> though each is distinct from the other. An individual who migrates from a tribal area into a town will find that his behaviour, appropriate to rural circumstances, is out of place in town and he must therefore adopt new customs and habits."[8] (My emphasis).

The notion of situational change thus allowed the setting apart of the town as a separate social system -

"The individual does not bring his social institutions

6. Gluckman (1945); Epstein (1958).
7. Mayer (1971).
8. Mitchell (1966) pp. 43-4.

> with him to town. The institutions are parts of different social systems and the individual moves from one into the other .... An urban social institution is not a changed rural institution: it is a separate social phenomenon existing as part of a separate social system so that the behaviour in town of a migrant when it differs from that in his rural home is more likely to be a manifestation of 'situational' rather than 'processive' change."[9]

The distinction is a useful one, but it must not be overlooked that to understand what is going on within a particular town, it may be necessary to resort to external factors such as the national economy and administration and the role of the particular town within these, and the nature of the town's development since its foundation. Furthermore, 'urbanization' and 'labour migration' are but two processes contributing to the transformation of African society, and situational change and the situational approach cannot alone account for the nature of this transformation. To view the town as 'relatively stable and enduring' may seriously distract attention from the understanding of processive change, of which urbanization is an expression.[10]

In Machakos I wanted to look at the town not just as a milieu of social relations in itself, but at the role the town played in the social change which Kenya was undergoing. And in order to understand the social relations existing within Machakos I found it necessary to refer to this process of change, to the history of Kenya as well as of Machakos, and to contemporary factors stemming from, for instance, Nairobi. What Machakos as a social milieu

9. Mitchell (1966) pp. 47-8.
10. Cf. also Lewis' warning that some anthropologists "have been mainly interested in treating the new circumstances produced by change as an enclosed, self-contained field to which Radcliffe-Brown's model of self-maintaining structure could again be applied." Lewis (1968) p. xxi.

offers, is the possibility of exploring people's life situations as they are affected by social change in Kenya, and as they reflect the nature of this change.

Colonialism and urbanization in Africa

To place the study of local situations, like that of a single town, into a wider historical context it is necessary to place it within, and relate it to, a process or set of processes which subsume the local situation, of which the local situation is a product or a function. The most significant processes within which to place a local situation in Africa are those resulting from colonial expansion and consolidation, and Independence. Labour migration and urbanization, together with the introduction of cash-cropping, have in Africa been the social processes whereby previously self-sufficient and autonomous peoples have been incorporated in a wider social and economic system, and given specific roles within this. The nature of these roles has varied both geographically, according to the forms of labour and resources mobilization adopted by the Europeans in particular areas,[11] and temporally, as the range of activities available to Africans has opened out. The resultant patterns of stratification and their development have been the essence of the colonial history of African societies.

Much has been written about the transformation of African societies into 'peasantries', discussion being centred on changing systems of land tenure, the nature of cash-crop production, and the expropriation of this by the capitalist economy.[12] As part of the same incorporation process, rural African societies provided wage labour to European agriculture and industry. This latter process, along with the more recent, in East Africa at any rate,

11. Amin (n.d.); Cliffe (1973); Arrighi and Saul (1973).
12. Cliffe (1973); Arrighi and Saul (1973); Saul and Woods (1971); Leys (1971).

tendency for some African agriculturalists to hire labour, has led to a discussion of the tendency towards polarization of African society into social classes.[13] And this discussion has in turn spawned a controversy around the application to Africa of categories of stratification developed for the analysis of social stratification in industrial Europe.[14] The discussion is complicated by the fact of Independence, and the necessity of accounting for the new states of Africa. One problem for the supposed polarization of African society into social classes of the classical Marxian kind is that it is 'delayed' by various mechanisms, such as labour migration, continued ownership of land, 'tribalism', and varying degrees of colour bar.[15] But whatever the terms used to describe the stratification process in Africa, there is no doubt that a polarization is taking place, in terms of a broadening of differences in income and sources of income, education and access to education, occupation, as well as differences in corresponding life-styles. However, according to Colin Leys, writing about Kenya,

> "any attempt to present Kenyan politics purely in terms of antagonism between classes tends to appear artificial. This is partly because ofthe difficulty of finding Kenyan equivalents for the most familiar Marxian class categories. While it may be possible to talk of an embryonic haute bourgeoisie and a more substantial petty bourgeoisie, it is extremely difficult to talk about a proletariat, and the classic problem of analyzing the all-important and diverse socio-political characteristics of the peasantry must always be solved afresh in such a context."[16]

A major difficulty for many of the new states of Africa, including Kenya, in terms of social class analysis is said to be that they have no bourgeoisie of their own, the means of production (apart from insignificant

13. Allen (1972); Amin (n.d.); Arrighi and Saul (1973).
14. Worsley (1967); Leys (1971); R. Leys (1973); Mafeje (1973).
15. Mafeje)1973); Wolf (1969).
16. Leys (1971) p. 307.

smallholdings and a few larger farms) being owned directly by international corporations or expatriates.[17] While it is true that since Independence no African bourgeoisie with significant economic power has emerged, this does not mean that there is no bourgeoisie, but that this is made up of the predominantly European owners of the means of production.[18] In Kenya economic power is retained by the ex-colonial power, but administered on the spot by locally-recruited bureaucrats, overseen by a government co-opted into serving the interests of foreign investment. Hence the 'growth without development' situation.[19] Kenyan-owned commercial enterprises tend to be conducted on a small scale, or to be in the hands of an Asian business community. The government can placate African frustrations by handing over this sector to citizens, because it is easily expropriated, and the small shops and businesses concerned are still dwarfed by the foreign-owned sector. The African bourgeoisie thus tends to be truncated - it is formed of bureaucrats, professional people (doctors, lawyers etc.) and a small, relatively weak commercial sector. The economically powerful are missing.[20] Because of this, it has been more appropriate to speak of those Africans with power and authority, which is based on education or political ability, as an élite, rather than as a social class.[21]

As well as the African bourgeoisie being at a low level of development, an African proletariat has emerged only on a very small scale. The African proletariat may be taken as being formed by those workers who own only

17. Shivji (1971); Who Controls... (1968).
18. Who Controls... (1968).
19. Leys (1971); Frank (1967).
20. Shivji (1971). Cf. also Worsley, who, in refusing to consider petty traders in West Africa part of a 'bourgeoisie' writes "It is ridiculous to label them and wealthy giants like the United Africa Company as 'capitalist entrepreneurs'." (1967) p. 134. He also points to the domination of commerce by foreign capital.
21. Lloyd (1966).

their labour power - in Kenya mainly the landless engaged in urban or rural wage-labour, or who are unemployed. The numbers of landless are kept at a relatively low level by either labour migration or the practice of providing agricultural workers with plots to cultivate for themselves.[22]

The substantive mechanisms inhibiting the growth of social classes - the 'delaying mechanisms' referred to above - inhibit both the economic preconditions for the development of social classes and the polarization of political interests which accompany this. The mechanism we are particularly concerned with here is that of labour migration.

Circulatory labour migration inhibits the development of a class of landless labourers, in that this form of migration makes it possible for a family to supplement its income from an otherwise uneconomic piece of land, by wage labour. Wage-earning in a town or other employment centre does not necessitate a man giving up his land, making many urban workers more aptly described as what Leys calls 'partly urban-based peasants'. In addition, labour migration has the effect of retaining the preoccupations of those workers who would be expected to form part of a developing proletariat out of the wage-earning situation and on the land. Any political expression they develop tends to be channelled through 'tribalism', by reaffirmation of their tribal loyalties in electing representatives on tribal grounds (frequently regarded as part of a patron-client exchange), and their blaming of the nation's and their own ills on specified or unspecified 'tribalism' practiced by other tribes.[23]

Migrant workers are by no means a homogeneous category. It tends to be forgotten that not only the potential proletariat but also the truncated bourgeoisie have strong rural ties, and may be considered circulatory

22. Leys (1971) pp. 314-5.
23. Cf. Gertzel (1970), especially pp. 42-4.

labour migrants. Civil servants and doctors also take a great interest in the land, and in their kin living there, especially where the former are first generation educated. Although they have been educated out of the peasantry and are no longer economically dependent on the land, this does not mean that their interest in the land wanes. They may put part of their urban earnings into the land, not necessarily for commercial ends. Their ties to the land and rural-dwellers serve to reinforce links to the potential proletariat, to which fathers and brothers and cousins may belong, and poorer rural dwellers, again hindering the polarization of political and economic interests. Attitudes and behaviour displayed by migrant workers to the land are thus very significant.

Migrant workers also display wide variations in their degree of commitment to urban life and the work situation in town. Although many of them are preoccupied with the land, and others owe more allegiance to the town, there is most frequently some sort of tie in the other direction. Some migrants are held in town only by the cash their job brings them, some educated ones may retain rural ties only because of the emotional cost of breaking them. This dual orientation[24] is very difficult to break out of. The possession of rural ties acts as a considerable security to migrants, which allows an escape from a work situation felt to be exploitative or otherwise unsatisfactory. A migrant really dissatisfied with his wage-earning situation can simply quit it and go back to the land - as Wolf would say, he can 'retreat into subsistence production'.[25] Migrants may display positive attitudes to town life, enjoying the freedom and excitement, the flavour of

24. This 'dual orientation' does not refer to the much criticized theory of 'dual economies'. Cf. Mafeje (1973); Frank (1969). R. Leys (1973), however, points out the descriptive value of 'dualism'.
25. Wolf (1969) p.289.

'the civilized way of life', and this, together with the possibility of retreating into subsistence, bodes ill for the creation of the conscious, protesting proletariat which Allen seems to suggest.[26]

The unemployed are more likely to express feelings of resentment at their position than the employed (and in a situation of heavy unemployment those fortunate in having jobs are less likely to rock their boats). It is significant that the Kenya Government in1970 was more concerned to placate the unemployed, by ordering employers to increase their workforces by 10%, than the already employed. The unemployed are more likely than anyone to come to the conclusion, especially where so many of them are educated, that their only hope is to attack the basic structure of the society which has no use for them.

In the towns, the only real proletariat are the 'poor townsmen', those with no land, no rural ties, and who live permanently in town. But these people are often in such a precarious position in town, economically, that political consciousness is virtually absent[27], or focussed on a particularist organisation of their own whose aim is to represent their interests within the local urban situation. Where such an organisation <u>does</u> develop interests beyond the local level, these are also likely to be particularist, for instance in terms of religion, serving to cut its members off even more from their 'fellow workers' than creating consciousness of a common situation.

It is within these considerations that the situations of people in Machakos may be placed in a wider

26. Allen (1972) p.289.
27. This is analogous to the 'poor peasants' referred to by Wolf (1969) pp. 290-1, who have low 'rebellion potential'.

context, and the study of urbanization and labour migration given a wider significance. The 'situational' is thus given 'processive' meaning.

Chapter II gives an account of the way in which the town has developed since its foundation by Europeans at the end of the last century, paying particular attention to how Africans were incorporated in different ways at different periods into the wage economy of the township. The emergent structure of stratification in the township may be seen as consequent on the economic policies formulated by Europeans for Machakos District.

Chapter III describes the African residents and labour force in terms of demographic, tribal and occupational characteristics, and suggests a way of categorizing people in terms of the nature of their involvement in the town, and their ties, if any, to the land. It is also shown that Kamba and non-Kamba are involved in Machakos in different ways, and that this is a function of the role of the town within a wider national employment structure.

Chapter IV examines more closely the Kamba presence in Machakos and points to a broad difference between those working in Machakos for strictly economic reasons, and those to whom 'the urban way of life' means more than this. The significance of the land is considered as an aspect of 'dual orientation', and the way in which this varies according to the nature of people's urban involvement.

Chapter V deals with the 'commuters' - those members of the Machakos labour force who live outside the township and travel into town daily. The commuters fill the less well-paid positions in Machakos but also act to tie town and country more closely together, not just by commuting in itself, but by providing 'brokerage' services to other rural-dwellers less acquainted with urban-based bureaucracies.

In Chapter VI I look at the élite (a more suitable term than 'truncated bourgeoisie'), those persons filling the top administrative positions and the professions in Machakos. These are mainly non-Kamba, who together with some locally prominent Kamba constitute a 'local élite'. I also look at the local businessmen, who tend not to achieve élite status, and at smaller businessmen and the ways in which the latter organise their enterprises to minimize the effects of competition.

Chapter VII concerns the Machakos Muslims as a community of townspeople, and the way they have reconstituted themselves as a 'quasi-tribe' since Independence in order to protect their position in the township. The majority of the Machakos Muslims are poor, most often having no land of their own, and are among those residents most susceptible todescription as part of the emerging proletariat. Feelings of polarization within the Muslim community are forestalled, however, by the strength of their religious particularism, which also serves to set them apart from other African members of the labour force.

Chapter VIII looks briefly at the way people presently working in Machakos have moved from job to job, showing Machakos to be only one possible employment centre among many. This chapter also suggests how occupational selection is related to an interplay between individuals' resources and social and economic restraints.

No description of an African town can ignore the other racial groups involved in it, in this case the Asians and Europeans. Chapter IX looks at the changing roles of Europeans and Asians in Machakos, and the way their relationship to the African population has been redefined since Independence, as an aspect of a modified racial stratification.

Chapter X concludes by comparing the Machakos findings with other recent anthropological studies of African towns.

Fieldwork

Fieldwork for this research was carried out between April 1969 and October 1970. Before setting off for Kenya, I had chosen Machakos as being one of Kenya's main industrial growth points, after consultation with a geographer specialist in East Africa. The town had the advantage of being fairly small, so that I could handle fieldwork alone, with only one local assistant. When I first arrived in Machakos, however, I was surprised to discover that it contained only one enterprise approaching the common conception of industry, a small sawmill. I had to decide whether to find another small-sized town with an industrial labour force, or to remain in Machakos and change my research plans. I realized, however, that Machakos was of a type of town very typical in Kenya, and which had received less attention from anthropologists than necessary to fill the gap between descriptions of the old indigenous towns of West Africa, and the new, large industrial towns. I decided that an ethnographic description of Machakos could provide a useful contribution to the anthropology of urban Africa.

Quantitative data on the resident population of the township was collected by a sample survey of the town's dwelling places. In order to draw the sample I numbered every dwelling place, using an aerial photograph as a map base, the dwelling places being identified during walks around the town, and drew an 8% simple random sample of these. I then interviewed every household within each dwelling place , a household being taken as that group sharing a common budget - for instance contributing to the same rent payment, or eating meals together. Data was thus obtained on household structures, and the age-sex ratios, tribal affiliations etc. of the resident population. (This is henceforth referred to as the 'resident population sample - 'RPS'.) It was obvious, though,

that this information was insufficient to give a representative picture of all the persons playing a regular role in the town. Most important, it did not include those many people who worked in town but lived outside. Also difficult to pin down were many fairly itinerant workers, and those with no fixed place of work - the petty traders and market sellers, and the shoemakers who merely squatted on the pavements to carry on their trade. I decided that the most convenient approach to include the commuters would be to take a sample of the labour force of the town, which would also obtain information on rural residence. The simplest way of doing this was to take a sample of work places in the town, and to interview people working in each. This, however, included neither those workers who had no fixed work place, nor market traders. There were relatively few people working in the streets, though, and many of these were in any case covered by the household sample. The market was too fluid an institution to be approached by such a method, so much depending on season of the year,the particular day of the week, when the interviewing was done. I therefore took a one in five sample of fixed work places, and interviewed as many people as possible in each (henceforth referred to as 'labour force sample' - 'LFS').

To supplement the survey data, I also conducted extensive interviews, focussed and unfocussed, with a large number of people. And while conducting the household survey, I tried as far as possible to encourage people to respond as extensively as possible, if only after the formal questionnaire had been completed.

In addition to these more formal methods of data collection, I participated as far as possible in leisure time activities, which involved much sitting around in bars drinking beer, and paying visits to people's rural homes. Urban research is, I suspect, quite unlike

the traditional rural fieldwork of social anthropologists, in which the anthropologist can immerse himself in the daily life of the people he is studying. It is impossible to proceed in this way in a town, which by definition is heterogeneous occupationally and is also faster moving. People leave home in the early morning for their places of work, and return in the evening just before dark, to retire for the night relatively early, by European standards of television and electric light. It was often difficult to pin people down for long enough to obtain much information from them, or about themselves, and I was constantly frustrated by failing to contact people who had gone off to work, or had returned to their rural homes. On the other hand, it was possible to hang around shops chatting to the owners or assistants, to spend time with the unemployed, and to sit speaking to women while they stirred a cooking pot or plaited one another's hair. People were, by and large, very willing to be interviewed, and had no objections to answering my questions. They soon got used to my presence in the township, even if some insisted that my occupation was 'teacher' despite constant explanation of what I was doing, and often asked why I never did any work.

It should be noted that this thesis describes conditions in Machakos during the fieldwork period, 1969 - 1970.

Chapter II

THE DEVELOPMENT OF MACHAKOS TOWNSHIP UP TO 1970

Machakos in 1970

Machakos is situated in the east of highland Kenya, dominated on two sides by steeply rising hills which, depending on the time of year, are either lush green or parched brown. These hills are quite intensively settled, and among the regular patches of cultivated land can be seen glinting rooftops and spirals of smoke. The approach to Machakos from Nairobi, which is forty miles to the north-east, is by a good tarmac road across a rolling plain. On either side of the road, as it approaches Machakos, might be cultivated land with maize, or with scrawny African cattle grazing under the care of a very small boy. The land might be virgin bush with giraffes and gazelles among the flat-topped acacia trees. Farther away from the road are larger farms, possibly European-owned, or an African co-operative, with great plantations of coffee in dark green rows.

From the road, the town appears only as a sprawling grove of eucalyptus trees, but on coming closer the actual buildings may be seen, low and scattered at first, and then close together by the sides of the roads through the town, which are lined by trees.

The main streets are broad, tarmacked, and lined with small shops (*dukas*) and bars. The number of these shops seems immense, and all seem to be selling the same basic items - maize meal, sugar, rice, cheap clothing, and other household odds and ends. Some have bed frames and mattresses stacked outside. The people to be seen in the streets are predominantly African, although there are also Asians and possibly one or two Europeans. The African

men mostly wear trousers and open-necked shirts, the women bright dresses, with scarves tied round their heads. The Asians can be seen behind their shop counters. The names above the shops are both African and Asian - Mukeku and Purshottam, Khalidas and Malinda, but only very rarely a partnership between the two. There are also the names of nation-wide firms like Bata shoes and Elliot's bread, and international trade names - Honda, Coca-Cola, and Philips. African shoemakers squat outside the dukas, renovating old cast-offs, or making sandals out of old car tyres and inner tubes. Outside one large Asian-owned store sits a woodcarver, selling the famous Kamba carvings of human and animal figures.[1] Some men wear long white robes and white caps; these are members of the Machakos Muslim community. Their women wear the all-enveloping black garment called bui-bui. White-robed men, young and old, hang around the door of the white-walled, flat-roofed mosque, from which a (tape-recorded) voice calls the faithful to prayer five times daily.

Europeans seem to be in town strictly to do their household shopping, and even then only items which cannot be bought, like bread and milk, on a weekly shopping trip to Nairobi. Europeans are not an obvious presence in Machakos, living in bungalows outside the township's main built-up area, and rarely coming into the township itself.

All but a few of the dukas are small, and the largest premises in the town centre are the two branches of European-owned banks, the Standard Bank and National and Grindlay's Bank. In addition to these large offices are smaller ones, of two Asian advocates, four private medical practicioners, and an African herbalist. There are several garages. The most obvious implications of all these services is that they cannot serve the pop-

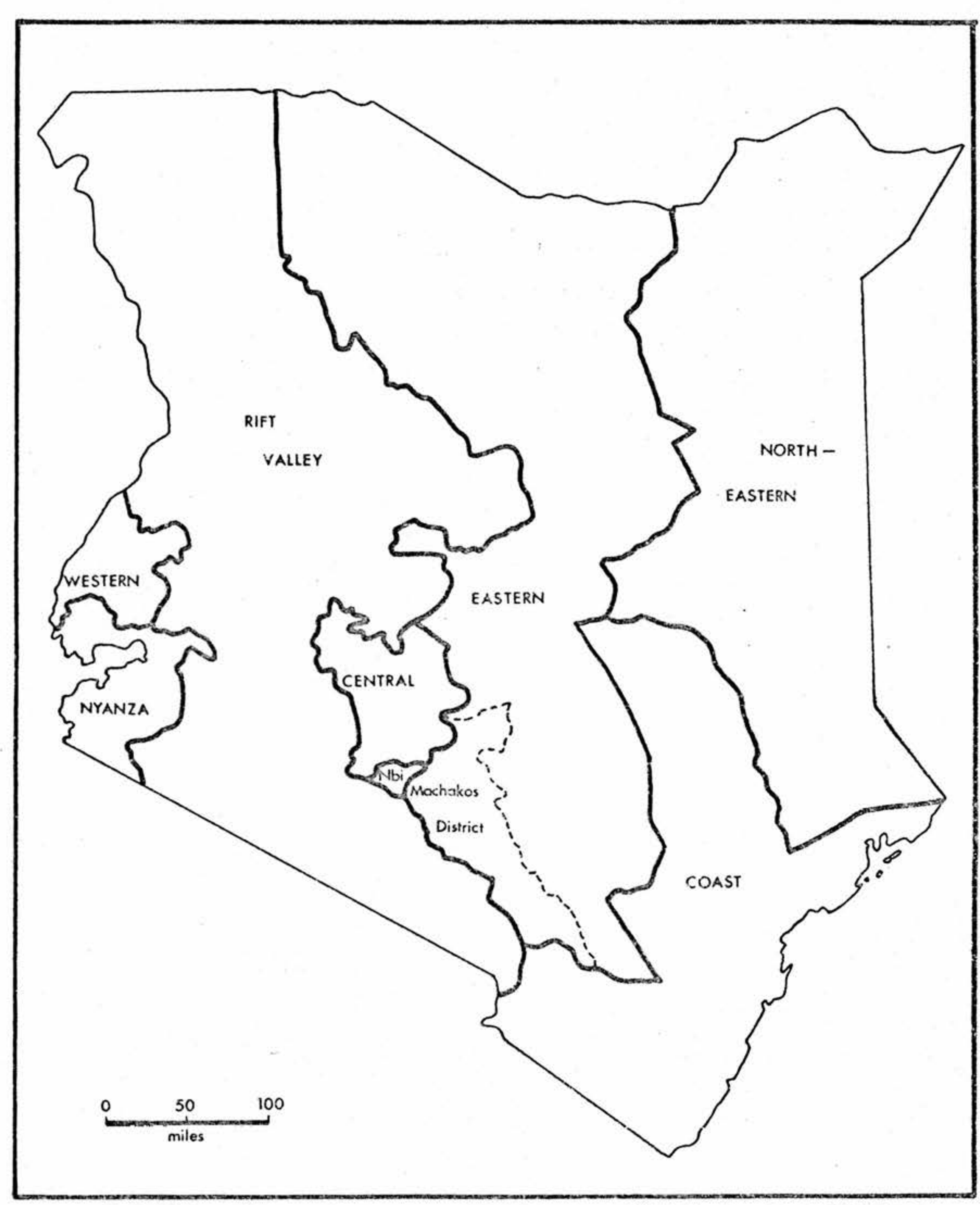
1. For an account of the Kamba carving trade,cf. Elkan (1958).

ulation of the township alone. Few dwelling places can be seen, although many people do live behind the dukas. The two storey buildings in the central area have usually Asian family businesses below, on the ground floor, and the family home above. In the shops African women, some with babies slung by towels on their backs, examine the goods on offer, speaking Kikamba if both customer and shopkeeper are of the local Kamba tribe, or, if either is of another tribe, or is Asian, in Swahili, the East African lingua franca. A European of many years' residence or an American Peace Corps volunteer will use Swahili. A European newcomer will use signs, or English, which a few shopkeepers know.

Many young African men and a few girls wander about, seemingly aimlessly, sitting in groups under trees, or leaning in twoes or threes on a street corner. These are the unemployed, in town in the hope of finding work or, having given up that hope, to meet friends in the same position, to share the same experience, to kill time.

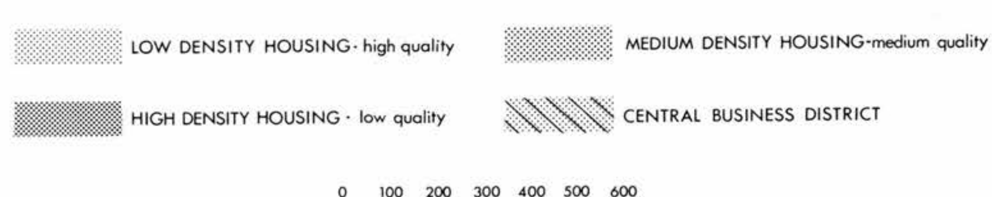
In the dry season the atmosphere in Machakos is dusty, in spite of the tarmac roads in the town centre. There are open drains at the sides of the roads; there is no water-borne sewage system for the town so the town's smells can be, to a visitor, unpleasant at best and at times overwhelming. Rain falls during two seasons, from March to May and October to November, when everything turns green and the sewers are flushed out.

The offices of both the district and the local government are adjacent to the central business area. The government boma - still called so although the original fort has been pulled down - is the oldest part of the township, dating back to the arrival of the first Europeans, and contains the oldest buildings in the township. The offices of the district administration find their way into the lives of all inhabitants of Machakos District, of which this township is the headquarters.



KENYA - ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS.
PROVINCES.

Teacher Training College
Running Track
Boys' Secondary School
Machakos Sports Club
Administration Offices
Swahili Village
Anglican Church
RC Church
Market
Indian Sports Club
Girls' Secondary School
Prison
Police Lines
Hospital
Primary School
TOWNSHIP BOUNDARY
School for Blind
Technical and Trade Training School
N



MACHAKOS TOWNSHIP

The District, and the territorially coincident Masaku County, cover an area of 5,800 square miles, with a population of 707,000. Everyone requires the services of the District offices, whether to pay school fees, to pay taxes, to apply for or to renew a driving licence, or trading licence, or to obtain a livestock moving permit, or to pay water bills. National administration is centralized to such a degree that the District offices in Machakos play an important role in the lives of everyone in the District. The District is the responsibility of the District Commissioner (DC) in Machakos, who in turn is responsible to the Provincial Commissioner in the headquarters of Eastern Province in Embu. But the District is the most important administrative unit for those living in it. District Officers are posted in Divisions of the District, directly responsible to the DC in Machakos. Below the District Officers are Chiefs and Sub-Chiefs in Locations and Sub-Locations. The apex of the system for every individual in the District is the DC in Machakos, almost autocratic and every bit as powerful as his colonial predecessor, with all the aura consequent on this, enhanced by his khaki uniform and pith helmet on the old British pattern.

Local government is less obtrusive in its role, and is so noted for its inefficiency that the DC's administration has taken over from it the running of education and the collection of Graduated Personal Tax, which every adult male is required to pay. Government is an important employer in Machakos, the many offices being full of clerks, typists and messengers, people fulfilling functions from the issuing of anti-rabies certificates for dogs to the shaping of District coffee-growing policy. Out of my resident population sample, more than 22% of the employed adults worked for the government or local government.

On the eastern edge of the town is the market, where women sit selling fruit and vegetables, their wares piled in front of them as they squat in rows. It is also possible to buy second-hand clothes, earthenware pots, and bows and arrows. Fruit, vegetables and cereals are the main items on sale, though, testifying that the market serves an agricultural hinterland. Every day the market is fairly busy, although there often appear to be more sellers than prospective buyers, and many of the sellers seem to be offering the same range of goods. Mondays and Fridays are the main market days, and people come from all over the District and beyond, and lorries full of tomatoes and cabbages leave for the Nairobi shops and restaurants. Market days are convenient occasions for rural-dwellers to come to town for other reasons, and the town is always full of people on market days.

On market days the queues at the hospital out-patient department are longer than usual. The hospital in Machakos serves serious patients for the whole of Eastern Province, and in spite of being the Provincial Hospital is seriously short of staff, patient accommodation, and other facilities. The demand for treatment, which is free of charge, is very great, and people are willing to queue for as long as six or seven hours for attention.

The physical layout of Machakos symbolises the colonial past, with graduated housing standards and other facilities, grouped in areas still recognizably the former segregated housing zones. The largest house in town is the official residence of the DC, a spacious bungalow with a verandah in the British 'colonial style', during which period it was built. This house is in the centre of what was formerly the 'European residential area', of large bungalows with four or five rooms, verandah, and separate 'servants' quarters'. They are

spaced out, in their own well-tended gardens. Most African government employees have housing provided, most of which is concentrated in the south-west of the township. Lower grade African employees have standard pattern houses with three small rooms, inside toilet and corrugated iron roof. Higher grade African employees, such as department heads, have the former 'European' housing.

The poorest type of housing in the township is found in the 'Swahili Village', which is also one of the most distinctive parts of the township, adjacent to the market. This is very high density, poor quality housing. The older buildings are of mud and wattle, with roofs of flattened tin cans, and bare earth floors. A single building is divided into rooms, with normally a single household occupying each, so that under one roof there may be living over thirty people. Newer housing in the Swahili Village (so called because the 'Swahili Community' lives there) is of stone or concrete, with cement floors and corrugated iron roofs. A single 'long-drop' latrine serves a whole building, and there may be a single water tap. The atmosphere in the Swahili Village is in contrast to the rest of the town. The atmosphere is of unkempt squalor and poverty. The air is dusty and fetid. Naked children play in the rutted streets, and women tend charcoal stoves outside their houses, mixing maize meal and water into <u>ugali</u> porridge. Outside some doors are little piles of charcoal for sale. The inhabitants of the Swahili Village are very poor, apart from a few better-paid workers attracted to living there by low rents, or housing shortage elsewhere. Most people cannot afford to maintain their housing in good condition, even if they actually own it, most people being tenants. Children are often poorly fed, and the hospital admits many malnutrition cases from here. The Swahili Village has a reputation for immorality and crime, and is the

first target for police searching for stolen goods, and for the periodical drives against prostitution. Machakos Urban Council is trying to rebuild, in stages, the whole of the Swahili Village, and has erected some stone buildings intended for an owner-occupier scheme for present Swahili Village residents, although very few can afford economically to participate.

Asian housing is also a distinctive type, although some houses formerly occupied by single Asian families have now been subdivided for African use. The former 'Indian residential area' is in the south of the township. The buildings are usually flat-roofed, white structures big enough for the entire extended family to live under one roof.

On the margins of the township there are government secondary schools, one each for boys and girls, and the 'Technical and Trade Training School'; there is also a small school for the blind. These are all necessarily boarding schools, drawing their pupils from the whole District and beyond. Bungalows for the staff are adjacent to the dormitories on the school compounds, and a large proportion of the staffs are European.

Machakos is expanding. On the outskirts, new residential buildings are going up at a fast rate, attempting to provide for the demands from the growing work force. Landowners on the outskirts know the value of their land to be higher for building than for growing maize, and many are willing to cash in on their good fortune of having land near town.

What is conspicuous by its absence in Machakos is any factory building. The only large industrial-type buildings in the town are a maize store and a warehouse for hides and skins. Large-scale employment is restricted to the government.

There have been two clearly recognizable periods

in the development of Machakos as a social setting, divided by the granting of full independence to Kenya in December 1963. Independence was the most far-reaching event to occur since the imposition, at the end of the nineteenth century, of European rule. Independence opened up a whole range of new opportunities to Africans all over Kenya. The handing over of power and authority from Europeans to Africans had profound structural implications for the social and economic orders of Machakos. The pre-Independence period is further susceptible to treatment in terms of two phases, from the first establishment of Machakos to the removal of 'national' administrative functions to Nairobi, and from this latter event to Independence. Each period (between which there is some overlap of characteristics) marks a predominant set of relations between Machakos people, determined principally by the nature of the incorporation of African labour and Asian entrepreneurial activities within an economic system controlled almost completely by Europeans, up to the point where Europeans recognized it to be politically and financially more economic to control by indirect means.

Pre-Independence Machakos - the early period.

Machakos was first established as a trading depot for the British East Africa Company before 1888, although the path through Machakos had long been used by Arab caravans travelling through Kamba territory to avoid the hostile Masai.[2] Machakos had been the site of bartering for supplies between Arabs and Kamba before the arrival of the Europeans, but in 1889 the Company, represented by F.J. Jackson, built a fort as a supply

2. Sources on which this account is based include the Kenya National Archive (KNA); Rosberg and Nottingham (1966); Newman (1972); Sorrenson (1968); Mangat (1969); Harlow, Chilver and Smith (1965); Musyoka (1968).

point at which to replenish food, etc., before caravans set out across the sparsely populated areas between the Highlands and Lake Victoria. The fort was also expected to act as a deterrent to the Arab slave trade. The name Machakos is a corruption of 'Masaku', a local Kamba war-leader whose home was on a hill behind the present town, and who had been prominent in recent fighting with the Masai. For a time the settlement was known as Fort Machako's. In 1892 John Ainsworth, also a Company employee, built a stone fort as a centre from which to administer the surrounding area, which by 1895 was one interior province comprising Kikuyu, Ukamba, Taita and Taveta districts. Machakos was the only up-country station of the Imperial British East Africa Company, and was the administrative centre until the railway to Uganda reached Nairobi in 1899.

At this stage of the town's development the population was very small; only a handful of Europeans, all administrative officials, lived at the station, the remainder or the population being Sudanese and Swahili porters and askaris, with one or two local African interpreters and labourers. No Asians arrived until 1895, when Ainsworth persuaded two traders from India to set up shop, promising them suitable stores and living quarters. Machakos had become administrative centre, military barracks and commercial centre for the whole of up-country British East Africa. Europeans dominated all other people. The Asian trader was not yet a prominent figure. Permanent Asian immigration was not yet in full swing, and the great majority of Asians were temporary indentured labourers, and the Asian role in small-scale commerce was yet to become a significant feature of the social order. Africans were, in the main, very unwilling to enter wage employment for Europeans, although Ainsworth successfully recruited 1000 Kamba

in 1895, to work on the railway at Kibwezi. It was felt preferable, to ensure a steady supply of labour willing to submit to a regular, European work régime, to import 'coolie labour' from India.

The Kamba were an agricultural and cattle-keeping people living in dispersed homesteads, a few of which would require to unite only for mutual protection against marauding raiders from the nearby Masai, or for joint ritual at, for instance, circumcision.[3] There was no centralised government, and indeed there is evidence of endemic conflict reaching military action between certain areas.[4] In spite of the facts of common language and other cultural similarities, and the presence of a dispersed clan system, there are little grounds for treating the Kamba at this period as an entity such as 'Kamba tribe'. Lindblom, who carried out fieldwork among the Kamba in 1911-12, says, referring to the matter of 'the name of the tribe', "Of at least a hundred of the older men questioned, none seem to have so much as thought of the matter."[5] The British, on the other hand, largely on the basis of experience in West Africa and India, expected to be able to treat with 'chiefs' representing named political units. Ainsworth entered into a treaty with a local Kamba called Mbole, on 4th August 1889, in which Mbole, who claimed to be a 'chief', turned over all of the Kamba lands and responsibility for peace-keeping in the area to the Europeans, in return for general protection.[6] 'The Kamba' were not impressed, and

3. Lindblom (1920).
4. Newman (1972).
5. Lindblom (1920) p. 14; cf. also Southall (1970).
6. The text of this 'treaty' reads: "Let it be known to all whom it may concern that Mboli, chief of Ivati, Ukambani, has placed himself and all his Territories, Countries, Peoples and Subjects under the protection, rule and government of the Imperial British East Africa Company, and has ceded to the said company all his sovereign rights and rights of

between 1894 and 1897 the British carried out four punitive expeditions, using the garrison of Sudanese askaris, against 'hostile natives'.

The company was an agent of the British Crown, and as such claimed dominion over a wide area, its European employees seeing themselves as district officers ruling from district headquarters. When the Foreign Office in London assumed responsibility for British East Africa in 1895, company officials became government officials, with little change necessary in their spheres of influence, duties, or ways of carrying them out.[7] The principal task was to ensure the safe passage of traders, and the existence of an atmosphere sufficiently peaceful to allow trade to continue. Swahili and Arab traders, and later Asian and a few European traders, brought into the fort, for transport to the coast, cattle, hides, beeswax and ghee, exchanged for cotton cloth, beads, umbrellas, etc. During this period the area around Machakos was a transport route and a source of trade goods. Only later did these goods become land and labour.

In 1899, with the arrival of the Uganda Railway at Nairobi, the administrative centre for British East Africa moved away from Machakos to Nairobi. Kenya's present capital owes its origin to its position on the railway, built during 1895-1901 to tap the wealth of Uganda. At that time Kenya, in the eyes of the Foreign

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of government over all his Territories, Countries, Peoples and Subjects, and that the said company hereby grant their protection and the benefit of their rule and government to him, his Territories, Countries, Peoples and Subjects, and hereby authorises him to use the flag of the said company as a sign of their protection. Dated at Ivati, Ukambani, this Fourth day of August, 1889.

Signed / F.J. Jackson
on behalf of the Imperial British East Africa Company. "

KNA DC/Mks/4.1 'Political Record Book - Up to 1910, Vol. 1.'

7. Low (1965) p.11.

Office, was but an obstacle on the way to Uganda, which had to be reached as cheaply and quickly as possible. The railway by-passed Machakos by twenty miles, and this was considered a major blow to the settlement. As a result of this, Machakos today has no industry while Athi River, only thirty miles away but on the railway, now has a meat processing plant and a cement factory. But Machakos remained, although with its sphere of influence reduced to a local level, as administrative and commercial centre for Machakos District.

The first phase in the township's development is marked by the virtual absence of African participation in the wage economy. Africans were unwilling to involve themselves in urban life, probably because there was no need for this, as they were living a self-sufficient and integrated existence dependent on their own crops and cattle, produced by family units on their own land. Machakos District is notorious for periodic drought and famine, but at the early stage the effects of this could be alleviated by relying on the herds, and by trading with neighbouring areas, such as those occupied by the Kikuyu. On the other hand, there was no real need for African labour at this time, except on the railway, and this was a short-term project better served by Asians. Trade through the medium of cash was introduced, however, and it is significant that Asians were preferred to Africans for this. Kamba had long experience of trade with Arabs, Swahilis and other tribes, but trade based on money was thought best introduced by Asians. An Asian trade monopoly had yet to baulk African aspirations in that direction.

The colonial District Headquarters.

The period between the removal of central administrative functions to Nairobi, and Independence

in 1963 is marked by the further consolidation of racial differentiation, with increasing incorporation of Africans in the capitalist economy, and then mounting pressures from Africans to reverse the status quo of the colonial régime, and the gradual erosion of economic and administrative differentiation by race which culminated in Independence.

Until 1906 all that consisted of Machakos was the European-built boma,

> "an imposing place which had fine avenues of blue gum trees planted along the broad roads leading up to it. The fort itself was enclosed by an outer wall of stone with a deep ditch in front whilst all the government offices and residences... were inside." [8]

There was also a line of huts for the Nubian askaris and Swahili porters. As Asian traders and shopkeepers began to arrive their stores were built along the roads leading to the fort. A market was established to which the local Kamba brought some foodstuffs and a few cattle. In 1906 Machakos was gazetted a township under the East African Township Ordinance of 1903, with a boundary of 3/4 of a mile radius from the fort. Some Swahili cattle traders settled in the township, and other Swahilis arrived from all over the country, but especially from the European farms to the north of Nairobi, having been granted plots of land in Machakos. (See chapter VII.)

The surrounding area of good farm land was at this time beginning to be alienated from Africans for allocation to European settlers, the first of whom arrived in 1906. It was at this time that attempts to procure African labour began in earnest. DC's reports for the period constantly refer to the difficulty of persuading Africans to work on European farms, even in times of drought and famine. The problem was not so serious in the township, in the absence of industry, but as work became sought by Africans in the country as a

8. 'Fifty Years On'. Collection of unpublished papers, in the possession of Mrs N. Hill, formerly of Machakos.

source of cash, so it became to be sought also in the towns. In Kenya the need for cash was created in order to supply rural labour, but this led to a demand for urban roles as well. Taxes were imposed, payable only in cash, but even this was not enough as cattle could be sold rather than labour to pay them. What made the Kamba seek work was not a desire to participate in the cash economy, but the inability of their traditional way of life to cope with the onslaught of effects of European colonialism. The alienation of political integrity, the undermining of traditional bases of authority, the imposition of taxes, the introduction of new desirable goods, and the condemnation of the traditional belief system - these are only some of the themes which together brought the modern world to the doorsteps of the Kamba, and forced its way into their world. And once incorporation had begun, its effects were insidious in penetrating more and more deeply into the old subsistence, family-based system, introducing a necessary dual orientation to family and to the market. The most obvious causes of labour migration appear to be a related nexus of increasing population, shortage of land, cattle overstocking, and soil erosion. Although land shortage in Ukambani was not nearly as badly felt as in Kikuyu areas, it was felt by Kamba in terms of overstocking of cattle; in 1929 Machakos District had 190,000 cattle on land capable of carrying 60,000. This in turn led to soil erosion, and in 1937 some locations were over 50% eroded.[9] These problems were aggravated by the inability, due to administrative restrictions, on expanding into areas beyond what was held to be 'Kamba territory'. Newman suggests that "one reason for going to work as squatters on settler farms was the existence of extra grazing."[10] Overstocking

9. Newman (1972) p.13.
10. Newman (1972) p.14.

culminated in attempts by Europeans to cull the herds by force. In 1938 protesting Kamba marched on Nairobi, after an armed raid which removed 2,500 cattle. This action provided a suitable cultural peg for opposition to the Europeans (much as circumcision had among the Kikuyu) and spawned organised political groups such as the Ukamba Members Association, led by a policeman, clerks and teachers. Wage labour was well established by then, of course, and provided education and experience on which to base organisational abilities.

As well as to pay taxes and to buy food in time of need, cash was also required to buy the European-produced consumer goods which came to be considered essentials. For long, items like oil-lamps, bicycles, soap and European clothing were considered luxuries, but under the influence of traders and missionaries their use became established. Missions had been active from the beginning of the colonial period, in particular the Africa Inland Mission, and as well as being demonstrators of the usefulness of European tools, and of the prestige attached to European clothing, taught a religion stressing participation and hard work in a world outside the parochial tribal system.

Kamba went to Nairobi and Mombasa and other towns in East Africa in search of work, as well as to the conveniently located Machakos Township.

The population of the township was steadily growing, especially in the number of Africans living there. In 1922 the town was demarcated into African, Indian and European residential areas. Until the first census to take account of Africans, in 1948, only estimates of the size of the African population in the township are available, and there is a gap in population data between 1919 and 1948.

	Africans	Asians	Europeans	Total
1897	?	?	?	300
1909	424	126	7	557
1919	580	297	13	890
1948	1524	454	50	2028
1962	3464	758	131	4353

Table 2.1. Population growth of Machakos Township up to Independence.

By 1920 the following pattern had emerged in the function of buildings:

Ownership	Shops	Residential	Religious	Offices	Other
European	1	7	-	2	1
Asian	43	54	1	-	-
African (inc. Swahili)	-	80	1	-	-
Total	44	141	2	2	1

Table 2.2. Buildings in Machakos Township, 1920, by function, and race of owner.[11]

Just about the only public expenditure in the township of direct benefit to the African population was a 'Native Industrial School', opened in 1915, teaching basic manual crafts. Places at the school were sought after although, in the words of the DC, "the sons of headmen are given preference over others". The level of expenditure was consonant with that spent in the 'reserves'; in 1925 revenue in the District from direct taxation was £25,000, and expenditure on the Africans £20.[12]

Town-based earning opportunities were strictly

11. Ulu District Annual Report, 1920-21. KNA DC/Mks.1/1.13. (Ukambani was for some time in the early years known as 'Ulu'.)
12. Newman (1972) p.11.

circumscribed in terms of educational qualifications, skills and experience, and this circumscription acted along racial lines. Africans were restricted to unskilled or semi-skilled occupations or, at the very height of practical aspirations, to routine clerical work or primary school teaching (and the latter tended to be out in the reserves). Neither Europeans or Asians would allow Africans to encroach on their own occupational spheres. Africans could earn more money, achieve a more prestigious occupation, only up to a certain point, at which they would be competing with Europeans or Asians for the same position. At the same time, Africans were only temporary residents in Machakos, their ties to the land still being extremely strong, and the land being their place of retiral, in the manner of the classical type of circulatory migration. Africans were a pool of cheap labour, whose cost was kept to a minimum as long as they were still tied to the land. Political reaction against the European rulers was led from the towns (cf. the destocking crisis which was led by a policeman) but was counteracted by 'loyalist' organisations in the countryside affirming the legitimacy of European rule, led by tribal elders and headmen.[13] The idea of the 'Kamba tribe' had become accepted and this, too, kept the African population divided (cf. the resolution made by one loyalist organisation against the fact that "some members of this tribe are trying to cast their tribe and become Kikuyu by tribe".) During the Emergency of the 1950's the Kamba provided 40% of the security forces.[14]

Before Independence, concern for township administration tended to be subordinated to concern for

13. These headmen were, of course, British appointed, in the absence of similar indigenous offices.
14. Newman (1972) p. 12.

running the rest of the District.[15] The objective of township administration, to Europeans, seemed to be the maintenance of cleanliness and sanitation. The only other matter regularly discussed by the Township Committee was the allocation of building plots for lease. This Township Committee was chaired by the DC and consisted of his nominees; it was not until 1949 that two Africans were invited to sit on it to represent African interests. Beyond the township boundaries, however, the African-run Local Native Council had responsibility for many local government activities, including health, education and roads. Although the township was legally half in the Native Reserve and half on Crown Land, the Local Native Council was powerless within the township. It was the secretary of the Council, though, who was one of the Africans invited to sit on the Township Committee in 1949. The other African nominee was the 'Swahili Village Headman'. The Muslim community had had their own headman since at least 1914, responsible for hearing minor disputes involving members of the Muslim community, but dealing mainly with tax collection. (See chapter VII.) His position was directly analogous to the headmen in the rural reserve.[16]

Europeans were firmly in control and held strictly apart from both Africans and Asians in other spheres of township life. As well as residence being segregated, Europeans had their own club, which was the hub of Europeans' social life, and their own Anglican

15. Southall writes of early urban administration in East Africa: "The colonial urban administration was simply an aspect of general administration. The smaller urban settlements were dealt with directly by district commissioners as a minor but troublesome part of their duties for many years," (1966) p.489.
16. The terms 'chief' and 'headman' were often used indiscriminately to refer to the same office. Today chiefs run locations and sub-chiefs sub-locations. The 'Swahili Village Chief' is in fact a sub-chief.

church was consecrated by the Bishop of Mombasa in 1951. Asians had their own religious communities and their own 'Indian Sports Club'. African Muslims worshipped at the Machakos mosque, erected in 1902. Roman Catholics could attend mass in Machakos, but adherents of other denominations were expected to use churches in the reserves. There was little possibility of mixing. Racial differentiation coincided with occupational differentiation and there was hardly any overlap between these sectors.

From 1949, as part of the European attempt to pre-empt African nationalist demands, Africans and Asians took a greater part in running township affairs, and representatives sat on the Township Committee in what was more than a token presence. The Township Clerkship became an African - filled post, first by T.N. Malinda, who became an MP in the post-Independence elections. Representing Asians were prominent Asian businessmen, one of whom, Jan Mohamed, became the only Asian minister in the Kenya Government. The African sector of the population was becoming much more influential, and even at the level of this small township committee, political ambitions of later leaders found their first legitimate outlet. The capitalist economy now embraced the African population very firmly, and in 1955 the bank estimated that over £20,000 worth of business had been done by Africans in the township alone. One brewery recorded sales of £3,500 in one month.

The end of the pre-Independence phase shows a tendency towards an overlap between the racial occupational spheres. Africans and Asians attained more positions on the Township Committee, and there was even a junior administrative post, on the staff of the DC, specially created for Africans. European District staff seemed to respect the opinion of their 'African Administrative Assistant', and at least on African matters

such as climate of opinion, and the likely actions of politicians. The creation of this post may seem trifling, but in the Kenya of the time was a considerable breach in the racial barrier. Long-standing clerical workers in the district offices had had an informal influence on local African affairs, in that their advice might be sought by the DC or a District Officer on a local matter, and they were once instrumental in having a particular man created Swahili Village Headman, but this new post was the first formal recognition of African rights to higher office. All over Kenya, the new administration was being groomed, but in the careful eye of the colonial power.

In the reserves, Africans had also begun to open shops, encroaching on a previously Asian preserve. The new shopkeepers tended to be ex-askaris.

Up to Independence, the nature of stratification in Machakos was formed by the role of the District as an area of labour supply and of white settler farming. Africans were the objects of the primary tasks of the colonial administration - to winkle Kamba out of their traditional way of life and into the service of European employers, and to maintain law and order so that trade and production could proceed unhindered. Where Africans were allowed into positions above the level of unskilled manual labour, it was to fill positions which Europeans were unwilling to fill, or would be too expensive, such as low grade clerical, primary teaching, and police functions. Africans were first and foremost cheap labour, but any political awareness of their exploited situation was dulled by their continued attachment to land and cattle and their families living on the reserves. The 'tribal' societies, based on household production, had been transformed into a peasantry. They were now a 'part-society' existing within a wider economic system

in an asymmetrical power relationship, their labour power being extracted from them, through the medium of circulatory labour migration. Because of the circulatory nature of this migration, an emerging proletariat could not appear, in terms of free labour divorced from the means of production. 'Extra-economic' ties still predominated (as 'tribalism', respect for elders, etc.), but ownership of even a small piece of land still gave the producer control over at least part of his production.[17] Kamba coming to Machakos were more peasants than proletarians. The basic patterns had not changed in over fifty years, except in the numbers of people involved, and the firmer hold of the capitalist economy over the Kamba. As Independence approached, the future patterns began to be anticipated.

Machakos in Independent Kenya

Up to Independence in 1963 the nature of Machakos as an administrative and commercial centre had not changed appreciably since the town's foundation at the end of the nineteenth century. Certainly there were more people around with more money to spend and more to spend it on, and Africans were beginning to take a share in government, but no profound reordering of social relationships took place as occurred after Independence. After Independence, not only did the administrative and political apparatus change hands, but the commercial sector, at least at the lower levels, began to be taken over from Asians, and Europeans and Asians were required to alter considerably their attitudes and actions towards Africans. More avenues, occupational and political, were opened up to Africans and denied to other races. The DC (for a short time known as Regional Government Agent)

17. Cf. Laclau (1971), on the incorporation of peasant societies within a wider capitalist economy, with the survival of 'feudal' social formations.

was African and the administrative offices were filled with Africans, except for a few European 'technical specialists'. The Local Native Council was replaced by the County Council of Masaku, with its seat in Machakos. Many European settler farmers left for other countries, usually South Africa, Rhodesia or Britain, being unwilling to live in a black-ruled Kenya. Many Asians left for similar reasons, or because they feared their property might be summarily confiscated by the new rulers. Both European and Asian clubs were required to lift membership restrictions and residential segregation was lifted. The official government policy was to ensure the lifting of restrictions on Africans, to allow freedom of occupational choice, to ensure it was 'aliens' who filled the 'left over' or 'residual' positions that Africans did not wish to fill, or were temporarily unable, through lack of education or experience. This was a reversal of the colonial structure of opportunity.

Businesses which Asians are no longer allowed to run have reverted to African ownership, so that small traders have become, since Independence, predominantly African.

Length of time under present ownership	Ownership			
	African	Asian	European	Total
Up to 6 months	4	-	1	5
Up to 1 year	4	-	2	6
2 - 3 years	15	1	-	16
4 - 6 years	7	-	-	7
7 - 9 years	6	1	-	7
More than 10 years	2	9	1	12
Total	38	11	4	53

Table 2.3. Ownership of a sample of wholesale and retail businesses in Machakos, by race and length of time under present ownership. (Source - LFS)

The figures for the above table are for the end of 1969, so that any business six years old or less has come into existence only since Independence. Of African businesses, 79% have done so. On the other hand, out of the 38 African-owned businesses, only twelve had a turnover of more than Shs.1000 per week (as far as could be ascertained) while of the non-African-owned businesses, only one had a turnover of less than this amount. And of the three recently opened European-owned businesses, two were branches of international companies, Bata Shoes and British-American Tobacco, doing a considerably greater volume of trade than Shs.1000 per week. And both banks in Machakos are European-owned. Africans dominate in numbers only, and in Machakos at any rate European-owned commerce has actually increased its presence, although its employees are African.

Nevertheless, the immediate significance of Independence for the African population of Machakos has been a growth in the number of town-based opportunities, with freedom of choice over a wider range than ever before, resulting in a stretching of the stratification system within the African population. As new positions are open to Africans in both the commercial and government sectors, with higher incomes and more power than ever before, new strata have come into being - African businessmen, District Officers and doctors.

Machakos in 1970 - the main characteristics

The salient characteristics of Machakos are now: 1. its relatively small size, and slow, but steady growth; 2. its lack of industry and existence as an administrative and commercial centre; 3. the predominance of a single tribe in its African population; 4. its dependence on rural dwellers for a large proportion of its

labour force; 5. its densely populated rural hinterland.

1. The 1970 population of Machakos was just over 6,300. Growth has been fairly steady; compared to other Kenyan towns the growth rate of Machakos is slightly higher.

	1948	1962	% annual growth rate 1948 - 62	1969	% annual growth rate 1962 - 9.
Nairobi	118,976	266,794	8.87	509,286	12.98
Mombasa	84,746	179,575	7.99	247,073	5.37
Nakuru	17,625	38,181	8.33	47,151	3.36
Kisumu	10,899	23,526	8.28	32,431	5.41
Thika	4,435	13,952	15.33	18,387	4.54
Eldoret	8,193	19,605	9.95	18,196	-1.03
Nanyuki	4,090	10,448	11.10	11,624	1.61
Kitale	6,338	9,342	3.39	11,573	3.41
Malindi	3,292	5,818	5.48	10,757	12.13
Kericho	3,218	7,692	9.93	10,144	4.55
Nyeri	2,705	7,857	13.60	10,004	3.90
Thompson's Falls	-	5,316	-	7,602	6.14
Lamu	5,868	5,828	-0.05	7,403	3.86
Machakos	2,028	4,353	8.19	6,312	6.43
Kakamega	4,978	3,939	-1.49	6,244	8.36
Kisii	2,426	4,542	6.23	6,080	4.84
Voi	3,632	2,532	-2.16	5,313	15.69
			Ave. 7.06		Ave.5.97

Table 2.4. Populations and growth rates of Kenyan towns.[18]

All of the towns in the table above show very high growth rates by European standards, but not by African standards. It is not just the larger towns and cities which are fast growing but the smaller centres as well.

18. Sources: Colony and Protectorate of Kenya, Statistical Abstract, 1961; Kenya Population Census, 1962 and 1969; Morgan and Shaffer (1966).

The 1962-69 growth is much higher than the average of 3.3% for the total Kenyan population. Comparable rates for the towns of other African countries are Ghana, 9.22% between 1948 and 1960,[19] and the Copperbelt of Zambia, 7.55% between 1951 and 1956, and 8.66% between 1956 and 1963.[20]

2. As already mentioned, Machakos has no labour intensive industry apart from its clerical and administrative services, and its wholesale and retail outlets. The largest private employer in Machakos is a sawmill with about fifty men. The only manufacturer, apart from one- or two-man operations, was a shirt-maker employing nine men, who closed and moved to Nairobi in 1968. The main implication of the absence of any large-scale industry in Machakos is the absence of a mass unskilled labour force like those found in African mining towns and manufacturing centres. In Machakos there is virtually no organised trade union activity, or management activity, on a scale which permeates all aspects of the urban lives of workers. The mine management in Luanshya described by Epstein controlled not only work conditions but also matters outside the actual production situation. All African mine workers were required to live on a compound owned and administered by the mine, and for some time were even issued with food by the mine. According to Epstein,

> "almost any problem arising within the Mine Township may be regarded by Africans as falling within the province of the (African Mine Workers') Union, the Union's position within the structure of mine society was to be seen as equivalent to the African Personnel Department to which, however, it stands in opposition." [21]

The only approximation to this monolithic management-worker relationship in Machakos falls within relationships

19. Caldwell (1969).
20. Mitchell (1973).
21. Epstein (1958) p. 127.

of government employees to the government. Most government employees in Machakos live in houses tied to their jobs, and pay rent at a subsidised rate to the government. These workers are subject to transfer to another post at as little as 48 hours' notice, and this is facilitated by the tied-house system. But not all government workers live in government housing, this being in short supply, so that many contract with private landlords. The remainder of township resident workers are employed in the private sector - by the shops, garages and bars, or as domestic servants. This private sector represents an 'atomistic' organisation as opposed to the more 'unitary' structure of government employment.[22] Very few private enterprises in Machakos employ more than half-a-dozen persons, with the result that union activity is virtually impossible to organise on an all-encompassing scale, including all Machakos workers in a single employees' movement. In any case, a large proportion of Machakos workers are self-employed, or are engaged in family enterprises, where a father, say, has his son working with him, or two brothers work together.

3. Machakos is situated in the heartland of one of the two districts traditionally the territory of the Kikamba-speaking people, now referred to as 'Kamba tribe'. In 1969 there were 1.2 million Kamba in Kenya, of whom 700,000 were resident in Machakos District and 340,000 in the adjacent Kitui District.[23] Machakos Township is an important source of wage-earning opportunities, especially for Kamba living in Machakos District, being both easily accessible and peopled predominantly by fellow Kamba. In 1969 Kamba were almost 60% of the African resident population in the township, and 88% of the labour force. In Machakos (as, for instance, in East London) the presence of a large number of people from one tribe

22. Cf. Epstein (1958) pp.123-4, pp. 153-4.
23. Kenya Population Census, 1962.

gives newcomers from that tribe considerable incentive to come to town, knowing that they can be sure of food and shelter from a neighbour from home, if not a kinsman or affine. In Machakos one of the main languages in daily use is Kikamba. Kamba fresh from home need not feel too insecure in Machakos. They are not faced by the apparently incoherent plethora of strange customs, languages, and traditional hostilities that is often the case in more tribally heterogeneous urban centres, such as Nairobi. The weakest Branch of the New Akamba Union, the Kamba tribal association intended for welfare purposes and found in many East African towns, is said by Kamba to be the one in Machakos. There is simply no need for it.

4. More than 20% of the Machakos African labour force is not resident within the township, but consists of rural-dwelling 'commuters', who travel between shamba (Swahili: lit. 'a piece of cultivated ground', but used generally to apply to a person's rural home) and place of work in town morning and evening. In Machakos commuters tend to fill unskilled posts for long periods, which would seem to reflect a dependence on the small town, by people without a command of better-paid jobs elsewhere, for a steady supply of cash which could never increase to supplant farm income entirely. What the commuters emphasise about Machakos and the rural-urban relationship, is not their separateness in time and space, as has been emphasised for other urban centres, but their continuity. The town's population does not coincide with its labour force; physically, 'town' does not stop where 'country' begins. In fact the shading from one into the other is almost imperceptible with such a hinterland of dispersed rural settlement. The ties, social and economic, between town and country are so close that it becomes difficult to talk of two separate systems, and the model which must be used to make sense

of reality, or which reproduces more accurately and explains more aspects of reality, approximates a single social field, in terms of a series of interconnecting relationships all of which in some way influence one another, including both the town and the area from which it draws its work force.

The importance of the immediate rural hinterland of a town, sometimes known as the 'peri-urban' area, is not now in question. For instance, in a comparative study of Umuahia, Nigeria and Mbale, Uganda, Hanna and Hanna state that "urban politics in Africa cannot be comprehended without including the peri-urban area within the scope of research",[24] meaning by 'peri-urban' areas which appear to have regular political, social and economic interaction with their urban centres. This delimitation is, however, of doubtful applicability, the limit of 'regular interaction' being arbitrary and uncertain. For Machakos, the only definite limit on the immediate hinterland, or what the Hannas call the peri-urban area, is the line drawn through the homes of those commuters living at the greatest distance from the township. This line is obviously not only ragged on the ground, with many anomolies, but also ragged in time. The most common radius is about three miles from town, but in places the boundary may shoot out to include a car-owner living fifteen miles away, or a hardy, persistent walker eight miles away. In addition, town residents may have chosen to live in town despite having homes only one mile away. The limit of the immediate hinterland defined in this way also varies over time, as men take a job in a distant town which requires their living there, as they give up their jobs in Machakos and spend all of their time in the country, or as they decide to take lodgings in town. But whatever its drawbacks, this criterion for

24. Hanna and Hanna (1967) p.152.

delimiting the rural hinterland is based on real facts, is statistically determinable, and allows for variations over time; it is based on a specific criterion rather than something as vague as 'political interaction'.

5. The immediate hinterland of Machakos, the high land to the north and east, is densely populated in dispersed homesteads (Kikamba: musyi), to a density of (in 1962) 500 to 750 persons per square mile,[25] so that the area is one of the densest populated in Kenya. Characteristically, a long-established musyi is the home of an extended family, including imported wives and possibly polygynous co-wives of the men of the musyi. When a man decides that a son has become too old to go on sharing his mother's house, he allocates a piece of the musyi to his son, who is expected to build his own house on it. When this son marries, he builds a house on the same piece of the musyi for each wife. The head of the musyi decides before his death how the musyi is to be divided among his sons. The land is becoming increasingly fragmented, so that very often a plot of cultivated land cannot produce nearly enough food to support all those living on it. A major motive is thus provided for seeking work in town, and Machakos is conveniently close. Money earned may be used to supplement food produced by the musyi, and may be saved in order to pay a deposit on a larger piece of land on a settlement scheme. If a musyi produces a surplus, or if the cultivator wishes to convert what it produces into cash, Machakos is a convenient market. Money produced by the musyi, or by the wage labour of its members, may also be used to provide an education for one or more of its younger members, not just to gain the prestige of education, but to try to break out of the system of dependence on an ever-diminishing piece of land,

25. Kenya Population Census, 1962.

that is, in an attempt to break out of the peasantry.

Machakos District, as well as being a labour-supplying area is now also a significant producer of cash-crops. Under the Swynnerton Plan, which was produced in 1953, the growing of cash-crops by Africans was encouraged as part of a general strategy to produce a prosperous African yeoman class to counter nationalist demands.[26] Coffee and other crops were introduced, and Africans adopted them wholeheartedly - another aspect of the 'anticipation' of Independence. The first commercial production of coffee in the District by Africans was in 1956, when twelve tons were sold. Since then, production has expanded enormously, and coffee is now the most important cash crop in terms of both cash earned and the number of growers.

Year or Season	Tons of clean coffee produced
1956-57	12
57-58	63
58-59	91
59-60	99
60-61	262
61-62	267
62-63	315
63-64	641
64-65	782
65-66	992
66-67	1112
67-68	1073

Table 2.5. Coffee production of Machakos District.[27]

Cash-crop production is also facilitated by the taking over of farms formerly owned by white settlers, either

26. Cf. Harbeson (1971).
27. Source: Blom-Bjorner (1968).

Crop	1964 - 1965 (a)	(b)	(c)	1965 - 1966 (a)	(b)	(c)	1966 - 1967 (a)	(b)	(c)
Coffee	286,447	15,674	340	332,088	15,674	422	308,349	15,759	391
Cotton	44,217	10,000	100	84,159	10,000	168	22,472	15,000	30
Sisal	21,417	20,000	21	6,561	20,000	6	nil	(20,000)	nil
Castor	4,100	10,000	8	18,254	10,000	36	28,879	10,000	58
Wattle bark	65,000	2,000	650	22,550	2,000	226	5,365	2,000	54
Maize		n/a		102,854	100,000	21	3,574	100,000	1

(a) Value of crop or produce (£).
(b) Estimated total number of growers in District.
(c) Approximate average income per grower (Shs.)

Table 2.6. Relative financial importance of coffee in Machakos District, compared with five other main cash crops.[28]

28. Source: Blom-bjorner (1968).

as co-operatives or settlement schemes.

European settlers still employ African labour, but this practice is also followed by African farmers, who either can afford to hire labour due to the large size of their farms, or devote part of their urban-earned wages to paying someone to cultivate their land during their absence in town. The practice of employing labour, or at least offering payment to kinsmen for services rendered instead of performing some service at a later date, does not mean that a category of agricultural labourers is in the process of formation, as almost all persons who hire out their labour in the country have land of their own, or at least access to land. However, the incidence of wage employment in the rural hinterland is yet another sign of the penetration of the money economy beyond urban centres, and a growing willingness to treat labour as a commodity.

Having described the development of Machakos Township as a centre of employment, I will now go on to identify the types of worker present in town, to explore the nature of their involvement in the town, as well as their relationships to the land.

Chapter III

THE AFRICAN POPULATION - KAMBA AND OTHERS

The African population of Machakos is so predominantly Kamba that the town may with little exaggeration be called a 'Kamba town'. The town also has close ties with the surrounding Kamba countryside, especially through the practice of commuting. It is therefore useful to describe the African population by reference to the Kamba. In this chapter I will describe the characteristics of the African population as a whole, but at the same time show how the system of work allocation operating in Kenya as a whole produces a particular effect in the distribution of education, work, and income at the local level in Machakos.

A categorisation of the Africans in Machakos.

The African population in the township, including the commuters, may usefully be classified according to their present 'rootedness' in the town. This categorisation helps to describe the social situation within which people operate, and also gives a partial account of their motivations within this system. By 'rootedness', I mean the extent of people's present involvement in the town, in terms of the ways in which they are linked to the town - by job, residence, kin, friends, religion, etc. 'Rootedness' is not necessarily a measure of anything like 'commitment'. A man may spend the greater part of his life working in town but still be irrevocably 'committed' to the countryside, in the sense that the country contains his ultimate reference point, where he visualises 'home' to be, and where he intends to spend the rest of his life after his period of work in town. Of crucial importance to an understanding of people's rootedness in town is an under-

standing of the significance of the land. The land is of continuing and all-pervasive interest to people at all socio-economic levels.

Town is, by and large, considered to be an immoral place, full of drunkards, thieves and prostitutes, which can have an adverse effect on a person exposed to its influences. This is often cited as a reason for rural life being preferable to urban life. In addition, wage-earning is said to make men 'lazy' and spoil them for hard shamba work. People without much education or occupational specialisation would much rather live completely off their shambas, so that town life is often considered a necessary evil, distracting a man's attention from the shamba and his family, which should be his primary concerns.

The ways in which rights to land, contact with kin, and, in general, a person's rural social status, are maintained by African migrants in towns, are well documented.[1] Migrants in Machakos, as in other African towns, do this by visiting home as frequently as possible, by making material contributions to their families at home, and by assisting kinsmen and rural neighbours when they come to town. To fail to keep up this interest in the rural homeland is morally highly reprehensible, and all sorts of pressures are brought to bear on an individual who appears to be shirking his responsibilities. There being so many Kamba in Machakos, and the rural area of the Kamba so close at hand, surveillance is usually possible for Kamba by kinsmen or neighbours from home. Emissaries from the country may come in search of an errant individual, or messages may be sent to his kin or neighbours in town, or even to the Township Chief, who sees as one of his duties the searching out of miscreants of this kind when requested to do so. Anyone neglecting his obligations to the countryside is said by his family and friends to

1. Cf. Watson (1958); Van Velsen (1960).

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be 'lost'.

The expectation that all migrants working in town will eventually take up their inheritance on the family shamba is, however, only an ideal which is recognised not always to work out in practice, for reasons additional to the possibility of individuals becoming 'lost'. The shortage of land in Ukambani, or rather the small size of most shambas in relation to the large number of male heirs, is acutely felt, and a common motive for earning money in town is to save to buy land elsewhere.[2] There are individuals and whole families in the township who expect to spend the rest of their lives there for the express reason that there is not enough land for them. The land is still uppermost in the minds of urban workers of the lower occupational categories and very few would conceive of abandoning it voluntarily for an exclusively urban life. It is only as educational qualifications and occupational specialisation increase that economic dependence on the land decreases. The most apparent reasons for this are increasing salaries and better job security. As a man's salary increases, he is less dependent on income from his shamba to supplement what he earns in town. (In fact, the less qualified the worker, the lower his wages and the more likely he is to consider urban income a supplement to shamba production.) As a man's qualifications and specialisation increase, so he becomes more indispensible to the labour market. A replacement of similar qualifications is less likely to be found to replace him; he is less likely to lose his job and have to fall back on shamba income alone.

Ironically, those urban workers least dependent on their shamba incomes are those most able to improve their shambas, buy more land, and employ labourers to

2. Cf. chapter II; also Owake (1971).

care for it in their absence. Urban workers with even professional qualifications retain interest in their rural holdings, their obligations to their rural kin, and in getting the most out of the land. Complaints are often heard of officials taking too many days off from their duties in town to visit their land. Interest in the land is thus not a purely economic phenomenon. Cabinet ministers and industrialists share their interest in what goes on at home in the country with the most lowly road sweepers, so the interest in the land is not explained solely in terms of the insecurity of urban work. Interest in the land is also a cultural phenomenon, which expresses an allegiance to a way of life, and a 'traditional' tribal system, in addition to the adoption of 'Western' ways and ideas.[3]

'Rootedness' is not, therefore, primarily a measure of commitment to town life, but a representation of a person's attachment to town at a particular moment. 'Commitment', while obviously related to rootedness, should be held apart. Only by doing this would it be possible to investigate the relationship between the one and the other, were this to be attempted. I am not, however, attempting here to to measure the degree of 'urbanization' of individuals or groups, in terms of how they might act in the future. The difficulties of this

3. Cf. Szymon Chodak, who writes: "Land is viewed by the true peasant not simply as a commodity or as one of the variable elements needed for productive activities. It is the source of life, the mother of human kind. Wealth and prestige derive from the possession of it. It contains the ashes of the ancestors and hence the roots of the present. Tilling the land is for the peasant not just a way of obtaining the means to live, it is a vocation inherited from the past. Land is regarded as the safest form of investment. Hence, if a peasant becomes engaged in any entrepreneurial activity other than work on his land, it is either because of necessity, or for the purpose of obtaining means for investment in land." Chodak (1971) p.343. He does not, however, consider the possibility of obtaining high prestige occupations away from the land.

kind of exercise have been well noted.[4] I suggest 'rootedness' as a more finite expression of people's <u>present</u> situations in town. There are three main categories of people in Machakos in terms of rootedness.

Completely town-rooted people are those living in Machakos having no links outside the township, to kin, land, or occupation, and whose whole personal social universes are contained by the township boundaries. These people may conveniently be known as 'townsmen'. The second category is of people rooted in town in terms of present residence and occupation, but who maintain ties with kin or land elsewhere, to the extent of having alternative residences. This is the category of 'circulatory migrants' of the now classic type. They are partially rooted in town, maintaining strong ties elsewhere. The third category contains the commuters, who are rooted in Machakos only by their jobs, who work in town every day, but who live in the surrounding countryside, with their families and wider kin.[5]

These categories, as described above, are ideal types, there being much more variation within and overlap between categories in reality. There are, for instance, persons born in town and at present living in town, to all intents and purposes 'townsmen', but who maintain certain ties with the countryside, possibly with kin. Townsmen may also maintain contact with kin, friends, property, or jobs in other towns. It is also possible for people to have <u>become</u> townsmen; having been born in the country, maybe still having rights in land, they may have deliberately cut off these ties, and restricted their

4. P. Mayer makes a distinction between 'stabilisation' of migrants in East London and the 'genuine quality' of urbanization, which is more related to 'commitment'. Mayer (1971) pp. 4-5.
5. For a similar classification, except for the commuters, cf. Wilson and Mafeje (1963).

horizons to the township. Among circulatory migrants there are persons tied elsewhere not to a piece of land, but to another town, where they possibly were born and have kin still living. Such persons are more realistically treated as townsmen, in that their ties outside Machakos are urban rather than rural. Migrants are not necessarily tied to their rural birthplace, but possibly to a different shamba in the country, which has been recently acquired. Among the commuters may be persons who sometimes actually live in the township, as either their jobs demand or as their personal inclinations towards urban residence change. Most commuters live on the family shamba, but there are some who live in the immediate hinterland with kin or friends, having been offered a place to live more cheaply, free from the evils of town, but convenient for work in Machakos.

It is also possible for individuals to move between categories, as already suggested. A commuter may become a circulatory migrant, and then maybe even a townsman. For rootedness is not a static condition, but something which may be constantly changing, as circumstances and personal desires vary over time. The most apt factors distinguishing individuals in terms of their rootedness in Machakos are birthplace, present residence, and intended place of retiral, i.e. where a person intends living when he stops wage-earning in a town job. Frequency of home-visiting is also useful, in that townsmen will have probably ceased to maintain such contacts. Table 3.1 indicates how often contact with a 'home' outside Machakos is maintained by visiting. Ease of visiting obviously influences frequency, distance being the factor most involved in terms of financial cost and accessibility. The category indicated by this table is the townsmen, who 'never' visit their home. Although only two persons born outside Machakos stated that they 'never' visit home it should be

Distance of birthplace from Mks.	week	month	6 mths.	year	more than 1 year	'never'	total
Less than 3 mls.	2	1					3
3 - 10 mls.	22	9	3	1	1		36
10 - 20 mls.	12	15	3	1	1		32
20 - 30 mls.	4	3	1		1		9
30 - 50 mls.		7	3		1		11
More than 50 mls.	3	9	9	5	6	2	34
Born in Machakos						4	4
Total	43	44	19	7	10	6	129

(Column group heading: Visited 'home' within the last:)

Table 3.1. Last visit 'home' of resident adult African males. Source: RPS.

remembered that there are probably more in this situation, but who have not admitted the fact. Because it is considered a 'bad thing' to fail to regularly visit home, people asked this question have a good motive for lying, or at least for stretching the truth. I was able to discover this sometimes when, for instance, I knew respondents' friends. One respondent, whom I first met through interviewing him, but who later became one of my best friends and informants, confessed to me laughingly that although he had claimed to have been home only three months before, he had not in fact been home for six years. More persons than admitted it have probably given up visiting altogether. Furthermore, the persons who said they had last visited their homes more than one year ago may be suspected of feeling at least ambiguous about their obligations and intentions, especially if the shamba concerned is near at hand. The category 'more than one year ago' may include people whose last visit was thirty years ago. But the table does show tendencies in home visiting behaviour, confirming

the expectation that frequency decreases as distance from Machakos of the home increases, and this table also gives an idea of the size of the 'townsman' category relative to the rest of the resident population - that is, at least 4%.

Stated place of retiral is a further means of estimating the size of the townsman category, and more efficient than 'home-visiting'. It is, after all, possible to go on visiting home while still intending to retire in town, or to think of town as one's real point of reference, one's real 'home'. For this question there is also less likelihood of evasion of the truth, there being less motive for this. It is generally accepted that there is no real excuse for failure tovisit one's home, but there are reasons for remaining in town which the people who hold them consider acceptable. Shortage of land, or landlessness, were the reasons mentioned most frequently.

Intended place of retiral	Birthplace: country	Machakos	other urban	total	Muslims
country	111	-	-	111	1
Machakos	6	4	4	14	9
other urban	-	-	1	1	1
don't know	6	-	-	6	-
total	123	4	5	132	11

Table 3.2. Intended place of retiral of resident adult African males. Source: RPS.

By 'retiral' was meant the time people considered themselves too old to work, or when they decided that they no longer wished to work in town. Table 3.2 shows how the townsman category grows to over 10% when assessed by this question. All of the six people who did not know where they would retire said that they had worries about land availability. The figures for Muslims contain one man

intending to retire to the country, but he was, in fact, born on the coast, where virtually the whole population is Muslim. The other main implication of the table is the overwhelming majority of those intending to go back to the land. Another point is that whereas, it seems, country-born can decide to retire in town, town-born do not seem to decide to retire in the country.

The size of the commuter category is indicated by the numbers of those workers resident outside the township. Table 3.3 shows this category to be a large proportion of the workforce - over 20%.

Distance of birthplace from Mks. (miles)	Residence: Machakos	country	total
Born in Mks.	5	-	5
Less than 3	2	14	16
3 - 10	50	30	80
10 - 20	22	1	23
20 - 30	28	-	28
30 - 50	22	-	22
More than 50	28	-	28
Total	157	45	202

Table 3.3. Residences of labour force, by distance of birthplace from town. Source: LFS.

All of those living outside the township live on shambas, in only three cases the shamba concerned not being the family shamba, but that of friends or more distant kin. The table also shows the high proportion of the labour force born only a short distance from town.

The Muslims may be considered a sort of core of the townsmen, most of the Muslims never having owned land nor had any right to it, and no home other than Machakos Township (see chapter VII). Local Kamba have joined these Muslims by intermarriage and conversion, and members of a

few other tribes are similarly represented. The category is therefore better described as 'permanently' rather than 'completely' town-rooted, as many in this category may still have kinship, affinal, and other ties with the countryside. Some even have pieces of land outside town which they cultivate, but this land is more likely to be used instrumentally, on a strictly economic, possibly commercial, basis, and is not an affective expression of rural, tribal loyalties. The townsman category is thus composed of a. coastal people or their direct descendants, b. Muslim Kamba (either recent converts or descendents of converts), c. converts to Islam of other tribes, or descendants of these converts, d. the landless and other 'dropouts' from the countryside, e. the descendants and offspring of unions between any of the former.

The migrants may not necessarily see urban work as temporary, in that they may wish to participate in it for most of their lives, but still pay their final allegiance to the land. They are less town-rooted than the townsmen because their links with the countryside are more numerous, firmer, and more faithfully maintained.

The commuters are more land-rooted than the migrants because their places of residence are in the country, even if they, too, do not necessarily look upon urban work as temporary. The presence of this category illustrates the closeness of the relationship between Machakos and its hinterland, and this is even more apparent when it is seen that 47% of the total African labour force was born within 10 miles of town, and as much as 89% within 50 miles of town.

The categories of worker are best seen as points on a continuum, whose poles are, in terms of rootedness, 'social universe entirely urban' and 'social universe entirely rural'. These poles do not represent degrees of <u>commitment</u> to a particular way of life, for, as I have

mentioned, a person with a high degree of rootedness in town may have no long term commitment to town life. What such a continuum allows is the treatment of the town and its rural hinterland as one social field, which contains two physical areas, distinguished occupationally in terms of where different types of occupation predominate - peasant farming or commercial farming, against wage labour at various levels, business and the professions.[6] Urban employment or residence can then be considered as types of affiliation within this whole social field.

The relationship between commitment and rootedness will become clearer if we distinguish three broad types of motive for urban involvement.

Among workers in Machakos there seem to be, broadly speaking, three main types of motive for working in town, apart from the Muslims whose home is Machakos. There are those workers for whom urban employment seems to be solely a means for obtaining cash - to pay taxes, to buy food, land, and to pay children's school fees. Most of these workers have little, if any, education, so have poor jobs and low wages. They tend to be unaccompanied by their wives and families, and to live as simply and cheaply as possible. We may suitable distinguish this type of worker as having instrumental motives for working in town. This type of worker in Machakos tends to have a very low commitment to town life, expressed by the remittance of as much as possible of his earnings to the country, and a low participation in town activities. Such a person may spend many years in town, may be rooted by his employment and residence, but have no long term commitment to town life.

6. This continuum is not, however, to be confused with the 'rural-urban continuum such as that suggested by Robert Redfield (1964) as it neither describes nor suggests the change of something denoted 'rural' to that denoted 'urban'. It merely describes people's rootedness to either the one physical area of the other, and allows a comparison between these. Cf. also Dewey (1960).

Most commuters have predominantly instrumental motives for working in town, but not all invariably do so (see chapter V).

Another important motive for taking work in town is the desire to attain an occupation and position which confers high prestige, and also brings in a large enough income to permit enjoyment of a comfortable life in town. Town life is the accepted and expected milieu of life for a significant category of people, containing particularly the better educated. To live in town, to appreciate its amenities and standards, and to enjoy urban modes of entertainment, are seen by many as the only way of fulfilling ideals of 'the civilized way of life'. We may refer to persons with those ideals as having <u>normative</u> motives for working in town in that, for them, work in town expresses an allegiance to the ideals of a way of life which can only be achieved in town.

It is not only town residents who have normative motives of this kind. Many commuters share them. To have ideals towards urban work, a career, and the prestige scale of occupations is not incompatible with living in the country, even if it may be accepted that promotion beyond a certain point may not be possible, because of unwillingness to change residence. Furthermore, most town residents with normative attitudes maintain great concern for rural affairs, especially their own shambas, without detracting from their estimations of the desirability of working in town. It is probable that this type of motive has spread especially since Independence, when the possibilities for Africans of working in towns were greatly increased, although the desire for such opportunities in town was one of the crucial motivating factors for the pre-Independence African nationalist movements in Kenya.

The third broad type of motive for working in town is the desire, prevalent especially among women,

to escape the obligations and hardships of rural life. Women on the shamba are expected to do virtually all the heavy agricultural work, as well as cooking and collecting huge loads of firewood. The obvious place for women who wish to escape this kind of life is in town, even although employment possibilities are few. This kind of motive may also apply to men who wish for some reason to escape from the countryside. Such people may be more rooted in town than most of those residents with instrumental motives because although they may have the intention of returning to the country at some time in the future, they may have been obliged to cut off, or may have failed to maintain, many of their ties with the countryside.

The motives of individuals may, of course, be mixed. A person coming to town principally to earn cash may also see town as more than just a source of this cash. Motives may also change. A person first migrating to town with the object of earning cash may become more concerned with the 'freedom' and other perceived advantages of town living. Conversely, a migrant attracted not just by the prospects of earning cash but also by the idea of town life may become disillusioned concerning his chances of finding work and a commensurate life-style in town, and turn his primary interest to town as a source of cash to supplement rural income, or to invest in land.

The nature of the motivations of workers in town will become clearer, as well as the nature of their involvement in town, when I give some illustrations. But first, some remarks are necessary concerning the demographic, ethnic and occupational composition of the African population as a whole.

The structure of the African population

In 1969 the African residents in Machakos were 88% of the total population. Meaningful differentiation

among the African population, and the basis for most forms of interaction, is based on tribe, religion, and occupation. Religion acts to separate out the community of Muslims; tribe determines common cultural backgrounds as the basis for allegiance and loyalties in certain kinds of situation, occupation is the most important determinant of social status differences, and sets the 'local élite' apart from the rest of the population (see chapter VI).

The 'Swahili community' in Machakos contains many Muslims who are uncertain of their tribal ancestry, because so many tribes and intermarriages have been involved in its growth. People are often uncertain as to whether they should call themselves 'Kamba', 'Arab', 'Swahili', etc. 'Swahili' is the generalised term for the wider category of African Muslims,[7] and is used as such in Machakos, where what is known as the 'Swahili community' contains pure Arabs and pure Kamba, united in their allegiance to Islam and the local mosque. But because many Muslims refer to themselves by tribal terms, in presenting figures for the African population as a whole I have included those Muslims who call themselves 'Kamba' with non-Muslim Kamba, and other Muslims with 'other tribes', and presented figures for 'Muslims' separately. In this way the Muslim community can be compared to the rest of the African population, without begging the question of the tribal affiliations of certain Muslims.

The tribal composition of the resident population is shown in Table 3.4, on the following page. The table shows how strongly Kamba are represented in the resident population, and also how strongly <u>children</u> are represented. The age-sex structure shows the over-representation of adult males, and the under-representation of women and old people. The over-representation of males is not, however, as marked as has been noted for other African

7. Cf. Eastman (1971).

	Adults Males	Females	Children (under 16)	Total
Kamba	25.6	15.1	16.7	57.4
Kikuyu	3.9	3.9	7.8	15.6
'Swahili'*	1.6	3.4	5.5	10.5
Baluhya	1.8	1.0	5.5	8.3
Luo	0.8	0.3	0.5	1.6
Other tribes	1.6	0.5	4.4	6.5
Total	35.3	32.9	40.4	99.9 n=383
Muslims	12.5	32.9	54.5	99.9 n=88

*Does not include Muslim Kamba. Muslims are 24% of the total population, and of these 22% state their tribe as 'Kamba'. See foot of table, 'Muslims'.

Table 3.4. Tribal composition of African population, residents (%). Source: RPS.

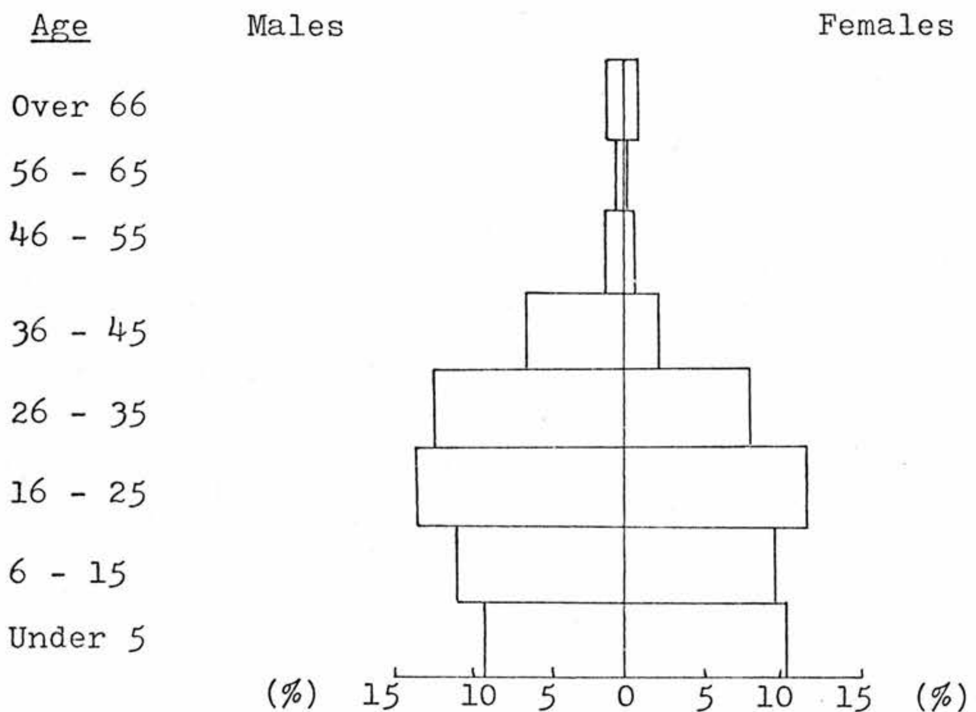

Figure 3.1. Age-sex structure of African township residents. Source: RPS.

towns.[8] It is difficult to speculate whether there has been an evening out of the sex ratio in Machakos, there being no data available for the past. This is only one possible approach, though. Mitchell's figures are for Southern Rhodesian towns in 1961. There is more restriction on the presence in towns of Africans in Southern Rhodesia than in Kenya, which makes it more difficult for a man to take along his family, or for a single woman to find work or housing. Similar restrictions in Kenya were removed at Independence, and there has been unrestricted entry to the towns for many years. The practice of commuting to Machakos decreases the necessity for single men to live in town. Commuters are the poorer paid workers who would be more likely, given a greater distance between town and labour supply areas, to live in town without their families (see chapter V). In addition, the Machakos work force is not, unlike those of the Southern Rhodesian towns, predominantly industrial, so that many of the jobs available in Machakos may be done as well, and more cheaply, by women, in spite of the fact that many of the jobs which could be performed by women are held by men. Table 3.5 on page 66 shows how occupations are divided between men and women. The table demonstrates how widely, in fact, women are employed in Machakos, and also the large number of women supported as 'housewives'. Noteworthy is the excess of women over men in the unemployed/retired category. Of these seven women, five are Muslim and belong to the Swahili community. Petty trading is also a largely female activity.

The large number of children is a reflection of the relatively large number of families in town (see below), but must also be associated with the very high rate of population growth in Kenya of over 3% per annum.[9]

8. Mitchell (1969a) shows a more distorted age-sex structure for Rhodesian towns.
9. World Bank Atlas (1972). The figure is for 1960 - 1970.

	Males	Females	Total
Administrative (supervisory)	12	-	12
Secondary school teacher	5	3	8
Routine clerical worker	11	4	15
Primary school teacher	1	5	6
Police/prison officer	2	-	2
Skilled/semi-skilled labour	30	2	32
Domestic servant	7	5	12
Petty trader	5	13	18
Shop worker	23	6	29
Unskilled labour	19	1	20
Prostitute	-	7	7
Unemployed/retired	2	7	9
'Housewife'	-	33	33
Schoolboy/girl*	16	7	23
Other	4	1	5
Total	137	94	231

* Over 15 years old.

Table 3.5. Occupations of resident African adults. Source: RPS.

Although the town is tribally heterogeneous, housing is so difficult to find in Machakos that members of one tribe cannot congregate in a particular area, but are scattered around the town, taking accommodation provided by an employer, or wherever it can be found. Even in the Swahili Village, Muslims are in a minority. The Kamba domination of Machakos, at least in number, is even more marked when the labour force is considered.

	Males	Females	Total
Kamba	73.8	13.9	87.7
Other tribes	10.5	2.0	12.5
Total	84.3	15.9	100.2

Table 3.6. Labour force, by tribe (%). Source: LFS.

The nature of the presence in Machakos of Kamba and non-Kamba, however, differs considerably. Kamba do not have a share in jobs, housing, etc. proportionate to their numerical presence. We can now look at the nature of the Kamba presence in Machakos, and compare it to that of non-Kamba.

The Kamba in Machakos

The excess of males over females is more marked for the Kamba population alone. The Kamba population, however, is also notable for the seasonal variation in its age-sex structure. Figure 3.2 shows the extent of this variation.

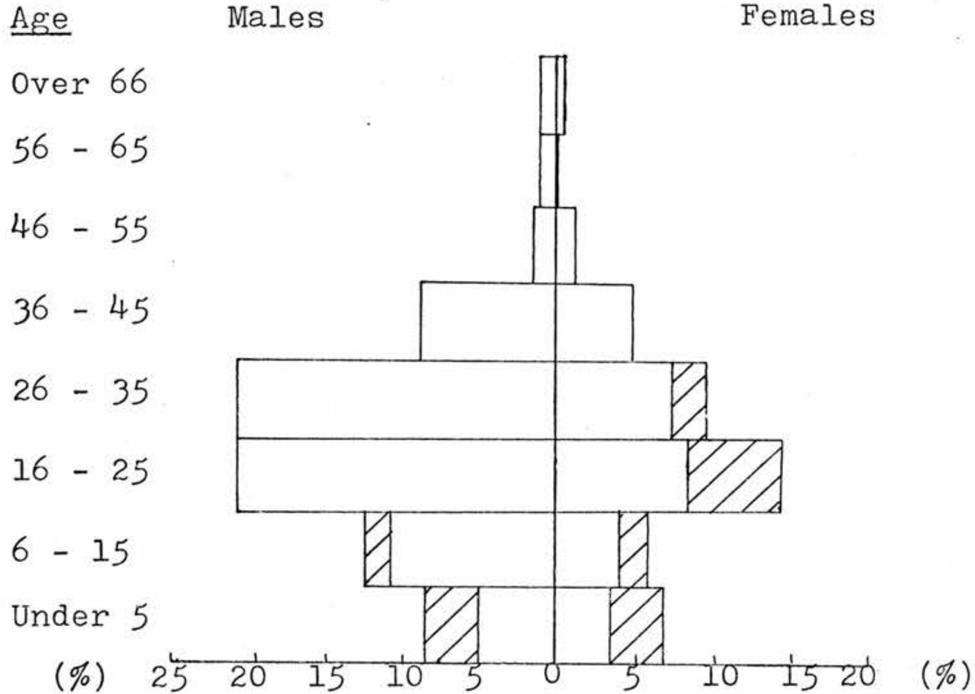

Figure 3.2. Age-sex structure of Kamba township residents. Shaded areas represent % increase of dry season population over wet season population.

Source: RPS.

Throughout most of the year the majority of Kamba men live singly in town, wives and children staying home on

the shamba, which the women cultivate with the help of the children, who possibly also attend a nearby primary school. Better-paid men sometimes can afford to employ labour on their land, where kinsmen are not available, but even then his wife, or his mother if he is unmarried, will supervise their work. Particularly during the rainy seasons in March and November, when land clearing and planting take place, and at harvest time in July and February, women are occupied by work on the shamba. Few Kamba township residents can afford the luxury of having their families live with them in town, as this requires the purchase of extra food, and more rent for a bigger room, apart from the question of who looks after the shamba. Another reason for families living in the country is the widespread belief that the proper place for children to be educated at primary school is in the country, away from the bad influences of the town, and among their country kin and neighbours.[10] Some Kamba children attend primary school in Machakos, but these are in the minority. Secondary schools tend to be in towns, and in any case many take boarders only. So many women and children, who are not in school or are on holiday from school, if they visit the family head at all do so for brief periods of up to about a month, and at certain agriculturally defined times between planting and harvesting. This sort of visiting tends to be restricted to Kamba, partly because they are the lowest paid in Machakos (see below), and partly because their rural homes are near enough to town not to require prohibitively expensive transport. To the African adult population as a whole, the difference this seasonal visiting made in 1969 to the sex ratio was from 68 females to every 100 males in the rainy season, to 79 females to every 100 males during the dry season. Within the Kamba population the difference was even more marked,

10. Weisner (1969) describes similar attitudes to children's education among Baluhya in Nairobi.

from 43:100 to 58:100.

The survey of the resident population was done, as already explained, by sampling dwelling units and interviewing households within these. The extent and membership of households were usually fairly easy to determine, informants having a clear idea of this, and a household generally being contained in a single house or building, a single room, or adjoining rooms. A 'household' was taken to be that group sharing common residence and budget (even if this only involved contributing to the same rent payment), which usually also involved eating together. Where families were concerned, whether nuclear, extended, compound, or parts of these, the task was simple. The oldest man was usually the household head, and regarded as such, so that the composition of the household could be understood by relationships referring to this head. Where the members of the household, in the cases where the household had more than one member, were not related by kinship or affinity, they generally acknowledged one of their number as household head by virtue of his or her being responsible for payment of the rent and other dealings with the landlord, being the owner of the building, by seniority of age or urban residence, or simply having lived in the dwelling longer than anyone else. Servants were included as members when they lived in, and in any case they were sometimes also related by kinship to their employers. Where they were so related, they are included in Table 3.7 as 'relatives' and not as servants.

It may be seen from Table 3.7 that very few Kamba compared with non-Kamba live in Machakos as part of a family or family-based household. Kamba men are much more likely to share their dwelling with other men, but who tend to be related to the household head. A Kamba man is most likely, though, to live in town alone, possibly being visited at certain times of the year by his

Household head	Kamba	Non-Kamba	Total	Muslims
sole member	28	2	30	1
plus wife	3	1	4	1
" wife, child(ren)	12	14	26	7
" wife, child(ren), other relative(s)	2	7	9	1
" wife, child(ren), non-relative(s)	-	1	1	-
" wife, child(ren), servant	1	-	1	-
" wife, servant	-	1	1	-
" wife, other relative(s)	-	1	1	-
" child(ren)	1	-	1	-
" child(ren), other related child(ren)	1	-	1	-
" related adult male(s)	11	-	11	-
" unrelated adult male(s)	7	3	10	-
" related adult male(s), unrelated adult male(s)	4	-	4	-
" servant	-	2	2	-
Total	70	32	102	10

Table 3.7. Composition of households with male heads, by tribe. Source: RPS.

Number of persons in household	Kamba	Non-Kamba	Total	Muslims
1	36	3	39	1
2	23	7	30	2
3	10	10	20	4
4	7	2	9	-
5	6	3	9	1
6	4	5	9	4
7	1	2	3	1
8	2	2	4	2
9	-	1	1	-
10	-	1	1	-
:				
22	-	1	1	1
Total	89	37	126	16

Table 3.8. Household size, by tribe.
Source: RPS.

wife and children. And non-Kamba are most likely to be accompanied by their wives and children, and maybe another relative in addition. This 'other relative' is sometimes a young girl who works as a servant, mainly looking after children, in return for board. She may be a wife's younger sister, or household head's brother's daughter, or wife's sister's daughter. An 'other relative' might also, typically, be attending school in Machakos. This applies for Kamba as well as non-Kamba. Such a boy or girl, usually closer related than servants, brother or half-brother or sister or half-sister (the child of another of a father's co-wives), is usually supported financially by the household, at least in terms of food and lodging, although the school fees may be paid by someone else. 'Other relatives' who work in Machakos are those taking advantage of their kinsman's presence in town to cut down on living expenses, to get help in the search for work, or to use

the kinsman's home in town as a stepping-stone to an independent dwelling. Some 'other relatives' are not in school proper, but in a 'training school' of some kind, learning a craft or trade which they hope will improve the chances of finding work. In Machakos there are several of these 'schools' ranging from the 'Iveti Secretarial Training College' which teaches typing to about twenty young men and women, to a garage which teaches mechanics to half-a-dozen young men.

As well as these 'schools' teaching crafts, people can learn a trade or craft individually, as apprentices, but often without pay and sometimes paying a fee. Attendance at such training requires outside support, and kin are asked, or offer, to provide this. But to provide this kind of support, or just to take in a relative as servant, requires the ability of the household to pay extra expenses. It is notable that more non-Kamba than Kamba households can do so. I will deal later with households with female heads. Table 3.8 shows that taking all households into consideration, non-Kamba tend to have larger households than Kamba.

It appears from household structure and size that the situation of Kamba in Machakos is rather different from that of members of other tribes. Kamba seem to be either less willing or less able to support their families and other relatives in town. It is, as we have seen, easier for the families of Kamba to pay short visits to town, but this does not imply that, given the choice, Kamba _prefer_ to keep their families away from town. They are, in fact, less able to afford financially to do so. This becomes apparent when we look at the distribution of occupations, earnings and education between Kamba and non-Kamba. Table 3.9 shows the relationship between occupation and tribe for African residents. Proportional to their numerical presence, Kamba have fewer of the jobs requiring more education or training,

	Kamba	Non-Kamba	Total
Administrative (supervisory)	4	8	12
Secondary school teacher	2	6	8
Routine clerical worker	9	6	15
Primary school teacher	4	2	6
Police/prison officer	-	2	2
Skilled/semi-skilled labour	26	6	32
Domestic servant	12	6	18
Shop worker	20	9	29
Petty trader	16	4	20
Unskilled labour	16	4	20
Prostitute	7	-	7
Unemployed/retired	5	4	9
'Housewife'	18	15	33
Schoolboy/girl*	19	4	23
Other	3	2	5
Total	161	78	239

*Over 15 years old.

Table 3.9. Occupations of resident African adults, by tribe.
Source: RPS.

and which tend to be better paid. The same relationship is also apparent when we look at the labour force, rather than the residents.

	Kamba	Non-Kamba	Total
Professional	-	2	2
Administrative (supervisory)	3	1	4
Routine clerical	33	7	40
Shop worker	74	9	83
Skilled/semi-skilled labour	46	5	51
Unskilled labour	19	1	20
Other	1	-	1
Total	176	25	201

Table 3.10. Occupations of African labour force, by tribe.
Source: LFS.

Almost 20% of the African labour force are 'routine clerical' workers, i.e. low and intermediate grade 'white-collar' employees (and with these I include primary school teachers), the main employers of these being the district administration and the county council, with smaller offices, like the two banks, also employing a significant number of clerks. Skilled and semi-skilled workers include tailors, carpenters, drivers, etc., and are 25% of the labour force. Unskilled workers (10%) are mainly labourers and sweepers for the local government offices and builders' labourers. The relatively small size of this category may be attributed to the absence of industry, the usual employers of large numbers of unskilled workers. The largest category, that of shop workers (over 40%), would seem to take the place of industry in employing those with little education or occupational skill. In Machakos there are eighty-two shops selling foodstuffs as the principal item, as well as over forty shops selling clothing and thirty hotel/bars. To work in one of these places, whether serving behind a counter or opening bottles of beer, requires very little expertise beyond the ability to give change correctly, and in many cases this responsibility is reserved by the owner of the concern himself. Machakos serves as a retail centre (and wholesale centre) for a population much larger than that living in the township. 'Shops' range from what are little more than stalls to a highly organised entrepreneurial enterprise employing over fifty men, with a large turnover and involving considerable capital investment. But there is only one business on this level, the shop selling agricultural equipment and hardware, which has diversified to include the sawmill, and this is totally Asian-owned. All the shops etc. employing a large number of people are either Asian or European owned, although some of the newer African-owned shops and businesses are fast growing (see chapter VI). But these are only two or three, and

the overwhelming majority of African businesses are run on a very small scale. Very often the owner is the only worker involved, and if he has any assistance this is likely to be his wife or a kinsman, who might work without wages, or for a tiny allowance. Of 68 shopworkers in the sample, half were either self-employed or worked for a close relative. I have included as 'shopworkers' both owners of shops and their employees, if any, for it is ludicrous to set up separate categories which draw a distinction between a man running a market stall and his son who works for him without wages, and then to include the father along with a commercial entrepreneur employing twenty men. This is especially distorting where the small enterprises are in the vast majority. This is another of the difficulties involved in sorting out an 'African proletariat' in terms of work situation.[11] (See chapter VI.) In addition to shopworkers there is a number of petty traders, mostly concentrated in the market dealing in agricultural produce, but a few hawk in the bus station, selling things like cheap plastic durables, soap, and clothing.

Higher administrative workers, those with supervisory positions, work mainly for the government and local government offices, including such persons as the District Labour Officer, the District Community Development Officer, the County Council Clerk.

Kamba workers in Machakos are markedly less educated, measured by the time spent in full-time education, than non-Kamba (Table 3.11), and corresponding to their poorer education and poorer jobs, Kamba have lower incomes than non-Kamba. The two tables on page 76 demonstrate this. The relationship between tribe and occupation, education and income found in Machakos is indicative of the sort of occupational selection at work in the nation as a whole. Highly educated workers tend to be in government employment; the tendency for better-educated

11. Cf. Worsley (1967), quoted in chapter I, note 20.

Education (years)	Kamba	Non-Kamba	Total
0	6.8	4.0	5.4
Up to 5	28.8	24.0	26.4
5 - 8	46.3	28.0	37.2
9 -10	10.2	20.0	15.1
11 -13	6.2	8.0	7.1
14 -16	1.7	8.0	4.8
More than 16	0	8.0	4.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

n = 202

Table 3.11. Education of African labour force (%).

Source: LFS.

Income (shillings per month)	Kamba	Non-Kamba	Total
Less than 100	9.0	4.0	6.5
101 - 300	58.8	32.0	45.4
301 - 500	15.8	20.0	17.9
501 - 700	5.6	20.0	12.8
701 - 1000	5.1	8.0	6.5
1001 - 1500	0.6	4.0	2.3
More than 1500	2.3	8.0	5.1
Unstated/don't know	2.8	4.0	3.4
Total	100.0	100.0	99.9

n = 202

Table 3.12. Income of African labour force (%).

Source: LFS.

Africans to enter government service is also well-known for other African countries.[12] There are more better-paying jobs for Africans in government service, although this tendency should change as Asian non-citizens are forced to hand over their businesses to Africans, and as the foreign-owned enterprises feel they are able, or are forced, to employ more Africans at higher levels. In Machakos, out of twenty-two residents in the resident population sample earning more than Shs.700 per month, seventeen were government employees. Highly educated and experienced Africans are still scarce, and outside Nairobi tend to be spread fairly thinly over the country, with little regard to the residential preferences of individuals. Most qualified, especially professionally qualified, Africans prefer to live and work in Nairobi. As the capital of the nation, Nairobi is a very modern city with all the facilities expected of a metropolis. More people are employed in Nairobi, over the whole range of occupations, and centralisation of Kenya is such that the top posts of every profession and occupation are in Nairobi. Salaries and wages in Nairobi are higher than anywhere else in the country. By comparison with Nairobi, wages, standard of living, and opportunities for promotion in Machakos are very poor. So why do people choose to work in Machakos, especially those with high qualifications, let alone poorly educated people who would be expected to chase high wages wherever they are available? Of the seventeen government employees earning more than Shs.700 per month, twelve are non-Kamba. Why do they work outside their home area? The answer for the highly qualified employees is that they do not choose to work in Machakos. They are posted there by their employer. Similarly, employees in the private sector may be posted to branches in Machakos. If a person were to choose his place of work outside Nairobi, he would choose to work in his own

12. Cf. Lloyd (1966) pp.4 - 10.

tribal area, to be close to his shamba and family, and among fellow tribesmen sharing a common vernacular and other customs. However, taking into account the scarcity of professionals and experienced administrators, and the undesirability of maintaining these in a constantly fluid mobility around the country so that hardly any time at all might be spent at each post, the chances are for a small provincial town like Machakos, that most of the senior positions will be filled by non-Kamba. Highly-placed Kamba are, in turn, to be found scattered around Kenya rather than in their 'home area'. It is significant that President Kenyatta, on a visit to Machakos in 1969, brought with him several high-ranking police and army officers, stationed in other parts of the country, and introduced them to a mass meeting of local people. Only lower grade occupations in Machakos, for which little special ability is required, are filled by Kamba, whose desires to work in Machakos coincides with a fairly open market for their level of skill.

Workers with no, or only a little, education are in abundant supply relative to the number of jobs available in the country, so that Kenya displays the chronic unemployment problems common to all African nations. There is a constant pool of people in Machakos looking for work. One of the main topics of conversation among young men is the work situation at the given time - where work might be available, who got a job recently, who has given up the search and gone back to the countryside. Every day outside the Labour Office in Machakos there is a gathering of young men and women hanging around in the hope that some vacancies might be announced. Young men with even secondary school education find it difficult to find work; unemployment among school leavers is a serious problem. But the majority of the best jobs in Machakos, which pay the best wages but which require the most education, are filled by non-Kamba. It is only when the lower levels,

of routine clerical work and manual labour, are reached that the labour force becomes predominantly Kamba. The Kamba workers in Machakos would not, by and large, command good, well-paying jobs elsewhere in Kenya. Many Kamba have tried to find work, or have actually worked for a spell, in Nairobi. But they are easily replaceable even if they find a job, and often find themselves unemployed again, especially when they take days off to visit their shambas.[13] Besides, Nairobi is a big city and a newcomer needs help to find his way around, let alone know where to look for work. For Kamba, Machakos is more convenient, and is commonly mentioned as the 'home town' of the Kamba, where the psychological as well as the economic security of the shamba near at hand is an advantage, besides the possibility of being among one's own tribe in town.

The non-Kamba

Stratification in Machakos works partly along divisions of tribe, non-Kamba tending to give the orders and make the decisions, and have more money and prestige. Among non-Kamba there are representatives of the 'national élite' who have been transferred to Machakos (see chapter VI). Most of these government employees are Baluhya and Luo. Employees of private firms are often in Machakos to work in branches of nation-wide enterprises, such as the three Kikuyu employees of a Kikuyu-owned photographer's studio, one of a chain throughout Kenya. The preference of African employers (or obligation) to hire fellow tribesmen is yet another aspect of the cross-cutting effect of 'tribalism' across potential class formations. Similarly, Kamba feel that they are at an advantage in Machakos because potential private employers are most likely to be Kamba.

There are no formal tribal associations in

13. For an account of the plight of the unemployed in Nairobi, cf. Gutkind (1967).

Machakos, each tribal group being small enough for members to know one another personally, so that formal organisation is unnecessary. The only group to consider forming a tribal association were the Luo, at the time in 1969 when KPU, the largely Luo opposition party, was banned. The Luo felt insecure, threatened by what they felt to be a hostile government or by unnamed and possibly imaginary 'outside forces'. The Machakos DC at that time was Luo, however, so that the Luo felt that they were safe as long as he was in office, and that to actually form an association would merely draw attention to their fears and insecurity, and also possibly jeopardize the position of the DC, whome they considered their 'leader'.

The only other significant group of non-Kamba in Machakos are the Muslims, to whom many Kamba have become assimilated, and I will deal with these in chapter VII.

This chapter has shown some of the variations within the African population, and the correlation which exists between tribe and stratification, and other social variables. It has also begun to show how Machakos is situated within the wider context of Kenya as a whole, and how the local situation is affected by circumstances emanating from the wider national level. We can now look more closely at the African population, and those working in town but living outside, exemplifying what has been described above.

Chapter IV

KAMBA MIGRANTS AND TOWNSMEN

Having dealt with the African population as a whole, we can look more closely at Kamba migrants in Machakos, to investigate the nature of their urban involvement, and the nature of the difference between migrants and townsmen. What is it that leads Kamba to become townsmen, and how great is the difference in terms of 'rootedness' between migrants and townsmen? Most townsmen in Machakos are, however, Muslims, although in this chapter we will deal with the non-Muslim townsmen, and in a later chapter look at the Muslim townsmen. In terms of rootedness, it is seen that there may be little to choose between individual migrants and individual townsmen. The significant difference for many townsmen may lie not in the fact that they have no rural ties, but the way in which they perceive these ties, and the uses to which they are put.

Kamba migrants

Most Kamba in Machakos are migrants, living and working in the town, but maintaining ties with kin and land in the countryside and intending at some time in the future to return there for good. Table 4.1 shows the relationship between tribe and the place where people say they will live when they are too old to work, or when they stop working, whenever that may be.

Place of 'retirement'	Kamba	Non-Kamba	Total
Birthplace (ie. share of family shamba)	62	21	83
Other - near birthplace (bought)	21	3	24
Other - not near birthplace (bought)	8	1	9
Other - persons <u>hoping</u> to buy land	5	2	7
Machakos Township	4	9	13
Other urban	-	1	1
Total	100	37	137

Table 4.1. Intended plac e of retirement of resident African adult males. Source: RPS.

A common motive for working in town is to save money in order to buy a piece of land, especially when a man's father's land is too small, or felt to be too small, to permit a decent existence for a man and his family. It may be possible to buy a small plot adjacent to the piece one has inherited, but failing this, a man's aim is to find a piece of land near his father's shamba, at least in the same sub-location or location. Failing this, a man short of land will buy a piece wherever he can find it, possibly on a settlement scheme, or as a share in a co-operative.[I] Governmentloans are available for purchase of land on such schemes, so that all a person need do is save a deposit and repay the balance in instalments <u>after</u> taking possession. Ex-European farms or ranches are often taken over for this purpose, and split up into small shambas, or run as co-operatives (i.e. each family has a small plot for subsistence, and also provides labour for the rest of the farm, which is run on a commercial basis for the benefit of all members of the co-operative). Once a loan has been raised, a person's need for cash is certainly not over, because not only does he have to repay his loan, but he also must raise cash for other ends. It is not usual for a shamba to be completely self-supporting. Those buying a share in a co-operative are more fortunate, because ideally their cash requirements are met by the commercial operation. The idea of the 'target worker', the migrant who comes to town to earn a specific sum of money for a specific end, such as land purchase, or bridewealth, is barely applicable to Machakos. The need for cash is so omnipresent that if a man's shamba cannot provide him with his cash needs then he is going to find himself extending his periods of urban wage-earning again and again as one specific need is replaced by another as the circumstances of his life cycle dictate. A Kamba may come to town in the first instance to save money to build a house for himself, then to save deposit to put down on a piece of land, if he requires it, and if not there will be bridewealth, and no sooner is he married than he will require the cash to pay school fees, if not yet for his own children then for those of his relatives, who have discovered their kinsman's ability to raise cash. The concept of target earning is useful only

I. Cf. Chambers (1969).

if retained for the very broad goal of a higher standard of living.

Kamba migrants in Machakos include both those with predominantly 'normative' motives to working in town, and those with predominantly 'instrumental' motives. It will be useful at this stage to illustrate this distinction by examples, which will at the same time give a better impression of the nature of the urban experience of Kamba in Machakos.

JOHN MULI was born in Mbitini, about forty miles from Machakos, in 1942. His father has fifteen acres of land at Mbitini, part of which he still cultivates, assisted by his two wives. When John was eight years old his father sent him to a local primary school, paying the fees with great difficulty, although at the time he had a small shop in the market at Machakos, selling general foodstuffs and some cheap clothing. After John had been in school six years, his father could no longer pay the fees, because the shop was not doing so well, largely for lack of someone who understood figures and simple accounting. John greatly regretted having to leave school, because he knew the great advantages of education, and the difficulty of making a decent livelihood with no education. His father had been in school only two years. When he left school in 1956 John had no idea of what kind of work he could do, or would like to do, but his father brought him to Machakos to help in the shop, especially the stock and the accounts. John worked in Machakos for his father, without pay, for five years. During this time he shared his father's room in the Swahili Village, and they took turns having a day off during the week to visit the shamba at Mbitini, taking money, and a little food from the stock, such as sugar and tea, for the women, who looked after the shamba, growing maize, beans, and a little millet. After five years, the business had picked up a lot, and John's father decided to return for good to Mbitini, to look after the shamba and try to get a bit more out of it, and leave the shop completely to John. John has been running the shop now for the last eight years, taking every Sunday off to visit his own wife, whom he married in 1961. His father gave

over six acres of land to John not long before the marriage, and his wife looks after this.

John says he has no complaints about his life at present. Machakos is quite a good place to work in, because being the biggest town in the district has a big enough custom for the shop. But he does not like the town out of working hours, after he closes the shop at 6 pm. He says there is far too much drunkenness in Machakos, too much thieving going on. And there are plenty of temptations for a man on his own, particularly 'those women', who encourage a man to spend all his money, and 'make him lazy'. In the evenings John stays in his room, and if he goes anywhere visits his father's brother's son who has a room nearby. For the past year one of John's two sons has shared his room in Machakos to attend a primary school in town. In spite of the success of his shop, which now makes Shs. 400 profit per month, John does not want to work there longer than necessary. The shop he looks upon as a useful asset, but not as dependable as his piece of land. As he puts it, "The shop may be robbed or burned any time; who can steal my land?" His monthly profit is spent on paying taxes, buying clothes for the family, and extra food, and on paying his son's school fees, as well as his own living expenses. He also manages to save a little. What he looks forward to is receiving the rest of his inheritance of land from his father and being able to settle on his shamba for good. Until then, six acres is not enough to support himself and his family. He is trying just now to buy an extra six acres from a neighbour, using his savings. His wife, he says, works very well on what land they have, so he would not think of bringing her to live in town, even if there was someone else who could look after the land. Besides, town is not the place for women. It is too expensive to keep them there, and in any case his wife would be bored with nothing to do, unless she helped in the shop.

PETER MUINDI was born thirty-two years ago about forty miles from Machakos, in a sub-location of which his father was sub-chief. Peter's father was not a wealthy man, but had a steady income, so that Peter had a good education, up to Form 4 (eleven years). After leaving school in 1957, Peter got a job as a clerk in a bank in Nairobi. He was quite well paid, by standards of the day, even doing work which was only that of an office boy and messenger. Peter was able to afford a room of his own on a municipal housing estate, and he was also able to send money home to his parents every month, and take them presents of food and clothes when he visited them, which he did fairly often, usually every month for a weekend. Peter enjoyed living in Nairobi, because there was everything to do, dancing, cinemas and bars, and because the friends he had 'knew about big cities', and helped him find his way around. One particular friend was David, a post-office clerk, also a Kamba, whom Peter met on the housing estate. David had heard from another Kamba that Peter had just arrived on the estate, and went over to introduce himself, to see whether Peter might be from the same home area, and whether they had any mutual acquaintances. They had not, and were from different parts of Ukambani, but became friendly, and began to spend most of their 'off-duty' time together, and some weekends they travelled to Machakos together, on the way to see their families.

Peter met his other friends in Nairobi through David, these also being Kamba, of whom there were many in Nairobi. Peter and David often went to bars and night clubs where they knew these other friends would be. These friends were of similar occupations to Peter and David - clerks, and a driver-salesman for East African Tobacco. Their ages ranged from Peter, the youngest, to about thirty. Sometimes these men would bring their wives along, if they lived in Nairobi with their husbands. Otherwise, girlfriends would come and go, and one man eventually married a Kamba girl he met in Nairobi.

Peter had a few girls in Nairobi, but was careful not to spend too much money on them. He sent a fair amount af money home every month, and in addition spent quite a lot on clothes. He considered himself at the time to be a 'sharp' dresser - always dark suit, white shirt and tie, and he took to wearing a hat with a little feather in the brim.

After Peter had been in Nairobi for about three years, it became obvious that Independence was on its way. The bank which employed Peter was aware of the necessity for promoting Africans to positions which had hitherto been closed to them, and for training Africans to fill more responsible positions. Peter, being young and bright, was sent on banking courses and accounting courses, and was rapidly promoted to become a teller in a Nairobi branch. In 1962, with Independence at hand, Peter was transferred to Machakos, where the bank also had a branch. Peter found himself with a more senior, better-paying post in Machakos, where he knew he was being groomed for even better things. But he was sorry in some ways for coming to Machakos. He wanted to see more of Kenya, he said, and would have liked to have spent some time in Nakuru, maybe, or Mombasa. In Machakos he had a little house of his own, but soon his father's brother asked him to let his son come to live with him in Machakos, so that he could go to a private secondary school in Machakos. Peter agreed, knowing that he would also be obliged to pay the school fees, as well as give the boy food and a little pocket money. This boy stayed for two years, after which he decided to look for work, and went back to his father's shamba. He was replaced, however, by Peter's youngest brother, who started to attend a secondary school in Machakos.

While he was in Machakos Peter met a Kamba girl working as a typist in the DC's office, and in 1964, after they had known each other almost a year, they married. The ceremony was held in a small church near Peter's birthplace, and was attended by a large number of people. Peter's new wife continued to work after they were married, but stopped

when she had their first child a year later. Peter and his wife now have two children, and live in a larger house in Machakos, where they moved when Peter became the head clerk in the bank in January 1969 and his salary became close to Shs.1500. Peter's wife's youngest sister, who is eleven years old, lives with them, acting as a kind of maid, in particular looking after the children, doing washing, and so on. Peter's brother is also still there, now having reached Standard 5.

In the evenings, Peter often has a beer in Machakos Sports Club, of which he became a member in 1969. Some of his friends also drink there, in particular the Treasurer of the County Council, also a Kamba, and a Kamba who is the District Community Development Officer. But at the club he also meets members of the local African elite - some of the District Officers, the Provincial Physician, the District Agricultural Officer, none of whom are Kamba. And he also comes into contact with the European and Asian members.

Peter's father has allocated him part of the family shamba, on which Peter has built a house, and part of which he cultivated, growing maize and a little coffee. This is looked after by his mother, and two parttime labourers, paid by Peter. Peter is trying, however, to buy a piece of land on a new government settlement scheme, on a large farm which the government has just bought from a European settler (who has since left for retirement on Malta). Peter's father's land is fairly small, and has to be divided among four brothers. Peter thinks he would be better off buying a large piece of land for himself elsewhere, and giving over his share of his inheritance to his brothers. What he wants is a big enough piece of land on which to build a large, comfortable house, grow a variety of crops, and also keep a few good cattle. Peter is very proud of cattle he has already, including a fine bull which he bought

from a European ranch on the other side of the Rift Valley. He is considering concentrating on cattle, especially the breeding of bulls for stud or sale. Peter visits his shamba very regularly, usually once a fortnight, which is easy now that he has bought a car.

For the time being, Peter is content. He knows that he is fortunate to have such a good job, and that he is young for the positions he holds. He has not, therefore, thought much about farther promotion, knowing that it may be some time before he is considered for a post of bank manager. But this is only a matter of time. The other bank in Machakos has recently had an African manager appointed, a Luo who is only about 35 years old. Peter's time will come. Apart from a managership, there is the possibility of having the same position but in a larger branch, probably in Nairobi. Peter would welcome such a possibility. Having spent some years in Nairobi, Machakos, he feels, is a bit provincial and a little boring, without the constant exitement of the capital, or the wide variety of things to do. (Peter especially misses the cinema). But looking beyond that, to retirement, Peter visualises a quiet life looking after his land in the country, with, hopefully, a comfortable house, and prosperous, successful and attentive children and grandchildren.

The attitudes of the two men to town life have developed out of their having different resources and differing opportunities to exploit them. Peter benefited greatly through possessing not just education, but a position just before Independence within an organisation wishing to promote its African employees; he was in the right place at the right time. John on the other hand had no scarce, desirable skills, and could not achieve the kind of situation in town which would allow him to widen his view of town life. John had very largely to create his own situation, but the nature of this was such that it could only supplement what became a more important resource - the land. John's attitudes to town life reflect this.

One obvious distinction is the difference between the two men in their style of life in Machakos, which can only partly be related to the difference in the size of their incomes. Thus, although income difference is a considerable constraint, one way or the other, it is not the only constraint on behaviour. When, for instance, household structure is considered, income differences alone do not account for the contrast between the two men's situation. John Muli lives alone in town because that way he can live very cheaply, and turn as much money as possible back to his family on his shamba. But this is not the only reason. He does not consider the town a desirable place for women. Town, for John, is at least potentially immoral, and is not considered more than a temporary expedient, on account of the necessity to raise cash, granted the smallness of his shamba. For John, town exists only for the money it produces. Peter, on the other hand, sees town as something more than just the place where he works. Town is a milieu which provides a legitimate and desirable way of life, which may be shared, indeed, ought to be shared, with his wife and children. Peter sees no contradiction, however, between this way of life in town, and his intention to leave town at some time, to spend his old age in the country.

The attitudes of the two men to their life in town are symbolised by the material nature of their homes in town. John lives in a tiny room in the Swahili Village, which he shares with his son. This room is one of six of similar size in a mud and wattle building, with a roof made of flattened tin cans. The rooms contains two beds of wooden frames with strips of old inner-tube stretched in criss-cross pattern over them. A small table stands in one corner, beneath which is a large tin can of water, the nearest watertap being two hundred yards away. On the top of the table are a few enamel plates and mugs, and an oil lamp. There is one wooden folding chair, but no other furniture. Cooking is done on a tin charcoal stove, in a clay pot.

Peter, by contrast, lives in a spacious bungalow, formerly owned by an Asian family, on the edge of town, in what was the 'Asian residential area'. Furniture is 'European style' - armchairs, sofa, and a low coffee table. Photographs of Peter and his wife hang framed on one wall, of the couple sitting in a Nairobi park, of his wife as a young girl in school uniform blouse and skirt, with two school friends. Peter's wife cooks on an electric stove.

The majority of Kamba workers living in Machakos approximate John Muli's style of life. As already described, Kamba working in Machakos tend to be those who would have difficulty finding work elsewhere. In Machakos they are more likely to have kin, neighbours, or friends who can help them find work, accommodation etc. A person in Peter Muindi's position, on the other hand, has little need for this kind of assistance. Peter works in Machakos not through choice, but because he was posted there. His employers helped him find a house. The closeness of so many of his relatives is, in fact, something of a nuisance. He complains about the frequent visits from his kinsmen, and the constant requests for financial help, which he feels might be fewer if he lived farther away. Machakos is a bit too handy for his relatives, he thinks, although he also says that he feels guilty for thinking so. As well as asking for money and accommodation, and expecting to be entertained, these relatives interfere where Peter considers they have no business. Peter's wife's mother, for instance, had on one of her visits commented on their new refrigerator, which she considered a waste of money. And when looking after their youngest child when he was a year old, had repeatedly taken off his baby clothes, to let him crawl about naked in the garden, because she said that was how Kamba babies should be.

There is, in fact, a contrast between the kinds of relations the two men have with their rural-dwelling kin. While the relations John has with his kin may be characterised as showing continuity, and agreement, Peter's show discrepancy and at least latent conflict. This is not to imply that Peter and his rural-dwelling kin are in any

way at odds. Peter keeps up contact with them faithfully and loyally, helps out financially and in other ways (such as by supporting and accommodating the younger brother in school). But sometimes he feels he is being exploited by his kin, when they ask for too much money too often. And he often feels that the attitudes his kin display towards his life in town are a mixture of backwardness and jealousy. Peter's other four brothers have not so far had as good an education, nor reached anything like the same position. He feels that it would be natural for them to be at least a little jealous, but dislikes their looking askance at prestige objects like a refrigerator. This jealousy is more complex, and difficult to handle on both sides, in that it is also mixed with pride, that a member of the family has reached such a position. Peter's brothers are thankful, no doubt, that he has at least considered buying his own land.

John Muli, on the other hand, has nothing comparing to these difficulties and appears to be merely the temporary urban extension of a united family. The difference between the two men is also evident in their attitude towards their land. For John, the land is the most important and dependable producer, even if he has to supplement its production by earning cash in town. Working in town is only a necessary and temporary evil, which should be allowed as little as possible to distract attention from the land. Peter's interest in the land is, by comparison, almost dilettante. He recognizes the fact that for him ownership of the land is not an economic necessity. Even in retirement he will have a pension from the bank which employs him. Nevertheless, the land is still very much one of his concerns. He spends a lot of money on improving his cattle, and saves in order to buy another piece of land. Once when Peter invited me to visit his shamba we spent all of Sunday there. On arrival, Peter was given a very warm welcome, everyone coming out of their houses to greet him. Peter took me round to meet all the adults, and he spent some time exchanging news with them - about how his brother was progressing at school, about the trial of a gang of robbers going on in Machakos, about the price a nearby piece of land

fetched, about the possibility of Peter paying for the hire of a tractor to clear some scrub from part of the family land. Peter showed me his own part of the shamba, on which he was growing maize, with coffee on part of a hillside, and explained how it was impossible to make any significant improvements on such a small piece of land. His cattle grazed on a part of the shamba still in his father's hands. Peter spoke of the cattle of Major-General Ndolo, then the Kenyan Chief of Defence Staff, and a Kamba, who also has a farm in Machakos District, with some envy. Gen. Ndolo's cattle are known throughout the District for their high quality. Peter's interest in agriculture might be decribed as almost 'dilettante' because it is more like a hobby than anything else. It is a spare-time activity, from work in the bank, made possible because he has inherited a piece of land and has kin who can take care of it in his absence. But the importance of such a 'hobby' is that it expresses a continued loyalty to a way of life which to someone in Peter's position might become incompatible with town life. The actual agricultural practice - the cattle, the harvesting, the planting - are only incidental ways of expressing a continued adherence to something more basic - adherence to a set of kin and their way of life, rooted in a particular type of milieu, despite seeming distractions from the town. The way in which Peter practices agriculture - at almost second-hand - is consonant with what is expected of him. He has, by his family's standards, a lot of money, and has a high prestige on account of this and the kind of work which earns it. He is expected to maintain this status in the country as well as in the town.

Ali Mazrui has suggested, for African nations, the idea of the 'trans-class man'.[2] He suggests that a person may belong to two 'social classes', one in town and one in

2. Mazrui (1968).

the country. This idea is clearly spurious, when it is seen that Peter Muindi is given all the kudos his status as head clerk in the bank demands on his visits to his family in the country. Mazrui (apart from confusing the notions of social class and social status) implies the existence of two quite separate social systems, which do not communicate with each other. How this is possible where he describes persons passing between the systems is not at all clear, but probably he has been led astray by Gluckman-esque notions of 'dropping off the trappings' of town life on the journey back to the shamba.[3] These trappings, though, are never dropped off, because the actors involved do not necessarily wish to create any discontinuity between what they are in town and what they are in the country. It may be the case for latrine cleaners in town that they would like this fact to be forgotten by their rural kin, but anyone with any claim to prestige in town has a lot to gain by retaining it in the country. Peter's problem is not that he has to mediate between two systems, but that he wishes to emphasise the fact that there is only one system, within which although there may appear to be contradictions these are merely temporary, or personal (in terms of jealousy or envy) and are unnecessary. Peter demonstrates his continued membership of the family by showing that he can take a great interest in family affairs, and contribute to them, and also by continuing to take an interest in the land in a way which is consonant with, and contributes to, the prestige and status he has from his high position in Machakos. Wishing to buy a new piece of land for himself does not mean that he wishes to cut himself off from his family, nor does it imply his estrangement from them. On the contrary, such a desire shows his interest in the land and the way of life it represents. He wishes to get all he can out of the land. He also knows that his family will be better off if he finds land somewhere else, that they will be more able to support

3. Gluckman (1945).

themselves out of the limited land at their disposal.

A further contrast between the two men may be seen in their leisure-time activities, both in what these activities are, and with whom they are shared. The contrast is clear. John has extremely restricted leisure-time activities in town, spent with a more restricted set of people, insofar as he tries to spend as little money as possible, recognizes the 'temptations' of town life, and sticks to the people who cannot be suspected of carrying the immorality of town life - that is, the kinsmen and friends who are already known from the country.[4.] Peter, on the other hand, is actively widening his range of leisure-time contacts and activities. Peter's membership of Machakos Sports Club brings him into contact also with Europeans and Asians, but also means that he spends more money. For Peter, the possibilities of town life are things on which money might legitimately be spent, as ends in themselves.

Not only is Peter being drawn into the company of Europeans and Asians, but he is also beginning to have more contact with Africans of other tribes. When two Africans in Machakos meet for the first time, the two things they immediately establish for one another are tribe and occupation, if either is not already clear by language or dress. Initial greeting or inquiries are made in either English or Swahili, depending on how the initiator of the contact rates the other.

4. Discussing a Chicago slum area. Suttles describes how, for persons lacking trust in the moral worthiness and influence of those around them, 'social relations can be restricted to permit only the safest ones. Families can withdraw to their households where they see only close relatives'.
Suttles (1968), p.8.

Someone prosperous-looking and well-dressed will be addressed in English, the language of the better educated (provided of course, that the initiator knows English), the less prosperous-looking in Swahili. In Machakos it is considered a slight to address an educated person in Swahili, if the initiator obviously knows English. Tribe is rarely ascertained by asking a person outright, but more circumlocutely, such as by asking where his home is. But Kamba in Machakos often assume other Africans to be Kamba and use Kikamba, unless they are prosperous looking, when they might be Kikuyu, or Baluhyia, or Luo. Knowledge of a person's tribe and occupation usually at once determine the kind of relationship any two people can expect to have. This does not mean, though, that people are invariably honest about themselves. I once heard a Kamba friend telling two Kikuyu that he was a Swahili. It turned out that my friend was angry with the Kikuyu for being too interested in knowing his tribe. He wanted to 'keep them guessing', he said. Kikuyu are often criticised for having an over-acute interest in knowing a person's tribe, this interest being related to their alleged favoured status in Kenya in the competition for things like government jobs and financial aid for their home districts, because of the disproportionate power Kikuyu have in the Kenya government. Kikuyu are accused of being interested only in their own kind. My friend chose 'Swahili' as a useful 'non-tribe'. (But see chapter V11, for an account of how 'Swahilis' perceive themselves).

Status groups (in the Weberian sense) are most commonly formed from people of the same tribe and with similar occupations (cf. the group of Peter's friends in Nairobi). [5]

5. i.e. '...status groups are normally communities', to which entry is based on estimation of equal status honour, which is in turn expressed by style of life. Gerth and Mills (1948), pp. 186-7.

In some situations socio-economic status over-rides the tribal principle (eg. at the élite level - see chapter V1), and in other situations fellow tribesmen will form a corporate group for a specific funtion irrespective of individual status differences. The Luo in Machakos began to do this when they felt their interests threatened (see chapter III).

In terms of 'rootedness', Peter Muindi and John Muli differ only insofar as Peter Muindi has the extra tie to town of his wife and children, living with him in town. But this is a significant difference in this case, giving a clue to the difference in the way the two men visualise their own attitudes to town. It is clearly not enough to lump the two men together as 'migrants', as they are migrants of a very different nature. Not all persons who have achieved a high position and income in Machakos necessarily show expectations of town life similar to those of Peter Muindi. Education is clearly of signifiance towards people's expectations. Secondary education, in particular, shapes the expectations of people towards the achievement of urban oriented positions, and a way of life centred on town. In Machakos, persons who have the same order of income as Peter Muindi but who do not use their income in exploiting the possibilities of town in the same way tend to be successful businessmen with little education. A business can be used strictly instrumentally, in the same way John Muli used his business, even if it makes a lot more money than John Muli's. The significant thing is what the money thus produced is used for.

Kamba migrants in Machakos may have little education, a job which pays very little, or even no job at all, and still be decribed as having normative attitudes to their expectations of living in town. But lack of steady income inhibits the realization of such expectations. Young people may be attracted to town for the sake of its

adventure - the night clubs, bars, cinemas, which are attractions not found in the same concentration, or with the same lack of parental supervision, in the country. As Mitchell rightly states, this 'bright-lights' theory is not in itself enough to explain why people come to town.[6.] There is a more deep-rooted economic factor, the inability of the land to provide an adequate living, its inability to offer a satisfying existence, especially for young people, who in addition are assailed by an everincreasing stream of newspapers and magazines, radio programmes and cinema films, and particularly the advertising in these, extolling the virtues of an alternative available in town. These can only add credence to the stories brought back by visiting or returning migrants. But neither does this explain why people remain in town, for these attractions are bound to pall when the cash necessary for their enjoyment is unavailable, if work cannot be found, or relatives in town can no longer provide pocket-money. Petty thieving, or prostitution for women, are alternatives, but otherwise a disappointed person will return home, perhaps to return to town in the future to try again.

Women in Machakos

If, compared to members of other tribes in Machakos, Kamba as a whole have poorer occupations and incomes, then Kamba women are in a similar situation, compared to women of other tribes. Tables 4.2 to 4.4.show how in terms of job, education and income, Kamba women have poorer situations compared to non-Kamba women, proportional to their greater numbers in Machakos.

6. Mitchell (1959).

Years of Education	Kamba	Non-Kamba	Total	Muslims
0	50.8	17.1	38.3	44.8
Up to 5	23.7	14.3	20.2	24.1
5 - 8	11.9	34.3	20.2	13.8
9 - 10	8.5	11.4	9.6	10.3
11 - 13	5.1	8.6	6.4	6.9
14 - 16	-	14.3	5.3	-
More than 16	-	-	-	-
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	99.9
			n = 94	n = 29

Table 4.2. Education of adult African females, by tribe(%)

Source: RPS.

Occupation	Kamba	Non-Kamba	Total	Muslims
Administrative (supervisory)	-	-	-	-
Secondary school teacher	-	3	3	-
Routine clerical worker	2	2	4	-
Primary school teacher	3	2	5	-
Skilled/semi-skilled labour	1	1	2	2
Domestic servant	5	-	5	1
Petty trader	10	3	13	1
Shopworker	4	2	6	1
Unskilled labour	1	-	1	-
Prostitute	7	-	7	-
Unemployed/retired	5	2	7	5
Housewife	17	16	33	15
Schoolgirl	4	3	7	3
Other	-	1	1	1
Total	59	35	94	29

Table 4.3. Occupations of resident adult African females.

Source: RPS.

Income (Shs. per month)	Kamba	Non-Kamba	Total	Muslims
0	45.8	60.0	51.1	69.0
Less than 100	11.9	5.7	9.6	3.4
101 - 300	23.7	2.9	16.0	10.3
301 - 500	1.7	8.6	4.3	3.4
501 - 700	-	8.6	3.2	-
701 - 1000	1.7	5.7	3.2	-
1001 - 1500	-	-	-	-
More than 1500	-	-	-	-
Unstated/don't know	15.2	8.6	12.8	13.8
Total	100.0	100.1	100.2	99.9
			n = 94	n = 29

Table 4.4. Incomes of resident adult African females. (%).

Source: RPS.

The most striking difference is that concerning the women with no education, the great majority of whom are Kamba. If it is difficult for men to find work, it is even more difficult for women, even on top of the lack of education of Kamba women. Certain jobs women are preferred for, because they are cheaper, such as in bars and shops, but for most occupations women have neither the education nor the experience necessary. Even domestic servants are as often men as women. Where people employ a female relative as 'maid' (see above), then she may be as young as eight years old. Of eleven girls described as 'maids', six were under 15 years old, and all of these were non-Kamba, who seem to prefer a girl they know to care for their children, the obvious person to engage to fill this task being a young relative, than to employ a local stranger.

The better-educated women in Machakos, commanding the better jobs, are non-Kamba (as among the men), who are in government service as school teachers, nurses or secretarial staff, and who have been <u>posted</u> to Machakos.

The posting system is so extreme as to take little account even of family ties. The matron of the hospital, a Baluhyia woman, had been posted to Machakos from the National Hospital in Nairobi, but her husband had been left behind, because he, a doctor, was still required to be in Nairobi. But non-Kamba women are more likely to be wives accompanying their husbands (see also Table 3.7), or living in town singly, working at jobs which require education and training, which not enough local girls can provide.

Many Kamba women are petty traders, living in town on their own account, or living with their husbands and supplementing the family income by this kind of trade, which requires very little capital to start.[7] It was mainly the petty traders who were unsure of their monthly income, when asked how much they earned, so uncertain is the profit of the type of trader who hawks around the town goods available just as cheaply in shops. In any case incoming cash was spent as soon as it was earned, in many cases, making the reckoning of a monthly sum a problem. Some women engaged in petty trade more successfully, buying and selling basic foodstuffs like maize and beans, travelling between the markets of the whole of Machakos District, and sometimes beyond. Some used Machakos only as a base, and spent only a few nights of the week there.

Some women in Machakos on their own account seem to have particular motives for being in town. The woman's position in the country tends to be arduous; women do all the agricultural work except the very heaviest (and sometimes also that), and they are almost completely dominated by the men. Any woman wishing to opt out of this system has little alternative other than coming to town, and to try to find work. But even if she does find work this is

7. Hansen (1973) describes the way in which women in Lusaka thus contribute to the household budget, and that in fact many women could not remain in town with their husbands without doing so.

unlikely, if she has little education, to pay for more than her basic needs, which she may define as covering more than just food and shelter. And if she marries, or otherwise attaches herself to a man, she is probably putting herself back into the system she tried to get out of. To supplement their incomes, many girls also operate as part-time prostitutes, especially those working in bars, who can make arrangements with their customers for after-hours. Bar owners may encourage this, to increase their clientéle. Full-time prostitution is an alternative to girls who cannot find work, as petty thieving is to men.

The Swahili Village Chief estimates that at any one time there are about sixty prostitutes in Machakos, but that number fluctuates as many of them move on to other towns, such as Athi River or Nairobi, if they are not satisfied with the money they are earning in Machakos. In the Swahili Village I spoke to four girls sharing a single room, who admitted immediately, when I asked them about their occupations, that they were prostitutes. They were young women between eighteen and thirty years old, and satisfied with their living as prostitutes, and claimed to make between Shs.15 and Shs.30 each per night, depending on the time of month, as towards the end of the month when men's money is getting low towards pay day, they are forced to lower their prices. The girls described their mode of operation, soliciting in bars, and asking the client to pay what they think he can afford. Strangers to town and Europeans are easy game, they said. A European is asked to pay Shs.30 for only half-an-hour's attention, and sometimes for a stranger to town the girls arrange that a male confederate bursts into the room, exclaiming that he is a wronged husband. The unsuspecting client is then beaten, robbed, and thrown out.

One of the girls had come to town from the countryside because she did not wish to marry, as Kamba men, she said, all beat their wives, and make them do all the work. She may marry one day, she said, an old man who will not beat her, but meanwhile she is earning a lot of money so she sees no need. Another of the girls is thinking of moving on to Mombasa, where she said she could earn Shs.60 per day. She has heard of the many foreigners in Mombasa (which is an international seaport) who pay big money. And she has a sister in Mombasa with whom she can live.

It was this kind of girl that John Muli complained about in Machakos -'those women' who tempt a man to spend his money. But he also referred to women who are simply out for a good time, and who encourage the men to buy them beers and meals, of whom there is no lack in Machakos. Because there is a relatively large number of full or part-time prostitutes in Machakos, and because it is known how difficult it is for a woman to find legitimate work, any unattached woman in Machakos, of little education, is automatically considered a prostitute. Such is the reputation of a large proportion of the female population of Machakos, held by men who think thus about the place of women in town, and the role of women in leading men off the straight and narrow.

If we consider households with female heads, we see how few of these are non-Kamba heads. (Table 4.5). The preponderance of Kamba women living in town with their children should be noted along with the fact that five out of the eight were mothers who were divorced, and had come to town to work either because they were well-educated or otherwise has a reasonably paying job, and could keep their children without having to depend on a male kinsman, or have to live on the shamba. In one case a woman's father had refused to let her live on his shamba with the children, as this would have obligated him to repay the brideprice. [8]

8. Cf. Penwill (1951) pp. 15-20.

One woman living with her children was a Kamba woman whose Muslim husband had died. The widow was able to live in town with the children by collecting the rent from her dead husband's property in town. Of the four Muslim households with female heads, every female head was a widow.

Household head	Kamba	Non-Kamba	Total	Muslim
sole member	4	1	5	
plus child(ren)	8	2	10	5
" other related female(s)	2	-	2	
" other unrelated female(s)	3	1	4	
" child(ren), other unrelated female(s)	2	-	2	
" unrelated servant	-	1	1	
Total	19	5	24	5

Table 4.5. Composition of households with <u>female</u> heads.

The women in Machakos are not necessarily in town just as appendages to men. Where women <u>are</u> in town accompanying a husband(and male migrants with instrumental motives need not necessarily always forego having their wives with them in town) they cannot always be characterised by motives in town and an involvement similar to that of their husbands, because they do not necessarily share his ideas about town life. A husband with normative attitudes may have a wife who longs to return to the country, or at least not share his activities in town (especially where she has little education), and a man who wishes to save as much money as possible may have a wife who loves to visit the bars and the night clubs.

Women in town on their own account sometimes remit money to husbands who have remained in the country cultivating their shambas. This applies particularly to the petty traders. Unmarried women with children, of whom there are many in Machakos, often live in town to earn money to

bring up their children, as an alternative to living with their families in the country, valuing the freedom of the town in addition to the possibility of earning. An unmarried mother may also leave her children with her own mother, and remit money from town to pay for their upbringing.[9]

These Kamba migrants are all rooted in town by at least actually living there. They may also be rooted in town by having work there, and hence a source of wages, or by actively seeking work, or by having wives or children living with them in town. Living in town immediately gives migrants the possibility participating in town life more fully if they wish. The difference in rootedness between these migrants and townsmen is that, whether or not migrants participate fully in town life, whether or not they perceive town in terms of more earning possibilities or more than that, the migrants maintain their ties with the country in such a way that they demonstrate their intention to return there. And even where maintenance of these ties has lapsed, they can still intend returning to the country. The defining criterion for townsmen must be the conscious intention of remaining in town for the rest of one's days.

Kamba townsmen

There are Kamba living in Machakos who intend to spend the rest of their lives in town, either because they were born in town and have nowhere to return to in the country, or because they do not wish to return to the country. Such people, although they may be described as 'permanently town-rooted', may not be 'completely town-rooted', because they may still have, and may even maintain, ties outside Machakos. Many of these people were born or have become Muslim, and these I will deal with in chapter V11,

9. Cf. also Little (1973).

and here will discuss the others. While most of the Kamba townsmen could be decribed as having 'normative' motives towards living in town, especially those who have made a conscious decision to remain in town based on a preference for town life, not all may be so described. Some who were born in Machakos, and some of those who have no alternative to remaining in town for such reasons as landlessness, may simply accept their permanent status in town as an inevitability, perhaps a positively unpleasant one.

The ties that are maintained by townsmen with the countryside may be ties of kinship, or even attachment to a piece of land. In some cases townsmen had pieces of land in the country which they actually cultivated, but this land was used instrumentally, for what it could produce in terms of food or cash, and did not express any deeper or more lasting ties with the rural way of life.

JAMES MBITI is about thirty-five years old, always dressed very smartly in a dark suit, and speaks good English. He lives in Machakos with his wife and two children, and says he intends staying in Machakos for good. James says he prefers the amenities which town life offers, the electricity, running water, shops and so on. As he puts it, "You might say that I am fully urbanized". He visits his relatives in the country very infrequently, and the last time he went to his family shamba was more than a year ago. Apparently his relatives are very critical of his neglect of them, and they say that he has become 'lost'. He has two brothers in Nairobi, though, and he visits them fairly often, whenever he is in the city.

James was educated up to Form 2 (nine years) and has worked in Nairobi as a car salesman, for a European-run enterprise which holds the Volkswagen franchise, and for an agricultural machinery firm as a representative dealing with co-operatives. The contacts he made in the latter job helped him to get the post of manager of Nzawa Ranching

Corporation, a cattle farm in Machakos District, but which he held for only a year, leaving at the end of 1965. He was a County Councillor from 1963 to 1966, when he resigned because he was 'wasting his time', because his Councillor's duties and obligations distracted his attention from his business enterprises, and because he was not paid for his trouble. His other business interest was in an African-owned hotel in Machakos, in which he bought a partnership in 1965, when he left Nzawa Ranching Corporation. This hotel now occupies all of his time.

James still owns some land, from his inheritance on the family shamba, but he is thinking of selling it because it is not big enough to make any money. He also has a share in a farming co-operative about six miles from town, where he keeps several head of cattle and a plot of potatoes. This, he says, is purely a 'commercial enterprise'.

The decision to stay in town for good, he thinks, was probably made in 1967, when he started making a bit more money, although he had always preferred to live in town and had probably had the idea in mind for some time. It is all a question of income, he claims, because you really need a lot of money to stay in town, and a steady income. He now earns over Shs.1100 per month. He intends making his future even more secure by building on some plots in the township for renting out as living quarters.

Thomson Musila is forty-seven years old, and was born on a European-owned farm about five miles west of town. His family had no land of their own, but were squatters on this farm, being allowed to cultivate a small piece of land for their own use in return for labour. When Thomson's father died, Thomson stayed on to support his mother, who is an Embu by tribe, but his older brother came to Machakos to find work. Fourteen years ago the European farmer moved all the squatters off his land, and Thomson's

house was broken down, so he had to come to Machakos, where his brother managed to find him work on the same builder's labouring gang, digging foundations for a hospital building. Thomson and his mother were able to find a place to live easily, because Thomson's mother knew the owner of a new building, who had been a friend of her husband's. Thomson's brother went on sharing a room with two other Kamba men. For two years Thomson worked in a hotel, serving beer and food, but lost this job when he was accused of stealing money. Thomson was out of work for some time, and things were very hard. He even went to Nairobi in search of work, but had no luck. After coming back to Machakos he got work as a sweeper at the hospital, but he lost this job, and started working as a building labourer again, after another period of unemployment. He has worked as a labourer for the last nine years, but only on a casual basis, taking work wherever he can find it, but usually for not more than a few months for any one employer. He earns about Shs.200 now, in most months. He has married a Kamba girl, and although they have four children his wife is able to do some petty trading at the bus station, selling soap, combs, matches, and enamel bowls. She makes about Shs.60 per month. His mother is still alive and lives with them.

Thomson thinks he will most likely spend the rest of his life in Machakos, because he thinks it would be impossible to find enough money to buy a piece of land. So he is resigned to staying in Machakos, which he does not like. He mentioned the high incidence of beer drinking which goes on among the men in Machakos, which he said must cost a huge amount of money. He himself claimed never to have touched beer, to have been able to resist temptations like that. Cigarettes are the same kind of thing, which a man is encouraged to take up in town. Thomson does not smoke, either.

The older brother has disappeared. He is thought to be in Nairobi, but this is uncertain. Thomson has few friends in Machakos. When he is not working, or looking for work, he spends most of his time at home, in the Swahili Village. He says it is not good to have too many friends, because then one is obliged to drink beer. Sometimes he visits his wife's brother, who works as a tailor. Although he thinks he has some distant kinsmen living somewhere in the District, he does not try to find them, because he says he has no reason to, as they could not help him anyway.

I could find no Kamba who were born in town and were non-Muslim. The implications of this I will discuss later. The townsmen are few, but constitute a significant category because they are often people, like James Mbiti, who have made a decision to settle in town, have cut off their country ties, and have deliberately repudiated the traditional ethic of ultimate attachment to the rural life. Others, like Thomson Musila, have had little choice, having no land to call their own, about settling in town. A decision to remain in town may not actually be consciously made. Some people, enjoying the freedom of the town, and its pleasures, may simply visit their rural home less and less frequently, until they never visit at all. This does not mean they have given up their claim to the land. People have taken up their share in the land after many yea rs' absence. But such neglect of rights in land and obligations to kin make it more difficult to claim a share where land is short, and where there are brothers who _have_ maintained contact and made contributions in cash or kind to their kin on the shamba.

Both James Mbiti and Thomson Musila are permmanently town rooted. Thomson has virtually no ties outside the township, and virtually his entire social universe is

contained within the township. Thomson's permanent status in town has hardly been a matter of choice, as he had no real alternative but to seek work in Machakos after he and his family were evicted from the European farm. The case of the Musilas shows how the possession of land can help to hold a family together. Because there has not been land to inherit, brothers have gone off to look for work in the towns and not returned; there has been nothing as deeply symbolic and economically significant as the land around which to organise family solidarity and obligations between members, and the family has become fragmented.

James Mbiti is in the process of deliberately cutting off his rural ties, and building up and strengthening his ties in town. But he has been able to choose to live in town because he knows he can afford economically to do so. James Mbiti seems to be similar in education, career and income to Peter Muindi, the head clerk in the bank. What is it that makes them differ? Why does Peter Muindi faithfully maintain his rural obligations and James Mbiti throw them off? When James had money to invest, why did he put into a business in town and not buy a peice of land, or otherwise invest in the country? In terms of present rootedness there is not a lot to choose between the two men. Both have their wives and families in town, and substantial income from their jobs, and more than the average in education. The main difference between the two men seems to be personal, in that James is more strictly business-minded than Peter Muindi, and more instrumental in his attitude to the land. Even his position of ranch manager is spoken of, by people who know him, rather darkly, when they ask each other where he got the capital to put into the hotel business, and why he left Nzawa Ranching so abruptly. James still has ties with the land, his family shamba, even if he virtually never visits it, and the share in the farming co-operative.

But unlike Peter, he uses these ties in a completely different way, and uses them for quite different ends, in his case centred in town. As Peter Muindi secures his future on the land, James Mbiti secures his in town.

To examine the differences between migrants and townsmen in terms of categories, rather than individuals, it is necessary to look at the general conditions and circumstances which surround choices and alternatives. For both migrants with small shambas and townsmen with none, there is little choice but to come to town. The migrant differs in that he has assets outside town which can be improved and used in the future. For a townsman, old age must be provided for by either working sons or cash income from capital investments. Where townsmen do have land, and could provide for a future on the land, but have chosen not to, there must exist means for establishing alternatives in town for both present and future. This probably means some degree of education, and hence the possibility of earning a good income early in a career, giving time both to consider the possibilities of remaining permanently in town, and to build up the requirements for this, in place of those in the country. Beyond that, the choice for individuals must remain personal, and these personal qualities very likely have to include the ability to withstand persuasion, coercion, and possibly curses from kinsmen.

A comparison of migrants and townsmen in Machakos is bound to note that both categories contain persons who are not 'normatively' committed to a life in town, and that there are, among even the townsmen, people who do not possess what Mayer has called 'the genuine urbanised quality'. Necessity and the force of cirsumstances, rather than any degree of real choice, has brought these persons to town, whether temporarily or permanently, and both could still be said to have rural reference groups. The migrants are

more fortunate in that they can at least look forward to returning to the countryside, so that their rural reference group is also one of their membership groups.

Chapter V

THE COMMUTERS

In the sample of 202 members of the African labour force in Machakos, 46 merely worked in town, and otherwise lived in the countryside. Of the men, only three were not living on their family shamba. That over 20% of the Machakos work force do not live in town, but commute daily between town and shamba, illustrates the closeness of the ties between the township and its surrounding hinterland, even more so than the migrants who were discussed in the previous chapter. The commuters have no need to consciously demonstrate and maintain their ties to the land. Any account of the township as a working social system must include a consideration of the commuters as an integral part of this social system, in that they contributesignificantly to township life, for which actually spending nights in town is not a prerequisite. But if the commuters are part of the township as a social system, then this social system must extend to include their residences, so constant and frequent is the contact between their shambas and the township.

The commuters are the least 'town-rooted' of the urban workers, having no stake in housing in town, and being less involved in town during their 'off-duty' hours, in the evenings and at weekends. When migrants may be drinking in the Machakos bars, mixing with members of other tribes and races, or just sitting alone in their rooms in town, commuters are more likely to be surrounded by their kin, wives and children, and tilling the soil. This does not imply, however, that the primary interest of these commuters is the land, suggesting that they are all 'instrumental' in their attitudes to their urban jobs.

The commuter category also contains many workers who combine normative attitudes to urban work with the fact of residence on their shambas. Many commuters in Machakos, however, do tend to be those with rather poor education, with low paying, unskilled jobs, and tend to fill these for relatively long periods. This seems to reflect a dependence on Machakos, by people without a command of more highly paid jobs elsewhere, for a steady supply of cash. Practically all commuters are Kamba. Tables below show the relationship between tribe, occupation, education, wage and residence.

	Kamba residents	Kamba non-residents	Total Kamba	Total non-Kamba	Total residents	Total non-residents
Professional	-	-	-	9.5	1.5	-
Clerical supervisory	0.9	-	0.7	4.8	1.5	-
Clerical routine	18.0	20.5	18.7	28.6	19.8	20.0
Skilled/ semi-skilled labour	26.1	38.5	29.3	23.8	25.9	37.5
Shop-workers	46.8	20.5	40.0	28.6	43.5	22.5
Unskilled labour	8.1	20.5	11.3	4.8	7.6	20.0
Total	99.9	100.0	100.0	100.1	99.8	100.0

n = 171

Table 5.1. Occupations of African male labour force, by tribe and residence (%).

Source: LFS.

We have already seen how non-Kamba tend to have better jobs than Kamba. The above table shows how Kamba residents in Machakos tend to have better jobs than commuters, who, especially at the level of unskilled labour are much more

highly represented than residents. Although commuters in other categories of occupation seem to be well represented, they still are the lower paid in these categories, being less well educated, as the tables below show. Table 5.2 shows that only one in eight non-residents has more than eight years' education, as against more than one in four residents.

Years of education	Kamba residents	Kamba non-residents	Total Kamba	Total non-Kamba	Total residents	Total non-residents
0	5.4	10.3	6.7	4.8	5.3	10.0
Up to 5	27.9	30.8	28.7	23.8	26.7	32.5
5 - 8	44.1	46.1	44.7	23.8	41.2	45.0
9 - 10	13.5	5.1	11.3	19.0	14.5	5.0
11 - 13	6.3	7.7	6.7	9.5	6.9	7.5
14 - 16	2.7	-	2.0	9.5	3.8	-
More than 16	-	-	-	9.5	1.5	-
Total	99.9	100.0	100.1	99.9	99.9	100.0

n = 171.

Table 5.2. Education of African male labour force, by tribe and residence. (%).

Source: LFS.

The figures for education are reflected in the differences in monthly earnings between residents and commuters. Only 10% of commuters earn over Shs500 per month, as against 17% of Kamba residents and 22% of all residents. As for the length of time people have been working in Machakos, only 12% of Kamba residents in Machakos have been working in town continuously, up to the present, for more than ten years, compared with 36% of the commuters.

Shillings per month	Kamba residents	Kamba non-residents	Total Kamba	Total non-Kamba	Total residents	Total non-residents
Less than 100	11.0	2.6	8.8	4.8	9.3	5.0
101 - 300	54.1	66.7	57.4	33.3	51.2	65.0
301 - 500	17.4	20.5	18.2	19.0	17.8	20.0
501 - 700	7.3	5.1	6.8	19.0	9.3	5.0
701 - 1000	5.5	5.1	5.4	9.5	6.2	5.0
1001 - 1500	0.9	-	0.7	4.8	1.5	-
More than 1500	3.7	-	2.7	9.5	4.6	-
Total	99.9	100.0	100.0	99.9	99.9	100.0

n = 169.

Table 5.3. Earnings of African male labour force, by tribe and residence (%).

Source: LFS.

Continuous time spent in Machakos up to present	Kamba residents	Kamba non-residents	Total Kamba	Total non-Kamba	Total residents	Total non-residents
Less than 1 month	4.5	2.6	4.0	-	3.8	2.5
1 - 6 months	12.6	10.2	12.0	19.0	13.7	10.0
6 months - 1 year	22.5	7.7	18.7	19.0	22.1	7.5
1 - 2 years	13.5	10.2	12.7	4.8	12.2	10.0
2 - 5 years	24.3	20.5	23.3	19.0	22.9	22.5
5 - 10 years	10.8	12.8	11.3	23.8	13.0	12.5
10 years +	11.7	35.9	18.0	14.3	12.2	35.0
Total	99.9	99.9	100.0	99.9	99.9	100.0

n = 171.

Table 5.4. Length of time working by African male labour force in Machakos, by tribe and residence. (%).

Source: LFS.

The relationship between wage and education is a bit more complex than I have so far suggested, because simple lack of education is not the only thing preventing a man from getting a job which pays more money, and the fact of having a better than average education does not mean that a man will automatically find a better than average paying job. I will return to these relationships in chapter 8, and note here just that some commuters with better than average education (and experience) do not seek better paying jobs because this might mean giving up the possibility of commuting, and that there is now a glut of men with better than average education, so that work is in any case very difficult to find. What I am suggesting here is that the commuters in Machakos are, on the whole, willing to accept poorer paying jobs because, on the one hand, they can live on their own shambas, and on the other, because a low paying job is not really so low paying because they are living at the same time on their shambas. Commuters are also willing to accept their positions in Machakos for much longer periods than migrants, for the above reasons. This, together with the probable stability provided by living with one's own family on one's own land, means that commuters will spend longer periods working in Machakos, and table 5.4 bears this out.

According to Elkan, people also commute between Kampala and its immediate hinterland.[1] In Kampala, however, the commuters tend to earn <u>higher</u> wages than migrants who actually live in the city.

Elkan relates the distance of birthplace from the city to occupational status in the city:

"the attractions of unskilled employment are greatest to people living at a distance from

1. Elkan (1960). Cf. also Elkan (1967).

> the main centres of employment because people who live close to them often have other opportunites for earning an income." [2]

The income required by a local employee, he says, will be higher than that of an immigrant from a greater distance, because the former has an alternative source of income in farming under his own supervision. The commuters supply Kampala with people to fill the skilled and supervisory posts, who reach these positions through long experience in the city. Since they are able to enjoy the dual income from farm and employment without having to be away from home, the desire to maximise income does not lead to short-term temporary migration. High farm incomes make men reluctant to migrate long distances in search of work, but they do not make them unwilling to take employment near their homes. Elkan suggests that the commuters are an emergent stable 'proletariat' of town workers, working, not just for specific objects which only money can buy, but to attain a higher standard of living. (Although Elkan does not appreciate that they are not a proletariat in the strict Marxian sense, and could never be as long as they own their land, and produce from it, as well as their own labour.) Elkan writes about a metropolis, and herein lies the reason for Kampala commuters commanding higher incomes than Machakos commuters. The Kampala commuters are fortunate in having landholdings close to a large and important urban centre, which offers higher wages than anywhere else in the country.[3] Hence there is no need to gamble a job in order to undertake a search for employment elsewhere. The Machakos commuters, on the

2. Elkan (1960) p. 5.

3. Elkan (1960) p.42.

other hand, know they are not likely to find better work elsewhere. Their wages are low, but the possibility of commuting makes them acceptable.

Commuters to Machakos travel to work every day either on foot, by bicycle, bus, or private car. A bicycle often carries two people and a car may be bursting at the seams, the car owner bringing relatives and neighbours who also work in town. The distance commuters live from town may be anything up to about fifteen miles, depending on the transport available to them, but people will walk up to eight miles to work every morning and back again in the evening.

I have already discussed the importance of the land and maintenance of links with the land for the migrants in Machakos. The possibility of remaining on the land as well as working in town has abvious attractions, particularly when so many people work in Machakos simply to earn as much cash as possible. To live in town is an expensive business. Rent must be paid, anything between Shs.25 and Shs.300 per month, and food and fuel bought, let alone all the other temptations such as beer and women. The possibility of commuting to work is an important factor to be considered when seeking work or thinking of changing jobs. Men by and large have a good idea of what the difference would be to their net income if they were to move to a job which necessitated living away from the shamba. One shop worker told me that he would not consider taking a job in Nairobi unless it offered an increase in his monthly wage of at least Shs100. This sort of feeling is not confined to lower paid workers. A trade union clerk who had worked in Mombasa, Nakuru, and had even spent three months on a course in Czechoslovakia, was doubtful about giving up his commuter status and taking work in Nairobi, even if he were offered promotion

as well. This man was able to reel off a whole list of rents for various types of housing in Nairobi, from Shs 102 for a City Council house, the cheapest and so the most desirable, Shs150 for a non-City Council owned single room, to Shs600 for a privately owned house, plus the cost of electricity, water and food. His present, Machakos, wage was over Shs500 per month, but he said he would be poor in Nairobi even on Shs1500. Many of the Machakos commuters are people who do not command better paying jobs elsewhere in any case, but even a low paying job in Machakos is a worthwhile proposition because the total wage is cash gained, nothing, save perhaps a small outlay on transport, going towards town living expenses. And these calculations <u>are</u> made by people, as the above examples indicate. In addition, an often mentioned drawback of living in town is the difficulty of knowing what is going on at home. Although there is quite good communication between town and country through the coming and going of workers visiting home and neighbours and kin visiting from the country, there is always a degree of uncertainty as to what is going on at home, whether the shamba is being properly cared for, etc., aport from the general undesirability of living apart from one's wife and children. A common cause of divorce seems to be the effect of this separation. In one case known to me, a tailor working in Machakos was informed by his half-brother that his wife was entertaining men in his own home. He hurried home and threw the wife out. Alternatively, women complain that their men do not pay sufficient attention to them, or send them enough money, or that their husbands squander too much money on the delights of town.

Not all persons whose shambas are within a

short distance from town commute. Of those in the sample whose rural homes are within ten miles of town, about half live in town. That such a large proportion of people live in town when it is recognised as economically, if not also socially, more desirable to live on the shamba, is found largely in practical difficulties of transport from some areas, and in the demands of particular types of work on the person involved. Out of thirty-seven men born within ten miles of town but living in town, twelve live on the sub-locations of Kaewa and Kombu and the area known as Kyambuko. These are on the far side of the Iveti Hills and the journey of about eight miles over the hills would be extremely taxing. A bicycle would be useless and a car little less so. Eight of the thirty-seven town dwellers work in bars, serving beer and food until 11pm and not finishing work until 11.30pm. Five men own shops and live 'over the shop'. They pay rent for the premises in any case, and any time spent travelling is valuable time wasted from possible opening hours. Shopowners also like to have someone on the premises overnight to discourage thieves. One domestic servant has rent free accommodation behind his employer's house, where he begins work very early. Of the remainder of the workers who live in town though having nearby birthplaces, two men's families had sold their land and moved to a settlement scheme farther away. Two men mentioned trouble at home, and the rest said they just preferred town life, the escape from the hard manual work on the shamba, and the additional personal freedom. By contrast, of those living out of town, there are no bar workers, only two shopowners (both of whom live less than one mile from town) and only two live at Kyambuko. Both of the latter are in their first jobs and had been working less than six months.

A shamba in the hinterland

Shambas within the immediate hinterland of Machakos are well-placed in terms of the possibilities of taking work in town. Nairobi is still the place where work is most desired (within the limits described above for the choice between Machakos and Nairobi), but even then, there are still many advantages to taking work closer at hand, as we have seen. Shambas in the immediate hinterland, then, may be the homes of several types of migrant worker, particularly those resident in Nairobi, those resident in Machakos, and those commuting to Machakos. A fairly large shamba(or musyi), three miles from Machakos, may be taken as an illustration of this. This shamba is about twenty acres in size, and is the home of 86 people, although not all of those may be resident on the shamba at any one time. Figure 5.1 shows the kinship structure of the shamba as conceived by one of its members. The head of the shamba, Amos Mutunga, is a man of about 80 years of age, who has four wives, and who no longer does much work, apart from supervising agricultural matters and hearing minor disputes within the shamba. The shamba produces mainly maize and bananas for home consumption, and also has a number of cattle and goats. Only rarely does one of the women take produce to the market in Machakos for sale. If perhaps some tomatoes are taken this is largely to give the woman the chance for an outing to town to sit in the market and gossip. There are enough working men on this shamba to bring in sufficient cash to take the burden of providing off its produce. Some members have small plots of land elsewhere, never more than one acre, where they grow coffee or bananas, and this is sold for cash. Table 5.5

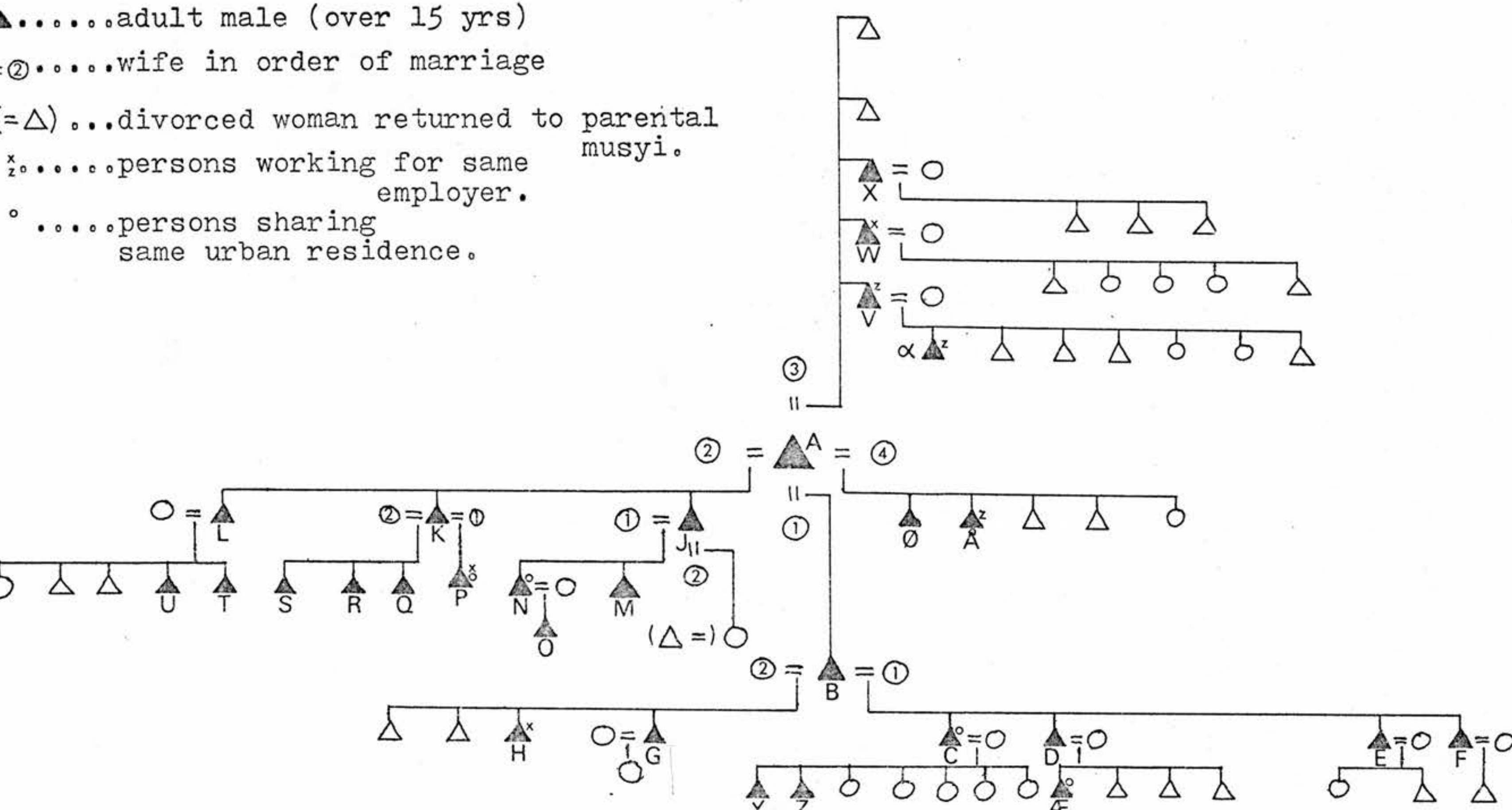

Fig.5.1. Members of the Mutunga musyi. (Does not include daughters who have married into other musyi.)

shows the occupations of males of working age who 'belong' to this shamba, where they carry on these occupations, and their migrant status, if any. One man, L on the table, is a sales supervisor in Nairobi, and commutes to Nairobi in the dry season. He has a job which pays him enough to run a car which can travel the murrum roads in the dry season.

Person on diagram		Occupation	Place of work	Type of migrant	Frequency of visits to shamba
A		retired (household head)			
B		farmer	shamba		
C	o	lorry driver	Nairobi	migrant	every 2 months
D		mechanic	Machakos	commuter	
E		barman	Machakos	commuter	
F		stonemason	Athi River	migrant	weekends
G		prison warder	Kitale	migrant	twice yearly
H	x	driver	Nairobi	migrant	monthly
J		farmer	shamba		
K		farmer	shamba		
L		sales supervisor	Nairobi	migrant/ commuter	weekends/commutes in dry season
M		unemployed	(shamba)		
N	o	telex operator	Nairobi	migrant	twice monthly
O		unemployed	(shamba)		
P	x o	machine operator	Nairobi	migrant	weekends
Q		schoolboy	(shamba)		
R		unemployed	(shamba)		
S		unemployed	(shamba)		
T		unemployed	(shamba)		
U		unemployed	(shamba)		
V	z	asst. machine operator	Nairobi	migrant	monthly
W	x	disp. clerck	Nairobi	migrant	weekends
X		carpenter	Machakos	commuter	
Y		unemployed	(shamba)		
Z		unemployed	(shamba)		
Æ	o	schoolboy	Nairobi	migrant	monthly
Ø		clerck	Machakos	commuter	
Å	z	machine operator	Nairobi	migrant	twice monthly
α	z	machine operator	Nairobi	migrant	twice monthly

x, z refers to persons working for the same firm

o refers to persons sharing the same urban residence.

Table 5.5. Males of working age (over 15 years old) on a shamba in Iveti Location.

Also notable is the fact that some members work in the same firm in Nairobi, and others share the same house in Nairobi. H, P and W work for a Nairobi printing firm, while V, Å and α work in the same biscuit factory. Four members (C, N, P, Æ) share two rooms in a block of flats in Nairobi, and it is here that other members live while in Nairobi for short spells. Of the migrants, only one, the prison warder who works in Kitale, has his family with him. His job is secure enough, and has housing provided, to enable this. The men who were said to be full time farmers on the shamba were older men, who had enough cash and other support coming from sons to no longer require to work for wages on their own account, and had done what so many migrants looked forward to doing, retired to the land. The other men, described as 'unemployed', also did some farm work, but considered this only temporary, until they got a job paying a regular wage. Some of these men also worked on other shambas as temporary hired labour. That there are eight men unemployed, though, out of twenty-nine of working age, gives some indication of the seriousness of the problem of finding work.

What this shamba, which is not untypical for the area, if with slightly more members than most, demonstrates, is the spread of its members between Nairobi and Machakos, and beyond into other parts of Kenya. The field of regular, signicant interaction of the whole shamba, through the activities of its migrants and commuters, includes both Machakos and Nairobi, and these are points of meaningful and constant reference to all members. These are the sources of cash and opportunity, of wider experience, as well as news of the wider world. Equally important, local, shamba affairs are also significant in the two urban centres - among, for instance, the members who work in the same factories, and those who share the

same dwelling in Nairobi. Shamba affairs extend into both work and leisure time in the two towns.

Commuters as brokers

In Machakos members of the same shamba may work in the same place and may also belong to the same leisure time group. This, along with the way in which commuters act as continuous links between Machakos and the immediate hinterland, is illustrated by a group of men who meet regularly after work to play cards. These are six men who meet in the hotel owned by one of them, at around 5pm most weekdays. They drink a few bottles of beer, play cards, and chat, for about an hour before going home. Four of the men are commuters - two carpenters, a clerk, and a poultry seller. The hotel owner and another carpenter live in town, although their shambas are within commuting distance of town. The relationships between the men are shown in fig. 5.2.

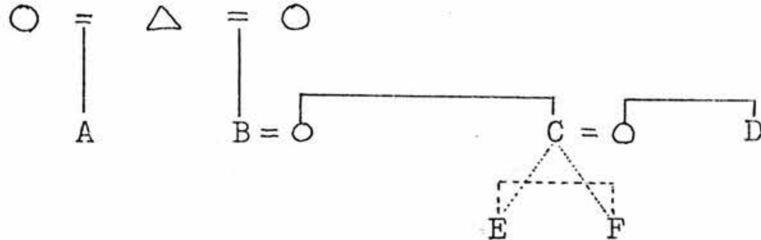

Fig. 5.2. Card-playing group in Machakos.

A, the hotel owner, and B, the clerk, are half-brothers (sons of their father's co-wives). B is married to the sister of C (the carpenter), C is married to the sister of D (the poultry seller). E and F are both employed as carpenters by C, and in addition they call themselves 'half-brothers', although they are in fact only members

of the same clan.

Although A is resident in Machakos, his commuting half-brother B acts as a constant contact man with his shamba. F, who is also resident in Machakos, is kept in touch with his home affairs, but not as well as A, as there is no-one in this particular group from his own shamba. However, as his home is in Kalama Location, practically on the edge of town, he has no difficulty in getting news. The fictive kinship link between E and F exists to strengthen the relationship between the two men, and in this particular situation in the face of other group members who are tied by real relationships of kinship and affinity, which are constantly being discussed during the card games, in terms of exchange of news about persons concerned. In addition, E and F partly compensate for their already equivocal situation, being employees of C. Although these men seem to be brought together largely by kinship and affinity, it should be remembered that in Machakos, if two Kamba born near town try hard enough, they will very often find some sort of kinship or affinity tie between them. The discovery that there _is_ some sort of bond is usually greeted with great acclaim by the two persons concerned. For this card-playing group, however, whatever the basis for their coming together regularly, the fact remains that they do regularly meet, and form a communication network between Machakos and the countryside. The commuters, being in constant touch with the country, are sources of completely up-to-date news from home, and minimize any tendency towards an 'information gap' between the two areas.

Many such informal groups exist in Machakos, but never do they reach the degree of quasi-formalism, at least among the African population, that Mayer describes[4] for the _amakhaya_ groups in East London, where groups of

4. Mayer (1971) pp. 124-5.

'home men' from the same rural location agree that there have to be meetings among themselves to control members' behaviour in town. In Machakos there is far less need for such a degree of organisation. For one thing, there are no political or administrative restrictions on movement between Machakos and the countryside as there are in South African towns, and neither is there any formally recognised distinction corresponding to the 'Red' - 'School' distinction in East London, which encourages the conservative, 'backward-looking' Xhosa to consciously preserve their way of life in the face of alternative attractions in town. On the other hand, it is still considered 'wrong' in Machakos for a man to neglect his rural ties, and even worse to settle permanently in town. Such informal groups as this card-playing group serve to remind non-commuters of their obligations to home through gossip and through the examples of their commuting colleagues faithfully returning home every evening.

The communication link also operates in reverse, the commuters providing constant information about town to the countryside. Among migrants, the knowledge that they are, in effect, under constant surveillance by their rural-dwelling kin is bound to operate for at least some persons as a sanction against 'misbehaviour'. A more significant process, in terms of this direction of the communication link, is the way services are performed in town for country people, particularly by commuters. While commuters do not have a monopoly of urban experience, they demonstrate their ability to mediate urban experience with rural-dwelling. Commuters are perhaps somehow more trustworthy than migrants. Persons who do not have much contact with town, or who feel ignorant of what goes on there, often turn to commuters for help in dealing with town-based institutions. I have already mentioned the extreme centralization

of administration in Kenya (chapter II), and the fact that a whole host of activities and services require licences, permits, payment of fees and charges to government offices in the district headquarters, or local government offices in the county offices. To a person without much experience of town, the bureaucracies whose offices are in Machakos and which must be dealt with may appear intimidating and mysterious. In such instances a person will often seek information and help from someone who knows 'how the system works' - which office to go to, who to speak to, which form to fill in, how to fill in the form, and, in certain cases, when a bribe is necessary, who to pay off, and how much. A commuter is the most obvious 'town-wise' person for a countryman to approach for assistance, in that a commuter is more readily available (he does not return home only at weekends) and, sometimes importantly, more easily held accountable. Commuters here act as brokers, or 'fixers', between country people and bureaucracies whose centres are in town. It should be remembered that these are not urban bureaucracies, in that they spread over the whole country and deal with as much rural affairs (agriculture, land) as urban, and their representatives (district officers, chiefs, sub-chiefs etc.) have offices in the country. It is the relevant district and county head offices which are in town, and only in this respect are they regarded as urban institutions, being here identified with 'town' and 'town people'. Commuters perform services in this respect, but very rarely receive material payment for doing so. They are unlike brokers described by Bailey [5], who bridge a 'gap between the peasants and the administrative and political élite' and expect payment because the broker wants 'a return upon the expertise which is his stock-in-trade and which cannot be built

5. Bailey (1970) p.41.

up overnight'[6]. These men are thus professionals, and consequently are vilified. They are renegades to the men of their own village, from whom they have chosen to stand apart in order to make a profit. The only person in Machakos who I knew took payment for this kind of work was a shopkeeper who charged Shs.2 for filling in a form. The category of brokers such as Bailey describes has not yet evolved in Machakos. In Machakos the brokers are not professionals, they give assistance as a favour, and in return receive merely prestige. For to be approached for this kind of assistance is to be acknowledged as someone who knows the town, who is sufficiently confident and worldly-wise to approach the local sub-élite, and who is educated at least sufficiently to read regulations and fill in forms.

This is not to suggest that the brokers are entirely altruistic, and entirely ignorant of the potential in having a following of clients who may be cultivated through the giving of favours. The shopkeeper who took payment for the filling in of forms did so, he said, so that people would not take his services for granted. His shop was a local information centre, and there was constantly a collection of young men hanging around the door, or sitting on the floor in a corner inside, playing cards. Here information was gathered and disseminated on jobs and other local gossip. The shopkeeper was a mine of knowledge about the town <u>and</u> about politics beyond the town. A young man, only 24 years old, he had served in the Kenya Army, and had then come to work in the local KANU office for Paul Ngei, a local MP and Cabinet Minister, before becoming local agent for an African-owned chain of dry-cleaning shops. This man was shrewd enough, and had gained enough experience working for Ngei, to realise the

6. Bailey (1970) p.41.

significance of followers and esteem concerning ability to 'get things done'. He professed to have no political aspirations for himself, but obviously enjoyed his position as broker of information and services. The people who came to him for help were mainly those from his home location, on the edge of Machakos. The majority of young men without work hanging round the shop were also from his home location, and many were people he had been to school together with, and who were hoping to make use of the wide set of contacts the shopkeeper had made while working for KANU. Their clientship took the form of deliberately attaching themselves to the shopkeeper's potentially more valuable network. The shopkeeper's status as commuter, while not an essential prerequisite to his position as sought-after broker, is nevertheless a valuable part of it. His regular 'following' consisted mainly of jobless young men who were near neighbours from home. Had he lived beyond commuting distance from town this following would of necessity have been much more sporadic and fragmentary.

'Normative' workers as commuters

As I have previously mentioned, although commuters tend to be poorly educated, poorly paid people with rather low status occupations, not all are in this position. If the majority of commuters have 'instrumental' motives in using Machakos as a convenient source of cash, many have 'normative' motives, but have merely restricted their horizons to this particular town, recognizing the advantages of living on their family shamba. The expense of living in town, especially Nairobi, has already been pointed out, along with the fact that prospective migrants do take such factors into account. All that happens is that the expense and inconvenience of having to live in

town sometimes act as dampers on personal ambition. There need be no contradiction between normative attitudes to working in town and living in the countryside. Country dwelling and urban employment are often seen as a healthy compromise. If brokers between the countryside and the urban-centred bureaucracies gain prestige by knowing 'how to get things done', even more prestige is accorded in the country to persons dwelling there who have high positions in these bureaucracies.

A high status occupation brings prestige not only to the holder of the occupation but also to his home locality. And in Kenya an influential person can bring considerable benefits to his home area. One of the top County Council officials in Machakos was a commuter. This man had used his influence to have a bridge built over a small river purely to get his car across. His neighbours boasted that he was even going to have the road tarmacked. This man was a member of the local Kamba élite, having a high position but in a local bureaucracy, being able to dispense significant patronage and favours to his fellow tribesmen, kin and neighbours. If he were to move beyond Machakos, it would be out of the local bureaucracy, and promotion could only mean a move to the local government headquarters in Nairobi, to a relatively junior position, without the constant honour granted to the 'local boy made good'. Much better to remain a member of an élite, even if not a national élite. (See chapter VI).

The commuter category in Machakos (and in Kampala) demonstrates that the concept of circulatory migration must be modified for an understanding of this type of African urban system, on account of the difficulty of maintaining even a conceptual separation between what goes on in town and what goes on in the country

for such a large proportion of the town's labour force. The commuters are 'circulatory migrants' in only the strictest sense. As the idea of circulation is normally employed to stress the <u>movement between</u> two differing social milieu, we here have to account for persons who live simultaneously in 'two systems'. Socially, the commuters constitute a perceptible overlap between Machakos and its hinterland, which can also be seen in the brokerage services of commuters, and the patronage services of influential commuters, who serve to tie the areas together in a much more tight system than the migrants alone could achieve. It is also noteworthy that the 'patrons' identify as much with their fellow-tribesmen around their home location as with their work-mates in town.

Chapter VI

AFRICANS IN GOVERNMENT AND COMMERCE

Since Independence, as Africans have been able to take up opportunities previously closed to them, a whole new range of careers and occupations has opened up. This chapter looks at some of the people presently in Machakos who have stepped forward into these newly available positions, their difficulties in doing so, and the way they perceive their participation in town-based activities. The new categories of senior civil servants, local officials, businessmen and national politicians are the most notable in their appearance since Independence, filling gaps left by Europeans, more recently Asians, and expanding on the limited opportunities available before Independence.

As noted in chapter I, there is no fully developed African bourgeoisie in Kenya, so that those in positions of power and authority, based on educational, political or economic power and ability, are better described as an élite rather than by the more usual 'class' terminology such as 'haute bourgeoisie'. 'Élite' here refers to those Africans who fill the top occupational and command positions, based on high educational level - that is, professional people like doctors and lawyers, and high ranking bureaucrats and government officials. These persons do not usually owe their positions to the possession of economic power, but to the exercise of economic power on behalf of the State or foreign-owned enterprises. Only in very few cases do African individuals in Kenya possess sufficient economic power on their own behalf to permit them to be included among the élite on this basis only. Where individuals do possess their own economic power, this tends to be achieved because of their previous élite membership on another basis, such as political power.[1]

1. Cf. interviews with Josiah Mwangi Kariuki and Masinde Maliro, both government Ministers, in Gertzel, Goldschmidt and Rothchild (1969) pp.78-84.

Because the African élite is defined largely in terms of education and financial reward, they tend to be recognised by a particular style of life associated with and encouraged by their level of education, and permitted by their salary levels and other perquisites of office or position. 'Style of life' here refers to the patterns of consumption and outside-work behaviour of the élite, the way in which they spend their leisure time, the kinds of material goods they buy, and what these are used for. Style of life is significant for the élite, not only in marking it off from the rest of society, who are required to recognise an élite as such, and are thus provided with characteristics which are highly visible, but also in giving the élite a large measure of common culture. Recognition of élite status by the masses also contributes to the inclusion among the élite of persons who possess certain important qualifications for élite status but still have to work their way up to the very top in their particular field. In this sense, junior hospital doctors are members of the élite as well as the medical director of the hospital, and District Officers as well as the Provincial Commissioner. Such persons have élite status due to their obvious possession of the necessary qualifications, high educational standard, high salary and élite way of life, so that the lack of top status in their particular field is only a temporary state of affairs. In any case, such persons wield the power, authority and influence of the very top, being the direct representatives of the upper levels. Equally important, such persons who are merely 'close to the top' are identified by 'the masses' with the actual top. It does not matter whether an individual is the top wielder of power and authority in his field; what is necessary for recognition of élite status is possession of the style of life marking off the élite from the rest of society. Style of life is, after all, what is most visible, since the rest of society may rarely see a civil servant actually administrating, a university

lecturer actually lecturing. What they see is the trappings around the actual occupational activity. (It is worth noting, in this respect, that whereas the élite are said to set standards for the rest of society, these standards will refer primarily to life-style, especially material aspects of this, and not to occupational standards, or other, less visible, characteristics). In Tanzania, the material consumption of the élite became so characteristic that they were referred to by a symbol of their style of life - the Wabenzi - from the Mercedes-Benz also favoured by the élite in Kenya.

Machakos offers the possibility of examining the élite in local situation, outside the national metropolis, where the élite tends to be concentrated, and where most studies of the élite are conveniently carried out. In Machakos there are senior government officials and professional people who constitute the basis of a 'local élite', and many people engaged in commerce at various levels. The national politicians, those who sit in parliament, although based in Nairobi depend on local roots, and at elections seek to revitalise these. Politicians do not, however, unless they reach ministerial rank, tend to be included as 'élite'. It is noteworthy that at the 1969 election in Machakos, it was local businessmen who stood for office, seeing this as a way of advancing themselves despite their lack of a high educational standard. Local politics are largely in the hands of the Muslims, and will be dealt with in the next chapter.

The 'local élite'.

The national élite in Kenya comprises those persons who are in the top positions of power and authority, which usually means a senior government post, a professional occupation, or directorship level in a foreign-owned business enterprise. In addition to these people, the élite includes the 'juniors' of these persons, as a kind of 'associated' élite. The national élite also includes many Asians and Europeans.

The idea of élite tends to have been used mainly with a national reference in the study of African societies and development, despite the recognition of the possibility of there existing different <u>kinds</u> of élite.[2] The assumption seems to have been that if an élite is defined in terms of, say, 'the superior persons in society', or those with incomes above a certain level[3], all that is necessary is the denoting of such persons, who therefore comprise the élite of a particular nation. We must remember, though, that the idea of élite is relative, and may be treated as situationally specific, that an élite in one situation would not be considered élite in another, or that a person whose claim to élite status in one situation is recognized, in another may not be. The national élite is not concentrated only in the capital city, but is spread around the country, with representatives in most towns. It is therefore possible to examine the élite in local situations where its composition may be based on different standards than for the capital city. We may refer to a 'local élite' whose members are the holders of the top occupational and command positions of the local situation, plus those persons 'associated' with the élite in this situation. In Machakos, the local élite consists not only of members of the national élite resident in Machakos - the District Commissioner, doctors of medicine, solicitors - but also others who are members of an élite only in Machakos, through association with representatives of the national élite in leisure time activities, work situation and style of life. Such persons, members of the élite in Machakos, would not be considered élite in Nairobi, where their salaries would be too low, their educational standards insufficient, and because no other élite members would require to associate

2. Nadel (1956) p. 419; Busia (1956) p. 426; Lloyd (1967) p. 125.
3. Both 'definitions' are used by Lloyd (1966). Vincent (1971) describes the 'élite' of an agricultural area in Uganda, but does not relate this to a 'national élite' at a higher level.

with them, Nairobi being large enough for them to associate with persons of their own status. In Machakos, however, the local élite has a characteristic style of life based on particular places of leisure time activity, clothing and other material possessions, allowing it to be recognized by the local population as the élite. The situation in Machakos illustrates the possibility of examining a local élite, and the way in which it interacts with a local population, in this case of the same tribal background, as opposed to the 'strangers' from the national élite.

Machakos being primarily an administrative centre, most members of the local élite are government officials, but there are a few in commercial occupations, such as banking, although commerce, in Kenya, has tended to attract persons less formally qualified, whose career in government would be less promising because of this. Perhaps commerce is an attractive alternative in that success depends on results rather than on a paper qualification. In Machakos, very few persons who have chosen the path of commerce have been sufficiently successful to gain entry to the local élite. They tend not to have sufficient formal education, nor to share, nor to be able to afford, élite ideals concerning style of life. If there is anything approximating a 'commercial élite' in Machakos, it is an élite in only the strictest sense of the word - the most successful local businessmen - but even these fall well below the required level of education, position and style of life for equal acceptance by the physicians and district officers of the local élite.

On the other hand, local officials who would not gain entry to the <u>national</u> élite can gain acceptance as members of the <u>local</u> élite. The county council treasurer mentioned at the end of the last chapter is a case in point. This man was a member of the local élite through being in a senior position in the county council, which required a fairly high educational standard, and he could subscribe to the same kind of conversation and afford the same kind of leisure time activities as local representatives of the

national élite. Equally important, in possessing the trappings of élite membership - association with other élite members, high status position, car ownership, smart clothes - he was treated by 'the masses' as a member of the local élite. But in Nairobi things would not have been the same, where the pacemakers among the élite are Cabinet Ministers and Company Directors. The lower levels of the élite in Nairobi are above the lower level of the élite in Machakos, if only in terms of the amount of money required to maintain acceptance. The Machakos county council treasurer was also a member of Machakos Sports Club, which served as the central meeting place for the élite, and for whom membership is almost de rigeur. The Club was founded by the European settlers during the colonial period as the focal meeting point for the European community, and at Independence racial restrictions on membership were lifted, although it is still the centre for European leisure activities, and is largely run by Europeans. Being closely associated with the European community in Machakos, and hence with European activites and standards, the Club also attracts African members who wish to associate themselves with these. Apart from this reason, the Sports club has one of the most comfortable bars in town, and has a snooker table and a darts board, which the African members use avidly. Prospective members of the Sports Club must be supported by at least two existing members. The annual membership fee of Shs. 200 is not inconsiderable, and probably has the effect of excluding a large number of would-be members. The Sports Club is the only one of its kind in Machakos, and membership is a mark of status. This being so, persons join the Club to support their claim to local élite status, as well as to enjoy the Club's facilities.

Two local businessmen had become Club members but were not treated as equals by other, local élite, members. Neither of the businessmen had much education, one of them

speaking no English and the other very little. Both had taken the opportunity offered for expansion in business when the Asians had begun to be forced out, but were undoubtedly clever and able in business. One of them drank in the Club bar alone, and played darts alone, none of the other African members ever saying more than 'good evening' to him. The other man was treated as a kind of clown by the other members on account of his constant drunkenness and widely publicized affairs with women. Neither of these men possessed the essential savoir-faire marking the élite. Both of these men were members, along with the District Commissioner and District Trades Development Officer, who were definitely local élite members, of a committee which chose successful applicants for government business improvement loans. But this association did not extend outside the work situation.

Apart from the Sports Club, the only other institution in Machakos with African élite members is a branch of Lions International, the charitable organisation. This is an élite society in that its members are recruited in terms of their ability to contribute considerable sums of money. The Machakos branch was founded in 1968, and in 1970 there were only four African members, three Europeans, the remainder being Asian, about thirty men. One of the Africans was president, the Luo headmaster of the Machakos government secondary school for boys. One of the other African members confessed to me that he should never have accepted the invitation to join, as he could not afford the dues. These were paid by his original sponsor, an Asian. The Lions' Club is essentially an Asian organisation (the national president is also an Asian). It is worth speculating how far the African president and members are mere window-dressing, to prevent the image of an exclusively Asian (and European) association, particularly in that the African members can scarcely maintain the same standards of expenditure as the Asians, most of whom are prosperous

business men, doctors, and lawyers.

Local representatives of the national, Kenyan, élite, are non-Kamba, and owe their presence in Machakos not to choice, but to the fact that they have been placed there by their superiors. This applies both to government and commercial employees, who are transferred around the country to various district headquarters or branches. The most important local commercial positions were the managerships of the two banks. One of these was handed over to a Luo in 1970, and since I left the other has been taken over from an Asian by a Kikuyu. Practically all of the senior government employees are non-Kamba. The most senior Kamba government employees were two magistrates, but not the most senior magistrate. Kamba tend only to be members of the local élite and, as I have suggested, the possibility of belonging to this may be one incentive for not moving beyond their 'home area'. Where Kamba were national élite members, but resident in Machakos, they tended to be outside this employment system, such as the retired army officer who was now looking after his farm and local businesses full-time. This man was also to become the president of the Sports Club.

Because the top positions in Machakos are filled by non-Kamba, the Kamba members of the local élite fill an important role in mediating between the local population (the masses) and the élite of strangers. The national élite members in Machakos are set apart from the local population on two counts. Firstly, they are élite members, with a much higher standard of living and with higher expectations than the local population, and can afford to indulge these. Secondly, they are of different tribes. They do not speak the local language, and must communicate through either English or Swahili. They have no kinsmen among the masses, as they have in their own home area. Furthermore, so many of the élite are Kikuyu that there is a danger of even more resentment building up among the local Kamba, who already accuse the Kikuyu of monopolising the opportunities of Independence. The presence of the Kamba local élite acts

as a zone of contact. The Kamba members of the local élite may explain or justify actions of the stranger élite to the local population, through their kin, neighbours, or friends. The local population can also contact the stranger élite through the Kamba local élite. They also reduce relative deprivation among the local population, which might be fostered through the constant presence of well-off and powerful strangers.

A further characteristic suggested of the élite is its corporateness.[4] In Machakos the local élite members certainly interacted with one another, through their common membership of the Club, for instance, and the 'official' sector of the élite were further brought together through having a common employer - the government - and working within the same bureaucracy. At the élite level tribal differences tended to be transcended to a far greater extent than among the rest of the African population. This tendency is shown in the multi-tribal nature of drinking groups in the Club, and is due partly to the common interests of the élite, which are not shared with less well-educated or well-paid members of their own tribes, and the desire to mark off the value of education and high status, and partly to the fact that in Machakos there are too few élite members to form leisure-time groups exclusively from their own tribes. Only the Luo temporarily retreated into a tribal-based association in Machakos, when they felt threatened at the time of the KPU banning, but this was both short-lived and not restricted to élite Luo. This does not mean that all élite groups were cross-tribal, because a person's closest friends were usually from his own tribe, even in Machakos, but groups larger than two to three, seen playing darts or drinking together, were almost always cross-tribal.

The Kenyan national élite is a highly mobile set of persons, both socially and geographically. The lack of highly trained people at Independence led to a crash-plan

4. Nadel (1956) p. 415; Busia (1956) p. 426.

for the education of Africans in jobs previously held by Europeans. Many of the élite today have been educated abroad, in the USA, Britain, the Soviet Union, Canada, etc., this geographical mobility being echoed in the gap created between them and their parents and other kin. Such geographical and social mobility continue on their return to Kenya. Government employees, especially, frequently spend tours of duty in many district headquarters around the country, as well as in Nairobi. Transfer orders seemingly come out of the blue, very often, and civil servants are often expected to move house, at two days' notice, to the other end of the country. This may be extremely frustrating for the person involved, tearing up roots just as he has got used to his situation, his local work duties, and has made new friends. (It is also frustrating to an anthropologist to see his most useful informants suddenly pack up and go!) A government employee rarely seems to spend more than two years in one post, and sometimes less than six months, before being moved on. This mobility applies to the middle and senior employees, and adds significantly to the density of personal relationships among them. Very often an employee new to his post will know some of those already there from former posts. The élite in a local situation thus provides yet another mechanism linking the local level to the wider national social system. As the local élite mediates between a local population and the national élite, so the national élite constitutes a sort of 'binding mechanism' relating separate local situations to one another and to the nation as a whole, supplementing the impersonal mechanisms of bureaucratic administration, and the often over-personalised or over-tribalised channels of national politics.

The national élite members only rarely see their spell in Machakos as anything other than an unavoidable duty, and would much rather be living elsewhere. The 'provincialness'

of Machakos is, though, alleviated by its proximity to Nairobi, which represents the culmination of all administrative, commercial and professional careers in Kenya. The prospects all lie in Nairobi, with the top jobs and big city life, and a small town like Machakos represents only one step on the road to Nairobi.

Africans in commerce.

As many of the local élite in Machakos took the opportunities offered by Independence, so did the local business-men. Table 2.3 showed that nearly 80% of businesses in Machakos have been under African ownership only since Independence. That is, of 38 African-owned businesses in the sample, 30 had either been set up by Africans or had been taken over by Africans only after Independence. A further six African businesses appeared during the last two years before Independence. This sudden expansion of Africans into commerce was made possible not just by the fact of Independence, but more particularly by the restrictions put on trading activities of non-citizens of Kenya, through legislation after Independence. Hence the rise in African ownership continues after Independence, as more and more pressure was placed on non-citizens.

The types of business involved in this kind of takeover are predominantly small retail concerns, together with a few wholesale businesses. Larger firms, such as garages and transport companies, have remained largely in Asian hands. Where the ownership is non-citizen, they have retained control by appointing African directors, or giving shares to African employees. In Machakos the largest wholesale suppliers of general goods are still Asian-owned, the larger garages are still Asian-owned, save one which is in European hands. The sawmill, the only industrial enterprise of any size in Machakos, is Asian-owned. The largest of the hardware suppliers in town is attached to the sawmill. Africans have moved into the smaller enterprises, although some of these have expanded considerably since their change of ownership. A few of the African business-men have become very rich, by African standards, despite little education, by careful diversification and expansion of their businesses, which they have been able to do only because of the restrictions put on the activities of Asians. Although Africans were

running businesses before Independence, they could operate only on a very low level, exploiting niches which Asians found too unprofitable. Expansion of African businesses was extremely difficult, if not impossible, due to almost complete control by Asians of wholesale and credit facilities, and by the difficulty of competing with Asians in terms of the range of goods offered or prices. It was not so much that Asians were unwilling to tolerate competition from Africans, as is so often suggested, as the fact that the organisation of Asian businesses and the relationships between, for instance, wholesalers and retailers, made it difficult for Africans to start off on an equal footing with Asians, or to break into what were personal relationships of trust between Asians. Most Asian businesses were family concerns, which employed members of the family, trained them to carry on the business, and sent out kin to run branches[5]. There was little opportunity here for Africans to be trained in commercial practice or theory, and they very rarely got beyond the lowest level of employment in Asian firms. Similarly, credit was available to Asians through links of kinship or co-religion, no security being necessary. Apart from a lack of business skills or access to credit facilities, Africans were severely handicapped in setting up their own enterprises through lack of initial capital. Even where credit was available, this would apply to goods and not to, for instance, the cost of premises or their fitting with shelves, counters, cupboards, etc. Banks would not be sympathetic to African applications for loans with no security, and the probability of failure in the face of Asian competition. This difficulty still remains, and is one reason for the continued low operating level of African businesses.

Since Independence, however, Africans have burst forward to take up the chances offered to them, with a desire to make up for years of lost time, although most are still

5. Cf. Mangat (1969); Morris (1968); Dotson (1968).

of a very low level of operation. The most successful African businessmen in Machakos were operating before Independence, but are aware that what gave them their first real break was Independence and the subsequent refusal of trading licences to non-citizens. Success tends to have been achieved through diversification, and the careful tending of associated but separate businesses, rather than through the intensification in operation or expansion of a single business. The man already referred to, as not gaining entry to the local élite through lack of education and 'savoir faire', has a retail business, an associated wholesale business, as well as a transport firm. On the other hand, he is able to supervise all of these interests personally, because they are centred in the same office, the retail and wholesale enterprises sharing the same premises. As Marris and Somerset stress,

> "The chances of profitable expansion are far more clearly associated with this concentration of attention than with other assets like capital, training, professional book-keeping, which might be expected to influence their progress."[6]

They draw attention to the dangers involved in diversification, which appears attractive to businessmen who cannot expand a single enterprise beyond a certain level without delegating management. African businessmen, according to Marris and Somerset, are characterized by their unwillingness to give up close personal supervision of their business enterprises, and their lack of trust in partners, who might run off with the cash, squander the stock, or give credit to family and friends. Spare resources tend, therefore, to be put into starting a new enterprise, rather than expanding an existing one. A businessman will try to run all of his enterprises under his own eye, leaving them in only the temporary charge of his wife, or maybe a brother, or, less desirably, an employee.

> "Two or three small concerns seem, then, more manageable than one large one, because they do not require the creation of new levels of responsibility and a new kind of organisation."[7]

6. Marris and Somerset (1971) p. 123.
7. Marris and Somerset (1971) p. 125.

Marris and Somerset do not, however, consider the possibility of the relative success of this kind of expansion, granted the difficulties and constraints in which African businessmen find themselves. The successful African businessmen had a number of businesses going at the same time, but these were carefully chosen for their compatability with one another, so that they represented neither conflict of interests nor impossible demands on his supervisory capacities. There is, of course, a limit to this kind of expansion, but it at least represents something between one small enterprise and the certain failure of supervisory capacities which Marris and Somerset seem to suggest.

For the successful men, the running of completely separate enterprises tended to be serial rather than contemporary. The assets of one business would be realized to finance another, potentially more profitable, business, and so on. Granted the difficulty in finding capital, this is seen as a realistic means of expansion. This process, as well as the system of associated diversification, is illustrated by the example of William Kioko.

At 42 years old, Kioko is now established as a prosperous businessman in Machakos, owning a hotel, a bakery, and several plots of rented out dwelling rooms. Kioko began his working career as cook for a European, but in 1953 gave this up to begin selling oranges. After four months he realized that orange selling could lead nowhere, so he took up the selling of poultry, goats, and cattle, which involved a larger cash turnover. But this, too, he gave up, and tried his hand at taking cassava, mangoes and arrowroot to the market sellers in Nairobi. But this was the Emergency period in Kenya, and, according to Kioko, a dangerous time for everyone. Kioko gave all his spare cash to his wife, Shs.600, and left for Tanganyika. After working in Arusha for a year, Kioko came back to Kenya with some savings and used this, together with what was left of the money he gave to his wife, to open a hotel in the Swahili Village in Machakos. This

'hotel' was a small mudwalled building of one room, in which Kioko placed a few wooden tables and benches. The 'kitchen' was a charcoal stove outside, where he cooked beans, ugali, and chapatis, and made tea. This business had a very low turnover and profit, except for a quite remarkable period of three days in 1956, when Princess Margaret visited the township. For these three days Machakos was full of people from outside, and Kioko made the colossal, to him, sum of Shs. 1155. All of this money he put in the bank. By 1960, Kioko had saved enough money to open a bigger hotel at Makindu, a trading centre on the main Nairobi - Mombasa road, about sixty miles from Machakos. For this hotel he rented a building from an Asian for Shs. 2000 per year. While establishing this hotel, Kioko left the Machakos one in the hands of his brother. The hotel in Makindu was quite successful, mainly because of its location, and in 1962 Kioko opened a third hotel, in Machakos but in bigger premises nearer the centre of town, and conveniently near the bus station. These premises he bought from an Asian, for Shs. 2500, who was leaving the country due to the imminence of Independence. But this spread of interests was getting too much. The hotel in Makindu, although making a good profit, was too far away to allow the constant supervision Kioko wanted, and his wife, whom he had left in charge, had not the experience or expertise to be left for long. Similarly, Kioko could not trust his brother to run the first Machakos hotel competently. Kioko decided to centralise his efforts in Machakos, which he saw as having the best possibilities for volume of trade. The first hotel in Machakos was sold for Shs. 1000 , the Makindu hotel for Shs. 4000. In 1963 this capital was used to buy the lease of some land in Machakos and to build a block of thirteen dwelling rooms. The building of such rooms is enormously profitable. A block of the type and size Kioko built costs about Shs. 10,000 to build, and rented out at Shs. 40 per month, the initial cost is returned in less than two years. As soon as his first

block had paid itself off, Kioko built another block.

Kioko's biggest venture so far has been the buying of a bakery from a family of Asians about to leave the country. This bakery cost Shs. 125,000, but is being paid for in instalments provided by the rental of dwelling rooms. The bakery has been a big success. Kioko knew nothing about baking, all stages of which had been performed by the Asian family. These Asians trained some of Kioko's former hotel employees before they left, and after some initial problems the bakery is producing three times as much as under Asian ownership, and Kioko now has the bread wrapped in greaseproof paper to keep it fresh much longer. Although slightly more expensive than Elliot's bread (the European-owned bakery in Nairobi, which sells bread throughout the country) Kioko had the advantage of goodwill from the local African population. He was a well-known, respected, and popular local businessman, and had pulled off a coup in taking over one of only two bakeries in town and running it with an all-African staff. The bakery was given the same name as Kioko's hotel to stress the takeover, and the bread and cakes from the bakery are also sold in the hotel. Close supervision of both interests is easy, as they are only 100 yards apart in the same busy Machakos street.

William Kioko was fortunate in learning his lessons early. He learned to overcome his lack of capital by moving up from business to business, but also made each move with care. He chose the type of business and its location sensibly, and was willing to wait several years until he felt conditions were right, his money safely in the bank, without squandering it in the desire to invest it immediately. He was early aware of the danger of spreading his attention too wide and concentrated his interests in one town and in complementary enterprises - the dwelling rooms to provide rapid capital, the hotel near the bus station, and the bakery in the same street which could also serve the hotel. Perhaps he has also been aided by a powerful 'Protestant

ethic'. He is still active in church affairs, and refuses to sell cigarettes or beer, which are highly profitable. Kioko has managed to run his businesses without depending on partners or putting a lot of trust in employees. But how far he will be able to expand his present business, particularly when a lot of spare capital accumulates, is questionable, without the ability to delegate authority to someone of ability that he can trust. Such a person is available. One of the bakery assistants is both trustworthy and able, and has the additional quality, in Kioko's eyes, of being involved in church affairs in Machakos. This man would be an ideal bakery manager if only Kioko can take such a step.

The lack of credit facilities was also overcome by Kioko in that he did not need them in the early part of his career, but depended on his own resources, and resorted to credit only when he had shown himself an able, and serious-minded businessman who could put his money in a bank, and leave it there. The loan to buy the bakery was provided by this bank. Usually, as Marris and Somerset point out, banks are closed, virtually, to African businessmen on the one hand because they have nothing to offer as security for loans, and on the other because they have no real social contacts with bank managers on which to build up relationships of trust and understanding. Government loans, either through ICDC (Industrial and Commercial Development Corporation) or through the District Trades Development Board, (which in any case provides loans to already-running businesses) are difficult to obtain, and are usually insufficient.

Partnerships are attractive solutions to the problem of initial capital, where a number of persons may be able to raise a sum beyond the means of one person. But this leads to problems. This solution to the desire to somehow get into business is often put into effect before the partners know enough about one another. One such

business was set up in a market centre near Machakos by four persons who bought a second-hand lorry, the deposit for this being raised through each contributing Shs. 100 per month. When the lorry began to run so did the problems. One of the partners persisted in carrying goods for his friends and relatives free of charge, and another spent a lot of money on unnecessary repairs, and on giving the lorry a bright new coat of paint. This was stopped, however, and all profit from then on was banked, until they had saved Shs. 1000. The partners decided to go into a different business, but could not agree on which. Eventually they opened a furniture shop in Machakos, selling cheap beds and mattresses, and wooden cupboards. But one of the dissidents decided to pull out, and demanded his share of the capital. This would have crippled the enterprise, and the person was dissuaded. But the mistrust continued. Money constantly went missing, and twice they were unable to pay the girl who took care of the shop. After a year the partnership was bankrupt and had collapsed.

Even where partnerships are successful, the persons concerned do not necessarily see the business involved as their only obligation. Frequently the partners have other businesses as well, which they run on their own account. In such a situation the partnership may become a secondary business, and not get its fair share of attention. And the temptation exists to put partnership money into the personal business. On the other hand, a partnership may flourish. An obvious example is that of Mbuni Dry Cleaners, a Kikuyu-owned company which has been hugely successful, and of which there is a branch in Machakos.

The most successful businessmen in Machakos were operating before Independence, gaining experience and saving capital, and Independence and the ensuing Asian exodus have been exploited by them as an opportunity to move into areas hitherto virtually monopolised by Asians, and on a scale previously only dreamed of. But the problems of how to get

started remain. The man who set up as a bar owner after winning the top prize in the Kenya Charity Sweepstake was indeed a lucky man; but organisational ability cannot be won so easily.

Most Africans in town-based business still have some kind of attachment to the land, and look to having productive and well-looked-after shambas to which to retire. Many businessmen told me that they would spend more time on the land if their businesses in town were not so demanding, and virtually all had used some of their profit to buy land, or intended doing so. The temptation to spend hard-earned and much-needed capital on land is bound to persist, and may seem realistic as insurance in the face of possible failure in a yet marginally successful business enterprise in town.

Very few of the bigger, more successful men spent any time on their own land, their attention being almost completely absorbed by their businesses, and keeping these under personal supervision. This is so demanding that little time (or, probably, energy) is left for agricultural interests. The successful businessmen were marked by their ability to use scarce capital shrewdly, in their efforts to diversify and expand, so that practically nothing was left over for alternative investment in the land. William Kioko had only a small piece of land, cultivated by his mother, and only very rarely did he visit it, let alone work on it. The more successful businessmen become, the less reason there is to provide an economic insurance in land, and the more they realize that their success is due at least partly to their not being tempted to do so. They have also, to a large extent, thrown off the 'extra-economic ties' of the rural based cultural system, so that land is also less attractive to them at a level expressive of their continued attachment to their rural, tribal way of life. They have avoided giving in to tribal and kinship pressures for credit and free goods, and to providing gifts and services to the rural home, to providing unnecessary employment to kinsmen, as well as to pressures to invest in land. This process is analogous to

that described by Wolf, in which landlords begin to treat land and tenants as commodities, and move to the towns, breaking the former personal exchange with their peasant tenants, and becoming incorporated in the alternative cultural system of the capitalist economy.[8] The successful businessmen in Machakos are, more than anyone else in town, the basis for an urban bourgeoisie. They are also employers, emphasising the permanence of town-based alternatives, at the expense of the 'delaying mechanisms' which would otherwise hold them to particularistic interests. The longer they are involved in urban-based business, and the more successful they become, encouraged by a government firmly committed to a capitalist path of development, the more they demonstrate the possibility of an entirely urban-based life. The example of James Mbiti in Ch.IV is evidence of this.

These businessmen may be contrasted with the government employees, who have much more job security, but still invest in land, although not necessarily as an economic venture. The main difference is that the businessmen are completely dependent on their own success in town, while the government employees are secure in a bureaucracy, and have salaries, often considerable by African standards, which do not have to be ploughed back into a business.

Smaller businessmen

Not all of the businessmen in Machakos are as successful as William Kioko, have as much experience, or even hope for their businesses to flourish in the same way. The vast majority of the shops in Machakos are little more than stalls run by one person, selling a very narrow range of goods at barely any profit. They may be run by people with very little idea of commerce, who are trying their hand at something which represents a reasonable alternative to unemployment. The lack of experience and business sense of these shopkeepers was often evidenced by their ignorance of their monthly,

8. Wolf (1969) pp. 282-3.

or even weekly, turnover. Many had no idea how much cash passed through their hands or how much profit their enterprise was making, if any. Cash might be spent as soon as it was taken in, on a bill for a child's school fees, for instance, and the shopkeepers family might be eating the stock. This may well be termed a kind of 'subsistence business'.

On the other hand, these enterprises do provide a living for a person who would otherwise be unemployed, and dependent on a small shamba, or on his kin, and they may make a reasonable, if not spectacular, profit. The scale of operation is such that little sophisticated knowledge of business practice is necessary, but a small shop or stall may provide a more ambitious person with the motivation to try something bigger, and possibly some initial capital. Equally important, if he tries his hand at a similar type of enterprise but on a bigger scale, he has ready-made connexions with wholesalers, who may even be prepared to wish him well in his new venture by offering credit, the businessman having proved his ability. But very few of the very small shopkeepers seem to want to move on to anything bigger, and remain content with their small stall and steady, if modest, profit, as something they know they can handle. The gamble on a bigger enterprise just does not seem worth the chance or the effort.

As I have mentioned, in 1970 there were over eighty shops in Machakos selling food as the principal item. The small shops stick to the staples such as rice, maize meal, and sugar, and little packets of tea, curry powder, Aspro, soap, etc. Other small operations include watch repairing, bicycle repairing, shoe repairing, and simple metal work (such as the manufacture of charcoal stoves or oil lamps) and laundry work. Permanent premises are not necessary for all of these tasks. A spare piece of ground, the shade of a tree, or the verandah of a shop, will serve for many of these enterprises. Men may squat

on the ground to work. The shoe repairers, who also renovate cast-offs for re-sale, remind one of prints of nineteenth century cobblers in Britain, squatting raggedly at work. Watch repairers often work at a portable wooden stand. Small tailors also abound, most of whom do sub-contracted work for a bigger tailor, such as making government or school uniforms. These tailors require only a sewing machine, and can work from their own rooms in town. In manufacturing, however, it is much more difficult for Africans to make a success. Manufacturing on any large scale means competing with foreign imports, and with large European and Asian owned firms in Kenya, which are not so affected by pro-citizen legislation. African manufactured items can rarely compete in price or quality with the big firms, and have to find a niche not already filled by these. In Machakos no African businessman has broken into manufacturing on a large scale. The constrictions on this sphere have kept Africans to the manufacture of objects which larger firms find unprofitable. Of note, however, is the manufacture of the famous Kamba carvings, which are found throughout the world. The main centre for the manufacture of these is a market centre called Wamunyu, about 25 miles from Machakos Township. These have been a success because of the specific African flavour. But although they bring a large amount of money to the carvers, they would bring even more if distribution and sales were controlled locally. Other manufactured items are things like charcoal stoves, oil lamps, and shoes made from old car tyres. These sell very cheaply, and, being in the hands of a very large number of small operators, can provide individuals with only a small, if steady, income. Possibilities for expansion assume rationalisation of the manufacture and distribution processes, which would entail the loss of effective control for individuals, as well as the considerable restriction on the activities of larger competitors, making cheap plastic shoes, for instance, or

glass-covered oil lamps. But at present the small African manufacturers do fill a need, especially for the cheap metal-ware, as well as providing themselves with a reasonable living.

A shop or stall is the favourite enterprise, however, requiring little capital and little previous skill or experience. One young man started with only Shs. 300 in capital, but took over a shop, a stall at the edge of the market selling the usual general food stuffs. This young man, George Musila, had worked as a shop assistant for two years in the same kind of shop, but bigger, and thought he could make this one pay, the previous owner, his father's brother, not being able to make enough to pay the rent. Some of Musila's friends had similar shops and they told him how easy it was to run such a shop. To buy the existing stock and the trading licence (Shs. 60) from his uncle Musila needed Shs. 572/75. But his uncle accepted the Shs. 300 which Musila had and accepted instalments for the remainder. Musila considered himself to have made a good move, and to be lucky in buying the shop from a relative as no-one else would have allowed him credit. He knew he did not need much capital for such a shop, and his home on the shamba was nearby, where he could sleep in order to save on overheads. Furthermore, because home was nearby, and Machakos was his 'home-town', he had a clientèle of friends and relatives which would be fixed and regular. After a year he bought a second-hand refrigerator for Shs. 325 so that he could sell cold drinks. His is only the second fridge in the market area, and has made a significant increase in his turnover. At the moment his weekly turnover is about Shs. 650, but on top of this there is credit worth about Shs. 100 - 200. He used to have ten credit customers, but some of these were poor at paying up promptly. There are now five, people he knows well, and who were regular cash-paying customers who bought relatively large amounts of goods. Musila will soon get four acres of

land from his father, but the shop cannot be forgotten. It brings, says Musila, "money which is useful, especially in the dry season". He has thought about trying to expand, but this would mean moving to the centre of town, where his overheads would be bigger, and his stock larger and wider in range. Musila is not sure he could handle all of that, and thinks it would be more trouble than worth while.

Some types of enterprise require less initial capital than the shop Musila ran. Muindi Mulelu had been unemployed for three years after the European whose servant he had been returned to Britain. Mulelu decided he had no chance of getting work unless he set up on his own account, and chose laundry work as this required little capital, and because he had experience in taking care of clothes. He rented a shop in the Swahili Village for Shs. 50 per month, bought an ironing board, irons and charcoal to heat them, and soap. At first things were difficult, as he was only washing the clothes of his friends, some of whom expected the service free. But after six months or so he became better known, the number of customers began to increase, so that now, after 31/2 years, he makes a profit of Shs. 100 per month. Mulelu does only laundry work, washing clothes in water, but has thought of doing dry cleaning, wiping clothes with petrol. For laundry work he charges Shs. 2/50 for a jacket, Shs. 1/50 for trousers, and Sh. 1 for a shirt. He sleeps in his shop, but his wife often comes in from the shamba to help him.

Another young man, Simeon Kitulu, was unemployed after leaving school, and felt very frustrated at having eight years' education but no chance of the kind of work he had come to expect. After helping his father on the shamba for over a year he started a stall in Machakos. He had Shs. 75, half of which his father gave him and half of which he got from selling sugar cane from the family shamba. One year's rent on the stall was Shs. 200 and the trading licence cost Shs. 60, but he was given credit worth Shs. 450 by an Asian

wholesaler for stock, and paid the rent in monthly instalments. The wholesaler let Kitulu have maize flour, sugar and soft drinks, for what was a small amount to himself but meant a great deal to Kitulu. Kitulu thinks that the Asian was willing to do this because he already knew the Asian slightly, because the Asian knew where he was working and could keep an eye on him, and because Kitulu had a considerable amount of education. When the shop first opened, Kitulu passed the word among all his friends, relatives and neighbours from home to come to his shop, and soon he had sufficient customers to keep the shop going. His first real break was during the serious famine of 1965. Kitulu had a stock of maize ready and people had no choice but to buy it. This allowed him to pay off all his debts to the wholesaler, who again gave him credit. After the famine, he had more regular customers. Most of his weekly profit of Shs. 100 now comes from clothes, which he started to deal in because, he says, clothes prices are not government controlled, so that he can bargain with the customers. At first he sold only second-hand clothes, but moved on to new clothes as well. Kitulu doesn't see any chance of further expansion. He could not move out of the township because he would lose his regular customers.

The question of 'who will give me custom?' is one which is carefully considered before opening a shop. There are so many small shops, particularly those selling general foodstuffs, that the consideration is realistic. In order to be sure of at least enough customers to set the enterprise going, a Machakos businessman mobilizes his network of rural neighbours, kin and friends. Although many of these expect special service, such as 'discount', credit, or free goods, others may not, and become the basis of a regular clientèle, or at least until the enterprise becomes better known. A small businessman in Machakos typically places his business, in terms of clientèle, between the general township population, an unknown public which he hopes to serve, and his personal network, a known quantity over which he has some influence. The personal network may be near enough Machakos, based in the country-

side around, to provide a stepping stone to the unknown, but larger, township population and visitors. Even after the business is established, kin and friends may continue to provide the nucleus of the clientèle, in terms of both regularity and the amount of cash they spend.

In an attempt to get a rough picture of a small shop's clientéle, I had my assistant observe business for periods in five small shops, three of which were the smallest type of 'stall' enterprise in the Swahili Village, and two larger shops, with 'walk-in' premises, in the main business district of the townshop. In all five cases, a substantial proportion of the persons buying from the shop were known to be shopowner before he opened his business, many of these being kin. Furthermore, these were the biggest spenders in each shop. Only very few customers were completely new to the shop, and most had been known to the shopkeeper, through his shop, over a period of years. Table 6.1 sets out the information gathered, and although no statistical inferences can be drawn from such sparse coverage, a few general trends can be seen.

	'large'		'small'		
	I	II	III	IV	V
Duration of observation(hrs)	53/4	4	6	2	61/2
Time shop open under present owner (yrs)	10	11/2	6	4	4
Total no. of customers observed	23	20	21	11	26
No. of customers known to owner before opening	5	10	4	6	10
No. related to owner	4	3	4	4	4
No. who have previously used shop	22	17	18	10	24
No. of customers living outside township	13	10	5	6	7
No. of customers living inside townshop	8	4	9	4	14
Dwelling place unknown	2	6	7	1	5
Total cash taken (Shs)	360	237	241	10	99
Total cash from kin	241	167	112	7	61
Ave. spent per customer	151/2	12	111/2	1	4
Hourly takings	621/2	59	40	5	15

Table 6.1. Five shops. Cash taken and clientéles.

In terms of cash taken, the most obvious thing is the dependence of shopkeepers on their relatives. In all five of the shops observed large sums were paid by kin, but as payment of credit in all cases. Marris and Somerset mention the giving of credit being seen by African businessmen as a quick way to ruin, but the shops observed here were all going concerns, the youngest being open a year and a half, and all were deeply involved with credit customers. But customers allowed credit were also in the special position of being kin. Of all credit transactions involved, only two were with non-kinsmen of the shopkeeper. Another form of credit used is the payment by a customer of a sum of money, maybe Shs. 20 or Shs. 30, after which he buys goods up to that amount, over a period.

What these five shops show is the close personal relationship between an African small businessman and his customers, a relationship based not just on trade but very often on something preceding the establishment of the trade relationship, such as kinship or propinquity. The businessman has an established clientèle of regular customers, and customers over whom he has a degree of influence outside his shop, and is thus protected to a large extent from competition from the host of other similar enterprises. The Machakos businessman uses his hinterland-dwelling network to launch himself on his urban venture, which continues to be supported by them. This applies equally to the two larger shops which were observed, situated in the middle of town, which would be expected to be patronised by a wider public. The lack of interest in shopkeepers in expanding by moving to a different town because they would lose this clientèle shows just how much they are conscious of their dependence on their personal resources in Machakos and around.

The small businessmen in Machakos are still, on the

whole, instrumental in their attitudes to town. The business is seen as just one more way of getting cash from town, and a method which in many cases has been a last resort, after failing to find employment by someone else. The possibility remains, of course, that they can graduate to higher things on the basis of their present resources, although most of them felt this extremely unlikely.

Are the African businessmen in Machakos entrepreneurs? And to what extent is the concept of entrepreneur useful in understanding their situations and actions? Fredrik Barth defines 'entrepreneur' as "someone who takes the initiative in administering resources, and pursues an expansive economic policy",[9] and according to Peter Marris,

> "Entrepreneurship is a kind of original and very practical perceptiveness - an ability to assemble and reassemble from what is available to one a new kind of activity, to reinterpret the meaning of things and fit them together in new ways. It is also a very concrete kind of imagination, alert to the specific opportunities of a particular time, improvisations for what lies at hand."[10]

The successful bigger businessmen are entrepreneurs according to both of these definitions. African businessmen at any level have serious obstacles to overcome, which requires ingenuity and patience. William Kioko is clearly a very clever entrepreneur, constantly turning over new plans in his mind, choosing carefully his strategies and holding his hand until the time is right. What is more, he began his career as a businessman through choice, knowing what he wanted. But at the level of small shopkeepers like Simeon Kitulu, the entrepreneur concept seems hardly applicable.

9. Barth (1963) p. 5.
10. Marris (1968) p. 35.

Kitulu, and others like him, imitate rather than initiate, and remain content with a steady income rather than risking expansion. The only aspect of entrepreneurship they seem to possess is the taking of the initiative in administering resources which Barth mentions. But even this often seems to happen reluctantly, as a last resort to earn money.

The level of the smaller businessmen has many aspects of the 'bazaar economy', but one which, due to its incorporation in a wider 'capitalistic' or 'firm-type economy' of wholesalers and larger businessmen, has also characteristics of the latter.[11] The plethora of small shops and stalls is reminiscent of the horde of small traders in a bazaar, the comparison appearing more apposite in the nature of the transactions taking place. The small shopkeepers in Machakos are not engaged only in impersonal, instrumental relations of trade, but have regular dealings with a personally-maintained, permanent clientèle, which to a significant extent owes its origin not to trade but to a pre-existing tie. It is to this that the small businessman owes his continued existence, like the bazaar trader, and he prefers this stability to the risk entailed in expansion. In this way competition is kept off the strictly economic level. The precariousness of business income is acknowledged in the continued investment by smaller businessmen in the land, unlike their more successful competitors, and their unwillingness to risk not providing a more solid economic security. They do not intitiate, but stick to established patterns in both business activity and investment in the land.

The work situation in public and private enterprise.

Having described the upper levels of government

11. Cf. Geertz (1962); Dewey (1962).

employment, and the nature of African private enterprise in Machakos, the difference between the 'unitary' structure of public employment and the 'atomistic' structure of private employment becomes clearer. In government, apart from there being a large number of employees embraced by the same bureaucratic structure, there is no clear distinction between employer and employee, to become a focus of employees' grievances. On the other hand, there is a body against which protest may be made and it is significant that the only 'strike' which took place while I was in Machakos was by government employees. These were primary school teachers who demonstrated outside the county council offices because they had not been paid for some time. Shortly after, the running of education in the District was taken over by the District administration.

In the African-owned private sector, too, there is very often no clear distinction between employer and employee due to the nature of African businesses as very often being family concerns, or one-man operations. In the absence of large private employers, any form of employees' 'consciousness' has difficulty in forming. Employees often work at below the official rates of pay, and for longer hours than permitted, conditions which they accept as part of the difficulty of finding work.

Chapter VII

THE MACHAKOS MUSLIMS

In Machakos, the African Muslim[1] community forms a kind of 'core' to the category of townspeople. The great majority of Muslims are permanently town-rooted, intending to spend their whole lives in town, having given up any claims to land, if rights in land ever existed for them, and many are completely town-rooted, having no direct relationships with persons or resources outside the town. In this chapter I will describe and discuss the Muslims from the point of view of their internal organisation, relationships to the rest of the township population, as well as their development as a community vis-á-vis the wider African population. Particularly significant for the Muslims have been the developments within them as a group since Independence, when they lost what had been a special place in township affairs, and had to enter competition with other Africans for township resources, especially building plots, on an equal basis. Since Independence, the Muslims can be seen to have reconstituted themselves as a 'quasi-tribe' to establish structural equivalence to the wider African population.

'Who are the Waswahili?'

This question has become something of a chestnut in East African studies[2], largely as a consequence of the

1. In Machakos there is also an Asian Muslim community, especially of the Shia Imami Ismaili sect, who should not be confused with the African Muslims. The African Muslims are of the Shaf'i variety, as are most in East Africa. Cf. Trimingham (1964).
2. Cf. Eastman (1971); Arens (1973).

uncertainty of social scientists rather than 'Swahilis' themselves as to what the term 'Swahili' means and when it is used. In Machakos, the term 'Swahili community' has long been accepted usage to describe the African Muslims by Europeans, Africans and often by the African Muslims themselves. 'Swahili' is not the only term used by the Muslims, though, who often prefer a 'tribal' term such as 'Kikuyu' or 'Kamba' to indicate that they are not descendants of the original coastal African Muslims. In other situations the same people will refer to themselves as 'Swahili' to identify themselves with the Muslim community.

Stigand's 'definition' (of 1913) maintains that a Swahili is

> "a descendant of one of the original Arab or Persian-Arab settlers on the East African coast. In the broader sense of the word it includes all who speak a common language, Swahili."[3]

This is now of little use, in that 'Swahili' is now also used to refer to 'up-country' African converts to Islam and their descendants, and the linguistic criterion is of little use now that Swahili is the lingua franca throughout East Africa. In Machakos, however, the problem is not who constitute the 'Swahili community', as all African Muslims do so, so much as how these persons refer to themselves. The term 'Swahili' has a value connotation, in being used by non-Muslim Africans to imply 'cunning', 'slyness' and other derogatory elements. 'Swahili', apart from its use to name a language, means 'Muslim'. It is used as a generalized category of African Muslims, and as such I use it here.[4] In Machakos, what is called the 'Swahili community' by outsiders contains pure Arabs and pure Kamba, and also those Muslims who are uncertain of their ancestry, but what sets them apart as a community and gives them common consciousness as such,

3. Quoted in Eastman (1971) p. 228.
4. My use is closest to that of Prins (1961).

and what they themselves use as the essential defining characteristic is Islam, and their allegiance to the local mosque. They themselves use the title 'Muslim' to refer to their formal organisation - the 'Machakos Muslim Community'. Many Muslims may still retain a feeling of Kamba, or other tribal identity, and describe themselves as such, and this may also apply to, for instance, Kamba who are a third generation of Muslims living in the township. Kamba Muslims in Machakos may retain their links with their non-Muslim kin, so have ties outside the town, unlike many of their Muslim friends. The main distinction significant for this terminology is that between how Muslims see themselves as individuals and how they see themselves as members of a group. Thinking about themselves as individuals, for instance when responding to questions such as 'Where were you born?' or 'What is your tribe?' a person may reply that he was born in town, or elsewhere, and is Kamba. But if questioned in the environment of his group, along with other members, he will describe himself as 'Swahili'. We will return to this difference below.

The Muslims in Machakos are a community based on common religion, demonstrated by common worship together at the mosque, and the common membership of associated Islamic organisations. There are few enough African Muslims in Machakos for all the adults to know one another personally. Furthermore, they are identified by outsiders, non-Muslims, as a community, not just by their religion, but by being associated with a specific area of town which is named after them - the Swahili Village - and by characteristic dress - white cap and long khanzu gown for men, and black bui-bui and brightly coloured kanga cloth for women, even though not all Muslims wear this. Many members of the Muslim community also appear physically distinguishable from the rest of the African population, by being 'Arab' in appearance.

Origins and development of the Swahili Community.

The Muslims in Machakos originate in three main

sources.

1. Many of the Swahili porters andaskaris employed by the Europeans who founded Machakos as a fortified trading post, as well as many of the Swahili traders in hides, ivory, etc., settled in the township for good, being permitted to cultivate patches of land for their own use. These people built the first mosque in 1902, and most were born at the coast.

2. It became the policy of the colonial administration to offer Swahili ex-government employees, scattered around Kenya and complaining of unemployment and landlessness, plots of land in certain specified townships, often as recognition of long and faithful service. Machakos was one of these townships.

3. Local Kamba intermarried with the Swahilis living in Machakos, and moved permanently to town, at the same time adopting Islam, or simply became converts to Islam and joined the Swahili community in town.

The manner in which the Swahili community was established is significant, in that its members were seen either as exploited, destitute people who had been given the charity of land in Machakos at nominal rent, or as converts not just to Islam, but from a more 'primitive' state of existence, who should be given privileges and assistance as a 'civilizing influence'. What is more, the 'destitutes' saw themselves as such. The correspondence between European officials, as well as the few still-existing written requests for aid from Swahilis, makes this clear. One official wrote in 1909,

> "...there are scattered about in the Kyambu district squatting on various farms a number of middle aged Swahilis many of them are men who have served the Govt. for years in the old caravan days others are retired Swahili traders whose occupation is gone. The Limuru farmers formerly bought the potatoes these people raised at 1/- per load but have now combined to reduce the price to 50 cents. The Swahili squatters who have in some cases been for several years on the farms and put a good deal of labour into the land are very indignant at the way they

are being treated and beg for land from the Govt."[5] And the District Commissioner of Kiambu, H R Tate, wrote to the Provincial Commissioner, Ukambani, in October 1909 as follows -

> Bearer Saleh bin Hadji has applied to me for assistance....Bearer and about 25 other Swahilis have been living near Limuru for the last year - some on Mr Buxton's land and some on Mr Tever's. Owing to the low price of produce at present the owners of the land will allow tenants on their property only on condition that they sell all their produce at-/50 a load. I will not be a party to any such agreement and the tenants themselves are not willing.
> These men like Saleh are old Headmen - past strenuous work on Safari - but anxious to get plots of land in this Province....
> Whenever I travel in the neighbourhood of Limuru deputations of these men follow me and ask me to help them....Some of them have literally nowhere to lay their heads."[6]

Not all officials, on the other hand, were convinced as to the good character of all of these Swahilis, and in 1910 the DC of Kiambu wrote -

> "...with the exception of the Swahilis at Fort Smith (now Nairobi), who were originally a community of Govt. ex-employees, the type of Coast native in this District is an undesirable one...
> They have proved a complete failure as native tenants on Europeans' farms and have become a positively undesirable element in Kikuyu...
> I therefore recommend that steps be taken in this District to repatriate if possible the Swahili..."[7]

In 1910 the decision was taken to grant plots of land to such persons, this settlement to be restricted to within the boundaries of certain specified townships, including Machakos.[8] In Machakos Township Swahilis were given the lease (referred to as TOL, or Temporary Occupation Lease)

5. KNA DC/Mks. 10a/9/1.
6. KNA DC/Mks. 10a/9.
7. DC Kiambu to DC Nairobi, KNA DC/Mks. 10a/9/1.
8. Other township suggested were Kitui, Mumias, Fort Hall, Nyeri, Embu, Kisii. Memorandum from Provincial Commissioner, 4. May 1910. KNA DC/Mks. 10a/9.

of a piece of land inside the township at nominal rent, on which they were supposed to build a home and grow food crops. The lease could be revoked if it was not built on, or if the lessee was absent from it for more than six months.[9]

Kamba converts to Islam were looked upon by administrators with a mixture of pity, benevolence and disgust, most account being taken of their legal position - whether or not they had forfeited rights in land, or whether or not they were entitled to move outside their tribal area - as 'in between' the traditional African system and Islam. The DC Machakos wrote that

> "...if Haji (i.e. an African convert to Islam) desires to be treated as such, he is frequently dismissed with remark that he is 'Mshenzi' (Sw.lit. 'a savage'); but if he desires to be treated as 'Mshenzi' he is told he is a 'Haji' and can enjoy no native rights therefore. I think converted natives should not only continue to enjoy all their former rights and privileges (but also those) a higher state of civilization brings... Generally I think every encouragement should be given to converted natives...because in theory at any rate, they are a civilizing influence..." 10

On the other hand, the DC Kitui wrote that the 'Wahaji' were

> "an undesirable class representing the vices of the Mshenzi and Swahili without the virtues of either. They therefore require to be under supervision. To meet this I would recommend that land be set aside if possible near Townships or Bomas and that the Wahaji be collected into a Wahaji location of their own. This could be made to include the Swahili and non-native of the district not including the Indians."[11]

The basis was thus established of the present Swahili community - a category of persons seen by the administrators, whether benevolently or not, as outcasts, leftovers and misfits, and who saw themselves as being exploited, destitute and needing help, and claiming, and being given, special privileges. Although there is no reliable evidence either way, we can guess that the Kamba converts were accused not only by European administrators, but also by their families and friends, of shirking their duty and preferring a life of vice and

9. KNA DC/Mks. 10a/9.
10. DC Machakos to PC Nairobi, 17 June, 1910. KNA DC/Mks 10a/9/1.
11. DC Kitui to DC Nairobi, 8 june, 1910. DC/Mks. 10a/9/1.

immorality in town, and for what seemed thin excuses and doubtful reasons. It is difficult to tell now why Kamba moved into town and became converted to Islam. Most of the Kamba members of the Swahili community today are second or third generation townspeople, whose parents or grandparents moved from the country and adopted Islam. I could find no townborn Kamba who were not also Muslim. People can not recount the motivations of their forebears with any accuracy. Women married Swahili men, men married Swahili girls, necessitating conversion to Islam. Marriage was not, however, the only reason for becoming Muslim. As well as standing up to family pressure to return to the land, a person wishing to remain in town requires to compensate for the loss of the 'sickness and old-age insurance' which the rural social system provides. The Muslim community in Machakos is an alternative, which even has 'alms-giving' as a written legal requirement. It is also worth considering whether adopting Islam could have been used as an excuse to remain in town, to offer some kind of legitimacy to family and kin for becoming a townsman.[12] As well as coastal people and Kamba, the Muslims include members of other 'up-country' tribes such as Kikuyu, Meru, and one or two Ugandans and Tanzanians. These people all seem to have spent some time wandering around Kenya from job to job, or town to town, and eventually settled in Machakos, or have been brought there by their parents when small. Some were landless, some say they just 'left' their rural homes. Somewhere along the way they became Muslims, most saying because their 'friends in town were Muslim'. One man, a Meru, said that he became a Muslim

12. Cf. Grindal (1973), who writes, on the basis of data collected in Accra, "...that the migrant's relationship to Islam and the urban Islamic community is directly related to insecurities resulting from leaving one's native area and confronting an alien and often dangerous, urban environment, and that Islam provides the migrant with the instrumental means by which to facilitate his adjustment to urban life." p. 333.
He also writes "the migrant's devout orientation towards Islam and the Moslem community serves to rationalise his independence from his traditional kin, thus alleviating anxieties caused by the strain in this relationship." p. 340.

in 1931, after he had arrived in Machakos, where he worked for Somali cattle dealers. He said that he"liked the religion because it was strong in town, and there was no tribal hatred among Muslims. You could belong to any tribe and it made no difference to them." The adoption of Islam is simple enough - a profession of belief that there is "None to be worshipped but Allah; Mohamed is His prophet." Kamba would already be circumcised. 'Swahili' dress might then be adopted, or only part of it, such as the cap.

There was hostility between 'true' Swahilis from the coast and the Kamba and other converts. This trouble surfaced innocuously enough in a scuffle in the market, but escalated into a dispute concerning the position of Township Chief. The Chiefship was long to be the focus of contention.

A township chief was first created around 1914, when the nember of permanent township residents became sufficient to warrant it. His duties included collection of taxes, the settlement of minor disputes, but the most important ones were connected with Muslim marriage disputes and inheritance. The creation of a Township Chief, or, as he was also known, Swahili Village Headman, acknowledged the Muslims as a fully urbanized population. Other Africans came under the jurisdiction of their Chief in their 'tribal area'. The first chief was an Arab teacher of Arabic at the mosque, named Ma'alim Rashid, whose downfall was brought about because of opposition based on the resentment of Kamba Muslims to the fact that the 'real' Swahilis controlled the chiefship. Some time around 1922-23, two men, Abdalla Waita, a Kamba Muslim convert, and Juma Hassan, a Swahili from the coast, had a fight in the market over a basket of bananas, which both claimed to have bought. Abdalla was defeated in the fight, but retaliated by calling for supporters from the crowd which had gathered. Juma did the same, and soon a general scuffle was in progress between a group of Kamba, Muslims and non-Muslims together, and 'real' Swahilis. Rashid, the chief, was called in after the

fight to settle the original dispute over the bananas, and decided in favour of Juma. Abdalla was not satisfied and complained to the European DC, who reversed Rashid's decision. Abdalla had been able to produce eye-witnesses to support his case, but Rashid had ignored them. The DC forced Rashid to resign, for showing favour to Juma Hassan because he was a 'real' Swahili.

Obviously, for an incident which occured nearly fifty years ago, there will be inconsistencies in the way it is remembered. One version, for instance, is that Abdalla and Juma fought alone in the market, and that Rashid, who had been watching, ridiculed Abdalla for being beaten by a much younger man. Abdalla is then said to have mobilized the Kamba Muslims to complain to the DC that Rashid was not doing his job properly by favouring the Swahilis. But both versions agree that the incident took place, that the dispute was between Kamba Muslims and Swahilis, on the issue of the Arab chief favouring 'real' Swahilis, which caused the DC to remove him. That the incident is remembered at all, including even the names of those involved, so vividly for some of the old men in Machakos, is a measure of its importance, and the importance for them of the issues involved.

After Rashid's resignation, disagreement continued. The Swahilis supported the return of Rashid, but the Kamba Muslims wanted a Kamba for chief. Such was the disagreement that the DC realized that no chief would be able to do his job properly, so he instituted a committee to carry out the duties of chief, composed of mainly Kamba Muslims. The next chief was appointed in 1927. This man, Sharif Ahmed, was a Swahili, but managed to get the support of the Kamba Muslims through his mother, who was a member of the committee standing in place of a chief. The Swahilis and Arabs resented Sharif's apparent siding with the Kamba, but Sharif harrassed his main opponents (according to the present chief) by reporting to the DC that their houses were

insanitary and unsafe, so that some of them were pulled down. In face of this kind of action, many of Sharif's opponents left Machakos for Nairobi or Mombasa. The present chief remembers all of this mainly because his mother's sister's house was one of those demolished. Sharif died in 1934, while still in office. How his behaviour could take place, right under the DC's nose, was probably due to the fact that DC's had very little interest in Township matters. Annual Reports make hardly any mention of the Township, and, when they do, show a preoccupation with the state of buildings and sanitation. Reports refer to the 'Swahili Community', and take no account of the interval division.

Tensions within the Muslim population continued into the 1940's, when a further incident illustrated the issues involved, in this case the 'real' Swahilis considering the converts to have an alternative existence in the country, unlike themselves, who had only the township. In 1942 there was a serious drought and famine in the district. Mjahidi bin Makka, an Arab, was chief, and was told by the DC to make a list of destitute members of the 'Swahili community'. Mjahidi gave the names of 'real' Swahilis only, saying that the Kamba and other converts could go back to the reserves to get food from their shambas. Whether this attitude was widespread among the Swahilis is uncertain, because the whole Muslim population had become so tired of Mjahidi's corruption (for instance keeping half of charity collections for himself) that they united to complain to the DC and get rid of him.

A new chief, Ramadhan bin Musa, was elected in 1947, and in 1955 this man began to sit on the Township Committee to represent the 'Swahili Community', the first African to do so. The present chief, Omari Mailu, has held office since 1956. He was appointed, rather than elected, but no-one knows why ("There is no way of knowing why Europeans do things.") He is, however, the first Kamba

Muslim to hold the office. One explanation given to me is that the DC depended heavily on his African clerks for character assessment, and that the clerks consulted by the DC were Kamba friends of Mailu. The chief's assessors (older men who assist and advise in dispute settlements) made no objection, however, when they were informed of the choice.

Hostility between Kamba converts and 'real' Swahili seems to have died down by this time. This may have been partly a consequence of intermarriage between them. But what seems to have been a major force in pulling the Muslims together was the approach of Independence, and the transformation of the old Township Committee into the Masaku Urban Council, part of Independent Kenya's local government hierarchy. The Muslims had a considerable interest in this body, which was the body supervising the allocation of building plots in the Township. Although Muslims had been expected to grow food crops for themselves, very few now did so, and instead made a living by wage labour, running 'hotels' in Machakos, or renting out buildings for accommodation to the growing migrant labour population. The greater the number of building plots a person controlled, the higher his income. If a man has, say, six plots, which he might accumulate through inheritance as well as leasing them himself, he might build dwelling rooms on three or four of them, for rent, rent one out as a shop or hotel premises, operate another as a hotel himself, and live with his family on one. A person with six plots has a secure and steady income, and is a relatively rich man, and only a few people have so many. The temporary nature of the leases to be obtained on such plots was, and still is, however, a cause for continued concern among the Muslims. Although the Government now wishes to make the leases permanent, this will be only on condition that the occupiers erect permanent buildings on them, which few people can

afford to do.

In 1956 the Township Committee had four African members out of a total of eleven. These were Malinda the township clerk, two other Kamba representing African businessmen and the African District Council, and a representative of the 'Swahili Village Community', Ismail Ahmed, a Swahili hotel owner (who had taken over this Committee seat from the chief). At Independence this man Ismail Ahmed became Chairman of the newly-constituted Masaku Urban Council, which was dominated by Machakos Muslims.

The central institution of the Machakos Muslims is the mosque, the most recent rebuilding of which was in 1965, when the women actually made the bricks and carried out the building. Muslim affairs in Machakos are run by the committee of the 'Machakos Muslim Community', of which all Muslims in Machakos are members (through the mosque) and which since 1958 has been annually elected. The main moving force has been Ismail Ahmed. It was he who was also responsible for the greatest achievement of the Muslims so far, of which they are proudest, the setting up, in 1958, of the 'Machakos Institute of High Islamic Studies'. This Institute grew out of the older Koranic school in the mosque. Ahmed met representatives of the Saudi-Arabian government in Nairobi, and invited them to Machakos, where these representatives were begged for help in improving the standard of Islamic studies in the township. Soon two teachers were sent from Saudi-Arabia, at the expense of the Saudi government, and after another year another teacher came from Egypt. Pupils now come from all over East Africa, almost all financed by the oil-rich Saudis. The Institute has moved beyond the mosque, and in 1965 moved into premises which previously belonged to the Hindu community in Machakos. The Hindus were very unhappy about selling what had been their place of worship to a Muslim

organisation (see ch.IX.). They wanted Shs. 100,000, but the Muslims had only Shs. 20,000, which they handed over as deposit, and occupied the building. When the Hindus demanded the balance, Ismail Ahmed approached the Egyptian Ambassador in Nairobi, who explained that the Egyptian Government could not help. However, he gave Ahmed a United Arab Airlines ticket to Cairo and advised him to try the oil companies. This worked, and Ahmed got the money. Contact with Arab countries is still very close. Ambassadors are constantly visiting the Institute and the mosque. At a recent party, the Ambassadors of Egypt, Sudan, and Libya were all present. The Machakos Muslims have expanded not only their activities, but also their horizons.

As table 3.4 indicates, Muslims are now about 24% of the total African resident population in Machakos. There is an underrepresentation of Muslim adult males because they migrate for work away from Machakos, in the same way that rural people migrate to towns. The Swahili community, as it can now be described, has thus the same kind of imbalance as has the rural African population. The Muslim community is poor, in spite of the links with the Arab world which bring finance for specific projects, thanks to the considerable generosity, whether self-motivated or not, of Arab companies and governments. The Muslim men who work in Machakos do so in poorly paid jobs as unskilled labour, or have hotels or shops. The original hide trading continues but in a much protracted manner.[13] Many of the men are unemployed, have no land to occupy their spare time, so hang about their homes, or wander the streets of the township. One or two are quite wealthy - Ismail Ahmed, and a cattle-dealer/hotel owner, and a dairy owner - but these are exceptions. Only three people have been on _haj_ to Mecca. Most cannot afford to build permanent dwellings on their plots, and continue to live in the rickety mud-walled,

13. Only one small operator remains.

tin-roofed structures, which are often extremely unsafe, not to say insanitary. The two Muslims with the highest positions in Machakos - a government department head and a senior bank worker - are not members of the Swahili community, both being coastal people doing a tour of duty in Machakos. Both tend to hold aloof from the Machakos Muslims; one spends more time with his government colleagues, the other has many contacts with the Machakos Muslims, but thinks little of their theological standards, describing the Kamba Muslims as "primitive people who learn religion like a parrot".

Links outside Machakos

Links beyond Machakos for the Muslims tend to be to other towns, particularly Mombasa, rather than to the land. The great majority of the Muslim population is permanently town-rooted. Many of the original coast people or their descendants, as well as many of the members of the 'up-country' tribes, are also completely town-rooted, having no land or direct links outside Machakos. The coast people may, however, have close ties to kin in Mombasa or Nairobi, who are frequently visited. Brothers, sons, daughters, grandparents, are visited in these places, letters exchanged, to maintain the ties.

The Meru, Kamba, and other descendants of 'up-country' converts, if they have rural-dwelling kin with land, have often given up claim to their share of the land, recognizing that they have lost their rights in land through long absence. Juma Yusuf, a Meru who became a Muslim in 1927 while working in Machakos, last visited his brothers in Meru in 1946. Once his brother's son came to Machakos to visit him, and then his brother himself, to try to persuade Juma to return to Meru, saying his proper place was there with his family. But Juma said he would live where he pleased. Now he would like to travel to Meru to see his family, before he dies, which he says "is the

wish of any old man to see his birthplace". He knows his land is now lost. His brothers have put their own crops on it. Juma expects to live what is left of his life in Machakos.

Another Meru, Salim Mrefu, married a Swahili girl in Machakos in 1931, and became Muslim at the same time. He decided to stay in Machakos for good, but visited Meru quite often. He has not been there now, however, for many years. He has tried to persuade his own sons to go to Meru to cultivate his share of the land, but they refuse, even though they often pass through Meru to bring back <u>miraa</u>[14] to Nairobi and Machakos, which is how they make their living. But they are not interested in the land. Salim says that children today are useless, and do not know how to work the land. He says of his sons "They're real town people now. The can't even speak Kimeru".

Some of the younger Muslims with land may still intend retiring to it, and may actually be having it cultivated. A Kamba busowner, whose father and father's parents were Muslim, and who is married to a Muslim girl in Machakos, has land near Kitui which is being cultivated by his mother, which he intends retiring to. In spite of exceptions such as the latter, the Muslims in Machakos, and their ties beyond Machakos, are overwhelmingly urban-based. And not only that, their stance is increasingly towards the wider world of Islam, and is not subsumed by Independent Kenya. (There are one or two Muslims in Machakos born outside Kenya - in Saudi Arabia and Somalia, for instance, who were brought to Machakos as children.) It is not uncommon for Machakos Muslims to have large portrait photographs of Nasser in their homes, and some of the better-off also have photographs of themselves wearing Arab robes. To go on <u>haj</u> to Mecca is an ambition

14. <u>Miraa</u> is a mild narcotic, chewed in twig form by Muslims in Kenya and other countries. Although it is on the WHO list of prohibited crops, it is regarded in Kenya, especially in Meru District, as a cash-earning crop.

shared by many. The links to the Arab world, particularly through the Machakos Institute for High Islamic Studies, grow stronger, and the local Muslims are extremely proud of their independent achievement in creating these ties. One man proudly told me about the scholarships which are available for people to study in Kuwait, which he stressed came direct to Machakos, without passing through the Kenya government or any other agency in Kenya.

I have suggested that some Kamba and other 'up-country' people may have adopted Islam to provide a convenient and acceptable explanation for becoming townsmen. On the other hand, no new male converts have appeared for some years. Male Kamba Muslims now tend to be second or third generation, apart from the old men and women. This may be related to the growing population in Kenya, and hence the ever-increasing pressure on the land, particularly when fewer persons than expected find alternative means of livilihood in wage labour. Given this situation, with the value of land rising, and so many persons trying to buy extra, or bigger pieces, of land, it may not be surprising that prospective townsmen no longer need to account for leaving the land completely, to counteract pressures against doing so. A brother in town is one fewer claiming his inheritance on an already overcrowded and fragmented shamba. Women, on the other hand, are still being absorbed by intermarriage.

The Chief

Until the Muslims began to be represented on the Township Committee by Ismail Ahmed, the Chief assumed all of the leadership among the Muslims. As well as collecting taxes for the administration, he was the leader in purely Muslim affairs - the teacher in the mosque, the arbitrator in disputes, the adjudicator in inheritance matters and divorce, and the registrar of marriages. His duties often

took him into dealings with non-Muslim members of the population, but he was regarded first and foremost as the representative and leader of the Muslims. It was not until the Muslims became incorporated in a more representative local government system that this leadership role began to fragment, partly because more representatives of the Muslims were involved, in a more bureaucratic system, partly because the community had grown in size, but local government also provided a new channel through which ambitious individuals could further themselves.

The present chief, Omari Salim Mailu, is about sixty years old, and was born in Kilungu, only about twenty miles from Machakos. His mother brought him to Machakos while he was still a baby, because she left her husband, and came to live with her Muslim brother. Mailu was sent to the mosque's Koranic school and learned Arabic (from Rashid, the first chief), and later became teacher of Arabic in the school, where he taught for twenty-four years. In 1945, because of his ability to read and write Arabic, he was appointed Registrar of Mahommedan Marriages. Mailu says he was appointed Chief because he had proved himself capable of holding the office.

Mailu's most significant duty now is the hearing of minor disputes, which he tries to settle without having to pass them on to a higher court, with a more formal procedure. The chief's hearing of disputes is an extremely personal, informal procedure, with very few characteristics of the type of legal procedure in a formal Western-style court, such as those over which the Machakos magistrates preside. The chief takes into account his knowledge of the persons involved, the circumstances surrounding the actual case, he threatens the disputants, often tries to make them reach a compromise, and often takes little account of the presence or absence of 'evidence'. To assist him he may call some of his _wazee_, twelve 'assessors' drawn from the older men of the Muslim community, but most cases he decides alone. The _wazee_,

however, are not any more impartial adjudicators than the chief. The last time a large group of them assembled concerned a case in which they were, in fact, witnesses, involving a motor-car.

A man who had bought a second-hand car for Shs. 1000 complained to the seller later that the car was in disrepair, so the seller agreed to repair it and return it in good condition. When he did not do so, the buyer complained to the chief. This case, said Mailu, should really have gone to a 'proper' court, because such a large sum of money was involved, but he knew the persons involved and thought he could use his personal influence to settle it. The assessors, too, knew many of the details of the case. The chief and assessors together persuaded the seller to return the car to the buyer, although without all of the repairs having been made.

In another case, a woman came to Mailu because she had inadvertently left her handkerchief in a shop, with Shs. 500 wrapped in it. The shopkeeper had denied any knowledge of the handkerchief, and would return neither it nor the money. The woman begged the shopkeeper to give her even Shs.400, but still he refused to admit any knowledge of the money. The woman did not go to the police, because she knew that she had no evidence, no witnesses, nothing, and thought that even if the police _did_ throw the shopkeeper in jail, she would not get the money back. She went to the chief, who asked her why she had not come to him immediately the money was lost, to which the woman replied that she did not like to accuse the shopkeeper of theft, and thought she could recover at least part of the money herself. Mailu believed the story. He knew the woman slightly, as far as he knew she was reliable, and thought her reasons for not going to the police very acceptable. Mailu had the shopkeeper brought to his office, but there the young man still refused to

admit that he had kept money not rightfully his. After two days of fruitless persuasion, Mailu even called in the man's parents from the countryside, to have them try to make the shopkeeper see sense. Under this kind of pressure, the shopkeeper eventually admitted that he had kept the money, and returned Shs. 300 immediately. He had spent the rest, but repaid it, under the chief's supervision, over three months. Because the handkerchief had also contained a Charity Sweepstake ticket, he had to pay an extra Shs. 2 to cover it as well.

In this case, all of the people involved knew that the case would never stand up in a formal magistrate's court, and that personal knowledge and persuasion were necessary to resolve it. Both cases demonstrate what Mailu himself claims to be his great advantage, his ability to work on a personal, face-to-face level, completely at odds with, and free from, the sort of procedure followed in a magistrate's court. This treatment goes beyond just the Muslim community, all members of whom Mailu knows personally, to the wider African population of the township and beyond into the countryside, from where Mailu fetched the shopkeeper's parents. But it is the Muslims whom Mailu knows most intimately, and by whom is most respected, and among whom most effective. Mailu brings a clearly Muslim flavour to his work, in his wearing of <u>khanzu</u> and Swahili cap, and also through his tendency to quote Islamic proverbs and the Koran to people brought before him, which also emphasise his paternalistic position.

<u>Ismail Ahmed and the Urban Council</u>

Since the Chief's authority became fragmented just before Independence, allowing other Muslims to compete for power and influence, Ismail Ahmed has been the most prominent local Muslim politician. He has considerable

achievements to his credit, including the Machakos Institute for High Islamic Studies, and it has been through his activities that the Muslim community in Machakos has become so closely integrated with the pan-Islamic world. Ahmed is a significant character also because of the way he used the Machakos Muslims as a springboard into national politics.

When Ismail Ahmed first began to sit on the pre-Independence Township Committee, he was a young man with ten years' education, considerable for the time. He made his living by keeping a hotel which his father had started, but augmented this by other interests in trading and transport. When the Township Committee became Masaku Urban Council, four of the nine elected members were Machakos Muslims, and Ismail Ahmed was elected Chairman at the inaugural meeting. This was not unexpected, as Ahmed had been a member of the body, representing the Muslims. Ahmed now, however, proceeded to use his position to advance himself materially and politically. One of only a few persons who had applied for a government house-building loan, he persistently failed to make repayment instalments, and was described by an auditor as a 'major defaulter'. The suspicion was also expressed that he had been supplying one of his own firms with Council contracts without declaring his interests.

In 1967 an external auditor was called in to examine the financial status of the council, and it was confirmed that in the first four years of the existence of the Council, there had accumulated a deficit of over £9,250. The clerk to the Council, an Asian, had disappeared when he realized that an audit was to be made, apparently responsible for the loss. This clerk had been one of two co-signatories necessary on cheques for traders' invoices, wage bills, etc., the other signatory being either the DC or the Chairman of the Council. The Asian clerk had simply written cheques in excess of the amount required, and when the cheque was cashed, pocketed the difference. He had to obtain, however, the second signature. The cosignatory

either did not bother to ensure that he was signing a cheque for the appropriate amount, or was in collusion with the clerk. The clerk destroyed all the old cheques before his sudden departure, so it was not possible to be absolutely certain who had signed the inflated cheques. The DC was a highly respected person and has since been promoted in the administration to Provincial Commissioner.

Ismail Ahmed's interest in Machakos and the Urban Council declined considerably, as he began to spend more time in Nairobi, where he had just set up a transport business. In 1968 and 1969 he was rarely present at Council meetings, and when he did turn up, it was usually either late, or for only part of the meeting. Ahmed's political ambitions, too, had reached Nairobi and national politics, for in 1969 he resigned from the Urban Council to stand for a seat in Parliament. But his building of a political following outside Machakos had started too late, or was just unsuccessful, because in the election he was heavily defeated.

In Machakos, dissatisfaction with Ahmed among the Muslims had become considerable. He was felt to have betrayed the Muslims by spending so much of his time and attention on Nairobi, to have abandoned the people who had first accepted him as leader, in spite of all the obvious and tangible benefits he had obtained for the Machakos Muslims, and so obviously not caring about the Urban Council. The Muslims have lost their dominant position on the Urban Council. The new Chairman is non-Muslim, and only three members are from the Swahili Community. When I left Machakos, a number of younger men were bidding for the leadership of the Muslims.

The Muslims have probably outgrown the need for Ismail Ahmed. They are now a well-organized community, whose inner conflicts based on descent have been largely submerged. The role of Independence as a catalyst for this development is considerable, but a political entrepreneur like Ahmed was

undoubtedly necessary to get off the ground, let alone conceive, a prestige project like the Islamic Studies centre. Independence has acted to draw the Muslims together also in order to obtain control over what they saw (whether realistically or not) as an important resource-controlling agency - the Urban Council.

The apparently recent unity among the Muslims is worth looking into. The split between 'real' Swahilis and 'up-country' converts does not appear to have surfaced since all the Muslims mobilized to unseat Chief Mjahidi. Indeed, so far has unity as a group evolved that the distinction may be denied. Not long after I began to investigate the Muslims in Machakos, I attended a meeting of the Islamic women's association, Tawakkl. In order to estimate the 'coast' and 'up-country' origins among the members, I had my assistant make a quick check on the birthplaces of a number of the women. The male secretary of the Machakos Muslim Association, who was also present, stated that this was quite unnecessary, as all the women present were 'Swahilis', implying that they were all born in town, or at least of mixed parentage. He seemed almost surprised when I was able to show him that out of the first thirteen women questioned, only eight were 'Swahilis' in his sense, and that of the five others, all of whom were of Kamba descent, only two were born in town. The male secretary knew perfectly well beforehand, however, that a large proportion of the Machakos Muslims were Kamba. When I asked him later, he even knew the rough proportion of the Swahili community which was Kamba by origin. But the first time he met me, he had been speaking for the group, to an outsider. It is the 'Muslim-ness' of the group which is stressed to the outsider, and in this way internal differences are denied. The previously felt distinction seems to have been submerged in order to counter what is perceived as a threat from non-Muslims in general. This 'threat' is undefined, but may be characterised as the same type of opposition between tribes which typifies urban Africa. The Urban Council was one focus of this competition,

even if the Muslims felt the competition to be more real that it really was. The issue of control over building plots through control of the Urban Council was something of a straw man, which covered a less specific desire of the Muslims to keep control of township affairs in general.

In drawing together, the Muslims have assumed a quasi-tribal status vis-á-vis the wider African population. Thus 'Muslim-ness', or 'Swahili-ness', is articulated through religion, dress, language and, sometimes, sport. Football in Kenya is noted for its use in articulating and expressing tribal rivalries. The Muslims' football team, Young Islam, plays in the Machakos District League. I watched them play a nominally friendly match against Machakos Boys' School. As the drama of the match heightened, tempers shortened, until the match almost had to be abandoned. The Kamba schoolboys who made up the school team complained most vehemently that the Muslim boys, in spite of the fact that a number were known to be Kamba by birth, and to be able to speak Kikamba, refused to speak Kikamba to the schoolboys during the verbal altercations of the match. On the other hand, the Muslim boys complained about the schoolboys taunting them in "that _shenzi_ language Kikamba".

The most obvious parallel for this process is what Cohen describes among the Hausa of Ibadan, who 'retribalized' by stressing their distinctiveness through the adoption of a particular order of Islam.[15] The Hausa _emphasized_ their distinctiveness rather than created it afresh. The Machakos Muslims represent a different type of process, because, unlike the Ibadan Hausa, they had never been a single group, and had to establish themselves as such by denying internal differences, particularly those of origin. The forging of group consciousness and solidarity

15. Cohen (1969); cf. also Proudfoot (1961), who describes a similar process of Muslim solidarity emphasis in Freetown, Sierra Leone.

among the Machakos Muslims is better described as the attempt to create a 'quasi-tribe', in that what common traits there were, i.e. religion, the Swahili language, and, to a certain extent, dress, were emphasized in order to establish the feeling of cultural homogeneity within a divided population.[16] The process of 'quasi-tribilization' allows the internal division to be denied. Hence the Muslims constitute a 'quasi-tribe', and now stand in structural equivalence to the rest of the African population. They see themselves as organized in opposition to the non-Muslim Kamba, with whom they believed they were in competition for control of the Urban Council, as well as being 'threatened' in an undefined way. The causes of the establishment of Muslim solidarity in Machakos are mainly political, in that the emphasis on cultural homogeneity was initiated by the political upheavals accompanying Independence, and was directed to cope with these. On the other hand, following Charsley, who suggests migration as a major cause of 'the formation of ethnic groups', seeking to qualify Cohen's emphasis on ethnicity as a particularly political phenomenon,[17] migration has played a significant role for the Machakos Muslims. They were orginally migrants to the town, and have been replenished by Kamba and other migrants to Machakos. That is, one reason for the lack of solidarity is their diverse origins, although this only came to be denied with Independence. In this situation, migration is one reason for the Muslims' ethnic heterogeneity, while political circumstances required them to deny this, and to emphasize their cultural homogeneity and distinctiveness. The Machakos Muslims are more comparable, however, to the Kampala Kenyans described by Parkin, than to the Ibadan Hausa, in terms of the <u>way</u> in which they emphasized their

16. Cf. Gulliver's discussion of 'particularism', Gulliver (1969).
17. Charsley (1974).

distinctiveness.

Parkin describes Kenyan 'expatriate' workers in Kampala, mainly Luo and Luhyia, and the way these had to redefine their stance towards Ugandans and Ugandan politics when Uganda became Independent, for fear of resentment at their holding key positions in the Kampala labour force.[18] Parkin describes the way in which, on the one hand, status differences within the Kenyan tribes became secondary to tribal solidarity in the face of external political pressure, and on the other hand, the way in which Kenyans could demonstrate their

> "voluntary' extrication from Ugandan politics and... acknowledge publicly their acceptance of expatriate status by an exaggerated... ceremonial interest in their own country's politics."[19]

In both Kampala and Machakos the peoples requiring to adjust to a new political order were occupationally dependent on public or private employment, although some Machakos Muslims were self-employed and some unemployed. The Ibadan Hausa, on the other hand, were economically self-sufficient. Like the Kampala Kenyans, who emphasized "the already useful rural-based ideology of kinship and descent",[20] the Machakos Muslims emphasized an already-existing ideology of common religion. The Ibadan Hausa, although already united by Islam, took up a new order of this which better fulfilled their needs of setting themselves apart from local Yoruba.

18. Parkin (1969).
19. Parkin (1969) p. 181.
2o. Parkin (1974) p. 127.

Chapter VIII

CAREER, MIGRATION, AND OCCUPATIONAL CHOICE

Having described the different categories of workers and migrants in Machakos, and the nature of their involvement in Machakos as an employment (or unemployment) centre, we can now look at their involvement in the town in the perspective of their other work experiences, possibly in other places. Machakos is only a constituent part of a much larger system, the existence of which is acknowledged by all the workers and potential workers in Machakos, many of whom have direct experience of it. Although many persons prefer to work in Machakos, the constraints on their choices, plus the necessity of their somehow finding work, usually mean that Machakos has to be treated as just one more place, if a more desirable place, where work might be sought. People may seek work, and work for periods in several different places in Kenya, and maybe even in another country. They may also spend more than one period in the same place, and punctuate periods of work with periods of unemployment, whether voluntary or not, living on their shambas or elsewhere.

We have discussed the kinds of considerations made by people in coming to Machakos, whether they come through conscious preference, such as the commuters who recognize the social and economic advantages of working near home, or whether they come through command, such as the government officials posted to the town. We have seen workers at different levels consider their involvement in Machakos itself, but what kinds of previous work experience do they have, and how has their career been shaped?

Any one person's work experience can be expressed as a linear development through time, in terms of the type

of work first held, where this was, how long it was held, and so on to further positions up to the present one in Machakos. The most obvious term for this pattern is 'career'. Ulf Hannerz defines career as "the sequential organization of life situations",[1] and this would seem to be as good a definition as any, provided that the 'life situations' refer to work situations, or workseeking situations, whether in town or country. We ought also to remember that 'sequential organization' may appear to refer to something more deliberate or planned than it actually is, so that conscious organization on the part of some individuals will tend to be supplied by the observation of the anthropologist. Hannerz mentions two useful contributions to anthropology of what he calls 'career analysis'. First, it provides "one way of understanding what it is like to be a member of a given society", and second, that it might tell us "not only about how people fare in a social structure, but also how their typical passages (from situation to situation) influence its shape".[2] Furthermore, however, career analysis ought to provide more than just another picture of 'how people live'. It should be able to provide us with how a given society constrains to a greater or lesser degree its members to act in particular ways when making decisions about where and what kind of work to do, which, after all, are among the most crucial decisions people have to make.

Patterns of migration.

Figure 8.1 shows the migration experiences of workers in different categories in such a way that the type

1. Hannerz (n.d.) p.2.
   Hanson and Simmons (1968) use to concept 'role path' to trace the series of experiences of urban migrants, but to cope with analysis of their 'adjustment to the city'. Cf. also Hanson and Simmons (1969). Cf. also Kapferer (1972), who analysis the way in which tailors in a Zambian clothing factory choose this particular occupation.
2. Hannerz (n.d.) p.3.

PROFESSIONAL (A)

O (University in USA)

O (University in Uganda)

(Univ. in U.K)

30 25 20 15 10 5 0 Years

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPERVISORY (B)

C O (Univ. in Czechoslovakia)

O C

C

C C

ROUTINE CLERICAL WORKERS (C)

Migrants

E

Commuters

P

U

SHOPWORKERS (D)

F F
F
C
D
E
?
F
F
Migrants
F F
E
C
E
E
E
C
O
O E
Commuters

Figure 8.1. African Male Labour Force, Occupations and Places of Work. (LFS)

of work they have held may be compared against the place of work, the whole career being seen as a process leading to the present occupation in Machakos. Peoples' present situations in Machakos, or rather their situations when I spoke to them, may be seen as the immediate culminations, or the momentary consequences, of sequences of actions. The information is based on the work experiences of the labour force sample, since respondents were about fifteen years old.[3] People may be compared on many variables - the extent to which they change their type of job, the extent to which they have moved around the country, their job security, the extent of their urban experience as opposed to wage labour in the country, and so on. This information tells us not only about the mobility of the Machakos labour force, but also, more generally, about the way these workers have reacted to the work-seeking task in Kenya, and the way they have exploited a labour market in which there is very heavy unemployment, among people of similar qualifications, or similar lack of qualifications. Only a few people, at all levels of work, have spent time only in Machakos, and periods of unemployment are very frequent.

Because the categorization of workers has a degree of arbitrariness (see Ch.III) the extent to which a person appears to change category may not have much significance. On the other hand, some workers do take radically different kinds of job as they move around the country. It may happen that an out-of-work clerk works as an unskilled manual labourer, or that a well-qualified school-leaver works as a shop assistant until he finds something which he thinks suits his qualifications. On the whole, though, it can be seen from the figure that

3. Cf. similar data, but in table form in Garbett (1960), which is diagrammatized in Mitchell (1969a).

workers in Machakos tend to have generally the same kind of job with which they started their working careers. The categories of worker in which changes take place most frequently are the shop workers and the skilled and semi-skilled workers. The shop workers have often spent periods as manual workers and vice versa, but this is not so significant in that shop work is often no more demanding of skills or experience than manual work. Furthermore, we have already seen that a person might open his own shop as an alternative to unemployment. The 'professional' and 'administrative supervisory' workers are least threatened by unemployment, and have greatest job stability. The 'professionals' enter their category immediately they enter employment, straight from university or other professional training. The 'administrative' workers have spent periods working as ordinary 'clerical' workers before promotion ot their present level. It is these two latter categories of worker who have profitted most obviously from the coming of Independence, stepping into the shoes of departing Europeans - the doctors, District Officers, government department heads and bank officials. The professional workers presently in Machakos are no more 'city experienced' than other workers, although they are more 'city oriented'. They would prefer to be in Nairobi, where all the career prospects lie. (See ch. VI.)

The 'adminstrative supervisory' workers tend to have had longer working careers than the professional men, due mainly to the fact that they have had to work for promotion to their senior level, rather than attaining their present positions through formal qualifications like the professionals. The 'administrative supervisory' men in the sample are all except one, who has studied in a Czech university, older men, who have worked as clerks for long periods. Only one commuter appears in the sample at this level, a man who has never worked outside Machakos, and

has only recently become a departmental head in the county council administration.

Among 'clerical' workers, the most notable difference from those previously mentioned is that periods of unemployment begin to show. These periods of unemployment are, however, experienced only until a person finds work, after which clerical work seems secure. Only one person in the sample of clerical workers has a period of mid-career unemployment, and he is again something of an exception in also having worked as an unskilled manual worker. This particular man is now a primary school teacher, with Standard 8 education, who worked as a labourer for six months in Machakos after he left school, being unable to find employment for which his education suited him. Labouring work was also not so badly paid in that he was able to commute from close nearby. He became redundant, however, and was unemployed for half a year before finding his present work.

Unemployment may, of course, be voluntary, such as when a person stops wage earning in order to put more time into his shamba, or gives up one job to look for a better one. This kind of unemployment is infrequent, though. Few people will admit to having lost their job, and the latter kind of explanation is undoubtedly given to cover up sacking. Similarly, people dislike admitting pre-career unemployment. Figures for unemployment are, if anything, undervalued. Manual workers and shop workers often lost their jobs through redundancy - employers completing a contract, cutting back on overheads, going bankrupt. They also lost them through default - drunkenness, absenteeism, petty thieving and inefficiency.[4] Losing a job in the latter way often seems, to the observer, like semi-voluntary redundancy, where a person persists in behaving in a manner

4. Cf. also Elkan (1955).

that is bound to cost him his job. Given the general difficulty of finding work in Kenya, the seeming casualness of a person losing his job in this way appears almost reckless. (Reckless, that is, to a person brought up among British attitudes to work.)

'Pre-career unemployment' and 'mid-career unemployment', leaving aside the question of whether it is voluntary, imply different things. 'Pre-career unemployment' is the inability to find work immediately a person completes his education or gives it up, or otherwise first begins to look for work. This may be taken as a measure of the inapplicability of the skills of the work seeker to the type of job he wants, the scarcity of the type of job he wants, or the extent of the competition the workseeker faces from other workseekers. Of those presently working as routine clerks, few suffered pre-career unemployment, and of those who did, many have been working for some years. Most recently employed clerks seem to have found work without much trouble. On the other hand, we do not know how many people are seeking 'clerical' employment. We can, however, compare the educational level of present clerical workers with other workers, to see how many potential 'clerks' are doing other things. This does not mean that all people with qualifications for 'clerical' work want this kind of work, but most do, in spite of the fact that other kinds of work, such as skilled manual work, is sometimes preferred. 12% of shopworkers with at least nine years' education would suggest that at least some of them might prefer a higher level of work, but have taken shop work as an alternative to unemployment.

Pre-career unemployment is particularly heavy among shopworkers and manual workers, whether skilled or unskilled. About 30% of shopworkers suffered from this, increasing to 40% of skilled/semi-skilled workers and 50% of unskilled workers. This implies that the fewer

	Education in Years (%)							
	0	Up to 5	5-8	9-10	11-13	14-16	More than 16	total
Professional	-	-	-	-	-	50.0	50.0	100.0
Admin.Sup.				75.0	-	25.0	-	100.0
Clerical	-	-	37.5	27.5	25.0	10.0	-	100.0
Shopworkers	6.0	27.7	54.2	8.4	3.6	-	-	99.9
Skilled/semi-skilled	5.9	51.0	39.2	3.9	-	-	-	100.0
Unskilled	25.0	40.0	35.0	-	-	-	-	100.0
Total (% of)	6.4	28.2	44.1	11.4	6.4	2.5	1.0	100.0

n = 200

Table 8.1. Education of African male labour force, by occupation (%). Source LFS.

the skills required for a job, the greater the competition for them (even assuming that shop work and the various kinds of manual work lie on a par with one another concerning skills required), or that a lot of people at this level are looking for work beyond their capabilities.

Mid-career unemployment is that which occurs <u>between</u> jobs, and may be taken as a measure of job security, or the attractiveness to the worker of a particular job, compared to, say, working on his shamba or looking for something better. The professional workers, administrative supervisory workers, and 'clerical' workers on this sample do not seem to be threatened by sacking, or to wish to stop working for periods. Once they have their jobs it seems possible for them to stick to them. Certainly they change their jobs, but without going through a period of unemployment in between. Mid-career unemployment becomes more prevalent among shop workers and the manual workers. We must remember, of course, that the shape of a person's career is also a function of his stage in the life cycle, or his age. On this sample, many workers are young, in their first jobs, and have held them only a short time. We cannot say they will not be affected by unemployment.

I have already suggested that in Machakos small businesses may be set up as an alternative to unemployment. Persons faced with unemployment also have the possibility of prevailing upon kin to employ them. Of 68 shopworkers in the sample, 34 either own the business where they work, or are employed by a close kinsman, most often a father or brother. This may also account for the greater number of persons among shopworkers who have been working in Machakos for a relatively short time. Again, shop work is what may be taken by school leavers until better work, hopefully, is found. Mid-career unemployment occurs with much less frequency than pre-career unemployment, remembering, of course, that persons presently in their first job can not possibly have experienced it, and that not all persons actually wish to work as soon as they are around fifteen years old, but may voluntarily remain on the land. It is noticeable, however, that mid-career unemployment frequently occurs after a person has had work in a category other than that of his present work, and often in a work place other than Machakos, this place more often being a city - Nairobi or Mombasa - than an other town. The work seeking experience in Nairobi is well-known and quite well documented - it is extremely competitive and extremely frustrating,[5] which may account for the preference of people for taking work in Machakos after losing or leaving a job in the city.

Some men come to Machakos with a variety of urban experiences behind them, others having worked in the rural area. City experience is fairly evenly spread over all of the work categories except the unskilled manual workers, who tend not to have tried their chances elsewhere, even those who have been working many years. They tend to have been working longest in Machakos, and

5. Gutkind (1967).

more than half have been unemployed atleast once. The skilled and semi-skilled men more frequently have experience of working in a rural area or small market centre. Many of these men are carpenters, cooks or tailors, who have learned their trade in the country before finding better-paid work in town. Rural employment for these men has rarely been more than a stopgap, for training or until something better is found. The difference between rural and urban wages has long been blamed for the flood of workseekers to the towns.[6]

Commuters do not display notably different career characteristics until the levels of manual labour, where they tend to be the workers who have been working longest in Machakos, as we noted in Ch. III.

The patterns of migration are formed not just by individual motives, for people are not free to work where they wish, in the job of their choosing, but must operate within what is virtually an employer's market. The sequences of actions made by individuals are the results of an interplay between their personal resources, aspirations and motivations, and other constraints acting on them - the value of these resources, the realism of their aspirations, the need for cash, the pressures imposed on them by other people. These constraints may operate in ways that the individuals recognize and understand, such as from kin, local employers, school, and in ways that are neither understood nor even recognized - the national economic situation, ministerial decisions, international market prices etc. These latter constraints act upon individuals in such a way as to constitute a set of external determinants over which he has no control. Others he has some influence upon, although they may be highly susceptible to influence by the external determinants. That is, values may be given by society and the economic system to certain assets possessed by the individual, such as educational level, the possession of skills, the ownership

6. Cf. Gertzel et. al. (1969) pp. 74-7; Sheffield (1967)

of land. Each individual manipulates these constraints, as far as he recognizes them or understands them, in terms of his own resources into choices or strategies. People may be mistaken in their judgement whether a particular asset has value enough to make it worth investing in. Education is a case in point, having been sought by many persons on the grounds that it would ensure a prestigious, well-paying job. Education no longer ensures this, but people still invest in it, and school fees are one of the most important reasons people give for earning money. It is impossible to attain a secure, high prestige occupation without a fairly high education, although for certain kinds of success in town, it is not necessary, such as in business.

There is a shortage of persons with qualifications other than scholastic ones. The possession of a scarce urban/ industrial skill such as carpentry or motor mechanics may be independent of school education. Some people realize this, and try to provide themselves with such abilities, possibly after they have attended school and realized that their school education is not the key to success. One person, for instance, could not find work in spite of having reached Form 2 in a secondary school. He attended, therefore, a typing course in Nairobi, paid for by the brother with whom he lived in Nairobi. When this skill did not increase his chances of finding work, he attended a school for motor mechanics in Machakos, paid for by his father. He thinks that he should be able to find work as a mechanic, even though it was not his original ideal.

The possession of skills may be supplemented in the search for work by the possibility of prevailing upon help from other people, either influential people who can offer work or further contacts for work, or simply fellow tribesmen or kinsmen who can offer food and shelter and information about likely work in the area. Work seekers may actually spend time cultivating such patrons, visiting them in their offices, trying to do them small favours. An

influential kinsman, especially in a government office, is considered a valuable asset. The practice of family members providing work for one another is so widespread in Kenya that it has become enshrined in the term 'brotherisation'.

To forego the necessity of working in town a man needs a fair amount of land. Very few have this, and those who have are often the urban-based élite, who least 'need' it. In Machakos the poorest people tend to be the landless, who have to find all of their own and their families' needs in town. Possession of even a small piece of land means that urban work may not be so economically crucial, so that a person may choose to work for a shorter period, or leave one job in search of a better one, which may also entail shifting place of work. On the other hand, the commitment of African workers to the land, strengthened and expressed in cultural attitudes, and the requirement to constantly remit cash to the countryside, dissipates capital, where this is used to maintain a second household as well as to support uneconomic agriculture. People are discouraged from being more adventurous in the search for work, because they can never build up savings to tide them over a spell of work seeking. The two goals of more land and education for children are incompatible and contradictory - incompatible in that there is rarely enough cash for both to be satisfied, and contradictory in that the one entails buying a firmer place in the peasantry. On top of this, the attitude that people ought to return to the land negates the value of purchased land, which will be dissipated by fragmentation among heirs.

The interplay between constraints and assets is a complex one. The decisions involved may not be reached rationally, even taking into account incomplete knowledge of the factors involved. The amount of choice open to individuals may be small, not just at the bottom end of the market, but also for highly positioned people in government being transferred around the country.

Chapter IX

RACIAL DIVISIONS AND INTERESTS

Throughout Kenya the most readily perceived social cleavages are determined by race. This has been the case since the Europeans first set foot in the country with long term plans, has persisted despite Independence, the replacement of European government officials by Africans, and despite the continual inroads made by Africans into the sphere of commercial enterprise hitherto dominated by Asians. The three main racial groups have kept their separate identities; outside the work situation interaction takes place predominantly between members of the same race; each racial category is very largely endogamous. The Europeans, Asians, and Africans are recognized as having separate, often conflicting, interests, and racial differentiation tends to be emphasised by this conflict; members of each race tend to unite and identify with their fellows in either the attempt to maintain the racial status quo, or alter it, in their own interests.[1] Race relations in Machakos, as in the rest of Kenya, are characterised by the fact that both immigrant races, European and Asian, are tightly-knit and inward-looking, disdaining contact with Africans, and having few, if any, common interests on which to base interaction with each other. This pattern has hardly changed since the beginning of the colonial period.

1. An account of race relations in Kenya in terms of a 'bargaining model' of tacit and direct negotiation between the three racial groups is Rothchild (1973). Rothchild says "Ethnic and racial groups that are widely embracing in their identities are more nearly comparable to states than to other domestic groupings based on class, profession, partisanship, or religious affiliation." p.3.

The Europeans in Machakos.

For many years the only European residents in the township were the government officials and their families, with the exception of a single European storekeeper, who opened shop in 1920. These Europeans were all temporary migrants to the town, in almost the same manner as the Africans. They expected to fulfil a tour of duty in the township before returning to Britain or being transferred elsewhere. As the rural homestead was to the Africans, so was 'UK' to the Europeans. The only permanent Europeans in the district were the settler farmers, who lived on their farms around the township, often at a fair distance. The first settlers to be allocated land by the government near Machakos arrived in 1906. At first they reared ostriches for their magnificent tail feathers, to be exported to Europe at Shs. 35 each to adorn Edwardian ladies' hats. But the motor car killed this fashion, so the settlers tried wheat farming, which was ravaged by disease, weeds and locusts, and then they tried cattle, and later coffee, with which they soon prospered.

The government and non-government Europeans appeared to get along well with one another, unlike the situation in other parts of the colony, partly, no doubt, on account of the very small European presence in and around Machakos.[2] The Europeans had to stand together, and were a tight-knit community. Machakos was a 'happy station'[3].

2. Nearer Nairobi, there was vociferous argument between settlers and administrators. The government was attacked as being composed of career-mined bureaucrats, who had come to Kenya only for a specific tour of duty so had no real interest in the country's future. They were accused of appeasing the Asians and of being insufficiently firm with the Africans. The settlers demanded more land, the conscription of African labour, the stopping of Asian immigration, and that settlers be given a greater control in government. Cf. Bennett (1963); Sorrenson (1968).
3. Tanner (1964) and (1966) discusses the similar situation of European communities in Tanganyika.

The 'Ulu Settlers Association' was set up in 1908 to "promote the welfare of the settlers, and to lay suggestions before the government" - the first meeting, however, was held in the District Commissioner's house. The name was soon changed to 'Machakos District Association', and the settlers performed various administrative duties on local government committees. Both settlers and officials gathered in the townshop for sports meetings - cricket, tennis, horse racing, rifle shooting. A 1912 newcomer wrote "I was quite surprised to find that Machakos was more like an English village with its houses and gardens and picturesque huts..."[4] Machakos had the first race track in East Africa. The British saw themselves as the unquestioned élite.

Just before Independence in 1963 there were 130 Europeans in the township. These were government officials, some school teachers, and medical staff for the hospital. Many of the settler farmers have since left, and those remaining do not expect to be in Kenya much longer, as the government intends buying them out, to turn their farms into African co-operatives or settlement schemes. The government officials have gone, replaced by Africans, but with a few European 'experts' in certain departments, such as medical and veterinary. These experts and their young families help towards the increase in the European population since Independence, which is mainly the result of the increase in the number of families with young children. Most Europeans are secondary school teachers on short term contracts, like the experts, arranged by the British Ministry of Overseas Development, as part of the British aid package to Kenya. Some Americans are similarly employed, as well as a few Danes, Norwegians and Dutch. These 'expatriates' are as much migrants as their colonial predecessors. They are attracted to Kenya by the possibility of working for a time in a good climate, with a standard of living much higher than

4. "Machakos District Association Celebrates Sixty Years." Unpublished collection of papers in the possession of Mrs N Hill, Machakos.

their salaries would buy in Britain, with servants and a bigger car. The financial incentives are strong - an inducement allowance plus a gratuity at the end of the contract. Most of the British immediately renew their contracts for a further two years. The majority of the expatriates are young, with children too young for school, which they will attend when the family returns home. They want to enjoy a brief spell of Kenya and all its advantages before settling down at home, which is determined by school age of children more than by anything else, parents preferring not to entrust their children to the Kenyan primary school system.

School teachers live on compounds attached to the four government secondary schools in Machakos. Machakos Boys' School is particularly dominated by European staff, in 1969 nineteen out of a staff of twenty-five being European. Living together on the compounds allows constant interaction between European families. While husbands meet in the staff room, wives have coffee together, unfettered by housework or children, each of which is the responsibility of servants. The separate school compounds are in turn connected by mutual visiting, joint school activities, and leisure time spent together at the Club.

In the constantly turning over European community, some continuity of membership is allowed by the handful of European permanent residents. An Italian garage owner and his family, the manager of a small canning factory in the District, for instance, are prominent in the community, but are doubtful of their future in Kenya. This degree of uncertainty is an important factor in European life in Machakos. The school teachers and other expatriates share this, the feeling of harassment by African administrators, the care not to say anything which might be overheard and construed anti-African, or as ridiculing anything African. There are precedents which show this fear to be justified. In the face of at least the feeling of African hostility, Europeans feel they must

stand together.

The only Europeans who stand apart from this community are the Protestant (Africa Inland Mission) mission workers, who live on their own compound just outside the township. Their strict, fundamentalist, Protestant code of conduct forbids participation in activities which would bring them into contact with other Europeans; the ban on both drinking and dancing bars them from practically every leisure time gathering at which Europeans are present in number. The local Roman Catholic priests are not as retiring.

Machakos Sports Club provides the focus for most joint European activity, and brings the remaining settlers into the township community. Even the Protestant missionaries play tennis at the Club, even if they do not actually enter the buildings. The Club provides varied sporting facilities and a bar. All of the Europeans, with few exceptions, are members of the club, and non-membership is cause for comment. In colonial times the Club was racially exclusive, and brought together both settlers and officials in an informal atmosphere in which they could assert their common 'European-ness' despite other differences, and let their hair down and enjoy themselves in a situation where it was unneccessary to uphold European prestige, out of sight of their African subordinates. The Club was both a powerful socializing device for newcomers, who had to accept the common values of British colonialism and behave according to them, or to be ostracized and have no social life, and a milieu in which these values could be continually and publicly stated and maintained. After Independence the Club was obliged to accept members of all races, but it is still an overwhelmingly European institution.[5] It is a mark of some prestige for an African to become a member, to appear to attain acceptance by a European institution (see Ch.VI.). But Europeans, by and large, remain separate from African members; they have difficulty in finding common

5. Similarly, the local Anglican Church is still known among Africans as the 'European Church'.

grounds for conversation, and in addition, many Africans' English is not good. Africans, with only one or two exceptions, do not play sports, but keep to darts, which is played in the bar. Asian members are few, but take vigorous part in sports so here find common ground with Europeans, which sometimes also extends to mutual home visiting. Asians can, and do, join the European community on this basis of common interest. But they must pass the tests - they must be keen sportsmen, good conversationalists, and they must pay their turn at the bar.

The new African administration has not become entirely certain of its status vis-à-vis the Europeans, and the Club has become the focal point of African attempts to assert their authority and ascendancy over Europeans. For years before Independence Africans were treated in a paternalistic manner, were conscious of the contempt in which most Europeans held them, and still know all too well the nature of the snide comments often made by Europeans about their genetic ancestors, general intelligence and administrative ability. Europeans had assumed that Africans would not for a very long time, if ever, become capable of running their country, so the relative suddenness of the handover of authority to Africans could only add to the uncertainty and lack of confidence of the Africans. The European administration and the most uncompromising settlers left the country, but still in Machakos there remained a sizable group of Europeans who were very closely associated with the old administration by virtue of the existence óf the Club, where practically all Europeans were seen to unite. The Club is still envisaged as the European institution par excellence. Europeans use the sports facilities, Africans do not. In the bar Europeans and Africans sit apart.

In February 1968 the administration made a major attempt to demonstrate its hegemony over Europeans, to emphasize the supposed reversal of roles brought about by Independence. An incident occurred which is now a cause

célèbre among Europeans in Machakos, and which was even mentioned in the British press, when a young European was arrested and brought to trial for allegedly naming his dog 'Jomo', after President Kenyatta.[6] From what I could gather from witnesses to the incident, and from the official court record, the European, Miller, entered the bar of the Club late one evening, to join some other Europeans and an African businessman, Nzioka, who had had quite a lot to drink. Miller also brought his dog into the bar, which is contrary to Club rules. Nzioka pointed this out, but agreed to allowing Miller to enter the name of the dog, as Miller's friend and therefore guest, in the Visitor's Book, which the African barman handed over. The name of the dog, 'Juno', was duly appended, amid the atmosphere of a joke. Nzioka left the bar, but returned later accompanied by a senior police officer, who inspected the Visitor's Book. Miller was arrested and put in jail, charged with 'conduct likely to cause a breach of the peace'. Attempts to bail Miller out of jail were refused, on the grounds, given by the duty officer, that "We can treat Europeans however we please." Miller's lawyer's application was refused on the grounds that "the approach of the advocate to the Chief Inspector was not pleasant." Bail was eventually allowed by the African Resident Magistrate, who overruled strenuous attempts by the police to keep Miller in custody.

At the hearing, the two chief prosecution witnesses were Nzioka and the barman. Both of these testified that Miller had entered the Club with his dog, and had entered his dog's name in the Visitors' Book as 'Jomo', at the same time pointing to the statutory photograph of Kenyatta hanging over the bar, saying that the name of the dog was the same as the President. Several defence witnesses were produced, testifying that the dog's name was Juno, and that this was what had been entered in the book. Miller had at no time pointed at the President's

6. I have published a version of this incident as Lang (1972).

photograph or mentioned his name. The prosecution produced the Visitors' Book as an exhibit, but the relevant entry was written in s scrawl, which could quite easily have read either 'Juno' or 'Jomo'. Counsel for the defence cross-examined at length the two main prosecution witnesses and the senior police officer who had investigated the case and made the arrest. In the course of this, the witnesses were shown to have fabricated evidence at the behest of the police, and the magistrate threw the case out of court . The police officer was shortly after transferred to another town.

The police, and therefore the administration, had attempted to treat a European in the same way that they thought the European police and administration would have treated an African in a similar situation before Independence. The police repeatedly made remarks asserting their authority and ability to treat Miller in the manner they did. Africans in this incident were attempting to show to Europeans the consequences of insulting an African, and that the pre-Independence period, when they could have got away with it, had passed. Africans were now in control and Europeans had to toe the line, and would now get a taste of the treatment they used to hand out to Africans.

The African District Commissioner has harassed the Club in various ways since the Miller incident. He has several times threatened closure of the Club, insists that dances in the Club be held only with his direct permission, to be obtained by a personal visit of a senior committee member to him in his office. He has called the Club a 'security risk', and has cancelled Club functions, by his own decree, at the last minute. The Club, in turn, has reacted by electing as President an African ex-army officer, now a local farmer and businessman, along with one or two more African committee members. This President is a mere figurehead, and has not the personality to assert his influence at committee meetings, and the Club is effectively run by the European vice-president, treasurer and secretary.

The administration is clearly hostile to the continued existence of this European enclave in Machakos, regarding it as a threat by the former colonialists to its authority. The Europeans, for their part, have not capitulated to what they see as unwarranted interference in their own affairs. Europeans treat the whole issue as evidence that the African administration takes over-blown notice of petty issues concerning its own authority and prestige. This view tends to shore up the widespread European belief in their own superiority over Africans, that Europeans like themselves will be indispensible to Kenya for a long time to come, because "Africans were given Independence too early" - a phrase heard time and again from Europeans throughout Kenya.

A paradox is that despite the disputes around the Club, and despite the ill-feeling that exists between Europeans and administration, it is admitted by both Africans and Europeans that relations are much better in Machakos than in the great majority of towns in up-country Kenya. Although at the high structural level between European community and African administration there is tension, at the level of individual relationships there is accord over racial distinctions. Of note is the fact that in 1969 Africans find it easy to join the Club in Machakos, which is not the case for the European Clubs of Nairobi, Nakuru, or Nanyuki, for instance, where prospective African members have great difficulty in finding club members to sponsor their admission. Machakos Sports Club requires the support of its African members, for financial reasons, there being too few Europeans in Machakos to support the Club by themselves. And in Machakos, Europeans and Africans do get together, and sometimes drink together at the bar, even if they feel more at ease in mono-racial groups. Individual African members are fully accepted by the Europeans, in taking part in sports and sharing the educational level of the Europeans, some having studied in European or North American universities. The only tennis-playing African member, one of the school headmasters, says

he prefers to live and work in Machakos, in spite of the fact that he is not Kamba, and has been offered posts in Nairobi. Nowhere else in Kenya, he says, could he play tennis, because of the difficulty in breaking into what is elsewhere an exclusively European and Asian activity.

Europeans no longer hold the exclusive right to the top posts and the highest living standards. On the other hand, Africans, in spite of Independence, have not completely moved into, and taken over, the sector of positions with European salary scales. Europeans are still paid salaries higher than even a fairly senior African administration official, and are seen to cling to their pre-Independence style of life. Africans feel they still do not effectively rule the Europeans. It is not surprising, therefore, that there should be a measure of resentment at the seeming flouting by Europeans of the promise of 'Independent Kenya' and Uhuru.

The Asians in Machakos.

Whereas the Europeans in Machakos, like most of the Africans, are temporary migrant workers, the Asians are permanent townspeople, having been born in the township and having intended spending their whole lives in the Township.

The Asians in Machakos, as in the rest of the country, have always found themselves in an ambivalent situation, caught between Europeans and Africans but with a changing relation to each. Until Independence, Asians were the employers of the Africans and political opponents of the Europeans. Today their economic role is in jeopardy as an African government legislates against them, and they find themselves in a weaker strategic situation than the Europeans, who still have valuable assets to offer, in the form of specialist teaching ability and other professional and expert services requiring long training and experience.

And the Asians are too deeply divided among themselves to be able to unite and form themselves into a solid force sharing mutual interests, as the Europeans have done. In Machakos the main division within the Asians is that between Hindu and Muslim, the latter represented particularly by the Shia Imami Ismaili sect whose international leader is the Aga Khan. There are two separate Asian communities, each based on religion, between which there is considerable rivalry and jealousy. In addition to these two main religious communities, there are representatives of other sects, such as Sikhs and Jains. Sikhs tend to identify with the Hindu community but these very small Asian minorities have strong ties with the larger communities of their religions in Nairobi, where the principal religious festivals are held.

The Kenyan Asians began to be afraid for their security just after the Emergency of 1952-1960, when it became clear that Africans were to have a greater control in government. At Independence in 1963 there took place from Machakos (as from the rest of Kenya) an exodus of Asians described to me as 'of panic proportions'. Asians were given the option of becoming Kenyan citizens or of retaining their British or Indian or Pakistani passports, and a time limit of two years from Independence was set within which aliens had to apply for Kenyan citizenship. Virtually all Ismailis applied for, and became, Kenya citizens, following the advice of the Aga Khan to treat Kenya as their home and in this way to demonstrate their allegiance to it. Fewer Hindu took up Kenya citizenship. In Machakos, the disparity between the numbers of Hindu and Ismaili Kenyan citizens is very large, an indication of which may be seen from the table below. These figures were collected from details on application forms for trading licences for 1970, in the office of the Machakos DC. Obviously this excludes many Asians, such as professional people and those who are not directors, shareholders, or owners of commercial enterprises requiring government licences. It does, however, give a reasonable

indication of the nature of the disparity between citizens and non-citizens, granted the difficulty of collecting data on such a highly sensitive topic. In Machakos I was strongly discouraged by the leader of the Hindu community from making such enquiries among his people, for fear of arousing suspicion of government spying. The trade licence applications include, as well as citizenship affiliation, applicants' surnames, which are an accurate indication of religious sect.

	Kenya citizens	Non-citizens	Total
Hindu	14	20	34
Ismaili	9	-	9
Other	-	3	3
Total	23	23	46

Table 9.1. Citizenship of Asian applicants for trading licences.

Many Hindu became Kenya citizens, but many more did not, aware of the existing African resentment of Asians and particularly the possibility of legislation enabling Africans to move into the sector of Asian enterprise, and wishing to keep their options open, the possibilities of emigrating to Britain or India should events turn against them. The exodus of Asians from Machakos at Independence consisted mainly of Hindus, who constituted the bulk of non-citizens. Ismailis in Machakos, as in the rest of East Africa, consider themselves to be, and are said to be, more 'Westernised' than any other of the Asian communities. The Hindu, by contrast, are characterized as inward-looking and conservative, Hindu women remain in strict seclusion, many speak no English, requiring apart from their vernacular (which in Machakos is Gujerati) only Swahili, and only a few words of that, to speak to their African house servants, and sometimes to help out in the family shop. They seldom leave home except to attend worship. In Machakos, every day around five in the evening, can be seen twenty or so Hindu

women, all dressed in beautiful silk saris, walking through the town for their daily stroll in family groups of five or six, from old grandmothers to young girls. These women are rarely seen at other times. Ismaili women, except for very formal occasions, wear western-style clothing. They speak English and commonly may follow careers of their own. Hindu say these women are 'cheap', and resent their 'aloofness'. The Ismailis are said by Hindus to be 'separatist' for not joining common cause with them. The Ismaili community is much smaller than the Hindu, but has its own mosque, which the whole community attends every evening. The Ismailis intend spending the rest of their lives in Kenya, and their prospects for the future are enhancedby their having a powerful leader. This man has risen beyond Machakos politics and the pre-Independence Township Committee to become, supported by his considerable commercial achievements, the only Asian minister in the Kenya government. The incorporation of the Machakos Ismailis in a wider, national community of the Ismaili sect entails stronger ties with their co-religionists in Nairobi than with fellow townsmen in Machakos.

The Hindu community in Machakos is too small to support the taboos on interaction, commensality, and other restrictive customs regulating inter-caste contact, so a fully fledged caste system does not operate. Nor is there a system of 'caste groups' which exists where there are large minorities of Hindu, as in Kampala or Nairobi.[7] Hindu in Machakos attend communal worship in the 'Hindu Sabha'. Caste distinctions in day to day activities are either ignored, or sublimated by such mechanisms as the joking relationship. Thus, note can be taken of caste inequality at the level of individual interaction, but in a manner which does not arrest the continuation of the activity. If two men play a game together, the winner might exclaim "A Brahmin beaten by a Shoemaker!", or in a game of bridge someone might say "Two Patels against two Patidars!" This occurs only in post facto situations. Teams are not deliberately formed on caste

7. Cf. Morris (1968).

basis, but caste differences, once noticed, are acknowledged. High caste confers prestige, but low caste is not a stigma.

Hindu had their own recreational club, known as the 'Indian Sports Club' until Independence, when the name was changed to 'Gymkhana Club', although it is still widely referred to by its former name. No Africans have joined this club, because it does not cater for African interests. There is no bar, and the accent is on games like badminton and volleyball in which Africans do not participate. If Africans wish to join a club they join Machakos Sports Club. The Hindu now use the building also for worship, and the name Hindu Sabha has replaced 'Gymkhana Club' over the door, yet again announcing its Asian character. Until 1965 the Hindu community had a temple for the specific purpose of worhsip, in the central area of town. However, such was the decline of the Hindu community after Independence, that the remaining members felt sufficiently insecure to feel it necessary to dispose of some of their assets. They were so nervous about the immediate future of Asians in Kenya that they feared there would be so much Asian property up for sale that there would be no price for it. Such was their haste that they were willing to sell their temple to the African Muslims. It is with shame that Hindus look back on this event, now described as 'catastrophic'; self-recriminations are particularly aroused by Muslims slaughtering cows in what was once a Hindu temple. The community admits it was overhasty in this sale, and that it was unnecessary - but a manifestation of their panic after Independende. Hindu remain pessimistic over the question of their future, and their uncertainty has increased. In 1967 new legislation made non-citizens temporary workers in the country, on permits issued for a maximum of five years, and renewable every year. And the 1968 British Commonwealth Immigrants Act meant that those holding British passports could not automatically take up residence in Britain.[8] The African administration know they

8. Cf. Steel (1969).

have been known to take advantage of this, together with their awareness that the Asians feel insecure, to avoid paying their bills to Asian traders, garage owners etc. The Asians are also an easy source of funds for Kanu.

One of the first reactions from Asians who wished to remain in Kenya after Independence, was to apply for citizenship, which many did only after the most recent restrictions were announced, after the two year limit had expired. In many cases a family business was involved, so only one or two members of the family became citizens, and trading licences applied for in their names. Not uncommonly, families have been split, some members living in Britain or India while others, Kenya citizens, remain to work the businesses. Alternatives are to enter partnership with Africans, who then apply for the licences. The government has complained that this sort of arrangement is yet another way in which Asians use Africans for their own ends, and although threats are made against those involved, there is little the government can do to stop it. What does cause concern among Asians is the fact that citizenship may not be absolute protection. The government reserves the right to revoke the citizenship of, and expel, anyone thought to be working 'against Kenya's interests', and this right has been invoked.[9]

9. The Times, Nov. 30, 1963; Aug. 16, 1966.

Chapter X

CONCLUSIONS

In order to make sense of the social processes taking place in Machakos, the township must be situated within two dimensions, the situational (or systemic) and the historical. The situational dimension refers to the systems of interaction beyond the township itself, of which Machakos is a component part, and the historical dimension to the factors which have shaped the growth of the town. The situational consists of the rural hinterland of Machakos as labour-supplying area and, more recently, producer of cash crops, and beyond to Kenya as a system of social, cultural and economic structures. The historical consists of factors both specific to Machakos, such as the actions of John Ainsworth and Ismail Ahmed, and general, formed by Kenya as British colony and then independent nation of the Third World.

I have suggested that social anthropologists have tended to overisolate African towns both situationally and historically. Situational isolation seems to have occured because those anthropologists who established the methodological framework for the study of towns based this on the study of a particular type of town. The strongest influences on 'urban anthropology' in Africa have come from the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute in what is now Zambia, the centre for the work of Gluckman, Mitchell, Epstein and others, on the mining towns of the Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt.[1] In Chapter 1 I suggested that a major methodological achievement of these anthropologists was the establishment of the town as capable of study in its

1. Gluckman (1945), (1961); Mitchell (1956); Epstein (1958).

own right, based on the 'situational approach' and the distinction between 'situational' and 'processive' change. This approach was developed, however, on the basis of research in towns in which there is a fairly clear separation between the town and the areas from which it draws its work force.

The Copperbelt towns are quite large, by African standards, and have large African unskilled and semi-skilled migrant labour forces, from many different tribes. These labour forces tend to have migrated long distances to the towns. In the period 1951-4, the African adult populations of Ndola, Luanshya, Kitwe, Chingola and Mufulira were surveyed,[2] it being noted that only 13.8% originated within 100 miles of the Copperbelt, while 53.1% originated from within 300 miles. Most of the remainder were drawn from a catchment area from 300 to 800 miles distant, while a significant number came from even further away. The distances from which the labour force is drawn obviously affects ease of visiting and therefore its frequency. Home-visiting is, in fact, infrequent.[3] Of those who had been in town up to four years, and whose homes were within 200 miles, over 70% had never been home. The infrequency of home-visiting, together with the distance from home, and hence the difficulty of keeping regular contact, gives rise to a particular situation in which it is possible for the anthropologist to pay little attention to forces emanating from the rural homes of the migrant labour force, or at least, as Mitchell suggests, to keep them 'constant'.

2. Mitchell (1973) pp. 293-4.

3. Mitchell (1973) pp. 299 and 301.

The Copperbelt towns thus present situations where the African populations may be treated as relatively discrete.[4]

Machakos, on the other hand, has a very close relationship with its rural hinterland, not just by virtue of the presence of a large number of 'commuters', but also through the practice of circulatory migration in general. The commuters emphasise this close relationship, and the necessity for reference beyond the township. Not only do commuters, as 'brokers' between rural-dwellers and the urban-centred bureaucracies, mediate between the two areas, but constitute an 'overlap' which points up the inadequacy of treating Machakos and its hinterland as separate systems, on a variation of the dualism theme in economics, capable of analysis independent of one another. The commuters are an integral part of the Machakos labour force, filling specific roles in the town, while their attachment to the urban locality is qualified by rural dwelling to a much greater extent than other migrant workers, the temporary urban dwellers. Their rural dwelling enables them to participate in the urban labour force in roles which

4. It may be dangerous to compare towns by statistics alone. Mitchell (1973, p. 299) compares his statistical demonstration that those men living farthest from the Copperbelt towns are least likely to be accompanied to town by their wives with the findings of Reader in East London. Mitchell remarks that

   "It is interesting to note that Reader found exactly the opposite. He writes 'Those living closest to the city naturally tend least to have their wives with them since they can go home most often'(1961:56)." Reader was, however, referring to a situation where 'closest to the city', means a very different thing, perhaps only a few minutes' walk (as in Machakos), from what it means on the Copperbelt, perhaps a distance of 100 miles. So 'the opposite' is scarcely so surprising. East London and the Copperbelt towns are very different, at least in terms of the origins (and hence composition) of their African populations.

urban dwelling migrants will not, or cannot, accept, and for longer periods. To appreciate the extent of the contrast between Kamba and non-Kamba in the manner of incorporation into Machakos, in terms of the distribution of jobs, education and income, the length of time spent working in the town, and the motives for doing so, consideration of the commuters is essential. The importance of the rural hinterland for economic activities in town is acknowledged by the small shopkeepers, in their use of personal ties of kinship and neighbourhood to support, or at least initiate, their enterprises. Some of them are aware that without their ties to the hinterland their businesses would have little chance of survival.

Mayer's study of East London presents a situation similar to that of Machakos at least in terms of tribal composition and origins of the African population, in that the bulk of this is of one tribe, whose home area is very close at hand, immediately adjacent to East London.[5] Hence Mayer's concern to include this in his analysis. In his study of Stanleyville, Pons, although primarily interested in 'within-town ties', relates these to external factors. He shows, for instance, how residence patterns vary among tribes represented in the city in terms of differing types of rural-urban relation.[6]

5. Mayer (1971). Cf. also Mayer's remark that "it seems evident that in regions of labour migration a case exists for the study of migrancy itself as a supplement to the study of towns and townlocated systems. The fact that the same individuals are apt to function as trade union members at one end, and as age set members at the other end, is one which common sense forbids us to ignore. The study of the ongoing structures - at the urban end or the rural end or both - therefore seems to require this supplement, if justice is to be done to the social realities." (Mayer(1962) pp.576-7.

6. Pons (1969) p.99.

How different would the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute formulations have been had they been based on fieldwork in smaller, non-industrial towns, drawing their populations from their immediate hinterlands? Such towns are, after all, at least as typical of African urban development as the Copperbelt towns.[7] Furthermore, small towns may display features of urban life unobservable in large towns and cities, because these, in Gutkind's view,

> "are primarily towns in which the institutions of urban life have crystallised to a point which makes it difficult for us to know how the towns have become established and how structural specificity has developed."[8]

My argument is that the empirical basis on which the methodological approach to African towns has been developed is too narrow, and that further types of empirical situation must be examined. While the 'separation' approach adopted for the Copperbelt towns may work for these particular towns, it may not be applicable to other types of town.

The relevance of the anthropological study of local situations for an understanding of the wider socio-economic systems of which they are a part is an extremely complex issue. Machakos does not represent a microcosm of 'Kenyan society', in that study of the township alone cannot illuminate the linkages and relations of the local situation to other local situations and to the power structures,

7. Cf. Abrahams (1961), who decribes a small Tanganyikan town, although only very briefly and sketchily.

8. Gutkind (1968) p.68.

economic and administrative systems which constitute the state.[9] It can, however, be treated as an expression of Kenyan society, a situation in which the social processes occuring at a national level become manifest, so that study of this local situation while not revealing everything about the total society, reveals significant aspects of it. These aspects may be explored through the study of the categories of persons participating in social life in Machakos, their relations to others both within and outside Machakos, the way they are connected to Machakos, and how they feel about this. Thus, in Machakos, although requiring to approach the presence of an élite in a slightly different waythan from, say, in the capital city, we can make meaningful statements about the membership and nature of the Kenyan élite as represented in Machakos, as well as to show the role of this élite in a local situation, and the way in which the national élite is linked together in spite of its geographical spread. Indeed, we cannot understand the nature of the élite in Machakos without reference to the national level, both situationally and historically.

The distinction between situational and historical change is a very useful one, but anthropologists have concentrated until quite recently on the situational aspect. Social anthropology seemed ready to grapple with the way in which African society was being transformed by European-

9. Cf. Leeds (1973) p.18.; Bell and Newby (1971) pp.38-40. Leeds states "the localities studied in so-called community studies constitute specialized, differentiated, and variously interrelated entities of a total society possessing institutionalized mechanisms for tying them together. From such an axiom it is clear that the organization of the microcosm cannot be homologous with that of the macrocosm." p.18.

introduced industrialization and urbanization when Godfrey Wilson's work on Broken Hill was published in 1941-2.[10] This described the nature of social change brought about by the incorporation of African people into a capitalist economic system. However, the removal of Wilson from the directorship of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute also resulted in the focus of concern set by him being replaced.[11] The isolation of the town as a separate social system led to elaborations on that system, a concentration on the town as a 'relatively stable and enduring' structure. By concentrating on the minutiae of situational change - the tribal association, urban marriage patterns etc. - social anthropologists did not place these in their context of the processive change which African society was experiencing. Thus, while the organisation of African social life in East London is admirably described, along with very rich qualitative detail, we are not told enough about the significance of these events for social processes taking place around and beyond the immediate situation, of which the immediately observable events are a part. There is no historical depth to the East London studies, which a 'Postscript' written ten or twelve years later does not alleviate. For all the reader knows, White society and African society in South Africa are static systems.

Pons says of his approach to the study of Stanleyville that he tries "to maintain the 'community study' approach",[12] and is principally concerned with the

10. Wilson (1941-2).

11. Richard Brown (1973) describes how Wilson was removed from his post by European pressure, which ended his attempts to make the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute concern itself with the colonial processes of exploitative labour relations. Cf. also Gluckman (1945).

12. Pons (1969) p.5.

structure of Stanleyville and social relations within the city. He is little concerned to understand why Stanleyville has developed into its present situation, spending only 2 1/2 pages on the 'history of growth'.[13]

Abner Cohen's work on the Hausa of Ibadan is the most notable counter to this kind of tendency. Cohen is able, through his use of history in conjunction with his interpretation of the use of political symbolism, to reconstruct the reactions of Hausa long-distance kola traders to the onset of Nigeria's Independence, to show how the Hausa community redefined their place vis-a-vis the Yoruba in Ibadan, and thus confirmed their position in the social order of Ibadan, retaining their monopoly of the long-distance kola trade.[14].

Cohen says he is concerned not with urban social organisation as such, but with an aspect of social organisation (in this case ethnicity) which may be conveniently studied in a town.[15] It seems that the broader the aspects of urban social organisation which are considered, the more difficult it becomes to analyse them as aspects of processive change. La Fontaine's study of Leopoldville deals predominantly with the social structure of the town, and although the author says that aspects of this "may be intelligible only in terms of their historical development, or in the light of factors extraneous to the local situation"[16] she does little to develop this theme. While describing the

13. Pons (1969) pp.22-4.
14. Cohen (1969). Parkin's analysis (1969) of ethnic relations in Kampala also puts situational events into their historical context. Cf. my discussion of this in Chapter VII.
15. Cohen (1969) p.214.
16. La Fontaine (1970) p.6.

development of nationalist political parties and the rise of their leaders, La Fontaine does not seek to relate these developments to changes in the urban social structure.

The concern for systemic time rather than real historical time is also apparent in the development and use of the social network concept in social anthropology. This was eagerly grasped by anthropologists as ideally suited for the analysis of urban situations, for description and elucidation of rapidly changing social situations in which individuals are faced with the possibility of choice, dispute, and conflict.[17] But, as Boissevain remarks,

> "although the basic attraction of the network approach is that it promises a way of studying the problems of social change and process, very little theoretical progress has been made in this direction." 18

The social network has thus been confined to use in analysing social situations rather than social processes.

I have suggested the emerging patterns of statification as the most useful set of processes by which to provide a historical perpective to the study of Machakos, and to place this within a wider frame of reference. The patterns of stratification in Machakos may be seen in the way in which work is distributed. Thus non-Kamba tend to be significantly better placed than Kamba, with the better jobs with more prestige and higher salaries. Representatives of the national élite in Machakos are much more likely to be non-Kamba. Kamba working in Machakos tend to have less education, and to fill the poorer positions in Machakos. This does not mean, though, that Kamba do not hold high positions, but that those who do tend to be found elsewhere in Kenya. The work allocation system in Kenya operates over the nation as a whole, controlled by a bureaucracy which,

17. Cf. the articles in Mitchell (1969).
18. Boissevain (1973) p.xi.

in theory at least, tries to ensure that certain scarce skills are evenly distributed over the country. This observation immediately draws attention to Machakos Township as part of a wider socio-economic system, which constrains aspects of social organisation in Machakos. A further effect of the work allocation system, for instance, is that poorly educated workers in Machakos, do not have much chance of finding better work elsewhere, and remain close to their rural homes. Those at the lower end of the labour market in Machakos are Kamba.

The system of work allocation, along with the state of chronic unemployment, are largely a product of Kenya's historical development. I described in Chapter II the way in which British policies towards Machakos District affected the way in which the racial groups were incorporated in the township, as well as the relationships between the races. The fact that Machakos remained a small commercial and administrative centre also affects the nature of social stratification in Machakos. This can be seen, for instance, when the Machakos commuters are compared to those in Kampala, who were fortunate in having landholdings close to a thriving metropolis and who could therefore work long periods in the city, gaining experience leading to better paid urban employment. The commuters in Machakos are in a very different position.

The historical event of greatest significance was, however, the coming of Independence. When I carried out my fieldwork, Independence was only seven years in the past, but already the implications of the new social order were becoming clear and new categories of stratification were becoming crystallised. Independence has meant not just a redefinition of the relative positions of Africans, Asians and Europans, but has led to new patterns of differentiation within the African population. Although

the division of society into social classes so far only barely applies to Kenya, it is clear that the African population in Machakos is going through a process of polarisation, consequent on Independence, through the attainment by some members of the African population of positions of power and authority after the removal of Europeans holding these positions, and by others, the successful businessmen, taking the opportunities offered by the placing of restrictions on Asian traders. The former have the chance to use their positions to begin the accumulation of economic power through the buying of land, shares in industry and commerce, while the latter have attained real economic power, becoming employers of labour on impersonal contracts. Between these people, however, there is the great majority of the working population, for many of whom Independence and after has meant little but frustration of raised and excited expectations. Many of these people are still primarily peasants, to whom town is merely a source of cash. It is those with predominently 'normative' attitudes to working in town who are more likely to develop attitudes of indignation and resentment directed at the government, as the main employer and director of the economy, as they continue to have their expectations of a secure and reasonably well-paid place in the capatalist economy frustrated. This kind of consciousness is delayed, however, by the continued attachment to land and rural-dwelling kin, as well as by the other factors mentioned in the Introduction.

This kind of consideration allows the organisation of data on urban labour forces in terms of a general process of development, relating the local situation to conditions and circumstances affecting the nation as a whole. In this way local situations can be compared and related to one another (for instance from data on migration between work

places) and to the greater system of which they are a part. In Kenya, these general circumstances fall under the headings of 'colonisation' and 'de-colonisation', and the continuing incorporation of Kenya into the capitalist economy.

What, then, is the nature of the town? What is specifically urban about research in towns tends to be submerged by placing the town concerned into more general processes of development, so that what passes for 'urban anthropology' in Africa may be better described as the social anthropology of Westernization, or industrialization, or just politics. Abner Cohen goes so far to say that what the town offers is merely 'ideal laboratory conditions'. He says

> "It is in this technical respect and not in the theoretical study of the so-called 'urbanism' or 'urbanization process', that the town is significant for anthropological research. I believe that the search for special principles governing urban life is a blind alley for sociological research. A great deal of what is called 'urban sociology' is not sociology at all but is mainly a description of human ecology. When, on the other hand, an urban study is sociological, then it is no longer necessarily urban, but is just sociological."[19]

Cohen is entitled to use the town as a laboratory, and has produced worthwhile research from a town, but this does not mean that this is all that the town offers. Cohen's research was successful because he related events in Ibadan to external historical and situational events. But it was the town which was the centre for conflict between Yoruba and Hausa, because here were the organising centres of the

19. Cohen (1969) p.214.

kola trade, and here the two groups lived close together, making special steps necessary by Hausa to prevent, for instance, intermarriage, which might threaten their distinctiveness. In Ibadan there was tribal heterogeneity, dense settlement, mobility, economic differentiation, to a degree not found in the rural areas beyond. These are some of the 'external determinants' listed by Mitchell,[20] which shape towns as distinctive areas of social life. While Mitchell used these to enable him to ignore what was going on outside a specific town, Cohen is able to relate them to conditions beyond. These 'determinants' are not relevant only to towns, but are rather variables which apply to African social life in general, and are found at their most intense in towns. It is because of this that towns offer 'ideal laboratory conditions'. Urban areas offer convenient situations in which to explore these variables in juxtaposition, as an expression of the system of which the town is a part. While Cohen may be quite correct in saying that there can be no special principles governing urban life, we should not lose sight of the fact that towns, as Mitchell suggests, possess special properties, and are in important ways dissimilar to non-urban areas.

We must avoid condemning urban anthropology to the fate which almost befell the urban sociology of Britain a few years ago, when it was suspected that because so much of British social life is urban, any consideration of urban life is merely 'sociology'.[21] British urban sociologists have, however, come to appreciate that there are specific features of urban life amenable to study, significant for an understanding of how town and city life affect urban dwellers. It is suggested that the main feature of the urban system is the housing market, competition within which may

20. Mitchell (1966).
21. Glass (1962) cited in Pahl (1969) p.1.

be taken as a direct expression of the differential distribution of power in urban society and of wider aspects of social stratification.[22] Transferred to the African scene, it may be that the job market may be treated in the same way, as an aspect of social life at its most extreme in towns, where the jobs are in greatest numbers and in greatest demand. Features of town life must, though, be related to the society of which the town is a part. The task of urban anthropology then, should be to explore the dynamics of social life as manifested in towns, and in doing so to meet Southall's expectation of anthropology in general - "to provide convincing accounts of what is happening to people in varied real life situations and to set these in a broader framework of time and space."[23]

22. Cf. esecially Rex and Moore (1967).

23. Southall (1973) pp.3-4.

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