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LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ
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Land and labour: women and men in agricultural
change, Murang'a District, Kenya, 1880-1984.

Fiona Mackenzie

A dissertation submitted to the
School of Graduate Studies and Research,
in partial fulfilment of the requirement
for the degree of doctor of philosophy,

Department of Geography
University of Ottawa
Ottawa, Ontario
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Abstract

The motivation behind the research documented here was the observation that an incongruence existed between the experienced reality of agricultural change by women and men, on the one hand, and the theories which explicitly or implicitly informed the formulation of agricultural policy in Kenya from the early years of the twentieth century, on the other. The first three chapters examine existing theory, the objective being to develop a framework within which rural structure and process in an area of smallholder agriculture in Kenya could be analyzed. Three areas of theory are discussed: geographical literature as it pertains to the conceptualization of space in Africa; feminist literature in terms of concepts which could bridge the material and ideational spheres; and literature on agricultural development which focuses on the differential relationship of men and women to processes of rural change.

From elements of these domains, a theoretical perspective is developed whose central concern is to identify the interrelationship between the sex/gender system and socio-spatial organization/division. The main elements conditioning the sex/gender system are defined as: women and men's relative participation in the central institutions of society and the relationship between these institutions; access to/control over the means and resources of production; how production is organized, within the household and outside it, and whether the forces of production support or undermine relative access to the means of production; gender participation in strategically indispensable labour; how the reproductive sphere is organized; and how this sphere "fits" with that of production.

The relative significance of these variables in historical process, and the spatiality of this process, is examined with reference to a model of agricultural change which distinguishes between precolonial, colonial and post-land reform eras in Murang'a District, Kenya. The concept of intra/inter-scalar organization of relations of production, of reproduction, and of productive forces forms the theoretical premise on which the model is based. This, together with the concept of socio-spatial division/separation is used in the context of changes in productive mode to link elements of the sex/gender system with processes of agricultural change.

Forms of organization based on kinship on the one hand and on local, extra household bonding on the other, emerge as focal points in the analysis of agricultural change in Murang'a District. Their role in defining contradictions in the rural environment is examined in this context. It is shown, for example, that through time, women have sought, by organizing on a local basis, to counter male solidarity based on bonds of kinship and to achieve their own solidarity in order to address the economic and ideational contradictions they face as individuals. Most recently, this has involved the formation of groups whose purposes range from those of rotating savings societies to those of income generation.

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Abbreviations

ADC	Assistant District Commissioner
AHITI	Animal Health and Industry Training Institute
AO	Agricultural Officer
ASDO	Assistant Social Development Officer
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
CDA	Community Development Assistant
CDO	Community Development Officer
CPAR	Central Province Annual Report
CPPRB	Central Province Political Record Book
DAO	District Agricultural Officer
DC	District Commissioner
DDDP	Draft District Development Plan (Murang'a)
DEO	District Extension Officer
DO	District Officer
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
FHD	Fort Hall District
FHDAR	Fort Hall District Annual Report
FHDHOR	Fort Hall District Handing Over Report
FTC	Farmer Training Centre
IADP	Integrated Agricultural Development Programme
IBEAC	Imperial British East Africa Company
IRS	Integrated Rural Survey
JTA	Junior Technical Assistant
KANU	Kenya African National Union
KAU	Kenya African Union
KCA	Kikuyu Central Association
KLC	Kenya Land Commission
KNC	Kenya National Archives
LNC	Local Native Council
MDAH	Murang'a District Agricultural History
MDAR	Murang'a District Annual Report
MDDP	Murang'a District Development Plan
MDEAR	Murang'a District Environmental Assessment Report
MDMOAAR	Murang'a District Ministry of Agricultural Annual Report
MDMOALDAR	Murang'a District Ministry of Agricultural and Livestock Development Annual Report
MDDSSAR	Murang'a District Department of Social Services Annual Report
NAC	Native Advisory Committee
NEP	National Extension Project
TA	Technical Assistant
T & V	Training and Visit

Part I: Theoretical questions

Chapter 1: The theoretical context

1.1 Nduma cia mwanake: a story

There was a famine and the husband went to stay in his hut (thingira) and was eating his goats. He told his wife that they were no longer together: "You will eat your property and I mine." The man would slaughter a goat and hang it in his hut. The woman thought she and the children would die and so she went to a swampy region and found nduma.cia mwanake (arrowroots of young men) which she uprooted.

She carried this with some firewood and went home. She cooked and ate one without giving any to the children. In the morning she found that she was quite fine and therefore that the arrowroots were not poisonous. She called her children and gave each of them an arrowroot. After they had eaten, nothing had happened to them. She was quite happy as she had found something to eat during that time. So every morning she went to uproot those arrowroots.

The husband was surprised and so one day he called her and asked her why she and the children were not growing thin whereas even those who were eating meat were growing thin. The woman told him that she collected arrowroots from the forest and ate them and that was why they were not getting hungry.

The man asked her to go and get them so that he could also eat. She went and brought them to him. The man peeled them and ate. He even told her that the meat that was in his hut was to be cooked by her and that they were to start living together in the same house. Every morning the woman went to uproot the arrowroots and she could even leave her husband cooking them while she did something else. The famine finished and they joined again.

When the land was cultivated those arrowroots were uprooted by the woman from where they had grown naturally and she planted them in areas where there was water. She planted a lot.

This story was recounted by Wanjiru, a farmer, the second wife in a polygynous household during an informal interview which was concerned with obtaining information on the process of agricultural change among Gikuyu women and men (November 1984).

Several issues critical to the focus of analysis in the dissertation may be elicited from the story. First, specifically here in response to a crisis, both a man and a woman took action: both were active agents in the process of change. While this point may appear obvious, much of the literature which identifies gender in development, does so in terms of the impact of development policies/processes on women (and men), perceiving them rather as objects, the passive recipients of exogenous action. Elias Mandala's (1983) analysis of peasant cotton agriculture in Malawi's Lower Tchiri valley, Sherilynn Young's (1977) work in Southern Mozambique and Margaret Hay's (1972) research among the Luo in Western Kenya are well-documented exceptions to this.

Second, in the story, the nature of the woman's and the man's response to the crisis was motivated by their perceptions of the options open to them. These in turn were related to the sharply differentiated division of labour in Gikuyu society, and the different environments either over which men and women had control or to which they had access. It is apparent that men and women related differently to the means of production and had different time/space constraints in their response to change.

Third, it is clear that at least in the initial stages of

response to the famine, the household did not function as a unit. In order to understand the response to the crisis, it is necessary to consider the intra-household scale in addition to that of the larger society.

The key issue which emerges from this discussion is that gender, or more precisely, the sex/gender system, is a significant key to the accurate analysis of socioeconomic reality. By the sex/gender system is meant, briefly, the system of relations between women and men as defined by the interaction between relations of production, reproduction and ideology. 'Sex' refers specifically to the realm of biology, whereas socially created differences between men and women are ascribed to 'gender'. This proposition and its implications have been ignored by mainstream theory, for example the recent writing of Goran Hyden (1980, 1983). It may be suggested, however, that any attempt at radical analysis will fall short of its objective unless this significant structuring element is included.

1.2 A rationale

The theoretical strands which form the substance of the argument of this dissertation are drawn from many sources. Yet, while potential danger lies in such eclecticism, this approach may lead to a more realistic inquiry of rural Africa than pertains at present. Perception of African reality has, in the past, as Colin Leys notes, been "overlaid by theory" (p. 99), but this theory has

drawn on experience outside Africa and is thus of limited value in probing the roots of African problems. There is a need to step outside the paradigms that have determined the questions asked about Africa, to move beyond the confines of disciplinary boundaries as Hyden (1983) has argued, and to adopt an historical perspective which allows for specificity of both time and place. Too much research in or of Africa has been given to proving a "given universal dogma" in Hyden's view (1983, p. XV), whereas what is required is analysis which is often non-universalist and non-linear in approach (Leys, 1982, p. 104). The result may be less precisely bounded and indicative of processes less widely consistent than has previously been theorized, yet, in this, may reflect more accurately rural reality.

My purpose in this dissertation is twofold. First, I will propose a synthetic framework which allows for both historical and cultural specificity in an analysis of the rural environment in Africa. The central hypothesis which underlies the framework is that an analysis of the dialectic between the sex/gender system and spatial structure provides a basis for understanding the nature of the process of rural, and in particular agricultural, change and the impact of that process on, and the response to that process of, men and women. While the separate components in the framework are not 'new' in that they represent theoretical developments in a variety of disciplines, their integration or synthesis in the framework provides a new perspective from which

to explore/explain the process of agricultural change.

Second, I will examine the relationships identified in that framework, focusing on economic structures, through an analysis of agricultural change in the area of case study, Murang'a District, Central Province, Kenya. In practical terms this approach is motivated by a concern that incongruity continues to exist between the reality experienced by rural women and men in Kenya and the perception of that reality evidenced by post-Independence agricultural policy. The objective is not to arrive at a series of policy prescriptions for planned/induced development. In line with the view that the essence of the development problematic concerns relations of power and thus that development must be conceptualized as a process of empowerment (Freire, 1983, Goulet, 1979), my underlying contention is that more rigorous analysis is a necessary precondition for effective social action. To adopt the argument of Clyde Weaver in assessing the situation facing regional planners in France, Britain and the U.S., concern lies to a very real degree with politics rather than policies and struggle rather than strategy (1984, p. 138). The implications of these "synonyms" for conceptualizing development will be evident in the arguments presented in the dissertation. The immediate purpose in the remainder of this chapter is to set the theoretical context for the framework which is developed in Chapters 2 and 3.

1.3 Society and space: reconceptualizations

The observation of Anthony Giddens (1979) that most forms of social theory have been put forward without consideration of their inherent temporality and spatiality is followed by his argument that:

At first sight, nothing seems more banal and uninformative than to assert that social activity occurs in time and space. But neither time nor space have been incorporated into the centre of social theory; rather, they are ordinarily treated more as "environments" in which social conduct is enacted (1979, p. 202).

Edward Soja (1980) distinguishes between 'contextual' and 'created space' to draw attention to the implications of this difference in the conceptualization of space. Contextual space includes David Harvey's (1973) categorization of absolute and relative space and refers to the characteristic of space as a container for human activity with its own "objectifiable geometry, and its phenomenological essence" (Soja, 1980, p. 209) rather than something integral to the latter's evolution. In contrast, the term 'created space' is used by Soja to refer to "socially based spatiality" (p. 209), a relational view of space which is defined as social construct and therefore intrinsic to social process. As Soja points out:

The structure of organized space is not a separate structure with its own autonomous laws of construction and transformation, nor is it simply an

expression of the class structure emerging from the social (i.e. aspatial) relations of production. It represents, instead, a dialectically defined component of the general relations of production, relations which are simultaneously social and spatial" (1980, p. 208).

He further argues that: "...social and spatial relationships are dialectically inter-reactive, inter-dependent, that social relations of production are both space-forming and space-contingent" (p. 211). In a sense this is what Alain Lipietz elucidates when he writes:

It should be understood that concrete socio-economic space appears both as the articulation of analyzed spaces, as a product, a reflection of the articulation of social relationships, and at the same time, as far as already existing concrete space is concerned, as an objective constraint imposed upon the redeployment of those social relationships. We shall say that society recreates its space on the basis of a concrete space, always already provided, established in the past (1980, p. 61). S

Or as John Urry (1981) more succinctly argues, spatial structures are "...themselves social, socially produced and socially reproducing" (p. 458).

Soja's terminology of 'created space' is somewhat misleading in the light of this argument in that the grammatical use of the past participle implies a more passive role than appears to be his intention; however, the concept of socio-spatial dialectic is an important one. Rather than seeking to fetishize space and delineate an area of autonomous geographical inquiry, it seeks to

integrate the spatiality of human activity into social science theory. In contrast to much Marxist analysis, it intends to define space as more than epiphenomenal.

The debate over the relationship between social and spatial structures, over the centrality of spatial/territorial versus class contradiction/conflict has been explored most widely in analysis of European and North American urbanism and in international and regional analysis where geographically uneven development and centre-periphery relations have been the centre of attention (Soja, 1980). Yet it may be argued that in the literature cited by Soja, representative at least until very recently of mainstream thinking on the subject, the social, and correlatively the spatial, has been incompletely defined. Whether 'informed' by a liberal or marxist perspective, the socio-economic has been framed within conventional parameters and the sex/gender system, as a significant structuring element of space and process, has been unaddressed. Households, where this scale is considered, continue to be treated as a unit, following the economist's convention of household utility function.

This neglect in geographical analysis, the transference of the gender divisions of urban and rural space in the literature, has increasingly been questioned in the last decade and the implications for research at a variety of scales made apparent. The recent publication Geography and gender: an introduction to feminist geography (1984) by the Women and Geography Study Group

of the IBG may well represent a landmark here in that it draws together literature which, to varying degrees of rigour, analyzes the relationship between gender and space. The value of the book lies in its proposal for a mode of analysis in which "...the implications of gender in the study of geography are at least as important as the implications of any other social or economic factor which transforms society and space" (p. 21). Feminist geography is then defined as:

...a geography which explicitly takes into account the socially created gender structure of society, and in which a commitment both towards the alleviation of gender inequality in the short term and towards its removal, through social change towards real equality, in the longer term, is expressed (p. 21).

Emphatically, this approach is not concerned with creating yet another branch of geography, a geography of women. It represents instead a mode of analysis with profound implications for (human) geographical inquiry as a whole. It may therefore in a radical way be contrasted with the substance of the volume Her space, her place (1983) by Mary Ellen Mazey and David Lee. In this volume, 'Where is she?', 'Where does she go?', 'What does she think?', and 'Her role in changing the face of the earth' are examined in terms of spatial behaviour patterns and perceptions of space. To a very real degree not only is space isolated from process, but women are separated as an analytical category. This same criticism may be directed to the contributors of Shirley

Ardener's (1981) book: Women and space. Although here interesting examinations of the relationship between gender, space and culture are made at a variety of scales, focusing on cultural ideology, analysis is ahistorical and the relationship between space and social process is not examined except peripherally in Tamara Dragadze's work on the sexual division of domestic space among the Georgians and Tadjiks in the U.S.S.R.

While it may be necessary to render women visible in geography as well as in other social science disciplines, it is hardly sufficient to focus on patterns and the superficial gender division of space if the question 'why?' is to be answered. The inadequacy of both spatial separatism (Sack, 1974) and sexual separatism becomes readily apparent when explanation is sought for the patterns described. Here one must be concerned with underlying societal structures which affect women and men and the relationships between them in the context of society as a whole.

These relationships are clearly complex ones: they are also dynamic in the sense that the socio-spatial dialectic as it relates to gender is historically produced. The division of space and "...the consequences for social relations between men and women," as McDowell contends, "are neither inevitable nor constant. The relations between production and reproduction vary over time and space, as does the social construction of gender and patriarchal domination"¹ (1983, pp. 62-63).

A mode of analysis which incorporates gender with space and

social process has been explored in the context of the urban built environment of Europe and North America.² Provocative insights have been gained into urban spatial structure; regional change, industrial location and employment patterns; and analysis has proceeded at some structural depth into distance and mobility factors operative in gender access to facilities. The key concept which emerges from this perspective is that men and women differ fundamentally in their degree of access to and control over space/environment. While at one level of abstraction this obviously reflects relations of power, authority, autonomy and social adulthood³ within the specific cultural context, at a more concrete level, such gender differences are reflected in "...the degree of segregation between the sexes in the activities carried out in a given environment" and the "intensity and nature of occupance of a space" by men and women (Wekerle et al., 1980, p. 6, emphasis theirs). By focusing on these distinctions, Gerda Wekerle, Rebecca Peterson and David Morley argue that insights into directions for social action may be gained.

The gender segregation or division of space may be conceptualized at a variety of scales--from that of a formally created club or rape centre to that of informally constituted social constraint. The latter limits mobility in certain areas and/or at certain times, for example in restricting work environments, whether this be the Houses of Parliament (Rodgers, 1981) or a typing pool, or in the context of inter and

intra-regional distribution of jobs and the location of new industry (Women and Geography Study Group of the IBG, 1984). This gender division of space does not in itself imply inequality between women and men, but the nature of their use of that space and the value attributed to it does reflect relative status. Here the concept of public/private space, indicative of the social and spatial division of labour, has proved a useful analytical distinction in the North American and European contexts. The division between public, male-dominated space and the restriction of women to the private/local domain has been integrally linked to changes in the form and organization of the city which have taken place since the industrial revolution of the 1800s when production became spatially separated from reproduction and the family was no longer the basic productive unit in the areas discussed.

Thus far feminist analysis has focused on the urban environment of Europe and North America, as evidenced by the IBG volume (1984). Although there is a chapter in this book entitled "Women and development", the topics covered: the impact of development of women; the gender division of labour in agriculture; women and migration; and women and industry; occupy only thirteen pages. They serve therefore as fragmentary introductions to areas where analysis is required, rather than themselves offering analytical insight into the relationship between gender/society/space. This to a very real degree reflects the lack of feminist geographical inquiry in or of the Third

World, in particular in rural areas, and in Africa. It is also the result of a more general lack of research on processes of change in rural Africa by geographers. It is to this area of neglect in the literature that this dissertation is addressed.

The appropriateness of the cross-cultural transference of such concepts as the private/public dichotomy, however specifically defined, needs further inquiry, and it is recognized that although insights from feminist geographical inquiry outlined above may provide useful starting points for questioning in the African context, the cautions of Hyden and Leys (Chapter 1.2) are pertinent. In particular with respect to rural Africa, it is important to recognize the prime role of kin relations as a determinant in spatial organization. Kinship as a structuring element of space has been ignored by researchers in North America and Europe (Jill Vickers, 1984, personal communication). Issues such as territorial definition, exogamy/endogamy, virilocality, affect the bonding among women and among men. This topic will be explored more fully in the next chapter, but a quotation from Alice Schlegel's (1977) work will serve here to identify the significance of kinship as a spatial/social variable:

...rules of residence determine which sex forms the nucleus of the household as a corporate group. Ties of loyalty and obligation, then, tend to be strongest among those members who form this nucleus, and, other things being equal, power or authority would reside with the sex that brings in husbands or wives as the case may be (p. 29).

In recognition of the significance of kinship, the framework for analysis developed in Chapters 2 and 3 seeks to integrate this element into the spatiality of male/female relations with broader relations of production, of societal structure and of the 'environment', both physical and ideational. Before this is introduced, however, I would like to place this conceptualization of space as social construct within the context of selected geographical literature on Africa which has dealt with the spatial theme.

1.4 'Space' in geographical literature on Africa

Through an analysis of specific examples of research in rural Africa, the argument will be made in this section that even where the social/spatial relationship has been conceived of as dialectical, as it has been 'informed' by an incomplete conceptualization of the social in which gender has been invisible, it has not led to an accurate understanding of rural structures and processes. Here I intend only to point to the gaps; the remainder of the dissertation must be judged on the basis of whether it leads towards a more accurate delineation of rural reality.

Several geographers of the spatial tradition working in Africa in the 1960s operated within the framework of modernization theory. Although different characterizations of the theory exist in sociological and economics literature, essential to the theory

is the assumption that development occurs in a unidirectional manner and is associated with progress from a state of traditionalism to one of modernity. Industrialized countries with a high degree of urbanization are defined as modern and countries with large numbers of the population earning their livelihood through agriculture and living in rural areas are considered traditional. Modernization is characterized as a process of diffusion whereby "...values, ideas, technology, skills, capital, institutions and enterprises" (Slater, 1974, p. 335) spread from the industrialized countries to the Third World. Rostow's (1960) deterministic model of economic growth provided economic orthodoxy to support the theory. Rostow envisioned a stage-theory of change from a traditional society, through a transitional or preconditional stage, to "take-off", a "drive to maturity", to be followed by a stage of high mass consumption. Assuming a labour surplus in the agriculture sector, a change from an agriculturally-based to an industrial economy was seen as intrinsic to the process. Essentially positivist in nature and ethnocentric in approach, failure to follow the predetermined route was attributed to "barriers" or "obstacles" in the path of societal transformation (Slater, 1974).

Geographers such as Soja (1968) working in Kenya, Peter Gould (1970) in Tanzania and Barry Riddell (1970) in Sierra Leone adopted this theoretical perspective in their search for a more normative discussion of regional issues. Their analyses differed

somewhat in approach, yet all were set against the background—pattern of colonial rule, and the variables chosen to delineate the spread of modernization reflected this availability of data whether identifying demographic, education, communication and transport, connectivity with major urban centres, economic development, health or political/administrative values.

Soja's work focused on spatial inequalities and he mapped the spatial variation of his indicators of modernization which were subjected to principal components analysis. Gould's and Riddell's work sought to identify a process of diffusion of their selected indicators from urban ('developed') to rural ('underdeveloped') areas. These illustrated, to quote from a well-known passage from Riddell, that: "...patterns of change move like waves across the map, and cascade down the urban hierarchy as they are funnelled along the transportation system" (1970, p. 45). Both writers expressed their findings as trend-surface maps. The modernization surfaces thus produced were then 'explained' in terms of the diffusion of development from the urban centres. It is of note that the significance of the one variable in Riddell's work which indicates the reverse of the general trend of the cascade from Freetown, the cooperative, originates in the rural areas and is ignored in his subsequent generalization (Taylor, 1972).

Work of Soja, Riddell and Gould has been criticized by Charles Gore (1984) as representative of spatial separatism in geographical analysis. Sack (1974) has defined this concept as

follows: "...it is possible to identify, separate and evaluate the spatial either as an independent phenomenon or property of events examined" (p. 1). Such an approach is characterized not only by its objective "...to explain the locational properties of social phenomena, but also to use spatial variables to explain these properties" (Gore, 1984, p. 15, emphasis his). Description becomes explanation and location takes on an importance of its own, isolated from the social processes of which it is part. At the most, discussion centres on what Gore refers to as contingent rather than determining relationships (1984, p. 217) and thus the fundamental processes bringing about changed relations of power at several scales are ignored. If these relationships are considered, the variables mapped may be regarded rather as measures of the spread of underdevelopment, and the diffusion of institutions, technology and capital as reinforcing dependency (Slater, 1974).

Further, the assumption that the diffusion of innovation is an exogenous and essentially urban--initiated process, occurring in a unilinear manner and leading to an "...inexorable if slow march toward balanced growth and development" (Soja, 1979, p. 30) has served to mask the spread of social inequalities at a variety of scales. One example taken from Soja's (1968) work will serve to illustrate this point.

In a discussion on labour migration, Soja refers to two subsystems of modernization in Kenya, one based on cash crop

development in the areas of former African reserves and the other on major urban centres and areas of European farming. Regarding the former, modernization is associated with cash crop production by Africans, a sector of the economy which grew dramatically after the adoption of the Swynnerton Plan in 1954. Contribution to the national economy is explicitly related through the choice of the variable African cash income to commercial agricultural production. In the search for quantifiable variables, this variable is based on a combination of wages and total cash income from agriculture and livestock, the latter being derived from the district Annual Reports of the Ministry of Agriculture for 1962. As no actual data are available on the number and distribution of Africans involved in growing commercial crops, the data are based on the area under such crops proportional to farm income. No attempt is made to estimate the contribution of food (non export) crops to the local or national economy. The increasing inequalities, both regionally (Central Province benefitting the most) and among the rural population, are camouflaged. In reality, it is estimated that during the 1950s and 1960s while the middle peasantry increased their share of the income, that of the lowest 40% fell (Heyer, 1981). Soja's discussion also masks the profound effect on men and women of the social and spatial division of labour brought about by the introduction of cash cropping and of male rural outmigration, an issue which will be discussed in detail in subsequent chapters.

In fairness to the historical record, both Soja (1979) and Riddell (1981) have more recently 'reappraised' their earlier work, Soja seeking "...explanation for the spatial organization of society in the structure of social relations and the historical evolution of contemporary political and economic systems." (1979, p. 35, emphasis his), Riddell suggesting a more cautious re-evaluation. Neither has been concerned with a more thorough definition of the social.

David Slater's (1975) research on Tanzania, 'informed' by dependency theory, stands in marked contrast to the preceding modernization studies. As outlined by André Gunder Frank (1967), the central tenets of this theory state that underdevelopment cannot be conceptualized as an original state whose other epithets are backward or traditional, but rather must be viewed as part of a process set in motion by the integration of a country into international capitalist relations of production, from the sixteenth century onwards. The key, as Clyde Weaver succinctly points out, is that "...in an exchange economy it is control of the surplus value of production that determines the outcome of the development process" (1984, p. 118). In Frank's model, the metropolitan-satellite relationships that developed resulted in the increasing expropriation of economic surplus from the satellites, generally through resource sales, such that the metropolis grew at the expense of the satellites and the latter became dependent on the former in terms of the growth and

direction of their economies. Therefore, in antithesis to previous theorizing, the dependency perspective focuses on the historical, external relationships of poorer countries to explain their present condition.

Slater's (1975) analysis of Tanzania in terms of spatial structure rather than spatial inequality per se reflects this position. Starting from what he refers to as "spatial unevenness", an historical model is proposed through which Slater seeks to identify the underlying causes of surface inequalities. He distinguishes between four time periods, the first of these representing pre-colonial spatial structure immediately prior to the 1880s (Figure 1.1, (i)). This period is characterized by local, regional and sometimes long distance trading networks, representative of an evolving economic system with a certain degree of "internal cohesion and interdependence" (p. 141). The processes active here contrast sharply with those of the second stage, divided into two parts, to reflect the different degrees of colonial penetration. The period from the 1880s to 1914 is characterized by initial colonial penetration, concentration and the beginning of internal expansion; from 1919 to 1950/60, the scene is one of increased colonial organization and expansion. Slater argues that during the colonial period, with the introduction of a capitalist mode of production, production and consumption, rather than being further integrated in an area whose territorial boundary was now exogenously defined, were integrated

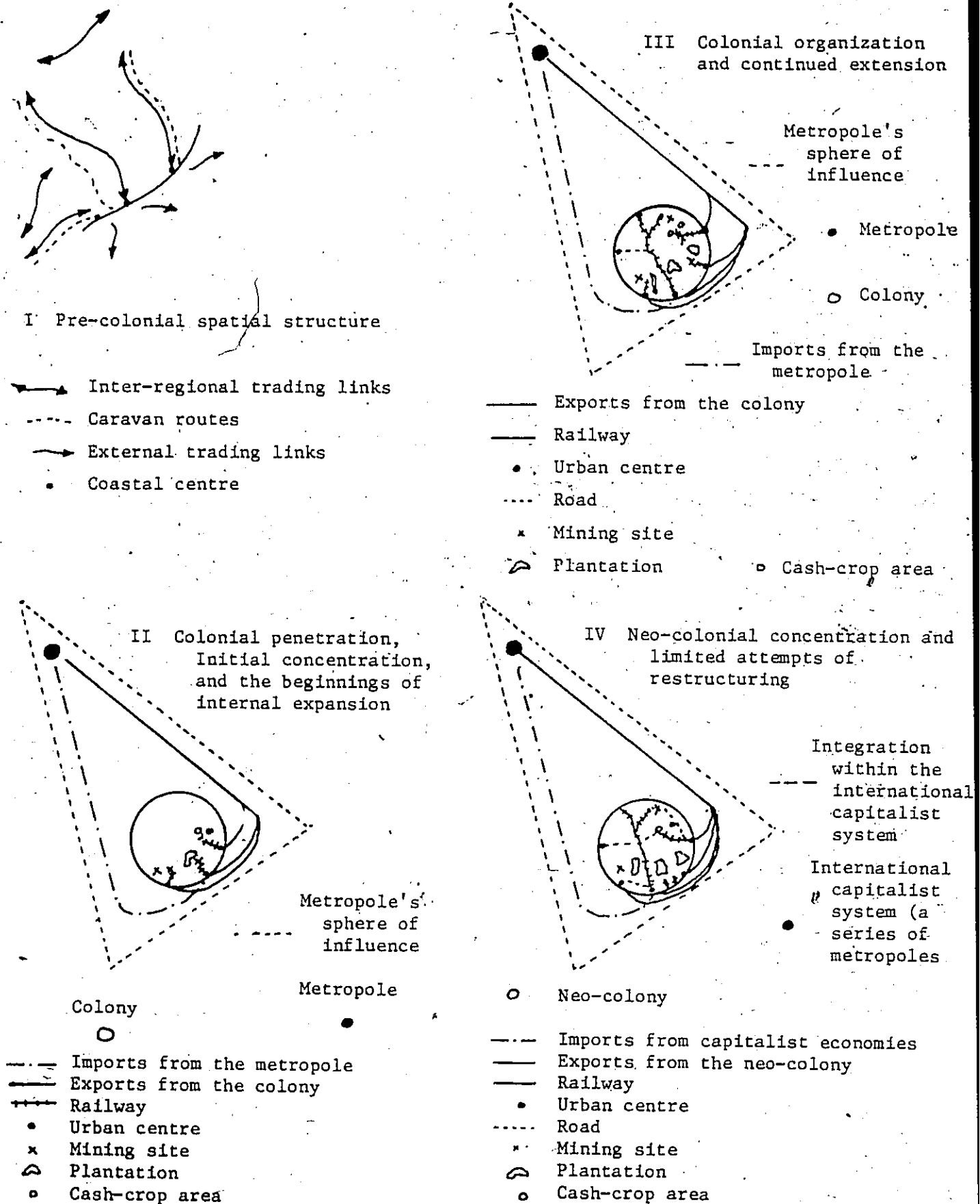
with the external system through trade: "Hence, the colony exchanged commodities which it produced but did not consume, nor even fully process, for other mainly manufactured goods that it did consume but did not produce itself" (1975, p. 137).

Dependence on the colonial power was extended through control of the national economy by: (1) the establishment of plantations, settler estates, mining enterprises, and monopoly trading companies; (2) unequal terms of trade between the colony and metropolitan power; and (3) the colonial monetary system.

In terms of Figure 1.1, diagram (ii) illustrates a situation where a superimposed external definition of territory served to disintegrate local spatial structure whether of trading networks or of indigenous social organization. Within this colonially defined space, the colonial economy was concentrated in a few, often isolated, locations, other parts of the country becoming peripheral, often serving as a labour reserve for the resource-rich regions. The growth of the communication network, initially through the building of railway lines linking areas of economic or strategic value to the colonial economy, and the growth of urban centres, only occasionally coincident with the location of indigenous central places, were concomitant with the process of external integration.

The second phase (diagram iii) involved the extension of the colonial space economy such that:

Figure 1.1 Spatial structure from the precolonial to neocolonial eras, after Slater, 1975.



Each economic region corresponds to a "one-line economy", an axis based externally on a port where import and export were conducted and comprising a series of adjacent branches which subdivide in turn until they peter out in the bush. The axis and branches were followed by an ascending current, that of produce imported, and by a descending current, that of exportable products. Each region resembled a kind of lung with its system of veins and arteries running parallel, receiving its oxygen at the level of agricultural production. But the heart was placed outside, far beyond the seas; the impulses that regulated the nature of the intensity of the flow were external ones (Sûret-Canale, 1971, French Colonialism in Tropical Africa, 1900-1945, p. 190, quoted in Slater, 1975, p. 145).

The fourth phase, of the post-Independence period, is labelled by Slater as one of neo-colonial concentration. It is considered by him to be characterized by some attempt at restructuring of the spatial system through growth pole planning and decentralization, yet remaining "...highly fragmented and essentially externally oriented" (1975, p. 146).

Slater applies this historical schema to a detailed and well-documented discussion of the events in Tanzania, focusing particularly on the colonial era. It is clear that space is considered integral to social process in his analysis, yet his research may be faulted for his neglect of internal linkages and structures, whether based on class or territory. Gore (1984) offers some insight into the external/internal dynamic by challenging spatial dependency analysis on the grounds that the focus on spatial relationships of surplus transfer are divorced

from the "...social processes which determine both the relationship and its development implications" (p. 199). He contends that social and political structures created by the external relationships and the "internal dynamic of these structures" (p. 135) are ignored. There is a fundamental difference, in his view, between conceptualizing how the "...surplus of a region is extracted by another region" (p. 198, emphasis his) and analyzing the spatiality of the appropriation of surplus by certain social groups. It is not enough in terms of seeking explanation for patterns of development/underdevelopment to argue that surplus is transferred. While this may mean that surplus in one area is less than it may potentially have been, this does not in and of itself imply that a region is less well off were it without such external relations. Similarly, it does not necessarily follow that a larger surplus in the region would lead to growth in that region. Both in the context of the periphery and the metropole, it is critical to examine how that surplus is used (Gore, 1984).

Gore does not explicitly refer to Slater in his critique of spatial dependency analysts--in fact, it is unclear exactly to whom he is referring in his reference to "the crude applications of the dependency perspective" (p. 198). It may be that Slater's statement of purpose at the beginning of his discussion of Tanzania: "...to identify certain key aspects of the impact of colonialism on spatial structure, so as to demonstrate how many of the contemporary obstacles to a strategy of spatial transformation

originate from colonial expansion and penetration" (1975, p. 137) implied to Gore an essentially positivist analysis of space which sought spatial prescription for spatial problem. This, however, would not be an accurate deduction. Even Slater's conclusions, couched under the heading "Implications for contemporary spatial planning", place the issue of spatial organization within the framework of productive relations: capitalist or socialist. 'Space' is used as an entry point for social analysis, discussion centring on determining relationships.

What may with validity be criticized is the exclusive focus on external relationships for reasons identified above. Hyden's (1980, 1983) counterargument, that the development problematic in Africa must be framed in terms of the persistence of precapitalist modes of production, rather than in terms of excessive capitalist penetration, provides a way in to an analysis of the linkages between the external and internal. By arguing that a "structural anomaly" is posed by the existence of two contending modes of production, the one capitalist, the other peasant, with its own "economy of affection"⁴, Hyden gives both insight into the processes of change within a nation-state and visibility to indigenous structures and organization which have been ignored in African political economy. With respect to the development of social science theory, it is unfortunate that the spatiality of the structures and processes he examines is excluded.

In the context of a more accurate understanding of the

reality both Slater (1975) and Hyden (1980) search for in Tanzania, it is significant that neither questions the conventional Marxist definition of production relations. For example, although Slater notes the absence of men in Unyamwesi (p. 150), a labour-supply area for the colonial economy, the relevance of the issue of the gender division of rural space in terms of support of the colonial economy goes unexamined. In like manner Hyden (1980), discussing the peasant mode of production, not only fails to differentiate within the peasantry on the basis of economic stratification, but also ignores men and women's different relationship to both this and the capitalist mode of production. As Jiggins (1981) has pointed out, "Insofar as women are the major domestic food producers and the pivot of social reproduction" (p. 93), analysis of socio-economic reality must recognize gender as a structuring element. In Hyden's later book (1983), his analysis of indigenous political/social/economic institutions is deficient for the same reason. He fails to note that such organizations are overwhelmingly single sex in nature (Okonjo, 1976), reflecting women's and men's differently defined environments and different and historically changing relationship to the means of production. As, for example, recent research in Kenya suggests, changes in women's organizations indicate a move of structural significance for society in that women, as owners and managers, are establishing new relationships to the means of production and thus to the market (Thomas, 1982).

This has important implications for Hyden's argument for development "from within", much of which hinges on recognition of the developmental characteristics and potential of some such local organizations.

Gender is not considered in the final example of the conceptualization of African space to which I refer, but the intention to integrate external and internal processes of change in the model is made explicit. In Taylor's view there is no "universal concept of development" (1981, p. 87). Rather, he argues that:

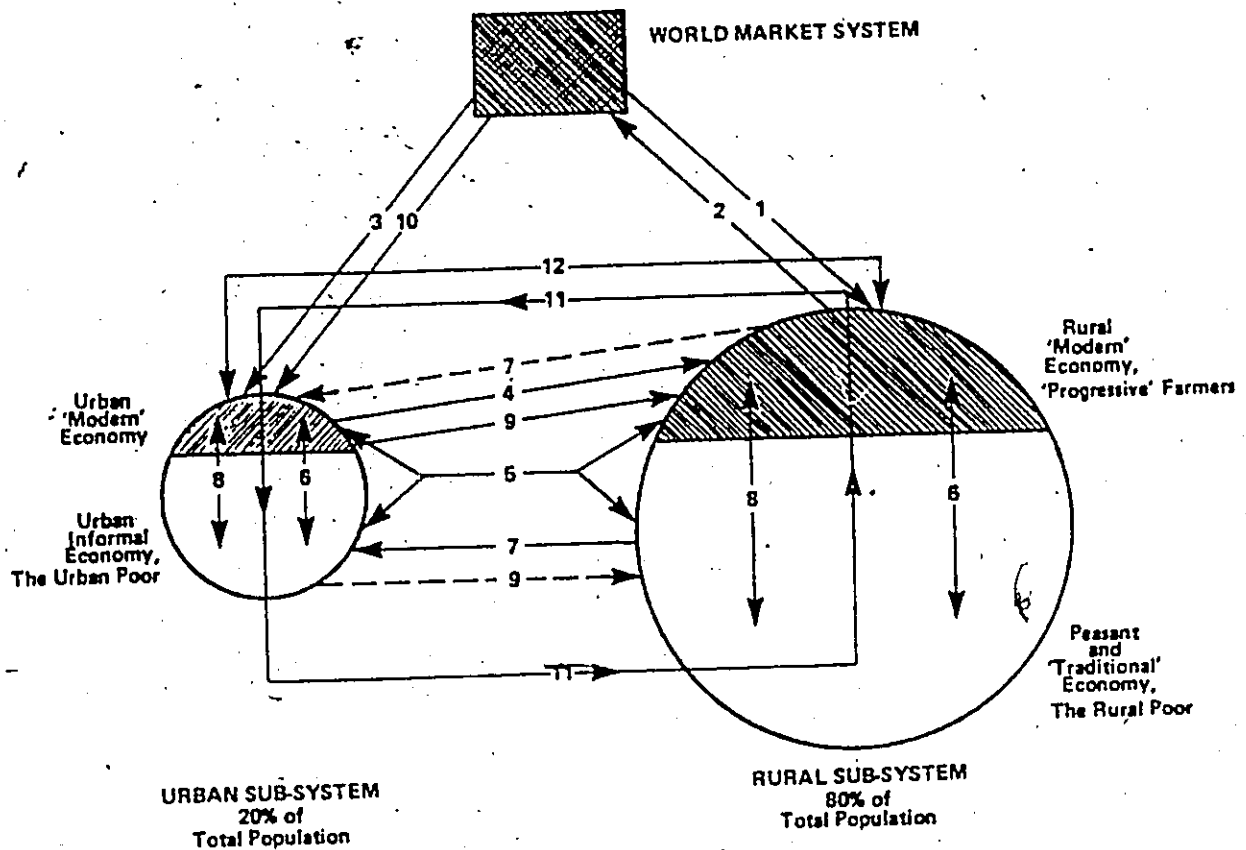
Both past and present political, economic, social and cultural realities together with differences in resource endowments and differences in ideology in individual countries are sufficient to ensure that "development" differs in meaning both among African countries and often between different groups and regions within these countries (1981, p. 87).

Three general relationships are considered as "conditioning spatial organization for development" and it is in terms of these that explanation for the structures and processes he identifies in the model (Figure 1.2) must be framed. The North-South relationship, that between rural and urban areas, and the relationship between rich and poor are characterized as unequal, interrelated and "changing over space and time" (p. 87).

Three structural characteristics of the Kenyan economy are distinguished in the model, defined as: government policy; the

Figure 1.2

A DYNAMIC SPATIAL MODEL OF THE KENYAN ECONOMY



TRANSFORMATION AND INTERACTION PROCESSES.

- 1 The Colonial Impact: Land alienation and foreign investment in resource and commercial crop sectors.
- 2 Resource-based primary product export.
- 3 Foreign investment in import substituting industry.
- 4 Investment in rural development.
- 5 Increasing disparities between rural and urban sub-systems.
- 6 Increasing disparities between sub-sectors of both rural and urban economies.
- 7 Excessive Rural-Urban migration.
- 8 Patron-Client relationships.
- 9 Kinship-based economic remittances.
- 10 'Aid' flows.
- 11 Circular and return migration.
- 12 Indigenous capital investment.

STRUCTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

- A. Government policies favouring a relatively open domestic market system.
- B. Adequate resource endowments but limited availability of good arable land.
- C. Relatively low technology.

Source: Taylor, 1981.

physical environment; and the level of technological development. Interacting with these structures are twelve "transformation and interaction processes" which reflect different facets of the three relationships identified above.

Taylor's discussion of the model is brief and therefore a critique may be based on its potential in facilitating further research, rather than on its exhaustive application to the Kenyan situation. Clearly, it proposes a less linear approach to explanation than has characterized the work already discussed. In addition to identifying internal and external processes of change in one interactive framework, kin relations are singled out for particular attention. These are operative most obviously in processes 8, patron-client relationships; 9, kinship-based economic remittances; and 11, circular and return migration. The inclusion of the physical resource base as a variable in the equation is also significant. The strength of the model lies in its attempt to identify and integrate the complex variety of endogenous and exogenous variables into a systemic whole, allowing for historical and cultural specificity.

The model's main weakness lies in its loose theoretical underpinnings. Taylor acknowledges that the three relationships which "condition" spatial organization interact with each other and change through time. He does not discuss the nature of this interaction or what determines the process of change. The lack of clarification of the basis of power relations in Kenya leads to

inconsistency in the definition of structures and processes in Figure 1.2. Government policies, for example, are identified as a structural characteristic. They do indeed reflect structure, being an instrument of groups/individuals who wield state power. Who holds this power and the basis of the power, whether in wealth, control over the means of production, knowledge or organization, or other "right" (Gore, 1984, p. 239), and the degree of conflict among contenders for such power, will determine policy. But the extent to which policy is implemented will reflect the degree of autonomy of alternate bases of power, as Hyden (1980) has argued in the context of the economy of affection in Tanzania. If policies of the state are accorded structural significance, then, to follow Hyden, it is reasonable to question why kin relations are not similarly classified. Whether confined to a peasant mode of production as in Hyden's schema, or not, they remain a powerful force in rural Kenya. At one level they concern the extension of clan politics to the administrative structure of the state, the "soft" state whose mechanisms Hyden deplores as antithetical to the economic efficiency necessary for "growth and development" (1983, p. 63). Patron-client relationships (process 8 in Figure 1.2) illustrate one aspect of these mechanisms. At another scale, kin relations define territory, a concept defined succinctly by Gore as "geographic space and power" (1984, p. 238, emphasis his). This has implications not only for organization of space at a local level on a territorial rather than functional

basis⁵ but also in terms of the structuring of gender relations. Most obviously the latter concern access to and control over land as will be shown in subsequent chapters.

The linkages between Taylor's third structural variable, technology, and the bases of power in Kenya need similarly to be elucidated. The range of technology and of technical knowledge in urban and rural areas is broad, but it may be argued as Bell (1979) has done, that it is of greater significance to the structuring of socioeconomic space to consider who controls what technology rather than the level of technology itself.

To conclude, while Taylor's model exposes the complexity of variables whose interaction condition socioeconomic space, the conceptual framework offers little indication of the mechanisms or contradictions which determine the processes involved. Alternative bases of power are not recognized or related conceptually to the organization of geographic space or territory. To a significant extent this reflects the lack of synthetic theory which attempts to link the social and spatial from the level of the state to that of particular social formations at the local level in the context of African reality. The "cross-scalar synthesis" which Soja (1980, p. 211) calls for is necessary if the spatiality of social relations is to be conceptualized comprehensively. But it is a task that must await the more accurate conceptualization of parts of the whole. For this reason, while recognizing that relations with the macro economy

cannot be ignored, the focus of the dissertation is on analysis of the socio-spatial dialectic at the local level. In the subsequent two chapters, the intention is to develop a theoretical framework which can provide a conceptual bridge between the sex/gender system and the spatiality of processes of change.

Notes

¹The concept of "patriarchy" is discussed further in Chapter 2. McDowell notes that it "...is not a single or simple concept, but has a number of different meanings. At its most general level, it refers to the power relationships in which men dominate women" (1983, p. 62). McDowell uses the term to denote "temporally and spatially specific relations between men and women" in the context of the gender division of urban space in postwar Britain.

²For a discussion and synthesis of this work see Women and the Geography Study Group of the IBG, 1984, Geography and Gender: an introduction to feminist geography.

³These concepts are elaborated in the context of feminist theory in Chapter 2.

⁴To Hyden, the economy of affection "...denotes a network of support, communications and interaction among structurally defined groups connected by blood, kin, community or other affinities, for example, religion. It links together in a systematic fashion a variety of discrete economic and social units which in other regards may be autonomous. In spite of the cellular structure of the production system, household units are co-operating for both productive and reproductive purposes (1983, pp. 8-9). Hyden argues that it is the peasant's ability to "...stand with one foot in the economy of affection and the other in the wider national economy" that enables "him" to act in a relatively autonomous way (ibid.).

⁵Weaver (1981, p. 93) distinguishes between a territorial and a functional definition of space as follows:

Territorial development simply refers to the use of an area's resources by the residents to meet their own needs. The main definitives of these needs are regional culture, political power and economic resources. Territorial development can be compared and contrasted to the idea of functional development, i.e., the narrow exploitation of a region's potentials only because of the role these play in the larger international economy.

Chapter 2: A framework for analysis: Part 1

2.1 Introduction

My purpose in this chapter is to define those elements necessary to untangle the relationship between the sex/gender system, society and space. To do this I will examine the search for the roots of gender differences in feminist theory, the intention being to discuss selective concepts relevant to the theme of this dissertation rather than to present a comprehensive analysis of such theory per se. The framework which is developed indicates an holistic conceptualization of the elements necessary for analysis, but the focus in Chapters 5 to 7 will be on that part identified within the economic system, my interest being related specifically to agricultural change.

The discussion in Chapter 3 then follows directly from this. A model is developed within which the elements identified in Chapter 2 can be accorded historicity: i.e. within which the productive/ reproductive dialectic may be analyzed in time and space, in so far as this relates to processes of agricultural change. Discussion is based on a review of the literature on inter-tropical Africa in which the differential relationship of women and men to agricultural change is analyzed. Although the spatiality of processes of change is in general ignored in this literature, the objective is to draw on insights from

the research in order to formulate a theoretical perspective which integrates the concept of space with an historical model of change. This perspective will then be considered in Chapters 5 to 7 in the context of the case study area.

2.2 A feminist perspective on theorizing

While feminist literature on oppression and social change has been characterized by theoretical division and disunity (see Jagger and Rothenberg, 1984), Joan Kelly (1983) suggests that a major change in social vision among feminists is now emerging. This she labels a "doubled view" (p. 259), arguing that the conflicts in theoretical conception--principally those based on sex versus those based on class--"...are themselves expressions of the nineteenth century conception of two socio-sexual spheres" (p. 263). In Kelly's view, the identification of one domain/sphere of work associated with men and the other with home and women results from dualist thought patterns whereas reality, at least as it pertains to the present in North America and Europe, is more blurred and considerably more complex. Thus, she contends, analyses are beginning "...to treat the family in relation to society; treat sexual and reproductive experience in terms of political economy; and treat productive relations of class in connection with sex hierarchy" (p. 264). Recognition of the simultaneous and dialectical workings of the relationships between work/class and sex/gender affords the basis for Kelly's

"doubled vision" and provides one conceptual bridge needed to probe beyond the ideological blinkers of "partial theory".

Kelly's analysis identifies some of the linkages evident in the industrialized urban environments of North America and Europe which transcend the earlier dualisms. These relate, for example, to the increasing numbers of women working in areas of socially organized production, yet in positions subordinate to those of men with respect to pay, benefits, opportunities and responsibilities, a situation for the majority specifically related to responsibilities in the private/reproductive domain.¹

Socialist feminist analysis (such as Kelly's) draws on insights developed from both radical feminism and theory which is closely allied with the Marxist "tradition". Although both perspectives contain a wide divergence of analytical viewpoints, the former, to a greater or lesser degree, universalizes from a basis of biological determinism, the latter from a basis of the material. As an example of radical feminist analysis, Shulamith Firestone (1970) attributes the "fundamental oppression" of women to their biological function of reproduction. She argues that although biological differences between women and men do not in themselves necessitate hierarchical relations, such differences have led to the primary division of labour, one that undercuts and precedes (historically) any division of labour based on class or race. Such relations are seen as originating in the family and then form the basis for the construction of social relationships

of gender in the wider society. As reproductive (i.e. biological) labour is universal, radical feminists contend, so are patriarchal relations based on this. Jill Vickers (unpublished), however, points out that not only does such an analysis of relations of power fail to offer any explanation for the maintenance of patriarchy through time, but through its focus on biological determinism, neglects to link this form of control/domination with other related, political and economic, forms. Thus radical feminism fails both to relate male dominance to the development of class relations and the state and to the "legitimizing authority of symbol systems" (Vickers, p. 305). With its premise that women are dependent on men for physical survival, lacking their own productive resources, this perspective may further be characterized as acultural as well as ahistorical in the sense of lacking insight into how patriarchal relations have varied in time and in place.

In contrast to the radical feminists, those working within the Marxist tradition have based their analysis of women's oppression on changes in relations of production. Gender inequality is no longer seen as the central problematic, being subsumed within class contradiction. Engels' (1970) The origins of the family, private property and the state formed the basis for much subsequent feminist discussion. In this work, Engels argued that prior to the institutionalization of private property, all productive labour had use value only, that men's and women's

labour was valued equally in social terms. Women's subordination is attributed to the privatization of property, initially livestock, and related to this, the development of the family as an economic unit. Men's concern to pass on wealth/property to their children, together with their appropriation of surplus, arising from the development of an exchange economy and the increased importance of production for exchange, led to gender inequality: men gained economic power at the expense of women.²

Drawing on part of Engels' argument, Sacks (1975) contends that:

"Private property transformed the relations between men and women within the household only because it also radically changed the political and economic relations in the larger society" (p. 216). With the increasing separation of social and domestic work within an exchange economy, the sexual division of labour became more significant with regard to gender inequality. As Sacks (1975) has pointed out, women began to work for their husbands, first, when the household was the place where exchange value was created, and later with the spread of industrial capitalism, when men's labour was sold in exchange for a wage. Women's unwaged labour, converting goods for consumption and reproducing the labour force, was essential for capitalism. Surplus value is here defined in terms of the difference between what a worker produces and what is required for that worker's maintenance/reproduction (Rubin, 1975). To quote further from Sacks (1975), women's labour became a "...socially subordinate part of producing an exchangeable

surplus. Women became wards, wives, and daughters instead of adult members of the society" (p. 217).

Vickers (unpublished) argues that Marxist feminist analysis is limited in two major ways with respect to getting at the roots of women's subordination: first, by restricting any analysis of patriarchal relations within the family, linkages with the establishment of a state are neglected; second, with an insistence on the supremacy of the economic for explanation, the role of the symbol system in supporting gender relations is identified as superstructural or epiphenomenal. Although socialist feminists have tried to include an ideational dimension in their analyses based on the material, with the intent of linking the different scales of society, Vickers argues that frequently treatment of the symbolic is contained by the other. Work by Rosin McDonough and Rachel Harrison (1978) is pertinent here. They contend, for example, that patriarchal relations vary according to relations of production. Within the capitalist mode of production, patriarchy operates through class relations. For example, the contradictions faced by a proletarian woman, which as a wife are framed in terms of her potential independence as a social producer and her legal dependence as a wife, differ from those of a bourgeois woman who as a wife is an "honorary" member of that class, not herself owning the means of production (1978, p. 37). A focus on relations of human reproduction is viewed as essential to understand the specific nature of women's oppression while first

place is accorded to productive relations by McDonough and Harrison (p. 28). Two kinds of reproductive activity are distinguished in their work: the one they associate with production--"the reproduction of the conditions of production, the means of production, commodities" and the reproduction of relations of production; the second concerns the realm of the family--the reproduction of the worker (p. 28).

Such analysis, to follow Vickers' argument, fails to analyze why mechanisms such as virilocality, sexual segregation in the work force, restrictions on women's right to control their fertility, rape, wife beating (Vickers), or genital mutilation and footbinding (Daly, 1978) occur. Therefore the concept of patriarchy is "domesticated" and subordinated to concepts of male-stream Marxism (Vickers, p. 74).

In her own search for the origins of power relations between women and men, Vickers focuses specifically on the concept of patriarchy. This is to her not an "essentialistic" category; there is no single or universal cause or form of patriarchy (p. 32). She agrees with Mary O'Brien (1981) that it is "...not within sexual relations but within the total process of human reproduction that the ideology of male supremacy finds its roots and its rationales" (O'Brien, 1981, p. 8, emphasis hers). For O'Brien; patriarchy is "...the power to transcend natural realities with historical man-made realities" (p. 54). It is in order to compensate for their natural separation from the real

process of genetic continuity that O'Brien contends men seek to institutionalize their power through principles and ideologies of continuity. Vickers, drawing on cross-cultural analysis, is critical of the universalism of O'Brien's argument, herself proposing that there is no universal explanation for hierarchical gender relations. Rather, in the search for a "...sensitive mode of dialectical thinking...with a dialectic of production and a dialectic of reproduction interacting through history" (p. 144), she argues that if the linkages between the material and the ideational are to be uncovered, more emphasis needs to be given to the ideational or symbolic order than has characterized much previous socialist feminist scholarship.

Attributing more strength to the ideational/symbolic/ideological³ and conceptualizing this dimension as both dialectically interactive with the material and autonomous, Vickers develops a model exploring the relationship between the symbol and material/power orders. The complexity of this relationship is evident in the struggle to overcome the either/or of debate and to integrate women as actors in history. But, as Vickers notes earlier in her book, if insight into the relationship between sex and power is to be gleaned, "...the male-stream cul de sac of unilinear, evolutionary schemes for single-variable explanations" (p. 21) must be avoided. With an acceptance of contradiction and the reality of paradox, discussion is unlikely at this point in time to lead to definitive answers to

ontological questions. Theory may appear untidy when compared to the norm of "scientific" inquiry.

At the centre of her analysis is Vickers' premise that reproduction is a central activity of human life and that it is "...male control of the female biological capacity to reproduce the species" (p. 318) that forms the core of patriarchy. The relationship between sex and power under patriarchy in her view can be understood in terms of four dimensions: "autonomy; images of power and powerlessness in the symbol systems which rule our heads; economic activity and productivity and social adulthood, comprising individual and collective public activity" (pp. 395-6). Discussion of these dimensions in essence forms the bridge between analytical modes. It also provides a way for a less fettered framework than that provided by Gayle Rubin's (1975) exegesis of Lévi-Strauss' "exchange of women" and Freud's psychoanalysis in her elucidation of the interrelationships among sexuality, economics and politics.⁴

Vickers' conceptualization which is then both developed and measured within the framework of cross-cultural comparative analysis draws on many disparate threads both of feminist and, (if in a contrapuntal way), male/main stream theory. My intention here is not to discuss Vickers' complex argument in its entirety, but to draw on some of the insights which led to her synthesis and on the work of others to illustrate connections between the material and the symbolic of significance in elucidating the

socio-spatial dialectic.

The notion of a dialectical relationship between power and symbol is central to Vickers' schema. A critical insight to this relationship is the coexistence of (female) power with (male) dominance (Sanday, 1981). Much research in the past, Vickers argues, has defined power exclusively as domination/subordination, a zero-sum game. Using the concept of 'double vision' here differently from Kelly (1983), she contends that in contrast, a feminist vision of power must focus on power as "...inner strength, competence and relationships built on trust" (p. 267). Hence power relationships are considerably more complex than they have frequently been conceptualized. Alice Schlegel's (1977a) insights into the multidimensional nature of power are pertinent here. Power is defined by her as "...the ability to exert control", whether this relates to one's self and one's actions or those of others, in domestic, political, economic or religious areas. But, Schlegel proposes, the dimensions of authority and autonomy are also critical to an understanding of power relations. The former is defined as: "...the socially recognized and legitimated right to make decisions concerning others" (Schlegel, 1977a, pp. 8-9). It is therefore closely linked with the symbolic order (Vickers, unpublished). Autonomy is conceptualized as the "freedom from control by others" (Schlegel, 1977a, pp. 8-9).

In assessing the relative equality of women and men with reference to these distinctions, Schlegel considers three

questions important: a) how autonomous are the sexes in terms of exercising control over their own persons, activities and the products of their labour and those of others? b) how is this control balanced between the sexes? c) how central to social organization are the institutions controlled by women vis à vis men? (1977a, p. 9). A central institution is defined here as "...one that establishes priorities in the allocation of time, goods, and personnel, and legitimizes motivation and justification for action" (p. 19). Schlegel contends that women may have considerable autonomy and control in one area/sphere, for example the household, but if this institution is peripheral to the central political decision-making institutions of society, male/female relations are unlikely to be equal.

Therefore in assessing relations of power, one needs to assess how and to what extent men and women participate in the different institutions, how the sexes differ in terms of having power and authority within the institutions and how the central institutions relate to each other (Schlegel, 1977a). Such institutions may be identified with political, economic, religious, social, legal, military, educational and other systems. Where kin relations are a central institution men and women's relative power and authority will vary according to rules of inheritance, residence and descent. Rae Blumberg (1984) argues that these variables are rank-ordered, the amount of property men or women control through inheritance being the most significant

kin or familial variable. She suggests that in general women are more likely to control substantial domestic property in matrilineal societies with matrilocal residence.

Rules of residence relate directly to the ability to control property or territory and to the potential benefit from support groups/ solidarity. Residence may be virilocal, in which case the wife moves on marriage to her husband's home; uxorilocal (or, less accurately, matriloc⁵), where residence on marriage takes place with the wife's family; avunculocal, where the couple lives with the husband's uncle; bilocal, where residence may be taken up in either the wife's or husband's family; or neolocal, the situation where a nuclear family lives near neither set of kin (Blumberg, 1984).

The origins of rules of residence have in general been traced back either to the sexual division of labour in subsistence activities, one particular division of labour favouring cooperation between men, another between women, or to the necessity of defence by a kin group (Blumberg, 1984). Vickers argues further that where a settled agricultural system aims at increasing productivity, the need to increase the work force through increased reproductive labour will tend towards a patrifocal group, where female bonding is likely to be weaker and male dominance stronger. Peggy Sanday (1981) links these different theories through her analysis of the ideational/material premises of a people's relationship with their environment. This

argument will be discussed in detail later in this chapter, but it is relevant to note at this point that residence and descent rules tend to follow the paternal line where resources are scarce or where stress ("natural" disaster, migration, colonization) has caused societal disruption, whereas the pattern is likely to be matrilineal and uxori-local where the environment is more favourable. Sanday notes the different nature of the two forms:

The accommodating nature of matrilineal forms results from the dispersion of related men due to the practice of matrilocality, a practice that promotes widespread cooperation and coordination of groups. The latter form of organization, I would add, encourages integrative political structures.... Because patrilineality and patrilocality consolidate related men, this form of social organization promotes stable political systems in circumstances where competition for scarce resources is the basis for sociocultural survival or expansion (p. 177).

Whatever the nature of the origin of different rules of residence or descent, the effect on relations of power between the sexes is likely to be profound, yet not always simply unidirectional. Much of the feminist literature on bonding, while disagreeing completely with the premise of their argument that men's supposed superior ability to bond was biologically based, draws on Tiger and Fox's (1971) recognition of the relationship between the ability to bond and male power. Much feminist literature supports the notion that bonding between women of between men is significantly conditioned by the practice of

village exogamy. Both Schlegel (1977a) and Vickers (unpublished), for example, relate residence rules to the ability to bond and hence to the achievement of autonomy or social adulthood. One dimension of this argument rests clearly on the material order, as Blumberg (1978) argues: "...when the wife can continue to live with or near her relatives while the husband is separated from his kin, her degree of autonomous control over the family or group's productive resources is facilitated" (p. 28). Further, Rubin (1975) suggests that where women "circulate", as a result of virilocality, they are "...in no position to realize the benefits of their own circulation", namely, social organization (p. 174).⁶ The power resulting from this accrues to men. The distance moved on marriage is clearly a significant variable here.

Residence on marriage, however, is not the only determinant of bonding. This is evident in Sanday's (1981) discussion of the Iroquois who are considered matrifocal at the village level, yet patrifocal at the League and inter-village levels. It is also evident in a very interesting footnote to Sacks' (1982) discussion of Igbo practice of village exogamy based on Margaret Green's (1964) Ibo Village Affairs.⁷ The Igbo women in the patrilineage village group of Agbaja, east of Onitsha, belonged to two separate organizations: one as wives,⁸ and one, formed on the basis of trading organization, as sisters or daughters of their natal kin corporation. Both organizations had significant ritual and "adjudication" roles in village and wider areal concerns. Sacks

quotes from Green:

(But) it seems to be less generally grasped that the Ibo system of exogamy (village exogamy) works like a cement binding the villages together, or like a consolidating network which has to some extent, among other things, made trading between the village units possible. It has certainly made for the mitigation of inter-village fighting. And in all this the leading part has fallen to the women.... Women, as daughters of their native village, have also their far-flung inter-village organization which has no parallel in that of men and which has thus a special interest and importance as an inter-village system of links (Green, 1964, p. 232, quoted in Sacks, 1982, p. 240).

In this instance women's ability to bond outside of their marriage relationship--and marriages were virilocal--was based on their economic role as traders. This bonding was a significant factor in their achievement of power and authority as social adults in Igbo society. Therefore, although women's ability to bond may be curtailed by exogamous marriage rules, the different scales at which bonding may occur must be considered in order to assess how this relates to gender access to power.

Further aspects of kin and modes of production will be examined shortly, but I wish to return briefly to the discussion of institutional centrality. This notion must be qualified in three ways if it is to relate to the dynamic nature of society. First, participation in central institutions by men and women will vary according to age, as Schlegel (1977a), Mandala (1983), Meillassoux (1981) and Vickers (unpublished) point out. Thus, the

relative equality between the sexes may vary according to their life stages, women in their post-reproductive period often being accorded greater authority in such institutions than at previous periods in their lives. Second, the centrality of an institution is not a fixed/static variable: it will change in relation to other changes in the economy, polity, society and changes within the symbolic order. Schlegel draws attention to this in the context of the role of colonialism and the subsequent profound impact on kin relations in terms of domination/subordination. But also of importance are other sources of stress which Sanday (1981) discusses, for example, migration. Third, the relation of women and men to central institutions will vary according to socioeconomic strata. Mandala (1983) examines this with reference to the historical differences between the south and north of the Tchiri valley in Malawi. He compares the effect of colonial rule on the female elites in Mang'anja society with the "ordinary" women both here and among the Sena. Women's leadership in religion (among the Mang'anja elite) continued in the south up to the 1960s, despite their removal from political power, first, by the Kololo, and later, by the British. This had a significant affect on their autonomy and authority in society.

Vickers considers the concept of social adulthood, first elucidated by Sacks (1975),⁹ as closely tied with participation in the central institutions of society and with autonomy. She defines the concept as "...a status, with rights and duties,

accorded to individuals recognized by a society as capable of participating in the affairs of the community or society." It is thus "culturally defined and historically conditioned" (Vickers, p. 298). For Sacks, (1975), social adulthood is based on nine variables: (1) the performance of collective social labour; (2) significant representation in legal proceedings; (3) opportunities for socializing; (4) one, rather than two, standards with respect to extramarital sex; (5) the relative ease of divorce; (6) social disposal of wealth; (7) access to political office; (8) involvement in societal decision-making; (9) taking part in extra-domestic religious rituals (p. 223).

Integral to the concept is the notion of having the authority to act in areas outside the family. Yet such authority is linked to autonomy within the family as both Blumberg (1984) argues in terms of life options and Vickers (unpublished) in terms of life choices. If women can achieve autonomy in life choices, Vickers, argues, then they may also be able to develop power to act as social adults. The critical choices for her concern: reproduction; sexuality; mothering and nurturance of children; spatial freedom; personal and educational development; and productive activities (p. 339). Excluding economic (productive) variables in order to avoid tautology, in her argument that life options provide a "...measurable set of opportunities and freedoms that...may be most strongly predicted by women's relative economic power", Blumberg (1984, p. 70) identifies the significant life

options as concerning: fertility; marriage; divorce; premarital sex; extra-marital sex; control of the household; freedom of movement; and access to education.

Clearly not all the above categories of choices or options are discrete, spatial freedom or mobility being an integral facet of several of the others. What is significant in Blumberg's analysis is insight into the relationship between the economic system and power. She argues that economic power is a significant conditioning factor in exercising life options and in general in influencing, (not necessarily through formal channels) the political arena. Of itself, however, it does not guarantee equality. In Vickers' words: "...economic 'power' is rarely simply translatable to political power or authority in the sense of the power or the right to control others" (pp. 284-85). I will turn now to a discussion of the questions of economic power, following this with reflection more specifically on interaction with the ideational.

2.3 Production and dimensions of power

The central questions here concern, in essence, those subsumed under the concept of mode of production. Concisely, to quote from Sacks (1982):

A mode of production is a particular constellation of means of production (the tools and equipment appropriated from the natural world or constructed from its products for purposes of producing

subsistence and material needs), of the forces of production (the means together with the ways people organize themselves to use them; their organization as producers), and the relations of production (denoting how people stand in relation to productive means and to each other) (p. 105, emphasis hers).

While the concept of mode of production continues to be the centre of heated debate in Africanist literature, its conceptualization of the basis of economic power as resting on the relative control of the means of production and allocation of surplus is generally accepted and will form the framework for raising areas of concern here.

The notion of the sexual division of labour is central to an understanding of the relationship between sex and power. Schlegel (1977a) draws attention to this issue in a discussion of the domestic mode of production, one in which, as defined by Sahlins (1972), the household is the dominant production unit and the main relations of production are those between the genders or between the generations. Schlegel argues that as productive relations are "embedded" here in other relations, they must be compatible with the division of labour in the non-economic domain. Reproductive roles are identified as key to "determining" the sexual division of productive labour: tasks that involve separation from home for long periods of time are incompatible with childrearing. Thus, while the sexual division of productive labour is not itself explained by anything in nature as Meillassoux (1981) notes, nevertheless if the sexual division of labour entails significant

spatial division, it is less likely that men will be involved in a nurturant role. Vickers builds on Schlegel's observations by pointing out that where women's productive roles fit readily with their reproductive and nurturing activities--to an extent similar to men's--both sexes will have the same degree of spatial mobility and knowledge of their environment. She hypothesizes that: "This latter point of the fit between economic and reproductive activities may well be as significant for egalitarian social relationships between the sexes as specific characteristics of the balance between their productive roles" (p. 525). It is this factor, and the "symmetrical" relationship the sexes have to productive labour that in her view contributes, for example, to the egalitarian relationships among the !Kung. Vickers interestingly also points out that in polygynous families where domestic responsibilities are shared, there would be less conflict between women's productive and reproductive roles. This in turn might have provided the basis for greater economic independence and hence autonomy for a woman. The significance of diverse marriage systems is frequently ignored in the literature on the division of labour, yet as Mandala (1982, 1983) has shown among the Mang'anja and Sena, it is an important variable in analyzing the impact of colonialism. He distinguishes between female headed families, male-headed monogamous and male-headed polygynous families and argues that the colonial economy resulted in the decreased significance of the sexual division of labour in

~~monogamous~~ households while intensifying it in polygynous households.

The significance of the fit between productive and reproductive labour will vary according to mode of production. In more stratified societies, for example, Blumberg (1984) contends that women's role in production is "...more a function of the demand for labour relative to the available supply than of the degree of compatability of the activity with simultaneous childcare responsibilities" (p. 75).

The sexual division of labour, while not a cause in itself of stratified power relations, provides the grounds nevertheless on which inegalitarian relations may develop. One of the critical variables here is the centrality of sex-differentiated economic activities to society as a whole, or as Blumberg expresses it so cogently, to the "strategic indispensability" of that labour (1978, 1984). This idea is of great significance historically with regard to women's and men's participation in agriculture in Africa as will be discussed in Chapter 3. Essentially, in the many societies where women were responsible for cultivation, the colonial introduction of export/cash crops to men or male migration and integration directly in the wage economy, resulted in men's labour being involved in activities which were deemed socially productive. In contrast, subsistence food production was less highly valued and thus women's labour was viewed as less strategically indispensable.

The relationship of the sexes to the means of production is a complex one. In rural areas this includes analysis of men's and women's relative access to and control over/rights to/ownership of land, movable property (livestock) and non-agricultural production; access to and control over information, capital, training and technological innovation, and control over the allocation of labour and over the products of that labour. My focus here will be specifically on gender access to land in order to bring out the critical issues with respect to the basic argument. The other areas will be discussed in Chapter 3. I will also restrict comments to gender relationships to land where kinship, in the sense of relations based on filiation, is a significant principle of societal organization. Therefore I will exclude from discussion the communal mode of production where the means of production are held "in common" by men and women and are equally accessible to all members of the band (Sacks, 1982). It is here where the band is the basic unit of "adhesion" that land is the "subject of labour" through an economy of hunting and gathering, rather than an "instrument of labour" (Meillassoux, 1981). I will also not be concerned at this point with societies where productive relationships are defined by class or where a strong central state existed in the precolonial context. Justification for this focus rests, first, on providing a framework for analysis for the latter part of the dissertation which concerns a people whose predominant mode of production prior

to colonialism concerned a variant of a kin corporate mode (Sacks, 1982); and second, as Angelique Haugerud (1983) has shown so convincingly in Embu, Kenya, kinship remains a major organizing societal principle with respect to land even where individualization of land tenure and statutory legal rights to land exist.

The argument here will rely to a considerable extent on Sacks' (1982) discussion of male/female productive relationships within a patriliney. Both here and where matrilineal descent is followed, "the destination of the offspring" (Meillassoux, 1981, p. 20), and thus control of women's reproductive power, is central. Sacks endeavours to integrate through a "conceptual and methodological shift in the definition of mode of production" the sphere of social relations that results from this with the material order. Her central hypothesis states that: "...women's and men's relations to the means of production create different social relations among them and create complex and multifaceted social beings who do not have universal gender-based essences" (p. 6). She develops this argument most completely in the context of a kin corporate mode of production, defined as a productive mode in which both sexes are members of a corporation which has some form of collective ownership of the means of production. Access to and control over the means of production is therefore based on membership in the corporation, and power will exist "...to the extent that these corporations have unequal amounts of productive

property and members within them have unequal access to their corporation's property" (p. 73). Although land is frequently the main means of production, it is important to recognize that non-agricultural specialization may be significant (Mandala, 1983), and that although generally self-sufficient, such corporations are not autarchic (Meillassoux, 1981).

The central dynamic in the kin corporate mode of production lies in the contradiction between kin corporate relations of production and corporate and subcorporate forces of production. Sacks reasons that: "Kin corporations are both owning and producing groups. But they are not groups for all (and sometimes most) productive tasks, nor do they own all (or most) of what is produced on corporate means of production" (1982, p. 117). Succinctly, the contradiction exists "...within the productive forces (between producer-owners and producer-nonowners) and between them and the productive relations (of producer-owners and nonproducer-owners)" (p. 117). Central to this dynamic are the often contradictory relationships of men (as husbands and brothers) and women (as wives and sisters) to the productive means and in terms of the forces of production.

The distinction Sacks makes between "sisters" and "wives" is critical to an understanding of her argument. A sister is defined: "...in situations of corporate patrilineages to mean one who is an owner, a decision maker among others of the corporation, and a person who controls her own sexuality" (p. 110). A sister

thus has autonomy as an adult and this position and relationship results from her membership from birth in a kin corporation. In contrast, a wife is referred to as dependent and subordinate. Sacks' rationale for this distinction of roles is given as follows. I quote at length as the argument is important in terms of the ideational/materialist debate:

To emphasize the wife-sister relations of production differs from emphasizing women's relations of production. I think we have accepted the social darwinist assumption that women as a gender have a single and essential relation to the means of production. Consequently we have tended to reduce everything to what is believed to be the essential relationship: the wife relationship. I am simply suggesting that women (and men) especially in non-class societies, have several essential and contrasting productive relations. To believe that one sees a single essence in women's relations to the means of production, I think, is to take a capitalist view. Capitalist ideology holds that men as a gender belong in the economy, roughly the sphere of capitalist productive relations (as workers or owners), while women as a gender belong in the home, where they maintain and reproduce the working class and have very different relations from men to the means of production. We know that this ideology is not reality; the gender woman is both housewife and 45 percent of the work force. But that ideology insists that the housewife role is the essence of women's relations to the means of production. There is no reason to presume that the capitalist equation of one gender - one relation to the means of production is any truer in other modes of production than it is in capitalism itself (Sacks, 1982, pp. 110-111).

In the kin corporate mode of production, in contrast to the

communal mode in which differences between the genders are based on productive forces (how the work is organized) rather than in productive relations, men and women, as siblings, have the same productive relations, but as spouses relate differently to the means of production. Sacks contends that how work is organized can support or undermine these sets of contradictory productive relationships. In patrilineal and patrilocal corporations, sisters are owners and not producers, wives are producers and not owners. How these relations are actualized, i.e. the extent to which a woman may achieve autonomy (and social adulthood) as a sister rather than being defined primarily as a wife, depends, following Sacks' argument, on the organization of forces of production. Her thesis is that: "...in non-class productive modes--even in patrilineal, patrilocal corporations, often conceived of as necessarily patriarchal--the existence of a corporate owning group allows for a range of relationships, some of which are sexually egalitarian" (p. 122).

Sacks illustrates the range of power women may achieve in patrilineal societies by comparing the case of the precapitalist Lovedu with that of the Mpondo. Among the Lovedu, a patrilineal and patrilocal (virilocal) kin corporation of the north-east Transvaal, women had significant autonomy, resulting from the fact that sisterhood defined women's main productive relationship and "shaped" their relationships as wives, rather than the reverse (p. 154). Sacks writes that: "The organization of production,

together with the sister's political and ritual responsibilities to her house, made these relationships frequently exercised" (p. 158). Cross-cousin marriages, although virilocal, meant that women remained close to their natal home. Thus, while fulfilling a reproductive role for their husband's lineage, they were able in their early years of married life, to work for their father's sister, later in life being able to access their rights to the labour of a brother's daughter. Often this claim was framed in terms of a return for having provided a brother, through the bridewealth given for his wife, with the means for the brother to marry. This organization which facilitated the bonding between women did not in Sacks' view result in equality between the sexes, and this was particularly evident with regard to sexuality, but women were able to exercise considerable autonomy in other areas. She points out that even among the Mpondo where women's predominant relationship to the means of production was as a wife, and women were definitely subordinate to men, lineage wives were able to achieve some measure of solidarity through organizing together for agricultural tasks and the collection of wood and water.

Women may also, within patrilineages, contract "women marriages" or become "female husbands", as Denise O'Brien (1977) prefers, in order to gain control over the means of production. In this respect, O'Brien distinguishes between "autonomous" and "surrogate" female husbands. A surrogate female husband acts as a

substitute for a male kinsman by providing heirs. In contrast, an autonomous female husband "...marries independently, without any reference to male kin, and...is always pater to children borne by her wife or wives" (p. 113). The latter type of husband is conceptualized as a male, the former as a female acting on behalf of a specific male. To the autonomous female husband may accrue political and economic power, as O'Brien indicates among West African traders and among the Venda, Lovedu and Koni. Sacks notes the case of a woman from the Igbo town of Onitsha who, as a successful trader, repays the bridewealth given for her, divorces her husband, and founds her own house on her return to her natal kin group. This clearly enabled the woman to become a household head in a patrilineal society, and this occurrence was not uncommon in Sacks' view. The degree to which such autonomy was translated into social adulthood is not explored by Sacks.

It is evident from Sacks' discussion that the relative significance of the sister/wife role is not static, but changes both in terms of the life cycle of women and with changes in macro power structures. In terms of the life cycle, even within a patrilineal system, with age, women "...become controllers of labor and productive means--as sisters who control brothers' children's lineage affairs and as mothers who control their own children and their children's productive means" (p. 120). Men's access to the productive means and labour similarly changes with their change in status from junior, to senior, to elder. Seldom

is their relationship as a brother in their kin corporation analyzed (Sacks, 1982).

Changes in the macro economy will also affect the balance between the relative roles a woman has as a sister or a wife. Sacks gives the example of class relations among the nineteenth century Buganda here to document the undercutting of female power through the breaking of sisterly relations. This, she argues, had a visible effect on women's autonomy and status of social adulthood, and the ascendance of the relationship as wife. While not addressing women's roles as sisters or wives, Blumberg (1984) makes an important observation linking different scales of social interaction and the relative ability of women to exercise power. She summarizes her argument in an hypothesis which relates to a theory of gender stratification.

Since macro levels influence micro levels more than the reverse, where women's relative economic power at the macro levels (society; class; at times, community) is less than at the micro level(s), the less favourable macro levels will act as a "discount rate" to reduce (but not eliminate) the extent to which women can exercise their relative economic power at the more micro level(s): that is, women's actual micro power will be less than their potential power (1984, p. 49).

Blumberg also argues that the converse is true: where women's relative economic power is greater at the macro than the micro level, the former will "cushion" the latter. In historical terms then, for example, where colonial administrative practice

eclipsed at least in part kin economic and social structures of power and women's role in them, this will in turn have affected negatively women's economic power in the household. The relative power women can access through subsistence rather than cash crop production, as already indicated, is an issue directly involved here.

My discussion up to this point has focused on access to and control over land, but where non-agricultural production is central in economic and societal terms, clearly this will be a basis for further differentiation in relations of power between women and men. This is an area that has been neglected in theorizing on productive relationships in precapitalist societies, as Mandala (1983) has noted. Mandala elaborates in detail the role of men in iron smelting and smithery and of women in salt production among the Mang'anja, in the mid-nineteenth century, but he concludes that gender-specific non-agricultural production at that time did not provide the basis for unequal power relationships. The gender balance of power was however disrupted as a result of the intrusion of the Kololo into the Tchiri Valley and later by British colonialism. Here, the effect of male migration and women's and elder's reliance on their husbands and sons for cash from the colonial mining economy had a profound effect on gender relations.

The rights of women as sisters or wives come into play not only in the allocation and organization of productive labour as

has been discussed, but also from control over the products of that labour. Here it is important to distinguish between products of use or of exchange value. How central either of these products is to the society in question will be germane to a discussion of the gender control of them (Schlegel, 1977a). For gender relations of power, control over the allocation of surplus (from exchange) is of greater significance than control over the products of subsistence (Blumberg, 1984). Schlegel (1977a) suggests that two issues are involved here: one concerns the social networks arranged through the exchange of goods and the relative role of men and women in these networks; the second concerns the exchange relationships with outside societies, as these in turn frequently affect productive relations within society.

Sacks' (1982) discussion of "sisters and rulers" in West Africa indicates women's extensive collective organization of trading networks and the reinforcement of sisterly productive relations as a result of such trading organization. Thus, among the Igbo of Onitsha, women had considerable power and authority as social adults. While some women, generally those who were older and at least not as involved in reproductive labour, travelled far, many less spatially mobile were able to integrate their role as traders more closely with their reproductive activities (Beneria, 1979). In support of her argument here, Beneria draws on earlier work by Lawson (1966) who observed that:

Women spent much of their lives in the market place, undertaking their family work looking after and feeding their children, even washing and bathing in the market, so that the market place became a virtual extension of the family house (Lawson, 1966, p. 597).

Often such trade involved relatively egalitarian societies, but Etienne and Leacock (1980), who view trading activity as critical with respect to social stratification, argue that a critical point is reached "...when such trade became important enough to lead to specialization and the consequent re-organization of productive relations" (p. 13). This creates the potential for forms of economic dependency and lays the basis for both social and sexual stratification. With increasing capitalist penetration and urbanization has come a larger scale and more formally structured trading system that, as Beneria argues, mediates against women's supremacy in this area: "At the roots of this process", she suggests, "we find the constraints placed upon women by their involvement in reproductive activities, and the productive structures set up by capitalist penetration into traditional economies" (1979, p. 222).

2.4 The ideational: autonomy and integration

For many writers who have acknowledged the role of the ideational in gender stratification--more frequently using the term of ideology (see note 3)--the assumption is made that this is subsumed under the material/economic basis of power as discussed in Chapter 2.2. In contrast, work by Schlegel (1977a),

and Vickers (unpublished) views the ideational as having a separate dimension although in addition being itself dialectically related to the economic. Schlegel identifies the distinctiveness of this "order":

People act, but they also think: they perceive, they organize their perceptions into cognitive sets, and they plan. They are aware of self and other, and they explain this distinction in beliefs about the nature of mankind and express it through symbols and ritual. These explanations lead to predictions and justifications of behavior and become a powerful motivating force for social action (1977a, p. 31).

Schlegel proceeds to argue that there is a relationship between "...the ontological axioms of a society, ...the norms and symbols by which these axioms are conveyed, and social relations" (p. 31). In turn, "male" and "female" are defined according to the dialectic between such ontologies, their expression through ritual and belief and the social system--the latter being defined in this context by Schlegel to include both relations of production and exchange, and relations of affiliation. It is interesting that in drawing attention to the ideological dimension, Schlegel discusses the spatial arrangements of men and women: how in Hopi society the association of the "left" with men and the "right" with women is linked to ideology. She hypothesizes that: "It may be that the most abiding expression of gender differences lies in spatial arrangements" (p. 33). As such, spatial division may be used as an entry point to a discussion of the interrelationships among

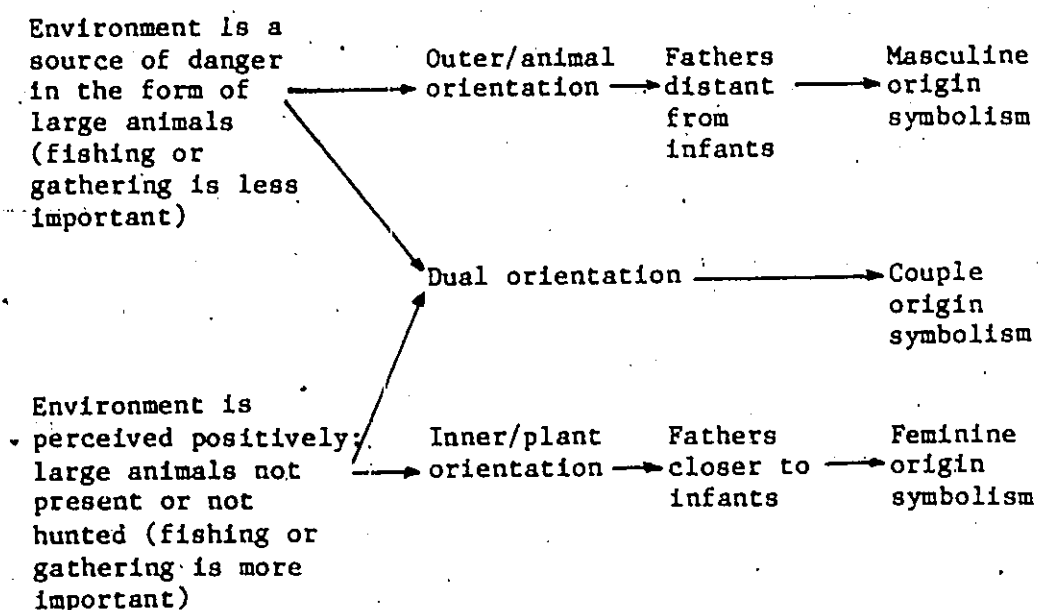
economic/productive relations, social and reproductive relations and ideology in specific contexts.

Schlegel does not, in her discussion, go beyond the important recognition of the relationship between these orders to search for the roots/origins of ideational determination. For this, I will turn to Peggy Sanday's (1981) book in which Sanday explicitly sets out to "...uncover the bases for the underlying plan that directs the authority relations of males and females in symbolism and behaviour" (p. 56). Developing her insight into the co-existence of female power and male dominance she traces the links between the symbol order, the environment and the productive mode. She summarizes these interrelationships as follows:

...male dominance and female power are consequences of the way in which peoples come to terms with their historical and natural environments and develop their separate identities. Male and female power roles are cast when peoples forge their sense of peoplehood. A sense of peoplehood implies a shared code that guides behavior, including behavior of the sexes, not only in relation to each other but also in relation to valued resources and to the supernatural. Power is accorded to whichever sex is thought to embody or to be in touch with the forces upon which people depend for their perceived needs (1981, p. 11).

Sanday bases her analysis on cross-cultural comparison, using 186 societies from the Standard Cross-Cultural Sample.¹⁰ The first linkages in her argument are illustrated in Figure 2.1. The main premise on which these connections are founded is the notion that

Figure 2.1: The genesis of origin symbolism.



Source: Sanday, 1981, p. 68.

"...the authority relationship between the sexes is based in part on a people's concept of the source of supernatural power and on how they choose to engage this power for their own ends" (p. 64). Sanday contends that although the "origins" of sexual inequality cannot be categorically defined, the starting point concerns a people's perception of and relationship to their environment. Whether a people see themselves as vulnerable or not in relation to their environment will condition the orientation of their subsistence activities, and in turn these will be reflected in the relative nurturant roles of women and men. Where the environment

is viewed positively, beliefs will tend towards inner power, and be associated with feminine origin symbolism. Conversely, where the environment is negatively perceived, beliefs of outer power and masculine origin symbolism will pertain. Gender symbolism in creation stories results therefore both from childrearing practices and how the environment is perceived and utilized in subsistence activities (p. 68). Whether the creator is viewed as male, female, or a couple, indicates the conceptualization of the location of the major source of power in a particular society.

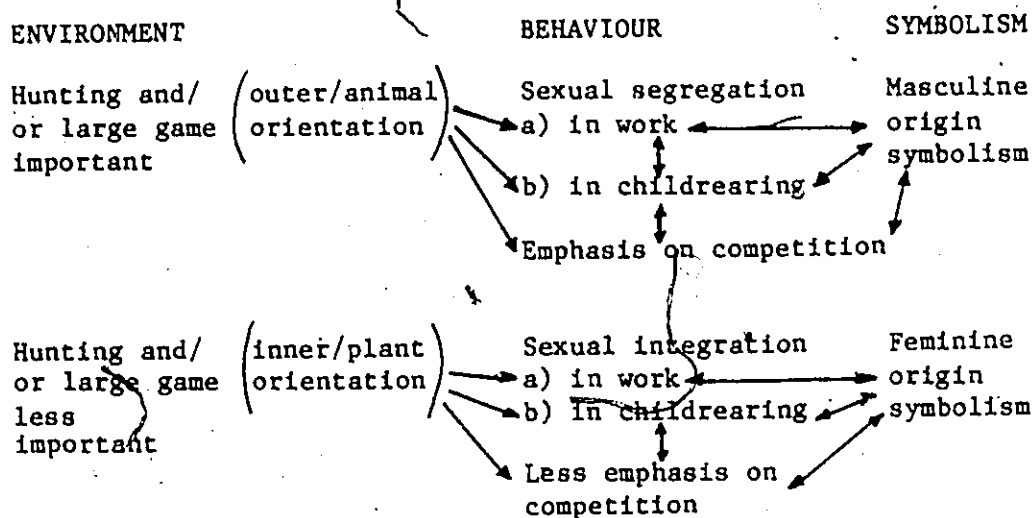
This is considered of prime significance by Sanday for:

By articulating how things were in the beginning, people supply more than a logic for sexual life-styles - they make a basic statement about their relationship with nature and about their perception of the source of power in the universe. This relationship, and its projection into the sacred and secular realms, holds the key for understanding sexual identities and corresponding roles (1981, p. 57).

The causal linkages illustrated in Figure 2.1 are tested by Sanday using multiple regression analyses of 43 societies chosen from the Standard Cross-Cultural Sample.¹¹ On the basis of statistical support for these links, Sanday moves her argument to the area of rationale for the sexual division of labour. Figure 2.2 illustrates the hypothesized linkages between the environment, origin symbolism and the sexual divisions of labour. The arrows indicate where significant correlations (Pearson's R) were found.

Sanday distinguishes between three general cultural

Figure 2.2: Sexually segregated versus integrated cultural configurations. Arrows indicate significant correlations.



Source: Sanday, 1981, p. 90.

configurations (dual orientation is not indicated in Figure 2.2) which "determine" the division of labour in work and in childrearing. She points out that sexual integration in these activities is less common and that integration correlates with an economy based on gathering rather than hunting, and in turn with feminine origin symbolism. Sexual segregation, in contrast, results either from an economy based on large game, an "outer" orientation, masculine origin symbolism and an emphasis on competition, or where there is a dual-sex orientation. In the case of the latter, although there is variation according to society, there is, in general, a separation of power structures

between male and female, and some degree of balance between inner and outer orientation. An inner orientation in the sexual integration in work and childrearing is likely to lead to cooperative arrangements between the sexes and more equal power structures. Where sexual separation of tasks is evident, either in a society with a dual or with an outer orientation, two different "worlds" are created: "...one male and the other female, each consisting of a system of meanings and a program for behavior" (p. 7). Even where there is separation, where the female and male "worlds" are balanced, sexual equality is likely. Yet, in Sanday's view the spatial separation of tasks is critical in providing a basis for inequality. She suggests that: "...men and women must be physically as well as conceptually separated for men to dominate women" (p. 7).

This argument is then extended in an examination of the basis of male and female power in inner and outer oriented societies. Discussion centres on the co-existence of male dominance with female power. In particular Sanday is concerned to question whether this power and authority is based on ascription or achievement. Economic and political power and authority are viewed as ascriptive when they result from a "natural right" or are part of "a long-standing cultural configuration" (p. 131); they are defined as achieved when based solely on economic autonomy, on activities on which men depend. In inner oriented societies, female power is associated with ascription; in outer

oriented societies, women's power depends on their access to and control over resources.

By distinguishing between ascriptive and achieved bases for power, Sanday points towards an explanation as to why women have political power and authority in 53% of the societies classified in her analysis as having advanced agriculture. In so doing she goes beyond Eleanor Leacock's (1978) and Ester Boserup's (1970) arguments which, Sanday notes, assume the universal demise of female power and authority. Leacock, basing her analysis to a significant degree on Engels' analysis of the impact of technological change on gender relations, argues that, as the immediate purpose of production changes from one based on use-value to one of exchange-value, direct control is lost by the producer. The new household relations created by this process confine women to the private domain and thus they lose public power. Boserup (1970) in turn contends that with the introduction of cash crops and new agricultural techniques to men in Africa during the colonial era, although women continued to produce subsistence crops, these were no longer valued as highly by society as they were not the source of cash.

Sanday suggests that the relative impact of the changes noted by Leacock and Boserup depends on whether female power was ascriptive or achieved:

If female power is related to feminine symbolism and in situ cultural development,

we can assume that the authority of women is an integral part of the fabric of a people's social identity and, as such, less easily destroyed by colonial influence. If females live in a world where power is determined by might as opposed to right, it seems reasonable to suppose that the outside influence that disturbs the relative access of males and females to scarce or valued resources will have a corresponding effect on the relative balance of power between males and females (1981, p. 131).

Similarly, the effect of other sources of stress, migration, food scarcity, warfare or other causes of societal disruption, will depend on the basis of power in society. Where "ancient metaphors" accord women power in society, women will have a firmer basis on which to retain their autonomy. Where, however, an outer orientation pertains, concomitant with sexual segregation, Sanday suggests that it is likely that under stress a society will rely on male aggression and the ground is laid open for increased male dominance. This is likely to result, first, in the exclusion of women from the area of political and economic decision-making; and second, through increased male aggression, in an ideology of male toughness, spatial separation involving male-only places, frequent interpersonal violence, including wife-beating, the institutionalization or frequency of rape and the taking of wives from other groups (p. 164). In only 15 of the 93 societies (for which data were available on this) which Sanday analyzed were there no indicators of male aggression: twelve of these were found in societies where women have political and economic power,

two where women have no such power, and one where women have only economic power. There is therefore co-existence of female power, economic and/or politically based, with male aggression.

Male dominance is recognized as a complex question but Sanday's distinction between mythical and real male dominance lends some light into its co-existence with female power. Mythical dominance, Sanday argues, is indicated where male aggression co-exists with female economic and political power. It is likely to result from dual-sex cultural configurations. In such a situation, both sexes will respond to stress "...by attempting to maintain their traditional power while striving to leave room for the other to maneuver" (p. 187). Here, Sanday suggests women may decide it is the society's interest to "play the game" and balance the more formal power of men with their informally defined power. She hypothesizes that in a crisis situation, women often appear to act as conciliators in response to male aggression (p. 210). In the final analysis, she contends: "If there is a basic difference between the sexes, other than the differences associated with human reproductivity, it is that women as a group have not willingly faced death in violent conflict. This fact, perhaps more than any other, explains why men have sometimes become the dominating sex" (pp. 210-211).

2.5 Conclusion

The foregoing analysis has attempted to identify elements in

the material and ideational/orders which interface with gender power, autonomy, authority and social adulthood. Discussion has not been linear, owing to the multidimensional nature and complexity of the variables involved. It is, however, to the sources of power in society that any framework which hopes to elucidate the relationship between the "social" and the spatial must turn.

From this discussion, to summarize, it is hypothesized that gender relations of power will vary through time according to a particular constellation of variables which are themselves conditioned by the material/ideational dialectic. The relative significance of these variables will be directly related to:

- (1) the scale of analysis (household, community, state, international) and the relationship between these different levels;
- (2) the degree of socioeconomic stratification in society; and
- (3) age/generation.

Relations of power between women and men, then, will be conditioned by:

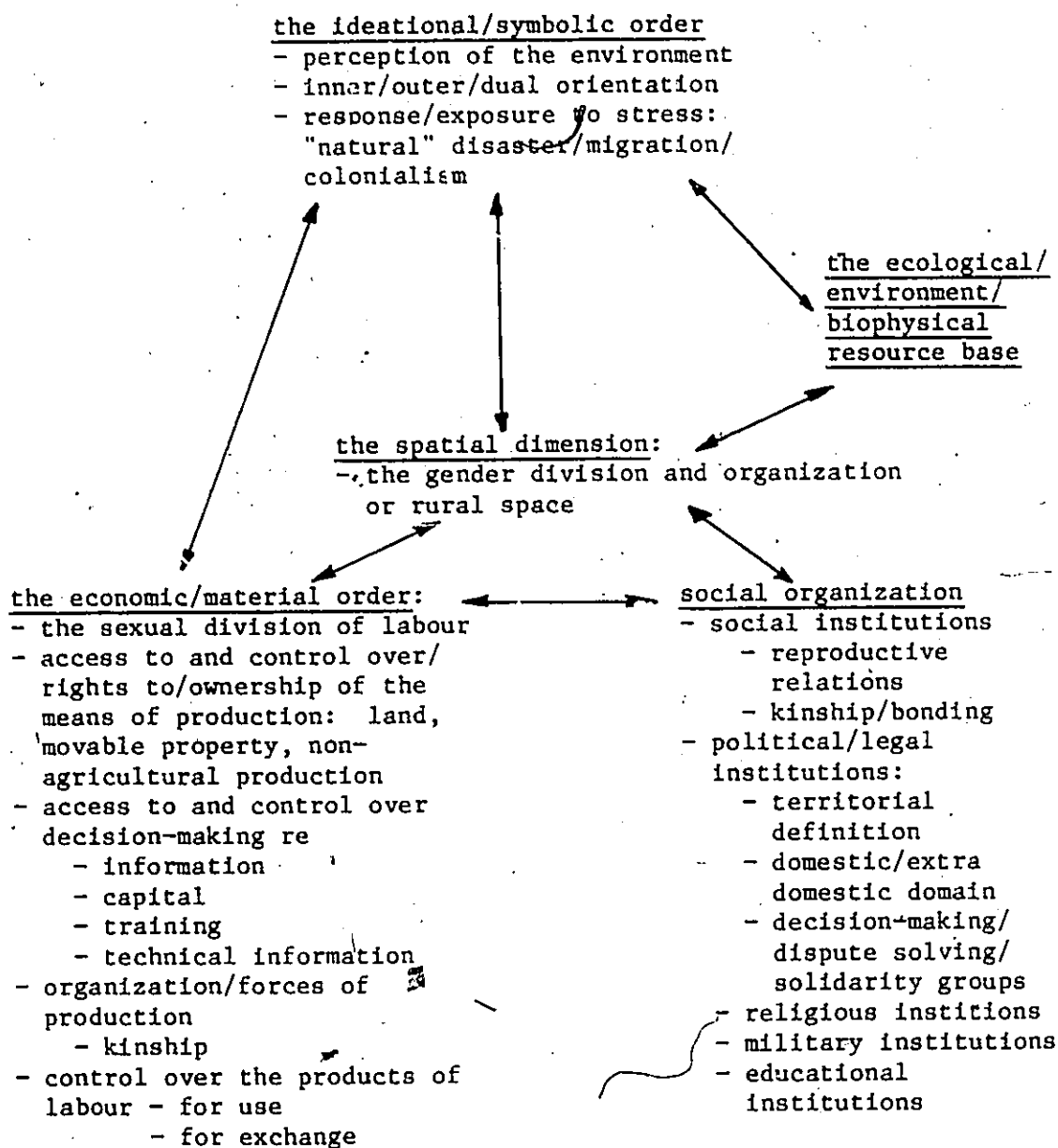
- (1) the nature of gender participation in the central institutions of society, whether these be economic, political, social, legal, religious, military or educational, and the relationship between these different institutions;

- (2) access to and control over or rights to or ownership of the means of production, whether this be land, livestock, non-agricultural production, or such resources as technology, training, capital, and information. (These in turn will vary according to distance and mobility factors. For example, where kin modes of production pertain, rules of inheritance, residence and descent will be critical);
- (3) how production is organized and whether this supports or undermines (2). Included here is the concept of how and by whom labour is allocated;
- (4) the degree of participation in what Blumberg (1984) has referred to as strategically indispensable labour. This will vary according to the degree to which production is for exchange, rather than for use. Gender relations of power will also be related to control of the products from this labour, and particularly of surplus;
- (5) how reproductive activities are organized. This will include: reproductive choices; sexuality; and childcare;
- (6) how reproductive activities "fit" with productive activities---in time and in space.

The hypothesized linkages have been summarized in a general way in Figure 2.3. In the conclusion to Chapter 3, I will draw on the concepts and ideas discussed here, and on the historical model

of agricultural/rural change developed in Chapter 3, to outline a theoretical perspective which integrates the spatiality of processes of change with the social.

Figure 2.3: Framework* for analyzing the relationship between gender and the socio-spatial dialectic in the rural environment.



*A synthesis, drawing particularly on: Blumberg, 1984; Mandala, 1983; Sacks, 1982; Sanday, 1981; Schlegel, 1977; Vickers, unpublished; Wekerle et al., 1980.

Notes

¹Considerable confusion has permeated the literature in defining "reproduction". It is useful to draw attention to the distinctions made by F. Edholm, O. Harris and K. Young (1977), "Conceptualizing women," Critique of Anthropology, 9/10, pp. 101-130. Three dimensions of reproduction are separated:

1. Social reproduction: this refers to those conditions necessary for the continuation of a social system. They therefore concern the transmission of resources generationally.
2. Reproduction of the labour force: this includes the daily maintenance of workers and the future labour force, plus "...the allocation of agents to positions in the labour process over time" (p. 106).
3. Human or biological reproduction: this, involving childbearing, is the only one necessarily female. Conceptually, it may form part of 2, yet may be differentiated from it.

²See Sacks (1975) for a critique of the premises of Engels' arguments.

³Following Vickers' suggestion, I am using the term 'ideational' or 'symbolic' rather than 'ideology' here except where reference is made to a writer who specifically uses this last term. The 'ideational or symbolic order will be defined here as that which pertains to value systems and "...sets of beliefs about the natural, social and supernatural worlds" (Schlegel, 1977, p. 14).

⁴The principal references to which Rubin refers are as follows: (1) S. Freud, 1961a, "Some psychical consequences of the anatomical distinction between the sexes," in J. Strachey, ed., The complete works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. 19, Hogarth, London; 1961b, "Female sexuality," in Strachey, op. cit., Vol. 21; 1965, "Femininity," in J. Strachey, ed., New introductory lectures in psychoanalysis, W.W. Norton, New York. (2) C. Lévi-Strauss, 1969, The elementary structures of kinship, Beacon Press, Boston, 1971, "The family," in H. Shapiro, ed., Man, culture and society, Oxford University Press, London.

⁵Uxorilocality refers to residence with the wife's family, rather than with the wife's mother (matrilocal). Patrilocality concerns residence with the husband's father (Meillassoux, 1981, p. 24).

⁶This "circulation" of women may, however, result in significant technology transfer as Hay (1972) has shown to be the case with agricultural techniques and varieties of seed among the women of Kowe, Kenya.

⁷Margaret M. Green, 1964, Ibo Village Affairs, Frank Cass, London.

⁸See pages 57-59 for a discussion of Sacks' concepts of "sisters" and "wives".

⁹For Sacks (1975), in essence "...women are social adults where they work collectively as part of a productive group larger than or separate from their domestic establishment" (p. 228).

¹⁰Whyte's (1978) analysis of the "status of women" draws also on part of the Standard Cross-Cultural Sample developed by Murdock and White (1969). While the explicit focus of his work differs from that of Sanday, both discuss the "determinants" or variables which condition the equation of power between men and women. Whyte recognizes the complexity of this question and the fact that there is no key variable to explain "status", yet through his choice of statistical method, in this case cluster analysis, used to search his large matrix of intercorrelations, he eliminates some of the variables on which Sanday's (1981) argument relies. For example, variables concerned specifically with the ideational realm (see dependent variables 1-5 which concern "religion" p. 103), with marriage arrangements and residence, divorce and other rights in marriage, roles in procreation, and domestic work are excluded on the basis that: (1) they did not have an inter-item correlation exceeding $r = .2$; (2) they were not scalable, i.e., that there was a minimum of 3 items per cluster; and (3) the clusters were not interpretable. He does include in subsequent analysis the dependent variable "women's informal influence", although it did not meet the above selection criteria, acknowledging thereby that power may work in different ways. However, his argument may be considered flawed and to offer a less sensitive treatment of power relations between the sexes than Sanday's on account of his removal of certain variables considered elsewhere in the literature as significant, merely on the basis of statistical ease.

¹¹The causal linkages illustrated in Figure 2.1 are based on the testing of hypotheses using multiple regression-analysis of 43 societies chosen from the Standard Cross-Cultural Sample. In the first link, father's proximity to infants is defined as the dependent variable, the subsistence variables as independent variables. The hunting of large game and the importance of animal husbandry account for most of the variance explained in the dependent variable. In the second link, the type of origin symbolism is entered as the dependent variable, and subsistence variables and the proximity of the father become the independent variables. Again, the result is significant, although the proximity of the father explains the largest part of the variance of the dependent variable (Appendix C, pp. 246-247).

Chapter 3: A framework for analysis: Part II

3.1 Introduction

So far, I have presented a case for framing analysis of the socio-spatial dialectic at the intersection of the material and ideational orders. The final purpose of this chapter is to identify a theoretical perspective linking this with processes of agricultural/rural change in a particular rural area in Africa. In order to arrive at this point, and to accord a measure of historicity to the elements identified in Chapter 2, the initial task is to outline a model of agricultural change. This will be done by drawing on a sample of the literature in which the differential relationship of men and women to agricultural change is the focus of attention. Much of this literature seeks an understanding of the present relative positions of the genders in rural society through reference to structures originating in the past. I am not concerned here to present a comprehensive analysis ~~of the societies in question in terms of the framework developed~~ in Chapter 2. Rather, the objective is to examine the degree of diversity in the literature in order to illustrate disparities and the difficulties of generalization. In Section 3.5 the spatiality of processes of change identified from this literature will be

considered.

Processes of agricultural and rural change may be analyzed at several interacting levels/scales. As Beneria (1979) has suggested in her distinction between the household and non-domestic level, the household is "...a microcosm whose productive and reproductive functions depend partly on the stage at which a given society finds itself in its economic and social transformation" (p. 215). The non-domestic level involves several scales of societal interaction (kin, village, community, nation state, international) whose relative importance will vary with productive mode. Discussion of agricultural/rural change here will be concerned with intra-household and non-domestic levels with reference in particular to: first, changes in agrarian structure and mode of production. Analysis will centre on women's and men's access to and control over land. It will also concern gender participation in non-formal education/training, access to information, capital/credit, technology and non-agricultural production. Second, I will focus on the organization of production, including the sexual division of labour and the development of wage labour markets in the rural sector and/or urban centres. Third, the relative importance of production for use or exchange--whether based on crop, livestock, or non-agricultural production--will be considered. Here, the question of the degree of integration of the local economy with external systems and the commercialization of production will be

addressed.

3.2 The precolonial era: gender and agriculture

An examination of the literature on gender or women in agriculture in Africa gives evidence of the great diversity of agricultural systems, as well as the different degrees of rigour and detail with which this topic has been analyzed. The variety of systems, the complexity and intricacy of the processes of change, defy generalization. Yet it is in discussion of this subject that the myth of a "static Africa" has so often been promoted as Sherilyn Young has observed:

"Traditional agriculture" is the term all too frequently ascribed to whatever happened before the plough and outside the irrigation project. The study of women has suffered from this neglect of agricultural history since women are usually the main cultivators. But beyond this the study of women has suffered from its own static generalization: from the idea of the "traditional women", the idea of the essentially unchanging existence led by African women before or outside the transformation of Christianity and urbanization (1977, p. 66).

Boserup (1970), one of the first to argue against this characterization, identified the predominance of "female farming systems" in Africa south of the Sahelian belt. Here, women's contribution to agriculture is generally greater than that of men. Goody and Buckley (1973) link this predominance with the two main patterns of inheritance: the one based on matriliney, the other patrilineal. From their analysis of 279 African societies using

data from the Ethnographic Atlas, they conclude that where inheritance is matrilineal, women play a major role in agricultural production four times as often as men; where patriliney is the norm, in contrast, women play a major role about twice as frequently as men. It is the latter system, characterized by the "house property complex",¹ that is the more common. The discussion which follows will relate to both these systems, being restricted to case studies where kin-corporate modes of production pertained in the more recent precolonial era, rather than to Sahlins' (1972) "original affluent society".

It is apparent when attention is turned to specific societies that reality is far more heterogeneous than might be deduced from Goody and Buckley's work. Neither matrilineages nor patrilineages follow one particular model. Land ownership is in general vested in an authority beyond that of the household, yet even here there is frequently fluidity, and a constant dialectic in some societies between the individual and the kin corporation. This is readily apparent in Polly Hill's (1963) analysis of migrant farmers to the Akim Abuakwa area of southern Ghana. Her research reveals great variation in social response to the migrant "capitalist" farmers, their investment of savings and accumulation of property prior to colonial intrusion.

Hill distinguishes between two types of organization of the migrant farmers: those from the patrilineal Akwapim towns and from the Krobo, Shai and Ga areas on the one hand, and those from

the matrilineal towns of Aburi and Akropong, also Akwapim towns and thus Akan on the other. The organizations were initiated locally, well before colonial rule, and Hill points out that they therefore should not be seen as a response to an hypothesized active role on the part of expatriate trading firms.

Farmers from the patrilineal societies organized what Hill refers to as a company system, formed from groups of friends. These acted as land purchasing clubs. In contrast, migrants from matrilineal systems purchased "family lands". These people were related by blood or marriage, and generally, although retaining some land for individual use, they encouraged their matrilineal kin to settle the lands, granting usufruct rights to them. It is significant to note that under the inheritance rules of both systems, individual property was continuously in the process of becoming lineage property, and that although migrants were involved in an exchange economy, this was not incompatible with the customary system of land tenure. Hill notes that there is no evidence of excessive lineage demands and suggests:

In fact the expansionary process involved a constant balancing of the forces of capitalist enterprise (as represented by the individual farmer and his wives and children) against the demands of lineage solidarity (and the need to provide for the very old, the very young, the less enterprising, and for certain stay at home women) (1963, p. 16).

Reference to female farmers in Hill's book is brief but

significant. Under both social systems men took precedence over women regarding inheritance: in the patrilineal systems inheritance passing from father to son(s); in matrilineages, inheritance generally being lateral, usually to a brother. In the company lands, it was unusual for a woman to be a company member in her own right, and Hill remarks that only where a father had no son would he buy land for a daughter. Where such a situation arose, however, such a woman would have as much control over her property as a man and her children would inherit. But Hill points out that women farmers in general "...suffer from many disabilities in the extent of their individual control" (p. 116), although, as custodians of property (where usufruct rights are allocated to them), they are able to exert some autonomy. Much of the day to day cocoa farming in some company areas remains the responsibility of women.

In the family lands, the majority of original cocoa farmers were similarly male, but some were female. Hill contrasts this situation among the migrant farmers with that of the native Akim. Here women in areas such as Akokoase comprise half the number of cocoa farmers and they have the same relationship to their farms as men. Their farms, however, and generally one farmer has several, tend to be somewhat smaller than men's.

One of the reasons given for the predominance of male farmers among the migrants is based on the prevailing division of labour. Hill notes, for instance, that prior to the introduction of coffee

and cocoa (grown on the new farms) and migration from the Akwapim towns because of land shortage, male farmers gained cash through trading oil palm products. The care of trees was men's responsibility, and although women assisted in the production of palm oil, they did not control its sale. Later, men also controlled the collection and sale of wild rubber. Cash gained from these sales was used to purchase outright, or through installment, virtually uninhabited forest land from the Akim. Women, in contrast, were responsible for all food crops except for yams and maize, and although their active role in trading brought them cash, rarely was this invested in land (Hill, 1963).

Audrey Smock (1977), taking a broader perspective on change in Ghana and drawing on analyses of several societies, contends that, despite considerable variation, and northern Ghana excepted, women had substantial autonomy and economic power. This was in part based on their control of agricultural products and other goods whose value extended beyond the domestic sphere and which were as highly valued as products of men's labour. While this control was greater among predominantly matrilineal societies such as the Akan, it was significant also among the patrilineal Ewe and Ga. Smock points out that under both systems, women's access to land was assured. They frequently cultivated their own plots of land separately from their husbands who would clear the fields for them without reciprocal labour requirements. They similarly controlled the proceeds of their labour, and their organization

into extensive trading networks ensured widespread support systems.

Prior to colonialism, among the societies discussed in Smock's work, again with the exception of the north, the sexual division of labour meant separate spheres for women and men, yet this was an essentially equitable non-hierarchical division of labour. Women's economically critical role compensated at least in part for their subordinate status with regard to inheritance. It is also significant that in several societies marriage did not necessitate a husband and wife having the same residence. Thus, even among patrilineal groups, women would retain a place in their natal kin corporations--as sisters (Sacks, 1982)--and such bonds, as Smock notes, often contradicted marital relations. This basis for bonding, the fact that in general societies did not value female chastity highly, that divorce was relatively frequent and could be initiated as easily by men or women, and their economic role, meant that women achieved considerable independence, and spatial freedom. Among the Akan, women's position--and authority--was further reinforced by their social and political (and in the case of Yaa Asantewa who led the Ashanti against the British in 1900-1901, military) roles. The joint rulers--the Ohemaa and Asantehene--signified the separation between female and male power (Calloway, 1976). Even where female political power was not institutionalized as among the Ewe and Ga, consensual decision-making patterns meant that at least with age, women were

listened to.

Smock considers that matrilineal rules of inheritance and descent supported women's high status among the Akan. Evidence from the Mang'anja of East Africa supports this view (Mandala, 1983). Mandala's analysis of the rapidly changing situation in the lower Tchiri valley in the mid-nineteenth century is an extremely sensitive analysis of the ecological, economic, and "ideological" components of change as they affected gender and generational productive relations. From the time of the demise of the Lundu state until the internationalization of the slave trade and drought of 1862, Mandala considers that a "gender neutral" economy existed (p. 34). Hierarchical productive relations were based on age and slavery.

Land among the Mang'anja was inherited matrilineally, men gaining access to the land only after they had proved themselves hardworking to their parents-in-law. Agriculture at this time was based on the mphala-dimba system, each household in general having a garden in the two ecological zones. The spatial ratio between the dimba (the river-fed land) and the mphala (the rain-fed land) was determined by the fluctuating levels of the Tchiri river. Both men and women worked the land, the only specific tasks mentioned by Mandala being men's clearing of the dimba after the season of flooding, while women harvested from the mphala. In contrast, non-agricultural production was gender-specific: men were responsible for iron smelting, women having a role only at

the ritual level; women controlled salt production, although men would build huts in the marshes at the time of salt collection, and gather firewood. In the case of salt production, women organized themselves communally i.e. around kin relations. Iron-ore smelting was organized by the community of married men. Salt and cotton (raw, or as cloth, whose production was controlled by male elders) formed important exports from the valley, and both women and men were actively involved in the trading of these goods, women, for example, carrying the salt to the highlands for sale. Women were at least equal in decisions as to the sale of other goods for exchange. Further, their position in society was supported by their political leadership, the "owner of the matrilineage", generally the oldest sister, being the mwini-mbumba (her male counterpart was the nkhoswe). Further, women played a significant religious role.

This egalitarian situation between men and women, however, represents reality at one point in time, and the post-1862 changes which opened the area to first Kololo and then British penetration, substantially altered gender and generational relations.

Etienne's (1980) analysis of the Baule of the Côte d'Ivoire indicates yet another pattern of productive relations in an area where although descent was within a cognate group, wealth and positions of authority were matrilineal. In her view this resulted in no clear subordination or domination, but rather

significant gender autonomy. Land among the Baule was available for use to all, and was worked according to a well-defined sexual division of labour. In economic terms, it appears that control of the products of their labour was more significant for egalitarian gender relations than access to the land per se. Some production was the entire responsibility of one sex, the producer controlling its distribution; for other products, both men and women were involved, tasks being gender-specific. In this latter case, whoever initiated the process and took responsibility for it controlled distribution, but expected to share any surplus gained through exchange with the spouse. There was thus a close productive relationship between husbands and wives.

In general, Baule men would clear the land, following a bush fallow system, and plant yams whose distribution they then controlled. Women would weed, plant and assist in harvesting the yams, but in addition intercropped² between the yam mounds, growing cotton and food crops. In this way, women gained control over cotton production and although husbands wove the cloth, wives controlled distribution. Cloth, Etienne argues, was particularly important in Baule society, its use not being confined to the subsistence sector. Cloth had value in ritual, for long distance trade, and its use brought the weaver prestige. Etienne comments: "That the original distribution of such a polyvalent product was the woman's domain inevitably gave her power and autonomy both in the conjugal relationship and in Baule society in general"

(1980, p. 221).

This situation contrasts fairly dramatically with that of the Kusasi of northern Ghana. Whitehead's (1981) research of this patrilineal kin corporation indicates rigid hierarchical ordering based on gender, age and marital status. In the precolonial era societal organization was non-centralized and focused on a complex extended family system. Land was allocated to the household, the basic unit of social structure, by chiefs.

The primary distinction here which defines the household's productive relations is that between private farms and household farms. Whitehead argues that in societal terms the latter are the most important as it is here that the staple food crop, millet, is grown. All household members work here, the type of activity varying by gender; but men, who are viewed as the major farmers, control this farm: they allocate family labour on it and store the millet in granaries to which they have exclusive access.

Men and women also work on their own separate, private farms. Here women grow other food crops, including vegetables, and control the distribution of this produce. As their farms are substantially smaller than men's, and the produce grown on their farms is generally used to feed the family during the "hungry season", women, in contrast to men, have little surplus to sell in local markets. On their private farms, husbands may use the unremunerated labour of their wives. Women may only use the labour of household men by calling small exchange working parties

for which they provide food and beer (Whitehead, 1981).

A far less rigid hierarchical ordering of gender relations in a patrilineal kin corporation is evident in Pala Okeyo's (1980) discussion of land rights among the precolonial Luo of Kenya. Her analysis indicates that Luo customary land tenure results from changes in the mode of livelihood, dating in particular from the migration of the Luo from the area of southern Sudan where transhumant pastoralism was practiced, and where women's contribution to the economy was through childbearing and rearing and domestic work. The Luo moved to western Kenya in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, changing to a mixed farming economy. The growing significance of crop agriculture to the local economy, Pala Okeyo argues, meant the increased centrality of women in the production system as they became responsible for this in a division of labour which assigned livestock care to men. A women's position in society was also enhanced by recognition of her "structural role as a lineage wife" (1980, p. 194). She did not allocate land, rights to which were held by men, but she was the "channel" for patrilineal inheritance rights to land. Her usufruct rights to land were ensured by the kin corporation.

Deviations from this generalized pattern are identified by Margaret Hay (1972). She points out that after the rinderpest epidemic of the 1890s, some men became increasingly involved in crop agriculture, beyond clearing the fields. In order to rebuild

their decimated herds, such men laboured to produce a surplus of grain which was then exchanged for sheep, goats and cattle.

Further variations in the sexual division of labour were conditioned by social status, wealthier men doing no field work.

Hay's analysis of agricultural change focuses in greater detail on the colonial era, but it is of interest to note here her identification of women in the precolonial period with the continuous process of agricultural innovation which took place through crop selection and the choice of new seed varieties and techniques. This Hay relates to the coming together in Kowe, her area of study, of women from relatively different agricultural areas, owing to the practice of exogamous marriage and the patrilocal rules of Luo society. Exchange visits of relatives and visits to markets (Luo women were active traders) contributed to the diffusion of such innovations.

To conclude this section, it is of the greatest importance to acknowledge the diversity of agricultural systems in precolonial sub-Saharan Africa, and to recognize the dangers of generalization. It does, however, appear appropriate to note several points. First, although women for the most part did not have direct access to land through inheritance systems, whether patrilineal or matrilineal, their usufruct rights were guaranteed by lineage custom. Second, while a matriliney served to support more directly women's lineage role, under patrilineages, the house-property complex compensated in part in many cases for

women's lack of access to land in their own right. Third, women's ability to retain rights as sisters in their natal kin corporations, often through organization for trading, meant that their economic status--and autonomy--was increased. Fourth, in general, while the sexual division of labour was frequently sharp, women's and men's roles were complementary and relatively balanced. In fifth place, the Kusasi excepted, men and women frequently controlled the distribution of the products of their labour, and were viewed as having separate economic roles. In many cases trading was engaged in by both sexes, but this took the form of relatively egalitarian barter exchange for other commodities rather than being defined by capitalist relations.

In societal terms, this is not intended to imply that equality existed between women and men. I have been concerned to focus here on certain aspects of productive relations, and it is evident that women had a significant economic basis for varying degrees of autonomy. The extent to which this was translated into the exercise of authority in society and the achievement of social adulthood would have been determined by the interaction of other factors. These will have varied by age and by social status, as Mandala (1983) so clearly shows.

3.3 Colonialism, gender and agricultural production

While no one date can be set for the beginning of colonialism in Africa, the relatively egalitarian trading links between Africa

and Europe which characterized the "pre-mercantilist" period. (Amin, 1973) were gradually eroded from the early 1600s onwards. With the rise of European mercantilism and the destruction of communities by the slave trade, Africa became the "periphery of the periphery", to use Amin's terminology (1973, p. 183). By the nineteenth century Africa had become further integrated into the metropolitan economy as the provider of raw materials for Europe's industrial revolution. But, Amin argues, until the end of the nineteenth century, traders relied on "spontaneous" development to provide these products, a situation Hill's (1963) evidence supports. With the imperialist stage of capitalism, marked by the Berlin Conference of 1884/1885, African territory became externally defined and controlled, according to the ambitions of European powers. One result was major socioeconomic and political structural dislocation coming in the train of the newly imposed capitalist mode of production.

Many writers have assumed that the introduction of a new mode of production submerged previously existing modes, but Hyden's (1980) contention is that this reasoning overemphasizes the role of market exchange. As noted in Chapter 1.4, his argument is based on the co-existence of the peasant and capitalist modes. By suggesting that the peasants remain to a large extent "uncaptured", operating within their own "economy of affection", he contends that they are only marginally integrated into national and international economies. Hyden does not analyze the

implications of the "structural anomaly" for gender relations, yet researchers such as Carmen Deere (1979) have pointed out that women are indeed fully integrated into the wider economic system through their participation in non-capitalist modes of production. Deere considers that family structure and the concomitant sexual division of labour are critical to the conceptualization of the articulation between the two modes: she argues, for instance, that women's production of subsistence crops (on land that is owned by the family) serves to subsidize the wages of (male) labour, and hence through its role in the unremunerated reproduction of the labour force, contributes to the capitalist's extraction of surplus. The wage then earned by the labourer is less than the cost of production and of the reproduction of labour itself.

Meillassoux (1981) draws attention to the distinction between circulation and production in his conceptualization of the "organic" nature of the link between the two modes of production. He hypothesizes that the subsistence economy belongs:

...to capitalism's sphere of circulation to the extent that it provides it with labour-power and commodities, but remains outside the capitalist sphere of production, since capital is not invested in it and the relations of production are domestic and not capitalist (p. 95).

The mechanism implied here by which surplus value and labour rent³ are extracted is, for Meillassoux, "...a reproduction process

which, at present, is the fundamental cause of underdevelopment at one end and of the wealth of the capitalist at the other" (p. 95). Women's role in this link is clearly as producers (biologically and socially) of labour.

Meillassoux's analysis of the role of the family in changing relations of production and reproduction may be criticized for its "static" treatment of women's subordination (Beneria, 1979), his failure to recognize the changing face and chameleon-like characteristics of patriarchy, (which results in his inadequate development of insights identified in the earlier part of the book), and his treatment of women as "objects" rather than "actors" in processes of agricultural change.⁴ Yet, consideration of different societies indicates society-specific responses to the introduction to a "contending" mode of production, varying according to the particular patriarchal nature of that society and the mode of interaction with external forces.

In the following discussion I will focus on case studies from, first, West Africa, "Africa of the Colonial Economy", where integration with the metropolitan economy through the export of tropical products was promoted by the instruments of taxation and monopoly trade; and second, East Africa, "Africa of the Labour Reserves", where large areas of land were "alienated", and local people were forced to provide labour for estates, plantations or mines (Amin, 1973).

In Ghana, the "formal" period of colonialism began in 1902

when the British government enacted legislation making the southern part of the country a colony and the "Northern Territories" a Protectorate.. Smock (1977) considers the main instruments of colonialism were not only the economic ones of compulsory taxation and monopoly trade, but also imbalances in educational opportunities and attitudes, and the misconceptions of colonial administrators and missionaries. She notes that both these groups assumed that the "natural" pattern was for men to play the "economic" role in a household and directed their dealings towards them. Education was provided primarily for males who were then recruited to clerical positions in the colonial hierarchy. Smock suggests that this spread of education was the prime factor affecting the relative position of Ghanaian women and men.

In terms of changes in agriculture, there is a lack of consistently precise data to draw on, but a picture can be produced from local case studies. Hill's (1963) research indicated that among the Akwapim groups, food production was the responsibility of men and women, but with the migration of cocoa farmers, women came to play a larger role in food production. In addition, she notes that as new cocoa farms were established, women often became the "effective custodians" (1963, p. 117) of these, being left in charge while husbands travelled to manage work on their other lands. In the currently most productive cocoa area, Brong-Ahafo, Smock (1977) estimates that women own one-ninth

of the farms, actively assisting their husbands on the rest. Smock attributes the greater participation of women in cocoa production in Ghana, comparing this with women's cash crop production elsewhere, with the fact that this production began in the small scale sector. As it did not involve estate or plantation production nor, initially, government extension workers, there was less discrimination against women. This, together with women's increased role as traders, resulted in the colonial impact not being as severe as elsewhere (Smock, 1977). Calloway (1976) notes that the principle of matrilineage assuaged the deepest impact of colonialism in societies where this pertained.

Among the patrilineal Ewe the picture is different, and the introduction of cocoa in the 1920s and 1930s brought far reaching change. Bukh (1980) does not discuss the implications of patriliney to the processes of change in the southern Volta Region, but she does comment on changes in social organization and relations of production which caused the area to become both a labour supplier and cash crop producer. She argues that, "...land became more privatised in the sense that although the lineage community kept ownership, the control of the land was lost with the redistribution that took place between its users, that is, between households" (1980, p. 18). Women's access to land became more difficult in that they had to rely on men's permission for using their fallow land, rather than being allocated a piece of

common lineage land. With male migration, women took a more central responsibility for food crop production. Women presently head about half the households. Where men remained and produced cocoa, they have gained more ready access to cash than women whose only way to obtain cash is through the sale of surplus subsistence products.

The situation in the north of Ghana indicates greater restriction of female roles. This is detailed by Whitehead (1981) among the Kusasi. Until the 1920s, this area acted as a labour reserve for agriculture and mining in the south, but by the 1940s with the construction of an agricultural research station and the introduction of groundnuts and bullock farming, the northern regions became more directly integrated into the colonial economy. At the same time, inequalities resulting from the relations of production noted in Chapter 3.2, became more pronounced and the asymmetry of gender relations increased. Whitehead notes that the specific farming system practiced here limits the "massive intensification" of women's work in subsistence crops (1981, p. 102), women's private farms being "pitifully small" (p. 96). With commoditization of the economy, women's dependency on the "common fund" has increased at the same time as millet production, and therefore household production, has decreased. The latter in her view results from men's focus on growing cash crops rather than subsistence crops. The cash men receive from this source is not used for purchasing food which was previously supplied from their

farms. Women, who are ultimately responsible for their family's food supply, although they control neither the production nor disposal of the staple, millet, must work harder, in Whitehead's view, to produce income from sources such as trading in order to meet household needs. Women's work in total has therefore intensified.

Dramatic changes in gender productive relations during the period of colonialism are also evident in Etienne's (1980) analysis of cotton production among the Baule. The specific source of change identified here was the introduction by the French of a factory producing thread and cloth at Gonfreville. From here, male weavers could purchase thread, freeing them from dependence on female cotton production and causing a breakdown in male/female productive relations.

Cotton was chosen as an export crop by the colonialists and through the imposition of forced labour which lasted until 1946, the Baule were made to grow it, using new techniques and new varieties in pure stands. At each stage of this introductory process men rather than women were addressed by agricultural extension agents. Etienne details how, when forced labour was discontinued, men were made responsible for their wife's head tax and this helped to reinforce their control of cotton production, and through the sale of cotton, cash. Part of this was then used to purchase Gonfreville thread.

The lack of control of the process was exacerbated for women

as the cotton was now grown as a second year main crop on the previous year's yam plots. This land had customarily been used by women and their use rights were now lost. Women continued to intercrop cotton on the yam plot, and in the second year grow some food for subsistence. As much of their labour was now allocated to assisting their husband's cotton crop, however, they lacked time for spinning and trading their own crops. Etienne notes that Baule cloth made from homespun is now no longer a basic need, factory cloth being used for everyday wear, but it still has a role as a prestige object and in ritual. The introduction of cocoa and coffee in the area further contributed to a breakdown in gender productive relations. These perennial crops became men's responsibility, and as in other situations, led to their more permanent rights to land although women's labour was essential to production. Etienne points out that the principle of repayment for labour continues but this is controlled by men and repayment is often arbitrary and "disproportionately low" (p. 238) when compared to labour input and monetary value of the product.

Colonialism in East Africa differed from that in West Africa in terms of the large-scale alienation of land and the restriction, in several countries, of Africans to Reserves. This was the case in Kenya and affected, inter alia, the Gikuyu and Luo. Part of their territory became land for European estates while from the reserves labour migrated either "voluntarily" to obtain cash to pay taxes or through forced contract labour. The

case of the Luo will be considered here.

As a response to political unrest which culminated in Mau Mau in the 1950s, the colonial government introduced structural change in the rural areas through implementation of the Swynnerton Plan. This plan had a differential impact regionally, but its aim was to create a politically stable, land-owning peasant class of farmers more interested in economic gain than in further radicalization of the situation (Sorenson, 1967). A premise of the Plan was that customary land tenure with the fragmentation of holdings was an obstacle to more productive agriculture. To deal with this, privatization of land was institutionalized and involved a process of land adjudication, consolidation and then registration in the name of the household head (*ibid.*). This meant that the power of individual men to allocate land in a patrilineal system was equated with registrable interest, and men became the land owners. No attempt to redistribute land more equitably was made under the Plan.

Pala Okeyo's (1980) work specifically examines the impact of the individualization of land tenure on the position of Luo women. The process of land consolidation did not get underway here until 1963 except for a few pilot schemes which were carried out earlier. Prior to land reform, restriction to reserve areas had led to increased land shortages and conflict in customary land rights. One result of this, as Pala Okeyo notes, was that the male head of each family took over more decision-making in terms

of allocating cultivable land. Through this trend to individualization, corporate rights decreased in strength and women's rights to land were no longer guaranteed. As land became a scarcer commodity, Luo men migrated to the White Highlands, their labour earning cash for hut and poll taxes. Women remained in the reserves, producing food for subsistence requirements.

The institutionalization of private land begun under the Swynnerton plan was incomplete by the mid-1970s when Pala Okeyo's research was conducted, but her study which included a survey of 135 lineage wives in Kisumu and South Nyanza indicates the impact of this process on women. Her data show that land ownership was transferred almost exclusively to men, with no provision for the access rights of women. Of those interviewed, only 5.9% had land registered in their own name. In practice, Pala Okeyo writes,

...these women would probably still enjoy their cultivation rights to land as lineage wives, but the status that guarantees their rights is being superseded by the new stipulation which gives individual men the right to alienate the land from which their female relatives (wives, mothers, and sisters) expect to draw their livelihood for several years to come (1980, p. 206).

Discussing the reasons behind this, she points to the all-male local advisory groups formed as part of the adjudication process and argues that women's use rights became invisible as the issues discussed centred on allocation and inheritance. Pala Okeyo contends that in all likelihood women will lose some autonomy as

their structural role of head of house is no longer important.

She also cites evidence that sons who have inherited land, unable to find employment, are selling land to obtain cash.

Hay's analysis of the effects of colonialism, based on interviews with the people of Kowe, adds insight into changes in the sexual division of labour during this period. Hay details the active role played by Luo women in response to increasing labour migration from 1930 onwards. Before 1930 she considers that the level of migration was such as not to alter the sexual division of labour, but the 1930s brought the effects of the world depression to this area which decreased prices for export crops and meant the loss of jobs by migrant men. In addition locust invasions and drought led to periods of famine.

The local economy, which until this time had been sustained, collapsed, and wage labour was viewed by many as the only reliable source of income. The intensified labour migration of men then began, and women generally took over virtual total responsibility for the smallholding, as well as earning income through trading. Responses to Hay's interviews indicated that women no longer saw security in agriculture, but rather viewed this solely in terms of providing subsistence for the family whose real economic security lay in formal education and wage employment--of men--elsewhere.

Effects of migrations on gender relations of production are evident also in Jiggin's (1980) discussion of Central and Northern Provinces of Zambia and Van Horn's (1977) research in Western

Province of Zambia. Van Horn refers to the collapse of Lozi agriculture which, previous to the colonial period, had been intricately adapted to the local environment and required for maintenance the full-time effort of local people and labour supplied by Lozi imperial conquests. The system was founded on a complex set of drainage canals built in the nineteenth century in the flood plain areas.

A breakdown occurred in this system as a result of the combination of "natural" disasters such as rinderpest and the impact of British colonialism. Lozi men were forced to migrate to the mines of Zambia's copper belt and South Africa to pay taxes, and imported labour ceased. Women took over cattle herding, formerly men's responsibility, and the previously shared food crop production. They were unable to maintain the drainage system because of labour scarcity and therefore the channels became blocked and the fertile flood plain soils waterlogged and unworkable. Farming then moved to the higher but less fertile areas where cassava became the more important staple. With decreasing fertility in this area, agriculture gradually collapsed (Van Horn, 1977).

Extreme hardship faced by women farmers is documented by Young (1977) in her analysis of the Tsonga and Chopi under Portuguese colonialism. By the early twentieth century, Young estimates that over half the adult males from Southern Mozambique had migrated to South African mines or were working as forced

labour for the Portuguese on the fertile land they had alienated. Women's work load increased with labour migration, and Young documents the active response of such farmers to the changes imposed, including growing new crops such as sisal, cashew nuts and groundnuts in order to ensure economic survival. In addition women took a larger part in trading. Compulsory female labour for four days a week on Portuguese cotton fields in the Second World War added further to their work load, and pay here was insufficient to compensate for foodcrops they had no longer time to grow. With the relaxation of labour requirements in the 1950s, women were able to adapt more successfully to the colonial economy. Self-sufficiency in foodstuffs was quickly achieved and cotton and cassava grown for cash. To a far greater degree than many other societies analyzed, women were able to have greater access to cash, vis à vis men, and Young suggests that this gave them considerable autonomy and authority in society during the colonial era.

While the above analyses indicate the general implications of colonialism for gender productive relations, Mandala's (1982, 1983) more sensitive analysis to processes of change illustrates the differences between social strata and more particularly between male-headed polygynous and monogamous households and those headed by women. In general, Mandala (1982) argues, the effect of the colonial economy was to decrease gender differences in the organization of production in monogamous households (the most

numerous) but exacerbate unequal relations in polygynous households. Both the increase in cotton production and the decreased significance of non-agricultural production were seen as contributing to the situation in the former type of household. In terms of cotton production in monogamous households, cotton was intercropped with food crops on both the dimba and mphala and both women and men worked together planting, weeding and harvesting. Once harvested, women were responsible for the disposal of any surplus, husbands having to consult their wives if they wished to sell any part of it. If the sale was a substantial one, or involved cotton, in general a mutual agreement was aimed at. In polygynous households, in contrast, particularly among the wealthy farmers who owned their own separate cotton gardens, the zunde, women's labour here was not directly remunerated, although women did control the proceeds of their labour from their own gardens. In the latter they frequently grew cotton in addition to food crops precisely in order to come to terms with this lack of direct access to cash from their husbands' zunde.

It is among female-headed households, those headed by widows, divorcees, elderly spinsters and wives of non-returning migrants, however, that the cotton economy had the greatest impact: it allowed these women ready access to cash with which to pay taxes and therefore allowed the survival of this social group. Thus, prior to the Second World War, Mandala argues cotton production provided "...a mechanism whereby women could extend their domestic

rights beyond the usual limits of tradition" (1982, p. 32).

This situation changed dramatically when the cotton economy collapsed. This resulted in the first place from the flooding of the dimba gardens when the level of the Tchiri River rose and, second, from the plummeting of cotton prices on the international market in the 1930s. The less fertile mphala gardens could not sustain continuous cotton production which finally collapsed by the end of the 1950s. This resulted in increased male outmigration from the area and women's intensification of agricultural production, but their decreased access to cash. The result of this was most severe for female-headed households. The solution proposed by the local chiefs was for such women to marry, on the condition that men be taxed at a flat rate, not tied to the number of wives they had. As Mandala (1982) expresses the situation: "In other words polygyny was the only solution men could conceive of to deal with the economic difficulties faced by women in an era of deprivation" (p. 37). The practice of polygyny followed was that of the patrilocl Sena rather than the matrilocl Mang'anja whichever ethnic group was involved, a situation which can only have led to such women's further subordination. In all cases, women's role as wives was reinforced at the expense of their other productive relations, and their dependence on men for cash increased.

Again, it is difficult to generalize from the selected cases reviewed as to the precise impact of colonialism on gender

relations of production. These were clearly related to the precise form that colonization took, in turn determined, as Etienne and Leacock (1980) have observed, by the particular economic and political ambitions of the colonial power, the actual mode of colonization and the reaction to this exploitation by the inhabitants of the areas colonized. But whether colonialism involved expropriation of land and the development of wage labour or the production of goods required by the colonial economy, the commoditization of the economy and the changed relations of power in the wider society had an impact on the centrality of institutions in society.

Kin relations, for example, particularly as they determined access to land, were increasingly questioned. Whether "land reform" per se was planned for or not, individualization of male control over land occurred with the introduction of cash crops, and particularly perennial crops. Reinforcement of the patriarchal nature of society meant that women's usufruct rights were no longer guaranteed. To a very real degree this resulted in increasing insecurity for women as Smock notes: "In a situation in which the clan cannot effectively impose sanctions, the clan also cannot protect women's prerogative" (1977, p. 48).

It is also evident that with increased production for commodity exchange and the growing significance of commodities to meet basic needs, the split between the monetary and subsistence sectors frequently resulted in the intensification of women's

labour in food crop production. While writers such as Deere (1979) and Mullings (1976) have argued that this distinction has led to the devaluation of women's role which has become more private, and has resulted in women's decreased autonomy, there are clearly exceptions to this. These are identified, for example, by Young (1977) for the Tsonga and Chopi under Portuguese rule from the 1950s onwards and by Mandala (1982, 1983) for a specific time period in the lower Tchiri valley. Further, the significance of the distinction between social and domestic labour will have varied according to family type (monogamous/polygamous, female-headed) and socioeconomic stratum, as Mandala illustrates.

Women no more so than men were passive recipients of the process of colonialism. They actively sought to come to terms with a situation that was perceived as increasing their subordination in society and their social and economic insecurity. This is made very evident in Mandala's (1982, 1983), Hay's (1972) and Young's (1977) analyses. It is precisely this dimension, however, that has been ignored in many theories of social change, Meillassoux's (1981) being an example. Such theory needs to include not only the "accommodation and resistance" (Etienne and Leacock, 1980, p. 20) of women and men to changed power relations resulting from external societal interaction, but also to the differential relationships to this process of different strata in society and of women and men in differently defined household structures.

3.4 The post-Independence period: planning for rural change

Discussing the post-Independence era, writers such as Ann Seidman (1977) have referred to the perpetuation of structures and relationships which developed during colonial rule, which continued to promote a 'top down' paradigm of development, reliant on export-oriented growth and dependence on the international system. The importation of expertise and innovation from abroad was seen as the key to the model of development planned. Where attention was given to rural areas, it tended to be aimed at the export crop sector, and where the two co-existed, to the large rather than small-scale holding. The focus on export crops was visible not just in national statistics which frequently recorded only these totals, but also in the planning departments, research institutions and in the Ministry of Agriculture's extension department.

The literature on the impact of these changes on gender relations, or rather, on women, is vast, and I intend here only to refer to a few case studies in areas of peasant production which illustrate different dimensions of the topics identified in the introduction of this chapter. It should further be noted that in some cases the changes implemented date from the introduction of land reform rather than the declaration of political independence. I will consider, first, two examples of change in the organization of production and gender access to and control over land: the ujamaa and villagization programmes in Tanzania and the Mwea

Irrigation Scheme in Kenya. Second, I will refer to research on the provision of agricultural extension services to men vis à vis women; and third, I will comment on observations of the division of labour in rural Africa at the present time.

Within the confines of this chapter it is not possible to place the policies which pertain to these issues in the overall context of the models of development adopted by the countries concerned, although this is required for an understanding of the underlying relations of power. Turning first to access to land in post-Independence Tanzania, for example, the reader is referred to Hyden's (1980) and Von Freyhold's (1979) analyses of rural change both before and after the Arusha Declaration of 1967. Brief reference must however be made to the concept of ujamaa which provided the rationale for the creation of communal village production units in the post-Arusha era.

In his discussion of "Socialism and rural development and the concept of ujamaa", President Nyerere (1967) calls for the reintroduction in Tanzania of three principles of "traditional" rural life. The first concerns respect for each member of the family and the mutual rights of each member; the second relates to the holding of property in common and members' equal access to basic necessities; third, Nyerere refers to the responsibility of each member to work. He also calls for an end to the inequalities of the old system, such as those between men and women. In terms of rural change this meant the cooperative organization of

production.

Storgaard (1975-76) considers that the proposed new mode of production based on ujamaa differed from the existing modes in two respects important to women's position: first, cooperative organization of production and communal ownership of the means of production; and second, a division of labour based on skill, not sex. Storgaard contends, however, that the potential for radical change beneficial to women was missed owing both to the structures chosen for implementing rural change and to the attitudes of local people and bureaucrats.

Storgaard's research refers to the Bukoba District of West Lake Region. This area became integrated into the colonial economy both through coffee production and the export of male labour, subsistence food production of women providing the means for reproduction of the labour force. Structural features of the patrilineal kin corporation included the practice of exogamy and a strict sexual division of labour whereby women were referred to as "the hoes of their husbands". During the colonial era the negative implications for women of their lack of direct access to and control over land was exacerbated. Male control of cash crops meant that more land was allocated for this production and women worked as an unpaid labour force for men. A woman did control the income from any surplus foodcrops sold, but this was far less than a man's cash earnings from tea or coffee. There was, in addition, a lack of non-agricultural opportunities for women in the area.

Given this situation, an ujamaa village, Storgaard suggests, should appear attractive. In practice, however, mechanisms of implementation and attitude served to reinforce women's subordinate position in the 34 villages which existed by 1973. The one considered the most significant by Storgaard was the division of land in the villages into private parcels, consisting of one acre (0.40 ha.) household plots for a house and food production; and the other communal. All adult members of the village had access to the communal land but private plots were registered in the name of the household head, generally a male. On divorce, a woman had to leave. Communal land did not become as important in production as was intended; had it done so, Storgaard contends, new forms of organization would have resulted in more egalitarian gender relations. As it was, the distinction between private and communal land facilitated the transfer of the customary organization of production.

It was initially decided not to introduce crops such as coffee into ujamaa villages to avoid the perpetuation of old biases and values, but this was changed through the pressure of members. Although there has been a lack of time-allocation studies to support this more generally, Storgaard suggests that 40-50% of a man's labour time is spent on communal work compared to 29% of a woman's. It is only through communal work that a woman can obtain income, and day care facilities were planned to facilitate women's access to this. It may be observed, however,

that the traditional division of labour has been preserved by husbands directing their wives to work on the private farm and reporting them as "sick" for the communal work register.

In terms of recruitment to villages, Storgaard notes that most women came as "wives", rather than as household heads in their own right. Their subordinate status in the village was also confirmed by their lack of participation in formal positions on village committees. Hence, although women may have gained from the provision of social services such as health and education facilities and water, no fundamental social change accompanied ujamaa villages in this area. Only James Brain's (1976) analysis of the Ruvuma Development Association of Southern Tanzania indicates substantial change in gender productive relations. A basic difference between this group of eleven ujamaa villages and those analyzed by Storgaard concerns the former's instigation through local initiative without outside assistance, prior to the Arusha Declaration. Brain considers that despite the patrilineal nature of Ngoni society, a successful effort was made to effect equality in participation between women and men, particularly in decision-making and projects.

Since November 1973 when Operation Vijiji was announced, there has been a huge resettlement effort in Tanzania. By 1975, over nine million people had moved to villages (Mascarenhas, 1979, p. 152). No longer was there insistence on communal production, but emphasis was placed on private holdings or private

farming within village "block" farms. Unfortunately there is a lack of published work to assess the impact of these more recent changes on gender relations. Fortmann (1981) indicates that women are now registered independently of their husbands as members of their village, but even so, she considers that this is no guarantee that men will share the cash from the sale of crops which women were involved in producing. According to a summary of discussions held at the Workshop on Women's Studies in Tanzania, the village government has control of land in the village, but this is allocated according to family unit, and the head remains the father or eldest son (Bryceson and Sachak, 1979). Fortmann (1981) also notes the lack of equal access of women to the agricultural extension service, although the government has expressed the objective of contacting all farmers through the newly established villages. No information is given regarding women's status in the village on divorce. In Tanzania then, despite the espousal of a national philosophy of human equality, fundamental areas of power and control between women and men continue virtually untouched.

The second case study, in contrast to the above, does not represent an example of planning for structural change in rural areas. The Mwea irrigation scheme in Kenya is an irrigated rice settlement scheme whose beginnings were closely tied to the "Emergency" and the need of the government to occupy detainees whose labour was used for construction. The successes and problems of the scheme have been extensively dealt with in Chamber

and Moris' (1973) book on the subject. The intention here is to comment only on the impact of the scheme on women, and in particular on their access to land. For this I will draw on Jane Hanger and Jon Moris' chapter, "Women and household economy" in this book. The chapter is based on detailed research carried out on the scheme itself, and for comparative purposes, on households in Nembure, off the scheme. The central finding of Hanger and Moris is that women's rights and needs within the Mwea scheme are unrecognized and that this poses a major problem for the future success of the scheme.

In their analysis, Hanger and Moris refer to four assumptions made in the management's objectives for the scheme: first, that by focusing on the raising of incomes of tenants, increased family welfare would result; second, that tenants would change their staple diet to rice from the customary maize and beans. Land was allocated only for rice production. Third, other needs of tenants would be met from cash sales of paddy to the management. Yet here, Hanger and Moris note: "...this assumption runs against the grain of indigenous Kikuyu and Embu custom, where farm income to meet household and farming needs is not freely shared between a husband and his wives" (1973, p. 240). Finally, the authors refer to the fact that the male household head is treated as the principal agricultural worker and decision-maker, the tenancy agreement being made with him. In reality, women do a larger share of the farm work.

The main criterion for tenant selection at Mwea has been male landlessness in the two source areas identified. When chosen, the tenant is allocated irrigated land for rice production and a very small plot for a house. Access to land on which to grow subsistence crops is not part of the scheme's official system, and herein lies women's major problem. In practice, small areas of unirrigated land, called "red soils" and amounting to a maximum of one-third to one-half an acre (under 0.2 ha.), have been allocated where available by village committees to women. Generally the older established villages have greater access to such land, and in some cases newer villages have no land to allocate. Because of the uncertainty attached to this distribution and the small amount of land involved, women have become dependent on men to meet their normal household responsibilities. Theoretically, lack of subsistence crops was not supposed to be a problem as tenant families were to change their staple diet to rice. Rice is however disliked and maize and beans continue to form the basic diet.

Women's labour is essential for rice cultivation yet all cash proceeds from the rice crop go to the men. The only measure of a woman's economic independence comes from her sale of rice on the black market. For this, a woman keeps back from sale to the management a share of the harvest. The amounts traded by each woman may be small, but access to this income is critical. Hanger and Moris note that this is tacitly recognized by junior scheme

staff who do not usually obstruct the process.

The authors also refer to other aspects of life which cause stress for women: the necessity to walk far to access non-polluted water; the scarcity of fuel; the type of housing and its organization in centralized villages reminiscent of enforced villagization during the 1950s; the heavy demands on their labour when peak harvest periods for rice coincide with high labour requirements on food plots; and finally, the problems associated with distance from kin and markets.

In light of these problems and the women's high rate of abandonment of the rice scheme, Hanger and Morris suggest measures to decrease women's economic dependence on men. They call for the recognition of women's claim to at least half of the rice income, access to safe water, an organized system of firewood, and a minimum allowance made for the purchase of a subsistence crop other than rice. Some of these recommendations have been taken into account in planning for the newer Bura irrigation scheme, but recent information (World Bank, 1982) indicates that the majority of proposals have not been put into practice.

I turn now to a discussion of relative access of men and women to agricultural information, as provided by Ministries of Agriculture extension services. Bias in the provision of services from this source has been identified by many (Moock, 1976; Bettles, 1980; Fortmann, 1978, 1981, for example), but one of the most extensive analyses in sub-Saharan Africa is Kathleen Staudt's

(1975-76, 1978a, 1978b) carried out in Idakha Location in Kakamega District, Western Kenya. It was in order to test the hypothesis that the government gives preference to male farmers in agricultural extension work that Staudt initially collected data from her sample of 212 (nonelite) jointly--and female--managed households. 40% of her sample was made up of female-headed households, a household head being defined here as the person in day-to-day charge of the farm (1978a). A later sample survey of 40 elite households enabled Staudt (1978b) to differentiate between households on the basis of socioeconomic status. This was measured by material indicators including the value of possessions, size of land and type of house construction. Table 3.1 illustrates two major findings from Staudt's work (1978b):

Table 3.1: Proportion of farmers with no access to agricultural services by farm management type and class

	Non-elite (N=212)		Elite (N=40)	
	Female-managed	Jointly-managed	Female-managed	Jointly-managed
Farms not visited	49%	28% ¹	-	3%
No household member attended demonstration plot	62%	46% ²	50%	41%
No household member trained	95%	80% ¹	70%	46%
No loan information, application or receipt	99%	86% ¹	30%	34%

Source: Staudt, 1978b, Table.1, p. 29.

Notes: 1. Significant at the .01 level.
2. Significant at the .05 level.

First, for both female and jointly managed households, the elite have much better access to all services provided by the Ministry of Agriculture than nonelite farmers. Second, the most severely disadvantaged group of farmers in terms of access to services are the nonelite female managers: only half of these have ever been visited by an extension agent, compared to 72% where a holding is jointly managed. Staudt notes further that sex differences are more marked among the nonelite, particularly where the more valuable services of the Ministry of Agriculture, access to training and to loans, are concerned. Jointly-managed farms are four times more likely to have a household member who has attended a Farmer Training Centre and fourteen times as likely to have applied for a loan, or have received a loan, than female-managed farms. Only 5% of all nonelite female-managed farms have ever had a household member trained. In contrast, among the elite, there is far less discrimination in terms of the distribution of agricultural services.

Providing further detail, Table 3.2 indicates that, among

Table 3.2: Summary service scale¹ mean, by farm management type and economic standing among nonelite farmers

	lower economic standing (N=118)	higher economic standing (N=94)
female managed	1.1	1.4
jointly-managed	1.5	2.4

Source: Staudt, 1978b, p. 30.

Note: 1. The six point scale indicates no service, (1) 1 visit by an agricultural instructor, (2) 2 or more visits, (3) farmer training, (4) demonstration plot attendance, and (5) loan application or receipt.

nonelite households, although female-managed households always have less access to agricultural services than their jointly-managed counterparts, this varies according to economic standing. Disparities are less marked among the poorer households, than among the wealthier ones, but differentiation is least marked among female-managed households of either type.

Louise Fortmann's (1984) recent research in Botswana represents findings which complement those of Staudt. Fortmann's analysis of 358 household from twelve sites in the eastern communal areas of Botswana (of which 27% were female-headed) does indicate that female-headed households are disadvantaged vis à vis those headed by men with respect to access to draft power (81% of the latter households owning cattle compared to 44% of the former, a difference significant at the .001 level), and access to labour (female-headed households had a mean family size of 6.8 compared to 8.3 for those headed by men, a difference again significant at the .001 level). In general, female farmers lacked access to the same level of resources as men. Once Fortmann controlled for cattle ownership, the indicator used for economic stratification, however, both agricultural practices such as ploughing and starting date of ploughing, and access to extension workers show no gender differentiation. Table 3.3 indicates gender access to agricultural extension workers, contact valued, because it is through these people that credit programmes are directed. The table indicates that when wealth is

controlled for, there is no statistically significant difference between the two household types. From this, Fortmann concludes, that "...class bias seems to overcome the gender bias" in the delivery of extension (1984, p. 459). She traces this to the historical focus of Botswana extension staff on "Pupil Farmers", often the wealthier members of society. The reason given is that they are easier to work with "...since the same problems of uncertain availability of draft power and inability to purchase inputs that plague the cattleless farmer plague the extension agent who tries to work with him/her" (p. 459).

Table 3.3 Comparison of percent of male- and female-headed households receiving advice from extension staff controlling for cattle ownership

	<u>Cattle owners</u>		<u>Non-owners</u>	
	male (N=194)	female (N=35)	male (N=43)	female (N=45)
No advice	60.9	74.3	86.1	81.6
Received advice	39.1	25.7	13.9	18.4
Chi square	2.302		0.240	

Chi square is not significant.

Source: Fortmann, 1984, p. 459.

Fortmann stresses in her conclusion that this should not "discount" the importance of gender in planning rural programmes, as such programmes which are concerned with farmer's legal status

(such as land ownership), for example credit programmes, are likely to be biased against all women. She recommends further research which will examine the effect of gender, by socioeconomic stratum, over the life span. She cautions against generalizing from her data in view of the great diversity of agricultural systems in sub-Saharan Africa.

While Barnes' (1983) analysis of small-scale farming systems in Kenya does not, unfortunately, disaggregate the Division of Labour Survey data (1979) according to socioeconomic level, a very strong case is made for differentiating households on the basis of sex and marital status of household head. She distinguishes between households headed⁵ by married women, unmarried women (generally widows), and men. Her central argument is that female-headed households, and particularly those headed by unmarried women are disadvantaged in terms of their location in agro-ecological zones, average size of holding, size of the household labour pool which they may draw on and access to non-farm income. The fact that female-headed households tend to have smaller holdings located in poorer ecological zones is explained by the fact that the majority of these holdings cannot support valuable export crop production and therefore bring in little cash. Men migrate from them--either husbands or sons--to gain a livelihood in another rural area or an urban centre. Access to cash has become an increasing necessity for all smallholders and where this cannot be gained from the holding, the

usual pattern is for male migration.

Where, however, cash can be sufficiently generated from the holding to meet perceived needs, Barnes notes that men may remain. She contends that at present there is no "precise" division of adult labour by sex in crop and livestock production, and that the previous distinction between male and female tasks has become blurred. While this finding is certainly a provocative one in terms of gender relations, further analysis by socioeconomic stratum might well shed further light on this situation.

Evidence from elsewhere in Africa indicates the very high workload women carry in the post-Independence era (in relation to men) in agricultural production and the tasks of fetching water and firewood (ILO, 1981; Fortmann, 1978, for Tanzania; Bettles, 1980, for Botswana; Nantogmah, 1979, for Ghana; Clark, 1975, for Malawi; Pala, 1980, for the Luo in Kenya; and Hanger and Moris, 1973, for the Mwea-Settlement scheme in Kenya).

The hypothesis that women's work load is increased as agricultural production is commercialized, however, has been questioned by Spencer (1976). Analysing the case of the Integrated Agricultural Development Project in the Eastern Province of Sierra Leone, he concludes that the work load of households participating in the project (which centred on rice production) increased in comparison with a control group, but that among the former the greater work load was felt by men and male children rather than women. His conclusions may however be

contested on the grounds of his definition of the work load. Spencer excludes from his analysis what he refers to as "purely domestic activities", which include meal preparation and child rearing. As Fortmann (1978) has argued in this context, given the very heavy initial work load of women which includes his-excluded activities, any small increase in demands on their time represents a much greater burden for women relative to men. In general, research on the commercialization of agriculture reveals that, whether through the increase in cash crops, through male migration, or through decreased access to fuel supplies, an increased workload falls on women (Stamp, 1975-76; Fortmann, 1978; Bettles, 1980; Jiggins, 1980).

Stamp's work in Kiambu District in Kenya, for example, identifies the problems faced by women household heads. Although concomitant with increased autonomy in decision-making in certain areas, their work load has increased not only because of male outmigration, but also the decreasing levels of soil productivity and an awareness of the risks involved in turning more land over for coffee production both because of the insecure pricing arrangements for this crop and because less land was available for food crops. With reference to coffee, Stamp reports that women lacked control over income from this crop even though they laboured to produce it, as shares in the cooperative which handled the marketing were registered in the man's name.

I have not attempted in this section of Chapter 3 to discuss

all aspects of productive relations between women and men. It is therefore inappropriate to draw definitive conclusions as to the complexities of the articulation of dominant and subdominant modes of production. In terms of their access to land, it is apparent that agrarian structures continue to mediate against women's access to and control of this means of production. It is also evident that in many cases the commoditization of the economy has led to the intensification of their work in food crop production and in areas of heavy male outmigration, their labour, always there, has increased in cash crop production. There has, thus, to a certain extent been a necessary blurring of the previously defined sexual division of labour.

3.5 Theoretical perspectives

In Chapter 1.3 it was argued that space may be viewed as social construct and as such is an intrinsic part of social process. To reiterate from Soja, the structure of space is: "...a dialectically defined component of the general relations of production, relations which are simultaneously social and spatial" (1980, p. 208). The intention at this point is to relate this concept to the discussion of Chapters 2 and 3 by proposing a theoretical framework which will then be considered in Chapters 5 to 7 in the context of Murang'a District, Kenya, for the period circa 1880 to the present.

As there is a lack of existing theory which addresses the

spatiality of social process in the rural environment, the ideas presented here must explore new theoretical ground. In Chapter 1, the work of Wekerle, Peterson and Morley (1980) in the context of the urban-built environment of industrialized countries was discussed. Specifically they propose that three distinctions: the "degree of segregation" between men and women in the activities carried out in a certain environment; the "intensity and nature" of the occupance of a space by the sexes; and the "extent of control" of each sex over specific spaces, provide a link or an entry point for analyzing the social/spatial (p. 6). They argue that these dimensions "...underlie the primary limitations placed on women in the environmental context: limitations on access, on the range of activities they carry out, and on the degree of autonomy they possess in different settings" (p. 6). McDowell (1983) has also provided insight into the relationship between the social and the spatial through her analysis of the gender division of urban space. She contends, for instance, that:

"...the division of urban space both reflects and influences the sexual division of labour, women's role in the family, and the separation of home life from work that developed in the period of capitalist industrialization" (1983, p. 62).

While the concepts of gender division and separation do indeed address social/spatial distinctions which provoke questions as to underlying socioeconomic structures and processes in the

urban environments under study, it is proposed here that a focus on the structures and processes of social/spatial organization as they occur at and between different scales may provide an additional and powerful perspective for analysis, particularly in the rural Third World environment.

In a sense this argument is merely the obverse to the approach which focuses on division or segregation, yet at least in the context of a society where kinship is a major social/spatial structural determinant (and it may be argued that it has much wider geographical significance than this), it centres discussion on the forces which define territoriality along gender lines. This in turn relates to the ability of women and men to bond at different societal levels. In Chapter 2 it was argued that this ability is a significant element in the ability to achieve autonomy, authority within society, and social adulthood. To adapt Soja's (1980, p. 211) phrase of "cross-scalar synthesis", it is suggested here that the concept of intra/inter-scalar organization, of relations of production and reproduction and of productive forces, is one which may effectively help to penetrate the nature of the socio-spatial dialectic within the rural African environment.

In terms more specific to the historical model developed earlier in this chapter, the following theoretical arguments may be proposed in relation to the specific context of the case study area, Murang'a District.

A. The late nineteenth century: a kin corporate mode of production

The precise nature of the dynamics of the kin corporate mode of production will have varied according to the length of time and the manner in which the area under study has been settled, and by ecological zone. The essential dynamic of the mode, the central contradiction within the forces of production and between them and relations of production will, however, have prevailed. To summarize from Sacks' (1982) analysis discussed in Chapter 2, the contradictory relations between men (as husbands and brothers) and women (as sisters and wives) as they relate to the means of production are central to this dynamic.

Within this mode of production, where the household, as the dominant unit of production, formed a central societal institution, it has been argued by Vickers (unpublished) that female domestic power might check male dominance. Evidence suggests that women had a significant economic basis for varying degrees of autonomy. The extent to which they were able to translate this into the exercise of authority or positions as social adults will have depended to an important degree on their ability to bond or to organize. This will have been conditioned by the organization of both productive relations and the organization of productive forces both within the household and outside it. These in-turn will have

been conditioned by rules of inheritance, residence, and descent, to follow Blumberg's (1984) priorities.

In a society where territory was defined within a patriline, and land was the main means of production, men's inheritance of the land, supported by the practices of exogamy and patrilocality (the rules of residence), would have given that sex the basis for extra-household bonding. As argued in Chapter 2, this would have been reflected in their dominant participation in the central political, legal and military institutions of society. The extent of participation by an individual would, in a classless society, have varied with age. Thus, within such a kin corporation, men's relationship as "brothers" to the means of production would have been reinforced on marriage (as they gained access to and control over land in their own right) by their relationship as "husbands".

For women, in contrast, the organization of productive and reproductive relations as defined by male territoriality, concomitant with the practice of exogamy and patrilocality and their movement away from their natal kin corporation on marriage, will have resulted in the dissolution of their organizational base, of their participation for example in political institutions such as age-grade sets. As wives, women will have had usufruct rights to land in their husband's kin corporation, but the extent to which they were

able to retain or access rights to land as sisters in their natal kin corporation will have depended to a considerable degree on the distance moved on marriage and on their mobility. The latter will have varied according to the stage of their family's life cycle. In addition, rights to land will have been affected by their brothers' marital status.

The distance moved on marriage will also have conditioned the degree to which a woman could maintain any labour-related organization as sisters in their natal corporation. Further, where no extra-household/inter-village bonding/organization existed to overcome this factor of scattering and distance (for example, through such trading networks as described by Green, 1964, see Chapter 2, pp. 47-48), women would be in a far weaker position than men to use their economic power as a basis for effective and visible participation in other central institutions of society. In contrast, where a basis for bonding at a wider scale than that of the household existed, such as through organization for trading, this could compensate for distance moved on marriage and their isolation as sisters from their natal corporation. Again, age will have been a factor here, greater spatial freedom often being accorded women of post-childbearing age.

In Chapter 2 it was argued that the sexual division of labour, as defined by the interaction between the ideational/

symbolic order and the material order, is a central element in understanding the relationship between sex and power.

Schlegel (1977a) has indicated that within a kin corporate mode of production, where the dominant production unit is the household, productive relations are "embedded" in other relations. For this reason, at the household level, productive and reproductive roles must be compatible. Where agriculture forms the means of livelihood, and "work" and "home" are not spatially separated, there is a greater likelihood that women will be able to fit their productive and reproductive responsibilities. This is of significance is so far as, to quote from Vickers: "The fit between economic and reproductive activities gives the sexes equal mobility and equal knowledge of the outside world" (unpublished, p. 524). This, Vickers contends, is of significance in egalitarian relationships. In addition, where within the sexual division of labour women have significant agricultural responsibility, their movement on marriage may mean their greater role in agricultural innovation and change, as Hay (1972) has documented among the Luo.

B. The 1890s to 1954: British colonialism

While Gikuyu society was engaged in inter-societal/inter-national trade to varying degrees prior to 1890

(Taylor, 1978), the imposition of British colonialism from the 1890s onwards involved a fundamental structural change in levels and intensities of societal interaction. The relations of exchange, of power and of goal direction (Schlegel, 1977b) between the two contending modes of production had a significant impact on productive and reproductive relations and forces within Gikuyu society. The effect of an external definition or limitation of Gikuyu territory, which involved substantial "alienation" of land, was to redefine internal productive relations. While a process of de facto individualization of land holdings characterized the land tenure system of the early 1900s, the sufficiency of the land base to provide a means of livelihood was not in question until the curtailment of the land base and the imposition of hut and poll taxes by the colonial government. In this context the demands of the colonial economy for labour, extracted through the imposed tax requirements, meant the beginning of male outmigration to work as wage labour on European-owned estates and in urban areas. For gender relations of production, this represented the beginning of the partial separation in the location of production of use value from production for exchange value. Women's responsibility for food crop production intensified and continued to be vital for societal reproduction within the local area and the wider economy. It served to subsidize

the wages of male labour, rather than the reverse, but as household production became peripheral to the demands of the macro economy so women's labour was viewed as less "strategically indispensable" (Blumberg, 1984). Being unwaged, women's labour was seen as a socially subordinate part of producing an exchangeable surplus and their economic contribution was accorded less prestige. Where female power may be considered as based on "achievement" rather than "ascription" (Sanday, 1981), this can only have resulted in their decreased autonomy within society, particularly at the macro level. In contrast, men's access to cash meant their increasing involvement in institutions more central to the colonially defined terms of the macro economy.

The partial spatial separation between production for use vis à vis production for exchange was maintained until the introduction of changes under the Swynnerton Plan during the "Emergency" of the 1950s. The introduction of export crops in the wake of land consolidation and registration and the return of male migrant labour to the Reserve meant the increased spatial proximity of production for exchange and for use (the latter on a reduced land base) but it did not result in women's accessing directly benefits accruing from this. Men controlled the allocation of land for export crop production, had access to the information, technology and capital required, and participated in the

co-operative institutions set up to market the produce. While women's labour was used, women did not control its proceeds.

Productive relations between men and women will also have been profoundly changed by the de jure institutionalization of individual title to the land. Through land registration, the power of individual men to allocate land as sanctioned by the clan was equated with registrable interest and thus men, with very few exceptions, became owners of the means of production. As Smock (1977) has argued, where the clan could no longer guarantee women's usufruct rights to land, and as land became a marketable commodity, their insecurity vis à vis the means of production can only have increased. On a decreased land base, it is likely also that their ability to obtain rights to land in their natal kin corporation will have declined.

C. Post-1954

While 12 December 1963 marks the date of Kenya's Independence, of significance to the processes under study here is the beginning of land reform carried out under the Swynnerton Plan in the early 1950s. It is this date which will therefore be used to distinguish the two eras.

Within the context of the continuing articulation of two modes of production and the increasing stratification of the

rural population with the penetration of capitalist relations of production, it is necessary to differentiate between socioeconomic strata and household types, specifically those headed by men versus those headed by women, whether married or widowed, in any analysis which hopes to penetrate rural structure and process. In terms of gender relations to land, it is likely that although in the main men's individual rights to landownership will be sustained by the de jure system as it interacts with clan-based territoriality, individual men will lose these rights through the process of increasing inequalities and stratification of the rural population. While for the most part economic and societal structures will mediate against women's ownership of land, under the de jure system, it is legally possible for women to own land. In the main, however, it is likely that women will continue to lack such control, and will stand in a position of insecurity to land as their access to it is no longer guaranteed by their husband's lineage and marital breakdowns increase in frequency.

In a situation of continuing decline of the household as a unit of production and increasing commoditization of the economy, the need for access to cash will be reflected in changes in the sexual division of labour. It may be argued that among the poorer and more wealthy households, in particular, male outmigration from the rural areas will be

significant. In the case of poorer households, males will migrate for reasons of necessity; in the case of richer households, well educated men will seek out economic opportunity. Given women's continued responsibility for productive and reproductive labour, it is likely that they will lack the mobility of men in accessing non-farm employment. Particularly in the context of female-headed households, however, women may have increased control over 'day-to-day' farm management decisions, and where export crops are grown, have responsibility for their production. There may therefore be significant blurring of the sexual division of on-farm labour. It is likely however that women remain in a subordinate position with respect to access to information, to training, to capital, to technology and to the proceeds of their labour expended on export crop production. Thus, although there is not complete spatial separation or division within the rural environment of domestic versus social production, women are unlikely to gain full benefit from this in view of continuing hierarchical gender relations.

Where, in the face of the increasing contradictions they face in productive and reproductive relations, women have been able to organize/bond among themselves at the local, extra household, level, whether as an agricultural work force, for a social-welfare type of activity, or more

radically, in order to initiate an income generating activity, this may reflect the beginning of a significant structural change in rural productive relations.

Notes:

¹The term "house property complex" was used first by M. Gluckman, 1950, in "Kinship and marriage among the Lozi of Northern Rhodesia and the Zulu of Natal" in A.R. Radcliffe-Browne and D. Forde, eds., African Systems of Kinship and Marriage, London. It refers to a patrilineal kin system in which property is allocated to a wife for her agricultural use and is inherited by her sons. Goody and Buckley (1973), who cite the earlier work, suggest that the house property complex:

"...constitutes a kind of social recognition of a woman's major role in the process of production, though she herself is excluded from ownership of the means of production themselves" (p. 118).

²Intercropping refers to a technique of crop production widely practised in small-scale farming systems in Africa. For a discussion of the merits of this technique, see, D. Belshaw, 1979, "Taking indigenous technology seriously: the case of inter-cropping techniques in East Africa," IDS Bulletin, Vol. 10, No. 2, pp. 24-27.

³Meillassoux, 1981, uses the concept of labour rent to refer to a situation in which labour-power produced in the domestic economy is freely transferred to the capitalist sector of production. This occurs, for example, in a situation of corvée labour, where no wage is paid to the worker. Reproduction of the labour force is sustained through peasant production in the domestic economy. Where, however, the worker is farther from home and cannot be fed from domestic supplies, the value of subsistence is supplied by the employer. In this case, the employer's profit is not a "free rent" but a surplus value,

"...made up of the difference between the price of the subsistence goods consumed by the worker during his working period and the price of the goods produced by the worker in the same period" (Meillassoux, 1981, pp. 114).

⁴For further discussion of Meillassoux, 1981, see, Etienne and Leacock (1980).

⁵Barnes (1983) uses the definition of the Central Bureau of Statistics, Government of Kenya, 1981, for household head: "the senior member of the household resident in the household compound or through residing elsewhere returns at frequent intervals" (The Integrated Rural Surveys 1976-79, 1981, p. 23).

Part II: Murang'a District

Chapter 4: The environment and agro-ecological potential

4.1 Introduction

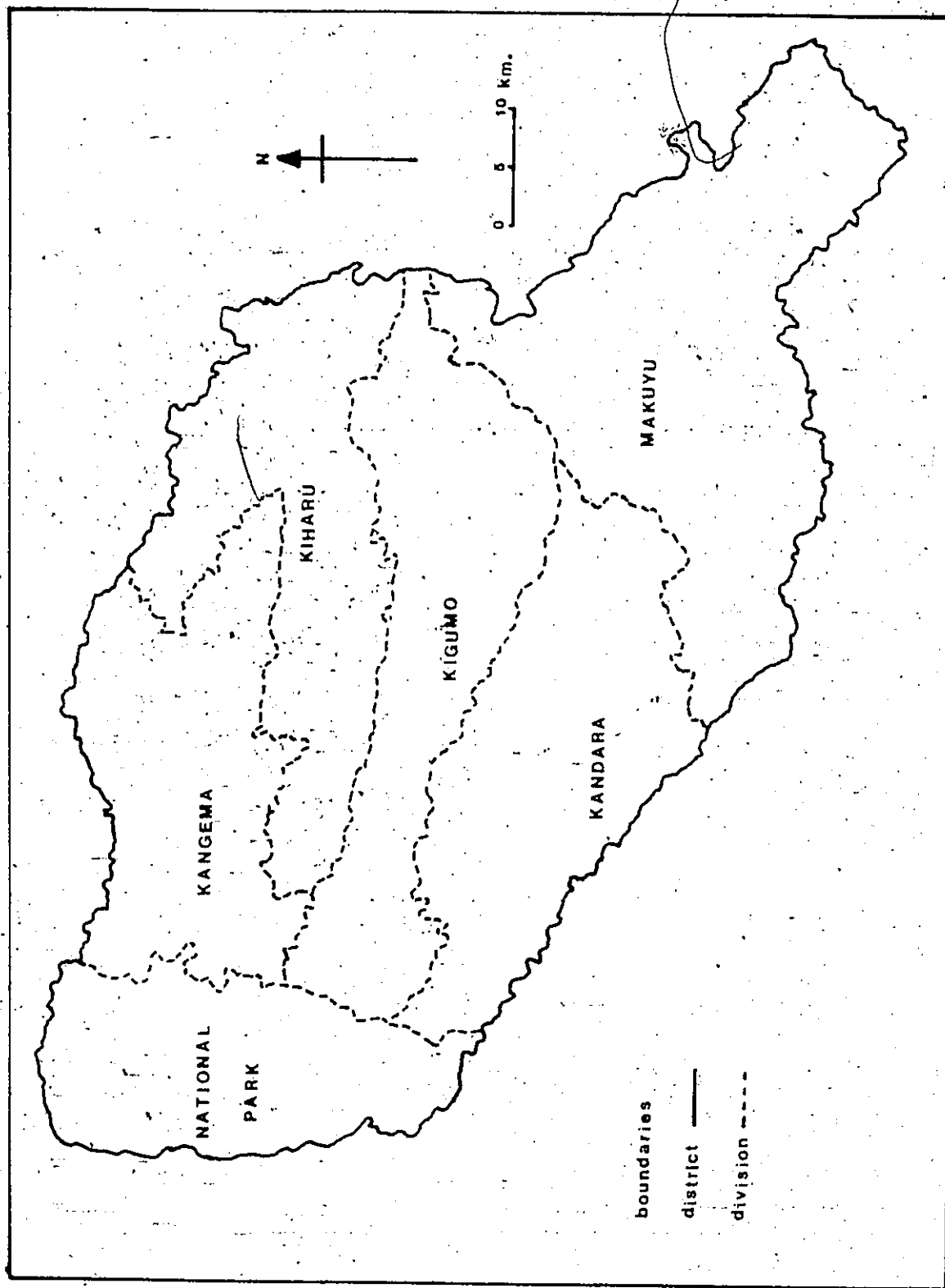
Murang'a District, one of the three districts of Central Province, is located approximately 80 kms. north of Nairobi between $0^{\circ}34'$ and $1^{\circ}07'$ south and 36° and $37^{\circ}26'$ east. To the south lies Kiambu District, and to the north, Nyeri, the two other districts comprising Central Province. Murang'a District is bordered by Kirinyaga, Embu and Machakos Districts to the east and Nyandarua District to the west. It is divided into five divisions for administrative purposes, from south to north: Kandara, Kigumo, Kiharu, Kangema, and to the east, Makuyu (Figure 4.1). Each division is further divided into locations (29 in total), and then sublocations (132 in total). Figure 4.2 indicates the general infrastructure in the district.

In this chapter, the resource potential for agriculture in the district will be assessed with a view towards providing a background for subsequent discussion in Chapters 5 to 7.

4.2 Topography

The most significant topographical feature in the district is the deeply dissected volcanic plateau, dropping in altitude from

Figure 4.1 Murang'a District: administrative divisions



3657 m. in the Nyandarua range in the west to 1219 m. in the more gently rolling land of Makuyu and the Kakuzi hills in the east.

The landscape is one of parallel ridges and valleys trending WNW to ESE. Relief intensity is greatest above 2134 m., reaching 300 m. or more in places, slopes frequently being greater than 30%. Between 2134 m. and 1524 m. (Figure 4.3), the altitudinal difference between ridge top and valley bottom drops to an average of 100 m., and slopes are approximately 16%. In Makuyu Division to the east, and minor parts of Kigumo and Kiharu which also fall below 1524 m., the terrain is in general more level. Even here, however, hills and minor scarps are located in the areas marked Hs, Hr, Lv and Ln on Figure 4.4. In this zone the Kakuzi Hills (Hr in Figure 4.4), rising to 1645 m. above sea level, are a major topographical feature. Relief intensity here is 100-300 m., slopes varying between 8% and 30% (Kenya, MDEAR, 1982, pp. 3-5).

The district is well drained by rivers (Figure 4.3) which in general flow WNW to ESE from the Nyandarua range and form part of the Upper Tana drainage system. The majority of these are permanent, the exception being some seasonal streams in the southeast of the district. Only during a prolonged drought, such as that occurring 1983-84, do rivers such as the Saba Saba dry up.

4.3 Geology

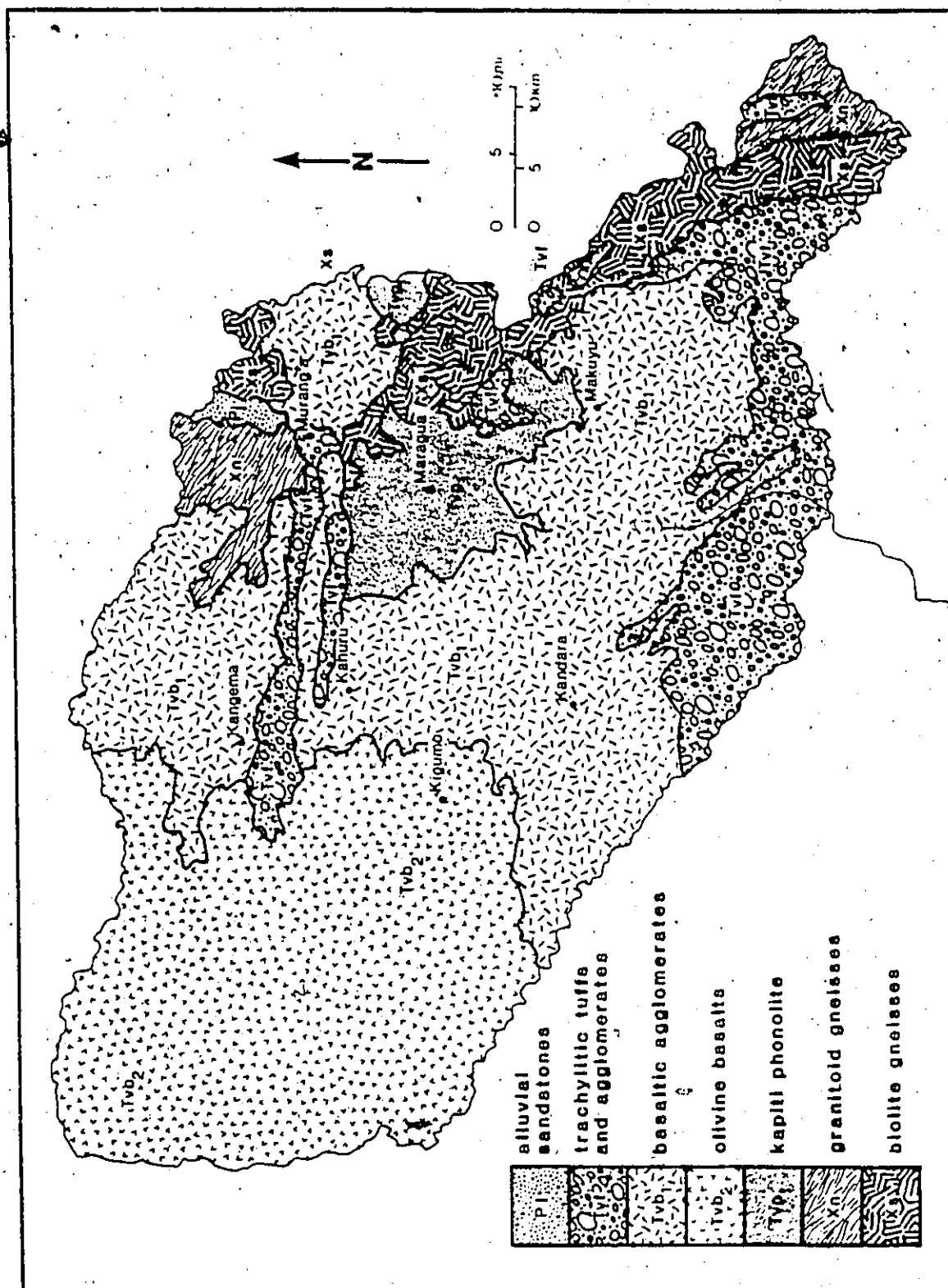
The oldest rock formations, the Precambrian rocks of the

Basement system which include the highly metamorphosed granitoid and biolite gneisses, are found in the southeastern part of the district (Figure 4.5). To the west, these have, for the most part, been overlain by extrusive rocks dating from the Miocene and later Tertiary and Pleistocene periods, originating from volcanic activity in the Rift Valley and Kirinyaga (Mount Kenya). The earliest of the volcanic rocks, the phonolites (Tvp₁), flowed from the west during the Miocene era, and were later covered by more recent ash and basalt. Extrusions from the Tertiary and Pleistocene periods cover by far the greater part of the district (Tvb₁, Tbv₂, Tvf) in Figure 4.5 (Kenya, MDEAR, 1982, pp. 6-10).

No mineral deposits of economic significance are found in rocks of the Basement System, although there are scattered occurrences of garnet, sillimanite and kaolinite. These rocks are, however, quarried for building purposes, for road ballast and for adding to concrete. Volcanic rocks also provide building material, and in the past have been quarried in certain locations for iron ore. Claystones, used for construction, occur in the southwest of the district near Thika and in the Gathamba valley and Kianochi southwest of Murang'a town. At Kangocho, in Mukangai valley and near Maragua township, clay suitable for brick making and pottery is found (Kenya, MDEAR, 1982, p. 10).

Porous rocks of the volcanic complexes, delimited by non-conformities within this system or where it juxtaposes the Basement System, act as aquifers which are tapped by wells and

Figure 4.5 Murang'a District: geology



Source: NDEAR, 1983, p. 9.

boreholes throughout Murang'a.

4.4 Soils

Figure 4.4 illustrates the extent of the various soil types in Murang'a. While it is evident that there is significant variation in type, in general soils which have developed on volcanic rocks in the north and west of the district are more fertile, deeper and have a higher organic content than those formed on the rocks of the Basement Complex.

The most extensive group of soils, the nitosols (Rn and Ln), developed on volcanic rock, range in colour from very deep, dark reddish brown to dark brown and in type from friable to firm clays. They are very deep and well drained with acid humic topsoil. Their natural fertility is moderately high to high (Jaetzold and Schmidt, 1983, p. 580). The histosols which lie to the west of the nitosols are strong brown loams, also having a high humus content. Although their natural fertility is also moderate to high, their potential for agriculture decreases with altitude. The andosols in the extreme northwestern corner of the district are acidic peaty loams which are frequently shallow and interspersed with rock outcrops (ibid., and Kenya, MDEAR, 1982, p. 11).

Soils in the lower parts of Kangema, Kiharu and Kigumo Divisions and those in Makuyu Division, which have developed on the Basement System, are more varied than those which have

developed on the volcanic soils and on the whole are of lower natural fertility. The cambisols, found on hills and minor scarps in the area of gneissic Basement system rocks, are relatively young, rich, soils. They range in type from dark red to brown friable sandy clay loam to clay. They are generally well drained but contain many stones and boulders. Vertisols, black cotton soils, have developed in plateau areas of Makuyu division, and are relatively poorly drained. They are deep, dark grey to black clays often containing boulders and stones which tend to crack when dry. The ferralsols of the southeast plateau areas are friable, dark red clays of relatively low fertility, although generally deep and well drained. The regosols of the Kakuzi hills are of variable fertility, tending to include significant rock outcrops. The acrisols of southeastern Makuyu, the footslope areas, are of relatively low fertility. They are in general well drained, relatively deep red to yellow-red friable, sandy clay loam to clay (Jaetzold and Schmidt, 1983, pp. 578-580; Kenya, MDEAR, 1982, pp. 12-13).

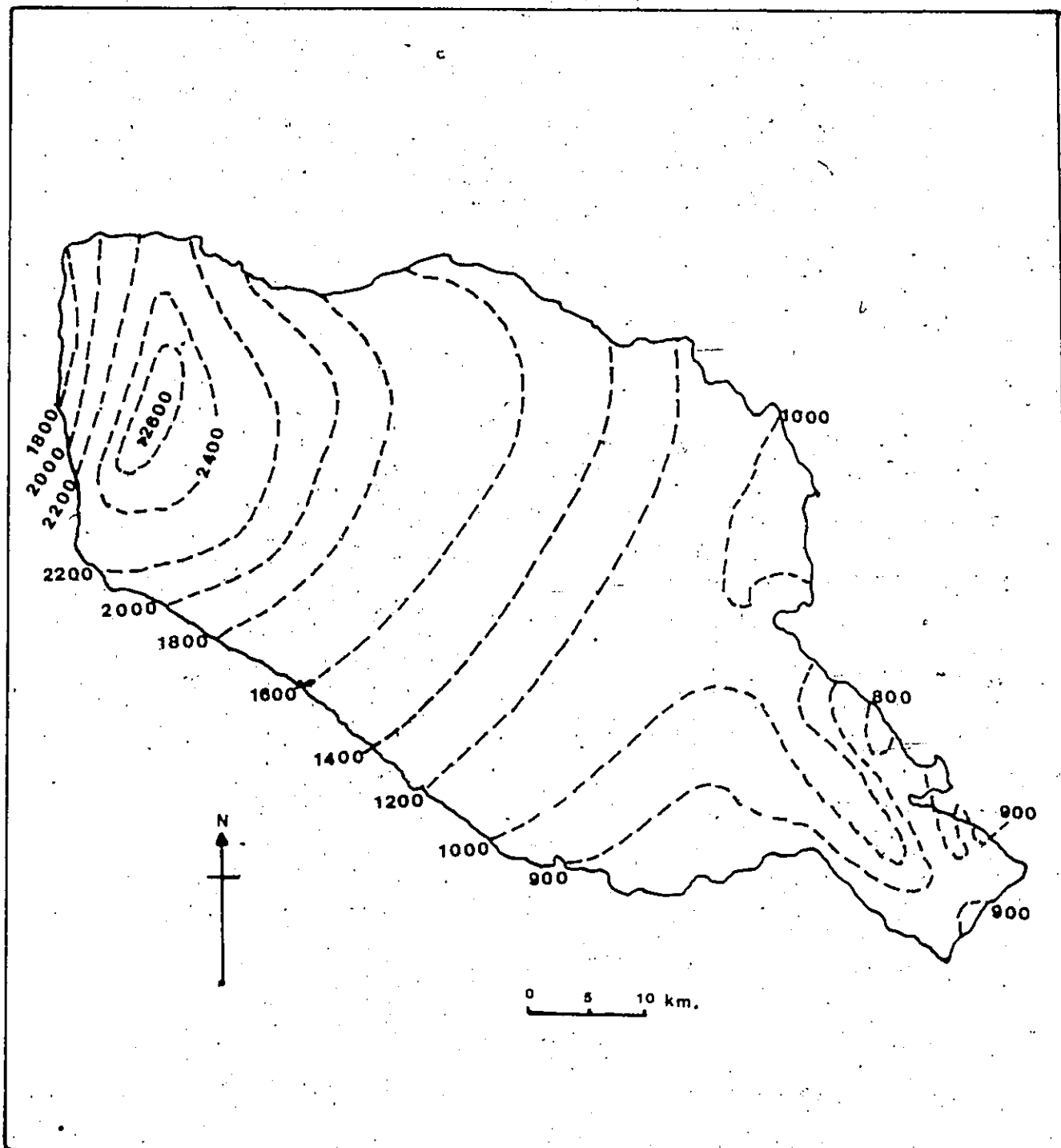
More specifically, fertility will vary according to position in the soil catena: soils on the ridge top tend to be deeper and contain more humus than those on the slopes, while in the valley bottoms soils tend to be deep and alluvial (Taylor, 1966b, p. 19).

4.5 Climate and agro-ecological zone

The agricultural potential of Murang'a District is closely linked to rainfall totals, distribution and reliability. The broad pattern of precipitation is characterized by two rainy seasons: the Long Rains or kimera kia njahi (the season of the dolichos beans) from March to July and the Short Rains or kimera kia mwere (the season of bulrush millet) from October to December. In the higher altitudinal zones these two seasons are not separated by a dry season but experience gathano, a period of mist and drizzle between July and September. Data from fourteen stations in the district collected in 1978 indicated that 49% of total rainfall occurred between March and May, while approximately 20% fell during the period of the Short Rains (Kenya, MDEAR, p. 20). In general, rainfall amounts and reliability increase with altitude (Figures 4.6, 4.7, 4.8), although there can be very local marked deviations from any norm.

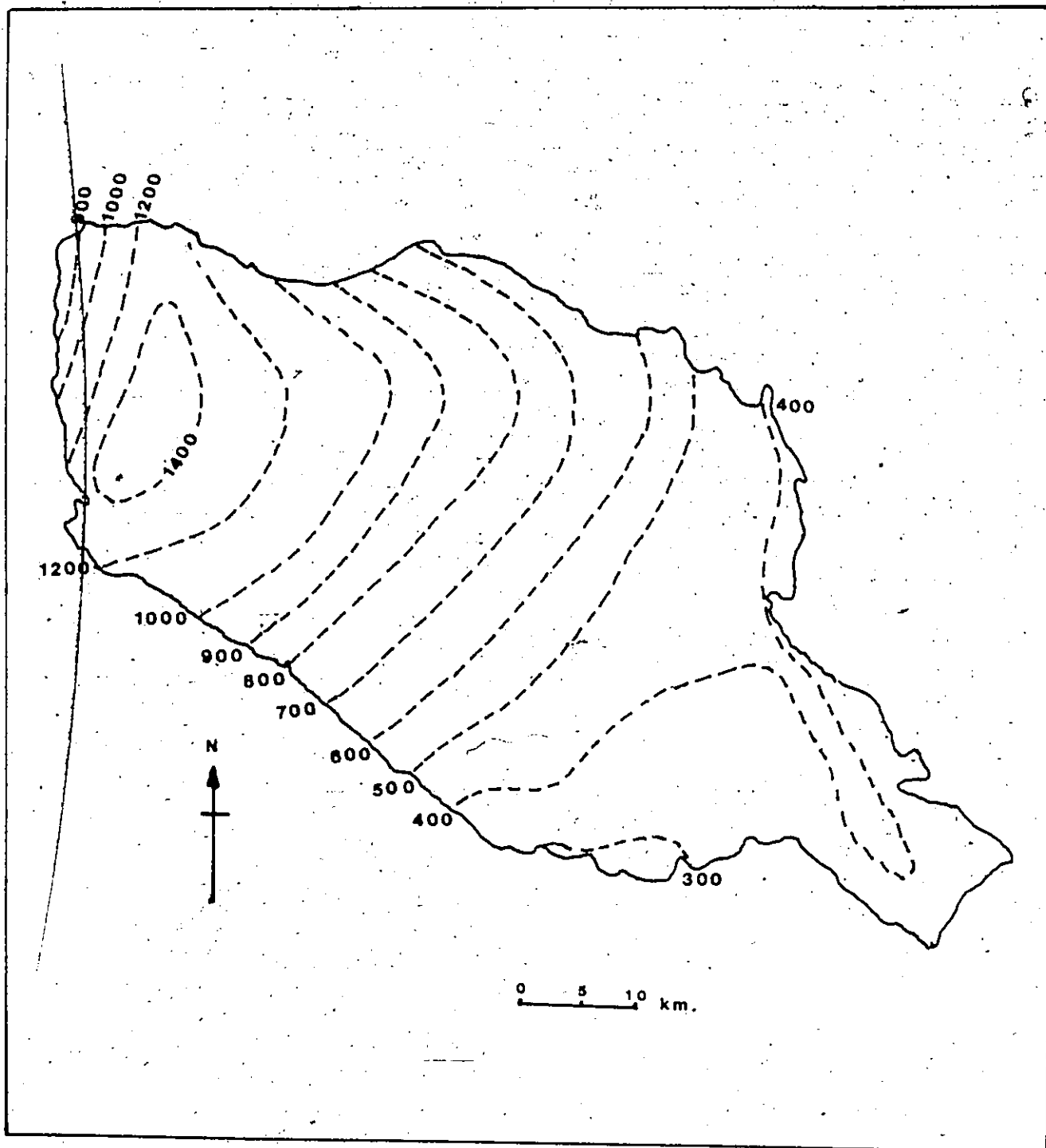
On the basis of rainfall totals and the decrease in temperature with altitude, three climatic zones may be differentiated. Above 1760 m., rainfall averages between 1400-1600 mm. per annum, is well distributed and generally reliable. Drought, although occurring for example in the period 1983-1984, is infrequent. Temperatures range from a mean minimum annual temperature of 6°C or below to approximately 18°C. This area, frequently referred to as High Murang'a, is characterized as a high potential zone. Lying between approximately 1500 and

Figure 4.6 Murang'a District: average annual rainfall in mm.



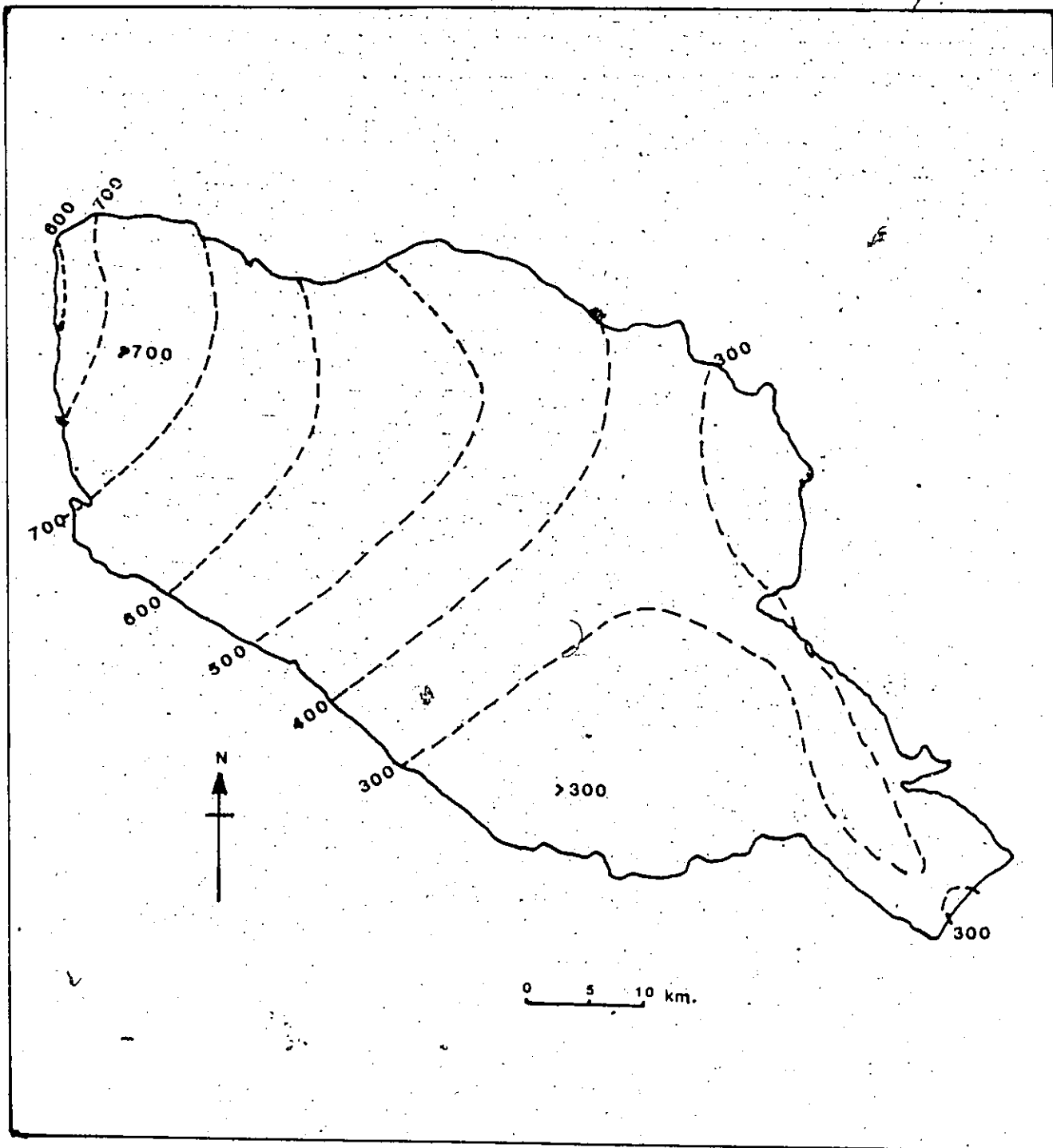
Source: Jaetzold and Schmidt, 1983.

Figure 4.7 Murang'a District: 60% reliability of rainfall in agrohmid period of first rains. (Amounts in mm. surpassed norm in 6 out of 10 years.)



Source: Jaetzold and Schmidt, 1983.

Figure 4.8 Murang'a District:- 60% reliability of rainfall in agrohumid period of second rains. (Amounts in mm. surpassed norm in 6 out of 10 years.)



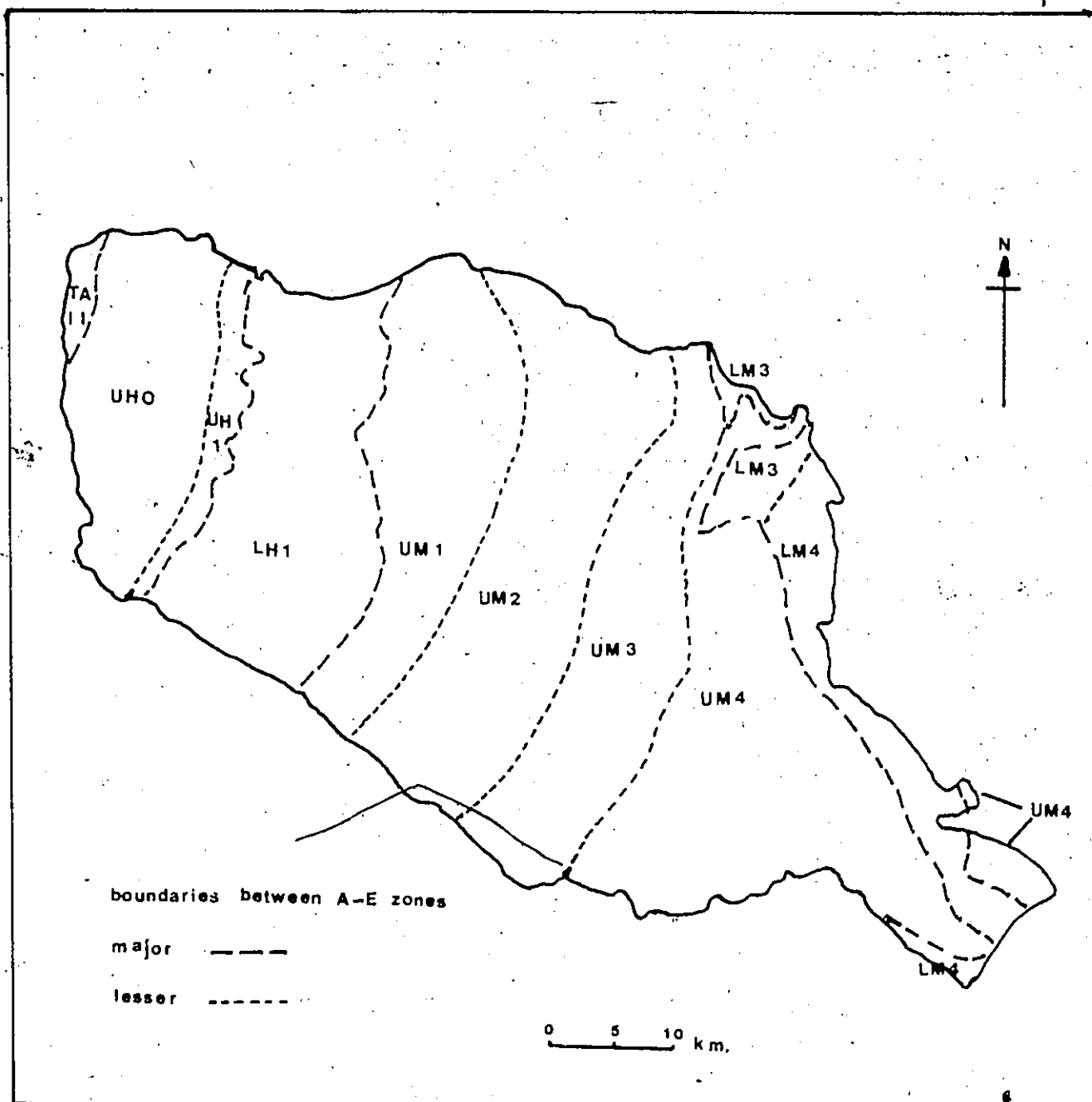
Source: Jaetzold and Schmidt, 1983.

1760 m. above sea level, Middle Murang'a receives 900-1400 mm. rainfall a year. It is generally reliable and well-distributed. Temperatures here range from a mean minimum annual temperature between 10°-14°C to a mean maximum of between 22°-26°C. (Kenya, MDEAR, 1982, p. 20).

To the east of these two zones lies an area of lower agricultural potential, Low Murang'a, located below 1500 m. above sea level. This zone is frequently subdivided into the marginal zone, lying between 1260 m. and 1500 m. above sea level, with precipitation averaging between 500-900 mm., and the zone of rangeland, below 1260 m. above sea level. The latter area receives, on average, under 500 mm. of rainfall a year. Both marginal and rangeland zones experience greater unpredictability in rainfall distribution and amounts. Temperatures in these zones range from a mean minimum of between 14°-18°C to a mean maximum of 28°-30°C. (ibid., pp. 20-23).

A more precise indication of agro-ecological zoning is given in Jaetzold and Schmidt, 1983 (Table 4.1, and Figure 4.9). In the Upper Highland Zone (UH1) in Murang'a, little of the land is cleared of forest, being considered of greater value as a catchment area. Below this, in the Lower Highland zone (LH1), lies the main tea and dairy zone. Both areas have permanent cropping potential, with a long/very long cropping season followed by one of medium length. The tea zone extends into the Upper Midland zone (UM1), to be followed as average annual rainfall and

Murang'a District: agro-ecological zones



Source: Jaetzold and Schmidt, 1983.

Table 4.1 Murang District: climate and agro-ecological zone

Agro-Ecological Zone	Subzone ¹	Altitude in m.	Annual mean temperature in °C	Annual av. rainfall in mm.	60% reliability of rainfall ² 1st rains in mm. 2nd rains in mm.	60% reliability of growing period ³ 1st rains in days 2nd rains in days Total ⁴ in days
TAI-II (Tropical Alpine Moor and Heathlands) Tropical Alpine Zones						
		National Park				
UHO Forest Zone						
UHI Sheep and Dairy Zone	p or 1/v1-m	2 130-2 430	14.9-13.0	2 200-2 500	1 100-1 400 650-700	210 or more 140-155 350-365
LHI Tea - Dairy Zone	p or 1/v1-m	1 730-2 130	18.0-15.0	1 700-2 400	850-1 300 480-680	210 or more 140-155 350-365
UH1 Coffee - Tea Zone	p or fl-m			1 700-1 900	800-1 100 500-580	210 or more 140-155 350-365
	flm	1 670-1 800	18.8-18.0	1 500-1 700	700- 900 400-520	180 or more 130-140 310-340
UH2 Main Coffee Zone	m/11m/a			1 300-1 620	550- 820 320-480	160 or more 110-130 270-300
	m + a/m	1 500-1 670	19.7-18.8	1 180-1 400	450- 650 280-400	130-160 105-115 -

Table 4.1 Hwang'a District: climate and agro-ecological zone (continued)

Agro-Ecological Zone	Subzone ¹	Altitude in m.	Annual mean temperature in °C	Annual av. rainfall in mm.	60% reliability of rainfall ² 1st rains in mm. 2nd rains in mm.	60% reliability of growing period ³ 1st rains in days 2nd rains in days Total ⁴ in days
UH3 Marginal Coffee Zone	m/s + s s/m + s/m	1 340-1 500	20.7-19.7	900-1 350 900- 950	350- 650 230-380 350- 410 260-310	110-130 90-100 105-115 100-110
UH4 Sunflower Maize Zone	s/m + s s + s s + s/vs	1 340-1 520	20.7-19.5	900-1 100 850- 950 800- 850	320- 450 230-300 280- 380 220-280 200- 280 200-230	100-110 90-100 90-105 90-100 85-100 75-85
LM3 Cotton Zone	s/m + s s + s	1 160-1 340	21.7-20.8	Very small 980- 1 100	390- 490 270-320	85-105 85-100
LM4 Marginal Cotton Zone	s + s/vs s/vs + s/vs s/vs + s/vs	1 060-1 1660	22.3-21.7	900-1 000 790- 980 Very small	350- 450 230-280 320- 400 250-300	85-100 75- 85 75- 85 75-85

Source: Dietzold and Schmidt, 1983, p. 568.

Notes: 1) Subzones are distinguished by length of the cropping season:

p - permanent cropping possibilities

l/vl - long, very long season

m - season of medium length

f - fully long cropping season

i - intermediate rains

m/l - medium to long cropping season

s/m - short to medium length cropping season

s - short cropping season

s/vs - short to very short cropping season

2) Amounts surpassed normally in 6 out of 10 years, falling during the agro-humid period which allows growth of most cultivated plants.

3) More if growing cycle of cultivated plants continues into the period of second rains.

4) Only added if rainfall continues at least for survival (90.2%) of most long term crops.

its reliability decrease, consecutively, by the main coffee zone (UM2), a marginal coffee zone (UM3) and a sunflower-maize zone (UM4). Distinctions are made within these four zones according to length of cropping season. Thus, for example, in zone UM2, the main coffee zone, a distinction is made between the area with a medium to long cropping season, intermediate rains and second medium to short cropping season (m/l i m/s) on the one hand and a subzone with one medium cropping season and one medium to short cropping season (m + s/m). Once the Lower Midland zones are reached (LM3 and LM4), both cropping seasons are short to very short.

4.6 Vegetation

Only in the Forest Reserve of the Nyandarua range is there evidence of the evergreen mountain rainforest which once covered the Gikuyu plateau. At higher altitudes, East African camphor (ocotea usambarensis) and podocarpus milanjanus dominate, while on the lower slopes juniperus procera, podocarpus gracilior, olea chrysophylla Uaa and olea hochstetteri are found (Taylor, 1966b, p. 20). Elsewhere, only isolated remnants of forest exist on the occasional ridge top, and scattered trees, often preserved on account of their significance for ritual, are preserved.

Below the forest, three vegetational zones are distinguished. The highest of these, the high bracken zone, (Zone 2 of Figure 4.3) is dominated by bracken (pteridium aquilinum) and sedges

(cyperus spp.). The pastures are comprised of Gikuyu grass (pennisetum clandestinum), paspalum scrobiculatum and melinis minutiflora (molasses grass). Varieties of local trees such as verdinia holstii, sideroxylon addii-friederici, piptadenia buchani, croton megalocarpus, ocotea usambarensis and pococarpus milanjanus also grow here (ibid.).

The grass zone which lies below the bracken zone, (Zone 3, Figure 4.3) is dominated by Gikuyu grass (pennisetum clandestinum), is interspersed with evergreen trees (including wattle, acacia mollissima, introduced in the 1920s), and grasses such as pennisetum schimperi, eleusine jaegeri and digitaria scalarum. Indigenous trees such as croton megalocarpon, erythrina abyssinica and figus sycomorus grow here. The star grass zone, named after the dominant species of grass (cynodon clactylon) occupies the area of very high agricultural potential. Cultivation is intensive here. Isolated broadleaf trees such as croton megalocarpon, erythrina abyssinica and figus natalensis are also found (ibid., p. 21).

In the driest areas of the district, in the southeast, woodland mixed with dwarf grassland is the dominant vegetation pattern (Zone 4, Figure 4.3). The commonest grasses here include hyparrhenia filipendula, cenchrus ciliaris and aristidia adscensionis. Trees include the dombeya dawei, erythrina abyssinica and acacia spp. (ibid.).

Chapter 3: Metumi: territory, economy and gender in the 1880s

Gutiri undu utari kihumo kiaguo

In translation:

there is nothing that has no origin (Gikuyu proverb).

...land tenure [is] the most important factor in the social, political, religious, and economic life of the [Gikuyu]. As agriculturalists, the Gikuyu people depend entirely on the land. It supplies them with the material needs of life, through which spiritual and mental contentment is achieved. Communion with the ancestral spirits is perpetuated through contact with the soil in which the ancestors of the tribe lie buried. The Gikuyu consider the earth as the "mother" of the tribe, for the reason that the mother bears her burden for about eight or nine moons while the child is in her womb, and then for a short period of suckling. But it is the soil that feeds the child through lifetime; and again after death it is the soil that nurses the spirits of the dead for eternity. Thus the earth is the most sacred thing above all that dwell in or on it (Kenyatta, 1938, p. 21).

5.1. Territorial and social definition

My purpose in this first section to the chapter is to consider the period prior to the 1880s in what is now Murang'a District to the extent that it is necessary to establish the territorial and social basis for the mode of production which prevailed at that time, prior to the ecological crises of the 1890s and British colonial exploitation. On the basis of a general discussion of the evolution of the land tenure system on this part of the Gikuyu plateau, and the relationship between the

territoriality implicit in this system and extra-mbari social organization, Section 5.2 will consider territorial/kin relations in terms of gender relations of production. It is these latter relationships, and in particular how women and men relate to land, the basic means of production, which underlie social/spatial relations. Sections 5.3 and 5.4 will then examine more specifically gender participation in agricultural and non-agricultural production, focusing on how production is organized. In the final section, the implications of social/spatial organization and division will be discussed with reference to the concept of the parameters of female power within a society defined by male dominance.

Gikuyu¹ society was, near the end of the nineteenth century, according to Muriuki (1974), "patriarchal, uncentralized and highly egalitarian" (p. 110). This, he argues, was the outcome of the interaction of two essential yet to some extent contradictory elements: the one based on the mbari, the "subclan", the basic kinship and territorial unit; and the other on the marika, the age set system, which provided the basis for the political structure, the military organization and the judicial system. The marika (sing. rika) frequently cut across the boundaries of lineage territory and produced a counter tension to a solidarity based on kinship ties. It is on the basis of analyses of genealogies of the mbari and oral records dated by the marika that Muriuki, in the most definitive history yet published on the

area, is able to detail the history of the Gikuyu from the early 1600s and document their gradual territorial expansion in the second stage of a migratory process into the plateau area inhabited by the three subsections of the Gikuyu: Metumi (now Murang'a), Gaki (Nyeri) and Kabete (Kiambu).

Discussion of the period prior to the crossing of the Thagana river of the Gikuyu-proper, (marking the entry into their present territory), is based on more fragmentary data pieced together from the oral traditions of the Embu, Cuka, Mbeere and Gikuyu, as well as from linguistic² and archeological³ evidence. But whereas Muriuki's observations penetrate incisively the conflicting views of societal origins to define the emergence of cohesive social groups during the process of pre-sixteenth century migration, he does not tie this into reflection on previous social and political systems. Only allusion is made to the fact that "social upheavals" characterized an earlier period and that at an unspecified time Gikuyu society was matriarchal (1974, p. 111). As this fact has relevance for subsequent discussion, I will turn briefly to the more distant past.

The first stage of the migration of the "Mount Kenya peoples" involved the Thagicu, the group from which the Gikuyu, Kamba, Embu, Mbeere, Meru (including the Cuka, Muthambi, Mwimbi, Igoji, Imerti, Tigania) and Tharaka were derived. These "pioneers" who preceded the main group of Gikuyu to their present territory were, for the most part, hunters, although some were pastoralists

(Muriuki, 1974, pp. 54-55). Carbon dating of potsherds, iron slag, pieces of hammerstones and tuyères from 'Gatung'ang'a in Mathira division of Nyeri indicates continuous occupation of this area from the early twelfth century by a people who carried out iron working and some livestock (cattle, sheep, goats) domestication (Siirijainen, 1971). C14 dates from Gatere Forest Station and Njiiri's school in Murang'a District indicate occupation from 650 ± 130 A.D. and 410 ± 115 B.C., respectively (ibid., p. 221). The migration, which originated in the area of Igembe and Tharaka to the northeast of Kirinyaga (Mount Kenya), is thought to have resulted from a combination of circumstances (Muriuki, 1974; Dundas, 1908). First, the source area is considered to have been at that time a poorer environment ecologically, characterized by greater susceptibility to drought than the area to the southwest. This, in combination with an hypothesized increase in population, could have led to outmigration and expansion into a neighbouring sparsely populated and yet more fertile agricultural land. A third reason given in the literature, an invasion by the Galla from the southern Ethiopian highlands, may have had significance from the early sixteenth century. In addition, Muriuki notes that each Gikuyu mbari had, according to its oral history, its specific reasons for migrating. This source frequently refers to periods of internal tension, to intra or inter-mbari quarrels, to the role of opportunity-seeking, adventurous individuals, or to the response

of groups of people to disasters of disease and famine (Muriuki, 1974, p. 47-49). Both Muriuki and Cagnolo⁴ (1933, pp. 199-202) cite the names and dates of several serious famines which affected this part of East Africa, although they refer to a later time period. Muriuki, for example, notes the following: the Famine of Sweeping the Courtyard, occurring sometime between 1637 and 1645; the Famine of Small Bones, 1730-1738; and the Famine of Kimorori, 1863 (1974, p. 49).

During the course of the migration south, and then west, groups broke off from the main migrating body at points Muriuki calls "centres of dispersal" (p. 50). These groups later gave rise to the distinctive groups that exist today. Thus Ithanga became a centre for dispersal for the Embu, Mbeere, Ndia, Gicugu and Gikuyu pioneers (ibid., p. 56). By the mid-1500s, the Gikuyu had migrated northwest from Ithanga to Mukurue wa Gathanga, where according to mythology, the Gikuyu originated. It was here that God placed Gikuyu, a man, and Muumbi, a woman, giving them the surrounding land. Their daughters became the founders of the "full nine"⁵ clans, mihiriga (sing. muhiriga), giving their names to the clans. Leakey (1977) notes the significance in the legend that it was the "...daughters who took husbands, rather than the men taking wives" (p. 49), considering this as evidence of an earlier period of matriliney whose existence is in addition substantiated by continuing "minor" social customs. Further research may reveal the linkage between the timing of the origin

of the creation stories and the legends of the overthrow of a matriarchy⁶ (Kenyatta, 1938, pp. 6-7) and the "social upheavals" of Muriuki's analysis. It would appear probable, to follow Sanday's (1981) arguments regarding the relationship between environment and a people's perception of "...the nature and origin of creative power" (p. 16), that the crises facing the Gikuyu before or during their migration were related to subsequent changes in social order. With reference to this, it is of significance to draw attention to Muriuki's observation that Mukurue wa Gathanga of the legend is more likely to have been located at Ithanga than at Gakuyu near Gathuki-ini in Murang'a District, both on the basis of the place name which means a "place of sand" and because by the time the Gikuyu actually reached Gakuyu they already had a well-established patrilineal and patrilocal clan system (1974, p. 45). Their distinct cultural identity had been forged during the process of their migration: from Ithanga (Muriuki, 1974, pp. 37-62; Maxwell Committee, 1929, p. 7).

The actual process of territorial definition on the Gikuyu plateau, beginning in Metumi and spreading first to Gaki and only much later (1800s) to Kabete, was underway in the early 1600s and took place gradually over a period that lasted many generations (Muriuki, 1974, pp. 62-82; Maxwell Committee, 1929, p. 6). It appears that although the area was previously inhabited by the Gumba who practiced a hunting and gathering economy in the plains

(Muriuki, 1974) and the Athi/Dorobo⁷ who had a similar economy in the higher, forested areas, (Thomson, 1885; Hobley, 1906; Beech, 1917; Muriuki, 1974), land was acquired peacefully. Respect for the right of first use of the land and fear of being cursed are reasons given for the mode of land acquisition (Maxwell Committee, 1929; Kenyatta before the Kenya Land Commission, 16 June 1932, U.K., 1934). First contact was with the Gumba and evidence suggests that a symbiotic relationship was established between them and the Gikuyu (Muriuki, 1974, p. 39) whose means of subsistence was in the process of changing to one of cultivation and pastoralism from one of hunting and gathering (Dundas, 1908; Kenya, Maxwell Committee, 1929; Muriuki, 1974). Agricultural produce of the Gikuyu was exchanged for hides and skins. From the Gumba the Gikuyu learnt iron working and smelting and, it appears, adopted rites of circumcision/clitoridectomy and some aspects of the marifika system (Muriuki, 1974, pp. 39-40).

The Athi, a term in Gikuyu meaning "hunters", or Dorobo (and Muriuki suggests the two names refer to the same group of people), were the second group with whom the Gikuyu came into contact. The considerable confusion in the literature over the Athi/Dorobo, their territorial extent and the mode in which the Gikuyu occupied the land, Muriuki explains, is the result at least in part of linguistic ambiguity⁸ (1974, pp. 38-39). The term 'Athi' appears to have been more frequently used in Metumi and Gaki, and 'Dorobo' in Kabete. 'Athi' is, however, also used in Metumi and Gaki mbari

histories to refer to early Gikuyu pioneers.⁹ Whereas in Kabete, the prime relationship between the Gikuyu and the Dorobo was based on the purchase of land and involved irredeemable sale¹⁰ (Leakey, before the Kenya Land Commission, 1932, p. 662, U.K., 1934; Kenya, Maxwell Committee, 1949; Beech 1917), elsewhere a significant trading relationship was established, the Athi acting as middlemen between the Gikuyu, Maasai and coastal (Arab and Swahili) traders (Krapf, 1860; Thomson, 1885; von Hohnel, 1894). Unlike the situation in Kabete, no payment was involved in Metumi as Gikuyu settled on the plateau (Leakey, before the KLC, 1932, p. 680, U.K., 1934). There is evidence of a certain amount of assimilation between the Gikuyu and the Athi/Dorobo and the Gumba, but the generally peaceful relations were interspersed with periods of confrontation (Muriuki, 1974, p. 63). Athi who did not intermarry with the Gikuyu migrated by the mid-nineteenth century north to Kirinyaga or settled among the Maasai (Muriuki, 1974; Dundas, 1908). The "fate" of the Gumba is less clear but it seems probable that with land clearance by the Gikuyu and the destruction of the ecological basis (bushland) for their livelihood, they retreated towards the Nyandarua (Aberdare) range and it is here that the clearest visible evidence of their occupation is found (Taylor, 1966a).

The process of land settlement by the Gikuyu will have changed over time with the evolution towards a mode of production based on agriculture. The Maxwell Committee notes that by the

time migrating groups or families reached Metumi much land was acquired through first clearing, kuuna, rather than on the basis of hunting rights, mutego (Kenya, 1929, p. 16; also Muriuki, 1974, p. 74). The movement was characterized by individual families or groups of families staking out claims, "...families of different clans (mihiriga) passing each other and settling without clan cohesion" (Kenya, Maxwell Committee, 1929, p. 7). To a significant degree this pattern of territorial dispersion at the level of mihiriga and the land tenure system which evolved were influenced by the nature of the physical environment. Settlement proceeded on a ridge by ridge basis, a family or group of families often acquiring widely dispersed pieces of land (Kenya, Maxwell Committee, 1929, p. 16; Muriuki, 1974, pp. 73-75). In a frontier area, and particularly where military operations were frequent (as in Nyeri at the time of the Barabiu incursions in the 1800s (Muriuki, 1974, p. 65), settlement was accompanied by the establishment of outposts manned by "warriors". The latter were often encouraged to settle as ahoi (sing. muhoi) (tenants-at-will) to help with defence as well as land clearing. Leakey (1956) writes that many junior members of mbari in Metumi and Gaki would "gladly relinquish" land rights in an old estate in order, temporarily, to become a muhoi on a new estate. Here, chances of accumulating wealth in the form of stock would enable such a person to purchase his own land in Kabete eventually (p. 167). This process in turn will have furthered the situation of clan,

mihiriga, dispersal (Muriuki, 1974, pp. 78-79).

The land tenure system which followed occupation in Metumi (and Gaki) involved an "ownership" mode which was neither individual nor communal. Land, as it was occupied, was "owned" by the mbari, the group of people who traced their origin to a common male ancestor, the founder (Muriuki, 1974, p. 35). Authority over the land owned by the mbari, referred to as the ng'undu (or githaka in Kabete)¹¹, the "clan estate", was vested, after the death of the founder, in the muramati (pl. aramati), the guardian or custodian and nominal head of the mbari (ibid., p. 75). The muramati, generally the eldest son, was finally responsible for land allocation within the ng'undu, had a veto on the admission of ahoi and on the "sale"¹² of land to non-mbari members (Sorrenson, 1967, p. 10). Yet even here he would act in consultation with the mbari council (Muriuki, 1974, p. 75). This council would be composed of all initiated males of the mbari. The elders, and at times warriors, participated in it (ibid., pp. 115-116). The mbari itself varied in size from a few dozen to a few thousand families, and could be scattered over a relatively large area (Sorrenson, 1967, p. 5; Muriuki, 1974, p. 35). According to the Maxwell Committee, the ng'undu could vary in size from 50 to 6000 acres (20.3 to 2430 ha.), averaging between 200-300 acres (81 - 121.5 ha.) (Kenya, 1929, p. 9). Each mbari traced its origins to one of the ten mihiriga of the mbari ya Muumbi, (the children/descendants of Muumbi) (Muriuki, 1974, p. 113).

The smallest social and political unit within the mbari was the nyumba, or family. Comprised of a husband, wife/wives and their children this formed the "core of Kikuyu society". Each nyumba would form a mucii (pl. micii), the homestead, and in turn, several dispersed micii formed an itura (pl. matura) (Muriuki, 1974, p. 36). The itura is translated by Lambert (1965, p. 2) as the "village group", although this may mislead in that it implies a closely settled area. In general the itura consisted of men related agnatically together with their wives and children. As Fisher (1954, p. 19) notes, however, affines and non-kin could also be resident here. Although the itura did not therefore necessarily consist of members of one mbari, for reasons which will be identified later, it was "a closely-knit community" and "...the focus of the social and political interaction in everyday life" (Muriuki, 1974, p. 36). Matura were linked, in turn, to form a mwaki (pl. miaki), a territorial unit whose members "...assisted each other with hot embers to light fires" (ibid., p. 36). Several miaki would form part of a rugongo (pl. ngo'ngo), a ridge. In general a ridge represented an area larger than that occupied by an mbari and has been defined as a "...unit for political, social and ritual purposes, which transcends the interests of the mbari" (Middleton and Kershaw, 1965, p. 29). Kenyatta writes: "The people lying between one river and another are considered to constitute a sacrificial unit. They have one sacred tree or grove under which they offer sacrifices in common"

(1938, pp. 245-246). These sacred places are distinct from those of the mbari.

Generally the rugongo would form the largest functional administrative unit, but at times of crisis or "country-wide" ceremonies, ad hoc alliances of ngo'ngo would be formed. This grouping would be termed a bururi (Muriuki, 1974, p. 36). From the literature it appears that a bururi, loosely translated as a district, may apply to different scales of societal organization. It may, for instance, refer to the three large divisions of Gikuyu country, Metumi, Gaki and Kabete; it may also refer to the total country of the Gikuyu, as in Kenyatta's reference to bururi wa Gikuyu (1938). Middleton and Kershaw note:

The district was also the unit on which the age-sets and part of the judicial system of the Kikuyu were based. It is not easy to discover the span of these districts, that is, the area over which representatives of local councils of elders had authority, and over which according to Dundas,¹³ the mbari sacrificed to God simultaneously (1965, p. 30).

For Routledge and Routledge (1960, p. 196), the district generally contained between five and thirty mbari, the basis for organization being the "advice of one medicine man".

To a considerable extent the development of social and political organization reflected the nature of occupation of the land and the land tenure system. The mbari frequently predominated in one administrative unit, such as an itura or rugongo, but as the mbari were in some cases fairly widely

dispersed and varied greatly in size, this was not universal (Muriuki, 1974, p. 36; Middleton and Kershaw, 1965, pp. 23-31; Kenyatta, 1938, pp. 1-2; Cagnolo, 1933, pp. 20-22). I will consider in turn, the basis for bonding of the mbari, and then turn to that based on the age set system, the mariika. Discussion at this point will be somewhat general. The following sections will discuss the implications of the contradictions exposed here in terms of gender relations of production.

Mbari solidarity was achieved through the definition of rules of inheritance, residence and descent along male lines. Mbari were exogamous units (Leakey, 1977, p. 816). Cultivation rights to land of the ng'undu were inherited by sons, each son on marriage being allocated a portion of land cultivated by his mother for his wife's use (Muriuki, 1974, p. 76; Sorrenson, 1967, p. 10; Fisher, 1954, p. 175; Kenya, Maxwell Committee, 1929, p. 33). Women were not, in the main, able to inherit land; exceptions to this general practice are considered in Section 5.2. It is important to note that the inheritance of land referred only to cultivated land, whether fallow or in use. The undistributed parts of the ng'undu were not inheritable (Kenya, Maxwell Committee, 1929, p. 33), although a son was generally able to clear any of his father's uncultivated land as needed. Any uncultivated land of the mbari that was kept for grazing or woodland was owned by all sons of the mbari. Within the wider society, only the following were considered communal: rights of

way; uncleared forest; market sites, dancing grounds, and public meeting places; salt licks; mineral springs; deposits of sand, clay and iron ore; and sacred groves and trees (Kenya, Maxwell Committee, 1929, p. 72; U.K., 1934, pp. 500-501; Fisher, 1954, p. 199; Middleton and Kershaw, 1965, p. 52).

Solidarity within the mbari was not a static state of affairs, but resulted from the constant dialectic between "the two apparently antagonistic principles constantly in operation-- community (or kinship) and individual rights (Lambert and Wyn Harris, 1945, p. 64 quoted in Taylor, 1966b, p. 35).¹⁴ Barlow (1934, p. 3023) quoted by Taylor (1966b, pp. 35-36) illuminated the dynamics thus:

The sense of family ownership is so strong and the instinct to preserve the integrity of the family githaka is so deep-seated that the inquirer into the system of tenure may at times find difficulty in disentangling family rights and individual rights. Under normal circumstances, family control over the land remains inconspicuous, and the individual rights play the important part in the everyday life of the githaka. Every subdivision of the mbari, and every individual, down to the youngest son of the youngest wife of the most junior member of the family, have their indisputable rights in their respective portions of the land. And yet every transaction concerning any modicum of the land is preceded by consultation between the members of the mbari whose common interests are affected.¹⁵

It is difficult to evaluate, on the basis of the ahistorical published accounts, particularly Leakey's (1977) three volume series of the southern (Kabete) Gikuyu¹⁶, the precise significance of kin relations within the mbari. It is clear, however, that the

strongest and closest bonds were those between classificatory brothers, murū wa baba, a category which included not only full brothers but the sons of the father by all his wives and patrilineal cousins. Leakey writes:

The solidarity of the family, as represented by the brothers and male patrilineal cousins of each generation, was one of the most striking things, and to the Kikuyu themselves one of the most valuable things, in their whole organization; it was the foundation of all Kikuyu life and social organization (1977, p. 861).

Not least, it was significant in terms of responsibility for bridewealth payments, kuraacia. Marriage, the central organizing principle of kinship, was ordered in Kikuyu society through what Stamp (1985) has called the "bridewealth sex-gender system". Rather than viewing women in this system as objects circulating or being exchanged for a brideprice (Meillassoux, 1981), Stamp (1985) draws on Collier and Rosaldo's (1981) insight into women's participation with men "to make marriages", thus "...organizing women and men into social relations for biological reproduction" (Stamp, 1985, p. 11). Through this system, "[w]omen were affiliated with their husband's patrilineage...which legitimized the marriage and secured lineage membership for their offspring" (ibid., p. 15). Stamp considers that within this system, on the basis of organizations such as the women's age-grade system¹⁷, women, although under the often oppressive authority of their affinal kin, had the "...material, political and ideological

base for relative power and autonomy" (ibid., p. 14). She does not attempt to compare this power base with that of men's whose participation in the bridewealth system was as a group of brothers in the patrilineage, a group which was able to sustain its ties through life on the basis of collective "ownership" of the ng'undu, the means of production, and the practice of patrilocality.

It is this rule of residence which mediates against similar bonding among women. Discussing the relationship between mwari wa baba, classificatory sisters of a lineage, Leakey notes that they are "...as nearly united to each other as classificatory brothers, but only until the time of their marriage. After that they belonged to the families they had married into, and their obligations lay there" (1977, p. 858). While this statement does represent a simplification of a more complex relationship of women as sisters to their natal kin corporation after marriage (Section 5.2), it does indicate the significance of women's movement on marriage out of the area of their mbari and of male-kin-based territoriality.

Similarly, Leakey (1977) draws attention to lack of bonding between patrilineal male and female cousins, who although classificatory brothers and sisters of a lineage, lose effective contact after marriage. In contrast, ties between uterine brothers and sisters are considered close and between half-brothers and half-sisters "fairly close" (Leakey, 1977, p.

861). Brother-sister relationships, together with mother-daughter relations, will be further considered in Section 5.2.

With only one exception, a man's ties with relatives were restricted to those of his own mbari. The important exception was the relationship between a man and his mother's brothers and classificatory brothers. The tie was particularly close with the mother's uterine brother "...who would have been her guardian if her father had died before she was married, or after his death if she had made a matrilocal and matrilineal marriage or had been divorced" (Leakey, 1977, p. 868). The relationship appears to have been a close and reciprocal one in that either party could call on the other for assistance. It is however interesting to note that a muhiwa (sister's son) could call on his mama for a contribution towards the bridewealth payment (ibid., p. 869). A woman's relationship with her maternal uncle was also a close one, and if her mother was married matrilineally, her daughter would count as his own daughter, and "...he would arrange their marriages, and would take all of the marriage payments for the use of getting wives for his nephews, by the same sister" (ibid., pp. 870-871). Additionally, whether the relationships were organized along matrilineal and matrilocal lines or not, ceremonial ties linked with initiation rites strengthened them. Leakey notes that the relations between men and women with their paternal and maternal aunts was also close, but was not tied to any specific obligations (1977, pp. 871-872).

The extent to which any solidarity formed on the basis of membership of an mbari could be sustained will have been conditioned in part by the territorial cohesion of the ng'undu. As has already been indicated, dispersion of the mbari was coincidental with territorial expansion and increased in significance towards the end of the nineteenth century. By this time, higher population densities and the continued subdivision of land on inheritance involved the creation of smaller holdings, some of which would not have been able to meet the needs of a family unit. In such situations, a segment of an mbari could opt to migrate further and claim land further west or purchase land in Kabete; as an alternative land could be acquired through a contractual relationship such as that of the ahoi (see Section 5.2) (Middleton and Kershaw, 1965, p. 50; Muriuki, 1974, p. 115). The continued practice in some mbari of matrilineal residence patterns (Kenya, Maxwell Committee, 1929, p. 8) will have affected mbari cohesion.

With time then, one mbari was frequently not the sole occupier of an itura or rugongo. In the face of mbari dispersion of the male members of an mbari, attempts were made to retain solidarity through the holding of "occasional" reunions (Muriuki, 1974, pp. 112-114). Where, however, the territorial extent of an mbari coincided with that of an itura, mwaki or rugongo, mbari solidarity based on male kin relations will have been reinforced by social and political interaction which was organized at these

levels but which was not dependent on kin ties.

Bonding outside the mbari was based primarily on the links formed by women and men through their recruitment, on initiation, into the marika system. The rite of initiation, irua, which involved ceremonies of circumcision/clitoridectomy, and the instruction, kuumithio, associated with it (which concerned Gikuyu traditions, religion, modes of behaviour and the duties of adults), marked the transition in Gikuyu society from childhood to adulthood, and passage through it thus conferred social status. It was a rite that was held every year for women, but for men a sequence of annual rites was followed by a closed period, muhingo, during which no males were initiated.¹⁸ Such closed periods

lasted for nine years in Gaki and adjacent parts of Metumi, and five years in the rest of Metumi and Kabete (Muriuki, 1974, pp. 118-119). The marika, and here Muriuki is referring particularly to male age-sets, "...acted as a bridge which enabled individuals to become members of a wider community that surpassed the kinship or territorial relations" (1974, p. 133). Where the ceremony was held after the closed period, a relatively wide age range of men will have been involved, of significance in terms of the differential bonding between women and men.

Initiation rites were organized on a local basis, generally involving several matura (Fisher, 1954, p. 14), thus members of a particular rika frequently came from different mbari. All males and females initiated in the same year were grouped into one

age-set, riika ria irua, and they remained members of this throughout their lives. The links were strong, as Muriuki explains:

Among themselves the members of an age set demanded and encouraged cooperation, solidarity and mutual help as a result of which an age group exhibited a strong sense of comradeship and fraternal egalitarianism. Indeed, riika mates looked upon each other as actual blood brothers or sisters, depending upon their sex, and behaved accordingly (1974, p. 119).

Marriage was not allowed between women and men initiated together (Fisher, 1954, p. 14).

The significance of the marlika system for defence and as a basis for social and political cohesion is brought out in the literature (for example, Hobley, 1922; Cagnolo, 1933; Kenyatta, 1938; Lambert, 1965; Muriuki, 1974; Leakey, 1977), and note is made in general that both women and men were participants, but its significance for women is virtually ignored. For men, on initiation, entrance was gained to the status of warrior. Depending on location in Metumi, a man would serve as a "cadet" for five or nine years and then as a senior. Duties in addition to those of defence included acting as the executive arm of the elders by policing markets, festivals, arresting offenders and calling public meetings. Additionally, some tasks such as the clearing of land, cutting poles for houses and kraals and planting men's crops (yams, bananas, and sugar cane) fell to them (Muriuki,

1974, p. 120). The warrior corps acted both on a territorial mbari basis as well as on the basis of membership in a riika, dependent on the scale of the activity (and the size of the mbari). Following a period as a warrior, a man was expected to marry in order to qualify as an elder, a member of the kiama or council. Muriuki distinguishes between three ranks of seniority within the kiama, none of which was organized by age set (1974, pp. 127-128). Entry to the three ranks was neither automatic nor compulsory, but rather depended on a man's inclination, the age of his children, ability to pay the entrance fee (Fisher, 1954, p. 15), and whether he was a member of the ruling generation (see note 18) (Muriuki, 1974, p. 128). Although the responsibilities of the kiama were many and included religious and political activities, their most important function was the dispensation of justice for cases that were beyond the jurisdiction of the family head or muramati. Kiama were organized on the basis of the itura and the mwaki. Each had a muthamaki (pl. athamaki), a leader or spokesman, who was "...no more than the chairman of a territorial unit or leader of his riika. His powers were very circumscribed and he could only act in accordance with the wishes of his peers, who delegated power to him. He was not a 'chief' (Muriuki, 1974, p. 131).

In contrast to the extensive discussion of the complexities and roles of the men's kiama in the literature (Hobley, 1922; Kenyatta, 1938; Lambert, 1965; Leakey, 1977; Muriuki, 1974),

little is known about women's age sets or other political organizations. Muriuki notes that after initiation women were organized into junior and senior sets, the seniors being charged with the responsibility for the education of the junior set (1974, pp. 121-122). Beyond this he is silent. Kenyatta (1938, p. 4) similarly notes the existence of women's age sets but says little else. Leakey (1977, p. 741), referring to the occupations of initiated girls, writes of their assistance to their mothers in agricultural tasks, only in the evenings (or occasionally during the day) joining with their riika in dances where both sexes were present.

The extent to which bonding based on the mariika system for women will have been sustained after marriage will have been conditioned not only by the distance moved on marriage and whether a woman remained within the area of her riika, but also on the existence of institutions paralleling men's kiama which would allow women to organize effectively at the extra-household level. Given that a riika would frequently have drawn men and women from beyond the mbari, it is likely that women marrying within an itura or mwaki could have retained at least some age-set links.

There is little published evidence of extra-household organization for Gikuyu women during the period of study. As Kertzer and Madison (1981) point out with respect to age sets, it is difficult to know whether this reflects the absence of such institutions or ethnographic bias. Hobley (1922) notes with

regret that so little is known about women's councils or kiama which, he argues, existed in every district. The scope of their activities he describes, intriguingly, as follows:

...they collect goats periodically and present them to the elders of ukuru, or priestly class. They occasionally fine troublesome women, and the fine, usually a goat, has to be obtained by the culprit either by extra work or by begging one from her father. The men fear the women's kiama, as it is believed that the members of it have the power to bewitch people (p. 274, emphasis mine).

Lambert (1965), in his analysis of social and political institutions, questions the "formality" of women's kiama. He writes:

Men say they do not know whether such gatherings of women are merely called for specific purposes or whether they are ad hoc committees of permanent and organized chiama. (p. 96).

He goes on to give examples of three institutions of women in Meru whose function he argues is similar in scope to that of the men's kiama but whose authority is limited to the "women's sphere".

Activities of these "assemblies" he categorizes as: (a) "purely domestic"; (b) agricultural, concerning food crop production, not ownership of the land; (c) "the discipline, and the regulation of the social life of girls and women" (p. 100). The extent to which it is possible to generalize from the "experience in Meru to the area of the "Gikuyu-proper" is unclear. Reference is also made by

Kenyatta (1938, p. 108) to women elders, but again no details are given.

More recent investigation by Stamp (1985) in Kiambu (Kabete) does shed some further light on the situation in the period prior to colonialism but also provokes unanswered questions. She argues that the age grade system formed the basis for women to organize after marriage. Distinct from the age set, age grades

"...constitute the strata (eg. childhood, adolescence, adulthood, old age), each associated with a bundle of social roles" (Kertzer and Madison, 1981, p. 110). Six such grades were recognized for females and for males in Gikuyu society (Fisher, 1954, pp.

13-14).¹⁹ Stamp considers that two age grades, nyakinya, composed of elders whose first child had been initiated, and kang'ei, which included women whose children had not reached this status, were active and provided "...the base for their strategies to generate resources, and the forum for their collective decision making with regard to matters within their sphere of authority" (1985, p. 19).

Kang'ei women "were required" to provide labour for nyakinyua women, and this "control" of the younger lineage wives by the nyakinyua women, Stamp suggests, "...represented a legitimate authority counterbalancing patrilineal control of women" (1985, p. 20). From her discussion it would appear that "membership" in the two age grades was automatic and compulsory. It is not clear from her analysis, however, the extent to which such authority of the nyakinyua grade was confined to the household and was exercised at

this level only between, for example, a mother-in-law and her son's wives or between co-wives of widely differing ages. Stamp does refer to a women's council, ndundu, which operated at this time and whose functions were economic, social and juridical. Having observed that this same name was applied to a council of male elders, she writes that: "A central purpose of the ndundu was cooperative cultivation, but they provided women with organizational and affiliative bases for non-agricultural pursuits as well" (1985, p. 19). In view of the other work arrangements that women could make for agricultural activities, and which are well documented in the literature (Section 5.3), the statement raises questions as to the precise role of the ndundu in this respect. More generally, the question of scale of operation and of membership of the ndundu is not raised in Stamp's discussion, yet this is a matter of direct relevance in assessing the parameters of female authority. Further, if a main objective of the ndundu is as stated, it contrasts greatly with that of the men's ndundu ya kiama, the "inner consultative council", which, in judicial proceedings, was the final arbiter (Muriuki, 1974, p. 129). The relationship between the ndundu and kiama, if any, for women has yet to be considered, and critical gaps remain in the knowledge of the functions and societal significance or "centrality" (Schlegel, 1977) of women's political institutions.

Before concluding this section, two additional observations may be made with respect to women, as wives, and extra-household

organization. Both concern ceremonies. The first, Hobley (1922) alluded to in the quotation given from his page 274, and was referred to as the sacrifice for the ceremony of kung'ootha atumia. This ceremony, described in detail by Leakey (1977), was generally held in association with the planting of crops, but was also performed after any thanksgiving service carried out at the sacred tree of "the territory as a whole" (Leakey, 1977, p. 1090). It appears that when a planting season had been particularly bad because of a lack of rain (but not so serious as to be called a drought), and the male elders were taking no action, women would mobilize themselves to deal with the situation. Initiative would come from the senior wives of men of the ruling generation (see note 18) who would call a "women's meeting". In Leakey's words:

"...delegates would be appointed to go through all the villages of the territory demanding small goats and sheep from the elders. Such a demand made by the delegates of a women's meeting could not be refused, and when the animals were forthcoming the women would request that the senior elders of the ruling generation of the territory meet them at a given place on a given day" (1977, p. 1090).

These sheep and goats would then be used to obtain sacrificial rams. Sacrifices would then be held at the "territorial" and more local level in order to obtain God's blessing for the next harvest season (ibid.). Women's role in religious ceremony was, according to ethnographic reports, a subordinate one (Routledge and Routledge, 1910; Hobley, 1922; Kenyatta, 1938; Leakey, 1977; for

example). The ability of women to mobilize at the scale suggested, probably that of the rugongo, is indicative of a widespread organizational network, however "periodically" tapped.

The second "ceremony" or practice, kiriro, refers to the period of mourning that followed a woman's marriage. On the day after the marriage, her (female) friends would come to a woman's new home to mourn the loss of a unity that had been broken by her marriage. Kenyatta (1938) writes:

It is considered as the age-group mourning for the loss of services and companionship of one of their number who, by marriage, had passed to another age-group (p. 172).

The significance of the movement on marriage for a women in terms of the break up of her close age-grade and age-set associates is missed by Leakey (1977) but is brought out clearly by the anonymous author of Wangu wa Makeri's²⁰ biography (Kenya National Archives, 1974). The kiriro would frequently continue for up to eight days, after which the friends would be persuaded to return home with bananas and other gifts. (KNA, 1974).

The practice of exogamy and patrilocality is critical in assessing a woman's ability to sustain bonds formed as a member of her natal kin corporation. In the great majority of cases women did not move far on marriage. Leakey, before the Kenya Land Commission (U.K., 1934, p. 689), notes that marriages occurred within the same "district". Evidence collected in Murang'a District, 1984, indicates distances of 2-3 kms were the norm (see

Chapter 7, note 18). Contact with a woman's natal kin corporation was frequently continued, for varying periods of time, through ongoing productive relations as sisters and daughters (Section 5.2). The movement on marriage, outside the mbari, will, however, have put women at a disadvantage vis à vis men in terms of sustaining bonds based on the mbari, the riika and the age-grade, in view of women's prime responsibility as wives for production and reproduction. Assessment of the extent to which extra-household organization after marriage, whether as sisters or wives, was able to compensate for this disadvantage, must await further research.

In contrast, although men could experience some conflict between allegiance to their mbari and their riika (the latter, Muriuki (1974, p. 116) argues, acted to counter the former's "introvert tendencies"), solidarity based on both these systems will have been sustained and reinforced through the political institutions, central to society, to which they gained access during their lives. These institutions were organized both at the level of the mbari and the wider society.

5.2 Land and tenure: women and men

As indicated previously, the ng'undu system of land tenure was in the process of continuous evolution. By the 1880s the contradictions to which the tension or dynamic between mbari vis à vis individual control over land gave rise could still be resolved

in Metumi through migration southwards to Kabete in cases where a family did not wish, or was not able, to obtain land under a contractual relationship outside the mbari but within Metumi.

Within the broad framework of the tenure system already outlined, a series of productive relations, generation and gender based, complementary and contradictory, were interwoven to form the fabric of a society/economy whose pattern, to paraphrase from Clark (1980, p. 357), represented economic and political process. Within Metumi in the late nineteenth century, the mode of production was based on a relatively intensive agricultural system. Some goats and sheep (mburi) were kept; cattle, an indicator of wealth, less frequently so. Details of production will be given in Section 5.3, but it is important to note at this point that although the economy may be defined in terms of the predominance of household production, it was by no means solely a subsistence economy. The written records of Thomson (1885), von Hohnel (1894), Macdonald (1897), and Tate (1904), all of whom passed through the area (see Section 5.3), and evidence of long distance trading networks in which the Gikuyu participated (Section 5.4), attest to the significance of this.

Quoting from a communication from Orde-Browne, Assistant District Commissioner (ADC) in Chuka and Mwimba²¹, Beech (1918) includes the following:

The question of land tenure is closely bound up with the question of women in native society, and also with the

general laws of inheritance: it appears to me that a proper understanding of the Land Laws can only be obtained by regarding the land as being closely connected with the women of the community (pp. 138-139).

In making this observation, Orde-Browne alludes to the relevance of an understanding of usufruct rights to land in addition to inherited rights to land in Metumi. It is an underlying theme of this and subsequent sections, while discussing how women and men relate to land, that the distinction between usufruct rights and "ownership" rights to land will have been of less significance per se when both were subject to mbari authority than in a situation where outright individual ownership/control was recognized by society.

A man's relationship to land as a mwene (pl. ene), a married member of the mbari, will have been determined both by his membership as a brother of the owning collectivity, the mbari, and as a husband in his own household unit. At times, as has been previously indicated, there will have been conflict between the two allegiances. For women, their "position" in the ng'undu system was conditioned by their relations as wives and sisters to the land. As wives, two factors were significant: first, through the allocation of usufruct rights to land in her husband's lineage, a woman obtained control over this land and its products for her nyumba; second, a wife, as the medium through which land passed from one generation to another, fulfilled a role of structural importance in a kin corporation which practised

polygyny. As sisters, women could have rights to land. Most commonly these were based on usufruct rights given on marriage. But where a woman opted to contract a matrilineal marriage or bear children but remain unmarried, she was able to gain control over land in her own right. This land would then be inherited matrilineally by her (male) children. The extent to which men and women could operate autonomously as they related to the means of production will be examined in this section.

The basic unit of production within the ng'undu was the mucii, the homestead. Rights to the cultivated land of this unit were inherited by a son from his father, but, as has already been indicated, these rights gave less than absolute control to the mwene. This was evident both in terms of the contractual arrangements a man could make with respect to the sale or loan of land, and with respect to the rights of other members of the household to the land. The former relationships will be examined first.

The absolute sale of land without the possibility of redemption was unknown²² in Metumi during the period under discussion (Beech, 1917; Kenya, Maxwell Committee, 1929; M.R.R. Vidal in a memorandum dated 1932 to the KLC, U.K., 1934; Fisher, 1954). In case of need, where for example, sheep and goats were needed for the brideprice or a ram for sacrifice, a form of redeemable purchase of land could be arranged. In such a situation, land, the collateral for the loan, would first have

to be offered by the mwene to other members of the mbari. If no interest was shown, with mbari consent, the mwene could let his wishes be known elsewhere. (Kenya, Maxwell Committee, 1929, p. 22).

In practice, however, it appears that the mwene might try to circumvent this procedure by "selling" land outside the mbari on the grounds that it would then be easier to redeem it (Fisher, 1954, p. 262). The relationship between the mwene and the muguri (pl. aguri), the "person who receives the use of land against a loan of livestock" (Middleton and Kershaw, 1965, p. 50), was considered to be on a friendly basis but involved no security of tenure for the muguri; land could be redeemed at any time. If use had been made of the land, it could be redeemed by payment of the exact number of animals involved in the original "purchase". If the land had not been cultivated, the original number of animals and their natural increase had to be returned (Kenya, Maxwell Committee, 1929, p. 22; Fisher, 1954, p. 202). A muguri had the right to take on ahoi, but could not otherwise loan land (Kenya, Maxwell Committee, 1929, p. 23).

The relationship between a mwene and a muhoi was based primarily on friendship, and land, where available, would be loaned on request to the muhoi. Again, it would appear that permission would be sought from the elders of the mbari (Kenya, Maxwell Committee, 1929, p. 43), although Fisher (1954, p. 201) argues this consultation was not necessary. The apparent contradiction is resolved if one considers that the latter

situation was more likely to be the norm in Kabete, where mbari control was weaker than in Metumi. The rights of ahoi were not rigidly defined but involved, in essence, usufruct rights to an area of cultivated land and, frequently, access to mbari grazing land (Leakey, 1977, p. 121). Ahoi had full control over managing the land, mugunda, and its products. No payment to the mwene was involved, but generally ngerure, gifts, were given once a year as a token of respect. These generally took the form of beer, millet or sorghum and sometimes bananas were given to the mwene's wife (Fisher, 1954, p. 209). Generations of ahoi would frequently cultivate the same piece of land, and although Middleton and Kershaw (1965, p. 50) indicate that ahoi were only allowed to plant temporary crops, Fisher (1954, p. 208) states that perennial crops were grown by them. Ahoi were generally only evicted in a situation of land scarcity and in this case six months notice to allow for the harvesting of any planted crops was generally given. The relationship with ahoi was the most common form of contractual agreement in Metumi (Taylor, 1966b, p. 38).

Whereas a muhoi would only cultivate the land of another mbari, frequently owning some land himself elsewhere, a muthami (pl. athami) would, having reached an agreement with a mwene, move his entire household to the piece of land. A muthami is defined by Leakey (1977, p. 115) as a "resident tenant". He would therefore have building, as well as cultivation, rights. Again, before such an agreement was reached, the mwene would consult with

the mbari elders. Although this is not explicitly mentioned in the literature, it would appear likely that this type of contractual arrangement was more common in frontier areas. Leakey (1977, pp. 116-117) writes that in return for the above rights from an mbari, the muthami became a member of the community and offered the services of the male members of his household for purposes of defence. Other than this, the only "fees" involved were the payment of a goat to the mwene after the first harvest, and, at each harvest, a kiondo, sisal bag, of each crop would be sent to the landlord. The landlord would also expect to be invited to participate when beer was brewed or ceremonies held by the muthami. Not infrequently, a muthami would hope to change his status to that of a muthoni, a relation-in-law (ibid.).

A mwene also had the right, again subject to mbari approval, to enter into an arrangement with a muciarua (pl. aciarua) or a ndungata. In both cases the relationships would be sought by the muciarua or the ndungata on the basis of the mwene's standing as a gitonga, rich person. A muciarua, defined as: "A man who is adopted into the family of a clan other than his own by means of a special ceremony" (Kenya, Maxwell Committee, 1929, p. 15), was usually very young, poor and without land rights of his own.²³ If the gitonga agreed to the relationship, the muciarua would be treated in most matters as a son of the family. He would, for example, be provided with sheep and goats for bridewealth payments. He would not, however, have control over mbari land

(Kenya, Maxwell Committee, 1929, p. 25).

A ndungata is defined by Leakey (1977) as a serf. He²⁴ was a man who either had no close relatives or had no access to land, and requested food and shelter from a gitonga in return for work. Generally the ndungata would move from his home area in search for such work, being "ashamed" of his position (Leakey, 1977, p. 796). He would cultivate seasonal or perennial crops on any land allocated to him and no "gifts" would be required, although Fisher (1954, pp. 211-212) notes that on request a ndungata would provide the gitonga with food. The arrangement between the two parties was not binding on either and could be terminated quickly, yet not uncommonly a more permanent relationship would be established on the basis of marriage arrangements. Leakey (1977, pp. 796-800) describes four different forms that a marriage could take, in one case involving a matrilineal/matrilocal arrangement. Here, generally a daughter who had already had a child would be "given" (Leakey, 1977, p. 796) to a ndungata who would then be the physical husband but not legal father of any subsequent children. These would remain under the authority of the gitonga and would belong to his, and thus his daughter's, mbari. Where a ndungata agreed to pay the brideprice, even if gradually, he could become the legal father of any children and they would be named after his own family and be recognized as belonging to his mbari. As a third instance, a gitonga could pay the brideprice for the ndungata, as though he were a son, but here any children would

belong to the family and mbari of the gitonga. Further, if the ndungata decided to leave the household of the gitonga, he would leave alone without his family. As a final arrangement, Leakey gives the case of a gitonga who had "inherited authority over, and responsibility for, a young widow", whom he could "request" to take a ndungata as a physical husband. Any children would belong to the lineage of the deceased husband and inherit from his mbari (1977, pp. 798-799). Leakey does not discuss any conflicts within the mbari that might result from these arrangements, but when claims to mbari land are considered, particularly in situations of land scarcity, a case cited in Murang'a where this occurred (Murang'a District Agricultural Histories, MDAH, 1984, G, p. 12) is unlikely to have been uncommon. In this instance, a ndungata and the wife "who had been married for him" were chased away by a "real" son, after the father's death. The mode of marriage (i.e. relating to the brideprice payments) was not specified in this case, but it may be suggested that where land/territory would have, in effect, been alienated to another mbari, as in the second arrangement cited above, the basis for further conflict will have been laid.

While it appears from a reading of ethnographic studies as though women were pawns in the various manoeuvres to obtain land, or rights to land, this was very far from being the case. Women were able to act with a certain degree of autonomy albeit within the constraints of the system. In the first place, women were

not, in general, forced into marriages. Leakey writes as follows:

By Kikuyu custom no girl was forced to marry against her will, and every opportunity was given to girls to contract love marriages. Those who failed to do so had two alternatives. They could become second or third or later wives of men who had already a first or senior wife, or they could contract a matrilineal marriage, live at home, and bear children who would become members of their mother's clan and family (1977, p. 10).

Second, a significant point in the literature which is frequently overlooked, and to which Obbo (1976) draws attention, is that the bridewealth system acts, in one respect, as insurance against violating women's freedom of choice with respect to marriage partners. Obbo argues that, "[f]athers and brothers do not like, or sometimes cannot afford to refund the bridewealth but they may be forced to do so if they do not heed the woman's wishes not to marry at all or not to marry a particular man" (1976, pp. 375-376). Fisher (1954, p. 88) contends that in the case of the Gikuyu the bridewealth served to give the woman "a more honoured position in society" than a woman for whom bridewealth had not been given, the latter having no "right to appeal". A Gikuyu woman could leave her husband, returning to live in her own mbari. If she could prove maltreatment, the bridewealth did not have to be returned. Alternatively, if she left "without just cause" (Leakey, 1977, p. 754), the bridewealth would have to be returned--the total number of sheep and goats and the equivalent of their estimated natural increase (ibid., p. 805). If a child

had been born, this number would be reduced. If a wife proved "unsatisfactory", Leakey contends, she could be returned to her family with a demand for reimbursement of the bridewealth (ibid.). Such a situation would be more likely to occur where a woman bore no children. Given the lack of information, one may only speculate as to the frequency of conflicts which arose from these situations and the nature of their resolution. In the above situations, women were free to remarry, but once a woman had given birth to more than one child, divorce was extremely rare. Where the respective mbari could not facilitate resolution of the conflict, a legal separation was more likely. Here, a woman would return to her mbari, but although free to choose her own relationships, any children to whom she gave birth would belong to the mbari of her husband and move to his clan when aged twelve or thirteen (ibid., pp. 806-807).

The degree of autonomy a woman could exercise was in large part based on her usufruct rights to land, both as a wife and frequently as a sister. As a wife, she was allocated land to cultivate on the land of her husband's mbari. If she were the first wife, she would be given the total portion of her husband's inheritance to cultivate, barring a small area, mugunda wa muthuri, which he might keep for his own use, to grow yams, bananas and sugar cane (Fisher, 1954, p. 193). Evidence collected from the area (MDAH, 1984) would indicate that as a second or subsequent wife, a woman would be allocated a portion equal to

that of the other wives. Unless new land were available and cleared in the mbari, this would mean the subdivision of the first wife's land. During the 1880s in Metumi, only in the areas closer to the Nyandarua range were the mbari likely to have access to significant uncultivated land. Not infrequently, a wife's plots would be scattered in several different locations, depending on the degree of fragmentation of the ng'undu. Division among wives would be made on the basis of equal access to land of different quality, although the ngatha, senior wife, would have had the very fertile iganjo, the midden from an old homestead site, included in her plot (Fisher, 1954, p. 194).

If the age-range of the wives was very great, Fisher's observation that the allocation of land was not always equal would pertain. She suggests that the size of a woman's garden, the migunda ya mutamia, depended on "...her age, the size of her family, her state of health and her "zeal for work" to which must be added her husband's means to provide land" (1954, p. 226). Certainly, as her sons married and claimed their share of their inheritance for their wives to cultivate, a woman's garden would decrease in size.

Women also, often, had usufruct rights to land as sisters. Fisher mentions that as young children, boys and girls were sometimes given small plots to work on, and that as adolescents a father would often allocate a plot of land, mugunda wa muiiritu for a daughter and, mugunda ya mwanake for a son. In both cases,

full rights of disposal of crops were recognized. The son would use his land to grow men's crops (Fisher, 1954, pp. 194-195, 215). Interviews conducted recently in the area indicated no recollection of these practices (MDAH, 1984). Of importance, however, were the frequent references to a woman being allocated usufruct rights to land in their own mbari on marriage (also, see Kenya, Maxwell Committee, 1929, p. 24; Muriuki, 1975, p. 76). Rather than being given a gift of mburi cia mathaga (sheep and goats), on marriage from her father, a woman could receive mugunda wa mathaga (Fisher, 1954, p. 195). Such rights to the land of her own mbari were temporary,²⁵ and their continuance depended on any future wife's needs for land, or the needs of lineage sons. The plot could be "redeemed" through a gift of mburi cia mathaga to the daughter (ibid., p. 215). Accessing this right as a sister will have depended both on the distance moved on marriage and on a woman's mobility, the latter being significantly constrained after the birth of children. As women, on average, moved about 2-3 kms. on marriage, the distances involved were not great (MDAH, 1984). In the literature, reference is made to the relatively close contact between the wife's family and the husband's family, and the reciprocal nature of arrangements that could be made in times of need (Leakey, 1977, p. 689). These included providing the other party with a goat or sheep to pay a fine, or work arrangements whereby a woman after marriage was expected to assist her own mother as required, provided this did not interfere with

her obligations at her new home (ibid., p. 857). At times, a woman might also assist her daughter in cultivating on the latter's land in her husband's mbari (MDAH, 1984). Where a woman, as a sister, did access use rights, she had full control over the produce and may have kept a granary on the land of her mbari (Fisher, 1954, p. 215).

Where a woman opted to marry according to prevalent patrilineal and patrilocal rules, as was the norm, her significant structural position via à vis the land tenure system resulted from the fact that she was the medium through which "ownership" rights were transmitted. Middleton and Kershaw (1965) summarize the process:

Individual [male] members of a domestic family acquire their holdings on the basis of descent from the father through the mother, by the use of a portion of her part of the githaka; this portion comes under their control by its use being passed by the mother to her daughter-in-law (p. 50).

It is significant that in describing this process, men and women interviewed in 1984 used language which in translation reads, for example: "When a girl got married, she was given land by her mother-in-law" (MDAH, L, p. 1); and, "The man could only get land when he got married so without a woman there was no land" (ibid., p. 24). It was customary for sons to inherit equal portions of the land their mother cultivated. Although Fisher (1954, p. 217) suggests that the eldest sons inherit a larger portion, this is not substantiated elsewhere in the literature or from data

collected in the field.

This process, by focusing on the nyumba, which in its primary sense refers to a married woman's dwelling hut (Fisher, 1954, p. 5), implies, as defined in the house property complex, that social recognition is given to "...a woman's major role in the process of production, though she herself is excluded from ownership of the means of production themselves" (Goody and Buckley, 1973, p. 118). Referring to the "mother-centred segment" and the "matricentric family", Obbo (1976) explains the situation in terms of familial structure in a polygynous society. She draws on Gluckman's (1950)²⁶ observations that in such a society, (1) children of the same mother have a closer relationship than the children of the same father, and (2) that social position is determined through the mother, to deduce that "seminal ideology" is weakened and "complementary filiation" is strengthened (Obbo, 1976, p. 384). The nyumba, then, forms not only a cooking and eating unit, but also a unit of central structural significance in the mbari in terms of rules of inheritance, residence and descent.

As wives in their husbands' mbari, women could not inherit land. Options open to them, vis à vis the structural position of their nyumba will, during their husband's lifetime, have been conditioned by the number and sex of their children and those of any co-wives. As a widow, a wife could exercise significantly more autonomy vis à vis her husband's mbari. Although the levirate, githambia mutamia, was practiced, and a widow of

child-bearing age could be "inherited" by a younger brother of her husband (Fisher, 1954, p. 217), the decision as to whether to proceed with this arrangement was hers. If she followed this path, she could continue to work the land allocated in her deceased husband's holding, also receiving additional land from the muthambia, the brother (ibid., also: Routledge and Routledge, 1910, p. 143; Beech, 1917, p. 59). In this situation the first born child would inherit from the deceased husband but any subsequent children would inherit from the living legal husband (Leakey, 1977, p. 538). Middleton and Kershaw, drawing on Dundas (1915)²⁷, state that a senior wife could not remarry. She had to choose between the levirate, or living alone, but possibly inviting a mwendia ruhiu to live with her (1965, p. 48).

The mwendia ruhiu, literally "the seller of the sword", is dubbed by Lambert (1965) as a "professional taint remover (p. 54), because of his role in "washing" or "removing" the death of her husband (MDAH, 1984, L, p. 16). There is some confusion and contradiction in the literature as to the status of a mwendia ruhiu in society (see, for example, Kenya, Maxwell Committee, 1929, p. 26, 27, 72; Middleton and Kershaw, 1965, p. 51). This is explained in the Report of the Maxwell Committee (Kenya, 1929) as follows: "The reason for withholding information about it is probably because it is a relic of mother-right which is a custom fast disappearing, and which the natives no longer wish to admit

as custom" (p. 26). Later, the same Report refers to the practice as "...a relic of matrilineal and matrilocal customs which have fallen into desuetude" (p. 72). To synthesize from observations by Fisher (1954) and interviews in the area (MDAH, 1984), the mwendia ruhiu is often a widower, generally has no wealth in land or livestock of his own, who goes to live at the homestead of a widow for an unspecified period of time. She provides him with food in return for work. Should children result from the relationship, they would inherit through the woman's deceased husband, and would call him father. In contradiction to statements made by the Maxwell Committee (quoted above) and Middleton and Kershaw (1965, p. 51), the children do not inherit matrilineally. Through this option a woman of child-bearing age may increase the size of her nyumba, and to extrapolate, could reinforce her structural position in her husband's mbari. This would be of particular significance where she had not previously given birth to sons. In such a situation, frequently, land would otherwise have passed to the sons of co-wives (MDAH, 1984). Again, one may only speculate as to the possible conflicts that could arise from a woman exercising this option. They are likely to have become more numerous as land shortages increased. On the basis of retrospective data, influenced inter alia by the moral teachings of Christian missionaries, it is difficult to define the "position" a mwendia ruhiu occupied in society. In none of the interviews held in 1984 was the practice considered in a

favourable light. Yet it was relatively common practice (MDAH, 1984, H, p. 8). Even Leakey, while not referring to a mwendia ruhiu specifically, observes that women of child-bearing age "...could take lovers with a view to bearing sons to inherit property and keep the family name alive" (1977, pp. 800-801).

Where a widow was past child-bearing age, she could opt to become a female husband. Again, the option was one exercised by a woman who was childless or who had only daughters, her objective being to continue her husband's lineage through her nyumba.

In such a situation Leakey remarks that not only did the widow have the right to marry a wife herself, but was "...indeed actually expected" to do so (1977, p. 801). The practice may be defined by two quotations from people in the area. The first is from an elderly man.

If, for example, Kamande's mother²⁸ doesn't have a son, but only you, a daughter, who will marry and go away, that will be the end of our name. If we wish to retain our name, we can marry a girl and have her here, not as my wife. She would just stay here and she can bear children with whoever she wishes. She names the baby after me and the other after this one (Kamande's mother). After our death, she would keep everything. Nobody could get this from her. Or a woman could marry a girl after the death of her husband (MDAH, 1984, L, p. 16).

The second quotation is from an interview with an elderly woman:

Some of these women are very cunning and they don't want their husband's brothers to inherit the land, and so they are forced to marry another woman (MDAH, 1984, V, p. 14).

The decision to become a female husband may in some cases have been made prior to the husband's death, often as he was dying, but the implementation of the decision was left to the woman. She would choose the woman to be married and arrange for the bridewealth to be paid. Frequently, she might choose to marry a woman who already had sons while unmarried, thus leaving less to "chance". After marriage, the "wife" could live with someone of her choosing but the "legal" husband would be the widow, as a surrogate for her deceased husband (MDAH, 1984). For such a woman, the offer to become the wife of a female husband would not have been unattractive as her sons would have had inheritance rights to this land. None of the literature reflects on the security of this inheritance vis à vis that from a woman's own mbari, nor did the interviews address this issue, but in the context of land shortages, it might have been a more secure route for the "wife" to have taken. Clan permission was never sought before this option was chosen, and it appears to have been one which was taken not infrequently. Actual examples of the practice were cited by many of the participants in the interviews with reference to "the past", and one of the women interviewed was herself a female husband²⁹ (MDAH, 1984, G). Leakey writes that not only was the practice "not rare", but that "[t]here were cases of rich widows marrying not one, but several wives in this way and thus bringing an almost extinct family up to strength again" (1977, p. 801):

In terms of assessing the relative autonomy a woman could exercise in society as a female husband, the distinction made by O'Brien (1977) between a surrogate female husband and an autonomous female husband is a useful one (Chapter 2.3). Unfortunately for the purposes here, her research focuses only on the relationship between autonomous female husbands and the processes involved in the achievement of political power. Further research is needed to assess the parameters of the power of surrogate female husbands. Gikuyu women who take this option may be assigned to this latter category, and the power they are able to achieve must be measured at the scale of the mbari where their relative autonomy vis à vis the male members of their deceased husband's mbari is expressed. In an acephalous society where power was diffuse, this may not have been insignificant. --

Beyond discussing the case where a ndungata marries the daughter of a mwene (landholder) without paying bridewealth, and the fact that such a marriage would be matrilineal and sons would inherit through the mwene, the ethnographic literature lacks detail on the options open to a woman who, as a sister, decided to remain in her natal kin corporation. The practice, it appears, was an uncommon one, but one that, from Leakey's observations, seems to have been quite accepted. From his discussions (1977, p. 536, 566), it would appear that once an unmarried woman had children of her own, a married woman's hut would be built for her in the homestead of her eldest married brother. Leakey does not

address the question of the portion of her father's land which was given to her relative to that of her brothers. He does note that she had gardens to cultivate and that sons would inherit through their mother. Frequently the woman was asked to choose a "permanent lover", a mwendia rugia or githaria who would "...live with her as her husband, help her in her gardens, and perform all ceremonial duties for her." It was he, then, who took the part of legal husband in all ceremonies" (Leakey, 1977, p. 566). The man, however, had rights to neither the children nor the land.

The Maxwell Committee (Kenya, 1929) viewed this type of marriage as indicative of the norm of an earlier period among the Gikuyu when matrilocal prevailed (p. 8). The Committee Report considered that the process of transition from the matrilocality to a patrilocality system "...may have been a factor in retarding the territorial unification of the clan" (ibid.). In the 1880s in Metumi, the autonomy a woman was accorded to exercise the option of contracting a matrilocality marriage or non-legal relationship is likely to have been determined by the stage of evolution of the mbari i.e. whether it was expanding into new territory and had both abundant land and a desire to expand its territory through an increased population. Where, in contrast, brothers were vying for their share in an already populated ng'undu, considerable pressure may well have made the option of contracting a matrilocality marriage less attractive to their sister. Recent evidence from Murang'a supports this argument (MDAH, 1984).

5.3 Agriculture: production, organization and control

The Gikuyu economy of the late 1800s centred on agricultural production. While it may be characterized primarily in terms of production for subsistence, the written records of Thomson (1885), Von Hohnel (1894), and Macdonald (1897) attest to the intensive nature of cultivation and the agricultural "surpluses" produced.

Part of the latter were used to provision trading caravans and the exploratory/military expeditions of European travellers.

Quotations from these writings may illustrate the point.

Referring to the Gikuyu plateau, Thomson wrote:

Enormous quantities of sweet potatoes, yams, cassava, sugar cane, Indian corn, millet etc. are raised, and the supply seems to be quite inexhaustible. On my return journey I found a caravan of over 1500 men staying at Ngongo, who remained there a month, and carried away little short of three months' provisions, yet it did not seem perceptibly to affect the supply or to raise the ridiculously low prices. Extremely fat sheep abound, while they have also cattle in considerable numbers (1885, p. 308).

Von Hohnel, travelling through the area with Count Teleki in 1887 and 1888 later referred to it as "...the granary of a very extended district" (1894, p. 352). Macdonald in 1897 wrote of his journey:

As agriculturalists the Wakikuyu are very enterprising, as is shown by the miles of potato plantations which are far in excess of their requirements. New clearings are daily being made with fire and axe in the surrounding forests. They also have a rude idea of irrigation, and lead little water channels from the valleys on the top

of the spurs. It must not be supposed that sweet-potato and sugar-cane are the only produce of the country, for maize, various kinds of millet, beans, yams, bananas, tobacco, and oil-seeds are also largely grown; bees, too, are cultivated though not nearly to the same extent as in Ukambani.... Cattle, goats and sheep are abundant" (1897, p. 109).

Lugard (1893) portrays a similar picture when writing of the area of Kabete to the South.

It is not my intention here to detail the agricultural practices or productivity of the area of Metumi in the 1880s. I will, however, indicate briefly salient features of the agricultural system before discussing men and women's participation in agricultural production.

In essence, a system of rotational bush fallowing based on the two cropping seasons, kimera cia njahi (March to August) and kimera cia mwere (September to February), was practiced in the middle and lower altitudes of the area although in the higher parts of the plateau this was modified on account of the wetter and cooler climate. The length of the fallow period under this system will have varied according to the density of settlement of a particular mbari and to the physical characteristics of the soil. The Gikuyu distinguished between eleven main soil types, many of which had subcategories (Fisher, 1954, p. 234). The location of the garden vis à vis the terrain will also have affected the length of fallow. Distinctions were made between mugunda wa rugongo, on a hillslope; mugunda wa kianda, in a valley; or a mugunda wa ruui, near a stream (ibid., p. 236).

Women interviewed by Fisher in the early 1950s in the area indicated that "formerly" some gardens would be cultivated for between five and eight years before fallowing was necessary. If there was no shortage of land the fallow period could extend beyond ten years. During this period, it would either be allowed to revert to bush and be used for grazing, or thatching grass could be grown on it (ibid., p. 257).

The relatively intensive agricultural production was sustained through the maintenance of soil fertility. Measures which will have facilitated this included the following: (1) crop rotations, which varied by location in the low, middle or high parts of the plateau and according to the situation of the garden in a valley or on a slope, (ibid., p. 260); (2) intercropping, kibococo. Intercropping was recognized as a practice which not only saved time and labour through providing a dense vegetation cover thus inhibiting weeds, but also served to check soil erosion by ensuring a longer period of ground cover and to arrest the spread of plant diseases and insect pests (ibid., p. 247). The latter were also checked through the practice of burning garden refuse after harvest; (3) soil erosion was also limited through the practice of constructing muconjo, piles of leaves and other vegetable matter placed as a low ridge along the contour line. In a subsequent season the muconjo would be moved up or down the slope, and the line of seeds planted along the former location would thrive particularly well (MDAH, 1984, C, p. 7; N, p. 3); (4)

manure was valued, as is indicated by the value attached to the iganjo, midden. Manure was not, however transported elsewhere.³⁰

The range of crops grown is indicated in Table 5.1. Millets, chiefly mwere, bulrush millet in the lower zones and mukombi, foxtail millet, together with legumes, chiefly njahi; (Lablab beans), njugu, (pigeon peas), thoroko, (cow peas) and ngina, (green grams), formed the basis of the diet (Fisher, 1954; MDAH, 1984). Sweet potatoes and bananas were important perennial crops which contributed to the diet (Fisher, 1954; MDAH, 1984). Writing in 1904, Tate considered that: "The home-grown diet of the Kikuyu is extremely varied as compared with that of other East African tribes" (p. 132). It was essentially a vegetarian diet, the meat of sheep and goats only being eaten on ceremonial occasions. Cattle were rarely killed (Taylor, 1973, p. 2).³¹

Droughts did occur in the area periodically, and Muriuki (1974, p. 49) refers to the famine of Kimorori of 1863 and the Famine of Necklaces of 1884 circa this period, but in general it appears that the practice of storing abundant food from the majority of years when productivity was high, together with the practice of growing many drought-resistant crops such as the millets and sorghum, bananas and arrowroots, meant that a relatively high population density could be sustained.

The earliest map detailing the cultivated acreage of part of an ng'undu in the low-middle altitudinal belt in Metumi is Meinertzhagen's (1957) map of 1902. From the measurement of the

Table 5.1 Metumi: principal food crops prior to 1900

Gikuyu	English	Botanical name
1. Cereals		
o ugimbi ¹	finger millet	Eleusine coracana
o mwere	bulrush millet	Pennisetum typhoides
+ mukombi ¹	foxtail millet	Setaria italica
xo muhia	sorghum	Sorghum spp.
mbembe	maize	
2. Legumes		
mboco	kidney bean	Phaseolus vulgaris
o thoroko	cow pea	Vigna unguiculata
xo njugu ²	pigeon pea	Cajanus cajan
o njahi ²	Lablab bean	Dolichos lablab
o thuu/ngina	lentil/green gram	Lens esculenta
3. Root crops		
ngwaci	sweet potato	Ipomoea batatas
x gikwa (pl. ikwa)	yam	Dioscorea spp.
nduma	arrowroot	Colocasia esculenta
x mwanga (pl. mianga)	cassava	Manihot utilissima
4. Fruit		
irigu (pl. marigu)	banana	Musa sapientum
mbuu	plantain	Musa paradisiaca
nguyu.	wild fig	
nathi		
ngambura		
ndare	wild fruit	
mathuya		
mbiru		
5. Vegetables		
nyeni ³	green leaves used as spinach	
including:		
terere		Amaranthus spp.
togotia		Erucastrum arabicum
kigerema		Coccinea trilobata
kihiu		Lactuea sp.
thabai		Urtica massaiica
managu		Solanum nigrum

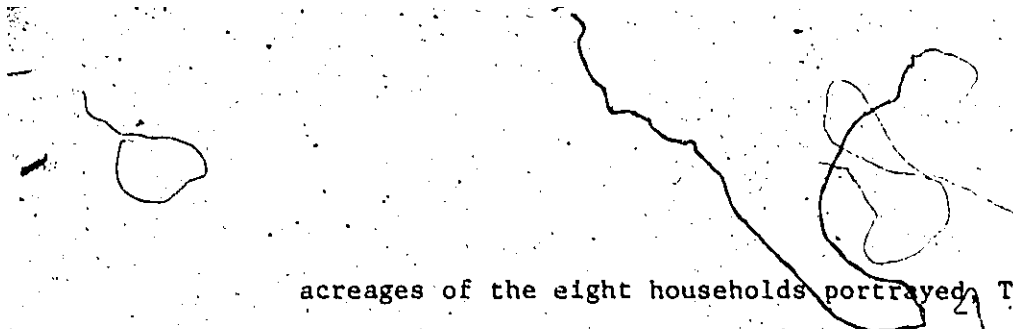
Table 5.1 Metumi Principal food crops prior to 1900 (continued)

Gikuyu	English	Botanical name
6. <u>Other</u>		
kigwa (pl. igwa)	sugar cane	Saccherum officinarum
mbaki	tobacco	Nicotiana tabacum
mubariki	castor oil	Ricinus communis
ruungu	gourd	Lagenaria siceraria
ihuithia rieur ⁴		Kalanchoe marmorata
nyeki ya kigutu	thatching grass	Sporolobus fimbriatus
muhukuura ⁵		Mondia whitei
ng'onde ya kiondo ⁶		Notonia petraea

Notes:

1. x crop is not grown in upper zones.
o crop is grown particularly in the lower zones.
2. Both these crops are high in calcium and are regarded as a lactafacient (Farnsworth Anderson, 1937, p. 128).
3. The leaves of njahi, thoroko, and the thangari species of nduma, were also included in this category.
4. This plant provided herbal drugs and "water" for washing hands after working in the gardens (Leakey, 1977, p. 185).
5. The roots provided power used in magic. It was extensively traded with the Maasai (Leakey, 1977, p. 176).
6. A creeping plant used in purification ceremonies (Leakey, 1977, p. 176).

Sources: In order of importance: Fisher, 1954; Leakey, 1977; Farnsworth Anderson, 1937.



acreages of the eight households portrayed, Taylor (1966b) has calculated that the cultivated acreage of the households range in size from 1.1 to 5.06 acres (0.45 to 2.05 ha.) averaging 3.68 acres (1.49 ha.) (p. 39). Taylor points out that the cultivated land of each household "seems" to be surrounded by fallowland but in the absence of demarcated boundaries on the map, it is impossible to tell whether this land belongs to a particular household or is under mbari jurisdiction (ibid.). Fisher (1954, p. 237) estimated that a woman could work, on average, about 2.5 acres (1.01 ha.), an amount which would include a certain amount of fallow. The land was worked using various lengths of digging stick; minyago (sing. munyago); different types of knives and axes being used for other agricultural tasks (ibid., p. 232).

No figures of the population in Metumi are available for this period, but Taylor (1966b, p. 24), based on a hut count of 27000 in 1903³², estimates that the population at that time could have averaged 240 per square mile (150 per square kilometre). He points out that even if this is an overestimation of 100%, a density of 120 per square mile (75 per square kilometre) is still considerable. As a serious famine and other ecological and human crises which occurred at the end of the 1890s reduced the previous population in size, it may well be that the population supported was in the neighbourhood of the higher estimation.

As has been argued in Chapter 2, an analysis of the sexual

division of labour is an initial step not only in assessing men's and women's relative participation in productive activities but also in leading to an understanding of the power relations/contradictions in society. These are conditioned by: women and men's participation in the central economic structures of society (Schlegel, 1977a); how strategically indispensable their labour is (Blumberg, 1984); their control over decision-making with respect to productive and reproductive activities; the control they exercise over the allocation of labour and the products of labour, and whether these have use or exchange value; and how production is organized both inside and outside the household. Critical here is the question as to whether such organization supports or undercuts productive relations of men as husbands/brothers, of women as sisters/wives (Sacks, 1981).

As a preliminary to her analysis of the sexual division of labour in Gikuyu society prior to colonialism, Greet Kershaw (1974-1975) refers to Gikuyu perceptions of the nature of the universe. She writes:

According to these ideas, human beings were believed to be temporal manifestations of a general principle in which women were the life-givers and men were life itself. But men were life itself only in their association with the land, which was the permanent principle embodying the past, the present, and the future (p. 179).

A man's continuity was "manifested" through his continued relationship with the land. Men had to:

...insure that nothing threatened this continuity, and it was their task to maintain the right relationships. These relationships were between themselves and the land which included the right relationship between themselves and other men, ancestors and the unborn and between themselves and the deity. As women were the guardians of the biological order, so men were the guardians of the social and ritual order (ibid.).

It is against this set of values, the ideational, that Kershaw then "explains" women's and men's respective participation in Gikuyu economy and society. To her, the division of labour at this time did not "...imply a hierarchical order but rather a complementary, mutually dependent relationship" (p. 179). Women's prime responsibility for agricultural production, particularly for the seasonal crops, which formed the basis of the diet (millets and legumes), entailed making decisions as to what crops to grow, how much to grow, when to tackle the various tasks and whether to produce a surplus. If a woman decided to produce a surplus, within certain limits, she had the right to dispose of the crops (ibid.). The purpose of men's participation in agriculture, in contrast to that of women's, Kershaw suggests, was to provide for social and ritual occasions. Hence, men were responsible for animal husbandry, sheep and goats having ritual and social significance (for bridewealth) rather than food value. Similarly, men were responsible for certain perennial crops which had ritual and social importance: sugar cane, yams, bananas, tobacco (Kershaw, 1974-75, p. 180). Kershaw's research was conducted in Kiambu, and as no evidence of men's gardens per se was found in Murang'a (Metumi) in recently conducted interviews

(beyond that of small plots of sugar cane, for example, in the valley bottom), her observations on the significance of these gardens may have only local relevance. It is worth quoting from the rationale she gives for these gardens, however. Kershaw argues that men preferred to have their own garden, rather than planting their crops in women's gardens:

In case of conflict each could bar the other from entry into his or her garden; hence having a garden of his own gave the husband greater social and ritual independence. While a wife could bar her husband from the garden, he could retaliate by refusing to perform appropriate ritual for her. This interdependence guarded against conflict and strengthened mutual cooperation as neither wife nor husband could ultimately perform their roles without the cooperation of the other (1974-1975, p. 180).

Details of the sexual division of labour circa 1880 for the area are given in Table 5.2. While it is clear that women are primarily responsible for seasonal crops, irio cia imera, and men are mainly concerned with perennials, irio cia menja, the sharpness of the distinctions between women's and men's labour suggested by Kershaw's analysis is somewhat modified. For example, both men and women participated in clearing the land and in the first weeding of the seasonal crops.

In using Table 5.2 to assess the relative participation of women and men in agriculture, certain limitations of the data must be borne in mind. First, no indication is given of the length of time taken for a task, its frequency nor its arduousness. Fisher (1954, p. 264) remarks that all the heaviest work is done by men.

Table 5.2 Metumi: sexual division of labour, circa 1880

	Men	Women
A. <u>Agricultural activities</u>		
1. Land Preparation	-clearing of trees and bush - <u>gutuguta</u> -hoeing (<u>gucimba</u>)	-placing of brush, grass weeds as <u>miconjo</u> (sing. <u>muconjo</u>) along contour lines to prevent soil erosion. Refuse was also periodically burnt and the ash spread over the plot. -preparing plots for planting (<u>kuhukuria</u>) by breaking up clods after hoeing.
2. <u>Planting</u>		-Seed selection from own stores or from seeds obtained from a market.
a. <u>Long rains</u>	-(maize - husband helped if wife unwell) -sweet potato cuttings	-<u>legumes</u>: pigeon peas, cow peas, green grams, kidney beans -maize -sorghum (took 10 months to mature, therefore harvested after short rains. -sweet potato cuttings
b. <u>Short rains</u>	-(Maize - husband helped if wife unwell)	-bulrush millet (lower areas) -foxtail millet (higher areas) -finger millet -maize -pigeon peas (first) harvest at same time as main harvest) -lablab bean crop at end of long rains; second harvest at the end of following short rains. -kidney beans

Table 5.2 Metumi sexual division of labour, circa 1880 (continued)

	Men	Women
<u>Agricultural activities</u> (continued)	-sweet potato (cuttings planted more frequently in long rains)	-sweet potato (cuttings planted more frequently in long rains).
c. <u>No season indicated in the literature</u>	-yam (harvested after 3 to 4 rainy seasons) -arrowroot -banana -cassava -tobacco -gourd -sugar cane	-yam (sometimes women planted cuttings). -castor oil (a bush, which once established, yielded for many years). -arrowroot -banana (women carried shoots to plot for new banana grove) -cassava -thatching grass (planted on fallow land or as boundaries between co-wives plots).
3. <u>Weeding</u>	The first weeding <u>kurinura</u> was so important that everyone took part. <u>Ngwatio</u> , a cooperative form of work organization, was used.	
	-men weeded in their plots of sugar cane and were in the main responsible for the cultivation of arrowrots.	Subsequent weeding were done by women. Between 2 and 4 weeding were required per season.
4. <u>Other work</u>	-propping up bananas -training yams -cutting water channels for irrigation (<u>kuuhithiria mei</u>) -erecting temporary platforms (<u>rutaria</u>) for bird scarers -fencing -repairing (or constructing) roof frame and platform of granaries	-thinning, pruning, shading (newly planted sweet potato vines), dusting pollen off millet -thatching granaries

Table 5.2 Metumi sexual division of labour, circa 1880 (continued)

	Men	Women
<u>Agricultural activities</u> (continued)	-(boys - bird scaring)	-scaring birds from millets (also girls)
5. <u>Harvesting</u>	-cutting sugar canes -yams (there was a taboo against women digging yams) -men carried some maize in the form of <u>manja</u> (the sheaths of the cobs were tied together, strung over a cord and tied) -digging up cassava (as well as women) -after harvest, men would uproot plants which could not be pulled up by hand. Millet, maize and sorghum stalks were often included here -(men never dug up sweet potatoes)	All crops, with the exception of yams Women carried <u>all</u> crops to the homestead, including yams and sugar cane. -a <u>ciondo</u>, string bag, was used to carry most crops. -sweet potatoes were dug up as needed by women or uninitiated men
6. <u>Food storage</u>		mainly: millet, beans, maize, were processed for storage. Maize and beans were stored in granaries: <u>makumbi</u> (sing. <u>ikumbi</u>) or <u>mururi</u>. Millets were frequently kept in stoppered wooden containers, <u>mbuuthu</u>.
B. <u>Pastoral activities</u>	-herding and care of sheep and goats and cattle -milking cattle -plucking sweet potato vines -slaughtering	-plucking sweet potato vines for sheep and goats -care of small stock kept in the <u>gicegu</u> (close to the house).

Table 5.2 Metumi sexual division of labour, circa 1880 (continued)

	Men	Women
C. <u>Domestic activities</u>	-beer making with sugar cane (cutting and peeling canes, mixing pounded cane with water, ~~winnowing~~ out the juice and putting it in beer gourds). -hut building (cutting poles, erecting walls, making frame-work of roof)	-beer making with sugar cane (pounding the cane and "cooking the beer") -fetching water -collecting firewood -food preparation -collecting bush foods -sweeping huts and courtyard -making salt from papyrus -making castor oil -rearing and care of children -hut building (plastering the walls, thatching ie: cutting grass and taking it to the homestead. The actual thatching was usually done by a specialist).
D. <u>Other "economic" activities</u>	-path making -building bridges -trading	-marketing/trading -making baskets
E. <u>Specialist occupations</u>	-iron smelting -black smithing -making granaries, winnowing trays, wicker doors -beadwork -leather work -bee keeping -making snuff -dressing skins -making men's skin clothing -obtaining salt from the Rift Valley	-collection and washing of iron sands (localized) -pottery -making sleeping mats, winnowing trays -thatching -making women's skin clothing -obtaining salt from the Rift Valley

Sources: Primarily Fisher, 1954 and Leakey, 1977. Also, Routledge and Routledge, 1910; Kenyatta, 1938; MDAH, 1984.

She does not point out that the heaviest task, that of clearing the land, gutuguta, is done infrequently. Cereals and legumes took much more time to cultivate than did perennial crops.

Bulrush millet, mwere, in particular demanded substantial labour. It frequently had to be weeded four or five times, and women were responsible for all weeding after the first one. Mwere had to be protected against birds for about two months, and harvesting was "slow and tedious" (Fisher, 1954, pp. 271-272). Foxtail and finger millet apparently did not have the same attraction for birds, but otherwise demanded much labour (ibid., p. 272). Nor were women excluded from the heavy tasks. The carrying of water and collecting of firewood, as well as carrying to the homestead virtually all the harvested produce, could hardly be classified as light. Routledge and Routledge make the following observation with respect to firewood:

A woman, fetching home firewood a distance of 5-10 miles, of her own accord makes up her load to quite 100 lbs. A Kikuyu man is quite unequal to carrying a load that his women think nothing of (1910, p. 104).

Second, the balance of work between women and men will have depended on the stage of evolution of a particular mbari, whether new land was being cleared. This is not considered in drawing up the "static" division of labour table. Third, Table 5.2 gives no indications of how the sexual division of labour varies with age, yet in a homestead where older women could command the labour of

younger women or where children assisted in bird-scaring, water collection, weeding and harvesting, or the care of younger children, variation will have occurred. None of the literature indicates the proportion of work carried out by children, yet children participated in many such activities from an early age.

Table 5.2 does, nevertheless, indicate that the responsibility for day-to-day agricultural operations lay with women. The crops they produced were basic to the society's survival. Except for the period immediately following childbirth, involvement in agricultural participation was sustained throughout life, even if on a reduced acreage in later years.³³ Decisions regarding crops were controlled by the sex responsible for those crops. Such decisions, as has been indicated, included the choice of crops, husbandry management/technical decisions such as seed selection, the timing of various tasks, and whether to produce a surplus (Kershaw, 1974-75; Kayso, Fisher, 1954; Leakey, 1977). In addition, in a situation where agricultural knowledge was diffuse, women and men will both have been involved in adopting innovations. The story related in the preface indicates an example of women's possible contribution. Women's participation in the marketing of food crops exposed them to new varieties of crops (MDAH, 1984, H.15: the example of a new variety of nduma, arrowroot, was given), and it is likely that the practice of exogamy further facilitated their role in the diffusion of new

varieties, as Hay suggests was the case among the Luo (1972, p. 246).

The literature on the control of an agricultural surplus is less than precise. In general, women had the right to make gifts to friends and relatives and to trade, either privately or in a local market, any other surplus. Such crops would be exchanged for a commodity needed for the household (Fisher, 1954, pp. 272-274). Where a surplus was large, however, Leakey (1977, pp. 280-281) states that a wife could be told by her husband not to use a certain, filled, granary. Grain from the granary would be bartered for sheep and goats. Livestock so purchased, Leakey argues, would be put to the use of that wife's nyumba, either for bridewealth transactions for her children or for ritual or ceremonial needs associated with her nyumba. Fisher's (1954) observations, however, would lead to the conclusion that this may have led to a situation that was contentious.

Fisher points out that a married man's mburi, the sheep and goats, were divided into two groups: the mburi cia thingira, which were for his use and were housed in his hut (thingira); and the mburi cia nyumba, which were housed with his wife, although they "belonged" to him. (Cattle were not divided in this way, but each wife was allowed to receive milk from any that the husband owned, Fisher, 1954, p. 168). In a monogamous household, mburi from either group could be used by the husband who did not have to replace them (*ibid.*). In a polygynous household, the rights were

somewhat different. Fisher notes that the mburi a husband allocated to a wife and which were received as bridewealth for a daughter belonged to her nyumba. They were then frequently used as bridewealth for a son. But Fisher goes on to state:

The husband exercises full control over the stock of the various houses... He may use animals from one house to make up the bride-wealth for a son of another. The bride-wealth received for the daughters of his different wives he may use to acquire more wives for himself. There is, in fact, a balance of claims in respect of bride-wealth stock between the different houses and between these and the husband himself. In the adjustment of this balance much depends on the relative ages of the children of the various houses and the number of sons and daughters each wife has (p. 168).

Further dispute may have arisen as each son expected to inherit his share of the stock allocated to his mother's house.

Beyond discussions of the sexual division of labour, little attention has been given in the literature of the period to the organization of production, within the household and outside it. Stamp's (1985) work referred to in Section 5.2 indicated that older women could command the labour of younger lineage wives, yet there is little indication of the extent or nature of this work or the scale at which it operated. Fisher's references to cooperation between wives in polygynous households suggests that any work arrangements depended on the degree of friendship between the women (1954, p. 266). Whether co-wives cooperated in agricultural production or not, Leakey (1977) states categorically that there was no borrowing between co-wives of food from their

respective granaries (p. 281). Presumably this would have applied to the normal course of events rather than to times of severe food shortages.

Many, indeed the majority, of agricultural tasks involved extra-household cooperation. Both women and men could call together small work groups, ngwatio, of their own sex, generally numbering under five people. Such arrangements were reciprocal and could involve kin, affines, friends or neighbours in an itura (Fisher, 1954, p. 268). Ngwatio would be formed for tasks such as clearing the land, hoeing, planting, weeding, harvesting, building micongo, cutting grass for thatching a house and beer making (MDAH, 1984). This type of labour arrangement was very small-scale, locally based, ad hoc and very common. It would have provided the means whereby women, lacking other organizational bases, would have been able to keep in contact with any age set, age grade or kin "sisters" who were within a reasonable distance of them.

Other small-scale, extra household arrangements were frequently made for the herding of livestock. Three were common. First, kuhithia involved the placing of livestock, particularly cattle, with friends for reasons of a lack of grazing in the vicinity or a lack of labour. The muriithi (pl. ariithi) to whom the stock was given, often for several years at a time, would obtain milk, manure, a share in the natural increase and often other gifts from the owner in return for his services. The system

of kuhithia offered security to the owner in that placing livestock in different areas decreased the likelihood of total loss from a disease. Second, within the matura, herd groups of men who were kin, affines or neighbours often made a reciprocal arrangement, kuriithiria, taking it in turns to herd each other's livestock. Third, through the practice of kuhoya muriithi, a boy or a man would be hired to do the work. In return for his services, the herder would periodically be given a goat (Fisher, 1954, pp. 156-161).

Where a larger number of people was required for a task, a non-reciprocal form of work organization, gutumana wira, was called. Again, men or women could arrange such a work group calling friends, neighbours or kin to meet them on a particular day. Gutumana wira were often organized for the clearing of large areas of uncultivated land, house construction or for thatching a house (Fisher, 1954, p. 263). Such work parties were remunerated with food and drink, a fact which Clark (1980) argues in the case of the nineteenth century Gikuyu was of political significance. Clark's discussion is focused on what she refers to as ngwatio, but it is clear that in her insightful analysis she is in fact referring to a much larger scale of work organization. She considers that the ability to call a large work party to clear additional land or perform other agricultural tasks and thus enhance the size and political prestige of a certain mbari would depend on the surplus food a woman was able to produce to "pay" such work parties. With the exception of food stored from a

particularly abundant harvest, women controlled their own granaries and exercised their own priorities and responsibilities with respect to food distribution. At times, Clark suggests, women would deem it advantageous to provide food and beer for work parties. But where a wife was reluctant to do this and a husband had alternative plans for a harvest, particularly a large harvest, conflict would have arisen. Clark explains:

"The right to make decisions, the spiritual and economic power to enjoin compliance, and the expectation that wives obey their husbands, together set up a dynamic of sometimes conflicting expectations which gave rise to decisions that at times affirmed women's control over resources and at others, men's power over women" (1980, p. 368).

A woman's ability to translate any power into authority in this respect would vary according to her "spiritual power", her personal strength of character, her ability to draw on kinship solidarity and use its influence to her advantage and an awareness of the indispensability of her labour (ibid., p. 367). Domestic decisions made in the context of providing food and beer for large work parties would then be linked to relations of power at the level of the mbari and the wider community.

5.4 Non-agricultural activities: internal and external trade

Table 5.2 indicates that both women and men were involved in a variety of non-agricultural activities. Some of these were specialist occupations and involved only very small numbers of the population. Iron smelting, obtaining salt from Naivasha and soda

from Lake Magadi fell into these categories (Routledge and Routledge, 1910; Leakey, 1977). Long distance trading was not a specialist activity, but the number of people involved was restricted. External and internal trade are singled out here for discussion because analysis of the relative mobility and spatial freedom of men and women may help to define the social-spatial relationship.

Both types of trade were of significance to the Gikuyu economy of the 1880s. Internal trade took place between the different ecological zones of the plateau (Taylor, 1967) and between Metumi, Gaki and Kabete (Muriuki, 1974). In the case of trade within Metumi, Taylor (1967) has identified markets existing at 1500 m. and 1800 m. on the borders between the low and middle altitudinal zones and middle and high zones, respectively. Somewhat larger markets existed between 1500 m. and 1800 m. where produce from the three zones was exchanged. These markets were essentially "invisible" central places (Taylor, 1978) for the local economy in that, whereas they had functioned for many centuries as meeting and trading places and were connected through a comprehensive set of paths, they lacked permanent physical structures. While the exchange of agricultural products will have predominated in these markets, they were also the location where specialist commodities were available: iron implements, salt, pottery, skin clothing and red ochre (Muriuki, 1974, p. 108).

Women's responsibility for the barter of agricultural products has

already been discussed.

Inter-district trading was particularly active between Metumi and Gaki, but it also took place between Metumi and Kabete. The main items exported from Metumi included high quality red ochre, pig iron, iron implements, tobacco, saddle querns and blue powder (thegeme). From both south and north came soda, skins, skin garments (all originating from Maasai country), beads and cowrie shells (Muriuki, 1974, p. 109; Leakey, 1974, pp. 499-503).² In times of relatively localized drought, such marketing will also have involved agricultural produce. This trade was carried on at markets located near the borders, but also involved the exchange of goods organized by relatives of individuals in the different districts (Leakey, 1977, p. 500; Muriuki, 1974, p. 108).

With reference to long distance trading, with the exception of a relatively brief period in the mid-nineteenth century when the trade in ivory with the Kamba was at its height³⁴ (Krapf, 1860, p. 144; Muriuki, 1974, p. 100) and at times of famine (MDAH, 1984), trade with the Maasai far exceeded in importance that with the Kamba. It is trade with the Maasai that will be discussed here.

While the literature does not comment on the relative role of women and men in inter-district trade, women's role in long distance trading is well-documented, Kitching's (1980, p. 13)³⁵ generalizations to the contrary notwithstanding. Thomson (1885),

Macdonald (1897) and von Hohnel (1894) all attest to the fact that women were primarily responsible for trade with the Maasai.

Referring to this trade, (and, Muriuki, 1974, states, exaggerating the degree of warfare between the Gikuyu and Maasai), Thomson, for example, writes:

Curiously enough, however, though they are eternally at war to the knife with each other, there is a compact between them not to molest the womenfolk of either party. Hence the curious spectacle is exhibited of Masai women wending their way with impunity to a Kikuyu village, while their relatives are probably engaged in a deadly fight close at hand. In the same way the Wa-Kikuyu women frequently carry grain to the Masai kraals to exchange for hides (1885, p. 308).

Macdonald indicates that women could carry out this trade

"...without interference or danger" (1897, p. 110). Von Hohnel

observes: "It is a noteworthy fact that the women on both sides are always perfectly safe, in spite of the constant feud between the Masai and the Wakikuyu" (1894, p. 291). Muriuki (1974, pp.

107-108), drawing on the writing of Fisher (1885)³⁶, comments that Gikuyu women traded as far as Lake Naivasha, Narok, Kajiado and Nanyuki. He also notes that men who could not perform military duties sometimes acted as escorts to the traders, but that they were not guaranteed safe conduct (Muriuki, 1974, p. 107).

Despite this documentation, there is need for substantial further research. None of the literature cited here details the precise localities from which such trading took place, yet oral

evidence (Taylor, unpublished data; MDAH, 1984) from Metumi indicates that the people involved in such trading came from specific locations close to the Nyandarua range and the routes through the mountains. Further, Muriuki (1974, p. 107) notes that often "...particular Kikuyu localities traded with particular Maasai localities." Routes which led from Metumi westwards to South Kinangop and Laikipia, northwards via Gaki and south via Kabete were all used in the Maasai-Kikuyu trade, but the most highly frequented routes were those directly westwards, passing through Njiiri, Karuri, Gathiru and Kinyona (Taylor, unpublished data; MDAH, 1984, U, p. 2). Trading took place at markets, such as the one at South Kinangop (Taylor, *ibid.*). These were particularly active at times of famine (Muriuki, 1974; MDAH, 1984).

Goods traded by the Gikuyu included millet flour, banana flour, green bananas, arrowroots, sweet potatoes, beans (*Dolichos Lablab*), honey, tobacco, pottery, sugar cane, red ochre, metal goods and gourds. These were exchanged for livestock (goats, sheep and young calves), hides and skins, leather cloaks, brass and copper wire, beads, and medicinal bark (Leakey, 1956, pp. 171-172; 1977, p. 483; Muriuki, 1974, pp. 107-108; MDAH, 1984, U, p. 2).

For further details of the trade, one must turn to Leakey's (1977) accounts of these activities in Kabete. The volume of trade from this area with the Maasai may well have been greater

than from other districts, and it involved trading parties rather than meetings at established market sites, but there is little evidence available to indicate that other major differences prevailed. Leakey (1977) considers that women monopolized long distance trading. Participation in the trade was restricted to older women: no woman was permitted to undertake this activity unless she was one of aka aria maruithitie, women who had at least one child initiated (Leakey, 1977, p. 480). The trade was generally organized and led by a hinga (literally, hypocrite/dissembler, *ibid.*, p. 480), a woman who was bilingual. Generally she was either a Maasai woman who had married a Gikuyu male or a Gikuyu woman who had been a prisoner of the Maasai. The hinga would let the women in her area know of her plans and any who wished to accompany her would, on payment of a "fee", be allowed to join. The "fee" took the form, generally, of a banana bark bundle of a commodity to be traded. It was carried for the hinga by the women accompanying her (Leakey, 1977, pp. 481-482). The size of these expeditions Leakey described as follows:

As late as the first ten years of this century parties of up to a hundred Kikuyu women could be seen setting off to Masai country, carrying food for five or six days and enormous loads of trade goods (1956, p. 172).

Elsewhere, Leakey (1977) states that women took enough food to last for three to four weeks. Women's loads ranged between 100 and 150 lbs. (45 - 67.5 kgs.) (p. 482). Leakey notes that such trading was initiated by Gikuyu women rather than the Maasai,

except during times of famine when Maasai women would frequently enter Gikuyu territory. The reason he gives for this is that Maasai women did not like carrying heavy loads (ibid., p. 479).

Leakey points out that in general no men accompanied the trading parties, but he does identify three men, who, near the end of the nineteenth century were well-known traders. Karau wa Muthigani, Waithaka wa Mathia and Gitangu wa Gathimba had all lived in Maasai country and had friends there (1977, pp. 483-485). Taylor (personal communication) has suggested that they (and other men) may have been involved in cattle trading, given the sexual division of labour in Gikuyu society. Further research may well indicate the need to specify type of trade item to assess its significance for women vis à vis men, a point made by Cianciarelli (1980).

In contrast to Leakey's observations in Kabete, Marris and Somerset (1971, see note 36) consider that, in the context of Nyeri (Gaki), women's monopolization of trade with the Maasai was restricted to periods of warfare. At other times, they argue, although women did participate, it was in the capacity as porters or carriers rather than as leaders. With reference to the area of Metumi, Taylor (personal communication) has suggested that during periods of peace, it was likely that both women and men participated in long distance trade, but, given the sexual division of labour, men would have controlled the trade in livestock. On this basis, he has indicated that livestock trading

was in all likelihood restricted to peacetime, as during other times raiding would have procured livestock for the Gikuyu. In times of war, trade, in the hands of women, is more likely to have concerned goods such as beads and wire which women could then have resold in markets in Metumi.

Leakey (1977) does not appear to have a problem with the apparent contradiction between a woman trading for livestock yet not having sole control over the goods on return home. He writes that when a Gikuyu woman returned home she did indeed give the goods to her husband, but this "surrender" "...did not mean that the woman renounced her absolute right to it, but rather signified her acceptance of the fact that her husband, or eldest son, was better able to take charge of it and control it" (p. 485). He follows this with the observation that there was a "recognized law" that such goods i.e. livestock, hides or skins, could only be used for a woman's nyumba: "They could not in any circumstances be diverted by a husband or a son to the use of the family as a whole or to any other wife or stepmother, unless the woman who had obtained them gave her consent" (ibid.). One may only speculate as to the conflicts which may have arisen here. It would seem unlikely, however, that women would undertake such an arduous activity without reasonable guarantee of remuneration.

Clearly there is much room for further research to identify the significance of the respective roles of men and women in long distance trading, the volume and frequency of such trade during

times of peace vis à vis times of war, and the degree to which such organization represented an active network or form of bonding at the extra-household level. At present no literature addresses the issue of whether trading did in fact indicate, for women, a means of sustaining a bond based on an age-grade or age-set system.

5.5 Some conclusions

Within the mode of production as it existed in Metumi near the end of the nineteenth century, the mucii, individual homestead, was the basic unit of production, defined by "ownership" by a male member of the mbari. Where a household was polygynous, considerable economic autonomy in terms of production devolved to the level of the nyumba, a wife's household. It was as a wife that women's rights to land were guaranteed by the mbari, both on the basis of usufruct and because of the matri-centric structure of the nyumba. A wife's control, within limits that have been discussed, of the products of her labour will have been the basis for considerable economic autonomy. Her labour to produce the day to day subsistence requirements and any surplus of basic commodities was indispensable. The goods she produced were central to the functioning of the larger society. As a sister, women's rights to land were restricted unless she opted to remain unmarried or to contract a matriloal marriage which was not common.

Through the centring of economic production at this level, and forms of local work organization, particularly ngwatio, that a woman was able to call on, a woman was able to maintain compatibility between her productive and reproductive responsibilities. A cooperative form of household assistance, matega, would be arranged for the period immediately after a child's birth (Stamp, 1985, p. 25).

Whereas a woman's main relationship to the means of production was as a producer, that of a man, both as a husband and as a brother in the mbari was that of an owner. His role in production, both with respect to land and livestock, was focused on goods of ritual and ceremonial significance rather than day to day subsistence. The contradictions between women as producer-nonowners and men as nonproducer owners identified by Sacks (1981) will have been a central one at the level of the household, with, as Clark (1980) has argued, implications for the wider economy.

The extent to which either men or women will have been able to manoeuvre within this dynamic--the extent to which they will have been able to exercise autonomy or authority--will have depended, as suggested previously, on the extent to which they were supported by extra-household organizational bonds. It is therefore the nature of the link, (the forces of production and reproduction), between the level of the nyumba and wider scales of societal organization, that is the critical one in assessing relative relations of power between men and women.

One may reasonably conclude that men as brothers in a corporately owned mbari and as husbands with something less than full ownership rights of the land of their mucii were able to achieve authority and social adulthood in society on the grounds of: (1) bonding based on the mbari, a territorial unit defined by rules of inheritance, residence and descent along male lines; and (2) solidarity achieved through membership in a riika, which served as the basis for extra-mbari functional organization. Where these two coincided spatially, men's solidarity based on kin relations will have been particularly strongly reinforced.

For women, it is less easy to be unambiguous. Previous sections of this chapter have attempted to define areas where women have been able to exercise autonomy in a society which was both patrilocal and patrilineal. It is clear that a woman's relations as a wife to her husband's mbari will have undercut pre-existing bonding based on both her mbari, her riika and her age grade on account of the rules of residence. Yet these bonds were not severed completely. Distances moved on marriage were not great, and relatively close contact was generally maintained between the two families (Leakey, 1977). The forms of work organization, such as ngwatio, would have allowed women to maintain at least some degree of extra-household bonding. In a fairly restricted area of western Metumi, participation in trade with the Maasai may also have sustained solidarity outside the household. On the basis of existing evidence, collected

retrospectively, much of it biased and ahistorical, it is not easy to reconstruct the extent to which women were involved in political institutions, the precise role of these institutions and their centrality to society as a whole. From the many references to women's organizations, however fragmentary, it is clear that women were able to mobilize and organize at the extra-household level, however frequently such organization was called on or within what jurisdiction its authority prevailed.

Notes

¹The correct spelling is as follows:

Agikuyu (pl.), Mugikuyu (sing.) - the people
Gikuyu - the country
Gigikuyu - the language

Rather than adopting the anglicized spelling of Kikuyu for all three meanings, I have followed Kenyatta's (1938) practice of using Gikuyu in its place.

²Muriuki (1974, pp. 51-52) draws on historical linguistic research by P.R. Bennett, 1967, "Dahl's law and Thagicu", (African Language Studies, Vol. 8, University of London, p. 127-159), to support the notion that the name Thagicu is the name of the ethnic group from which the Gikuyu, Kamba, Embu, Mbeera, Meru (Cuka, Muthambi, Mwimbi, Igoji, Imenti, Tigania), Tharaka, Sageju and Sonjo originate.

³From his analysis of archeological material from sites in Nyeri, Murang'a and Kabete, Siiariainen (1971) concludes that a Bantu-speaking population existed in the area prior to the Gikuyu's entry into the area in the sixteenth century.

⁴Cagnolo (1933, pp. 199-202) gives the dates as follows: Famine of Sweeping the Courtyard, 1840; Famine of Small Bones, 1852; Famine of Kemorori, 1864. As Muriuki's research is the more rigorous, the dates he suggests have been included in the text.

⁵In the published literature, the number of Gikuyu mihinga (clans) varies: Kenyatta (1938, pp. 5-6) lists nine, Routledge and Routledge (1910, p. 21) thirteen. Muriuki (1974, pp. 113-114) cites evidence to support his claim that there are ten clans. Nine of these are directly descended from the nine legendary daughters of Gikuyu and Mumbi, and the tenth clan claims descent from a woman from one of the other clans, who gave birth to children but remained unmarried. Gikuyu generally refer to their clans as being kenda muiyuru, "full nine", meaning ten because of their "...aversion, for magical reasons, from correctly counting either human beings or livestock, because it was widely believed that such an irresponsible act would be followed by calamity" (Muriuki, 1974, p. 113).

⁶Kenyatta (1938, pp. 6-8) discusses the matriarchal origins of Gikuyu society, and their original collective name of Rorere rwa mbari ya Moombi, the children of people of Moombi. With reference to Gikuyu mythology, he explains the change from a matriarchal to a patriarchal kinship system as follows:

It is said that while holding superior position in the community, the women became domineering and ruthless fighters. They also practised polyandry. And, through

sexual jealousy, many men were put to death for committing adultery or other minor offences. Besides the capital punishment, the men were subjected to all kinds of humiliation and injustice.

Men were indignant at the way in which the women treated them, and in their indignation they planned to revolt against the ruthless women's administration of justice. But as the women were physically stronger than the men of that time, and also better fighters, it was decided that the best time for a successful revolt would be during the time when the majority of women, especially their leaders, were in pregnancy.

The decision was hailed by the men who were very anxious to overthrow the rule of the opposite sex. At once the men held a secret meeting in which they arranged a suitable date to execute their plan. On the day appointed to carry out the initial stage of the revolt, the men started to act enthusiastically. They embarked on a campaign to induce the women leaders and a majority of their brave followers to have sexual intercourse with them. The women were unfortunately deceived by the flattery of the men, and blindly agreed to their inducements without knowing the wicked plan the men had made to overthrow the women's rule.

The men, after completing the first act, quietly waited for the result. After six moons had elapsed the men then saw clearly that their plan had materialised. At once they organised into groups and finally carried out the revolt without much resistance. For the brave women were almost paralysed by the condition in which they were. The men triumphed, took over the leadership in the community and became the heads of their families instead of the women. Immediately steps were taken to abolish the system of polyandry and to establish the system of polygamy.

The men also decided to change the original name of the tribe as well as the names of clans which were given under the matriarchal system, to new ones under the patriarchal system. They succeeded in changing the name of the tribe from Rorere rwa Mbari ya Moombi to Rorere rwa Gikuyu (i.e. Gikuyu nation or the Children of Gikuyu). But when it came to the changing of the clan names, the women were very infuriated and strongly decided against the change which they looked upon as a sign of ingratitude on the part of the men. The women frankly told the men that if they dared to eliminate the names which stood as a recognition that women were the original founders of

the clan system, the women would refuse to bear any more children. And to start with, they would kill all the male children who were born as a result of the treacherous plan of the revolt.

The men were very much afraid of the women's strong decision, and in order to avoid the conflict, they allowed the original names of the clans to remain unchanged.

⁷Muriuki (1974, pp. 37-39) discusses the confusion in the literature on the distinction between these peoples and concludes on the basis of his own data and that previously collected that 'Athi' and 'Dorobo' refer to the same ethnic group. See the discussion under note 8.

⁸As Muriuki (1974, p. 38) explains, the Gikuyu word athi, (hunters), was used both to refer to an individual whose means of livelihood was hunting, and to an ethnic group who practiced hunting and gathering. Further confusion, Muriuki considers, arose from the unwillingness of the Gikuyu to discuss the matter as it touched immediately on politically sensitive issues of how land was first obtained.

⁹It is of interest to note here that evidence presented before the Kenya Land Commission of 1934 indicated for mbari land claims in Fort Hall District (Metumi) that at least two of the claims in the Forest Reserve area were Dorobo claims, and in the area alienated to European farms, one was a mixed Dorobo/Gikuyu claim (p. 371). Muriuki notes that the fact that the use of the word 'Athi' to refer to early Gikuyu pioneers is not necessarily contradictory as some mbari histories do reveal descent from the Athi (1974, pp. 38-39).

¹⁰Before the Maxwell Committee (Kenya, 1929), elders from Gaki, in reply to a question as to whether land could be sold outright replied: "All that is ever conveyed is a temporary and provisional right to reside, to cultivate and to keep stock on a given area or areas. There is always right of redemption" (Appendix, p. 7). This situation was true also of Metumi. Only in Kabete, settled much later, were sales irredeemable. Leakey, before the Kenya Land Commission (U.K., 1934) indicated that such purchases from the Dorobo in Kabete often involved intermarriage and payments, generally of goats, and were often not completed in one generation (p. 662).

¹¹The term githaka is more widely used in the literature than ng'undu to refer to the land owned by the mbari (for example, see Sorrenson, 1967; Taylor, 1966b). Githaka, in its literal sense, means "bush", rather than a unit of land tenure. The Maxwell Committee Report (Kenya, 1929, pp. 8-9) notes the following:

The natives of the South Nyeri and Fort Hall Districts expressed the opinion that the word "Ngundu", which is

also known in Kiambu, is the more correct designation for the total unit, and that strictly only that part of it which is bush should be called Githaka, but they have adopted the technical use of Githaka as synonymous with Ngundu in order to come into line with Kiambu Kikuyu.

I will use the term ng'undu to refer to the land holding unit of the mbari for the area of Metumi (Fort Hall District).

¹²See note 10 of above.

¹³C. Dundas, 1915, "The organisation and laws of some Bantu tribes in East Africa", Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, Vol. 45, pp. 234-306. Cited in Middleton and Kershaw, 1965.

¹⁴The full reference from Taylor is: H.E. Lambert and Wyn Harris, 1945, The Kikuyu Lands, Nairobi, paragraph 3, p. 64.

¹⁵A.R. Barlow, 1934, "Kikuyu land tenure and inheritance," published in the Report of the Kenya Land Commission, London, p. 3023.

¹⁶Regarding the similarity between the Gikuyu of Kabete (Kiambu), Metumi (Fort Hall/Murang'a), and Gaki (Nyeri), Leakey notes the following:

The laws and customs of the Kikuyu of the Fort Hall and Nyeri districts are basically the same as those of the southern section of the tribe, but in matters of detail they differ so significantly that a generalized account could only be misleading (1977, p. XIII-XIV).

¹⁷Kertzer and Madison, 1981, define the age grade system as one based on the strata (childhood to old age) through which each person normally progresses during the course of a lifetime, each of which levels has specific responsibilities and expectations. In contrast, an age set: "...is an actual group of people who recognize common membership in a named grouping based on common age. Members of an age set generally remain in that same age set throughout their life course" (p. 110).

¹⁸Muriuki (1974, pp. 117-119) notes that considerable confusion in the literature has resulted from the fact that the word riika refers to four different groupings, as follows:

- (1) In its most general sense, riika refers to a generation, the moiety in charge of Gikuyu affairs at a particular point in time. The moiety was replaced every thirty or forty years at the time of the iruika or handing over ceremony, the last one being held in 1898-1899, at the end of the famine. At this ceremony the Mwangi moiety would replace, or be replaced by, the Mains/Irangu moiety, the two recognized, and alternating, moieties.

- (ii) Riika as used in this discussion refers to an initiation set comprised of all men and women circumcised in a certain year. Each set would be given a specific name.
- (iii) Several sets as identified in (2) above were grouped to form a "contingent" of an army or a "regiment". This was also given a name, often identifying the first initiation set which comprised it. This regiment was also referred to as a riika.
- (iv) In those years when only female initiation took place, the riika name referred to an exclusively female age set.

¹⁹The age grades identified by Fisher (1954, pp. 13-14) are as follows:

- (1) Infants (0-5 years) kaana (pl. twana).
- (2) Small children (5-7 years): for a boy, kahii (pl. ruhii)
for a girl kairitu (pl. airitu)
- (3) Older children (7-15 years):
- an uninitiated boy, kihii (pl. ihii)
- an uninitiated girl, kirigu (pl. irigu)
- (4) Adolescents (15-20 years), i.e.: subsequent to initiation, but before marriage:
- men: mwanake (pl. aanake)
- women: muiritu (pl. airitu)
- (5) Adults, general term: andu agima
A married man with children, muthuri, (pl. athuri)
A married woman with children, mutumia (pl. atumia)
- (6) Old people, general term: andu akuru
An old man, muthuri mukure
An old woman, mutumia mukuru
The term kiheti (pl. iheti) is used for a woman past child-bearing.

²⁰Wangu wa Mekeru achieved fame through her appointment as chief in the Weithaga area in 1902. See Chapter 6.2 for further discussion of her chieftainship.

²¹Orde-Browne, Assistant District Commissioner, in Chuka and Mwimbe prefaced the remarks quoted here by saying that the system of land tenure in his administrative area resembled that of the Gikuyu "very closely: the marked local differences in other matters do not seem to exist in this case" (quoted by Beech, 1918, p. 138).

²²The only possible exception to this concerned the case of homicide. In this case land was generally not redeemable,

although Beech (1917, p. 58) notes differences of opinion expressed on this matter in Metumi (Fort Hall District).

²³A muciarua is referred to as "a person born with a goat" (Murang'a District Agricultural Histories, MDAH, 1984, B, p. 32). A recent example of this practice was given by one informant (MDAH, 1984, J, p. 11, confirmed by M, p. 12) who referred to a neighbour. Nathan, who, as he had no son, brought up Munene, a boy from Ndia. Munene grazed Nathan's livestock for him, and later paid the bride price for him: "He was his son" (M, p. 12).

²⁴The literature refers to ndungata as exclusively male. Two informants in the 1984 interviews mentioned that women could be ndungata, but only for very short periods of time, because "women get married" (MDAH, 1984, A, p. 17, B, p. 30). Others interviewed denied the possibility of women having this status.

²⁵Fisher (1954, p. 218) indicates that in Kiambu (Kabete), the mugunda wa mathaga, the land given to a woman on marriage, is "a thing of the girl" as an elderly man explained. It belongs to the mbari of her husband and on the woman's death it is inherited by her children. If she has no male children, the plot is inherited by her co-wives' sons, or if none, her husband's brother. This is therefore marked contrast to the situation in Metumi and Gaki. Also in Kiambu (Kabete), a muthoni (pl. athoni), a relation-in-law, generally a son-in-law, could request land of his wife's parents. Such a request would not be refused in the case of need (Leakey, 1977, pp. 118-119). Such access to land was not heritable and occurred only in Kabete (Kenya, Maxwell Committee, 1929, p. 26).

²⁶Obbo refers here to M. Gluckman, 1950, "Kinship and marriage among the Lozi of Northern Rhodesia and the Zulu of Natal" in A.R. Radcliffe-Brown and D. Forde, eds., African systems of kinship and marriage, Oxford University Press, London.

²⁷See note 13.

²⁸Kamandé's mother = his wife.

²⁹See the discussion of Chapter 7.2, for an illustration of some of the problems faced in accessing land.

³⁰Taylor (1966b, p. 45) notes that manure was not carried to the fields because: (a) of difficulties in transportation; (2) the dead, including aborted or still-born children and afterbirths were frequently buried in the cattle enclosure and therefore it was "unconceivable" for anyone to dig deeply in a manure heap.

³¹Taylor, 1973, argues that the amount of meat in the Gikuyu diet was "probably substantial" (p. 2). On the basis of testimony given by Leakey before the Kenya Land Commission that "...a Kikuyu uses from

two to three goats in the course of a year", and that the average cold dressed weight of a goat was 28 lbs. (12.6 kg.) in 1958, Taylor calculates that, on average, "...each Kikuyu consumed eighty-four pounds of goat meat a year under the traditional system" (ibid.). This calculation may be considered an exaggeration as (a) the two to three goats to which Leakey refers may not all have been immediately consumed. As Taylor notes, quoting Leakey, goats were often used for gifts, not just for ritual purposes and it was only on occasions of the latter type that mburi were slaughtered; (b) it is more than likely that Leakey's statement, quoted above, which refers to "a Kikuyu" refers, in reality, to an adult male Gikuyu. Calculations for meat consumption should therefore be adjusted accordingly.

³²The source for this data is: "A history of Fort Hall, 1888-1943", an unpublished, anonymous, undated report, located in the Office of the Regional Government Agent, Fort Hall.

³³As a son married, as previously explained, a portion of a woman's cultivated acreage would be allocated for his wife's use. Thus, the actual acreage a woman cultivated would decrease as this process continued. Generally, the youngest son would inherit that piece of land left to his mother after his brothers had been allocated their share.

³⁴Ciancanelli (1980) discusses the impact of the ivory trade (and slavery) on gender relations among the Gikuyu. While several of the ideas she raises are interesting ones, the basic argument, particularly with respect to slavery, appears founded on speculative reasoning rather than fact. For example, her argument that polygyny was less common in the interior part of the plateau than in Kabete because it was on such outer fringes that society needed to defend itself more adequately against slavery (and therefore a higher proportion of the male population was of warrior status), is unsubstantiated by any written evidence. Similarly, her argument with respect to the impact of the ivory trade on social formation extrapolates from a tenuous base to suggest that the demand for ivory in the nineteenth century, and men's control of this and the goats obtained as "profit", permitted the development of individual wealth which in turn led to the increasing subordination of women (pp. 29-30). Muriuki (1974, p. 100), while noting the lucrative nature of the ivory trade for the Gikuyu, also notes that the trade was at its height only for a brief period in the mid-nineteenth century. Much further research clearly needs to be done in this field, particularly that specific to the area of study. Much of Ciancanelli's discussion draws on material from other source areas.

³⁵Kitching (1980, p. 13, footnote 1) casts aside evidence from Muriuki (1974) and Leakey (1956) that women monopolized trade with the Maasai prior to the colonial era, to base his conclusion that long distance trade was in the hands of men on Marris and Somerset's (1971) account of the trade between the Gikuyu of Mahiga location, Nyeri (Gaki) with the Purko Maasai. In doing this, he overlooks a

particularly pertinent paragraph of Marris and Somerset's discussion which unfortunately for their general argument is located as a footnote on page 33. It reads as follows:

Sometimes, when tension was high, caravans consisting only of women were formed. The wives of a famous trader are said to have led his caravans on several occasions, when it was too dangerous for him to travel himself. Even when fighting had broken out between the tribes, women could still travel safely to and fro. The women were good bargainers. When tension eased, they reverted to carrying goods as casual traders or porters in caravans led by men (Marris and Somerset, 1971, p. 33).

The period of trading to which Marris and Somerset refer was 1870-1890. They give no indication how frequently tension between the Gikuyu and Maasai resulted in women's control of the trade, it is difficult therefore to assess for this area the precise relative participation of women and men in the trade.

³⁶G.A. Fischer, 1885, Das Masai Land, Hamburg.

Chapter 6 Fort Hall District: processes of rural stratification,

1900-1952

Gicigo kia mugunda gitinyihaga

In translation:

A piece of land never shrinks (Gikuyu proverb.)

6.1 Introduction

The objective in this chapter is to identify salient processes active in increasing the degree of socioeconomic and gender differentiation within Gikuyu society subsequent to the imposition of colonial administration from the early 1900s. At the broadest level, it will be argued that the external (colonial) definition of Gikuyu territory, together with the demands of a colonial economy, had a profound effect on productive relations at both the extra-household (mbari) level and within the household in Fort Hall District, the area of Metumi. Changes in the dynamic between mbari/individual control over land, integrally related during the period 1900-1952 to the balance between farm and non-farm labour, form the basis from which to examine the growing inequalities within the area. As the authority of the mbari was increasingly brought into question within the parameters of a

curtailed land base, productive relations were increasingly conditioned by, and interrelated with, access to non-farm employment. At the societal level a process of land accumulation/marginalization was first set in motion and then fuelled by income from this source. At the level of the household, the presence or absence of males in off-farm employment, whether on the "Reserve" or off it, and whether such earnings were sufficient to lead to an expansion of the household's material basis of production through land purchase (or were used in total for the maintenance of subsistence), will have been significant in defining gender productive relations."

Expressed differently, gender relations of production will have varied not only according to the household's relative access to land, but also to the degree of reliance on non-farm income and participation in the process of the increasing spatial separation of production for use vis à vis production for exchange. Changes in the social and spatial division of labour were an integral part of the processes which led to the growing unequal distribution of land and thus to greater rural stratification.

In order to consider how these processes operated in Fort Hall District, the chapter will be organized as follows: Section 6.2 will, in brief, set the imposition of colonial administration in the context of ecological disasters of the late nineteenth century and forays into the area by the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC) and other trading elements; in Section 6.3,

the evolution of colonial policy towards African agriculture and the general trends of agricultural production between 1900 and 1952 will be discussed. Section 6.4 will then address the implications of colonial policy for the division of labour, particularly with respect to the distinction between products for use and products for exchange. Land, the growing inequalities in its distribution with the individualization of control, and the implications of this for women relative to men, will be discussed in Section 6.5. In the final section, an attempt will be made to draw from the arguments presented indications of the significance of spatial division/separation and organization of production for gender stratification.

6.2 From "punitive expeditions" to colonial territorial definition and administration

For Muriuki (1974), 1904 marked the end of organized Gikuyu resistance to British rule, a significant landmark in a process of "social upheaval" which was to climax in the 1950s with Mau Mau. The breakdown of this resistance may be attributed to the interaction of ecological with "man"-induced variables. My focus here, after a brief review of the "natural" disasters of the 1890s, is on the human factors, specifically, the colonial delimitation of Gikuyu territory and the incongruence between the imposed administrative system and local societal structure in order to set the context for an analysis of agricultural change from the early 1900s to 1952.

An assessment of the relative significance of ecological versus human factors in the disintegration of Gikuyu society as it existed in the 1880s must await research as thorough and sensitive as that of Kjekshus (1977) for Tanzania, 1850-1950. Suffice it to say at this point that the Gikuyu population (in common with other east African peoples at this time) was, in the 1890s, subject to a series of disasters. The first of these in the area of the Gikuyu concerned the coincidence of a drought, an outbreak of rinderpest and a smallpox epidemic in 1892-1893. Maasai, fleeing the effects of rinderpest which had destroyed their herds, entered Gikuyu country, chiefly into Kabete in the south, but also via passes in the Nyandarua range into Metumi and Gaki. Their presence in an area where smallpox was endemic led to the spread of an outbreak of a particularly virulent form of the disease which reached epidemic proportions (Dawson, 1981, pp. 126-127). Leakey (1977, p. 44) has estimated that the mortality rate reached 5-10% of the population, but as Dawson (1981, pp. 126-127) notes, the basis for this figure is unclear.

In 1884 locusts caused such severe damage to food crops on the Gikuyu plateau that Ainsworth wrote to his IBEAC superiors from Machakos as follows: "Kikuyu is in a far worse condition than we are: there is absolutely no food in the country at present"¹ (quoted by Muriuki, 1974, p. 155). Further locust invasions in 1895 and 1896 and an outbreak of influenza in 1897, which brought high mortality particularly among the old, were

major setbacks to recovery, but conditions worsened from 1897. The drought of 1897 affected a large part of central Kenya, being particularly severe in the area of the Kamba. The outbreak of two cattle diseases, pleuro-pneumonia in 1897 and rinderpest in 1898, together with locust attacks in Kabete, Ukambani and Taveta, marked the beginning of the Famine of Ruraya that lasted until 1900. The influx of Kamba into the Gikuyu highlands and the trading of food with them, with the Maasai, with trading caravans (particularly those associated with food buyers from the Uganda railway) and with IBEAC personnel at Fort Smith, seriously depleted food resources in the plateau, an area which, by early 1899, was also suffering from the drought. The spread of the jigger from 1897 by askari (soldiers) of F.E. Hall, an IBEAC official stationed at Fort Smith, led to further health problems, but it was the smallpox epidemic of 1898-1899 that had the most devastating consequences for the already weakened population. The outbreak was most severe in Kabete, but it spread northwards to Metumi and Gaki (Dawson, 1981, pp. 128-129).

Mortality estimates from these disasters vary. Dr. H.A. Boedeker before the Kenya Land Commission (KLC) in November 1932 estimated that 70% of the population in the area around Kiambu (Kabete) died (U.K., 1934, p. 698). John Boyes before the KLC also in November 1932 estimated that 95% of the total Gikuyu population were dying in 1899 (U.K., 1934, p. 725). Harry Thuku, also before the KLC, considered that 30-40% of the population died

in the Great Famine (U.K., 1934, p. 216), but it is unclear if his estimate included the lower percentage of deaths in Embu and Meru. An agricultural instructor at the East Africa Scottish mission at Kibwezi, John Patterson, estimated that two-thirds of the Gikuyu population died between 1898 and 1899 (U.K., 1934, p. 746). On the basis of the estimates, Dawson (1981, p. 129) considers that between 60-90% of the population in the south of the plateau died, while between 10-70% died further north. The young and recently circumcized adults were the most heavily affected. The population estimate of 135 000 given by Taylor (1966b, p. 24) for Metumi therefore most likely represents a considerable reduction in the previous population of the area.

These crises occurred at a time of increasing contact between the Gikuyu and other societies. While this contact was initially far greater from Kabete than Metumi or Gaki, it gradually extended northwards. Contact with Swahili traders was followed near the end of the nineteenth century by relations with IBEAC officials, then British administrators, settlers and missionaries. The nature of interaction between the Gikuyu and traders and travellers varied prior to contact with IBEAC. Despite rumours of the danger associated with travel through Gikuyu country, von Hohnel described relations as "very friendly" and stated that "...we could not help thinking that the traders who had had such difficulties in these parts had only themselves to blame" (1894, p. 298). Nevertheless on no less than three occasions, (two of

which were in Metumi), he had had to fight.

Relations with Europeans deteriorated rapidly after IBEAC's establishment of forts in southern Kabete, first at Kiawariua, Dagoretti, by Lugard in 1890, and a year later, at Fort Smith.² Two factors contributed to this situation: first, IBEAC's activities; and second, the alienation of land to Europeans. Muriuki (1974), discussing the interaction between Gikuyu and IBEAC at this time attributes the problems not only to the permanent nature of IBEAC settlement but also to the undisciplined nature of the askari (soldiers) employed by them, and the recruitment by force of Gikuyu as porters (p. 143). To a significant degree the conflict associated with this was confined to Kabete.³ But the decree in 1892 that Fort Smith (and Machakos) had to be self-supporting as a result of IBEAC's financial problems, led to the increasing involvement of the company in local affairs, in raids for food and "punitive expeditions". The policy of F.E. Hall, in charge of Fort Smith between August 1893 and 1899, to "divide and rule" through exploiting what Muriuki refers to as "...the traditional rivalry and enmity between the clans, ridges, or even individuals, inherent in Kikuyu society" (1974, p. 156), was instrumental in furthering division in Gikuyu society. Two "punitive expeditions" led by Hall in 1893 indicate something of his tactics: 90 Gikuyu were killed, 922 sheep and goats and 5 cattle were captured. Of his own men 2 were killed and 3 wounded. Such activities, together with the alienation of

land to settlers in southern Kabete which halted Gikuyu territorial expansion in this area, meant that resistance in Kabete was broken by 1885 (ibid.).

With the establishment of the East Africa Protectorate in 1895, Britain took over from IBEAC,⁴ but the same strategies of "punitive expeditions" and in many cases the same personnel continued. In the area of Metumi government influence was at first virtually non-existent. Instead traders, such as John Boyes, the self-styled "king of the Kikuyu", with his own army of Swahili and Kabete askari, flew the Union Jack and claimed to act in the government's name. With local allies such as Karuri wa Gakuri and frequent raiding expeditions for ivory and cattle, he served to split the Gikuyu of Metumi and Gaki into factions such that by the time of his arrest in November 1900, his activities and those of other traders had brought the area to the brink of civil war (Muriuki, 1974, p. 159). The anonymous writer of the History of Fort Hall 1888-1944 (HFH) noted that "...pacification of the country was slow and difficult" (p. 3) as a result of such activities, although Muriuki (1974) argues that subjugation was fast because of the collaboration of men such as Karuri who had previously associated with Europeans. Resistance was broken by the mounting of periodic punitive expeditions after the establishment of a fort at Mbiri by Hall in November 1900. The fort was re-named Fort Hall in 1901 after Hall's death and the district for which Fort Hall was the colonial administrative centre took its name from this.

Fewer "punitive expeditions" were carried out in Fort Hall district, but they were nonetheless brutal. One expedition, mounted against the people of Muruka between 2 September and 25 October 1902, resulted in the death of 200 Gikuyu and the capture of 300 cattle and 2000 sheep and goats. Of a colonial force of five British officers, 115 askari, 300 Maasai levies and Gikuyu warriors, one was killed and thirteen wounded (Muriuki, 1974, p. 162).⁵ In Kihumbuini, Meinertzhagen had given orders that, "...every living thing except children should be killed without mercy.... Every soul was either shot or bayonnetted." Young women and children had been removed from the village before the troops arrived, according to Meinertzhagen (1957, pp. 51-52). The action was in retaliation for the deaths of five Indian traders and a European settler; themselves the result of previous trouble with traders.

Once visible opposition was crushed, British administration was instituted through the creation of a new political order that, ignoring existing structure, gave power to newly created chiefs. In some cases the chiefs were athamaki (local leaders), in others they were people who were opportunists, who "...exaggerated their own importance" or had been mercenaries who had worked for the British (Muriuki, 1974, p. 167). Karuri who had gained political prominence from his association with John Boyes (and whose spearman had been used with Boyes' askari in raiding) was one example of such opportunism (CPRB, 1901-1926; Muriuki, 1974,

p. 161). Karuri in fact became Paramount Chief. At least initially such little control was exerted over the new cadre of chiefs and their Njama (hangers-on), that Muriuki observes: "According to all accounts, the hammering that the Kikuyu had experienced at the hands of the punitive expeditions was nothing compared to the constant harassment inflicted upon them by the mercenaries now christened 'chiefs'" (1974, p. 167). Not only were the chiefs unpopular because of their role in carrying out the requirements of the British administration for the collection of hut tax⁶ from 1902 onwards, for the recruitment of unpaid labour to construct roads, and for the building of bomas (encampments) (ibid., p. 177), but they were also involved in the forced recruitment of labour for settler farms and measures which led to their own enrichment. Karuri, for example, decreed that any potential initiate had to pay him a rupee before the period of muhingo (the closed period when no male initiation ceremonies were held) could be ended (ibid., pp. 177-178). Such power did Karuri exercise that his recommendation that a woman friend, Wangu wa Makeri, be appointed "headman" for Weithaga was accepted by the British in 1909. Wangu wa Makeri's biography indicates that she clearly had an ability to lead and had achieved considerable popularity in her own right. The biography also notes that she came from a family of women leaders, her grandmother, Nyamunyi, being a prominent leader in the Wanjengi Gituto region. Yet, the anonymous biographer writes: Nyamunyi did not "...rise to rule

men because there was no force strong enough to contradict the traditions, so she only remained at that level" (Kenya, National Archives, 1974).⁷

Later chiefs, such as Ignatio of Location 8, tended to be chosen on the basis of their mission education (Sorrenson, 1967, p. 45). Their accumulation of land and association with British interests led to continued resentment on the part of the majority of the population: their role was a constant reminder of a political structure that had been bypassed. Hostility towards the institution was so great that in time "...the chief became the political and emotional target of anti-colonialist activity" (Muriuki, 1974, p. 169).

The system of administration under the chiefs or headmen set up by the British was based on the location, of which there were thirty three between 1908-1912.⁸ Subheadmen were responsible for the sublocation, the smallest administrative unit. The areal extent of an administrative unit was based on matura (village groups), but whereas each itura had its own elders recognized by the people, they had no official status under the new system (FHDAF, 1926, p. 9). An attempt was made to revive the kiama (council of male elders) following a meeting by Sir Percy Girouard and the chiefs of Central Province in 1910 (CPRB, 1910). Native Tribunals were established in 1913 in order to support an institution less incongruent with Gikuyu social organization. Yet, although the Native Tribunals were to have the power of

judging cases of land dispute or minor criminal offences, they were not locally-based (FHDAR, 1926, p. 10). Kiama, as discussed in Chapter 5, operated at several levels, but in essence they were comprised of mbari elders, and thus had very local jurisdiction. In contrast, Native Tribunals were established in Fort Hall, at Kandara and Kigumo in the south, and Kangema and Kiharu in the north (ibid.). Prior to 1930, the four divisional chiefs acted as presidents of the tribunals, the vice-president and elders being chosen from a panel of elders for six months at a time. One "Superior Tribunal" existed for the district as whole, over which five elders presided (FHDAR, 1933). The final authority, however, was the District Officer for each division; he visited the courts regularly, heard appeals, and in some instances revised decisions (FHDAR, 1924). Only in 1930, following the Native Tribunals Ordinance, were chiefs accorded a lesser role in the system, no longer presiding over the tribunals. Yet even here, in Nyeri and Fort Hall (although not in Kiambu), the tribunals, Sorrenson (1967, p. 45) notes, "...were organized along the lines of British courts even to the extent of dressing up the elders in wigs and gowns."

Mbari elders, although remaining "a great power in the land" and consulted on cases of land litigation, inheritance or bridewealth (FHDAR, 1948, p. 8), were in reality ignored as a societal structure until their cooption as part of the campaign to combat soil erosion (FHDAR, 1945, see Section 6.3).

Even the creation of a Local Native Council (LNC) for Fort Hall District in 1925, as a countermove to Harry Thuku's Young Kikuyu Association (Sorrenson, 1967, p. 46), was hardly an expression of democratic representation. The LNC in Fort Hall replaced the Native Advisory Committee (NAC), formed in 1921, whose purpose was to bridge the gap in communication between the District Commissioner (DC) and the people. Of a membership of seventeen, the missionaries appointed three members and the Government and Tribunals the rest. The NAC powers were "solely discussive" (FHDAR, 1921). Of the twenty five member LNC, thirteen were nominated by the government and twelve were elected by the people via four polling stations. Electors were all adult Gikuyu men (FHDAR, 1925, p. 5). In reality, all nominees had to be approved by the government (Sorrenson, 1967, p. 46). Elected members tended to be mission-educated men and young business men (Kitching, 1980, p. 188, drawing from Kikuyu District Annual Report, 1925, p. 4).

Sorrenson suggests that the powers of the LNCs (renamed African District Councils in 1951) were circumscribed mainly on the basis that the DC was the chairman, and had the power of veto, and a District Officer (DO) acted as Secretary and Treasurer. Although LNCs could collect local taxes and pass bye-laws, these were subject to approval by the Governor-in-Council (ibid.). In contrast, and despite these constraints and those resulting from their limited revenue, Kitching (1980) sees them as having had a

significant impact on local development, and defines them as follows:

...an agency through which the energies of 'educated' and 'progressive' Africans emerging from the mission schools would be channelled, and acting first in opposition to, and then in co-optation of, the activities of 'militants' associated with the Kikuyu Central Association.... In particular, they did much to expand the very limited educational facilities available to Africans through the provision of grants to missions for the payment of teachers' salaries, and later through the amassing of funds from which schools were built (p. 188).

Their activities were, however, much broader than this and involved many agricultural activities, including the construction of maize mills, demonstration plots and seed farms, the hiring of African agricultural and veterinary extension personnel and the provision of loans for African business. Their expanded role in the 1930s and 1940s led to their position as a major source of wage and salary employment in the Reserve (ibid., p. 190).

With respect to their role in furthering a process of rural stratification, two aspects of the LNC are worth noting. First, increasingly from the 1930s onwards, LNC members were drawn from an educated elite and it was their definition of "progress" for Africans that was implemented by LNC action. This view, Kitching argues, was framed in petit-bourgeois terms: "...the agent and beneficiary of progress and improvement was always the progressive, educated individual African" (ibid., p. 193). No contradiction was seen between individual material increase and "progress" for "fellow" Africans. Yet substantial evidence

suggests close links between LNC members, teachers, clerks, chiefs, headmen and traders, both because a man might fulfil several of these roles simultaneously and probably almost all of them at some stage of his life, but also because of the close bond between members of a small educated elite many of whom would have attended the same schools (ibid., p. 194). To a very real extent the LNCs, together with other colonial administrative structures, the chiefs, headmen and Native Tribunals, served to create a "ruling class" (Sorrenson, 1967, p. 47) that was frequently far from representative of the mass of the population. This caused the DC, Fort Hall for 1944-1945, P.C. Osborne to note:

...the fact that on occasions the LNC has shown itself patently out of touch with and sometimes even directly opposed to the views of the tribe clearly demonstrates that for all its success and achievements it is not by itself regarded as completely fulfilling the demand for political self-expression (FHDAR, 1944, p. 3).

In the light of growth of the Kikuyu Central Association and its successor, the Kenya African Union, and their claim to represent the Kikuyu people, Osborne's comment is a remarkable understatement. This is outlined by the hostility in Fort Hall District engendered by the LNC proposal in 1944 to pass bye-laws which would have recognized the practice of irredeemable land sales. Such a bye-law was clearly in the interests of those who had been able to accumulate large landholdings on account of their access to non-farm income whether from military or other employment sources (FHDAR, 1938, 1944; see Section 6.5).

Second, the role of the LNC as the sole source of capital loans until the 1950s was significant in supporting the enterprises of the educated elite not just in terms of local business on which Kitching (1980) focuses, but also, subsequent to the introduction of the Agricultural Betterment Fund, in terms of assistance to the so-called "better farmers". The Fund was set up with the promulgation of Maize and Produce Control in 1942 and gained its revenue from a cess on each bag of maize or other produce sold to the Control. Although a substantial part of the trade in produce was channelled through the black market (see Section 6.3), the LNC by 1943 had accumulated sufficient funds to pay all recurrent costs of primary education in Fort Hall and to undertake to construct a primary school (FHDAR, 1943, p. 8). It appears that there was considerable conflict between the priorities of the Gikuyu members of the LNC who wished to spend the Fund on measures such as increased educational facilities, loans to "better farmers", (so designated by the Department of Agriculture), LNC seed farms, demonstration plots and manure factories (see Section 6.3), and the District Officers whose main concern was with an anti-soil erosion campaign (FHDARs, 1948-1952; Kitching, 1980, pp. 194-195). Although the loans to farmers were very small (under K250 each) and reached only an extremely small percentage of smallholders, they were important in that they represented farmers' first access to credit and "...therefore the first use of money as means of production which did not come from

domestic savings or from off-farm earnings by household members" (Kitching, 1980, p. 195). While the significance of this may be debatable, the Agricultural Betterment Fund's support of the enterprises of the "ruling elite" to a disproportionate extent (the "better farmers" for example, were frequently members of the LNC, *ibid.*) indicated yet another element leading to the differentiation of this stratum of society.

Efforts to institutionalize councils at more local scales in Fort Hall District met with limited success. In 1946, Locational Councils were set up in some locations and were comprised of "a small number" of elected men. But their mandate was limited to advising on the distribution of wattle permits and licences for shops and lorries (FHDAR, 1946). They flourished or faded according to the whims of the chief (FHDAR, 1950). No Divisional Councils were established but quarterly Divisional Barazas were held from 1946 onwards which served to publicize the actions of the LNC (FHDAR, 1946, 1948, 1950).

What emerged then from the colonial administrative structure was the creation of a stratum increasingly removed from the rest of society. Except for those elders who served on the Native Tribunals, those who had previously held positions of authority in society were bypassed. With the exception of Wangu wa Makeri who for a brief period held a position of authority under the new system, women were unrepresented in the administrative structure. The visibility of their pre-existent organization was even less

than that of men's to the colonial authorities, and showed itself only on the occasion of relatively extreme provocation when women "rioted" (see Section 6.6).

While colonial administrative structures helped to create differentiation within Gikuyu society, the alienation of Gikuyu land to European settlers and the creation of a "Reserve" for African occupation led to the further breakdown of the mbari system. As part of an economic strategy to reduce the deficit incurred through the construction of the Uganda Railway from Mombasa to Kisumu, land was to be allocated to European settlers. The transportation of their agricultural produce was to make the railway a viable economic enterprise. Following the suggestion of Sir Charles Eliot that "empty" land be given to white settlers, the Land Regulations of 1897, replaced in 1902 by the Crown Lands Ordinance, opened the way for the restriction of African territory (Sorrenson, 1968; KLC, 1934, p. 461).⁹ It was from 1903 that Gikuyu land was involved in this process (U.K., 1934, p. 120). Table 6.1 indicates the amount of land lost to the Gikuyu Province.¹⁰ It should be noted that Crown Land was not available for use by the Fort Hall Gikuyu but was in essence pending allocation for further settlers.

The Gikuyu of Fort Hall lost land on their eastern borders and forested land on the slopes of the Nyandarua range, the latter being designated as Forest Reserve. Neither of these areas had been "vacant". The evidence of Chief Kimani wa Thuo, for example,

Table 6.1 Land allocation in Kikuyu Province (square miles; square kilometres appear in parentheses)

Total area	North Nyeri	Meru	Embu	South Nyeri	Fort Hall	Kiambu	Nairobi	Total
1. Of Nairobi municipality and Townships	39 (62.4)	10 ^A (16.0)	6 ^D (9.6)	-	3 ^F (4.8)	7 ^G (11.2)	35 (56.0)	100 (160)
2. Held by European settlers	977 (1563.2)	-	-	-	292 (467.2)	419 (670.4)	118 (188.8)	1806 (2889.6)
3. Held by Asiatics	-	-	-	-	-	-	7 (11.2)	7 (11.2)
4. Of Forest Reserves	412 (659.2)	244 ^B (390.4)	218 (348.8)	528 (844.8)	133 (212.8)	229 (366.4)	-	1764 (2822.4)
5. Of Crown land (unallocated)	579 (926.4)	626 ^C (1001.6)	-	205 ^E (328.0)	185 (296.0)	2 (3.2)	38 (60.8)	1635 (2616.0)
6. Of game reserves	-	-	-	-	-	-	44 (70.4)	44 (70.4)
7. Of railway station reserves (a) within township (b) outside townships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	148 acres (59.9 ha.) 293 acres (118.7 ha.)
8. Of guarantive reserves and outspans	3 (4.8)	-	-	-	3 (4.8)	-	-	6 (9.6)
9. Native areas	-	2046 (3273.6)	1084 (1734.4)	743 (1188.8)	580 (928.0)	398 (636.8)	-	5211 (8337.6)
10. Of other government Reserves	9 (14.4)	-	-	-	12 (19.2)	16 (25.6)	4 (6.4)	41 (65.6)
Total areas	2019 (3230.4)	3286 (5257.6)	1308 (2092.8)	1476 (2361.6)	1208 (1932.8)	1071 (1713.6)	246 (393.6)	10614 (16982.4)

Table 6.1 (continued)

Source: Commissioner of Lands, Nairobi, before the KLC, 1932, U.K., 1934, p. 214.

Notes:

1. Holdings of missionary societies in Kikuyu Province (acres):

a) holdings in non-native areas (excluding Nairobi Municipality)	14188
b) Nairobi municipality	1625
c) Other townships	5
d) Holdings in native areas	586
Total: (approx. 25.5 square miles, 40.8 square kilometres)	16405

These figures are included under other headings.

2. A, D, F - Native Reserve.
3. B. 55 square miles (88 square kms.) of this area is Native Reserve.
4. C - earmarked for extension of Meru Native Reserve.
- E. Mwea grazing area. Earmarked for extension of South Nyeri Native Reserve.
9. Two square miles (3.2 square kms.) of this area are Native Reserve.

before the Kenya Land Commission contradicts that of a settler, Lord Cranworth, with respect to the land in the east. The latter had argued that the Gikuyu Reserve covered far more land than the Gikuyu had previously occupied (U.K., 1934, p. 477), whereas Kimani explained that this land had been used for grazing and firewood collection as an integral part of an mbari economy. Before the KLC Kimani stated that:

At the time of the 1898 famine we left this area, and retreated westwards, and when we returned we found that the surveyor had been in our absence and demarcated farms (U.K., 1934, p. 112).

Not only was land lost from the east and 6094 people moved (the Kikuyu Central Association Fort Hall Branch, before the KLC, U.K., 1934, p. 121), but losses of access to salt licks, to iron ore sites and of a major trading route to Ukambani were also involved (ibid., and, for example, Kimani wa Thuo, p. 112, Parmenas Mockerie, p. 439; Macharia wa Kimungi, p. 112, before the KLC, 1934). Regarding the stock route to Ukambani, Gikuyu were no longer allowed to use the old Mathengeta track as this now passed between two European farms, that of Maragua and the Saba Saba Estate. For reasons couched in terms of veterinary necessity to prevent the spread of stock diseases, the only route allowed passed via Thika adding two days to a journey from Kitui to Fort Hall (M.R.R. Vidal, D.C., FHD, before the KLC, U.K., 1934, p. 576).

In the forest area, grazing rights in forest glades, and

access to salt licks, timber, red-ochre deposits, and honey collecting areas were lost (eg. Ndaimainu wa Mathie before the KLC, U.K., 1934, p. 111). Ostensibly, the rationale behind this move was protection of the watershed yet, as Macharia wa Kimungi observed before the KLC, such concern did not prevent the operation of commercial sawmills in the area, revenue from which was not used for the benefit of those no longer allowed access. Rather, the latter now had to obtain a Kshs. 21/- permit for every thirty loads of firewood carried out (U.K., 1934, p. 112).

Land was also lost within the Reserve, for example, for the boma (administrative encampment) at Fort Hall, for missionary societies, and for the Maragua-Tana Electric Light and Power Scheme. Thus, although mbari claims to land in Fort Hall District were far fewer than those in Kiambu, they were nevertheless substantial: of a total district population of 175 330, it was estimated that one in three Gikuyu considered "he" had a claim to land outside the Reserve. Before the KLC of 1934, 15 claims representing 38 mbari were made in the forest zone, and 20 claims representing 103 mbari were made to land in the eastern zone or missions. In each case claims were based on inheritance of land¹¹ (U.K., 1934, pp. 370-371).

Of the land alienated in the east, most of the land went to three groups of settlers: Messrs. Swift and Rutherford at Punda Milia were allocated 11 000 acres (4455 ha.); Sisal Ltd. at Makuyu had 25 000 acres (10 125 ha.); and Posho Ltd., 19 000 acres (7695

ha.). Sisal and coffee became the main crops grown here and on the smaller (500 to 2000 acres, 202.5 to 810 ha.) estates near Thika (CPPRB, 1916).¹²

Contributing to the hostility engendered by land alienation was the process by which Europeans acquired land: many Gikuyu knew nothing about what was going on. In the absence of a lands office in 1904, Hausburg, who obtained land near Punda Milla in 1904, described the process as follows: "You drew a sketch plan of a river and a tree, and whatever struck your fancy, and you drew a square round the particular bit of land and sent that in for approval" (Muriuki, 1974, p. 173 quoting from the KLC, U.K., 1934, p. 394). Frequently, land so alienated was not cultivated for a number of years, and at least initially, Gikuyu were often "allowed" to stay on the land. The case of "Paul Clark's farm", 669 acres, gained prominence before the KLC just because of this "invisible" process of land transference. In this case it was twenty-one years after the land was first alienated that the Gikuyu knew about it. The land had changed European owners twice before Clark began to cultivate in 1925. It was completely surrounded by unalienated Gikuyu land (U.K., 1934, p. 9).

Given the number of claims before the Commission, each was not investigated separately. The solution proposed by the KLC was to effect compensation to the "tribe" as opposed to the individual. It was the former that was assumed to have suffered from the alienation of land rather than the individual who had

only been temporarily inconvenienced. Individuals were expected either to have recouped their losses within the Reserve or to have moved to the Rift Valley to become squatters. Yet at this time, as the KLC noted elsewhere in its report, 110 000 Gikuyu, (one-fifth of the population) lived outside the Reserve (Kiambu, Fort Hall District, Nyeri), an indication of the inability of this land unit to support the population within the demands of a colonial economy (Sorrenson, 1967, pp. 24-25, on the basis of the KLC, U.K., 1934, Chs. XIII-XV).

Within Fort Hall District the Commission recommended adjustments to the Reserve area which included the addition of 6.79 square miles (10.8 square kms.) (including Paul Clark's farm, two unalienated farms, 1000 acres (405 ha.) of land under Samar Ltd. which was still occupied by Gikuyu, a further 22 acres (8.9 ha.) to be bought from this company, and 4 acres (1.62 ha.) of Forest Reserve). A total of 9.14 square miles (14.6 square kms.) were judged by the Commission to be have been lost by Fort Hall Gikuyu. No compensation was given for mission lands which were assumed to benefit the Gikuyu directly, nor for that land in the east which was considered "vacant" after the 1898 famine. The balance of the land (2.32 square miles, 3.71 square kms.) was supposed to be found from land beside the Reserve, but if this were not possible, it was to be "merged" with the land allocated to the Gikuyu as a whole in North Yatta to allow for "economic expansion". In addition, Gikuyu in Fort Hall District were to be

given K2000, through the LNC, "...as compensation for disturbance and loss of amenities due to disturbance" (FHDAR, 1934, pp. 4-5).

Over time the majority of the KLC's recommendations were carried out (FHDAR 1935, 1936, 1937). In 1938, the area of Fort Hall Township was reduced (FHDAR, 1938). This did little, however, to assuage the bitterness felt by the Gikuyu who united through the Kikuyu Central Association to express their unresolved grievances and continued state of insecurity (Sorrenson, 1967, pp. 24-27). At the level of the mbari, the option for a growing population to expand its territory was curtailed in so far as the shifting of frontiers, either eastwards or in the south, in Kabete, was concerned. Instead, a process of migration both of whole families to settler farms and of males, frequently to urban areas, was set in motion which was integrally related to the accumulation/loss of land to individuals and the weakening of mbari authority.

6.3 Agriculture: policy and production

The evolution of policy towards the Gikuyu and other "Reserves" in colonial Kenya can only be understood in relation to the demands of a colonial economy whose foundation lay in the development of settler agriculture. Employment rules which enabled this latter sector to procure African labour on terms favourable to it; access to transportation and other infrastructure; preferential, or often exclusive, access to

markets; research, extension and credit facilities directed to their needs, all continued to support European large farm agriculture (Heyer, 1981). In the context of limited alternative opportunities through which to obtain cash for hut and poll taxes, either through the production of crops of marketable value or through non-farm employment in the Reserve, male migrant labour linked the household economy in Fort Hall District with both the European agricultural sector and urban centres.

In this section of the chapter, my concern is to discuss trends in agricultural production in the district from the early 1900s to 1952 with reference to colonial agricultural administrative practice as a preface to a discussion of changes in relations of production, particularly the sexual division of labour and control over its product. These changes served to differentiate increasingly between social and domestic labour and varied according to the emerging strata of Gikuyu society. No attempt will be made to give a comprehensive analysis of agricultural change in the district. Nor will I try to assess the precise impact of colonial policy on agriculture. As Kitching (1980) observes, the lack of agro-economic surveys in the area precludes this. On the basis of existing data, there is no accurate way of defining whether changes in crop types or husbandry practices emanated directly from colonial policy or whether they would have occurred spontaneously without it (Kitching, 1980, p. 103). The approach taken will focus on the

salient issues generated during the process of change to give some indication of the increasing intensification and nature of agricultural production in Fort Hall. Discussion will centre on changes associated with: food and "cash" crop production; crop and livestock management; soil conservation; prices and trade; and agricultural extension.

6.3.1 Crops: for use and for exchange

Fazan's "Economic Survey of the Kikuyu Reserves" carried out in 1931 and prepared for the KLC (U.K., 1934, pp. 971-1039), despite all the shortcomings of the data, represents the first systematic attempt to quantify agricultural production in the area of the Gikuyu. The survey was carried out at the end of a decade which had witnessed a great expansion in the cropped area and agricultural production of Fort Hall District (FHDARs, 1923-1931). Comparison of Tables 6.2 and 6.3, together with Table 6.4 indicate something of the nature of the changes that had taken place since 1902. Both sets of data must, however, be treated with caution. Meinertzhagen's (1957) maps of eight holdings in the lower-middle ecological zone, on which Taylor's (1966b) calculations are based, indicate separate cropping areas for each of the identified crops. Yet the majority of these crops would have been intercropped, which poses questions as to the accuracy of their acreages. Perusal of the notes to Fazan's tables identifies possible sources of error here, as many of the figures represent extrapolations

Table 6.2 Fort Hall District: the family holding, 1931 average
acreage per household of 5.26 members (average hectareage in
parentheses)

	average	%
maize	1.22 (.49)	40.3
beans	0.49 (.20)	16.2
European potatoes	0.03 (.01)	1.0
sweet potatoes	0.44 (.18)	14.5
yams, arrowroot, cassava, vegetables	0.83 (.34)	27.4
sugar cane	0.12 (.05)	4.0
wattle	0.38 (.15)	12.5
bananas	0.32 (.13)	10.6
Total under crops	3.03 (1.23)	100.0
Total necessarily fallow (1/2 acre and above)	0.60 (0.24)	
Stock feed	0.50 (0.20)	
Homestead	0.10 (0.04)	
Total agriculturally developed	4.23 (1.71)	
Proportion of grazing commonage available per household	7.19 (2.91)	
Total land of all kind available per household	11.42 (4.62)	

Source: calculated from Fazan, 1934, op. cit. p. 989.

Table 6.3 Port Hall District: samples of crops and hectares, 1902

Crop	ha.	Holding								Total								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	ha.	z							
millet	.31	31.4	.19	42.7	.38	24.9	.57	31.6	.38	22.1	.36	25.9	.25	12.6	.44	21.5	2.88	24.2
bananas	.05	17.8	.18	40.9	.41	26.5	.42	23.3	.27	15.5	.28	19.8	.45	22.7	.24	11.9	2.42	20.3
maize	.15	15.3	-	-	.06	3.7	.21	12.0	.58	33.6	.15	10.6	.41	20.6	.28	13.4	1.83	15.4
beans	.19	19.4	.07	16.4	.12	7.6	.22	12.4	.25	14.4	.41	28.7	.18	9.1	.22	10.9	1.66	13.9
sugarcane	.04	4.1	-	-	.13	8.1	.16	9.0	.10	5.6	.10	6.9	.44	22.5	.17	8.3	1.13	9.5
sweet potatoes	.12	12.0	-	-	.11	7.1	.09	4.7	.13	7.8	.46	32.8	-	-	.60	29.2	1.10	9.3
cassava & yams	-	-	-	-	.34	22.0	.13	7.0	.02	0.9	.06	4.0	.25	12.6	.10	4.7	0.88	7.4
	0.98	100.0	.45	100.0	1.54	100.0	1.79	100.0	1.72	100.0	1.41	100.0	1.96	100.0	2.05	100.0	11.9	100.0

Source: Based on Taylor's (1966b, p. 41) calculations from Meinertzhagen's (1957) map.

from limited data. Tabulations are based, for example, on population statistics gained from hut counts made for tax purposes and assumed, at this period, a ratio of children to adult population of 37% (FHDAR, 1934, for example). It was later (1948) found that such measures underestimated the Gikuyu population by 25% (Kitching, 1980, pp. 38-39). It is thus likely that average household size in 1931 is underestimated and that the acreage available per household was significantly overestimated. As note 2 to Table 6.4 indicates, the estimation of produce sold outside Fort Hall District in 1931 is particularly open to question.

As Kitching (1980, p. 39) points out, it is therefore very probable that the proportion of cropped land was greatly underestimated and that both what he refers to as "surplus product" (that used for exchange) and "socially necessary product" (of use value) are underestimated. Further, although Fazan did himself draw attention to the misleading concept of "average household", no indication is given as to the scale of differentiation in the balance between production for use and for exchange between households in the Gikuyu districts, nor of the proportion of households engaged in commercial production.

Kitching (ibid.) observes further that Fazan's "sales" category is misleading in that some of the production for use value and consumed within the districts would in fact have been sold by some households and bought by others.

These drawbacks notwithstanding, it is apparent from the

Table 6.4 Fort Hall District: agricultural production, for use and for exchange, 1931 (tons)

	For use		For exchange		Rate KShs.	Value ₦	Total tons
	tons	%	tons	%			
maize	6 223	27.3	16 552	72.7	55	45518.00	22 775
beans and other pulses	4 667	63.7	2 657	36.3	77	10229.45	7 324
European potatoes	3 111	72.7	1 170	27.3	44	2574.00	4 281
sweet potatoes	12 446	86.2	2 000	13.8	37	3700.00	14 446
millets	4 668	85.4	800	14.6	110	4400.00	5 468
yams, arrowroots, vegetables and cassava	1 773	91.7	160	8.3	37	296.00	1 933
sugarcane	38 189	95.5	1 800	4.5	13	1170.00	39 989
bananas (units of 1000 bunches)	3 972	95.0	210	5.0	500	5250.00	4 182
wattle	-	-	4 166	100.0	35	7290.5	4 166
Total	75 049	71.8	29 515	28.2		80427.95	104 564

Source: Calculated from Fazan, Table C, KLC, U.K., 1934, p. 981.

Notes: 1. Computation of agricultural production for use, for Fort Hall District, is based on the amount of food a family of 5.26 persons consumes:

- 1 lb. maize, 3/4 lb. beans, 1/2 lbs. European potatoes, 2 lbs. sweet potatoes, 3/4 lb. millet daily;
- 2 lbs. weekly of either yams, arrowroot, vegetables or cassava;
- 2 bunches of bananas a week.
- 1 ton of sugarcane a year.

2. Sources used to estimate the amount of agricultural produce sold: comparison of railway returns; the examination of records during the food control period (chiefly maize); enquiries from millers and prominent shop keepers, and the inspection markets provided the main basis for determining the proportion of produce exported to other "native areas" or to squatters in settled areas.

3. Checks on the above figures were made by observation of farms in the district and worked out for a "typical" holding.

tables that a major shift was in the process of occurring in the staple diet. Although maize, yellow and black varieties, were grown prior to the colonial era, these were of very limited importance (Taylor, 1966b, p. 39).¹³ Millets, as discussed in Chapter 5, together with legumes had formed the basis of the diet. The introduction of Hickory King (Zea Mays) and other white maizes after the famine of 1917-1918 to replace the lower-yielding but more nutritious indigenous varieties (Leakey, before the KLC, U.K., 1934, p. 684), began a change of profound significance to the local economy (Taylor, 1966b, p. 48). The move was clearly supported by the Agricultural Department through the multiplication of seed in the several seed farms in Fort Hall District. Annual Reports from 1922 note the free distribution of seed to different locations, for example Njiiri's, Ndungu's and Wakomo's locations in 1933, chosen on the basis of the chiefs' interest in agricultural innovation (FHDAR, 1933). An earlier report stated that the new maize seed was "...taken by the natives with considerable enthusiasm" (FHDAR, 1922). Maize became the staple crop grown in both seasons and, according to one observer "...attained an importance unjustified by its merits and disastrous to good farming" (Humphrey, 1945, quoted in Taylor, 1966b, p. 48).¹⁴

While analyses such as Kitching's discuss the rapid adoption of maize in terms of its demand from urban centres, from settlers to feed their resident labour and from 1914-1918 as part of the

war effort (Kitching, 1980, pp. 29-31), (Table 6.4 indicates for Fort Hall that approximately 72.7% of the maize produced was exported from the Reserve in 1931), changes in the sexual division of labour associated with high rates of male outmigration were of further explanatory significance. This is brought out in Fisher's (1954) discussion of crop change: the cultivation of millet makes far heavier demands on women's labour time and energy than the cultivation of maize (p. 231). Numerous participants in the 1984 survey in Murang'a gave the reason for change as the fact that neither women nor children (who were in the 1950s in increasing numbers entering school) had time to scare birds (MDAH, 1984). In a situation of increasing intensification of women's agricultural responsibilities, at least among a certain proportion of the households, a less time-consuming but high yielding crop would have proved attractive.

The drawbacks associated with this change were not unnoticed by the district administration and by the 1940s there appears to have been an effort to reverse, at least partially, the trend. The Annual Report for 1945 (p. 28) refers to the "constant propaganda" to plant millet in the short rains as it gave a more reliable return than maize during this season. The replacement of millet by maize, in view of the greater adaptability to conditions of drought of the former crop¹⁵, meant increased vulnerability during periods of drought. Efforts to ameliorate this situation through campaigns to plant cassava (FHDAR, 1947, 1949) in addition

to improved varieties of bulrush millet (FHDAR, 1935, 1938) met with little success. Instead, bananas, arrowroots and sugar cane remained as "standbys" in case of famine (FHDAR, 1949).

The extent to which the seed farms, increasingly run by the LNC in cooperation with district agricultural officers, were instrumental in fostering innovation is unclear. Yet in at least the case of the introduction of exogenous varieties of beans, European potatoes and European vegetables and various fruit trees, they did play some role from 1927 onwards. Njahi (lablab beans) were, for example, gradually replaced in importance by the French bean and haricot bean (Phaseolus vulgaris) (Taylor, 1966b, p. 48). While higher prices were important in explaining this change, the growing susceptibility of lablab beans (and pigeon peas) to insect attack was also significant (Fisher, 1954, p. 231). Attempts to introduce wheat (FHDAR, 1925, 1929) and rice (FHDAR 1933) through the seed farms met with no lasting success.

Although sweet potatoes, in 1931, were of far greater importance to the diet than other root crops, European potatoes were rapidly gaining prominence. They were distributed from the seed farms from 1930 onwards (FHDAR, 1930), yet production may well have preceded this. Kitching (1980, p. 29) notes the importance of potatoes supplied by Gikuyu for the Nairobi market from 1900 onwards, but it is unclear whether this was restricted to Kiambu.¹⁶ The increase in these potatoes at the expense of sweet potatoes was decried by Leakey on both nutritional grounds

and because the European potato produces no fodder for goats. In a situation of decreasing grazing land, and inflation in the number of goats required as bridewealth¹⁷, this change, he argued, contributed to the process of soil erosion (Leakey, before the KLC, U.K., 1934, p. 669, 689).

Other innovations were not associated with the colonial agricultural department and concerned indigenous plant varieties. Their "invisibility" to those compiling district annual reports, and thus the lack of even estimates of production, makes it impossible to quantify their significance. Perhaps the most important of these changes concerned the introduction of a new variety of arrowroot that took less time to cook. The ngirigache variety which spread from 1938 onwards takes only three hours to cook, which compares with ten hours for nyamondiri or mwanake varieties (MDAH, 1984, L, p. 1; H, p. 2, 6; I, p. 1; J., p. 6; K, p. 3; X, p. 1). Different varieties of banana (for example, the kiganda) also spread independently of the colonial system (MDAH, 1984, J, p. 6). Other crops invisible to colonial statistics decreased in importance: indigenous green vegetables identified in Table 5.1 were in part replaced by nutritionally inferior European vegetables such as the cabbage (MDAH, 1984, J, p. 24).

It is apparent from Table 6.4 that by 1931 maize was the main export earner for the district bringing, in £45 528.00 or 56.6% of the total earnings. This was followed by income from beans, £10 229.45, 12.7%. These figures illustrate the fact that until the

early 1930s, intensification of agricultural production in the Reserve was virtually confined to the production of surplus from food crops of use value. Income from this source varied according to selling price, and the annual reports are replete with references to wide price fluctuations. The figures per ton of produce in Table 6.4 represent the low prices prevailing during the Depression. They were significantly higher during the period of the 1914-1918 war and then between 1923 and 1928 (Kitching, 1980, pp. 33-35).

Within a few years of the introduction of wattle, acacia mollissima, in 1922, the proportion of earnings from maize declined (FHDAR, 1929). In 1931 wattle produced only 9.1% of the export earnings from Fort Hall District (Table 6.4) but by 1937, despite the Depression, production had almost trebled (Table 6.5).

Unfortunately no data are available to estimate its importance as an export earner relative to maize, but the Annual Report for 1937 estimates that "not less than £25 000" was paid to Fort Hall

producers for the bark in that year. The Memorandum on Native Agricultural Development in the Native Reserves (Department of Agriculture, Kenya, 1937, quoted by Kitching, 1980, pp. 63-64)

gives an estimate of 44 000 acres (17 820 ha.) planted to wattle by 1937 in Fort Hall. In the 1920s, expansion of wattle was slow, the distribution of seedlings being restricted to chiefs, headmen, clerks and teachers, but after the purchase by Forestal (a U.K. based multinational) of the British East Africa Wattle Estates and

Table 6.5 Fort Hall District: volume and value of exported produce 1935-1952 (tons and \$30)

	Maize		Beans		Potatoes		Sorghum		Miller		Pigeon Peas	
	Vol.	Val.	Vol.	Val.	Vol.	Val.	Vol.	Val.	Vol.	Val.	Vol.	Val.
1935	10 152 ¹	-	1 088	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1936	4 356	-	361	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1937	4 908 ²	-	211 ³	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1938	16 867 ⁴	-	1 907 ⁵	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1939	10 842	-	2 322	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1940	-	20 066	-	3 915	-	1 787	-	-	-	-	1 295	-
1941	9 296	20 824	1 362	9 915	336	1 109	-	-	-	69.5	584	-
1942	7 662	23 600	1 374	11 543	-	-	-	-	-	-	500	-
1943	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1944	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1945	982	4 000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1946	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1947	6 849	41 107	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1948	1 797	13 036	46	437	-	-	1.3	77	-	1 106	-	-
1949	1 797	14 034	214	2 007	-	-	-	-	78	875	-	-
1950	125	955	295	4 785	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1951	3 025	40 238	17.5	366	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1952	3 507	58 928	902.7	18 191	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 6.5 Fort Hall District: volume and value of exported produce 1935-1952 (tons and K£) (continued)

	Bananas (bunches)		Charcoal (bags)		Firewood		Tobacco		Fruit* Vegetables		Wattle bark	
	Vol.	Val.	Vol.	Val.	Vol.	Val.	Vol.	Val.	Vol.	Val.	Vol.	Val.
1935	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13 571	-
1936	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10 277	15000-20 000
1937	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11 953.8	c.25 000
1938	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7 565	-
1939	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11 784	34 000
1940	-	-	-	-	-	-	45	143	-	-	-	-
1941	-	3 000	-	-	-	3 500	42.7	165.5	-	-	10 997	32 273
1942	-	7 000	-	-	-	4 000	-	150	-	-	13 265	41 120
1943	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1944	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13 281	48 665
1945	-	7 000	-	-	-	7 000	163	708	-	-	10 442	49 595
1946	-	0	-	-	-	8 000	97	438	-	-	11 904	68 911
1947	-	-	-	-	-	-	123	383	-	-	9 739	80 473
1948	160 000	12 000	40 000	3 000	36 500	22 000	163	915	10	280	11 701	117 257
1949	160 000	11 250	40 000	4 000	36 500	31 025	163	886	23	478	15 351	157 632
1950	160 000	20 000	40 000	5 000	36 500	32 850	84	413	204	2 290	16 681	169 287
1951	240 000	36 000	45 000	9 000	36 500	33 000	93	532	876.5	13 624	10 215	134 625
1952	-	-	38 540	5 781	-	-	30	170	706	11 683	15 321	183 702

Table 6.5 (continued)

Source: FHDARs, 1935-1952. All value figures use an estimated 'average' price for the year.

Notes:

1. This figure includes 71 446 bags of maize and 42 256 bags of maize meal. (1 bag = 200 lbs.)
2. FHDAR 1938 indicates that 7 915 bags (706 tons) passed through Inspection Centres in 1937. The figure used here comes from FHDAR 1937 and includes 53 267 bags of maize and 1 706 bags of maize meal.
3. FHDAR 1938 gives a figure of 1 008 bags (90 tons) for the amount of beans exported from the district.
4. FHDAR 1939 gives a figure of 188 909 bags (16 867 tons) exported in 1938, whereas the FHDAR 1938 gives a figure of 32 103 bags (2 866 tons), but refers to 1938 as a record year for maize passed through Inspection Centres. For this reason, the 1939 figure has been included.
5. FHDAR 1938 gives a figure of 15 429 bags (1 378 tons) for 1938. The higher figure given by FHDAR 1939 has been included as the Annual Report 1938 notes that record amounts of beans passed through Inspection Centres.

Extract Company at Kikuyu, with support from the Department of Agriculture, production increased rapidly (Kitching, 1980, pp. 64-65).¹⁸ Three interrelated factors in Kitching's view led to the rapid adoption of wattle.

First, wattle had value both for use and for exchange. Its wood could be used for building, as fuel and for the production of charcoal which in the context of restricted access to Forest Reserves, was significant. In fact, during the years of the Depression, charcoal, rather than the bark, brought in more income for a household which resulted in continual conflict between the smallholder and the company. In an effort to maximize sales of charcoal, wattle trees were frequently cut down while still "immature" for tannin extraction (Kitching, 1980, p. 66).

The unit price of wattle bark to producers during the 1930s, Kitching observes, was never higher than and was more frequently below that of the main food crops, yet its attraction lay in the fact that it had a high yield per unit of labour and per unit of land, and by the 1930s both of these were significant constraints to the expansion of smallholder agriculture. With reference to land, Kitching observes that although a ton of maize or beans might have fetched more than a ton of wattle bark in 1937, the former would also have taken much more land on which to grow (1980, p. 67). Wattle, as a non-labour-intensive crop, was attractive to households where males were increasingly involved in wage labour migration. This latter characteristic of wattle

production caused some anxiety on the part of the DC, Fort Hall in 1939. In the Annual Report for that year J.H. Clive wrote:

A worrying feature of this crop is the tendency of natives in the upper locations to plant their ithaka with wattle, retire as squatters to Naivasha and Nakuru, and then allege that there is no room for them in their Reserve. (FHDAR, 1939, p. 40).

Nevertheless, the district administration supported production through the construction of drying sheds; through sending local "instructors" to give demonstrations as to the thinning of the trees, stripping and drying both on LNC seed farms and through individual farm visits; through the bulk issue of improved seed; and through improvements in marketing facilities (FHDAR, 1932, p. 24). In 1933 five wattle inspection stations were set up in a bid to improve the quality of exported bark (FHDAR, 1933, p. 34). At a later stage a quota system was introduced and producers registered (FHDAR, 1947).

Some effort was also made on the part of the colonial administration to introduce cotton and tobacco as cash crops to the areas of lower altitude during the 1930s. Cotton seed was distributed to Chief Kigwaine and Chief Ndamaiyu's locations in 1935 and in that year 178 acres (72.1 ha.) were planted by 711 farmers (FHDAR, 1935). The cotton campaign continued through to 1937 when a total of 1380 acres (558.9 ha.) were planted by the beginning of that year. Unfavourable weather conditions in the latter part of 1937 and a fall in price resulted in a sharp

reduction in acreage (FHDAR, 1937, 1937).

In association with British-American Tobacco, 24 acres (9.72 ha.) of tobacco were introduced in Chief Kigwaine's location in 1937 (FHDAR, 1937). This acreage had increased to 42 (17.01 ha.) by 1940 when 99,823 lbs were exported from the district (FHDAR, 1940, see also Table 6.5).

Until 1951, Fort Hall smallholders were prohibited from growing the most valuable cash crop of the time, coffee. The prohibition, enforced by the administration, was the result of pressure from European settlers who feared that were Gikuyu allowed to plant coffee, disease from their hypothetically poorly maintained trees would spread to the settler farms (Sorrenson, 1967, pp. 41-42). In addition, the settlers would have lost the labour they required at the critical harvesting periods. Considerable resentment was vocalized in the district as a result of the denial to plant (for example, FHDAR, 1950).

In 1951, however, the first coffee trees were introduced, a measure that the district agricultural officer saw as essential if the district were to be self-supporting. In that year, 3600 trees were planted and four nurseries set up with assistance from the Betterment Scheme. In 1952 a further 7000 trees were planted. Initially, 100 trees was the maximum allowed per grower, but on proving satisfactory in their management, a grower was permitted a further 200 (FHDAR, 1951, 1952).

The balance between crops grown for use and for exchange, as

well as the choice of crops, will have varied according to the socioeconomic position of the household and the relative terms of trade. Kitching (1980) argues that poorer households during the period of the 1940s, when inequalities in Central Province were increasing, would probably have had to adopt a high-risk strategy which entailed the production of cash crops such as wattle (in Fort Hall) and the purchase of at least part of their subsistence needs from the market. For reasons given previously, wattle will have in general provided a more secure means of ensuring a livelihood on a smaller holding than production of cereals alone. With this strategy, however, the poorer household was not protected from sudden rises in the price of cereals relative to that of wattle. In contrast, for larger holdings cash crops would have been grown in addition to crops for use, and thus a farmer incurred far less risk owing to a lack of dependence on the market for subsistence crops (Kitching, 1980, p. 127).

6.3.2 Crop and livestock management

The population of Fort Hall District, estimated at 135 000 in 1903 giving a possible density of 240 per square mile (150 per square km.) (Taylor, 1966b, p. 24), had increased to 210 960 (347 per square mile, 216.9 per square km.) by 1941 and 303 646 (515.8 per square mile, 322.4 per square km.) in 1948 (FHDAR, 1941, 1948). Table 6.6 illustrates the implications of this in terms of available and cultivable acreage for Fort Hall

District households in 1931 and 1948.

Table 6.6 Fort Hall District: available and cultivable acreage of households, 1931 and 1948 (hectarage in parentheses)

	Population	Density per square mile (per sq. km.)	No. of households	Available acreage per household	Cultivable acreage per household
1931	171 852	291.9 (182.4)	32 671	11.42 (4.63)	9.1 (3.69)
1948	303 646	545.8 (322.4)	57 723	6.46 (2.62)	5.14 (2.08)
Increase or decrease	+77%	+77%	+77%	-43.4%	-43.4%

Source: Kitching, 1980, p. 120, calculated from East Africa, Population Census 1948 p. 4 and Fazan, op. cit., U.K., 1934, p. 975 and p. 984.

As population density increased, concomitant with the commercialization of agricultural production, the proportion of fallow and grazing land decreased relative to that under cultivation. Fazan estimated that in 1931 119 095 acres (48 233.5 ha.) of Fort Hall District, or 31.9% of the total acreage, was cultivated (Fazan, U.K., 1934, p. 984). In 1939 the DC, FHD, considered that the cultivated acreage had increased between 100% to 200% in the preceding ten years (FHDAR, 1939, p. 37). By the

time of Fisher's study in 1952, the period of fallow had decreased to about two years, from an earlier average of seven or more years. At the same time, the period during which a piece of land could be cultivated before "impoverishment" had decreased to about seven cropping seasons (3½ years) by the early 1950s (Fisher, 1954, p. 257). For Clive, DC, FHD in 1939, the relationship between this process and the growing problem of soil erosion was direct. Referring back to the campaign of 1928 to increase land under cultivation when he was Agricultural Officer in the district, he admitted in the Annual Report (1939, p. 37) that: "Now we seem to be reaping what was then sown."

Crop management practices such as pure cropping, recommended by the colonial Department of Agriculture, further exacerbated the breakdown in soil structure associated with a decreased length of fallow. The previously universal practice of intercropping had ensured that when one crop was harvested some form of ground cover, often sweet potatoes, remained, thus protecting the soil. Department of Agriculture advice to plant crops separately in order to obtain high yields (for example see FHDAR, 1934, p. 39) flew in the face of local experience accumulated over hundreds of years. "The net result", Leakey observed before the KLC:

...as I have seen it happen, is that the maize is harvested just when the dry season is well on and there is enough sun to ripen it, and it is pulled up by the stalks. Then very often in the dry season you get one of those very heavy thunderstorms, and the soil is washed out into the river, and that is a result of the natives following the methods of the Agricultural Department (U.K., 1934, p. 676).

The increased acreage under wattle, by inhibiting undergrowth, did not ease the situation. Crop yields were low (Table 6.7). On the basis of Fazan's data, Kitching (1980, p. 38) has constructed estimates of "average" household production for Fort Hall of 3.2 tons of produce per annum, of which 0.9 tons was exported. The productivity of labour power, he argues extrapolating from this, was low.

Some attempt was made by the Department of Agriculture to remedy the situation, in addition to the soil conservation measures discussed below. This took the form of recommending the construction of compost pits and the increased use of boma manure (from the homestead area). In a situation of increasingly fragmented holdings, transport of these forms of fertilizer must have been difficult, but in 1936 the number of 28 549 farmers is given as having made compost pits. The Annual Reports indicated that in 1937 a further 5423 pits were dug, in 1938, 7956, in 1939, 2542, in 1940, 5642. In 1948, two bulk compost factories were started, subsidized by the Betterment Fund (FHDAR, 1948). A move towards the stall feeding of livestock on some farms led to the easier collection of manure, and Annual Reports from the mid-1930s note the increased application of this to the cultivated land.

An effort was also made to increase the production of fodder in the District from 1935 onwards (FHDAR, 1935). The loss of grazing land with the alienation of the eastern areas to settler farmers had taxed the resources of many mbari to the extent that

Table 6.7 Fort Hall District: acreages cultivated and how cultivated, 1931
(hectareage given in parentheses)

A) Seasonal Crops	Total tons produced per annum	Yields per acre per season	Resultant acres seasonally distributed		Average acreage under seasonal crops
			Long Rains	Short Rains	
maize	22 775	4 bags	39 946 (16 178)	22 760 (9 218)	
beans + other pulses	7 324	2½ bags	16 113 (6 526)	16 113 (6 526)	57 129 (23 137)
milletts	5 468	3½ bags	-	17 185 (6 560)	
European potatoes	4 281	2 tons	1 070 (433)	1 070 (433)	
B) Perennial Crops					
Total tons produced per annum	Yields per acre per annum	Average acreage under perennial crops	Stockfeed ¹ Estimated at		Total acreage in cultivation (including homestead)
			½ acre per homestead	at 1/10 acre per household	
sweet potatoes	14 446	1 ton			
yams, arrow-roots, cassava	1 933	2 tons			
sugarcane	39 989	10 tons	42 364 (17 157)	16 335 (6 616)	3 267 (1 323)
wattle	4 166	½ ton			119 095 (48 233)
bananas (in units of 1000 bunches)	4 182	400 bunches			

Source: Fazan, op. cit. (U.K., 1934, p. 983).

Notes: 1. This includes: sweet potatoes planted for goats, or where they are allowed to graze; the remains of other perennial crops; bare patches of stumps of recently felled wattle; plus clumps of trees, patches of grass for thatching and very occasional fruit (pineapples, limes, guavas).

it was increasingly difficult to provide adequately for goats, sheep and cattle. Although sweet potatoes continued to be important (FHDAR, 1941), the increased use of land for European potatoes whose leaf was of no use as fodder must have further exacerbated the situation (Leakey, KLC, U.K., 1934, p. 669), particularly in the context of increasing numbers of livestock in the district from the mid-1920s through to circa 1935. Fazan's estimates of livestock for 1931 give figures of 76 124 cattle and 125 130 sheep and goats for Fort Hall District (U.K., 1934, p. 986). This is likely to be an underestimation of livestock owned by Fort Hall households, first, because many livestock at this period would have been loaned out for grazing in Maasailand or Ukambani, and second, on account of resistance of the owners to reveal the exact numbers of their livestock (Kitching, 1980, p. 219).

The rapid increase in numbers of livestock was related to the changing terms of trade with neighbouring pastoral peoples and what Kitching has referred to as "bridewealth inflation" (ibid., p. 225). Between 1928 and 1934 pastoralist areas neighbouring the Gikuyu plateau had been experiencing drought. The need to obtain cereals for stock feed (considered by Kitching to be much more important than trading for food for the pastoralists themselves) led to terms of trade which favoured the grain producer, despite the fact that the Depression had decreased the money prices of food crops. As a result, the Gikuyu obtained large numbers of

livestock by barter, and in addition, for those households whose incomes were rising, money was generally invested in livestock at this time; and thus herds were increased by this means (Kitching, 1980, pp. 220-222).

The major use of livestock up to the mid-1930s was for bridewealth. With the intensification of agricultural production, primarily through women's labour, the centrality of bridewealth "transfers" was, Kitching argues, strengthened. This was the case whether the labour involved served to enlarge the marketed surplus in the case of wealthier households, or whether it concerned the maintenance of subsistence on a reduced land base in the case of poorer households. Kitching summarizes the process as follows:

For with increasing female labour input into agriculture, women's labour power became increasingly prized by all household heads, and so its transfer became increasingly costly to effect. This is what lay behind the persistent rise in bridewealth payments, which was in turn a powerful factor in motivating unmarried young men to seek wage labour (1980, p. 221).

In Kiambu, bridewealth payments had escalated from a previous average of 30 sheep/goats to 60-110 in the early 1930s (Leakey, before the KLC, U.K., 1934, p. 689). The price in Fort Hall was somewhat lower (the DC, Fort Hall in 1945 indicated that bridewealth payments were 90 goats, 9 cows or "anything up to KShs. 1600/- FHDAR, 1945, p. 5) with the result that significant numbers of women from this district were marrying Kiambu men, the latter clearly taking advantage of the lower bridewealth payments (FHDAR, 1932, p. 4).

In the 1940s, the contradiction posed by increasing livestock on a land base which could not support them and continuing bridewealth "inflation" was brought to a head with the return of squatter livestock to the Reserve and the demands of a war economy for food crop expansion. It was resolved through the substitution of money for livestock in bridewealth payments. This practice served both to individualize responsibility for the bridewealth payment (the prospective husband assuming full responsibility rather than relying on kin support) and to increase tension between the generations, as parents insisted on certain high levels of remuneration (Kitching, 1980, pp. 225-226).

6.3.3 Soil conservation

For reasons that have already been given, soil erosion became a problem of increasing dimensions by the mid-1930s. Plans to deal with it occupied more and more attention of the Department of Agriculture from this date. A variety of strategies were tried with limited results. For Osborne, DC in the district 1944-1945, "...the scale of work is entirely disproportionate to the problem which grows yearly with an alarming and geometrical progression" (FHDAR, 1944, p. 7).

The lack of success of the Department of Agriculture has been attributed in the literature to the political machinations of the Kenya African Union (KAU). Sorrenson (1967), for example, refers to the political implications of anti-soil erosion measures and

the compulsory nature of their implementation:

Government attempts to arrest erosion and improve farming in the reserves were suspected by the KAU politicians as being designed to avoid the provision of land elsewhere and especially in the Highlands; there was even the fear that such measures as contour terracing were intended to make more land available in the reserve for Europeans (pp. 90-91).

He goes on to point out that these fears were unfounded, but the allocation of land for roads, railways, schools and the East African Power and Lighting Company continued to cause unease (ibid.).

What is unacknowledged in Sorrenson's account, but is evident in a reading of the Annual Reports for the district for the period 1936 to 1950, is the reliance on women's labour for the success of the programme. In a literature which is otherwise opaque to the question of gender, except for the odd desultory reference to the "conservatism" of women (for example, FHDAR, 1924, p. 4; 1946, p. 44)²⁰, the visibility of women and their modes of organization in the context of soil conservation is noteworthy. It was in fact through women's organization of ngwatio and gutumana wira that soil conservation, and particularly the construction of mitaro (contour ditches), was carried out. It was very unpopular not just because of the effort and expense, but also because of the frequent possibility that the land could be "redeemed" and the investment of time and labour lost (Fisher, 1954, p. 282).

Two types of anti-soil erosion measures were carried out.

The first needed no skilled supervision and involved: the protection of riverbanks, gullies, roadsides and steep slopes; the control of grass fires; manuring; and the destocking of eroded areas. The second required relatively close technical supervision and involved such measures as bench terraces and contour planting (FHDAR, 1936, p. 66). Much of the early work carried out by the Department concerned the planting of strips of fodder grasses (Napier, Wagutu, Moigoya) across the contour (FHDAR, 1937). Later, bananas were included in the recommendation in an effort to increase the measure's popularity (FHDAR, 1941, p. 8). The practice of constructing miconjo (lines of vegetable matter placed along the contour line) continued but was insufficient to keep pace with the erosion (FHDAR, 1944). Later measures to construct bench terraces involved far more labour and supervision.

"Free communal labour" was used in some locations between 1936 and 1938 to carry out these measures in association with Assistant Agricultural Instructors who had been hired for this purpose, but by 1938 the issue had become so politicized as to render this impossible (FHDAR, 1936, 1937, 1938). The administration imposed fines for burning off crop residues in the early 1940s to try to reduce this practice (FHDAR, 1942), and in 1943 persuaded the LNC to pass a motion that smallholders "...should perform up to ten days unpaid forced labour a month on anti-soil erosion work" (FHDAR, 1943, p. 2). This motion was not, however, supported by the Chief Native Commissioner or the

Provincial Commissioner and the Fort Hall Department of Agriculture was "forced" to fall back on the mwaki system of the Gikuyu. Under this system, participation in soil conservation work was ensured through peer pressure, an individual who did not contribute being ignored by the others until some form of retribution (generally the preparation of food) had been made (ibid.). Mbari elders were made responsible for the work to be carried out and had some say in where labour would be allocated. According to the Annual Report for 1945 people showed "willingness" in working under this system and in that year approximately 14 000 acres (5670 ha.) were terraced. Only isolated instances of refusal to cooperate were noted (FHDAR, 1945). With the support of personnel hired through the Fort Hall Betterment Scheme in 1946, communal efforts were expanded. The Annual Report indicates that in that year 6900 miles (11 040 kms.) of terracing were completed compared with 3470 miles (5552 kms.) in 1945. There were apparently some setbacks, however, caused by returning soldiers who refused to participate in terrace construction and who also tried to prevent their wives from doing so (FHDAR, 1946, p. 6). In general, there was reluctance by men to participate as management of the holding was considered to lie with women (Fisher, 1954, pp. 282-283).

The "willingness" of people to participate in communal terracing was increasingly doubtful in 1947. In that year, the KAU, under the chairmanship of Jomo Kenyatta, at a large meeting

held at Fort Hall station (approximately 10 000 were in attendance), decided that in future no women should take part. By July 21st, no women showed up for terrace construction, and the men withdrew their labour by mid-August (FHDAR, 1947, p. 1). From the Annual Report for 1948 it would appear that there had been at least some district-wide return to terracing. The Report notes that the work organization for terrace construction relied primarily on women's ngwatio groups, so much so that when they refused to participate in 1948, "...the men had little heart for the whole business" (FHDAR, 1948, p. 11). But in one part of the district, Chief Peterson's location, women "rioted" over the issue. The DC described their action as a "Revolt of the women." 2500 women from this location met at the district headquarters on 14 April following an LNC decision in March that all women should return to soil conservation work. In his report, the DC noted that the reason women gave for their action concerned their household and agricultural responsibilities which left them no time for communal labour on two mornings a week. The DC met with the women at Chief Peterson's on April 17th to persuade them to return to soil conservation work in vain. In May, the women then announced they would not plant grass either. The DC described subsequent events as follows:

Now this was serious. For as many years as anyone can remember twice a year when good rains have fallen all able bodied men and women turn out to plant grass. Chief Peterson until that point somewhat afraid of his people

and reluctant to take action girded up his by no means lean loins and went into action. He issued orders to certain women to plant grass on their own particular land and they refused. He promptly arrested them on May 4th and they were as quickly released by a large crowd of their own sex brandishing sticks and shouting Amazonian war-cries. I was in the area and served all the women with summons to appear before the Native Tribunal Fort Hall on May 7th. The cases were heard on May 8th and despite the fact that the sympathizers had been warned not to come and create a disturbance in the station nevertheless after a fine of Sh.10/- had been imposed on each delinquent a large crowd of angry females descended on the offices. By this time we had had enough of this monstrous regiment of women and after warning them twice to leave peaceably they were forthwith driven out of the Township by the Police using light sticks (FHDAR, 1948, p. 2).

The DC considered that the women were "...spurred on to the demonstration" by "young men" from Nairobi whose aim was to disrupt progress "...in an area which for a gross display of overcultivation, lack of fertility, and over-grazing cannot be bettered anywhere in the District (ibid., p. 1).

In attempting to estimate the autonomy women exercised in refusing to participate in soil conservation measures vis à vis the influence of subversive elements from Nairobi, there is need to consider not only the general political climate and the clear antagonism in what it was thought women "should" do by the KAU and the LNC positions, but also the particular environment of Chief Peterson's location (15) and that of Chief Ndungu where there was also trouble (Location 1). Both areas are of relatively poor agricultural potential and it is possible that both were characterized by exceptionally high rates of male outmigration. Thus it may be hypothesized that women's complaint of lack of time

to provide their labour was indeed sufficient motivation for action. The colonial administrators' myopia as to the ability of women to organize effectively, on the other hand, may then have caused them to seek explanation elsewhere. In a situation of increasing political volatility in the district, their focus turned to the visible (male) indications of unrest in Nairobi.

In 1949, the district administration introduced a new scheme to combat soil erosion. A target for terrace construction was set for each location, proportional to the number of adult males enumerated in the 1948 census. The total for the district was set at 1350 acres (546.8 ha.) per month (FHDAR, 1949, p. 13). Few details are given in the Annual Report for 1949 as to how the new system was to operate or be enforced. The DC, F.A. Lloyd, notes only that no "communal labour" on a "muhiriga" (clan) (presumably, mbari (subclan)) basis was carried out although ngwatio was practiced, that the system has "worked so far" and that there were "few visible signs of agitation". What unrest there was, it appears, "continued underground" and concerned women's participation (ibid., pp. 13-14).

Some anti-soil erosion work was also carried out through paid work gangs under the district Betterment Fund (FHDAR, 1950, 1951). It was not until the forced labour of years of the Mau Mau and the Emergency, however, that the scale of terrace construction was to equal and then surpass that of 1946.

6.3.4 Prices and trade

Reference may be made to Tables 6.5 and 6.8 to illustrate two features of the Fort Hall economy during the period up to 1952 which are of relevance to the discussion of this chapter. The first concerns the volume and value of particular crops traded outside the district; the second has to do with the price range to which crops were subject during this period.

Fundamental to an understanding of both tables is the relationship between marketed output and supply conditions, predominantly depending on the weather. Thus, while Kitching's (1980) detailed analysis of smallholder response to price rises of specific crops in Central Province is well-substantiated, he also argues that the marketed output bears no "discernible" relationship to price fluctuations. Instead, it is strongly related to extremely localized climatic conditions (1980, p. 114). Earlier in his study he quotes from the Annual Report, Fort Hall, 1933 to indicate something of the complexity of this factor:

There was an excellent short rain crop of maize, beans and millets. But there was an almost complete failure of long rain crops in the lower locations, and on the poorer shambas [plots] in the middle and higher locations. The bean crop failed practically everywhere, but above 5,000 feet a maize crop about 50% of normal was obtained and between 4,000 and 5,000 feet about 30%. This with a fair crop from pigeon peas and the quantities of food in store arrested any season's food shortage (FHDAR, 1933, p. 27).

In an economy where drought was "...a powerful and continually present factor disrupting the 'supply' side of the market",

Table 6.8 Fort Hall District: unit prices of crops, 1930-1938 (KShs.)

	maize (per 200 lb. bag)	beans (per 200 lb. bag)	potatoes (per 180 lb. bag)	wattle (per ton, dried)
1930				45-60
1931	4/80	6/80	3/60	35
1932	3-8			40-50
1933				
1934	3/30-13	4-25	3-12	29-31
1935	1/70-6	4-5	3-6	30-39
1936	2/10-9/25	4-11/50		39/20-48/18
1937	6/80	11	5	max. 79/52
1938	4/50-6/40	7-10/20		61/60

Sources: Fazan, op. cit., U.K., 1934; Annual Reports, Native Affairs Department and Annual Reports, Fort Hall District, 1930-1938, as compiled by Kitching, 1980, p. 71.

Kitching argues that the boundary between surplus/subsistence, between production for exchange need and for use, was constantly shifting (1980, p. 35). Yet it is not only this shift which is evident in the pattern portrayed in Table 6.5.

Subsequent to the introduction of the Maize and Produce Control in 1942, all such trade external to the district was required to pass through this channel. It is this trade that has been measured in Table 6.5. In response to the generally far higher prices of the Nairobi free market or to prices in Ukambani, it is evident that over the years far more produce was channelled through the black market than through Control. For example, the Annual Report, Fort Hall, includes the observation that very little maize was bought in 1948 by Control because of the well-developed trade with the Kamba. The DC bemoans the loss of potential revenue from this source, through the cess, for the Betterment Fund. In 1950, the DC noted that of an estimated district surplus of 30 000 bags from the long rains crop, only 1400 were delivered to Control, the rest going to Machakos and Kitui either direct or via Indian traders at Thika and Saba Saba. This meant a loss of over £4000 to the Betterment Fund. With good road connections to Ukambani, the low prices paid by Control, and the impossibility of enforcing the Maize and Produce Regulation, Fort Hall was, according to the DC, "...ideally situated for the illegal export trade" (FHDAR, 1950, p. 9).

As a result of this, it is impossible to assess accurately.

the relative proportions of the various crops exported, with the exception of wattle for which there was only one buyer. On account of the black market trade, maize is likely to have assumed far greater importance as an export commodity than is evident from Table 6.5. Unfortunately, no data are available to shed any light on the size of this trade or the implications of the different forms of marketing for men and women's control over it.

In his discussion of the growth of African trade and business, Kitching (1980) does stress the distinction between local or subsistence trading from that related to export trade. The latter, he argues, was now in the hands of men:

This bifurcation was the equivalent, in the sphere of exchange relations, of the control exercised by male household heads over the bulk of the household's surplus product with women being 'relegated' to control only over the 'subsistence product' (1980, p. 178).

According to this schema, male traders sold the major part of surplus household production to male specialists involved in the export trade (ibid., p. 176). One may only speculate that in a household where the male "head" was absent, women may have been able to benefit directly from sales to Control or on the black market.

The only observation made in the Annual Reports of women and external trade during this period concerned women's formation of "egg circles", and it is an interesting one. The DC noted in 1949 that: "An unusual development is the apparently spontaneous

formation of an egg circle by a hundred and thirty five women in Chief Ndungu's location. No trading has been done so far, but future developments are awaited with interest" (FHDAR, 1949, p. 30). By 1951, women's cooperative egg circles were active in locations 1 and 4 (FHDAR, 1951, p. 23). Clearly, women did take some initiative in establishing marketing connections.²¹

One further observation of interest concerns the role women played in controlling food prices in the local markets. A frustrated DC wrote of the situation with respect to the trading in maize in markets:

Control was impossible as when an official entered a market a wail would go round and the ladies would then sit on the measures and nothing short of brute force would make them move (FHDAR, 1943, p. 2).

The purpose of including Table 6.8 is to illustrate the degree of fluctuation in crop prices during and between years in order to indicate something of the nature of the risk adopted, in particular by poorer households, in growing wattle and relying at least in part on the market for subsistence requirements. For such a household, the sale of a percentage of harvested cereals at one time of year in response to a price rise or to meet an immediate need, as Kitching (*ibid.*, p. 127) argues, would be rational even if the household needed to purchase subsistence requirements later, so long as favourable terms of trade between cereals, and, for example, wattle pertained. But this balance

could easily be, and frequently was, upset by local weather conditions.

One result of increasing reliance on the market for subsistence, at least among the poorer households who were far less able to cope with price volatility, would have been the possibility of not being able to obtain a balanced diet throughout the year (Kitching, 1980, p. 113). Evidence cited by Taylor (1973) indicates that the changes in crop type (to white maize, less nutritious beans, European potatoes and other European vegetables at the expense of millets, local beans, sweet potatoes and indigenous green vegetables) led to a diet in the 1940s that was deficient in calories, calcium, protein and vitamin A (p. 4).²² This will undoubtedly have reinforced any trend towards poorer nutrition caused by reliance on the market for subsistence for those households opting for a strategy of inedible cash crop production for the market.

6.3.5 Agricultural extension

The contents of a "programme" for agricultural production as it evolved in Fort Hall have been identified above. The objective here is to indicate briefly the structure of the agricultural service and its mode of operation.

Analyzing present constraints to the effective operation of the Kenyan agricultural service, Leonard (1977) has referred back to the "hub and wheel" strategy of colonial agricultural

administration: the "control" of several African frontline workers by a colonial officer at the "hub" (p. 199). The result was to produce a rigidly hierarchical authority pattern in the service which was to be inherited by the post-colonial Department of Agriculture. It also led to the development of an extension service whose implicit ideology based on middle class British values biased the service away from those who in reality were responsible for the day to day management of most agricultural production. Women, although viewed as "hard workers" (FHDAR, 1937, p. 8), were also judged to be "conservative" (FHDAR, 1924, p. 4) and responsible for the lack of progress in the district. The Annual Report for 1946 (p. 44) includes the statement that: "One of the main obstacles to progress is the fact that so much is left to the women who are the most conservative people."

By 1929, a European agricultural officer had been posted to Fort Hall District and under him worked a number of "Native Agricultural Instructors". As the numbers of the latter increased in the 1940s, responsibility for paying their wages lay for the most part with the LNC. Their chief function in the late 1920s and early 1930s was to run demonstration plots which were maintained by LNC funds. By 1930, there were fifteen of these (FHDAR, 1930, p. 21); although the following year the number was decreased to two large and four smaller seed raising plots. "Natives", presumably men, were given instruction and demonstrations at these sites (FHDAR, 1932, p. 28). To a very

real extent these demonstration plots/seed farms served as centres for colonial administrative work at this time (CPAR, 1936).. No numbers are given in the Annual Reports as to people attending; they may well have been limited. It is extremely unlikely that women ever attended, both because of their heavy work load on the holding and the prevalent attitudes of staff.

In 1932, the District Agricultural Officer (DAO) organized divisional Agricultural Committees in order to interest people in greater production and in an attempt to improve marketing facilities (FHDAR, 1932).. The four Committees appear to have been used as a lecture forum for the DAO (FHDAR, 1936, p. 42), the main topic discussed from 1936 onwards being soil erosion. A further initiative in the district in 1940 by the DAO was the opening of a school for (African) agricultural instructors at Fort Hall Seed Farm. Accommodation for eighteen people, six from each of Kiambu, Fort Hall, and Nyeri was provided. The curriculum included basic education as well as agricultural topics (FHDAR, 1940). Again, it is extremely unlikely that women were involved in any of these activities.

Finally, subsequent to the establishment of the Fort Hall Betterment Fund, the DAO was involved in the administration of loans to farmers. As already indicated (Section 6.2), these loans were small (under K£50 per annum) and affected only a tiny percentage of farmers. In 1949, K£500 was issued in the form of loans, most of which was spent on manure. By 1951, the sum

loaned had increased to K£1000. In order to qualify for a loan, the applicant had to be screened by the LNC (FHDAR, 1949, p. 29; 1951, p. 10).

In essence, what this meant was that a small core of men, "progressive farmers" to use the jargon of the time, were selected as the focus of attention of the extension service. It was expected that their example would serve to diffuse the "innovations" in crops and farming practices to other sectors of the population.

6.4 Labour: on the farm and off the farm

Although his arguments may be overextended in the case of female labour in pre-colonial Kenya, Kitching's (1980, pp. 14-16) discussion of the concept of the underutilization of labour time during this period offers insight into the processes by which men and women adjusted to the demands of a colonial economy. Framing his discussion in a general manner and without reference to particular societies, Kitching suggests that labour was underutilized in this earlier period in two ways. First, quantitatively, a significant part of the year was not spent in material productive activities, a situation, he maintains, that was particularly true of male labour time. Under colonial rule, pursuits which had previously been carried out by men became impossible or functionless. Second, in a qualitative sense, Kitching argues that much labour power was expended using

technology which allowed for little intensification of production.

As a response to the previous quantitative underutilization of labour, from the early 1900s onwards, labour time and power were redistributed with the result that new productive activities were engaged in and a new division of labour emerged.

Qualitatively, an increase in labour productivity in agriculture allowed the creation of a labour force actively employed by the colonial administration; an expanded African trade and business sector; and a labour force involved in agricultural production on settler farms (Kitching, 1980, pp. 17-18). The last included a squatter population whose emigration from the Reserve did not alter the sexual division of labour on the Reserves as whole families were involved in the migration²³ (Kitching, *ibid.*; MDAH, 1984, H), as well as short-term or casual labour on estates bordering the Reserve. It was income from these alternative sources that Kitching argues was a critical variable in societal stratification. In a discussion of the creation and differentiation of the wage labour force in Kenya he maintains that: "...the prime determinant of differentiation among cultivating households was the rate of savings and investment out of off-farm income" (1980, p. 273). Capital from this source was invested in agriculture through both the purchase of additional land and the hiring of labour to work it.

The purpose of this section of the chapter is to discuss the implications of the new patterns of production as they were reflected in the sexual division of labour. I will focus on changes in the agricultural division of labour within Fort Hall District and address issues raised by the alternative patterns of employment on and off the Reserve only in so far as they impinge on questions of participation in central economic structures (Schlegel, 1977b), the "strategic indispensability" of labour (Blumberg, 1984) and the increasing stratification of society.

In the period up to 1930, the great expansion in cultivated acreage in Fort Hall and the commercialization of production, particularly rapid in the 1920s, was the result of a quantitative increase in women's labour time and their adoption of labour-saving technology, as Kitching (1980) argues for the Reserves in general. In the case of Fort Hall, the qualitative change was brought about primarily by changes in crop choice and through the replacement of the minyago (digging stick) by the jembe (hoe), and panga, (a machete-like knife) (Fisher, 1954). Kitching's estimates of a migration rate of 41.7% in 1928 which dropped to 30.4% in 1933 of adult males in Fort Hall (1980, p. 250) give some indication of the extent of migration at this period. Whereas earlier migration involved unmarried men seeking money for bridewealth for the most part, from the 1920s it was married men who predominated (ibid., p. 251). The percentage of absent males was to rise again in the latter half of the 1930s.

It is important to note that the expansion in production took place at a time when population numbers were still recovering from the disasters of the 1890s, the loss of life from conscription in the Carrier Corps (1914-1918), and the influenza epidemic of 1918 (Dawson, 1981). During the same period, road construction had provided easier access to the Nairobi market (FHDAR, 1929).

Recognition of the process of increasing household stratification in Fort Hall renders any ahistorical or acontextual description of the sexual division of labour of the period problematical. It is in this light that the one account of agriculture in Fort Hall (and Kiambu) during the period which recognizes and documents the participation of women in this production, Fisher's (1954) The anatomy of Kikuyu domesticity and husbandry, proves to be less than satisfactory. Yet by juxtapositioning certain observations that Fisher makes, it is possible to effect an exegesis which points to at least some of the areas of contradiction. In Fort Hall where there is no evidence of separate gardens for women and men (except as indicated in Chapter 5.3), the focus of negotiation/dispute within a household is more likely to have centred on control over the products of agricultural labour per se than, as Kitching (1980, p. 124) argues, on women's efforts to keep a distinction between the two types of garden, their aim being to control the disposal of at least part of the product of their labour.²⁴

Table 5.2 indicated by a breakdown of crop type and season the relative participation of men and women in agricultural activities. It is apparent from Fisher's observations in the early 1950s that several major changes had occurred. First, as a result of both men's migration to paid employment elsewhere and what Fisher refers to as "...a change in men's attitude to agriculture" (1954, p. 265) (which she explains in terms of their exposure to European education), women's responsibility for agricultural production had increased. Women, she pointed out, now did men's work of "...clearing bush, hoeing, planting bananas and plantains, or digging up yams" (p. 264). Very few men ever assisted in weeding. Second, changes in crop type allowed women to intensify their production. Most significant here was the change from millet to varieties of maize such as Hickory King and other white maizes which gave a higher yield than indigenous varieties and demanded less labour time per unit of input (Fisher, 1954, p. 231). In turn this allowed for the commercialization of cereal production for which there was a high demand on the settler farms to feed resident labour, from the neighbouring pastoral peoples for cattle feed during periods of drought, and for the growing urban market. Third, the introduction of a relatively low-value cash crop, wattle, in the 1930s led to further modifications of the division of labour. Fisher observes that: "...men fell wattle trees and women strip the bark, although it is not uncommon to see women also engaged in felling

(p. 285). She does not state who was responsible for drying the bark, but it was generally carried to the collection points by women (MDAH, 1984, S, p. 7). A return of male migrant labour to Fort Hall in the 1930s is likely to have coincided with the planting of large acreages to wattle, but on a return to high levels of outmigration, it would appear likely that in a significant proportion of the households women would have become solely responsible for the labour associated with this crop, after the seven years taken to reach maturity. Four, the division of labour within the household will have varied according to the risk-minimizing strategy adopted. As previously discussed (Section 6.3), some households (generally the poorer) no longer opted to attempt to meet their own subsistence needs, choosing rather what Kitching refers to as a "cash-crop-substitution-for-food-crop" strategy (1980, p. 129), hoping to balance a shortfall in subsistence production through the cash generated from the better terms of trade available for cash crops. Fisher comments on this situation as follows:

...in former times most families were self-sufficient in foodstuffs and exchanged any surplus in the market or through private barter for other commodities or foodstuffs which they did not grow themselves or for which they had a predilection. Nowadays, in contrast, production often falls below subsistence level with the result that many housewives have to buy food at some time during the year, though it is considered "a bad thing to do so". One woman who frequently went to market to buy food for her family of five, when discussing the subject, said of a friend who had an even larger family to feed: "So-and-so has many gardens. She does not need to buy food. She has gardens

of yams, bananas, colocasia, and English potatoes to produce food in the time of hunger."

There is no doubt that to the progressively-minded Kikuyu the cultivation of cash crops is a great incentive to improve their agricultural technique. But to conservative cultivators who have neither the means nor the desire to break with traditional practices cash crops are a ready and easy source of money, and only too often are planted in land which would otherwise be devoted to food crops (p. 281).

Clearly something more was at work than "conservatism" in choice of crop strategy. Difficulties faced by some households can be gauged from other observations made by Fisher. For example, she refers (p. 239) to the increasing reliance of some women on the purchase of seed rather than saving it from the previous harvest for sowing. Elsewhere she notes that in June and August, a slack agricultural period, women frequently went to visit their migrant husbands: "At the time of hunger many women go to Nairobi to fetch money from their husbands. If they send a letter he might refuse to pay" (p. 271). Finally, reference to the increase in hired labour is illustrative of a process of growing stratification between households, although Fisher does note that this was not on a 'large scale' at the time of her study (p. 268). She offers no explanation as to who the hirers of labour were beyond saying that their holdings were large relative to their labour resources. Labourers, she writes were: "[u]sually, only older women who have no children at home, or women who have few plots of their own..." (p. 269). They are also likely to have been women without access to adequate remittances (Kitching, 1980, p. 129). Rates of pay were 70 cents for a seven hour day of

weeding or 80 cents for hoeing or clearing bush for the same time period²⁵ (Fisher, 1954; p. 268). Fisher notes that men were also sometimes employed in such work.

While it is apparent that women's agricultural production increased significantly in the period up to 1952, it is not as clear that their control over the management of the holding and disposal of the products of labour were commensurate with this. Fisher's concluding comment on her discussion of the subject, that: "The women exercise almost complete control over the management of their gardens and the disposal of the crops therefrom" (p. 285), requires some re-assessment in the light of other observations she makes. Three quotations may serve to make the point. In the first, Fisher quotes from a woman she interviewed:

A woman can plant whatever she likes in her garden, but some men tell their wives they must plant a certain crop in a certain garden, that is to say, wattle in one and sweet potatoes in another, and the wife must obey. If she does not he may beat her (p. 273).

Second, with reference to women's rights to sell produce, Fisher observes:

Provided a woman ensures there is always sufficient food for her husband and children, she may sell any surplus either in the market or in private transactions, but she has no right to sell the whole of her crops. In theory, she is not obliged to obtain her husband's consent, for "the crops are of the woman," but in practice she may ask him "if it is good to sell food". Normally she is not expected to hand over the proceeds to her husband, but

is free to spend them on the purchase of household utensils, implements and seed, clothes, gifts for relatives and friends, or occasionally a few luxury goods or perhaps an ornament for herself (p. 275).

She goes on to remark that if a husband needs money for a specific purpose: "...he may tell her to sell some of her crops so that he may "see the money" for these things" (p. 276). Finally, she states that:

Some men object to their womenfolk going to market to buy or to sell, or simply to sight-see. Needless to say, the women occasionally seize the opportunity to sneak off, dressed in their best, when their husbands are away from the homestead, or else a trusted friend may sell their produce for them (p. 276).

Kitching (1980) extrapolates from this to argue that under conditions of growing commercialization of the economy, control over maize and other crops is likely to have increasingly become an area of contention between husband and wife, and resolution of the conflict will have varied, inter alia, according to the presence or absence of the male "head" (p. 124).

It is apparent from Kitching's subsequent discussion, and evidence from Fisher, that women retained their role of local trading in rural periodic markets, but as previously discussed, evidence presented by Kitching indicates that a "bifurcation" between subsistence trading and a long-distance trade in the surplus resulted in men's greater control of the surplus.

Kitching points out that: "Since however women's labour power appears to have remained predominant in all farm production at this time, the process of commercialization would appear in

general to have been appropriated by men at the expense of women" (1980, pp. 178-179). Again, it is likely that this "bifurcation" of trade may not have been as distinct as Kitching argues, and the egg circles formed by women (see Section 6.3(4)) indicate at least one way in which women tried to assert their control over a product. Further, the relative control of women and men is likely to have varied by household socioeconomic status and whether the husband was occupied in migrant labour.

Local trading appears to have been one of the very few off-farm activities accessible to women during the colonial era. Annual Reports for Fort Hall frequently refer to the demand for female labour from neighbouring coffee and sisal estates, and of a shortage here (for example, FHDAR, 1943, 1946), but no indications of numbers of men or women engaged in this casual labour are given. The demand was frequently not met because of: the low wages offered by the settler farms in the district²⁶ (and the higher wages offered to men who travelled elsewhere); in the early 1920s, because of a decreased labour "supply"--resulting from Carrier Corps deaths²⁷ and the 1918 influenza epidemic (FHDAR, 1920-1921); and because when harvests were abundant on the Reserve, it was "more profitable and congenial" to work there (FHDAR, 1924, p. 11). Some women, as already indicated, worked as labourers on other Gikuyu holdings, but again, no estimates are available as to numbers.

The role of women as local traders may well have been of

greater significance than is apparent from Kitching's relegation of them to the "subsistence" sector. Kitching (pp. 175-176) suggests that women traders came from middle-level households growing small surpluses, and households where men were absent. He does not mention the likelihood that poorer women, re-selling produce, rather than solely trading their own, may have participated. Fisher (1954), noting that the sale of agricultural produce was an important source of income for women (p. 137), points out that this often took the form of the re-selling of produce bought by neighbours. She remarks that profits from such retailing could average 50% in the case of bananas, or 25% in the case of cow peas or pigeon peas. Women also traded in cooking pots²⁸ and firewood. Certainly, the amounts traded may well have been small, but the growth in numbers of local markets in Fort Hall District, from 8 in 1915, to 15 in 1928 to 42 in 1967 attests to the growth in local trade (Taylor, 1978, p. 46). It is important to note that except in cases of district-wide drought, household subsistence requirements were not met from the holding would have been met predominantly from local trade.²⁹ As the "market" was depended on more for subsistence needs, so women's participation in this trade would have grown.

Local trading would have provided an avenue for women to access cash which also allowed them to "fit" their productive with reproductive responsibilities. In spatial terms, distances involved would have diminished as the numbers of market sites

increased. In terms of time, such an activity would have been restricted to, perhaps, a half day every four days, or once a week. The growth in local trade did not occur, Kitching argues, at the expense of labour input into agriculture, but was rather additional to it (1980, pp. 175-176). With the exception of the casual employment already identified, alternative employment activities did not allow women to mesh their diverse responsibilities as easily.

In Fort Hall District, the growth of business enterprises (Table 6.9) multiplied from the mid-1920s. Men, with their greater control of cash and greater mobility, were the sole participants in these ventures, frequently undertaking them in partnerships or with group ownership (Kitching, 1980, p. 163). This was often the case for example with shops which were largely concerned with the purchase and resale of African agricultural produce--either to Produce Control directly, or through Asian middlemen, or onto the black market particularly after 1930 (ibid., pp. 170-171). Such enterprises demanded a large financial outlay, particularly where the premises were permanent constructions as was frequent after 1939 (Fisher, 1954, p. 138), and were most successful when undertaken in conjunction with the bulk buying and transportation of the produce. Growth of business in this direction was, however, continually frustrated even after the 1939-1945 war when expansion was rapid, on account of the Asian monopoly of wholesale purchase, by harassment from...

Table 6.9 Fort Hall District: off-farm business, 1920-1943

	Shops	Flour mills	Carts	Motor lorries	Ploughs	Hand. mills	Bicycles	Cars	Buses
1920		1							
1921									
1922		2							
1923		3							
1924	70	6							
1925	126	12	5 or 6	3	2				
1926	130								
1927	144		28	12					
1928	208		78						
1929	154	40	82	3	11	18	174	4	
1936	201		153		95				
1942	280								
1943	384 (constructed of stone)								
1946				58					34

Sources: FHDARs, 1920-1946; History of Fort Hall, 1888-1944.

the local administration regarding licensing, and from the lack of capital available to Africans (Kitching, pp. 179-185). (See Section 6.1 with respect to the role of the LNC here.)

It is unfortunate that the Annual Reports from 1930 onwards give little indication of the rate of growth of businesses. Expansion and growth was often ephemeral, commonplace or, as Kitching notes, posed a problem in that many businesses were involved in "illicit" produce trade (ibid., p. 171). Two other businesses will, however, be noted here as they had a specific effect on the organization of production between women and men. Flour milling, chiefly by water mills, proved to be a "lucrative business" (Fisher, 1954, p. 140) for many men, and as Kitching notes, it freed women's labour for other (cultivating) activities (1980, p. 168). What neither Kitching nor Fisher observe, however, is that the introduction of water-powered mills or hand mills took control of maize or sorghum processing out of women's hands. It further served to reduce the nutritional value of the product. Drawing on work by Culwick³⁰, Taylor (1973, p. 4) points out that the previous practice of soaking grain prior to pounding it into flour rendered the product more nutritionally assimilable. Second, sugar mills, producing jaggery from sugar cane, were introduced into the district in the early 1900s by Karuri (CPPRB, 1904, 1905). Their diffusion meant women's decreased participation in beer production, again freeing women's labour time but ensuring their loss of control of the technology. Sugar

mills were abolished in Fort Hall in 1927 as the result of a resolution narrowly passed by the LNC. Concerned with the degree of drunkenness in the district, the DC had insisted the resolution be discussed. That it was barely passed reflected the fact that several Council members were mill owners themselves (FHDAR, 1927, p. 3). Commenting on the impact of both sugar and maize mills in the 1918-1930 period, Kitching observes that each: "...produced a whole series of underlying shifts in the distribution of labour time and labour power, all of them tending to have a positive impact on agricultural productivity" (p. 169). Yet each also, unobserved in his analysis, removed women from the arena of controlling technological innovation.

Before considering the role of wage labour and off-Reserve employment, of far greater significance in terms of income and numbers of men involved, one final comment may be made concerning the activities identified in Table 6.9. The point is made by Fisher (1954, p. 140) that many men obtained their income from a variety of sources. The development of businesses which allowed part-ownership of a store, or form of transport, or a mill, in addition to obtaining wages as a clerk, headman or other occupation with the colonial administration, allowed a man to spread the risks involved in making a livelihood.

Clive, DC, FHD in 1941 estimated that in that year 10% of the (male) labour force was engaged in employment in the district as teachers, students, shopkeepers, or wattle bark sellers. A

further 10% was employed in the Army. Over 50% of the labour force, however, was employed off the Reserve in registered employment (FHDAR, 1941, p. 4). It is very difficult, however, to achieve accuracy in such estimations. Even after the introduction of the kipande or registration card in 1919, loopholes in the use of the kipande and the lack of inclusion of the large numbers of people seeking work rather than actually employed, would, in Kitching's view, have led to underestimations of 50% before 1941, 20% of this figure comprising those employed but not registered, and 30% seeking employment. The introduction of labour censuses in 1942 would have provided somewhat greater accuracy, but even here figures are considered to be 30% below reality (Kitching, 1980, pp. 247-250). It must also be realized that the figures given for wage employment off the Reserve were averages. The 59% of the adult male population of Fort Hall estimated to be in such employment in 1943 (FHDAR, 1943, p. 6) will not have been spread evenly across the district. Male outmigration will have been concentrated in those areas where holdings were smallest (where subdivision of inheritance had been proceeding for the greatest lengths of time, in the middle altitudinal belt) and in the areas of lower agricultural potential, the lowest altitudinal belt.

The rationale behind migration to wage (or salaried employment) will have varied according to the degree of wealth/poverty of each household. At one end of the spectrum, men from poorer households will have migrated as unskilled wage labour in

order to meet the requirements of household survival. Educated men from richer households in contrast will have been employed in more highly paid positions, their aim being to invest capital so earned in the acquisition of land and the hiring of labour to work it. For Kitching, the rationale for migration was not simply a "bi-polar" equation with returns to labour in agriculture posed against returns to labour in wage employment. It was rather "multi-variant" and the balance between the two would vary according to: (1) the expected level of the real wage; (2) the price of agricultural produce; (3) the size of household holding; and (4) crop yields on the land (1980, p. 269). With access to better paid employment, Kitching argues, a man would be able to "shift parameters" between the third and fourth categories indicated, and with improvements in crop quality, also the second category (*ibid.*; p. 270). For such men, the "prime determinant" of migration would be the high wage. For men from poorer holdings, factors (3) and (4) would be the more important (*ibid.*).

There is a lack of precise data to measure both farm income during the period of study and returns from wage labour, and thus it is impossible to assess accurately critical questions as to the relative importance of income from either source. Tables 6.10 and 6.11 however may shed some light on the matter.³¹ Table 6.10 indicates that, on average, farm incomes in Central Province rose between 1931 and 1952. Yet, as Fazan has noted for his figures (*op. cit.*, KLC, U.K., 1934, p. 1001) any "average" represents a

**Table 6.10 A cost of living index for farm households in Central Province
1931-1952 and the effect on real farm incomes**

Cost of living indices for Africans in Kenya (1931 = 100)		Real value of 'average' farm cash incomes of African farmers in Central Province (1931 estimate used as base)	
1931	100	1931	Shs. 202 (Fazan)
1932	93.5		
1933	85.6		
1934	83.4		
1935	88.2		
1936	86.1		
1937	90.8		
1938	87.2		
1939	86.4	1939	Shs. 229/06 (real value of 1931 figure)
1940	-		
1941	-		
1942	-		
1943	134.7		
1944	139.7	1944	Humphrey (original) Shs. 260/8 Humphrey (corrected) Shs. 273/8
1945	139.8		
1946	142.5		
1947	148.2		
1948	157.6		
1949	161.6		
1950	171.0		
1951	162.4		Fisher (1) Shs. 562/4
1952	177.8		(2) Shs. 516/7 ¹

Sources: Kitching, (1980, p. 151), drawing on: (1) Sharon Baker Stichter, 1972, Labour and National Development in Colonial Kenya, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, table 3.4, p. 188; (2) Colony and Protectorate of Kenya, Cost of Living Commission Report (Nairobi, 1950), pp. 3 and 4, and (3) Report of the Cost of Living Committee (Nairobi, 1954); (4) Fisher (1954); (5) Humphrey, 1945, The Kikuyu Lands, Nairobi.

Note: Fisher (1) and (2) takes her Shs. 1,000 figure as an average for all smallholders in Kiambu and Fort Hall and deflates to 1931 equivalents using the two alternative price indices. This provides exceedingly optimistic estimates of real farm incomes in 1952.

Table 6.11 Incomes, farm investments and remittances of
744 African households in Nairobi, 1957

A	B	C	D	E
Income class (Shs. per annum)	% of workers in each class	Average income of class (KShs. per annum)	% of C invested in home farm	Average % of income remitted to rural areas
0-1 799	34.1	1 693	-5.91	10%
1 800-3 599	38.6	2 583	0.62	10%
3 600-5 399	17.3	4 330	1.51	11%
5 400-7 199	6.9	6 126	10.15	11%
7 200-8 999	3.1	4 851	7.00	16%

Source: M.W. Forrester, 1962, Kenya today: social prerequisites for economic development, Gravenhage, pp. 75-6 and Tables I and II, p. 119, as cited in Kitching, 1980, p. 276, with the exception of column E which is based on Kitching's discussion in the text.

"distortion". For the majority of households, he suggests, budgets would be at a level "considerably below" the averages shown. Fisher's (1954) data are particularly problematical and are far more an indication of income for a farmer with larger holdings in Kiambu and Fort Hall than for any 'average' (Kitching, 1980, pp. 150-152). Thus although prices for maize and wattle increased greatly between 1939 and 1952 (the price for maize for example was in 1952 700% its 1939 level in constant terms), data from a survey carried out in Central Province in 1963 "strongly

suggested" that for the "mass" of small farmers in the Province, real income had fallen after 1945 (ibid., p. 152).

It must also be remembered that the great fluctuation in prices of crops (Table 6.8) led to instability in reliance on income from this source, and it was this variable, as much as the relative return to labour time which, Kitching, argues "...could make even relatively low-paid wage labouring a rational redeployment of labour time for many households, even if the redeployment was to relatively low-paid employment outside of agriculture" (1980, p. 278). Real wages in Kenya, from the available data discussed by Kitching, indicate great stability between 1905 and 1941 (ibid., pp. 273-275). Table 6.11, based on a study of households in Nairobi in 1957 by Forrester, gives some indication of savings and investment ratios and remittances of the wage labour force. Kitching (ibid., p. 276) points out, however, that the table reflects the fall in real wages after 1941 and it would be unlikely that prior to 1941 any wage earner would be disinvesting from the farm. Extrapolating from this and other data, Kitching argues that the differential access of men to off-farm income, of which wages or salaries were the major form, was critical in laying the basis for stratification in the densely populated reserves. Men with access to high wages or salaries were able to invest considerable capital in their holdings. In contrast, for the large majority, wage labouring became increasingly oriented to the maintenance of subsistence. The foundation for

this pattern was laid before 1939 (ibid., pp. 278-279).

What has not been explained thus far is why it was men who contributed exclusively to the migratory process. Kitching suggests that the new dichotomy between wage labour time and cultivating labour time, manifested in the sexual division of labour, resulted from the sexual division of labour and production in the pre-colonial period (ibid., p. 153). From previous discussion in this chapter, it is clear that several of men's previous tasks were eliminated with the imposition of colonial administration. In contrast, women's productive responsibilities intensified, particularly from the period of 1918 onwards. It is also of importance to reiterate that an ideational element was involved in the restriction of women to production which required less mobility. It was only through a woman's confinement to a relatively limited spatial arena that she could maintain the compatibility between her productive and reproductive roles. Part-time trading or casual labour did not violate this compatibility. Relegation to the holding did not preclude women's involvement in production for exchange: the commercialization of maize production and the production of wattle bark would have been primarily the result of women's labour. Thus, although the period between the early 1900s and 1952 was characterized by the increasing spatial separation of production for use vis à vis production for exchange, through the migration of men to off-Reserve wage labour employment, the incomplete nature of this

separation (ie: the concurrent commercialization of agricultural production in the Reserve) meant that women were in a position in Fort Hall to participate in the production of goods of exchange value. The extent to which they will have been able to control effectively the proceeds of labour expanded in this area will have varied by socioeconomic stratum, as is discussed in Section 6.6.

6.5 Land: growing inequality

The roots of growing stratification in Fort Hall District, in so far as differential access to non-farm income is concerned, have been discussed in the previous section. The most visible expression of the stratification was in the growing inequality in holding size. As land sales/purchases became more frequent, the equilibrium which had previously existed between the mbari as a unit and its individual male members under the ng'undu system of tenure was upset. Individual men from the 1930s onwards exercised increasing autonomy vis à vis the mbari whose power was increasingly questioned.

The permanent nature of the boundaries imposed by the creation of the Gikuyu "Reserves" were a critical factor in this equation as previous patterns of mbari territorial expansion were suddenly curtailed. The option for members (who could no longer meet subsistence needs on holdings reduced in size through inheritance) of clearing new land either in the forest zone or the drier belt to the east of the District was foreclosed. By the

1930s few mbari had grazing land which could be opened up for cultivation (Taylor, 1966b, p. 46). Families could move as squatters to the Rift Valley, but this ensured no permanent rights to land. Problems caused by the increased pressure on the land through the continued subdivision of small plots of land were exacerbated by the increasing inequalities in its distribution. The process of buying and selling land which led to the inequalities was well underway by the 1930s (for example, CPAR, 1938, p. 6).

The issue of redeemability of sales of land is critical in analyzing the balance of power within the mbari. Land "sales" in the past in Fort Hall, as discussed in Chapter 5, were occasioned by need. That they were never final indicated that the mbari retained its territorial integrity even if this territory was not spatially contiguous in all cases. Once the redeemability of a sale was questioned, mbari integrity was threatened from within as well as from without.

The significance of this issue came to the fore in 1944 in Fort Hall and reaction to the situation gives an indication of the divergent interests that had emerged in the District. Chief Njiiri's proposal before the LNC in that year that all land sales where the purchase price had exceeded eight goats be considered outright and irredeemable was met by "vociferous and determined" opposition in the barazas held subsequently (FHDAR, 1944, pp. 8-9). The protagonists of outright purchase, whom the DC observed

were a "minute proportion" of the population, were, according to the DC "entirely self-interested": they were mainly "...persons who have 'purchased' large areas of land which they are now unwilling to allow to be redeemed"(ibid.).

Having said this, however, the DC went on to state that continuation of the practice of redeemable purchase had its own attendant problems. Speaking later in the 1940s, Coutts, DC in 1948, maintained that "...certain unscrupulous persons are using the redeemable custom to take back land which has been made fertile by a younger more progressive person" (FHDAR, 1948, p. 2). In the end, this lack of security could only have a negative effect on productivity, to follow the thread of the DC's arguments. In a situation of relative land abundance, and without commercialization of production, security of long term tenure on such land had never been an issue.

The practice of redeemable sales also led to the growing division between and within families as they were engaged in "...a mad individualistic race for more acres of eroded soil" (ibid.). The vast increase in litigation cases over land before the divisional tribunals is evidence of this. By 1949 the situation had reached such proportions that the LNC enacted a bye-law that no land sold before the famine of 1898 could be redeemed. This fact and the increasing compensation that tribunals were giving to litigants for improvements to land to which they had lost access decreased, in some measure, the insecurity noted above (FHDAR, 1949, p. 4).

Individualization of control over land meant also that arrangements such as the status of ahoi (tenants) were questioned. Numerous references in Annual Reports refer to the growing number of landless from this source as well as from the sale of land (for example, CPAR, 1937, p. 7; 1947, p. 22). The cases of ahoi added to the litigation cases before the tribunals. About these, Kidd, DC, Fort Hall in 1932, wrote:

One of the main reasons for this fervour for land litigation is the fact that heads of sub-clans (Murumati) have sunk into obscurity and no longer have any influence over the younger generation who entirely disregard old transactions on a friendly basis and are intent to hold their githakas without any encumbrances such as tenants admitted by their ancestors (FHDAR, 1932, p. 2).

In many cases land would have been worked by ahoi for generations, and again, where improvements had been made to the land, "dismissal" could have been particularly bitterly contested.

The lack of data for the period under study makes it impossible to quantify the growing inequalities precisely. Data from the Economic Survey of Central Province 1963-1964 (1968) may, however, be used to give some indication of the situation. Although these figures postdate the land reform carried out between 1954 and 1963, as the reform did not involve the redistribution of land between individuals (see Chapter 7.2), they may be used to indicate the situation in the early 1950s. It is apparent from Table 6.12 that disparities in holding size were marked. They were in fact greater in Fort Hall District than in

Table 6.12 Central Province: holding size distribution, 1963-1964

	Central Province		Muranga's District (Fort Hall)		Kiambu District		Nyeri District	
	% holdings	% land	% holdings	% land	% holdings	% land	% holdings	% land
under 2 acres (0.8 ha.)	31.8	13.1	26.4	4.7	57.4	33.4	35.2	15.
2-6 acres (0.8 ha to 2.4 ha.)	49.9	48.9	48.4	34	30.2	48.1	50.2	54.
over 20 acres (8.1 ha.)	1.6	8.1	3.8	24.4	0.6	24.4	0.6	1.

Source: Economic Survey of Central Province 1963-1964 (1968), p. 21.

any of the other districts of Central Province. Holdings of under 6 acres (2.4 ha.) occupied only 38.7% of the land in Fort Hall District, compared with 81.5% for Kiambu and 69.8% for Nyeri. In contrast, holdings over 10 acres (4.05 ha.) in size occupied 38.8% of Fort Hall land compared with 8.1% in Kiambu and 18.9% in Nyeri.

Concomitant with the process of growing inequalities in holding size was the increase in fragmentation. The distribution of household plots in different environmental situations reduced the risk of total crop failure, whether caused by weather or pests/diseases. By the 1940s, however, fragmentation had proceeded to a degree that farm management was made difficult. In

one case a holding was found to consist of 108 fragments, in total amounting to 40 acres (16.2 ha.) (FHDAR, 1958, p. 13). Taylor (1966b) from a survey of 257 holdings randomly sampled from the District found that on average a holding under 3 acres (1.2 ha.) consisted of 5.6 fragments (p. 52). He cites three examples from the middle altitudinal belt as an indication of the extremes of fragmentation: (1) a holding of 3.5 acres (1.4 ha.) in Location 3 comprising 24 fragments; (2) one of 4.2 acres (1.7 ha.) in Location 18 with 23 fragments; and (3) a holding of 3.6 acres (1.5 ha.) also in Location 18 with 17 fragments (*ibid.*, p. 53). Even in the higher altitudinal belt in Kinyona Location, Taylor's evidence indicates that fragmentation had proceeded quite far.

It must be realized however that the high numbers given to indicate fragmentation do not result solely from the practice of subdivision of a holding through inheritance. Some will have been the result of land purchase. The example of the 513.3 acres (207.9 ha.) of Chief Njiiri's, comprising 28 fragments, is a case in point (Taylor, 1966b, p. 53). Njiiri was clearly able to accumulate vast acres of land through purchase or through other means by which he exercised his authority as chief.

For women, the move by individual men to control land through purchase is likely to have resulted in their relative loss of autonomy in its management. Women were not, however, excluded from the purchase of land, and Fisher's comment to this effect suggests that it was possible for at least a small minority to

accumulate sufficient capital to effect a purchase. Fisher (1954) discusses the situation as follows:

Many women now buy gardens, although male relatives still conduct the transactions and mark the boundaries. One informant in Fort Hall, an intelligent, vivacious woman, summed up the position as follows: "In the past women did not buy gardens or cattle or mburi, but in these days, when they have money, women buy gardens for cultivation, cattle, and mburi." She concluded her remarks by saying that new women had "wisdom", but formerly they were fools of women (irimu cia atumia) (p. 187).

The frequency of land purchase by women that Fisher suggests is questionable in the light of data that will be discussed in Chapter 7, but clearly it was not a rare phenomenon. Three observations may be made of the practice. First, that it occurred indicated that at least some women were able to control substantial savings of their own. Further research might indicate whether such women were widows, as was more probably the case, or whether married women were able to exert this degree of autonomy within the context of increasingly hierarchical household productive relationships. Second, the language used by the Fort Hall woman would appear to indicate that women of at least certain social strata were becoming increasingly aware that the changes taking place in productive relations were at their expense, a point made also by Kitching (1980, pp. 125-126). One way to reverse this state of affairs was through land purchase in their own right. That this in itself must have been a source of intense dispute where a married woman was concerned is evident from

discussions with several women in the District in 1984 (see Chapter 7.2). Finally, the purchase of land by women was, in effect, a threat to mbari solidarity which was based on patrilineal filiation. For this reason alone it is likely to have exposed an apparent contradiction for a man who, acting probably as a brother for his sister in the transaction of the purchase of non-mbari land, was at the same time fighting to maintain his own mbari's territorial integrity.

6.6 Separation and organization: some hypotheses

Throughout the period of colonial administration, land remained the main means of production for households in Fort Hall District. Access to the land and control over it, however, changed as the ng'undu system of land tenure adapted to the confines of colonially delimited territory. Increased individual male control over land at the expense of mbari authority over it was part of this process. Differential access of households to non-farm income was a critical variable fuelling the process of individualization of tenure, leading in turn to a more stratified society.

The "Reserve" did function as a labour reserve for the export of male labour to other sectors of the economy (settler estates, urban areas, colonial administration), but this was not its only direct link. Fort Hall also became a net food exporting area during this period and from the 1930s onwards, with wattle

production, provided the raw material for Forestal, a transnational company. The intensification of agricultural production which allowed this "surplus" was achieved largely as a result of women's increased labour input into agriculture, combined with changes in crop type, millet to maize. Women, therefore, were not only responsible for subsistence production, but produced goods of exchange value to the colonial economy. The extent to which they will have been able to exercise control over any income from this source will have varied according to the fairly complex interaction of a number of factors.

The balance of power between husband and wife will, according to Kitching (1980, pp. 124-125), have been conditioned by: the presence or absence of male household heads on the holding; the relative proportion of male vis à vis female labour input; holding size; whether labour was hired or not; and the strength of personality of the actors involved. To these may be added: the amount of income from non-farm sources and whether this led to land purchase; the balance between non-farm and farm income; and women's relative to men's contribution to non-farm income. Women's role in providing income from non-farm sources is ignored by Kitching. Undoubtedly for the vast majority of households it was a far smaller proportion of total household income than that provided by men, but this does not preclude its potential significance in assessing the degree of autonomy a woman could maintain. That having been said, however, it must be viewed in

the more general context of greater male access to cash. As this played an increasingly major role in the local economy, and particularly where this led to an expansion of household land, this factor is likely to have been critical in leading to the greater exercise of male authority within the household.

By the early 1950s it is apparent that significant stratification had occurred between households. Kitching suggests that these strata were not "wide-layered" but that differentiation in the "Reserves" was rather characterized as:

...a finely-graded spectrum stretching from richest to poorest with the closely intertwined and interdependent criteria of size of off-farm income and size of landholding as the twin axes around which that differentiation revolved (1980, p. 154).

He proposes a typology based on this characterization which allows some measure of assessment as to the relative control over agricultural production between women and men.

The typology which follows is based on the categories Kitching develops from his discussion of agricultural change in Nyanza, Nyeri, Kiambu, Fort Hall and Kowe (1980, pp. 144-145). It is modified significantly to reflect observations made by Kershaw (1974-1975) from fieldwork in Kiambu, and discussions carried out by the author in the area of Fort Hall in 1984 (MDAH). It is representative of the situation in the early 1950s, and assumes a monogamous household, the norm at this time.

1. This type is characterized by the smallest holdings, where

the husband is absent on short-term employment. Few remittances are sent home. The wife's labour input into cultivation far exceeds that of her husband, but he does have some input when at home. No land is purchased, some may be sold. The wife is likely to obtain income by labouring on other people's farms. Kitching suggests that in such households women's loss of autonomy in control over farm management and income is "probably advanced or complete" (p. 145). In contrast, Kershaw's data on families with little or no land indicate that such women's day-to-day management of the farm would result in their increased role in decision-making, and thus a gain in power. She qualifies this observation with the statement that: "This power is sometimes seen as illegitimate by her husband, and this may create problems between them" (p. 190). I would suggest that Kershaw's argument, reinforced by the fact that many such women had access to non-farm income, whether through trading or as labourers, and however small in amount, is the more likely, and that women in such households had more autonomy than Kitching maintains. The frequent option of such households for a strategy focusing on cash crops (wattle) would have meant that women's agricultural labour was not relegated purely to the subsistence sector. The lack of spatial division between production for use and production for exchange in agriculture thus allowed women to fulfill

their multiple responsibilities including agricultural production for the wider economy. This argument must, however, be qualified by the fact that here and in type 2 which follows, women's insecurity vis à vis the land would have increased when the decision to sell land become a necessity. Here, as Kitching suggests, there is likely to have been a vigorous attempt to centralize power/decision-making by the man. This would have been little tempered by weakened mbari authority.

2. The second category of household differs from 1. above only in that the husband is absent in longer-term low-paid employment. His labour input into agriculture is therefore less than 1. Again, no land is bought, and it may be sold to meet emergencies. Women may engage in limited off-farm employment to meet subsistence needs. It is likely that a production strategy of concentration on cash crops (wattle) is more likely to prevail than one aimed at meeting subsistence requirements. As in 1., it is likely that women's greater control of the day-to-day management of the holding led to dispute over control of agricultural products, but because of the husband's prolonged absence and lack of investment in the holding, women may well have been able to exert more autonomy than in 1. above. As in 1. above, however, if sale of land became a necessity, women's structural insecurity vis à vis the land will have been critical in determining household power relations and women's

subordinate position.

3. Here both husband and wife remain on the holding, which is larger than in 1. or 2. above. Both participate in crop production, the husband focusing on cash crops. His labour input will still be less than that of his wife's. A woman may have less autonomy than previously in farm management because of her husband's use of land for wattle. Control over the proceeds from surplus food crops on which the woman has expended labour is likely to be the source of dispute, but as the husband is present on the holding he is more likely to be able to effect control than in 1. and 2. This situation may have been moderated by the wife's ability to trade the surplus locally, rather than directing it towards export from the district.
4. In this case both husband and wife are again resident on the holding but the husband is involved in relatively well-paid wage or salaried employment locally. Holdings are of a size adequate to meet subsistence requirements and produce a surplus for sale. Investment of non-farm income in the holding is likely to lead to land purchase and the possible hiring of labour. Because of his residence on the holding, the husband is likely to assert control over critical farm management decisions, but the wife's virtually sole labour input would make it likely that farm management decisions and control over any surplus were areas of dispute. Because of the husband's cash income and investment in the holding, it

is likely that he will have been able to exert his authority in the matter.

5. This category differs from 4. in that although the holdings are relatively large, the husband is absent from the district in long-term relatively well paid employment. Critical decisions as to land purchase may remain with the husband, but a wife's control over the day-to-day management of the farm is likely to give her more autonomy than 4. above. She may well direct the hiring of labour facilitated by her husband's remittances. As in 4. above, however, her husband's financial investment in the holding is likely to lead to his greater control over the management of the holding and disposal of its surplus.

The proportion of each type of household within Fort Hall will have varied, as Kitching notes, through time (1980, p. 145) and according to the environmental potential of the holding's location.

To take this analysis a stage further, it is necessary to return to the conceptualization identified earlier by Sacks (1982). Following this line of reasoning, it may be suggested that all strata of society during the period from the early 1900s to 1952 saw an intensification of the contradiction between women (wives) as producer-nonowners and men as non-producer owners of the main means of production, the land. This was the result both of the individualization of male authority over household land

(itself tied to male access to non-farm income) and the commercialization of production, the outcome of female labour intensification. While some men (the proportion increasing with time) from the lower strata will have lost rights to land in the process of land accumulation/marginalization during this period, women will have been placed in a structurally more subordinate position than previously in two ways. First, as wives, their usufruct rights to land will no longer have been subject to the same degree of mbari guarantee. This will have increased the insecurity of women in the lowest socioeconomic strata. Second, as pressure on the land increased, women's rights to land as sisters are likely to have been significantly curtailed.

To some degree, resolution of the contradictions will have been conditioned by the extra-household organizational links of women and men. For men, solidarity based on the mbari or riika will have diminished during the period, but it will by no means have been eliminated. Additional bonds were created, for the male elite, through ties based on formal (mission) education and involvement in the colonial administrative machinery, and, for the majority, through popularly based political organization such as the Kikuyu Central Association (KCA), formed to oppose the colonial power structure. From both types of organization which gained prominence, visibility and centrality during this period, women were excluded.

As indicated in the discussion on soil conservation, modes of

work organization such as ngwatio continued and will have provided women, and to a lesser extent, men, with the means for extra-household bonding. No research has been carried out to determine the degree to which women's political organizations which predated the colonial era survived and functioned after 1900. Infrequent references to women's ability to organize are however interspersed in the Annual Reports for Fort Hall. Those concerned with soil erosion have already been cited. On at least three other occasions women united in the period prior to 1952 to indicate opposition to the colonial regime. The numbers involved attest to the scale of the network.

In 1937, resistance of widows to the payment of the hut tax came to a head. It was in this year that "...a great number of widows all over the Native Reserve suddenly became passive resisters," and it became impossible to collect taxes from them (FHDAR, 1937, p. 4). 550 women were "prosecuted" in the last three months of the year. The writer of the Annual Report for that year expressed surprise at the degree of opposition to payment as there had been few problems in the past, and alluded to the possible influence of the KCA. In 1939, in two locations in Fort Hall (Chief Kigwaine's and Chief Sila's Locations), this passive resistance was followed by a "strike" of women tax payers. On this occasion it was found necessary to imprison "a number of females 'pour encourager les autres'" (FHDAR, 1939, pp. 18-19). No indication is given of the numbers. This action led to the

demand by the LNC to abolish taxation on women. An increased male poll tax was advocated to cover the shortfall.

In August 1941, 1500 women from Location 14 met at Fort Hall Township to protest against the order to deroof huts, an anti-plague measure. The "agitation" continued until the middle of September when the Chief, Joseph Kariuki was replaced by Munyoroko, considered by the DC, J.H. Clive, to be an "able-bodied man ... essential to handle the situation" (FHDAR, 1941, p. 2). Clive added that he did not know "...who incited them to this course" (ibid.).

The final instance, in 1951, appears to have been linked to anti-government, Kenya African Union (KAU) activity as it followed a large KAU meeting in September. The DC, F.A. Lloyd, gave the names of the "ringleaders" as James Beattah and Andrew Munya, yet he also indicates that a "band" of women from Karara itura in Location 7, where political activism on the part of the Kikuyu Independent Schools Association was particularly strong, were the instigators. In protesting against a rinderpest inoculation campaign, women from seven locations joined together. Eleven cattle crushes were burnt, over 500 women were convicted, many being imprisoned. At one stage in the protest over 300 women attacked the gaol in Fort Hall, eventually being dispersed (FHDAR, 1951, pp. 1-2).

It is therefore evident that however invisible women's networks were to colonial authorities, and however informal they

were in structure at this time, women were able to organize effectively on an issue-related basis on a wide scale. Although in all the instances cited protests were directed towards the colonial administration, it is likely that the existence of extra-household networks provided a measure of solidarity on which women could draw in other contexts.

Notes

¹Ainsworth to IBEAC, 24 and 31 July, 1894; Hall's and Ainsworth's reports to IBEAC in F02/73, as quoted by Muriuki, 1974, p. 155.

²IBEAC, granted a royal charter in 1888, actively traded in the area since this date.

³Three incidents marked the seriousness of the conflict in Kabete at this time: the forced evacuation of the fort at Dagoretti in June, 1891; the death of Maktubu, an askari (soldier) at Fort Smith in charge of food buying for the company; and the arrest and subsequent death of Waiyaki, a prominent local leader, in 1892 (Muriuki, 1974, pp. 142-149).

⁴For further discussion of this process see M.P.K. Sorrenson, 1968, Origins of European Settlement in Kenya, Oxford University Press, pp. 9-30.

⁵Report on Murang'a by Capt. F.A. Dickson in F02/430 and 431; H. Moysa-Bartlett, 1954, The King's African Rifles: a study in the military history of East and Central Africa, 1890-1945, Aldershot, p. 204, as quoted by Muriuki, 1974, p. 162.

⁶Initially a hut tax of 3 rupees was imposed. Collection of the tax had, at times, bizarre consequences, as recounted by Meinertzhagen in his diary for the 23 August, 1902. Referring to the hut tax he writes:

This has been explained to the Kikuyu, and as they have very little coin they were told that one sheep in lieu of 3 rupees would be accepted. The result is that sheep have been dribbling in with no arrangements to keep them; many have been stolen and many are suffering from foot rot. There is no market for them, so they have become a burden to the administration - the first time in history when a tax has become a burden to the collector of taxes. It shows a great lack of forethought. Today we have 746 sheep, all penned up and largely lame from foot rot. So Hemsted today called in the Kikuyu chiefs and told them to take their sheep back. Of course, first come, first served, but all sheep are gone. But what a muddle and lack of organization (1957, p. 42).

⁷The most complete record of Wangu wa Makeri's life is found in an anonymously authored booklet, Oral Tradition Collections from Murang'a District, 1974 found in the Kenya National Archives (Ref. KNA 1974). The author indicates that Karuri wa Gakura at first selected Wangu's husband as chief for Weithaga location but as he had distinguished himself neither as a warrior nor a muthamaki (local leader) it would have been difficult for him to exercise power. In contrast,

Wangu was "very forceful, graceful and charming". Although contrary to Gikuyu custom, Karuri chose Wangu as chief in that location, a decision, the biographer notes, that suggested both "...a very close personal relationship between Wangu and Karuri, one which was beyond the normal sharing of wives between the age mates" and confidence on Karuri's part of his relationship with the colonial authorities. Karuri helped Wangu "...break through the accepted tradition that women could hardly rule men."

Wangu was appointed a chief in 1902. Her biographer notes that she, with the assistance of her main henchman, Ikae wa Kathimba oversaw a period of "peace, stability and progress". Wangu was "innovative", and being a "very renowned farmer" she had part of her husband's land used as a demonstration plot for the Agricultural Officers. A supporter of mission education, she allowed a mission to be established in the location. She also, apparently, initiated the idea of building huts with windows.

Although her biographer notes that she and Ikae were "very popular", it is also indicated that in her service of the colonial government she had to implement legislation that was unpopular. Eventually, enforcement of tax collection and forced labour (for road construction and the demonstration farm), the biographer explains, led to the people trying to remove her from office. The opportunity came at a dance in 1909 which she and Karuri attended. Refuting the rumour that Wangu's inadequate clothing at the dance was the cause of her demise, the writer argues: "Jealous of her popularity and ability to lead, the men created an exaggerated story in an attempt to reassert themselves and to overthrow her." (Pages in the booklet are unnumbered.)

Wangu tendered her resignation in June 1909. In a handwritten account of the resignation in the Chiefs and Headmen Record Book (DC/FH 1/4/1), Kenya National Archives, it is recorded that this took place at a meeting of the "old men" at Wangu's camp. This meeting was then apparently followed by a meeting of the women of the location who chose a candidate, Ikai, to replace her.

⁸The Fort Hall Annual Report for 1926 notes 36 locations. In 1936, the 32 locations were decreased in number to 15 (FHDAR, 1936). In 1952, 4 new locations were established, and in 1954, Location 20 was created (FHDAR, 1952, 1954).

⁹The precise definition of the Gikuyu "Reserves" took shape over a number of years. In 1906 the boundaries of two "Reserves", one including Nyeri and Fort Hall and the other covering Kiambu, were published in The Official Gazette of the East Africa and Uganda Protectorates, 1 May and 1 July, 1906. Some of this "Reserve" land was however alienated for European settlement after 1906 (Sorrenson, 1967, p. 19). Sorrenson records that in fact no "effective legal protection" for the reserves existed until the Crown Lands Ordinance of 1915 was

passed. Even then, there were delays before implementation and it was not until 1926 that most of the Reserves covering Gikuyu country were finally "proclaimed" under the Ordinance (ibid.).

¹⁰Administrative boundaries between provinces changed from 1902 to 1963, in so far as they affected the Gikuyu districts, as follows:

- 1909: Kenia Province: Fort Hall, Nyeri.
Ukamba Province: Kikuyu, Masailand, Ulu, Kitui.
- 1918: Kenya Province: Fort Hall, Nyeri, Meru, Embu.
Ukamba Province: Kikuyu, Machakos, Kitui.
- 1924: Kikuyu Province: Fort Hall, Kiambu, Southern Nyeri, Meru, Embu.
Nairobi-Extra-Provincial Boundary.
- 1929: Kikuyu Province: Fort Hall, Kiambu, Nairobi, South Nyeri, North Nyeri, Meru, Embu.
- 1933: Central Province: as above, 1929, plus Machakos, Kitui.
- 1961: Central Province: Fort Hall, Kiambu, Thika, Nyeri, Nanyuki, Meru, Embu.
- 1963: Central Province: Murang'a, Kiambu, Nyeri.
from, F.F. Ojany and R.B. Ogendo, 1973, Kenya: a study in physical and human geography, Longmans, Nairobi.

¹¹With reference to observations made in Chapter 5.1, two of the fifteen claims made in the forest zone were Dorobo, the rest Gikuyu. Of the other claims, one was a mixed Dorobo/Gikuyu claim, the remainder being Gikuyu.

¹²This information originates in a document by H.R. Tate, dated 1 October, 1916, and entitled: The Province of Kenya. It is included in the Central Province Political Record Book for that year.

¹³Taylor draws on research by N. Humphrey, 1945, The Kikuyu Lands, Nairobi.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵For a discussion of the relative characteristics of these crops in terms of drought-tolerance, see S. Vogel and M. Graham, eds., 1979, Sorghum and millet: food for production and use, Report of a workshop held in Nairobi, 4-7 July, 1978, IDRC-123e, Ottawa.

¹⁶The first detailed Annual Report available for Fort Hall is dated 1920-1921. Earlier reports are summarized in the History of Fort Hall, 1888-1944, but these contain no reference to the topic.

¹⁷ See subsection 2 below for details.

¹⁸ Kitching's discussion on wattle draws heavily on: M.P. Cowen, 1975, "Wattle production in Central Province: capital and household commodity production 1903-1964", mimeo MS, Nairobi.

¹⁹ Leakey argued that increasing numbers of Gikuyu men, when they married, took their wives with them to where they were employed on European farms or by the government. As the wife's parents would no longer be able to "...access customary help from the man if they were to need it," they demanded higher bridewealth payments in compensation (before the KLC on 7 November, 1932, U.K., 1934, p. 689).

²⁰ a. FHDAR, 1924, p. 4:

"The women of the tribe are more untouched by social progress than are the men, and this must of necessity be so for the women are bound to their homes and gardens in the Reserve; they are also by nature more cautious and conservative."

b. FHDAR, 1946, p. 44:

"One of the main obstacles to progress is the fact that so much is left to the women who are the most conservative people."

²¹ Previous trading in eggs in the district had been the subject of a series of conflicts where the principle actors had been Produce Control, Indian traders, and African traders supported or unsupported by the LNC (FHDAR, 1943, p. 3; 1946, p. 15). For a summary discussion of the events, see Kitching, 1980, p. 197.

²² Taylor draws on research by C.R. Philip. 1943, "Nutrition in Kenya: notes on the state of nutrition of African children," East African Medical Journal, Vol. 20, No. 7, pp. 227-234.

²³ There is a lack of adequate estimates of the squatter population from Fort Hall, Kiambu and Nyeri. The figure of 110 195 is given in 1934 by the KLC, U.K., p. 27.

²⁴ Much of Fisher's discussion does distinguish between the "norms" of Fort Hall and Kiambu, yet in the matter of separate gardens for women and men, no distinction is made. This topic was explored in the context of interviews held in Murang'a in 1984, and no evidence of the existence of separate gardens in the district was unearthed.

²⁵ The following prices of foodstuffs given by Fisher (1954, pp. 125-126) give some indication of the value of the wage. The prices were obtained from local markets in Fort Hall in 1951. In each case the price is for 1 lb. of the commodity, in cents.

Crop	Low altitudinal zone	Middle altitudinal zone	High altitudinal zone
bulrush millet	38.09		20.00
foxtail millet	36.36		40.00
potatoes		11.04-19.20	11.86-15.00
sweet potatoes		4.65- 7.27	
yams		10.93-13.65	
maize	12.50-15.56	12.64-19.08	16.43
dwarf beans	17.02-19.05	4.70-25.80	8.88-33.33
pigeon peas	50.00		
sorghum	26.13		22.90

²⁶The Fort Hall Political Record Book, 1915 (p. 38), states that wages on the settler farms in the district amounted to 5 rupees plus rations compared to a rate double that outside the reserve. Reasons given for the lower rate on the Reserve by the Annual Report for the district, 1920-1921 concerned the fact that in general settlers in the district were "not very wealthy" and returns from the land were poorer than from elsewhere.

²⁷No indication is given of precise numbers of Fort Hall men who died as a result of wartime activities. The Central Province Political Record Book (1901-1926) gives a figure of 8716 men who enlisted in the Carrier Corps from the district between August 1914 and July 1917.

²⁸Fisher (1954) states that a woman can make six medium sized pots a day, and sell about a hundred a month in a period of harvest when demand for pots is greatest. The potter usually sells a pot for KShs. 1/-, and they are then retailed for KShs. 1/50-2/-. With reference to the proceeds of her sale, Fisher writes of the potter as follows:

She is normally free to spend her earnings as she pleases. But, "if she has a fellowship with her husband", as the Kikuyu say, she often hands over some of her earnings to him to be used for the benefit of the family - for the purchase of household equipment, clothing, extra food, or for the payment of school fees. And in any case she usually makes a contribution to the expenses of the household as well as purchasing a few luxuries for herself" (p. 141).

As indicated earlier, control over the proceeds of the sale is likely to have been an area of dispute.

²⁹There is a lack of data to assess these proportions adequately. Fisher (1954) gives weekly household expenditures for two rather

wealthy households in Fort Hall District for 1951.

- a) In the first family, the husband is absent from the holding earning a "fairly good salary" as a government employee. The first wife lives on the holding and farms seven small plots. She has four children. She receives no regular remittances from her husband. Over a 25 week period for which expenditures were recorded, she spent KShs. 132/90, of which 63.4% was for food, purchased locally. (The second wife lives with the husband where he works.)
- b) In the second household, the husband has a "very well-paid" position in Nairobi. The first wife cultivates five plots, none of which are large. She has five children. Fisher notes that: "Her husband is supposed to send her a money allowance every month, but, as she pointed out, he tends to be rather negligent in fulfilling this duty." She earns a "small salary" as a local midwife. Her household expenditures were KShs. 110/51 over a 16 week period. 75.1% of this was spent on food. (The second wife usually lives in Nairobi with the husband.) (Fisher, 1954, pp. 133-134).

³⁰G.M. Culwick, "Nutrition in East Africa," Africa, Vol. 14, No. 7, pp. 401-410, as cited by Taylor, 1973.

³¹For further discussion see Kitching, 1980, pp. 150-155 and pp. 241-279.

Chapter 7: Murang'a District: national policies, local initiatives

Utamerithitie ndaigaga kingina thi

In translation:

She whose seedlings have not germinated does not put down the seed container (Gikuyu proverb.)

7.1 Introduction

The present Kenyan Development Plan 1984-1988 indicates that agriculture is at a "crossroads" (p. 177). Famine caused by recent droughts which were severe even in the areas of relatively high agricultural potential such as Murang'a District, and the periodic importation of large amounts of food since 1979, are an indication of the strain in this sector of the economy. Although this crisis may be contrasted in macroeconomic terms with agricultural growth in the 1960s and 1970s, the issues and contradictions faced by the agricultural sector are not new. In the small farm sector¹, the target of specific agricultural policies in the current Development Plan to a far greater extent² than in previous plans², the contradictions which existed prior to 1952 have merely intensified, first, as a result of policies introduced during the period 1952-1963 prior to Independence and

second, owing to the differential access of households to non-farm income in the post-Independence period. The individualization of the land tenure system, institutionalized during the 1950s and 1960s in Murang'a District, the introduction of high value export crops, coffee and tea, under the Swynnerton Plan of 1954, together with differential access to non-farm income, have been key variables in the processes of rural, and gender, stratification in the post-1952 period. The process of drawing households further into the arena of capitalist relations of production has meant an even further intensification of the contradictions between women and men as they relate to the means of production.

The overall purpose of this chapter is, first, to delineate dimensions of the contradiction which give insight into rural and gender stratification; and second, to indicate how women, through extra-household organization at the local level, have attempted to come to terms with the increased contradictions evident within the household and in the context of the wider economy. It will be argued that women's groups in Murang'a, formed for social-welfare purposes, as agricultural work forces, or more recently and more radically, with the objective of earning income, represent a direct response by women to changes in socioeconomic structure which have affected them negatively.

As in the case of the previous chapter, no attempt will be made to present a comprehensive analysis of agricultural change.

Rather, the objective is to focus on particular aspects of this change which are seen as critical in defining gender productive relations and, more generally, rural stratification.

In each of the cases of policies towards: land tenure; food crop/export crop production; and agricultural extension, the local situation will be discussed with reference to national policy as it has evolved since 1952. The intention is not to discuss the development of national policy in detail: this has been done elsewhere (see note 2). But it is necessary to place local agricultural change within the framework of Kenya's "national developmental" strategy (Sandbrook, 1982, p. 90).³

The areas chosen for analysis are of course not discrete. The interrelationships between them and non-farm income become apparent as distinctions are drawn between socioeconomic strata on the one hand and the sexual division of labour and women vis à vis men's access to and control over the means of production and of the products of their labour on the other. They are made more visible through consideration of:

- (1) a changing definition of territory characterized by a decline but not a complete eclipsing of mbari authority under a system of freehold tenure;
- (2) the contradiction posed by the increasing spatial separation of female and male labour with ever higher levels of male outmigration yet the incomplete spatial separation of production for use and production for exchange; and

- (3) local initiatives in organization or bonding on the part of women which challenge processes evident in (1) and (2) which tend towards their increasing subordination.

7.2 Land: freehold tenure and the mbari

The assault on mbari authority vis à vis the land which began in the period prior to 1952 was both altered and accelerated through a process of land consolidation and registration of individual title subsequent to the declaration of the "Emergency" in 1953. After briefly identifying the significant events and rationale which were associated with this "land reform", the purpose here is, first, to indicate the nature of the change in tenure system with respect to increasing differentiation in society; and second, by means of a series of case studies, to illustrate how, for the great majority of women, insecurity of access to the land has increased since the mid-1950s as a direct result of the "reforms". The impact of the increasing individualization of tenure on the security of women's access rights to land was discussed in the previous chapter. This process was immeasurably accelerated by the institutionalization of freehold tenure in the great majority of cases in the name of individual males, concomitant with a decline in mbari authority whereby women's usufruct rights as wives to land were no longer effectively guaranteed. Insecurity is, however, also fostered by a process which acts in antithesis to this one and which suggests

that although the dynamic between individual/mbari control over land (noted in Chapter 5) has indeed changed since the 1880s, it remains a significant force in defining relations to the land. To the extent that this dynamic serves to assert the continuation of (male) mbari territoriality (as distinct from registered individual ownership rights to particular parcels of land) and may be manipulated to serve the interests of specific mbari factions, women's security is further in question.

"Land reform" was introduced during the period of the "Emergency" as a political measure to counter the force of Mau Mau. The purpose was to create, eventually, a rural bourgeoisie (Lamb, 1974, p. 12) which, in the words of C.M. Johnston, Special Commissioner for Central Province, would be "...too busy on their land to worry about political agitation" (quoted in Sorrenson, 1967, p. 117).⁴ Johnston referred to the process in 1956 as "an agrarian revolution" which would:

...have the effect of creating a solid middle-class Kikuyu population anchored to the land who has too much to lose by reviving the Mau Mau in another form (quoted in Sorrenson, 1967, p. 118).⁵

Measures introduced as part of the "close administration" (CPAR, 1954, p. 4) of the Gikuyu in Central Province from 1953 onwards facilitated the process. The decision reached by the War Council in June 1954 to effect the enforced villagization of the entire population of this area was the most critical (Sorrenson, 1967, p. 110). Brought in initially as a "punitive measure", it was

subsequently perceived by the Provincial Commissioner for Central Province as popular for security reasons (CPAR, 1954, p. 4).

Discussions with local people in 1984 lend considerable doubt to the latter observation. Bitterness over this and the enforcement of compulsory labour on colonially-inspired schemes remains widespread (MDAH, 1984).

Villagization had been completed by October 1955 when over a million (1077 500) Gikuyu and Embu had been moved into 854 villages (CPAR, 1955). Figures for Fort Hall District in 1956 indicate that in all a population of 322 757 had been moved to 235 villages together with their livestock (CPAR, 1956, Appendix). Particularly in those areas which were classified as "bad", i.e. where the majority of people were sympathetic to Mau Mau, control over movement and the restriction of economic activities such as trading was rigidly and tightly enforced. All local markets in Fort Hall had, for example, been closed in 1953 (FHDAR, 1953, p. 2). Locations 4 and 5 in Fort Hall were considered to be "notoriously bad" and here more communal labour was enforced and little time was allowed to farm the land (FHDAR, 1954, p. 4). Location 4 was in fact the through route for weapons and ammunition from Thika to guerilla bases in the forests of the Nyandarua range (MDAH, 1984, DD.). In contrast, the "good" areas were "rewarded" by somewhat greater freedom of movement, although for Fort Hall District, Sorrenson makes the observation that it was virtually impossible to make a distinction between "good" and

"bad" locations because even where chiefs were "loyal", active or passive support for Mau Mau existed at least in pockets (1967, p. 167).

It was in Fort Hall District that support for Mau Mau was greatest, a fact which is explained at least in part, according to Lamb, by the greater differentials in wealth in this district compared to the rest of Central Province (1974, pp. 133-134).

Sorrenson refers to one official's summation of the district's allegiance to Mau Mau as follows: 10% were active supporters; 70% were passive supporters; 10% were actively anti-Mau Mau (a group which included the Kikuyu Guard, the Tribal Police, and often government employees and mission adherents); and 10% were passively anti-Mau Mau. The last group included those who had well-paid positions with European settlers or the government (1967, pp. 106-107). Some indication of the social composition of the different groups is available from two sources. First, an analysis by a DO (District Officer) in Kiambu of the Githunguri Kikuyu Guard estimates that: of the 25 leaders, 84% were classified as "rich" or "very rich"; of the 609 rank and file, 63.4% were of "above average wealth"⁶ (Sorrenson, 1967, pp. 107-108). Second, in contrast to the "loyalists", the guerillas were in the main drawn from the landless class or those with very little land, frequently anoi (tenants) who had been turned off the land, repatriated Gikuyu from the settler farms and those whose mbari land had been taken over by kin (Lamb, 1974, p. 14). In

fact, lists of men whose land was subject to confiscation under the July 11, 1955 Native Land Rights Confiscation Order, i.e. those actively involved in Mau Mau, indicated that on average between one-quarter and one-half had no land. In Fort Hall, 868 men were listed for this purpose in 1955 (Sorrenson, 1967, p. 105). Where "terrorists" did own land, the amounts were, according to a Handing Over Report for Kandara Division in Fort Hall, very small and not worth the "...time and trouble to confiscate" (FHDPOR, 1957, p. 11). There were however exceptions to this norm, and Sorrenson cites the case of one guerilla leader in Fort Hall, Kihonge Kingara, who owned over 100 acres (40.5 ha.) (1967, p. 108). It is interesting to note an observation of one DO (in Kiambu) that the "solidarity of the "hard core" of Mau Mau was based on riika bonds, and consisted of those men between the ages of 35 and 45 who were members of the sets named Karera, Marabo and Njane Kanini⁷ (ibid.).

"Land Reform" in essence served to cement some of the existing cleavages in Gikuyu society and to provide a base for the further widening of social disparities based on land sales/purchases. Fort Hall district in the early 1950s was frequently named the most "conservative" district in terms of land tenure, there having been far less agitation for title here compared to the other Gikuyu districts. Yet, as Lamb points out, political opposition to the administration is an explanatory variable of far greater credibility than any "social conservatism" (1974, pp. 12-13).

In Fort Hall, the "reform" began as a consolidation experiment in June 1954 in the location of the "loyal" chief Ignatio under the supervision of the DC, J. Pinney.⁸ It was not until the meeting of 7 November 1955 of all DCs of Central Province that land consolidation was adopted as provincial policy (Sorrenson, 1967, p. 114).

Critical decisions in the process of land consolidation, as laid out under the Land Tenure Rules, lay with the "loyal" elders. Once a decision had been reached to consolidate a unit, defined in terms of an itura or sublocation covering 1000-2000 acres (405-810 ha.), and agreement had been reached with the local population generally through barazas (public meetings), a committee was formed. This consisted of a chief or headman, a registrar and local mbari elders, and its objective, in the first place, was to adjudicate claims to land (Sorrenson, 1967, p. 168). Once a Record of Existing Rights was compiled by the committee, sixty days were allowed for appeals to be lodged (Homan, 1962, p. 6). Subsequent to the preparation of a perimeter map of the consolidation unit, individual fragments of land were measured by ground-survey crews, and land was re-allocated by the committee on the basis of pre-existing acreage. A percentage of each person's holdings was deducted for common use, i.e. for schools, villages, roads. Where land confiscated from "terrorists" was available,⁹ this percentage was reduced (Sorrenson, 1967, pp. 169-170).

In allocating land, the stated intention was to locate the new holding on the site of the largest former fragment and to portion land fairly according to agricultural potential. Holdings of under 3 acres (1.2 ha.), defined initially as the smallest economic unit, were to be located near villages and the landless were to allocated plots in the village (ibid.). Larger landholders could also choose to keep a house in the village and one quarter an acre of their land here (Taylor, 1966b, p. 56). Subsequent to consolidation a further period of sixty days was allowed for objections (Homan, 1962, p. 2). Registration of title followed the establishment of a Land Registry in Fort Hall in 1959 (FHDAR, 1959).

Despite precautions which included the periods for lodging appeals and the fact that detainees were to be informed of the proceedings, Lamb (1974) argues that implementation of the Land Tenure rules was not fair. First, better educated and more wealthy landowners, including those on the committees, were in a better position to manipulate the system than the vast majority of the population (also MDAH, 1984, B, C, D, F). Second, those in detention were frequently not informed, a finding which is not surprising given that one intention of the consolidation process was to deprive "terrorists" of their land. As Lamb writes, "...it requires considerable credulity to imagine that most district officers considered detainees to be innocent of 'terrorism'" (1974, p. 15). Third, as officials were concerned to complete

the process of consolidation within five years, and that it would be irrevocable, appeals were frequently not given priority attention (ibid.).

As early as 1958, errors in land consolidation were noted (FHDAR, 1958, p. 13), despite the slow rate at which the process was implemented, a rate which was the result of substantial local opposition. One particularly serious error concerned a discrepancy of 1 000 acres (405 ha.) in a location of 4000 acres (1620 ha.) (Sorrenson, 1967, p. 173). By 1960 it was realized that the discrepancies were major. Part of the fault lay in the lack of survey expertise and inadequate supervision of survey teams, resulting in inaccurate measurements of fragments (ibid., p. 171). But further inquiry, Lamb records, "...revealed evidence of substantial corruption, of fictitious fragments of land being recorded, and of repeated contravention of the appeals procedure laid down in the Land Tenure Rules" (1974, p. 13). In particular, it was evident that some landowners had managed to accumulate substantial additions to their land on demarcation (FHDAR, 1960, p. 9).

In the latter part of 1960, the decision to re-check all consolidation work in Fort Hall was made. As the Records of Existing Rights Registers and for the most part the Demarcation Registers in the district had been closed, new legislation had to be introduced to authorize re-consolidation (FHDAR, 1960, p. 1. 9). This was in place by 1961 (Sorrenson, 1967, p. 179). The

task was, of course, a huge one and was carried out under very different conditions from the first process of consolidation. By 1960, with few exceptions, detainees had returned to the land and in several locations ex-detainees held the balance of power on the adjudication committees rather than the loyalists. In fact, their return to Fort Hall from 1958 onwards led to increased resistance to consolidation (Lamb, 1974, p. 13). At one stage in 1961, the lack of cooperation meant that "...serious consideration was given to withdrawing all land consolidation teams from the district" (FHDAR, 1961, p. 12). The ending of the "Emergency" in January 1960 also meant that the degree of control over the population, and in particular restriction to villages, could no longer be enforced. Removal of the population from the land in the early 1950s had obviously eased the problem of re-allocating land. In fact, as early as 1958, 980 landowners had been allowed to return to their holdings, to build often permanent houses and to plant newly introduced, permanent crops such as coffee (Sorrenson, 1967, pp. 179-180).¹⁰ The changing political climate also meant that the administration had to proceed cautiously and involve people far more closely than previously. R. Giffard, in charge of the re-consolidation process in Fort Hall, had to adopt "slower more accomodating tactics" than the "sledge-hammer" approach used, for example, in Kiambu (ibid., pp. 180-181). In some cases where permanent buildings and crops were in place, Giffard opted for allocating a holding in two or more parcels,

which Sorrenson notes, went against official policy; but which could allow for a more equitable distribution of land of different potential (ibid.). As a result of this process, consolidation was not completed in Fort Hall until 1968¹¹ (Lamb, 1974, p. 14).

The Economic Survey of Central Province 1963/1964 (ESCP, 1968) gives some indication of the nature of the disparities in land holding size in the district. Although subject to sampling errors when the data are disaggregated to the district level, as the survey notes, it represents a more rigorous attempt to define conditions in Central Province than the earlier Kenya African Agricultural Sample Census 1960/1961.¹² The Economic Survey

included 900 households in Central Province, of which 167 were in Fort Hall District. For analytical purposes holdings were divided into three strata: stratum 1 consisted of holdings under 4 acres (1.6 ha.) in size; stratum 2, those holdings between 4 and 8 acres (1.6 to 3.2 ha.); and stratum 3, holdings over 8 acres (3.2 ha.) in size (ESCP, 1968). Average holding size for Fort Hall, in relation to other districts in Fort Hall, is given in Table 7.1.

A more precise indication of inequalities is provided by Table 7.2. The data show that 26.4% of the landholders, those operating holdings under 2 acres (0.8 ha.) in size, control 4.7% of the land in Fort Hall. For Central Province, 31.8% of the landholders operating holdings in this category control 13.1% of the land. At the other end of the spectrum, 3.8% of the holders, those who operate holdings above 20 acres (8.2 ha.), control 24.4% of the

Table 7.1 Central Province: average size of holding
(land operated) by strata, 1963/1964, acres (hectares are
 given in parentheses)

District	Stratum 1	Stratum 2	Stratum 3	District Average
Kiambu	1.4 (.57)	5.8 (2.3)	11.7 (4.7)	2.6 (1.1)
Fort Hall	2.9 (1.2)	6.9 (2.8)	18.1 (7.3)	5.2 (2.1)
Embu	2.8 (1.1)	5.6 (2.3)	14.5 (5.9)	4.1 (1.7)
Nyeri	2.5 (1.0)	5.1 (2.1)	12.1 (4.3)	3.3 (1.3)
Meru	2.7 (1.1)	5.2 (2.1)	11.1 (4.5)	4.2 (1.7)

Source ESCP, 1968, p. 20.

Table 7.2 Fort Hall District: holding size distribution, 1963/1964

Size of holding, acres (hectares are given in parentheses)	Fort Hall District		Central Province	
	% of all holdings	% of all land	% of all holdings	% of all land
>1.0 (0.40)	9.3	1.0	10.5	2.5
1.0-1.9 (0.40-.79)	17.1	3.7	21.3	10.6
2.0-3.9 (.80-1.6)	23.0	11.7	30.7	26.7
4.0-5.9 (1.7-2.4)	25.4	22.3	19.2	22.2
6.0-7.9 (2.5-3.2)	5.9	7.4	6.4	9.4
8.0-9.9 (3.3-4.0)	9.4	15.0	4.7	7.3
10.0-14.9 (4.1-6.0)	5.3	12.0	4.4	9.6
15.0-19.9 (6.1-8.1)	0.7	2.4	1.1	3.6
20.0+ 8.2+	3.8	24.4	1.6	8.1
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: ESCP, 1968, p. 21.

land. For Central Province as a whole, 1.6% of the landholders operate 8.1% of the holdings. Almost half the holders in the province (49.9%), those with holdings which range in size from 2 to 6 acres (0.8 ha. to 4.3 ha.), control 48.9% of the land. In Fort Hall, this same group comprises 48.4% of the holders, but controls only 34% of the land. The greater differential in holding size is apparent when comparisons are made with other districts, as Lamb (1974, p. 134) illustrates using data from the same source. Holdings under 6 acres (2.4 ha.) comprise: 81.5% of the land in Kiambu, 58.8% in Embu, 69.8% in Nyeri, 61.7% in Meru, but only 38.7% in Fort Hall; holdings over 10 acres (4.05 ha.) in size comprise: 8.1% of the land in Kiambu, 20.9% in Embu, 18.9% in Nyeri, 20.2% in Meru and 38.8% in Fort Hall.

A further significant finding of the Economic Survey was the fact that 18% of the households surveyed in Fort Hall owned no land. This figure compares with 40.9% for Kiambu, 14.7% for Embu, 19.4% for Nyeri and 5.3% for Meru (ESCP, 1968, p. 20). The implications of these findings and the relationship of holding size from the 1963 and more recent data to farm and non-farm income and to the distribution of male and female labour will be discussed in Section 7.4. What is important to note at this point is the very marked degree of inequality in land distribution in the district in 1963, reflective of the situation in Fort Hall at the time of consolidation. As discussed in Chapter 6.5, this illustrates the fact that the process of land accumulation/marginalization had been operative prior to the "land reform".

Registration of freehold title to the land followed the re-consolidation and demarcation of holdings. Details of the Registration Bill, the Native Lands Registration Ordinance 1959 passed in 1959 are discussed by Sorrenson's (1967) Chapter XI: "Registration of titles and land control". Three observations are pertinent to make at this time with respect to the Bill in view of the general argument of this chapter. First, in the final draft of the Ordinance, no protection of "lesser rights" was included. As an example of this, Sorrenson refers to "customary tenancy" practices, i.e. involving ahoi (1967, p. 189). No reference is made in his work to the fact that women's usufruct rights to land which had been previously guaranteed by the mbari became invisible during the process of registration. Rather, it was individual men's rights to land which had previously implied something less than full ownership, that were regarded as the registrable interest. Possession of a title deed under the system of freehold tenure therefore gave to men virtually unbridled power over distribution and allocation of the land¹³, the second point of relevance to discussion here. Third, the practice of encouraging "join-ups"¹⁴, where holdings were under 3 acres (1.22 ha.) in size, (both for "economic" reasons and because of the assumption that that owners with over 3 acres would be "allowed" to move out of villages, thereby ensuring the villages remained of a "manageable size") and the subsequent registration of the holding in the name of one owner under the Land Tenure rules meant that

the rights of several holders were not in fact registered. When the Registration Ordinance was introduced, the person in whose name the land had been registered under the Land Tenure rules became the sole owner. Although co-owners could be registered, it was not compulsory for the person who became the sole owner to do this (Sorrenson, 1967, p. 214). Even in Fort Hall where, on account of re-demarcation, the registration of many titles was late relative to Nyeri and Kiambu, Giffard estimated that 3000 to 4000 right holders were in effect "dispossessed". Sorrenson suggests that this situation was in fact unlikely to have been "of much consequence" as only the "clever and unscrupulous" would have tried to turn their kin off the land (ibid.). It would seem extremely probable, however, that this issue would become an ingredient for later dispute as pressure on the land increased. Where a sale of land or its mortgaging for a loan was in question, the registered interest under one owner must frequently have been the source of bitter argument. It is also important to note that as a result of this "joining-up", any analysis of average holding size should take account of the fact that many holdings defined as one unit for registration purposes would in reality have been supporting more than one family, a point made by Sorrenson (1967, p. 215).

There is no quantitative evidence to indicate the degree of commercialization of land prior to the process of "land reform" (Lamb, 1974, p. 74). The rapid increase in land sales subsequent

to the registration of title is indicated by Table 7.3.¹⁵ What is particularly interesting to note is the proportion of land purchases made by women relative to men. Since Independence in 1963, an average of 11.7% of such purchases have been made by women in Murang'a District. Although it is likely that many of the purchases may be made by the educated elite with access to formal employment (and such land in many cases may be held as security rather than being cultivated), this is by no means universally the case (MDAH, 1984, A, EE), and should not detract from the significance of the trend. It will be shown on the basis

Table 7.3 Murang'a District: land sales, 1958-1984

Year	Total Sales	Sales to Women		Sales to Men	
		No.	%	No.	%
1984 ¹	923	108	11.7	815	88.3
1979 ²	1413	177	12.5	1236	87.5
1974	1928	235	12.2	1693	87.8
1969	923	120	13.0	803	87.0
1964	374	25	6.7	349	93.3
1963	165	23	13.9	142	86.1
1962	78	1	1.3	77	98.7
1961	6	0	0	6	100.0
1960	66	1	1.5	65	98.5
1959	67	6	9.0	61	91.0
1958	6	0	0	6	100.0

Source: Murang'a District Land Registry, Presentation Books.

Notes: 1. Sales up to and including 8 December are included.
2. Data from 7 to 31 December were missing.

of the case studies which follow that land purchase by women represents their response to a situation of increasing insecurity vis à vis the land. In the great majority of situations it also reflects the surmounting of obstacles placed in their way both in terms of husband-wife relations within the household and at the level of the mbari. To male mbari members, the sale of land to a woman implies the loss of territory and thus it is bitterly opposed. To husbands, the purchase of land and registration in a wife's name, is a declaration of independence which is not easily tolerated.

It will be evident from Table 7.3 that sales for 1984 were substantially lower than for 1979, the result of a directive in 1982 to Land Boards in the District. Land Boards had been set up at the divisional and district levels under the Land Control (Native Lands) Ordinance, 1959, in order to deal with questions of succession, subdivision, gift, sale or the mortgaging of land. All land transactions are required to be agreed to by the divisional board and no transaction is legal until it receives the board's consent (Homan, 1962, p. 9). At present, all cases are heard initially at the locational level under the Chief and a committee of elders. Only where agreement cannot be reached is the matter referred to the divisional administration. With the rapid increase in land sales in the 1960s and 1970s, it became apparent that many such sales were occurring without the knowledge of a man's family, frequently leaving a woman in the position of

being unable to support herself and her children. As a result of the widespread number of complaints that were being voiced, particularly at the locational level, the Member of Parliament for Kikuyu District, Charles Njonjo, introduced a directive whereby it became compulsory for the spouse of the landowner (and, if adult, children) to appear before the Board both to indicate their awareness of the action being taken and of their agreement with it. It was thus a measure intended to decrease directly family insecurity in rural areas (interview with the Chief, Muthithi Location, November 1984). The dramatic decrease in land sales by 1984 is visible evidence of the directive's effectiveness.

The increased sale of land was in fact one of the explicit economic objectives of the Swynnerton Plan, A Plan to intensify the development of African Agriculture in Kenya, introduced in Kenya in 1955. Land consolidation was seen as part of this broader endeavour. In the frequently quoted words of Swynnerton:

Former government policy will be reversed and able, energetic or rich Africans will be able to acquire more land and bad or poor farmers less, creating a landed and a landless class. This is a normal step in the evolution of a country¹⁶ (quoted in Leys, 1975, p. 52).

It was thus expected that a class of commercial farmers would emerge who, through the purchase of land from smaller holders, would accumulate sufficient acreage to be able to operate "economic" units. The landless class so created, in addition to those who had been returned to the "Reserves" in the Emergency,

were to become labourers for the landowning class.

While this strategy aimed at the creation of "economic" holdings (which were variously defined according to ecological zone by G. Gamble, Provincial Agricultural Officer for Central Province in (1958)¹⁷, and were upheld by the Department of Agriculture, it was in contradiction to the practice which came to be to be tolerated if not approved by the provincial administration. The latter, Sorrenson notes, was more concerned with security and political matters and was "...anxious to ensure that all who had a legitimate claim to land received a title..." (1967, p. 224).

The central area of dispute between the two authorities concerned the subdivision of holdings below the size stipulated as "economic". The intent of the Registration Ordinance with respect to succession, or inheritance, was clear: first, refragmentation was to be prevented; second, the number of co-owners of a piece of land was to be limited to five in order that the land remain a "negotiable asset"; third, all heirs under customary law were to receive compensation where they did not receive a share of the land to which they were entitled (Homan, 1963, p. 49). Land Boards were required, at least initially, to carry out this mandate.

Shortly after the registration of title had been completed, however, it became apparent that procedures with respect to succession were not working. The Land Register was, in Homan's

words, "...gradually ceasing to reflect the true state of affairs on the ground" (1963, p. 50). Based on calculations for Kiambu, he concluded that after 4 years of registration in this district, over 3000 out of a total of 75 000 titles were still registered in the names of deceased people. This, he suggested, was due to the continuation of the customary practice of land inheritance. The end result, he gloomily predicted, would be a return of the country to "its original, fragmented state" (ibid.).

Homan (1963) considered that the lack of registration of transmissions was due to "ignorance", to a lack of immediate concern to maintain the transmissibility of the land, or to the fact that people were aware that the policy of "one owner, one farm" would mean a refusal of their application for a succession order (1963, p. 50) either because it would indicate more than five co-owners or it would be judged uneconomic (Sorrenson, 1967, p. 215). Sorrenson also makes the point that in many cases an application would not be made in order to avoid transmission fees.

In order to improve some of the administrative procedures associated with notification of death and problems connected with compensation to heirs who did not receive title, a new system was introduced in September 1961. Although Homan (1963) considers that this resulted in an improvement in registration, Sorrenson points out that the "fundamental defect" of the provisions for succession which existed under the Registration Ordinance before

modification remained. In essence, the provisions:

...fell hardest on the small holding which could not be sub-divided yet could not be made to bear the burden of providing the income to pay compensation to the unsuccessful heirs. The successful heir was immediately saddled with a burden of debt when he already had a considerable problem in making a living. Moreover he had little chance of raising capital to improve his land (Sorrenson, 1967, p. 216).

The only way out of this predicament, Sorrenson continues, was not to notify a death and to subdivide the land unofficially between all heirs claiming a share (ibid.).

The response of divisional Land Boards to the changing and somewhat ambiguous instructions from the provincial land board with respect to sub-division and size of holding, was, by 1964, to agree to all applications (ibid., p. 217). Clearly, this represented mere recognition of the de facto division of the land.

Direct evidence of the present situation with respect to the subdivision of land, the fragmentation of holdings and the degree of congruence between the de jure situation represented by the Land Registry and the de facto reality in Murang'a District, at least on a large scale, is lacking. Yet an assessment of this situation is necessary in considering the relative insecurity faced by men and women vis à vis the land. For this reason, reference is made to Haugerud's (1983) analysis of a random sample of 83 households in two agro-economic zones in Kagaari Location, in neighbouring Embu. The same process of land consolidation and the

registration of title was carried out here but population pressure is very much less than in Murang'a. Her findings indicate that twenty years after demarcation, the Land Registry had a record of "a mere fraction" of the subdivisions that have occurred. With reference to the area in which she was working, she writes:

Among 1,200 titles covering all of one circumscribed area of the coffee zone between about the 5,000 - and 4,200 - feet contours, only 8 percent (84 of 1,031) of the original titles have registered subdivisions. Just 16 percent (165 of 1,012) of the currently valid titles on the register are subdivisions of previous titles. In the cotton zone the rate of official subdivision is higher; here, among 345 contiguous titles, 12 percent (31 of 265) of the original titles have registered subdivisions, and 25 percent (76 of 310) of the existing titles are subdivisions of previous titles (Haugerud, 1983, p. 73).

Haugerud explains the higher percentage of registrations of subdivision in the cotton zone in terms of this area's lower population pressure and the higher rate of land transactions which frequently involve the purchase of land by non-residents. Neither of the zones' rates of subdivision is, in her view, a realistic assessment after twenty years of high population growth. Her evidence also indicates substantial fragmentation of holdings within and between ecological zones as households attempt both to reduce the risk of crop failure and to diversify production.

Widespread lending and borrowing of fragments as well as multiple "parcel-ownership" allow this practice to continue. For example, three-quarters of the sample borrow and/or lend land. 58% of the

sample own two or more parcels; 12% own at least three pieces of land; and 6% own at least four parcels. These proportions approximate those of the immediate pre-consolidation period (Haugerud, 1983, pp. 73-74).

The critical observation Haugerud makes from her analysis is that recent changes have led to increased contradiction between de jure and de facto rights to land and that at the "intersection" of the two systems "...previously existing rights become less secure, and new sources of domestic conflict fester" (ibid., p. 76). Statutory law has not, she argues, "...even in the absence of severe population pressure, eclipsed kin relations as a basis for defining access to land" (ibid., p. 72). Haugerud does not pursue this argument in terms of gender relations to land, yet the fluidity of the equilibrium between the two systems that she exposes points towards the centre of the contradiction that women face with respect to the land. The case studies which follow, collected in Murang'a in 1984¹⁸, have been chosen to indicate different facets of this contradiction. They have been changed only to the extent that it is necessary to ensure the anonymity of the person concerned.

1. A.N.K.

A.N.K., a woman presently about 50 years old, grew up in a family where her father laid great emphasis on equality between three sons and four daughters in terms of their

access to formal education and to labour on the holding. He himself was educated in the early 1900s in a missionary school. Her father's earnings as a school teacher enabled him to purchase the 10 acres (4.05 ha.) on which the family grew up in the middle altitudinal zone of the district. (He had left his share of his father's 2 acres (0.81 ha.) to his brother who had not received the same level of formal education and lacked an equivalent opportunity to earn an income.) Prior to consolidation, the farm was in several fragments, which her mother was responsible for working. At the time of adjudication in 1957-1958, her father was away from the holding. It was widely understood that a family unrepresented at the committee hearings was unlikely to be treated fairly, and thus, as the oldest member of the family present who had had a formal education, A.N.K. participated in the proceedings and insisted on the family's rights. Although there were other women at the proceedings, all were married and they were there as observers rather than as participants. Her presence was the subject of considerable and sustained acrimony on the part of the mbari elders. With the assistance of a "land man", an African on the committee, she persisted in her appeal. She considers that at first women liked the idea of consolidation because it reduced the time spent travelling between the fragments and eased the

burden of carrying the harvest for great distances. As cash crops such as coffee were introduced, and husbands took over control of part of the land for this purpose, women were left with less land on which to obtain a subsistence.

A.N.K. herself received training as a registered nurse and subsequently helped with her brothers' and sisters' education. Only when her next sister could take over supporting her siblings' education did A.N.K. marry.

On marriage, she moved a distance of about 3 kms to land given to her husband by his father, within the coffee zone. The land, totalling 8.5 acres (3.4 ha.), was registered in her husband's name. He had been given a larger share of the land than his brothers because of his assistance with their education. He furthered his education with support from A.N.K. after their marriage and obtained a well-paid position in the government administration.

A.N.K. has continued working as a nurse in the district, also having responsibility for the farm. While she used to do some of the farm work herself, a labourer has been hired for many years for this purpose. A group of women is often called in for tasks such as sowing, weeding and harvesting, being paid for the day's work. Enough is produced from the holding for subsistence purposes and maize, beans and bananas are sold locally. Where the amounts sold are not large, she

keeps the proceeds; if the amount is large and she asks her husband's help in taking the produce to market, by car, he keeps the money. She obtains money from the sale of milk (there were two cows and three calves in 1984), but where an animal is sold, her husband gets the money. She has no authority to sell livestock.

With the money she and her husband have earned, an additional 3 acres (1.2 ha.) have been bought. At his insistence, this land was registered in his name.

Income has also been invested in a house. A.N.K. has managed to save money on her own over a long period of time and with this she has now been able to purchase 1.5 acres (0.6 ha.) of her own. Negotiations for the land were conducted for her by her father. Although her husband now knows about the land, he questions why she has it registered in her name. With the land as collateral, she has recently managed to obtain a bank loan and has set up a small scale maize-milling business in a nearby township. Two of her four daughters manage this. Her husband also has a small car repair enterprise in another trading centre.

A.N.K. feels very strongly that women should be independent and have their own source of income. She does not harbour bitterness yet is very conscious of the fact that, having helped her husband to improve his employment

through supporting his education, she did not receive a fair share of what he earned. He did help her in setting up a business, but not to the extent she needed.

A.N.K. would like to pass on to her daughters not only her own land, but also that registered in her husband's name which she has farmed. She is conscious of the fact that should the marriage break down, she have no rights to the land registered in her husband's name. Were he to remarry and have a son, any prospect of her daughters accessing that land would be jeopardized. In any event, inheritance by the daughters could be challenged by the mbari should, for example, a brother of her husband lay claim to the land on the basis of customary practice.

Yet it is not just security in land per se which concerns A.N.K. She also considers it of vital importance for a woman to own some of her parents' land, a piece of mbari territory. She has in fact talked extensively about this with her father and he has agreed that although the bulk of the land will go to her three brothers, one acre (.04 ha.) will be registered in the name of herself and her sisters. This may seem a token, but in terms of general inheritance practice it is a step onto different ground. A.N.K. considers ownership of a piece of her own mbari land critical

because it would provide a place to go if there were problems in a marriage. A woman would be much "safer" here than on land she had purchased on her own or in a house in Nairobi because a husband would not pursue her to her parent's property. After the parents' death, brothers or the mbari could offer protection and the means for negotiation. For A.N.K., the change of residence on marriage, even though the distance was not great, was viewed as very significant. In her words, "For a woman to be fully independent, she needs to understand the need to be strongly joined in her family." This, at the most basic level, means being able to access territory, not just land, on the same terms as men.

2. B.K.

B.K. is a widow in her late 50s. She owns and manages a farm of 4.5 acres (1.8 ha.) in the coffee belt near Kandara. On her husband's death ten years ago, she had the land registered in her name. She has three daughters, two of whom are unmarried. One of the latter has two daughters and one son. She would like to divide the holding and register the land in the names of her two unmarried daughters. So far, a faction of her husband's mbari is supporting her deceased husband's brother's claim to the land on the basis of customary inheritance procedures. This section of the mbari

is insisting that the land be "returned to the mbari", fearing that on the subsequent marriage of one of B.K.'s daughters, mbari territory would pass to an outsider. Before the divisional Land Board in Kandara, the District Commissioner for Murang'a, and at the Thika Court, the mbari has been successful in preventing the transaction B.K. wishes. The fact that title to the land is registered in her name has not so far allowed her to exercise authority in succession to the land. At present, with legal assistance, she has taken the case to the High Court of Kenya in Nairobi.

3. M.W.G.

M.W.G., about 65 years of age, grew up on a holding in Kigumo division in a family with three brothers. When she married, she moved to Gaichangiru in Kandara division, within the coffee belt. Her husband's land was about 2.0 acres (0.8 ha.) and she managed crop production. Subsequent to land reform, when "rich people" took over their more fertile land and they were moved to a less fertile area, her husband "sent her away" as she had given birth only to daughters. No usufruct rights to the land were supported by her husband's mbari. On separation, the bridewealth was shared, unusual in the circumstances, but she did take her daughters with her to

her father's land. As her three brothers were to inherit this land, her father bought her a plot of 0.7 acres (0.28 ha.) nearby and registered the land in her name. She manages to produce subsistence from this land which is not very fertile, but relies on her three daughters for other necessities such as clothing. Two daughters have married and moved away. The third lives with her, with her son, Ndegwa. N.W.G. intends to leave the land to "Ndegwa's mother", the unmarried daughter.

4. M.J.R.

M.J.R., in her early 40s, is the principal of a school. Her husband has an influential position in the provincial administration.

On marriage, M.J.R. moved to the land allocated to her husband by his parents, amounting to approximately 9 acres (3.6 ha.) in the lower coffee belt. By combining both their salaries, "they" bought an additional 11 acres (4.45 ha.) which her husband insisted be registered in his name alone. After much dispute, M.J.R.'s husband has finally decided to allow her name to be entered on the title deed of a parcel of land measuring 0.25 acre (0.1 ha.). Thus, it will now be in both their names.

Despite her well-paid and respected employment position,

and the fact that she has sons (two) as well as daughters (three), M.J.R. is very conscious of her insecurity. Realizing that all her earnings were tied up in land registered in her husband's name, and that she had no entitlement to this land in the event of separation or divorce, two years ago she negotiated with a friend (female) to purchase three acres (1.2 ha.) of land from a third party in another location. Saving for this purchase had been very difficult as her income was always disclosed to her husband (whereas the reverse did not happen). In the event, their respective husbands found out about the negotiations and M.J.R. and her friend were warned not to attempt such a transaction again.

One of the reasons she wanted to purchase the land was to use it as collateral for a loan to start a small business. Her husband would not allow her to mortgage "family" property. She cited the case of a fellow teacher who had managed to obtain a loan through her husband's agreement in using land registered in his name as collateral. On this basis, the colleague borrowed KShs. 50 000/-. On receipt of the money, the teacher's husband demanded KShs. 30 000/- which he then "drank away". The remaining KShs. 20 000/- was insufficient to allow her to accomplish her plans and she

continues to repay the entire initial loan from salary deductions.

M.J.R. cited the case of her maternal grandmother who, as a widow, managed to obtain land at the time of consolidation in her own name. This was not a common occurrence. M.J.R.'s aunt, who had done much work for her mother in cultivating the land and supporting her as she grew older, was given this piece of land. But the mbari is now fighting to "reclaim" this land on the basis of viewing it as lost territory, although the aunt is in fact a member of the mbari. In order to ensure her control of the title, the aunt is considering re-registering the title in the names of two friends as well as her own. In this way, although she will not be able to call the land exclusively hers, the mbari would find it very difficult to wage battle on three fronts at once.

5. W.G.

W.G., in her late 80s or early 90s, came from near Mugomoini. Her father had two wives. None of the children of the second wife lived. Of her mother's seven children, only she survived. As the only surviving child she had asked her father for land, but this was refused and on her father's death, land was taken by his step-brother. The latter's sons

obtained title deed to the land at the time of consolidation.

W.G. was given land, for use, on marriage at Kiagware, within the coffee zone. She cultivated the two acres (0.8 ha.) here, and later her husband cleared other land. In total, at the time of consolidation, they had four parcels of land. With consolidation, they had two plots of land, the 2 acres (0.8 ha.) at Kiagware, and 9 acres (3.6 ha.) at Kware. Subsequently another 3 acres (1.2 ha.) were purchased near Kware.

Of her seven children, four died, leaving W.G. with three daughters. In order to prevent her husband's step brother from "snatching" the land she managed on her husband's death, she and her husband decided, as he was dying, that she should "marry" a woman. Thus, as a female husband, W.G. divided her deceased husband's three plots equally between herself and her "wife", Wanjiku. This was entered as a mutation in the Land Registry; she retained title to all the land in her own name until the marriage of two of Wanjiku's three sons when a portion of the land was registered in their respective names.

Retaining title to much of the land in her name and her refusal to allow Wanjiku to give land to her only daughter were among the factors that led to disagreement between W.G.

and Wanjiku. All of her own three daughters are now married, but although two have land elsewhere, the one in Ukambami lacks land. W.G. wishes to give this daughter, Nyambura, land. It has been an uphill battle to retain her husband's land in her own name even with a "wife" with sons, as this has been continually and bitterly contested by her husband's brother. This brother-in-law sold his inheritance soon after consolidation and is now trying to compensate for this action by arguing on the basis of mbari solidarity for access to W.G.'s land. W.G. therefore dare not give him further grounds for taking away the land by giving a portion of it to Nyambura who is married to a man from another mbari. Such action would be viewed as the loss of mbari territory. For this reason also, she has refused to give land to Wanjiku's daughter who is married in Kiambu. So far, W.G. has therefore succeeded in keeping land in her husband's name (Wanjiku's sons by different fathers are named after relatives of W.G.'s deceased husband and of Wanjiku), but the battle has been a continuous one.

W.G. is trying to obtain land for her daughter, Nyambura, from her own mbari and has been negotiating with the sons of her father's step-brother for this purpose. So far she has been unsuccessful,

6. J.W.

J.W., probably 55 years in age, grew up not far from Saba Saba on land which was inherited by her brother. On her marriage she moved to Kiambu where her husband was working. At the time of consolidation, as she and her husband were not present on the land in the coffee belt which was her husband's share, it was registered in the name of his brother. Her husband died shortly after registration and so she travelled to the land which she could claim as his wife. Her brother-in-law gave her her husband's share of 2 acres (0.8 ha.) to cultivate, but retained the title deed in his name. She saw no reason to question this action.

As J.W. has three daughters and no sons, her brother-in-law expects his son to inherit J.W.'s land. Two of her daughters are married, but she does not know at present where they are. The third, unmarried, daughter has employment in Nairobi and generally visits her at the end of the month. J.W. relies on this daughter for necessities. In good years, the land allows her to make a subsistence living, but in terms relative to the farmers of the area she is extremely poor. One particular problem is the lack of help she has to do farm work. She is frequently unwell and can do little herself. She would like to leave the land to her unmarried daughter if the latter remains unmarried and does not anticipate dispute with her brother-in-law over this.

7. K.W.W.

K.W.W. is a widow who obtained title to the land she had cultivated in the coffee zone in Kigumo Division on her husband's death. As she grew older and less able to work all the land, she divided this part between her three married daughters, although retaining the title herself. She herself lives on another piece of land nearer to Saba Saba. The married daughters do not live far away, and although they have land at their respective husbands' places, they also cultivated their mother's land until two years ago.

The daughters have now been pushed off the land by K.W.W.'s deceased husband's elder brother who had sold his own land not long after consolidation and lacks land for his two sons. He has physically moved onto the land he considered his by right of customary inheritance practice and divided it among his sons, thus obtaining land by force where he could not do so "legally". K.W.W. had refused to give him title to the land. She does not have the "strength", i.e. the financial resources, to go to court. Her husband's mbari is clearly at least tacitly accepting a fait accompli. With neither access to legal council nor the support of her husband's mbari, K.W.W. is in no position to exercise any authority that under de jure system of freehold tenure is supposed to be accorded the owner of a title deed.

8. W.N.G

W.N.G. is about 60 years old. She grew up in the Ngong Hills in a family where her father had four wives. For each, he cleared land. Her mother had eight children, three sons and five daughters. The sons were allowed to go to a nearby missionary school; the daughters were refused permission. W.N.G., however, ran away to the school and stayed there for eight years during which time she received training as a midwife. She met her husband at the school and when she married moved to a farm within the coffee zone near Kandara township. Of her own family, her four sisters married Maasai; in the "Emergency", her brothers were moved to land in Nyandarua as the area in Ngong was returned to the Maasai.

W.N.G.'s husband was given 18.6 acres (7.5 ha.), in four parcels, for her use on marriage. She continued to work as a midwife for two years after marriage, but then stopped in order to look after the children. Her husband continued to work as a school teacher in local schools and in Maasailand until his retirement. When he married a second wife, each parcel of land was divided equally between them. On consolidation, the land which was then in one piece was divided equally between them. After her husband's death in the late 1950s, the holding was legally subdivided and each wife was given title deed to 9.3 acres (3.77 ha.).

This land has now been divided among her three sons

(whose wives cultivate their share) and one of her two daughters. Prior to his death, W.N.G.'s husband had made it known within the family and the mbari that one daughter was to be given land, in W.N.G.'s words: "As she was named after my husband's mother, he loved her very much." This daughter is presently unmarried with a child and she holds the title deed to her land. Neither the brothers nor the mbari have disputed her claim to the land.

This case is unusual in that land was "willed" to a daughter when she was still very young. It is not uncommon (and W.N.G. cited four cases of women who lived not far from her as examples) for an unmarried woman with children to be given land by their fathers.

9. M.W.

M.W., about 40 years old, manages a farm of 1.2 acres (0.49 ha.) in the tea zone. Her husband, an itinerant bicycle repair mechanic, has been unable to work for some time owing to ill health. Income from tea and the production of part of their food requirements allows a living at the subsistence level.

M.W. came from a family, in Location 16, in which there were four sons and three daughters. On consolidation, the five fragments were consolidated to form a total holding of 33.4 acres (13.5 ha.). This land is now divided among the sons, the two younger having 6 acres (2.4 ha.) each, the two

older, 8 acres (3.2 ha.) each and the eldest daughter, who has 5.4 acres (2.2 ha.). Each has title deed to his/her land. M.W. stated that her eldest sister was given the land because although married, she cannot bear children, and her father feared that she could be "chased away" by her husband.

10. B.N.

B.N., a landowner originally from Kangema, but now resident in Kandara Division referred to the case of his uncle, N.G., who had remained in Kangema in the coffee zone when part of the family had moved south. Of N.G.'s two wives, the sons of the first died, leaving one daughter; the second wife had one daughter. The daughter of the first wife married but did not move far, and continued to look after her father as he grew older. In 1981, he indicated to his immediate family and to the mbari that this daughter was to inherit his land. On his death shortly afterwards, the title deed was registered in her name, despite the efforts of a nephew of N.G., B.N.'s elder brother, to seize the land.

Clearly the permutations of accessing and controlling land and the workings of the dynamic between an individual (male or female) and the mbari are far from exhausted by the case studies given. In some cases the examples cited lack precision: they

concern issues which remain sensitive. Certain observations may, however, be drawn from this and other individual histories collected in 1984. First, a man's rights to dispose of land to which he holds title, whether his decision includes allocation to women or men, appear to be upheld at the level of the mbari. A wife may inherit from her husband on his decision and the title deed will be registered in her name. A daughter may also inherit from her father where this has been explicitly detailed by him. This occurs almost exclusively where the daughter has borne children and is unmarried. The case of B.N.'s cousin above is an exception and B.N. stated that he knew of no other comparable case. The extent to which allocation of land to an unmarried sister with children is accepted by her brothers is, however, related to the size of holding prior to subdivision. It may also be related to whether the woman's children are sons or daughters, although no evidence collected indicated this. Where pressure on the land is severe, the possibility of a sister obtaining land is likely to be the source of considerable dispute. In a case not cited above, but where the holding is relatively large, the father has registered 3 acres (1.2 ha.) of his land in the name of a daughter with two children, and another daughter who is presently separated from her husband and has her children with her has had land pointed out to her as hers. It will be registered in her name. It is clear, however, that the transfer of land to the daughters is not viewed as ideal by the father or the four

brothers (MDAH, 1984, W.). Frequently, where a daughter is given land, this is a much smaller share than her brothers, as above, and may involve the purchase of a separate plot if means allow, as in the case cited of M.W.G. Very rarely a daughter is given an equal share (ibid., 2).

Second, the theoretical rights of a woman, as a wife or a daughter, to dispose of land on terms equal to those of a man under conditions of de jure freehold tenure are constantly disputed by members of the mbari. Conflict centres on the issue of territoriality. Where the customary pattern of male-male succession is returned to, i.e. the woman, as wife, acts in essence as a caretaker of the title deed until her sons marry, and this is by far the most common practice, territory remains in the mbari. Any dispute which arises generally concerns the division of the land according to the distribution of fertile/infertile sections or the allocation of land with permanent crops such as tea or coffee in this area.

Where a woman remains unmarried, her children belong to her (and thus her father's) mbari. Land inherited by her sons will remain mbari territory. But where a woman, either as a sister in her mbari or as a wife in her husband's, attempts to pass land on to a daughter, the mbari is threatened with loss of territory. Even if a woman (as a sister or a daughter in her mbari) decides to marry and retains the land in her name and it is likely this would often be contested by her husband, her children would be viewed as members of her husband's mbari and their succession to

the land would mean an extension of his mbari's territorial control. It is this that is so relentlessly fought by the mbari, or by factions in it, in the cases of B.K., W.G. and K.W.W. above. A wife's purchase of land, A.N.K. and M.J.R. above, while viewed as an explicit and immediate threat to male power within the household, is a threat also to male-defined territoriality at the wider, mbari, scale.

Third, individual men, fathers, as is evident in several of the case studies, recognize women's vulnerability in terms of access to land. There has been, according to many of those who participated in the study, a greater willingness of fathers to give land to their daughters in recent years. This may be in response to an educated daughter's assistance, perhaps in the form of remittances sent from Nairobi (MDAH, 1984, A). It may also characterize those households with greater access to land and therefore be more common among the more wealthy sectors of rural society.

Finally, although women's insecurity in relation to land has been recognized in this context (father-daughter), and in terms of the directive issued to Land Boards in 1982, it is very apparent that antagonism towards women's control of land, whether as wives in individual households or as sisters/wives at the level of the mbari, is a characteristic of the post-land tenure "reform" period. As an individual man's authority within the household continues to be buttressed by the mbari, which still defines rules

of residence, descent and inheritance with relatively few exceptions along male lines, and where the control of territory is an integral component in the power struggle, the structural causes of women's insecure access to and control over the land have intensified. The contradictions they face become sharper under conditions of more frequent marital breakdown and increased pressure on the land for the majority of households who are not involved in land purchase and accumulation. The dynamic set up by the interaction between kin (mbari) rights to land vis à vis rights accorded by de jure freehold tenure has therefore: (1) reinforced individual male rights to land, albeit at the expense of the poorest stratum of society which has become landless; (2) resulted, with the exception of a very small, but significant, minority of women who have been able to purchase land and retain it in their names (Table 7.3), in a situation for women where: a) the mbari no longer guarantees access to land for usufruct. The 1982 directive concerned with land sales in part compensates for this, but it does not address loss of control for women over land and its proceeds where export crops are controlled by men (Section 7.3); b) although they may hold title to land, their (women's) exercise of the authority accorded men in a similar position is questioned and disputed, if necessary by force, by members of their own or their husband's mbari where mbari territory is threatened.

7.3 Elements of national agricultural policy

7.3.1. Export crop production: coffee

The "Swynnerton Plan", A plan to intensify the development of African agriculture in Kenya, introduced in 1954 in response to the political confrontations of the Emergency, reversed previous government policy to smallholder agriculture not just through the introduction of land reform measures discussed in the previous section, but also through the promotion of crops for the export and urban market. The removal of restrictions on the growth of crops such as coffee, and later tea, supported to varying degrees by a re-orientation of research, extension, marketing and credit facilities towards the smallholder, resulted in a phenomenal growth in these crops. It is to this second aspect of the Swynnerton Plan, rather than to "land reform" per se, that writers such as Heyer (1981), Smith (1976) and Okoth-Ogendo (1981), inter alia, attribute the greater productivity of Kenyan agriculture in the 1950s and 1960s. An emphasis on the continued expansion of this sector, chiefly through the intensification of land use rather than through an extension of hectarage, is evident in recent government publications such as the Development Plan 1984-1988 (p. 177). Further, Sessional Paper No. 1 of 1986 calls for a major reconstruction of coffee production on the basis of:

- (1) the large scale replanting of coffee hectarage with new disease-resistant, high yielding varieties such as Ruiru II; (2) an expansion of the area under arabica coffee by 50% by the year

2000; and (3) to plant 50 000 hectares of robusta coffee in western Kenya and Coast Province by the year 2000 (p. 66).

At the level of Murang'a District, the present District Development Plan observes that future expansion in food crop and export crop production must come from increased yields per hectare, chiefly through an improvement in crop husbandry, rather than through an increase in hectarage. It is recognized that the increase in area under coffee, an increase of 85% between 1976 and 1982 (Table 7.3.A.), can no longer be sustained (1984, p. 25).

The objective in this section of the paper is to relate the impact of these changes to gender stratification. It will be argued that the mode of introduction and the organization of coffee production have served to intensify gender contradiction outlined in Section 7.2. While some parallels may be drawn with the effect of the introduction of tea in the higher altitudinal zones of Murang'a, it is not intended to imply, by focusing on coffee, that generalizations from one crop to another are in order. The different mode of organization of production and marketing arrangements in particular make this inappropriate. Coffee has been chosen for study here as it remains the main income earner for Murang'a, and involves 71 630 "active growers" (MDMALDAR, 1983, p. 24) in comparison with tea, grown by 20 373 households (ibid., p. 39). In Section 7.4 the implications of export crop introduction for the widening of rural inequalities will be considered.

Although the records indicate that coffee nurseries were established in Murang'a District as early as 1950, the crop was first introduced to farmers in 1952 under the Betterment Scheme. In this year 109 growers planted 8119 trees on 15.10 acres (6.1 ha.) (FHDAR, 1952). Larger scale plantings were made from 1954 onwards: in that year 519 farmers grew 80.85 (32.7 ha.) acres of the crop (43 422 trees) (FHDAR, 1955, p. 6). Coffee was at this time introduced only to those who were known to be "better farmers", who agreed to the stipulations of the Ministry of Agriculture with respect to planting, manuring, mulching, pruning and spraying, and who agreed to plant a certain hectareage of mulching materials (FH Gazetteer, 1957, Section 9, pp. 1-3). Seedlings were sold at a cost of 30¢ each in 1954, to a maximum of 100 per farmer. Once a farmer proved "satisfactory", the allotment could be increased to 300 trees (FHDAR, 1954). Evidence suggests, however, that this limit was frequently not adhered to, and a man with a large holding could circumvent the restriction by registering 300 trees per wife (MDAH, 1984, Y, p. 16).

As land consolidation progressed, so the importance of coffee in the district economy grew. By 1959, coffee surpassed wattle as the major income earner, the value of the coffee crop of 538 tons for that year amounting to K£167 050 compared to K£98 500 for the 10 123 tons of wattle (Taylor 1966b, p. 242).¹⁹ Of the total value of exports for the district in 1960, K£392 023, coffee was responsible for 63.5% and wattle for 18.6% (FHDAR, 1960). By

1961, most of the restrictions against planting were withdrawn, and a much wider sector of the population was able to plant coffee. At the end of that year over 10 000 growers were involved in coffee production on an acreage of 4018 (1627.3 ha.). By 1962, the acreage had almost doubled to 8010 acres (3244 ha.) (FHDAR, 1961, 1962).

Although figures are given for the increase in coffee production between 1962 and 1968 in district Annual Reports and reports of the Murang'a Farmers' Cooperative Union, formed in 1960, for political reasons these were the subject of mounting controversy in the intervening years. At the recommendation of an Economic Mission of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) in 1963, and in view of the world supply of coffee, a ban on further planting was placed in effect from January 1964 (Taylor, 1966b, p. 137). Increased income from coffee was supposed after this date to come from increased quality of coffee, not from an increase in tonnage (Lamb, 1974, p. 84).

In an attempt to enforce the ban on further planting, a limit of a 6% maximum for infilling was imposed between 1964 and 1966. In theory this meant that a grower could purchase seedlings to replace diseased trees up to a maximum of 6% of the total number of trees. In practice, largely owing to the widespread nature of the coffee seedling supply system, through the nurseries of each coffee society, it was relatively easy to subvert the regulation (Lamb, 1974, p. 85). From the results of a Department of

Agriculture census in 1966, it was estimated that farmers in Murang'a had planted three times the amount of coffee that was allowed (ibid., p. 91).

It was not until the imposition of a 2% infill quota in 1967, together with the creation of the Coffee Authority to effect further enforcement of the ban on planting, (including uprooting of illegal coffee), and the centralization of seedling nurseries, that the opposition to Government policy surfaced as an acute political crisis. Although the timing of an intensified local campaign coincided with the introduction of the 2% infill quota and tougher measures to prevent subversion, the issues underlying the problem had festered since 1964. In essence, all restrictions on coffee planting in Murang'a were viewed as intolerable. It was argued by growers' leaders in the district that restriction of their hectarages resulted from the unlimited development of coffee production in the estate sector at a time when African farmers were not allowed to plant the crop. Thus, the Cooperative Union called for a reduction of hectareage in this sector as well as a lifting of the 2% infill restriction. Grievances were especially acute in Kandara division as, with the late completion of land consolidation in this area, few trees had been initially planted, and thus it was considered particularly unfair to take the records of 1963 as a basis for an infill quota (Lamb, 1974, pp. 102-107).

The radical nature of demands by Murang'a farmers indicated their recognition of the Government's policy of continued reliance

on the estate sector for export earnings. This involved not only an acceptance of the status quo with reference to hectares in the respective large and small farm sectors, but also Government support of the former sector through restricting sale of coffee to quota markets under the International Coffee Agreement (to which Kenya was a signatory member in September 1966, Lamb, 1974, p.

84). Lamb explains the reasoning as follows:

From the estate owners' viewpoint, however, an important rationale was that prices for non-quota coffee were lower, and hence acreage returns paid to growers would drop, with high-quality producers (predominantly estates) consequently suffering from a larger proportion of their crop being sold in non-quota markets. Kenya's strict adherence to the I.C.A. thus detracted from the full potential of non-quota markets being explored, to the benefit of the estates but to the potential disadvantage of most existing African growers and of all would-be coffee growers for whom coffee, even at a lower rate of return, would still have been an attractive farming proposition (1974, p. 86).

In 1967, the precise local situation as regards hectareage under coffee was confused. Estimates varied between those of the Ministry of Agriculture (22 761 acres, 9 218 ha.) and the Cooperative Union (17 996 acres, 7 288 ha.) (CPAR, 1966). The former figure was later admitted to be too high by the Ministry, and the Union's figure too low, the result of an artificially low estimate in 1966. The last figure was compiled when an order was sent out to sixteen individual coffee societies to compile up-to-date records of their members. At the time it was deemed in their interest to deflate this number. Thus, when society

registers was to be taken as the basis for the 2% infill quota, and to define illegal coffee, reaction was immediate (Lamb, 1974, p. 95).

Eventually, after an alliance between the Union and the local Kenya African National Union (KANU) branch, Government policy was changed. On May 28, 1967, at a KANU conference in Murang'a, the President's decision to rescind the directive of uprooting coffee in African areas was announced (ibid., p. 106). This effectively meant an end also to infilling restriction, as Lamb points out (p. 108).

As is indicated in Table 7.4, coffee production remains of critical importance in the local economy. There is, however, indication of a recent decrease in hectarage, given as 12 638 ha. in 1983 (MDMALDAR, 1983, p. 24), although the total amount of cherry²⁰ production was 73 650 034.5 kg. in 1983, an increase over the previous season's total of 71 837 687 kg. (MDMALDAR, 1983, p. 23 and MDMOARR, 1982, p. 29). At the same time, there has been an increase in yield per hectare from 0.5-0.6 tons in the mid 1970s to 0.9 tons in 1981. The average yield of 0.53 tons per hectare in 1982 is attributed to poor weather conditions in that year (MBDP 1984-1988, p. 25).

Coffee was introduced in Murang'a at a time when migrant Gikuyu men had been forcibly returned to the "Reserve", and it was to men specifically that the crop was directed. The "better farmer" was defined only as a male and it was to men that

Table 7.2 Murang'a District: major crops, hectareage and production, 1976-1983

CROP (variety)	Area and Yield	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983
Maize (hybrid Katumani, local)	ha. tong	28,968 78,300	33,544 75,492	30,038 67,602	23,689 39,024	25,890 39,193	35,000 42,804	38,000 41,040	43,504 38,843
Beans (Rosococo, Canadian Wonder, Mwezi Moja)	ha. tons	15,250 8,235	15,370 11,093	13,802 8,695	12,096 4,540	22,799 16,638	23,537 11,691	32,917 14,834	25,007 11,253
Wairimu (Pigeon Peas)	ha.	135	120	292	535	102	99	250	493.5 220.5
Cow Peas	ha.	NA	700	570	105	68	60	70	370
Sweet Potatoes	ha.	700	NA	1,014	NA	650	386	300	480 2,400
Irish Potatoes	ha.	6,216	6,217	4,039	3,086	NA	4,462	6,030	5,195 1,870
Coffee	ha. tons	9,500 6,202	11,416 9,726	16,607 7,632	NA NA	12,615 10,034	12,615 11,408	17,615 9,369	12,638 73,650 034 kgs.
Tea	ha. tons	6,126 14,842	6,850 23,292	7,698 24,999	NA NA	NA 24,452	8,842 26,116	8,967 32,015	9,080 40,850 487 kgs.
Sisal	ha.	NA	NA	7,860	8,075	1,760	4,000	3,500	NA
Wattle	ha. tons	8,000 8,146	7,000 5,897	5,600 5,538	NA NA	NA 5,118	5,000 NA	4,000 NA	3501
Bananas	ha. tons	2,780	3,793	4,867	4,646	4,646	4,028	6,405	4,964 58,452
Cotton	ha.	1,432	NA	NA	1,388	1,379	859	1,124	840
Pyrethrum	ha.	182	109	52	30	NA	NA	16	11

Table 7.4 Murang'a District: major crops, hectareage and production, 1976-1983 (continued)

CROP (variety)	Area and Yield	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983
Macadamia Nuts	ha.	NA	617	430	410	259	NA	185	NA
Sunflower	ha.	16	115	100	264	12	NA	NA	NA
Sugarcane	ha.	135	120	292	535	800	50	187	154
Pineapples	ha.	3,172	2,000	3,188	3,607	4,160	4,200	4,500	4,200
Passion Fruit	ha.	277	217	176	150	100	80	42	44
Plums	ha.	136	173	196	190	190	NA	NA	NA
Oranges	ha.	NA	NA	NA	NA	270	280	290	359
Mangoes	ha.	145	164	188	180	180	NA	NA	104
Avocado	ha.	10	80	100	115	140	220	NA	211
Tomatoes	ha.	196	274	198	228	200	258	438	621
Cabbages	ha.	737	733	612	580	556	800	885	913
French Beans	ha.	NA	84	120	130	130	150	162	247
Tobacco	tons	NA	70	89	102	59	95	132	132

Source: Kenya, Ministry of Agriculture, 1976-1982, as compiled in the Murang'a District Development Plan 1984-1988. For 1983, data from MDMALD, 1983, Annual Report.

Note: MDMALD, 1983, notes that the hectareage for 1982 under wattle was 400 ha.

extension and marketing arrangements for the crop were targeted.

Despite this, it is evident from administrative records for the period, that although the crop was introduced to men, increased production relied on women's labour. For example, the Cash Crop Officer, FHD, writing in 1962 of the greatly increased expansion of coffee production, concomitant with a decrease in average yields per hectare and a lower range of quality, remarked that:

It must be kept in mind that many coffee growers leave the work of growing the coffee to their wives and they themselves, the growers, only visit their farms from time to time... Coffee is a demanding crop and does not happily live on part time attention. The blame is not on the woman who works very hard from morning to night but on the man who fails to provide the money required, from time to time to pay for the extra labour essential to maintain the planted coffee in good health (Murang'a District, Coffee Annual Report, 1964, Appendix A).

By 1965, the District Agricultural Officer (DAO) estimated that of the 26 000 coffee growers in Murang'a at the time, 16 000 were female, i.e. were in sole charge of the coffee, given a return to high levels of male outmigration after the lifting of the Emergency and with Independence. The DAO further observed that the women were "...left alone on the farm with little or no knowledge of how to grow good coffee". Their other responsibilities prevented them from attending demonstrations or courses at Farmer Training Centres run by the extension service (MDMOAAR, 1965). It is equally apparent, however, that remuneration for their labour has not been commensurate with their

participation in production. Analysis of the marketing arrangements for coffee gives some indication of the barriers faced by women in this respect.

Since its introduction into Murang'a in the 1950s, the processing and marketing of coffee has been organized cooperatively. The seven societies established in 1954 expanded to sixteen by 1967, and remain at this number at present (FHDAR, 1954; FHDAR, 1967; MDMALDAR, 1983). An examination of the registers of two of the societies gives some indication of the barriers faced by women in terms of their benefitting from coffee production. As Table 7.5. and 7.6²¹ show, by far the majority of members are male, 89.9% in the case of the Njora Coffee Growers' Cooperative Society and 83.2% in the case of Irati. While an examination of the minutes of the Njora society suggests that not all the transfers of shares have been registered in the society registers, and that women have frequently benefitted from the transfers (Table 7.7), it is likely that this indicates a relatively temporary situation in the majority of cases. In 27% (31) of the 115 cases of a transfer from a male to a female, the transfer was made from a husband to his wife while he was living. With the exception of two further cases where a man's shares were transferred to his mother, the remainder of the transfers involved arrangements made on a man's death for his widow(s) to take over the share. In such cases, the shares will have been passed on to sons as they married, for the most part. Nevertheless, that

Table 7.5 Njora Coffee Growers' Cooperative Society: membership

Year	Cumulative total membership	New memberships			Females as % of total new membership	Subsequent change of shareholder	
		male	female	total		m. to f.	f to m.
1951	3	3	0	3	0	0	0
1952	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
1953	10	6	1	7	14.3	1	0
1954	19	8	1	9	11.1	0	0
1955	63	42	1	44	2.3	2	0
1956	70	7	0	7	0	1	0
1957	81	10	1	11	9.1	1	0
1958							
-60	217	135	1	136	0.7	4	0
1961	298	76	5	81	6.2	1	0
1962	408	108	2	110	1.8	2	0
1963	468	58	2	60	3.3	2	0
1964	801	323	10	333	3.0	8	0
1965	1255	440	14	454	3.1	15	0
1966	1289	33	1	34	2.9	0	0
1967							
-69	1482	187	6	193	3.1	5	0
1970	1595	106	7	113	6.2	0	0
1971	1655	47	13	60	21.7	2	0
1972	1670	14	1	15	6.7	1	0
1973	1935	250	15	265	5.7	2	1
1974	2579	595	49	644	7.6	5	0
1975	2894	285	30	315	9.5	1	0
1976	3568	601	73	674	10.8	4	1
1977	4071	458	45	503	8.9	2	0
1978	4345	242	32	294	11.7	3	0
1979	4693	286	62	348	17.8	2	0
1980	5120	367	60	427	14.1	3	0
1981	5286	143	23	166	13.9	1	0
1982	5381	84	11	95	11.6	0	0
1983	5602	200	21	221	9.5	0	0
1984	5784	149	33	182	18.1	0	0

Source: Njora Coffee Society Registers.

- Notes:
1. Female memberships as a % of total membership: 10.1%.
 2. Male to male and female to female transactions are not included.
 3. For the periods 1958-1960 and 1967-1969, no distinction was made by individual year in the Registers.

Table 7.6 Irati Coffee Growers' Cooperative Society: membership

Year	Cumulative total membership	New memberships			Females as % of total new membership	Subsequent change of shareholder	
		male	female	total		m. to f.	f. to m.
1951	5	4	1	5	20	1	-
1952	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1953	40	34	1	35	2.9	1	-
1954	86	45	1	46	2.2	-	-
1955	123	37	0	37	0	9	-
1956	145	22	0	22	0	1	-
1957	177	32	0	32	0	-	1
1958	207	27	3	30	10	3	-
1959	215	8	0	8	0	1	-
1960	251	32	4	36	10.1	3	-
1961	337	86	0	86	0	11	-
1962	521	170	14	184	7.6	15	1
1963	690	159	10	169	5.9	13	2
1964	814	110	14	124	11.3	14	1
1965	1029	151	64	215	29.8	22	2
1966	1267	203	35	238	14.7	13	1
1967	1282	13	2	15	13.3	-	-
1968	1302	158	5	20	25	1	-
1969	1311	8	1	9	11.1	-	-
1970	1387	57	19	76	25.0	4	1
1971	1431	38	6	44	13.6	3	3
1972	1534	83	20	103	19.4	2	3
1973	1583	37	12	49	24.5	3	3
1974	1703	105	15	120	12.5	5	-
1975	1756	45	8	53	15.1	1	-
1976	2031	228	47	275	17.1	4	24
1977	2120	65	24	89	27.0	2	-
1978	2209	76	13	89	14.6	-	-
1979	2307	89	9	98	9.2	-	-
1980	2529	192	30	222	13.5	2	-
1981	2668	128	11	139	7.9	-	-
1982	2819	132	19	151	12.6	-	1
1983	3045	204	22	226	9.7	-	-
1984	3221	156	20	176	11.4	-	-

Source: Irati Coffee Society Registers.

- Notes: 1. Female memberships as a % of total membership: 16.8%.
 2. Male to male and female to female transactions are not included.

Table 7.7 Njora Coffee Growers' Cooperative Society: transfer of shares

Year	m. to f.	f. to m.	m. to m.	Total
1978	6	0	1	7
1979	8	0	3	11
1980	8	2	1	11
1981	33	1	5	39
1982	13	5	5	23
1983	25	4	3	32
1984	<u>22</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>31</u>
Total	115	14	25	154

Source: Compiled from the Minutes of the Njora Farmers' Cooperative Society, 1978-1984. Registry, Ministry of Agriculture, Murang'a District. (Records prior to 1978 were unavailable.)

- Notes:
1. Male to female transfers occurred primarily on the death of a husband when shares were transferred to the wife's name. In 6 cases between 1978 and 1984, on his death, the husband's share was transferred to one wife, while a second wife was bought another share.
 2. Male to male and female to female transactions are not included

shares are transferred to women for even a limited period of time is a change from the previous practice whereby, on a male shareholder's death, the shares would be held in trust for a son (District Coffee Officer, Murang'a District, personal communication, December 1984).

The predominance of male membership in the coffee society in the context of high levels of male outmigration and women's labour input into coffee production has two sets of implications for the

productivity of this and other crops. First, at least until the last two to three years, payment has been made solely to the shareholder. Evidence from interviews with farmers in the district indicates widespread dissatisfaction on the part of women who are responsible for coffee production but who depend on the will of their husbands for remuneration. In many cases, women's response is to withdraw their labour from production, or at least not to accord coffee the highest priority, resulting in poorer quality produce (MDAH, 1984, A, p. 12; O, p. 12). The situation became particularly acute in the recent (1982-83) drought. One farmer reported that when the crops failed, maize was available for purchase from local coffee societies; payment would be deducted from the next coffee harvest sales. Some men, however, refused to give permission for their wives to obtain the maize as this would then decrease the cash owed to them at the time of the next payment. For similar reasons, wives are frequently denied permission to obtain fertilizer or other agricultural inputs supplied by the coffee society (MDAH, 1984, A, p. 12, 27).

Recognition that this situation was working against increases in productivity, both in terms of quantity and of quality²², led to a recent drive on the part of the Union to encourage members to open joint accounts at the four Savings and Credit Sections of the Union. Table 7.8. illustrates the situation for the six coffee societies belonging to one of these.²³ The wide discrepancy in the percentage of joint accounts between the different societies

Table 7.8 Maragua Savings and Credit Section, Murang'a Farmers' District Cooperative Union Ltd. (November 1984)

Society	Single mens accounts		Single womens accounts		Joint accounts		Total accounts	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Mugoiri	1971	52.5	526	14	1260	33.5	3757	100
Thanga-ini	648	16.9	187	4.9	2992	79.2	3827	100
Njora	3554	71.0	595	11.9	854	17.1	5003	100
Irati	1040	31.1	451	13.5	1854	55.4	3345	100
Nginda	777	67.5	156	13.6	218	18.9	1151	100
Kiangoma	1192	59.4	210	10.5	604	30.1	2006	100
Total	9182	48.1	2125	11.1	7782	40.8	19089	100

Source: Senior Savings Clerk, Savings Department, Maragua Savings and Credit Section, Maragua Ridge.

in the Maragua Savings and Credit Section is explained by the Senior Savings Clerk as resulting from the varying degree of male outmigration from an area. Thus Thanga-ini and Irati, areas of high male outmigration, have a larger percentage of joint accounts (personal communication, November 1984).²⁴ While this trend does not in itself guarantee that women have total control over the proceeds of their labour, it is certainly a step in that direction.

The second set of implications resulting from women's limited membership in coffee societies concerns their great difficulty in

gaining access to credit. Cooperative societies have become the major vehicle for providing credit to the smallholder in Kenya: 86% in 1980/1981 and 72% in 1981/1982 of new agricultural credit to small farmers being channelled through these institutions (calculated from Kenya, Economic Survey 1983, p. 116). Credit extended through the Cooperative Production Credit Scheme (CPCS), amounting to KShs. 32 364 712.45 in 1982 (MDMOAAR, 1982, p. 40), the Smallholder Production Services Credit Programme (SPSCP), the Integrated Agricultural Development Programme (IADP), the National Poultry Development Programme (NPDP), the Smallholder Coffee Improvement Programme (SCIP) and the new Seasonal Credit Scheme (NSCS) inter alia have all been directed through coffee societies (Kenya, Economic Survey 1983). Only rarely can smallholders access credit through the Agricultural Finance Corporation (AFC) as the size of the loans requested is small, and as land is required as collateral, women would be particularly disadvantaged.

7.3.2. Food production

With the exception of maize²⁵ and wheat, both crops grown on large scale European farms, food crops were relatively neglected in official national agricultural policy in Kenya from the 1930s onwards (Heyer, 1981; House and Killick, 1983). It was not until the fourth Development Plan 1979-1983, with its explicit recognition of the extent of poverty in Kenya and a focus on

meeting basic needs that the small farm sector and food self-sufficiency were stated as central concerns. Indeed, a growth rate of 4.3% in the food crop sector was the target for this 5-year plan period, to be promoted particularly through changes in the marketing system and pricing policies.

Additionally, although further research was called for to breed varieties of maize, such as the composite Katumani, more tolerant of drier environments, Plan 1979-1983 stated that research in other food crops: pulses, sorghums and millets, was to be promoted. Husbandry practices such as intercropping were recognized as of value for small farm systems and the development of technology appropriate to small farm production was to be financed, for example through the Agricultural Engineering project at the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (Plan 1979-1983, pp. 233-237).

The issues raised in the fourth development plan with respect to food policy and nutritional objectives acquired further strategic importance in 1980. The importation of large amounts of maize, wheat and milk in that year, in response to widespread food shortages, caused a more explicit statement on National Food Policy, Sessional Paper No. 4 of 1981, to be produced (Kenya, 1981).

Essentially, this document analyzed the constraints facing the agricultural sector and suggested a strategy for increased production premised on the objective of domestic self-sufficiency.

of food. It further stated an expectation that the agricultural sector would continue to provide the basis for foreign exchange earnings for the economy as a whole. Rather than advocating any "diversification" (p. 13) of land under export crops, the intensification of land use in areas such as Central, Eastern, Nyanza and Western Provinces and, secondarily, the extension of cultivation into semi-arid zones of, for example, Eastern Province and Rift Valley, were proposed as the basis for increased production. Intensification of land use was to be promoted through an increase in intercropping, in multiple cropping, in the increased use of inputs such as fertilizer, and the introduction of improved seeds (p. 15). Policy details to promote these changes are outlined in the fourth section of the policy paper, while policies concerning pricing, agricultural inputs, research and extension, food security, processing and marketing, trade, nutrition, resource development and employment which form the framework within which measures of intensification are embedded, are discussed in Section Three.

A critical point made in the paper is that past high rates of agricultural expansion, such as that in maize production following the introduction and adoption of hybrid maize in the 1960s, will not easily be repeated, let alone sustained. Yet it is estimated that production capacity would have to grow by at least 4.9% per annum to achieve self-sufficiency in maize by 1989 (p. 8), given the high overall rate of population growth of 3.8% per annum,

(Plan 1984-1988, p. 143). Thus the trend of previous years, of a decline on a per capita basis of food production, would have to be reversed. FAO data published in 1982 indicate that between 1971 and 1982 despite an increase in food production of about 30% (and an increase in cereal production of a little under 20%), the per capita production of food declined by 13% and cereal production decreased by 20% (FAO, Production Yearbook 1982, Vol. 36).²⁶

The objectives for the agricultural sector outlined in greater brevity in the most recent Development Plan, 1984-1988 follow the same lines as the earlier Development Plan 1979-1983 and Sessional Paper No. 4, 1981. A target of growth in agricultural production as a whole is set at 4.6% over the plan period, but the targetted increase in food production is not identified. One third of the planned increased production is expected from an increase in hectarage while intensification of land use is expected to account for the rest (Development Plan 1984-1988, p. 177). Intensification is also the key to proposals outlined under the chapter on agriculture and food security in Kenya, 1986, Sessional Paper No. 1.

Perhaps more than has been the case for some time, then, and particularly in view of the political insecurity associated with recent shortfalls in food production (Africa Confidential, 9 April, 1986), domestic food production is of central significance in the national context. It is against this macro-reality that the relative participation of men and women in food production, as

well is in the production of crops for export, needs to be measured.

Within Murang'a District, the relative neglect of food crop production by the extension department of the Ministry of Agriculture, with the exception of an emphasis on maize production from the late 1960s, is evident from the district Annual Reports from 1952 onwards. The focus of concern became the introduction of export crops: coffee, tea and to a lesser degree pyrethrum, and in the area of livestock production, the promotion of grade cattle during this period from 1952. In fact, this was the case to such an extent that there is an almost complete lack of adequate measurement of "subsistence" crops for the 1950s and 1960s in the district Annual Reports. These reports note whether harvests were good or poor, but, with the exception of references to hectares of hybrid and composite maizes, lack details as to the extent of production of beans, millets, sorghums, and root crops such as arrowroot, sweet potato and cassava. Only the odd reference to previously important crops such as millets and the need to promote crops more drought-resistant than maize are found (eg. FHDAR, 1955). More notice is given to introduced crops such as Irish potatoes and European vegetables in these written reports.

Maize is singled out for attention, in the Annual Reports, among the food crops from the 1960s onwards, owing to the visible promotion by the Ministry of Agriculture's extension service of

hybrid and composite varieties (eg. MDAR, 1967). This emphasis on the replacement of previous varieties of white maize followed a breakthrough in hybrid seed development in the early 1960s with the development of high-yielding, late maturing varieties (the 6 series for high altitude areas released from Kitale and the 5 series for lower altitudinal zones from Embu). These were originally intended for adoption by large scale commercial producers, synthetic or composite maizes such as Katumani being considered more suitable for small-scale production. The latter did not necessitate the seasonal purchase of seed. The hybrid yield, being about 30% higher than that of the synthetics, however, caused their immediate adoption except in the drier areas, at the expense of the synthetics (Gerhart, 1975, pp. 4-5).

Maize hybrids were introduced in Murang'a from the mid-1960s, but their rate of diffusion was slow. In 1967, 2% of the total hectareage under maize (30 052.2 ha.) only was occupied by hybrids. Katumani occupied even less land, 0.9% of the total hectareage under maize (calculated from MDAR, 1967). Increased adoption was noted in the Annual Report for 1971, and by 1978, it was estimated that of the 30 038 ha. (see Table 7.4) planted, two thirds were a hybrid variety or Katumani. In this year, the actual hectareage under hybrid maize was given as 19 429 ha. (MDMOAAR, 1978, p. 32). Since that date, there has been a lack of distinction between the different maizes in the Ministry of Agriculture's Annual Reports, and thus no specific estimations are available.

There is indication, however, that the extent of adoption varies with agro-ecological zone. While it is considered that the majority of farmers in the coffee zone, Middle Murang'a, now grow hybrids, only about 40% of the maize in High Murang'a is hybrid, and the percentage is far lower in the lower zone, where Katumani achieves somewhat greater importance. Even here it is not very popular as the first cob which is produced is small and comprised of small grains (Crops Officer, Murang'a District, personal communication, May 1980).

Beans, which with maize continue to form the basis of the local diet, have only recently benefited from improvements in variety (MDDP 1984-1988, p. 28).²⁷ The production increases of the 1980s, indicated in Table 7.4, result largely from an increase in hectareage rather than any improvement in output per unit of land. The decrease in hectareage in 1983 was associated with a ban on interplanting with coffee (MDMALD, 1983, p. 20).

As is indicated by Table 7.4, other food crops remain insignificant in comparison to the hectareage under maize and beans. Millets and sorghums are not even considered in this table. The Annual Report 1983 of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development gives a figure of 25 hectares for the extent of sorghum, grown chiefly in lower Kigumo and Kiharo (p. 11). No figure is given for millet, although an increased interest in growing this crop is evident in the post-drought period in 1984 (MDAH, 1984, F. p. 15; G. p. 15; J. p. 27).

Of the root crops, sweet potatoes continue to be valued for their resistance to drought: tubers provide food for human consumption, and the vines are used as fodder. As a result of the 1982-1983 drought, growth in the hectareage under cassava has increased from 40 ha. in 1978 (MDMOAAR, 1978, p. 35) to 1782 ha. in 1983 (MDMALDAR, 1983, p. 21). About 390 ha. are planted with arrowroots (MDMALDAR, 1983, p. 21), an increase over the 100 ha. estimated for 1978 (MDMOAAR, 1978, p. 35). Irish potatoes remain of local importance, but the lack of increase in their hectareage is associated with a lack of seed potatoes, the result of serious local potato blight and a shortage of material imported into the district (MDMOAAR, 1978, p. 37; MDMALDAR, 1983, p. 21).

Of the remaining food crops only bananas are of outstanding significance. As indicated in Table 7.4, their hectareage has increased in the recent past particularly in Kigumo and Kiharu Divisions. Much of the recent hectareage increase can be attributed to price increases in the crop, and the scale of bulking of bananas at markets such as Mukuyu and Muthithi is indicative of their importance for export from the district.

Finally, indigenous green vegetables completely escape mention in Annual Reports, but the same varieties mentioned in Table 5.1, and particularly terere, remain very popular.

It is evident from Table 7.4 that growth in cultivated land has been associated both with the expansion of food crop

production and export crop production. It is in fact due to an increase in area under production rather than yield per hectare that production in both sectors has increased (MDDDP 1979-1983, p. 13). Yields of the majority of crops remain low: maize, on average, yields 2.7 tons per hectare, bananas 27 tons per hectare. Comparative yields for Kisii District are 4.2 tons of maize and 30 tons of bananas per hectare (MDDP 1984-1988, pp. 20-21). Increase in hectarage under cultivation has, in general terms, been associated with a decrease in fallow/pasture land, a trend noted in the previous chapters. Table 7.9 gives some indication of the potential for this in 1960/1961. As the data are not disaggregated by ecological zone, it is impossible to estimate the precise scope in middle Murang'a, for example, for this to have taken place. In this zone, where pressure on the land has been intense for some time, and where zero-grazing is the norm for many of the farms, an increase in hectarage under coffee has been at the expense of land under food crops (MDAH, 1984, F. p. 12; Y. p. 16). This change in land use must have been particularly noticeable in the immediate post-coffee boom period of 1977-1978 (see Table 7.4). It is logical to deduce that, particularly in the coffee belt, the great majority of women on holdings where coffee was produced are faced with a situation in which their responsibility for providing food is negatively affected by a reduced land base. Pressure on the land under food crops is also resulting in increased evidence of soil exhaustion. In the words

Table 7.9 Fort Hall District: land utilization 1960/1961
 ('000 acres/hectares and percentages)

Division	Total arable	Temporary Crops	Temporary Fallow	Permanent Crops	Uncultivated Pasture	Woods/Forests	Bush	Other	Total Land
Kiharu									
acres	24.1	22.7	1.4	2.3	26.0	0.6	2.5	2.0	57.5
ha.	9.8	9.2	0.6	0.9	10.5	0.2	1.0	0.8	23.3
%	41.9	39.5	2.4	4.0	45.2	1.0	4.3	3.5	100.0
Kandara									
acres	39.2	38.2	1.0	5.6	26.5	6.8	0.7	1.5	80.3
ha.	15.9	15.5	0.4	2.3	10.7	2.8	0.3	0.61	32.5
%	48.8	47.6	1.2	7.0	33.0	8.5	0.9	1.9	100.0
Kangema									
acres	20.1	17.1	3.0	2.7	19.7	6.7	10.7	0.7	60.6
ha.	8.1	6.9	1.2	1.1	8.0	2.7	4.3	0.3	24.5
%	33.2	28.2	5.0	4.5	32.5	11.1	17.7	1.2	100.0
Kigumo									
acres	29.2	25.1	4.1	8.1	24.3	4.0	10.0	0.8	76.4
ha.	11.8	10.2	1.6	3.3	9.8	1.6	4.1	0.3	30.9
%	38.2	32.9	5.4	10.6	31.8	5.2	13.1	1.0	100.0
Total									
acres	112.6	103.1	9.5	18.6	96.5	18.2	23.9	4.9	274.7
ha.	45.6	41.9	3.8	7.5	39.1	7.4	9.7	2.0	111.3

Source: Calculated from: Kenya African Agricultural Sample Census 1960/1961, p. 2.

Note: Arable land here includes that under temporary crops and under temporary fallow.

of one farmer (female), the land is now "used up" (MDAH, 1984, L. p. 14). Or, as expressed by another: "Now we cultivate more, but the food we get is not as much as for those days" (MDAH, 1984, G., p. 6). These problems will be more critical on smaller holdings.

It is also evident that, despite a lack of profile in district Annual Reports, and indeed a lack of measurement of subsistence production, this does not reflect accurately the significance of food crop production in the local economy. To assess this situation in more detail it is necessary to draw on data from sources which are not directly comparable over time.

The Economic Survey of Central Province 1963/1964 (1968) may be used to give some insight into the processes of rural change in the early 1960s, and particularly the relative importance of food crop production and men and women's labour input into agricultural production. In the latter context it should be remembered that at this particular time, when the restriction on outmigration from the district was relaxed after the end of the Emergency, levels of outmigration from the district were limited by the relative lack of employment opportunities in urban areas (FHDAR, 1960; 1961).²⁸

One further observation should be made before considering data from this source. Data on agricultural production and labour input are disaggregated by holding size: the sample of 900 households (0.32% of the total) in Central Province (Kiambu, Fort Hall, Embu, Nyeri, Meru) being classified into three strata. As indicated in Chapter 6, stratum 1 includes households under 4

acres (1.62 ha.) in size, stratum 2 those between 4 and 8 acres (1.62 and 3.24 ha.) and stratum 3, over 8 acres (3.24 ha.). When the ESCP (1968) turns to tabulate agricultural incomes, however, the classification changes to being one based on seven income groups. While these groups do correspond to certain average holding sizes (Table 7.13), there is a lack of comparability with the data disaggregated by stratum.

Tables 7.10 to 7.12 indicate the value of agricultural production, the nature of the relationship between production for use vis à vis production for exchange, and the significance of this for total household income. The proportion of households in each stratum is given in Table 7.10 with the value of agricultural production. It may be noted that although approximately 50% of agricultural production in Central Province as a whole was produced on farms under 4 acres (1.62 ha.) in size, in Fort Hall District the proportion is considerably lower (32.0% of crop production; 29.4% where livestock production is included in this figure). In contrast, holdings in stratum 3 are responsible for a larger percentage of total production by value in Fort Hall than in Central Province as a whole. It is apparent from Table 7.11 that the value of agricultural production increases with holding size, as would be expected, but that holding size is inversely related to average value of production per unit of land: the smaller the holding, the more intensively it is cultivated. This point will be returned to shortly when labour input is

Table 7.10 Percentage distribution by value of agricultural production by farm size, 1963/1964

Size of holding in acres (ha. in parentheses)	Fort Hall District			Central Province		
	(% holdings ¹)	Crops ¹	Crops and Livestock ¹	(% holdings ¹)	Crops ²	Crops and Livestock ¹
<1.0 (<0.40)	(9.3)	3.6	3.2	(10.5)	4.2	4.1
1.0-1.9 (0.40-0.77)	(17.1)	11.0	9.5	(21.3)	15.5	14.9
2.0-3.9 (0.78-1.6)	(23.0)	17.4	16.7	(30.7)	31.2	30.2
Stratum 1	(49.4)	32.0	29.4	(62.5)	50.9	49.2
4.0-5.9 (1.7-2.4)	(25.4)	27.8	27.0	(19.2)	21.1	20.9
6.0-7.9 (2.5-3.2)	(5.9)	10.1	9.6	(6.4)	8.8	8.7
Stratum 2	(31.3)	37.9	36.6	(25.6)	29.9	29.6
8.0-9.9 (3.3-4.0)	(9.4)	11.6	12.5	(4.7)	5.5	6.0
10.0-14.9 (4.1-6.0)	(5.3)	9.0	9.2	(4.4)	7.9	8.3
15.0-19.9 (6.1-8.1)	(0.7)	0.8	1.5	(1.1)	1.6	2.2
20.0 or more (8.2+)	(3.8)	8.7	10.8	(1.6)	4.2	4.7
Stratum 3	(19.2)	30.1	34.0	(11.8)	19.9	21.2

Source: Calculated from: ESCP (1968), pp. 24-25.

- Notes:
1. In each case, the columns add up to 100% when rounded (i.e. Strata 1 + 2 + 3).
 2. This column adds up to 100.7% as in the original.

Table 7.11 Fort Hall District: value of agricultural production per acre of land operated, 1963/1964

	Value of agricultural production per household (excluding livestock products) (KShs.)	Area of land operated (acres)	Average value of production per acre operated (KShs.)
Stratum 1	334	2.9	115
Stratum 2	585	6.9	85
Stratum 3	719	18.1	40
District	417	5.2	80
Central Province	576	3.9	148

Source: ESCP 1968, p. 25.

Note: 1. The average value of agricultural production per acre of land operated was highest in Nyeri (KShs. 275/-) and lowest in Fort Hall. This is likely to be related to average area of land operated per person (0.9 acre in the case of Fort Hall District, 0.6 acre in the case of Nyeri) and average size of holding (5.2 acres in the former case, 3.9 acres for the Province as a whole, ESCP, p. 20), and the fact that Nyeri at this time led in coffee production (Kitching, 1960, p. 337).

considered. For the moment, attention will be drawn to the significance of the values in the left hand column of Table 7.11. Were livestock production and firewood production (see Table 7.12) to be added, the district figure of the average value of agricultural production would increase to KShs. 636/-.

Unfortunately, the data in Table 7.12 are not disaggregated by stratum. It is evident however that, on average, the value of production in Fort Hall District is significantly below that of Central Province as a whole, where the average value amounts to

Table 7.12 Household agricultural production, consumption and sales
1963/1964 (KShs. per household)

Commodity	Fort Hall District			Central Province			
	Volume produced (lbs.)	Value of production (Shs.)	Value consumed %	Volume produced (lbs.)	Value of production (Shs.)	Value consumed %	Value sold %
maize	1093	120	89.2	957	112	86.6	13.4
other cereals	1	-	-	115	21	62.0	38.0
pulses	313	62	91.9	516	103	84.5	15.5
sweet potatoes	941	56	83.9	892	45	88.9	11.1
Irish potatoes	91	18	100.0	195	29	89.7	10.3
other roots	193	20	80.0	302	30	90.0	10.0
sugar cane	354	18	50.0	194	13	53.8	46.2
cabbages	74	10	40.0	78	8	50.0	50.0
other vegetables	55	9	100.0	159	20	60.0	40.0
bananas (no. of bunches)	1672	43	70.0	1983	52	75.0	25.0
pineapples	233	14	7.1	94	6	16.7	83.3
other fruit	30	1	50.0	35	2	50.0	50.0
coffee	128	37	0	380	105	-	100.0
other crops	-	9	0	-	30	-	100.0
milk (pints)	230	81	59.3	344	111	45.9	54.1
eggs (nos.)	207	11	72.7	114	17	58.8	41.2
meat	4	2	100.0	6	1	-	100.0
firewood	-	125	100.0	-	98	-	100.0
Total	-	636	75.6	-	809	50.7	49.3

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Source: Calculated from ESCP, 1968, p. 22, 23, 28, 31.

KShs: 809/- (Table 7.12). The figure for Fort Hall is, in fact, under 50% that of Nyeri (ESCP, 1968, p. 25). For this latter district, Kitching (1980, p. 337) draws on data for 1944 to show that average household cash income from farming (i.e. the value of subsistence is subtracted from that of agricultural production) in 1964 had increased KShs. 132/- in 20 years.²⁹ As the real value of money fell 16% between 1956 and 1964, and the rate of inflation was higher than this in the period 1945-1955, the real purchasing power of farm cash income had decreased substantially at this time, despite the measures effected under the Swynnerton Plan (Kitching, *ibid.*).

This situation will have affected households in stratum 1 particularly negatively. To follow Kitching's argument which he relates to Kiambu (*ibid.*, pp. 337-338), stratum 1 households in Fort Hall produced KShs. 334/- worth of agricultural production in 1963/1964 (Table 7.11). Given that the average value of consumption of own production for the district as a whole was KShs. 298/- (ESCP, 1968, p. 31), this would give the value of production sold as KShs. 36/-. Although this might have been marginally increased by the sale of milk, eggs or meat (Table 7.12), the figure would clearly remain low and would vary according to holding size within the stratum. Thus a significant proportion of the households (particularly the 26.4% under 2 acres in size, Table 7.10) could lack any income from this source. This point is corroborated by data from Table 7.14, calculated from

Table 7.13 Fort Hall District: receipts and disbursements per household by income groups (Shillings) (1963/1964)

	Gross income group (KShs. per year)						
	Up to 1000	1001-1500	1501-2000	2001-2500	2501-3500	3501-5000	5001 and over
<u>RECEIPTS</u>							
Cash receipts							
Agriculture	70	189	363	428	654	904	1666
Manufacturing, trade and transport	28	106	89	374	388	673	5692
Services	136	159	208	278	285	803	2413
Remittances	53	164	131	37	115	71	1
Other cash receipts	28	40	179	219	399	835	839
Total cash receipts	315	658	970	1336	1842	3286	10611
Consumption of own produce	346	506	623	749	977	731	1268
Total receipts	661	1164	1593	2085	2819	4017	11879
<u>DISBURSEMENTS</u>							
Enterprise expenditure	35	113	211	292	625	953	4743
Household consumption							
Food	153	268	328	460	433	737	1020
Non-food	167	326	405	516	693	1020	2540
Total consumption	320	594	733	976	1126	1757	3560
Transfers (including money lent out)	2	12	27	10	34	38	66
Taxes	5	26	22	13	66	52	163
Total cash	362	745	993	1291	1851	2800	8532
Subsistence food	227	378	477	585	793	539	1084
Subsistence firewood	119	128	146	164	184	192	184
Total disbursements	708	1251	1616	2040	2828	3531	9800
Surplus (+)							
Deficit (-)	-47	-87	-23	45	-9	486	2079
Size of household (persons)	4.4	5.9	7.5	7.2	8.6	8.3	10.1
Size of holding (acres)	5.3	9.1	7.0	11.0	11.4	10.3	22.6

Source: ESCP, 1968, p. 41, Table 54.

Table 7.14 Fort Hall District: percentage of own produce consumed by gross income group (1963/1964)

Gross income group (KShs. per annum)	% distribution of households	% of own produce consumed (by value)
<1000	39.7	83.2
1001-1500	29.6	72.8
1501-2000	13.6	63.2
2001-2500	4.1	63.6
2501-3500	6.6	59.9
3501-5000	4.4	44.7
>5000	2.0	43.2
All groups	100.0	

Source: Calculated from ESCP, 1968, p. 39, 41.

information given in Table 7.13. Here it is apparent that, as expected, the proportion of produce grown for subsistence is negatively related to income group, which is in turn related to holding size (see base of Table 7.13). Nevertheless, it is important to observe that even in households with a gross income of over KShs. 5000/-, a substantial part of production was geared to subsistence. The significance of this must be assessed later in the context of the prevailing division of labour.

Before continuing to consider in more detail data disaggregated according to the seven income groups, brief reference may be made to Table 7.12. For the purposes of the argument in this section, it is important to note that all the

major crops grown in the district in 1963/1964 were overwhelmingly grown for home consumption. This was the case particularly for maize, beans (pulses) and sweet potatoes.

Table 7.15 indicates the proportion of cash income obtained from agricultural sources according to income group. In each case illustrated here, as well as in the more general context of Central Province to which Kitching (1980, pp. 339-340) refers, cash income from agriculture (and this is basically from food crops as has already been noted, there being little coffee produced at this time, Table 7.12) is under 40% of cash income from all sources. It is also evident from the Table that households in the highest and lowest income groups were the most dependent on non-farm sources for cash. The implications of this

Table 7.15 Fort Hall District: cash income from agriculture relative to total household cash income (1963/1964)

A	B	C	D	C as % of D
Income group (Shs. per annum)	Average hold- ing size in acres (ha. in parentheses)	Cash income agriculture (Shs.)	Total house- hold cash income	
1. 0-1000	5.3 (2.1)	70	315	22.2
2. 1001-1500	9.1 (3.7)	189	658	28.7
3. 1501-2000	7.0 (2.8)	363	970	37.4
4. 2001-2500	11.0 (4.5)	428	1336	32.0
5. 2501-3500	11.4 (4.6)	654	1842	35.5
6. 3501-5000	10.3 (4.2)	904	3286	27.5
7. >5000	22.6 (9.2)	1666	10611	15.7

Source: Calculated from Table 7.13.

for rural stratification will be further examined in Section 7.4.

In order to place these observations in perspective, Table 7.16 illustrates the total value of agricultural production (i.e. subsistence as well as marketed produce) relative to total household income. Only in the case of the upper two income groups does the value of agricultural production fall below 50% of total household earnings. Thus, in 1963/1964, the year under review, agriculture still provided the basis for the livelihood of the vast majority of households in the district.

Table 7.16 Fort Hall District: value of agricultural production (subsistence and marketed) relative to total household income, 1963/1964

Income group (Shs. per annum)	% value of agricultural production to total household income
1. 0-1000	62.9
2. 1001-1500	59.7
3. 1501-2000	61.9
4. 2001-2500	56.5
5. 2501-3500	57.9
6. 3501-5000	40.7
7. >5000	24.7

Source: Calculated from Table 7.13.

To address now more specifically the concerns of this chapter, reference will be made to the data collected on the division of labour as part of the Economic Survey for Central Province, 1963/1964 (1968). It will be remembered from Table 7.11 that the average value of agricultural production per unit of land was inversely related to holding size, being highest on holdings in stratum 1. Table 7.17 indicates that labour input per acre decreased markedly with holding size, production per unit of land therefore being closely associated with labour input. In this context it should be noted that a "man-day" refers to the work of one person on the holding for one day. Any labour input

Table 7.17 Fort Hall District: labour input per acre of land operated, 1963/1964

	Total "man-days" worked on household enterprise	Land operated household (acres)	Average "man-days" worked per acre of land operated
Stratum 1	480	2.9	166
Stratum 2	759	6.9	110
Stratum 3	1064	18.4	59
District	588	5.2	113
Central Province	565	3.9	145

Source: ESCP, 1968, p. 30.

over half a day is counted as one day. Work over one hour but under half a day is counted as half a day, and anything less than one hour is omitted (ESCP, 1968, p. 14). Total "man-days" worked per holding, however, as is evident from Table 7.17 were higher the larger the size of holding, as, of course, was the value of agricultural production (Table 7.11). Table 7.18 indicates that although the average number of "man-days" of hired labour increased with size of holding, this remained very low, averaging 6.1% of total labour input for the district. 15.7% of the labour for stratum 3 households came from this source, compared to 4.5% for households in stratum 2, and 3.8% for stratum 1. 57% of hired labour came from men, 35.5% from women and 7.3% from children. In all strata labour was provided predominantly by the family itself. Table 7.19 indicates the breakdown of this labour input by sex.

Table 7.18 Fort Hall District: average number of "man-days" of hired labour on family holding, 1963/1964

	Men	Women	Children	All
Stratum 1	7	10	1	18
Stratum 2	21	10	4	35
Stratum 3	98	58	11	167
District	19	15	2	36
Central Province	17	9	2	28

Source: ESCP, 1968, p. 15.

Table 7.19 Fort Hall District: average number of "man-days" worked by household members on family holding, 1963/1964

	Men		Women		Children		Total	
Stratum 1	147	31.8%	228	49.4%	87	18.8%	462	100.0%
Stratum 2	257	35.4%	352	48.6%	116	16.0%	725	100.0%
Stratum 3	245	27.3%	407	45.4%	245	27.3%	897	100.0%
District	176	31.9%	268	48.6%	108	19.6%	552	100.0%
Central Province	184	34.3%	281	52.3%	72	13.4%	537	100.0%

Source: ESCP, 1968, p. 14.

Note: Central Province at this time consisted of: Kiambu, Fort Hall District, Embu, Nyeri, Meru.

The most important observation to make from Table 7.19 is the higher level of labour input into the holding by women. Although it is likely that male participation in agriculture was higher at this time than prior to the Emergency, or than later when male outmigration increased substantially, probably largely the result of a focus on coffee production, the figures may exaggerate the percentage of male input. No indication is given in the ESCP, 1968, of who was interviewed to obtain data on labour input.

In the likely event that the person interviewed was the male head of household, there may have been a tendency to overemphasize his input into production.

It may be noted that the relative proportion of male and female labour input varies little by holding size in Fort Hall District, in contrast to the situation in Kiambu. In this latter

district, not only was the difference between male and female labour greatest overall, but in the case of households in stratum 1. the difference was particularly marked: 23% of the total labour input being provided by men, 63.0% by women, the remainder, 13.6%, by children. As Kitching notes (1980, p. 338), this was a function of the higher percentage of the male-labour force involved in off-farm employment (in nearby Nairobi or Thika).

It is also apparent from Table 7.19 that overall levels of labour input into agriculture were very high. This was particularly the case for women, who in addition will have been responsible for labour associated with child care, food preparation, water and fuelwood collection and carrying produce to market. Kitching (1980, p. 339) extrapolates from this situation common throughout Central Province to suggest that household labour input, and particularly women's labour, was "stretched" to such an extent that any new enterprise, such as the production of coffee, would either have had to replace a previous activity (for example, by decreasing food production), or would have had to involve hired labour. As has been already observed, the latter "option" was not open to the majority of families, and thus it was likely that households which chose to turn land over to coffee or tea did so by substituting these crops for food crops. Thereby, reliance on the market for meeting subsistence needs will have increased.

In terms of the more recent situation, a Household Budget

Survey with data compiled at the district level was conducted in Kenya in 1981, but these data are not at present available. The questionnaire administered through this survey indicates that it would allow a comprehensive analysis of the present situation vis à vis the significance of subsistence production to total agricultural production, of agricultural production to total household income, and of the present division of labour. Less satisfactory data from the Integrated Rural Survey (IRS) IV, 1979³⁰, may only be used to give an indication of the recent situation. Sample size for the IRS surveys I to IV, from 1974 to 1979, was based on the decision to use the province as the level of aggregation. The following tables, which have aggregated data for Murang'a District only, are therefore subject to sampling error.

Table 7.20 distinguishes between households headed by married men, married women, and unmarried women, generally widows. The definitions given in the IRS Basic Report (1981) for the household and head of household are as follows:

A household comprises a person or group of persons generally bound by ties of kinship who normally reside together under a single roof or under several roofs within a single compound and who share the community of life in that they are answerable to the same head and share a common source of food (IRS Basic Report, 1981, p. 22).

The household head is:

Table 7.20 Murang'a District: the division of labour and maize production, by household type (percentage), 1979

	Households headed by married men (N = 59)		Households headed by married women (N = 8)		Households headed by unmarried women (N = 9)	
	Regular labour	Occasional labour	Regular labour	Occasional labour	Regular labour	Occasional labour
Planting						
1. females 15 yrs. and over	73.2	2.7	100.0	12.5	72.7	100.0
2. males 15 yrs. and over	26.8	16.2	0	12.5	27.3	0
3. females 6-14 yrs.	0	51.4	0	25.0	0	0
4. males 6-14 yrs.	0	29.7	0	50.0	0	0
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Weeding						
1. females 15 yrs. and over	69.3	1.6	85.7	11.1	72.7	16.7
2. males 15 yrs. and over	30.7	21.4	14.3	11.1	27.3	16.7
3. females 6-14 yrs.	0	42.6	0	22.2	0	33.3
4. males 6-14 yrs.	0	34.4	0	55.5	0	33.3
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Harvesting						
1. females 15 yrs. and over	71.2	1.8	85.7	11.1	72.7	20.0
2. males 15 yrs. and over	28.8	22.8	14.3	11.1	27.3	0
3. females 6-14 yrs.	0	42.1	0	22.2	0	40.0
4. males 6-14 yrs.	0	33.3	0	55.5	0	100.0
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Marketing						
1. females 15 yrs. and over	100.0	93.1	100.0	0	100.0	0
2. males 15 yrs. and over	0	6.9	0	0	0	0
3. females 6-14 yrs.	0	0	0	0	0	0
4. males 6-14 yrs.	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	-	100.0	-

Source: IRS IV, Division of Labour Module, 1979, unpublished data.

The senior member of the household resident in the household compound or though residing elsewhere returns at frequent intervals. The head of the household and the holder are usually the same person...the holder is a person or persons who have control and ability to make decisions relevant to the agricultural activities on the holding (IRS Basic Report, 1981, p. 23).

When both a husband and wife reside on the holding, the husband would be classified as head.

The main point to be drawn from Table 7.20 is the far greater proportion of adult female labour output for households of all types, compared to that of men or of children. The measurement of labour input into maize production is a useful one: itself a staple in the diet, maize is frequently intercropped with beans, and therefore provides a more general indicator for labour in food crop production. The relative input by women in planting, weeding and harvesting varies by household type, being greater in households headed by married women. These households, where the husband is absent from the holding for most of the time, comprise families at a younger stage in the life cycle: children are at school. The average age of a woman as household head in this category is 37.5 years. This contrasts with the situation for households headed by unmarried women, whose average age is 56.7 years. (For married men, the equivalent figure is 44.9 years.) In the households headed by unmarried women (generally widows), adult male labour is sometimes provided by a son who will eventually take over the management of the holding. In all households, women alone are responsible for the regular marketing

of produce. For other activities, households rely on the occasional labour input of both male and female children.

Table 7.21 provides the only information available on the relative importance of hired labour for rural households. The most salient feature of the table is the relatively high percentage of hired labour in preparing the land for farming in households headed by married women. Although data are not available from the IRS IV survey to document this, interviews in the district indicated that this is directly related to the source of non-farm income provided by absent spouses in the form of remittances (eg. MDAH, 1984, A. p. 12). Unfortunately, hired

Table 7.21 Murang'a District: responsibility for preparing the land for farming, by household type (%), 1979

	Households headed by married men (N=59)	Households headed by married women (N=8)	Households headed by unmarried women (N=9)
1. adult females	16.4	33.3	33.3
2. adult males	3.6	0	0
3. adult females & males	27.3	16.7	33.3
4. adult females & children	3.6	16.7	0
5. adult males & children	3.6	0	0
6. entire family	30.9	0	22.2
7. family & hired labour	9.1	0	11.1
8. hired labour	3.6	33.3	0

Source: IRS IV, Division of Labour Module, 1979, unpublished data.

labour is not one of the categories used for assessing labour input into the planting, weeding and harvesting of the different crops. It would appear from the information in Table 7.21, however, that women's labour input in households headed by married women (Table 7.20) needs to be qualified. At the same time, it is necessary to differentiate households on the basis of size of holding and total income level. There is likely to be a marked distinction between those households with access to substantial income from non-farm sources (from migrant spouses) and those where migrant spouses are either seeking employment or are engaged in poorly remunerated employment. The sample of these households (8 in total) was considered too small to test this idea definitively. Nevertheless, the breakdown of households according to the three-fold typology is a useful one to give some degree of specificity to the present division of labour within the district. The classification will be used further in Section 7.4.

Interviews conducted in the district support the above observations of a division of labour which varied according to household type and socioeconomic stratum. Where a man was resident on the farm, one woman remarked that men did more work than in the past (MDAH, 1984, F, p. 6; S, p. 7). On the majority of farms sampled, men were absent, and women stated that not only did they carry a much heavier work load than in the past (ibid., D, p. 8; P, p. 13; S, p. 16; U, p. 5; V, p. 12; X, p. 10), but

that their husband's contribution to the household economy in general was minimal (ibid., O, p. 14; Y, p. 21). In several cases, men were looking for work, rather than obtaining an income from employment. In the words of one woman: "Children were given uhuru [independence], but not the parents" (ibid., N, p. 8).

7.3.3 Agricultural extension

With the objective of illustrating a further dimension of the contradictions faced by women and men in the process of agricultural change, the focus of attention here will be on activities in Murang'a District of the agricultural extension service in the late 1970s and 1980s. Observations will be made in the context of the recent (1983) adoption by the Government of the World Bank supported National Extension Project (NEP). In general, it will be argued that the NEP has the potential of addressing the problems associated with the extension service and of evolving into an effective extension model only if locally adapted in recognition of the temporal and spatial realities of the majority of farmers. The intention in this section is to identify briefly criticisms levelled at the Ministry of Agriculture's extension service, to indicate the pattern of extension activity in the district prior to the introduction of the NEP, and to discuss the implications of recent changes under the NEP for the relative access of men and women to extension. Analysis will draw on: a survey of 279 sellers of food crops in

five markets in Murang'a carried out in 1980³¹; data collected by the author from the two Farmer Training Centres (FTCs) in the district; Annual Reports of the Ministry of Agriculture at the district level; a recent government evaluation of the NEP conducted in May 1984 in Murang'a; and interviews with extension personnel from the district to the sublocation level conducted by the author in 1980 and 1984.

It is appropriate to note at this point that although the considerable negative comment directed to the extension service (for example, Ascroft, Chege, Kariuki and Roling, 1971; ILO 1972; Mbithi, 1972; Leonard, 1972a, 1972b, 1977; Schonherr and Mbugua, 1974; Staudt, 1976, 1978a, 1978b) leads to scepticism regarding its role in promoting sustainable benefits to the majority of (non-elite) farmers at least in the past, recent and current development plans, the National Food Policy paper of 1981, and most recently the sessional paper no. 1, 1986, Economic Management for Renewed Growth, accord the extension service a role of great importance. In the last named document, for instance, a successful extension effort is named as an essential ingredient in a strategy of intensification of agricultural production, on which Kenya's future food security and income is based. Thus it is seen as a matter of "national survival" (p. 86). The other essentials identified are a price incentive system and more efficient marketing arrangements for fertilizer and other agricultural inputs. The extension service, for example, is expected to be the

critical element in the realization of a tripling of maize yields through the adoption of improved husbandry. Returns from this strategy are estimated to be "considerably greater" than from a strategy based on the increased use of fertilizer (p. 87).³²

Under the Development Plan 1984-88, 8% of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development's (MALD) recurrent budget and a little under 6% of the development budget was allocated for extension. Of the total expenditures, approximately 90% was used for salaries. Primarily in order to provide support for extension personal (without an increase in staff members), the paper on Economic management for renewed growth (1986) considers that a 142% increase in recurrent expenditures is needed over the 1984/1985 estimates (1986, p. 87).

Discussion of the past performance of the extension service will focus on three interrelated aspects of the service: the structure of the institution; the distribution of its services; and the effectiveness of delivery. To turn to the first of these areas, the most definitive study of the structure of the Kenya's extension service has been carried out by David Leonard. Building on field experience carried out in Western Kenya in the early 1970s (Leonard 1972a, 1972b), his book Reaching the peasant farmer, organization theory and practice in Kenya (1977) borrows from theory developed in the context of the industrialized countries to expose levels of conflict within the extension service. For example, in part he adapts R. Dahrendorf's

theoretical framework of Class and class conflict in industrial society (1959) in which Dahrendorf proposes a two group model of social conflict, groups being defined according to their possession of authority rather than by ownership of the means of production. Leonard argues that the existence of dichotomous conflict between groups in the extension service is a major explanatory variable in extension ineffectiveness. The dichotomy, he argues, results from the rigidly hierarchical authority pattern of the service inherited from the "hub and wheel" (1977, p. 199) strategy of colonial agricultural administration. The few colonial officers at the "hub" controlled the junior level personnel, Africans, who as frontline workers were accorded a very subordinate position. In the post-1963 era, the gap between the level of agricultural officer (AO) and agricultural assistant (Technical Assistants, TAs), or Junior Technical Assistants (JTAs), is particularly marked and in Leonard's view serves to prevent effective linkage between the farmer and the research centre, the "classic function" of the extension service (ibid., p. 6).³³ Further, as a result of authoritative rather than leadership relations between senior staff (AOs) and frontline personnel, "interest" groups of varying degrees of cohesiveness have evolved and given rise to generally covert conflict between this group and senior staff. The most visible evidence of this is the "informal restriction" on the work, and particularly the farm visits, of frontline workers (ibid., p. 78). Thus, although the

ratio of frontline staff to smallholder farmers is of the order 1:450 (World Bank, 1983), contact with farmers is limited.

Leonard's analysis of the constraints of the extension service is linked with recommendations for change. These will be mentioned here only insofar as it is necessary to illustrate the degree of change introduced under the NEP. For example, in order to address the problem identified above, Leonard suggests that frontline worker motivation and accountability may be increased through their involvement in decision-making processes (including the setting of targets) associated with their work. In response to his observation that extension worker performance is related to inadequate training (but that there is no direct correlation between motivation and education, the work of TAs with secondary schooling often being inferior to that of those with only a primary school certificate)³⁴, Leonard recommends that motivation and job commitment may be increased through: greater opportunities for upward mobility within the service for all cadres of extension worker (career advancement has been very limited and based on past education results rather than performance and experience); an increase in non-material benefits on the job, such as those involving more professional and less authoritarian supervisory working relations; regular opportunities for educational upgrading; and better working conditions, for example through the provision of housing and transport.

Leonard's otherwise rigorous analysis of the extension

service does not address one structural aspect of the institution which has a direct bearing on the arguments presented here. In essence, a dual orientation of extension exists: a production-oriented service for men and a home economics-subsistence orientation for women. In such specific documents as the recent World Bank publication (1979) Integrated Agricultural Development Project (IADP) Management Handbook, women's "domestic" role still appears to be the one emphasized, and their concerns are seen as central only to the Home Economics extension staff. Although these staff now receive training in agricultural topics in addition to home economics, their mandate is so wide, embracing cooking, nutrition, home management, family relationships and handicrafts in addition to agriculture, that little time is available for any one activity (for example, see Table 7.28). Compounded by the small overall numbers of these staff, their work is spread very thinly.

Past observers such as the ILO mission to Kenya in 1972 and Staudt (1976, 1978a) have considered the sex of extension agent to be significant in biasing services away from women farmers.

Staudt (1978a), for example, argues as follows in the context of Kakamega District, Western Province:

Over 98% of the agricultural staff in this district are men; the society is characterized by communication between men on governmental matters and by symbolic male authority over households, despite extensive male absence in rural areas. This social context may thwart the natural diffusion process (1978a, p. 444).

This point and its relevance to Murang'a will be returned to later when the distribution of services is discussed. For the moment it may be noted, from Tables 7.22 and 7.23, that there are few women extension staff in the district. In 1980 (Table 7.22), 10 TAs were female compared to 48 males. Among the JTAs, 12 were female, 85 male. Thus, among those extension workers in most regular contact with farmers, 14.5% were female. At the Technical Officer level, one female officer in each division, with the exception of Kiharu, was explicitly responsible for home economics. At the

Table 7.22 Murang'a District: agricultural staff, by division and gender, 1980

	Kiharu		Kangema		Kandara		Kigumo		Makuyu		Total	
	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m
AAO	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	3
TO	0	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	5	0
TA	1	9	2	11	3	8	1	11	1	4	8	43
JTA	3	8	3	19	5	29	1	24	0	4	12	64
Totals	5	17	6	31	10	38	3	35	2	9	26	130

Source: Unpublished data, District Agricultural Officer, Murang'a District, May 1980.

Note: AAO = Assistant Agricultural Officer
 TO = Technical Officer
 TA = Technical Assistant
 JTA = Junior Technical Assistant

District level, which is not shown in the table, the Home Economics Officer co-ordinated their activities. Other staff at the district level included the District Agricultural Officer (DAO), in overall charge of the ministry within the district, and under him, a specialist staff: a Programme Officer, Coffee Officer, Livestock Officer and Livestock Technician, Horticulture Officer, Crops Officer, and the Home Economics Officer. Of these staff, the last two are female, the remainder male.

Data for 1983 for the District (Table 7.23) indicate that at least in these divisions the relative percentages of male and female frontline staff have changed little, 17.1% of the TAs and

Table 7.23 Murang'a District: agricultural staff, by division and gender, 1983

	Kiharu		Kangema		Kandara		Kigumo		Makuyu		Total	
	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m
AAO	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	5
TO	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	4	2
TA	4	10	1	8	5	9	3	16	1	11	14	54
JTA	4	14	3	19	0	28	1	21	3	2	11	84
AHA	0	1	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	4	3
Totals	9	28	7	29	7	38	6	38	4	15	33	148

Source: MDMALDAR, 1983, pp. 4-10.

Note: AHA = Animal Husbandry Assistant

JTAs being women. Barriers which previously existed at such intermediate level training institutions as Egerton, Embu and the Animal Health and Industry Training Institute (AHITI) have for the most part been removed (Reynolds, 1978, p. 148), yet clearly relatively few women are benefitting from the training or, alternatively if trained, few are remaining in the profession.

The skewed distribution of extension services towards the wealthy, the "progressive", and male farmers, has been documented in the literature and forms the basis for substantial criticism directed to the extension service (for example, Ascroft et al., 1971, ILO 1972; Leonard 1972a, 1972b, 1977; Staudt 1976, 1978a, 1978b). Leonard's research in Western Kenya, for example, first drew attention to the inequalities of extension coverage. His data indicate that on average 57% of a frontline extension worker's visits to individual farmers, the main mode of information dissemination, were to "progressive farmers". This latter group of farmers were defined as those who had adopted hybrid maize and had one or more cash producing enterprises such as grade cattle, cotton, coffee or tea. They formed 10% of the total sample. In contrast, the 43% of the farmers classified in the middle group received 37% of the visits and "non-innovators", 47% of the sample, received only 6% of the visits (Leonard, 1972b, p. 5). Leonard points out that were extension services distributed equally, a farmer would be visited every other year. At the time of his field work, a progressive farmer averaged 2.91

visits a year, and middle farmer 0.44² and a non-innovator 0.07 visits.

Leonard attributes the bias in service distribution primarily to the overall acceptance of a "trickle down" strategy of development, but he argues that the degree of skewness extends further than any reasonable justification of economic growth would allow. Inequality is also caused by what Leonard terms the "squawk factor" (1977, p. 188): the greater likelihood of the elite or progressive farmer to complain to a more senior agricultural officer if he/she does not receive the services expected. As complaints are the most visible means of evaluating a TA or JTA's performance, a complaint carries significant weight. Rather than being related to a class alliance with the extension agent or direct political influence, Leonard suggests their "...power advantage...derives quite simply from their presumption that government should provide them with services and that they can tell an officer if it does not" (1977, p. 189). Thus, Leonard concludes:

Attention to the complainers and the invisibility of the rural poor probably account for a substantial part of the inequality in the distribution of extension. Nonetheless, we do not want to forget that the dominant explanatory variable is the ministry's acceptance of the progressive farmer strategy and its supporting ideas of the diffusion of innovation and the maximizing of economic efficiency and growth" (1977, p. 191).

The less secure "lower status" extension workers appear particularly prone to skewing their visits to the more progressive farmers (ibid.).

Leonard does not address questions of gender bias of extension delivery in his analysis. Staudt's (1978b) findings on this topic, with respect to gender and socioeconomic stratification, have been discussed in Chapter 3. Data available for Murang'a District do not, unfortunately, allow disaggregation of households on the basis of socioeconomic stratum, and thus Staudt's observations may not be tested in this particular context. Some indication of the type of contact women farmers have with the extension service and the biases in distribution may be gained from analysis of a questionnaire survey conducted in five markets in Murang'a in May 1980, and data collected from the student registers at the two Farmer Training Centres (FTCs) in the district.

Table 7.24 illustrates that 29.7% of the total sample of 279 women farmers had ever had contact with the extension service. By far the largest number of contacts took the form of individual farm visits, an indication of the continuing importance of extension strategy towards this method of contact (Table 7.25).

From this second table, it is also evident that although several farm visits concerned general farming issues (soil erosion) and local food crops (chiefly maize and beans), the majority of visits concerned export crops (tea and coffee) or horticultural crops for

Table 7.24 Murang'a District, market survey: respondents' contact with the Ministry of Agriculture's extension service, 1980

CONTACT	TOTAL		KANDARA		KIRIA-INI		MARLIRA		MUKUYU		MUTHITHI	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Last year	58	20.8	6	12.5	13	19.7	15	28.8	10	25.0	14	19.2
Ever ¹	83	29.7	13	27.1	19	28.8	19	36.5	14	35.0	18	24.7
Never	196	69.9	28	70.8	34	71.2	33	63.5	26	65.0	55	75.3
No response	1	0.4	1	2.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: See note 30.

Note: 1. "Ever" includes the figure for "last year".

the urban market.

Farmer Training Centres were second in importance in terms of contact with the extension service. It is significant to note here that despite women's responsibility for food crop production, none of the respondents had attended the courses organized for this purpose. Of the 22 attending a course, 19 attended a Home Economics course. These courses are scheduled during the school holidays and with older children at home and able to take over other responsibilities, some women are freed for attendance.

Table 7.25 illustrates the fact that only 5.4% of the women sampled had access to loans through the extension service. This is considered one of the more valuable forms of such contact. Of the 15 loans, 13 were for coffee, indicating the most likely source of the loans as being the coffee cooperative society.

Demonstrations are held in the district for both food and export crops, and for soil conservation measures, but only those for export crops are referred to in the Ministry's Annual Reports. For example, for 1983, 1809 field demonstrations for coffee were held, attended by 9400 farmers. 51 barazas, meetings generally held at a chief's camp, organized for the same purpose were attended by 22 846 farmers (MDMALDAR, 1983, p. 36). Only the reports of the district Home Economics Division note demonstrations on "general agricultural topics": 134 were held in 1978 (MDMOAAR, 1978, pp. 86-87). For 1982 when 308 demonstrations and 1983 when 135 demonstrations were held, no

Table 7.25 Murang'a District, market survey: type of contact with the extension service, 1980

TYPE OF CONTACT	TOTAL No. % ¹		KANDARA No. % ¹		KIRIA-INI No. % ¹		MARIIRA No. % ¹		MUKUYU No. % ¹		MUTHITHI No. % ¹	
A. Individual farm visit Reasons for visit: ²	71	25.4	12	25.0	14	21.2	17	32.7	11	27.5	17	23.3
i coffee	29		5		8		5		1		10	
ii maize/beans	9		1		4		1		2		1	
iii cabbages, potatoes, tomatoes, onions, carrots	10		4		2		1		1		2	
iv fruit	5		1		0		1		1		2	
v general farm husbandry	8		1		0		1		4		2	
vi soil erosion prevention	10		1		3		2		2		2	
vii irrigation	1		0		0		0		0		1	
viii tea	8		0		0		8		0		0	
ix other (un-specified)	2		0		0		1		1		0	
B. Course at FTC Type of course:	22	7.8	1	2.1	5	7.6	5	9.6	7	17.5	4	5.5
i coffee	2		0		1		1		0		0	
ii tea	1		0		1		0		0		0	
iii home economics	19		1		3		4		7		4	
C. Credit loan type:	15	5.4	4	8.3	3	4.5	4	7.7	1	2.5	3	4.1
i for coffee	13		4		3		4		0		2	
ii other ³	2		0		0		0		1		1	
D. Demonstration Plot ⁴	2	0.7	0	0	1	1.5	1	1.9	0	0	0	0
E. Women's Group Reason for visit:	16	5.7	2	4.2	3	4.5	2	3.8	6	15.0	3	4.1
i food crops	14		2		3		2		4		3	
ii other	2		0		0		0		2		0	

- Notes: 1. The percentage of the total contacts between respondents and the extension service.
2. These columns do not add up to total individual farm visits, as some respondents gave more than one reason for one visit.
3. 'other' includes: one general loan, one loan for cattle purpose.
4. One demonstration was for food crop husbandry, the other was for coffee.

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distinction is made according to topic. The decreased number of demonstrations in 1983 is explained in the Annual Report as related to the demands of the newly introduced Training and Visit (T and V) Scheme (MDMALD, 1983, p. 79). Table 7.25 indicates that only 2 of the farmers surveyed had attended a demonstration.

Barazas are organized for agricultural purposes when a topic is of widespread concern. In the past such meetings have had almost exclusively male participation. Although no farmers interviewed in the market survey had attended a baraza conducted by the extension service, the former trend is now changing and women not only attend but are more active participants (MDAH, 1984).

Sixteen of the 279 farmers of the market survey said they had contact with the extension service through a women's group. Of these, 14 cited the reason for the meetings as discussion on food crop production. In the district as a whole, 78 women's groups in 1983 liaised with the Home Economics Extension Service. For reasons associated with the T and V Scheme, this number represented a reduction from the 84 groups of 1982. In terms of numbers, there was a drop from a total of 2591 women in 1982 to 2360 in 1983 (MDMALDAR, 1983, p. 78). "Lessons" given within the context of the women's groups also decreased from 1392 with an attendance of 27 379 in 1982 to 1260 lessons attended by 16 700 women in 1983. Of the lessons held in 1983, 398 (31%) concerned food production and 331 (26.3%) were classified as "other

extension services eg. cash crops, animal husbandry, family life education etc." The remainder, in order of importance, were: cookery and nutrition (172), home management and improvement (115), handicrafts (93), clothing and textiles (92), child care and development (59) (ibid.).

In contrast to the decline in group activities carried out by the Home Economics Division since the introduction of T and V, the number of individual home visits has increased: from 419 in 1981 to 707 in 1982 and 1376 in 1983. The implications of this for extension coverage will be discussed later.

Before turning to the T and V Scheme in the district, analysis of data from the student registers of the Farmer Training Centres indicates at this level of extension the bias against women farmers. Table 7.26 illustrates the general picture between 1978 and 1984. Only data for courses directed to farmers, as opposed to staff, or other outside interests, are included. The preponderance of male attendance in agricultural vis à vis home economics courses held for farmers at the FTCs in Murang'a is evident from Table 7.26. Table 7.27 gives a further breakdown for the agricultural courses at Kenyatta FTC, selecting those given on coffee, crops and general agriculture, and animal husbandry, as these were the most commonly offered courses between 1978 and 1984. From this table it is evident that, on average, 11.9% of the attendance at coffee courses, 22.5% at crops courses, and 26.7% at animal husbandry courses, is by women. Given the sexual

Table 7.26 Murang'a District: farmer training courses, 1978 to 1984¹

Year		Kenyatta FTC					Thika FTC				
		Courses held	Attendance m	f	Total	f as % of total	Courses held	Attendance m	f	Total	f as % of total
1978	A ²	20	377	104	481	21.6	6	65	54	119	45.5
	HE ³	5	0	120	120	100.0	1	0	22	22	100.0
	Total	25	377	224	601	37.3	7	65	76	141	53.9
1979	A	20	358	55	413	13.3	No data available				
	HE	3	0	81	81	100.0					
	Total	23	358	136	494	27.5					
1980	A	15	507	47	554	8.5	19	283	130	413	31.5
	HE	4	0	127	127	100.0	3	0	71	71	100.0
	Total	19	507	174	681	25.6	22	183	201	484	40.7
1981	A	16	481	137	618	22.2	16	331	138	469	29.4
	HE	6	9	198	207	95.7	1	0	10	10	100.0
	Total	33	490	335	825	40.6	21	331	148	479	30.9
1982	A	15	425	101	526	19.2	7	31	106	137	77.4
	HE	4	0	174	174	100.0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	19	425	275	700	39.3	7	31	106	137	77.4
1983	A	8	159	32	191	16.8	No courses held				
	HE	1	0	13	13	100.0					
	Total	10	159	45	204	22.1					
1984 ⁴	A	16	375	80	455	17.6	5	50	15	65	23.1
	HE	3	0	89	89	100.0	2	0	30	30	100.0
	Total	19	375	169	544	31.1	7	50	45	95	47.4

Source: 1. Murang'a District, MOA/MALD, Annual Reports 1978, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983.
 2. Student Registers, Kenyatta and Thika FTCs; 1979, 1984.

Notes: 1. Only courses for farmers are included, ie: those for staff, 4-K clubs and non-farming activities are excluded.
 2. A = agricultural courses.
 3. HE = home economics courses
 4. Up to 30 November 1984.

Table 7.27 Kenyatta FTC: attendance at selected farmer courses, 1978-1984

Year	Coffee			Crops and general agriculture			Animal husbandry				
	m	f	f as % Total	m	f	f as % Total	m	f	f as % Total		
1978	171	32	15.8	109	56	165	33.9	40	9	49	18.4
1979	226	30	11.7	39	3	42	7.1	37	7	44	15.9
1980	235	23	8.9	52	12	64	18.8	26	4	30	13.3
1981	131	16	10.9	56	32	88	36.4	22	30	52	57.7
1982	50	6	10.7	112	24	136	17.6	160	55	215	25.6
1983	105	15	12.5	44	4	48	8.3	10	13	23	56.5
1984	54	9	14.3	87	14	101	13.9	57	10	67	14.9

Source: Murang'a District, HOA/MALD Annual Reports, 1978, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983.

Kenyatta FTC, Student Registers, 1979, 1984 (until mid-November).

division of labour indicated earlier, it is clear that there is a definite bias against those who provide the major labour input.

Those courses which women most frequently attend are home economics courses. Production of food crops, particularly the growing of vegetables in "kitchen gardens", are indeed part of the curriculum for these sessions, but as is shown in Table 7.28 the Home Economics courses cover many other topics also.

Table 7.28 Kenyatta FTC: Home Economics courses, 1979

Subject	No. of lessons	No. of hours
nutrition	15	30
family relationships	10	20
child care	12	24
health	9	18
home management	10	20
kitchen gardens	10	36
clothing and textiles	16	32
family planning	10	20
group organization and leadership	7	14
cookery demonstration	15	30
food preservation	10	20

Source: Kenyatta FTC, Annual Report (draft) 1979, p. 18.

The limited female attendance at FTC courses would appear to result from two factors. The first concerns the constraints on a woman's spatial mobility: the difficulty women face in leaving their homes for periods of six days owing to their multiple responsibilities on the shamba. This is the reason given for holding Home Economics courses during school vacations when older children at home may be able to take over the tasks (District Home Economics Officer, Murang'a District, personal communication, May 1980). Clearly, it is still accepted by those planning the courses that women's interests ~~are~~ best served by these rather than the other more production oriented courses. Second, there is likely to be a recruitment bias on the part of (frequently male) extension workers who, recognizing that even in jointly-managed households, the withdrawal of a woman's labour from the household is more problematic than the withdrawal of a man's, given the prevailing sexual division of labour, focus attention on the male household head.

In summary, data from the survey in five markets in Murang'a and from the ~~FTCs~~ indicate that women farmers have limited contact with the agricultural extension service. Their contact is particularly infrequent as far as the more valuable components of the service are concerned: access to loans and to FTC courses. Further, what contact women do have ~~seldom~~ focuses specifically on food-crop production, the area of production where, in general, they have the greatest degree of control. The extension service

as a whole, thus, does not appear to have adapted its modus operandi to fit the reality of the majority of farmers who are female.

The National Extension Project (NEP) was developed in large measure to replace the Integrated Agricultural Development Project which was facing severe implementation problems in the late 1970s. In Kandara Division, of Murang'a, one of the fourteen districts selected for the programme, for example, by the time of the May 1980 evaluation, it had become evident that there were major problems with the provision of loans, such that 36 of the 45 farmers surveyed had decided not to continue with the IADP (unpublished tabulations, May 1980). The IADP had in fact aimed to remove constraints facing smallholders in the area of food crop production through the provision of an integrated package of inputs. Existing credit, training and marketing institutions were to be strengthened and a technological package provided (World Bank, 1979).

The NEP was designed as a major new initiative to increase the effectiveness of the extension service. Modelled on the Training and Visit (T & V) scheme developed by Daniel Benor in the Indian subcontinent, it was expected to remedy the major problems identified earlier. The focus was to remain on visits to individual "contact" farmers, but these were to liaise with a group of "follower farmers". Linkages between these farmers, the extension service and research institutions were to be improved,

mechanisms being set in place for two-way communication. A systematic method of extension management was to be introduced such that frontline workers spent more time in contact with farmers, and that their visits were visible to their supervisors. Regular training sessions were to be held which dealt with timely recommendations to farmers. These were no longer to be held on a "package" basis (unlike the approach under the IADP), but rather, were to focus on changes in crop husbandry with the optional use of inputs such as fertilizer. The option was to be open for local adjustment to recommendations (World Bank, 1983).

In Murang'a District, T & V was introduced in January 1983. At the level of the JTA or TA in charge of extension in a sublocation, this meant a radical change in work schedule. The JTA/TA responsible for a sublocation was required to divide this unit into eight sub-areas within each of which eight farmers were to be chosen. These farmers, numbering 64 in all, were named as contact farmers. They were the main contact points between the extension worker and the farming population. Over a two week period, the JTA/TA was required to visit each of these farmers once, four days in each week being set aside for such visits. One of the two remaining days of the bi-weekly cycle was scheduled as a day of training for the extension worker, the other was left free for activities such as general administration, including loan processing. Each frontline worker, under this system, was

expected to provide a map to the DEO indicating where he/she would be on each day of the week. The TA/JTA was also responsible for keeping a record of farm visits (Divisional Extension Officer (DEO), MALD, Kigumo Division, personal communication, October 1984.)

The main criterion for the choice of contact farmers in Murang'a was given as "farmer cooperation", in line with Benor and Baxter's (1984) definition of the role of these farmers.

According to this source such a farmer:

- (1) ...should represent proportionately the main socioeconomic and farming conditions of their group and be regarded by other farmers as able and worthy of imitation; (2) they should be practicing farmers; (3) they should be willing to adopt relevant recommendations on at least a part of their land, allow other farmers to observe the practices, and explain the practices to them; (4) as far as size and composition of farmers' groups permits, they should come from different families; and (5) their farms should be dispersed throughout the group area. Tenants, sharecroppers, young farmers, and women farmers may be contact farmers (p. 45).

The main function of the contact farmer then was to act as the medium through which ideas could diffuse to the surrounding farmers, termed non-contact or follower farmers. From data presently available in Murang'a, it is not possible to assess quantitatively the extent to which earlier biases towards wealthier or male farmers indicated earlier have been overcome. In the records of 28 frontline extension workers in Kigumo Division, only 7.03% of the contact farmers are listed as female

(126 of the total 1792) (JTA/TA files, MALD, Kigumo Division, 1984, unpublished data). This figure is, however, undoubtedly misleading as both male and female extension agents interviewed from Kigumo and Kandara divisions indicated that the majority of farmers with whom they spoke were female. The explanation for the apparent anomaly at the MALD office, Kigumo, was that women farmers will frequently give their husband's name to the JTA/TA as he is the owner of the land, although they will actually play the role of the contact farmer.

Unfortunately, the evaluation of the T- & V scheme in Murang'a in May 1984 did not disaggregate according to sex of contact farmer, so the success or otherwise of the scheme may not be judged on this basis. It is nevertheless apparent from Table 7.29 that there are problems with implementation. Data in the table are drawn from a survey carried out between mid-October and December, 1983, in each of the five divisions in Murang'a. One location in each division was randomly selected and within this administrative unit, 65 contact farmers were selected, again randomly. In addition, 22 non-contact farmers were identified according to a set list of criteria. As indicated in Tables 7.29 and 7.30, the actual number of farmers interviewed varied from the numbers targeted, generally for reasons of transport difficulties or the inability of the enumerators to locate the farmer.

From Table 7.29 it may be seen that 28.6% of the contact

Table 7.29 Murang'a District, Training and Visit Scheme: contact farmers, 1984

	Kinyona	Gatanga	Kanyenyaini	Mugoiri	Ichanga	Total
Sample size	65	45	59	56	65	290
1. <u>Consistency of visits</u> <u>by JTA/TA:</u>						
Farms reporting:						
no visit	49	3	4	9	18	83
1 visit	14	10	2	3	7	36
2 visits	1	30	53	42	40	166
over 2 visits	1	2	0	2	0	5
2. <u>Innovation diffusion</u> <u>among farmers:</u>						
a. contact farmers reporting that other farmers attended demonstrations	8	20	26	17	6	77
b. Total no. of farmers attending demonstrations:	73	113	101	103	27	417
weighted ave. per farmer	9.12	5.65	3.88	6.06	4.50	5.42
ave. for all farmers	1.12	2.51	1.71	1.84	0.42	1.44
c. contact farmers reporting that:						
(i) they inform other farmers of de- monstrations	2	16	19	3	3	46
(ii) TAs/JTAs inform other farmers of demonstrations	7	5	11	9	0	32
(iii) they discuss advice with other farmers	15	35	48	47	21	166

Source: Compiled from: Kenya, MALD, Monitoring and evaluation sub-unit T & V extension system, field survey report: Meru, Murang'a and Taita Taveta Districts, May 1984.

Note: 1. Average number of farmers attending by those who reported that other farmers had attended.

farmers surveyed had received no visit from an extension worker. This problem was particularly serious in Kinyona where 49 of the 65 farmers had not been visited. This may be at least in part a reflection of the greater distances between farms in this area close to the Nyandarua range and the difficulty of meeting the target of 8 farmer visits per day (TA, Makomboki sublocation, personal communication, November 1984).

What is more disturbing from the data in Table 7.29, however, is the indication of lack of contact between contact and follower farmers. Only 26.6% of the 290 contact farmers reported that other farmers attended demonstrations given on their holdings on the occasion of a visit by the JTA/TA. The great majority of contact farmers, therefore, were not in contact with their fellow farmers for the purposes of linking them with the extension service, particularly for letting them know when the JTA/TA was to visit their farm. There appears, however, to be more informal contact with other farmers, 57.2% of the 290 farmers stating that they did discuss extension advice with other farmers.

Of the sample of non-contact farmers (Table 7.30), 48.6% had heard of the T & V scheme, 42.2% of the 109 farmers knew where the demonstrations were held by a JTA/TA, indicating that they knew who the contact farmers were, but only 11.9% knew also when the demonstration was to be held.

It is evident from the evaluation survey (May 1984), from discussions with extension personnel at all levels of the district

Table 7.30 Murang'a District, Training and Visit Scheme: non-contact farmers, 1984

	Kinyona	Gatanga	Kanyenyaini	Mugoiri	Ithanga	Total
Sample size	22	20	22	23	22	109
1. Non contact farmers who have heard of T & V	11	9	21	3	9	53
2. Source of agricultural information:						
TA/JTA	6	4	14	3	7	34
contact farmer	2	1	4	0	2	9
friend	0	0	0	0	0	0
other farmers	14	20	14	0	0	0
barazas	0	0	0	0	0	0
3. Farmers who know:						
- where demos. held	10	10	18	0	8	46
- when demos. held	4	4	4	0	1	13
- when & where demos. held	4	4	4	0	1	13
4. Farmers who have attended demonstrations	6	7	12	0	5	30

Source: Compiled from: Kenya, MALD, Monitoring and evaluation sub-unit T & V extension system, field survey report: Meru, Murang'a and Taita Taveta District, May 1984.

administration, and from district Annual Reports (MALD) that the wholesale adoption of the T & V "package" as regards extension worker-farmer contact needs revision in order to be less incongruent with the local situation. At one level this concerns the unrealistic expectation that an extension worker in the higher altitudinal areas can cover the distance between eight farmers in any one day. The terrain and condition of the roads means that they are frequently not easily cyclable, and only male extension agents use bicycles. Further, even in those areas where distances between contact farmers are not as great, extension workers frequently comment that they have to wait while a (woman) farmer finishes another task before meeting him/her. In recognition of this problem there was discussion in December 1984 of decreasing the number of contact farmers to 40 per extension agent, i.e. on a day devoted to this activity, a JTA/TA would be expected to meet five contact farmers. There was also discussion as to whether to identify new contact farmers annually in order to get around the problem of the lack of contact between contact and follower farmers. Neither of these recommendations had been incorporated in the Training and Follow-up Programme 1984-1985 produced by the DAO, Murang'a, in the latter part of 1984.

Perhaps most troubling in the adoption of the T & V approach is the lack of recognition given to local organizational structures, use of which could mean a far wider basis for extension than that of a strategy of contacting individual

farmers. This point is very far from being new in the Kenyan context, the issue having been identified during the Special Rural Development Project (SRDP) (Ascroft, Chege, Kariuki, Roling, 1971; Roling, Chege, Ascroft, 1973) and in the particular context of the Women's Programme under the SRDP (Pala, Reynolds, Wallis, Browne, 1975). The identification of women's groups here is in fact obvious given that they have been identified by the Home Economics Division of the MALD as the appropriate targets. Yet, of the 28 JTA/TAs in Kigumo Division whose work schedules were examined in 1984, only 3 extension workers indicated that they met with a women's group. One of these agents met with two groups.

Part of the problem lies in the fact that the option of including a women's group in the place of a contact farmer was given only to Home Economics extension workers after the introduction of the T & V scheme. At this point, such agents were allowed to choose between visiting six contact farmers and one women's group on a day scheduled for this activity, or eight contact farmers. Given that meeting a women's group consumes far more time than meeting individual farmers, the majority of agents opted for the latter course of action. Thus, it is perhaps not surprising to read in the MALD, Murang'a District, Annual Report 1983 that:

Due to the introduction of Train and Visit programme, the staff had less time with Women (sic) Groups as they were attending to contact farmers (pp. 78-79).

It is, however, of real concern, as clearly the number of women contacted through groups has dropped. The change made at the end of 1984 to allow a worker liaising with a women's group to visit a total of five contact farmers that day in addition to the group may help to alleviate the situation somewhat.

Of wider significance, however, is the lack of promotion of women's groups as contact points for JTA/TAs other than Home Economics staff. Some of these staff do indeed link with women's groups, but their numbers appear to be very small. The problem would appear to be associated less with the sex of the extension agent³⁵ than with the inability of those in charge of implementation to adapt the contact farmer strategy to local reality, in itself a reflection of the ideational bias still evident in the bifurcated structure of the extension service with the home economics component on one hand and the "agricultural" on the other.

Owing to the initiative of divisional staff, there was, by the end of 1984, an effort to overcome this division of responsibility in the context of the bi-weekly training sessions for JTA/TAs. Such training sessions are an integral part of the T & V scheme and are held at divisional headquarters for JTA/TAs. In turn, divisional level staff are trained on one day a month by Subject Matter Specialists (SMSs) drawn from higher levels of the MALD or research institutions. At the meetings, training appropriate to the season is provided. The intention of these sessions is also to promote two-way communication between the

farmers and researchers through this process (World Bank, 1983).

At the bi-weekly sessions, all staff at the level of JTA or TA are now exposed to the same training. Generally this covers topics on food crops, coffee, soil conservation, animal husbandry and "home economics". Prior to the latter half of 1984, only home economics staff would receive instruction in topics designated as home economics (eg: nutrition, vegetable growing, food preservation, storage). The change may go some way towards integrating at this level the concerns of the two programmes.

Overall, from the JTA or TA to the higher levels of agricultural administration in the district, the training component of the T & V scheme is considered to have been successful in the following respects: (1) it has helped to bridge the gap between research and extension. Discussion at the training sessions has allowed concerns raised at the farm level to be fed back into the higher levels of the hierarchy. Frequently, note is made of the improved social relationships between all agricultural field staff and with research personnel; (2) the regular updating with technical information of the extension staff has created a new degree of confidence in the staff. This was often mentioned in conversations with TAs or JTAs as a valuable asset, particularly where initial training had occurred a long time ago; (3) regular training sessions have assisted staff in programming their work efficiently (Murang'a District Extension

Project - Training and following up programme 1984-1985, DAO.

Also, personal communication with extension staff).

Problems which were arising by the end of 1984 with respect to training, however, had to do with repetition of the messages delivered and difficulties associated with the amount of travelling necessitated by bi-weekly meetings. It was suggested that such sessions be re-scheduled for once a month to help alleviate these difficulties (ibid.).

More generally, during 1984 it was realized that there was a need for more local adaptation of the national programme. This observation pertained particularly to the content of the extension programme. While the emphasis had been on farming recommendations which were suitable for widespread adoption (and not, for example, conditional on the purchase of inputs), they were not ecologically specific enough for the wide range of environments in Murang'a. Recommendations tended to be geared to farmers in the middle and upper zones, and crops such as pigeon peas and cowpeas which would have been appropriate to promote in the lower areas were neglected.

At the end of 1984, the T & V Scheme had been in operation for just under two years. It may thus be early to judge its overall effectiveness. There were indications within the district not only of the scheme's limitations as presently implemented, but also of ways of resolving the problems. At that time, however, there was little real questioning of the basic rationale for

focusing on individual farmers and expecting non-contact farmers to "follow". While placing a greater emphasis on women's groups for extension does not in itself guarantee success, as Berger, DeLancey, and Mellencamp (1984, pp. 50-52) observe in the very general context, women's groups in Murang'a are frequently already involved in group agricultural activities. Meeting farmers on such occasions, (often meetings are held weekly), would indicate recognition of the severe temporal and spatial constraints women face as farmers owing to their multiple responsibilities. The characteristics of women's groups which would justify this focus are discussed in Section 7.5.

7.4 Perspectives on inequality

Data are not currently available to quantify the precise dimensions of present differentials in economic or gender stratification in Murang'a District. A closer definition will be possible once data from the Household Budget Survey of 1981, based on the district as the sampling unit, are released. In the interim, reliance must be placed on a somewhat eclectic assortment of information to piece together the parameters of a picture of gender and economic inequality.

There is in particular a lack of adequate information on the distribution of land in the district. The disparities in holding size made visible by the Economic Survey of Central Province (1968) were discussed in Section 7.2 (Table 7.2). They will be

referred to again in this section with reference to the hypothesized link between size of holding and access to non-farm income.

Indication of the variation of holding size according to ecological zone may be gained from data analyzed by Taylor (1966b) from Land Consolidation records in 1962. Of the 42 654 holdings recorded, 44.8% were under 3 acres (1.2 ha.) in size. Table 7.31 indicates the differences both between and within two ecological zones. While on average holdings were larger in the higher altitudinal tea zone, at the time of the survey relatively large holdings still existed in the coffee zone.

The most recent government data with any degree of precision on the distribution of holding size come from the Statistical Abstract, 1970. From Table 7.32 it is evident that 46.5% of the land holders operate holdings under 1 hectare in size, and that these occupy only 16.7% of the land area in the district. 78.4% of the holdings are under 2 hectares in size. At the other end of the scale 0.7% of the holdings, those over 10 hectares in size, occupy 5.7% of the land. While exact comparison with data from the earlier ESCP (1968) is not possible given the different categories of holding size, it would appear that with the increase in number of holdings with subdivision over time, some measure of decrease in disparities of size distribution had occurred in Murang'a by 1969.

Table 7.31 Murang'a District: holding size distribution by ecological zone, 1962

Location	Sublocation	Total number of holdings	Holdings over 3 acres (1.2 ha.)	Holdings under 3 acres (1.2 ha)	Average holding size acres	hectares
1. Tea Zone						
(Location 2)						
	a	718	620	98	7.63	3.09
	b	161	150	11	15.46	6.26
	c	718	620	98	6.44	2.6
	d	227	202	25	10.33	4.18
	e	286	270	16	11.65	4.72
	f	943	632	311	4.84	1.96
Total		3053	2498 (81.69%)	559 (18.31%)	9.39	3.80
2. Coffee Zone						
(Location 10)						
	a	726	134	592	2.07	0.84
	b	366	114	252	4.81	1.95
	c	831	403	428	3.28	1.33
	d	824	542	282	2.88	1.17
	e	326	72	254	2.25	0.91
	f	522	223	299	6.13	2.48
Total		3595	1488 (41.39%)	2107 (58.61%)	3.57	1.45

Source: Taylor, 1966b, pp. 235-238.

Table 7.32 Murang'a District: size distribution of registered small holdings, 1969 (hectares)

Size of farm	Number	%	Area	%
0.0-0.49	24 864	25.0	9 068	5.9
0.5-0.99	21 355	21.5	16 790	10.8
1.0-1.9	31 694	31.9	46 904	30.3
2.0-2.9	11 672	11.7	29 232	18.9
3.0-4.9	6 670	6.7	26 277	17.0
5.0-9.9	2 495	2.5	17 626	11.4
>10	666	0.7	8 883	5.7
Total	99 416	100.0	154 749	100.0

Source: Calculated from Kenya, Statistical Abstract 1970, Table 79(a), p. 81.

Table 7.33 draws on more recent data. Although it indicates the range of holding size, it unfortunately gives no indication of the distribution of land. Land is an issue of considerable political sensitivity in Kenya, and as House and Killick (1983, p. 48) have noted there is "...a near-conspiracy of silence from official statistics." It is thus impossible, given the lack of data available, to assess the degree of land accumulation/marginalization which has occurred since 1969. With the great activity in the selling of land noted in Section 7.2 (Table 7.3) and recent attempts to place some checks

Table 7.33 Murang'a District: size distribution of smallholdings
by division, 1979 (hectares)

Division	Number of holdings	Size range
Makuyu	1 837	2.0-4.0
Kandara	30 306	1.3-2.3
Kangema	34 566	0.5-3.0
Kiharu	51 342	0.8-20.0
Kigumo	13 213	1.5-6.5
Total	131 264	0.5-20.0

Source: Murang'a District Development Plan 1984-1988, p. 128.

on land sales through procedures introduced at the level of the Land Board, it would be surprising if this process of differentiation in holding size were not active.

It is similarly difficult to arrive at accurate estimations of holding size distribution by sex of household head. Kimani and Taylor's 1972 survey of 5142 farms in the district (Makuyu Division is excluded) included 1253 households (24.4%) headed by women.³⁶ On average, male-headed households managed holdings with 10.2% more land than those headed by women (Table 7.34). These households were further differentiated by cultivated acreage, farm income and income from food and export crops as is

illustrated in Table 7.34. In all cases, farms headed by women had lower values than those headed by men. It may, however, be noted that very similar correlations assessing the relationship between cultivated acreage and total income were obtained for both household types (in the case of male-headed households, $r = .5191$; in the case of female headed households, $r = .5256$).

Further analysis of these differences may be gained from Figures 7.1 to 7.9. With reference to Figures 7.1 to 7.3, it is

Table 7.34 Murang'a District: differentiation of holdings by sex of household head, 1971

	A female-headed holdings (mean) (N = 1253)	B male-headed hold- ings (mean) (N = 3884)	C Ratio A to B
acreage	5.02 (2.0 ha.)	6.16 (2.5 ha.)	1:1.23
cultivated acreage	2.76 (1.1 ha.)	3.15 (1.3 ha.)	1:1.14
farm income (KShs.) ¹	844.36	1054.00	1:1.25
crop income (KShs.)	645.18	804.81	1:1.25
coffee income (KShs.)	438.31	532.47	1:1.21
tea income (KShs.)	120.78	162.99	1:1.35
maize and beans income (KShs.)	33.05	37.62	1:1.14

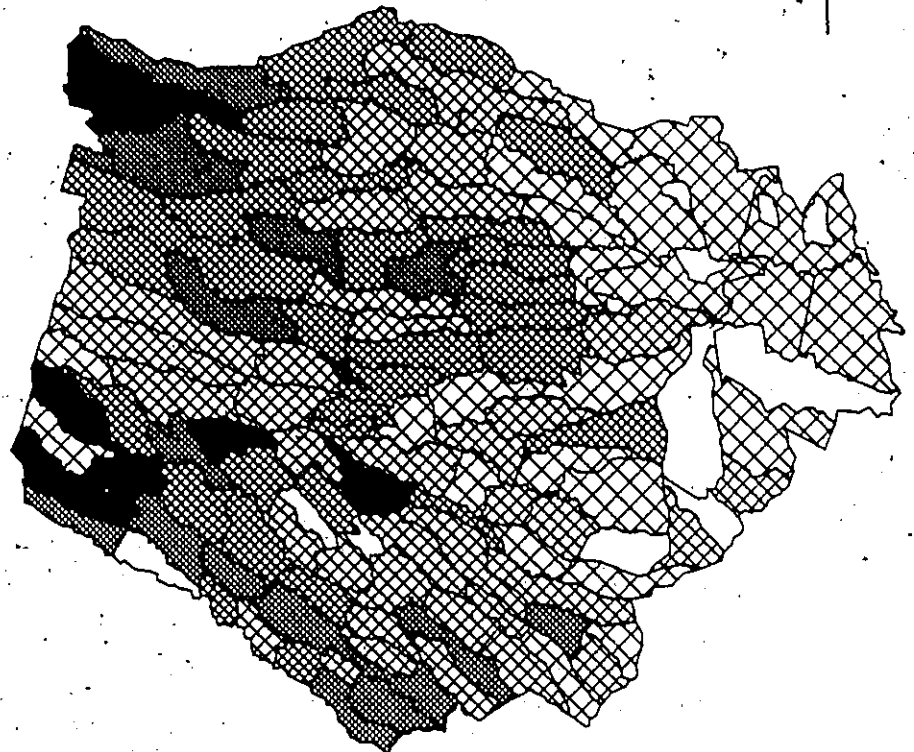
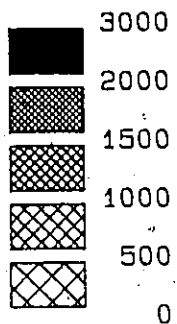
Source: Kimani and Taylor, 1973, Farm File (unpublished data).

Note: 1. Calculated by combining annual income from crops and livestock.

MURANGA DISTRICT AVERAGE FARM INCOME

TOTAL
SAMPLE

INCOME (Kshs.)



MURANGA DISTRICT AVERAGE FARM INCOME

Figure 7.2

MALES

INCOME (Kshs.)

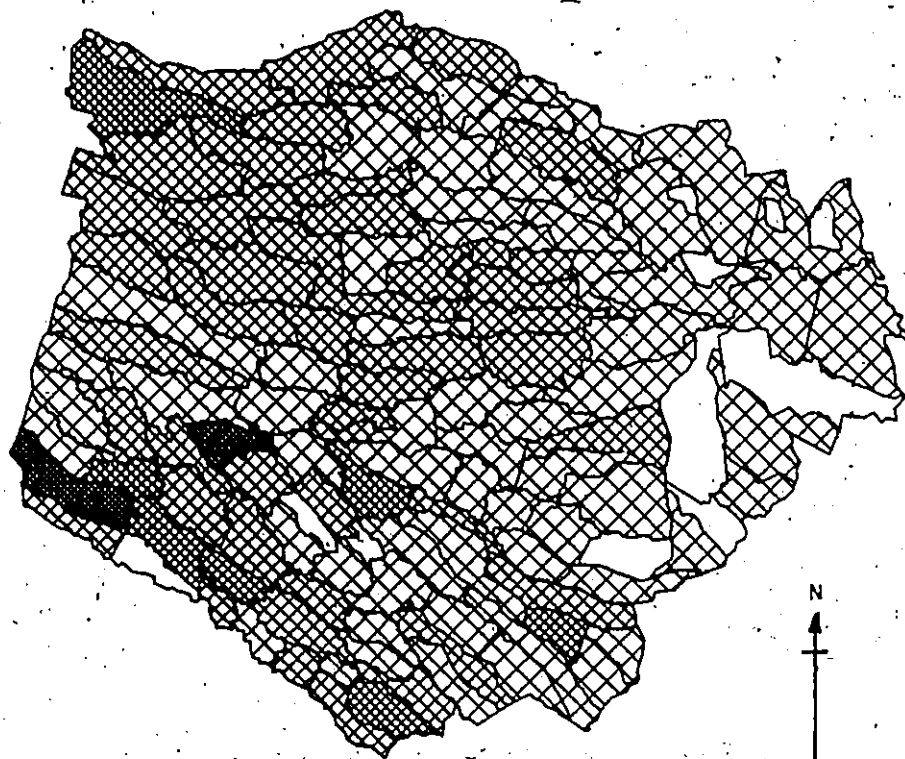
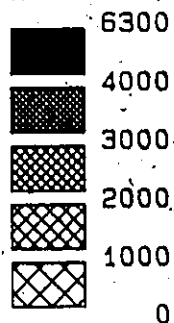
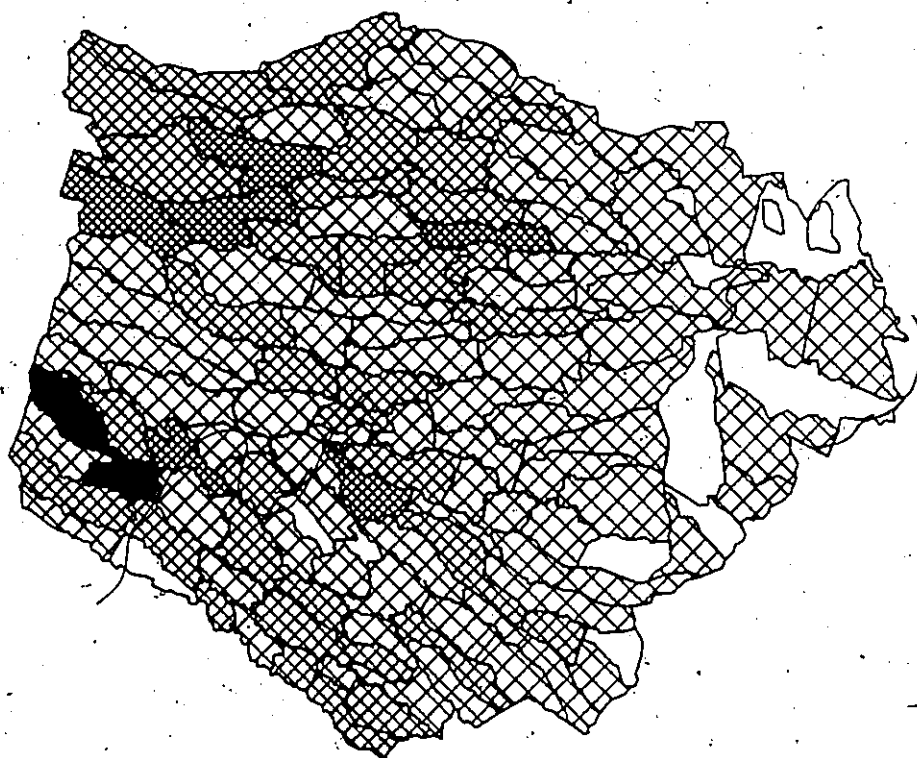


Figure 7.3

FEMALES

0 5 10 15 20
KILOMETRES



evident that average farm income increases with altitude, the highest incomes being found in the coffee and tea zones. While it is apparent that this pattern is characteristic of both male and female headed holdings, care must be taken in the interpretation of Figure 7.3 in particular. The two sublocations with values over KShs. 4000/- which occur in the south-west of the district (Kandara Division) are based on a sample of only one holding per location.³⁷ Figures 7.4-7.5, 7.6-7.7, 7.8-7.9, break down farm income further to indicate the situation respectively, for income from coffee, tea and foodcrops (maize and beans). Regarding coffee (Figures 7.4, 7.5), it is apparent that the highest incomes are found in the middle part of the coffee belt, presumably a situation related to the more optimal conditions for coffee here, given a general lack of irrigation of this crop on smallholdings. It may be noted, further, that there is a wider spread across ecological zones of male-headed households growing coffee, possibly related to the greater ability of these generally larger households to absorb risks.

In considering the situation for tea (Figures 7.6, 7.7), the same caution given earlier for the two sublocations in Kandara division, in Figure 7.7, must be noted. Figures 7.8 and 7.9, which indicate the situation for income from food crops, illustrate quite different patterns of income for female vis à vis male headed households. The distribution of households obtaining income from this source is more widespread in the district for

MURANGA DISTRICT AVERAGE COFFEE INCOME

Figure 7.4

MALES

INCOME (Kshs.)

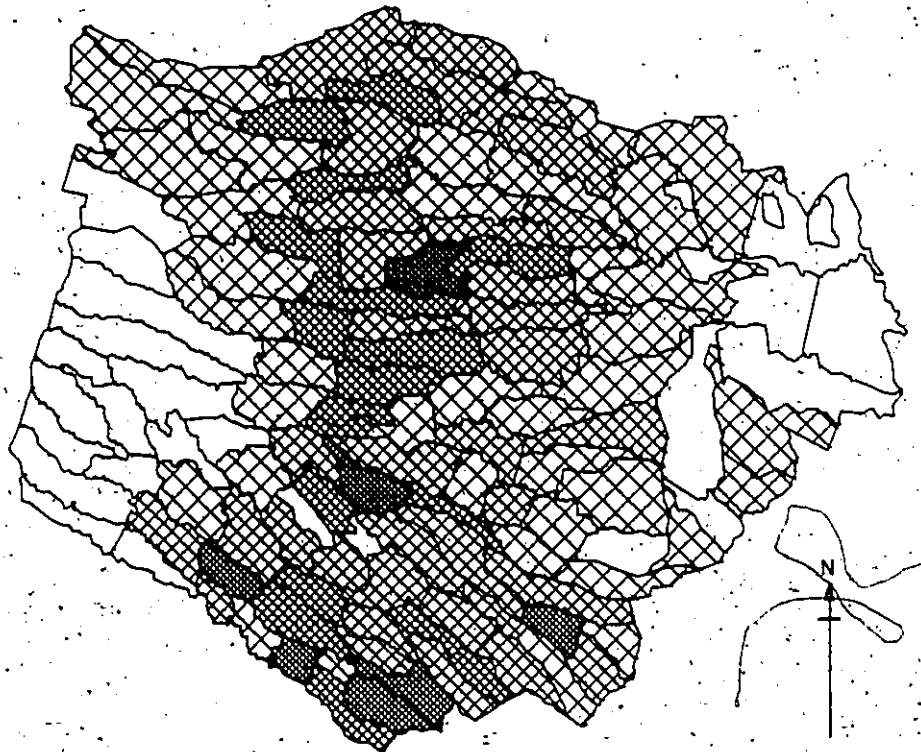
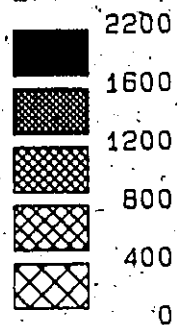
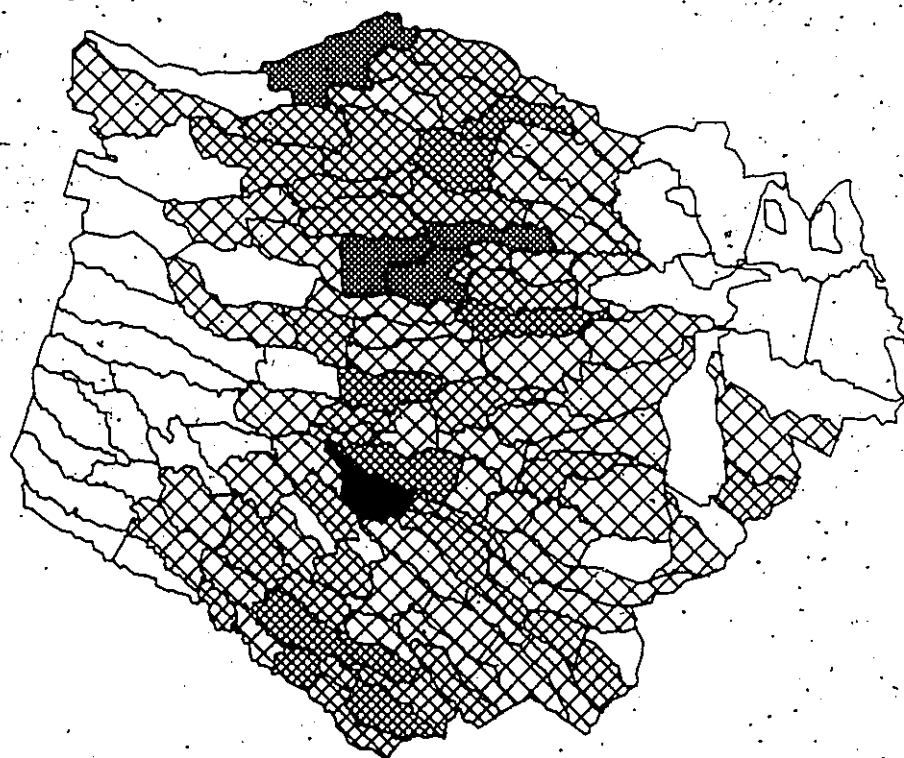


Figure 7.5

FEMALES



MURANGA DISTRICT AVERAGE TEA INCOME

Figure 7.6

MALES

INCOME (Kshs.)

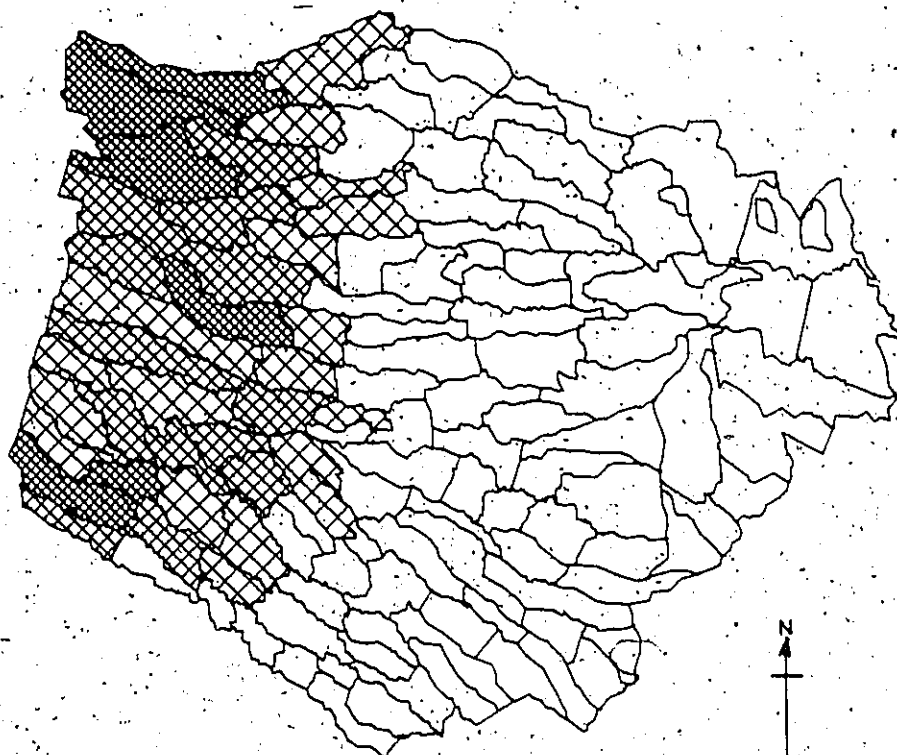
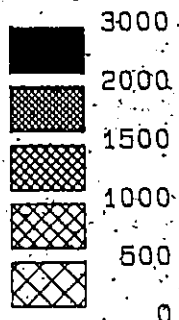
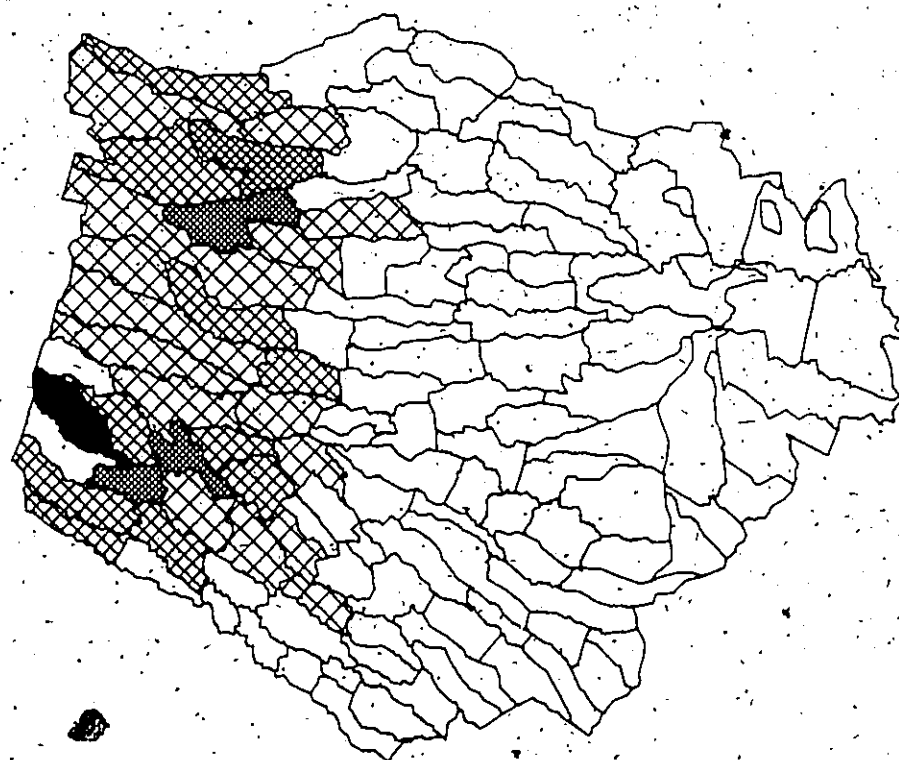


Figure 7.7

FEMALES



MURANGA DISTRICT AVERAGE MAIZE & BEANS INCOME

Figure 7.8

MALES

INCOME (Ksh's.)

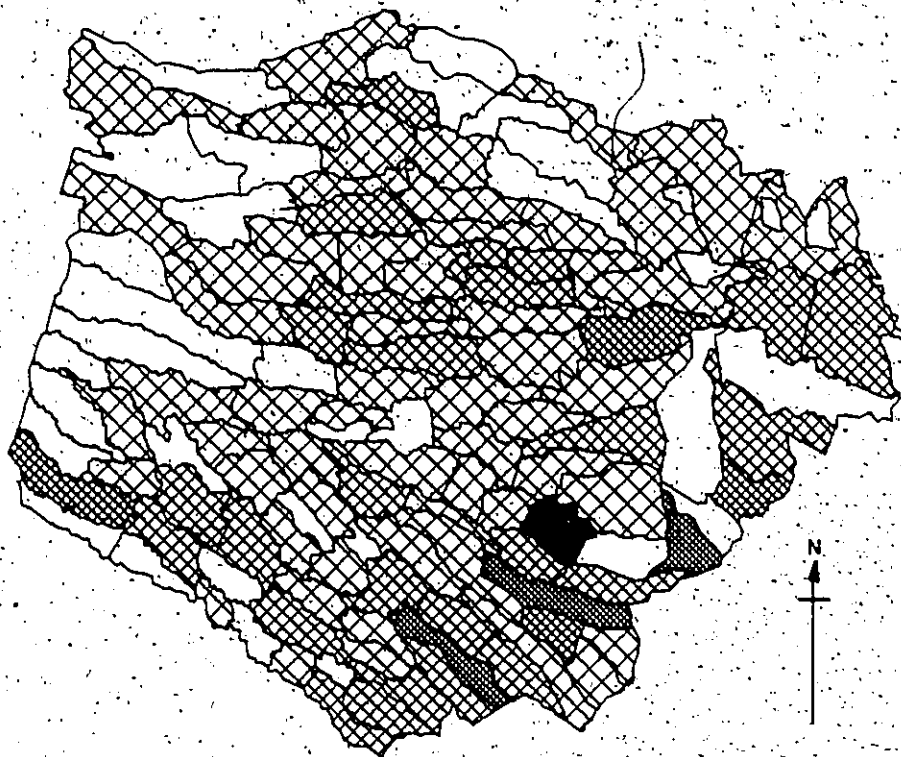
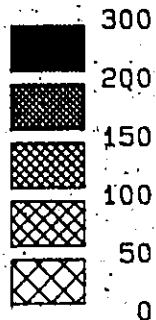
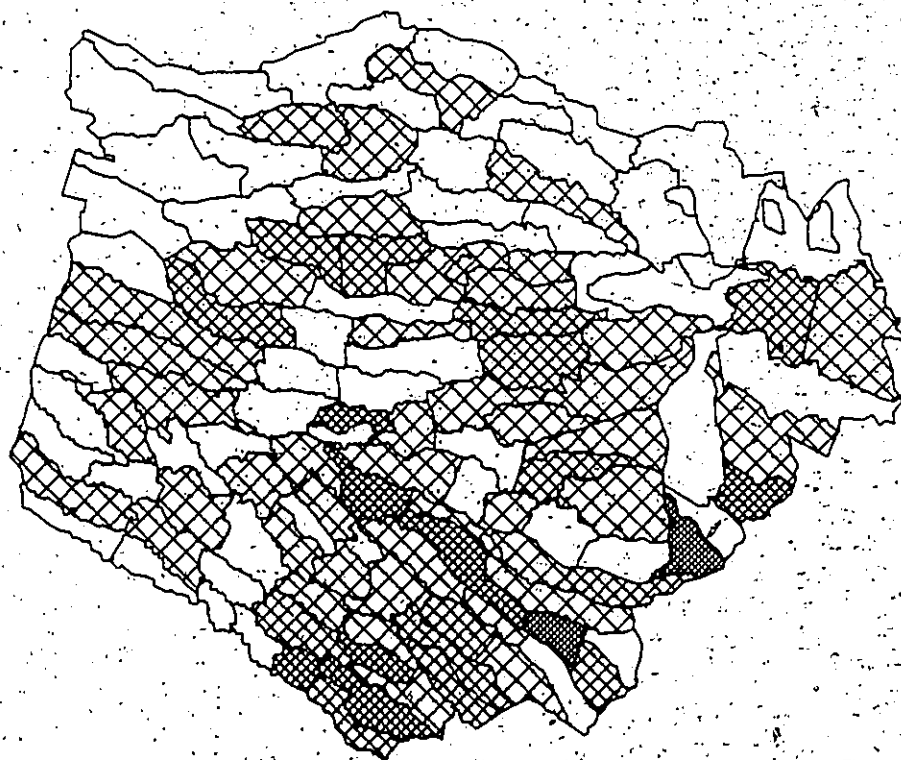


Figure 7.9

FEMALES



male than for female headed households. It may be suggested that this is linked not only to a focus on food crop production for subsistence in those households headed by women which are characterized by smaller hectarages, but also by the option taken by many of these households for what Kitching has identified as a "high risk strategy" (1980, p. 127). Such a strategy will emphasize production of crops of high potential value, such as coffee or tea, which nevertheless leaves the household more vulnerable to (international) price fluctuation and an increased reliance on the market for subsistence. Table 7.34 indicates that, on average, income from maize and beans represents only 5.9% of farm income in female-headed households and 5.4% of farm income in those headed by men.

Finally, with respect to data from Kimani and Taylor's (1973) survey, it is interesting to note from Table 7.35 that, in

Table 7.35 Murang'a District: improvement or decline in cash income from farm sources by sex of household head (percentage), 1971

	female-headed holdings	male-headed holdings	district average
improved	45.4	47.2	46.8
decline	30.3	32.7	32.1
same	20.4	16.9	17.8
don't know	3.8	3.0	3.2

Source: Kimani and Taylor, 1973, Farm File (unpublished data).

response to a question as to whether there had been an improvement or decline in cash income from farm sources, similar responses were obtained from both types of holdings.

On the basis of Barnes' (1983) rationale for disaggregating data on female-headed households on the basis of marital status, it was decided to use this categorization of household types in order to analyze data from IRS IV (1979) for Murang'a. As noted previously, the small size of the sample means that the data may only be used to give an indication of the situation, and results should not be considered definitive. Data presented in Table 7.36 illustrate some of the differences. As noted at the base of

Table 7.36 Murang'a District: differentiation of holdings by type of household, 1971

	households headed by married males (N = 59)	households headed by married females (N = 8)	households headed by unmarried females (N = 9)
Size of holding (ha.)	0.77	0.96 ¹	0.58
Number of improved cattle ²	3.05	2.00 ¹	2.25
Number of goats	1.79	2.0	0.37
Presence of a water tank	0.19	0.12 ¹	0
Number in household	7.32	5.0	3.11
Number in household under age of 15	3.14	2.75	0.89

Source: IRS IV (1979), unpublished data.

- Note: 1. If one household of 3.64 ha. is excluded from the sample, the average area per holding drops to 0.58 ha. The same household owned 3 improved cattle (grade), and was the only one to own a watertank.
2. Owing to missing data, it was not possible to calculate the number of 'unimproved cattle' per holding.

the table, results for averages given under the married female head type are skewed by one entry. This particular household operated a holding of 3.64 ha. If this household is removed from the calculation, the average holding size drops to 0.58 ha. for households headed by married women. Then the finding of Barnes (1983) in the context of the entire smallholder population in Kenya that the holding size was greater for male than for female household heads of either type would appear to hold true.

(Further details of holding size are given in Table 7.37). This observation may however be misleading in two respects.

Table 7.37 Murang'a District: holding area by type of household, 1979

Area (ha.)	households headed by married males		households headed by married females		households headed by unmarried females	
	No.	total % holding	No.	total % holding	No.	total % holding
<1	44	74.58	6	75.00	8	88.89
1.0-1.9	11	18.64	1	12.50	1	11.11
2.0-2.9	3	5.08	0	0	0	0
3.0-3.9	1	1.69	1	12.50	0	0

Source: IRS IV (1979), unpublished data.

First, size of holding is not a consistently reliable indicator of household wealth/poverty, given the wide range of ecological environments in Kenya. There is thus need to qualify such an assessment by reference to ecological zone. But second, and of greater significance for the argument of this chapter, is the likelihood that households headed by married women span a wide range of incomes. They may represent in the main poorer households from which men migrate in order to obtain non-farm income for family survival, but they also include more wealthy households, the absent spouse being in well-paid salaried employment elsewhere. Such households may well be able to increase their holding size through land purchase, but such information is not available from IRS IV. If this is the situation, and it would follow from hypotheses suggested in Chapter 6.6, then the household identified earlier, rather than being an anomaly, represents a stratum of wealthy households headed by women. Clearly, this argument needs to be tested by a larger sample. It is unfortunate that Barnes (1983), with access to the total data set for IRS IV, did not therefore disaggregate her categories according to socioeconomic criteria.

Households headed by widowed women, in general, operate holdings of a smaller size because of the later stage of the family life cycle of this household type. As observed earlier, the average age of a woman in this category of household is 56.8

years. The amount of land over which she had control would have been reduced as sons married and took over ownership of their share of the land. The smaller amount of labour available in such households (Table 7.36) indicates this situation. It is also evident from this table that unmarried women may have frequently opted to focus on livestock, rather than crop production, as the former requires somewhat less labour. Such women may be disproportionately represented among the poor because of their lack of access to non-farm income, as Barnes (1983) argues.

The link between non-farm income and rural stratification has been discussed in some detail earlier. In large measure the associations suggested are based on circumstantial evidence, as Kitching observes (1980, p. 364). Before examining the evidence he presents from a survey of farmers in Kangema Division of Murang'a District to give an empirical basis to the argument that access to substantial non-farm income was the "historically crucial determinant" of holding size, reference will be made once again to data from the ESCP, 1968. Reference was made in Section 7.3.2 to Table 7.13 on total receipts and disbursements per household by the seven income groups identified in this survey. The relationship between income group and holding size is illustrated by data provided at the base of the table. In Murang'a, cash from non-farm sources is the prime source of cash for households of every income group and category of holding size in the district (Table 7.13). From Table 7.15 it

may be seen that dependence on non-farm income is greatest for holdings in the highest and lowest income groups. Table 7.38 indicates that the major source of income varies according to income group, services (i.e. wages and salaries) providing the greatest percentage contribution in general for the lowest, third lowest and the second highest income groups; manufacturing, trade

Table 7.38 Fort Hall District: household income from non-farm sources as a percentage of total cash receipts

Income group (Shs.)	Manufacturing trade, transport	Services ¹	Remittances ²
0-1000	8.9	43.2	16.8
1001-1500	16.1	24.2	24.9
1501-2000	9.2	21.4	13.5
2001-2500	28.0	20.8	2.8
2501-3500	21.1	15.5	6.2
3501-5000	20.5	24.4	2.2
> 5000	53.6	22.7	0

Source: Calculated from Table 7.3.2.5 (ESCP, 1968, p. 41, Table 54).

- Notes: 1. Services includes wages and salaries.
 2. Remittances are considered as a separate category in the ESCP, 1968, without further explanation. From Table 42, p. 33, it would appear that remittances refer to household income provided by relatives not normally resident in the household.

and transport being the highest contributors for the majority of the other groups. Remittances are in general less important as a source of income the higher the income group.

While this picture diverges from the more general one that Kitching (1980, pp. 339-342) draws for Central Province, it nevertheless illustrates a situation of "bundled" or "cumulative" privilege:

Better-off households in Central Province in 1964 always had more land and more land cultivated, and more labour to work it (from household and hired sources), and more off-farm income and higher wages and salaries and more income from remittances and more income from trade and business than those in the next income category down (p. 340).

The generalizations hold true for Murang'a with the exception of income from remittances. It is this cumulative advantage that provides support for the argument linking non-farm income to the process of land accumulation/marginalization, in itself also fostered by differential investment in agricultural production (through the purchase of inputs and improved livestock, for example).³⁸

More direct evidence for the association between size of holding and non-farm income comes from Kitching's 1973 survey of thirty "progressive farmers" in Kangema Division. Twenty-eight of these farmers, whose holdings averaged 18 acres (7.29 ha.) in size, were involved in "above average" wage or salary employment off the farm at some period in the past. Income from this source

was identified by these farmers as being used for the purchase of land and farm and business investment. Twenty three of the farmers had themselves purchased the greater proportion of their land with cash, and ten of these had purchased all their land (1980, pp. 367-369). In twenty eight of the cases therefore savings from non-farm income were directly related to the process of land accumulation. Yet, Kitching observes, the correlation between non-farm income and holding size is not a simple one:

In many respects what mattered in Kangema...was not so much the absolute level of wage or salary income, but the time at which it was acquired, the length of time for which it was available, and the price of land over that period as a proportion of that income (1980, p. 371).

It was these factors that were so critical in the process of rural stratification in Kenya. As Kitching notes, the "agrarian revolution", of which land reform was such an essential element, did "little or nothing" to alter the process (ibid., p. 374).

More recent data to assess income distribution and poverty among Murang'a's population of 648 333 (1979) are not available, but both the draft District Development Plan (DDDP) 1979-1983 and the present District Development Plan (MDDP) 1984-1988 give estimates of the distribution of poverty. Basing estimates on Crawford and Thorbecke's (1978) earlier work on poverty lines in Kenya, and adjusting for inflation, the MDDP arrives at a figure of KShs. 9550 to indicate the poverty line in 1984. The Plan then estimates that 30% of the households in Kandara, Kigumo,

Kiharu and Kangema Divisions lie below the poverty line. The equivalent figure for Makuyu Division is 70% (MDDP, 1984, p. 12).

The largest category of rural poor, involving about 53 000 households in 1979, is made up of smallholders in the marginal and rangeland areas, principally in Makuyu Division, but also in parts of Kiharu, Kigumo and Kandara Divisions. Here, lack of rainfall, or its unpredictable nature, is a critical factor. A further 27 8000 farmers who operate holdings under 1 ha. in size in areas of high and medium potential in Kangema, Kiharu and Kandara are also considered to lie close to or below the poverty line (DDDP, 1979, p. 5).

Three other categories of rural poor are noted in both the DDDP, 1979, and the present District Plan, 1984: 30 000 squatters (1984); 22 000 landless (1984); and 65 3000 "adult dependents", (1979), defined as adults of working age who lack employment opportunities and are generally supported by relatives (DDDP, 1979, p. 5).

The distribution of poverty is unequal both between and within agro-ecological zones. The DDDP, 1979, which discussed the extent of poverty and differential access to basic needs in detail, observed that there are wealthy farmers in marginal areas, generally those who operate large coffee and pineapple estates with irrigation facilities. Irrigation water is, however, not generally available for the small scale farmer. Nor have suitable cash crops such as sunflowers and cotton been promoted in the area

until very recently (DDDP, 1979, p. 77).

A significant explanatory variable in the distribution of poverty concerns the emphasis in the district on investing in those areas from which high capital returns may be expected. Infrastructure, particularly road building, for example, has been located in those areas producing export crops such as tea and coffee. A comparison between sublocations in marginal areas and those in areas of higher agro-ecological potential indicates that the latter have a much higher percentage of bitumenised and murrum (all-weather roads), and are better served in terms of access to markets, education and health facilities (DDDP, 1979, p. 78).

The DDDP 1979 also indicated that a further source of inequality between farmers in the marginal areas and those elsewhere lay in uneven access to credit. In marginal areas, particularly in Makuyu Division, although farmers own the land, they generally do not have a title deed either because the land was subdivided from a large estate, such as Punda Milia, or because they form part of a settlement scheme. As most credit institutions demand a title deed as collateral for a loan, the DDDP considers this lack to be a constraint to farmers in the area.

Additional evidence of poverty comes from a nutrition survey carried out by Hoorweg, Niemeyer and van Steenberg in 1978 in two locations of different agricultural potential in Kigumo

Division. Kiiriangoro in Kirere location at an altitude of approximately 1650 m. was chosen in the "upper zone" as an area of good agricultural potential, lying within the coffee zone, not far from the tea zone. Kagurumo in Gikaranga-Ruanganga location was chosen to represent the lower zone where far less coffee is grown and the rainfall is less predictable. In each area, a sample of 150 households with children between the ages of 6 and 59 months was identified.

Data were collected not only on the nutritional status of the children through anthropometry, and nutritional knowledge and preferences, but also on a wide range of socioeconomic variables including: employment, level of education and residence of household members; land use and agricultural activities; family composition; and marital status. On the basis of relative access to regular off-farm employment and involvement in commercial farming, households were classified as poor, medium or wealthy. Taking weight-for-age (W-A) as the critical value in identifying children "at risk" in nutritional terms, findings indicated that although there is no evidence of severe protein energy malnutrition, chronic "mild" malnutrition (W-A of 80%) is widespread, affecting 28% of the children surveyed. The distribution is, however not even: 41% of children in the poorer households fell below a value of W-A (80) in comparison with 19% for "medium" and 20% for "rich" households. In the upper zone, 22% of the children fell below the same value compared to 35% in

the lower zone.

Hoorweg et al.'s data were not disaggregated by type of household head, but more recent data from South Nyanza indicate that this is an important variable. Kennedy and Cogill (1986) conclude their study in this area by observing that children from female headed households "...consistently have a better nutritional status than preschoolers from other types of households" (p. 11.4).

As indicated at the beginning of this section, there are limited quantitative data on which to build a comprehensive picture of socioeconomic and gender inequality in Murang'a. The data presented do, however, provide an indication of areas where future research may specify the issues more closely. In particular there is a need for data on: the distribution of land in order to measure both the degree of land accumulation/marginalization and the relative control over land of households headed by women and men; and on the relative distribution of household type and the contribution and role of non-farm income to household maintenance.

7.5 Local organization and women's labour

The Murang'a District Development Plan 1984/1988 lists "Women's Groups" as a "development agency" in the district (1984, p. 38). A total of 582 women's groups with a membership of approximately 31 977 is noted elsewhere (MDDSSAR, 1983). This

latter number represents 19.7% of the rural female population aged between 20 and 60 years in Murang'a. Yet while this figure is suggestive of a broadly-based and widely-spread movement, current literature on women's groups in Kenya in general, and in Central Province or Murang'a particularly, indicates that their significance in the process of rural change is the subject of controversy.

At one level, Mwagiru (1982) argues that women's groups are an indication of "intact coping mechanisms" which women have evolved to face "hardship and adversity" (p. 38). She views them as representative of "change with continuity" and refers to the mabati groups which grew up in the 1960s as related to the previous practice of thatching roofs communally (p. 45), i.e. through the mode of the work organization known as gutumana wira. With pressure on the land, less thatching grass was produced to replace roofs annually. In response, women formed rotating savings societies which enabled members, in turn, to be provided with mabati, metal sheet roofs. Subsequently, she argues, these groups changed to other activities, including commercial projects, in response to the pressures of poverty. Her analysis of 34 groups in Murang'a and Nyeri districts recognizes the role played by socioeconomic factors with respect to the rationale for a group's formation, its objectives and its activities, yet her argument is couched in terms of welfare. She recognizes neither the historical specificity of the process of rural stratification

and the interrelationships of this to gender contradiction nor their explanatory potential in the quantitative and qualitative change in women's mode of organization in the preceding thirty years.

In contrast, Stamp (1985) frames her discussion of the activities of Mitero women in Kiambu in terms of the "double subsidy" (p. 23) that women pay, both to capital as they labour without a wage, and to male household heads who appropriate the proceeds of their labour. To Stamp, women's organizations are vital for "resistance against exploitation" (p. 24) and are the "...source of the most radical consciousness to be found in the countryside" (p. 29).³⁹ Ngwatio and matega have, she suggests, taken on new meanings, being no longer restricted to reciprocal cooperative work arrangements in the case of the former, and assistance in household tasks for women at the time of childbirth in the latter. The groups in Mitero which have evolved within this ideology of cooperation now have objectives indicative of the sharpening of gender contradictions in the post-land reform period. To fulfil these, women will, for example, labour on nearby coffee estates, rather than on coffee trees on their farm, in order to obtain resources for investment in their own organizations which cannot be controlled by husbands. They will also attempt to accumulate capital in the group in response to their insecure access to cash and their frequently decreased production of food crops (Stamp, 1985, p. 26).

Drawing for the most part on a Women's Bureau/Central Bureau of Statistics (WB/CBS) Survey of 1977, Women's Bureau data of 1978 (WB, 1978), and data collected in Murang'a in 1984, my intention in this section is to pursue this argument with reference to women's groups in Murang'a District. Specifically, I will suggest that the recent and radical change in the objective of groups, from that of a welfare perspective towards income-generating activities, is a direct response by women to the socioeconomic structural changes outlined earlier in the chapter which have affected them negatively.

Prior to Independence in 1963, "outside" organization for women in Murang'a was associated with Maendeleo ya Wanawake, an umbrella organization initiated in the early 1950s under the Department of Community Development, as part of the "social" development programme carried out with villagization. By 1954, there were 13 groups with 700 members (FHDAR, 1959, p. 8). In 1959, 32 were recorded (FHDAR, 1959, p. 8). They were organized and "run" by female European officers (FHDAR, 1958, 1961) and activities were associated with training in home economics, sewing and knitting (Business and Economic Research Company, BEKC, 1984).

From the mid-1960s, women's groups began to grow autonomously. For the most part, these were mabati groups which combined their function as revolving loan associations with social functions (Mwagiru, 1982, p. 49). Self-help activity was indeed

encouraged under the State-adopted ideology of 'Harambee' (pull together); at first informally, but during the later 1960s, through directives issued through Community Development Officers and Chiefs. At barazas it was suggested that women organize to meet needs which were expressed in terms of their heavy workload (as increasing numbers of children attended primary school) and lack of access to cash (interview with the Assistant Community Development Officer, (ASDO), (Women), Murang'a, December 1984).

Revolving loan groups predominated until the late 1970s. Members of the groups generally met once a week and paid monthly contributions, in 1977 ranging between KShs. 12/- and 300/- per annum, the amount varying according to the wealth of members (WB/CBS, 1977). Each month, depending on the amount contributed and the size of the group, the total would be allocated to one or more members. In some cases the decision as to what to do with the money was left to the recipient; in other cases the group decided (Community Development Officer, CDO, Murang'a, December 1984). Membership in such groups averaged 45, but a range of from 7 to 352 members is evident from 1978 data (WB, 1978).

Table 7.39 indicates the preponderance of non-income generating activities among women's groups at this time. 456 of the total 505 surveyed were of this type. The great majority of these were involved in some form of rotating loan organization: of the 456 groups, 88.9% were specifically mabati groups, 28.9% were involved in the purchase of water tanks, 5.5% in the purchase

Table 7.39 Murang'a District: Women's Group activities, 1978

	Kandara	Kigumo	Kiharu	Kangema	Makuyu	Total
<u>1. non-income generating</u>						
mabati	135	107	100	63	0	405
cultivating land	0	0	2	0	0	2
buying cows	0	0	20	0	0	20
buying water tanks	124	0	7	1	0	132
buying coffee trees	0	0	2	0	0	2
buying water pipes	0	0	4	0	0	4
home improvement	1	0	8	16	0	25
contributions	0	0	0	0	36	36
nursery-centre building	0	0	2	0	0	2
poultry keeping	0	0	10	0	1	11
hiring shambas	0	0	1	0	0	1
keeping pigs	0	0	7	0	1	8
<u>2. income-generating</u>						
handicraft	1	3	20	5	0	29
keeping pigs	2	2	2	0	1	7
building shop	2	2	1	0	0	5
pottery	0	1	3	0	0	4
kitchen garden	0	0	0	3	0	3
keeping goats	1	0	1	0	0	2
poultry	1	0	1	0	0	2

Source: Calculated from unpublished data, 1978, Women's Bureau.

Notes: 1. Includes: sewing, knitting, basket making.

2. Several of the 456 groups list more than one activity.

of items for home improvement and 4.4% in the purchase of cows.

Several groups had more than one activity.

Although the argument in this section centres on the significance of income-generating activities, this should not

detract from the importance of groups classified as "non-economical" in the Women's Bureau's records. A water tank to collect water from a mabati roof is of major significance in an environment where several hours a day may otherwise be spent in water collection. Tap water is available to only 10% of the district's population, the rest of the water for household use being carried an average distance of 1.5 kms., often over steep terrain. In the eastern zone, for example, Irhanga Location, this average distance increases to 3 kms. in the dry seasons (DDDP, 1979, p. 46). The significance of this in terms of physical labour can be assessed from data collected by the IRS I survey. (1974). For Central Province, it is calculated that in the dry seasons, water is collected three or more times a day by 45% of the households and that at least 85% of the water is carried by an adult female or adult female/child (Kenya, CBS, Women in Kenya, 1978, p. 14, drawing on IRS I data).

The purchase of a grade cow by group members may also lead to a significant improvement in household welfare. Thomas (1982, pp. 8-9), gives the example of the Kabanga Women's Group in Muchungucha sublocation in Mbiri Location (Murang'a) as a group which formed in 1976 following the construction of a cattle dip. There had previously been no grade cattle in the area and the group's objective was to provide members with such cattle or cross-breeds. The KShs. 4800/- raised each month was divided among eight members who used the money to purchase these higher

milk-yielding cows. The sale of milk from such a cow could bring in about KShs. 500/- a month, if the milk was not used for home consumption.

9.7% of the 505 groups listed in 1978 were categorized as "economical". Table 7.39 indicates the type of activities carried out by the 49 groups. Handicrafts predominate. In view of the severe marketing problems associated with handicrafts, and problems in pig production (CDO, Murang'a, 1984; BERC, 1984), of greater potential significance for the future are the five cases of shop building. This activity has a far higher success rate than the others mentioned (ACDO (women), Murang'a, December 1984).

The great majority of groups surveyed in 1977 (251 out of the 280, who replied to this question) had a secondary, social, function in addition to carrying out one of the above activities. Of the 89.6% of the groups which indicated they provided a social service, all contributed to self-help (Harambee) activities; 45% were involved in paying school fees, for members and destitute children; a further 28.7% of the 251 groups provided financial support for children's homes; and 21.5% of the groups were involved in meeting members' expenses for funerals and weddings. 197 (69.4%) of the 284 groups surveyed also organized for social activities such as dancing (WB/CBS, 1977). To a very real degree the amount of support, whether verbal or in a more tangible form (such as chiefs allocating land for use or permits for shops), is

a result of community activities carried out by the groups (ASDO (women) Murang'a, 1984). For Kenya as a whole, 80% of the labour for Harambee projects is provided by women (Slattery, 1981), and while not all of this labour will come from women's groups, group members are very conscious that their participation in the construction of cattle dips, dispensaries, schools or nursery schools results in support of activities which might otherwise be less easily tolerated in the wider community (interview with Thuita Women's Group, November 1984).

Unfortunately, comparable data for "secondary" activities is unavailable for more recent years, but it is evident from informants' replies that their significance remains despite the change in major activity of many groups. Owing to omissions indicated in the notes to Table 7.40, this table does not illustrate as clearly as it might the increase in number of groups and in membership between 1978 and 1984. The figures for 1984 for Kigumo and Kangema in particular are underestimates. Data from the Annual Report of the Department of Social Services for Murang'a District for 1983 indicates a total of 582 groups with 31 977 members. This had increased from 540 groups listed in 1982.

The recent increase in numbers of groups and of membership is associated with a radical change in orientation of the groups towards income generation. The change in overall direction is illustrated both among new groups formed in the 1980s and in the

Table 7.40- Murang'a District: Women's Groups, 1978, 1984

Division	No. of Groups		Total Membership	
	1978	1984	1978	1984
Kandara ¹	147	154	4933	7362
Kigumo ²	115	60	4334	1975
Kiharu	130	149	5688	6813
Kangema ³	74	65	5242	3437
Makuyu	39	83	1896	3153
Total	505	511	22093	22740

Sources: 1. 1978 data: Women's Bureau files, Nairobi.
 2. 1984 data: Community Development Officer, Murang'a District, December 1984.

Notes: 1. The 1984 figures are underestimates as only income-generating projects are included for Muruka Location.
 2. The 1984 figures are greatly underestimated. The Community Development Assistant Kigumo gave a figure of 121 groups. Maragua Ridge is excluded from the total.
 3. The 1984 figures are underestimates as reports were missing for 3 locations.

evolution of earlier groups to this type of function. Table 7.41 shows a remarkable contrast here to Table 7.39. 44.6% of the groups for which data were collected in 1984 were involved in income generation, distributed as follows: Kandara, 77 groups; Kigumo, 44 groups; Kiharu, 59 groups; Kangema, 14 groups; Makuyu, 34 groups. Activities range from handicraft production to

Table 7.41 Murang'a District: Women's Group activities, 1984¹

	Kandara	Kigumo	Kiharu	Kangema	Makuyu	Total
1. non-income generating						
mabati	31	1	39	4	11	86
home improvement	1	0	7	38	19	65
water tanks	1	0	0	18	0	19
contributions	37	24	34	6	20	121
buying ploughs/tools	0	0	0	0	2	2
dancing	0	0	0	0	1	1
2. income-generating						
livestock rearing	20	18	28	0	11	77
bees	2	1	3	0	6	12
tree nursery	1	0	0	0	0	1
poultry	8	1	0	0	7	16
crop production	19	1	3	6	2	31
buying land	1	0	0	0	1	2
handicraft ²	8	11	32	10	9	70
firewood/charcoal for sale	11	5	5	0	1	22
trading	4	0	0	0	0	4
buying plot	3	1	2	3	0	9
building shop	4	2	1	0	1	8
house rental	0	3	0	0	0	3
posho mill	2	0	0	0	0	2
paraffin selling	0	2	0	0	1	3
block making	2	0	0	0	0	2
running hotel	1	0	0	0	0	1
store	3	0	0	0	0	3
land shares	0	0	0	0	1	1
buying house	0	0	9	6	0	15
banking money to start business	0	0	0	0	1	1

Source: Community Development Officer, Murang'a District, December 1984.

Notes: 1. Some groups list more than one activity.

2. Includes: sewing, knitting, baskets, pots, silkscreen

agricultural activities such as livestock rearing, crop production for sale and poultry keeping, to buying a plot generally with the intention of building a shop, running a hotel or store, buying and operating a posho (maize) mill, and the purchase of landshares or land. While a group's agricultural activities do represent resistance to male control over women's earnings at the household level in that they facilitate women's exclusive control over the proceeds of their labour, (and members do not divulge amounts earned outside the group), an activity such as the running of a store, the purchase and operation of a posho mill or buying land is indicative of far more radical change. The two posho mills in Kandara Division, run by the Kiawa Mbutu Women's Group and the Muruka Women's group provide a service to women in their communities; they are also indicative of a move to gain access to and control over technology from which they were previously excluded. Both are very successful in terms of generating income (ACDO (women), Murang'a, 1984). The purchase of land by Utheri wa Methi Women's Group in Makuyu is similarly a move of significance in terms of women's gaining access as owners to the means of production. This latter group began in 1981 with 80 members. Through the accumulation of contributions sufficient land was bought to allot 0.5 acres (0.2 ha.) to each member. The land is registered in the group's name. The CDO Kandara indicated that the Community Development Office insisted on this in order to protect the women's interests (interview, December 1984). It is

interesting in this respect that the district Maendeleo ya Wanawake worker when discussing this same group emphasized that the land was registered in the husband's name, "...because women belong to the husband." Further, "it is an African custom that a woman at home doesn't have something belonging to her. It is given as respect to the husband" (interview, December 1984).

Data are not available at the district level to assess the degree of success of the various activities or of the groups in meeting their objectives. From discussions with Community Development Officers at the district, divisional and locational levels, however, it is apparent that marketing problems for handicrafts persist. Official policy is to discourage further production as no reliable outlet has been found despite investigation. Severe problems of marketing pigs have now led to a decrease in this activity (ACDO (women), Murang'a, 1984). The more successful enterprises concern poultry raising, rental accommodation (whether in the form of a house or hotel) and the running of shops and posho mills.

Poultry raising can, however, run into problems as the experience of the Thuita Women's Group (Kandara) illustrates. Begun in 1982, members of this group of 50 women, ranging in age from 20 to 60 years, are for the most part members of an adult literacy class. Their leader is the teacher. The poultry project is located on one of the members' farms. The initial contribution of KShs. 500/- per member was used to construct a poultry shed and

buy 200 chicks. No time limit was set to pay the KShs. 500/- in order not to exclude poorer members of the class. In fact, some members were providing labour on the project rather than paying this sum. The theft of 50 chicks one night led to the employment of a night watchman who was then replaced by the members taking turns to guard the enterprise. During the drought of 1983-1984, as a result of an incorrect balance of ingredients in the purchased foodstuffs, the laying capacity of the hens declined. As they were proving to be a loss, the hens were sold, at a loss: costing between KShs. 40/- and 50/- to raise a hen to the laying stage, hens weighing generally under 2 kgs. each were sold at KShs. 10/- per kg. In July 1984, 235 more chicks were bought, exhausting the group's financial resources. Members expressed the hope that a drought would not again lead to inadequate feed (meeting with the group, November 1984).

Recent initiatives in group activities include bee keeping, house rental, the sale of firewood and charcoal, and the making of building blocks. The success of a bee keeping venture of the Makurwe Endesha Women's Group (Kandara), a group formed in 1982 which by late 1984 had 40 members, led to their rental of a store plot in April 1983 and the wholesaling of animal feeds and maize. Starting with a stock of KShs. 300/-, by November 1984 they had assets of KShs. 15 000/-. They continue the bee-keeping activities although the drought of 1983-1984 resulted in decreased production (meeting with the group, November 1984).

Activities such as house rental or the establishment of a hotel as well as the sale of firewood and charcoal are a direct response to local need: there is a lack of rental accommodation in the district, and as the local supply of woodfuel decreases, firewood and charcoal are in great demand. Groups in the higher altitudinal zone are involved in the latter activity (CDO, Kigumo, November 1984). Of the two building block enterprises in Kandara, that of the Nyakinywa ya Muruka Women's Group is particularly successful. The blocks, made of ballast and cement, are in very great demand locally, being significantly cheaper than stone for the construction of permanent buildings. The group of 50 members owns its own block-making machine at the Kirere trading centre and employs five casual labourers and a watchman (ACDO (women), Murang'a, December 1984).

In their endeavour to initiate income-generating projects, many groups are faced with problems of lack of capital or access to loans (WB/CBS, 1977; District Development Plan, 1984-1988). Table 7.42 indicates the high degree of reliance on their own monthly contributions and membership fees to sustain their activities in 1977. Additionally, 64.3% of the groups earned income through the sale of their labour. Women lack access to non-farm income as has already been indicated, but as a group they can earn income seasonally through work on coffee estates. Very few women obtain assistance for group finance from their husbands

Table 7.42 Murang'a District: Women's Groups' source of funds, 1977.

Source	Number of Groups (N = 283)	% of Groups
Monthly contributions	251	88.7
Farming for others	182	64.3
Harambee fund raising	135	47.7
Central government	0	0
Local government	3	1.1
Membership fees	176	62.2
Voluntary organizations	2	0.7
Donations	54	19.1
Other	14	4.9

Source: Calculated from unpublished WB/CBS Survey data, 1977.

(CDO, Kandara, December 1984). As the leader of the Thuita Women's Group explained, the group was formed to achieve independence from men, not to allow their influence to extend into another area of life (November 1984).

Data from 1982 indicate that (central) Government assistance to women's groups in the district, amounting to KShs. 173 000/-, was channelled through the Women's Bureau to 22 groups (MDDSSAR, 1983). Support given by local Government, while amounting to little in financial terms, may, however, be of greater significance. The loan or lease of land for cultivation by chiefs at the location level is a case in point.

The extremely low level of funding available through the

Women's Bureau would lead one to question the rationale behind Feldman's (1983) argument on this point. Feldman, recognizing women's subordination in the rural context, maintains that the effectiveness of policy towards women's groups and the activities of the groups themselves must be measured in terms of the transformation of gender relations. This would be indicated by women's access to land, to labour, to cooperative societies, to loans and to training on terms equal to men. She writes, in the conclusion of her analysis of policies towards rural women in Kenya:

Women's groups are often defended in Kenya on the ground that their existence gives women more power. But women can only have more power if their activities challenge existing power relations. Women's acquiescence in their lack of many skills and their dependence on government for support confirms their lack of power. As long as women's groups fail to assist their members obtaining training in marketable skills such as plumbing and carpentry, and as long as women's groups are being established by those who are hoping for government handouts, while being unable independently to secure loans, or for the sale of their crops where there are no established markets, rural women are neither increasing their power nor, in consequence, transforming the social and economic conditions in which they live (Feldman, 1983, p. 84).

In the light of evidence from Murang'a, two counter-observations may be made in response to Feldman's conclusions. First, drawing on a sample of only fifteen women's groups, her focus on projects, including two in Murang'a which have received outside funding, has biased her observations out of proportion to reality. In 1983, 22 (3.8%) of a total of 582 women's groups

in Murang'a received funding through the Women's Bureau. Clearly, the vast majority of the groups are not dependent on the government. Indeed, one may argue that with the exception of advice from CDOs and training provided by this department for group members⁴⁰, the Women's Bureau is largely irrelevant to the growth and functioning of the groups. Indication of the ability of women's groups to generate their own resources is given by Thomas (1982) for Mbiri and Weithaga locations in Murang'a. Over a 7-8 year period women's groups in these locations had raised a total of KShs. 653 757/- for individual and community projects (p. 11). This ability to raise funds does, however, coexist with a need for capital to finance enterprises. In this context, the District Development Plan 1984/1988 calls for a system of registering groups as co-operatives or companies in their own right in order to attract financing (p. 39). Second, by ignoring the historical and cultural context of the groups' evolution in her discussion of the economic aspects of women's subordination, Feldman fails to observe key elements in a process of rural change which may not have the speed of a "revolution" but which may be no less radical in intent. There is a concern among women which is as pervasive as a consciousness of the contradictions they are addressing not to break beyond repair the fabric of their lives. A women's leader of Mitero, whom Stamp (1985) quotes, identifies the issue in the context of the ideology of male dominance:

How does a man exercise power as head of the home? So he has to try all means to suppress women's group activity, to make it not succeed... We try not to be too aggressive, or to break the link with the family and even community. We can't expect to break that myth right away - it must be gradual. If you want to change it abruptly, you encounter a stronger resistance (p. 28, from an interview in 1981).

In assessing the significance of women's groups in processes of rural change, a critical question concerns the social class of members. Evidence will be examined here to assess this situation. The evaluation of the Women's Programme of the Special Rural Development Programme⁴¹ of the early 1970s led Pala, Reynolds, Wallis and Browne (1975) to observe that there was disproportionate representation of the rural elite in women's groups. Browne (1975) commented that in Tetu membership was virtually confined to the middle peasantry, and that the poorest, generally landless women, would be less likely to register in mabati groups as they lived on land rented from the County Council, and Council regulations discouraged the building of permanent or semi-permanent housing. As has been indicated, however, with time, the focus of the majority of women's groups has changed and more recent evidence from Thomas (1982) suggests that membership ranges from women of the lower (if not lowest) income groups to higher ones. Her comparison of women's groups in Mbiri and Weithaga locations in Murang'a is pertinent in this context (Table 7.43).⁴²

Mbiri is located in the lower altitudinal part of Murang'a and is characterized by Thomas as resource-poor. In contrast,

Table 7.43 Women's Groups: Mbiri and Weithaga Locations

	Mbiri	Weithaga
Population (1979)	19 410	32 350
Population density (per square mile)	404	647
Literacy rate for men	74%	97%
Literacy rate for women	50%	77%
Literacy rate for members of women's groups	20%	40%
% of households owning land	85%	61%
subsistence households as a % of total households	23%	4%
% households with male off-farm employment,		
casual or regular	74%	62%
% of women in women's groups	34%	<14%
% of women's group members in subsistence households	62%	no data

Source: Compiled from Thomas, 1982, pp. 26-29.

Weithaga is located in the middle zone where coffee is a well-established cash crop. 23% of the households in Mbiri compared to 4% in Weithaga are involved only in subsistence production. Male outmigration from Mbiri (74% of the adult males) is considerably higher than from Weithaga (62%). In Mbiri, where the percentage of households headed by women is higher, Thomas' random sample of residents indicates that 34% of the adult women belong to women's groups. Two-thirds of the groups interviewed in Mbiri classified the majority of their members as female household heads, a category which included women whose husbands were in employment elsewhere and not generally resident in the district, widows, divorced and "abandoned" women.

62% of group membership in Mbiri came from households in what Thomas defines as the lowest income group (those involved in subsistence production). Unfortunately, no specific data are given for Weithaga. Thomas does, however, indicate that all groups interviewed in Weithaga stated that "the vast majority" of husbands were employed on the farm or else in nearby off-farm employment (1982, p. 6). Membership in areas such as Weithaga, Thomas suggests, is drawn from all socioeconomic strata, but represents a far smaller (below 14%) percentage of the adult female population.

An analysis of the literacy rates for the two locations is a further indication of the strata from which the groups draw their membership. It is evident from Table 7.43 that the average literacy rate for members is considerably below that for women as a whole in each location. In Mbiri only 20% of the members are literate; in Weithaga, 40%. These figures suggest that, although all age groups of women may be represented, the tendency may be for groups to be dominated by older women who have received no formal education. Few women in their 20's (or teens) are members. Although the situation is likely to have changed in the intervening years, the WB/CBS Survey of 1977, indicating that of the leadership cadre only 42% of the women were able to read or write, suggests relatively high representation of the older population. Thomas (1982), while giving no precise figures, points out that very few group members had salaried employment, a

further indication of the low socioeconomic status of members.

Although Thomas' analysis does provide evidence of a relationship between poverty and group membership in the areas of lower agricultural potential, it is unfortunate that she ignores one significant piece of information which distinguishes Mbiri and Weithaga locations: the percentage of households owning land. The landless class in Weithaga is proportionally considerably higher than in Mbiri (Table 7.43), an indication of the greater degree of land accumulation/marginalization that has taken place here. As it is unlikely that a majority of these households have access to regular off-farm salaried or wage employment, they are likely to represent the poorest stratum of the population. There is no indication in Thomas' work as to their membership in groups in areas of greater agricultural potential such as Weithaga where cash can be earned by casual employment on coffee, or in resource-poor locations such as Mbiri where access to cash for women is more difficult. Further research is clearly needed in this area.

One interesting observation Thomas does make concerns the spatial distribution of types of group. She notes that income generating groups tend to be located in the areas of greater agricultural potential. It is in locations such as Weithaga that more income-earning opportunities exist for members (through working on coffee for example), thus access to cash is easier and women can find the capital necessary to start an income-generating

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activity. Thomas distinguishes between such groups which are born "...less out of economic hardship than out of economic opportunity" (1982, p. 14) from those in Mbiri where access to cash is far more difficult. Confirmation of this trend is needed from a larger sample, but it is evident that the largest number of groups exists in the middle altitudinal belt, the coffee zone (CDO, Kigumo, December 1984).

Women's groups are not the only form of local organization in Murang'a. Since 1980, men have begun to form self-help groups, generally on an mbari basis (CDO, Kigumo, December 1984). I have no data on the number of groups for the district as a whole although these, as the women's groups, must be registered with the Department of Social Services. For Kinyona Location in the tea zone, Murang'a District, eighteen groups were listed, all but one having been formed after 1980. Only the group formed in 1973, Karuhia Self Help Group, was in the process of building a shop. The seventeen remaining met only to make monthly contributions. The Community Development Assistant (CDA) for the location indicated that men were the sole members of all the groups except for three (interview, November 1984). 43 self-help groups were listed for Muthithi location in the coffee zone, the CDA for this location again indicating that the main activity of the groups was making monthly contributions. With the exception of one group begun in 1978, all were organized in or after 1981 (interview, December 1984).

The rationale behind the formation of self-help groups appears to have been men's perception of the success of women's groups. Yet, according to the CDOs in Kigumo and Kandara divisions, there is a reluctance on the part of men to engage actively in any group enterprise. Groups continually press the CDOs for support in applying for outside funding. Women are reluctant to join the groups as they recognize their participation is likely to be subordinate (CDO, Kigumo; CDO, Kandara, December 1984). Women also are reluctant to have men as members of their own organizations. As the leader of the Thuita Women's Group said in response to the question as to why there were no men in the group, "Men want to control, run everything, take the profits" (interview, November 1984). The 1977 WB/CBS Survey indicated only 11 of the 284 groups who responded to this specific question had male members. In each case one or two men belonged, with the exception of one group where 7 of the 9 members were men.

The critical element for women, evident from interviews in Murang'a in 1984 and from research by Thomas (1982) in Murang'a, Kericho and Embu, and Stamp (1985) in Kiambu, is that organizing as a group provides the necessary solidarity for women to address the economic and ideational contradictions they face as individuals. Conscious of the need for community support for their continued existence and thus their engagement in community developmental activities, women nevertheless use the group to further their specific objectives. This concerns primarily their

need for cash, in addition to social support, in the present context.

The demand for cash has increased rapidly in the post-1963 rural economy, and it is estimated that about 60% of a smallholder's needs in Kenya are met through cash expenditures (Kongstad and Monsted, 1980, cited in Barnes, 1983, p. 48).⁴³ On the basis of a survey of 300 households in two sublocations in Murang'a, Hoorweg, Niemeijer and van Steenberg (1983) indicate that in those households where men have regular employment in government or industry (35% of their sample), or where men are self-employed off the farm (17% of the total), men will contribute to school fees and clothes for children. They may also contribute more generally to household expenses. Even in these households women will generally be solely responsible for the provision of food, whether grown on the farm or bought, and on half the farms of their sample, women alone bore the burden of the provision of necessities. In the context of a lack of access for women to non-farm income in rural areas, women's groups provide a means whereby women can generate cash. Where cash is obtained from a rotating savings and loans scheme, women, rather than another family member, will determine its allocation and use. Where cash comes from an income-generating activity, even though the amount may be small, undoubtedly the situation in the majority of groups at present, members will again control its use. In analyzing the relative success of groups involved in meeting this objective, it

must be realized that the move towards income-generating projects is a new one. For this reason, as well as women's groups' contributions to the welfare of the community, there appears as yet little overt opposition.

7.6 Conclusions

In sections 2, 3 and 4 of this chapter, an attempt has been made to illustrate dimensions of the process of increasing stratification in Murang'a. Data have been drawn from a variety of sources to produce a picture which at present remains incomplete, and attention has been drawn in the text to those areas where further research is needed. It is nevertheless apparent that, in the more general context of growing socioeconomic inequality in the district, an intensification of gender contradictions (particularly between nonproducer-owners and producer-nonowners) has resulted from the institutionalization of individual rights to land, cooperative arrangements for the processing and marketing of export crops (coffee), and the organization of the agricultural extension service.

With reference to present land tenure systems, evidence was presented in Section 7.2 to indicate that while a process of individualization of tenure had been in operation for several decades prior to the 1950s, the registration of freehold title in the context of the continuation of rules of succession defined by mbari (male) territoriality had led to considerable insecurity for

women. In a situation where land is becoming an increasingly scarce resource, territorial (mbari) control over the land is likely to remain a significant element in the power struggle.

Although women, in the vast majority of cases, stand in a subordinate relationship to land vis à vis men, as was suggested in Chapter 6.6, evidence suggests that productive relations will have been further conditioned by: the presence or absence of a male household head on the holding; the sexual division of labour on the holding, and whether labour was hired; holding size; strength of personality (Kitching, 1980, pp. 124-125); the proportion of income from non-farm sources and whether this led to land purchase; the balance between non-farm and farm income (and within the latter between export and food crops); and the relative access of men and women to non-farm income. These variables were used to develop a typology of rural households which illustrated the likely bases for the relative autonomy women and men could exercise within the household.

Four main factors will have served to modify the typology presented in Chapter 6.6: the institutionalization of the individualization of the land tenure system; the far greater significance of export crops (particularly coffee and tea) to the local economy and the structures of production associated with these; the increased importance of cash for household survival and the dependence, particularly for holdings in the lowest and highest income groups, for cash from non-farm sources; and the

changes in land use associated with increased export crop production. The changes are summarized in Figure 7.10.

Overall, it is likely that holdings of type 3, characterized as larger in size than types 1 and 2 and by the residence on the farm of both the husband and wife, will have decreased in number. This is likely to have occurred because of the increased demand for cash in the present economy and the resultant outmigration of the husband from the district in search of wage or salaried labour. Changes in land use with conversion to coffee or tea production and the production of food crops on a reduced hectareage could not fail to have been the source of considerable dispute within these and other households as women's labour was expected on crops over which they exerted limited control.

Holdings of types 1 and 2, both among the smallest in size, were differentiated by the length of absence of the husband in off-farm employment. Gender relations in these households are likely to have become increasingly contradictory where the sale of land became essential for family survival and where, for reasons given in Section 7.4, a high-risk strategy, emphasizing crops of high potential value (coffee and tea), was adopted. As in the case of households of type 3, the reliance on women's labour for production for the extra-household economy but their lack of control over the products of this labour will have led to increased intra-household conflict. Women's withdrawal of labour from coffee production on their own holdings is clear evidence of

Figure 7.10 Typology of households

Type	Pre-land reform (early 1950s)	Recent change
1	a. Small size. b. Male absent on short term employment, few remittances. Possible small female income from casual labour/trading. c. Land - no purchase; possible sale. d. Division of labour: woman in charge of day to day management; responsible for all main productive/reproductive tasks; limited male labour when at home. e. Agricultural production: possibly for use and for exchange/high risk strategy. Some of subsistence purchased.	- Increase in number of holdings of this type. - Where land is sold, increasing contradiction in gender productive relations. - Increase in conflict where strategy focuses on export crop production.
2	As above, but male engaged in longer term low paid employment outside district. He provides less labour than in 1, therefore possible greater female autonomy.	- Increase in number of holdings of this type. - Where land is sold, as above, increasing conflict. - Classified as female-headed. - Conflict over control of earnings from production for export.
3	a. Farm larger in size than 1 and 2. b. Both man and woman resident on holding. c. Land - probably neither purchase nor sale. d. Division of labour - woman's greater, but production on a reduced land base as land is turned over to cash crops. e. Production for use and for exchange: conflict likely over the control of surplus food production.	- Decrease in number with increased demand for cash and male outmigration. - Increase in conflict with conversion of land to export crop production, but increase in female labour.

Figure 7-10 (continued)

Type	Pre-land reform (early 1950s)	Recent change
4	a. Larger holdings than 1, 2, 3. b. Man and woman resident on holding. Man involved in well paid local employment. c. Land: probable purchase. d. Woman's almost sole labour input, with possibility of hired labour. Man's investment of earnings in holding giving him control over critical farm management decisions. e. Production of a surplus of food crops, and sale of export crops. Conflict over control of major proceeds of food sales, and probably of cash crops.	- As cash has increased in significance and male access to this predominates, an increase in male control over critical management decisions is likely.
5	a. Holding size as in 4. b. Man absent from district in long term well paid employment c. Land: probable purchase, also d. Major labour input by women, also hired labour. e. Production of crops for use and exchange. Critical management decisions remain with man, but woman in charge of day to day management.	- As above, 4, but women more likely to exercise autonomy in view of their day to day management of the holding. Also classified as female headed.
6		- Households headed by widows. - Varying control over land depending on stage of life cycle.
7		- Holdings purchased by women with access to non-farm income

this. In terms of the district as a whole and the continued subdivision of parcels of land, it is likely that the number of households of types 1 and 2 has increased.

In households characterized as types 4 and 5, men are involved in relatively well paid employment: in the case of type 4, locally; in the case of type 5, outside the district. As non-farm income has increased in significance since the 1950s, and male access to this remains predominant, it is likely that male control over critical farm management decisions will have increased. This will have been particularly evident in the case of households of type 4. In type 5 households, women may have continued to exercise greater autonomy through their day to day control over the management of the holding.

It is holdings of types 5 and 2, where the husband is absent for relatively long periods from the holding, that may be characterized as female headed, given the earlier definition (Section 7.3.2) of this concept. A further category of households headed by women, as widows, may be differentiated in the post-land reform period. Such households are now structural entities in their own right, with varying degrees of autonomy as discussed in Section 7.2. Depending on the stage of life cycle of her family, a widow will control varying amounts of land. As land is passed on to a son on marriage (and where land is, uncommonly, given to a daughter), so a widow's access to land will decrease.

Although they remain in the minority, it is evident that the

last two decades have seen an increase in the number of women employed off the holding. The lower sex ratios for 1969, in comparison for those for 1979, for all the divisions except for Makuyu, is one indication of this trend (MDEAR, 1982, pp. 38-42). Rising rates of female employment in the "formal" and "informal" sectors, although limited (CBS/UNICEF, 1984, pp. 81-86), are also indicative of women's more regular involvement in off-farm production. There is a lack of data with which to assess the precise situation in Murang'a in this respect. But some women, relatively few in proportion to total numbers, do now have access to more regular off-farm income. It is likely to be these who are involved in land purchase, as discussed in Section 7.2. Where such land is registered in the woman's name, a further type of female headed household may be distinguished.

Particularly where there is a spatial separation of female and male labour, with female labour being restricted to the holding (responsibility for productive and reproductive tasks being combined), in conjunction with male control over the products of that labour, the contradictions between women and men have become increasingly intensified in the last few decades. This factor and the greater need for cash in the present economy have led women to challenge the processes discussed in Sections 2, 3 and 4 through initiatives in local, extra-household organization. Section 7.5 indicates the scale and nature of this strengthening of extra-household bonding. It is argued that

women's groups, many of which were formed initially for purposes of mutual (welfare) assistance but are now developing income-earning activities, provide the medium whereby women may more effectively cope with, and challenge, the direction of, rural change.

Notes:

¹The small farm sector is defined as including farms between 0.2 and 12 ha. in size, although where part of the holding is uncultivated, larger farms may be included (Kenya, Statistical Abstract, 1979).

²For a discussion of agricultural policy in previous plans see, for example: J. Heyer, 1981, "Agricultural development policy in Kenya from the colonial period to 1975", in J. Heyer, P. Roberts and G. Williams, eds., Rural development in Tropical Africa, pp. 90-120, Macmillan, London; W.J. House and T. Killick, 1983, "Social justice and development policy in Kenya's rural economy", in D. Ghai and S. Radwan, eds., Agrarian policies and rural poverty in Africa, pp. 31-69, ILO, Geneva; ILO, 1972, Employment, incomes and equality: a strategy for increasing productive employment in Kenya, ILO, Geneva; Killick, T., 1981, "By their fruits ye shall know them: the Fourth Development Plan", in T. Killick, ed., Papers on the Kenyan economy, pp. 97-108, Heinemann, London; Leys, C., 1975, Underdevelopment in Kenya: the political economy of neo-colonialism 1964-1971, University of California Press, Berkeley; L.D. Smith, 1976, "An overview of agricultural development policy", in J. Heyer, J.K. Maitha and W.M. Senga, Agricultural development in Kenya: an economic assessment, pp. 313-363, Oxford University Press, Nairobi.

³National developmental strategies are defined by Sandbrook as reflecting:

...essentially the desire of domestic bourgeoisies to reduce or eliminate their junior status in relation to foreign capital. The aim of the state is to use its leverage in order to redefine the terms of dependency and secure a larger share of the economic surplus for a bureaucratic and/or private national bourgeoisie (1982, p. 90).

This strategy or model is distinguished by Sandbrook from the neo-colonial, the national-populist, the bureaucratic-collectivist, and the transition-to-socialism models.

⁴The original source is: Land Office, AA49/11, enclosure in G.D. Fawcus to P.W. Low, 22 December 1955. The enclosure was a draft of an article on land consolidation, intended as a press release but which was not published.

⁵The original source is: Provincial Office, Nyeri, LND 33/3/11, an address to members of the Kenya Regiment, (June 1956).

⁶Sorrenson gives the source as: Report on Githunguri Kikuyu Guard, 14 August, 1953, included as an appendix to the History of the Kiambu Guard, C.G.A., P.C., Nyeri, ADM28/8A, anon.

⁷Ibid.

⁸The Gaturi Pilot Scheme of Location 8 (Ignatio's) involved the consolidation of 1200 acres by the end of 1955. In an adjacent itura, 1700 acres were consolidated. Consolidation was also undertaken in 1955 in Kigumo sublocation in Location 18 (1000 acres), Location 4 (Gatitu sublocation, 1200 acres) and Marimira sublocation in Location 12 (FHDAR, 1955, pp. 11-13).

⁹Sorrenson (1967, p. 166) writes as follows on this issue regarding a meeting of the Fort Hall District Council and the Law Panel in 1954:

It was also agreed that consolidation was to be under the control of loyal elders who were to have the power to reduce the holdings of active Mau Mau leaders and to increase those of loyalists - a policy that was subsequently legalized by the Forfeiture of Lands Ordinances, except that confiscated land was put into a pool of common land rather than handed over directly to loyalists.

By 1956, 868 people in Fort Hall District had had their land confiscated (Sorrenson, 1967, p. 105; Lamb, 1974, p. 11).

¹⁰The original source is: D.O. Fort Hall, LC/R/1, Pinney to District Commissioners, Central Province, 28 April 1959.

¹¹On this point, Lamb is in disagreement with Sorrenson. Sorrenson (1967, p. 181) writes that consolidation was complete in Fort Hall District by the time of writing. Drawing on evidence from the district Annual Report for 1968, Lamb notes that consolidation was not completed in two locations in Kandara Division and a small section in the north-east until 1968. In the former case, there was substantial opposition from the local population. In the case of the latter, the area was accorded low priority because of its sparse population.

¹²Kitching (1980, p. 334) notes that this earlier survey indicated considerable inequality in size of land holding in the districts of Central Province. It did not, however, provide any information on farm income. One interesting finding noted by Sorrenson (1967, p. 226) from this survey concerned the fact that 37% of the registered owners in Central Province did not live on the land.

¹³Sorrenson notes that the working party on land tenure "...stopped short of a complete abolition of native law and custom" (1967, p. 191). For example, a "complicated procedure" was set down in the draft Registration Bill to deal with mortgages in order to prevent the "direct" transfer of land to the mortgagee in the case of default. In the case of succession, the Registration Bill decreed that decisions should be made between the heirs and the elders regarding who was entitled to the land (*ibid.*, pp. 191-192). See Sorrenson, Chapter XI, "Registration of titles and land control" for a fuller discussion.

¹⁴"Join ups" occurred when several right holders, frequently brothers, amalgamated their holdings for the purpose of registration (Sorrenson, 1967, p. 214).

¹⁵In order to obtain this data, the Presentation Books of the Land Registry for Murang'a District, for every fifth year after 1963, were examined. In each case, a count had to be made of type of land transaction (sale, mortgage, succession, partition) by sex of person in whose name the land was registered. No indication in the Presentation Books was given as to the hectareage of land involved in each transaction. For this, the title deed would have had to be consulted. Nor was it possible to tell whether the woman who purchased the land was married or not. To obtain the data in Table 7.3, nine person-days of labour were involved.

¹⁶The complete reference given by Leys is: R.J.M. Swynnerton, 1955, A plan to intensify the development of African agriculture in Kenya, Government Printer, Nairobi, p. 10.

¹⁷Gamble, in Land Office, AA49/3, memorandum, 17 September 1958, gave the following definitions of the minimum size of subsistence holdings for 4 ecological zones in Central Province:

- a) high bracken zone, 8 acres;
- b) Gikuyu grass zone, 5 acres;
- c) star grass zone, 4 acres;
- d) grass-woodland zone, 3-5 acres.

An "economic" holding was defined as double the acreage of a subsistence holding. On this basis, Sorrenson calculates that only 2700 of the 37 600 holdings in Fort Hall District would have been classified as "economic" at that time (Sorrenson, 1967, pp. 224-225).

¹⁸See Appendix, methodological note 4a.

¹⁹It may be noted at this point that there is frequently discrepancy between the figures given by different sources, as noted by Taylor, 1966b, p. 239.

²⁰A distinction is made in data on coffee between the production of cherry and of mbuni. The latter is of poorer quality and is cherry that has dried on the tree before being picked.

²¹In order to obtain the data for these tables, the number of new members per year had to be calculated from the society registers, distinguishing between male and female members. In the case of the Irati registers, data for a particular year were frequently found in more than one register (i.e. more than one "register" was in operation at the time), which increased the difficulty in obtaining the figure. A further problem noted with respect to Table 7.7 was that there appeared to be no consistency in entering a new name where a change of

shareholder had occurred. As it proved impossible to locate the Minutes of the Njora Farmers' Cooperative Society meetings earlier than 1978 in the District Archives, it has not been possible to adjust the overall figures to reflect this. It was not possible to locate the Minutes of the Irati Society.

²²For the 1969/1970 coffee season, 32.3% of Murang'a coffee crop was classified as Grade 2, 25.3% as Grade 3 (CPAR, 1971). For the 1982/1983 season, 13.1% was classified as Grade 2, 27.0% as grade 3 (MDMALD, 1983). In neither case was any first grade coffee produced.

²³At the Thika Savings and Credit Section, no separate information on accounts is available by coffee society. Of the 24 884 accounts here, 5452 (21.9% are now held jointly, a percentage that is increasing). No information was available on number of accounts held separately by men and women.

²⁴The Senior Savings Clerk at the Maragua Savings and Credit Section took responsibility for compiling these figures. It took two person days to go through the records and count, by society, the number of accounts held singly by women and men and the number of joint accounts.

²⁵Research into the introduction of maize in Kenya has been carried by J. Gerhart, 1974, "The diffusion of hybrid maize in Western Kenya", Ph.D. Dissertation, Princeton University. This has been abridged by CIMMYT (Centro Internacional de Mejoramiento de Maiz y Trigo), 1975, and appears under the same title, as one of their publications.

²⁶Despite a stated emphasis on increasing government investment in agriculture in the Plan 1979-1983 and the Sessional Paper on National Food Policy, 1981, the actual budget allocation for agriculture as a share of government expenditure has decreased. The World Bank (1983) has estimated that the development and recurrent budget allocations for agriculture and livestock increased by 70% between 1975 and 1983 while during the same period, the overall national budget more than doubled (World Bank, 1983, Kenya: growth and structural change: Volume II. An IBRD country study, Washington).

²⁷See also, S. Schönherr and E.S. Mbugua, 1976, Bean production in Kenya's Central and Eastern Provinces, Occasional Paper no. 23, Institute for Development Studies, University of Nairobi.

²⁸Annual Reports for both these years note the rising unemployment in the district. In 1960 the situation was particularly serious when the main harvest failed. Some indication of the size of the problem of unemployment is given by the fact that the Annual Report for 1961 states that over 4000 "vagrants" were repatriated to the district in that year, the majority having no means of gaining a livelihood.

²⁹Here, Kitching draws on data from N. Humphrey, 1945, "The relationship of population to the land in South Nyeri" in The Kikuyu Lands, Nairobi. Kitching considers that the situation in Nyeri gave "...a somewhat rosy picture of the trend" in 1964 as that district led in coffee production and milk production (Kitching, 1980, p. 337).

³⁰See Appendix, methodological note 4d.

³¹See Appendix, methodological note 4b.

³²The Sessional Paper No. 1, 1986, indicates that one shilling's worth of fertilizer can yield three shillings worth of maize. Improved husbandry can triple maize yields over present practice on many farms with or without the use of fertilizer (p. 87).

³³The present organization in the field of the Ministry of Agriculture is as follows:

Designation	Location	Pre-service training
Provincial Director (PDA)	Province HQ	Degree (s)
Provincial Agricultural Officer (AO)	Province HQ	Degree
Provincial Extension Officer (PETO)	Province HQ	Degree
District Agricultural Officer (DAO)	District	Degree
Agricultural Officers (AO)	District	Degree
District Extension Officer (DETO)	District	Degree
Divisional Extension Officer (DEO)	Division	Diploma
Technical Officer (TO)	Division/ Location	Diploma
Technical Assistant (TA)	Location/ Sublocation	Certificate (2 years)
Junior Technical Assistant (JTA)	Sublocation	Induction (3 months)

Source: World Bank, Kenya, NEP, Implementation Volume, 1983.

³⁴Leonard argues that a possible explanation for this is the length of time agents with secondary education have been divorced from agricultural experience at home and their assimilation of the attitude that farming as an occupation is "below" them.

³⁵For further discussion of this issue, see M. Berger, V. DeLancey and A. Mellencamp, 1984, Bridging the gender gap in agricultural extension, International Centre for Research on Women, Washington. Prepared for the Office of Women in Development, USAID, September, pp. 58-61; and P.J. Muzaale and D.K. Leonard, 1985, "Kenya's experience with women's groups in agricultural extension: strategies for accelerating improvements in food production and nutritional awareness in Africa", Agricultural Administration, Vol. 19, pp. 13-28.

³⁶Kimani and Taylor (1973) do not, in fact, define household head. Data were aggregated on the basis of an answer to the question: Sex of farmer.

³⁷See Figures 7.11 and 7.12 for sample numbers.

³⁸For a discussion of this issue in the broader context of rural-urban interactions, see P. Collier and D. Lal, 1980, Poverty and growth in Kenya, World Bank Staff Working Paper No. 389.

³⁹As Stamp (1985, p. 37) states in note 27, her conclusions here differ from those presented in her earlier work: 1976, "Perceptions of change and economic strategy among Kikuyu women of Mitero, Kenya", Rural Africana, no. 29, pp. 19-43.

⁴⁰Such training concerns leadership, management and accounting skills.

⁴¹Under the Special Rural Development Programme (SRDP), introduced in the Development Plan 1970-1974, fourteen pilot projects were planned. Their objective was to increase agricultural output and raise income and employment opportunities in the districts concerned. Sites for projects were selected on the basis of replicability of the experiment elsewhere and in order to cover a cross section of ecological zones. Projects included components such as: a coordinated extension programme; smallholder seasonal crop credit scheme; functional literacy programme; stocking agricultural inputs; improved marketing; and family planning and childcare programmes. The Women's Group Programme, part of the SRP, was designed specifically to benefit the rural family, essentially through a process of self-reliant development. Its major objectives were:

- a) to revitalize and strengthen women's groups in the rural areas through enabling them to make effective use of local resources such as personnel and materials;
- b) to increase the influence of group activities on the welfare of the group member's family; and
- c) to establish more functional connections between group activities and the development of the community, (PBFL/FAO, 1974, Women's leadership in rural development, Report No. 14, as quoted by Pala et al., 1975, p. 1.

Figure 7.11

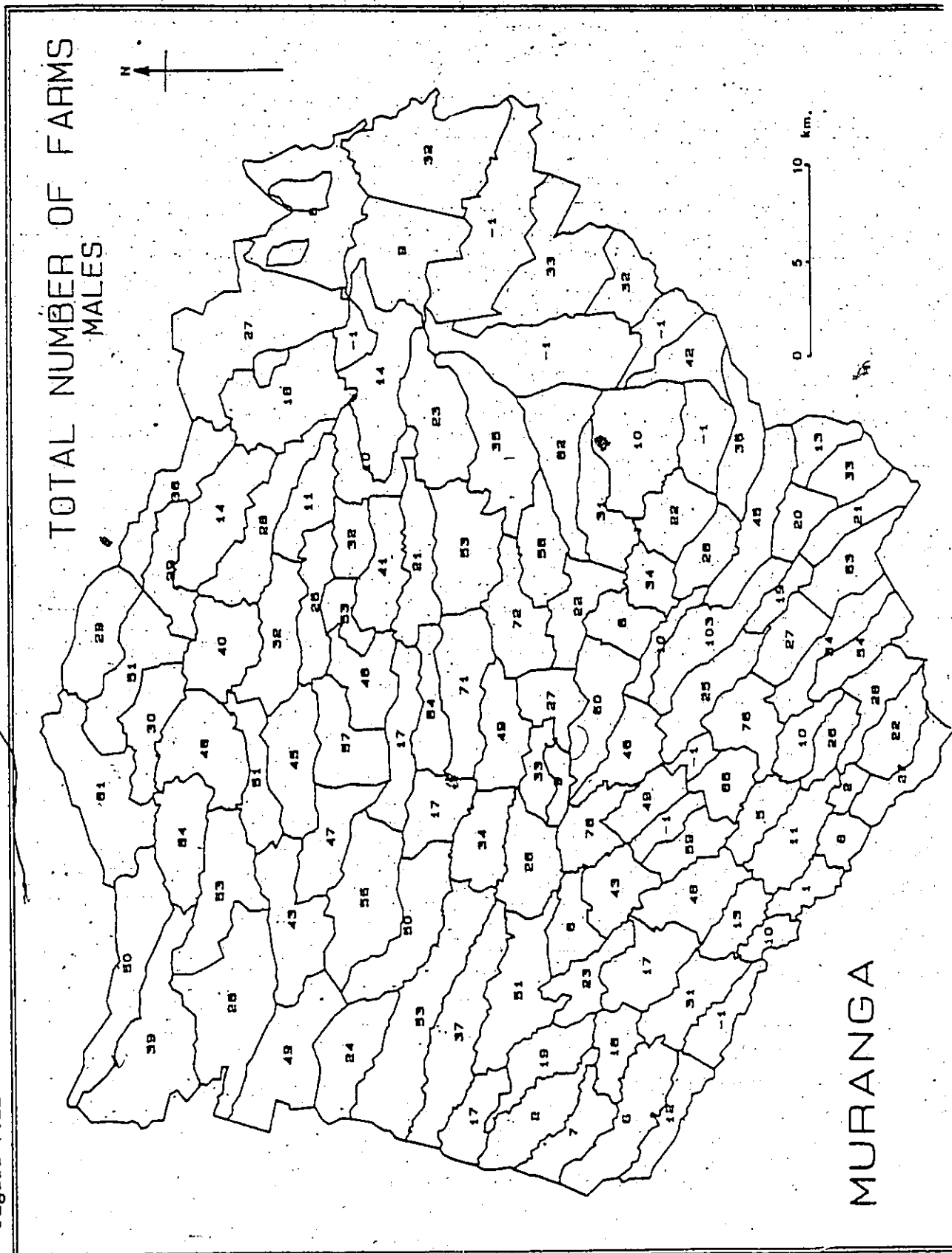
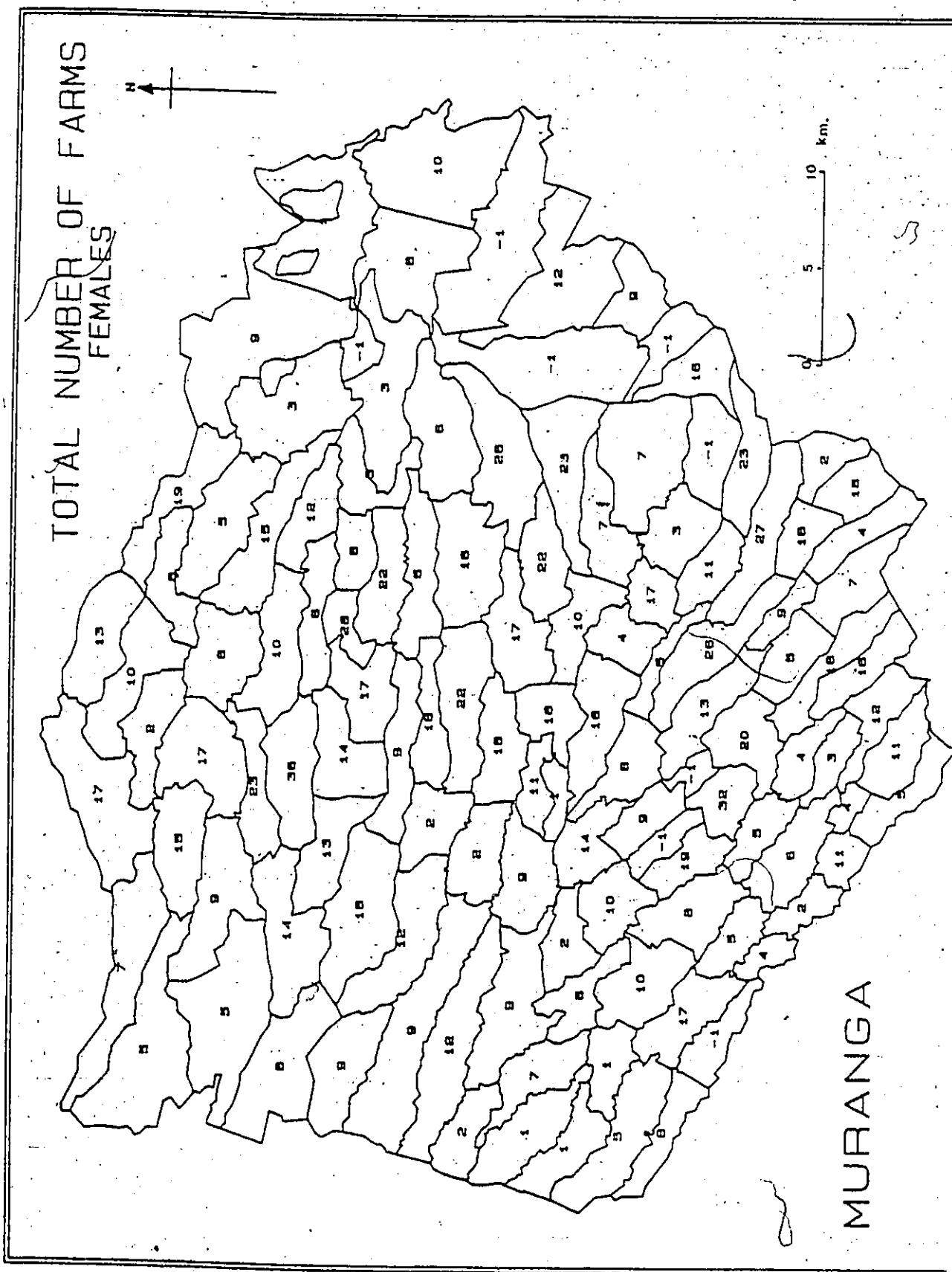


Figure 7.12



⁴²Thomas' analysis is based on interviews with 44 women's groups in five locations in three districts: Murang'a, Embu and Kericho.

⁴³The complete reference is: P. Kongstad and M. Monsted, 1980, Family, labour and trade in Western Kenya, Scandinavia Institute of African Studies, Uppsala.

⁴⁴Sex proportions by divisions, 1969 and 1979

Area	males	females	sex ratio 1979	sex ratio 1969
Kandara	86 928	94 793	91.7	88.1
Kigumo	64 640	70 476	91.7	88.4
Kangema	61 938	70 974	87.3	80.3
Kiharu	58 213	64 679	90.0	86.0
Makuyu	31 192	29 210	106.8	113.6
Murang'a Township	7 721	7 569	102.0	134.2

Source: Murang'a District Environmental Assessment Report, 1982, based on data supplied by Kenya, Ministry of Economic Planning and Development.

Note: 1. Excluding Murang'a Township.

Part III

Chapter 8: Gender and socio-spatial analysis

The motivation behind the research conducted here, as stated in the introductory chapter, was the observation that an incongruence existed between the experienced reality of agricultural change by women and men, on the one hand, and the theories which explicitly or implicitly informed the formulation of agricultural policy in Kenya from the early years of the twentieth century, on the other. The first part of the research therefore examined existing theory, the objective being to develop a framework within which rural structure and process in an area of smallholder agriculture in Kenya could be analyzed.

Three theoretical domains were discussed: geographical literature as it pertained to the conceptualization of space, and its application to analyses of African environments; feminist literature as it sought to question mainstream definitions of power relations and to develop lower order concepts of power (autonomy, authority, social adulthood) which would bridge the material and ideational spheres; and, literature on agricultural development which focused on the differential relationship of men and women to processes of rural change.

From elements or strands of the theories discussed, I have sought to develop a theoretical perspective whose central concern has been the

Identification of the dynamic between the sex/gender system and socio-spatial organization/division. The argument was made in Chapter 1 that the sex/gender system is a central element in defining the spatiality of social process. The objective throughout has not been to single out 'space', 'spatial inequality' or 'spatial structure' for separate enquiry, but, viewing 'space' as social construct, to effect an integration of this notion into social science analysis.

A key observation which emerged from the literature examined in the first chapter, specifically that of Leys (1982) and Hyden (1983), was that theory which is to address African environments must be contextually defined - in time and in locale. In the second chapter, the material and ideational bases of power within society were examined in order to identify specific variables which could be used to elucidate the relationship between society and space. Recognizing that these would vary in significance according to the scale of analysis and the degree and nature of interaction between different strata of societies, as well as the extent of socioeconomic stratification in society, and by age, the main variables conditioning gender relations were defined as: women and men's relative participation in central institutions in society and the degree of interconnectedness between the institutions; access to/control over the means and resources of production; how production is organized, within the household and outside it (the sexual division of labour), and whether the forces of production support or undermine relative access to the means of production; the relative participation of women and men in

strategically indispensable labour (Blumberg, 1984); how reproductive activities are organized; and how these latter responsibilities "fit" with productive activities.

In order to assess the relative significance of these variables in historical process, and to analyze the spatiality of this process, a model of agricultural change is proposed in Chapter 3, distinguishing between the (immediate) precolonial, colonial and post-land reform eras. The theoretical premise on which the model is based concerns, in essence, the concept of intra/inter-scalar organization of relations of production, of reproduction, and of productive forces. This, together with the concept of socio-spatial division/separation is used in the context of changes in productive mode to link elements of the sex/gender system with processes of agricultural change.

Adopting this theoretical perspective serves to facilitate a mode of analysis that not only clarifies contradiction in the specific context of historical change in Murang'a district, but that restores agency to inquiry. Forms of organization that are based on kinship on the one hand, and on local, extra household bonding formed as a counterpoint to kinship, on the other, emerge as critical focal points in the analysis. To turn first to kinship, it is evident from Chapters 5, 6 and 7 that this is not only a central institution in society and a structural determinant of major significance in the socio-spatial system, but is a key concept linking the social with the spatial. Rules of inheritance, residence and descent, defined by the kin corporation, the mbari, act as a bridge in two interrelated respects.

First, these rules influence the relative ability of women and men to bond at different scales of societal interaction. In Chapter 2 it was argued that such bonding or solidarity was critical in the achievement of autonomy, authority and social adulthood. Second, in so far as kinship defines territoriality, it will further condition male/female relations. Territoriality may be defined, following Sack (1983, p. 56), as "...the attempt by an individual or group (x) to influence, affect, or control objects, people and relationships (y) by delimiting and asserting control over a geographical area," but it is not a gender-neutral concept. The implications of this for the development of theory do not enter Sack's equations. Yet, it is apparent as territory is defined in the context of Gikuyu society that this is done so along male lines. The mbari, the basic kinship unit, is also the main territorial unit. The significance of this for extra-household bonding becomes clear as mbari/individual relations are traced through time. Its impact on gender relations to land changes, but does not disappear, as the dynamic or the dialectic between mbari/individual rights to land under the ng'undu system alters, first, with the individualization of male control over the land from the 1920s onwards, but more particularly when "land reform" and the registration of individual title in the 1950s and 1960s gives pre-eminence to ownership rather than usufruct rights to land. It is evident through this process, reinforced by changes in land use as export crops assume greater significance in the local as well as national economy (and women's control over disposal of the products is no longer commensurate

with the labour they supply), and changes in the division of labour resulting from households' reliance on non-farm income either for purposes of survival or for the accumulation of wealth, that, on balance, the basis for individual male autonomy and control has increased vis à vis that of women's. That this generalization must be qualified according to socioeconomic strata is argued in Chapters 6 and 7.

But it is also apparent, to turn to the second form of extra-household organization, based on local, non-kin networks, that these have formed the basis for bonding outside the mbari and to varying degrees through time have served as a countertension to mbari solidarity. In Chapter 5, the relative significance for men and women of membership in a riika, an initiation or age set, as well as forms of work organization such as ngwatio and gutumana wira were discussed in this respect. For instance, with reference to the initiation set, it was concluded that for women, unlike for men, membership was frequently undercut on marriage through the practice of mbari exogamy. For men, the age set provided the basis for political structure, military organization and the judicial system in the precolonial system. Where the jurisdiction of the mbari coincided spatially with membership in a riika, men's basis for bonding will have been particularly strengthened.

It has also been shown, however, that, through time, women have sought, with varying degrees of formality, to counter male solidarity. The sparseness of the historical record makes it difficult to be

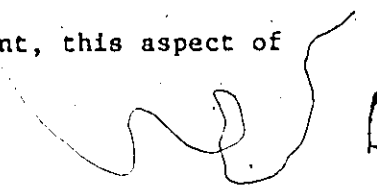
precise here, but it is evident that the nature and form of organization, as the objectives, have altered as necessitated by changes in productive mode. Most recently, action has been both of an ad hoc nature as labour has been withdrawn from a husband's coffee trees or complaints have been made to chiefs or subchiefs where land has been sold without a wife's knowledge, (in both cases resulting in policy changes, in the case of the former with respect to the coffee society savings accounts, in the second with respect to the 1982 directive issued to Land Boards), and of a more formal nature as groups have registered their formation with the local Community Development Officer.

It is argued in Chapter 7 that this latter form of organization provides women with the necessary support or solidarity to address the economic and ideational contradictions they face as individuals. The recent change in objective and orientation of many groups from one of mutual assistance through the rotation of savings to one of income generation, however successful these presently are, reflects women's recognition of the dynamics of structural economic change. The groups may well represent "the most radical consciousness" in the rural environment as Stamp argues (1985, p. 29).

As local institutions representative of struggle in the context of rural contradiction, such groups may be viewed as an "animating force" (Weaver, 1981, p. 93) for local action. Proposals for development "from within" by, inter alia, Galtung (1980), Weaver (1981, 1984), Stöhr (1981), Stöhr and Taylor (1981), Taylor (1985), Sandbrook (1982,

1985) and Hyden (1983) hinge on recognition of such local initiative and direction in processes of change. But up to the present, these proposals have been framed in terms of community organization and participation.

This dissertation has examined one rural environment at the local or community level, analyzing in part the complex set of relationships and contradictions that define that reality. A significant observation that may be drawn from this is that communities frequently face disunity not only with respect to socioeconomic stratification, but also in terms of gender. If development "from within" is to become a realistic alternative to other paradigms of development, this aspect of the "struggle" needs to be considered.



Appendix: methodological note

1. Of necessity, the methodology used in this dissertation has been eclectic. This is the case, in the first instance, with respect to the construction of theory. Insights are drawn from a variety of disciplines in the first three chapters to develop a theoretical perspective from which rural structure and process in an area of smallholder agriculture in Kenya could be analyzed. Second, the methodology used to collect data to test the hypotheses in the context of the case study was also eclectic.
2. Chapter 5, focusing on Murang'a District in the 1880s, drew essentially on the following sources:
 - a) G. Muriuki's (1974) definitive work on the history of the Gikuyu;
 - b) anthropological sources, including Leakey's recent 3 volume work on the southern (Kabete) Gikuyu (1977);
 - c) accounts of European "explorers": Thomson (1885); Lugard (1893); von Hohnel (1894); and Macdonald (1897);
 - d) Government documents which postdated this era, but which, in seeking to examine land claims, probed the past. The evidence presented before the Kenya Land Commission (U.K., 1934) and the Report of the Committee chaired by G.V. Maxwell (Kenya, 1929) on land tenure in Kikuyu Province were particularly useful here. The former document is held by the Kenya National Archives (see note 3 below); the latter document is published.
 - e) J. Fisher's (1954) account of The anatomy of Kikuyu domesticity and husbandry, a unique document in terms of a first hand account by a woman of agricultural practice in Kenya during the colonial era (1950-1952), was invaluable. In addition to the agricultural material referred to in the dissertation, the document contains information on education, infant development and the cost of living in Kiambu and Murang'a District. The document is located in the Kenya National Archives (see note 3 below).
3. Chapter 6, in addition to drawing on the Murang'a District Agricultural Histories (MDAH) 1984 discussed below (note 4a), relied extensively on unpublished archival data. With very few exceptions (such as the biography of Wangu wa Makeri, (see note 7 of Chapter 6), all this material, in addition to being located in the Kenya National Archives in Nairobi, is available on microfilm.

through the Africana Collection of the Center for Research Libraries, 6050 South Kenwood Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A. 60637. An annotated guide to the documents is available in published form: R.G. Gregory, R.M. Mason, L.P. Spenser, 1969, Guide to the Kenya National Archives: to the microfilms of the Provincial and District Annual Reports, Record Books, Handing-Over Reports; Miscellaneous Correspondence; and Intelligence Reports. Syracuse University, Program of Eastern African Studies. Eastern African Bibliographical Series, no. 3.

4. The main unpublished data sources used for Chapter 7 were as follows:

- a) The Muranga District Agricultural Histories, 1984. In all, 30 sets of interviews were carried out in Murang'a. Before going to the field, three sublocations were chosen as source areas for interviews, based on the following criteria: (1) differing agro-ecological zones; (2) visibility in the colonial record i.e. one sublocation in Kandara Division was chosen as it was site of women's riots; (3) proximity to, or distance from, the nearest urban centre, Thika. After discussions in the district in early October 1984, it was suggested I begin interviews in the coffee zone in Kigumo Division, the area from which the interpreter came. This suggestion was made on the basis that the issues I wanted to discuss were sensitive. Eighteen of the interviews were conducted in this area. A further six were conducted in the tea zone, in a sublocation in Kigumo Division where I also had a personal introduction. Six further interviews were conducted in Kandara Division, in each case households being chosen through personal introduction. The case studies cited have been modified only to the extent necessary to ensure anonymity.

An effort was made to choose households from different socioeconomic strata. While no precise estimation of this was possible, on the basis of size of holding, type of construction of buildings, and personal belongings, a rough approximation could be made. Six of the interviews took place in relatively wealthy households, seven in households which would be considered as lying below the average in terms of level of living, the remainder being representative of the mean for the area.

The purpose of the interviews was to elicit information on agricultural change as it had occurred during the lifetime of the interviewee. For this reason, members of the older generations were the greater number of participants. In eighteen of the cases, the main spokesperson was a woman, in seven of the cases, a man, and in five households both men and women interacted. In the majority of households, however, there was frequent participation by other members of the family or friends.

In each case, the interview was conducted in Gikuyu and recorded on tape. The purpose of the research was explained by the interpreter and then the interview was conducted in as unstructured a way as possible, relying on an oral history method (See, for example, J. Stubbs, 1984, "Some thoughts on the life story method in labour history and research on rural women," IDS Bulletin, Vol. 15, No. 1, pp. 34-37). Prompting or questions were given as necessary to ask for clarification or extension of a particular point. Participants were asked to focus their observations on men and women's relative relationship to the land, to livestock, to the division and control over labour, decision making, non-agricultural production, and work organization. They were asked to distinguish between the periods of their life with respect to before and after marriage, and as children grew up. They were also asked to relate this to historical events, in particular the early years of colonialism, the period leading up to the "Emergency", land reform and the more recent past. Participants were asked to differentiate between their own experience and that of others, and to recall what they knew of the situation during their parents' lifetime.

While there was a considerable range in the depth of interviews, there was in general substantial interest in discussing the topics. I was frequently asked about my experience on similar matters, and on occasion such discussion also lasted for a considerable period. In general, interviews lasted between 1 and 2½ hours. With the exception of two interviews conducted in Kandara, there was a very ready acceptance to using a tape recorder. The tapes were subsequently translated into English. The translator was asked to translate from the Gikuyu as literally as possible.

- b) a market survey conducted in 1980. This questionnaire survey was carried out in five markets in Murang'a: Mukuyu, Kandara, Muthithi, Mariifa and Kiria-ini. The objective was to obtain information from food crop sellers on: characteristics of their farming systems and their perceptions of problems faced in food crop production; their degree of contact with the Ministry of Agriculture either through extension agents or through visits to Farmer Training Centres; and the regularity and other details of their contact with the market. The questionnaire, translated into Gikuyu, was made up for the most part of open questions. Several were pre-coded to allow for a more quantifiable set of responses. Questionnaires were administered by five female high school students from the district, under my supervision. After an initial pretest in Mukuyu market, one day was spent in each of the markets. Interviews were restricted to food crop sellers who grew at least some of

their own food crops, whether or not they were actually selling their own produce at the time of the interview. Those who were solely traders and not growers of food crops were excluded from the sample. Although the interviewers were requested to record the answers verbatim to the open questions, this proved to be impossible as answers were frequently given in the form of a long narrative. It was also impossible to carry out a random sample of food crop sellers within the market, mainly because the number of sellers did not remain constant through the day. An effort was made, however, to choose a sample representative by market stands, i.e. by food crop. For further details, see: F. Thomson (Mackenzie), 1981, Food crop producers, the rural periodic market place and agricultural change: Murang'a District, Kenya, report submitted to CIDA, Ottawa.

- c) Unstructured key interviews with government employees in Murang'a District.
- d) data collected in 1971-1972 by S. Kimani and D.R.F. Taylor. An outline of the methodology used in this survey and the coded questionnaires are given in their book, Growth centres and rural development in Kenya 1973. These data are available on computer tape at Carleton University and the University of Nairobi.
- e) unpublished Government of Kenya data:
 - (i) Presentation Books held at the Land Registry Office, Murang'a (see note 15, Chapter 7);
 - (ii) Coffee Society Registers, available at the Coffee Society buildings; Minutes of the Coffee Society Meetings, stored in the District Archives, Murang'a; and the Maragua Savings and Credit Section of the Murang'a Farmers' District Cooperative Union, at Maragua Ridge, Murang'a District. (See notes 21, 23, and 24, Chapter 7);
 - (iii) Student Registers and Annual Reports of Kenyatta FTC and Thika FTC, available at these Centres;
 - (iv) The Integrated Rural Surveys (IRS) I to IV are sample surveys carried out in the smallholder areas of Kenya by the Central Bureau of Statistics under the National Integrated Sample Survey Programme (NISSP). They include detailed socioeconomic information on households as well as data on agricultural production which may be disaggregated according to the sex and marital status of household head. In addition a series of survey modules were used with the core

questionnaires in each survey round: literacy module (IRS II); Module on handicapped people (IRS III); division of labour module, non-formal education module, energy module, and nutrition module (IRS IV). In rural areas, the sampling fraction was 1%. Primary sampling units (PSUs) were selected on the basis of crop zones and rainfall patterns. In the case of each PSU, two clusters were randomly sampled, each cluster containing about 200 households. Within each cluster, 20 households were chosen. In Murang'a District, IRS IV clusters were located in Kamahuha Location, in the lower part of Middle Murang'a and in Ruchu location which straddles the tea/coffee divide. The Integrated Rural Surveys 1976-1979 Basic Report (1981) publishes data by province, undifferentiated by sex of household head. I was able to obtain the raw data for Murang'a for IRS IV which provide the basis for tables in this Chapter. As indicated in the text, these must be considered with circumspection as the district was not intended as the sampling unit;

- (v) Women's Bureau/Central Bureau of Statistics Survey of 1977 available at the Women's Bureau, Nairobi. Data on Murang'a District for 1978 were also available from the Women's Bureau;
- (vi) Data on women's groups in 1984 were collected from the Community Development Offices at the Murang'a District Headquarters, at the Kiharu, Kigumo, and Kangema divisional offices, and from selected sublocations as necessary;
- (vii) Data on the Training and Visit Scheme were available at the Ministry of Agriculture Office, Murang'a District.

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