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THE MIGRATION PROCESS AND DIFFERENTIAL
ECONOMIC BEHAVIOR IN SOUTH MARAGOLI,
WESTERN KENYA

by

Joyce Lewinger Mook

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requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
under the Executive Committee of the Graduate
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ABSTRACT

THE MIGRATION PROCESS AND DIFFERENTIAL ECONOMIC BEHAVIOR IN SOUTH MARAGOLI, WESTERN KENYA

Joyce Lewinger Mook

This study explores the affects of labor migration upon individual response to new economic opportunities in a developing agrarian community.

The Maragoli can be characterized as a fast growing population with extremely limited land resources, who have long been dependent upon income from wage labor in urban centers to meet financial needs at home. While engaging in a pattern of circular migration, Maragoli workers commonly maintain strong village ties mainly for the sake of security in a situation of unemployment in town and underemployment at home. Although new opportunities have become available for cash earning within the local economy, the response to these opportunities have differed markedly among South Maragoli's overall population. As its primary objective, this dissertation attempts to explain why certain types of migrants who have the financial means tend not to invest extensively in commercial agriculture or trade enterprises at home despite the great insecurities of urban wage employment.

Anthropological research techniques were used in an intensive two year study of one South Maragoli village (142

farm heads), and for the exploration of economic transactions between urban migrants and their kinsmen and village friends. In particular, networks of interpersonal relations, which influence individual options and strategies, were traced through the material dimensions of gift-giving and income redistribution.

Three operational categories among male village farm heads were delineated which define the degree to which workers have stable and gainful employment in the national wage economy. These categories indicate that an employment bias exists in favor of older, better educated, skilled workers. Among the village population, those holding the most secure and lucrative wage paid jobs were employed as local civil servants. As the kinsmen of prestigious clan leaders who became tribal administrators under indirect colonial rule, these persons were the first to take advantage of missionary sponsored education.

An investigation of village agricultural patterns showed that readiness to adopt innovations is closely associated with resource availability and is not equally functional for all farmers. A scale of agricultural differentiation was applied to adopter patterns of items representing local farming innovations. Three agricultural adopter status categories were identified and found to be positively correlated with employment profiles.

Along with variations in employment patterns there follows differences in the structure and content of social linkages which affect an individual's options in acquiring

agricultural resources. It was shown that Maragoli social organization is undergoing a transformation in which associational ties are replacing functional links of extended kinship. Yet despite fundamental societal changes and geographic separation, relatively unskilled and insecure migrants become bound in a web of debt relations with kinsmen and close friends at home. Non-elitist migrants look to agriculture to supplement their wage income and provide long-range security. However, they are unable to manage resources at home on their own behalf. These persons, therefore, cannot afford the social cost of withdrawal from home pressures for income redistribution. As a means of lessening asymmetrical exchange relations, workers possessing long histories of irregular, low wage employment tend to refrain from extensive investment in agriculture or other local enterprises.

In contrast, workers with stable and lucrative wage employment at home, such as teachers or administrators, are in an economic position to disengage from onerous kinship obligations. These individuals tend to participate in wide-knit networks of associational ties. It is such persons who are most likely to exploit opportunities for high risk/high gain investments at home.

Diversification of social linkages among worker profile groups was found to be closely related to increasing stratification and economic differentiation in the Maragoli countryside.

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I am indebted to many persons for their assistance during the research and writing of this dissertation. I would like to express my gratitude to Thomas Susu for invaluable research assistance in the field and for the generous hospitality of his family during my stay in South Maragoli. In addition, the Institute for Development Studies at the University of Nairobi provided the use of their research facilities and placed me in close association with numerous scholars who, during 1970-1972, were conducting research relevant to my study. An early draft of this dissertation was written at the Center for Research on Economic Development at the University of Michigan, and I am grateful for the hospitality of its research staff.

I owe a very special debt to Professor George Bond of Teachers College, who gave me a tremendous amount of help and encouragement in revising successive drafts of this study. I have also benefitted from the ideas and criticisms of my dissertation defense committee: Professors Lambros Comitas, George Bond, Conrad Arensberg, Charles Harrington, Graham Irwin. To Professor Joan Vincent, who was on leave from Barnard College and could not serve on my committee, I am particularly grateful for her careful reading and extensive criticisms of an earlier draft. I should also like to thank Professor William Dalton of the University of New Brunswick, who guided me over the early hurdles of my graduate training and has offered perceptive and comprehensive comments for the

future expansion and revision of this study.

During the course of my research, I heavily imposed upon the time and good-will of the people of South Maragoli. For their tolerance and open-hearted hospitality, I am ever grateful.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

This study is concerned with processes of social change and economic differentiation in South Maragoli, an administrative Location in the Western Province of Kenya. The research objectives are twofold: first, to isolate factors affecting patterns of socio-economic change in an agrarian society undergoing rapid development and to identify the mechanisms by which this outlying community is linked with the wider Kenya economy; second, to analyze the divergent response to changing economic opportunities shown by various social categories of persons within the local population. The inter-relationship between labor migration and the mobilization of resources at home bears critically upon both these problems and provides the central focus of this investigation.

A great deal of attention has been paid by social scientists, especially those studying Sub-Saharan Africa, to the relationship between labor migration and change in local socio-economic systems (e.g. Gulliver 1955, Watson 1958, Van Velsen 1960, Schapera 1947, Gugler 1968, Southall 1954, Long 1968, Skinner 1960); and many of the problems addressed here have been raised in previous studies. However, it is hoped that the combined theoretical and methodological orientation employed in this inquiry will make an original contribution to this general field of exploration, and as

such, will also be of practical concern to those involved in economic planning in developing countries.

Throughout this work, attention is directed to the social and economic constraints upon individual strategies and decision-making in regard to the pursuit of an expansive economic policy. In particular, emphasis is placed upon the decisions by which individuals assess investment opportunities within the local economy, especially in the agricultural system.

In attempting to analyze the manner in which such decisions are affected by a migratory experience, and the changes in interpersonal relationships associated with it, I have adopted an analytical and methodological approach which has received relatively little attention in other migratory studies. First, I have tried to set this investigation within a dynamic framework. Such a framework entails (1) a view of labor migration as a social process occurring within a context of social and economic relations that involve both town and country, (2) an examination of the migratory career as a chain of transactions between the worker and his environment and a characterization of that environment in terms which stress the reciprocity of transactions, and (3) an account of socio-economic change at both the town and country ends of the migratory continuum so as to offset changes particularly associated with migration and to enable a comparison of migrants with non-migrants, as well as a distinction among the migrants themselves.

Second, I have given methodological attention to operationalizing indicators and measuring data pertinent to

the analytical framework of the study. For example, the gifts and visits exchanged between urban migrants and their countryside friends and relatives are categorized, and then quantified across divergent employment groups. I hope that such specification will facilitate a comparison of the data presented here with those collected by other investigators, and will aid in the refinement of future theoretical constructs.

South Maragoli, the countryside focus of this migratory investigation, constitutes one of the six administrative Locations of Vihiga Division in the Kakamega District of Kenya's Western Province. South Maragoli and North Maragoli, its sister Location, are predominately inhabited by the Maragoli (Avalogoli) who are part of a linguistically and culturally related complex of peoples known as the Abaluyia, the third largest ethnic group in Kenya.

The Maragoli can be characterized as a fast growing population with extremely limited land resources, who have long been dependent upon income from wage labor outside the Province to meet their financial needs at home. From the early days of Kenya's colonization around the turn of the century, the Maragoli, spurred by the imposition of taxation and agricultural labor requirements, have engaged in a cyclical pattern of migration to the farming estates and urban centers associated with white Europeans, returning back home both during and at the end of their employment careers. At the same time, early penetration of British administrative structure and policy, along with heavy missionization and the

educational facilities which accompanied it, helped to stimulate new opportunities for cash earnings within the local economy. Such opportunities include small amounts of wage employment within the District and self-employment in commercial agriculture and trade.

Within the last decade, Kenya, along with many other developing nations in Africa, has been faced with a growing crisis of unemployment in its urban centers and with widening income differentials between agricultural labor and wage-paid, non-agricultural employment. In an effort to reduce the massive export of relatively unskilled labor to towns and cities, where the ranks of the unemployed are already swollen, and to generate a more equitable distribution of income among citizens; the Government of Kenya has recently given increased priority to the development of the nation's rural areas.¹ In particular, important changes have been initiated within the agricultural sector designed to increase the earnings of small-holder farmers. These changes include the legalization of freehold tenure through land registration, and the introduction of new cash crops and farming techniques suited to the different ecological conditions in the country.

Within South Maragoli, however, response to opportunities for increased subsistence and commercial agricultural pro-

¹Kenya's second five-year Development Plan, 1970-1974, clearly assigns priority to the development of the nation's rural areas. The Government's key strategy in this regard is to induce small-scale farmers to adopt improved techniques of production so as to raise their rural income and stem the flow of labor into towns.

duction have differed markedly among the land-holding population. Cultivators who have adopted a new innovation reside alongside of those who have not, even though the latter are aware of the new technology. The situation is especially complicated in that unproductive farms do not necessarily belong to poor families, nor is the adoption of innovations simply a function of wealth or communications.

While many families have access to at least a minimum of financial capital from other economic activities, which may be channeled into agricultural investment, only a small minority of residents have chosen to exploit these new agricultural niches. This study will show that those who have done so tend to have specific characteristics. They are most likely, for example, to have a high level of educational attainment (i.e. over seven years of schooling), steady wage employment or close access to someone who does, and to live at home year-round. Moreover, I shall argue that these agricultural entrepreneurs, most of whom are employed as teachers, pastors, or government administrators, tend to form a new "elite" in South Maragoli which is economically as well as educationally distinct from the majority of the population.

While it is extremely difficult to change the distribution of income directly through agriculture in a densely populated area such as South Maragoli, the farm enterprise serves to supplement wealth acquired from other economic pursuits, and provide for long-term social welfare. Yet,

the fact remains that labor migrants who have the financial wherewithal tend not to invest extensively in agricultural opportunities at home, despite the great insecurities of urban wage employment. It is this seeming paradox which this study attempts to resolve.

From the outset then, this investigation is somewhat distinct from earlier migration studies both in terms of its central problem and its basic approach. First, this inquiry is unlike those in which the migrant is regarded either as undergoing a unidirectional process of "detrribalization" which contributes to the disintegration of his tribal society (e.g. Richards 1939, Wilson 1941-1942, Mair 1934), or as playing separate roles in mutually exclusive town and country arenas which enables him to actively maintain the norms and values of his traditional social system (e.g. Watson 1958, Van Velsen 1960, Gluckman 1961, 1966). Following in the sociological tradition set by such scholars as Durkheim and Radcliffe-Brown, concern with social stability and structural integration prompted these studies in which the impact of migration was measured by the extent to which the traditional socio-economic system remained intact.

In contrast, this investigation focuses upon situations of change and the manner in which new elements, interpreted and manipulated by local residents to suit their particular needs, influence the range of available economic options and contribute to the development of new social action. Attention here is directed to what Firth has labeled "elements of social organization" or "those aspects of dynamics or process in

which choice is exercised in a field of available alternatives, resources are mobilized, and decisions are taken in the light of probable social costs and benefits" (1964: 17).

Second, several anthropologists have attempted to relate variations in behavior among urban migrants with their involvement in differential networks of social relationships (e.g. Mayer 1961, Epstein 1961, Parkin 1969). But while these investigators emphasize the form (or mapping) of such linkages — which persons interact with which other persons — less attention is paid to the actual content of these interactions. This deficiency is most often found in relation to the rural end of such networks, where the reciprocal rights and obligations which govern relations tend to be assumed rather than empirically investigated. Yet as Garbett and Kapferer suggest, "Through detailed analysis of the social relationships of migrants both in town and country it may be possible to ascertain in what relationships they have invested most and therefore those to which they are most committed" (1970: 193). In attempting to explain how individuals are constrained in their behavior by the organization of their social relations, this inquiry concentrates upon the economic exchanges transacted between migrants and their kinsmen and village friends, and the regularity with which home ties are maintained. In particular, empirical data is used to indicate the town and country exchange of services, visitors, and gifts.

This study of migration and economic differentiation is

based upon fieldwork conducted in Kenya between June 1970 and May 1972. During the first nineteen months of the study, my husband and I lived in a rented house situated within a family compound in Bulala,¹ the South Maragoli village selected for intensive investigation. The remaining five months of our Kenya stay were spent in Nairobi, and from there, I conducted a tracer study of the labor migrants who originated from the village.

The fieldwork was undertaken in order to gain an understanding of individual response to new economic opportunities in a developing agrarian community, and the manner in which the dynamics of labor migration influence that response. The closely focused approach of this investigation facilitates a systematic analysis of the factors which structure the activities of the migrant and the response which these activities draw from other actors in the community.

The study is set in Munugi, one of South Maragoli's eleven sub-locations. Munugi, which has the fourth highest population density in South Maragoli, is one of the few sub-locations in which land registration and adjudication have recently been completed. Within Munugi, I selected Bulala Village to serve as an arbitrarily bounded spatial unit within which interactions between individuals and groups could be intensively observed. Moreover, Bulala (with a total population of 934 persons) also provided the base for an extended framework of analysis which brings into consideration networks of social and economic

¹This is a pseudonym, as are the names of the individuals that appear in this study, and the sub-location in which Bulala is situated.

ties connecting village personnel with individuals outside the local setting. Within Bulala, I gathered data on a 100 per cent sample of 142 land-holding heads of households. (The only "landless" adult males in the Village were those who had not as yet acquired land through inheritance, or those who had already relinquished the rights over all their holdings to their heirs.)

Systematic questionnaires were used to elicit information basically concerning family histories, farm organization, and the structure of individual career patterns. By living within the area and participating in local affairs, I was able to cross-check and augment most of this information and to note changes in the demographic data during the annual cycle. This was not, therefore, a "snapshot" census, frozen in time, but rather an on-going log of data concerning a processual flow of personnel and events.

The data were collected with the aid of an extremely able research assistant who was a resident of the area. Not only did he aid me with Lulogoli (the Maragoli dialect) and help with such time-consuming chores as keeping running accounts of household budgets, farmers' use of labor, and gift-giving and visiting patterns; but his personal experience as a former labor migrant currently engaged in establishing his own farm provided invaluable insights into the social dynamics which influence agricultural enterprise and create economic differentiation in South Maragoli.

I was further fortunate in having excellent baseline

material on South and North Maragoli, and the surrounding region. Extensive data from government offices were available and I had access to agricultural files, postal records, court cases, land adjudication transcripts, areal photographs, and school and church registries. In addition, early statistical records from the colonial era concerning labor migration, farming schemes, and political and demographic patterns were available from the Kenya National Archives and from the annals of the Friends African Mission at nearby Kaimosi. There were also many relevant historical, economic, and anthropological studies previously conducted in the area (especially Were 1967, Wagner 1940, 1949, 1956, Osogo 1966, Sangree 1966, Fearn 1961, Weisner 1969, Leonard 1970, 1972). Moreover, Peter Mook (1971, 1973), who was concurrently evaluating a local development program for the Kenya Government and conducting an economic study on technical efficiency in maize production, provided a rich assortment of farm-level data drawn from a random sample within Vihiga Division.

While living in Bulala, I had an opportunity to meet with and interview each of the sixty-four current farm-head labor migrants, since they all returned at least once for a home visit. However, in order to gain a clearer understanding of the migrants' activities in their place of destination, especially in relation to specific links and transactions with family and friends at home, it was necessary to visit with them in town. In addition to my direct observations,

twelve of the migrants generously agreed to keep detailed diaries concerning their activities over a six month period. The material derived from these accounts served to pinpoint gaps in the original questionnaires and to provide new areas of investigation.

The organization of this study derives from the problem of constraints affecting individual economic behavior. The next chapter presents a description of South Maragoli's socio-economic setting, concentrating upon those characteristics of the area which link it with the wider Kenya society and which seem to have a direct bearing upon labor migration. Chapter Three is concerned with the structural history of wage employment and how it sets the parameters for social interaction. Chapter Four concentrates upon contemporary wage employment patterns, examining both labor migration and wage labor at home, and delineates three operational categories of workers in the village population. In Chapter Five, the resources required for area adaptive agricultural enterprises are described in detail and a scale of agricultural differentiation is drawn in terms of the adoption of innovations. Adopter status categories are then correlated with worker profiles. Chapter Six explores changes in the social system through which economic exchanges are transacted; while Chapter Seven analyzes the manner in which particular networks of social relations, reinforced through reciprocal exchange patterns, influence individual options and strategies. The conclusion reviews the argument and places the

investigation within a wider context of research concerned with African labor migration and change in agrarian societies.

The general orientation of this study stems from recent anthropological writings on social change, especially Barth's essay on the role of the entrepreneur (1963), Long's analysis of social innovation among Zambian migrants (1968), Garbett and Kapferer's theoretical schema concerning migratory investigations (1970), and Johnson's inquiry into adaptive economic behavior among workers on a Brazilian plantation (1971). All of these works stress the importance of local factors which affect the range of economic alternatives open to an actor and the choices he makes. Accordingly, the following pages present the thesis that the response of individual farmers to opportunities for agricultural innovation constitutes behavior which they consider optimal in terms of their evaluation of personal social and economic circumstances.

Chapter II

SOUTH MARAGOLI: THE SETTING

South Maragoli Location, an administrative unit of the Vihiga Division of Kakamega District,¹ lies on the southern plateau tip of Western Province some 250 miles northwest of Nairobi, Kenya's capital city. The Location is fifteen miles north of Kisumu, the Nyanza Provincial center on Lake Victoria, and is easily accessible from the main Kisumu-Kakamega roadway (see Figure 1). The excellent condition of this bituminized road and the heavy volume of traffic which uses it is the first indication of the dynamic linkage between South Maragoli and the world outside its boundaries.

The Location covers 35.5 square miles lying in the heart of an ecological zone which roughly coincides with Vihiga Division. The lush green rolling hills of the Division mark a sharp contrast with the dry plains of Nyanza Province to the south and west, and the Nandi escarpment of Rift Valley Province to the east. The Division also is distinct from the north of Kakamega District in its profusion of granite boulders and smaller rock outcroppings which

¹Kenya is divided into Nairobi, the capital city, and seven administrative provinces. The provinces are divided into districts, which are each sub-divided into divisions. In most parts of the country, divisions are further split into locations, and the locations into sub-locations.

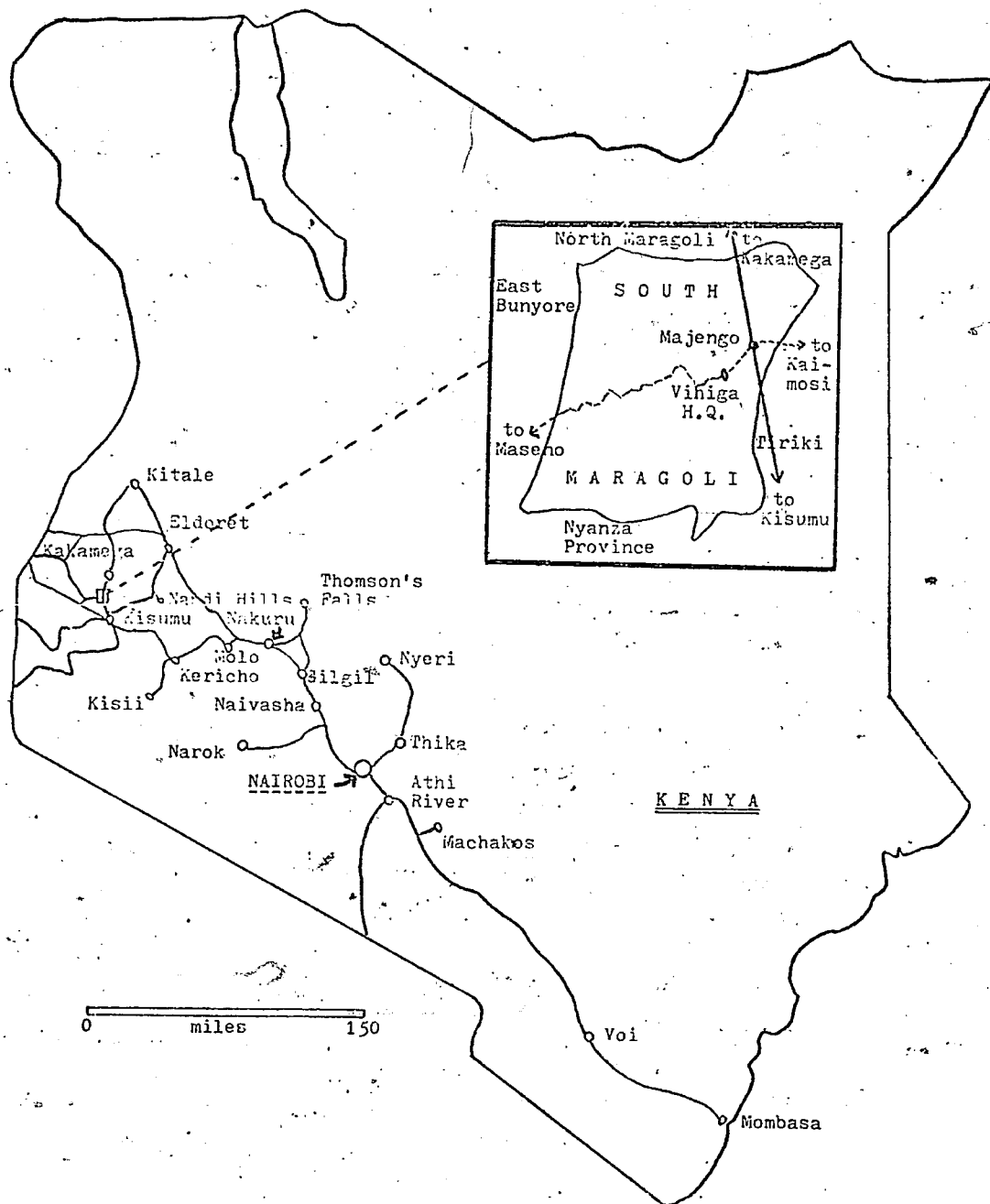


Fig. 1.--South Maragoli and Common Points of Migratory Destination

particularly dominate a large portion of South and North Maragoli Locations, and for which the Lulogoli name "Vihiga" (abnormally large rocks) stands.

Stretching north from the equator to 0°18' latitude, Vihiga Division is characterized by Star and Kikuyu grasses and by a belt of fertile granite and volcanically derived soils. Although the Division nestles on the equator, its average altitude of 5,000 feet (reaching 5,600 feet in the Maragoli forest reserve) results in a moderate climate. The area is well watered by a wealth of natural streams which flow along the steep valley floors of the plateau. In addition, rainfall averages 60 to 70 inches and is well distributed throughout the year, falling in two major peaks which occur soon after the equinoxes: the long rains of February through June, and the short rains between August and October. Although farming practice is somewhat hampered by the steep and rocky nature of the terrain, P. Moock (1971) has estimated that 88% of Vihiga's farmland is under cultivation.¹

The single most outstanding characteristic of Vihiga Division as a whole is its population density, estimated in the Kenya Population Census of 1969 at approximately 1,400 persons per square mile, and reaching as much as 1,600 in parts of North and South Maragoli. This is one of the high-

¹In 1971, P. Moock conducted a random sample survey of Vihiga farmers. For each location, 100 farmers were interviewed. This is the most comprehensive survey of Vihiga farm-level data to date.

est concentrations for an agricultural area in all of Kenya, possibly all of Sub-Saharan Africa.

Since there are few natural barriers to the expansion of settlement, the region's density problem is essentially social rather than geographical in nature. The ancestors of the occupants of Vihiga Division, the Maragoli (Avalogoli), Banyore (Abanyole), and Tiriki (Abatirichi), arrived in the area between 1598 and 1733 migrating originally from the southern regions of eastern Uganda.¹ These Bantu-speaking peoples are part of a complex of seventeen linguistically and culturally related groups residing in Western Province, who within recent times have become collectively known as the "Abaluyia" (those of the same tribe).² However, while the Abaluyia complex sometimes functions as a bloc in Kenyan national politics, it is an extremely loose confederation of politically and territorially discrete tribes of diverse origins. In the face of long-term border hostilities with the Nilotic and Nilo-Hamitic peoples who surround them on all sides, and probably as a result of their preference to remain within their fertile region rather than move to the less attractive neighboring areas, the Abaluyia tribes have imposed territorial pressure upon one another which has severely

¹This arrival date is based on Were's (1967) estimate of geneological length. There has been some controversy among geographic historians as to the direction from which the Avalogoli arrived in the Kisumu region. For further discussion on this matter, see Barker (1958) and Osogo (1966).

²Prior to the 1940's, this group was referred to as the "Bantu Kavirondo" in literature concerned with the area. The change to "Abaluyia" is detailed by Ogot (1967).

restricted internal migration.

Even before the turn of the century, the effects of this territorial squeeze were becoming conspicuous. Joseph Thomson, the first European traveler to the region, recorded that "what most impressed me was the surprising number of villages...Almost every foot of ground was under cultivation" (1883: 284). For the fast growing Maragoli, encapsulated by the alien Luo to the south and their often unfriendly Banyore, Idaxo, and Tiriki cousins to the west, north, and east, territorial skirmishes were occurring with increasing frequency on the eve of colonial rule. Under the British colonial administration, established in the mid-1890's, this trend toward the circumscription of tribal domains became institutionalized. Boundaries were demarcated which, for the most part, separated Abaluyia settlements from those of neighboring peoples, while within Abaluyialand, the various acephalous tribal units were organized into chieftaincies with chiefs appointed from the local population. The delineation of these chieftaincies or "locations" generally corresponded to the areas occupied by the various tribal groups,¹ and boundaries in recent years have been adjusted

¹Werner argues that the present seventeen tribes are much bigger units than they were in pre-European days. At that time, they were very loosely organized and consisted of several quasi-sovereign clans. "The reorganization of clans into sub-tribes and therefore bigger administrative units had the effect of strengthening local administration and reducing the country to effective and more manageable local units" (1967: 175). According to Wagner, when more than one clan made a claim for political leadership, the tribe was split into several chieftaincies, e.g. North and South Maragoli (1949: 22).

to accommodate marginal migrations.

Since the 1920's, Maragoli settlement has expanded noticeably into the less crowded Vihiga Locations of Tiriki and Nyangori. In addition, small pockets of Maragoli peoples can be found in South Nyanza and, within the last decade, on the Government settlement schemes in the northern region of Western Province. However, permanent re-settlement has been relatively minor among Maragoli's ever-increasing population, and many of those families who move to the schemes continue to retain control over their ancestral plots in the Location.

The 1969 Kenya Population Census estimates that South Maragoli contains 49,661 inhabitants within its narrow boundaries. The effect of this congestion is best appreciated from an aerial view of the Location. From this vantage point, one sees dots of thatched roof houses, interspersed with those topped by corrugated iron, scattered in profusion over the fertile countryside. Houses are so closely positioned and evenly distributed across the rolling landscape that from the air one has no way of perceiving that some of the houses cluster into homesteads, and that some of these homesteads form villages. Tiny asymmetrical, euphorbia bordered gardens of many crop textures and tones present a "crazy quilt" pattern which is sporadically highlighted by tracts of uncultivated boulder strewn hills, deep bushy valleys, open market greens, and school football fields.

Yet for an overcrowded, unindustrialized area, South Maragoli conveys an air of prosperity and affluence. A

dense network of feeder roads and bicycle paths radiate from the numerous rectangular brick structures of schools and churches; and from repeated market clusters of eight to twelve iron roofed shops, including general stores, butcher shops, "hotels" (teahouses), grinding mills, carpentry sheds, and backroom beer halls. The dirt tracks cut through the villages, providing easy access to the Location's major all-weather murum road which is traveled daily by many Maragoli owned taxis, buses, and lorries.

The Maragoli economy is linked with the nation's wider economic system mainly through a long established pattern of circular labor migration. Given South Maragoli's situation of chronic land shortage, the vast majority of Maragoli adult males move back and forth between town and country for the better part of their working careers, seeking employment in European associated towns and farming estates. During the migratory period, these workers commonly dispatch to their families money for expenses unmet by farm income and return home several times a year on employment leaves which often coincide with peak agricultural labor requirements. In this manner, labor migration acts as a safety valve for the overcrowded conditions on the land.¹

¹The 1969 Kenya Population Census lists Abaluyia distribution across Kenya as follows: (1) Western Province, 1,167,443; (2) Rift Valley, 148,991; (3) Nairobi, 65,056; (4) Nyanza, 40,860; (5) Coast, 19,485; (6) Central, 8,738; (7) Eastern, 2,475; (8) North Eastern, 254. In the past, there has also been considerable migration to Uganda and Tanzania. However, more recently, Government policies in these countries, especially concerning currency transfer, has significantly reduced the immigration of outside laborers.

Thus, given the remittance economy upon which the Maragoli depend and the insufficiency of local land resources, it is not surprising that residents tend to regard themselves as "gardeners" rather than "farmers". "How much land does your father own?", I was often teased. "If he grew some vegetables, ~~would~~ you call him a farmer?" This minimization of agricultural activity reflects the commonly held local view that such enterprise is merely a supplement to alternative sources of employment.

Wage Employment and the Schools

For several decades, labor migration out of the area has been more a necessity than an option for Maragoli families unable to cover even simple cash needs from their agricultural income. Today, in Bulala, the Maragoli village which I studied in detail, 61% of 161 adult males between the ages 20 and 59, who are not attending school, work or are in search of employment outside the District at any given time. In addition, 75% of the adult males over age 35 in Bulala, who are without wage employment at home, have spent at least 10 years outside the District in the pursuit of wage paid jobs.

For those who seek urban employment, permanent movement out of Kakamega District is still the exception. In the absence of sufficient welfare and social benefits, including unemployment insurance and retirement pensions in urban centers, non-elitist labor migrants are forced to look to

their rights in land as an ultimate source of security. Unable to afford adequate accommodation for their family in town, migrants tend to leave their wives at home to raise the children, manage the farm, and report on local affairs. However, this combination of wage employment and farming, upon which Maragoli has survived for over half a century, is now severely threatened by a national unemployment crisis which has arisen over the last decade.

Despite substantial growth in most sectors of the economy, the unemployment situation in Kenya has recently assumed massive proportions. A dramatic synthesis of seemingly unrelated factors which include (1) a trend towards capital intensive technology, (2) a massive increase in school enrolments, (3) a surging population growth rate of 3.3% per annum, (4) a widening gap between wage earning and agricultural income, and (5) an urban bias in the provision of social services has provided Kenya with one of the most serious unemployment situations in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Today wage employment accounts for only 28% of the potential labor force in Kenya, while male employees constitute about 34% of the total adult male population. Despite ambitious targets for the growth of wage employment, planners predict that nearly two-thirds of new entrants to the labor force will become full-time farmers, nearly 80% will end up in some form of agricultural employment, while less than one in five can expect non-agricultural wage paid jobs (Rado 1970: 15).

A few years of schooling was once the key to wage employment in Kenya, but today, primary education is no longer a guarantee of even a low level job. Kenya's latest Development Plan predicts an increase of only 375,000 wage paid jobs between 1970 and 1974, in the face of an expected increase of 945,000 Standard (grade) VII primary school graduates during the same period.¹ Even allowing for the annual attrition rate of those already employed, the school leaver is faced with a grave job hunting situation. Not only must he compete with his peers for employment, but also with secondary school leavers (not more than half of whom will be able to enter the wage labor force), unemployed adults, and primary school leavers of recent years who have not yet found jobs.

The decrease in wage positions relative to population growth also has affected opportunities for non-agricultural self-employment. Although the 1970-74 Development Plan aims at increasing small-scale business enterprises in the rural areas, those unable to continue their education and find wage employment are faced with serious difficulties upon embarking on a profitable entrepreneurial career. Aspiring full-time entrepreneurs need, for example, not only high quality training to make themselves outstanding in a competitive market; but also funds to purchase equipment, trade licenses, and

¹Since Independence, the primary school course has been consolidated into seven years from the former four year primary and four year intermediate courses.

shop facilities which will meet the restrictive vestiges of colonial health regulations. Most important, they require land and labor of their own in order to lessen profit-draining obligations to parents and relatives on whom they would otherwise depend.

Though there is little small-scale industry in the area, there are numerous trade and artisan enterprises.¹ The Vihiga Divisional headquarters, situated in South Maragoli about a mile from the Kisumu-Kakamega road, provides a boost for local business; the police station, court house, health center, and administrative offices draw many potential customers into the area. Yet, in almost all cases, local businesses have been established and maintained out of the savings of those with previous or, more often, with concurrent wage employment.

Occupational diversity is common among South Maragoli's residents. Small-scale farmers, not engaged in wage employment occasionally work as carpenters, bricklayers, masons, roof thatchers, tailors, or shoe repairmen. However, most of these semi-skilled local fundis (craftsmen) earn only meager remuneration with which to complement their farm income. Those who succeed within the sea of local traders and craftsmen tend to be older than recent school leavers and have superior skills and expertise usually gained from on

¹There is a surprising absence of outside artisans and tradesfolk in South Maragoli. However, there is a large Asian community in nearby Kisumu which serves as a major source of competition for Maragoli businessmen.

the job training in wage employment. There are also some opportunities for seasonal farm labor in the Location. But wages are so low and the job duration so short that men prefer to send their wives and children, rather than take such jobs themselves. Chapter Five discusses opportunities for hired agricultural labor in greater detail.

Members of the Maragoli community strongly believe that education paves the way for wage employment. In Bulala Village, 77% of the males between ages 30 and 59 have had some formal education, while 8% have had academic training beyond primary school. The direct and positive linkage between education and economic benefit, prior to the onset of the employment squeeze, is discussed in Chapter Four.

Although formal education no longer offers assurance of a salaried job, the possible "payoff" is so great that the investment is attractive despite the high risk of unemployment. Maragoli parents invest a large proportion of their income in the school system.¹ Before responsibility for primary education was taken away from local government in 1970, Kakamega District, in response to community pressure, spent over 80% of its local government budget on education. This percentage exceeded that of any other district in Kenya, and in addition, Kakamega spent more money in absolute terms than any other district on teachers' salaries.

¹School fees are graduated by classes, ranging from Kshs. 50/- in Standards I and II to 90/- in Standard VII. Besides school fees, there are activity fees, building funds, school uniform expenses, examination fees, watchmen's salaries, lunch programs, and self-help construction and maintenance contributions. In addition, the withdrawal of members of the family labor force results in a reduction of income for the household.

Kakamega District is well endowed with 462 primary schools, 42 of which are within South Maragoli's 35.5 square miles. However, Kakamega's 24 aided secondary schools can provide only 12% of the District's 13,068 Standard VII students with an opportunity for continuing academic studies. Although 32 locally constructed and supported self-help, Harambee secondary schools, along with a few private schools, have been initiated in the District, they have helped only slightly to ease this bottle-neck situation.

The payment of school fees is a top priority for whatever funds parents are able to accumulate. Despite costly school fees, 73% of 215 children aged eight to sixteen in Bulala Village were attending primary classes and 33% of those aged four to seven (an usually high proportion of this age group in a developing country) were in primary or nursery schools.¹

For many years, the Maragoli have viewed farming enterprise merely as a supplement to wage employment. The community's economic life-blood is composed of a flow of labor migrants to town centers. Meanwhile, a high proportion of remittances sent home are used to send children to school, which perpetuates this migratory cycle. Yet, as wage employment becomes more difficult to obtain, those unable to succeed in entrepreneurial trade or artisan enterprises will

¹While the percentage of children who reach Standard VII is much lower than this, the proportion with some exposure to the school system is much higher. These figures were collected during the third school term when there are fewer children attending classes than in the first term. For a further discussion of the school system, see J. Moock (1973).

be forced to look to agriculture as the mainstay of their sustenance.

The Agricultural Potential of South Maragoli

The Location supports a wide variety of food crops which include maize (the main source of subsistence), beans, millet, potatoes, bananas, onions, cabbages, and tomatoes. Each of these crops is potentially marketable if the farmer is able to produce a surplus above his family's consumption needs. The only major crop grown exclusively for sale is coffee, which is processed and sold at a coffee cooperative in the Location. In 1970, about 35% of South Maragoli farmers (in comparison with 15% in Nyangori, 13% in Tiriki, 10% in North Maragoli, and 13% in East and West Bunyore) grew coffee, although its quality was generally poor and the prices were low.¹

South Maragoli farmers have the advantage of a bimodal rainfall pattern which usually supports two harvests of maize annually, although due to frequent dry spells during the short rains season, millet is often substituted for maize. In addition to subsistence and cash crop production, farmers raise a number of domestic animals including chickens, one or two native cows per farm, and less commonly goats, sheep, ducks, and turkeys. However, these animals and their by-products are

¹According to the 1971 report of the Ministry of Agriculture, Vihiga Division, 164.94 hectares of coffee were grown in South Maragoli, while the sale price for that year was 60 K. cents per kilo. In addition, P. Mook's 1971 Vihiga survey indicates that 3% of South Maragoli farmers grow tea, although such crop acreage is very small. Prior to 1971, only farmers living east of the Kakamega-Kisumu road were allowed to grow tea under the area's quota. But while this restriction has been removed, the rate of tea adoption is slow due to small

too few and of too low quality to be raised for anything but household consumption.

Population density is high, and consequently, owners of grade cattle have a good local market for the rich, plentiful milk which these animals produce. In recognition of this fact, the Kenya Government offers loans to farmers with adequate acreage to set up a paddock (a minimum of five acres is required). However, as of 1970, there were only 132 grade cattle in the Location, of which just 47 cows were mature and productive.¹

As South Maragoli is only fifteen miles from the port, rail, and air terminal of Kisumu township, it offers its farmers splendid marketing opportunities. Not only does it have numerous feeder roads as well as excellent external road connections, but also a large number of vehicles for transporting produce. The availability of transport is indicated by 1969 District police records; 2,987 motor offenses were recorded involving buses, lorries, and taxis.

The farms of the Location are served by a number of extension agencies. They are more accessible to bicycling agricultural extension agents situated at the Vihiga administrative headquarters than are farms in other parts of Vihiga.² They are also served by the Friends Rural Service Program, a volunteer extension organization from nearby Kaimosi Mission.

plots and reluctance to tie up land in an investment which won't pay off for six to ten years.

¹By 1970, only 57 IDA grade cattle loans had been made for the entire Vihiga Division.

²P. Mook (1971) found that 57% of South Maragoli's farmers were visited by agricultural extension agents in 1970.

Moreover, many students from the area attend Kenya's oldest agricultural secondary school, at Chavakali, in adjacent North Maragoli. The Division, in 1969, boasted of 138.4K clubs for young farmers with 5,175 members and 64 Home Economic clubs for women. Of South Maragoli's farmers, 6%, prior to 1969, attended at least one agricultural course at Bukura Farmers' Training College, 25 miles away (P. Mook 1971). In addition, an agricultural research sub-station in Kakamega continually experiments with new fertilizer combinations and new maize varieties to increase crop yield in the area. Thus, the agricultural situation in South Maragoli is far from stagnant.

Given the adequacy of soil, weather, and water, the availability of cash crops and livestock enterprises, the opportunity for marketing, and the accessibility to farming expertise, South Maragoli should have high agricultural potential. Yet, such farming advantages are outweighed by the area's fundamental problem of over-population and by the great number of uneconomic farm units. The size of land holdings in the Location vary, but while 5% of South Maragoli's farmers have over nine acres (fifteen acres is considered enormous by local standards), 58% possess three acres or less.¹ Since homestead living quarters, sometimes containing two or three separate houses, are included in this acreage, the amount of land available for cultivation may be up to a quarter acre less than the total farm size.

¹These figures derive from P. Mook's 1971 survey of Vihiga. However, he cautions that since all parts of South Maragoli had not undergone land registration by that time, the acreage presented in the survey may be somewhat imprecise.

Furthermore, land holdings are often fragmented into two or three separate plots, sometimes situated in different parts of the Location.

Farms usually are irregular in shape due to rock outcroppings and steep gradients. Large scale, mechanized farming technology, therefore, is unsuitable for South Maragoli; and almost all farming is done with hand hoes. Farmers with small acreage cannot afford the luxury of fallow land, and are prone to growing two crops annually with the consequent depletion and exhaustion of the soil. Furthermore, in those parts of the Location where hillsides are particularly steep, fields dug on slopes with little attempt at terracing have heightened the danger of soil erosion.

Due to the combination of small land holdings, a low level of technology, poor soil management, and insufficient crop staggering;¹ the area does not produce enough crops to meet local demands, and is a net importer of maize and beans. Extension programs demonstrate that with the use of hybrid maize varieties designed to suit the ecological conditions of the area, chemical fertilizer, and proper husbandry techniques a farmer can increase his maize yield from as low as 6.5 200 pound bags per acre to over 20 bags.² Yet, agri-

¹Legumes and other vegetables are planted along with maize and harvested three months later simultaneously throughout the area. Thus, markets in Vihiga and Kisumu are flooded with vegetables twice a year and prices are low, while at other times, markets are virtually devoid of produce.

²During the long rains, half the average acreage is devoted to maize, while far less than this planted with maize during the short rains, and yield is considerably lessened due to frequent droughts.

cultural innovation in maize production as well as in the production of other agricultural commodities attracts little individual investment in South Maragoli. While a few families have fully taken advantage of new opportunities to increase their agricultural productivity, the majority, who own tiny plots and concentrate upon production for home consumption,¹ tend to regard agricultural enterprise as a last choice in the absence of other employment possibilities.

Patterns of Residence

The 1969 Kenya Population Census shows a 100 : 146 ratio of men to women in the 25 to 49 age group in Kakamega District. Of Kakamega's total population, half is under age 15 and three-quarters is under age 30. Therefore, South Maragoli, in the District's residential nucleus, has become a "bedroom community" in which a congested population, dominated by women and children, is dependent upon remittances to pay taxes, school fees, and numerous household expenses. The dependent nature of the population upon outside wage earners, and the long-term factor of land scarcity have strongly influenced residence patterns in the area.

Prior to colonial rule, residence patterns in Maragoli were determined by clan affiliation. The Maragoli tribe as a political unit was an aggregation of twenty-eight autonomous and acephalous clans. These exogamous, patri-clans formed units of contiguous residence. Legend has it that after the descendents of the tribal patriarch, Mulogoli, ar-

¹P. Moock (1973) estimates the per capita consumption in Vihiga at one and one half bags of maize flour per year.

rived in what is now the Vihiga area, they began to divide into clan units or oluhia (named after the hearths where elders met to discuss local news).¹ Some of the clans further split into lineages or inyumba (houses).

Although the Maragoli clans claimed rights over territory, this did not preclude clansmen from granting residence privileges to "clan strangers", most frequently sister's sons and uxori-locally married husbands who wished to live away from their clan. In fact, the practice was so common that by the mid-1930's Wagner found 37% of Maragoli's population residing as clan strangers or avamenya (1949: 56). Clan territoriality was further diminished by the custom of participant clans sharing land conquered in war.

Within this century, such factors as the residential segregation of Christians (a short lived practice inspired by early missionaries), farm fragmentation, and freehold land purchase have dealt the last remnants of clan territoriality a final blow. Today, as a result of land registration, land is legally held on an individual basis in Maragoli, and no land is considered communal except areas officially designated as public places, such as schools, markets, and pathways. The present system of land tenure and the recent program of land adjudication are detailed in Chapters Five and Six.

From an investigation of current residential patterns,

¹For a listing of Maragoli clan groups and a discussion of clan history, see Wagner (1949) and Were (1967).

I found it difficult to identify which Location areas were formerly associated with which clans, except in those sub-locations still retaining clan derived names. Yet, fierce protest by the Location elders in 1971 against the Administration's proposal to change three sub-location boundaries and substitute church parish names for those associated with clans, indicate that the identification of clanship with locality is still considered important.

South Maragoli's eleven sub-locations, each presided over by a sub-chief, are informally divided into sub-areas headed by unpaid headmen or magutu. This administrative framework, established under colonial rule, overlies and sometimes cross-cuts the dense spread of indigenous village units. Many villages, customarily small, have been consolidated into larger units since the arrival of the missionaries in this century. Such a criss-cross of territorial units provides residents with a number of alternatives for locality identification.¹

Bulala Village is situated in Munugi Sub-Location, which has a density of 1,500 persons per square mile. While 174 adult males, ages 20-59, maintain residence in the village (Table 1), 111 or 64% are absent at any given time; thus, leaving nearly a 2:1 ratio of females to males within this resident age group. The population is divided evenly between

¹In the process of conducting 142 pilot interviews in Bulala, I received a total of five different answers to the question, "In which village do you live?"

TABLE 1
BULALA VILLAGE TOTAL POPULATION^a

Age	Males	Females	Total
0-9	155	166	
10-19	115	114	
20-29	74	67	
30-39	30	35	
40-49	43	30	
50-59	27	19	
60-69	17	21	
70-79	6	8	
80-89	3	4	
Total	470	464	934

^aThese figures include household heads working away and those who attend school or are employed outside the village without having established a permanent household of their own.

the sexes, and over half the inhabitants are under age 20. The average size of a nuclear family in Bulala is 6.1 persons, not including those who have moved away to establish a household of their own, while the average farm unit size is 6.6 persons. The slight difference between the two figures indicates the paucity of extended family members in these farm units.

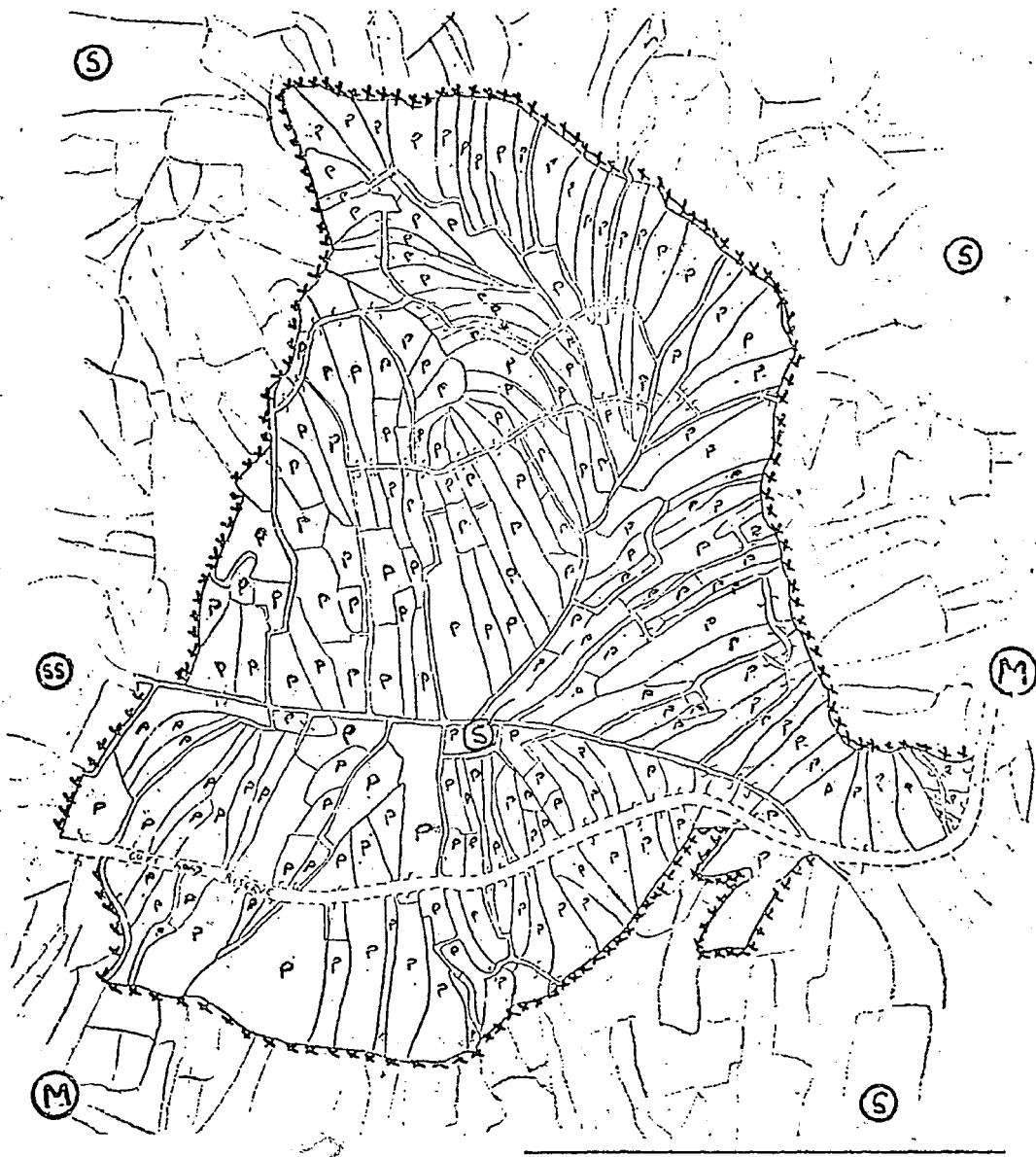
Bulala Village is a composite of four indigenous villages, whose individual boundaries have now faded from the memories of the elders. The village is situated entirely in Munugi Sub-Location, but is cross-cut by a sub-area boundary which administratively separates approximately 10% of the village from its remainder.

The mitten shaped village consists of 87.98 hectares

(220 acres) divided into 193 separate garden plots, which are bordered by euphorbia bushes. Unlike most Maragoli villages whose boundaries are not apparent, Bulala is delineated by steep valley streams and a short passage of roadside (see Figure 2). The surrounding infrastructure is so intensive that within a one mile radius of the village house in which I lived, there are four primary schools, one "self-help" secondary school, a coffee-cooperative, two small market centers, and churches representing six denominations. In addition, the Location's major all weather road passes along the village outskirts, making movement beyond the village as easy as within its boundaries.

Individual farmers generally cultivate a number of small plots. Of those owning land in Bulala, 20% reside in other villages, while 27% of Bulala's resident farm-heads possess land elsewhere. Since the basis for village residence is farm ownership and the establishment of a household, this study concentrates upon the 142 persons who live and have land holdings in Bulala Village. Included in this number are five females living alone who have recently registered farm land in their own name.

In Bulala, the farm homestead or omugidzi usually consists of one to three individual houses which center on a common courtyard. The term omugidzi traditionally referred to the front yard of a man's house on which he grazed his cattle. Recently, however, omugidzi has been used by residents to denote a decision-making farm unit. The constit-



0 miles 1/8

KEY

- | | |
|------|--------------------|
| P | Plot (registered) |
| S | School (primary) |
| SS | School (secondary) |
| M | Market |
| xxxx | Valley Stream |
| ---- | Murum Road |
| ==== | Pathway |

Fig. 2.--Bulala Village and Its Environs

uent farm family may include several generations. Such temporally extended homesteads often can be readily identified by their variety of component house styles including the customary round thatched roof hut, the more modern square hut, and the recent semi-permanent house with corrugated iron roof.

The basic domestic group is the elementary family, which lives as an isolated unit. This grouping is sometimes extended to include an aged parent, a newly married daughter-in-law, or the children of a husband's or wife's sister or brother. Marriage is ideally patrilocal and polygamous. Inheritance of family land and possessions is patrilineal and generally divided with great attention given to equity among sons. Since land holdings are small, fathers tend to delay the division of property for as long as possible. This factor combined with an ever-increasing bridewealth (consisting of cash and cattle) leads to a situation in which Maragoli men do not commonly have control over land or labor until they reach their thirties. Thus, many homesteads include resident adult landless sons working or searching for employment away from home.

The Maragoli omugidzi may be spatially as well as temporally extended if the homestead head is a labor migrant who has established a second household in town. Maintenance of a second urban household usually assures frequent change in the composition of the Bulala homestead over the annual cycle. Wives make several annual urban visits, children go

for holidays, brothers and the children of brothers and sisters search in town for jobs and secondary school places. By keeping a constant log on my Maragoli homestead census, I found that 78% of the 142 farm units changed the composition of their membership significantly over an annual cycle. This frequent coming and going of migrants, wives, and families between town and country has substantial effect upon the availability of agricultural labor and upon farm management decision-making.

The isolated living pattern of the elementary family within the village is consistent with the demands of the production system. Indeed, given the small-scale nature of agricultural activity in the area, there is little need for large cooperative groups. Just as the village does not serve as a cooperative production unit, all of its residents are not affiliated with similar religious or social organizations.

Bulala supports a host of voluntary associations, including school committees, saving societies, "self-help" improvement groups, and denominational and African independent churches. Membership in these organizations is not delineated by residence, and participants are usually drawn from a number of villages. Schools and churches, in particular, are major institutionalized centers for much of the Location's social activity, and provide local actors with highly visible platforms for demonstrating leadership ability.

Religious affiliation in Bulala¹ reflects patterns of differential association both within the locality and the omugidzi. While eight denominations (Salvation Army, Friends African Mission, Pentacostal Assemblies of East Africa, Divine, Orthodox Church, Holy Spirit or Dini ya Roho, Wokufa, and Moslems) have attracted membership from Bulala; over 65% of the village population is currently affiliated with either the Salvation Army or the Friends African Mission, both of which are international organizations oriented toward pragmatic self-improvement programs.² Changing denominational affiliation or switching congregations within the same church organization is not an uncommon occurrence. For example, over 40% of Bulala's adult population have changed local congregational affiliation at least once since 1960. Religious differences are reflected in personal friendships and work parties rather than doctrinal preferences.

The relationship of both men and women are widely dispersed through activities outside the immediate area surrounding Bulala. Membership in a variety of voluntary associations provides new lines of social differentiation which cross-cut patterns of association based on kinship and locality. In this manner the solidarity of any one group is modified while wide-knit networks of interpersonal rela-

¹In all, 7% of the adult population were not affiliated with a church at the time the pilot interviews were conducted.

²For a detailed description of the activities of both these churches in the southern Abaluyia area of Kenya, see Sangree (1966).

tionships are established which stretch throughout South Maragoli and well beyond its boundaries.

The Distribution of Wealth

Economic transformation and growth have been marked by increasing inequalities in the distribution of wealth and income among Maragoli residents. Emerging status differences indicate that response to opportunities for agricultural innovation, land purchase, and local trade have differed significantly among the overall population of the Location.

Maragoli adult males commonly pursue more than one form of employment during the year. On the one hand, a disadvantageous man/land ratio precludes agriculture from being a full-time occupation for the majority of the area's population. On the other, those with non-agricultural occupations look to farming to supplement their income and provide security in times of unemployment and ill health.

Although Graduated Personal Tax (GPT) lists provide the best method for assessing primary occupations and general incomes among the Location's population, they do not include adult males employed outside the District nor those employed by government. Persons working outside, although simultaneously engaged in agriculture, pay taxes at their place of employment. Public servants have taxes automatically deducted from their pay checks. Moreover, local occupations, no matter how lucrative, that are secondary for persons with wage employment, are not included in their tax assessment. Thus,

income differentials may be wider than tax lists indicate. In addition, the GPT lists reflect a great deal of subjectivity in the appraisal of incomes, since they are recorded by the sub-location officials and sub-area headmen. There also appears to be some confusion as to the basis of such estimates since assessment criteria differ from one sub-location to the next. For example, Nyangira (1970: 9) claims that 90% of all GPT assessment is done on the basis of capital assets, e.g. land, cattle, crops, shop stock, rather than as intended, upon the income derived from the farm or store. In addition, I found that at the tax assessment meetings which I attended for two sub-locations, one sub-location taxed a large variety of part-time occupations, while the other exempted all non-shop owning craftsmen and traders.

In 1970, 778 persons, not employed by government, paid local taxes (Table 2).

TABLE 2

SOUTH MARAGOLI GPT ASSESSMENT
RETURNS FOR 1970

	Tax	Persons
Kshs.	48/-	694
	72	46
	108	21
	156	10
	240	2
	360	0
	480	2
	600	3
	Total	778

In all, 2,715 males out of a total 9,438 were listed as potential taxpayers in South Maragoli. Tax eligibility starts with an annual income over Kshs. 960/- or US \$137.¹ That 29% or 778 of these potential taxpayers were on the actual tax roles reflects the high proportion of taxable males working away from home, and also the occupational multiplicity of those who hold wage paid jobs.

The standard of living in the Location is best indicated by the average annual expenditures of resident families. I collected data from the 142 farm units in Bulala on such major expenses as school fees, house repairs, taxes, agricultural inputs, and travel over an annual cycle. However, I was able only to gather detailed budgets for food and household goods from six Bulala families. The expenditure items and figures presented in Table 3 have been cross-checked with merchants, neighbors, and official records.

This standard of living for average farm units in Bulala is not reflected by agricultural output. If an average Bulala farmer with an acre and one half in maize follows extension advice and produces a high yield of 20 bags per acre during the long rains and 10 bags during the short rains, his total annual yield would be 45 bags. If his average six person farm family consumes 9 bags, and he sells the remaining 36 bags at a maximum market rate (prices are discussed in Chapter Five), his gross profit could be as high as 2160/-. However, if we deduct 60/- for hybrid seed, 240/- for fertilizer, and say, a

¹There are 100 K. cents in a K. shilling, and 20 K. shillings in a K. pound. Kshs. 7 = US \$1.00; KE 1 = US \$2.80.

low 100/- for labor (costs are also discussed in Chapter Five), he would remain with a net income of 1,760/-. Thus, even if a Bulala small-holder were to maximize his agricultural output, the cash earnings from his farm alone would not cover his present basic annual expenditures.

TABLE 3
ESTIMATED BASIC ANNUAL EXPENDITURES
FOR SIX PERSON FARM UNITS

Item ^a	Annual Expense
Food and Household Goods (e.g. milk, sugar, tea, meat, maize, beer, oil, medicine, parafin, charcoal, clothing, batteries, ink, stationary)	Kshs. 1,280/-
House Repairs	100
School Expenses (three children)	260
Transportation	90
GPT	48
County Council Tax and "Self- Help Donation"	17
Agriculture-All Crops and Animals (e.g. seed, fertilizer, labor, construction)	110
Total	Kshs. 1,905/- (US \$272)

^aDoes not include urban household or travel expenses of the absent farm-head.

My actual income estimates for 1970, including farm and non-farm cash earnings, for the heads of the 142 farm units indicate that 52% had an income less than Kshs. 1,500/- for that year, while 22% made over 3,000/-. Given the small size of South Maragoli farms, major income differentials among omuridzi heads are mainly a function of the widening gap between wage employment and unsupplemented agricultural income.

It appears that estimated omugidzi expenses outweigh the earnings of the majority of farm-heads. However, in South Maragoli, as in many African communities, farm units tend to rely upon more than one source of income. Women generally have occasional, part-time occupations as potmakers, venders of vegetables or fowl, or members of labor groups. Often their earnings are used to purchase food and clothing for themselves and their offspring. In order to earn pocket money, school children usually undertake casual labor when classes are not in session, for example, breaking land for planting, selling eggs, helping with house construction, and running errands for shopkeepers. In addition, married daughters and employed sons contribute to their siblings' school fees and to their parents' agricultural expenses.

A Dislocated Suburb

A stereotyped notion of an on-going traditional life in a pastoral rural setting is far from the socio-economic reality of contemporary South Maragoli. The community's dynamic linkage with the wider Kenya society is reflected in its patterns of communication and travel, and in the prevalence of universalistic norms and values associated with Western education, Christian ideology, and a cash economy.

Maragoli homes are furnished with the symbols of a cosmopolitan society. One finds mud walls covered with calendars from Nairobi companies, framed family photographs, and numerous magazine clippings. Occasionally, there are displayed certificates of various adult training courses (i.e. sewing, Bible,

agriculture) in which household members have participated. Common household goods include china tea sets, manufactured sitting room furniture, bed frames and mattresses, and several wooden or cardboard suitcases. In addition, such items as tinned food, bottled milk, tea, and sugar can generally be found under every thatched roof. Dress follows European standards and nearly everyone wears shoes. Such material trappings indicate the cosmopolitan orientation of the area's population.

In Maragoli, one never knows in which language to greet strangers. Inevitably, one says "Mulembe", the Lulogoli peace greeting, and receives a Swahili "Jambo" or a "Good Day" in return. Multi-lingual ability is not limited to men, as a surprising number of women have at least a rudimentary knowledge of Swahili acquired during visits to town. In addition, a large number of persons are literate as a result of exposure to formal education, British army literacy classes conducted during colonial days, or church sponsored Bible courses. Literacy and multi-lingual ability, as we shall see, have given the Maragoli a special advantage in securing wage paid jobs across the country.

Outside communications are enhanced by plentiful radios and a heavy circulation of daily newspapers (shops are usually sold out by mid-morning). Mail flow is heavy and regular, both in and out of the area, as I can attest from official records of postal money orders and my experience as an occasional carrier of mail for Bulala residents. Village mail is collected from the Maragoli Post Office, four miles away, under the mailbox number of the local primary school. In this manner, news of death, birth, or difficulties of local persons in town is quickly known in Bulala.

In addition to the interchange of news and ideas, and the movement of persons between countryside and town; the travel experience of many South Maragoli residents extends beyond Kenya's boundaries. Many older men, although they do not travel as frequently today as younger men, have had experience overseas as members of British colonial army battalions in past world wars. Moreover, several Bulala villagers have kinsmen working or studying abroad.

Although South Maragoli is 250 miles from Nairobi and has no town center of its own, it cannot be classified as a strictly "rural" or "agricultural" area. Instead, it might be more appropriate to think of Maragoli with its crowded population, two or three acre family plots, dense spread of social services, and dependency upon town income as a dislocated suburb of Nairobi and other town centers across Kenya. Furthermore, the concurrent involvement of persons engaged in urban employment and local agriculture, the constant flow of gifts and visits between town and Location, and the prevalence of such cosmopolitan forces as Christianity, western education, and mass media function to link the community into the mainstream of contemporary Kenya society. The nature of agrarian life in Maragoli, the differential structure of employment opportunities, and the decisions of individual residents as to agricultural investment, thus, are best viewed within the context of Kenya's wider socio-economic system.

The next chapter presents a historical account of Maragoli's incorporation into and growing dependency upon the national wage labor economy.

Chapter III

THE STRUCTURAL HISTORY OF LABOR MIGRATION

Maragoli and its surrounding region has long served as one of Kenya's major labor reservoirs, created by the economic necessity of adult males to exploit employment niches outside their overcrowded homeland. The history of wage employment dates back to the beginning of the twentieth century when external forces combined with internal pressures to drive large numbers of adult males into the colonial labor market.

By the turn of the century, European farmers and businessmen were rapidly settling in Kenya. As their farming estates and new companies grew, they required greater inputs of local labor. By 1906, the East African Standard, a leading local newspaper, already spoke of a labor shortage in the Colony, and by 1908, the Government had conducted an inquiry into the matter. Thus, when a joint hut and poll tax was introduced in 1910, the same year in which a rinderpest epidemic killed 50% of the cattle in North Kavirondo District (as Western Province was then called), the stage was set for massive waves of labor migration among the Maragoli as a means of easing their precarious economic situation.

When taxation was originally introduced by the British

Administration in 1899, it was levied on hut owners who were allowed to pay in kind with produce or through local corvée labor on public works.¹ The 1910 poll tax was initiated so as to extend the tax base by including those male Africans who were not hut owners and, therefore, had not been previously liable for taxation. The significance of taxation as a milestone in Maragoli history was marked by the naming of the 1911 circumcision group, whose initiation took place during tax collection. The group was called Kichiti or "small ticket".

Early in the century, the Maragoli had already begun to feel the pressure of their disadvantageous land/labor situation. With the occurrence of several acute famines in 1906, 1907, 1910, and the introduction of taxation at the turn of the century, the strain upon land resources was aggravated considerably. Although these factors provided incentives for wage employment, the Kisumu District Political Records for South Maragoli in 1910 attest to the initial reluctance with which the Maragoli left their homeland. It was recorded that, "The Maragoli are averse to going to work outside their own country and apparently many of them who have done so have returned home ill and some have died." It seems that from its inception, labor migration for the Maragoli has been more of a necessity than a free choice.

¹Hobley (1929: 124) writes that the payment of taxation was initiated as a visible sign of local acceptance of European control.

Meanwhile the European settlers' demands for labor to work their plantations and their industries were increasing at a far greater rate than was the supply. Tax payments in kind soon were replaced by money as the labor market expanded. In addition, a series of five Native Authority Ordinances was enacted between 1912 and 1922 which authorized headmen to require every quarter year, six days unpaid local community work from all able-bodied men unless there was proof of three months work executed during the previous twelve months (Orde-Brown 1933: 149). Although Fearn, in his excellent study of the economic development of Nyanza Province from 1903 through 1953 suggests that such labor often was regarded by the Africans as a holiday (1961: 51), the 1917-18 Annual Report for North Kavirondo District indicates that offenses against the Native Authority Ordinances — including refusals to preform such work — made up the majority of cases tried by Native Council Courts. Forced labor, therefore, may have provided a good deal of added incentive for outside employment particularly in areas such as Maragoli, where the positions of chief and headmen were imposed upon the customary acephalous political system.

Maragoli residents, however, were lured as well as coerced into entering the labor market. With the completion of the Kisumu terminus of the Uganda railway line in 1901 came the first missionaries, and with their arrival, the two dominant themes of Maragoli life — work and education — soon were

firmly established. Both missionization and the subsequent establishment of the formal school system have had a tremendous impact upon socio-economic life in Kakamega District. Among all the Abaluyia peoples who had early contact with Christianity, it was the Maragoli who most enthusiastically welcomed and most earnestly exploited the services offered by the missionaries. Thus, when in 1902 the Friends African Mission was established at Kaimosi in neighboring Tiriki, their early annual reports indicate that the majority of African domestic servants, students, and converts came from Maragoli.

From the beginning, the overcrowded Maragoli were quick to appreciate the missionaries' role as bestowers of goods and services which would help alleviate their dependence upon limited land resources. The Maragoli's eager willingness to aid the missionaries combined with the factor of population density in the Location, which the evangelists considered a big help to their proselytizing efforts (FAM 1919), encouraged the Friends to expand their operations directly into Maragoli. Thus, in 1906 the mid-Western American Quakers, after a two year dispute with the Church Missionary Society which had previously established themselves in South Maragoli, took over the C.M.S. station in Vihiga.¹

¹During 1904 and 1905, the Kaimosi Mission archives reveal the exchange of sharply worded letters with the C.M.S. concerning the location of the latter's outpost in Maragoli. This station was situated ten miles from Kaimosi and the Friends considered the outpost an encroachment upon their religious domain. An agreement was reached whereby the C.M.S.

Although the actual number of converts to Christianity was slight in the early years, and field observations indicate that customary religious attitudes concerning rites de passage, disease, and personal misfortune have a tendency to persist behind Christian trappings even today; the missionaries made better theological headway with the Maragoli than with the majority of neighboring peoples. Part of the explanation for the Friends' success with the Maragoli lies in the use of Lulogoli as the chosen dialect for Biblical translation, and in the fact that Maragoli customs and beliefs did not clash as seriously with missionary attitudes and practices as was the case, for instance, with the Tiriki.¹ But although language and lack of critical cultural conflict may have facilitated proselytizing, historical accounts from the Kaimosi archives and from informants indicate that Maragoli interest in the missionaries was generated by other than theological considerations.

Practically from the day they settled in the area, the Quakers began to play the role of dispensers of European services and consumer products. In their Annual Report of 1902 to the Board of the Friends African Industrial Mission, the pioneering evangelists proudly recounted, "We purchased

would move further west towards the Luo area, while the Friends would limit their work mostly to the Abaluyia.

¹In his detailed account of the spread of Christianity in southern Abaluyialand, Sangree discusses missionary hostility towards Tiriki secret circumcision and initiation rites, and also Tiriki alienation towards the missionary practice of recruiting social outcasts, mulogi or witches, and aliens (Maragoli) as the first African converts (1966: 124-26).

native flour (for our men's rations), chickens, eggs, sweet potatoes, etc. from the natives, paying them in rice...., and then sell them cloth, salt, soap, etc. as they desire. This teaches them the use and value of money about which they have heretofore known little or nothing." In addition to introducing Vihiga residents to a cash economy, the missionaries undertook to instill the value of modesty in the community by giving every workman they hired a shirt, loin cloth, and a blanket (FAM 1903). Before the advent of the First World War, the various missions which had been established in the area were supplying their congregations with a source of wage employment, medical facilities, and consumer products.

The rise of consumer expectations among the Abaluyia was stimulated greatly during World War One. The recruitment of Africans into army battalions and the heightened use of African labor throughout the Colony brought increasing numbers of Abaluyia into contact with European life and manufactured goods. The early arrival of Indian and Swahili traders in the area with the completion of the Kisumu railway terminus in 1901, and the steady expansion of shops into the countryside further fanned local interest in imported products.

Given the combined factors of population pressure, famine, the introduction of taxation, and a growing demand for consumer goods; economic motive was primary in the

Maragoli reaction to missionary contact. But of all the material and social benefits which the missionaries offered, the one which brought the greatest Maragoli response was formal schooling.

From Sangree's account of the activities of the early Friends missionaries, we learn that the first persons to attend the mission schools were generally sons or young kinsmen of those prestigious clan leaders selected by the British as tribal administrators.

Friends missionaries followed a policy of trying to induce the British appointed tribal leaders to send sons to the mission at Kaimosi to learn to read and write and hear the Christian message. Several Abaluyia tribal chiefs and headmen, very likely encouraged by the British authorities, soon took up the practice of sending perhaps one of their own sons and several other children of their clan to Kaimosi to live and learn what the missionaries had to offer (1966: 26).

Individual career histories in South Maragoli indicate that those with some knowledge of English were offered preferential domestic or farm management jobs by settlers across the Colony. However, the desire for wage employment was not accompanied by alienation from the local environment. Many of the students who completed the early "literacy education" course were rewarded with wage paid jobs as teachers, pastors, or government functionaries; and the preference of these high status persons, whose skills were in demand all over Kenya, was to remain within their own district. As parents soon became aware that education was paying economic rewards, school enrolments soared. By 1914, the FAM Annual Report indicates that there were already 2,662 students in Maragoli

schools — proportionately an outstanding number in the whole of East Africa at that time.

References in the archives of the Kaimosi Mission indicate the early pragmatism of the Maragoli in their outlook towards education, and the constant pressure they exerted upon the Mission to expand its educational activities. Several elderly informants recalled that in the 1920's, eighteen of the students attending boarding school at Kaimosi had a dispute with the missionaries over the education program which the students considered more oriented towards theology than academic skills. This group, which included men who later became leading figures in Maragoli politics, left the Kaimosi Mission to join the C.M.S. church and enroll in their school at Maseno, which provided two additional years of academic education. After completing their examinations, many of these students then returned to the Friends' fold as teachers in the Mission's growing number of "bush" schools.

This early type of manipulation of missionary services indicates the pragmatism of the Maragoli in selectively adapting the services offered by external agencies to suit their special needs. It appears from the socio-economic setting of pre-colonial Maragoli and the history of early contact with European agencies that the Maragoli were highly motivated to maximize the new social and material resources offered them, and thus, were ripe for "missionization".

In addition to religious training and formal schooling,

the Friends' practical approach to missionization included an emphasis upon technical training. Students at the Mission were instructed in the skills involved in carpentry, printing, bicklaying, tailoring, and the construction of saw mills and grinding mills. Thus, the early Maragoli Christians were the first in the Location to gain access to modern crafts and trades with which to supplement agricultural income.¹

For those Africans in search of employment outside of the District, there was little difficulty in finding jobs. As commercial centers grew and the railroad opened up the highland country for farming, owners of large companies and farming estates organized recruitment centers across the Colony. Some of these centers were established in Kisumu and at least one was located in the town of Kakamega. Small-scale businessmen and farmers used private recruiting agents to collect and forward Africans to their place of employment. In the Nyanza Province Archives, a 1927 letter to the Senior Commissioner from labor agent, J. Riddock claimed that when a recruit arrived at such a center, he was encouraged to sign a labor contract through such incentives as advances for his hut tax, food ration

¹In Wagner's study of the District in 1935, he found that, "In all cases where I was able to make inquiries, the young men who were engaged in a modern craft did not come from families in which similar crafts had been traditionally practiced...The technical knowledge and skills required for all these new activities has been imparted by the industrial and handicrafts departments of mission and government schools and, to a lesser extent, by apprenticeship with Indian fundis in European townships or at Indian trading centers" (1956: 17).

for the journey, rail fare, and blankets.

The most common form of contractual labor was the thirty day ticket system, in which thirty days work had to be assigned and completed within forty-two days at most. When the ticket was completed, the laborer would receive his wages, and both the employer and employee could terminate the contract. Similarly, a thirty day verbal contract was regularly used in the employment of domestic servants, an occupation for which the mission-educated Maragoli were particularly in demand. On larger farms and in companies requiring labor for longer periods, it was standard to have written contracts of at least six months. At the end of these contracts, it was the employer's obligation to repatriate the employee to his homeland.

Although a few of the sugar and tea estates sought to encourage a stable labor force through the provision of accommodation for an employee's family; given the meager monthly wages which were offered, Maragoli workers consistently preferred short-term contracts to long periods away from home. In addition, such short-term contracts in conjunction with accessible transport to their location (via the Kisumu railway line) facilitated frequent home visits. In this way, the Maragoli migrant (unlike many Central African Copperbelt migrants who stayed away from home for several years at a time) was enabled by the structure of the labor system in which he participated to maintain the statuses of wage employee and small-holder simul-

taneously rather than alternatively.

During the 1920's, the Maragoli benefitted from the continual demand for labor in the Colony, which was intensified by the extension of a branch railway line between Kisumu and Butere. The need for African labor was so great in those early years that the region was over-run with both licensed labor agents and private recruiters. In a letter to the Chief Native Commissioner in Nairobi in 1925 concerning the lack of supervision over labor recruiters, the Senior Commissioner in Kisumu complained, "At the present time there are a large number of Europeans, Asiatics, and natives employed by farmers, companies, railway contractors, sisal estates, engineers in charge of railway construction and others scouring the districts in search of labor...Many juveniles, sometimes children of the apparent age of 8 or 10, are recruited and sent down the line."

The presence of numerous labor recruiters in the region indicates the emphasis placed in early years on the persuasion of Africans to accept labor contracts. Although population pressure gave the Maragoli more incentive than their neighbors to earn wages, they too originally entered paid employment as "target income workers" with limited financial needs. However, it was often not so much a matter of limited aspirations for goods, but rather that the wage level was too low which failed to attract large numbers of laborers or make long periods of work away from home worthwhile. The early elasticity of the labor supply was noted

in the 1923 Annual Report for North Kavirondo District, along with a recommendation for its control. "During the latter part of the year the natives have shown an increased disinclination to go out and work, owing to their Hut Tax troubles being over. This will right itself again in 1924 when more money is required."

From 1910 up until 1930, the major labor problem in Kenya was a labor demand which far surpassed the supply, and Africans throughout the Colony were economically both coaxed and coerced into wage employment. But depending upon their ability to sustain subsistence needs and earn an adequate agricultural income to cover taxation and other target expenses, Africans from different parts of the Colony responded in greater or lesser degree to the call for wage employment. For the Maragoli, an overwhelming response to the call was predictable.

By the early 1930's, many industries in Kenya were suffering the effects of the depression, and wages fell off by 20% to 30%. In addition, recruiting efforts were lessened as employers had all the labor that they required. However, despite the world depression, opportunities for employment were increased in Kakamega District in the post 1930 years. At first there was the discovery of gold in Kakamega in 1931 and a subsequently prosperous, if short lived, gold mining industry in which the Maragoli were especially sought after for underground work.¹ Wagner

¹See Colony and Protectorate of Kenya, ARNA 1933.

(1949: 38) estimated that by the end of 1937, 44% of the male population of Bantu Kavirondo between 15 and 40 years of age were employed in the services of Europeans, including those working in the Kakamega goldfields.

Later, during the Second World War, employment opportunities throughout the Colony resumed as the Government conscripted labor for essential industries and for army regiments at home and overseas. Again in the 1950's, labor migrants from the Western regions of the Colony particularly benefitted from the labor shortage caused by the evacuation of tribes affected by the Mau Mau Emergency in Rift Valley and Central Provinces.

It was not until the early 1960's when internal European misgivings concerning forthcoming Kenya independence combined with external recession to cause a sharp contraction in employment, which fell by 13% between 1960 and 1963 (Ghai 1970: 5). During the post-independence period, the level of employment resumed an upward trend, but at a slow rate of growth. However, due to a rapidly growing, educated population and the widening gap between town and country incomes, an urban unemployment situation began to arise in Kenya which today has reached the proportions of a national crisis.

After more than half a century of exporting labor across the country, the Maragoli have been completely incorporated into the cash economy. Entry into the labor market on the basis of limited cash needs has ballooned

into dependency upon monetary income for actual survival. When labor migration first began, the major cash needs of the Maragoli were taxes, clothing along with assorted manufactured household items, and cattle and cash for bridewealth. While the introduction of taxation served as an inducement to seek work, its effect was limited as a conscriptive device. Taxes had to be kept low or possibly result in numerous exemptions for the destitute which would create a time-consuming administrative burden. Thus, taxation, serving as a subtle means of persuasion, rose slowly from three rupees in 1910, reaching 12 Kenya shillings in 1938 and 20 Kenya shillings in 1961. Only when unemployment approached serious proportions was income tax levied on a graduated basis.

Aside from imported cloth and a few desired items for household use, cattle and cash for bridewealth constituted a paramount and increasingly expensive need for employment (Table 4). The figures presented in Table 4 derive from

TABLE 4
THE RISING COST OF BRIDEWEALTH CONTRACTS

Year ^a	Amount
1910	2 cows + 1 bull + 12 hoes
1920	2 cows + 1 bull + Kshs. 24/-
1940	4 cows + Kshs. 60/-
1950	5 cows + Kshs. 200/-
1960	7 cows + Kshs. 600/-
1970	8 cows + Kshs. 800/-

^aThe amount given here for 1970 contracts refers only to marriages with girls having five to eight years of education.

the compilation of 136 bridewealth contracts among married or widowed male Bulala farm-heads. The figures for each point in time, thus, represent an average and the number of animals or shillings may vary slightly for each individual case. Of the 136 bridegrooms in the sample, 98% began wage employment prior to their marriage. Although only 17% of the 136 men have been able or have chosen to pay off their bridewealth debt in full (all 17% are men over age 45), the rising cost of the contract, especially in bovine poor Maragoli, has acted as a spur to economic activity.

Today, the payment of bridewealth is only one of numerous costly but basic expenditures faced by Maragoli residents. For many years the people of Maragoli have not been able to sustain their growing population on agriculture alone. Given small land holdings, even profits from cash crops cannot provide sufficient cash to stretch much beyond family consumption needs let alone cover school fees; maintain the upkeep of the home; pay fares, fines, and licenses; or fulfill financial obligations to kinsmen.

While much has been written about Africans seeking wage employment out of boredom with rural life, distain for farm labor, and attraction to the bright lights of the towns; it seems clear that for the Maragoli, dire economic need has long acted as both a necessary and sufficient propellant for the massive movement across the gap between small farm income and non-agricultural wage employment.

Chapter IV

CURRENT PATTERNS OF WAGE EMPLOYMENT

Today, despite the massive and growing unemployment situation in Kenya, the Maragoli still maintain their advantage of early education by holding positions in the national labor force at the skilled and semi-skilled levels in numbers disproportionate with their size in the population. Yet, changes in the nature of employment patterns have important implications for socio-economic relationships at home. This chapter examines first the urban and then the local labor markets in which workers participate. There follows an attempt to differentiate employment patterns among Bulala male farm-heads through the use of worker profiles.

Employment Away From Home

Kenya's modern employment condition has completely reversed itself from the early years of the century when the demand for labor was far greater than the supply. The fact that the economy today can only accommodate 23% of the total adult male labor force in urban wage employment, while agriculture is not a viable alternative for the majority of the remainder has changed the entire character of the labor migration system.

In recent years, the population of urban areas has

become more stable while a labor force has emerged which is permanently dependent upon wage employment. With urban wage jobs at a premium, the period of time which labor migrants spend away from home has been considerably lengthened. Whereas in the 1950's, the majority of migrants regarded employment as a means of accumulating savings to meet monetary targets at home, today's town residents tend to remain in employment much longer. Thus, the pattern of circular movement into and out of employment (as opposed to movement between employers) has been significantly altered.

Since the supply of labor is increasing ~~much~~ faster than the number of posts available, those fortunate enough to be employed tend to hold on to their jobs. Of the 122 male farm-heads in Bulala Village who do not have full-time, off-farm employment at home, the average time spent out of the area in employment or in search of employment amounts to 15.2 years. Moreover, three quarters of those over age 35 have been out for longer than 10 years, while 30% have been away for 25 years or more. When labor migration is taken as a proportion of age, a more meaningful measure given the variation in ages among farm-heads, the 122 men have been away from home an average of 32% of their lives. It can be seen that Maragoli men are not satisfied with short spells of employment. Due to the rural-urban imbalance of earning opportunities, the search for wage employment in urban centers continues throughout a large proportion of a man's lifetime.

The number of towns in which all Bulala farm-head mi-

grants have held jobs averages 2.2, while 32% have held jobs in three or more towns. Although 62% of Bulala's current farm-head migrants have headed for Nairobi, where jobs are most plentiful, Table 5 shows that job seekers fan out to many small towns across the country. This geographic spread accords with the 1969 Kenya Population Census which shows that substantial numbers of Luyia migrants are found in every town in Kenya.

TABLE 5
URBAN CENTERS FOR CURRENT BULALA
FARM-HEAD MIGRANTS

Area	Migrants	Percentage
Nairobi	40	62
Central Province	4	6
Athi River	2	
Thika	2	
Rift Valley Province	16	25
Eldoret	5	
Kericho	3	
Kitale	3	
Nakuru	4	
Narok	1	
Nyanza Province	3	5
Kisumu	3	
Out of Country	1	2
Mwanza, Tanzania	1	
Total	64	100

The average number of jobs held by current Bulala farm-head migrants is six, with the present position of those currently employed lasting five years. As Rempel (1970)

concludes from his recent survey of Kenya urban labor migrants, temporary migration is now an infrequent occurrence among rural to urban migrants. When men come to town and secure employment, they tend to stay. When a job is lost, the pattern is to set upon a strategy to obtain another immediately. Yet lengthy residences in town and protracted engagement in the urban labor force in no way implies a lessening of the migrant's ties with the home area.¹ In fact, instead of setting the worker at an increasing social distance from his area of origin, the process of incorporation into urban wage employment may lead to more intricate urban-rural interactions.

Forty years ago the laborer's exploitation of paid employment opportunities was facilitated by the employer in terms of contract, transportation, and accommodation. In a sense, the labor migrant could act as an independent agent, accepting and terminating periods of labor at his discretion once he had fulfilled his minimum financial needs. In addition, since short-term labor contracts were easily obtained by a three or four hour walk to Kisumu, it was unnecessary for the Maragoli migrant to mobilize personal relationships to any large extent in order to expedite his employment transactions.

¹Elkan (1972) argues that there has not as yet emerged an urban proletariat in Kenya which has severed their home ties and which no longer has a farm income. Although there has been a large increase in Nairobi's African middle class since Independence, Elkan suggests that this does not rule out a second home in the countryside.

Today, the magnitude of the unemployment situation requires the marshalling of personal affiliations in order to obtain the academic credentials to qualify for employment, finance transportation to town centers, locate inexpensive accommodation, and establish a steady job. The acquisition of school places and the payment of fees are the first critical stages of a wage employment career. Johnson and Whitelaw note in their study of remittances among Nairobi labor migrants that, "A high level of educational attainment is often indicative of the fact that a large amount was invested in the individual by a family member or friend and this would tend to increase the degree to which the worker feels beholden — legally or otherwise — to someone in the rural areas" (1972: 6).

Among the Maragoli, payment of school fees and attainment of school places unavailable through regular Provincial channels are typically the concern of close kinsmen within the extended family. Out of the 139 Standard VII students whom I traced two years after they left school, 61% had managed to remain within the academic school system, although only 45% had done so by advancing to secondary school.¹ Of the 63 students who obtained secondary school places, 37 or 59% did so outside of Western Province. These places were found in all cases with the aid of kinsmen employed in towns where the schools were located. Of the kinsmen who assisted

¹For the results of the first year's post-primary tracer study on this sample of school leavers, see J. Mook (1973).

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the leavers, Fa did so 20 times, Br 8, moBr 3, FaBr 2, siHu 2, and FaFa once. The high cost of attendance at private schools was partially alleviated by the free accommodation offered the students by their relatives. Of the 63 students, 48 had their secondary fees paid by their Fa, 10 by their Br, 2 by FaBr, 2 by siHu, and 1 by moBr.

Today, the unemployment conditions in Kenya also necessitate the utilization of personal connections for procuring a job. Table 6 indicates that whereas the vast majority of male Bulala farm-heads now fifty years or older initially found a wage paid job by themselves or through recruitment agents, younger men were much more dependent upon friends and family for aid in gaining employment.

TABLE 6

MANNER IN WHICH BULALA MALE FARM-HEADS
FOUND FIRST JOB^a

Manner ^b	Age				
	20s %	30s %	40s %	50s %	60-89 %
Recruited	0	0	17	39	81
By Oneself	17	25	40	50	11
By Friend	53	38	24	7	8
By Brother	12	21	5	4	0
By Father	6	8	7	0	0
Other	12	8	7	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100
	(86)	(24)	(42)	(28)	(26) = (137)

^aThis Table includes all Bulala farm-heads with the exception of the five female heads who never held a wage paid job.

^bThe category "Other" includes patrilineal cousins, mothers' brother, and brothers-in-law.

In the 1972 report by the International Labor Office on employment in Kenya, it was argued that with the rapid increase in the number of school leaving certificates, employers have had to find a more sensitive mechanism for hiring workers. Thus, they have turned to the use of job brokers, usually trusted long-term employees, who suggest suitable family members or friends for these coveted posts. Meanwhile, the possession of certificates is used only to legitimize the choice which the employer finally makes (1972: 510). Even once employment has been gained, the possibility of losing one's job, especially at the competitive lower levels of the labor market, is ever-present as a potential threat. Therefore, the maintenance of strong links with job brokers throughout one's working career has become a crucial part of the migration process.

Although Maragoli migrants are spread across the country, travel in search of employment is not haphazard. Labor migration takes the form of a chain of links to kinsmen and friends who might provide accommodation and hospitality to job seekers even if they cannot aid in procuring employment. During his search for a job, the migrant typically moves from relative to relative, and friend to friend equalizing the burden of hospitality among members of his urban network. If he does not succeed in securing steady employment, he will eventually return home to replenish his resources.

Bulala male farm-heads commonly view higher education

and contacts with employed friends or relatives as the best combination for finding a job. Yet, with job seekers at roughly three times the rate of growth of wage employment opportunities, the job hunting process can take a long time and create a spiral of indebtedness to urban patrons for food and lodging. According to Whitelaw's 1971 survey of Nairobi households, over 10% of migrants are still seeking wage employment as long as three years after their arrival in the city. The period of exploratory urban stay for the Bulala migrant usually varies from two weeks to nine months, depending on monetary support from home, the acquisition of periodic day labor, and the willingness of peer group and family to stake him in town.

Once steady employment is found, the migrant generally moves into lodging of his own. Among the 55 Bulala farm-heads who currently hold jobs outside of Kakamega District, 71% have housing provided as part of their employment, 20% rent or share the rent of a room in a housing estate, while only 9% continue to stay with friends or relatives. Housing in urban Kenya is overcrowded. Whether lodging is provided or rented, workers of low economic status tend to reside in cramped quarters, having one small room at their disposal.

There are some residential areas in each town where men from the same home base tend to form loose clusters due to patterns of mutual assistance in finding jobs and housing. Of the 17 Bulala farm-heads currently employed as cooks or gardeners in Nairobi, 71% live in the Lavington and West-

lands sections of town. Other areas in Nairobi which house large pockets of Maragoli migrants include Shauri Moyo, Bahati, Eastleigh, and Jericho. Within each area, however, men are rarely in a position to choose their fellow residents, and neighborhoods are marked by mixed ethnicity. Thus, the growth of manifest community ties in these areas is checked by the diverse ethnic nature of the population, and also by the fact that membership in such voluntary associations as church groups, political organizations, and tribal or clan welfare societies are not circumscribed by locality.

The most pertinent grouping for Maragoli migrants are networks of friends and kinsmen, united by ethnicity and countryside residence, who are dispersed throughout the town. Within the Bulala-Village farm-head sample, migrants most often named other Maragoli men as "best friends", while the diaries kept for me by twelve of the migrants revealed that leisure time was most frequently spent in the company of other Maragoli migrants.¹ Through the maintenance of close ties between members of such networks, knowledge of home affairs — births, deaths, domestic crisis, agricultural innovations, and so on — is rapidly diffused. In addition, friends often provide monetary assistance, offer transient accommodation, impart information about potential jobs, and carry messages or gifts for one another when they travel.

¹In studying a sample of migrants who were residents in a Nairobi housing estate, Weisner (1969: 7) found that 90% of all friends listed by members of all tribes were from the same tribe as the informant.

home, which they do several times annually.

Although 86% of the current Bulala farm-head migrants hold wage paid jobs, the nature of their employment with reference to income level and job turn over rate is precarious and predisposes them to rely heavily upon one another for assistance in times of need. The 1972 International Labor Office report on Kenya maintains that more relevant than the concept of unemployment to a worker's well being (especially in a poor country where people desiring a wage paid job may be otherwise employed) is the opportunity for earning a reasonable income.¹ Many persons with full-time wage employment earn excessively low incomes.

Of the currently employed Bulala farm-head migrants, 82% hold unskilled or semi-skilled jobs (Table 7). As formal technical training at lower employment levels is relatively rare in Kenya, these classifications do not necessarily refer to a degree of skill, but rather indicate the type of work performed. Nevertheless, if we

¹Other employment includes those engaged in studies or housework, and also members of the "informal" sector such as self-employed traders and craftsmen.

TABLE 7

TYPE OF WORK PERFORMED		
Job	Migrants	Percentage
<u>Unskilled</u>	21	38
gardener	12	
watchman	7	
laborer	2	
<u>Semi-Skilled</u>	24	44
cook	18	
office messenger	4	
waiter	1	
gas station attendant	1	
<u>Skilled</u>	9	16
carpenter	2	
painter	2	
mason	1	
survey assistant	1	
driver	1	
mechanic	1	
assistant station master	1	
<u>Clerical/Professional</u>	1	2
policeman	1	
<u>Total</u>	55	100

accept the ILO suggested income floor of Kshs. 200/- per month as representing a minimum standard of urban living, then 48% of Bulala's wage paid farm-head migrants would rank among the working poor. Since all of these men head multi-person households and are the only wage earners in their nuclear families, the problem is particularly serious. Many Bulala migrants are of lower socio-economic status than average for Nairobi African workers, and as such are especially vulnerable to unemployment due to the lack of adequate provisions for welfare and social security benefits. Moreover, for the majority

of Bulala farm-head migrants whose housing is tied to their jobs, loss of employment is accompanied by immediate eviction.

Since it is costly to live in town and, low income housing is suitable only for bachelor occupancy, the majority of low level workers cannot afford to have their families with them on a permanent basis. In addition, the withdrawal of all family members from the countryside would result in a reduction in total income for the domestic group. Furthermore, there is a widespread belief that children of primary school age should not be educated in town where without adequate supervision, they may turn into delinquents.

None of the Bulala migrants in the farm-head sample had their wives living with them on a full-time basis during the study, although five men who were recently married and without school age children had their wives residing with them for a large portion of the previous year.¹ However, 49 or 77% of the wives of current Bulala farm-head migrants visited their husbands in town at least once during the course of 1971. Of the fifteen wives who did not, nine had unemployed husbands, while six had husbands married to a second wife in town, and were not encouraged to make a visit.

¹Weisner (1969) found that differences in the urban status and income of Kisa (an Abaluyia tribe from Kakamega District) household heads in Nairobi are important determinants of rural and urban household compositions. Within the three status groups he designates, factors of school age children and land ownership are shown to be intervening variables. Among the current Bulala migrants in my sample, there is not great variation in income or land size. However, of the twelve families without school age children, the wives tended to spend longer periods of time in town.

The movement of family members between town and country is strongly affected by the agricultural cycle and by the expense of transportation¹ and urban lodging. Since the number of visits made must be restricted, the family of the labor migrant attempts to coordinate the timing of trips with agricultural labor requirements and financial needs at home. Of the wives who visited their husbands, 6% spent over six months in town (all of these women were without school age children and maintained less than one acre of land at home), while 78% made one or two trips lasting from two weeks to two months each. The remainder visited their husbands who worked in nearby Kisumu, Nakuru, or Kitale at least once a month, and stayed one or two days each trip. Yearly or semi-annual visits by wives and family generally take place inbetween planting seasons. May and June are particularly popular times for visits since farm labor demands are low. In August, many children join their parents in town during the school holiday. Then, when the August/September harvest and planting season begins and schools reopen, wives and children return home.

Although it is difficult for working migrants to plan their annual leaves to coincide with the somewhat sporadic agricultural cycle, 67% managed to be home during the January digging season in 1971. During that year, men working in Nairobi and towns in Central Province averaged 2.2 visits

¹ A round trip fare on the bus, the least expensive mode of travel, between South Maragoli and Nairobi is Kshs. 30/-.

home, while men in Rift Valley Province made an average four trips home. Kisumu men generally took the bus home once a week, and the migrant employed in Mwanza, Tanzania came home once during the year.

Visits home are generally accompanied by the exchange of gifts both in cash and in kind, while remittances are commonly dispatched home between visits. As Johnson and Whitelaw observe, the magnitude of urban-rural income transfers in Kenya implies that "it is not useful to consider the welfare of urban residents and rural residents as independent of each other" (1972: 8-9). Gifts and visits between Bulala migrants and their friends and relatives at home are detailed in Chapter Seven.

Insecure employment, lack of sufficient welfare benefits, and limited social services in the non-elitist jobs in which Maragoli men specialize necessitate that migrants retain active ties with their home area. Such ties serve as an insurance policy in times of unemployment and illness, as a means of maintaining a supplementary agricultural income, and as an investment for eventual retirement in the home community. Maragoli migrants can readily be likened to the Nairobi "colony" of Kisa migrants described by Weisner in 1969. Weisner argues that from the viewpoint of those who remain at home, labor migrants have gone to "colonize" a town. "One cluster of such an urban colony may live for many years in a town, yet always maintain their ties with their rural home of origin. It is this social network,

rurally defined, yet resident in a town, which most closely conforms to the view migrants themselves have of their social relations" (1969: 7).

Although membership in such a rurally defined urban network facilitates town living, 96% of the male farm-heads in Bulala claimed that they would prefer to be employed within Kakamega District. Of these men, 68% added that they would be willing to take a decrease in salary in order to remain at home. It is no wonder that given the high cost of town living, the separation of families due to the inability of most unskilled and semi-skilled workers to support and lodge their wives in town, and the lack of unemployment benefits and adequate social insurance schemes, many men feel alienation from the urban environment and prefer employment at home.

Yet, despite the slight possibility of obtaining a job and the lesser opportunity of earning a satisfactory income in town, Maragoli men continue to "try their luck" in urban centers. As Gugler points out, "The marginal productivity of labor approaches zero in some rural areas where land is scarce, here the departure of a member of the producing unit may not affect output but only reduce underemployment" (1968: 473-73). People tend to migrate when the returns expected are greater than the costs. Given the ever increasing urban-rural wage differential, labor migration represents the one income-maximizing alternative available and thus, the currently optimum allocation of labor resources. It is pre-

cisely the villager's insight into this economic calculus, maintains Berg (1965: 176), that leads him to migrate as a wage earner. Yet, given the stated preferences of the Maragoli and the fact that those with high levels of education have been quick to accept wage paid jobs at home, it seems that the rate of labor migration would decline if opportunities for employment were expanded in the local area.

The Local Labor Market

Although the systematic exploitation of employment niches in town centers across the country is the backbone of the Maragoli labor strategy, migration is neither the only, nor the most preferred, aspect of their involvement in wage employment. Within Kakamega District, there is little private industry. Mission stations and small-scale local enterprises provide a few opportunities for jobs. In addition, a small number of full-time positions are available for laborers on the larger farms in the area. However, the wages attached to low level local jobs are very meager, usually ranging between Kshs. 700/- and 1000/- per year. By far the largest and most lucrative source of local employment is the growing Kenya civil service.

In relation to population size, the Kakamega District staff of 4,449, including administrators, teachers, agricultural instructors, veterinary extension workers, community development agents, and medical assistants, ranks low in comparison with other districts in Kenya. There is

tremendous competition for these scarce wage employment positions since they offer far greater rewards than high salary alone.

Within South Maragoli Location, the administrative bureaucracy is a strong, influential organization which is well articulated with community level politics. The bureaucratic hierarchy consists of an appointed location chief and eleven sub-chiefs who preside over the sub-locations. Both the positions of chief and sub-chief receive a salary. The magutu or headmen, who oversee the sub-areas into which the sub-locations are divided, are locally nominated and receive no government salary. However, the magutu are the direct and daily contact between the administration and the people; and as such, their position, while only semi-official, is an acknowledged and heavily utilized level in the local bureaucracy.

In contrast to the locally elected ligutu (singular of magutu), the location chieftaincy is a position based upon clientship to the district administration in a manner similar to that depicted by Vincent (1971: 50) for the Gondo Parish Chieftaincy in Uganda. However, unlike the Gondo Chief or most chiefs imposed upon acephalous, egalitarian political systems, the leaders of the Maragoli Location bureaucracy do not stand outside the local political system. Although the chief and sub-chiefs are executive officers primarily dependent upon the higher bureaucracy for their status and the enforcement of unpopular decisions, their

daily administration is contingent upon the cooperation of men influential in local level politics.

The local bureaucracy was created to enforce law and order, collect taxes, and disseminate government information. From its inception, the British realized that the new administrative system would not function as it was intended unless the chief and his headmen possessed the confidence of the elders.¹ In the past, therefore, Maragoli chiefs were men whose individual leadership was derived on a clan basis and elevated to a tribal level. This narrow political base, supported by British authority and force, was articulated with the horizontally structured-segmentary system through the creation of paid headmen called milango or "doors", who were chosen from the dominant clans to act as liaisons between the chief and the people. The milango system, thus, served to reinforce the indigenous segmentary system while establishing the new status of African bureaucrat.² Furthermore, since the inception of indirect rule in

¹The North Nyanza, South Maragoli, Political Record for 1910 indicates British awareness of this situation. In this report, accusations are made against Mugofu, the second Maragoli Chief, of ineffectual leadership due to his inability to win the confidence of the elders.

²In his analysis of political administration in Tiriki, Sangree argues that since the milango system provided no new organizational concepts through which the clans could adapt themselves to a centralized political structure, the "multiple clan based foci of loyalties tended to cancel each other (just as they did in pre-European times) leaving the tribal Chief a rather ineffectual political figure" (1966: 231-32). For detailed descriptions of British rule in Western Province see Wagner (1949), Sangree (1966), Hobley (1929), Fearn (1961), Were (1967), and Barker (1958).

1890, each official in the administration has had a committee of elders who act as arbitrators in community cases and as executive advisors. Such incorporation of influential community leaders into the administration acts to articulate the bureaucracy with the community and thereby, legitimizes the government system.

The local administration is important to Maragoli residents because of its direct and daily involvement in community affairs and also, its linkage with the wider political structure. Although location administration is no longer directly connected with the representative political structure,¹ it is highly linked with division level Ministry departments such as Agriculture, Community Development, Health, Education, and Lands and Settlement. The Vihiga Division Ministry officers utilize the location hierarchy to disseminate information and assist in the operation of government programs. In addition, since the South Maragoli Chief's office is situated across the road from the Division headquarters, informal links between government officers are

¹The powers of the chiefs were first extended outside their tribal boundaries in 1924 with the establishment of the Local Native Council, an organization created to develop self-administration in the economic affairs of the District. The L.N.C., which became the African District Council in 1951, was an influential body through which the chiefs and other tribal representatives made decisions concerning such matters as road maintenance, extension of trade licenses, new sites for schools and clinics. After Independence, this body was replaced by the County Council, which following its financial crisis in 1968, has had its three main functions — the control of primary education, health services, and roads — taken over by the Central Government. For a discussion of Maragoli participation in A.D.C. politics, see Mowrer (1954) and Fearn (1961).

facilitated.

The local bureaucrats and their advisory elders, therefore, have access to the distribution of patronage, loans, licenses, self-help project sites, and other government bounty. Figure 3 indicates some of the responsibilities at each administrative level in the location bureaucracy. Aside from major judicial functions which were removed from the chiefs in 1936, the remaining list of bureaucratic involvement in community affairs is impressive. Location administrators and their de facto advisory committees act as a communications network through which information from the national superstructure is passed on to the people, and government spoils are distributed. In addition, local administrators and their adjunct elders wield influence in terms of their access to such negative sanctions as tax assessment and the arbitration of community quarrels.

Although the chief and sub-chiefs are appointed, there is heavy competition for these posts. The 1964 South Maragoli, Applications for Chieftainship file contains nominating letters from previous location bureaucrats, clan societies, church groups, headmasters, university students, and thirty prominent Maragoli teachers, traders, and artisans. One may infer from the wide span of attention given to administrative appointments that location executives are not outside the local system of political organization in Maragoli.

Central GovernmentProvincial CommissionerDistrict CommissionerDistrict Officers in Charge of Vihiga DivisionChief of South Karagoli Location
committee of elders

responsibilities include:

1. maintenance of law and order with the assistance of six administrative policemen
2. tax assessment and collection
3. ordering of suspected criminals before the District Magistrate
4. arbitration of Location disputes
5. selection and planning of self-help projects (e.g. health centers, cattle dips, social halls, Harambee schools, day nurseries)
6. determination of individual assessment for self-help donations.
7. collection of primary school fees
8. weekly Barazas or meetings to disseminate government information to sub-chiefs and elders (e.g. time of cattle inoculations, collection of land deeds, date of sports events, available agricultural loans, interviews for government employment)

Sub-Chief
committee of elders

responsibilities include:

1. maintenance of law and order in the sub-location
2. completion of tax rolls
3. referring of sub-location disputes to Chief for arbitration
4. collection of self-help donations
5. issuing identity stamp necessary for the collection of postal money orders
6. weekly Barazas to pass on information from Chief's main Baraza

Ligutu
committee of elders

responsibilities include:

1. tax assessment of each taxpayer
2. maintenance of pathways, bridges; conservation
3. arbitration with elders of domestic quarrels and petty community disputes
4. witness land transfer, bridewealth, and other local transactions
5. member of sub-location committees (e.g. land adjudication, water distribution, self-help projects)

Fig. 3.--Administrative Hierarchy

The steady development of government services in the District has brought about an increase in well paid civil service posts. In addition to chiefs and sub-chiefs, teachers and agricultural staff are particularly plentiful in the area. Since bureaucratic employment entails a high degree of clerical activity, knowledge of English and Swahili are necessary, if not sufficient, qualifications for government positions. It is, therefore, not uncommon to find that the incumbents of salaried civil service posts are middle-aged persons recruited from wealthy and prestigious families who were able to furnish their sons (and in some cases daughters) with an education. It is these men who, as recipients of relatively high levels of missionary instruction, early in the century, were especially well placed to take advantage of new channels for patronage, goods and services, and entrepreneurial opportunities in the community.

Teachers, in particular, due to their literacy skills, prestige resulting from steady salaries, and familiarity with church organization, have been involved in part-time activities as village pastors and church functionaries. Such conspicuous leadership positions in the community often serve as a springboard for appointed political positions in local administration.¹

¹Five of the six chiefs serving in Vihiga in 1970 had previous careers as teachers. The present Chief of South Maragoli worked as a Friends missionary and teacher on Pemba Island, later attended Woodbroke Friends College in Birmingham, England and then became a local shopkeeper prior to his administrative appointment.

In addition to political entrepreneurship, many of those persons who, by virtue of their high level of education have been professionally employed in the area, engage in business enterprises. The steady but often inadequate salaries of local civil servants (given the urbane life-style to which many aspire) have both induced and enabled them to seize local entrepreneurial opportunities for supplementing their income. In this regard, technical training and business skills, obtained at mission schools, have become indispensable for many of those who have become Maragoli businessmen. Out of 13 primary school teachers from Munugi Sub-Location, whom I interviewed, 11 were actively involved in some type of business enterprise. Furthermore, of 18 shopkeepers over age 45 from two South Maragoli market centers, 10 were or had been teachers and 2 were agricultural instructors. Another 2 had obtained high levels of technical skill at mission schools and had been employed locally — one by Kaimosi Mission and one by a coffee cooperative society — before establishing business enterprises of their own.

Traditionally, leadership positions in Maragoli were informal and lacked an economic base and an institutionalized system of authority. In contrast, under indirect colonial rule, formalized governmental posts began to carry economic privileges. Since the introduction of the milango system in 1924, a steady salary has been conferred upon the incumbents of civil servant positions. But more important than the salary, is the access which these persons have to new material

and social resources which channeled through the Province hierarchy, can be utilized in competition for wealth and prestige. Today in South Maragoli, economic and political power are closely linked with local level political leadership. Executive and legislative power emanating from the Central Government is passed into the hands of local civil servants; and these are commonly persons with an established political base as the offspring of prominent Maragoli families and as members of influential local voluntary associations.

Of 137 male Bulala farm-heads, only 15 have permanent full-time, off-farm employment at home (Table 8). Of these,

TABLE 8
LOCAL FULL-TIME, OFF-FARM EMPLOYMENT

Job	Workers	Percentage
<u>Unskilled</u>	3	20
agricultural laborer	2	
watchman	1	
<u>Semi-Skilled</u>	1	7
cook	1	
<u>Skilled</u>	2	13
tribal policeman	1	
shopkeeper	1	
<u>Clerical/Professional</u>	9	60
sub-chief	1	
teacher	7	
agricultural instructor	1	
Total	15	100

10 or 67% are employed by Government. Among all the male farm-heads in Bulala, those currently employed at the pro-

Professional level in the local civil service draw the highest salaries, ranging from Kshs. 500/- to 700/- per month. These positions offer benefits, moreover, in terms of access to government goods and services which may be unavailable to those employed away from home. In contrast, the three workers with unskilled local jobs have an average wage of Kshs. 65/- per month, the lowest income of all farm-heads holding a wage paid job.

In this peri-urban area, the Maragoli look to employment outside of agriculture to improve their standard of living. Yet, despite job hunting difficulties in town and a stated preference for local employment, the flow of labor out of the area is maintained by the paucity of viable alternatives at home.

Labor Supply

Labor migration out of Maragoli takes place on an enormous scale. The process involves persons young and old, male and female, educated and illiterate, land owning and (temporarily) landless. There is, however, a notable tendency for most migrants to be under age 50, male,¹ and for young migrants to have at least a primary school education.

Out of 161 able-bodied Bulala males (including farm-

¹The Kenya Statistical Abstract, 1970 estimates that only 12% of the enumerated "formal" sector labor force are females, and this percentage includes non-African as well as African women.

heads and others), between the ages 20 and 59, who are not attending school; 56% have full-time off-farm employment either at home or away. Table 9 indicates that wage employment is related to age, with unemployment falling disproportionately upon the younger members of the labor force.

TABLE 9

FULL-TIME, OFF-FARM EMPLOYMENT BY AGE
AND PRIMARY RESIDENCE

Age	Primary Residence		Full-Time, Off-Farm Employment ^a		Total Employed %
	In %	Out %	In %	Out %	
20s (63)	33	67	0	64	43
30s (28)	36	64	10	77	54
40s (43)	33	67	36	86	70
50s (27)	67	33	50	100	67
Total (161)					

^aThe percentage of full-time, off-farm employment relates to the proportion of those residing in the village and those residing out of the village respectively. Total employed refers to the proportion employed out of the entire age group.

This is especially noticeable in the local labor market. Among 15 men employed at home, one is in his late 30s, 5 are in their 40s, and 9 are in their 50s.

Although it appears from Table 9 that reverse migration (i.e. the flow of migrants back to their country home) occurs in the 50 year age group, it should be noted that 50% of those at home are employed. This means that only 9 of the 27 men in this age group have returned home to "retire". In the 40 year age group, 9 men out of 43 have also returned

home. In land scarce Maragoli, migrants without employment prospects at home tend not to disengage permanently from wage labor until they are over age 60. This inclination toward late "retirement" is in accordance with the 1969 Kenya Population Census age distribution figures for Kakamega District as a whole.

The figures in Table 9 which are related to place of primary residence, represent only the point in time at which the data were collected. We have noted that men return home during periods of unemployment and sickness. Of those currently at home, without full-time employment, 48% consider themselves "in transit" and plan to migrate in search of wage employment within the next year. This factor makes difficult a comparison between rural and urban men; since, for the most part, they are the same men who have simply been caught at one moment in time either at their rural or urban residence. Most Maragoli men follow a cycle of movement back and forth between shamba (farm) and town during their working years. In addition, those who are not migrants at present have had labor migration experience in the past. As Weisner argues, "Looking at number of years in town at one place (a city), and at one point in time, excludes these equally urban, but rural-resident men and families" (1969: 12).

Weisner suggests that the major differences between Kisa men most often found in the countryside and those most often in town are age and education. This applies to the Maragoli as well. In the past, Maragoli men with education beyond the

primary school level were given prestigious jobs as civil servants at home, while those with lower educational qualifications migrated to urban centers in search of employment. Today, middle-age men still dominate the ranks of the local civil service and younger men with high levels of education are forced to seek jobs outside. Young men with little or no schooling are cut off from jobs away from home as well as from those in the local labor market. The fact that families which cannot afford school fees have difficulty in sponsoring job hunting expeditions, means that school drop outs and those who were never enrolled tend to make fewer trips to town.

Educational attainment is a major determinant of job level and hence, earning ability in Kenya, as Table 10 suggests. The relationship between education and occupation becomes somewhat distorted, however, in the face of Kenya's massive unemployment situation. While job hunting difficulties affect persons at all levels of education, unemployment falls most heavily on the young, who are thus, forced to take any job which becomes available.¹ When workers in the

¹ For a broader discussion of differences among individuals in hourly urban earning, see G.E. Johnson (1971).

TABLE 10
OCCUPATION OF BULALA MEN AGED 20-59
BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION

Job	Level of Education ^a			
	None %	1-4yrs %	5-8yrs %	Over 8yrs %
Clerical/Professional	0	0	3	73
Skilled	0	0	18	0
Semi-Skilled	0	28	21	0
Unskilled	35	33	13	0
Jobless	65	39	45	27
Total	100	100	100	100
	(26)	(51)	(62)	(22) = (161)

^aSince the number of grades in the Kenya primary school system has been altered over time, educational level is presented here in years rather than by grades.

20 year age group are removed from the Bulala Village sample, the relationship between education and job type becomes even more discernable (Table 11).

TABLE 11
OCCUPATION OF BULALA MEN AGED 30-59
BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION

Job	Level of Education			
	None %	1-4yrs %	5-8yrs %	Over 8yrs %
Clerical/Professional	0	0	4	100
Skilled	0	0	35	0
Semi-Skilled	0	32.5	38	0
Unskilled	39	30	0	0
Jobless	61	37.5	23	0
Total	100	100	100	100
	(23)	(40)	(26)	(8) = (97)

Although education is no longer a guarantee of a job, it is the least educated within all age groups who suffer the most. As the ILO report points out, young workers with higher levels of educational attainment can look forward to moving up the wage earning ladder quite rapidly; the less educated, once they have found employment, tend to remain at low level jobs (1972: 63).

While wage employment has become a social tradition in Maragoli, employment patterns differ greatly among the adult male population. Not all those who migrate to town are able to find jobs or hold on to them, not all employees earn a decent wage, nor are all wage paid jobs in urban areas. (Wage employment can also be found in small towns and peri-urban areas across Kenya, though less readily.)

Employment patterns among the 137 Bulala male farm-heads (female heads are not included here) may be categorized into three operational worker profiles. These profiles will be used to define the degree to which workers have stable and gainful employment in the wage economy. Profile no. 1 refers to those who have had less than five consecutive years of wage employment and whose income over the last five years averages less than Kshs. 150/- per month. All of these men, moreover, have either been jobless for the past five years or have held jobs paying exceedingly low wages.

Profile no. 2 is composed of men with a career history of long-term steady employment. All have spent at least five successive years as wage earners, while many have had

steady employment for over ten years. In addition, all have incomes which over the last five years average more than Kshs. 150/- but less than 400/- per month. Those with Profile no. 3 have maintained steady employment over ten consecutive years with an average income during the last five years of over Kshs. 400/- per month. These men, all of whom have relatively high levels of education, are employed at home.

There are other Maragoli residents whose career history would fit Profile no. 4. These are labor migrants who hold high paying, elitist jobs in town. Such men are not represented in the Bulala Village farm-head sample, however, and so will not be discussed here. (Some mention is made of this group in the conclusion of the study.)

The distribution of employment profiles among Bulala male farm-heads is as follows:

	<u>P1</u>	<u>P2</u>	<u>P3</u>	<u>Total</u>
Number	60	67	10	137
Percentage	44	49	7	100

The next chapter examines the resources required for profitable production in agriculture, and it will be suggested that differential response to available agricultural innovations is correlated with variations in employment patterns as represented by the three worker career profiles.

Chapter V

THE ORGANIZATION OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

The single most important factor determining land use in Maragoli is its surging population growth rate. Increasingly congested conditions on the land have led to an intensive agricultural system under which public lands reserved for cattle grazing and individual plots placed periodically in fallow have practically disappeared as the soil has come to be cropped more frequently.

While intensification of agriculture developed under the pressure of rapid population increase, crop production was further stimulated by attractive market prices for maize and vegetables, and expanded agricultural extension services. Appealing prices for cash crops, stemming from the influx of Europeans during the Kakamega gold rush of the 1930's, from World War Two food demands, and from the rising price of produce both domestically and on the world market during the post war years greatly encouraged agricultural development. Moreover, given the high population density in Maragoli and money inflows in the form of remittances, vegetable and dairy farmers have a good local market for whatever surplus to their family's consumption needs they can produce.

Agricultural advice had been regularly dispensed in

North and South Maragoli since 1923, with the aim of increasing food production and conserving the fertility of the soil.¹ To these ends, the Kenya Government reinforced early missionary efforts to encourage the use of soil enrichment techniques, and has made available improved seeds, new crops, and exotic fowl and livestock. Advice concerning farming methods and crop investment alternatives is currently being extended to Vihiga farmers by a staff of eighty agricultural and veterinary agents. The intensification of land use, the export of labor, and the availability of agricultural innovations (requiring new modes of production and capital investment) have caused far reaching social and economic changes which have affected the system of agricultural organization.

In Bulala Village, agricultural land takes the shape of long narrow strips running perpendicular to the valley streams. Few plots are situated entirely on level land. The majority extend down the bordering slopes, with the extreme lower sides used for cattle grazing. All the inhabitants of Bulala are involved in agriculture to a greater or lesser extent, depending upon additional occupations and place of principal domicile. Due to the biannual pattern of rainfall, which requires a timely agricultural routine, Bulala farmers are galvanized into a yearly cycle of similar activities.

¹For a discussion concerning the introduction of new crops, and also the early encouragement of soil conservation techniques in the District, see Wagner (1956: 30-39).

The central focus of agricultural action in Bulala Village, as well as in the rest of South Maragoli, is the production of maize. Sangree suggests that due to the serious failure of the principal eleusine crop in 1918, and the subsequent efforts of the Friends missionaries and the British administration to alleviate starvation through the distribution of maize meal, maize gained wide acceptance and soon surpassed eleusine as the basic staple food. The popularity of maize was furthered by the refusal of women converts to Christianity to brew beer. Since custom prescribed the task of grinding to women; males forced to do their own brewing were able to circumvent ridicule by using maize, which could be ground into flour at the mission power mills, instead of eleusine which had to be ground by hand. (Sangree 1966: 126,136). In addition, improved maize seed, which has been made available through missionary and government suppliers since 1909, provided a greater food output under double cropping than eleusine, which was customarily grown once a year.

In the early 1960's, several recommended varieties of hybrid maize, which were considered especially suitable for the rainy highlands of Kenya, were introduced in Vihiga. The rapid spread of hybrid maize in Maragoli, reflected in the naming of the 1968 circumcision group "Hybrid Good Seed", has created greater labor and land intensification of small-scale agriculture. For hybrid strains not only require greater labor investments than local maize, but through

higher yields allow the farmer to achieve his subsistence needs on a reduced acreage, thus, releasing the land for more labor intensive cash crop or livestock production. Yet, although the production of hybrid maize offers the possibility of increased yield per unit of land, additional investments of labor and cash may be rejected by the farmer if the returns are insufficiently attractive. Although 75% of Bulala's farmers have tried hybrid maize for at least one season; in 1971, only 58% had been growing hybrid continuously for the previous three long rains. In order to understand how hybrid maize production may be a profitable enterprise for one farmer and not another, an examination of the annual cycle of farming activities is first necessary.

The Process of Maize Production

Maize production involves four major stages: land preparation, planting, weeding, and harvesting. In addition, there are miscellaneous tasks such as planting and harvesting interplanted crops, and insect and disease control.

Land is dug twice a year in preparation for the planting of maize. The annual maize production cycle begins with the preparation of land in December or January. Early digging, relative to the time of planting, enriches the soil by allowing time for buried plant matter to decay completely. A second digging also takes place just prior to planting so that clods of dirt and weeds sprouted since the first digging may be removed. The second digging, if done close to the

surface, can produce a good seed bed and reduce weeds during early germination. Having the land adequately prepared before the onset of the rains in February or early March, and again in August or September is a critical factor determining the size of maize yields. A.Y. Allan (1971) of the Kitale Agricultural Research Station has warned that late planting, after the start of the rains, reduces yields drastically and also lessens fertilizer response. However, the actual onset of the rains is somewhat variable and the correct decision on when to plant can be largely a matter of guesswork.

In 1970, there were only four tractors in all of South Maragoli and neighboring Bunyore. Although hand ploughs have been recommended by the Agricultural Department in the past, both the ecological nature of the area and the pattern of scattered land holdings have discouraged their use. Thus, land preparation by means only of hand hoes is an extremely labor intensive activity. Wagner wrote that in the 1930's, the usual crop rotation system in Maragoli consisted of keeping a plot in fallow one out of every four years (1956: 23-24). By 1970, crop rotation had become rare in the Location due to the combination of small farm size and the great labor investment required for breaking land unfarmed for long periods.¹

¹Harold Dusenberry, USAID advisor in Vihiga from October 1970 to January 1971, recommended 2 1/2 acres as the minimum for a system of crop rotation. For farms under this acreage, the use of chemical fertilizers was suggested for greatest yields.

Planting takes place just at the onset of the rains. The Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) recommends that the maize seeds be spaced in rows 2 1/2 feet apart with 12 inches between plants for an adequate plant population and in order to facilitate weed control later on. But while farmers commonly plant in rows, exact spacing varies enormously. Seeds and fertilizer can be obtained from the farmer's own land or purchased from commercial suppliers in the area. Home produced maize seeds are selected from a previous harvest and stored for replanting, while animal manure or burnt stalks can be used for fertilizing crops. Purchased farming inputs, however, are gradually replacing those produced at home. Not only do commercial seed and fertilizer provide higher yields, but those produced on the farm are no longer available in sufficient quantity.

Chemical fertilizer such as Single and Double Superphosphates or FAO Compounds are strongly suggested for use on land that has been in crop for one or more years. In addition, top dressings such as Calcium Ammonium Nitrate or Sulphate of Ammonia, applied when the plants are knee high, are recommended for optimum yields. However in 1971, only 22% of the village farmers were using chemical fertilizers, while the majority relied on small amounts of farmyard manure. If soil fertility is held constant (a reasonable assumption for such a small area), farmers at different stages in the adoption of recommended husbandry practices may have different yields from the same fertilizer applications. The Kitale

National Agricultural Research Station emphasizes that, in order for the farmer to make his costly investment in chemical fertilizer pay off, he must first have adopted other innovations beneficial for maize production. Such innovations include the use of hybrid seed, early planting, row spacing, adequate weeding, and disease control, but require relatively high inputs and timely use of labor.

Bulala farmers tend to weed their maize crop once or twice between germination and harvest, while the MOA recommends a minimum of three weedings. Weed control is indispensable in the intensive agricultural system of Maragoli due to the spread of the dangerous Striga weed, which commonly occurs under exhausted soil conditions. Yet, the Location-wide custom of interplanting beans with maize to protect the smaller plants from wind and frequent hail storms presents a serious constraint to weed control. The beans, considered a famine crop, are planted in a broadcast fashion when the maize is about six inches high, and mature about the time that the maize flour from the previous harvest is almost depleted. After an early harvest, the beans are dug under which provides nitrates to the new maize crop. Although the MOA strongly opposes the practice of interplanting on the grounds that it is a constraint upon maize yields, few Maragoli farmers follow this advice. For many small-scale farmers, the risk of losing their famine crop outweighs the benefit from extra weedings which, in fact, may have such small net gain as not to be worth the effort.

Harvest of the long rains crop usually occurs in August or early September, while the short rains season ends about December. However, hybrid maize takes several weeks longer to mature than local maize. In South Maragoli, this additional time period often presents the farmer with problems such as the rotting of cobs due to bird damage, the lodging of tall stalks blown over by wind, and theft. Therefore, harvesting as well as land preparation, planting, and weeding requires a timely management of farm activity.

Harvest times usually coincide with the payment of school fees and with the return of labor migrants on leave (during which time these workers are expected to entertain visitors). Due to the recurrent need for ready cash, therefore, most farmers are forced to sell a good percentage of their small yields soon after harvest.¹ In addition, maize is sold at harvest time as a form of self-protection against beseeching friends and kinsmen attracted by a conspicuous food surplus.

Social pressures to distribute harvest yields have undercut the advantages of home storage facilities. Whereas granaries were once common sights in Bulala, in 1971, only 9% of the village farm units maintained maize stores. Most keep a small supply of maize in the home. In at least two cases, such granaries were kept secured by padlocks. Since most farmers cannot store more than four 200 pound bags of

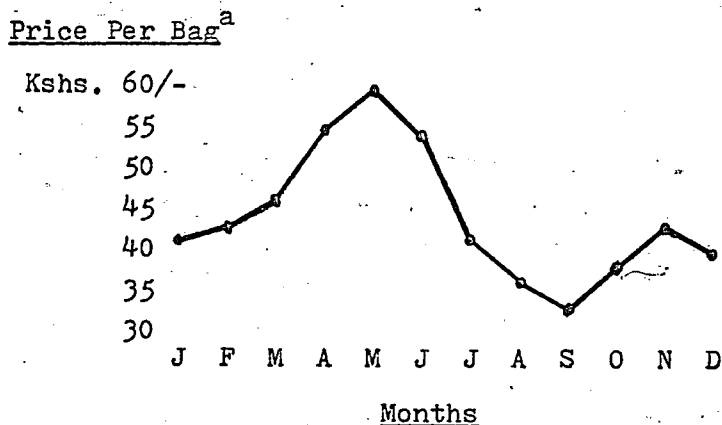
¹Three bags of maize sold at harvest time will pay the fees of one child enrolled in Standards V through VII.

maize for household consumption and prefer to sell their maize for ready cash soon after the harvest in any case, they are forced to replenish their dwindling supply of food later in the year from shopkeepers at a considerable loss (Figure 4).

The disinclination of Maragoli farmers to maintain home granaries, provides a speculative niche for local shopkeepers who purchase the maize after the harvest, store it, and sell it (usually to large dealers) during famine time when prices nearly double. The sale of maize across provinces is illegal in Kenya. The Government directs that farmers sell maize to licensed traders only within the province where the grain was produced. Maize is, nevertheless, "smuggled" into Maragoli from areas having an earlier harvest. However, given the cut taken by the middleman, this grain also commands a high price.¹ Although the Maize and Produce Board (MPB) buys maize for Kshs. 30/- per bag all year round and sells it at a slightly higher but constant price, there are no outlets in Vihiga, and transportation costs to and from the closest MPB station render any savings negligible.

The rise and fall of Maragoli maize prices, indicated in Figure 4, reflect the annual cycle of agricultural production. During the short rains season, from August to December, it is common for farmers to grow more millet than

¹See Barclay (1973) for a case study in illegal maize trade in Western Province.



^aThese prices were collected from two large markets in the Location, and cross-checked with price information from the MOA.

Fig. 4.--Maize Prices in South Maragoli, 1970

maize, and to sow the faster maturing local maize seed rather than the hybrid. Such a strategy is based mainly upon the fact that frequent droughts during this period often result in smaller maize yields. As a consequence of reduced production during the short rains, maize prices in December and January do not fall as severely as prices in August and September.

Maragoli farmers tend to shop in local stores charging higher prices than those in major market centers or in Kisumu in order to maintain good relations with the shopkeepers. These relationships, which may lead to the extension of credit, become particularly valuable during the famine period between April and June. However, even when credit is extended, given the high price of famine-time maize, most farmers are forced to depend upon their short crops for supplementing their diet.

Although the Kitale Research Station's experiments with maize production have shown a potential 30 bags per acre in areas with such physical attributes as South Maragoli, P. Mook (1973) found that average Location yields, even during the long rains season, are far lower — close to six bags per acre. It has been indicated, thus far, that a timely agricultural routine includes proper husbandry techniques, the use of store bought seed and fertilizer, and the delay of crop sales; all of which are critical to the profitable production of maize. However, the farmer's decision to take full advantage of this technology for increased yields is closely related to his command over such basic means of production as land, labor, finances, and expertise. This discussion now turns to a closer examination of these resource requirements.

The Availability of Land

Land scarcity is the most important factor inhibiting the development of agriculture in South Maragoli. It has been difficult in recent years for residents to bring new land under cultivation. Expansion into new territory is blocked by crowded conditions in neighboring locations and social obstacles elsewhere; settlement plots are difficult to acquire; and the purchase of land is prohibitively expensive and until land adjudication, legally precarious. In addition, the egalitarian nature of the succession system has resulted in the fragmentation of individual holdings

through the sub-division of land. These factors have served to accentuate the insecurities inherent in the customary land holding system and make residents acutely concerned with the precise delineation of boundaries between parcels of land.

The development of more intensive land utilization in South Maragoli, under increasing population pressure, has been accompanied by significant modifications in land holding patterns. In the face of a growing scarcity of land, general rights to clear new plots within undistributed clan land rapidly disappeared. With the reduction of virgin bush and the shortening of the period of fallow, individual families began to establish permanent rights to recultivate particular parcels of land, thus, leading to the emergence of private ownership of property as the dominant feature of the Maragoli land holding system.

As the nature of customary land tenure among the Abaluyia, and the Maragoli in particular, has been described elsewhere,¹ a brief review of the main structural highlights should suffice to provide a backdrop against which to set recent developments. The fundamental principle of the land tenure system was that all members of the sub-tribe dominating a particular settlement area had general rights to cultivate plots of land within that area. The political territory of the sub-tribe was further divided into clan lands, and within the clan boundaries, land rights were vested in the individual

¹See Wagner (1956), Sangree (1966), and Kenya Native Land Tenure Committee Reports (1931, 1933, 1945).

as a member of the clanship community. The weak control of the loosely organized clans over land was demonstrated by the lack of institutionalized powers given to the land elders, as trustees of "surplus" clan lands. Only by virtue of the prestige conferred upon them by the community could the elders bring sanctions ex post facto to bear upon persons who misused communal lands, were quarrelsome, or committed offenses against the customary rules of inheritance.

In contrast to general rights over land by which security of tenure was guaranteed through membership in the sub-tribe and clan, specific rights of individuals over land occupation and employment were based upon the principles of inheritance, trusteeship, rights of first cultivation, "purchase", and tenantry.

An omwene womulimi or land owner could use his plot as he wished. However, his manner of reallocation was dependent upon the way in which the land was acquired. Inheritance of omulimi gwa guza or grandfather's land is patrilineal and ideally distributed equally between sons. However, in practice, the eldest son has an advantage over his brothers in his right to the first share of land, and in his power as executor over the estate, shared with the mother, should his father die while some of the sons are still too young to receive their inheritance. The youngest brother is also favored in that he has rights to the land which the father has reserved for himself in his old age. During the days when land was relatively plentiful, the sub-division of

fields was kept within limits as sons were often indifferent about the exact division of family lands. The eldest son usually settled near his father since he was second in command. Other sons frequently moved away to live on newly cleared land or under the sponsorship of a friend or relative.

If a man died before any of his sons were grown, one of his brothers (usually the one to inherit the widow) acted as the land trustee. During his administration of the estate, the trustee or omwandu had the right to use one of the plots which would return to his brother's sons after he died. If the owner, omwene, had no sons, his land, in principle, would be inherited by his brothers. However, in practice, the omwene's sons-in-law or grandsons often lived on the land. After the omwene died, the estate would be divided among heirs and tenants.

The land which the omwene acquired by himself through the right of first cultivation could be let to a long or short-term tenant, or the rights to such land could be transferred entirely to a "purchaser" or omuguli. The transfer of land rights to an omuguli was legitimized by the "payment" of chickens, goats, or hoes in the presence of community witnesses. However, the status of the omuguli in regard to rights of usage and inheritance over the land differed from the omwene since the direct heirs of the "seller" maintained the option to redeem the land by returning the payment to the purchaser.

The omumenya or sponsored non-clansman had long-term

rights to occupy and use the granted land without payment. However, he could not transfer such rights without the permission of his patron. The omwatirua or short-term tenant differed from the omumenya in that his sponsorship involved rights of land usage but not residence. It is expected that the omwatirua, usually a friend or neighbor of his sponsor, would give up the field pledged to him after one harvest. However, if the omwatirua were allowed to cultivate the land continuously over a long period, build a dwelling, or present gifts to the omwene, the case could be put forth that his status had changed to that of an omumenya or omuguli. In practice, the difference between transactions involving an omumenya, omwatirua, and omuguli were slight and often led to confused legal situations. However, it was not until the scarcity of good land became critical that such confusion resulted in serious disputes and expensive litigation.

The political and economic value placed upon land as a scarce commodity within increasingly populated South Maragoli has created bitter competition over acreage, and such competition had led in turn to the accelerated sub-division and fragmentation of individual holdings. With little fresh land available for cultivation, all heirs of the omwene avidly began not only to claim a share of the family estate, but also to reclaim land granted to the omumenya and omuguli. However, as the community elders tend to recognize the principle of continuous cultivation, tenants and purchasers often were awarded a share of the land given them by the original

owner. This trend of dividing land among the omwene's tenants as well as his heirs has greatly speeded up the process of land fragmentation. In addition, according to Wagner (1956: 94-95), when eviction of pagan families from Christian Villages ceased during the 1930's, land disputes heightened as many of those persons who had previously been compensated for their land attempted to reclaim their property.

Although women could not own land outright under the customary land tenure system, they were often powerful in their role of land users, and as channels through which avamenya (plural of omumenya) might gain sponsorship. The husband allotted each of his wives a separate field, and widows could retain their gardens even after all their sons had been married. If her sons were not of age, and in the absence of an omwandu, trustee, the uninherited widow often managed the farm and apportioned the husband's land to her sons as they grew up. With the recent decline in widow inheritance, partly as the result of Christianity and partly due to the increasing cost of an additional wife, female farmheads have become increasingly reluctant to sub-divide their fields or give up management control to their daughters-in-law. Women's control over farm resources has been further increased by the absence of middle-age men from the village, and by the outright sale of land. Recent land cases show that daughters are now able to inherit omulimi gwagulwa or purchased land, as opposed to grandfather's land, if they are without brothers or are particularly favored by their

father.

The recent investment of money and labor in grade cattle and tree crops which require long-term planning, and the construction of permanent dwellings have helped to make interests in individual holdings quite exclusive. In addition, the high sociological value of Maragoli as a bedroom community is reflected by steep land prices, averaging Kshs. 4000/- per acre in Bulala, which are unrelated to current or future productivity. The reluctance to sell or share land serves as a general impediment to entrepreneurial activity.

As individualistic attitudes toward land combined with the insecurities of the customary land holding system, land disputes constituted the bulk of civil cases in local and district courts. In 1966, a program of land adjudication and registration began in South Maragoli. This program is part of a larger scheme throughout Kenya to register all land holders. In South Maragoli, especially, where the insecurity of tenure restricts investment in agriculture, farmers look to the adjudication program to support individual claims. By 1972, two sub-locations were registered, three were adjudicated but not yet registered, three were nearly adjudicated, and three were still in the initial stages. Bulala Village is situated in one of the sub-locations in which registration was completed prior to my arrival in 1970. Thus, I was able to ascertain a clear picture of the Bulala land holding pattern frozen at that point in time.

In Bulala Village, 46 or 32% of all the land owning

residents have scattered holdings, while 71% of the owners of at least two acres possess scattered plots (Table 12).

TABLE 12
ACREAGE AND SCATTERED HOLDINGS AMONG
BULALA FARMERS^a

Acreage ^b	Owners	Cumulative Percentage of Owners	Percentage of Owners with Scattered Holdings
Less than 1	38	27	0
Less than 2	56	66	21
Less than 3	28	86	54
Less than 4	10	93	90
4 or more	10	100	100
Total	142		

^aAcreage and Scattered Holdings include all plots held by Bulala farmers, in the village and outside.

^bThese are mutually exclusive and not cumulative categories.

Not only are total land holdings small in South Maragoli, but even the larger holdings are composed of a number of tiny plots. Of a total of 1,175 land parcels in registered Munugi Sub-Location, 90% are less than 2 1/2 acres.

Spurred by their small inheritance, many Maragoli persons have taken advantage of conditions of internal migration, land sales, and legal ambiguities within the customary tenure system to increase their land holdings. The strategies by which they have done so and the manipulation of the adjudication process, in particular, are examined in Chapter Six. Although scattered properties usually act as a constraint to farming

technology; given the context of small inherited plots in South Maragoli and extreme population pressure on the land, dispersed holdings, implying land expansion, are often an indication of upward economic status.

Ownership of viable acreage is a necessary condition for productive farming; however, it is not a sufficient one. For the actual yield obtained from maize production is not solely dependent upon acreage but on a number of intervening variables between planting and harvest, not the least of which is the use of labor.

The Availability of Labor

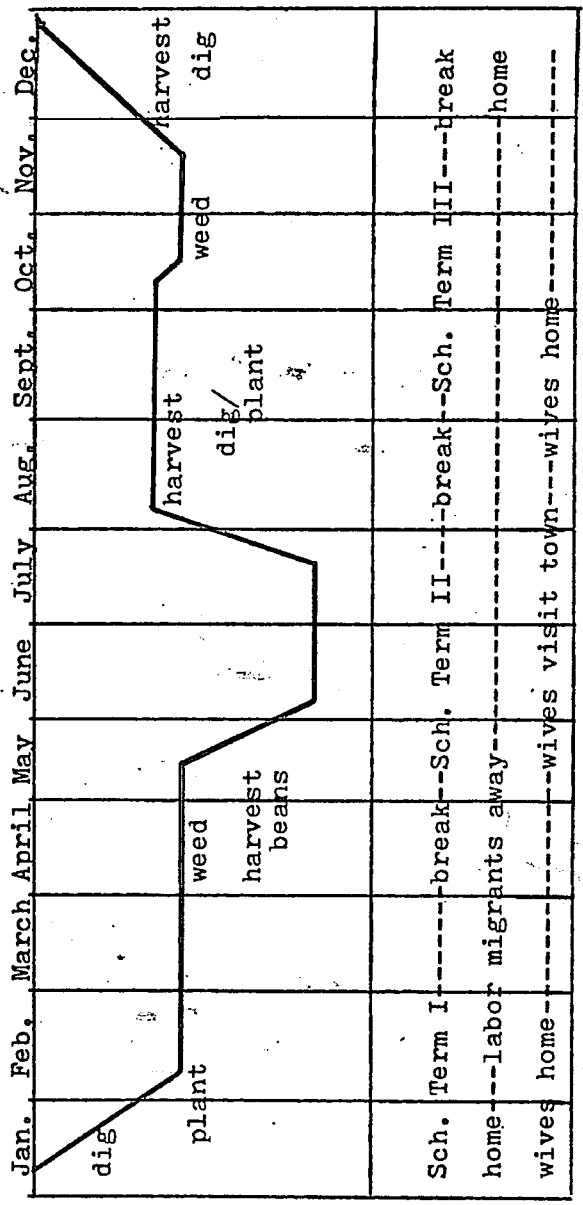
High population density leading to a scarcity of land and an abundance of labor should suggest a system of agriculture which emphasizes concentrated land use and labor intensive methods (Boserup 1965). Given advantageous physical conditions, a high output per crop acre could be expected under such a system. However, in South Maragoli a high population density does not necessarily lead to an abundance of agricultural labor given the opportunities for labor migration and full or part-time, off-farm economic activities at home.

Although the Location is densely populated, South Maragoli has a highly mobile population. Given small farm size and the precarious nature of maize production, the opportunity cost of labor migration or school attendance (in preparation for migration) is small and there is great

incentive to turn to off-farm employment.

A farm unit consisting of a man, his wife, and two teenage children is normally sufficient to meet daily labor needs. Due to small acreage, even seasonal peaks in the agricultural cycle do not require large numbers of persons. Furthermore, the non-rigid division of labor between sexes and ages, encouraged by the absence of labor migrants and school children, lessens the farm unit's dependence upon each of its members. However, the labor of the elementary family may be insufficient to meet even relatively small labor requirements during peak periods of hybrid maize production due to the deployment of family members in wage employment, trade and artisan activities, and school attendance. Due to such off-farm activities, the majority of Maragoli farms operate under conditions of an effective labor shortage.

Figure 5 relates the demand for labor under maize production to such competing non-agricultural activities as school attendance, labor migration, and wives' visits to town. The peak farm labor activities of digging and planting take place sometime between late December and early February. However, since the onset of the rains varies from year to year, peak labor requirements may or may not coincide with the annual home leave of most labor migrants or with the December school holiday.



Farm ^a

Off-Farm

^aThis estimate of the demand for labor in Bulala over the annual cycle follows P. Mook's measurement of mean number of man-hours in a nearby area (1973: 297-301).

Fig. 5.--Calendar of Maize Production and Off-Farm Activities

The actual demand for labor under maize production on individual farms depends upon the timeliness of rainfall, agricultural productivity, farm size, and material inputs of seed, fertilizer and top dressing. The composition of the labor unit is related to the level of labor input from the farm family. One point I shall develop later is that the availability of family labor is a function not only of competing off-farm activities, but also of the developmental stage of the domestic group.

The average farm of $1 \frac{3}{4}$ acres in Bulala has a labor input of 1.7 full-time family workers, despite an average size farm family of 6.6 persons. In 1971, 51% of Bulala's farmers hired peak seasonal labor and 10% employed full-time permanent labor in addition. The decision to hire labor relates to the availability of family labor and to the demand placed on labor by farm size (Table 13). The

TABLE 13

HIRED LABOR BY FARM SIZE AND FAMILY LABOR

Acres ^b	Full-Time Family Labor			
	1 Worker	2 Workers	3 Workers	Total
Less than 1	9/20= 45%	4/14= 29%	1/4= 25%	14/38= 37%
Less than 3	20/35= 57%	17/39= 44%	2/10= 20%	39/84= 46%
3 or more	3/3=100%	12/12=100%	5/5=100%	20/20=100%
Total	32/58= 55%	33/65= 51%	8/19= 42%	73/142= 51%

^aThe denominator refers to farm units, while the numerator refers to those units hiring labor.

^bThese are mutually exclusive and not cumulative categories.

fact that all those owning three or more acres hire labor despite the amount of family labor available, implies that there is a connection between farm size and wealth.

Within South Maragoli, farming activities are independent and family centered. Hired labor most often consists of women and young men with small family plots and little opportunity for more remunerative activities. All workers on the farm other than members of the domestic group are paid for their labor at the common daily wage rate for piece work of Kshs. 2/- plus lunch or approximately 4/-.¹ Those who hire labor on a full-time permanent basis usually pay between Kshs. 40/- and 65/- per month in addition to providing

¹P. Moock (1973: 230) argues that this is the minimum "honorable wage" and that village farm wages are probably less rigid than they appear.

meals.

Extended family members who work only occasionally on the farms of their kinsmen are also paid for their services. Farmers minimize the use of extended family labor since on the one hand, the subordination of the employer-employee relationship is inconsistent with Maragoli ideals of appropriate interpersonal relations, and non-cash payment leads to obligations incompatible with cash crop farming and the accumulation of wealth.

An alternative means of acquiring labor is to become a member of and/or employ a digging group. The customary reciprocal, rotating work parties in Maragoli, which were paid in beer, have today been replaced by digging groups, based upon either church or neighborhood affiliation, which are paid in cash. The isurika or "church group" is usually called upon only for difficult work, such as breaking fallow, and receives Kshs. 20/- to 30/- per job, part of which is given to the church. Every family belonging to the church is expected to provide at least one member for the digging assignment. Members of the church work party are fed and entertained, turning the assignment often into a major social affair which confers prestige upon a generous host. The cost of entertaining the ten to twenty men and women composing such a group is great, and thus, the employment of a church group is limited to persons of wealth.

Neighborhood digging associations are of two types. The first is composed of five to ten women who rotate in a

group, working on each others' farms. Each woman pays the others in cash when they work on her farm. Although it would appear that the women make no financial gain by such an arrangement, the digging association is a ruse which allows its members to pocket the money their husbands remit for the hiring of labor. The second type of neighborhood work party is composed of teenage boys and girls, usually school drop outs, who hire themselves out locally as a "farm labor group". Of those hiring labor in 1971, 8% employed a church group and neighborhood youth group, while 52% employed a neighborhood youth group alone.

Despite small acreage, 31% of Bulala's farmers have portions of their cultivatable land which are uncleared. These farmers claim that they have no funds for clearing bushland, which left undug for long periods requires a large labor input. Furthermore, they feel that even if they do manage to plant a large acreage, they might not have sufficient funds to look after it later on. In the past, unused land was let to a long or short-term tenant. However, as land became more scarce and its value increased, the risk of property loss through ill-defined leasing transactions became too costly. As land registration, legally reinforcing the owner's rights over his property, is completed in South Maragoli, the leasing of unused land to tenants may once again become popular.

Few farms in Bulala Village with less than one acre or with four or more acres have uncleared plots (Table 14).

TABLE 14

FARMS WITH PORTIONS OF LAND UNCLEARED^a

Acres ^b	Owners	Percentage Uncleared
Less than 1	38	8
Less than 2	56	41
Less than 3	28	50
Less than 4	10	50
4 or more	10	20
Total	142	31

^aUncleared land refers to that which is cultivatable and not in planned fallow.

^bThese are mutually exclusive and not cumulative categories.

The labor requirements on the small farms are generally met by the farm family alone or with minimum outside help. Labor was hired on all of Bulala's large farms and all but two of these are fully cultivated, implying a connection between farm size and ability to hire sufficient labor.

When I questioned the farmers as to what they considered the main constraints to their agricultural activities, 31% answered inadequate labor; 63% said land. It seems that for most small-holders, it is not a lack of finances which inhibits the full use of farmland. Rather, on small farms the addition to output gained from extra labor may be insufficient reward for redirecting funds spent on household needs or school fees. In addition, without granaries for storing maize, the farmer who sells his produce at harvest time prices, may actually incur a loss by hiring costly labor.

The Availability of Financial Resources

The growth of savings from agriculture is slow in South Maragoli, and for the individual to engage in a specialized farming enterprise that has potentially high rates of return, he must first have access to other sources of income. Even to secure the full benefits of the new maize technology, the entire cost required by an optimal package of capital inputs and husbandry practices is high.

Hybrid seed for one acre costs Kshs. 19/- per 22 pounds, as opposed to local maize which is home produced. According to P. Mook (1973), a typical MOA fertilizer recommendation of 110 pounds DSP and 220 pounds SA per acre would cost the farmer in the range of Kshs. 80/-. Moreover, since fertilizer is generally sold in 110 or 220 pound bags in Vihiga, a farmer living some distance from a large market center has an additional cost of transportation. Store purchased recurrent capital inputs increase the demand placed on labor; and for farmers without adequate family labor, it could be costly to hire additional workers.

There are development loan facilities through Government and commercial programs to which farmers without sufficient income might turn. However, these require some security, usually in the form of a land title deed, and are only available to those with a certain minimum acreage appropriate to the proposed enterprise. Furthermore, credit is typically tied to purchased recurrent inputs, to the exclusion of labor. Thus, for labor-poor, small-holder

farmers who accept such loans, increased labor costs might offset any profit in production and leave them in debt.

The Availability of Expertise

Although financial ability affects access to land, labor, and such recurrent capital inputs as seed and fertilizer; proper management of the production process is required to make the investment pay off. On every farm in Bulala, there are two roles: farm-head and manager. These roles relate to a division of decision-making responsibility, and may or may not be held by the same person.¹

The farm-head is responsible for decisions concerning the allocation of the farm unit's major resources. For example, the head determines the level of expenditure to be invested in farm production as opposed to other cash enterprises, the assignment of family resources to different economic uses, and the ratio of food consumed on the farm to output sold. In contrast, the farm manager makes technical decisions relating to the selection of inputs for a given level of expenditure determined by the head. Such decisions as which hybrid to use, how much fertilizer to spread, whether to row plant, when to prepare the soil, and how and when to use available labor are major determinants of output.

¹I wish to thank P. Mook (1973) for this insight into decision-making differentiation in Vihiga.

In an area such as Bulala where there is a high rate of labor migration, the farm-head and manager may not be the same person (Table 15). Although 97% of the farm-heads in

TABLE 15
RELATIONSHIP OF FARM-HEAD TO MANAGER

Relationship to Head ^a	Frequency
Self	78
Wife	59
Father	5
Total	142

^aIncluded among the 78 persons in the "Self" category are five female farm-heads.

Bulala are men, women have key responsibilities in the division of agricultural decision-making.

One of the most important criteria for good farm management is access to adequate information concerning an efficient use of capital inputs and farming techniques adaptive to the farmer's own land, labor, and marketing situation. Information about new seed strains, fertilizers, and effective husbandry techniques is mainly disseminated by the local agricultural extension service.

A major problem with such an information channel is that in Bulala, at least, male agricultural staff tend to avoid the female managed farms of absent labor migrants. The

reason for such behavior is self-protection against possible accusations of sexual mis-conduct, which could cost the extension agent his coveted job. Since women in such households not only regulate daily agricultural activity but also act as an information channel through which absent husbands learn of new investment possibilities in agriculture, the denial of extension advice directly to these women often results in husbands not remitting the funds necessary to support the new technology. While women talk with the wives of resident farmers and glean information in that way, they usually cannot provide their husbands with the needed data to make an investment decision regarding their particular set of farm circumstances.

Extension services, in general, are aimed at big farmers whom the agents enjoy visiting and whose increased yield makes a substantial difference in the total (maize) output recorded in the MOA annual reports. As P. Mook (1973: 253) suggests, "One to one extension contact serves a social function more than it does the ostensible and officially intended purpose of transmitting information to better managed farms." Many of these "progressive" farmers have more knowledge about new agricultural inputs and techniques, due to their participation in training programs and their informal links with higher level bureaucrats, than do the junior staff,¹ and tend to deal with such agents in order

¹In Leonard's 1970 study of communication in agricultural extension in Vihiga, he found a wide diversity among both senior and junior staff members in their ability to

to achieve access to government services rather than receive advice.

Since knowledge of inputs and practices associated with a new technology is a crucial factor in any decision to innovate, it is important that the decisions of the farm-head and manager be coordinated. For example, if the head decides to purchase a costly fertilizer which has been recommended, but the manager has not adopted the proper husbandry techniques to accompany its use, the farm may incur a financial loss. In addition, there are certain areas of farm decision-making in which responsibility between the manager and farm-head may be unclear. P. Mook suggests that the timing of maize sales and the division of a plot between maize and short crops are decisions which fit into such a "gray" area (1973: 44-45). In other farming enterprises where greater financial loss may be at stake, lack of coordination in decision-making becomes more serious. In the case of absent labor migrants, where technical decision-making is allocated to a different person, the maintenance of a close relationship between manager and head, insuring that the two are not working at cross-purposes, becomes vital to productive farming.

adapt theoretical agricultural practices to local conditions.

Other Enterprises

It is often thought that the adoption of optimum inputs for hybrid maize would reduce the acreage necessary for food production through higher yields, and thereby release land for other cash enterprises. However, most farms in Bulala are too small to permit the profitable production of cash crops in addition to maize, a potential high income earner itself. It is only on larger farms, therefore, that one finds such cash enterprises as coffee and grade dairy cattle.¹ Along with land, other basic resources — labor, finance, and expertise — are required more extensively for such enterprises.

In Bulala, 27% of the resident farmers grow coffee. Within a 15 minute walk from the village is a coffee cooperative which combines collective processing, grading, storage, and marketing with individual crop cultivation. From the cooperative, farmers may purchase seedlings which bear fruit after three years. The farms which produce coffee have a much higher wage labor input than those producing maize alone.

Coffee production involves the major seasonal tasks of pruning, spraying, manuring, mulching, weeding, and harvesting. The most labor intensive activity, the harvesting of ripened berries, occurs between August and October, and

¹A small number of farmers have gone into the production of European vegetables and other perishable cash crops. But problems of marketing, price, and quality control have acted as major constraints to profit-making.

again between March and May (Figure 6). Coffee production

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Maize	dig/ plant			weed				harvest dig/ plant		weed		har- vest dig
Coffee	prune	spray	harvest				spray	harvest	mulch			prune

Fig. 6.--Annual Cycle of Maize and Coffee Activities

generally fits well with the annual maize cycle. However, coffee picking early in the year coincides with the pen-iless months, and later picking occurs simultaneously with the harvesting of maize. Although school children are home in April and August, providing additional labor for these activities, labor migrants are absent at the time of harvest and sale.

The price of coffee from Vihiga is generally low, ranging from 30 to 60 K. cents per kilo. In January 1970, the MOA estimated the average yield per hectare of coffee at 1270 kilos which, sold at 60 K. cents per kilo, brought the farmer Kshs. 762/-. However, with the cost of fertilizer, chemical spray to prevent plant disease, hired labor, and a percentage of the profit allocated to officials of the coopera-

tive and to the maintenance of equipment, the net profit for the small-scale farmer was minimum. Coffee production entails a higher opportunity cost on smaller farms than on larger ones since it diverts land from food production, providing no income for the first three years and then only a small profit for the cultivator.

In South Maragoli, where pasture land is so scarce that cattle are generally kept tethered while grazing or are even stable fed, the local demand for milk exceeds the supply. Thus, milk prices are as high as 40 or 50 K. cents per pint. However, the raising of exotic cattle, which are high milk producers in comparison with local cows, is an expensive and time-consuming enterprise. The farmer needs adequate pasture land with improved fodder grasses and supplemental concentrates. Fields must be paddocked, water must be readily available, and cows must be regularly sprayed or dipped. In addition, the farmer has to be in regular contact with the government veterinary service in order that contagious diseases may be controlled, inoculations may be provided, and cows can be served by grade bulls or artificial insemination.

Although loans are available for livestock enterprises, few Vihiga farmers can meet necessary qualifications. In order to secure a loan, the applicant must have a minimum of five acres, a title deed so that his property can serve as security for the loan, and the technical and financial ability to comply with the recommendations of the Ministry

of Agriculture. By 1970, only 35 farmers in all of South Maragoli and Bunyore had qualified for loans, and 4 of these farmers reside in Bulala Village.

The raising of grade cattle is a risky enterprise as well as an expensive one. These exotic cattle are more prone to disease than local animals, and the MOA strongly urges farmers to rid themselves of their local stock which spread ticks and disease. Since cattle are lent to less fortunate friends and kinsmen, and are used for bridewealth; the man who owns grade cows must find another way of maximizing community relations if he does not wish to lose prestige. In this regard, the poisoning of expensive grade cows, belonging to farmers whose wealth fellow villagers believe to be increasing at their expense, was not uncommon while I was in South Maragoli.¹ In such an atmosphere, the raising of grade cows requires the constant attention of the farmer or a full-time worker hired specifically for this task. Since the loss of an animal through disease or mistreatment could lead the owner into a spiral of long-term indebtedness, few farmers in Bulala were able and/or willing to engage in such a high risk/high gain enterprise.

One additional enterprise will be briefly mentioned here. In Bulala, six farm-heads, having established themselves in commercial agricultural ventures, have expanded their activities to include retail trade. As is common all

¹The theft of maize and the poisoning of grade cattle appear to be forms of social leveling in a once egalitarian society which is undergoing rapid change in the direction of inequality and stratification.

over Vihiga, the shops of these six men have been closed periodically due to a lack of funds with which to replenish stock. Under pressure from close kinsmen and friends, credit is granted too freely. Moreover, the personal use of stock by the shopkeeper and his family reduces income, leaving these small shops with a gross monthly profit which rarely exceeds Kshs. 100/-.

Although all of these men have been owners of shops for longer than five years, none have diversified their stock or expanded their businesses. Instead, these competing village shopkeepers have continued to purchase goods at a "discount" from the same Indian retailers in Kisumu or from traders at major market centers nearby. This tendency to purchase goods at above wholesale prices results from too small a turnover of stock and from a limited knowledge of marketing facilities outside the area. Their only speculative and profitable retail venture is the timely purchase and resale of village maize.

Although shops close from time to time and do not produce large profits, the possession of a duka (shop) is a considerable source of prestige. Not only does the iron roof structure give evidence of wealth but as Fearn (1961) suggests, the backroom where men meet to drink beer and discuss politics enhances the status of the owner. Furthermore, Barclay (1972) argues that a business venture is not necessarily an end in itself, but is sometimes a means of acquiring long-term economic security in the form

of fixed property. Among these Bulala shopkeepers, income from trade is often not reinvested in the store but is diverted to other economic activities such as the purchase of land, which is less accessible to the claims of kinsmen and debtors and has a higher profit-earning potential.

The Allocation of Resources

At current costs and returns, agriculture is at a comparative disadvantage with respect to competing alternatives for the allocation of resources. Yet, the insecurities of wage employment force Maragoli residents to depend upon agriculture as a means of supplementing their income and providing security in times of sickness, unemployment, and old age.

While opportunities exist for agricultural innovation in the Location, response among Maragoli farmers has differed significantly. In determining the level of expenditure to be allocated to a farming enterprise, the farmer must weigh the potential costs and returns of the enterprise in comparison with the economic feasibility of a number of competing alternatives for his time and money.

Readiness to adopt agricultural innovations is based upon the farmer's perception of the new technology as efficient for him in terms of his land size, labor constraints, ability to finance the enterprise, and access to technical services and expertise. Although many Bulala farms are capable of increased crop production, the returns

for producing a small addition to output are not sufficient to draw out this potential. Farmers reject extension advice based on false assumptions as to the optimum mix of inputs, adequate family labor, and the elasticity of the market. Agricultural investments with small financial cost and little risk involvement are generally chosen by the smallholder in preference to expensive high risk/high gain enterprises.

Given his labor and land situation, a farmer may be mis-advised by standard recommendations as to fertilizer types, top dressings, weeding frequency, crop mix, or even the profitability of accepting credit. The assumption that the production of "progressive" crops or livestock enterprise is economically worthwhile may not be valid for all farmers. Innovations may be efficient for one farmer and not another depending upon his access to basic farming resources. As Wharton (1971: 158) suggests,

The peasant farmer must compare the increased returns (greater output times expected prices) against the increased costs (new required inputs times known costs) before he is able to make a decision on the economic feasibility of the proposed technology. If he feels that the new technology is not economically viable for him, he will not adopt it.

In order to provide a fuller picture of the degree of agricultural differentiation in Bulala, Guttman scaling techniques were applied to the adoption patterns of items representing farming innovation. A Guttman scale is one in which a series of selected attributes are arranged in descending order according to the number of people who are

associated with them. In a perfect Guttman scale, any person who is associated with an attribute on any level is also associated with attributes on all lower levels. Table 16 presents the items included in the Guttman scale in the order of their level of significance. The selection of items

TABLE 16
GUTTMAN SCALE OF AGRICULTURAL INNOVATIONS

Level	Item	Number of Bulala Farm-Head Adopters
1	Owns grade cow	4
2	Owns retail shop	6
3	Owns maize storage bin	12
4	Hires permanent labor	14
5	Uses chemical fertilizer	32
6	Grows coffee	38
7	Acquired additional land by purchase or litigation	54
8	Grows hybrid maize for three consecutive years	82

in this scale was based upon the preceeding discussion of the agricultural production system in South Maragoli. In this Guttman scale, the coefficient of reproducibility equals .97.

Each farm-head was given a scale score according to the number of items that he or she had adopted. Agricultural differentiation, with respect to the adoption of innovations, falls along a continuum. Yet, while it is an academic intrusion to break such a continuum, I have taken the liberty

to do so for purposes of comparison. On the basis of his score, each Bulala farm-head has been placed into one of three adopter status categories which I have labeled "high", "medium", and "low". The high category contains those who have adopted from five to eight items in the scale. The medium group are those who have adopted from one to four items. The low category contains farm-heads who have adopted none of the items and are firmly rooted in a subsistence level of production.

Of the 137 Bulala male farm-heads, 40% fall into the category of low adopter status, 51% have medium status, and 9% have high status (Table 17). Among Bulala male farm-heads,

TABLE 17
AGRICULTURAL ADOPTER STATUS BY
WAGE EMPLOYMENT PROFILE

Worker Profile	Adopter Status ^a			Total
	L	M	H	
P1	45	14	1	60
P2	10	56	1	67
P3	0	0	10	10
Total	55	70	12	137

$$\chi^2 = 160.4, \text{ d.f.} = 4, p \leq 0.001$$

^a Adopter Status in this Table refers only to male farm-heads. When the five female heads are added, L = 57 (40%), M = 72 (51%), and H = 13 (9%).

employment profiles are fairly reliable indicators of adopter status. The pattern which emerges is that those men with

stable, high wage, employment at home are utilizing the economic opportunities made available through the introduction of new farming techniques and commercial agricultural enterprises. For example, among the 10 largest land owners in Bulala, 9 have an employment Profile no. 3. Labor migrants with long-term but low or middle salaried employment have made only limited investments in agriculture, while those with a history of extended unemployment or very low paid jobs have not taken advantage of any opportunity for farming innovation.

Adopter status, used in this context, is not a measure of a farmer's level of "modernization" or even his "progressiveness". The adoption of agricultural innovations is closely related to resource availability, and thus, may not be equally functional for all farmers. Furthermore, given a farmer's land and labor situation, his ability to finance an enterprise, and his access to agricultural expertise; the adoption of certain innovations may be irrational and lead to long-term indebtedness.

Since command over basic resources is a pre-requisite to the adoption of agricultural innovations, the next question to consider becomes what are the critical factors which favor or restrict the individual farmer in acquiring these. The options open to a farmer at any given time are affected not only by his current resource capacity and his past decisions, but also by the organization of his social relationships and the choices which others make towards him.

Chapter VI

THE CONTENT OF URBAN-RURAL SOCIAL NETWORKS

Among the Maragoli, the basic domestic unit is the elementary family of a man, his wife or wives, and children. This is the minimal group which acts together to exploit opportunities for wage employment, subsistence and cash crop agriculture, and entrepreneurial trade and artisan activities. Since the total income shared by the domestic group results from the strategic deployment of members in all activities, the coordination of interpersonal relationships both within the group and with other actors in the situation who pursue strategies of their own is required. By examining the internal structuring and external relations of Maragoli domestic groups, I seek to demonstrate the kinds of socio-economic threads which bind persons in a web of interdependent obligations despite geographic separation and basic alterations in the social system through which economic exchanges are transacted.

The Domestic Group

Among the patrilineal Maragoli peoples, the inheritance of family land and possessions follows the principle of the house-property complex (cf. Gluckman 1950: 195). Marriage, as we have noted, is clan exgamous, and ideally patrilocal and polygamous.

It is a husband's prerogative to divide his land into gardens which are assigned to each of his wives. Yet due to the high rate of labor migration in Maragoli, women not only regulate agricultural labor but play a large role in agricultural decision-making. It was noted in Chapter Five that 45% of Bulala's farm managers are women responsible for technical decisions relating to the selection and use of inputs made available by absent farm-head husbands or sons.

Cash profits from the agricultural produce of each garden belongs to that household, and the husband decides how such money is to be spent. It is the husband who is ultimately responsible for the maintenance of each wife's household, and the welfare and school fees of her children; at least, until an elder son in that house can relieve him of this duty. Although the husband is charged with the allocation of income for major expenditures, wives who earn small sums from such activities as pot-making, vegetable trade, or occasional agricultural day-labor jobs generally retain a portion of these funds for minor household purchases.

Married sons continue to maintain a residential base with their parents until the birth of several children, at which time they set up an omugidzi (homestead) of their own. A woman transmits land and property rights to her children in her husband's home. In polygamous families, sons ideally inherit their father's property in the order

of their mother's seniority and their own seniority among full brothers. The custom by which cattle and cash are given for marriage and family land is inherited in accordance with the prescriptions of the house-property complex has, up to the present, remained largely intact.

Yet, whereas a woman previously had only rights of holding until her sons came of age, more and more women today are coming to own property in their own right, and to dispose of it as they see fit. Where land registration has been completed in South Maragoli, official records frequently include the names of women who have either purchased land on their own or who, left with the guardianship of their husband's property (and uninherited by their husband's brother), have registered this land in their own behalf. With the creation of title deeds, women secure the same legal status as men in regard to the ownership of land. The increased control which women have acquired over farm resources in this bedroom community corresponds with their heightened command over children and the leadership roles they have assumed in local politics, church, and school since their men have been away.

But despite the increased "liberation" of Maragoli women; both the labor migrant and his wife, though separated geographically, remain highly dependent upon one another to fulfill their domestic obligations. In this regard, the contractual institution of bridewealth acts as a primary insurance policy for both parties. Bridewealth still tends

to be of high value since it transfers a woman's procreative capacity to her husband's lineage, with the actual payment issuing in part from the bridewealth realized from a sister's marriage. The size of the bridewealth contract is affected by the bride's level of education. However, bridewealth is commonly paid in installments, the bulk of which is rendered after the birth of several children.

The transfer of genetical rights in a woman to her husband and his clan, through the payment of bridewealth, is upheld by local courts. Bridewealth may also be recovered by the husband's family if a wife neglects her marital duties. In 1971, 24% of 63 civil court cases heard in Maragoli concerned the payment of bridewealth and the legitimacy of children, while many additional cases filed with the Chief's Office in South Maragoli were eventually settled out of court.

Since the stability of a sister's marriage plays an important economic role in the marriage of her brothers, assuring them of a contribution to their bridewealth, they are highly motivated to keep watch on her activities during maidenhood and in the nascent period of marriage. A husband is entitled to divorce his wife if she neglects her domestic duties or is adulterous, quarrelsome, or barren. A wife may return to her natal home on the grounds of mis-treatment by her spouse or lack of economic support. Although her parents and brothers often provide protection for her until harmony is restored or the marriage is dissolved, women are strongly urged to return to their husbands. Bridewealth installments

received are quickly dispensed to pay debts for other marriages, used to pay school fees, or invested in business enterprises. Thus, a sister's divorce, necessitating the return of bridewealth, may place her family under a considerable economic burden and entail lengthy litigation.

Elopement followed by a prolonged period of cohabitation without the payment of bridewealth is today, and probably was in the past, the most common form of marriage in Maragoli. Before the birth of children, a husband is said to be "testing the character" of his wife. However, after offspring are produced, pressure is brought to bear by agnates and affines alike to legitimize the union through the payment of bridewealth. Separation among long-term, cohabitating couples should not be confused with the dissolution of unions involving the transfer of bridewealth. Of 137 male household heads in Bulala, 22 men claimed to have "divorced a wife". However, in only three of these cases had bridewealth installments been initiated.

Although one may suspect labor migration to have affected the marital fidelity of Maragoli women, family pressure reinforced by fear of such supernatural punishments as difficulty or death in childbirth remain the real sanctions against adultery. Indeed, the association of promiscuity with birth control contraceptives has created a major impediment, along with other factors, to the acceptance of family planning programs recently launched in the area. It is rare to find Maragoli women engaged in prostitution locally, thus,

leaving this entrepreneurial niche open to women of other areas. Furthermore, migrant informants report that relatively few Maragoli women are prostitutes in town.

With a sizeable number of his close male kinsmen working outside, a man may look to his wife as a major defender of his home interests. The transfer of bridewealth, especially through installments, serves to motivate the vigilance of a man's affines over his wife's behavior while he is away. Yet, despite the payment of bridewealth, unless a man maintains harmonious relations with his wife and provides for her support and honor, in that she is expected to furnish hospitality to neighbors and gifts to her paternal family, she is apt to make repeated attempts to desert him. In 1971, for example, four Bulala farmers with worker Profiles no. 2 and low agricultural adopter status were unable to raise sufficient crops even for home consumption due to repeated efforts on the part of their wives to leave them. The pursuit of a runaway wife and lengthy litigation with her family to recover bridewealth can be costly to the labor migrant both in money and time. In this regard, the payment of bridewealth may also insure a wife against mistreatment or neglect by her husband. Thus, the custom of bridewealth binds members of the domestic group — sisters and brothers, parents and children, husband and wife — by common interests and helps regulate their behavior towards one another.

A father has considerable authority over his children. He retains a high degree of legal responsibility for his

married daughters, paying compensation for offenses committed by them. He also provides them with a refuge during periods of stress in their marriages. The long lasting control maintained over sons is manifest from the residential proximity of the eldest and youngest sons to their father's homestead, the delayed transfer of land rights, and the father's command over the division of bridewealth cattle and the allocation of omugidzi finances.

Due to the small size of land holdings and increased agricultural productivity through the introduction of cash crops, fathers tend to delay not only the transfer of land rights to their sons but also allocative decision-making responsibility in regard to the usage of apportioned fields. Of the 94 men aged 20 to 30 in Bulala, only 25% are land owners; and only three of these young land owners are under age 25.

The long-term dependence of a son upon his father for farm land might be further exacerbated by the recent land adjudication program which strengthens the owner's control over farm fragmentation and weakens the early claims of dependents. Where land registration has been completed, a land owner wishing to sub-divide his holdings legally has to bring his application to the Land Control Board. This administrative body, created by the 1967 Lands Control Act, and consisting of Government officials and appointed prominent local residents, then decides whether the proposed sub-divisions are economically viable. Theoretically, if a man with a three

acre plot wishes to sub-divide his land among five sons, the Board should grant approval as this will not reduce the economic productivity of the land, since it produces little at present. On the other hand, if a man with a 15 acre plot has grade cows, coffee, paddocks, and so on, and the farm is a highly productive unit, he could expect his application to divide the property into parcels to be refused since it would constitute a reduction in agricultural productivity.¹ In reality, however, the decisions of the Board are often manipulated to accommodate personal relationships and political circumstances.

Nevertheless, with land registration and increased productivity, the land carrying capacity of South Maragoli, even allowing for informal sub-division of land, might be further lessened. One probable long-term effect of the registration program will be that a high percentage of young men will be forced off the land permanently, and that those who do remain, will obtain control over their parcel later in life, possibly only after both parents' death. Meanwhile, the legal support which Maragoli parents are acquiring for the possible disinheritance of their children may correspondingly be increasing parental leverage over the financial resources of wage earning offspring.

It is expected in Maragoli that every father should help his sons obtain cattle for bridewealth. In the past, sons had few options for acquiring cattle and marrying without the assistance of their father. Today, they are expected to send home part of their earnings to help amass a herd for

¹The duties of Land Control Boards are described in the Kenya Ministry of Lands and Settlement, Handbook for the Guidance of Land Control Boards, 1969.

their bridewealth. However, since the father has full command over the allocation of cattle to his sons as well as over homestead finances, he may opt to use the money sent him to pay the bridewealth or school fees of a younger brother or another son, invest the money in a business scheme, or even acquire another wife for himself. As Sangree (1966: 22) suggests, if a son confronts his father over the denial of land rights or bridewealth, but he has not sent home money or given economic aid to his parents, he may be rejected in his appeal to the elders for their intercession in the matter. Thus, sons make certain to inform relatives and neighbors about what they have done for their parents so that if a conflict arises, they will have witnesses to speak on their behalf.

The authority which parents have over children is somewhat tempered by the economic advantages which parents hope to derive from their offspring. A wage earning child may be delegated a large share of responsibility for the welfare and school fees of his siblings, and also for the care of his mother, especially if the father has more than one wife. Among 139 Standard VII students from three primary schools near Bulala Village, 44 had at least one employed older brother. Of these, 30 or 68% had their fees paid by siblings. In the 14 remaining cases, the fathers paid the fees, and in 10 of these the fathers' salaries were far larger than those of their employed sons.

With husbands working outside the home area for a good

part of their adult lives, women have come to rely more upon their children for support. Most working men send home monthly remittances to their families. With the lack of job security in towns, however, women must depend upon more than one income for household expenses. Also, with the decline in the frequency of widow inheritance, sons have come to take over their paternal uncle's responsibility in caring for their mother in her old age. This increased dependency upon the financial aid of children includes daughters as well as sons. Apart from job opportunities for girls, a daughter with a high level of education can bring higher bridewealth and, perhaps more important, conjugal ties with a well-to-do family. Thus, parents try to hedge their bet that education will pay off by placing as many children as possible into the school system. Indeed, it is common for wives to coordinate visits to town with the beginning of school terms so that they can carry back the fees in person.

Competition over family resources can be a major factor disrupting the unity of the sibling group. Inheritance of property and possessions is ideally distributed equally between sons, yet the eldest son has prior claim for land and bridewealth. This advantage in sibling position occurs in education as well as in the inheritance of property. The eldest son has first claim on parental savings for school fees. Often his siblings are held back from entering Standard I or remain in the lower primary grades where fees are less expensive, until the father can replenish his finances

or until the elder child can pass through the system.

Given the scarcity of land resources and finances for school fees, brothers with productive plots or with high levels of education are considered to have gained success at the expense of their siblings. Thus, their earning power is regarded as a family asset from which all expect to benefit. This type of egalitarian outlook acts as a major impediment to the accumulation of individual wealth.

While the transfer of land rights, the allotment of bridewealth, and the payment of school fees create sources of sibling rivalry, common interests in family land and the socio-economic status of their sisters emphasize the solidarity of brothers and provides them with self-interest in preserving unity. Although there are continual tensions and ambiguous relationships within the domestic group; its members are closely linked not only by emotional ties, but by reciprocal rights and duties which they recognize towards one another.

The polygamous family is a multiplied configuration of the individual family. Children are grouped with their mothers and each cluster is separate in regard to bride-wealth and inheritance transactions. However, since a husband is expected to provide each of his wives with her own garden, land scarcity in South Maragoli as well as the financial pressure of a large extended family act as a deterrent to polygamy. Of the 137 male farm-heads in Bulala, only 16 or 12% are married polygamously.

Polygamous marriages among Bulala males are of two distinct types — internal polygamy and external polygamy. The first type involves multiple marriages where all wives reside in the vicinity of South Maragoli. In the second type, men are married to one wife who resides in the village and to another who resides in town.

Of the seven internal polygamists in Bulala, six men are over age 65 and none have engaged in labor migration since the time of their second marriage. In the past, all have held prestigious local level political posts, such as area headman or advisor to the Chief; while only the youngest has been active in the affairs of local voluntary associations. In addition, prior to the sub-division of land among their sons, all of these men held over five acres of inherited land. Internal multiple marriage, thus, appears to be part of the customary status syndrome upheld by the elders. Of the seven internal polygamists, six have worker Profiles no. 1 and low agricultural adopter status, while the youngest (a shopkeeper who speculates in land) has a Profile no. 3 and high adopter status.

In contrast to the internal polygamists, the average age of the nine external polygamists is 42 with a range from 31 to 50 years. All but one of these men spend almost all their time away from the village. The exception is a local teacher whose second wife resides in Kitale close to where he is purchasing land. All of the external polygamists working out of the village have tiny plots of less than two

acres, and have not transferred any land to their sons. Among the eight men who work away from home, only one sends regular remittances to his village wife. Four send only school fees, while three have sent no remittance at all since at least 1968. These three migrants rarely make visits to Bulala. Among the eight village wives of the migrant external polygamists, six have not visited their husband in town since the time of his second marriage. External polygamy, for these individuals, creates, or at least reinforces, the social distance between the migrant and his home.

Of the nine external polygamists, two have worker Profiles no. 1 and low agricultural adopter status, one has a Profile no. 2 and medium adopter status, and one a Profile no. 3 and high adopter status. Five men, however, have worker Profiles no. 2 and low adopter status. The worker profiles of these persons, unlike those of the vast majority of the male Bulala farm-head population, do not indicate their agricultural adopter status. One may assume, therefore, that in these cases the phenomenon of worker profile — adopter status mis-match is largely associated with poor domestic relations between farm-head and manager.

The composition of any domestic unit, at any one time reflects the developmental cycle of the family as well as the economic status of the farm-head (Table 18). The extended family which appears in Stage III of the develop-

mental cycle represents a very small proportion of Bulala's current domestic groups. This trend towards nuclearization results from a prolonged dispersal stage when grown children migrate to seek school places and wage employment. Furthermore, given the low carrying capacity of the land and the lateness of marriage, by the time a man has produced offspring, his father is usually under pressure to divide his holdings.

TABLE 18

DEVELOPMENTAL CYCLE OF DOMESTIC GROUPS
BY AGRICULTURAL ADOPTER STATUS


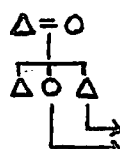
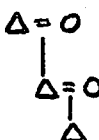
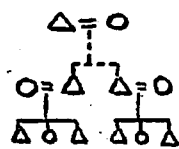
Adopter Status	Stage I	Stage II	Stage III	Stage IV
	 Nuclear %	 Dispersal %	 Extended %	 Divisional %
H	23	61	8	8
M	43	32	7	18
L	63	4	5	28
Total	49 (70)	23 (33)	7 (9)	21 (30) = (142)

Table 18 indicates an interesting contrast between the domestic group composition of the three adopter status groups. The domestic group composition of the majority of those with low adopter status falls into the nuclear stage, while the majority of those with high adopter status fall

into the dispersal stage. Furthermore, while 28% of the low adopter status group are in the divisional stage, at which time the initial unit begins to split, only 8% of the high adopter status group fall into this category. Meanwhile, the domestic units of medium adopter status are more evenly spread between the stages of the developmental cycle.

It would appear that agricultural adopter status is a function of age, reflected in the actor's place in the developmental cycle of his domestic group (Table 19).

TABLE 19
AGE DIFFERENCES AMONG ADOPTER STATUS GROUPS

Age	Adopter Status Group		
	L %	M %	H %
20s	26	3	0
30s	21	15	8
40s	18	40	30
50s	5	25	54
60s	5	7	8
70/80s	25	10	0
Total	100 (57)	100 (72)	100 (13) = (142)

Since only 23% of the low status adopters are in their 40s or 50s, as opposed to 84% of high status adopters who are in these age groups, the majority of low status adopters may be considered structurally marginal in their access to and control over family labor and land. However, it should not be forgotten that education, occupation, stability and gain-

fulness of employment, political status, and social connections also affect agricultural adopter status.

Although only 7% of Bulala domestic units are extended to include newly married sons and daughters-in-law, several domestic units are composed of appendages outside this category. For instance, 13 domestic units include Humo, 9 Sowi, 4 Husi, 1 HuFa, and 1 Hubr. Of those domestic units extended by children only, 10 include a daughter's illegitimate child, 7 a grandchild, 5 wisi, 4 wisiSo, 3 Husi, 2 Husida, 2 wiBrSo, 1 wiBrda, 1 HuBr, and 1 HuBrSo (Table 20).

TABLE 20

DOMESTIC GROUP APPENDAGES BY ADOPTER STATUS^a

Adopter Status	Type		
	Nuclear %	Extended by at Least One Adult %	Extended by Children Only %
H	31	23	46
M	51	22	26
L	65	16	19
Total	55 (78)	20 (28)	25 (36) = (142)

^aDue to the two household phenomenon of labor migration, 78% of Bulala's domestic units alter their form into and out of the nuclear state during an annual cycle. However, the appendages included here are considered permanent in that their services can be deployed on a regular basis by the farm-head.

Among the high adopter status group, Table 20 indicates that 69% have appendages to their elementary family group. Such

appendages serve two purposes: first, they replace the labor of the farm-head's dispersed children; second, the acceptance of young children into the domestic group, along with the subsequent payment of their school fees, is a relatively painless way of maximizing community relations while providing additional household help. Among the low adopter status group, only 35% of the domestic units have appendages, and of these only 19% have appendages consisting only of children. Inadequate finances and an inability to pay the school fees of relatives' children, in particular, is the major factor accounting for this difference.¹

The Wider Community

In contrast to the domestic group, members of separate farm units, even if close kinsmen, do not acknowledge intrinsic rights and obligations toward one another. Rather, the voluntary formation of economic linkages between domestic groups reflects a drive for security and is maintained through patterns of mutual assistance. The corporate nature of unilineal descent groups associated with rights of residence, ownership, inheritance, and production; along with jural, economic, and political autonomy appears to have undergone fundamental changes in recent times. Whereas once Maragoli society was apparently governed by corporate segmented units,

¹It should be noted that within medium and low agricultural adopter status groups, differences in family structure between labor migrants and those at home are mainly a function of age.

today functional segments of extended families and voluntary associations have largely taken over their socio-economic role.

Residential mobility, internal migration which dates back to the pre-colonial era, and recent land sales have undermined the territorial solidarity of clan units.¹ Within Bulala, clusters of agnates often occupy adjoining plots of land due to the egalitarian nature of the inheritance system. Depending upon the degree of affinity within these larger family constellations, children may sometimes eat from one house to the next and women may cooperate in performing minor domestic chores. However, farm units within such clusters are clearly delineated by euphorbia hedges, marking the economic independence of each domestic group.

The modifications which have taken place in the Maragoli land holding system due to population pressure and intensive land use under cash cropping have been discussed in Chapter Five. The emergence of private property as the dominant feature of the land holding system occurred long before formal adjudication was enacted. General rights over land, by which security of tenure was guaranteed through membership in the tribe or clan, has given way to a system of freehold tenure under which property may theoretically, at least, be transmitted and disposed of as the owner wishes. Whereas

¹The 142 land owning domestic units of Bulala Village represent 12 of South Maragoli's 28 clans: 44% are Mavi, 20% Muku, 12% Gihayo, 8% Mdindi, while the remaining 16% include Saniaga, Vasali, Vafunami, Vayonga, Mutembuli, Migangu, Mukuvera, and Vakivuta.

previously, claims to inheritance served to establish and maintain economic ties towards one's kinsmen, so generating a network of joint property interests, under freehold tenure, relatives are less bound by common interests to behave in specifically prescribed ways to one another.

Although lineages no longer control land, there are indications that association with a locality is still important when authority is needed for the settlement of a land case. Clan elders have always lacked institutionalized powers over the disposal and use of clan lands. Yet, they have always been considered authorities within the neighborhood when a boundary was in dispute. Even where land adjudication has been completed, the elders continue to play a significant role in the transmission of the owner's property upon the occasion of the hair shaving ceremony (olovego) which follows a funeral. After this ritualistic purification ceremony has been completed;¹ family, neighbors, and local elders meet to settle the claims and debts of the deceased as well as to divide the estate. If the deceased has not previously transferred the title deed to his land holdings, the inheritance of his property is recognized as primarily the concern of his lineage. Yet even in this regard, the role of clan elders per se is modified by the intervention of multi-clan community elders since, in inheritance disputes, claims and debts frequently involve persons outside the clan.

¹For a detailed description of this ceremony, see Wagner (1949: 485-96).

In Maragoli, clan exogamy creates a network of wide relations which places social emphasis on affinal and neighborhood status rather than on clanship. Those expected to contribute towards or receive a share of bridewealth payments constitute a very narrow group of consanguinial kinsmen. I was able to collect contribution data for fifteen bridewealth contracts among Bulala residents. Of these, only two have been completely settled, while in each of the remaining contracts, more than half the debt has been discharged. In three cases, the grooms have paid all the installments themselves. In five cases, cattle and cash received for an older sister have gone directly into the groom's installments. Of kinsmen who contributed, a father did so five times, FaBr once, mo twice, and a moBr once. In the cases of the contributing mother and father's brother, the groom's father had died. A neighbor contributed a cow toward the payment of one bridewealth contract. However, as this cow was the calf of an animal jointly owned by the neighbor and the groom's father, it seems likely that the two men were simply dividing the livestock between them.¹

Since the transmission of bridewealth generally occurs over many years, the bride's father may have died and her brother or even her brother's son may be the recipient of the last payments. Where the bridewealth received for a sister serves as the source of a brother's bridewealth pay-

¹The Maragoli engage in complicated joint ownership relations concerning livestock (see Wagner 1956: 103-04, 138-56).

ments, a special bond is created between the two siblings. Sangree (1966: 15) suggests that such a bond is also extended to the relationship between a woman and her brother's children and a man and his sister's children. As the paternal aunt or Senge plays an important economic role in the marriage contract between one's parents, both she and her husband are generally treated amiably and with respect. In return, the Senge is expected to treat her brother's children with friendliness and goodwill, presenting them with small gifts from time to time.

Sangree points out that the homestead of a mother's brother or Koza is usually in a position of being owed bridewealth by the homestead of his nephew (1966: 15-16). As the birth of the young man assures the eventual transfer of payment to his maternal uncle, a close relationship is likely to prevail between the two. In the past, it was common for a man to teach his sister's son special crafts and to grant him land. Today, an urban Koza (moBr) and Senge (Fasi) are the frequent recipients of visiting nephews and nieces in search of school places and employment. However, the cost of urban accommodation and hospitality soon outweighs the economic rewards of bridewealth, and unless emotional ties are strong or other types of mutual aid reinforce the relationship, the Koza and Senge are likely to withdraw from such asymmetrical exchanges.

While clans once provided the underlying framework for socio-economic organization among the Maragoli, they were not

highly institutionalized political units with articulated leadership positions.¹ Clan authority, lacking explicit rights and duties, was mainly a function of the prestige which the community conferred upon leading elders.

Although authority is horizontally distributed across segments in acephalous societies (cf. Richards 1960), the size of the "effective" political unit constantly altered according to the nature of the business at hand. For example, although sacrifices are no longer performed in Christian Maragoli, Wagner recorded that such religious observances were the only occasion for which the Maragoli assembled together on a tribal scale (1940: 210). Circumcision of teenage boys, occurring every seven or eight years on average, was another event involving the tribe as a whole. This ceremony, while occurring simultaneously throughout Maragoli, was, however, carried out on a community basis. In addition, cases concerning minor offenses were heard within a small neighborhood, while serious cases were dealt with by appropriately larger groups. Thus, the effective political units, aside from family and neighborhood clusters, were temporarily allied groups which appeared to be formed on a situational basis and were generally small in size.

With the introduction of British administration, the arrival of the Christian missionaries, the onset of labor

¹For a discussion of Maragoli political organization in pre-colonial times, see Wagner (1940).

migration, and the erosion of the territorial solidarity of the clans; the political, religious, and economic functions of the lineages were considerably reduced. Today, achieved membership in voluntary associations, rather than ascribed affiliation with a lineage, defines communal organization. Schools, churches, markets, and the local administration provide the source of numerous work groups and self-help committees; and within Bulala, itself, there are over fifteen such groups.¹

Churches, in particular, play a large role in the social affairs of the community. Through church membership, women are provided with legal support and a new basis of agricultural labor organization in the face of the increasing disappearance of middle-age labor migrants from the area. New leadership positions are available, and greater access to formal and non-formal education, church sponsored agricultural extension, and assistance with business management.² In addition to such regular activities as prayer meetings

¹Within Bulala Village, there is a tax assessment committee, a coffee cooperative committee, a cattle dip committee, a building committee for the self-help secondary school, the committee of elders for the monthly, quarterly, and yearly meetings of the Friends African Mission, two Salvation army committees, a parents group for the local primary school, a market committee of local shopkeepers, women's digging associations, the Pentacostal Assemblies of East Africa committees, and the sub-location Improvement Society.

²Several international church organizations offer special religious and trade courses and even academic scholarships overseas. The Friends have an excellent rural service agricultural extension program within the area, and the Partnership for Productivity, a Quaker associated organization with a branch in Kakamega, offers loans and assistance with entrepreneurial business enterprises.

and large scale funerals and wedding ceremonies, church members participate in arbitrating disputes within the congregation, helping to set bridewealth when two members marry, organizing work parties for community hire, and attending en masse the social functions of sister churches in other villages and districts.

The organization of schools also offers opportunities for community members to participate in numerous management committees, planning groups, football teams, and choir clubs; all of which affects internal household affairs as well as opening up new contacts outside the neighborhood. Voluntary associations, particularly those relating to church and school affairs, provide highly visible leadership platforms in the community and therefore, provide access to political mobility within the organization of the church and in general community politics. Moreover, the flow of political and economic transactions into the community is regulated not only by persons in their civil service capacities, but also by those in positions of local influence.

Authority positions in Bulala's voluntary associations tend to be overlapping. Church leaders are also the leaders of school committees, the coffee cooperative, the cattle dip committee, and so on. Of the 14 Bulala residents who are leaders in two or more local voluntary associations, 12 (including one widow) are in the high agricultural adopter status group and 2 are retired skilled labor migrants of medium adopter status. All reside year-round at home, all

are between the ages 38 and 62, and the men all have levels of educational attainment above Standard V. These middle-aged, influential residents have a local political base as children of established influential local families who were quick to exploit the early educational and employment opportunities offered by the missionaries and the Colonial administration.

Membership in voluntary associations is cross-cutting within the sub-location, the neighborhood, and the farm unit. The wide-knit web of interpersonal relations created by such segmented ties reinforces the wide network of social ties intrinsic to customary Maragoli social organization. Such a network pattern of association, providing a setting for dyadic links of what Wolf terms "instrumental" friendship (1966: 12), allows actors to manipulate a wide range of relationships based on a number of alternative criteria.

Interaction in Bulala takes place on many planes, a factor, which as Geertz (1959) points out, makes difficult the isolation of a community. Systems of kinship, neighborhood, and voluntary associations conjointly supply the structural parameters for organizing most interpersonal relationships within the village. This social network of kinship and other associational ties which ramify throughout Maragoli, also extend beyond its boundaries into Nairobi and other towns across Kenya.

The status of the urban labor migrant is typically variable and insecure, while his town based social relationships are often without formal structure and fleeting. Thus, by

maintaining wide-spread ties with home, the migrant assures himself of aid and support when they are required. It was suggested in Chapter Four that Bulala migrants in town maintain extensive ties with their point of origin. One way such ties are sustained is through the outstretch of numerous voluntary associations which keep their members in fairly regular contact with one another. Church affiliation and membership in location or clan welfare organizations functions to adjust members to town life, perpetuate homogeneous ties, and promote mutual assistance. Through the overlap of members and leaders in these associations, migrants in town are drawn together, and communications are enhanced with those at home.

The principal way, however, in which the Bulala migrant maintains home ties is through a mechanism of strongly effective networks of friends and relatives situationally recruited in the name of brotherhood (cf. Parkin 1969). Although much of the political, economic, and religious significance of the clans are gone, interpersonal allegiances and responsibilities are expressed in the idiom of kinship. Bulala migrants maintain regular contact with a wide range of kinsmen and friends who live or work near them in town or who visit periodically from Maragoli. Distant kinship relations are recognized in both paternal and maternal lines as well as through affinal linkages. As Epstein notes, the use of a classificatory system of kinship in town serves to reduce all possible relationships to a manageable number of categories of kin while providing for the extension of kinship related behavior patterns to an indefinite number of persons with whom actual

genealogical relations may be extremely remote (1961: 47). But along with the recognition of kinship is implied the acknowledgement of reciprocal responsibilities and obligations. While the ideology of brotherhood may be drawn upon for claims of assistance and hospitality, the shortening of social distance bears a high cost.

Patterns of Home-Based Support

In Maragoli, persons are free to mobilize ties of friendship and kinship in order to expand their mobility both within and outside the community. Dyadic ties of friendship are generally reinforced by the informal exchange of such items as money, food, drink, or hospitality and accommodation in town. Friends may also, upon occasion, act as sponsors for one another in attempts to widen their social contacts. However, while friends and neighbors often help each other in times of need, the tendency is to avoid long-term or weighty commitments. In addition, friendships based upon such single criterion as common neighborhood, school attendance, or acquaintanceship at workplace or bar, may be more easily broken than multi-stranded, overlapping relationships.

While labor migrants attempt to expand their social networks as broadly as possible, due to the nature of the migratory process they are frequently in a position in which they can presume only upon close friends and kinsmen to oversee certain kinds of critical transactions. Although lineages do not control access to land, labor, credit, school places,

or jobs, ties with the extended family are valuable assets for the transmission and distribution of these strategic resources.

It was indicated in Chapter Four that under modern conditions of wage employment in Kenya, the strategic mobilization of personal relationships is very important for persons wishing to qualify for and obtain a job. The utilization of interpersonal connections is also extensive during the course of urban employment due to pressure of maintaining two households and of allocating domestic group resources in both wage employment and agricultural activities. The inability of the farm-head labor migrant to provide the necessary supervision over his family and farming enterprises from afar is the major factor necessitating his dependence upon a reliable locally-based support group.

Land is a prime element of security in South Maragoli. The vulnerability of the absent labor migrant in attempting to increase or even maintain acreage at home is made visible through the numerous land disputes which take place during land adjudication. Although the registration of land parcels was completed in Munugi Sub-Location prior to my arrival in 1970, I was able to obtain complete records of the adjudication proceedings from the Land Registration Office in Kakamega. I also had the opportunity to observe first hand the adjudication proceedings which took place in two other sub-locations during my stay in South Maragoli.

Under the Land Adjudication Act of 1968, once an area

has been declared ready for adjudication, every person who considers that he has an interest in a parcel of land makes a claim to the recording officer. He then has the responsibility of pointing out its boundaries to the demarcation officer within a specified period of time. Each person whose presence is required by an officer or committee is required to attend in person or send an authorized agent. If he fails to attend or send an agent, the proceedings continue in his absence. In not less than seven days before demarcation is begun, the demarcation officer gives warning of the intended demarcation and recording of claims. Boundaries of all land holdings, whether public under the county council or privately claimed by individuals, are delineated. Also, rights of way to public roads or water are marked. At this time, with the agreement of owners, scattered holdings may be consolidated by way of exchange. The survey officer then prepares a demarcation map giving every parcel of land an identifying number. The recording officer considers all claims and prepares a form in respect of every parcel shown on the demarcation map.

If there are two or more conflicting claims for a parcel of land, or if a boundary dispute occurs which the recording officer is unable to resolve, he submits the dispute to the local adjudication committee. The local committee is appointed by the adjudication officer and decides, in accordance with recognized customary law, any questions referred to it. If the committee is unable to reach a decision after hearing

three witnesses for each side of the case who are examined and cross-examined by the litigants, it refers the matter to an arbitration board. If a litigant is dissatisfied with the committee's decision, he may, within 14 days, make an objection which is then referred to the arbitration board. The arbitration board consists of between 6 and 25 appointed prominent residents in the district.

In Munugi Sub-Location, 175 cases were heard by the local committee. Of these, 35 were appealed and in only 3 cases were the committee's findings reversed. In Munugi, under the direction of the Adjudication Officer for Western Province, the Sub-Chief gathered the residents together for the land committee election. Each of the six sub-areas in Munugi caucused and elected four members in addition to the Ligutu (Headman). All of those elected were considered leading elders in their community and none were civil servants.¹ When all 30 members were chosen, the entire meeting had to select a chairman and vice-chairman. In Bulala's main sub-area, three men and one woman were appointed to the committee along with the Ligutu. The woman and two of the men have high agricultural adopter status, while one man and the Ligutu have medium adopter status. Of these Bulala members, a high adopter status shopkeeper with seven years of education and two wives was also elected by the entire body as chairman of

¹It was not clear why local civil servants were not selected for the committee. Either a local law had been issued in this regard or these prominent residents, who had a great deal at stake in the adjudication proceedings, preferred to remain in the background and dispense their influence informally rather than accept formal positions on the committee.

the committee.

After the adjudication record is prepared and made public, further objections are allowed within the next 60 days to be given in writing to the adjudication officer. A final appeal of the objection decision can be filed with the Minister of Lands and Settlement. After all claims and appeals have been heard, the chief land registrar makes final the adjudication registration. Title deeds to land parcels then become available upon the payment of an adjudication fee to the Registrar's Office.

Throughout the process, communications with persons working away from home are vital. Those lacking the ability to read and write English or Swahili are at a definite disadvantage. Persons not responding to summons and without excuses for so doing are subject to expensive fines and/or imprisonment. In addition, the adjudication process is expensive. Fees must be paid by persons at whose request a claim is referred to a committee, and the payment of Chai (a Swahili word for tea, referring to covert payments of food or cash reimbursing persons for services performed) to witnesses is customary.

In Bulala's main sub-area, 73% or 58 land adjudication cases involved absent migrants. Table 21 indicates the general case types and the category of litigants concerned.

TABLE 21

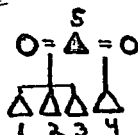
LAND ADJUDICATION DISPUTES INVOLVING
ABSENT MIGRANTS

Case Type ^a	Brs.	Paternal Parallel Cousins	Half Brs.	FaBr- BrSo	Fa- So	Mo- So	Brwi- HuBr	Neigh.	Lender-Tenant
A	9	4	5	2	0	0	0	0	0
B	2	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
C	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
D	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
E	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
F	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	13
G	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Total	15	10	8	3	3	1	1	3	14 = 58

^aCase A generally involves the use and registration of a migrant's land while he was working away from home. Case B is based upon a migrant's complaint that he did not receive an equal share of family land. In Case C, a complaint is lodged against the migrant for not dividing land which he purchased among his family members. Case D involves encroachment of an absent migrant's land boundaries. In Case E, land purchased from a migrant but not fully paid for was resold to a third party by the buyer. Case F concerns migrants who were unable to make land claims at the time of earlier transactions due to their absence from home. In Case G, the absent migrant did not help his family pay for purchased land or for land litigation expenses.

Of the cases, 71% involved disputes over land inheritance, an issue which serves to disrupt the solidarity of the agnatic group. Far fewer cases concerned boundary disputes between neighbors or claims against tenants. Such latter cases emphasize the unity of the descent group, especially where the land concerned is family land rather than a purchased parcel.

I have attempted to classify these cases by their central issue. However, as the following edited excerpts taken from official transcripts indicate, many cases involve a series of extenuating circumstances.

Case 15 (Type G)

In Case 15, we see a dispute between half brothers. The plaintiff is of the second house (born to the second wife) and the defendant is second born in the first house (born to the first wife).

Plaintiff(4):

I am claiming a piece of land from my second brother(2) which was owned by our father called Matiti(5). Matiti had four pieces of land. We sold two and there are two remaining. There are four brothers. My eldest brother(1) divided the biggest one in Buyonga between three of us and the land in dispute remained with my second brother(2). While I was working outside, my youngest brother(3) took down the boundaries. Now I want a piece of land where my second brother(2) is. My father had two wives. I am alone in my mother's house and the land which my second brother was given was my mother's piece.

Plaintiff's Witness(1):

I am giving this land to the plaintiff(4), my brother because he has never had any family land and yet our father had two wives—our mother and his mother. This land was my father's and when he died in 1947, all those things were left under my care as I am the eldest son. Matiti(5) left two pieces of land — one at Buyonga and one here. I gave this land to the defendant(2) to take care of as he was living near it. We have not divided the land at Buyonga and it is still with me. But I found that our younger brother(3) had taken down the boundaries of the Buyonga land which I had put up. He did this because as a younger brother he should remain on the land where our parents were buried. If I could decide this case, I would give this piece of land to the plaintiff(4) and defendant(2), while I would stay with my young brother(3) in Buyonga.

Defendant(2):

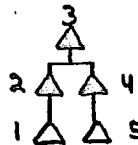
I do not have a piece of land which I can give to the plaintiff(4) because he has a piece which was given to him by our elder brother(1) in Buyonga in 1964. Also, I had a land case on this piece and was awarded the land. But when I wasted my money on this case, nobody helped me. Therefore, I have saved this land. Without me it would have gone to someone else. Since I was given this land, I have been using it and no one has claimed that it was his. I have planted my coffee trees.

Findings of the Land Committee:

Land awarded to the defendent for the following reasons:

1. There were some people who encroached upon this land and the defendent accused them and won the case. Nobody helped him.
2. On this land the defendent has got his trees and it was he who hedged the land.
3. The plaintiff was given land in Buyonga.

Case 18 (Type F)



Case 18 involves a dispute between paternal parallel cousins.

Plaintiff(1):

I am claiming this land from Jafeth(5) because he entered upon this land in 1937 and I was given this land by my grandfather(3) through my father(2). Since that time, he is staying on that land. When his father(4) died in 1943, my father(2) claimed the land and it was decided that it was his. But Jafeth(5) hasn't taken down his house up to now. When my father died, I returned from Nairobi and asked for this land, but the committee was postponed.

Defendent(5):

I do not accept giving this land to Ahuta(1) because this was my father's(4) land and my father showed me my boundary. My father was shown his boundary by Ahuta's father (2) and he told him to plant bananas on their father's(3) grave. When Ahuta's father(2) died, I did not see anybody claiming this land. My father(4) stayed here with Ahuta's father(2) with a boundary between them and no one accused anyone. It is ourselves who have started things. On this land I have got bananas, maize, my father's grave, trees, and a house of my mother's.

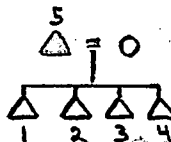
Findings of the Land Committee:

Land awarded to the defendent for the following reasons:

1. It was the land of his father from the grandfather.
2. No claim had been made for the land by Ahuta's father to the defendent's father.

3. The defendent has got crops on the land and his father's grave.

Case 24 (Type C)



In Case 24, there is a dispute between full brothers. The plaintiff is the youngest brother, while the defendent is the first born.

Plantiff(4):

I am claiming a piece of land which was my father's(5) because my brother(1) has it and I was not given a piece of my father's land. My father died when I was young and my mother was not inherited. So she moved somewhere else and it is where I have bought a small piece of land. On this land my father had planted bananas and he was buried here.

Defendent(1):

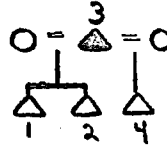
I do not accept giving this land to Ger sham(4) because this land was bought by my father in 1945 for three gourds and Kshs. 100/-. During my father's funeral, Ger sham claimed for a cow. When my father died, he had not paid the whole price for this land and it is I who completed the price when working in Nakuru. As I am the first son, I have divided this land among our three brothers. My other brother(4) bought his elsewhere. He claimed this land before the Ligutu but the case was dismissed as my father has bought this land.

Findings of the Land Committee:

Land awarded to the defendent for the following reasons:

1. This land was not family land because the father and defendent had bought it.
2. Ger sham claimed for and receive a cow at the funeral.
3. On this land there are crops and houses of the defendent and his two brothers.

Case 37 (Type A)



Case 37 involves a dispute between half brothers. The plaintiff is of the second house and the defendant is the second born in the first house.

Plaintiff(4):

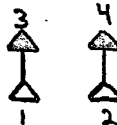
I am claiming a piece of land from Absolom(2) who was of our father called Omolo(3). My father gave me this land before he died, and my father had two wives — my mother and Absolom's mother. I was alone in my mother's house and Absolom is two in his. When I wanted to make use of this land after I returned from Uganda, I found my brothers(1 and 2) here. The elder brother(1) of the first house gave me a share of that which he had been using, but Absolom refused to give the piece he had taken. Our father died when we were all married and he had divided these pieces of land. When we had the funeral celebration there was no one who claimed this land from me. This land was empty and I was in Uganda. That is why my brothers started using it. I planted a guava tree before I went away and it is still there.

Findings of the Land Committee:

Land awarded to the plaintiff for the following reasons:

1. This was his father's land and there is a fruit tree which he planted.
2. When Luka(4) came here, even the elder brother gave him his piece.
3. The father had shared his land among his two wives; each wife had her piece. This land in dispute was of Luka's mother.

Case 41 (Type F)



In Case 41, we see a dispute between a lender (the plaintiff) and a tenant (the defendant).

Plaintiff(1):

I am claiming this land from Tomas(2) because when they came here they had no land and it is I who gave them this land on which to plant potatoes. I told them that after planting they should leave this land for me. I did not give them a specific time to leave this land. Then I went to work outside. Tomas's father(4) died and I did not come home to claim my land at his funeral due to my employment. His son(2) was given the piece. But they bought some land and I want my piece now.

Defendent(2):

I am not giving Philimona(1) this land because my father(4) bought this land for a cow and two goats and he has given it to me. At the funeral celebration nobody claimed this land. Philimona's father(3) was using this land and gave it to my father. Philimona never claimed it. If he knew that this was his land, he should have claimed it from my father and not from me because I was too young.

Findings of the Land Committee:

Land awarded to the defendent for the following reasons:

1. The defendent's father entered the land in 1932 and from that time Philimona has not claimed the land.
2. Tomas hedged this land and Philimona said nothing.
3. Tomas has got his coffee here and Philimona has never used the land.

The four major considerations in deciding adjudication cases in Maragoli are (1) the manner in which the land was acquired — inherited, purchased, lent — and how it was defended during prior litigation, (2) the principle of equality between brothers in sharing family land, (3) the timing of land claims, and (4) the manner in which the land is being used. However, a study of over 200 adjudication cases in South Maragoli reveals that these principles in combination can be easily manipulated so that similar cases often have inconsistent decisions. For example, in Cases 15 and 37,

half brothers of the absent migrants encroached upon their land boundaries. In Case 37, the migrant's claim was found to be justified as the land in dispute was of his mother. However, in Case 15, the fact that the absent migrant had neglected to contribute to a prior land case on the parcel in dispute was given precedence over the possible misappropriation of his mother's land by his oldest half brother. Again, in Case 15, the fact that the defendant had planted coffee trees on the land was given consideration in the case. But in Case 37, the use of the land by the plaintiff's half brothers was not mentioned in the Committee's decision.

In regard to adjudication committee decisions, the testimony of elders as witnesses to former land transactions and as authorities on customary law is critical to those with high stakes in the outcome of land cases. In the past, miscarriages of justice were infrequent as all parties involved were members of an integrated, lineage based, interdependent community. Today, there are few community sanctions requiring elders to testify impartially (Sangree 1966). Indeed, as witnesses generally receive covert compensation for each case, their creditability is open to speculation. Thus, with Chai thirsty witnesses available, it is not unusual to observe cases which have little grounding in customary law which were initiated by the plaintiff in order to inconvenience the defendant. In this manner, adjudication proceedings are sometimes turned into arenas in which disputes over non-relevant

matters are played out under the guise of land litigation.

Migrants lost many cases because they did not make claims at the time of previous land transactions (e.g. Cases 18 and 41) or did not provide financial assistance in prior land cases (e.g. Case 15). More often than not, these migrants did not do so because they were unaware that a funeral was being held or that a dispute had occurred over their land parcel. Even during the period of land adjudication, several migrants who had not returned home to voice their claims later insisted that they had not received notification of the proceedings. Plainly, the maintenance of ties of mutual assistance with members of the home community is vital to persons affected by land cases who wish to protect their interests and realize their claims. This hold which the home community has over its labor migrants, as displayed in the adjudication proceedings, is applied to other transactions as well.

For the migrant, unable to regulate home activities from afar, close friends and family serve both as a source of communications and as managerial aides. He relies upon them to keep watch over his wife's activities in regard to their children, the household, and the farm. If a domestic crisis occurs, he depends heavily upon friends and kinsmen for notification and assistance. This is illustrated by Jamen's difficulties, as related to me by his elder brother.

My brother, Jamen, married Loisi, the daughter of Adolwa in 1964. He lives at Mbihi Village. They have two children and then this girl decides to

abscond the home, and she eloped with someone else when my brother was working in Nairobi.

She went off early in 1969 with the two children and left them with her father. I wrote my brother a report, but due to the pressure of his work, he declined to return. My brothers and my father demanded and are still demanding the return of the children, but the old man has turned deaf ears. We have tried to bring him to negotiate, but all has been in vain. In the first instance, he demanded dowry. My brother sent two heads of cattle and Kshs. 500/- as this was the outstanding balance. The Sub-Chief witnessed this. Now we hear that Adolwa has already accepted dowry from another man.

My brother asked his employer for a leave of absence to come home and settle this matter, but his annual leave had already passed. So my father's brother asked our Chief to write a letter for him to forgive the absence.

The case of the farm is poor. All the coffee is with disease. No maize is planted as it was stolen last harvest by rogues. My brother sent money for labor, but there is no one to watch them and who will weed, pick berries, and carry them to the cooperative? Last year, our family helped but all the money spent on fertilizers was wasted.

My brother's friends have now collected the wife and returned her to Adolwa's house. We have arranged next week for Abaluyia and church elders to sit and settle this problem before my brother must sue in the Vihiga Court. But home affairs drop down when the owner carries a suitcase.

For local disputes and negotiations of all types, the migrant is dependent upon his moral supporters at home. Even when the absent migrant has the financial wherewithal, he must rely upon close relatives to oversee his transactions in purchasing land. As Plotnicov (1970: 71) suggests for the contemporary Nigerian labor migrant, "The protracted period of these negotiations make it necessary for the prospective purchaser to entrust his kinsmen with the proceedings while he

pursues his normal occupation." Repeated and prolonged absences taken from work to settle home affairs can easily cost the migrant his job. Of the Bulala male villagers who have worked outside at one time or another, 26% claim to have lost a job due to problems at home requiring their frequent return.

Migrants must also rely on those at home for assistance in erecting new dwellings and in making extensive repairs on the old. Since houses are built on a piecemeal basis, construction takes place when the owner can send funds. The absent migrant, therefore, needs someone to check that his remittances are spent as he intended and that the fundi (artisan) he hires does the work properly. In the same fashion, if a migrant is short of funds and wishes his wife to purchase food or farming inputs on credit from local shopkeepers, he needs friends and kinsmen both to argue the case on his behalf and to ensure that his wife or father pay back the loan from his remittances or from farm surplus. Of the 49 domestic units receiving credit from shops in Bulala in 1971, only 27% were headed by absent migrants. One shopkeeper claimed that absent migrants are poor risks since "their money is often eaten by someone before it gets into my drawer."

Since, as we have seen, few women who manage the farm for their absent husband or son receive door to door agricultural extension, migrants look to male kin to provide them with precise data on new area based technologies. Of all the Maragoli migrants I interviewed in Nairobi, less than half

were able to describe the most recent agricultural innovations at home. Those who were knowledgeable had information derived from home-based kinsmen who had written to them or conveyed the news while visiting in town. While I was in South Maragoli, new self-help cattle dip projects were being organized. Within three weeks of the first announcement of the projects at the Chief's Baraza, at least seven letters arrived from absent Munugi migrants urging their moral supporters to suggest, on their behalf, construction sites for the dips which were convenient to their farms.

The labor migrant looks to agriculture to supplement his wage income and to provide security during periods of unemployment. Yet constrained as he is by his inability to manage and manipulate resources at home to his best advantage, the migrant must rely upon a hard core of friends and relatives who may be regularly mobilized to protect his interests. Such solidly based relationships are maintained and reinforced through patterns of reciprocal exchange. The economics of gift-giving between town and country will be more closely examined in the following chapter.

Chapter VII
THE ECONOMICS OF SOLIDARITY

Contact with home for the Maragoli migrant is more a necessity than a choice due to the precarious nature of the urban socio-economic environment in which he participates. While attempting to maximize agricultural interests at home and simultaneously enhance the security of his urban position; a person may, in the course of his migratory career, become entangled in a web of onerous obligations which restricts action in both spheres. "That individuals when they make a decision attempt to maximize in terms of a number of factors at the same time carries the added implication that these factors act as constraints on one another" (Garbett and Kapferer 1970: 187). This chapter first examines the manner in which the demonstrated framework of social organization influences the process of income redistribution. Discussion then turns to the withdrawal of variant types of workers from asymmetrical relations through the selective choice of exchange partners. Lastly, the implications of differential networks among Bulala workers for agricultural investment behavior in particular, and for social mobility in general will be reviewed.

Directions and Contents of Gift Flows

Marshall Sahlins (1965: 139) has remarked that "a spe-

cific social relation may constrain a given movement of goods but a specific transaction — 'by the same token' — suggests a particular social relation. If friends make gifts, gifts make friends." Reciprocal exchange patterns in Maragoli are the most common way of stimulating and substantiating relationships between the parties concerned. Even for those working away from home, the flow of gifts and visits — and thereby the expression of closeness and unity — with persons in the countryside is facilitated by Kenya's modern system of transportation and communications.

Exchange gifts consist of three major categories:

(1) consumer goods and durables, (2) money, (3) hospitality outlays. Consumer goods include local farm produce as well as such items as sugar, soap, cigarettes, tinned foods, and paper products. Durables are commonly clothing, blankets, photographs, and household utilities. Each donor tends to give the type of items to which he has more access or which are less expensive for him to buy or produce than they are for the recipient. In this manner, the comparative advantage of the gift partners enhance the value of their respective gifts (cf. Lux 1972: 179).¹ The presentation of consumer goods and durables most frequently accompanies the exchange of visits between the parties.

Money is carried between town and country by hand, directly by the donor, the recipient, or through intermediaries.

¹Two articles by Lux (1971 and 1972), the first concerned with the exchange of visits and the second with the exchange of gifts among the rural Yombe, were extremely useful in helping me to organize and analyze my urban-rural exchange data.

Less frequently, cash is relayed through the national postal service enclosed in letters or in the form of money orders. Some donors send regular remittances to recipients, while others transmit cash only when they are able or when it is requested for specified expenditures.

Hospitality is extended to visitors in town as well as in the countryside. The cost of such hospitality includes at the minimum, sumptuous meals as well as accommodation for longer-term guests. In addition, although visitors sometimes arrive bearing small presents, the onus of gift-giving, according to Maragoli custom, rests with the host. Long staying guests expect to return with appropriate gifts from their host, and may request the fare for their homebound transportation. Furthermore, wage earning hosts in town often provide their long-term guests with pocket money and, when possible, with the service of school place or employment brokerage.

The direction of gift flow between town and country depends upon the nature of the offering (cf. Lux 1972). First, money tends to be channeled towards the village. Second, town workers receive farm produce, while relatively more purchased goods and consumer durables are Maragoli directed. Third, hospitality outlays fall most heavily upon those employed in town.

The flow of money from town to countryside is witnessed by the fact that 83% of the current Bulala farm-head migrants sent home remittances during the course of 1971. In comparison, only 19% of the migrants received funds from home during

the same period. These latter funds were in all cases sent to finance an unemployed migrant's search for a job. Of the 12 recipients, only 6 (none of whom was able to obtain employment for more than two weeks at a time) did not later reciprocate with larger cash gifts to the donor.

According to Table 22, 72% of the current Bulala farm-head migrants regularly remitted money to persons at home during 1971. The proportion of income remitted depends upon

TABLE 22

DISPATCH OF REMITTANCES AMONG BULALA
FARM-HEAD MIGRANTS

Frequency	Employed	Unemployed ^a
Remitted monthly	26	0
Remitted every 2 or 3 months	20	0
Remitted only upon demand	7	0
Did not remit	2	9
Total	55	9

^aThis category refers to those unemployed for more than nine months of the year.

a number of variables, for example, the number of other family members with wage employment, the migrant's income earned per month, the number and ages of recipients, and the particular needs of the recipients. On average, Bulala farm-head migrants tended to remit 30% of their annual urban wage to friends and family at home. This percentage is in accord with the conclusions of Johnson and Whitelaw's 1972 study of Nairobi remittances. Based upon a sample of Nairobi workers

earning an average Kshs. 411/= per month, it was found that 20.7% of the urban wage bill was remitted to rural areas, and that the proportion of income remitted declined as income increased.

The circulation of consumer goods and durables between town and country is more balanced than the flow of cash. Of the 64 Bulala farm-heads working or in search of employment outside South Maragoli, 28 or 44% received food parcels consisting of maize flour, beans, bananas, or chickens from home during 1971. Most of these gifts of farm produce were brought in person by the donor, while a few, sent by bus, were accompanied by an intermediary. When one includes the migrants who returned from their annual home leaves with gifts of food parcels, the number rises to 58 or 91%. Moreover, 6 urban migrants were sent Maragoli produced pots, baskets, or reed mats. In comparison, 49 or 77% of the migrants sent or carried home purchased goods and durables during the year.

The annual cost of hospitality extended by migrants to visitors from home is much greater than that which they receive. First, Nairobi migrants made one visit home for approximately every seven visits they claimed to have received during the year. Those in Central Province and Rift Valley Provinces received three times as many visits as they made home, while the Nyanza Province (Kisumu) migrants received about double their number of home visits. The Bulala migrant working in Tanzania returned home once and received one Maragoli visitor during the course of 1971. Second, the

total length of town visits was far greater than that of village visits. Third, in the migrant's absence, both short and long-term guests (not including domestic group appendages) were accommodated by his family at his village residence.

To which categories of persons are exchange gifts most frequently distributed? As gift-giving and income redistribution are the material dimensions of interpersonal social networks, they usually are linked with the exchange of visits between labor migrants and their friends and relatives at home (Table 23).

TABLE 23

EXCHANGE OF VISITS BETWEEN 64 FARM-HEAD MIGRANTS
AND THEIR VILLAGE PARTNERS DURING 1971^a

Visit Partner ^b	Visits Made	Visits Received
	by Migrant %	by Migrant %
Wife	92	77
Mother	85	22
Father	77	14
Sibling	69	80
moBr	42	16
FaBr	38	20
Fasi	32	12
siSo	20	84
BrSo	17	77
Affine	12	64
Other	22	91

^aThe percentage refers to the proportion of migrants who made at least one formal, pre-announced visit to or received a visit from the indicated partner. That is to say, 92% of the migrants visited their wife at home at least once during the year.

^bThe category "Other" includes collateral relatives, classificatory kin, friends and neighbors.

In some cases the percentage indicated in Table 23 may be excessively low as persons in a specified kinship category were also migrants working in different parts of the country. However, home leaves frequently overlap, and when they do not, Nairobi workers (the great majority of Bulala's migrants) can opt to visit friends and kinsmen in towns en route to Maragoli with little additional transportation cost.

Migrants do not necessarily visit or receive visits from the same persons, according to Table 23. Thus, visiting exchanges, except those with wives and siblings, do not suggest relationships of direct reciprocity (cf. Lux 1971: 122). The categories of persons, aside from wives and siblings, most often visited by the migrants were parents, maternal uncles, paternal uncles, and paternal aunts. Fewer migrants formally visited nephews, affines, distant kin, or home-based friends in pre-announced gatherings necessitating gift exchange.¹ In contrast, migrants received the former categories of persons as visitors to their town residence much less frequently than they did the latter.

The migrant pays formal visits to the older members of his close extended family and provides hospitality to his affines because as Wagner (1940: 206-207) observes, "These are precisely those people to whom he can turn for economic support, for help in a quarrel or dispute, for a share in

¹Wagner (1940: 206) distinguishes formal visits from mere sociability in that during the former, the visitor announces his intended visit beforehand and the host instructs his wife to prepare a proper meal while he looks for an appropriate gift which his visitor can take home.

garden land, or on whose goodwill he depends to conduct his marriage successfully." On the other hand, these are the people to whom he owes the most obligations and who can most readily drain him of his resources. Hospitality and gifts are provided for younger relatives both in fulfillment of obligations to their parents and as a deliberate maneuver on the part of the migrant to win their indebtedness, and thus, gain influence over them — a strategy which could reap rich rewards in the future. In a similar fashion, migrants choose to play host to their home-based friends and neighbors rather than be the recipients of their formal hospitality. Thus, they are able to maintain some control over such relations.

Of the 64 farm-head migrants, only the 3 working in Kisumu were readily able to return to Maragoli once a week. For the other 61 migrants, the cost of trips home was relatively high in both time and money, and therefore, such journeys had to be restricted in number.

The reasons stated by the 61 migrants for the visits which they made to Maragoli during 1971 are presented in Table 24. In total, these 61 migrants made 166 trips home during the course of the year. Some trips were multi-purposed, and some migrants made repeated trips for the same purpose.

TABLE 24

MOTIVES FOR HOME VISITS^a

Stated Reasons	Migrants (61) %
Home leave	72
Funeral	60
Illness in family	38
Family dispute	32
Non-family litigation	23
Business transaction	18
Unemployment/illness	14
Marriage/birth	7
Other	5

^aThis question was open-ended and the responses therefore total over 100 percent. The percentage refers to the proportion of the total number of respondents.

Besides allowing him free time with his family and friends, a migrant's annual paid home leave (usually one to three weeks) provides the major opportunity for managing his Maragoli affairs on his own behalf. Since home leave for the majority of Bulala's employed migrants often coincides with the long rains peak labor season, they can participate in or oversee digging and/or planting activities. House repairs and new construction are also common concerns of migrants home on leave. However, according to the migrants, trivial family quarrels, petty irritations with neighbors, and minor business transactions are the matters which take up the better part of their short time at home.

Aside from home leave, funerals were the single largest cause which brought migrants on special trips from town. There are two major reasons for this. First, funerals are

the occasions at which claims against the estate of the deceased must be declared. Second, among the Maragoli, absence from funerals, especially when one has quarreled with the deceased in the past, arouses the suspicion of witchcraft. Although isolated insinuations are generally brushed aside, few migrants take repeated accusations of this nature and the reproach engendered lightly. Thus, the sharing of grief and the lending of material support to those in mourning are major social obligations which migrants may selectively honor, but which few dare totally to ignore.¹

As the adult members of the nuclear family — wife, father, mother, sister, and brother — command the highest proportion of home visits, and are thus, outstanding in the migrant's social network, so too are they the most frequent direct recipients of cash remittances. Of the Bulala migrants who remitted cash during 1971, 87% dispatched regular stipends averaging Kshs. 30/- to 50/- per month for household expenses unmet by farm income. A large majority of these stipends were received by wives, with fewer regular remittances dispatched to mothers, fathers, and siblings respectively (Table 25). Circumstantial remittances were sent mostly to pay expenses connected with school fees, illnesses, travel, agricultural or other business transactions, funerals, court charges, bridewealth, and birth (in that order of frequency). The highest proportion of direct recipients for regular and

¹For detailed accounts of funerals and witchcraft accusations, see Wagner (1949).

circumstantial remittances combined, according to Table 25, were members of the migrant's nuclear family.

TABLE 25
DIRECT RECIPIENTS OF CASH REMITTANCES
FROM MIGRANTS DURING 1971^a

Recipient	Regular Remittance %	Circumstantial Remittance Only %	Total %
Wife	79	13	92
Mother	26	43	69
Father	17	34	51
Sibling	7	26	33
moBr	0	15	15
FaBr	0	6	6
Friends	0	17	17

^aThe percentage refers to the proportion of the 53 migrants who made cash remittances during 1971.

Those in wage employment are expected by their families to be responsible for the welfare of dependents. However, most Maragoli workers do not have the funds to satisfy all requests made of them. Migrants, therefore, often channel money to be distributed to extended family, friends, and neighbors through their wife and parents in order to sidestep additional financial involvements and also to acquire witnesses who could prove that the money was indeed sent (cf. Plotnicov 1970: 71).

Money sent by migrants can be used to finance the education of a young kinsman or to defray the expenses of job hunting relatives and friends in other parts of the country.

Among the 14 unemployed, non-farm head Bulala migrants, 12 received money from home during 1971. In 75% of these cases, the remittances sent to the migrant was money reallocated by parents from other employed family members. Fathers are the major redistributors of large amounts of funds intended to help relatives meet specific needs, such as school fees, or to fulfill specific obligations, such as bridewealth. Wives and mothers, in contrast, are the most frequent dispensers of small gifts to a wide assortment of kinsmen and neighbors. Such exchanges between households, which provide security in times of need, are commonly handled by women.

In allowing his nuclear family to act as his re-dispersement manager, the migrant must give up some decision-making control over his remitted income. Often money sent from town intended for one purpose, such as payment of credit at local shops or payment of the fundi (artisan) who repaired the leaking thatch roof, ends up being spent for something else. Recipients of remittances from those working far from home may spend their allotments on farm improvements, consumption items, consumer durables, or distribute funds to needy relatives and friends. When Bulala farm-head migrants in Nairobi were asked to name disadvantages in working away from home, more than 65% mentioned the "misuse" of home-bound remittances.

Selective Reciprocity

The establishment of continuing exchange relations is an expression of harmony and solidarity which serves as a source of security for the partners involved. Yet, gifts are not reciprocated immediately nor necessarily within a similar category of goods and services. Rather, the pattern of gift exchange among Maragoli kinsmen and friends approximates Sahlin's notion of generalized reciprocity. "The material side of the transaction is repressed by the social: reckoning of debts outstanding cannot be overt and is typically left out of account. This is not to say that handing over things in such form, even to 'loved ones', generates no counter obligation. But the counter is not stipulated by time, quantity, or quality: the expectation of reciprocity is indefinite" (1965: 147).

But, if the expectation of reciprocity among the Maragoli is not specific, it is nevertheless strong. While exchange is not strictly checked and calculated, the acceptance of gifts implies a vague obligation on the part of the recipient to render goods and services to the donor when needed. Such exchange relations are similar to the Mexican dyadic contracts described by Foster. In such relationships, reciprocity need not be complementary in the short term. Rather as Foster suggests, expectations center upon a long-range equivalence of value with both partners somehow balancing contributions and receipts (Foster 1961: 1184).

In situations where partners to the exchange are not equal in terms of their material and social resources, such expectations are often thwarted. As Lux (1972: 177) found in Zaire,

"The transition to wage labor, indeed, tends to unilateralize the demands, to the disadvantage of the wage-earners, and to distort the economics of interpersonal relations." Yet, difficulty in distinguishing between gift-giving which fulfills mutual obligations and gift-giving which maintains mutuality serves to befog asymmetrical exchange and generate conflict between donors and recipients.

While wage employment provides opportunities for an increased standard of living, in a once egalitarian society such as Maragoli, it also provokes a high degree of pressure from kinsmen and friends, momentarily or permanently less fortunate, for income redistribution. It has been suggested by several social scientists (e.g. Barth 1963, Jones 1965, Garbett 1967, Long 1968) that the pursuit of an expansive economic policy requires an entrepreneur to distangle himself from onerous social obligations which are incompatible with the actualization of economic aspirations. Yet, the non-elitist Maragoli migrant may be in an untenable position to disengage himself to any large extent from burdensome obligations to friends and family.

Ties with home and within town are maintained through the mechanism of an effective and extended network of kinsmen and friends summoned in the name of brotherhood. Frequent interaction with "brothers" is necessitated by the precarious nature of the migrant's position in the wage labor market, his underemployment situation at home, and the fragile duality of his economic livelihood. But while an effective

network may be readily mobilized in times of need, ties of brotherhood act to restrict the migrant's freedom of action (cf. Parkin 1969: 118),

Due to the overlapping nature of close-knit, effective networks, denial of responsibilities in one area of relations affects relations in other areas. Thus, the refusal to respond to appeals from "brothers" in town has repercussions at home and visa versa. For example, failure to honor the obligations evoked by reference to the ideology of brotherhood may provoke such town and country sanctions as ostracism, neglect of home affairs, witchcraft accusations, lack of assistance in job hunting, or curses for ill health (usually related to food poisoning) and economic disaster.

The migrant, thus, has an ambiguous relationship with his kinsmen and home-based friends. On the one hand, he wishes to disassociate himself from obligations which impede his economic advancement, while on the other hand, he does not want to be cut adrift from those who are potentially useful in providing aid in town and protection at home (cf. Parkin 1969). Caught in this dilemma, the migrant is continually choosing between courses of action to realize the greatest benefit to himself.

In attempting suitably to balance the pursuit of security with the achievement of maximum economic efficiency, the range of options open to a worker is affected by his particular socio-economic attributes. Since visiting and gift-giving may be considered vectors indicating the direction and

magnitude of a worker's investment (and therefore commitment) in his network of social relations, we return to the worker profiles introduced in Chapter Four in order to see how they relate to these reciprocal exchange patterns.

We find that according to Table 26, migrants with a Profile no. 1 made proportionately more home visits during 1971 than did Profile no. 2 migrants. On the other hand, Profile no. 2 migrants received proportionately more visits from kinsmen and home friends than did Profile no. 1 migrants during the year.

TABLE 26
VISIT EXCHANGE OF CURRENT MIGRANTS
BY WORKER PROFILE GROUPS

Number of Visits	Visits Made		Visits Received ^b	
	Profile 1 %	Profile 2 %	Profile 1 %	Profile 2 %
One	13	20	7	2
Two	13	43	13	2
Three	47	22	33	9
Four or more	27	15	47	87
Total	100 (15)	100 (46)	100 (15)	100 (46)

^aThe three Kisumu migrants, who are in the P2 group, are not included here.

^b"Visits Received" refers to those made by Maragolians to migrants in town.

Of the fifteen current migrants in the Profile no. 1 group, nine were unemployed for more than half the year, and along with four of the employed migrants were relying upon others

for accommodation in town. Of the six employed migrants, all were earning less than Kshs. 150/- per month at unskilled jobs. The combination of lack of accommodation facilities and lack of finances made visits, especially prolonged visits, to these migrants less inviting for their relatives and Maragoli friends. In contrast, all the migrants in the Profile no. 2 group were employed (only three were occasionally unemployed), and all but one had accommodation of their own at which to entertain visitors.

Among the Profile no. 1 migrants, 74% made three or more trips home during 1971. Unemployment in town and attendance at funerals at home were the major motives for such trips. Migrants without jobs, especially those under age 35, made repeated trips home during the year to "fill the stomach" (which is to say, eat well and relax) and to replenish their finances. Funerals and the declaration of claims against the estate of the deceased are events of major importance to those with few options for increasing their income. In addition, 60% of the current Profile no. 1 migrants are unemployed, and such migrants have difficulty in finding excuses for staying away when they are called to lend assistance to those in difficulty at home.¹

In comparison, only 37% of the Profile no. 2 migrants made three or more trips home during the year. Although

¹Such home-bound trips are usually made with borrowed money. Thus, these migrants commonly are deep in debt to friends and relations both in town and at home.

these migrants are in a better financial position than the Profile no. 1 migrants to make repeated home visits, they refrain from doing so mainly for two reasons. First, except for an annual home leave, these migrants hold non-elitist jobs which do not offer many multi-day holidays. Second, as Lux observes of the Yombe migrants in Western Zaire, frequent home visits often generate conflict between their aspirations for economic promotion and kin pressure for applying the norms of solidarity in terms of wage redistribution. Thus, Maragoli migrants (especially those with relatively stable and gainful employment), like the Yombe of Zaire "are practically always contriving a way out of trouble and avoiding too great an involvement, mainly by refraining from frequent visits to the village" (Lux 1972: 189). The migrants who followed such a policy most closely were five, Profile no. 2, external polygamists, each of whom kept in limited contact with home and made only one annual visit lasting less than a full week.

Table 27 indicates that Profile no. 1 migrants tend to place more emphasis upon gifts of consumer items than on either cash remittances or hospitality outlays. With inadequate facilities for entertaining and accommodating visitors, and thus, with fewer visits received, Profile no. 1 migrants spend a relatively small proportion of their total gift outlay on hospitality. Yet, gifts in kind are preferred by these migrants to cash remittances. First, gifts in kind are usually given directly by the donor to the recipient,

and thereby, are of a more personal nature than money sent by mail or delivered by a third party. Second, Profile no. 1 migrants can only make small gift allocations due to the sporadic and low level nature of their employment. Thus,

TABLE 27
GIFT CATEGORIES BY PROFILE GROUPS
OF CURRENT MIGRANTS^a

Type of Expenditure	Profile no. 1 %	Profile no. 2 %
Money	30	60
Consumer items	50	10
Hospitality	20	30
Total	100	100

^aThe percentages in this Table give equal weight to each individual within a profile group, regardless of the total of his gifts. That is, percentages were calculated for each individual and the figures in the Table are the average percentages for profile groups.

giving gifts in the form of consumer goods and durables helps to disguise their inexpensiveness, and allows the migrant to distribute such gifts less abashedly among more recipients.

In contrast, Profile no. 2 migrants prefer to make gifts to kinsmen and home-based friends in cash rather than in kind. Since more is expected of these steadily employed migrants, more pressure is put upon them to redistribute their earnings. By channeling remittances through the authority of their nuclear kinsmen, migrants can fulfill their obligations while

shielding themselves from what they perceive as exorbitant claims on their resources. Besides, while these migrants make relatively few visits to Maragoli, they manage to keep close contact with home through the large number of visitors whom they entertain in town (cf. Lux 1972). As suggested earlier, by balancing their home contacts in this manner, their strategy is to avoid increased obligations to those on whom they most heavily rely, while placing younger kinsmen and friends in their debt.

Although the Profile no. 2 migrant, due to the nature of his socio-economic attributes, has more options than the Profile no. 1 migrant in manipulating his social network and withdrawing to some extent from asymmetrical exchanges, he is still ultimately forced to reconcile his ambition of economic achievement with the constraints imposed upon him by his social environment. The migrant can and does selectively repudiate irrelevant relationships when the advantages gained by such a strategy override the costs. However, his insecure position in the labor force and need to supplement his income and provide for his long-range social welfare through agricultural production, render prohibitive the price of substantial withdrawal from the wide-spread pressures for income redistribution. Moreover, given the unemployment situation in Kenya and the heavy competition for jobs, the migrant always faces the possibility of sudden job loss and re-entry into the village on a permanent basis.

Profile no. 3 workers, by virtue of their relatively high levels of education, lucrative incomes, and stable home-

based employment are well positioned to avail themselves of the wide-knit nature of Maragoli social organization in disengaging from onerous asymmetrical exchange relationships. These Maragoli residents, in a manner parallel to that described by Foster (1961: 1190) for Mexican workers, are able to extricate themselves from the burden of ideal role behavior appertaining to the ascribed and achieved statuses they occupy by reducing obligations to be honored and choosing relatively few kinsmen, friends, and other associates with whom they maintain implicit dyadic contracts. Due to the Profile no. 3 worker's stability and gainfulness of employment and his year-round presence at home, the social cost of such selectivity is much lower than for the Profile no. 1 or Profile no. 2 worker.

In general, the visiting and gift-giving patterns of Profile no. 3 workers display the following characteristics: (1) they receive more visits and more gifts (though not of higher value) than they render, (2) gift-giving reveals that association with kinsmen is notably bilateral, but that aside from the nuclear family, emphasis tends to be placed upon inter-personal relations with persons outside the kin group, and (3) gift exchange and visiting take place most often with persons of similar socio-economic status. Because of the active leadership roles such men have assumed in voluntary associations, and because of the professional employment positions they hold, Profile no. 3 workers have ample opportunity to mobilize assistance and develop a clientele outside of a hard core of kinsmen and intimate friends. All of these

workers have control, to some degree, over the flow of political and economic transactions into the community, and have special favors to dispense. Thus, they are able to maintain advantageous inter-personal relations over a wide area not only by the actuality of gift-giving, but by the attraction of its potentiality. In this way, the social networks of Profile no. 3 workers tend to be more highly extended than those of workers with Profiles no. 1 or 2, without being as overlapping in nature.

Emerging Status Differences

We shall now look at the manner in which differential networks of social relationships affect agricultural investment behavior and at the implications of such networks for general patterns of social mobility in Maragoli society.

Since all Bulala workers attempt to withdraw from asymmetrical reciprocity whenever it is feasible, recurrent gift exchange, except among close kinsmen, tends to imply some degree of equality between the partners involved. Teachers and agricultural instructors most often exchange gifts with local businessmen, professional workers in town, and wealthy land owners. Skilled and semi-skilled migrants, with histories of long-term employment, exchange with peers in town and with those of similar status who are retired or in a transit state at home. Poor workers, with little schooling and infrequent access to gainful employment, are forced to gravitate towards one another due to their progressive exclusion from the exchange circles of the other groups. Thus,

social networks among the three profile groups of Bulala workers are distinctive not only in their internal patterns of associational linkages, but also in their trend towards insularity from one another. Such factors are highly relevant in accounting for observed variations in agricultural investment behavior among the Bulala farm-head population.

Throughout this study, it has been noted that while new enterprises and techniques have been made available for increased agricultural productivity, response to these opportunities have differed markedly among Bulala farmers. Undoubtedly, the question of costs and returns to investment is critical in the farmer's decision to adopt a new enterprise or technique. Given the smallholder's command over basic farming resources and the organization of his social relationships which aids or constrains him in acquiring these, his perceptions of the value of investments, based upon his opportunity costs and the potential of risk, may vary substantially from a statistical market analysis of costs and returns. As Wharton (1971: 173-74) notes, the element of risk may be multifaceted.

Where the new technology requires the purchase of a "package" of associated inputs to achieve maximum returns, the peasant farmer not only subjects himself to risks in production but also in costs which are of a much higher order of magnitude than he has previously experienced. If this action also reduces his ability to depend upon traditional forms of security (family and village) due to resentment at his innovative actions, the peasant faces a third form of risk. Any valuation and summation of all three often results in an extremely high risk factor.

Since employment profiles have been shown to be fairly reliable

indicators of agricultural adopter status, it is then reasonable to assume that ability to absorb both the material and social costs of risk laden enterprises differs across groups.

Three-quarters of those with a worker profile indicating long-term unemployment or very low wage paid jobs have not taken advantage of any of the recent opportunities for agricultural innovation. The constraints upon these workers in regard to the adoption of an expansive agricultural stratagem are twofold. First, they lack sufficient finances, and second, they have only peripheral access to economically advantageous interpersonal linkages.

Due to their subsistence or close to subsistence standard of living, Profile no. 1 workers are without the financial resources to purchase the recurrent capital farming inputs associated with available innovations. But even when such funding exists, the cost of the enterprise may be higher than the nominal price of the inputs. For example, new agricultural enterprises suitable for South Maragoli's situation of concentrated land use tend to increase substantially the demands placed upon labor. If the worker's family labor is inadequate or unavailable, he is then faced by the high cost of hiring labor or acquiring domestic group appendages. Furthermore, for those owning very small plots, the slight addition to productivity gained from the adoption of a new innovation may be insufficient reward for the costs incurred. Yet, the Profile no. 1 worker is not in a position to expand the scale of his enterprise through land purchase.

The internal organization of the Profile no. 1 worker's

network of social relations and his general exclusion from the networks of those with more lucrative employment further impedes his economic advancement. Due to their position in the developmental cycle of the domestic group, a high proportion of those with low agricultural adopter status tend to be structurally marginal in their access to and command over family labor and land. When this characteristic is combined with sparsity of fund, the worker is placed at a great disadvantage in attempting to undertake a commercial farming enterprise. In addition, Profile no. 1 workers, especially those who attempt to supplement their agricultural activity with wage employment, become easily swept up in a spiral of indebtedness to kinsmen and friends upon whom they are forced to depend for assistance. Continual debt leaves the worker highly vulnerable to appeals for the redistribution of whatever income or increased farming output he can produce.

The Profile no. 1 worker, therefore, tends to have a low agricultural adopter status due to his inability to absorb the material and social costs incurred by new innovations. His agricultural investment behavior, on the other hand, is highly prone towards security maximization and risk aversion. It is of interest to note that of the fifteen Profile no. 1 workers who have a higher adopter status, twelve are supported by wage-earning children.

Wharton has remarked that if an innovation has a risk factor the negative standard deviation of which falls beneath the minimum subsistence standard of living, the farmer is not

likely to adopt it. However, if the negative standard deviation lies above the subsistence standard of living, the farmer is more likely to adopt the innovation (Wharton 1971: 174). Profile no. 2 workers, due to their histories of extended, middle-range, salaried employment are able to maintain a higher standard of living than those in the Profile no. 1 grouping. Although Profile no. 2 workers hold non-elite posts in the labor force, they generally have the financial wherewithal to purchase commercial farming inputs, hire labor, and even expand their land holdings. Yet, as we have seen, these workers have made only limited investments in agriculture and, for the most part, have chosen enterprises involving low financial cost and little risk involvement. Essentially, the major deterrent to productive farming faced by Profile no. 2 workers is social rather than financial in character.

The vast majority of workers in this grouping are current labor migrants who maintain close contact with home due to pressures for dual residence and combined resource allocation in wage employment and agriculture. Due to the nature of this arrangement, what the migrant gains financially, he loses in control over the management of his domestic and business affairs at home. Since profitable agricultural production requires both timeliness of activities and knowledge concerning such things as optimal input mix, proper husbandry practices, and appropriate marketing strategy, the migrant is unable to regulate his agricultural operation on his own behalf. In addition, frequent negotiations and dis-

putes over agricultural matters make him dependent upon a reliable support group at home.

However, the extended and effective nature of their network of social relations render these workers unable sufficiently to escape pressures from family and friends for income redistribution. Thus, in what appears to be a compromise strategy, Profile no. 2 workers refrain from extensive farm investment at home since failure to honor the claims invoked by the maintenance of such enterprises bears too great a social cost. Among the ten Profile no. 2 workers who did not adopt any of the recently available agricultural innovations, five are external polygamists and four had wives who deserted them during the time of the study. The only Profile no. 2 worker with a high adopter status is recently retired and supported by his son, a young teacher.

All the Bulala Profile no. 3 workers, in contrast, are utilizing the economic opportunities made available through the introduction of new farming techniques and enterprises. The security of their wage employment cushions the risk of innovation failure by providing an alternative means of income (cf. Dalton 1971); while their access to relatively large amounts of financial resources helps them avoid the onerous cost of social ties. In addition, their year-round presence at home allows them to maintain control over the management of their activities and to exploit the wide-knit nature of Maragoli social organization to their best advantage. Unlike Profile no. 1 and Profile no. 2 workers, these actors are capable of absorbing both the social and financial

costs associated with entrepreneurial agricultural activities, and are thus, more willing to engage in experimental, high risk/high gain enterprises.

While most research concerned with the emergence of class in Africa has tended to focus upon the urban wage labor force (e.g. Schwab 1961, Mitchell and Epstein 1959, Lloyd 1966, Goldthorpe 1961, Mercier 1954), it is often in the countryside that nation-wide economic transformation and growth have the most profound and far-reaching effects upon patterns of social mobility. The factors underlying agricultural differentiation among employment profile groups suggest a trend towards deeper social division among the Maragoli in the future.

In a relatively short period of time, Maragoli has gone from an economically homogeneous, egalitarian society with no sharp divisions of rank, status, or wealth to one which is marked by differential access to strategic, subsistence maintaining resources. The interplay of such external forces as British colonialization, Christian missionization, and the international market system along with the internal factors of population pressure and severe modifications in the corporate nature of unilineal descent groups is largely responsible for such a transformation.

Inequality and social differentiation in Kenya are often viewed in terms of disparities between urban and rural dwellers. Yet, as we have seen, neither of these populations are homogeneous in nature. Employment patterns differ in both

areas, and along with such variation there follows diversification in the character of social linkages. Stability and gainfulness of employment, in association with level of educational attainment, are closely related to emerging status differences dividing the Maragoli population.

The effects of such differences are most strikingly illustrated by access to land, along with the education and employment of children. Those with access to a lucrative wage income are able to increase their acreage, often at the expense of those who, in desperation, are forced to sell land. In Bulala, a particularly densely populated area, the expansion of tiny inherited land holdings through purchase or litigation is almost a pre-requisite to productive farming. But whereas 100% of Profile no. 3 workers and 57% of Profile no. 2 workers have been able to increase their holdings by at least half an acre, only 10% of Profile no. 1 workers have been able to do so.¹ This situation is bound to become more extreme as even access to inherited land becomes restricted. Where once every individual was assured security of tenure as a member of a land occupying community, and no member of such a community was denied the occupation of land, the development of freehold tenure in a densely populated area should increase the likelihood of concentrated ownership and a growing landless class of former smallholders with little opportunity for other employment.

¹ Another 28% of Profile no. 2 workers and 15% of Profile no. 1 workers increased their land holdings by less than half an acre.

The belief that the road to a decent income for one's children is paved with education is widely held by town and country informants alike. Education, more than any single factor, is considered the springboard for inter-generational social mobility in Kenya. It is common, therefore, that the payment of school fees takes precedence over other demands upon parents' resources. Workers with high wage incomes are clearly at an advantage in their ability to finance their offsprings' education and also, in certain circumstances, that of their brothers and their brothers' children.

Sons and daughters of workers with higher levels of stable employment, according to Table 28, are favored in their chances for educational success and job procurement. It is especially interesting to note that of the male offspring of Profile no. 3 workers who were employed during 1971, all held jobs at professional levels in the labor force.

TABLE 28

FAMILIES WITH ALL SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN
ENROLLED OR EMPLOYED BY PROFILE GROUP^a

School Age Children ^b	Profile no. 1 %	Profile no. 2 %	Profile no. 3 %
Ages 8 - 16	59 (27)	84 (56)	100 (10)
Ages 17 - 25	32 (19)	65 (26)	100 (9)

^aThe Table refers to children attending primary or secondary school, or holding wage paid jobs.

^bThe age group 17 - 25 includes males only.

Clearly, families differ in their capacity not only to pay school fees, but to provide job information and broker contacts. As the 1972 ILO Kenya report suggests, a family's ready access to information concerning job openings and the ability to influence employment decisions in favor of family members leads to jobs which generate capital with which to purchase land, open shops, and pay school fees for further members. This provides for productivity in agriculture and other self-employment, as well as ensuring the supply of new candidates for high wage paid positions (ILO 1972: 510).

If such a cycle operated without fault, high level jobs and lucrative entrepreneurial businesses would ultimately be concentrated in the hands of just a few large wealthy extended families. However, the growing need to repudiate asymmetrical exchange relationships in the interest of capital accumulation and economic advancement is progressively placing links among large extended families under strain. The conflicts which arise between a worker's economic aspirations and the pressures placed upon him to conform to the economics of kinship solidarity force him to either restrict his activities or limit the full nexus of his lineage relations. Exchange relationships among Bulala workers are becoming increasingly organized on the basis of socio-economic status, which cross-cuts the bonds of kinship and communal affiliations. Factors such as the costly bride-wealth commanded by educated women, and the pattern of interlocking leadership positions in voluntary associations help to reinforce this trend.

Maragoli's integration into capitalist development has been characterized by progressive stratification and economic differentiation. It could be expected that in the future, social and economic behavior among this peri-urban population will be largely determined by a class consciousness stretching across regional sectors. In this regard, the analysis of interpersonal networks of social relations forming society-wide social strata seems an especially useful research tool for uncovering the mechanisms of social change and economic development.

Chapter VIII

CONCLUSION

South Maragoli has served as a case study of social change and economic differentiation in Sub-Saharan Africa. The major focus throughout this investigation has been on sociological aspects of rural development, especially the contribution of urban labor migration to local agricultural enterprise. In exploring the factors which underlie individual decision-making in regard to the pursuit of effective economic strategies, this study is as much concerned with methodology and analytical approach as with empirical findings.

The Argument

This discussion began with an account of South Maragoli's environmental and human resources, and the changing socio-economic framework within which these components interact. It was argued that Maragoli small-holders tend to look upon agricultural activity merely as a supplement to alternative opportunities for employment; while the community's economic life-blood is composed of a flow of labor migrants to town centers across Kenya.

Historical data indicate that migration for wage employment has been, since the early years of this century, more of a necessity for the Maragoli than a choice. The Maragoli

exploitation of urban employment niches was attributed to a combination of factors which include a high local population density, scarce land resources, government taxation, the early introduction of Western education, rising consumer demands, and a growing disparity between agricultural income and non-agricultural wage employment. But while the short-term "ticket" contract system used for recruiting labor in Kenya during the colonial era no longer exists and migrants are now permanently dependent upon wage employment; Maragoli residents continue to engage in a pattern of occupational multiplicity which includes subsistence and cash crop agriculture, entrepreneurial trade or artisan activities, and wage paid labor. It was argued that this mix of economic pursuits results mainly from decreasing rates of employment generation, the insecurity of non-elitist wage employment, and the lack of sufficient unemployment provisions and social welfare benefits in town.

An examination of the labor markets in which male landholders in Bulala Village participate revealed great differences in the nature of wage employment patterns. It was found, for instance, that not all those who migrate are able to find or retain jobs, not all workers earn decent wages, nor are all wage paid jobs located in urban centers. The process by which a worker incorporates himself into urban wage employment in contemporary Kenya was shown to lead to the development of intricate urban-rural interactions. The magnitude of the national unemployment situation requires

that the migrant strategically manipulate his network of social relationships in order to advance in the precarious urban labor market.

Although Bulala workers state a preference for employment at home; well paid jobs, especially civil service posts which offer preferential access to government goods and services along with local entrepreneurial opportunities, are relatively scarce. As we have seen, there is an employment bias in favor of older, better educated, skilled workers. Early church affiliation and educational achievement seems to have influenced economic and political mobility among middle-aged and elderly Maragoli residents. The first persons to take advantage of formal schooling were kinsmen of those clan leaders who having gained prestige within the indigenous political system were selected by the British as tribal administrators. It is these persons who dominate the coveted ranks of the local civil service.

It was found that rural and urban men are, for the most part, the same men caught at one period of their employment careers. The major differences between those most often found in the countryside and those in town are age and education. Worker profiles, which categorized employment patterns among Bulala male farm-heads, were used to define the degree to which workers have stable and gainful employment in the national wage economy. Among the village farm-heads, three different categories of workers were identified; those with little or irregular employment and extremely low income,

those with a career history of long-term steady employment and moderate income, and those with long-term steady employment and relatively high income. The last group, all of whom have high levels of educational attainment, are employed at home.

An analysis of agricultural production patterns in Bulala suggested that the intensification of land use, the availability of agricultural innovations, and the export of labor have caused social and economic changes which have affected the system of agricultural organization. Differences in farming patterns were related to differences in resource availability including land, labor, financial capital, and managerial expertise. It was argued that additional investments of labor and cash may be rejected by the farmer if the returns are insufficiently attractive. Readiness to adopt innovations was suggested to be closely related to resource availability and thus, not equally functional for all farmers. A scale of agricultural differentiation was applied to adoption patterns of items representing farming innovations. Three adopter status categories were delineated: high, medium, and low. These were found to be highly correlated with the worker profiles; those with low adopter status having the least stable employment. This led to a fuller examination of changes in Maragoli social organization and the content of urban-rural networks of interpersonal relationships.

In analyzing the internal structuring and external re-

lations of Maragoli domestic groups, I illustrated the interplay of various social and economic factors which serve to bind persons in a web of obligations despite geographic separation and basic changes in the institutionalized social structure. It was argued that members of the domestic group tend to be closely linked by common interests in land, bride-wealth, school fees, wage-paid jobs, and farm management. The nature of multiple marriage was seen to affect the closeness of the domestic unit, with external marriage to a second wife in town increasing the social distance between members. The composition of the domestic unit, as reflected by the developmental cycle of the family, was also associated with agricultural adopter status, in that those having low status tend to be structurally marginal in their access to family land and labor. However, the influence of age on adopter status was shown to be mitigated by a series of intervening variables which include educational achievement, occupation, stability and gainfulness of employment, and political status. Moreover, workers with high adopter status tend to engage in a strategy of replacing absent family labor with appendages to their domestic group.

I indicated that members of separate farm units do not adhere to intrinsic obligations towards one another; but rather form voluntary economic linkages reflecting a drive for security. Maragoli society is undergoing tremendous change in the direction of defacto and de jure freehold land tenure, preferential inheritance, low clan localization,

lessening authority of clan elders, and low incidence of the extended family as a domestic unit. Voluntary associations and functional segments of the extended family were shown to have largely taken over the political, religious, and economic functions of clans and lineages. I suggested that the wide-knit networks of social ties which ramify throughout Maragoli and extend into towns across Kenya provide the setting for dyadic links of "instrumental" friendship as defined by Wolf (1966); thus, offering alternatives to functional ties based on the criterion of kinship. However, it was argued that while labor migrants attempt to expand their social networks as broadly as possible, due to the nature of the migration process they are often in a position in which they can rely only upon relatives and close friends summoned in the name of "brotherhood" to oversee certain kinds of critical transactions. Land adjudication, for instance, illustrated the vulnerability of migrants in attempting to protect their farm interests and realize their claims from afar. We have seen that while rights in land and labor for agricultural production serve as forms of ultimate social security, the migrant is constrained by his inability to manage and manipulate resources at home to his best advantage. Thus, under the prevailing circumstances, he is forced to depend upon a core of close friends and relatives to protect his interests at home.

The final section of this investigation concentrated upon the reciprocal exchange patterns by which interpersonal

relationships are maintained. Networks of social relations were explored through the material dimensions of gift-giving and income redistribution. It was found that along with variations in employment patterns, there follows differences in the structure and content of social linkages. The wage laborer is subject to many claims upon his income. However, as we have seen, the relatively unskilled and insecure worker may be in an untenable position to disengage himself from obligations to friends and family. I suggested that while the town offers labor migrants freedom, the price of such liberty is lack of support at home.

In attempting to balance security with economic advancement, the range of options open to an individual worker was shown to be affected by his specific socio-economic characteristics. It was argued that migrants with insecure positions in the wage labor force and the need to depend upon agriculture for long-range security cannot afford the social cost of withdrawing from pressures for income redistribution. Although individuals with career profiles of long-term stable employment and middle-range income have more options in manipulating their interpersonal connections than those with histories of low income and unemployment, they too ultimately have their aspirations leveled by friends and kinsmen at home. In contrast, workers with stable and gainful employment at home are in an economic position to mobilize assistance from many sources and develop a wide range of clientele. These individuals with high levels

of educational attainment tend to participate in social networks which emphasize associational ties over those of extended kinship.

Diversification of social linkages between the three profile worker groups was found to be closely related to increasing stratification and economic differentiation. It was demonstrated that as a means of lessening pressures for income redistribution, farm-heads possessing a long history of non-elitist employment away from home tend to refrain from extensive investment in their farms or in local trade or artisan enterprises. The person most likely to exploit opportunities for high risk/high gain investments is one who has high salaried employment and lives at home, such as a teacher or administrator. We saw that the long established pattern of circular labor migration among the Maragoli is becoming progressively more difficult to sustain as urban unemployment continues, population pressure on the land increases, the registration of individual small-holdings nears completion, and the fee based educational system grows more prohibitive. This indicated a possible movement towards concentrated land ownership and job holding on the one hand, and the emergence of a landless class with little opportunity for alternative employment on the other.

Some Broader Issues

Labor migration is a channel through which the Maragoli countryside is articulated with the wider Kénya society. The flow of men, goods, and services between town and country acts as a medium not only for the diffusion of change from one geographic arena to another, but for the creation of new values and behavioral patterns appropriate to a highly mobile life style. Labor migration, however, is not the only dynamic linkage between this small outlying community and the Kenya national superstructure. For it was along the same roads and railway line which carried migrants out of the area that such new forces of change as the colonial administration and capitalist economic system, Christian missionization, and Western education filtered into the countryside. Thus, it was not solely the urban areas to which Maragoli migrants headed that were undergoing rapid change, but the home area which was being swiftly transformed as well.

There is a sociological fallacy in recognizing change in town centers while holding agrarian behavior patterns as a constant. Too often social scientists assume that the African must leave his home area and reside in a city setting in order to gain exposure to new political forms, new standards of living, new patterns of behavior, new ideas, and new skills. Such reasoning derives from theoretical constructs which polarize economic patterns and behavioral forms into ideal types. Contrasts between "tribal" and "detribal-

ized", "rural" and "urban", "tribesman" and "townsman", "traditional" and "modern" have commonly been used as indices or directions of social change. Yet, such simple synchronic dichotomies are often highly inappropriate for explaining the complex of ambiguous trends associated with conditions of rapid change in developing countries.

Those studies which automatically connected labor migration with "détrribalization" or held that returned migrants actively stimulate traditional norms and values failed to recognize new parameters for social change which developed from interaction between the international political economy and the indigenous social system. Meanwhile, among scholars who are especially concerned with economic entrepreneurship and political activism in the countryside, there has been a tendency to view these trends as almost exclusively the consequence of returned migrants who encapsulate themselves from village kinsmen through the medium of voluntary associations, and then evaluate local conditions in terms of town standards (cf. Long 1968, Garbett 1967, Bond 1974). Although such analysis of agrarian change may be more appropriate to certain social settings in Africa than to others, the emphasis placed upon geographic mobility as the basic pre-requisite for a "culture broker", "progressive farmer", or "rural entrepreneur" implicitly under-estimates the dynamics inherent in indigenous social systems.

These latter scholars have demonstrated the thesis that migrants can and do play a positive role in ushering change

into the countryside. However, this study suggests that such a thesis is incomplete in that it concentrates only upon the effects of labor migration and does not take into account many other factors which influence the process of local development and change. For example, as external agencies offering new social status, employment opportunities, and alternatives to "close-knit" networks of social relationships have become common features of the countryside throughout Africa, they frequently have provided new arenas in which customary factionalism could be played out. In Kenya, the nature of indirect colonial rule, the rapid diffusion of the money economy through the imposition of taxation and labor requirements, opportunities for small-scale commercial agriculture, and the inland penetration of churches and schools have encouraged occupational diversity and offered numerous paths leading to social differentiation in small towns and villages across the country.

Maragoli, as we have seen, lacked a highly structured political system with institutionalized traditional rulers whose economic based powers and political sanctions could be threatened by the imposed colonial order. Instead, the leaders of the indigenous system were the first to exploit the new linkages with the colonial superstructure in order to regulate the flow of political and economic transactions into the community. Thus, what has occurred is a great deal of continuity between those who competed for prestige in the fluid indigenous system and those who utilized the new administration, educational system, and voluntary associations as

arenas in which to maximize their resources in the struggle for positions of local influence and for economic gain. Labor migration in this case is only one cosmopolitan force among others within the community and it is in this context that the social dynamics which influence agricultural enterprise and create economic status differences have been evaluated.

Unfortunately, this investigation was unable to consider the role of elite labor migrants — those with secondary school or university diplomas who hold professional positions in the urban labor force. However, one may suspect from the evidence presented here that many of these individuals are the sons or close relatives of those who hold elite positions in the rural labor force. For it was this latter group who were the first to have the social contacts and the finances to send their kin along the road to economic success. In addition, networks of social relations among the urban elite may show the same characteristics as those among persons in the emerging upper stratum in the countryside. This would imply that stratification and inequality in Kenya are occurring within the context of differential social networks which cross-cut geographic bounds, rather than as urban-rural divisions of the economy. The connection between affluent rural entrepreneurs and the new urban elite is a topic which deserves further exploration.

No social system analytically encapsulated in space or time can provide an adequate framework for examining the dynamics of social change and economic growth. The process of national development implies increasing mutual dependence

between urban and rural sectors of the economy. Thus, the effects of labor migration upon agrarian change must be understood in terms of inter-relations between communities and between social groups. Migrants and non-migrants alike are involved through debt relations in a system of economic and social linkages which stretch across the surrounding countryside and into urban centers. By tracing and analyzing networks of interpersonal relations, this study has attempted to expose not only patterns of interaction within the local setting, but reciprocal exchanges occurring with persons outside the area of central focus. The inclusion of town and country environs within one framework of analysis, moreover, has facilitated a wide-angle examination of intersectoral dynamics and complimentary change.

It has been argued throughout this investigation that Maragoli's non-elitist urban laborers engage in a pattern of circular migration and maintain strong village ties mainly for the sake of their security in a situation of unemployment in town and underemployment at home. But unlike the Tonga or Mambwe societies examined by Van Velson (1960) and Watson (1958) respectively, the Maragoli community to which these migrants return cannot be described as "traditional". Gluckman has remarked that a man's rights to land "depend upon his accepting membership of a tribe, with all its obligations" (1966: 261). However, even if one overlooks the societies in which men inherit plots regardless of their political relations within the "tribe", such a structuralist view (stressing societal integration) does not allow for in-

dividual action or "the systematic ordering of social relations by acts of choice and decision" (Firth 1951: 40).

We have seen, for example, that in South Maragoli some workers are in a more advantageous position than others to disengage from onerous, asymmetrical exchange relationships. Moreover, those workers who cannot afford the social cost of withdrawal from debt relations with friends and family may choose to lighten their obligations by forgoing heavy investment in their farms and in other local business enterprises.

This study has been concerned with the dynamics of economic decision-making and the total socio-economic environment in which decisions are made. A basic premise underlying this investigation is that persons act out of self-interest within the context of constraints imposed upon them by the structure and organization of their social relationships. Thus, it has seemed appropriate to follow Barth's advice that "we need to see the rest of the community as composed of actors who also make choices and pursue strategies, and we must analyze routinized, institutionalized community life in terms of the choices that are available and the values that are ascribed — factors to which the entrepreneur, through his relations with other people, is subject, but which he also by his very activity may modify and change" (1963: 7).

Within the social sciences, there exists a need for systematic investigations of change in agrarian societies. It is important that we understand not only the areas of interaction within the community which draw actors into dependent

links with one another, but the various channels of articulation between the countryside and the wider economic system which can be manipulated by local entrepreneurs. The course of change within an agrarian context is determined by clusters of interrelated social, economic, and political variables. By utilizing a broad frame of reference, we may be better able to analyze the factors influencing the mobilization of resources and the processes by which entrepreneurs evolve from social groupings dissimilar from one society to the next.

As town and country are inexorably tied together within the modern Kenya economy, it is unrealistic to attempt to analyze change in one setting without making reference to the other. Similarly, there is little value for social and economic planners in dealing with "rural" and "urban" development as if they were mutually exclusive problems. If one were to draw a major policy implication from this study, it would be that agricultural conditions should be evaluated within the context of a comprehensive economic program taking into account such factors as national wage employment opportunities, tax incentives, and sectoral imbalances in the distribution of entrepreneurial business activities.

The ability of the labor migrant to bring about or take advantage of change in his home area cannot be understood by making sweeping generalizations about the response of this category of actors to social innovation. Labor migrants, like any other actors, differ in their social characteristics, their objectives, and the strategies which they

employ to achieve these. By looking at individuals, the choices they make between different types of relationships, the underlying determinants of these choices, and their ability to play one set of relationships and norms against another, the investigator is in a better position to understand the dynamics of societal change and to anticipate its course for the future.

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