
John Teddy Ambenge
University of Windsor

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ANALYSIS OF THE KENYAN LAND REFORM POLICY

by

John Teddy Ambenge

A Thesis
Submitted to the
Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research,
through the Department of Sociology
and Anthropology in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts at
The University of Windsor

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ABSTRACT

ANALYSIS OF THE KENYAN LAND REFORM POLICY
AND THE SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS, 1955 - 1985,

by

John Teddy Ambenge

Land reform is essentially a political process and for that matter, each land reform has to be tailored to its own situation in order to be successful, taking into account a nation's cultural heritage and economic conditions. This paper provides an overview of Kenya's capitalist agricultural transformation since 1955 and its effects on rural population. Presented first is the traditional land tenure from pre-colonial to colonial period. Secondly, data from Central Bureau of Statistics and Integrated Rural Surveys in connection with agricultural performance since 1955 is analyzed with emphasis on social implications.

The analysis of the data show that gradual change has been recorded in smallholder agriculture in Kenya in recent years. The importance of subsistence agriculture in relation to production of certain commodities for the market is on the decline. The smallholders were found to have earned substantial non-farm incomes. The relative importance of subsistence production is declining and more and more smallholders are now turning to commercial or
cash crop agriculture rather than traditional subsistence crops. The change in this direction is purely due to increased monetization and diversification of the rural economy from traditional agriculture to modern agriculture.

There was no relationship between the size of the farm and the crops grown. However, there was a great disparity in the sizes of farm holdings in all the provinces. A few people across the country were found to own large scale farms, while the majority owned and occupied less land. This was seen to have increased the situation of landlessness and poverty. Consequently, more rural people now live in poverty or near poverty line than before land consolidation policy. To this end, while small farmers are able to produce for-commercial purposes, they are compelled by circumstances beyond their control to convert their smallholdings to cash crops in order to sustain a household. Poverty is more widespread throughout the country, and very much pronounced in some regions than others.
DEDICATION

To my wonderful and beautiful family, parents, brothers, sisters and friends for their moral and financial support.
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This work would not have been successfully completed without the massive assistance and support extended to me by several people whom I have come to know and associate with at this very University. I am, therefore, heavily indebted to my Thesis committee headed by Dr. Subhas Ramcharan; Dr. Max Hedley - Department of Sociology and Anthropology, and Dr. Amrit Lall - Department of Geography, for their guidance and constructive comments at the early and later stages of the Thesis. I have benefited greatly from their candid comments on the subject of land reform.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION.

Land, in Kenya, is regarded as a source of socio-economic security and proof of accumulated success, thus the status obtained from the possession of land is that of wealth and prestige. Distribution of the land for self-sufficiency would enable the poor to benefit from what the land has to offer, and to improve their socio-economic status. Since ninety percent of Kenya's population lives in the rural areas, and earns its livelihood primarily from agricultural and related activities, agrarian reform could help to equalize income, wealth, and increase agricultural production and growth amongst a majority of the population. (De-Blij, 1981:77). In this respect, land ownership and control is crucial not just to Kenya's agriculture but to its society as well.

Purpose of The Study

This study analyzes the Kenyan land reform policy aimed at achieving equitable land distribution. This policy has been pursued with programmes to transform customary land tenure to statutory freehold tenure through land consolidation and registration (Republic of Kenya, 1965:1). To meet these goals, agricultural policy focused on three important areas for development:

1) land transfer programme;
2) smallholder* development; and

3) promotion of cash crops by both smallholders and large scale farmers**


The key element in the development strategy was, agrarian reform.

The study is posed to answer the following questions:

1) To what extent was the government successful in its objective of equal land distribution?

2) Was the promotion of cash crop production in the smallholder sector of the community realized?

3) How did the change affect the rural population?

To answer these questions, we intend to analyze data collected by Roger Van Zwaneberg on the changes in the size of farms, and the findings of studies by different scholars on rural development and land reform. Also data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (Kenya; Agricultural Survey, 1958/59 and 1960/61), Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965, the Swynnerton Plan of 1955, and the Development Plan 1984/88.

* Farmers with less than 20 acres of land.

** Farmers with more than 20 acres of land.
There are many variables that intervene in the implementation of land reform. These include customary inheritance, uneven distribution of land, and perceptions about the land, its ownership and use. The central theme of the study is the degree of structural differentiation that has occurred in land distribution.

In the past, the subdivision of landholdings, together with the fragmentation so common under traditional land tenure system, did not allow use of proper cultivation and conservation methods. However, individual land ownership based on property rights and land economy, can also prove to be problematic. At times, this creates land monopolies whereby all the land is taken up by individual farmers, so that the establishment of new farms or expansion of the existing farms is impossible.

This type of land monopoly has become common in Kenya, as a result of land consolidation. During the transformation of agricultural production, the relationship between the owners and non-owners of land changed due to the concentration of land ownership. A polarization of society took place, based on the ownership of the means of production, which fundamentally reflects the stages of development the government in power contemplated.
The present day land policy dates back to the colonization of the country, where land played a major role in the country's politics. During the colonial period, the White Highlands, which included up to 20 percent of the most fertile land of medium and high potential*, were reserved exclusively for European ownership. The appropriation of land by European settlers occurred only where the climate was sufficiently moderate, and the land fertile enough for commercial farming by Europeans. The European farms averaged approximately 800 acres, and depended on large amounts of hired labour. The Africans were forced to live on less productive land, and were prohibited from growing certain profitable cash crops and from keeping improved breeds of cattle. The African farmers produced solely for subsistence on smallholdings averaging about 2.0 acres.

The African smallholders during the colonial period were divided into four groups. The first group consisted of small farmers in the reserves, within which communal landownership was preserved. The second group consisted of small farmers who lived outside the reserve on land which constituted their collective or private property.

* High potential land area receives annual rainfall of 857.5mm or more. Medium potential receives annual rainfall of 735mm - 857.5mm. Low potential receives annual rainfall of 612.5mm or less.
The third group was made up of small farmers who lived on land that belonged to Missions, Crown land, or European private land, which was not utilized by the owners. The small farmers in the third group leased the land from European settlers, for which they paid rent or farmed in exchange. The last group of smallholders consisted of those who lived on farms and plantations owned by Europeans.

In 1955, as a response to the Mau Mau revolt, the Swynnerton Plan was introduced. The Swynnerton Plan of 1955 gave Kenyans the rights to grow cash crops. The Plan set the agricultural development strategy at the time of independence and provided the pattern for subsequent policy. The Plan established two changes in the policy that had previously controlled the development in the existing small scale farming areas. In the first place the prohibition on individual land ownership was discontinued. Secondly, the restrictions on commodity production were lifted and production of cash crops and keeping of graded cattle by smallholder farmers was encouragement. With the introduction of the Swynnerton Plan, the government expected a wide distribution of land to provide the backbone for democratic government.

This land reform policy was intended to improve the standard of living of the rural population by creating
various sized African farms. Under this programme, "targets were set for peasant farmers" (Sorrenson, 1967: 224). By creating smallholder farms, the colonial government hoped to end the racial dualism which was reflected in the contrast between large European farms and the African smallholders and landless peasants. As Collin Leys points out, the pattern of rural society that was envisioned was clear from the outset: It included a majority of independent smallholders farming largely, but not exclusively, for subsistence, a group of middle farmers, and a smaller group of rich or small capitalist farmers (Leys, 1971).

The period 1955 witnessed the beginning of land consolidation and registration in the Central Province. In addition, the development of indigenous Kenyan farming became possible through proper planning, crop development and technical services. As a result, smallholders rapidly adopted production of coffee, livestock, pyrethrum and tea.

By mid-1962, land reform had become the integral force of the decolonization process. With the entrance of the Kenya African National Union (KANU)* into the government, an agreement to establish the Million Acre Scheme to transfer part of the European Highlands to

* KANU the political party in power since 1963.
African ownership was sealed.

When, in post-independence Kenya, the government set about the task of accelerating the issuing of land titles to small farmers, and the allocation of large formerly European owned landholdings to Africans, it had many misgivings about the economic advisability of splitting large farms into small ones. The question was "could the small farmers be expected to maintain production while keeping down costs?" Among those opposed to the idea of land distribution and consolidation were the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU)* and some tribal leaders who, in 1965, argued that individual ownership of land was against the principles of communal ownership. The European settlers opposed land consolidation, since it threatened their monopoly of commercial agriculture. However, the Africanization of agriculture continued (Modern Africa, 1968:27):

The Africanization of agriculture pursued through settlement schemes and the assistance extended to Africans to buy large farms had enabled African farmers of both large and small scale farms to produce 60 percent of the total marketed produce, with 40 percent produced by smallholders alone (Mboya, 1970:105).

In contrast to Kenya, the Tanzanian government pursued a policy of communal or collective farming through

* KADU Kenya's opposition party until 1966.
the establishment of Ujamaa* villages. The ultimate objective of these villages was, "to transform the Tanzanian society from a state of poverty to modernity without losing the traditional African values" (Karioki, 1979:94). The objective was to develop an economically viable society, without the disruption which at times may be associated with social change. Furthermore, the aims of the Ujamaa villages were for socio-economic advancement, self-improvement, and mostly to offer a voluntary alternative to individual settlement. The Ujamaa villages were conducive to the spread of skills, knowledge and political education. Moreover, the most important aspect of this approach was to create political awareness in the masses. As a result, land consolidation and land tenure systems were abolished (Reporter, 1965:19).

However, contrary to traditional villages, the modern Ujamaa villages were conceived and planned in advance. Hence, traditional practice in the construction of these villages was distorted, and led to the alteration of farming methods and production. According to Paul Collier, "...farm production, and output per worker, was considerably below that on the

* The Swahili word "Ujamaa" refers to a number of families who live and share the same amenities. A kind of commune.
individual shambas" (Collier, 1986:116). In other words, production was dilatory on the communal farms due to the lack of incentive to farm. This in itself exacerbated the poor distribution of contributions to Tanzania's communal economy (Ergos, 1980; Putteiman, 1981).

The Kenya government in its determination to improve agricultural production, in 1965, embarked on agricultural policy which encouraged the promotion of cash crop production by both smallholders and large scale farmers. This policy called for intensified land consolidation and registration of titles. Individual land ownership has given some members of the rural community larger land holdings than others and, therefore, was seen as introducing an unequal distribution of the natural resources. This policy has increased social differentiation in the rural sector.

Individual land ownership has disrupted the homogeneity of rural community, formerly based on communal land ownership. It has developed a rural hierarchy in which different groups are linked to one another by a network of economic and social relationships. Thus a tremendous concentration of land ownership is in the hands of a small group of people. Most of those who maintain

* The Swahili word "Shamba" refers to a plot of land for farming purposes.
ownership of large farms have more than 500 acres and control 20 percent of the usable agricultural land in the country. Nicola Seidman points out that:

by 1974 there were 750 farms averaging over 800 acres, which were owned by civil servants, politicians and businessmen. Many of these farms were never farmed at all

(Seidman, 1970:23)

At the other end of the spectrum, we have many smallholder farmers and landless citizens. In the past, land had been regarded as a communal property that benefited every member in the tribe or community.

Accordingly, the main controversy over Kenyan agricultural performance has been the difference between large and small, cash and subsistence farming. The distinctive feature of land and agricultural policy was the individualization of ownership, through registration of titles based on capitalist principles. In essence, this was a continuation of the previous colonial period. This feature is in contrast with the informal or group ownership found in Tanzania.

When one examines the trends of development over the past thirty years, the picture one sees is that of uneven distribution of wealth in different regions, leading to wide variations in the proportion of population below the poverty line. If the Kenyan government's controversial decision to divide the agricultural economy into large and
small is any indication of a strategy to improve the standard of living of the rural population, it seems clear that its commitment does not extend to smallholders.

Erich Jacoby points out that, "the surest way to deprive a peasant of his land is to give him a secure title and make it freely negotiable" (Jacoby, 1971:323). The rural poor who own land, when faced with financial need, mortgage their land and thereby render themselves landless. This has been found to happen in many countries. Consequently, the rural poor have come to include the landless agricultural labourers, marginal and small farmers, and rural artisans who have been reduced to the status of labourers. As a result, a typical rural village is composed of a number of groups with highly divergent interests.

The stratification of the village community may be considered as one of most significant features of underdevelopment, and probably the greatest obstacle to the implementation of reform programmes aimed at the development of a more egalitarian society.

Review of the Literature

There has been an accumulation of literature on Kenya's land reform policy, since the inception of the Swynnerton Plan, 1955. Nevertheless, the socio-economic impact of the agrarian reform on the small farmer, has not
been sufficiently discussed.

When the government embarked on land reform, it expected this to be a pre-requisite of the agricultural development and to promote agricultural productivity. Vis-a-vis land reform, the once landless farmer was now capable of becoming the legal owner of land. Thus, the government needed to ensure that it achieved cooperation from the people expected to benefit from this policy. However, the Kikuyu of Central Province began to consolidate their land before the programme was put into effect. The policy of land consolidation drew popular support from the Kikuyu, although there was some opposition from other tribes, in particular the Luo.

Sorrenson (1967) and Helleiner (1968) have argued that the purpose of individual land consolidation in Kenya was essentially to create a stable middle class of farmers primarily made up of the Kikuyu tribe farming in the Central Province. Uma Lele (1980) and Gavin Kitching (1980), using farm survey and income distribution data, concluded that there was a predictable degree of inequality in land holdings as well as considerable disparities in land capacities between the geographical areas. It was found that politicians, bureaucrats, and other influential people, dominated large land holdings in Nakuru and Kiambu Districts. The inequality in land
holdings has been identified by Swainson (1980), Njonjo (1981) and Kaplinsky (1983), among others. Thus, in the Central Province and the Rift Valley Province it was found that inequality in landholdings was evident.

Subsequently, those who made substantial gains were, "the rich, the powerful and the loyalists on whom the colonial government depended for successful administration" (Sorrenson, 1967:118). Most of the beneficiaries were the loyalists who had to see to it that the land consolidation programme succeeded at all costs. They had every right to oversee such an exercise, since they had been allowed to grow cash crops, although on a limited base. Consequently, they had consolidated most of their land before this programme was officially enforced.

Herman De-Blij mentions that between 1955 and 1960, over "...one million fragments of land in Central Province were regrouped into 150,000 holdings enclosed by fences and hedges" (De-Blij, 1981:75). This marked the beginning of village settlement as people were compelled to live in villages under strict discipline, and to farm their lands while under close supervision.

The growing of cash crops under the Swynnerton Plan was allowed initially only in Central Province. It was therefore an offense for African farmers outside Central Province to grow cash crops, particularly tea, coffee
and pyrethrum, as these were still predominantly European crops. Gavin Kitching comments that, because of such clear cut separation and restrictions;

pre-conditions for class differentiation were laid in the decades before land consolidation and the progress of the so called 'agrarian revolution' was uneven, even though land consolidation was completed by 1970 in most districts

(Kitching, 1980:328).

The introduction of the Swynnerton Plan and the relaxation of the previous restrictions placed on the growing of cash crops, allowed a group of small and large farmers occupying the fertile regions of Kenya (the White Highlands and in Central Province) to flourish in their agricultural production and output.

Although land reform policy in Kenya was seen to have sealed the independence bargain, the colonial government was determined to insure that commercial agriculture continued to function under a new political structure. John Harbeson has argued that the main objective of the Swynnerton Plan was to:

...check and counteract the development of African politics, rather than give economic progress a positive and tangible political significance for rural Africans

(Harbeson, 1971:236).

This has been supported by the government's own post-independence, nation-building strategy which discouraged the linking of politics with economic nation building.
The literature suggests that the present day regional disparities were built through the process of post-1952 agricultural commercialization, unevenness of land consolidation, enclosures and registration. This is supported by the number of licensed smallholder coffee growers found in Kenya. For example,

Out of 133,000 registered smallholder coffee growers covering 270,000 acres of land, not less than 99,500 acres were in Central Province which included Meru and Embu Districts. Over 48,400 acres were in Kiambu, Nyeri and Murang'a Districts.

(Kitching, 1980:318).

It is apparent from Kitching's account that Central Province alone held over one third of the total number of acres of land under smallholder coffee production. Hence, it would seem that land reform in Kenya has benefited a particular region as well as a wealthy section of the society, and not the poor, landless peasants. Due to tribal customs and the colonial legacy, uneven distribution of land exists in Kenya. Inequalities caused by colonialism continues to be perpetuated by the present government. Inequality arising between provinces is prominent. For example, poverty is more widespread in the Western Province than in the Central or the Rift Valley Provinces. The introduction of the European type of freehold rights of land, particularly in the White Highlands of Kenya, has become a status symbol for the new
African settlers.

Kenyan land reforms were to ensure that there existed a continuous commercial agriculture under an African government. It appears, therefore, that the reforms favoured special class and ethnic groups, such as the affluent and in particular the Kikuyu, Kalenjin, and Kisii tribes. Instead of direct transfer of land to the landless poor, redistribution was based upon the capacity of individuals to contribute to total productivity. Thus, in opposition to the stated objectives of equality, this policy created a rift between those who owned land and those who did not.

**Theoretical Framework**

Land reform covers all government activities and measures, aimed at developing specific relationships between people and land. Although a vast amount of literature has been written about land reform, it covers a wide range of perceptions and forms an uncoordinated mass of material, thus there is an absence of a specific theory on land reform. However, "few attempts have been made to develop a body of theory based on actual case studies and historical examples" (Jacoby, 1971; Warriner, 1969; Tuma, 1965).

The United Nations, employs the broad definition, conceiving land reform as:
an integrated programme of measures designed to eliminate obstacles to economic and social development arising out of defects in the agrarian structures


A programme such as this involves changes of land tenure, as well as improvement of agricultural service institutions. In an extensive study of land reform, Doreen Warriner prefers the following definition:

Land reform simply means the redistribution of property or rights in land for the benefit of small farmers and agricultural labourers. This is what land reform has meant in practice, past and present

(Warriner, 1969: xiv).

Bearing in mind the complex and delicate problem of dealing with this topic, the aim of this paper is confined to a review of the unique historical events which led to Kenyan land reform and an assessment of the results. Doreen Warriner's definition of land reform has been adopted in the pursuits of this study. It should be noted at the outset of the analysis of Kenyan agrarian economy, that there is a whole spectrum of economic activities that take place in the rural areas. For example, a typical smallholder family in rural Kenya has a number of income resources: livestock, farm produce, farm wage labour, and monetary assistance from urban-dwelling relatives. Thus, it can be found that the rural family does not live solely by farm income. Bearing these
aspects in mind, a rural family has a number of resources from which it can derive income.

The government's role in devising and implementing proper reform measures cannot be dispensed under any other circumstances. Land reform must be well prepared, planned and executed to meet the country's economic and social needs. However, while land reform resembles technological progress in agriculture, some government sponsorship is necessary to bring about technological changes. Technological changes require tenure assurance which guarantees future benefits for those who risk their economic resources. The increased economic and social security, generally provided by land reform, encourages the farmer to make changes. To make these changes a cultivator must have the freedom of land use and access to additional resources.

Moreover, the best way to affect changes in an agrarian economy would be to develop industry and service. However, in Kenya where the economy is predominantly agricultural, capital investment in land constitutes an impediment to such development. Therefore, in order to step up agricultural productivity, land reform must be seen as useful and necessary. Under a well organized, effective and planned land reform system, social and political stability increases as the farmer's
level of living and economic development takes place.

The establishment of a new tenure pattern can and ought to be seen as an integral part of social and economic redistribution; Kenyan society needs to establish its own equilibrium between private rights and social responsibilities. This in turn must be coordinated with resource development and industrialization. However, even the most generous land redistribution schemes may fail unless peasants are supported by complementary measures in social and economic fields.

This study, based on primary and secondary data, is divided into five chapters. The first chapter forms the introduction to the research. It has identified the material utilized, and has provided an overview of the literature on Kenyan land reform. The second chapter examines traditional land tenure systems from pre-colonial to the end of the colonial period (1962). This provides the basis for understanding subsequent land reform policies. The third chapter assesses the implementation of agricultural policy in terms of smallholder development, cash crop production, and land concentration. Chapter four identifies some problems associated with land reform. In particular it deals with regional disparities in terms of employment opportunities, income distribution among the rural population, and landlessness. Finally,
chapter five draws together the major conclusions of the study. It also outlines some of the study's limitations and offers some policy suggestions.
CHAPTER 2
TRADITIONAL TENURE.

This chapter describes briefly the land relations that existed from pre-colonial to the colonial period. In this section, a review of the socio economic conditions that prevailed before the 1955 agrarian reform are examined.

As in most African countries, land tenure systems in Kenya varied from tribe to tribe, and were generally characterized as communal property. In most instances, the peasant household held control of the rights over the land. The obligations to the community that this entailed, did not interfere materially with the quest for survival and economic advancement.

Land Tenure Among the Kikuyu

Among the Kikuyu, traditional land tenure allowed individual members rights over land either through inheritance, private rent or cultivation. Traditionally one could inherit a number of widely separated fragments of land. There was no tribal tenure, and chiefs did not wield power over land other than their own family's land. Nonetheless, "the final authority over all land transactions, including the settlement of land disputes, rested with the council of elders" (Bryant, 1972:23). Moreover, the absolute control over land lay with the
tribe, with individual members simply holding it by mutual consent subject to tribal custom. The chiefs exercised authority over land, only in matters of disposal to outsiders and its allocation to families within the tribe.

Accordingly, the Kikuyu procedure for acquiring land was through negotiations, rather than forceful occupation of foreign land. It was believed that the spirits of previously deceased owners would haunt new occupants thus making agricultural activities impossible (Sorenson, 1967:8). Negotiations were encouraged between the two parties with a view to arriving at a mutual agreement before the actual transfer of property rights. A religious ceremony usually followed in order to mark the boundaries of the land negotiated. Only then did a transaction become sealed.

Alternatively, the Kikuyu traditionally acquired land through the systems of barter exchanges either from another member of their tribe or from a member of a neighbouring tribe. The tribe accepted individual sole cultivation rights on the land, in return for payment in the form of livestock. The initiation of negotiating land acquisition from another member of the tribe commenced with the user of the land. According to Kikuyu philosophy, land and livestock were considered communal
property and did not belong to an individual. However, in the event that a member with rights over land lacked enough livestock for a bride-price, he temporarily exchanged part of his land to another member or members of the tribe for livestock. The transaction under these circumstances was considered a pledge of security. Since the land could be redeemed at any subsequent period by re-exchanging the original amount of livestock previously received.

The social organization among the Kikuyu was such that they lived in an ithaka*. An ithaka covered an area from approximately 50 to 100 acres. The estate was occupied by a group of families, either entirely or partially divided up among individual members. The remaining portion of the estate was set aside and constituted common grounds for the group as grazing land, although some portion of it could be allocated to new individual members when necessary.

Land under cultivation by the members of a family remained part of the estate as a whole. However, those who had areas of cultivation retained their individual cultivation rights, and passed them on to their children, providing no harm was inflicted to the unit of the estate

* The Kikuyu meaning of the ithaka is lands, when the prefix 'g' is applied the definition is singular.
as a whole. Gunter Wagner mentions that, "in the event of death, the individual's entire land was passed into the possession of the family as represented by male descendants" (Wagner, 1956:85).

The immediate land control over a gathaka and its rights in the Kikuyu custom, rested with a muramati*. The trustee was usually the senior resident representative of the clan. A muramati would be the first arbiter in cases of disputes, and would allocate undistributed land to new members. While the muramati was in sole control of the family estate, he consulted full family council of the adult male members of the family on decisions of major importance. Further control of the gathaka, was exercised by the clan itself, through its elders. It was the elders who represented the ultimate group owner. The clan and their decision was necessary for sanctioning the redeemable exchange of a member's rights over land, or permitting a member to allow tenants on the plot.

In this case, any member of the family had the right to demand cultivation areas on the family estate, so long as there was available cultivable land. Any member of the family could, with the consent of the family council, take on tenants. Cultivation rights in this case did not

* The Kikuyu meaning for muramati is a trustee, a position usually held by a male member of the tribe.
amount to ownership, and no individual member of the sub-clan could sell any portion of the family estate without the consent of the family council. The only exception in this case, was an individual plot which had not yet been passed into the sub-clan control. The concept of clan ownership of land, in the sense of control over communally used grazing land and surplus, developed after the various clans had already become political entities. The clan territory, in this case, differed from the *githaka*, representing a type of clan holding.

**Land Tenure Among the Luhya**

Among the Luhya, the land tenure was determined primarily by three factors:

- economic use;
- social and political structure of the tribal community;
- the magico-religious, especially land connected with ancestors

(Wagner, 1956:73).

One would enjoy permanent usufruct of rights over lands held. In such a case, there was no need for one to pay harvest dues. The right to dispose of the lands depended on the manner acquired vis-a-vis these lands. A transaction occurred when one paid with livestock or farming tools, based on the quality of land. However, if evidence was produced to the effect that the land had once been cultivated by one's ancestors, the land was redeemable on returning the original exchange price.
Thus, the purchaser did not become the owner of the land, since in order to have full rights over the land, the transaction was confirmed by drinking "beer of the field" (Wagner, 1956:78). According to Luhya laws of inheritance, a grandfather's land is inherited by the eldest son, who would subsequently subdivide it among his brothers. The village headman, as the holder of a political office, was entrusted with the administration over surplus lands and common grazing lands. However, at no time was he the rightful user of such portion of tribal land, although in principle, he was regarded as the senior heir to such land.

The Luhya control over land was determined in a social and political context. Traditional attitude towards land was basically determined by the patrilineal clan organization, and the fact that the clan communities were essentially independent political units. These units were organized into a tribal units, under a chief deriving authority from tribal ancestors. As a result, any clansperson had a right to take field land under cultivation, and did not have to ask the village headman for such permission. Land acquired in this manner constituted individual land, but when passed on to the next generation, individual land became family land. Individual land differed from family land in the sense
that a person could sell individual land without seeking permission.

Landlessness

Hence, generally, landlessness was not a problem, since each clan made sure that none of its members were without land to cultivate. In the case of squatters, they were allowed to cultivate land with practically the same security of tenure as the other members. They paid no rent to either family members nor the chief. Nevertheless, a squatter could be evicted for behaving in a manner contrary to the clan or community's norms, or if the land was required for children of the clan. A squatter's status differed from that of a clansman in that he could not sublet his land to other squatters without obtaining express permission of the clan head. A tenant merely cultivated the land assigned while not residing on it; eviction could take place after each harvest. To avoid claims of purchase, the one with rights over land was careful not to accept harvest gifts or any other form of compensation for the land he apportioned to the tenant. Acceptance of any gifts from a tenant was regarded as a permanent exchange.

When population pressure threatened the community, some members of the clan moved out in search of land, usually uncultivated land. Usually, the wealthiest
members of the sub-clan who found it difficult to make a living from the small piece of land that was available moved out of the estate, taking with them some poor members of the clan. When a member moved to a new site, he did not relinquish his rights as a joint holder of the original family estate. Although, in practice, it was hard for him to return if the population on the sub-clan was dense. This was because the muramati and the council allocated cultivation rights in another member of the clan. However, in the event of return to the village the claim to cultivation rights was accepted as valid.

The traditional rights to land tenure remained intact until 1926, at which time the political functions of the clans and the authority of the village heads were superseded and abolished by the introduction of the system of paid headmen (Wagner, 1956:82). As a result, some of the traditional land systems disappeared, creating a new development, particularly in the sphere of economics. This ultimately changed the traditional significance of land and created a new approach towards land acquisition and ownership.

Private Ownership

At the beginning of the 20th century, European settlers found it convenient to establish themselves in Kenya and started to build a railway line in preparation
for commercial agriculture. The building of the railway was carried out by Asians from India, many of whom remained in Kenya even after the work of building the railway line was completed. As a result, the number of Europeans and Asians increased rapidly. However, the share of non-Africans in the labour force was still considerably low. Most Africans worked on European settlement farms, some were engaged in unskilled work, and others were engaged in clerical work. Although the share of non-Africans in the population was small, their share in income was over 20 percent.

When transactions took place for the purchase of land, assimilation of African traditional methods of land acquisition were not taken into account by the Europeans, because the colonial powers chose to oversee customary routes of land tenure. This resulted in the colonial government's ability to acquire land rights of native reserves. With the onset of European settlement, it became evident that traditional forms of land tenure would no longer be recognized or adhered.

The acquisition and ownership, in particular, became a crucial tool in the exploitation of natural resources. The colonial government argued that the Africans owned land only in terms of occupational rights and as such, unoccupied land was reverted to Crown Land. European
settlers ultimately recognized that no African had individual title to land. Therefore, land was considered as the commonwealth of the people, where "...a native's claim to land was recognized according to native custom only as long as he occupied beneficially" (Sorrenson, 1970:68). In other words, the principal usage recognized all unoccupied land as Crown Land, and the administration was free to deal with it as deemed necessary. This meant any land left vacant by Africans, was automatically reverted to the Crown and later allocated to a European settler as plantation farm. The appropriation of land by European settlers, encouraged the acquisition and ownership of land considered suitable for European settlement.

As early as 1915, the colonial government had set aside 8,242 square miles of Kenya's farm land for their commercial agriculture. Of this designated land, 20 percent was owned and occupied by five individuals and their families. "Thirteen individuals were found to be in control of 894,434 acres of land out of a total of 4,500,000 acres granted to settlers" (Van Zwaneberg; 1975: 37). In the process, the Kikuyu lost 106 square miles of tribal territory. By 1932, it was estimated that, the Europeans held an area covering 10,345 square miles, of which 11.8 percent was cultivated, 40.7 percent used for livestock, 20.0 percent occupied by
squatter, and 27.5 percent was unused

(Hailey, 1957:720).

The introduction of private ownership in Kenya had a profound effect on its economy. Africans who were educated under the influence of the British system, became indoctrinated by the colonial ideology of land ownership. In this instance, a would-be purchaser was now in the position to initiate negotiations with a land owner. This change in practice from traditional African tribal forms of land negotiations to the colonial practices changed the approach to land negotiations. The change of approach made rapid headway in the Kiambu area, and the githaka gave place to the smallholding as the unit of land tenure. This practice land tenure is still found in the Kiambu District.

African Reserves

By creating native reserves, the colonial government prevented the process of expansion by which the more populous tribes would normally have found relief from congestion. As a result, population pressure increased, families were left landless (Marsh; 1961). The resettlements were eventually consolidated into land units which were placed under the control of Native Lands Trust Boards. Boundaries were subsequently embedded in the land relations of African communities.
The creation and establishment of ethnic boundaries destroyed the pattern of land use and availability of land; a balance which was previously maintained through the system of cultivation or nomadic pastoralism. Hence, the rapid deterioration of land owing to fragmentation, overstocking and erosion. In addition, this increased disintegration of those aspects of social and cultural institutions related to land use control that could be mobilized to cure the malaise.

The population pressures increased fragmentation of land and the growing number of landless or near landlessness, especially in the Kiambu District. The Masai tribe were moved into restricted Manyatta*. The result of this settlement, profoundly modified the githaka system in the Kiambu. The old custom of redeemable purchase had became irredeemable. This disrupted their social structure and traditional form of land use. The creation and consolidation of the reserves provided a good opportunity for organization of the labour market and the control of African activity in the reserves, the Africans were forced to farm their lands under close supervision.

In its effort to control the African population, the colonial government made indigenous Kenyans farm labourers

* The Swahili definition of manyatta refers to an enclosed plot of land designated for settlement.
and created native reserves. The creation of African reserves guaranteed the European settler farmers the availability of cheap and dependable labour. Since they controlled both the political and the economic sectors, the European Settlers had power to fix the amount of wages an African labourer would be paid.

The commercialization of agriculture resulted in the separation of families. The men moved away from their village farms and homes to earn a cash income on the European plantation farms. The adult males working away from their homes would not take their families along with them, because it was against the law for the African male worker to be accompanied by his family. In the event that one desired to be visited by his family, an express order from one's boss was mandatory and the length of stay was documented. All this was done in the name of getting rid of the criminal elements from the European quarters.

The urban or plantation worker could only visit his family during his vacation period and this came once every year and lasted approximately 14 days. It was during such periods that the urban or plantation worker got to visit with his family. Other times, the urban or plantation worker would remit cash to his family or the extended family on a monthly basis. In return, the urban or plantation worker received items such as bananas, maize
flour, green maize, cassavas, potatoes and many other food crops grown mostly by women on the African farms.

So, while the male adult population was away, the women maintained the farms practically doing everything. They were responsible for the reproduction of the household, and in addition to growing food, they earned money by selling food crops. They engaged in a variety of non-farm activities (pottery making, basket weaving, and Kiondo* making among others), or sold their labour. The majority, however, worked on their husbands plots to produce a surplus. They dug, ploughed, planted, weeded, harvested and sold. Domestic work was their responsibility. Above all, they raised children single handily.

In terms of commodity production, the Africans were restricted to producing subsistence food crops. Since they could not engage in commercial agriculture, their income level was kept to a bare minimum. African farmers were prohibited by law from growing any cash crops. The only exception to the rule, were the local chiefs on whom the colonial government depended upon for successful administration. Consequently, it was not surprising that for several years European settlers dominated the country's politics and economy. They appropriated the

* Kiondo is a type of basket made by Kikuyu women.
best land, and restricted Africans to land of poor quality.

Wage Labour

The land consolidation process in African areas, increased the amount of labour migration, particularly for those who could no longer find enough land to subsist. In this way, a vast majority of the people became landless. With subsequent population pressure and increased production of cash crops, a growing demand for land was evident. The landless moved out of the reserves in search of land, their quest usually resulting in them becoming wage labourers on European plantations. For example, a large number of the migrant labour served six month contracts as farm labourers in the European Highlands. An alternative to becoming a farm labourer was to migrate to the city to seek employment either on a long term basis as domestic servants or in a skilled or semi-skilled occupation.

As a result, by the mid 1920s, a racially segregated society had been firmly entrenched; the Europeans were in control of export crops, crop production and professional jobs, Asians were in control of trade and middle level administrative positions, while Africans were confined to smallholder farming, unskilled wage employment, petty trade, lower level clerical jobs, and agricultural labour.
The expansion of the estates and urban areas created a demand for African labour. In Kakamega District, for example, by 1937 at least 30 percent of the adult male population migrated to urban centres and plantation farms (Wagner, 1956:94). Between 1936 and 1946 inequality among smallholders increased. Those who had had large areas of land, or land where cash crops could be grown, improved their income position considerably. More Africans became traders, and so earned better incomes. In spite of all this, inequality between and among Africans increased little.

In the years between 1946 and 1950, the economy grew quite rapidly, but inequality also increased in all sectors and races. Mainly the modern sector grew, while the traditional sector was checked by the restrictions or neglect of the government. Despite considerable increased inequality, poverty among the rural people was reduced due to the rapid growth of the economy.

One virtue to migration to urban centres was that it offered a new form of integration between tribal groups. In turn, this developed into a new social organization, its population made up of members representing various tribes throughout Kenya. With the help of tribally-based political associations this new social organization provided the opportunity for the emergence of a
representative trade union (Kenya Federation of Labour). This factor aided in intensification of political consciousness in the 1950s.

Thus, the creation of Africans becoming the work force in both the rural and urban areas led to the impact of social discontent. The increasing number of landless, the rapid deterioration of over-cultivated land in the reserves, and the juxtaposition of large tracts of land occupied by settlers, became central issues with the onset of the confrontation between the Kikuyus and the colonial government - the Mau Mau uprisings of the 1950s. Land appropriation became a strong factor in uniting all the tribes against the colonialists.

In 1952 the Mau Mau revolts threatened the smooth agricultural activities in the country. The Mau Mau uprisings were a result of the Kenyans, feeling a sense of deprivation. The majority of the rural population, particularly in Central Province was without land which they could call theirs. Most of the farms had been appropriated by the European settlers and the Africans were deployed as farm labourers. In order to bring the Mau Mau revolts under control, between 1952 and 1953 the government passed a legislation empowering it to confiscate individually owned land of Mau Mau activists. This action was followed by a policy which required that
all Kikuyu men, women and children be moved into fortified villages. They were subject to varying degrees of punishment depending on the amount of cooperation they exhibited. By 1955 nearly one million men, women and children had been moved into a total of 845 villages (Huxley, 1962:27).

By 1954, the Kenyan economy was largely agricultural, starting with its development in the colonial period, and continuing in the neo-colonial period from 1963. Land tenure and ownership structure of the Kenyan agricultural economy was based essentially on plantations or large estates, combined with certain crops on small farms. This condition contributed further to the sector's and country's underdevelopment.

The economy was characterized as structurally deformed and backward due to its primary function as the producer of raw materials, particularly coffee, tea and cotton for the British dominated market. However, during the first half of the century, Kenya entered into a new role of international trade, as a coffee and tea producer and exporter. With such an economic structure, national and foreign investments were assured of cheap and abundant manpower and stable profits.

This in itself, reduced their reservation wage which in turn reduced costs for the settlers. The settlers
reduced the supply price of labour even further, by employing such tactics as hut and poll taxes. The incomes of the African smallholders were subsequently held down by regulations, which prohibited Africans from growing cash crops. Europeans protected their positions furthermore through bureaucratic regulations which prohibited the Asians from owning land.

In the period 1950 and 1955, while the Mau Mau nationalists increased their struggle for independence, the economy boomed, particularly the agricultural sectors. Demand for labour rose due to higher prices and increased production. This helped reduce inequality, despite the fact that inequality within traditional agriculture increased.

By preventing any agricultural diversification, while hindering the country's industrial development, these investments engendered permanent unemployment. During the period prior to 1955, the economy was dependent on the state of the international economy, since reproduction of the system was feasible only through the external sector. As for natural resource endowment for agricultural development in Kenya, it is estimated that 20 percent of the land is either cultivated agricultural soil, or suitable for cultivation. Nevertheless, the actual utilization of land is greatly influenced by its unequal
distribution. With regards to population, estimates in 1954 indicate that over 90 percent of the total population lived and worked in the rural areas. Of this, 15 percent constituted the agricultural labour force (Republic of Kenya, 1958).

The gap between modern and traditional sectors hit its all time low in 1955. During this period, the modern sector was found to have grown in relative size, and the traditional sector was enriched owing to easing of restrictions on cash crop growing. Between 1955 and 1960, one of the consequence of Mau Mau, was that the government had to change its policy towards the African smallholders. During the second half of the decade, smallholders were allowed to grow coffee and received more support in planning, extension services and credit facilities. In spite of this, the incomes of smallholders fell owing to the poor market situation. Furthermore, the government decided to push up minimum wages. This contributed to the increased gap between urban and rural dwellers. The policy initiated to support poorly paid African workers' increased inequality. The falling smallholder incomes increased the incidence of poverty.

Since 1963 and the onset of independence, Kenya has pursued a capitalist strategy. During the 1960s, there was some land redistribution. This involved a policy
aimed at supporting smallholders within the existing structure of land ownership. The land consolidation policy and the smallholder cash crop promotion policy is discussed in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 3

THE AGRICULTURAL POLICY.

The aim of this chapter is to analyze data on agrarian performance with a view to finding out whether or not the government achieved its objectives of equal land distribution among the population, and the promotion of cash crops by the smallholder farmers.

Data from the Agricultural Census of 1958/59 and 1960/61 are analyzed. This census was the basic source of information to the government when it formulated its agrarian policy. Data from the Integrated Rural surveys of 1974-1979 and the Kenya Statistical Abstract are analyzed to establish the degree of structural differentiation in the smallholder sector. Also, data on smallholder cash crop production is analyzed.

The Swynnerton Plan 1955

The most pervasive influence of colonialism in rural Kenya was the introduction of Western economy and its forms of individual land ownership. Prior to 1955, Kenya's agricultural sector was dominated by European settlers. The Africans were dispossessed of their land and were turned into farm labourers on European plantation farms. The British conceived that rural Kenya's progress and prosperity depended upon what it considered to be a sound agricultural policy.
In turn, the implementation of such practices were dependent on individual land ownership.

In order to achieve this goal, the colonial administration, in 1955, implemented a new agricultural policy, better known as the Swynnerton Plan, for African farming. The Swynnerton Plan of 1955, called for cash crop development in African areas, as well as reform of the land tenure system through consolidation and registration of lands, formerly held under customary tenure. During the period before 1955, the Africans were basically subsistence farmers on their fragmented plots. It was hoped that the process of land consolidation and cash crop production in the smallholder sector would enable every African family to provide for its own subsistence, as well as gain a cash income.

However, the Africans were rather apprehensive about land consolidation and registration, perceiving it as laying the foundation for emergence of a class of landless labourers as in England during the agricultural revolution. Some tribal leaders in Kenya opposed the land consolidation programme. They employed every means within their power to dissuade members of their tribes to reject the foreign ideology. This is supported by the slow progress made in land
consolidation in many parts of the country, particularly Nyanza and Rift Valley Provinces. Despite the tribal leaders' efforts to discourage land consolidation, the people of Central Province later accepted consolidation of their land. This occurred at a time of acute land shortage which had resulted from increase in population. Also, the Kikuyu of Central Province agreed to consolidate their farms because of the advantages that came with it. The people from Central Province had come to realize that in order for them to improve their farming and enter into commercial production, they needed to gain access to credit loans and other agricultural support systems. Under these conditions a title to their land was required in order to secure loans.

The acceptance of land consolidation by the Kikuyu of Central Province set a precedence for an enclosure and consolidation programme throughout the country. Thus, table 3.1 shows the progress of land consolidation in Kenya from 1956 to 1985. Other communities followed suit in consolidating their lands. By 1960 the programme had spread through most of Kenya. Eric Clayton notes that:

by 1961 only 49,851 farms in the Nyanza Province; 194,948 in the Central Province, and 18,532 in the
Table 3.1
The Progress of Land Consolidation and Registration by Province 1956 1985 ('000 acres).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Nyanza</th>
<th>Rift Valley</th>
<th>Western</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>1,016.25</td>
<td>598.00</td>
<td>1,376.75</td>
<td>837.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>9.75</td>
<td>325.00</td>
<td>1,684.25</td>
<td>281.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>14.00</td>
<td>609.50</td>
<td>2,076.25</td>
<td>346.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>324.80</td>
<td>2,227.00</td>
<td>51.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>95.50</td>
<td>402.00</td>
<td>23.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>43.00</td>
<td>1,490.00</td>
<td>10.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>61.50</td>
<td>452.50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>77.00</td>
<td>447.00</td>
<td>13.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 1,040.00 2,061.30 10,145.75 1,563.00

percentage of consolidated land area: 100.00 73.47 63.30 97.60

Rift Valley that were consolidated and completely enclosed

(Clayton, 1964:44).

The process of land consolidation was much slower in Nyanza Province and Rift Valley Province than in the Central Province, mostly due to boundary disputes and the fear that consolidation might result in the loss of fertile land for that of poor quality. According to Eric Clayton, the land consolidation progress showed that,

by 1961, 74 percent of the area in Central Province had been consolidated, 19 percent in Nyanza Province, and 7 percent in Rift Valley Province

(Clayton, 1964:44).

Table 3.1 indicates that by 1985, only 63 percent of the total land area in the Rift Valley and 73.47 percent in Nyanza Province were consolidated. By 1975 fragmented landholdings in Central Province had been consolidated into single units, with subsequent registration under freehold title. By 1976, land consolidation had taken place in all of the Central Province. This in itself encouraged land concentration in the hands of a few rich individuals.

As soon as consolidation and registration were completed, the surplus population was expected to be absorbed into the large holdings of Central Province as agricultural labourers. It had been contemplated that
consolidation would compel farmers to sell and buy or rent land with loans from the government or other approved agencies. To this point, KANU, the party in power, emphasized that "African resettlement would not be carried out at the cost of high standard of agriculture" (Forrester, 1962:62). This meant that large scale farms were to be retained for commercial agriculture.

The land consolidation policy enabled rich farmers the opportunity to acquire more land. This policy contributed to a marked rural stratification and the emergence of a landless class. The rich African farmers were able to buy out the poor, and reduced the small landholders to farm labourers. Consequently, some members of the rural population became landless. The policy of land concentration strengthened the position of the rich farmers vis-a-vis the poor landless farmers.

**Land Concentration**

Table 3.2 indicates the degree of consolidation of separate parcels of land that had occurred between 1978/79. A great number of the population lived on farms that had been consolidated and registered, enabling them to partake in the modern economy. For example, Central Province held over 60 percent of the landholding under one single unit. While 15.7 percent
Table 3.2

Distribution of Holding by number of parcels and province 1978/79.
Number of holdings ('000).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parcel*</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Rift Val.</th>
<th>Nyanza</th>
<th>Western</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>119.0</td>
<td>200.8</td>
<td>124.6</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>496.3</td>
<td>23.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>277.8</td>
<td>298.8</td>
<td>438.2</td>
<td>249.7</td>
<td>1264.5</td>
<td>60.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>72.4</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>108.2</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>238.7</td>
<td>11.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>65.3</td>
<td>3.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5+</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>0.42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 501.3 526.5 708.0 341.7 2,077.5 100.0


* Parcel means a single piece of land forming part of the Holding but separated from other parts of the Holding by private or communal land.
of holdings consisted of more than one parcel of land. Central Province had 64 percent of total landholdings that were under one parcel. The Nyanza Province held 5.2 percent, the Western Province held 4.12 percent, and the Rift Valley held 0.9 percent. The national total under one holding was 61 percent of the total consolidated holdings in the four provinces. The national average for the four provinces was 4.2 percent. Table 3.2 shows only 0.42 percent of the landholdings consisted of five or more parcels.

An overview of large farm holdings indicate that in 1955, 15.8 percent of the farms were 20 to 199 acres, 46 percent of the large farms were between 500 and 1,999 acres (Republic of Kenya, 1958:19). After the inception of the land consolidation programme, the number of farms between 20 to 199 acres increased from 527 or 15.8 percent to a record high of 2024 farms or 54 percent between 1955 and 1985 (table 3.3). As for the farms of 2,000 acres and over, there was a marked decrease from 23 percent to 5.7 percent between 1955 and 1985. It was found that the European farmers who had owned 85 percent of the total agricultural land in the Rift Valley prior to 1955, owned 44.2 percent of the large farms in the Rift Valley by 1962. The rest of the farms were owned by a few Africans and Asians (Legum, 1969:164).
Table 3.3  

Size of Large farm holding 1955 - 1985.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of farms</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No. of farms</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No. of farms</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No. of farms</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-199</td>
<td>527</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>1425</td>
<td>44.9</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>53.9</td>
<td>2024</td>
<td>54.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200-499</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>792</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>817</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>819</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500-1,999</td>
<td>1537</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>719</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>687</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>618</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,000+</td>
<td>764</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,329</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3,166</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3,735</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3,737</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 3.4  


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>1954</th>
<th></th>
<th>1963</th>
<th></th>
<th>1971</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of farms</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No. of farms</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No. of farms</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-49</td>
<td>467</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>578</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>741</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-399</td>
<td>1162</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>1288</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1253</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400 and over</td>
<td>1535</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>1502</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1182</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,164</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3,368</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3,175</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, it is still common to find large farms owned by few individuals.

Overall, there has been an increase in the size of farms over 125 acres due to land consolidation programme of 1955. In the past, most of the land was fragmented and a single family could own several scattered plots, but after land consolidation, most families have had fewer plots. This can be seen in table 3.4, which shows a decline in the number of larger farms from 1,535 farms (400 acres or more) in 1954 to 1,182 farms in 1971 (Van Zwaneberg, 1974:174). The decrease may be attributed to the land redistribution policy which was in effect between 1955 and 1970. Obviously, the decrease recorded in this area was translated into an increase in the number of holdings in the smallholdings due to continuous subdivision. Holdings from 20 to 199 acres increased from 1,425 farms in 1972 to 2,024 farms by 1985 (table 3.3), an increase of 599 holdings or 42 percent.

Table 3.5 suggests that land concentration has occurred since 1963, and the degree of concentration is significant. This is supported by Table 3.6. From this table it can be seen that there were 126 farms of 4,000 acres and over, or 3.9 percent represented by an estimated total area of 1,274,000 acres or 47.4 percent
Table 3.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poorest</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richest</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>54.9</td>
<td>59.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Adapted from Collier & Lal; 1979.

Table 3.6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of Farm in acres</th>
<th>number of farms</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>estimated total area (000 acres)</th>
<th>% of all farmland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 - 49</td>
<td>741</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 - 99</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 - 299</td>
<td>685</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300 - 499</td>
<td>471</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500 - 999</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>373</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000 - 1,999</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,000 - 3,999</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4,000 +</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>1274</td>
<td>47.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,175</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>2,690</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ILO, Employment, Income and Equity, 1972 p.36
of all farmland in 1971. The table further indicates that a total of 741 farms were between 0 and 49 acres. These farms covered a total 15,000 acres or 0.6 percent of the total farmland. This was the category with the largest smallholder farmers, and from the area covered, it is evident that unequal land distribution had occurred and will continue for a long time. Further support is provided by the Integrated Rural Survey (IRS) of 1976/79. In this survey it is stated that:

69 percent of the total population or 13.8 million people in Kenya live on small farms of less than 20 acres (8.0 hectares). The survey found over 2.6 million smallholdings in Kenya, and the median holding size was between 1.0 hectare* and 2.0 hectares.


The owners of large acres of farmland are the politicians, civil servants and businessmen. For example, "...40 individually owned farms in Nakuru District, each measuring over 500 acres were owned by 38 people" (Kaplinsky, 1983:116). 50 percent of all Africanized land in Kiambu, a district with a population of 686,000 people was owned by "183 individuals with the leading 44 of these individuals holding two thirds of the land" (Kaplinsky, 1983:116). There seems to have been an increase in land annexation, which in turn, has increased in land subdivision amongst the smallholders because of population pressure and the inheritance
system.

**Smallholder Development**

To better improve the rural areas which had been very much neglected by the colonial government, the Kenya government's approach was to establish smallholder farms, that would be more efficiently managed by individual farmers.

The Government's policy of settlement, emphasized that ex-employees on European farms, bought for redistribution, would receive priority for settlement on such land (Mboya, 1970:101). However, the final choice of the new settlers rested with the country's President, who gave priority to resettling members of the Kikuyu tribe. The Kikuyu were resettled in some parts of Embu District on farms that Embu people were reluctant to occupy. The Kikuyu settlement on the Embu clan land bred intense resentment towards the Kikuyu tribe, not only by the members of the Embu tribe, but by other tribes too. The Embu people demanded the withdrawal of the Kikuyu from the Embu clan land, but with no success (Reporter, 1965:29).

The implementation of the land consolidation policy was expected to provide the smallholder with sufficient

*1 hectare = 2.5 acres.*
land on which the smallholder would live on. At the same time, the government was not ready to kill the goose that laid the golden egg. Therefore, some large farms were to be retained. The retention of large scale farms was to guarantee commercial farming.

To this end, from 1963 to 1964, and from 1967 to 1969, much of the Government's effort to develop agriculture was devoted to land transfer and resettlement of smallholders on formerly European owned mixed farms. It was estimated that "more than three quarters of the agricultural development expenditure went into land transfer" (Republic of Kenya, 1968:126).

By 1968, 934,000 hectares of mixed farming land previously under European ownership had been transferred to African ownerships of which 46 percent was settled by smallholders. The remaining 54 percent was in the hands of large scale farmers (Republic of Kenya, 1970:121).

One of the government's aims in relocating families on the farms was that individual land ownership would provide a greater initiative for development than communal or collective ownership. Consequently, the government provided for the transfer of 250,000 acres of land, out of which 200,000 acres went to large African farmers, and 20,000 acres were distributed to peasant settlers. Colin Legum mentions that:

despite the transfer of 50.25 million acres of former European owned land to Africans as
settlement schemes, subdivisions, plantations and ranches, the distribution of land holdings in 1980 was still highly skewed

(Legum, 1984:257).

Table 3.5, compares the landholdings of smallholders (under 20 acres) of Central and Nyanza Province. The table indicates that the richest 30 percent of the population in the Central Province owned 44 percent of total land acreage in 1963. By 1974 their share of total acreage increased from 44 percent to 53.8 percent. The poorest landholding group constituted 40 percent of the population in 1963, their share of the total acreage was only 26.3 percent. By 1974, this had decreased to 18.3 percent. As for the Nyanza Province, the poorest landholding group constituted 40 percent of the population, and covered a total land area of 15.6 percent in 1963, and by 1974 this area had decreased to 12.9 percent. The richest 30 percent of the total population in Nyanza Province owned 54.9 percent of the total land acreage in 1963. By 1974 this their share of the total land acreage had increased to 59.1 percent.

The examination of the distribution of small holdings (holdings under 20 acres) further identifies the degree of structural disparity. Table 3.7 shows that 33.4 percent of the holdings were 0 to 2.5 acres, 23.4 percent were between 2.5 and 4.75 acres, 15.3
Table 3.7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Rift Va.</th>
<th>Nyanza</th>
<th>Western</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 - 2.25</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>33.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.50 - 4.75</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>23.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.0 - 7.25</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>15.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5 - 9.75</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>9.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.0 - 12.25</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>6.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.5 - 19.75</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>7.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 acres</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>5.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Holdings | 329,530 | 89,823 | 386,431 | 254,618 | 1,060,402 |

percent of the holdings were between 5 and 7.25 acres, while 22.6 percent of the holdings were between 7.5 and 17.75 acres. Only 5.3 percent of the holdings 20 acres. One can suggest that the rural population with landholdings under 2.5 acres would find it hard to grow cash crops, unless they were assisted by the government. Most of the cash crops take a number of years to get ready. For a farmer with a small landholding, the pains of waiting might be detrimental to the existence of a household. At least 5 acres would be ideal to a smallholder farmer to engage in commercial agriculture. However, most smallholder farmers engaged in cash crop production, even though they held landholdings of less than 5 acres.

**Commodity Production**

Along with the land transfer programme, government policy continued to encourage production of export crops among smallholders. This section of the chapter looks into commodity production. The aim is to see if the establishment of smallholder farmers has been able to bring about the improved standard of living of the rural population. We shall examine closely the three main cash crops previously not allowed in the African farm areas. The relaxation of the restrictions previously placed on the Africans not to grow cash crops, effected
the progress of commodity production found in Central Province.

The agricultural output of the three main modern crops, coffee, tea and pyrethrum, increased considerably after 1955. In part, this expansion of the production of cash crops has been at the expense of traditional crop production, as land and labour have been directed away from the latter. This process has increased the market value of agricultural production in the African community. The African farmers were able to more than double their cash income. For example, of the total products marketed by African farmers, "... surplus food crops accounted for 20 percent and cash crops accounted for 65 percent. The remaining 15 percent went to livestock (milk, meat etc.). There was a noticeable increase in the total marketed production throughout the period 1955 to 1961. However, 5.2 percent drop was recorded in the amount marketed in 1962 (Clayton, 1964:46).

The drop in the total earnings could be related to the fact that the new farm owners were not well equipped to cope up with the modern forms of farming. The African farmers had not acquired modern farming skills to deal with the abrupt changeover that had just taken place due to the land transfer programme. From 1962 to
1971,

...the area of export crops under large scale
declined from 187,00 to 154,00 hectares. While
smallholder acreage under export crops increased
from 69,000 hectares in 1962 to 189,000 hectares
by 1971


Since the inception of the Swynnerton Plan 1955,
the African farmers have more than doubled their
production output. In 1962 of all the total products
marketed by Africans,

surplus food crops accounted for 20 percent,
livestock (milk, meat etc.) 15 percent, and cash
crops (tea, coffee pyrethrum, sisal etc.) 65
percent

(Clayton, 1964:46).

It may be assumed that with such an amount of crop
production the African farmers were in a position of
receiving more cash income than before 1955.

The production of tea, in particular, rapidly
became one of the principal smallholder cash crops under
the patronage of the Kenya Tea Development Authority
(KTDA). The KTDA is a statutory body with full
regulatory and financial powers. This body has built
and improved roads leading to tea producing areas, and
does provide extension services and credit to its
members. In addition, the body organized for the
collection and processing of the green leaf for
smallholders. As a result, smallholders' tea production grew from around 100 tons of processed tea in 1960 to 35,547 tons by 1981/82 season, (37 percent of total tea production) (Republic of Kenya, 1983: 121). The small holders in Central Province produced more coffee and tea than the smallholders in Nyanza Province, Rift Valley Province or Western Province combined.

Between 1958 and 1968 there was an expansion in the total acreage under use for cash crops. Table 3.8 shows that in the Central Province alone, coffee covered 63,750 acres, tea covered 113,250 acres and maize covered 257,250 acres. In terms of smallholder area under crop production, Central Province smallholders accounted for 76 percent under coffee, 78 percent under tea. In 1963, tea comprised 4,500 acres, and by 1973 the area under tea had expanded to 63,750 acres. The area under maize expanded from 113,250 acres in 1963 to 189,500 acres by 1973. As can be seen in table 3.8, the other provinces seem to have concentrated on subsistence crops, rather than cash crops. It is evident that as demand for the cash crops increased over the years, so did the area of land under these crops increase, particularly in the Central Province.

By 1979, "out of an estimated farmed area of 15.5 million acres, two thirds were being operated by
Table 3.8

Smallholder Crop Areas by Province 1978/79
('000 acres).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Nyanza</th>
<th>Rift Val.</th>
<th>Western</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coffee</td>
<td>63.75</td>
<td>9.50</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>6.50</td>
<td>83.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tea</td>
<td>112.50</td>
<td>9.25</td>
<td>20.75</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>143.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pyrethrum</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>9.20</td>
<td>14.00</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>33.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maize</td>
<td>257.30</td>
<td>555.30</td>
<td>463.00</td>
<td>11.75</td>
<td>P,587.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

smallholders with an average farm size of 5 acres or less" (Livingstone, 1981:63). The majority of the tea producers were smallholders expected to produce mainly for subsistence with very little surplus for marketing. The exception in this case being the large commercial farms which were highly developed and were expected to produce both cash crops and food crops for local and export market. The situation whereby the European settlers produced predominantly cash crops and the African farmers produced subsistence crops existed prior to land transfer and land consolidation programme. In recent history, small farms were able to produce about the same, if not more, for the market than large farms.

Table 3.8 shows a large amount of acreage under coffee and tea crops largely in Central Province. In terms of production, the province produced 64 percent of the total coffee produced by smallholders, and 56 percent of the total tea produced by smallholders. The smallholders in the Central Province appear to have practiced commercial agriculture and less of subsistence or traditional agriculture. In 1978/79 when the Integrated Rural Surveys were carried out, Central Province had 16 percent of the total land area under maize cultivation. Table 3.9 reveals that 75 percent of the total maize produced came from Western, Nyanza, and
Table 3.9

Smallholder Crop Production by Province 1978/79
('000 tonnes).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Nyanza</th>
<th>Rift Val.</th>
<th>Western</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coffee</td>
<td>182.7</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>284.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tea</td>
<td>189.0</td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>81.0</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>358.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pyrethrum</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maize</td>
<td>297.0</td>
<td>283.0</td>
<td>409.5</td>
<td>206.0</td>
<td>1,195.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rift Valley Provinces combined. The Central Province share in the maize production amounted to 25 percent. Rift Valley and Central Province led in the total production of tea. The two combined for 79 percent of the total tea produced by smallholders in the period 1978.

As indicated in table 3.9, 64 percent of the total coffee produced by smallholders came from Central Province. Also, 53 percent of the total tea produced by the smallholders came from Central Province. The smallholders in Central Province were found to have produced 30 percent of the total pyrethrum, and 25 percent of the total maize produced in the country by smallholders. On the other hand, smallholders in the Rift Valley Province produced 23 percent of the total tea, 34 percent of the total amount of maize, and 44 percent of the total amount of pyrethrum produced by smallholders within the same period. The Nyanza Province produced 24 percent of the total coffee, 15 percent of the total tea, 24 percent of the total maize and 26 percent of the total pyrethrum. Western Province produced a meagre 9 percent of the total tea, 12 percent of the total coffee, and 17 percent of the total maize.

Maize happens to be the staple food for most Kenyans. The crop happens to be grown by about one
million small scale farmers in Kenya, but as a subsistence crop rather than commercial crop. The National Christian Council of Kenya observed that:

95 percent of this crop is bartered or eaten, while the remaining 5 percent goes to the market. The production of maize is controlled by the many peasant farmers who market their crop, and by a few hundred large scale farmers

(NCCCK., 1968:1).

At present 1.7 million smallholders, produce approximately half of Kenya's gross marketed agricultural produce (Hunt, 1984:25). The increase was due to the favourable response in terms of improvements in technology and price incentives. This is supported by the credit loans extended to small farmers (see table 3.11). The agricultural intensification had favourable results with coffee and tea, which showed a marked increase. As a whole, the value of marketed output from small farms exceeded that of large scale farms: For example,

by 1966 there were 26,693 tea growers under the Kenya Tea Development Authority (KTDA). The average size holding was 0.6 acres and leaf yields from the authority's growers exceeded 17,500,000 pounds of green leaf


As for the value of marketed production for large scale farms, table 3.10 shows 82 percent in 1957, while that of the small scale farms was 18 percent. However,
Table 3.10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Large Farms more than 20 acres</th>
<th>Small Farms less than 20 acres</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% of share of small farms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>57.9</td>
<td>37.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>53.9</td>
<td>38.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>66.4</td>
<td>45.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>66.3</td>
<td>47.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>69.9</td>
<td>48.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>85.4</td>
<td>51.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>147.2</td>
<td>178.6</td>
<td>325.8</td>
<td>54.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>148.2</td>
<td>165.2</td>
<td>313.4</td>
<td>52.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>168.8</td>
<td>184.5</td>
<td>353.3</td>
<td>52.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>271.3</td>
<td>296.0</td>
<td>567.3</td>
<td>52.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>345.9</td>
<td>406.7</td>
<td>752.6</td>
<td>54.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistical Abstract, 1986, p.94

* 1 Kenya pound is equivalent to 20 shillings. Constant pounds adjusted for inflation.
the value of marketed production for small farms is seen to have risen from 18 percent in 1957 to 54 percent by 1985, while that of large scale farms recorded a big drop in the same period. The amount of coffee marketed by small farmers in 1967 more than doubled the amount marketed in 1963 (Reporter, 1968:39). Prior to 1963, small farmers had produced entirely for subsistence. However, by 1967 the small farmers were producing both for commercial and subsistence.

The large scale farmers contribution to coffee production in 1967 accounted for 40 percent, however, by 1984, the total coffee production had increased to 56 percent. The small scale farmers contributed 60 percent in 1967, but their share of the total amount produced decreased to 44 percent by 1984 (Republic of Kenya, 1985:114). The small holder farmers in the Central Province were found to be engaged in dual farming. They are more likely to have received more credit loans for farm development than members of any other province.

The credit loans support for most of the Kikuyu of Central Province came mostly from either the government approved agencies or farm purchase cooperative societies. The situation of regional disparity which prevailed during the colonial period, continued from the time of independence, and continue to the present
period. The lending institutions favour those who are already established.

The Role of the Cooperative Societies

The purpose of this section is to show what role the cooperative societies have played in the promotion of cash crop production in the smallholder sector.

In 1965 the government in resettling families, advocated the formation of cooperative societies. The aim of such cooperatives, was to enable the smallholder farmer to obtain access to credit loans facilities, enable the smallholder farmer to partake in the cash crop development, assist with the marketing of the cash crops produced on the smallholder farms, and to offer any other services for the general improvement of the smallholder sector. To achieve this end, the Ministries of Cooperatives and Social Services were authorized to demand every producer, even though not a member of a cooperative society, to market their produce through a cooperative. The marketing of agricultural produce through a cooperative was to enable the smallholder to avoid any dealings with a middleman. Hence,

by 1985 there were 185 such cooperatives registered for coffee growers alone, 53 cooperatives for pyrethrum growers, 217 cooperatives for farm purchase

According to the Government of Kenya, statistical data, in the 1985 income turn over of the cooperatives, coffee recorded 58 percent, cotton and pyrethrum held 2 percent each, dairy products accounted for 4 percent, sugarcane accounted for 1 percent, other agricultural produce accounted for 12 percent. 21 percent of cooperative income went to non-agricultural societies (Republic of Kenya, 1986:115). In 1981 it was estimated that:

smallholder cooperatives, which acted as agents for parastatal boards in primary marketing, handled 84 percent of marketed cotton, 64 percent of coffee, 60 percent of pyrethrum, 54 percent of dairy and 6 percent of marketed sugar cane


The basis of rural credit and of successful agricultural development, was the reason why the government decided to establish a class of smallholders on freehold land, with a secure mortgageable title. This way, the smallholder would obtain credit loans for agricultural improvements to the land. The credit policies in Kenya prior to 1978 were found to have favoured the large scale farmers and those who could prove that they could service the loan through non-farm income. The policy which favoured the able farmers and those with outside farm income, facilitated the entrance of non-farm investors into agricultural production.
This reinforced the government's policy of giving the wealthier farmers better terms than the poor farmers. Geoff Lamb mentions that, "development resources are further concentrated on the wealthier farmers" (Lamb, 1974:142). This was supported by the International Labour Office assertion that:

In 1967, 87.20 million shillings extended to rural credit programmes for over four years benefited 3 percent of Kenya's smallholders who were already better off than the 97 percent not accorded support (ILO, 1972:156).

Further support came from the Food and Agricultural Organization. FAO argued that the resources made available to rural peasants in Kenya is that:

less than 10 percent of the institutional credit is available for rural areas, and, what is even more important, only a small fraction of it is available to small farmers, while the bulk goes to large, commercial farmers, sometimes for non-agricultural use (FAO, 1975:3).

Analysis of the total amount of credit extended to farmers for agricultural improvement, (table 3.11) reveals that the amount increased from 214 million shillings in 1978 to 226 million shillings by 1983, reflecting 51.9 percent of the total amount given out in loans. Small farmers and cooperative societies, however, continued to receive most of their credits in
the form of short-term and medium-term loans*, a situation which still prevails today. In 1978 the small farmers received 14.1 percent of the total value of the loans given, and by 1983 the small farmers received 21.9 percent. During the same period, the amount of credit extended to cooperative societies dropped from 56 percent in 1978 to 51.9 percent in 1983.

The short-term loans accounted for 42 percent of the credit extended to small-scale farmers. As a whole, 72 percent of the new credit was extended to cooperatives. Medium-term loans accounted for 57 percent of the credit for small-scale farmers, and 20 percent to cooperatives. Long-term loans* were extended to large-scale farmers. The large farmers received 24 percent of the credit loans given out in 1978, with this amount of credit dropping to 12.7 percent by 1983. The drop affected the production output of the large farmers, as their contribution dropped from 82 percent in 1957 to 40 percent by 1983 when they received a meagre sum of Ksh. ½5,440,000. This was far short of the amount they had received in 1978 (table 3.11). The reverse was true for smallholder farmers, as they were found to have increased their total output from 18

* Short term loans extend from 1 to 3 years. Medium term loans extend from 3 to 10 years. Long-term loans extend 10 years and over.
### Table 3.11

**Agricultural Credit issued by Type of Farmer**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Small Scale Farmer</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short term loans</td>
<td>2,389</td>
<td>7,374</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>1,998</td>
<td>2,471</td>
<td>1,998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium term loans</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>938</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>3,747</td>
<td>2,717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long term loans</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>85</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other loans</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>809</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total loans given</strong></td>
<td>2,675</td>
<td>8,393</td>
<td>1,814</td>
<td>2,276</td>
<td>6,278</td>
<td>4,774</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cooperative Societies</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short term loans</td>
<td>6,926</td>
<td>5,855</td>
<td>9,507</td>
<td>4,657</td>
<td>3,238</td>
<td>8,090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium term loans</td>
<td>3,767</td>
<td>3,353</td>
<td>1,453</td>
<td>967</td>
<td>899</td>
<td>2,257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long term loans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>469</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other loans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>302</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total loans given</strong></td>
<td>10,693</td>
<td>9,510</td>
<td>11,452</td>
<td>5,892</td>
<td>4,497</td>
<td>11,287</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Large Scale Farmers</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short term loans</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium term loans</td>
<td></td>
<td>95</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long term loans</td>
<td>3,020</td>
<td>1,430</td>
<td>2,119</td>
<td>1,359</td>
<td>6,966</td>
<td>2,772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other loans</td>
<td>1,534</td>
<td>1,222</td>
<td>1,071</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>591</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total loans given</strong></td>
<td>4,567</td>
<td>2,749</td>
<td>3,190</td>
<td>1,392</td>
<td>7,557</td>
<td>2,772</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grand Loans given = 19,019 20,652 16,456 9,560 18,332 18,833


*Short term loans extend from 1 to 3 years, medium term loans extend from 3 to 10 years, long term loans extend from 10 years and more, and other loans include agricultural inputs e.g., fertilizers, pesticides and machinery.*
percent in 1957 to 54 percent by 1983.

In terms of marketing, 62 percent of all the crops grown in the Central Province are sold through cooperatives. In contrast, 58.91 percent of all the crops grown in the Western Province are consumed by the household (Republic of Kenya, 1981:123). The Central Province seems to grow crops for commercial purposes, whereas the Western Province grows more for subsistence.

The difference was due to the large plantation farms, which are available in the Central Province and are absent in the Nyanza and Western Provinces. The opportunities available for African farmers in the Central Province to work their way into the middle scale farmers, has eluded farmers in the Western and Nyanza Provinces. For example, the African capitalist class in the Central Province, was initially formed by the accumulation of land capital. This class expanded by taking over land and engaged in production previously monopolized by Europeans. After independence the middle class of farmers which had emerged in Central Province was aided by the government in order to expand the range of their enterprise.

The individualization of land tenure, via the registration of individual titles, made it possible
for rich farmers of Central Province to obtain credit for agricultural development. As Ngugi Wa Thiongo points out, the peasants who fought the British, now see all that they fought for being put on one side (Ngugi, 1967). The African farmers in both the Central and Rift Valley Provinces were able to receive huge sums of loans from either the Industrial Commercial Development Corporation or other government approved agencies, while others received their funds from farm purchase cooperatives founded by the local communities. Furthermore, the smallholder farmers in the Central Province gained immensely from agricultural extension services, which were expanded to include the consolidated areas. This expansion was partly due to the understanding that guarantee loans obtained were properly put to use.

As a result of the credit loans and agricultural extensions services, the farmers in Central Province seem to have adjusted very well to modern forms of agriculture as evidenced in table 3.9 which shows the magnitude of cash crop production in 1978/79 season. This is supported by table 3.10 showing the increased farm revenue from both large and small farms between 1957 and 1985. In this table, the smallholders received 54 percent of the total revenue in 1985.
compared with 18 percent in 1957. The smallholders in the Central Province produced a larger volume of marketed crops that either Nyanza Province, Western Province or Rift Valley Province.

The reason for the outstanding performance by the small farmers particularly in Central Province, might be attributed to the encouragement they have been able to receive from both the government and their local leaders, and the infrastructure laid out by the colonial government. The smallholder farmers have been encouraged, and have accepted the challenge, to grow cash crops which were until 1955 predominantly grown by Europeans. Consequently, these crops are now grown by almost every farmer. Most small farmers have abandoned the growing of subsistence crops to more lucrative cash crops. While the production of cash crops had spread to almost every province of Kenya, the state of rural prosperity has not been very much in evidenced, except for a few districts in the Central Province. This in itself has created regional disparities both within and between the provinces.

However, although the government has urged the small farmers to grow cash crops, it has failed to take an active role in assisting the smallholder farmers. Most of the credit loans were extended to cooperative
societies. Table 3.11 indicated that small farmers received a total of 4774 (Kenya pounds shillings) in 1983, yet the cooperative societies were able to receive 11,287 (Kenya pounds shillings) in the same period.

In terms of land distribution, the data revealed discrepancy in the landholdings. The government has been unable to provide equal access to land, and for that matter, table 3.7 showed that a large majority of the population in Rift Valley, Nyanza, and Western province was either landless or held under 2.25 acres of land each. In contrast, 5.31 percent of the population in our sample held farms of over 20 acres each. Land ownership and cash crop production determined income distribution, and this determined social or regional inequalities. The next chapter examines the issue of regional disparities in terms of land distribution, employment opportunities in agriculture, and income distribution.
CHAPTER 4.
REGионаL INEQUAlITY.

This chapter is set to investigate regional differentiation. In analyzing the regional disparities in land holdings, Western Province had 71 percent of the holdings under 7.5 acres, Nyanza Province was found to have 79 percent of the holdings under 7.5 acres, Rift Valley had 67.5 percent of the holdings under 7.5 acres, and Central Province was found to have the same percentage as Western Province. About 27 percent of the holdings were over 7.5 acres, 73 percent were below 7.5 acres (table 3.7).

In spite of land tenure reform and registration of individual titles, farmers in marginal and low potential lands have had hardly any visible benefits. The Kenyan government generally supports individuals and communities able to demonstrate that they can achieve high productivity. The policy guidelines in the Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965, African Socialism to Kenya, emphasized that,

> to make the economy as a whole grow as fast as possible, development money should be invested where it will yield the largest increase in new output


This continues to be the policy towards agricultural development today. The approach clearly favoured the
development of areas with abundant natural resources, good land and rainfall, transport and power facilities, and people receptive to and active in development.

Table 4.1 reveals that 99.6 percent of all the freehold land in Western Province was held by the smallholder farmers. 62 percent of the freehold land in the Central Province was held by the smallholder farmers, while 38 percent was held by the large scale farmers. In the Rift Valley, 75 percent of the freehold land was held by the smallholder farmers. Nevertheless, inequalities have persisted, despite the government's effort to balance the distribution of resources. The Central Province and the Rift Valley Province continued to out-perform the other provinces because of the large cash crop plantations and estates found in the two provinces.

An increase in commercialization, especially in food, has increased social differentiation and landlessness. Furthermore, the high incidence of landlessness is compounded by high population densities (table 4.2). In this table, Western Province is seen to be densely populated with 223 persons per square kilometre. This is far more than the national density of 142 persons per square kilometre.

The main problem with Kenya's land policy has been
### Table 4.1

**Distribution of Freehold Land by Province - 1979 in Square Kilometres.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Smallholder schemes</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>99.6 %</td>
<td>3 %</td>
<td>819 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyanza</td>
<td>100.0 %</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>397 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>61.8 %</td>
<td>38.2 %</td>
<td>3,180 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rift Valley</td>
<td>74.7 %</td>
<td>25.3 %</td>
<td>1,679 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,016</strong> %</td>
<td><strong>1,639</strong> %</td>
<td><strong>6,075</strong> %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*1 Kenya pound is equivalent to 20 shillings. Constant pounds adjusted for inflation.*

### Table 4.2

**Population Distribution by Tribe and Land Area 1979 Census.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tribe</th>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Land Area Sq. Km</th>
<th>Pop. Density</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kikuyu</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>2,345,833</td>
<td>13.173</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luo</td>
<td>Nyanza</td>
<td>1,774,444</td>
<td>10.330</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luhyia</td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>1,832,663</td>
<td>8.196</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalenjin</td>
<td>Rift Valley</td>
<td>1,696,728</td>
<td>22,017</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>7,649,668</td>
<td>53,716</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*1 square kilometre = 250 acres.*

**Persons per square kilometre.**
the recognition accorded to customary land tenure systems, particularly the inheritance system. The change of laws of inheritance would transfer all the small landholdings into the control of a single member of the family as a family farm. The farms would be converted into more viable economic units. Land consolidation may have helped speed up economic gains in the Central Province, but was of very dubious value in other parts of the country, as it created serious adverse consequences such as unemployment and landlessness. The accumulation of land has magnified the state of landlessness.

Landlessness

This section examines the extent of landlessness in rural Kenya. Land to most Kenyans, is regarded as a sign of wealth and gives the holder a sense of belonging and security.

During the colonial period, the class of landless squatters emerged due to insufficient land in the rural areas. Some people became landless because they desired to engage in the cash economy and in so doing, abandoned their farms. The farms were later lost in the process of land consolidation, as a result, they became permanent farm labourers on the European plantations. As independence approached, the Africans expected to
gain access to the land that became available when the
European settlers left Kenya.

In the post colonial era, the development or the
emergence of a class of landless people has been
attributed to land concentration in the hands of a few
well-off people. The situation is so wide spread that
it has even increased the degree of landlessness. Prior
to 1963, there were about 55,000 families of an
estimated 275,000 people who were landless (Forrester,
1962:102). After 1963, it had been expected that the
landless problem would be taken care of through land
redistribution of former European plantations. However,
the government, not wishing to destroy the large scale
plantation farms, made a token gesture to appease some
landless people by resettling them on the One Million
Acre Scheme. By 1972, the International Labour Office
reported that:

roughly 30,000 peasant households or 17 percent
of all households, had no land, while the average
amount of arable land available to each member of
the rural rural population was only 0.8 hectares

(ILO., 1972:174).

Ironically, some of those who claimed to be landless,
turned out to be wealthy persons with property scattered
all over the country.

The transition of land ownership from communal to
private ownership has raised the risk of excessive
indebtedness and eventual concentration of land ownership in the hands of a few, especially those who have the money to lend. Table 3.2 revealed that by 1978, 486,300 holdings, or 23.4 percent of the households were landless. However, in view of Kenya's high rate of population growth (3.9 to 4.1 percent per annum), and the fact that only 11 percent of Kenya's land area is composed of arable land, these figures are no doubt grossly underestimated. Adhering to customary land inheritance laws increases the subdivision of land among the sons in a family. This has began to cause much concern among most parents. There is fear that over generations, there will be no more land to further subdivide for a son who is about to marry.

It can be assumed that landlessness has increased, since land concentration continues to take place throughout the country, with the wealthy buying out the poor. Consequently, this has created a destitute landless class, leading to a rapid and deep class differentiation of the peasantry through the emergence of rich farmers. Furthermore, this threatens the conversion of the bulk of the peasantry into landless farmhands. This is supported by Central Bureau of Statistics data for 1976, which shows that there were as many as 400,000 landless people who depended on paid
Ksh. 379 per month for those who earned less than Ksh. 2,000, and for those who earned Ksh. 6,000 or more the average remittance was Ksh. 2,073 per month (table 4.3).

When households with income less than Ksh. 999 are compared with the households who received Ksh. 6,000 or more, it appears that the relative contributions of land and inputs to differences in farm incomes is not uniform across regions (table 4.3). For example, in the Central Province, which is exposed to urban employment opportunities in Nairobi, there are absolute differences between rich and poor households in the use of purchased inputs, but only small differences on their use of land. In this regard, innovation and smallholder poverty do not appear to be closely related to land size class. In the Central Province, the middle income group of smallholders have matched the real per capita income of the richest 30 percent. By contrast, Nyanza and Western Provinces, the land differences between rich and poor are substantial.

Accessibility to urban incomes, was by means of the urban migration and subsequent wage employment of male household members. Using data from an urban survey, Johnson and Whitelaw found that 21 percent of the urban wage bill was remitted to the rural areas (Johnson and Whitelaw; 1974). The remittance from urban wage income
work on farms or in towns or were simply unemployed (Republic of Kenya, 1986:108).

Most of the rural Kenya's population are subsistence level farmers, however, a few prosperous African families operating small sized units, produce sufficient quantities of coffee, tea, beef, pyrethrum, sugar cane and milk. This enables them to earn a middle level income and allows some to employ agricultural labourers.

Income Distribution

The majority of the smallholders earned their income from non-farm activities. Most of the rural households received some financial support from the urban relatives. The extent of such support and how it affected the structural differentiation, is the subject of this section. Marion Forrester points out that:

in 1961 the urban-rural support from those earning between Ksh. 1 and Ksh. 1,799 was about Ksh.180 per month. For those who earned over Ksh. 7,200, they remitted about Ksh. 115 per month

(Forrester, 1962:62).

Since the time the data was obtained and the time of the research, the amount of support from the urban to the rural area had more than tripled. This is supported by the Integrated Rural Survey data carried out in 1974. In this survey, the remittance stood at an average of
Table 4.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Range</th>
<th>0 -</th>
<th>1,000 -</th>
<th>4,000 -</th>
<th>6,000</th>
<th>Mean for all groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ksh. p.a. *</td>
<td>999</td>
<td>1,999</td>
<td>5,999</td>
<td>7,999</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CENTRAL PROVINCE**

| Mean income | 489 | 1,514 | 4,823 | 6,778 | 5,082 |
| Farm income  | 79  | 269   | 2,602 | 4,144 | 2,961 |
| Land in acres| 5.3 | 5.9   | 5.3   | 7.2   | 6.7   |

| Purchased farm inputs Ksh. p.a. | 395 | 204 | 370 | 747 | 427 |
| Education % of households with | 16  | 16  | 31  | 35  |      |
| Non-farm income               | 410 | 1,245 | 2,221 | 2,634 | 2,121 |
| Regular wage income and remittances | 209 | 548 | 1,250 | 1,420 |      |

**NYANZA PROVINCE**

| Mean income | 673 | 1,511 | 4,683 | 7,082 | 4,327 |
| Farm income  | 181 | 904   | 3,109 | 4,789 | 3,295 |
| Land in acres| 4.0 | 4.1   | 8.6   | 12.7  | 6.7   |

| Purchased farm inputs Ksh. p.a. | 55  | 27   | 292  | 40   | 140  |
| Education % of households with | 5   | 2    | 20   | 35   |      |
| Non-farm income               | 492 | 607   | 1,574 | 2,293 | 1,122 |
| Regular wage income and remittances | 150 | 150 | 385  | 1,144 |      |

**WESTERN PROVINCE**

| Mean income | 629 | 1,487 | 5,094 | 6,893 | 2,784 |
| Farm income  | 222 | 623   | 3,096 | 1,464 | 1,476 |
| Land in acres| 4.3 | 8.5   | 11.3  | 9.0   | 8.2   |

| Purchased farm inputs Ksh. p.a. | 22  | 43    | 214   | 157   | 112  |
| Education % of households with | 37  | 33    | 55    | 47    |      |
| Non-farm income               | 407 | 864   | 1,998 | 5,429 | 1,308 |
| Regular wage income and remittances | 168 | 545 | 1,041 | 3,655 |      |

* Ksh. = Kenya shillings
   p.a. = per annum

Source: Integrated Rural Surveys (IRS), 1974/75.
was an important stimulus to smallholder innovation, while on the other hand, it aided in generating inequalities at its highest level. Gavin Kitching asserted that:

remittance of this nature are predominantly sent by the richer urban households to richer rural households, thereby constituting the most powerful mechanism for social stratification

(Kitching, 1980:339).

The percentage income distribution in rural households (table 4.4), indicates that 54 percent of the population in the Central Province, 45 percent of the population in the Nyanza Province, and 50 percent of the population in the Rift Valley Province had incomes over Ksh. 3,000. The Western Province had 29 percent of its population with incomes over Ksh. 3,000. While the Central Province had a high percentage of its population with incomes over Ksh. 3,000, 10 percent of the population showed no income in 1974. In addition, 16 percent of the population in Rift Valley Province, 5 percent of the population in Western Province, and 4 percent of the population in Nyanza Province, indicated no income in 1974.

The distribution of income among the households reveals that 3.5 percent of the households in the Western Province had incomes of Ksh. 8,000 or more, 71 percent of the households had incomes of under
Table 4.4

Percentage Distribution of Rural Household by Income Group and Province 1974/75.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ksh.</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Nyanza</th>
<th>Rift Va.</th>
<th>Western</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 0</td>
<td>10.35</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>15.60</td>
<td>5.23</td>
<td>8.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - 999</td>
<td>7.84</td>
<td>12.14</td>
<td>9.67</td>
<td>21.42</td>
<td>12.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 - 2999</td>
<td>14.07</td>
<td>12.84</td>
<td>15.30</td>
<td>15.20</td>
<td>14.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3000 - 3999</td>
<td>10.14</td>
<td>10.70</td>
<td>10.18</td>
<td>10.02</td>
<td>10.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4000 - 5999</td>
<td>15.10</td>
<td>14.23</td>
<td>14.79</td>
<td>9.33</td>
<td>13.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6000 - 7999</td>
<td>11.26</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>8.37</td>
<td>6.46</td>
<td>7.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8000 +</td>
<td>17.40</td>
<td>16.63</td>
<td>16.97</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>13.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total      | 100.00  | 100.00 | 100.00   | 100.00  | 100.00|

Ksh. 3,000. By contrast, 46 percent of the household in the Central Province earned incomes under Ksh. 3,000. The Nyanza and Rift Valley Provinces showed 55 percent and 50 percent respectively, with a median annual average household income ranging from Ksh. 2,000 to Ksh. 3,000.

The unequal income distribution in the agricultural sector is reflected in the figures in table 4.4. In 1976, 55 percent of the households earned an annual income of less than Ksh. 3,000. In addition, 24 percent received incomes between Ksh. 4,000 and Ksh. 5,999, while 21 percent of the households had incomes of more than Ksh. 6,000. This is supported by the Integrated Rural Survey studies findings that:

240,000 or more of all peasant families in Kenya had an income of less than Ksh. 3,000 per year. Among smallholders alone, over a half a million households had incomes in excess of Ksh. 2,400, but less than Ksh. 3,000


The average yearly family income for sampled peasants was Ksh. 2,400 per year. This included income imputed from crops grown for consumption. The trends in poverty depend upon the levels at which the poverty line is drawn. Hence, the poverty line is fixed at Ksh. 2,000 per year. Applying this value, it is clear that while some 50 percent of the smallholder
population in the Central Province lived in poverty or near the poverty line in 1963, by 1975 the level of poverty had dropped to 32 percent. As for other provinces, the Rift Valley was found to have 34.4 percent of the smallholder population under poverty or near the poverty line, Nyanza Province revealed 42 percent of the households under poverty, Western Province showed a staggering 56 percent of the households under poverty or near the poverty line.

According to the percentage distribution of holdings by income groups, Table 4.5 indicates that those with less than 1.25 acres made up 14 percent, and are shown to have had no income at all, and 25 percent of those with less than 1.25 acres had received an income of Ksh. 1,000. The group holding 0 to 4.75 acres with zero income accounted for 59 percent of the total population covered. According to Table 4.5 an estimated 41 percent of the households could be assumed to have partaken in the agrarian reform, since they held not less than 5 acres of land. This group was more likely to have off-farm incomes, which enabled them buy land, employ labour and invest in the cash crops.

Thus, smallholder poverty is not strongly region specific, because in no region does the data show less than 30 percent or more than 60 percent of the
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acres</td>
<td>0 - 1.25</td>
<td>19.30 14.00 13.52 9.42 13.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.25 - 2.25</td>
<td>17.68 20.18 17.21 10.66 17.92</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 - 4.75</td>
<td>25.88 27.62 26.24 24.10 26.99</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.0 - 7.25</td>
<td>16.46 14.10 18.32 12.00 15.11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5 - 9.75</td>
<td>9.20 9.20 7.15 12.57 8.89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.0 -12.25</td>
<td>2.68 7.46 6.05 13.48 7.22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.5- 19.75</td>
<td>6.70 3.98 7.43 11.25 6.50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 acres</td>
<td>2.10 3.46 2.05 6.50 3.47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Holdings 274,039 527,785 374,503 297,095 1,483,422

Source: Rural Survey, 1974/75, p.120.
smallholders to be poor. Nevertheless, there are differences in reasons for smallholder poverty in the different regions. For example, Central, Nyanza and Western, together accounted for around 60 percent of smallholder poverty in 1974 (table 4.3). The regions obviously represent different stages of rural development. Central Province has enjoyed a high degree of agricultural innovation in switching from subsistence crops to cash crops. By contrast, Western Province has had little agricultural innovation, whilst Nyanza is at an intermediate stage. This is evident by the type of cash crops produced and the area covered by these crops (tables 3.8 and 3.9).

**Employment Opportunities**

The point of setting up smallholders was to provide land which would be cultivated by family members. In contrast to this, large scale farms were expected to create employment outlets in the rural areas. The basic idea was to stop unemployed rural peasants from going to the city or towns in search of a cash economy.

Table 4.6 indicates that the agricultural sector of the four provinces employed more than one quarter of the total labour force in the nation. Employment in this context means both self-employed and unpaid family labour. The Rift Valley Province alone was able to
Table 4.6

Employment in Agriculture by province, 1984.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Total employed</th>
<th>% total labour force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>56,728</td>
<td>7.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyanza</td>
<td>9,782</td>
<td>1.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rift Valley</td>
<td>134,579</td>
<td>17.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>4,056</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>205,145</strong></td>
<td><strong>27.02</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Labour Force = 759,169

employ 18 percent, Central Province employed 7.5 percent, and the Nyanza and the Western Provinces employed a total of 1.82 percent. In 1981 the Rift Valley Province was found to have increased in employment opportunities. For example,

The Rift Valley Province led with an increase of 15,200 employees. The Central Province and the Nyanza Province had 7,400 and 6,800 respectively (Republic of Kenya, 1986:36).

Generally, it is accepted that the Rift Valley and the Central Provinces generate more employment opportunities than the other provinces of Kenya.

Rural employment was maintained in the Central Province area, by the cultivation of cash crops on both large and small scale farms. Nevertheless, the districts furthest from Nairobi, Murang'a and Nyeri, like Kakamega District in Western Province, followed the pattern of male migrations away from the farms. The farms that they left were subsequently tended to by wives and family members. Table 4.7 reveals that in 1981 there were 1,180,000 households employed in non-farm activities, showing a growth rate increase of 3.6 percent from 1976. The Wanjigi Report mentions that in 1982 there were 1,222,000 individuals working in rural non-farm employment (Wanjigi, 1983:8).

In 1982 there were 627,000 self-employed or unpaid
Table 4.7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>1976</th>
<th>1981</th>
<th>% Growth rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small scale farm</td>
<td>2,665,000</td>
<td>3,040,000</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural non-farm</td>
<td>990,000</td>
<td>1,180,000</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban informal</td>
<td>125,000</td>
<td>157,000</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern sector</td>
<td>915,000</td>
<td>1,086,000</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastoralists</td>
<td>390,000</td>
<td>445,000</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,085,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,908,000</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

family workers, these categories of "employment" may include the gathering of firewood, fetching water, and cattle herding.

Out of 167,664 persons employed on plantations and ranches, over 46,587 earned their incomes from coffee, 59,868 from tea, and 24,361 earned their incomes from mixed farming.


In 1984 there was almost a 50 percent drop, from 627,000 to 324,000. The drop in the employment figures was partly caused by the continued partitioning of large farms into small holdings, leading to a change in the coverage of farms. Furthermore, Sessional Paper No. 1 of 1986, estimated at least 1,310,000 people were unemployed in rural areas.

Furthermore, table 4.7 indicates that small farms accounted for an estimated 52 percent of the total labour force in 1976. By 1981, the figures are found to have dropped to 51.5 percent. The drop in the percentages of small farm employees could be reflected in the increase in the percentages of rural non-farm employment. In 1976 the rural, non-farming accounted for 19.4 percent of the total labour force, but by 1981, the figures had risen to 20 percent. Further increases were observed in the modern sector. The modern sector (large scale farms) in 1976 accounted for 18 percent of the total employed. By 1981 the figures
had risen to 19.8 percent.

The emphasis on rural development through small scale agriculture, should encourage employment in this sector and make it grow. Diana Hunt asserts that:

in 1976, there were 3,273 large farms occupying 6.25 million acres averaging 1,943.75 acres, and 1.7 million smallholdings of which one third were under 1.25 acres and a half under 2.5 acres

(Hunt, 1984:25).

For most small farmers, an income outside their farming was clearly necessary.

The major benefits of improved agriculture and cash crop production have been concentrated in the Central Province. The benefits of improved agriculture and cash crop production were planned before land consolidation and registration of individual titles to the land. The most outstanding aspect of this change came in the social organization. As a security measure to protect individual Kikuyu households from Mau Mau, the Kikuyus were isolated and farming families were drawn into compact villages. There is no doubt that among all the provinces, the Central Province has benefited tremendously from land consolidation and cash crop production.
CHAPTER 5.
CONCLUSION.

Land to the peasant contains the ashes of his ancestors, and therefore the roots of the present. For the peasant, tilling the land is not just a way of obtaining a living, but in itself a vocation inherited from the past through generations. In Kenya, the rich, as well as the poor, regard land as the safest form of investment. To this end, when a peasant engages in any entrepreneurial activity, other than work on his land, he is doing so either because of necessity, or for the purpose of obtaining means for investment in land.

The advent of commercial farming by European settlers, led to consolidation of landholdings into large estates or plantations particularly in Kiambu district. The land that might otherwise have been available for domestic food production, was converted to the cultivation of export cash crops. As demand for these products increased over the years, so did the area of land under these crops increase to produce them. Increasingly, smaller areas are being utilized for the growing of food for local consumption, while more land is used for commercial crops.

The analysis of the government policies towards the smallholder development and the promotion of cash crop production succeeded only in Central province. However,
not every one in Central Province has been able to share in this success. The improvement in the standard of living enjoyed by some people in the country has been at the expense of others, particularly, the poor who are exploited. Consequently, only a few people in Kenya seem to have benefited from the so called agrarian reform.

An estimated 43 percent of the population has benefited from the policy of land consolidation and registration and smallholder cash crop development. The group was found to own land of not less than 5 acres each. The group was more likely to have off-farm incomes, enabling them to buy land, employ labour and invest in cash crops. However, the vast majority of the smallholder farmers have altogether less land than the few large scale farmers. As a result, there is a strong disparity in the size of farm holdings, which has in turn created a clear distinction between the large land owners and the landless.

The government failed to provide equal access to land, and the promotion of cash crop production has not been evenly spread out. The promotion of cash crop production is evident in Central Province, but this has more to do with people's approach towards new forms of farming. Whereas people of other provinces
practiced traditional farming, the Kikuyu had taken on modern farming. Previously, the Africans were only encouraged to grow subsistence crops, which were not developed to the capacity of cash crops. The removal of all previous limitations on the commercial crops Africans were permitted to grow, provided the incentive to invest in European land, which improved the growth of cash crop production by smallholders. This has been taken by many to constitute an agrarian revolution, but individualized farm ownership has increased landlessness.

The non-optimization behaviour, on the part of a large percentage of farms, could be attributed to the pursuit of individual self-sufficiency. The desire of the government to utilize land as an instrument of squatter absorption, limited the extent to which land could be moulded into an efficient economic engine for improving the economic position of the entire country.

This change brought with it a tremendous improvement in cash crop production in the Central Province. It has transformed some villages in the Central Province from poverty to prosperity. However, such prosperity could be short lived if the rich get richer, while the poor are impoverished, and as long as the economy is allowed to be in the hands of a few
individuals with large acreages of farmland. Furthermore, the prosperity could collapse if the credit loans facilities available are dominated by and favourable to the affluent section of the society.

The factors that have contributed to the present rural economic structure are mainly due to the colonial government's idea of developing Kenya's agriculture in order to produce raw materials for British industries. The large settler population in the Central Province introduced commercial agriculture and monopolized the growing of cash crops on large plantations or estates. Some areas in Kenya were prohibited from growing cash crops, due to the need to protect the European commercial agriculture.

The data presented reveal that poverty is more widespread in the Western Province than in any other province. Poverty is not only based upon shortage of land that could be available to the increasing population, but also due to the lack of agricultural development, unequal distribution of available land, and limited employment opportunities in the modern sector. The largest category of rural poor is the smallholder household. Their farms are either too small, or on land of such poor quality that their ability to achieve the basic minimum level of income is minimized. Under the
previously described land ownership conditions, incomes of the Kenyan rural population can be said to have been precarious. This is particularly the case with those small farmers who were forced to pay poll taxes.

The unequal income distribution in the agricultural sector is reflected in the figures in table 4.4. It is clear that the rural poverty in Kenya is coupled with uneven distribution of incomes and wealth, and that many members of the rural population live below poverty line, or near the poverty line. An estimated 80 to 90 percent of the population reside and work in the rural areas where poverty is concentrated. The problem has been that most of the plans have favoured the rich, urban areas, while bypassing the poor rural peasants. It is high time plans were focussed on the poor, since even in the urban areas deprivation is increasing.

In conclusion, it can be seen that the agricultural method and management adopted by the Kenyan agricultural sector, has not favoured the development of self-sufficient estates. Instead, it has encouraged the emergence of commercial enterprises.

Suggestions

In order for the government to solve the problem of the landless, measures such as reclamation of the land set aside as forest reserves and its
redistribution should be seriously considered. At least 26,707 square kilometres of land, is reserved by wildlife in the national parks. It is clear that the tourist industry gains from the promotion of national parks and their wildlife, however, some of this land should be distributed amongst the landless. Kenya finds itself in a situation where a decision has to be made about whether this land should be for the promotion of tourism or for the use of subsistence. In addition, the government, through means of incentives, could persuade people to move to areas less densely populated. This will assist the government in solving the problem of the landless.

Increasing agricultural efficiency in order to provide a basis for rural and cottage industries, and regular agricultural employment, should be encouraged. Moreover, cottage industries and improved agricultural efficiency can only succeed if credit facilities are made available to all farmers, rather than only to producer cooperatives formed by the workers. Other measures to promote employment opportunities, such as drainage of swampland, irrigation of drier areas, and encouragement of settlement on uncultivated land, must be initiated. In this way, the government may be able to solve, to some degree, the problems of unemployment,
landlessness and poverty.

Concerns arising from land redistribution or fragmentation, should be dealt with by the government. For example:

1) the enforcement of legislation that requires the holding of the minimum viable acreage at 3.0, should be put forth;

2) the government should define the number of acres a household or an individual ought to hold and own;

3) the practice of continuous subdivision, which is sanctioned by the government officials must be stopped, thus, one member of the family could inherit the family farm, whilst others would be encouraged to look for a paid job outside of the farm.

The problem, however, is that not many people are adequately educated to be marketable enough. However, with the development of better education and technical training programmes, some economic adjustments aimed at creating a trained urban labour force can be instituted.

Finally, for land reform to serve its proper purpose in Kenya, it must be implemented throughout Kenya's large and small farm sectors, and not confined to a token redistribution of some large farms formerly owned by European settlers.

Limitations

In this study, some of the limitations were:

1) We did not check into the Agricultural
price policy to evaluate the effect this had on the agricultural production. We could only assume that the high crop production in Central Province had to do with the price incentives and the area covered by the cash crops. Small farmers could have produced more than large scale farmers for a number of reasons, such as, better utilization of land (efficiency).

2) The position of real income received from agricultural production, as well as prices received by producers, were never investigated. These are crucial issues to determining the standard of living of any population. The failure to get into this area was due to the lack of raw data.
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World Bank - Kenya Agricultural Sector Survey, Report No. 254 AKE.

Appendix A

Crown land
African land
European land
Other alienated land
National forest

0 40 80 120 160 200 240
KM
MAP I Settlement Schemes.

Adapted from Dr. R. S. Odingo, Department of Geography, University of Nairobi.
Appendix C

KENYA: Main Agricultural Zones

Key

ct  tropical highlands
     coffee & tea zones

tz  tropical zone highlands

High potential land

Commercial ranching

Medium to low potential farm land

Almost all low potential land used for nomadic pastoralism

Appendix D

MAP II. Land Ownership in Kenya

Adapted from Dr. R. S. Odingo, Department of Geography, University of Nairobi.
VITA AUCTORIS

Name: John Teddy Ambenge
Date of Birth: October 20, 1951
Place of Birth: Kericho, Rift Valley, Kenya.
Nationality: Kenyan.
Marital status: Married

Education:

1979 - 1982 B.A. (Hons.) Sociology, Concordia University Montreal, Canada.
1987 - 1988 M.A. Sociology, University of Windsor, Windsor, Canada.

Employment:

1987 - 1988 Teaching Assistant, University of Windsor, Ontario, Canada.
1988 - Assistant Lecturer, Egerton University, Njoro, Nakuru, Kenya.

Activities:

1979 - 1980 President African Students' Association Concordia University.
1987 - 1988 President African Students' Association University of Windsor.
1987 - 1988 Graduate Student Representative.

Future plans: John intends to pursue a Ph.D. degree in Rural Sociology as soon as possible.