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SAVANNA TOWN

*Rural Ties and Urban Opportunities
in Northern Kenya*

Anders Hjort

Savanna Town

Rural Ties and Urban Opportunities in Northern Kenya

Akademisk avhandling som för
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Abstract

This study deals with a small multi-ethnic town in northern Kenya which has emerged during colonial times as a trade and administrative centre. Access to various subsistence opportunities in town is restricted and related to contacts with surrounding rural areas, the "home areas" of the migrants. These areas are inhabited by pastoralists to the north and farmers to the south. The study departs from the historical development of the town, the fundamental economic processes that maintain its existence and the settlement pattern and structure of opportunities within town. The interconnections between town and countryside are outlined in the second part. This shows how both are integrated in the lives of many townsmen and immigrants. Rural households may send members to town more or less temporarily in order to maintain viability. Others are pushed out of a rural economy. The effect of the various settlement strategies is an economic and social integration of town and a whole region through contacts which often contain elements of inequality. Ethnic ascription is of importance for most newcomers to town as a means to get in touch with those people within the own ethnic group who are obliged to give help according to established solidarity principles.

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ANDERS HJORT

Stockholm Studies in Social Anthropology
1979

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Stockholm

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PREFACE

The present study is based on an anthropological field study in northern Kenya April 1973 - July 1974. I owe gratitude for support in various forms to so many people, both in Kenya and elsewhere, that the task of giving proper thanks is impossible. First and foremost, however, I wish to thank my colleague and wife, Gudrun Dahl, for her part in a most fruitful co-operation during our respective field studies, and for putting up with my need to discuss all manner of odds and ends in the material, night and day. Among the great number of my helpers I am confined here to naming those who have fulfilled more specific roles within the context of my own field study and process of knowledge accumulation. The greatest continuous help from an academic point of view has been provided by Karl Eric Knutsson who has inspired my interest in northern Kenya, has made fruitful suggestions during my work in the field and has commented on both early drafts and more final manuscripts. While writing this book, I have also benefitted particularly from discussions with Ulf Hannerz and his comments on my many drafts. Gudrun Dahl, Irene Svensson, Aud Talle and Wilhelm Östberg have also read and commented on the entire early draft. Comments on various parts of it have also been made by Maurice Bloch, Harald Eidheim, Morris Fred, Tomas Gerholm, Robert Paine, Ulla Wagner and Sandra Wallman. Jürg Mahner, with his local knowledge, was extremely helpful during my selection of specific field area. I am also indebted to Karen Leander and Jonny Mair who have checked and corrected my English, and to Birgitta Wiklund who typed the

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I would like to mention my oldest son Ivan who had to put up with my absence for one year when I was in the field, and his mother, Eva Hjort, without whose solidarity this period would have been even more difficult for Ivan and me. During the writing period Ivan and his brother Viktor have shown considerable patience.

In Isiolo I received invaluable help from Abdi Boru, Adan Fugicha, Andrian Baiyenia, Joseph Epakan, John Frentz, Hassan Diba Miyo, Mustafa Aden Lord, Geoffrey Muthinja, Steve Ndegwa, Salan Abdirahman Hassan and Yassin Mohamud Ismail. In Nairobi Johan Sanne and Anders Karlsson helped me with accomodation during my study periods there.

I hope that this book will be appreciated in Kenya in spite of its "academical" character. Some of the issues dealt with are somewhat delicate. Which ones need not be pointed out, but I want to emphasize that I have tried to be careful in the balance between what has to be said for the purpose of analysis and what must not be said for ethical reasons, especially when it comes to protecting informants or other individuals.

When a present tense is used in this book, it refers to the time of the fieldwork (1973-74) if nothing

else is indicated. Needless to say all personal names in the study are fictitious. Footnotes appear at the end of each chapter.

Stockholm, February 1979

Anders Hjort

K E N Y A

INTRODUCTION

This is a study of a small multi-ethnic town in northern Kenya, its rural "umland" and the interdependence between the two¹⁾*. The town, Isiolo, is an administrative and trade centre, strategically located between farming and pastoral areas. Around the town and to the north live pastoralists who subsist on either camel or cattle herding (depending primarily on pasture quality) and on flocks of sheep and goats. Rainfall is highly

* Footnotes appear at the end of each chapter

irregular which means that the annual average is a poor measure of the region's productive capacity. Included in the Isiolo umland are also the northern slopes of Nyambeni Hills, a mountain range with fertile soil, good rains and high agricultural output²⁾.

Isiolo town and its umland are interdependent in many respects. The major aim of this study is to present an understanding of the qualities of the various ties. I start out with three introductory chapters in which I depict the emergence of the small town and touch upon the reasons for its existence. The contributions to the history of the township by the various ethnic groups are accounted for, before the focus is directed towards the affluent as well as the poor and impoverished inhabitants of Isiolo and the various economic opportunities that present themselves within the township. The second part of the study, which takes the form of one concluding discussion, involves the umland, partly in order to make it possible to account for the varying roles of the township in total household strategies to maintain domestic viability. For many inhabitants of the region, town and umland form one complex system within which life careers are made; it is not possible to isolate one from the other if one wishes to study the development process. Issues dealt with are: (1) the role of the small town of Isiolo as intermediary between urban life and ruralism; (2) town and umland as parts of an economic opportunity system; and (3) ethnic ascription as one asset in the search for economic security in the multi-ethnic and economically stratified township context. Hence, one important aspect of the township for this study is

that of a scene where interaction can properly be understood only on the basis of an understanding of circumstances in the umland. This work supplements Dahl (forthcoming b), a study of the Borana, one of the ethnic groups that are concerned here. Her study was carried out at the same time as the present one.

ON THE STUDY OF SMALL TOWNS

In order to present small towns as a type, one may start from the well established and simple classification system of African towns that was introduced by Southall (1961:6) when he launched the notions of Type A and B towns³⁾. Type A stands essentially for old towns with an ethnically homogeneous population, while Type B represents new towns with an industrial economy, immigration and ethnic heterogeneity. Most urban studies from inland East Africa deal with Kampala and Nairobi, that is Type B towns, since no old towns are found, except on the coast⁴⁾. By and large Southall, at that time, paid scant attention to the small administrative or trading centres with, say, between some hundred and a few thousand inhabitants that have been established by the colonial government. This fact has been pointed out by Middleton (1965:33) who put forth a Type C label for small towns of this kind. Gutkind (1968) argued for an increased attention to the study of small East African towns. He suggested that these could be used as "laboratories" for deepening the understanding of an urbanization process. The discussion of the C type of town in East Africa has later been elaborated by Vincent (1975:124) who concludes:

"The Type C town and its catchment area together constitute a political unit of some significance -- a unit more strategic, I would suggest, for the analysis of contemporary African political life than either the nation or any of its component parts, whether they be institutions, associations, or ethnic groups."

Her major argument for this great importance ascribed to town and umland, and for increased studies of East African small towns is their obvious political importance as an intermediary between "two coexisting political arenas, that of the countryside and that of the parish" (*ibid*: 121), and their significance for political change. This description fits the case of Isiolo. The town can be seen as an intermediary between centre (Nairobi) and periphery (the rural areas) involved, from an economic point of view, in an exploitative relation. A similar intermediary role exists in the political structure.

There are few studies that deal with Type C towns in Kenya; the only detailed one is Dutto (1975), a study of Nyeri town. For Tanzania Arens has published several studies of Mto wa Mbu (1970, 1973, 1975, 1976) which I shall refer to in later chapters. Apart from this work, there is a brief study of Kahama in western Tanzania by Abrahams (1961) who tries to identify "what sort of a place Kahama town is" and suggests a distinction between permanent and transitory town dwellers, a suggestion that has later been utilized in other urban or periurban studies. Vincent (1971) provides a detailed study of social change in Gondo (Uganda), where an emerging peasantry to an increasing extent acts within an industrial economic system⁵⁾.

The case of Isiolo will show that many farming and pastoral households in the umland have become dependent on the township for cash incomes, but equally that they depend on it solely as a relief for the subsistence economy. Individual household members can be sent into town, where limited income opportunities exist, in order to decrease the need for food production at home. Hence, the existence of a town is an economic asset for the rural population. In many cases poor people stay on forever in town. Particularly former pastoralists become sedentary, hoping in vain to return to a nomadic life in the umland. The effect is that Kenya's poverty problem of unequal distribution of wealth is dispersed into the rural areas, relieving the cities of some of its migrants.

Both Vincent (1971), on Gondo society, and Pain (1972), on Gulu in northern Uganda, have emphasized the fact that ethnicity is of importance in town life. In contrast to these Ugandan cases, Mto wa Mbu in Tanzania provides an example where ethnicity is of little significance, in spite of the fact that people of different ethnic groups are settling in town. Another such case, from outside East Africa, of a small town where ethnicity has ceased to be of relevance and where the focus for identification is instead localized to the small town itself, is Kita in Mali (Hopkins 1972:52). In both cases solidarity becomes based either on residence or religion, the latter representing an urban identity, hence distinguishing town from country (loc.cit. and Arens 1976:449). There are some tendencies also in the case of Isiolo town in this direction, particularly among

impoverished groups where little or no claims can be made on access to resources in the umland. Basically, however, ethnicity is a very significant factor in town life. Since the umland, ascribed to each ethnic group, plays an integral part, especially in the economic life of the small town, ethnic ascription proves to be one asset for access to subsistence resources in town. I want to emphasize this rather specific approach and indicate that I do not focus on ethnic interaction on the local scene in this study. For example, I shall later return to how ethnicity provides a point of departure for subsistence strategies through reference to solidarity principles that are valid in the umland. From this fact follows logically that such aspects of ethnicity are of great significance for the Isiolo immigrants.

ISIOLO TOWN IN ITS CONTEXT

The emergence of small towns, not only in Kenya, tends to be connected with a growing monetary economy in a capitalist economic system, and the small towns often provide a means for the exploitation of the rural areas. This is shown in the fact that these towns commonly rely on their rural umland either for cash crops, traded to a centre by middlemen, or for access to cheap labour. Since the focus of this study is not on the aspect of Isiolo town as an intermediary between a centre (Nairobi) and a periphery (the rural areas)⁶⁾, a few words need to be said in the introduction in order to describe the context within which Isiolo town

operates. It can be seen as fitting into a hierarchical system of economic dependencies, where a surplus is drawn from the rural areas and exported to the centre. According to this dependency theory, Isiolo town is a peripheral part of a larger capitalist system. The colonial and neo-colonial structure of this system has been outlined in the ILO Report (1972:11-12):

"A search for the causes of persistent inequities and unemployment in spite of a rapid rate of economic growth since the attainment of national independence must start with the colonial situation. On becoming independent, Kenya inherited a very lop-sided economy, already organised for the effective maintenance of very different ways of life for a tiny minority on the one hand, and a very large majority on the other. With few exceptions, Europeans occupied the top of the income scale, the Asians the middle and Africans the bottom. Inequality was thus deeply embedded with the economy.

Since independence, economic growth has largely continued on the lines set by the earlier colonial structure. Kenyanisation has radically changed the racial composition of the group of people in the centre of power and many of its policies, but has had only a limited effect on the mechanisms which maintain its dominance -- the pattern of government income and expenditure, the freedom of foreign firms to locate their offices and plants in Nairobi, and the narrow stratum of expenditure by a high-income elite superimposed on a base of limited mass consumption.

Indeed, the power of the centre over the periphery may well be greater today than it was before, since there is now a closer correlation of interests between the urban elite, the owners of large farms and the larger foreign-owned companies."

A similar conclusion on the post-independence situation is reached by Leys (1975:251-253) who provides an application of dependency theories on the case of Kenya.

Leys demonstrates how a colonial heritage of political divisions on tribal grounds has countered an emerging class consciousness among the Kenyan peasants. At the same time considerable foreign interests in Kenya due to her economic potential and politically strategic position, have attracted various forms of foreign capital aid. The high degree of reliance on such capital has contributed towards maintaining a status quo in the economic structure. Finally, some short-term factors unique to Kenya helped create the neo-colonial situation described in the ILO Report. Of particular importance has been the fact that in order to meet demands from various groups in the country, former European land became available, following substantial British loans to buy out the European landowners, for landless people as well as for affluent traders, farmers and civil servants. Equally important has been the fact that the Asian dominated trade could be gradually transferred to African traders. The emerging post-independence political situation has, accordingly, allowed a fairly limited faction to maintain considerable influence over a growing capitalist economic system in the country⁷⁾.

On the local scene of Isiolo the dominance mechanisms are felt in many ways. Most important is the continued existence of a local economic elite which has contacts in the Isiolo umland as well as with the national elite based in Nairobi. The Isiolo elite⁸⁾ contains self-made men who have become brokers between two worlds; that of the rural umland and that of the Kenyan nation. Access to capital resources for others than the elite members is blocked through a differentiation according

to ethnic status, age and political party influence (cf. Vincent 1971:2). In the case of Isiolo town, however, there are actually two elite groups which to some extent exploit different resources and hence do not compete directly. Their contacts with the political and economic centre of Kenya, Nairobi, can be used for protection, if needed, in illegal activities, for early information about government intentions in the region, and for economic benefits such as obtaining attractive government contracts, access to high quality pasture areas, and so on. Just as the ILO Report suggests for the nation generally, the dominance pattern has in Isiolo town remained much the same since the colonial period, albeit with some marked and important change, especially the reduced influence of one of the elite groups. This is due to a secessionist war in the area which allowed for an expansion of the other group. But the power structure remained unchanged with a local elite still made up of affluent long-distance traders. Their trade is fundamental to the existence of many income opportunities in the small town and they draw their economic surplus from the rural surroundings, so the small town of Isiolo, in these respects, fits well into the general dependency pattern.

NOTES TO THE INTRODUCTION

1. The term "umland" may at first seem strange to a social anthropologist. I use it whenever I want to emphasize the fact that the town and particular rural areas are interconnected, economically or socially, in a more permanent manner. "Umland" is more pregnant than, for example, "surroundings" which does not imply such contacts, but rather "within a convenient distance". "Catchment area" might be an alternative, but it seems to imply an urban to rural, rather than two-way communication. Another word, also of German origin, is "hinterland", which suggests that the town is situated on its boundary with involved rural areas. The term "umland" is an established one in geography; there is no English synonym for this German word (cf. Klimm et al 1957:212).
2. The mean annual rainfall is for Isiolo town 60 mm. and for Meru town 136 mm.; see Bernard (1972:21).
3. The focus of interest is on the study of small towns as the product of a continuing process, generated by conditions in both town and umland as well as in a centre-periphery system, rather than the particular setting of a small town in itself. A division into types is useful for a first differentiation between towns. For the present study only one type is of direct relevance, even though I shall make an occasional comparison also between towns of various types. The goal of the typology, now, becomes limited to identifying important aspects of small towns in order to allow for later structural comparisons.
4. I do not present a detailed list of the studies of Kampala or Nairobi since these studies are of little significance for the present study, except in a few aspects to which I shall return. The reader is, instead, referred to works by anthropologists such as Grillo, Gutkind, Parkin, Rigby and Southall. As for the Arab town culture on the coast, there are several studies of Lamu, among others, by Prins.
5. Saul and Woods (1971) look upon the African peasants as made up of those who rely wholly on land rights and the labour of family members for their subsistence and security and yet are involved

in a wider economic system, which also includes non-peasants. This approach seems appropriate since it means then that pastoralists as well as farmers come to form part of the African peasantries, "however much this might offend 'peasant purists'" (*ibid*: 105). Later Leys (1975:170-171) has defined 'peasant' modes of production as:

"modes of production characterized by the possession of land (and/or livestock) by households; by the production, on the basis of the labour of the household, of agricultural commodities (i.e. marketed produce); but in which land (or in pastoral areas livestock) remains 'natural' capital -- i.e. it is seen as an indispensable means of providing successive generations of households with the basic necessities of life, and not merely one thing among many in which capital may be invested for profit."

The point he makes, which is also asserted by Saul and Woods, is the dependency on a capitalist mode of production for supplementary, yet necessary cash incomes, either from the marketing of agricultural products or from wage labour. Such a dependence may take various forms, and so peasantries have to be differentiated even internally into strata (cf. Bernstein 1977:67). In the present study I differentiate first between farmers and pastoralists, and secondly between poor and rich according to opportunities afforded for accumulating wealth and turning it into capital (see Chapter 2). I shall qualify the differences and therefore not speak of a peasantry as such since this term becomes redundant: practically everybody in the study is a peasant today; a historical account for the peasantization process is not the primary focus of the present study.

6. This seems to be the focus of Kabwegyere's study (forthcoming), though I have not had the opportunity of reading his manuscript.
7. The question whether this in turn represents particular dependency on transnational corporations or represents a fairly independent capitalism is an issue that is currently debated; see for example Swainson (1977) and the debate that has followed in the Review of African Political Economy.

8. The use of the term "elite" in this study should not be understood to imply any superiority except in terms of economic resource control, political power and prestige.

PART I: ISIOLO A SAVANNA TOWN

This first part of the study is intended to give an account of factors which have been important for both the emergence of Isiolo town as well as for the continued existence of the township. Chapter I will show how Isiolo town developed, during the beginning of this century, as an administrative centre and a centre for long distance trade. This development was followed by a demand for service, labour, farm products for consumption, etc. Thus, opportunities arose, for poor inhabitants in surrounding rural areas of making a living in the township.

When Kenya achieved her independence, the secessionist war which had started in the north and lasted for three to five years, brought fundamental changes to the local population. Depending to a large extent on ethnic affiliation people were effected by the war to very differing degrees, and the wealth hierarchy was, to a certain extent, shaken up.

Chapter 2 concerns the structure of trade in Isiolo town and the growth of an affluent merchant class. It demonstrates that the most important trade southwards is in domestic animals and animal products, while the trade northwards consists basically of agricultural produce, especially maize meal and miraa (a stimulant drug) for consumption throughout northern Kenya.

Chapter 3 deals with the kinds of economic opportu-

ities which Isiolo can provide for people in the surrounding areas, who have difficulties in making ends meet in their traditional ways of living, or who have, for different reasons, been pushed out from their original community and economy. Some of these opportunities are created by the town's character as an expanding trade and administrative centre, with continuously growing demands for labour and service. Others, like those offered at the irrigated farming projects, have been purposively created in order to cater for the victims of the war and the subsequent droughts.

1. THE RISE OF ISILOLO TOWN

THE SCENE

Isiolo of today is a small town of about 6,000 inhabitants¹⁾ in the geographical centre of Kenya. In spite of its location it is often considered part of the north Kenyan "borderlands". The town stands on the savanna plain just north of Mount Kenya. Approaching from the south, one passes through the

fertile Highlands that extend up to the north-western slopes of the mountain. After climbing to about 3,000 metres above sea level, the road suddenly starts descending and the horizon opens up towards the northern plains. The corrugated iron roofs of Isiolo can be seen gleaming in the hot sun. Far off to the east, if visibility is not limited by dust clouds stirred up by an easterly gale which blows for six months of the year, one can see the blue contours of Nyambeni Hills. At about 1,200 metres above sea level, the plain landscape with its scattered volcanoes makes a desertlike impression, especially in contrast with the wheat fields and ranches of the Highlands.

Here, on the ecological boundary of the dry Northern Frontier District, white colonization once came to a halt. This boundary also constitutes the traditional border between pastoralists and agriculturalists (even today, if a pastoralist from Isiolo travels southward up the slopes, he considers himself "going to Kenya"). Colonial administrators have often commented in their reports on the difficult climatic conditions; heat, wind and dust. The former Northern Frontier District, NFD, (see Map 1.3) with Isiolo as its centre, was administered at minimum cost, at least up to World War II with the sole intention of keeping "Pax Britannica" sufficiently effective to prevent the expansion of Ethiopian and other interests in the area. This is the area where a secessionist war also took place after the Kenyan independence was won, a war that plays an important part in Isiolo history. It is usually referred to in Kenya as "the Shifta war". Since the term "shifta" may have derogatory connotations (it means "bandit" in Amharinja),

I have preferred to call it the secessionist war.

EARLY ESTABLISHMENT

Not until the first years of this century did the British take an interest in the Northern Frontier District, and then it was a direct result of the Abyssinians pressing southwards during the reign of emperor Menelik II. In 1909 NFD was proclaimed a district with headquarters at Meru town. The administrative history consists of many reorganizations of district boundaries and of upgrading and downgrading of NFD's administrative status, from that of District to that of Province and back again. Until 1928 Isiolo was merely a base for the Kenyan African Rifles. The strategic position of the town as a gate to the north soon became clear, and the administrative headquarters were moved from Meru to Isiolo in 1929²⁾. At the same time, Isiolo District was created from a combination of the Samburu and Garba Tula Districts, though most of Samburu District was again separated five years later.

With the development of Isiolo township as an administrative centre there followed a growing long-distance trade in livestock and maize meal. This trade was controlled by Asian and Somali traders, who had relatives in all of the important centres in NFD. They dealt mainly in ghee (butter-fat), hides and skins, and cattle and goats for downcountry areas. The local trading was carried out by Meru merchants, who traded with their posho (maize meal), potatoes and tobacco.

MAP 1.1: ISILOLO TOWN

The administration also received many applications for trading licences in Isiolo town during this period, though most were quickly turned down on the grounds that the number of businesses was already too high, and that over-establishment must be avoided. For many applicants the receipt of a licence would not have meant primarily full-time concentration on that particular business. Rather, it would have also meant the right to reside in Isiolo, thus providing opportunities for other activities than retail trading, perhaps illegal trade or grazing. By 1937 twenty plots had been demarcated for business³⁾, some of which were utilized by more than one trader.

Ethnic boundaries between the major groups in Isiolo town of today, the Borana, Meru, Samburu, Somali and Turkana, are quite distinct. Members of the various groups dress differently, and also their respective languages are totally unrelated, which forces people to use a lingua franca, Kiswahili (or occasionally English), for any instruction across these boundaries. Cohesion within the groups is so strong that the local community of today in many respects consists of a number of monoethnic small scale societies. Their presence in Isiolo town is connected with particular events in the emergence of the township, and I shall here make brief reference to their place in the history of Isiolo town. The presentation of the ethnic groups is also kept extremely brief, but indicates other sources.

Laikipiak Maasai and Samburu pastoralists in the town area

Before the arrival of the Europeans, the Isiolo area had been inhabited by cattle keeping nomads, predominantly Laikipiak Maasai, Samburu and some Somali. The Samburu⁴⁾ had a similar mode of existence to that of the Maasai and spoke the same language as these, although the Samburu used their own distinct dialect. These similarities are valid even today. The Laikipiak and the Samburu had been weakened by serious epidemic and epizootic diseases in the beginning of the 1890s and had been pushed southwards by expanding Turkana groups. The Laikipiak were further weakened by local wars and by an internal schism between two Maasai sections. The growing demands from white settlers for access to the so-called White Highlands resulted in an agreement between the British and the famous Maasai leader Lenana that all Maasai remaining in northern Kenya should be moved to the southern part of the country. This transfer was carried out in 1911. That some Maasai managed to hide is evident for example from the fact that the dialect spoken today in some of the Samburu manyattas⁵⁾ near Isiolo town is not the Samburu one, but a dialect closer to the ordinary Maa language. It seems reasonable to assume that some Laikipiak Maasai preferred to be assimilated into the Samburu culture rather than being forced to move. Many Laikipiak descendants are also to be found within northern Meru groups.

The transfer of the Laikipiak corresponded with the British policy of demarcating administrative areas

along ethnic lines, which still influences the ethnic situation in parts of Kenya today. Even though the present national policy is to deny the existence of ethnic rights to territory, the district boundaries are still to some extent accepted by the local populations as limits to expansion by the ethnic groups. Land ownership in the district is collective in so far as it is classified as County Council Trust Land (Kenya 1970c : 54-55)⁶⁾. Isiolo District was intended to be a Borana district to prevent further expansion by Somali groups coming from the north-east. The area north and west of Isiolo town was reserved for Samburu. Despite the fact that the site of the town was once predominantly a Samburu/Laikipiak area, the Samburu today play an insignificant role in the life of the township, with only a handful of the townsmen being Samburu, although they are one of the major pastoral groups in Isiolo's rural surroundings. Occasionally they migrate to the town to find pasture and water and a market for their cattle during the dry season, also to purchase food-stuffs. Some Samburu live permanently on the fringes of the town. The total number of Samburu in Kenya is 55,000 according to a census carried out in 1969 (Kenya 1970b), almost entirely found in the present-day Samburu District.

Borana of the Isiolo District and Town

Numerically the Borana dominate the present-day Isiolo District, which in total consists of between 30,000 and 70,000 inhabitants (in 1969). A more precise

estimate is not possible, since the results of various surveys are contradictory. The Borana are an Oromo people with their traditional home in southern Ethiopia, which they call Dirre and where an estimated 250,000 live⁷⁾. Before the turn of the century, those Borana living in northern Kenya were mainly camel-keeping and hunting sub-groups. Small groups also reached and used the grazing areas around Uaso Nyiro River, which was earlier used sporadically by Maasai, Samburu and some Somali pastoralists. The expansion of the Abyssinian Empire, and the concomitant exploitation of the local population by Amharic and Tigrean soldiers, led to an exodus of some groups of cattle-keeping Borana, who around 1910 took refuge in British territory. Some of these groups penetrated into the Wajir District, but were later transferred to the Isiolo District after clashes with Somali groups over water, and were gradually cut off from their northern relatives⁸⁾, who still live in Marsabit, Moyale and north of the boundary with Ethiopia.

The pastoral Borana Gutu, or "proper" Borana, in Isiolo District today are predominantly cattle herders. Another particular sub-group of the Borana are the Sakuye, who formerly specialized in camels but who lost virtually all of their herds in the 1960s. Yet another sub-group within the Borana are the Wata, a "low caste" which traditionally specialized in hunting. Today very many Wata are destitutes or poor small scale farmers due equally to the war and to subsequent droughts. In Isiolo District are also found some Garri (Gurreh)⁹⁾, a half-Borana, half-Somali people, who subsist from a largely pastoral economy.

In the following sections "Borana" is used as an expression including the Gutu, Sakuye and Wata, except when appearing juxtaposed to the Sakuye, in which case it denotes Gutu and Wata only.

The early town Somali

Outside Somalia, Somali are today found in Djibouti, in south-eastern Ethiopia and in north-eastern Kenya (see Map 1.2). The Somali have a segmentary lineage system, and the two sections that dominate among the so-called "town Somali" (I shall return to them below) in Isiolo are the Hertti and the Isaq¹⁰). Isiolo town is one of the most important centres in Kenya for these two Somali sections, who are in Kenya almost entirely "urban". The number of Kenyan Somali according to the 1969 Census (Kenya 1970b) is 240,000. This figure includes not only "town Somali" of the mentioned sections, but also pastoral Somali belonging to other sub-groups. The Garri are included here. A rough estimate of the proportion of Somali and Borana in the district indicates that various Somali groups make up between 1/4 and 1/3 of the population (Dahl, personal communication).

Apart from strategic considerations by the British when the town of Isiolo was established, the intention was to find a place to settle the so-called Alien Somali. These were mostly ex-soldiers from World War I, who had been recruited by the way of Aden (Isaq) and Kismayu (Hertti). They had generally engaged in cattle trade after the war, often supplemented with duka

MAP 1.2: The Horn of Africa: approximate Somali distribution

trade. Since they had left a nomadic way of life and after World War I adopted an urban life style (cf. Dalleo 1975:62), they are commonly referred to and refer to themselves as "town Somali".

After the weakening and transfer of the Laikipiak, the surroundings of Isiolo town appeared to present an empty area, suitable for settling the Alien Somali, with low pressure on the land. The ex-soldiers were at the time spread over various parts of Kenya. After the war they had been offered either to be paid dia (blood-money) for those killed, or to be given their own area in Kenya, where they would have the sole right to the land. The Alien Somali had unanimously chosen the latter alternative. In the beginning of 1929 residential and trading plots were demarcated for Alien Somali, who came with their stock both from the south and from the other districts of NFD.

The colonial government hoped that all ex-government Somali employees would be attracted to Isiolo town and the surrounding grazing areas. This hope was abruptly shattered in 1930 when, during the plot demarcations, it was discovered that Isiolo township had been mistakenly laid out not inside Isiolo District but instead within Meru District. The discovery of the mistake led to a standstill in the work on establishing land rights for the Alien Somali, and no permanent buildings were established for administrative purposes¹¹⁾. Ever since, the Alien Somali have been living in Isiolo and their cattle have grazed the surrounding areas, but the land has never been registered in their names, creating feelings of insecurity and unrest among them¹²⁾.

The early economy of the town (before the Italian invasion of Abyssinia) was mostly based on long distance trade in both livestock on the hoof and hides and skins. It was dominated by Arab, Asian and Somali traders, who all expanded their trade networks at the same time as the British expanded their influence. The same traders had contracts with the colonial military and civil administration for supplying grain. Apart from this trade and that of pastoral products, they opened up small shops (duka), selling such items as soap, tea, sugar, cloth and manufactured goods. Some of them also engaged in the illegal trades of the town.

One of the two major trade routes from northern Kenya went through Isiolo¹³⁾, and from there southwards to the Nyeri market. There livestock was sold mainly for consumption in Nairobi, or, in the case of Borana cattle, for cross breeding on the emerging white farms and ranches in the Highlands. Practically all Alien Somali were involved in the profitable stock trade, and grew wealthy. Towards the end of the 1930s, the Borana and Samburu herdowners, the producers, gained considerably due to good grazing after consecutive sufficient rains and a period of high demand for stock.

THE TOWN CONSOLIDATED

As a result of the Italian invasion of Abyssinia in 1936, many refugees entered northern Kenya. A large camp for more than 6,000 people, mainly Amhara, was set up on the right bank of the Isiolo River some

three miles north of town. This influx brought a boom in local trading, as the camp's population outnumbered that of the town. The camp was evacuated for security reasons in 1939, at the beginning of World War II. All refugees were then evacuated from Isiolo town. The boom in the Isiolo economy that commenced with the refugee camp continued during the war with Isiolo's increased importance as a centre both for military and trade activities. During the evacuation of the Northern Frontier District in 1940, most of the Arab and Asian, and to some extent also the Somali long distance traders from other towns in NFD, especially from Wajir, Mandera and Moyale, were allowed to settle in Isiolo. The opportunities for employment with the settled town Somali or with the British administration further attracted Meru and Turkana immigrants (individuals from these groups had occasionally settled in Isiolo at an early stage, though not in great numbers).

Turkana migrations to Isiolo town

The Turkana, related to people of the Karamojong cluster in Uganda and numbering 203,000 in the 1969 Census, inhabit the area to the west of Lake Turkana and southwards in the lowlands along the Rift Valley into Kerio Valley¹⁴⁾. They practise nomadic pastoralism for subsistence, tending camels, cattle and small stock and where possible they supplement pastoralism with farming, growing millet or maize.

In the first years of colonization, the Turkana were in a process of expanding to the south. During the

severe rinderpest epizooty in the 1890s that struck most stock in northern Kenya, those belonging to the Turkana survived to a greater extent than those of their neighbours. Lamphear (1976b:229) in addition mentions severe droughts in Kerio and Turkwell Valleys around the end of the 19th Century as a major cause for a Turkana expansion in a south-easterly direction into the Samburu area¹⁵⁾. Local oral history, as told by old Turkana men, states that the Turkana moved in a southerly direction under the leadership of Loparala, mainly in search of grass, but caused chaos, as they fought their way through other people's territory. They found Samburu living around the Uaso Nyiro River and in the area of what is now Isiolo town, since then called "Akop na Akiyar", the land of survival, by the Turkana. The presence of Samburu at Isiolo is also verified by the stories of Samburu elders.

Throughout the first decades of this century, individual Turkana looking for employment immigrated into Isiolo, often after being forced to leave a pastoral economy by local droughts, epizooties or other disastrous events. A steady trickle of Turkana kept coming as the town grew and the labour demands of administrators and traders increased. Many of the men were employed either locally in Isiolo town as manual labourers or recruited there for work further south as farm hands on white farms. Such recruitment increased during the Mau-Mau emergency, when the white farmers did not want to employ Kikuyu or Meru.

Before the British left domestic politics in Kenya, three attempts were made to force those Isiolo Turkana

who were not employed in town to move back to their area of origin¹⁶⁾. Only once, in 1952, did the administration succeed in transporting a considerable number of people, but many soon returned. This is not surprising, since the fundamental reason for their migration to Isiolo was shortage of grazing land and water, and thus there was no future for them in their original areas. After Kenya's independence they settled permanently in and around Isiolo town.

Meru becoming townsmen

Labourers for the Isiolo administrative and trade elite were also recruited from the poorer sections of the farming population in the Nyambeni Hills. This area is very different from the immediate surroundings of the town. Fertile soil, reliable rainfall and high population density are typical characteristics of these hills, which are inhabited by the Meru sub-groups Igembe, Imenti and Tigania¹⁷⁾. The Meru people belong linguistically to the north-eastern Bantu group. In the 1969 Census the sub-groups of the Nyambeni Hills numbered roughly a quarter of a million.

Meru land ownership was traditionally clan based. Today individual title deeds have been issued or are in the process of being issued throughout the area. There are today problems both of land fragmentation and of an increased number of landless people in the Nyambeni Hills, problems that contribute to the emigration to Isiolo (see Chapter 4).

As the demand for labour increased in Isiolo town after World War II, many Meru from Imenti moved there in search of employment in Somali households or with the intention of carrying out petty trade. Early recruitment for these positions was channeled through kinship and friendship, which explains why the Imenti dominate among these "early" Meru. They lived in the part of town called Kampi Ya Shauri Yako along the DC's Furrow (see Map 1.1)¹⁸⁾. Bula Besa at that time was inhabited by Somali. Access was only allowed to the Meru during day-time.

After the end of the secessionist war, during the latter half of the 1960s, most of the important Somali traders had to leave Isiolo town. Then, a high ranking Isiolo official, himself a Tigania Meru, urged the Meru people to migrate to Isiolo and take advantage of the departure of the Somali traders from what they considered Meru land. The result was a new wave of Meru migration, this time from Tigania. Today, Meru are firmly established both in the short-distance retail and market trade in Isiolo town and in the long-distance miraa trade¹⁹⁾. The fact that 84 % of the Meru traders have come to Isiolo after independence (according to a survey carried out with all the Isiolo traders; see the Appendix), is an indication of how recent this expansion is. As many as 43 % have come after 1970, that is well after the end of the war.

The "early" Meru have retained few economic links with the Nyambeni Hills, since the major reason for their migration was lack of land. If they have shambas, these lie in Isiolo rather than in Meru. Many still have

small fields along DC's Furrow that passes through Kampi. Ya Shauri Yako. These shambas are among the best in town, although of poor quality compared with those in Nyambeni Hills.

In contrast, the "new" Meru often have land in the Nyambeni Hills, and either trade their produce or supplement a too low production with employment or trade in Isiolo, perhaps purchasing farm produce at the Meru markets and reselling it in Isiolo town. Many Meru women combine small trading with prostitution, since this is the major opportunity for a female without employment to obtain an independent income.

THE SECESSIONIST WAR AND ITS AFTERMATH

Background information about the secessionist war is central to the understanding of living conditions both in Isiolo town and all of northern Kenya today. Many people died, due directly or indirectly to the war. Many more became destitute, some permanently. As a result of the war, new sentiments emerged, and former allies now distrust each other, while other people developed a new understanding for each other. Before the war, the strife between Muslims and non-Muslims greatly influenced the choices of allies, so that Muslims tended to support the guerilla. This religious strife creates a major division even today, but with some modifications. The Borana and Sakuye were so extremely hard hit by the war, while many more Somali people and livestock survived, that ten-

sion was also increased within the pro-secessionists in the wake of the war.

The Somalia-Ethiopia and Somalia-Kenya boundaries were drawn by colonial powers with insufficient respect for ethnic or economic demarcations. Thus, they have been disputed for many years²⁰). As can be seen from Map 1.2, Somali are living on both sides of the national borders. They occupy regions that are generally arid or semi-arid, and where, except for the river zones and on the coast, most inhabitants are pastoralists.

The local Somali population basically desires to manage their own affairs. The pastoralists know what ecologic limits exist to their livelihood in terms of different qualities of pasture, access to water and to salt-licks. Interventions by central governments have seldom been advantageous to the pastoralists, and they often consider such bodies as one among several unpredictable factors that affects normal life in a negative fashion.

Shortly before Kenyan independence in 1963, a referendum was held in the Northern Frontier District (Map 1.3) by the British colonial government with the intention to find out whether the inhabitants wanted to become part of Kenya or Somalia (Kenya 1962a). It seemed obvious to the commission that the entire Somali population and a large proportion of the Borana (especially the Uaso Nyiro Borana who had been living in close contact with the Somali and had adopted Islam) would want to be part of Somalia. The non-

MAP 1.3: The former Northern Frontier District (NFD) of Kenya

Muslim groups preferred to remain under Kenya (ibid: 18).

The local Somali and Borana population were under the impression that the British government had accepted their demands for NFD to be administered from Mogadiscio. However, it was soon clear that in fact the territory would continue to be part of Kenya. In March 1963 the British Colonial Secretary announced the decision to make NFD a seventh province in Kenya. Immediately after this announcement tension grew in the area and a pro-Somali uprising started immediately after independence (December 1963), gradually increasing in intensity.

The conflict in Kenya was directly related to the larger conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia; thus, the secessionist war has to be seen in the larger context of Somali nationalism, and the feeling that the colonial boundaries were unjustly drawn against the will of the local population. In Isiolo, this feeling was blended with a general feeling of insecurity on the part of the Alien Somali who had no formal permanent land rights. In addition, a general distrust of the Bantu population was prevalent, based on a suspicion that revenge would be taken for the Bantu's earlier maltreatment at the hands of the Somali. Armed with strong racist attitudes, the Somali feared that the "Africans" who formerly had been similar to serfs, and who did not follow Muslim rules of ritual purity, would gain the upper hand in politics.

Seen from a Somali point of view, the pact between Addis Ababa and Nairobi, signed in 1963, was an anti-Somali step. The official Somali attitude at the beginning of the war was that the new Kenyan regime as well as the Ethiopian government were colonial regimes depriving the local population of their ancient rights to follow the rains in search for pasture and water. An agreement between the Kenyan and British governments permitting some British troops to remain in Kenya was also interpreted in this way.

Such a standpoint was supported by pastoral Somali and by the Uaso Nyiro Borana. Rumours spread that the Bantu regime was going to make Christianity the official religion and force all inhabitants to become Christians. They also claimed that if the Uaso Nyiro Borana joined in a secessionist war, they would be given the miraa farms in Nyambeni Hills in compensation. Grazing areas for the pastoralists were also to be extended into Laikipia and perhaps even as far as to Lake Naivasha. The Christian Borana at Marsabit were reluctant, while many Sakuye identified themselves with the Somali (according to the ethnic history of the Sakuye, some sections originated in Somali).

The Somali and Muslim Borana launched a guerrilla war, and for a long time they successfully controlled the rural areas during the night hours. Most Somali segments in Kenya united in a front in spite of their usual internal strife and ongoing feuds. Even the rivalry between the Isiolo Hertti and Isaq ceased for this all-embracing cause. The general attitude of the

Bantu people was that all Somali and Borana were, at least potentially, "bandits" or "shifta". This accusation was openly made in Parliament.

The war proved costly to the government, which needed heavy equipment to combat the guerrillas. All roads were mined, causing great losses both in personnel and material. Eventually, most Kenyan regiments also became engaged in the fighting.

The role of the Somali national government during the war seems to have been limited to a minimum delivery of hand weapons, a generous contribution of mines, the acceptance of a few guerrilla training camps on the Somali side of the border, and extensive propaganda support by way of radio broadcasts from Mogadiscio as well as diplomatic activities when the civilian population was intolerably treated.

As the war went on, the burden on the local population of northern Kenya increased steadily. Not only were curfews difficult to live with, but also the system of "strategic villages" curbed usual nomadic movements to the detriment of the stock. People were forcibly settled in villages or towns. In the particular case of Isiolo town, nobody could move without a permit, and a general curfew was proclaimed from 7 p.m. to 6 a.m. Somali and Borana were required to remain inside the fences. The local Meru and Turkana population in Isiolo was generally allowed to leave Bula Besa during day-time, but they had to carry a pass to prove their ethnic identity.

Beginning in 1967, collective punishments for each lorry which was blown up by the guerrillas added to the difficulties. By confiscating domestic animals, the government reduced the economic bases of the guerrillas. Animals were collected for slaughter for the Nairobi market or sold in other areas where transport further south was possible. Occasionally, when transport was not available, the stock would be systematically machine-gunned. For example, in Isiolo over 5,000 head of cattle were killed on one day in 1967 according to eye-witnesses, after being brought in from the surrounding rural areas.

As mentioned earlier, a result of the war was that the Somali traders to a large extent were forced to evacuate the town. During their absence Tigania Meru were able to establish themselves as traders. In the beginning of the war many traders, both Somali and in several cases Muslim Asians, supported the secessionists. Those who refused to do so, risked having their shop raided at night. However, the overall strategy of the guerrilla forces was to avoid fighting inside the towns in order to minimize the suffering of the local population. The "strategic villages" also contained enough Somali to make it impossible for the guerrillas to launch a major attack against any of these centres.

The common attitude among the Samburu and Turkana populations was anti-secessionist. They had traditionally hostile relations with the Somali and Borana, which were manifested by frequent cattle raiding and reinforced by religious and other cul-

tural differences. The Samburu in the Isiolo-Wamba area especially suffered from raids carried out by the guerrillas, who forcibly captured their livestock and then used the Samburu territory for grazing. As a result, many of the Samburu households in the settlements surrounding Isiolo town today have too few domestic animals for subsistence and need supplementary incomes for survival.

The Borana and Sakuye are today convinced that they were exploited by the Somali. When the war started to go against the secessionists, it was possible for the Somali to bring their herds and flocks across the border to Somalia to relatives living there. The Borana and Sakuye had no such opportunities, and most of the cattle and camels that were systematically killed or expropriated by the Kenyan troops, belonged to Borana households. Thus, they acted as a buffer between the government troops and the Somali guerrillas who made up the core of the secessionists. Towards the end of the war the Sakuye took the initiative of contacting the Qallu in Ethiopia, the traditional ritual leader of the Borana people (see Asmarom 1973), who sent back a message advising the local population to negotiate for peace since nothing could be gained from the war²¹⁾.

The remaining Borana herds were decimated once again immediately after the war during the late 1960s when two drought years were followed by torrential rains. After the losses, which were hard felt since the war had already greatly reduced the domestic herds, some Borana starved to death, while others descended on

Isiolo town in order to seek work and thereby added a new element to the town's population. According to a local Borana leader about 2,000 settled in Isiolo as a direct result of the war and the natural disasters. Today, between 3,000 and 4,000 Borana live in the town area, including Bula Besa (see also Table 1.1). The majority of the Borana are engaged today in farming on small shambas producing barely enough for their own consumption and a little cash-cropping. The farming is supplemented by keeping some small stock or two or three head of cattle, by firewood collecting and by casual labour.

The Turkana in Isiolo town were favourably disposed towards the new regime in Nairobi. They appreciated the strong emphasis on land rights for the "Africans" and the call from the KANU party to "return to the land". It must be remembered that these Turkana had migrated due to land shortage, overgrazing, and droughts or other disasters throughout the colonial period, and that the British had tried to force them back to Turkana District on several occasions. The right of any citizen to live anywhere in the country was explicitly stated at independence. This meant freedom for the Isiolo Turkana to remain in the area without fear of displacement.

Many Turkana men had been employed as herders at the outbreak of the secessionist war. Some of the once wealthy Somali had entrusted their cattle to their Turkana employees, but without written agreements for the return of the stock. When the war ended, the same Turkana refused to give back the animals, assert-

ing that they had never been paid for their labour. The earlier herd owners could do nothing and so the wealth hierarchy changed: the former Turkana employees acquired the wealth of their former Somali employers.

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY IN ISIOLO

The polarization between Christians and Muslims, expressed dramatically in the secessionist war, represents a fundamental division between two cultural outlooks, one Western and the other Arabic. Islam had been the sole dominating religion in the Isiolo area until the last two decades. The common strong Islamic influence from the Swahili coast on East Africa has by and large been negligible in northern Kenya, since the Wardai ("Oromo" or "Tana Galla" living along Tana River), the Laikipiak Maasai and the Meru all prevented Arab traders from penetrating into this region. Instead, the Muslim influence in northern Kenya is connected with the Islam of the Horn of Africa. The Somali, who claim an early Arab descent, have since long been Muslims, while the Borana converts in northern Kenya have become Muslims more recently, approximately thirty to forty years ago, in response to contacts with the Somali²²⁾.

Various Ṣūfī ṭarīqas²³⁾ (mystic orders) have played a significant role in the religious and political history of the Somali, both in the Somali zones of northern Kenya and in Somalia itself. The orders of highest significance for Isiolo have been the Qādirīya, the Ṣālihīya and the Ḥusseinīya. The two

former orders were introduced to northern Kenya by the Somali ex-soldiers who settled there and through Muslim missions based in Jubaland in the beginning of this century.

During the period of Somali settlement in Isiolo town, up to the mid-1930s, there was considerable animosity between the orthodox followers of the Qādirīya and Ṣālihīya sects, which sometimes resulted in physical violence. One locally given explanation for this conflict was a difference between the two ṭarīqas in their attitudes to the British colonial powers. Those Somali who had been British soldiers during World War I and were settled in Isiolo town, generally did not actively support the Ṣālihīya ṭarīqa, which once had been associated with the uprisings of Sheikh Muhamed Abdille Hassan (called "Mad Mullah" by the British) in Somalia (Turton 1969). They were accordingly looked upon as traitors by those who considered the uprising to be a heroic nationalistic war.

Today there is a tendency in Isiolo, as over all in East Africa, for the importance of the ṭarīqa to decrease (Trimingham 1964:97-98)²⁴). The town Somali (Herti and Isaq) are not split into different ṭarīqas according to any predictable pattern. There is only one mosque instead of one for each ṭarīqa, contrary to what is common practice in Somalia (Lewis 1961:223). The members of the Ḥusseiniya ṭarīqa, however, are not allowed to enter the mosque. This sect was founded by Sheikh Hussein, a missionary to Ethiopia around 1300 (Braukämper n.d.:27; see also Cerulli 1959:134)²⁵). The syncretistic ayana cult with its roots in the

Borana culture, is adhered to by the members of the Ḥusseiniya. It has developed into an important social force both in the town of Isiolo, where it operates to bring strangers together, and also in the surrounding areas.

Recruitment to the Ḥusseiniya ṭarīqa is conducted both among the poor and destitute Borana and Somali Muslims. Female membership is high, and many Somali women, including one of the high-ranking ritual experts, are wives of men outspokenly opposed to this ṭarīqa. The influential Somali and Borana men in Isiolo town are Muslims, though never of Ḥusseiniya. For them and their sympathizers, religious affiliation is another principle for expressing network solidarity within this local elite, instrumental for both making a career and maintaining one's elite membership. The meeting place is at the mosque, which constitutes the authority centre for the Muslim establishment, where among others the Somali guddi court (an assembly of elders) meets to decide over internal Somali matters.

Membership of Ḥusseiniya equally expresses a mutual solidarity. Through the ayana cult, which is associated with this ṭarīqa and which is condemned at the mosque, one establishes and formalizes a communion with other poor or oppressed Muslims. An interesting aspect of this cult is that the solidarity is restricted to Muslims and becomes horizontal. Thus, membership implies a certain degree of opposition to the Muslim affluent social class.

In many ways the ayana cult is similar to other Ṣūfī movements: there is a saint, Sheikh Hussein of Bale, there are several families of spirits, more or less evil, there are the step-by-step initiations and ability to communicate with these evil spirits and there is a conscious expression of the Ḥusseiniya, at least locally, as a separate tariqa.

To my knowledge, little is said in the literature about Sheikh Hussein, even less about Ḥusseiniya as a tariqa and practically nothing at all about the ayana cult as a syncretistic cult linked with this tariqa. Trimingham (1952:253-256) touches briefly upon the pilgrimage to the sanctuary of Sheikh Hussein, which he considers "one of the most interesting religious phenomena in north-east Africa" (*ibid*: 253). He makes a very brief presentation of the history of Bale and Sheikh Hussein. The ayana spirits, however, are mentioned only as Galla nature spirits inhabiting sycamore trees to which offerings are made (*ibid*: 260)²⁶). There is no particular connection indicated between the ayana cult and Sheikh Hussein. Huntingford (1969: 81, 82, 85) mentions the Muslim religious centre in the town built around the tomb of Sheikh Hussein, but he does not connect the saint with the ayana cult. Both Trimingham and Huntingford rely on the information of Cerulli (1933) for their descriptions of the ayana spirits. Haberland (1963) also touches upon the pilgrimages to Bale and their importance for the Muslim Oromo in Ethiopia²⁷).

In spite of the lack of documentation in the referred literature of ayana's significance for the Ḥusseiniya

tariqa, the local connection is evident, which is sufficient for the present analysis. The ayana cult, as it exists locally, exhibits traits from Islam and the traditional Galla religion. Pilgrimages are made to the sanctuary of Sheikh Hussein as an alternative to going to Mecca for the poor man. The local religious leader of this tariqa has stated that most of the wives of religious men, who are members of other tariqa, together with other oppressed married women, have joined the Husseiniya. This is analogous to the development of the Somali sar cult (Lewis (1971:75-80)). Both sar and ayana activities in Isiolo town express and counter in a ritualistic manner an oppressing and frustrating situation for impoverished Muslims as well as for married town Somali women. Locally, the ayana and sar cults are performed differently, with the former involving a stronger ritual power, and, thus, is viewed more seriously and with greater respect.

The ayana cult has spread quickly, especially among the Uaso Nyiro Borana. As late as in the 1950s local leaders were in general actively opposed to it. Now the movement has become established, despite criticism from both pastoral Borana men educated in Islam and male town Somali, who consider the cult to be "something picked up from the bush", not proper according to the Islamic religion and therefore not acceptable as a tariqa.

The local administration in Isiolo town does not allow any ayana rituals without a written permission, which probably reflects a fear that the fast growing tariqa promotes political and social discontent. Such an

interpretation no doubt is true to some extent; but membership in Husseiniya does not indicate any political consciousness. It represents escapism and frustration due to an extremely difficult situation. As we have seen, recruitment of members of the Husseiniya is basically from impoverished immigrants, who have arrived in Isiolo rather recently due to the secessionist war, droughts or other disasters, and who have been joined by married town Somali women who are frustrated over their marriages.

Though important details of the ayana cult and recruitment may differ from the non-Muslim cult, the similarity between the two on the structural level is striking. Knutsson (1975:269-270) suggests a correlation between possession and the number of alternative roles available, noting that among the Macha Galla it is mostly women, having fewer alternative roles than men, who become possessed. Precisely this is the case in Isiolo as well, where the ayana cult has become established as a syncretistic Muslim tariqa, which allows for expanded recruitment across ethnic and sex boundaries. Hence, impoverished former male pastoralists as well as women, all in frustrating situations with no or few choices of roles, can join. Thus, as Knutsson concludes (loc.cit.) "possession ... must be seen not only as the end result of a dissociation-creating process but also as an important part of the continuous long-term generation of new roles in a society". In Isiolo, with its difficult post-war situation and dramatic changes, this conclusion is valid. Furthermore the actual performance of the ritual offers new roles and interaction for the oppressed regardless

of boundaries that would otherwise set a limit.

In contrast to Islam, the Christian mission in northern Kenya is not connected with the precolonial history of the area. The activities of the Christian mission are largely limited to the last fifteen years and are linked to development projects to a degree that Islam has never been. However, Christian missionary activities had taken place for several decades in the Nyambeni Hills by the time they were established further north, so that Meru migrants facilitated the spreading of an indirect Christian influence. The Kenyan government set development efforts as a condition for missionary activities and also demanded that missionaries should not put pressure on the local population to convert to Christianity.

The Catholic (Consolata) mission in Isiolo town has gained strong support among the Turkana from its inception in the early 1960s. About one third of the Isiolo Turkana have converted to Christianity. The higher ranking ng'imurok (Turkana diviners) in Isiolo town complain that their influence has decreased rapidly²⁸⁾. The Catholic priests are highly pleased with the Turkana children who remain Catholics even after finishing school. Borana children, on the other hand, accept (or whose parents accept for them) baptism, but invariably convert to Islam when they finish school. No Somali children attend the Catholic school. According to Somali people, the explanation for this is merely that the school has a Christian administration. Such a difference in school attendance between Borana and Somali primary school children might reflect a difference in the intensity of their Muslim

faith, but also the degree of poverty. The Somali are less dependent on the subsidized boarding and feeding offered by the mission.

The Protestant (Methodist) mission in Isiolo town, though it has a parish, has not been equally active. Its members are to a large extent Meru or government employees from other areas, where the Methodist mission has been strong. The majority of its members were born Methodists. Many Meru in Isiolo town are also Catholics since childhood.

SETTLEMENT PATTERN AND THE RESIDENTIAL AREA

The map of Isiolo town (Map 1.1) shows how administration and police residential quarters, offices and other public buildings are situated a kilometre from the centre. Behind the shoptines to the east of the road there is government housing for teachers and other employees. The major Nairobi-Addis Ababa road, which goes straight through the centre, carries much tourist traffic to the Samburu and Marsabit game reserves further north. Isiolo town is in fact divided along an east-west axis into a "town" section with demarcated plots and cement houses, and a "village" section called Bula Besa with an irregular settlement pattern and houses made out of local materials. As we shall see later, there is also a division along a north-south axis into Muslims and Christians.

The regional physical development plan for Eastern Province (Kenya 1970a) provides a picture of what

kinds of services Isiolo town offers its population: health and school facilities, a social centre, post service, petrol stations, bus service, an airfield, shops, market, bank, hotel and piped water. The tiny district hospital with its 40 beds, the only hospital in the whole district, is supplemented by the small Catholic dispensary in Isiolo town, but service remains consistently inadequate. School attendance has been very low but has increased markedly in recent years (Dahl, personal communication). Many residents cannot afford to purchase the piped water, but instead fetch their water directly from streams, for example the DC's Furrow, which passes through parts of Bula Besa. This water comes from a small stream, Isiolo River, which is used for irrigation and for watering of domestic animals further upstream, and it is continuously contaminated.

The first image that confronts the stranger when he arrives in Isiolo is that of a frontier town. Both sides of the road are lined with cement dukas (see Map 1.1). Their roofed verandah fronts, painted in bright colours, stand out against the dull grey bricks of the backyard walls and against the background of the dry landscape.

The position of Isiolo as a gate between north and south is reflected in the multiethnic composition of the population. That ethnic ascription must locally be of importance is immediately obvious to the visitor to Isiolo, from the way people dress, behave and interact. On sight, there can be little doubt whether a person is a Borana, a Meru, a Samburu, a Somali or

a Turkana. The town turns into a kaleidoscope as people of different cultures move along the verandahs or in and out of the busy market-place. Women who come from the outskirts of the town to sell cabbages, tomatoes or frankincense stop at the market stalls to buy tea and sugar. Cattle owners and businessmen exchange greetings and the latest news from Garba Tula, Moyale or Nairobi. Elders sit beneath the few acacias, and small children roam around at the roadside, watching how Landrovers and rocking buses stop to be emptied and reloaded with goods and passengers. Goats nibble at the few grass stalks in the alleys or at scraps left over in the market-place.

Most of the town's population, however, do not live in this centre but in Bula Besa and in the irrigated fields along Isiolo River. The irrigation has been organized recently and the fields are inhabited by sedentarized pastoralists. These shambas have low productivity but look lush and green in their surroundings. Bula Besa is a vast conglomerate of red mud houses with roofs made from corrugated iron sheets (mabati) or flattened kerosene tins (madebe) and interspersed with round grass houses built according to nomad fashions. Most trees have been cut down and the winding paths often turn into eroded furrows. People and domestic animals trample whatever grass may grow between the small plots which are commonly demarcated with hedges or thorn bushes.

Isiolo as it appears today, with its high proportion of poor people, with its thriving trade and its ethnic complexity is the product of rapid and drastic his-

torical developments. Bula Besa (see Map 1.4), where most immigrated poor and impoverished Isioloans live, contains about 1,100 households, or a population of around 4,400 if the average size of a household is estimated to four persons²⁹⁾. The area is informally divided into sections, with a population distribution as follows: 14 % of the households are in Marire, another 14 % in Kula Mawe, 9 % in Kampi Ya Shauri Yako, 3 % in Bula Besa Juu, 21 % in Bula Besa Middle, 28 % in Bula Besa Chini and 11 % in Bula Bao³⁰⁾.

The name Bula Besa is said to derive from the Somali word "bula" meaning house or sleeping place and the Kiswahili word "pesa", money. The Bantu speaking inhabitants often call it "Kula Pesa" meaning "eats money" in Kiswahili. One interpretation of this name is that the cost of living is markedly higher in Bula Besa than in rural areas. Another is that prostitution and illegal beer-brewing are services provided in the "urban" Bula Besa which require cash spendings above the essentials.

Bula Besa was fenced during the recent war and nobody was allowed to live outside of the town. The scramble for a small piece of land inside, broke down some of the settlements' segregation although the effect has not been that of a "melting-pot". To a great extent the present ethnical distribution still reflects the old division into a Meru and a Somali area. Two original settlements, Bula Besa Chini and Kampi Ya Shauri Yako, can yet be distinguished on the map as the two areas with the highest density. Bula Besa Chini was in the past inhabited by Somali households and Kampi

Ya Shauri Yako by their employees and servants (in many cases Meru).

The Somali population gravitates towards the north of town and the Meru population towards the south. The Turkana town inhabitants are found in the southern part and the Borana in the northern part. Thus, northern Bula Besa is primarily Muslim while the southern section is non-Muslim. The ethnic distribution is given in the following table, in which the various sections of Bula Besa are listed from south to north. The overall ethnic composition, excluding all fringe settlements, is also presented in this table³¹⁾.

TABLE 1.1: Ethnic ascription of the inhabitants both of the various sections of Bula Besa and overall (in %)

	<u>Borana</u>	<u>Somali</u>	<u>Meru</u>	<u>Turkana</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Total</u>
Marire	0	13	60	27	0	100
Kula Mawe	0	0	22	71	7	100
Kampi Ya Shauri Yako	9	27	55	9	0	100
Bula Besa Juu	0	31	46	23	0	100
Bula Besa Middle	27	55	9	0	9	100
Bula Besa Chini	3	97	0	0	0	100
Bula Bao	88	4	4	4	0	100
Overall	23	36	20	16	5	100

Generally, the existing compounds in Bula Besa have not been officially surveyed. According to the County

MAP 1.4: Bula Besa with sections

Council's files there is a survey which was introduced in 1970 when the administration was reorganized after the secessionist war. The holder of a residential plot is to pay an annual fee of 20 KSh. Non-paying inhabitants, that is most Isioloans, are officially defined as squatters and could lose their plot rights, should the County Council push the issue. The number of surveyed residential plots according to the files was 1,301 in 1971. However, they had not been demarcated and no one could tell where they were situated. When I read the name lists to the respective Chiefs and Subchiefs they could only place very few names, the rest being unknown. In some instances the Meru Subchief recognized names of people whom he knew were living in Tigania. Of the names in the register about 76 % are Meru, 15 % Somali, 5 % Borana and 4 % Turkana. These proportions are far off from the actual ethnic distribution as presented above. The total number of persons registered as plot owners also exceeds the official number of plots. The registration of plots on others than inhabitants and the Meru dominance in the register are interpreted by many, recalling the local political issue whether the town should belong to Isiolo District or to Meru District, as ways to increase Meru influence in the town.

With the exception of a few cement buildings, the houses in Bula Besa are made of local materials. The most common house structure has walls made of wooden poles intertwined with stones and plastered with mud. The roof is made of madebe or mabati. The floor inside is either made of mud or, in the case of Somali houses, imported sand. To keep the

house cool watering is required every day. The walls need plastering approximately every other month but need almost permanent care to ensure that the surfaces stay smooth, so that insects are kept away. In most parts of Bula Besa, each house (or cluster of houses) has its own small compound, often demarcated with a hedge or thorny bushes. The pre-war clusters of houses normally reflect a kin group.

The southernmost part of Bula Besa is called Marire after a nearby swamp, which holds water throughout the year. During the colonial time the British tried to make a swimming pool out of it, but no traces of this remain today. Recently, the County Council has made efforts to turn it into a fish pond. The name "Marire" derives from the Kimeru word for "pool" or "waterpond". Before the secessionist war, the area around the swamp was inhabited by Meru. During the war many of the people who were forced to settle in Isiolo town built houses within Marire, particularly in the southern end, where the density was not so high. In order to return to rural areas, many people have deserted these houses, which are instead utilized for keeping domestic animals during night time. Unlike in central Bula Besa, where most trees were cut down during the war, many acacias are left. There is good grazing in the outer parts of the town.

Even today the majority of the Marire inhabitants are Meru (60 %), many of them traders or employees of businessmen. Most wage-employed newcomers are to be found in this area. A few cement houses have been built here recently, and Marire is developing into

an area regarded as "high class". Rents are relatively higher than in other parts of Bula Besa.

A number of Turkana, in the survey about one quarter of the Marire population, inhabit a section of Marire, which lies towards Kula Mawe. Kula Mawe in turn is dominated by Turkana who subsist by keeping small stock in the vicinity. To a certain extent it is also possible to find pasture inside Kula Mawe. Some irrigated farming is carried out along DC's Furrow, which demarcates Kula Mawe from Kampi Ya Shauri Yako. Most households depend to some extent on remittances or relief from the Catholic mission on the other side of the main road. The Turkana population of the Isiolo Kula Mawe is made up of people who have been forced to leave their own areas due to droughts, and who have not been ascribed a shamba in the irrigated projects, due to the shortage of arable land. Many are extremely poor since most relatives outside the own household group, upon whom they could have relied, have been killed due to natural disasters or the war.

The ground is covered by volcanic stones. This accounts for the name, identical with that of a small place along the Garba Tula road, which is equally covered with stones. A British administrator is said to have told starving Turkana in this place that they could eat the stones that they had plenty of, instead of asking Government for food ("kula mawe" means "eat stones" in Kiswahili); hence the name. The same name was established for the Isiolo Kula Mawe due to topographical similarities, when some destitutes came from the original Kula Mawe.

Kampi Ya Shauri Yako ("the camp of mind your own business" in Kiswahili) is one of the original centres of Bula Besa. It is today inhabited by Meru and Somali traders, some of whom are rich in cattle. The survey showed that half of the households are Meru and one quarter Somali, including many "old-timers". As the name hints, tension and violence may occur in the area if people do not mind their own business. Chang'aa and other illegal alcoholic beverages are sold here at night time (as well as in Marire to a lesser, but increasing, extent). The compounds of the different households were established before the secessionist war. The area is small but densely populated, so fairly few structures were added during the scramble for housing during the war. The houses are made of mud walls with mabati roofs and are well kept in comparison with those of Kula Mawe. Some irrigated shambas are kept along the furrow here, too. A number of acacias still remain, providing shade during day-time.

Kampi Ya Shauri Yako shares a border with Bula Besa Juu, the southern part of Bula Besa proper. "Juu" means "upper" in Kiswahili denoting that it lies upstream from the rest of the original Bula Besa. This part of town is also inhabited predominantly by Meru and Somali households. Many of the Meru living here have converted to Islam, and were either born in Isiolo or came early, in the 1920s or 1930s. The population structure in terms of ethnic ascription is similar to that of Kampi Ya Shauri Yako, though the proportion of Somali is slightly higher. Their proportion increases as one moves on to Bula

Besa Middle, where Somali make up over half of the population. One quarter is Borana. Many inhabitants engage in trading, both legal and illegal. Most of the artisans are Kikuyu who live together in the south-western corner of Bula Besa Middle. A few of the Somali who live in this section keep cattle outside town, while many former cattle traders after losing all of their animals have no opportunity to pursue this trade today, and now rely on remittances. They are often Alien Somali or descendants of these.

Many households keep some smallstock in the vicinity, predominantly goats, which are looked after by children. The western part of Bula Besa Middle is inhabited by people who farm in the irrigated shamba area just outside. The area has no trees since these were cleared away in the recent war. There is too little vegetation cover, and erosion is high. During rainy periods it becomes difficult to move about on the winding paths due to the slippery soil and the constant flow of mud.

Bula Besa Chini, lower Bula Besa, is the other original "centre", besides Kampi Ya Shauri Yako. It was established after World War I as a Somali camp by Herti Somali, who had been British soldiers. The area is densely populated and badly eroded. Practically all inhabitants are Somali, a few being Borana. Their economic activities are similar to those found in Bula Besa Middle. The Somali black-smiths (tumaal) live in Bula Besa Chini.

Bula Bao forms the north-western part of Bula Besa.

It consists entirely of wooden structures of poor quality but with cement floors and with mabati roofs ("bao" means "wood" in Kiswahili). All houses have been built after the recent war, because the area was outside the fence then, and all old structures were accordingly torn down. Today this is the only part of Bula Besa that has been demarcated. The present landlords live in Meru town, having invested in these houses during the Meru expansion into Isiolo. They have one or a few agents employed who visit Bula Bao towards the end of each month only to collect the rent. People often move every month trying to escape paying rent to the landlord. The high mobility inside Bula Bao was demonstrated in the survey. It showed that practically everybody had shifted to another house within the area over a six-month period.

Bula Bao is almost entirely inhabited by people regarded as Borana, especially Sakuye and Wata, who were impoverished by the secessionist war. Many households are headed by divorcees and widows. A few domestic animals are kept, some small trading is carried out and sometimes firewood is collected to be sold at the hotelis (restaurants) in town. Even though Bula Bao is situated some distance from the irrigation schemes, a few households have access to a shamba. These households spend part of their time staying in the field to protect and defend it. There is not a single tree in Bula Bao, since the whole area was levelled by bulldozers. The goats nip whatever grass that grows. Not even hedges have been planted. With the surface lying bare, both wind and water erosion become considerable.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 1

1. This is an approximate figure based on a household survey carried out during the fieldwork in 1973-74; see the appendix. The figure is lower than that presented in the 1969 Census (Kenya 1970b), which indicated a population of about 8,300 inhabitants. When this census was carried out the circumstances in the area were exceptional, since the town was still crowded due to a secessionist war, which had raged in the area for five years. During this war, the nomads from the northern districts were forced to move into the major towns and villages. Therefore the number of town inhabitants in the census exceeds the number under normal circumstances.
2. An account of this is given in "Handing Over Report Isiolo District NFP, Bader to Mahony" 1930.
3. Letter DC, Meru to DC, Isiolo 17.9.37; Ref. No. LMD 16/4/9/1214.
4. For a presentation of the Samburu see Spencer 1965 and 1973.
5. "Manyatta" in Maa means "temporary cattle camp". In Kiswahili, however, the transferred meaning is "settlement", "kraal" or "encampment", equivalent to "enkang" in Maa language. I use "manyatta" in the second respect throughout this volume.
6. All land around Isiolo town has now been bought by the Livestock Marketing Division as a holding ground. See also below, note 12 of this chapter.
7. For ethnographic details on the Borana of Ethiopia see Haberland 1963, Baxter 1965 and Asmarom Legesse 1973. For the Borana in Kenya, see Baxter 1966a, 1966b, 1972 and 1975 (mostly dealing with the Marsabit Borana), Tablino 1974 and Torry 1976 (the Gabbra at Marsabit), Dahl 1975, 1979 and (forthcoming a and b) (Uaso Nyiro Borana) and Goto 1972.
8. The information in the colonial sources on the location of Borana or Somali ethnic sub-groups is sometimes contradictory. Many administrators obviously had great difficulties in distinguish-ing groups like the Boran Gutu (proper Borana),

Gabbra, Sakuye, Orma (Warday) and Garri. There is reason to mark some doubt about the pace of the Somali expansion, as it consisted of individual households making grazing and water arrangements with neighbouring Borana. Also, I think that the term expansion needs to be cautiously treated. The British often regarded the ethnic groups as homogeneous entities. With this view northern Kenya was regarded as having been full of small armies conquering each other. Rather, it is a result of continuous expansions and contractions of available pasture, and of forming and breaking alliances (also across ethnic boundaries) for the sake of protection or mutual cooperation. If the net sum becomes a Somali expansion, this cannot have been deliberate in a sense that a conscious decision was taken at a particular point of time to expand into or seek control over a certain territory. Instead it was a gradual process, and not a "sudden" event over a shorter period of time.

9. I use the spelling "Garri" rather than the British "Gurreh" so as to avoid the confusion that is easily made between the Garri and the Gurra in southern Ethiopia. There seems to have been some confusion in Colonial reports between the Garri and the Geri, who are a Somali section found around Wajir.
10. A brief presentation of the Somali is found in Andrzejewski and Lewis 1964. For further information the reader is referred to the works of Cerulli and Lewis, some but not all found in the bibliography. An account of early Somali trade in north-eastern Kenya is given by Dalleo 1975.
11. Handing Over Report Isiolo District NFP, Bader to Mahony 1930.
12. After the study period this land was sold to LMD to expand its holding grounds. The residents of the district were invited to claim compensation, an opportunity which in practice only the most affluent and educated seem to have been able to make use of (Dahl, personal communication).
13. The other one went past Tana River to Lamu on the coast and continued by ship to Mombasa.

14. For details on the Turkana see for example Gulliver 1955, Gulliver and Gulliver 1953:53-86 and Henriksen 1974.
15. For further historical details see Barber 1968 and Lamphear 1976a and 1976b.
16. An account of one of the attempts that failed is given in Adamson 1971:170-175. On that occasion the move had to be stopped in the last minute when an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease was discovered among the gathered goats.
17. The Meru are usually divided into nine "sub-tribes", a practice that was introduced by the British in the early 20th century; see Fadiman (1976a:2-3). The groups are from south to north along the eastern slopes of Mount Kenya: Chuka, Muthamba, Mwimbi, Egoji and Miutini. Further eastwards down the slopes live the Tharaka who are considered somewhat isolated from the other Meru groups. Muriuki (1974) and Turton (1975), for example, treat them as a group separate from the Meru. From Mount Kenya out into the Nyambeni Hills live Imenti, Tigania and Igembe. For some details see Lambert (1965), Bernardi (1959), Almy (1974) dealing with South Imenti, Sandberg (1969) concerning Igembe, and Sandberg (1971). The total number of Meru people in the 1969 Census was about 590,000.

Many historians today believe that the origin of the Meru is different from that of the Kikuyu in that the Meru arrived from Mbwa at the coast. For a discussion of this issue see Muriuki (1974:49-51), Mahner (1975:400) and Fadiman (1976b). A good summary of the research on this issue and a criticism of the common theory that the Kikuyu and Meru have migrated from an area in southern Somalia, the so-called Shungwaya dispersal, is presented by Turton (1975:521-523).

18. DC means District Commissioner. The name DC's Furrow is derived from the fact that water is brought in the furrow to the administrative area, including the house of the DC.
19. Miraa, *Catha edulis*, or "qat" in Arabic, is a toxicant drug that affects the central nervous system. It is widely consumed in the area. I have discussed the trade in miraa in Hjort (1974b).

20. For details on the Somalia-Ethiopia conflict and the Somalia-Kenya conflict see Hoskyns 1969 and Touval 1972:109-112, 212-249.
21. The contacts between the Sakuye and the Qallu had been broken since the 1940s due to Sakuye conversions to Islam.
22. For the Muslim history in East Africa see Trimingham 1964. Lewis (1966:255) writes about the Somali that "both the Northern and Southern Somali coasts have unquestionably been in extensive contact with the Muslim world for almost a thousand years".
23. The transcription follows Rahman's (1968). For a presentation of Ṣūfī doctrine, practice and some organizations see Rahman (1968:202). He explains the two dimensions of ṭarīqa; it can be translated with Order but this needs not always be true as a ṭarīqa can "exist without a corresponding organized fraternity". The second dimension of ṭarīqa is that it "is really the name of the Ṣūfī 'path' claiming to lead man to communion with God" (*ibid*: 189).
24. Even if the importance of the ṭarīqas other than Husseinīya has been gradually reduced, they still are of some significance. One expression of this is that the religious Muslims in Garba Tula today belong to Ṣālihīya and those in Sericho to Qadiriya.
25. An in-depth presentation of the saint Sheikh Hussein is found in Andrzejewski 1972.
26. Knutsson (1967:53-55) discusses the ayana spirit of the Macha Galla in Ethiopia.
27. The importance of Sheikh Hussein is presented i.a. on pp. 412-415 and 343, while ayana is mentioned briefly on p. 347. Haberland is seemingly negative towards the pilgrimage in a manner that resembles the attitudes found within High Islam:

"Mit ihrem unerträglichen Hochmut und ihrer schamlosen Frechheit gleichen sie mehr Jahrmarktbettlern, als frommen Pilgern. Schon ihr äusserer Aufzug ist abstoßend: sie sind schmutzig, waschen sich -- ausser bei den mehr rituell aufgefassten religiösen Waschungen -- nie

und lassen ihr langes Haar ungeschnitten in fettigen Zöpfchen um den Kopf flattern. Stets kauen sie mit vollem Munde Çat, was sie häufig halbtrunken macht." (*ibid*: 414)

28. The higher ranked ng'imurok (sing. emuron), diviners, of which there are three in the Isiolo area, are intermediaries between the Turkana skygod and the people. He is contacted through dreams. These ng'imurok, who seem to be territorially distributed, deal with matters of general importance to the group by predicting events such as cattle raids and droughts. The lower ranked shoe-throwing ng'imurok deal with minor issues at individual levels, like whether a child who is ill will recover or whether one will find employment. There are several shoe-throwing ng'imurok in Isiolo town. Those ng'imurok who have been interviewed have all complained that Christianity was rapidly gaining ground at their expense. In times of crisis, such as during the drought of 1973-74, however, the ng'imurok are also consulted by converted Turkana. Such a supplementary relationship, where an indigenous religion remains alive parallel with a world religion, is a recurrent phenomenon in Africa.
29. The estimation of an average household size of four persons is based on the survey carried out in Bula Besa where 130 randomly chosen households were interviewed; see the appendix. The low figure is due to the fact that some households consist of one or two persons.
30. This distribution estimate is based on the map where each household was noted and given a number; see the appendix.
31. Based on the survey carried out in Bula Besa; see the appendix.

accumulation of wealth. Thus, the few who manage (and who indeed are those in a structural position to have the option at all) form an affluent social class in contrast to those who fail. For the latter, household viability is problematic. All their efforts must be concentrated on subsistence production, mainly for immediate consumption (with a possible exception for pastoralists) and, accordingly, their chances for acquiring wealth through an accumulation of surplus decreases.

When a man marries and establishes a family, he invests in future access to labour. Until children grow up it is only the husband and wife who can work within the household. Therefore, the stages in the developmental cycle of a household, where the opportunity of accumulating wealth is theoretically present for the Isioloans occur either when the household is in the process of being established, or when dependents are so numerous that access to manpower is sufficiently great to allow for an economic diversification and specialization. During the period in between food production within the household has to be oriented to immediate consumption needs.

A further constraint is created by the emergence of demands on inheritance from the following generation. Even if a man's marriage in itself does not imply an immediate separation from his father, it represents the first stage of a process of take-over. A second opportunity for a household head to acquire wealth thus emerges while the sons are roughly 15-30 years old. Then the household has great access to manpower

and the household head still maintains his influence. As time elapses, the demands on inheritance increase from the households of the following generation. Therefore, if a man is to succeed in making an economic career he needs, generally speaking, to do so either before he gets married, or when the children are teenagers or in their twenties.

It seems then that a dichotomization at least into rich and non-rich must be relevant. This position will become illustrated below, where principles for the self-perpetuation of an affluent social class are presented. The identification of the "non-rich" as poor, impoverished or even destitutes, may seem to be an oversimplification. On the other hand, as the later chapters will show, there are historical reasons why the "non-rich" Isioloans to a large extent really are impoverished. This fact can be expressed simply in that their very reason for being in town is in itself a manifestation of a failure to subsist in the umland. Most migrants come to town in direct response to disasters, when traditional solidarity principles have failed to be effective for the consumptive needs of the households concerned (Chapter 4).

The purpose of this chapter is to account for the emergence and role of today's affluent social class in Isiolo, in essence the long distance traders and some administrators, who play an important part in the life of the town. The administrators' influence depends on control over important resources such as employment opportunities, while the traders' importance concerns economic transactions and capital accumulation.

The traders are commonly Meru and Somali, while before independence there were many Arab and Asian traders in town. Those without Kenyan citizenship have gradually been replaced, in accordance with the Kenyanization programme for business¹⁾. No Borana are to be found among the long distance traders. Instead they play an important role in local politics, since Isiolo District as it was developed by the colonial authorities is essentially a Borana district.

This chapter deals mostly with economic characteristics of the affluent class, with a focus on Meru and Somali traders. The relevance of an ethnic differentiation will stand out gradually. These traders are not only economically and politically important, but they are also culturally dominant. The Meru traders represent a Western culture, while the Somali traders exert an Arab influence.

LONG DISTANCE TRADERS

The long distance trade through Isiolo is dominated by the Meru and Somali traders. Livestock for slaughter or breeding and game trophies come from northern Kenya. The stock trade is regulated through various health control measures, though by no means fully controlled through these. A large proportion of the total trade goes outside the official auctions, and some of it is then beyond any veterinary inspection. The trade in trophies is totally illegal. Agricultural products that are traded to the north are particularly maize meal and miraa. This trade is supplemented with one in manufactured goods.

For those who want to establish themselves among the affluent local traders, there are three key risky methods of accumulating cash within a short period of time; the miraa trade (south to north), the stock trade (north to south) and poaching (north to south). Another possibility to start a career as a trader is to find employment elsewhere for some years and to invest the incomes in business activities.

Farm products and manufactured goods going north

At present there are 120 registered plots for the larger shops in Isiolo town, which are situated along the road running through the centre of the town (see Map 1.1). At present there are premises built on more than half of these plots. They are all one-storey buildings, mostly of cement blocks and iron sheet roofs, and of an average value of about 100,000 KSh. Behind the shop line is a circumfenced courtyard. One building contains up to four shops with back rooms for the house-owner and some rooms to rent.

Until 1963 there were only 19 shops in Isiolo town. Around independence many of the Asian traders, who until then had dominated the long distance trade, were replaced by Somali traders. An effect of the secessionist war was that the latter disappeared, as mentioned in the previous chapter, and business was taken over by Meru traders, most of whom were from Tigania. In a few instances large Meru firms, well established in Meru town, have started several officially independent businesses. A few of the most

influential Arab and Asian Businesses are intact, their owners now being Kenyan citizens.

The northwardly trade in retail goods and various farm products to and through Isiolo from the south involves a great many traders with different incomes and ambitions. In all there were 111 businesses along the main street in early 1974. A clear majority of them, 57 %, deal with retail short distance trading. The monthly turnover of retailers is presented in Figure 2.1:

FIGURE 2.1: Monthly turnover for retail traders in Isiolo

Most of these deal solely with short distance trading, but those with a high turnover are off-shoots of wholesale businesses, which account for most long distance trade. Other kinds of businesses along the main street are hotels, bar and lodging, butchery, carpentry,

garages, tailoring, radio and clock repair, wet cleaning, shoe repair, petrol station, gum collecting (store) and hides and skin sales. Of these, the petrol stations, which are managed by long distance traders, have a high turnover and the garages a fairly high turnover (normally around or above 5,000 KSh per month).

Wholesale traders with government contracts established warehouses in Isiolo town in the beginning of the colonial period, particularly for posho. From these the meal was transported to the other centres of the Northern Frontier District, such as Marsabit, Mandera, Moyale and Wajir. These traders or their descendants today make up an important group of the affluent merchants and Isiolo town forms a base for the wholesale business in agricultural products in northern Kenya²⁾. This key position of the town as a trade link between north and south is basically the same today as it was during earlier days, though it will be challenged by the further improvement of the Garissa road, the second north-south link.

A second category of wholesale traders is formed by traders who lack government contracts and who are not engaged in similar kinds of long distance trade. Their primary interest is Isiolo town and a few more markets. They combine wholesale with retail trade. The two kinds of wholesale business can be distinguished by the scale of the trade³⁾. They are clearly differentiated on the basis of turnover; 100,000 KSh or above per month in the first case, and grouped around 10,000 KSh per month in the second one. There are nine traders of

each category. In the following case I present some details of businessmen of the former category in order to demonstrate the local economic role of these traders.

Haji Mustafa: posho dealer

Haji Mustafa, one of the few remaining Arab traders in Isiolo, lives in Bula Besa, at easy walking distance from his mill behind the shop lines in the town centre. He is one of the largest wholesale dealers in maize meal and was one of the early traders in Isiolo. His business includes a large mill, where maize is ground into two qualities, one rougher for trade in northern Kenya, where this quality is preferred for making porridge, and one finer for eastern Kenya. His son, Mahmud, is the manager. A significant part of Mahmud's working day is spent finding customers and wholesale dealers from various townships. They are contacted at the bars, and negotiations involve much beer drinking. Haji Mustafa accepts this method, as it is well established in Isiolo, and allows his son to visit the bars, though he, being an active Muslim, seriously resents it. Haji Mustafa himself would never enter these places.

Mahmud Haji Mustafa is often accompanied to the bars by M'Kaumbuthu, a Meru from the Kianjai area in Nyambeni Hills, who is manager for another old posho trader and "Big Man" in Isiolo, M'Mburunga. (The prefix M' is pronounced m-tu- and signifies a circumcised Meru man.) M'Mburunga, who lives in Kianjai, and Haji Mustafa are old friends. At the time of independence Haji Mustafa decided to leave the country, and sold his shops lying in various centres of Kenya including the two closest

ones, in Meru and Nanyuki. However, after the secessionist war he returned and re-established himself in the posho trade. He also owns board and lodging hotels in Nairobi. M'Kaumbuthu used to work for Haji Mustafa and was adopted by M'Mburunga when Haji left the country. M'Mburunga has also given some land in Kianjai to Mahmud Haji Mustafa for his recreation.

Mahmud and M'Kaumbuthu have built up a network of traders who are dependent on them by extending credit. Thus, they assume their customers' risks. In many cases such service is necessary for the traders to reach an agreement. Needless to say, this aspect of the posho trade requires the manager to have a thorough experience of the trade, including a personal knowledge of most of the customers. Mahmud and M'Kaumbuthu provide an example of how two traders are forced to cooperate by circumstances. Having no permanent government contracts, which are the most sought-for kind of contract, since deliveries and payment are well scheduled, they need other customers to raise the turnover and create continuity. However, these customers involve greater risks.

But even effective cooperation cannot alter the problem of the trade's vulnerability to climatic conditions. During the 1975-76 severe drought period, the two partners' business flourished. In 1978 M'Kaumbuthu had withdrawn from the Isiolo arena and invested in more stable business in his home village. Mahmud was more or less broke by then because of the unusually long periods of continuous rains, and joked that he prayed to God for the worst drought ever. When there is plenty

of milk in the pastoral areas, the demand for posho is low and the wholesalers of Isiolo town suffer.

The cooperation of the traders is partly a system of informing each other about customers' ability to pay back loans, and partly an occasional organized exchange of customers. With customers or their representatives travelling at will to Isiolo town with the intention of picking up a delivery as soon as possible, planning becomes very difficult for the partners, and fluctuations in the demand for posho may become so great that a delivery cannot be made promptly, since they cannot afford to invest too much capital in storage. If Mahmud has no immediate possibility to deliver an order, the customer is referred to M'Kaumbuthu and vice versa. In this way they succeed in keeping a reputation of providing reliable deliveries.

Other traders do not have such close cooperation but instead try to delay their deliveries until they are able to meet the demand. Although a few customers are lost in the process, they prefer this method to co-operating with other traders. Such cooperation becomes complicated as an extensive flow of business information is necessary to control the other traders, so that one does not lose customers systematically. The strength of these traders is that they can afford a certain temporary loss of customers, since their government contracts provide a fundamental safety which is lacking in the partnership of Haji Mustafa and M'Mburunga. Thus, while M'Kaumbuthu and Mahmud practise an elaborate information system, the rest of the traders have the opportunity of utilizing alternative strategies.

With intense control from both sides Mahmud Mustafa and M'Kaumbuthu exchange customers so that no one makes a gain in the long run. Mahmud and M'Kaumbuthu are seen together at the bars from early morning until late at night, every day. Though they eat and drink together relations are sometimes tense. Since Mahmud has been in business longer he feels, probably justifiably, that M'Kaumbuthu tries to exploit his knowledge. At the same time, though, he recognizes his own benefit from this kind of cooperation.

As in the case of extending credit, the trader who accepts payment by cheques must have personal knowledge of his customers. Three days are needed to clear a cheque drawn on the Isiolo bank. It might be disastrous if it does not clear. Even if a legal process is successful and the trader eventually gets his money, the delay decreases the liquidity of his business in the meantime. Since many posho traders do not voluntarily inform each other about the solvency of their respective customers, it is possible for a buyer to move from one dealer who refuses a cheque to another.

An effective way of extending credit is to cover repair costs of lorries used for transport. These costs are high due to the rough roads north of Isiolo. One effect of the credit is that the customer becomes dependent on the creditor for deliveries until the debt is paid.

The major difference between Mahmud's and M'Kaumbuthu's methods of managing the business is that M'Kaumbuthu takes greater risks; accordingly, he sometimes accepts

cheques that Mahmud would not accept. He also accepts payment in the form of livestock which Mahmud does not. By doing so, M'Kaumbuthu secures more customers and increases his turnover, although at the cost of occasional losses. Mahmud is of the opinion that his companion takes too many risks and that he therefore sooner or later will be out of business.

The case of Haji Mustafa and M'Mburunga exemplifies the wealthiest of the Isiolo wholesalers whose monthly turnovers stay above 100,000 KSh. All such traders have been well established for decades (with the sole exception of Haji Mustafa who was absent for a five-year period during the secessionist war). The second category of wholesalers, those with a monthly turnover of around 10,000 KSh, is made up of relative newcomers to the business. These traders have made a life career similar to the ideal for expansive traders by having succeeded in making gradual investments. The common problem among these traders is how to raise sufficient capital to make the business viable.

M'Itutu: miraa trader

Those traders in Isiolo town who have established themselves within the last 10-15 years, have more often than not started out in the miraa business. This trade, if carried out on a large scale, involves great risks. It is unique in that miraa is not storable and has to be consumed within about four days after harvest (granted that refrigerators are not used, in which case the shoots could last for seven to ten days). The trade, therefore, has to be extremely well organized with fast

transport. Furthermore, the miraa production fluctuates seasonally. During June to October the trees produce few shoots and prices are high. A successful trader may make a net profit of around 15,000 KSh from a delivery consisting of a single Landrover load, granted that he succeeds in selling all of the miraa (Hjort 1974b:40). The number of persons engaged in the trade is considerably lower during this period than when production is high. Prices then drop to a sufficiently low level to greatly lessen the traders' chances of accumulating capital. Attracted by the small necessary investment, scores of young men try their luck in the trade during this high production period, motivated to make an effort in a situation where no alternatives exist, but with limited hope of success.

The business career of M'Itutu is a case study of the category of traders who take great risks (Hjort 1974b: 40-41). He entered the miraa business in 1971, when he had raised money by buying a leopard skin from a person whom he met at a bar in Kianjai (Nyambeni Hills). When this person had got sufficiently drunk, M'Itutu paid for the skin with small Ugandan notes, in colour resembling the Kenyan 100-shilling notes. He then rushed off to Isiolo with the skin and sold it there, returned to the person he had cheated and paid him the agreed upon sum before a police report had been filed. With the money that he had made, M'Itutu bought miraa at Kangeta, transported it to Isiolo and managed to sell all of it at a considerable profit. About one year later he went completely bankrupt after having failed to sell three consecutive deliveries of miraa.

A few months later M'Itutu again managed to accumulate capital, this time by stealing a load of miraa from another trader who had hidden it with the intention of smuggling it into the market at night-time to avoid the cess costs. Some time afterwards he tried to "make big money", hearing a rumour that deliveries had been very poor to a town far north in Kenya. He borrowed as much money as he possibly could, rented a car, loaded it with miraa and took off. On arrival, one of his local contacts suggested that he should smuggle the miraa into town without paying cess, which he tried. However, he was reported to the police by this person and caught. All his miraa was confiscated until he had paid a severe fine. As M'Itutu was unable to put forth the requested sum, the whole load of miraa dried and he had to remain for two weeks completely without money until the police helped him to return by giving him some petrol and a spare part for the rented car, which had broken down.

M'Itutu's efforts illustrate the methods used in the miraa trade and the kind of risks involved in it. The long distance trade was previously controlled by Somali traders, while short distance trade was in the hands of Meru traders. After the secessionist war, however, the situation changed completely and today no Somali traders of importance remain in the miraa business in Isiolo. The successful Meru miraa traders have invested their profits in retail shops, in hotels and in cattle, in addition to the shambas "back home".

"A quick success" in the miraa trade remains mostly fiction. Though the trade has the reputation of a road

to "quick money", this is only true if one has a thorough knowledge of the trade and rapid and reliable information about the alternative markets. It, therefore, becomes not only a matter of skill in learning the tricks of the trade over a long period of time (a year or two), but also a matter of contacts. A successful trader must be continuously informed about fluctuations in consumer prices as well as about variations in the production within Nyambeni Hills. While the Meru miraa traders are well informed about the situation among the producers in Nyambeni Hills, the Somali traders were far better informed about situations in the various markets throughout northern Kenya in earlier days. The major reason for this difference is, of course, that the respective networks of contacts extend in various directions depending on where "home" is. But there is also a structural difference in the networks, which will be discussed below in a comparison of the local Meru and Somali affluent traders.

Livestock and game trophies going south

Livestock and hides are essentially the only products legally exported from northern Kenya. To this is added a substantial, though not measurable, illegal export of wild life products such as elephant tusks, leopard skins and rhino horns. In order to cover the costs, however low, of the administration of the former Northern Frontier District, the British colonial government made early efforts to introduce taxes and encourage limited local trade, as exist in other

regions. Cash taxation was introduced in 1930 and made compulsory a few years later with the effect of an increased marketing of livestock. The goal, though sometimes unexpressed, was also to develop a cash oriented economy. The major resource in NFD, livestock, was by then in great demand as low-quality beef for a canned meat factory outside Nairobi and in growing demand by the government since beef was needed for its troops. The productive capacity of the arid northern districts surprised most early British experts and administrators.

Fluctuations in livestock prices outside official market have depended greatly on the incidence of drought. During such periods the pastoral herds become drastically reduced both because of increased mortality rates and the fact that people sell off many of their animals in such a situation⁴⁾. The effect is that pastoral households are forced to purchase maize meal to a greater extent than normal, not only during the drought period but also some time after it, until the animals born after the drought have grown.

The legal southerly trade in cattle, however, was hampered by quarantine regulations from the early 1920s into the 1940s. These regulations were intended to protect the emerging ranches in the Highlands. An alternative route was opened up for a few years to Lamu at the coast when the Italians occupied Ethiopia and the demand for beef increased in southern Somalia. This and World War II caused prices to increase considerably and the trade in Isiolo boomed.

By 1951 the price level was reported to have trebled since 1930⁵⁾. After that, prices dropped drastically due to the beginning of the Mau-Mau war and due also to serious outbreaks of epizooties. All Kikuyu land was declared closed territory and no Kikuyu were allowed into northern Kenya by the colonial administration. Around this time the official auctions were held at Garba Tula twice a year, normally attracting large numbers of Kikuyu traders who purchased primarily for the Nyeri market.

As a consequence of a Somali boycott of the first cattle auction to occur in Garba Tula after the Mau-Mau war, prices rose considerably. Increasing prices and good rains caused the trade to grow again from 1957 until independence. During the secessionist war the long distance cattle trade was practically brought to a stand-still.

The businessmen who dealt with long distance trade for the cattle auctions before independence, usually acted as middlemen between the pastoralists and the African Livestock Marketing Organization, predecessor of the Livestock Marketing Division, Ministry of Agriculture (LMD). Many of these businessmen were Somali, especially ex-soldiers from World War I or their descendants. They had built up great wealth in large cattle herds, which were in most instances lost during the war, as the previous chapter has shown. The town Somali in Isiolo today consists of a partly shattered former affluent social class of long distance cattle traders: Many of those who remain today are either poor or have found new methods of acquiring wealth. Various forms of trade

that require reliable contacts in several places, have become particularly attractive for these Somali, due to their geographically widespread lineage systems, quite efficient in economic transactions over long distances, as I shall discuss below.

An example of the fate of a former Somali cattle trader is Ahamed Sheikh, born in 1914, who came to Isiolo with his parents before 1920. In his early days he used to be employed as a herdsboy by a former soldier from World War I who lived in Kampi Ya Sheikh⁶⁾. Ahamed's income from herding these animals was food, especially milk, some goats annually and a little cash. With his savings he entered the cattle trade, and by the mid-1930s, when Isiolo grew as a trading centre, Ahamed was well established. Due to good rains and good grazing during the years to follow, he expanded his trade considerably. All surplus was reinvested in cattle purchased from pastoral households, often only a few at a time. Thus Ahamed would gradually build up large herds of cattle, while waiting for the next auction. In the meantime his employees herded the cattle into areas which had been set aside for the Alien Somali by the British.

During the secessionist war everything changed for Ahamed. He lost all his cattle which were shot and confiscated by the government troops. He found himself impoverished to the degree that he even had problems to find food for survival, since all his friends and relatives were struck and could not help him. Ahamed summarizes the secessionist war: "This was a miserable event that changed the life for Somali Kenyans from

herding animals to being farmers, teachers, drivers, policemen, army men and so on". He concludes that from this time on, people's customs changed with an increased emphasis on "town life", and also that so many immigrants have arrived that the original town dwellers are now in a minority. Ahamed has not managed to re-enter the cattle trade, but although he is aging, he is trying to build up his wealth again. Today he is one of the few Somali trading in tourist items, dealing entirely in Somali swords and knives which are delivered to him by the Somali blacksmiths, tumaal, in town. This trade is profitable and Ahamed is again able to invest in large stock, both cattle and camels. These animals are taken care of by the households of his sons.

The number of domestic animals, estimated in various stock censuses, provides an idea of the opportunities for trade. Since the censuses in general are unreliable, I present only three detailed ones in the following table. The districts of Isiolo, Garissa, Mandera, Marsabit, Samburu, Turkana and Wajir contain roughly 1,350,000 head of cattle (Hjort 1976:166) and 500,000 camels (Von Kaufmann 1976:255). These figures may be compared with the figure of 900,000 for Maasailand in the south (Kajiado and Narok districts).

TABLE 2.1: Number of domestic animals in Isiolo District in 1,000 head

	<u>1962</u> ¹⁾	<u>1970</u> ²⁾	<u>1973</u> ³⁾
Cattle	150	182	119
Camels	200	6	14
Sheep	155	12	23
Goats	365	26	54

1. Spinks quoted in FAO 1971
2. Watson quoted in FAO 1971
3. Watson et.al. 1973

Spinks' figures seem to have been used in the various censuses presented during the 1960s. Watson's census is based on aerial photographing. He is of the opinion that the earlier censuses have clearly underestimated the number of cattle.

Certainly, Spinks' estimate of the camel population is too high. Even so, the general trend, a drastic reduction in the number of camels, sheep and goats, is dramatic. The fluctuations are certainly linked with both the secessionist war and natural disasters that have occurred. Apart from many animals being slaughtered for consumption (or as collective punishment), much of the large stock was taken out of the district during the war, (see previous chapter) and particularly camels which can travel large distances.

The large scale trade in cattle is channelled through auctions. An important buyer in the drylands of Kenya is LMD, which purchases livestock at the auctions at fixed prices if no other buyers show up. The auctions are arranged jointly by LMD and the County Councils concerned. LMD is often the sole buyer in northern Kenya, where it makes the majority of its purchases⁷⁾. After the stock has been bought it is taken to one of the two large LMD holding grounds (one is situated just outside Isiolo town) for feeding, quarantine and vaccinations. LMD usually does not buy less than 100 head at a time (with the recent exception of the

experiments with Marketing Centres⁸⁾. This means that the sellers to LMD are usually middlemen who buy cattle from individual pastoralists.

Important for the existence of middlemen in the cattle trade is the spacing between auctions. That they normally occur only twice a year means that the pastoralists cannot always wait until the next auction when cash is needed and they have to accept the low prices of the middlemen between the auctions.

It is also necessary for the cattle trader to have access to an area with sufficient grazing and water where he can keep purchased animals until the next auction. The influential traders have secured this in two areas; either to the north of Isiolo town where the formal aspects of land rights are complicated so that informal contacts in Nairobi have proved necessary; or to the east of town in the Meru Grazing Area (see Map 2.1), where a cooperative ranching society, of which the few Meru cattle traders are members, has grazing rights.

During the drought 1973-1974 one could see many examples of how a trader's position with control over the best grazing grounds could be used for enormous profits. One such example is provided by the almost dying Samburu herd that was taken to the outskirts of Isiolo town where there is permanent access to water. The pastoralists agreed to sell their cattle at 50-80 KSh per head since the whole herd would soon die anyway and they felt that they might as well get some cash out of it. The Meru trader who purchased

the animals simply brought them across the road a short distance into the Meru Grazing Area. Here grazing was of sufficient quality to allow about half the herd to recover. A few weeks later each of the surviving head of cattle was worth several hundred KSh and the cattle trader had gained a substantial profit within a fortnight. This particular transaction gave rise to some unrest when the Samburu felt they had been unjustly treated and tried to take "their" cattle back by force.

While this example is somewhat extreme as the purchasing prices were unusually low, it illustrates the general tendency for the middlemen to increase their profits during the droughts. In comparison, one Somali trader sold more than 2,000 head of cattle at an auction in Garba Tula in January, 1974, at a unit price of 400-500 KSh depending on the quality of each herd sold. He had bought the animals during the previous months for 150-200 KSh per head. This profit, around half a million KSh, was, according to himself, above what he usually experienced. The wealthiest trader at this auction brought as many as 8,000 head of cattle. The average price paid by LMD 1970-1973 was 250 KSh per head (IDA 1973, Annex 3:2)⁹⁾.

Three factors that I have touched upon that benefit the cattle traders and middlemen are: (1) it is difficult for the individual pastoralist to sell directly to LMD, which does not purchase less than 100 head at a time at the auctions; (2) the auctions occur only twice a year; and (3) these traders have reliable access to grazing and water. The influential traders

have been able to influence land adjudication decisions. To control their situation, the traders also need an influence in the Isiolo County Council, where decisions are made about the frequency of auctions and the level of auction fees to the County Council. With this they have been quite successful. Some of the most prominent County Council members are cattle traders. It is not directly possible for the traders to influence the LMD policy itself, which to some extent has to do with the size of the organization. Within LMD one is aware of the problem of buying directly from the producer. Recent experiments with LMD-organized bi-weekly auctions on a small scale in Marketing Centres in southern Kenya are intended to counter the occurrence of middlemen.

The middlemen rely for their trade on an elaborate information system. Their representatives must cover a large area in search for animals to be purchased. The traders try to establish patron-client relations, for example, by combining the cattle trade with retail trade in the small centres. Thus improving the service in the rural areas or establishing other trade relations, they often expect political support for their interest also in the local elections¹⁰⁾.

An information system similar to that of the cattle traders, and similar patron-client relations, are needed for the illegal trade in game trophies¹¹⁾. The dominant poaching activity is the hunt for elephant tusks but rhino horns and leopard skins are also of great importance.

The general pattern of the trade is that a large number of hunters deliver to local traders, or to middlemen for traders in Nairobi. These men arrange the smuggling to Nairobi where the goods are either brought into the legal market, by somebody with a licence, or smuggled out of the country. The poacher depends on the trader-middleman for his security, so that he does not have to store the goods for longer periods. In order that neither the seller nor the buyer gives the other away, deliveries are sometimes made in a complicated fashion according to a step-by-step formula involving several persons.

The trader naturally makes use of whatever method available to improve his security, usually by establishing friendly relations with people who might have an influence over the trade. There are examples where traders even caught red-handed have avoided punishment as well as instances where they have been prosecuted. In the latter cases that I have come across all the traders dealt on a fairly small scale, being newcomers to the trade.

Over time there has been a tendency towards a concentration of the trade in game trophies on fewer middlemen, as pressure has mounted against poaching. This reflects the governmental concern, which has resulted in more efficient efforts to hinder this illegal trade. The process of concentration has also gone on centrally. When a single trader in Nairobi lost his licence so that he could not bring illegal goods into the legal market, it immediately became more difficult for the local hunters to sell their

products. The ban on legal hunting and dealing in ivory introduced in late 1973 also had repercussions for the local trade. By 1978 this trade was totally banned. Incidentally, this coincides with a decrease in the elephant population.

The local poachers get very low prices compared with those which the middleman gets in Nairobi. Typical prices are presented in the following table. The variations are due to differences in quality.

TABLE 2.2: Payment for game trophies to poachers and middlemen (in KSh)

<u>Item</u>	<u>Poacher</u>	<u>Middleman</u>
Elephant tusk (per kg)	30-40	280-300
Leopard skin	400-600	2,500-3,000
Rhino horn	10-20	75-120

The elephants are usually killed either by poisoned arrows or shot by rifles. Sometimes water holes may be poisoned in efforts to kill off a whole herd. One fairly small elephant may bring around 40 kg of ivory.

Prices on ivory on the international market have fluctuated in a similar fashion to the price of gold, since it is a similar kind of investment object. For non-citizens it is sometimes easier to bring such kind of capital out of the country than cash. Any external price fluctuations are quickly felt locally. The returns stated in the above table may be compared

to the 500 KSh per kg that elephant tusks brought in the Nairobi black market half a year earlier. Early in 1974 prices were down to 98 KSh a kg (Sunday Nation 21.4.74).

In order to give some kind of idea about the magnitude of the trade, one may consider that tusks representing 8,000 elephants were legally brought out of Kenya during the first half of 1973. Other estimates claim that around 2,000 elephants are killed per month in Kenya, although these figures are considered low by informed people (loc.cit.). Tsavo National Park accounts for most of this trade, but the Isiolo trade contributes considerably.

For a trader who buys the tusks from a small size elephant at 1,200 KSh and sells them at 11,200 there is a profit of 10,000 KSh per elephant. It is impossible to calculate a net profit. Though the indirect costs, for example for a continuous re-activation of networks or for re-building lorries for smuggling purposes, are extremely high, there is no doubt that the trade is highly profitable.

The sociology of the affluent merchants

The local affluent merchants in Isiolo town are divided into two sub-groups, which are dominated by Meru and Somali traders respectively. Members of the Somali group trade on a large scale in cattle or engage in other business. It is important for them to exercise a certain degree of local political influence, for

example in order to manipulate cattle auctions. Furthermore, it is necessary for a successful trader to have good general information about what goes on in various parts of northern Kenya; particularly about the whereabouts of domestic and wild animals, health conditions of cattle and small stock, the probability that pastoralists in an area are interested in selling animals, etc. The Somali traders, therefore, have to maintain effective contacts, through which they can be provided with the information required in a swift and reliable manner. Invariably these contacts are based on the use of the Somali lineage system. Kinship networks form the basis for both the information flow as well as recruitment and solidarity principles.

Of the ten most affluent local Somali traders, half are Isaq. They are all related and belong to the clan Habr Awal, being either Issa Musa or Saad Musa¹²⁾.

Guhad (in the kinship diagramme) was one of the three Somali leaders to settle in Isiolo after World War I. Mohamud has been politically very influential at the local level among the Somali since the 1950s, although his power has decreased since the secessionist war, while Daud has effective political networks at a national level. Daud has a strong position in local politics since he is a member of the Isiolo County Council. Bare, Elmi and Mohamud have all been more or less explicitly against the secessionist ambitions of the guerrillas.

All five Isiolo traders in the diagramme (see Figure 2.2) (Abdalla, Bare, Daud, Elmi and Mohamud) engage in trade

FIGURE 2.2: The affluent Isaq Somali in Isiolo

in cattle and small stock, in some cases supplementing other substantial business activities. They have shops in most of the small centres throughout northern Kenya as well as in some larger urban centres in the rest of the country. These shops do not necessarily bring a profit but are useful for establishing patron-client relations as mentioned above. Abdalla, Bare and Elmi cooperate in cattle trading, especially with the herding of purchased animals. In 1971 Abdalla, Elmi and another Isaq Somali, not in the diagramme, together applied for a "group ranch" of 15,000 acres. The application was turned down after a heated debate in the Isiolo County Council.

Bare worked as a herdsman for Hash in his youth. Before Hash died, he had made Bare a guardian for his son Daud, to whom he had left a substantial amount of wealth (the age difference between Bare and Daud is about 25 years). This position became the basis for Bare's efforts to establish himself as one of the affluent local merchants. He began to cooperate with the heirs of Guhad and Hash, who had established themselves as businessmen in the beginning of this century. Bare and Daud are now business companions, and their relationship is further reinforced by the marriage between Daud and the daughter of Bare. A similar arrangement exists between him and Abdalla, that is their respective daughter and son are married. Without the marriages of his two oldest daughters, Bare would be in a much weaker position and would find himself much worse off if his partners were to break the business relations, an event considerably less likely when these kinship links have been established.

The importance ascribed by Bare to the marriages may be understood through the knowledge that both daughters resented their respective marriages. Marriage is generally instrumental not only for confirming a position in the affluent social class, but also for obtaining such a position. Geographical dispersal of contacts that can be useful for business is then one factor that is given high consideration.

An important link for communication between Somali kinsmen, not least for the merchants, is formed by the many Somali drivers who drive over much of eastern Africa, from Somalia and Sudan to Zambia. Isiolo town is one of the main Kenyan centres for these transport lines, Eastleigh Section 2 in Nairobi being another. Many Somali drivers consider Isiolo their home. Since the transport business is linked with other trading activities, the lorries and their drivers can be seen as physical expressions of primarily agnatic and affinal links along which remittances are sent. Traditional clan cooperation, as for example dia payment¹³⁾, is highly organized and much information of value for the traders is channelled through these networks.

The example in Figure 2.3, showing with what kinsmen an Isiolo Somali trader keeps regular contacts, further demonstrates how geographically spread out these kinsmen are (see the map in the figure). The genealogy is typical of the kinship networks of the Somali affluent traders, with the exception that Wajir and Mombasa are not represented. Many traders have kinsmen in these places as well as in Isiolo and Nairobi. Kinship networks extend normally to the major centres in Kenya as well as in Somalia, Tanzania and Uganda.

The discussion so far has demonstrated the importance of kinship for the affluent Somali merchants. They are closely knit together through kinship ties. Members of the various kin groups are widely dispersed geographically, and marriages are instrumental for obtaining or reinforcing a business position. In contrast, the local rich Meru merchants' solidarity is based on neighbourhood, although in Meru "neighbourhood" in a sense is an expression of clan- and subclanship following principles of traditional land tenure. The Meru genealogies do not exhibit much geographical dispersal; on the contrary most kinsmen live within a short distance from each other "back home".

The affluent Meru merchants also tend to differ from the Somali in their focus in the trade. The emphasis of the Meru business is on wholesale trading, maize mills or miraa trade which are supplemented with cattle trade. Geographically, the trade is limited to the rich Nyambeni Hills, expanding out to places like Isiolo town but not much further. The cattle trade is organized differently from that of the Somali traders, so that they do not have such efficient networks of contacts throughout important parts of northern Kenya; consequently, they tend to buy larger herds than a few animals at a time, either on occasions when they are approached by sellers or at auctions.

Meru trade contacts are generally located in Meru town or other centres in Nyambeni Hills, except in the case of miraa or cattle traders. But contacts back to Nyambeni Hills are also decisive for the latter traders.

Thus, note some of the examples of such business methods that I have referred to in the case of M'Itutu, the miraa trader, and in the exploitation by a stock trader of a group of Samburu with dying cattle. It was fundamental for M'Itutu to have localized contacts which enabled him both to successfully sell his leopard skin and to purchase miraa, and for the stock trader to have a membership in a Nyambeni cooperative for access to grazing in the Meru Northern Grazing Area.

Neighbourhood solidarity is essential for the rich Meru merchants in building up networks of contacts. When shop keepers recruit employees, for example, they use such links. Out of the 65 Meru traders in the cement shops along the road, 41 (63 %) come from the centres of Kianjai, Muthara and Karama, all in Tigania. 22 (34 %) come from Katheri, Miiriga Mieru outside Meru town in Imenti. Only two traders were born elsewhere, one in Bula Besa in Isiolo and one in Chogoria further south on the eastern slopes of Mount Kenya. No one comes from such important centres in Nyambeni Hills as Kangeta, Lare or Maua as Map 2.1 clearly shows. The two sender areas are also distinguishable as two clusters on the map.

The pattern of recruitment in the miraa trade is similar. Over time, the neighbourhood-based recruitment to this trade has led to a situation where miraa traders tend to come from discrete areas in Nyambeni Hills, especially Kangeta and Kianjai which is shown in Map 2.1. The dominant traders have usually begun their business careers as assistants. In the case of the twelve traders at the market all come from Tigania.

MAP 2.1: Nyambeni Hills: "Home areas" of the
Isiolo Meru traders

Seven of these come from the same sub-location, Karama in Muthare (see Map 2.1). The market traders had altogether twelve permanent assistants employed in September 1973 (during the period when prices were high and the number of assistants low). Of these, nine belonged to the same sub-clan as their employer, and in five cases they were classificatory brothers. Besides the assistants, there were thirteen traders working on the premises of the regular traders on short-term contracts (officially as assistants since this kind of contract is illegal). In all cases but two they were of the same sub-clan as the licence holder.

THE ADMINISTRATION

In the present section I shall only briefly touch upon the administration, partly because its isolated role, nationally rather than regionally or locally linked, is not directly relevant for the present study. The affluent local merchants in Isiolo have a restricted influence over the administration, due to the Kenyan policy of circulating civil servants, which probably has the local effect of decreasing the incidence of local corruption. The district administration is closely linked to the central national administration through the Office of the President and the party, KANU. The wealthy Isiolo traders are, therefore, by and large restricted to controlling the County Council activities, such as issues dealing with auctions within the district and developmental projects. Control over job opportunities in the local administration is one

of the major assets for obtaining support. Further attempts to influence administrative decisions must be channelled through central contacts in Nairobi and then back again to the Isiolo scene.

Due to the policy of circulating civil servants, a large body of outsiders reside within Isiolo town, who do not participate in the local life, with the exception of utilizing such services as prostitution or beer brewing, and who even strive to isolate themselves from the local population. In terms of interaction, the civil servants are socially far away from Isiolo. They live in special quarters and predominantly meet people from their own category, both at home and in the bars. They do not go to Bula Besa, which most of them consider as a dangerous area inhabited by primitive people. Exceptions to this are occasional visits to the two sections of Kampi Ya Shauri Yako and Marire.

Many of the administrators who are posted to Isiolo apply for transfer as soon as possible. In some cases a transfer to Isiolo is interpreted in political or other terms as a warning that their career is in danger. The attitudes of the civil servants placed in such a position, where they anxiously wait for a transfer from the town, may deserve a study in itself. For the purpose of the present discussion, however, the impact of the administrators is limited to such issues as how they influence the employment situation or the opportunities to get loans, their control over decision-making and the signing of agreements with local contractors. Even if the intention of the policy of frequent transfers may not always be fulfilled, one of its

results is the decrease in the resources that the local affluents can manipulate.

Civil servants, expecting a transfer in a foreseeable future, of course rarely invest their savings in or around the Isiolo area, but export them to their "home areas", usually to be invested in the purchase of new land or in increasing the cash output of a shamba. Often a wife or a close relative has been left in charge of this enterprise.

Because of the fact that civil servants, even more so than the rest of the population, are strangers in town in most respects, I do not deal with them in detail in the present discussion. They can be seen as an extension of a specific sub-culture dispersed over Kenya. The local impact is limited (but not marginal!). There is, however, a recent tendency, further marked after my fieldwork, which in the future may partly contradict the description just given. This exception is found in the lower ranks of civil servants, among those who are not so likely to be transferred, and who have begun to invest locally in retail trade or livestock rearing. With a decreased circulation of civil servants one could hence expect a greater involvement locally on their part.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 2

1. The situation for Asians in East Africa is analyzed in Ghai and Ghai (1970). The process of Africanization is described in the following words by Swainson (1977:41): "The preferential access of local capitalists to certain areas of the economy was achieved by means of a system of licencing. The Trading Licencing Act of 1967 excluded non-citizens from trading in rural and non-central urban areas and compiled a list of specified goods which were to be restricted to citizen traders. These included most basic wage goods such as maize, rice, and sugar, which was to be extended later on in the 1970s to include most commodities including textiles, soap and cement. The Kenya National Trading Corporation had been set up in 1965 with the intention of taking over the import-export trade and was later used as the primary agency for the allocation of these specified goods to certain citizen traders. From 1967, therefore, the KNTC was used as an instrument by the emergent bourgeoisie to penetrate the wholesale and retail sectors, which had formerly been the exclusive preserve of non-citizens."
2. Even illegal trade may be attractive: The price of maize meal in the black market in Uganda, for example, was about four times the price in Kenya during 1973.
3. All of the shopowners along the main street, in total 111, have been interviewed in a survey.
4. A general discussion on long-term effects of a drought for pastoral households is available in Dahl and Hjort (1976:114-129). We have also discussed the same issue in Dahl and Hjort (forthcoming).
5. Northern Province Annual Report 1951:65:PC NFD 1/1/10.
6. This settlement was established by Sheikh Omar, the early leader of the Isaq Somali in Isiolo. It was destroyed during the secessionist war when people were forced to settle in Bula Besa.
7. The conditions for the cattle trade have changed recently (see note 10 below).

8. When there is a shortage of cattle in an area, such as after a drought, the rigid pricing policy of LMD may hinder the trade. For the pastoralist with few remaining cattle, the income from one sold animal must compare favourably with the alternative of keeping it as a source for reserve food or slaughtering it for home consumption.
9. Over half of these animals were immatures. The average live weight was 250 kg. The figures refer to the total LMD purchase in northern Kenya.
10. Recently important changes have taken place in the cattle trade in the area for three reasons: (1) auctions occur more frequently, (2) LMD has changed its policy of buying only large quantities of stock (though prices are still fixed), and (3) more traders have come from other parts of the country, particularly Kamba. As these changes have taken place after my fieldwork I cannot spell out the implications at present. It can be said, however, that with the more frequent cattle auctions, a strategy to select the occasions at a time when local need for cash is greatest is no longer viable. The fact that other private traders appear in great numbers, in the wake of the drought period and the shortage of slaughter animals that has followed, is also likely to further restrict the advantageous position of the Isiolo-based middleman.
11. This is not to say that all cattle traders deal with trophies, which is by no means the case.
12. Various Somali lineage segments within the Isaq (see a charter over the Somali lineage system, for example Lewis (1961:157)).
13. The dia-paying (kinship) group pays blood-money for a member, that is compensation to relatives of a killed Somali (for the most part). The payment from each member is made according to wealth and the degree of closeness to the offender in the kinship relation.

3. MAKING ENDS MEET FOR POOR ISIOLOANS

My purpose with this chapter is to present the economic opportunities available in Isiolo town, while I shall return to the actual choices made in the town-umland context later. For the poor Isiolo households there are two principal opportunities for making ends meet: Earning cash incomes and producing food for subsistence from the irrigated shambas. The focus of this chapter is precisely on "opportunities" -- who has

access to which resources and to what possible gain, as an indication of the importance of the particular activity. Thus, the intention is not primarily to make a descriptive account of the Isiolo standard of living, or of levels of consumption, etc.¹⁾.

Many of the town dwellers have immigrated more or less in desperation. They are former herdsmen from the neighbouring pastoral areas who have suffered large-scale collective losses of their herds and flocks of domestic animals. Others are farmers' sons, from Meru, with no farm lands or uncertain claims. There are the widowed and divorced women of various origins who have been left without support. To all these refugees from the rural areas must be added the impoverished town Somali who lost their wealth during the secessionist war. Many of these rely to a large extent on support from wealthier local clansmen or on remittances from relatives in other parts of East Africa. They remain attached to Isiolo as one of the major social and cultural centres for Somali in Kenya. The town offers all these poor people, first, the hope of a chance to avoid starvation.

In accordance with the previous chapter, employment is to be found within either commerce or administration. Labour is needed in town at various levels within the local, district and provincial administrations, in the form of labourers, messengers, drivers, typists, and so on. Herdsmen, guards, etc. are also needed at the Livestock Marketing Division. In commerce labour is required not only in shops, but also for grinding maize in the posho mills, loading and unloading lorries,

building houses and many other activities. Due to the gameparks north of town, traders and handicraft producers can make a living. Wild life gives rise to a considerable illegal trade in game trophies, and hence widespread poaching. In town, all the wealthy households, involved in commerce and administration, demand service -- maids, suppliers of consumer goods and entertainment. Traders in farm products serve those who have regular cash incomes - businessmen, labourers and others. To these opportunities has lately been added a new asset, irrigated farming. This has been developed with Government support.

One third of the households in Bula Besa keep domestic animals, in a few cases for trading purposes. Equally many also derive incomes from a shamba (the average size of which is as small as 1.6 acres). Out of these, only 28 % earn cash by selling shamba produce, and none achieves an annual income from this of above 1,500 KSh. As many as 40 % of the Bula Besa households have some incomes from employment. The average monthly wage for an employed household member is 372 KSh with the median clearly below that. Incomes from small trading for the Bula Besa households are even lower. One fourth of the households include a member practicing some trade.

The town inhabitants living in the shambas, and those living in the manyattas on the fringes, are considerably less involved in a cash economy than the inhabitants of Bula Besa. The primary difference is that the cash incomes of the Bula Besa inhabitants are for the "fringe inhabitants" replaced by incomes from farming

or animal husbandry. Remittances from relatives in the rural areas form an important supplement for many households.

WAGE LABOUR, HANDICRAFT, TRADE AND SERVICE OCCUPATIONS

Cash incomes for the Isiolo households come from regular employment, and from participation in work groups, charcoal production, firewood collecting, illegal hunting, the tourist trade, milk sales, prostitution, the market and various other forms of minor trading activities. The total household income is often supplemented by small scale farming, some animal husbandry and occasionally a little trade in farm produce.

Employment

Regular employment in Isiolo town is found with the local, and provincial district administration, with Livestock Marketing Division, with organizations such as missions, with traders and with individual households. Recruitment to many jobs is based on friendship, kinship or ethnicity. Control over job opportunities is an important asset for an individual wishing to achieve influence or to gain benefits. The kinds of jobs available to the Isiolo poor bring low wages; maids, shop assistants, herd boys, labourers, etc.

The lowest salaries that I have encountered are paid to the girls from Bula Geri, north of Bula Besa Chini,

who work as house maids for families in town, especially in Somali households. Geri girls have developed a local reputation of being particularly skillful in household work. Their monthly salaries vary between 30 and 45 KSh. For this they work 10-12 hours per day every day of the week. In contrast, the highest wages are paid to Turkana labourers, who are in great demand. Exactly half, a surprisingly large proportion (when comparing with the other sedentarized pastoralists), of the Turkana households in the shambas have a member with regular cash incomes. Practically all of these are labourers, herd boys at LMD or policemen. Their salaries range from 200 KSh to 500 KSh per month (81 % of those employed are found within this interval).

Work groups

Manual work such as road construction, building houses, loading lorries and working in the posho mills, is carried out by work groups, normally engaged on daily or weekly contracts. The work groups are made up of young men, Turkana, Meru and, in a few instances, Borana. The four permanent work groups in Isiolo town consist of between six and eight persons. Recruitment is accomplished through friendships. No formal leaders exist but each group has a number of more active members, who move around town early each morning in search of jobs.

When a work group is employed to load and unload a lorry, each member is paid two shillings. If there are many jobs during the day, the group splits up, and

incomes are pooled afterwards. Payment in the posho mills is six shillings per person for six hours' work during daytime or eight shillings during the night. Normally only a few work group members at a time find work in the mills. Building contracts are normally arranged weekly, usually with whole or substantial portions of the work groups. The payment is four shillings per day per person with an effective working day of eight hours. This work is markedly seasonal, since weather conditions often force the work to be more sporadic during the rainy periods.

The work group members consider their incomes equal to or slightly above what they could earn as manual labourers in government employment. The income is relatively secure, since the permanent group members pool the total payment and share also with anybody who is temporarily ill. The greatest problem is the seasonal fluctuation in the number of job opportunities.

Charcoal and firewood production

Charcoal is the usual source of energy for cooking. This has led to a steady decrease in the number of trees surrounding Isiolo. All charcoal burning within a radius of three miles from the town was prohibited in early 1974. Though the intention was to counter soil erosion, the only effect has been that prices have doubled and that charcoal is also produced during night-time in order to avoid the police.

Charcoal burning has been an established source of

income for a number of Turkana households. After the secessionist war and the drought in 1969, destitutes of Bula Geri and Bula Bao have joined the charcoal burners and started firewood gathering as well. Trading charcoal is divided so that the Geri sell in town to the Somali hotelis which are their permanent customers, while the Turkana go around to individual households offering charcoal or sell it at the market. The Borana sell in small quantities outside the market. The trade in charcoal and firewood is usually carried out by women.

Felling trees and chopping the wood for one kiln usually requires several days. It has to burn for three days and must be guarded. One kiln gives roughly two sacks of charcoal, which means that twelve madebe are filled (one debe contains 4 gallons, approximately 18 litres. In the rainy seasons the price is 1.50 KSh and in the dry seasons 1 KSh per debe. Hence one charcoal-kiln gives between twelve and eighteen shillings depending on the season. A theoretical monthly income from charcoal production for an individual would then be about 100-160 KSh. This is more than can be earned from firewood gathering, but production is, of course, more tiresome.

Illegal hunting

Another important source of income for several of the Isiolo households is the delivery of elephant tusks, rhino horns and leopard skins to middlemen for further delivery to Nairobi and export outside the country

(see Chapter 2). Poaching accounts for a substantial amount of job opportunities, although these are reliable only until the amount of wild life is substantially decreased so that a ban may begin to be effectively enforced. The job is dangerous since the individual small man may well be caught by the Anti-Poaching Unit stationed outside Isiolo, or by the police. If caught he is not protected by anyone. The possible incomes have been mentioned above in Table 2.2.

Tourist trade

Since Isiolo town lies along a road to two game parks, Samburu Game Reserve and Marsabit National Reserve, many tourists pass through the town. They often stop to buy petrol, as Isiolo is the last place where it is available, and they all have to stop at a barrier where every vehicle travelling north of Isiolo or returning is registered and inspected. About forty men trade at either of these places, where the tourists stop. The goods are locally produced, mostly from around Isiolo, and generally of good quality. Today, the traders are split into two groups, one at the barrier, consisting of Borana traders with licences from the Isiolo County Council, and one in town, consisting generally of Turkana traders without licences, but who were the pioneers in the tourist trade.

These traders in Isiolo town usually make a good living. On a successful day, when the tourist traffic is intensive (dry periods), a trader can sell for up to 200 KSh, while the average during the tourist season is around

60 KSh per day. The price paid by the trader to a middleman or a producer is usually about half of the lowest price he would accept from the tourist. This means that the net profit for a trader seasonally can be as high as one thousand shillings per month. Most traders gain some surplus, which they invest in cattle kept around Isiolo. Large quantities of tourist items are also traded to firms in Nairobi, which make huge profits; bangles, ostrich necklaces, wooden kettles, ambers and camel necklaces of domepalm fruits are sold at profits of 100-200 %.

Production of items for the tourist trade is an important source of cash income for many sedentarized pastoral households. One of the more important single items are ostrich necklaces produced by Turkana women. These necklaces consist of ringshaped beads made out of the egg-shell. One egg is enough for one and a half or two necklaces depending on the size of the beads. The eggs are collected in the vicinity of Isiolo town. Producing one necklace requires one full work day. The women often work with this when they rest in the shambas during the hottest period of the day. They normally have a male relative functioning as a middleman to the traders. The trader pays five shillings per necklace, while the price for the tourist is about twenty shillings. The unusually large discrepancy in prices is caused by the great demand for this particular item.

Another example of production of tourist items is that of Somali swords. These are made by two tumaal²⁾ in town. The traders buy about five, sometimes as many as

ten, swords per week for forty shillings each and usually get between sixty and seventy shillings from the tourists. The tumaal manage to produce up to twenty swords per week. They also make spears and arrows, which are sold to the local population for twenty shillings and five shillings respectively. If a tourist happens to buy these, the corresponding prices are sixty and ten shillings.

Milk sales

A number of manyattas in the vicinity of Isiolo depend to a certain extent on trading milk in town. To the south and west of Isiolo Samburu live permanently, to the west and north Turkana and to the east, Meru. People in these manyattas rely basically on animal husbandry. Most of these sedentary pastoralists (Samburu and Turkana) have settled since the war, when they lost large amounts of stock, which were taken by the guerrillas. For cash incomes they rely on selling cow's milk daily to Isiolo, usually on monthly contracts.

In most cases, particularly for Samburu households, herd and flock sizes are too small to rely on for consumption needs. Instead, they sell milk and occasionally an animal in order to obtain cash primarily to purchase posho and tea leaves. From a nutritional point of view this means in many cases that households consume less protein. For a majority of the households, with domestic herds of only ten to thirty head and with the need to sell an occasional animal (which

sometimes might even have to be a female), no growth in herd sizes can take place; the total herd growth is sold in order to obtain cash. For such households an increased involvement in cash activities is a direct indication of impoverishment. This point should be emphasized, since people at a planning level, even in local contexts, sometimes identify development with the establishment of a monetary economy.

A number of Meru manyattas in the Northern Grazing Area east of Isiolo town also sell milk, normally on monthly contracts. All members in the western half of this concession area come from Tigania. The animals kept in the cattle camps are those not directly needed for milk production for the households in Nyambeni Hills.

At the market, milk is sold regularly by Turkana women from the surrounding cattle camps. They charge 0.60 KSh per pint (0.57 l.), and sell 2-10 pints per day depending on the season.

Prostitution

When the word "prostitution" is used, the meaning easily becomes ambiguous. To give an example from the Borana and Sakuye living in Bula Bao, many divorcees and widows form temporal unions with men, who then contribute to the women's survival. This is a way of survival which to some extent is sanctioned in the traditional Borana culture. In other cases "prostitution" may provide the only means available for a woman

to cut kinship ties and establish an independent household (see Chapter 4).

Prostitution, beer brewing and small trade often go hand in hand as sources of income, since none by itself is sufficient to provide a living. Those who migrate to Isiolo, to carry out such illegal activities as prostitution and beer brewing, must prove to the police, if questioned, that they have a legal economic reason for being in Isiolo. In everyday life this creates little difficulty, at least for those who have had time to become reasonably well established in town. Apart from developing personal contacts, they try to diversify their economy as much and as quickly as possible. Having a kiosk at the market, however poorly equipped, is enough to be allowed to remain in Isiolo.

Recruitment of prostitutes to Isiolo is usually from Nyambeni Hills via Majengo in Meru town. Majengo lives up to the epithet "slum area" (majengo in Kiswahili) to an extent that Bula Besa does not. A survey carried out in Majengo³⁾ in Meru Township showed that as many as one third of the total number of respondents had a substantial proportion of their incomes from prostitution.

It is common for prostitutes and former prostitutes to invest in an irrigated shamba in Isiolo. This enables them to do some farming, for their own consumption or for trading. By investing surplus within Isiolo they are more likely to remain in town instead of returning to Nyambeni Hills.

"10 cent trade"

One kind of "last resort" to achieve a little cash is to purchase, say, a packet of tea and divide it into smaller 10 cent portions to be sold to people who cannot afford a whole packet. I call such activities "10 cent trade". The "10 cent traders" who may deal in several basic consumer items, of course gain little cash, 5-6 KSh per day. Some, such as Geri or Sakuye women, combine this kind of trade with gathering traditional medicines and incense to be sold outside the market.

The older Meru women in Isiolo who are "10 cent traders" and beer brewers usually establish contracts with the young women, whom they help first with housing and with customers, and then with the investment of surplus in trading or agriculture. For this arrangement which is viewed as a mother-daughter relationship, the older women are given some economic return. Moreover, the mother-daughter relationship forms a kind of insurance system which is useful in times of hardship.

Market trading

The Isiolo market is a daily market. Its site was changed in 1975, that is, after my fieldwork. The new market place is roofed, with cement walls and floors to meet the official requirements of an Urban Centre (the County Council aims at changing the status of Isiolo from Rural to Urban Centre). The old market that I deal with in this study has been demolished.

It used to be the social centre of Isiolo town, where much of the interaction took place, and most of the inter-ethnic contacts were made. During a brief visit in October 1977 I learnt that very few of the market traders could afford the rents for a stall in the new market. A popular expression about it was that it lacked furaha, happiness. Instead most of the trade, and the social activities which go along with it, have been informally moved to the street, where I also found many of the former market traders.

The items traded are various farm products, locally produced or from Nyambeni Hills (with the sole exception of onions which come from Timau, where the climate is more suitable (see Map 3.1). In the small kiosks that surround the market place, such basic items as tea, soap, maize meal and cigarettes are traded. Other kiosks are for miraa trade (treated separately below). Under the large acacia in the middle of the market, traders offer bananas, beans, maize, millet, onions, potatoes, tomatoes, etc. Sugar cane from the Isiolo irrigated schemes is sold just behind the market. Small stock are traded outside the market early in the mornings, and Sakuye women trade traditional medicines at the market entrance throughout the day. The miraa trade is most active before noon.

A few of the traders in farm products, especially Turkana women and, to some extent, Sakuye or Borana women who bring small quantities of beans or maize cobs, sell produce from their shambas and thrifty Meru traders come with various produce from Kianjai in Nyambeni Hills. A majority, however, are landless and make a living by

MAP 3.1: The flow of products to the Isiolo market

purchasing small quantities of vegetables or potatoes (for example one or two bags of potatoes) at the Gakoromone market in Meru Township and reselling them at the Isiolo market piecemeal.

I have selected two of the market traders whom I consider typical in order to give a little insight into their trade conditions. One represents a category of traders with fairly low turnover who remain in business one or a few years. The other represents the successful market traders who are well enough established in order to remain in business. Even the trader in this particular case, however, could not afford to move to the new market place or, rather, preferred not to do so.

Florence Nyamburu rents a kiosk at the Isiolo market from a fellow Meru, who keeps cattle just outside Isiolo town. She pays 60 KSh in rent per month. The shop is small and rather poorly equipped. Florence left home in Nyambeni Hills after a conflict with her father, and has been a prostitute at one of the Isiolo night clubs. Later she was a concubine in Sericho but ran away from her partner with some money. She rents a share in a Landrover three times a week to bring vegetables from Gakoromone Market in Meru Township. Her little shop has the usual items found in the market premises; tea, soap, maize meal, cigarettes and sweets. These are purchased from the retail cement shops along the road and sold piecemeal; one toffee at a time, twenty cents' worth of tea, and so on. Florence estimates her daily turnover to be about 20-30 KSh. This is the daily average for many of the market traders, whether they sell retail goods in the small shacks, deal with vegetables under the acacia tree, or are artisans and specialists like the two sandalers and the two barbers.

M'Ithai, who rents a kiosk near the market entrance, is one of the most successful market traders. His monthly income, after deductions for various fees and licences, is 400-500 KSh. He owns a shamba in Muthara and 30-40 cattle, which are kept in Meru Northern Grazing Area. M'Ithai goes to Muthara once a month. On returning to Isiolo town he brings fresh farm produce, meal and snuff. The meal is purchased directly from farmers, a little at a time. This way, he gets a lower price than he would get from wholesale dealers. The snuff is brought to Muthara for him by a trader from Chogoria, further south. They share the profit from the Isiolo market. Sometimes he also goes to Chiokarige in Tharaka (the lower eastern slopes of Mount Kenya) to purchase papyrus mats and hats, wooden walking sticks (an integral part of the costume of a Somali or Boran elder) and some sisal products. When he leaves his stall at the market, his younger brother is in charge.

Short distance miraa trade

The miraa trade has already been touched upon in the last chapter as one route by which people may enter the local affluent Meru merchant class, if they have access to such contacts as presented in Chapter 2. Here, the focus is on the short distance trade from Nyambeni Hills to Isiolo town. Most of the miraa available in Isiolo is sold at the market place and comes from the miraa market in Kangeta. The Meru trader in Isiolo tries to use his family and neighbourhood contacts⁴⁾ in his home tract to purchase miraa of the best quality, leaving an assistant in charge of the business in Isiolo town during his business expeditions to Nyambeni Hills. A trader normally employs one or a few regular assistants. Depending on the season, he adds one or two temporary assistants. To get extra income he might also lease part of his kiosk to a

temporary trader on a daily (illegal) contract.

Incomes vary greatly between traders, depending on their willingness to take risks (Hjort 1974b:38-41). On the one hand some traders are willing to gamble, even at the risk of a total loss, such as M'Itutu in Chapter 2. On the other hand, it is possible to have safe and rather steady, but lower, incomes, as the case of M'Kibiri demonstrates. He has been successful for many years, and his income can be used as an indication of the general level. The return in one month is about 800 KSh. Out of this, his one regular assistant usually gets a one fourth share. The miraa assistants are generally provided with food, allowed to sleep in the shop and paid in proportion to the profit, so that they get full pay only when commerce has been successful, and otherwise share the risks of the trader. The lowest rate I was informed of was a payment of 10 KSh out of a turnover of 500 KSh on the argument that the assistant did a poor job. The motivation for an assistant to work under such conditions is his desire to learn the tricks of the trade.

Apart from the Meru miraa traders in the kiosks, there are about twenty Borana (mainly Sakuye and Wata) and Somali women, who sell miraa on a smaller scale. They bring their miraa, sold to them on credit by the Meru traders, in a basket and sit around at the market or on the verandahs along the road, and sometimes look for customers at the residential areas, a thing discouraged by the authorities. Their daily turnover averages 25 KSh and out of this 10 KSh is used for purchasing the stock. Their monthly incomes are thus 400-450 KSh.

A miraa trader is much exposed to contacts with male customers, and married women and unmarried girls are often forbidden by their husbands or fathers to venture into this trade. For single women this is a major way of surviving and gives a secure income except when their trade is totally banned by the authorities, which occurs occasionally. Selling miraa slightly taints the reputation of a woman, and a "righteous" husband may disapprove of his wife associating with miraa traders. Women were traditionally prohibited from consuming miraa, but today its use among women is gradually spreading. Many of these female miraa traders, however, are very popular personalities, having many male and female friends. They are also in great demand as second or third wives, but seldom remain in long-lasting marital unions. Within the female sphere they are often socially influential and may have religious positions demanding respect.

The trade makes unmarried urban life a realistic alternative for women who resent the restrictions of married life, and it is considered both more respectable and less ephemeral as a secure source of living than prostitution.

Habiba, a Garri single woman, has been a miraa trader for nine years. She moves around with a basket of miraa in Bula Besa or merely waits for customers at her house. These are to a great extent Somali who do not want to deal with the Meru traders. The miraa is purchased from one particular Meru trader at the market, usually for 50-70 KSh per day. Habiba then demands 50 cents profit per bundle sold. Sometimes she supplements her miraa trade with selling some perfume and cloth. She tries not

to work on Fridays partly for religious reasons and partly to avoid excessive demands for alms in the form of miraa. Her house is of fairly good Somali standard which means that it has mud walls and a mabati roof, two rooms with a well kept red sand floor, colourful cloths forming the ceiling, good quality mats on the smoothly plastered walls, a big Somali bed in the sleeping room and a conventionally equipped "parade table" (with crochet-work and enamel-ware). When one comments upon her standard, she laughs proudly, stating the "miraa is my husband".

Habiba married at 15 and gave birth in this marriage to two sons, one of whom died. Since she and her husband did not get along well, they got divorced. Habiba, then, married a Somali man employed in Tanzania; this marriage soon proved unhappy, however, since her new husband refused to accept her son ("who is now 19 and selling miraa so that he can afford both trousers and a watch"). Habiba's reaction was immediately to reject her new husband and move to Isiolo to make an independent living. She then "married" miraa, and does not want a man any longer, though once she wanted to bear ten children.

Habiba's case is a very typical one, and other similar cases can easily be cited. Nuria, a 40-year old Boran miraa trader who has supported her five children for eight years since the disappearance of her alcoholic husband stated: "You can never miss a man to marry. But husbands, I know them. They do not even allow you to go and visit your sisters, nor talk to your friends in the street. And they never love another man's children. I cannot miss a man to love, and since today's husbands can't provide you with a decent living, while my miraa feeds me well, I can't see why I should marry again."

IRRIGATED FARMING

The major development since the war that may improve opportunities for the destitute to find a means for

subsistence, is the establishment of some irrigation schemes. The Veterinary Irrigation Scheme and the Bula Besa Irrigation Scheme were established in 1971 (see Map 3.2). Both faced the problem that there were too many, too small ($1/4 - 1$ acre), shambas. They had to be completely reorganized in 1972, when the third of the irrigation schemes, in Kampi Ya Garba, was established. This met no formal difficulties since all schemes are within the township boundaries and under the jurisdiction of Isiolo County Council.

Each irrigation scheme has a committee selected from among respected men within the schemes by the Agricultural Department and by the Sub-chiefs of the various ethnic groups. For example, Kampi Ya Garba has a committee of six men; two Borana, two Somali and two Turkana, one man from each branch of the furrow. Their most important duty is to check that the furrows are maintained, that the daily water distribution to the sections and, within these, to the individual shambas is carried out justly, that the shambas are properly levelled for effective watering, etc. No title-deeds are issued and if a shamba is left uncultivated for one or more years without notice to the committee, other people are encouraged to start utilizing the land, so that the whole irrigation scheme may be used effectively. This sometimes causes friction, if the old "owner" claims the shamba back.

The Prison shamba is different from the other schemes in that the labourers are prisoners, who produce food for consumption within the prison. Its irrigation is also older than the others.

MAP 3.2: Isiolo irrigation schemes

The dominant crops are maize, beans and sweet potatoes. The crops grown are as follows (including cash crops):

1. potatoes	8. cotton
2. maize	9. cabbage
3. beans	10. tomatoes
4. sugar cane	11. njahi (green peas)
5. sunflower	12. sorghum
6. castor seed	13. cassava
7. green grams	14. banana
	15. pidgeon peas

On Prison Shamba mainly vegetables.

The irrigation schemes are still ineffectively organized in that too many branches cover too great a distance, while the water flow is too slow, so that losses through evaporation are high. The outlet of water from the river is now at its maximum, and in order to increase farming in Isiolo town, the irrigation schemes need to be reorganized, with completely new furrows. Today, the total number of shambas is about 1,000 with an area under crop of 650 acres.

The irrigated fields are mainly inhabited by sedentarized pastoralists, Borana, Somali and Turkana. There are proportionally few Meru farmers in any of the major irrigation schemes. At the southernmost point of the town, however, some Meru households have settled with substantial cattle herds. To grow vegetables for household consumption they draw partly from the Isiolo River. The case of Amujal, a Turkana woman in charge of a shamba, shows how a household could be organized and illustrates the situation for many of the Isiolo sedentary former pastoralists.

Amujal lives in Nayanae Katwan (see Map 1.1), and is married to her second husband, Lobura. In 1960, Amujal was still living at Kerio Valley. She had lost both her first husband and her only son. Her daughters were unable to support her, so she joined a group of Turkana who were walking up to Isiolo town. The men in this group were going to look for employment. Some of the women were middle-aged and in a similar situation to that of Amujal. Most of them, however, were unmarried girls, who did not want to marry the husbands that their parents had suggested to them. All women intended to seek a new livelihood by digging a shamba along Isiolo River.

Lobura works as a herdsman for LMD and is away most of the time. Amujal takes care of their small shamba in the lower Kampi Ya Garba scheme; it is a plot, "bought" from a Boran man in 1970 for 100 KSh. Their small field is about 50 by 50 metres. Amujal grows maize on three quarters of it, and some beans, sweet potatoes and a little sugarcane on the rest of the shamba. All is intended for home consumption, including some given to Lobura's mother and sister, who manage a seasonal shamba of poor quality to the west of the river. As a result of a good maize harvest Amujal is able to sell some maize at the Isiolo market. At harvest time she spends her nights in a grass hut on the shamba, in order to protect the crop against thieves and wild animals. The maize cobs are not harvested and stored, but left in the field on their stalks until needed for food.

The greatest problem for Amujal in obtaining good harvests is shortage of water. Her shamba lies fairly far away from the river, and sometimes water does not reach it as it should, when her field is due to be watered. She has complained about this to the furrow committee, but they have claimed that they can do nothing about it, saying that there are too many shambas, that the other irrigation schemes are consuming more than before, and that the river holds less water than it used to do.

Amujal and Lobura try to save some money to purchase livestock. So far they have twelve goats and five cows, which are kept in a Turkana manyatta on the other side of Geromet Hills. The animals are looked after by a brother of Amujal's. She receives milk seasonally, when the animals produce more than her brother needs.

ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

Until the recent irrigated farming was established, the sources of incomes available to the often impoverished Isiolo immigrants have been various kinds of

service and short-distance trade such as those listed above. The various undertakings mentioned are numerous, and would be more so if one were to go into further detail. The degree of diversification and ingenuity, when it comes to the informal service sector, is great, which is accounted for by the pressing need to make money. Most people discussed here are among the poorest and live from hand to mouth. Many of the sources of income are quite unreliable both with regard to duration and payment. Options vary depending on the background of the immigrant (is he a sedentary pastoralist from the north or a landless farmer from the south? etc.) due to the fact that recruitment to some niches depends on the reputation of particular groups of people, as well as on friendship, kinship and in some cases on bribery.

The very approximate monthly incomes from the various cash activities presented in last section are summarized in Table 3.1:

TABLE 3.1: Monthly incomes from various activities

<u>Kind of work</u>	<u>KSh per month</u>
Barber, shoemaker	- 500
Borana <u>miraa</u> trader (1)	- 400
Charcoal producer	100 - 160
Firewood gatherer	80 - 120
House maid	30 - 45
Kiosk retail trader (1)	300 - 500
Milk trader (2)	40 - 180
<u>Miraa</u> assistant (1)	- 200
Ostrich necklace producer	100 - 150

<u>Kind of work</u>	<u>KSh per month</u>
Petty trader	50 - 150
Poacher (3)	---
Prostitute (4)	---
Short distance <u>miraa</u> trader (1)	- 600
Tourist trader	600 - 1,200
Tumaal (blacksmith)	300 - 500
Wage labourer	200 - 500
Work group member	- 350

- (1) At the market
- (2) Seasonal fluctuations
- (3) Fluctuates too much; for price per item see Table 2.2
- (4) Difficult to give a monthly average since it is more or less supplementary to other activities. The prostitutes at one of the night-clubs charge up to 20 KSh for their services.

The amount of cash spent monthly on food in the Isiolo households has been correlated with cash incomes in Figure 3.1. The first peak represents both those households where no member has a regular cash income and where, accordingly, most food stuff is produced, and those households which depend on remittances.

Most farmers in the irrigation schemes are Borana or Turkana, and there are great differences between them in terms of division of labour and diversification of income, basically due to differences in migration patterns. Among the Borana and Sakuye farmers, the male heads of household take care of the shamba while

FIGURE 3.1: The amount of cash spent on food per month in % of the number of households

their wives trade shamba produce at the market. Few have income from other sources. A significant exception to this, however, exists in the 30 % of the Borana households which have a member who is employed, almost invariably as a policeman or in the Kenyan army⁵⁾. Only 10 % of the Sakuye households have such incomes. Neither the Borana nor the Sakuye households own many domestic animals. Only in rare cases do they produce charcoal or firewood. Shamba produce is traded at the market to a much larger extent by the Sakuye than by the Borana. Incomes from this, however, are extremely low; on average 2.15 KSh per day. The difference reflects the fact that the camel-owning Sakuye

were harder hit than the cattle-owning Borana, and are forced to trade their limited shamba produce instead of consuming it.

The Sakuye households, being relatively recent arrivals, are forced to rely mainly on their farming. The Borana households are often extensions of pastoral families. Members of neither group diversify their economy in town. In contrast, the Turkana households show a high degree of complexity in economic activities in town, with extensive female responsibility for farming as one result. More than half (56 %) of the shambas of the farming Turkana households are looked after by women. In every case but one, the households have other income sources as well. In 60 % of these cases, one or more male members have employment providing a regular salary. In another 26 %, the households own domestic animals which require herders. Yet another 13 % have members with incomes from trading shamba products at the local market. Still 8 % obtain cash in various other ways, particularly from charcoal burning⁶⁾.

In 59 % of the (37) Turkana cases where males care for the shamba, no household members have regular incomes from employment. In the remaining 41 % of the cases other male household members have such incomes. The conclusion must be that in the cases where households obtain income in cash, such activity is overwhelmingly dominated by males. If the households have access to other income sources, it is the women's responsibility to take care of the shamba. Among the Turkana this high degree of female involvement in farming may also

represent a transfer of the division of labour in the rural areas, where women carry out whatever dryland farming there may be and also collect wild fruits and berries⁷⁾.

Fairly few of the total number of the Turkana shamba households (18 %) have large stock, and if so normally less than ten animals. A few have herds large enough for subsistence or for trading. On the other hand almost half of the households possess small stock, though the flocks are fairly small (in no case more than 50 head) and can be but a supplementary food source. The scarce grazing around Isiolo sets a limit on flock sizes. The animals are usually taken into the shamba for protection at night, and this also limits the practical flock size⁸⁾.

The great majority of the Turkana shamba inhabitants farm solely subsistence crops, and only 17 % claim that they trade any shamba produce. The Turkana households are generally well established on the best located shambas. Farming is for them supplementary to wage incomes of at least one household member. In contrast, those Turkana households that trade regularly at the market are headed by women or more recently established in Isiolo town. Half the Sakuye households in Kampi Ya Garba are also represented at the market, trading on a daily basis. For both categories, trading shamba products becomes a necessity in order to obtain some cash. Again, as in the Samburu case described earlier, involvement in a cash economy can be an indication of poverty.

The newly sedentarized, who have managed to obtain a shamba, rely heavily on it. Those who have settled earlier, have had time to diversify their economy and establish independent sources of income, so that usually each member of a household specializes in one kind of activity. However, some few seem to have deliberately specialized in farming, since they have considerably larger shambas than the average, and no household members are employed elsewhere.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 3

1. The average household economy has been briefly presented in Hjort (1974a:35-49, 59-64).
2. I have earlier described the tumaal as "black-smiths". In effect, they can be structurally regarded as a Somali low-caste. The Isiolo tumaal claim to be the only ones in Kenya, except for those in Wajir and possibly Mandera.
3. In this survey approximately every third household was interviewed. The selection was "quasi random" since the method employed was to pick one door and carry out an interview, miss four, interview the fifth, etc. Altogether 132 households were interviewed; see Hjort 1974a, and the appendix.
4. The traders and their assistants at the market are mostly from Muthara-Kianjai; see Chapter 2, the discussion on the Meru networks.
5. The figures presented in this section are calculated from the results of interviews with shamba inhabitants; see the appendix.
6. Note that some households have more than two sources of income. This explains why the total of the percentages does not add up to 100.
7. Even though most shambas are so recently developed that the person who cleared them is still the cultivator (in 63 % of the cases), some have been inherited (16 %) or given to friends (6 %). In the former case, inheritance has almost invariably been channelled through female links; Mother, Sister's Son, Sister's Husband and Mother's Brother. Most of the (few) shambas given to friends have been given by one woman to another. The pattern resembles that noted by Gulliver (1955:40-41, 60-61) for the Jie (who are closely related to the Turkana but rely more on farming); a wife has the absolute ownership over both agricultural land and its produce, and she has the right to give away shambas to kinswomen. Similar principles are noted by Dyson-Hudson (1966:41) for the neighbouring (basically pastoral) Karamojong: "rights in garden land are phrased in terms of women, for agriculture is primarily women's concern".

8. The Isiolo area is less suitable for keeping small stock due to prevailing diseases. Though this implies a relatively poor growth rate, people still feel the need for raising sheep and goats.

PART II: TOWNSMEN OR MIGRANTS

So far this presentation has been focused on the historical development of Isiolo town, the fundamental economic processes that maintain the existence of the township and the settlement pattern and structure of opportunities that exist in Isiolo town. I shall now shift the attention from the township and the various resources it offers for its inhabitants and how these resources are utilized in various combinations by different groups and strata. Instead I shall concentrate on how both town and countryside are of importance in a treatise of available opportunity structures for the inhabitants. The perspective, then, has to be expanded to include both the town and its umland. Chapter 4 shows how integrated these are in the life of many Isiolo and rural households in their efforts to diversify the household economy. Chapter 5 describes how the utilization of ethnic ascription in town often depends on contacts and solidarity principles existing in the rural areas. Chapter 6 concludes how rural ties are decisive for access to urban opportunities in Isiolo town, both due to the economic integration between town and umland, and due to differences in strength in claims by newcomers on solidarity from Isioloans.

4. TOWN AND UMLAND

In this chapter I shall deal with Isiolo town as part of a larger area and look at its inhabitants as members of rural communities in the surrounding region. The processes by which the migrants have come to town and the forms their migration has taken are of particular interest in order to understand their situation.

It is tempting for the observer to regard urban and rural as opposite poles, but for the individual Isioloan, they form part of a single system within which he operates in his struggle for survival. The economy of the region may appear to be dual, split into one "modern" monetary sector and one sector oriented towards traditional production for consumption, but these two parts are intimately tied together. Scarcity is a word with daily significance for the people of Isiolo. In order to continuously maintain household viability¹⁾, many households must have a high degree of flexibility and combine incomes from as many different sources as possible. This is also true even for those who have cash incomes. The high degree of unemployment forces down wages in the town to a level that is only possible through the existence of a supportive subsistence economy (cf. Leys 1975:183).

THE PATH FROM THE PASTURES

Pastoralism in northern Kenya is based on the rearing of camels, cattle, goats and sheep. The distribution of these animals is uneven, since the various species have particular fodder, water and management requirements, which cannot be met everywhere in the area²⁾. Estimates of the number of stock have been presented in Chapter 2.

Several groups of former pastoralists are found in Isiolo town: Borana from three distinct areas (Marsabit, from around Garba Tula/Kinna and Merti/Bulesa), Samburu

especially from around Wamba and Maralal, Geri Somali from Habaswein/Wajir and Turkana from Kerio Valley and from the area around Baragoi (see Map 4.1)³⁾. All have in common the fundamental fact that their herds have not sufficed for making a living.

War, drought and subsequent floods have caused many of the new immigrants to Isiolo to leave their pastoral economy. The Sakuye and Geri camel herders have lost too many camels for the family herds to be rebuilt through biological reproduction. Borana and Samburu hope to rebuild domestic cattle herds. For the Turkana, immigration has continued since the establishing of the town, although an increased number settled after natural disasters around 1950 and around 1960⁴⁾.

The sedentarized Turkana in Isiolo town have few contacts with the rural areas from which they come. Marriage links with those areas, for example, are practically non-existent. None of the male heads of household, who have been interviewed, had a married daughter "back home" in the rural area. Only 10 % have sons or daughters employed elsewhere. Contacts are limited even between the different Turkana communities in the township, with few kinship links tying them together. Those Turkana households which have settled in Isiolo have thus cut off contacts with the "sender" areas. Relatives whom they should support with remittances have migrated to Isiolo as well, and no domestic animals have been left behind. In contrast, most Borana Gutu inhabitants still have close relatives active in pastoralism in the "sender" areas. Many hope

MAP 4.1: Migrations to Isiolo town

to return to a nomadic lifestyle. Some have already done so since the end of the war after having sold their shamba rights at a low price (30 - 140 KSh) to Turkana farmers.

Most of the sedentarized pastoralists in Isiolo town live in monogamous marriages. The rare cases of polygyny coincide with economic activities in two geographically separate areas. One reason for the high proportion of monogamous households is the overrepresentation of poor households from the pastoral communities, where wealth is a precondition for a polygynous marriage. In the pastoral context, a polygynous household, once formed, has a greater chance to counter disasters; for example, the social networks, from which support can be mobilized, are larger, and a greater access to labour within the household allows for improved herd management practices, such as splitting a herd into several subherds. Hence, both through their initial access to more wealth and through their greater viability, polygynous households are less likely than are monogamous ones to be represented among the Isiolo poor. Individual members may migrate to try to increase their wealth, however, and to establish new forms of diversification in the family economy.

Causes for migration

Some causes for migration to Isiolo town are external to the migrants' economic system, and could be labelled "stochastic shocks"; disasters that cause severe death rates in the domestic herds, whether induced by drought,

epizootic diseases, floods, locusts or war. These disasters, of course, threaten the survival of struck households. They are to some extent part and parcel of the pastoralist's daily life, to the effect that there is a continuous stream of people migrating from home to relatives either in other manyattas or in town. This and other consequences of and possible precautions against a disaster are discussed in further detail in Dahl and Hjort (forthcoming).

Another set of causes for out-migration, is found in such structural changes as the loss of land and a weakened redistribution system. The immediate effects of these may be less severe, but over time the impact is abiding. A differentiation occurs between those members of a society who are forced to seek new livelihoods and those who remain raising livestock. An illustration of events that may follow upon a "stochastic shock" is found in the following case of Letorongos and his neighbours in the Samburu settlement at Maili Saba, south-west of Isiolo town on Isiolo River.

The village of Maili Saba consists of a number of households which all have been dramatically forced out of a pastoral economy, clearly against their wishes. Some had their cattle stolen by the secessionist guerrillas and some lost their stock in a drought.

The inhabitants of Maili Saba carry out some irrigated farming along the river banks. They own too few cattle to achieve household viability by subsisting solely on livestock. While striving to rebuild the herds, they make a living on farming subsistence crops and selling milk to Isiolo town ten kilometres away or to the Game Department Camp closer by. Many of the households are headed by widows, and the Morans ("warriors") have in

these cases been forced to take full responsibility for animal husbandry, including such management decisions that are generally carried out by Elders. During the drought period in 1974 only one Moran was present in the settlement. All the rest were grazing the stock elsewhere and were not expected back until the rains.

The houses in Maili Saba are built in the traditional Samburu manner, though somewhat larger and elaborate. Many pastoral Samburu express surprise over the fact that the village is permanent with a lot of effort spent on constructing the houses and yet its people are poor. Deserted houses indicate that some people have left the village (no Samburu would occupy another's abandoned house). All households are unrelated. The settlement is called Nairobi by the Samburu, since it resembles the capital with its mixture of people coming from different areas.

The main settlement at Maili Saba is formed by ten independent households. The members of one of them, that of Letorongos, immigrated because of cattle losses caused first by two raids made by the secessionist guerrillas, followed by a drought. Since they had only a few goats left, Letorongos realized that they had to find other means for survival, and he decided to move with his household close to Isiolo town, in order to try to rebuild a domestic herd, starting with small stock. Meanwhile, they would need to subsist on farming, but, living close to a centre like Isiolo might also provide opportunities such as famine relief, he felt. He had been told that grazing and water were especially abundant in this area, with Meru raids posing the only threat.

Letorongos' household consists of himself, of his wife Nolayiok and their only two sons and two daughters. Both sons are employed as policemen posted at Wajir, since they had no future in animal husbandry, while the daughters live with their parents. The sons regularly send home a little money. Nolayiok and her daughters take care of the shamba where they grow maize, beans and potatoes. Nolayiok walks to Isiolo when she needs to have maize ground. In order to obtain

some cash, maize meal is sold to neighbours and one pint of milk is delivered daily to the Game camp, rendering 15 KSh per month. The cash is used for buying sugar and tea. Letorongos now has between ten and twenty cattle at his disposal and a number of goats. He still intends to further increase the family herd, so that they shall be able to return to a nomadic life. According to Letorongos, this will be possible but may take several years.

The case of Letorongos demonstrates the kind of measures that are necessary for a pastoral household in times of widespread crises, when redistribution principles cease to be effective. Looking instead at structural changes, one of the most important tendencies in Kenya is a limitation of access to grazing lands. For the Isiolo area, pastures have been lost to the local population through the establishment of game reserves and the LMD holding grounds. The game areas have often been dry season refuges, and the loss is therefore severely felt. There has also been an extension of irrigated farming along Uaso Nyiro River, but with little negative effect as yet on access to water for the pastoral stock. On the whole, the reduction of pasture areas is not yet a problem in the district due to the heavy losses in stock that the local population has experienced.

The human/stock ratio in Turkana District is high, in contrast with Isiolo District. For the herdsmen this means an increased land shortage or diminishing pasture qualities. Such a development influences the economic situation for the entire pastoral community, rather than affecting the situation at an individual level, since land is owned communally (only the herds are owned individually, or rather by the family or household).

The high pressure on land in the farming areas is felt in an expansion of farming into formerly pastoral areas. Such land is being found particularly in Nyambeni Hills. Resettlement projects are now being established for example on the lower slopes of Nyambeni Hills to the east, where farming before has been considered to give too low return. This settlement tendency has caused a rapid population increase in such boundary areas due to migration. Mbithi and Wisner (1972) calculated more generally for eastern Kenya with an increase of ten times the average.

Isiolo town has become an important asset for pastoralists, offering an opportunity to improve their social positions through the earning of cash incomes. The life history of Lotukoi provides an example.

Lotukoi is an old Turkana man from the northern part of Kerio Valley. At the age of sixteen he walked up to Isiolo with a group of people from his home area to seek employment on roadworks between Isiolo and Garba Tula, and later up to Mandera. He decided to leave home because life was difficult and Lotukoi had heard many rumours "that Isiolo had a lot of food, cheap to buy, and even the poorest of the poor could earn his living". Lotukoi's main complaint about his youth was that his family had too few animals, so that he had had to stay hungry and eat long'onyo, an emergency food⁵⁾. He also disliked the demanding work of herding, especially during rainy seasons. Hailstorms occur frequently and when Lotukoi sought shelter, the animals always went astray and were not easily found afterwards, as they mixed with other cattle. Watering posed another obstacle; if Lotukoi was not fast enough, his cattle would mix with others, so that Lotukoi might lose some of those which were under his responsibility.

After working on the road, Lotukoi was employed by an Isiolo town Somali as a herdsman for 10 KSh per month plus a cup of posho daily. When he decided to return home after several years, he bought four large sacks of tobacco and a donkey to carry them. With this load he travelled past Baragoi and Maralal up to his home area, Kerio North, exchanging tobacco for goats along the way. This was so successful that Lotukoi decided to continue trading tobacco instead of herding his own animals, which he had found so troublesome. He is now well established with cattle herds and goat flocks back home, looked after by relatives, and with contacts in all the small and large centres between his home and Isiolo. When I met him, Lotukoi was in Isiolo to "borrow" money from Turkana labourers at LMD and at the Ministry of Works. In return they would receive domestic animals to be kept in Lotukoi's herds until the owners returned. In this way Lotukoi functions as an agent for Turkana from Kerio North, who want to invest cash surplus in their home areas.

The case of Lotukoi is, however, not typical of the Turkana, but he can be seen as a broker, who is initiating a new phase of relations between town and pastoral Turkana. Such contacts are much more frequent among the Borana, as we shall see in the following section.

Wage employment may be a means towards higher prestige, though it is not prestigious in itself. It presents a new opportunity to improve a social position by building up large herds and by fulfilling traditional obligations of redistribution. New possibilities towards further economic diversification are opened up through increased access to cash. One may engage in cattle trade or invest, say, in a house or in employing a herdsman, so that the domestic herd can be further

divided into subherds. The effect of such diversification is a spreading of risks. Hence, as for the Borana (Dahl (forthcoming b)), a pastoral community becomes stratified, depending on degree of access to cash.

The tendency towards economic stratification is amplified by the fact that wealthy people can afford to invest in cattle when prices are low during dry periods or droughts (see Chapter 2). A development may be possible similar to what has occurred in Botswana (see Hjort and Östberg (1978)), where a minority now owns most of the stock while the majority of the population has to find other sources of income, if they are not employed as herdsmen paid in part with "by-products"; milk and also meat from animals that have died from natural causes. The key issue, as Henriksen (1974:56ff) emphasized for Turkana District, if one wants to reduce the economic stratification, is to find means to prevent cash earned in other economic spheres from being invested in the pastoral sector.

Variations in migration patterns

Differences in migration pattern of the two largest sedentary pastoralist groups in Isiolo town, the Borana and the Turkana, are essentially related to differences in the importance ascribed to the clan systems. Clan membership is of limited (mostly ritual) significance for the Turkana, and a "man has no relations with his clansmen qua clansmen" (Gulliver 1955: 212). For the Borana, on the other hand, clan member-

ship is of great importance and it affects important aspects of the lives of the Isiolo migrants (cf. Dahl ibid.). The difference can be illustrated in a number of ways. One is the perception of genealogies. Those of the Turkana are shallow, rarely extend more than two generations back, which is said to be caused by the taboo against mentioning dead persons by name. There is no ambition on behalf of clan members to trace possible kinship ties. The Borana genealogies, on the other hand, are both deeper, commonly between five and seven generations, and wider, so that they involve more individuals. Strangers, when meeting, ascribe great importance to tracing kinship relations.

One fundamental material difference between the Borana and the Turkana is that rights to property in terms of domestic animals are associated with the clan in the case of the Borana; much of the redistribution of domestic animals is based on clan solidarity. The Turkana instead build up sets of individually based stockfriend relations, among whom most redistribution occurs. It is in the interest of the individual to establish such contacts, so that they cover vast areas. By doing so, he spreads his risks. With a geographical dispersal, the probability for all stockfriends to be hit by disaster decreases, and the chance of reorganizing a family herd in the case of individual disaster is improved. At the same time the system with these individually centred sets of relations is more vulnerable than the Borana collective redistribution system (by way of clan membership) in that fewer possible contributors are involved.

The quality of Isiolo town as an asset for migrants differs for a Borana and a Turkana immigrant. The Turkana male migrant (I shall mention the considerable female migration below) selects Isiolo town as one among several alternatives, an alternative that he knows has existed for a long period of time. If there is no future for him in any of the local Turkana economic niches, he may continue further south. Though he typically comes during a drought or some other disaster, such events only accentuate an impossible situation, and he would probably have come later, in any case.

It seems that those Turkana men who have migrated to Isiolo town, have come in search of a solution to individual problems. The attitude of the Turkana immigrant is almost invariably that he has left home permanently. Migrants are usually young and unmarried; seventy per cent of the male immigrants to the Isiolo shambas were 15-30 years old when they came. They are often younger brothers, which can be explained by the importance for the individual Turkana man of establishing his own genealogical line, ekal. This can be done only while the father is alive. Furthermore, the marriages of brothers have to be in genealogical order, so that the oldest son marries first, and so on. Since marriage ages are high and life expectancy low, the hope for a younger brother to form his own ekal can be small.

In contrast to the Turkana permanent and individual migration, the young Borana migrants, who have migrated after "stochastic shocks", are generally still members of pastoral households. They look upon their migration

to Isiolo township as a temporary action intended to maintain household viability. When the domestic herds have been rebuilt, they return home. This is illustrated by the disinterest in farming shown by such individual Borana. Though the establishment and development of a shamba is hard work (cutting trees and bushes, breaking up and rolling away stones), returning Borana Gutu have sold their shamba rights at incredibly low prices, usually to Turkana immigrants.

Among the permanent immigrants are also found destitute camel herders, Geri (Somali) and Sakuye (Borana) from around Wajir and north of Uaso Nyiro River respectively. There is an acute shortage of female camels in the area, and it takes such a long period of time to rebuild camel herds (cf. Dahl and Hjort 1976:78-86) that very few herdsmen will ever manage to reestablish themselves as camel pastoralists.

The particular forms for devolution of property and inheritance and new establishment that are found in Borana and Turkana pastoral society also influence the migration pattern. Among the Borana there is a heavy emphasis on common property and keeping the family herd together when the father-herdowner dies, which implies a gradual partitioning of the common inheritance of the fraternal group (Dahl forthcoming a). Among brothers, the choice is often to send away one as an effort in a total fraternal strategy. The Turkana also emphasize the importance of solidarity within the fraternal group⁶⁾. However, there are significant differences between the Borana and Turkana societies, such as the level of the bridewealth and redistribution principles that give rise to differences in migration patterns.

The level of bridewealth is generally higher among the Turkana than among the Borana, though in both societies it is determined according to economic ability. In a marriage that was considered fairly typical by the Isiolo Turkana herdsmen, the husband-to-be had to accumulate 71 head of cattle from his father's herd and from stockfriends, to be distributed to the relatives of the wife-to-be. According to Gulliver (1955:235) the bridewealth could typically be 28-35 head of large stock in Turkana District⁷⁾. The high level of bridewealth indicates a probability for generational conflicts, where a father may wish to marry a second wife, and a son wishes to establish his own household. In comparison, a young Borana man finds it less difficult to marry from this point of view. Bridewealth is low, about 5-30 head of cattle, depending on economic possibilities (Dahl forthcoming a). A married Boran man can accept being subordinated to his father, and this is seen as the normal case, even though the relation is often loaded with tension. Should the tension become acute, the son can appeal to the clan elders for settlement and be given a nucleus breeding herd with which to part from his father. For the Turkana, the clan plays no such role. It seems that the higher level of bridewealth again reflects a greater emphasis on the individual household among the Turkana. In the absence of clan solidarity for redistribution of property, fewer channels are available and more cattle need to be distributed on the occasion of marriage. The only significance of clans in this context is that they are exogamous, and that wives are married into their husbands' clans.

Of equally great importance as differences in family structures or in forms for devolution of property and inheritance are differences in social control. Again, social control in the Borana community is exercised through the great importance that is ascribed to clan membership. When two Borana strangers meet, they always seek a common denominator through kinship affiliation. Among the Isiolo town Borana Gutu the social control is even further strengthened by the fact that migrants come from geographically limited areas. Isiolo town is therefore effectively integrated into their local community. The pastoral Borana Gutu have a direct influence over many of the job opportunities in town through the local government. Household members are often sent to Isiolo with the explicit intention of earning supplementary money.

This was the case when Diba walked to Garba Tula to get a lift with one of the County Council's Landrovers up to Isiolo town. His father, Kalicha, had received a letter from one of the Councillors on the County Council, a clan brother of his, that there was a vacancy as a cess collector. Kalicha suggested to his oldest son to seek the employment, and Diba was happy about the offer. It was some time since he had left the boarding school in Isiolo town, and he longed for his school mates. At home there was really no task for him. His help was not needed with the cattle, and the only amusement he devised was to invent games for the small boys in the evenings. What Diba did not know was that Kalicha had complained about this situation during his frequent visits to Garba Tula. On his son's departure Kalicha mentioned nothing about Diba's salary. But a month later, Diba received a letter stating that his father was going to build a house in Garba Tula, and that he expected Diba to contribute by purchasing the mabati roof. Diba was saddened, because it meant a blow to his personal economy leaving practically no money for cigarettes and

miraa, important attributes in his social life. There was nothing for him to do about it, however, and Kalicha got his roof a year later. For Kalicha this meant a possibility to engage more actively in the local politics in Garba Tula -- he now had a permanent house to stay in, and his prestige had improved, since he now displayed a certain degree of wealth. Also, from an economic point of view the arrangement was agreeable for Kalicha. As housing is a problem in Garba Tula, he had little difficulty in finding tenants who provided him with considerable cash income.

In contrast to Borana society, there is little similar social control for the Turkana inhabitants of Isiolo town. They have migrated from a geographically vast area, and solidarity principles are not based on clan membership. This in itself makes Isiolo town attractive for those individuals who want to leave their traditional society. For many, Isiolo town offers an opportunity to earn an independent living. This is reflected in the significant proportion of women -- around half -- in the immigrant groups who settle in the shambas. They are almost equally divided between unmarried women who resent proposed marriages, and middle-aged women, whose husband and close male relations have died.

Changes due to sedentarization

Changes in means for subsistence occur for settlers in Isiolo town. From a pastoral economy based on animal husbandry the means for subsistence have become either farming or wage employment (or a combination). This also creates new household compositions and leads to changes in the conditions for the establishment of households. One reason for these differences is that

when a pastoral household is established, the domestic herd must be built up to a size and composition sufficient for survival, assuming that alternative income sources are limited.

The acquisition of a shamba, on the other hand, is less a question of a gradual process. When it comes to farming, the restrictions differ. In the particular case of the shambas in Isiolo town, the ages of the male heads of household in the Turkana community are now lower among those born in Isiolo than among those born elsewhere. The average age of marriage for women is twenty years whether born in Isiolo or elsewhere. For men, however, it is 23 among those born in Isiolo and 31 for those born elsewhere. This is expectable, considering that these households will maintain or improve viability through more intensive work inputs and a furthered diversification. Nothing is gained by refraining from establishing the household until the "proper" age according to tradition, an age more or less directly related to growth rates in domestic herds.

Inheritance rules, however, remain important for gaining access even to a shamba. It may happen that the young ages for establishing the Turkana household are only a temporary phenomenon. The possibility opened up through a brief but great supply of farm land when the irrigation schemes were established and soon thereafter when many Borana returned to their rural areas, selling their shamba rights hastily. It deserves to be pointed out again that, with diversification of household economic activities, where the husband seeks cash income

while the wife caters for the shamba, inheritance of shambas among the Turkana in Isiolo town, at least so far, tends to be matrilinear rather than patrilinear (see previous chapter).

To take advantage of the opportunities in the town it is beneficial to have been long in Isiolo in order to learn the tricks of the trade. This is shown in that the Turkana born in Isiolo can acquire a shamba at an early age and establish a new household. Similar advantages are offered to veteran residents in the acquisition of cash niches. As soon as one has got access to one source of income it is beneficial to marry, so that a combination of different economic activities can be achieved -- any one source of income can be insufficient or highly unreliable.

The authority structure for the permanent immigrants also shifts, depending on the degree of their involvement in the economic and social life of the town. Farmers need to obey the committees deciding on irrigation matters, work group members need to participate in a collective leadership, employees must abide their employers' demands, and so on. The result is a situation where social ties and economic bonds that existed in the home areas diminish. The younger generation of permanent migrants, relying at least partially on new authority principles and new economic opportunities, have also gained access to such subsistence resources as domestic animals or farm lands. While these traditionally should be under the control of the older generation, they become available to the younger generation, partly through a greater access to cash than

in rural areas, and partly due to the younger generation's expertise in the "modern" sector.

The attitudes of the sedentarized pastoralists of the first generation, whether successful in their intentions to rebuild domestic herds or not, is that they see residence in town as a temporary solution with the final aim to return to the pastoral community. Their presence in town represents the economic diversification in the rural "home area", in contrast to those having migrated permanently, who try to diversify their economy within the township.

A temporary migration pattern may cause difficulties for the pastoral household, however, if the labour requirements thereby cannot be met. As a consequence, it would be reasonable to expect seasonal migrations of pastoralists going back from town during dry periods, since the demand for labour in the nomadic households is greater during dry seasons⁸⁾. But the dry periods are also the time during the annual cycle when the demand for manual labour reaches its peak in town, since it is then convenient to conduct outdoor work. In Isiolo these factors seem to balance each other out, since no obvious seasonal migrations are taking place between pastoral areas and town.

FARMERS WITHOUT LAND

Isiolo town has not only attracted pastoralists from the north to become sedentarized, but also a great number of more or less landless farmers from Nyambeni

Hills in the south, who now try their luck in small-scale trading or in the various service activities already touched upon. Many are school drop-outs, as yet unemployed, who are still unmarried.

The historically close links between Isiolo town and Meru District have been touched upon in Chapter 2. The fact that the town happened to become located within Meru instead of Isiolo District, the "early" Meru migrants seeking employment and the wave of Tigania Meru urged to migrate to the town, or at least register there, by a local leader after the war, were factors in this development.

The administration in Meru has been anxious to manifest its interests in Isiolo town throughout its history. The Isiolo market was for a long period of time an extension of the Gakoromone market in Meru town. During the early colonial times a main activity at the Isiolo market was barter of maize and miraa for sheep and goats. The Isiolo County Council pays an annual fee to the Meru Municipal Council as a compensation for cess incomes from the Isiolo market⁹⁾.

Land use and land rights in Nyambeni Hills

Farming in Nyambeni Hills is intensive. A wide range of crops grow in the different ecological zones at higher and lower altitudes. The shambas are traditionally organized so that each household has access to several zones (cf. Bernard 1972 or Sandberg 1971:7-12).

The most important food crops are maize, millet, beans, yams, potatoes and bananas. In the Tigania area on the northern slopes, pasture is set aside in the drier lowlands, where many households keep considerable numbers of cattle. The most important cash crops are miraa, coffee and tea. Interestingly enough, miraa might even be the single most profitable cash crop, a fact that is generally overlooked, since the district is one of the best-producing coffee districts in Kenya (cf. Hjort 1974b:30-31; Bernard 1972:119).

Historically, land was clan property and the rights to cultivate it were allocated by clan elders. Anyone who could claim membership in the clan could also claim the right to farm unoccupied land within clan territory in proportion to the needs and capacity of his household. In the farm lands, land consolidation has been carried out since 1956 and only those parts of Igembe territory furthest out in Nyambeni Hills remain unregistered.

The individualization of land rights started in the 1940s with the introduction of more permanent crops such as coffee. The Meru area was the only one in Kenya where the colonial power allowed Africans to grow coffee, since large-scale production in the area would not be effective. Within the local community, however, the introduction of coffee created unrest, as those who planted the coffee bushes could raise permanent claims on land contradictory to customary law.

Land registration entails an individualization of land

rights. All land ascribed to a household is now registered in the name of its head, invariably the husband. In order to compensate for earlier land fragmentation, each household is given one continuous piece of land, or a few pieces. The consolidation has therefore meant drastic changes for the Meru households. Previously, a household could form different crops in the various ecological zones along the hillside. Now production is restricted to one or a few of these zones. Only in the lowlands in the Northern Grazing Area is land still communally owned. Here cooperatives have been set up recruiting members from the households who live along the northern edge of Nyambeni Hills.

Causes for migration

The out-migration from Nyambeni Hills during the early 1940s and preceeding years that was felt in Isiolo town in the settlement of the "early" Meru (Chapter 1) is, of course, not only linked with new employment opportunities in Isiolo town, but also with the local situation in Nyambeni Hills. Pressure on land seems to have increased during this period, though detailed historic information is lacking. In spite of this, Bernard (1972:91) tries to explain the increased migration from Tigania and Igembe northwards during the early 1940s in terms of an increased population pressure.

The recent migration, after independence, is directly related to the new systems of land tenure. In the following sections I shall touch upon three aspects of the allocation process that have been of importance

for the migration pattern: (a) that it has proved necessary for a young man to be married in order to attend meetings over land issues, a fact that forces many unmarried men to marry as quickly as possible; (b) that the number of landless people is increasing due to high pressure on land, and (c) that with the land registration in the husband's name, individualization implies that the woman's position is changed.

The necessity for men to marry

An unmarried man is classified as a boy in Meru society and is not invited to meetings over land issues. Since the rights to many specific pieces of land are still debated in the wake of land consolidation, it proves essential for any man who wants to farm in Nyambeni Hills, or who wants to take over from the earlier generation, to be regularly invited to these meetings. This uncertain situation makes it necessary for many young men to collect sufficient capital for bride-wealth¹⁰⁾ in order to marry, so that they can participate directly in the meetings, rather than needing to send representatives. The advantages of marriage in the adjudication process has had as an effect that the marriage ages are believed to have gone down, and that many migrants go to Isiolo, for example, in search for some employment.

M'Elongi's experience, a young married Meru man, working as a servant in Isiolo town, illustrates this issue. His parents died a few years ago. A neighbour then claimed that one of the fields had been lent by himself to M'Elongi's father many years before, and demanded it back. M'Elongi

is of the opinion that the claim would never have been made if he had already been married, but being single, he was not respected as an adult and could find no representative to speak for him at the Njuri meeting in question (a type of council of Elders which nowadays is responsible to the administrative Chief). In these circumstances, M'Elongi decided to marry quickly, so that he would be able to defend his rights in the future. Today M'Elongi is employed in Isiolo town, but his wife and children are living back home in the shamba, where he regularly visits them during week-ends. He considers that employment in town in combination with a shamba provide a maximum of security -- if one source of income fails, there is the other one to rely on.

Land shortage

The establishment of individual title-deeds to land has ended the redistribution method of the old land rights system, based on clan ownership. Before, at Njuri meetings it was decided to transfer the right of use of a shamba from a household holding more land than it could manage, to one with sufficient manpower and a need for increased food production. However, population pressure since then has mounted to make this system of redistribution insufficient, due to the scarcity of land. According to the type of land reform chosen, the land rights are inherited by sons from a father. In order to prevent fragmentation, the pieces of land are kept together, and younger sons therefore often become landless.

The story of M'Riboi and the efforts that he made when he failed to make Form II and decided to seek employment, highlights both the problems of land shortage

and the unemployment situation outside the agricultural sector, which forces people to move far in search of jobs.

The shamba back home in Karama, Tigania, where M'Riboi was born has recently produced barely enough food for the household which no longer includes the grown-up children. His parents had had high expectations for him to provide the household with regular remittances, and had explicitly stated that schooling was his inheritance; the shamba was for his older brother. Two of his three younger sisters had already married. From these marriages the family household had received bridewealth payments. Even though there were then fewer mouths to feed from the shamba's produce after the two daughters had moved, M'Riboi knew that the subsistence situation "back home" was pressed. He knew that his parents had even been forced to ask for cash from the parents of one of their sons-in-law until the coffee harvest.

The neighbours knew that M'Riboi attended school and the sacrifices his family made in order to pay his schoolfees were considerable. This made it socially impossible for him to return home until all other possibilities to earn a cash income had been tried. His first step was to contact the Education Officer in Meru who had helped him once before with a minor problem. M'Riboi asked for a job as an untrained teacher, but the visit was not successful. He therefore decided to go to Isiolo town, where he had many clansmen, and where he could get food and housing and maybe advice about his next step. In Isiolo it was suggested that he should continue to Nairobi, and he and a school-mate of his were offered a ride with a miraa trader.

In Nairobi they borrowed a room from Mukaria, a trader also from Karama, who traded miraa from the Maua market in Nyambeni Hills to Nairobi (brought here in his own Landrover) and also in Mombasa (sent here by bus). M'Riboi and his school-mate stayed only two days in Nairobi since Mukaria volunteered to pay their bus tickets to Mombasa,

where he had heard that it was possible to find employment. In Mombasa they contacted Mukaria's former trading companion who invited them to stay in his miraa shop. They were anxious to continue to Kilifi (on the coast) to visit a friend of M'Riboi's from home, who had got a job as an untrained teacher through contacts of a brother, who was a policeman. This brother had unfortunately been transferred and could not help them. They visited some friends of the brother, and one of them gave "half a promise" that he would arrange for them to be employed the following term.

After three days they returned to Mombasa now in the company of M'Riboi's friend from Kilifi. The trader with whom they had stayed before now refused to put them up. M'Riboi suggested that they should seek help from his "supervising father of circumcision"¹¹), whom he knew to be living in Mombasa. In his home they also met a police officer, a Tigania Meru from Muthara, who suggested that they should seek employment within the police force since recruitment then was being conducted. That night was spent drinking beer, although M'Riboi was reluctant to drink, considering that he had nothing to celebrate, not yet being employed.

On the following day 800 school drop-outs turned up at police headquarters to be interviewed, but only 100 were to be selected in the first round (and 20 in the final). M'Riboi failed because he was not tall enough and shortsighted. His class-mate, however, qualified in the first round, and was also later recruited. On that day M'Riboi, his "father" and friend waited a long while for M'Riboi's class-mate who did not appear. As it turned out later, he had left quickly for Nairobi. They, therefore, began searching for him all over Mombasa. In the evening they came to a bar where a man from Muthara was employed as guard. Here M'Riboi met with an age-mate from the same neighbourhood, who unfortunately was only interested in talking about girls, not about seeking a job. They also met a prostitute from M'Riboi's home area who shocked him deeply with her "city talk" about sex and money.

After seeking employment with some of the large companies in Mombasa in vain, M'Riboi was forced

to leave. His "circumcision father" did not want to help him more but bought the bus ticket for Nairobi for him, though he gave M'Riboi a letter to his father asking him to pay that amount back when M'Riboi had found employment.

Back in Nairobi M'Riboi was helped again by Mukaria and by a relative (a son of his father's sister's husband). Both were now rather generous in giving him money for food and cigarettes. M'Riboi gradually learned his way around Nairobi branching out from Pumwani where he was staying, but scared the entire time by the big city. The weeks in Nairobi were dreary. He found no employment and the closest he got to a job was an answer from the East African Railways Training School stating that they would inform him later if they were interested in arranging an employment interview with him. He met with many Meru but none who had contacts or sufficient interest to help him find work.

Finally M'Riboi gave up seeking employment in Nairobi and returned to Isiolo half a year after leaving, to look for some kind of employment there. This is what he is doing at present. In the meantime he stays in town with a miraa trader, who is a member of his own age class, and works there in return for food and housing. He is now waiting to be interviewed for an accountant job at the County Council and for a job as an untrained teacher¹²).

To some extent migration such as M'Riboi's is also a cultural phenomenon; economic needs are culturally defined (cf. Parkin 1975:11). Young Meru men are expected to leave home for some period of time. Earlier, this was institutionalized into the age grade system. These young men belong to the age grade of Warriors. A common age set initiation within each neighbourhood (by way of a circumcision ceremony) creates a feeling of *communitas* among these young men, which is for example expressed in the social activities in the marketplace during night time. The young traders there form

a transformed version of the Meru warriorhood; unmarried and in need to save money (in older times cattle) to pay bridewealth and to find an economic platform for the future household. The fundamental problem for many young unmarried men remain financial. They need not only accumulate enough money for marriage, but it must be done within a limited time period, determined by the land allocation process.

Changing conditions for women

The wife or, in polygynous households, wives, are traditionally responsible for food production on the shamba for the entire household. The husband only helps her, or them, with shamba work during planting time and harvest. The married woman is considered to get her land from her husband's clan through him, but she has traditionally much to say about what crops are grown, due to her managerial responsibility. Grain is kept in two big stores; one is for the use of the entire household, and another is monopolized by the wife (each wife has one of these stores). This division renders her some independence; thus, in a crisis she and her children can rely on the wife's store.

Female control over food production is now threatened by the introduction of perennial crops and by the land registration. Men tend to enter production of such perennial cash crops as coffee, miraa and tea. These require investments, an activity that men have traditionally dominated. They grow different crops depending on where the land is situated in Nyambeni Hills,

and with these perennial crops they may interfere with the (female) food production system by allowing too small acreage for such annual crops as beans, maize, millet and peas. Hence, the introduction of cash crops has generated a conflict between farming for cash and for subsistence that takes the form of competition between husband and wife over whether to grow perennial or annual crops (not cash versus subsistence crops). And the man is nowadays in a stronger position than was traditionally the case, since the clan's input is diminishing and the individual (man's) title deed is the only lawful claim on the land. In an acute conflict over what crops should be grown, the woman will find increased difficulty in gaining legal support for her point of view.

A demonstration of what forms the division of responsibility may take in the new situation, is provided by Margaret Kanini and her husband. They are both employed in Isiolo town, one with the Ministry of Works and the other one in the Child Welfare Centre, with approximately equal salaries. Their arrangement is that Margaret Kanini's salary is to be used to provide herself, her husband and their two children with food, while her husband's salary can be spent at his will. If he desired, he could spend it on beer drinking for prestige purposes. Instead he invests in the shamba back home, which is cared for by his elderly mother. He recently bought a one-acre plot, which he has planted with coffee-bushes.

Another potential conflict in Meru society, which is related to the increased importance of cash as well, exists between two wives. In the traditional economy, production was almost solely directed towards subsistence (other than such investment that was entirely

the husband's business; that is cattle). Now, with readily available cash and with the setting of a larger community, where money is spent for example on education, the younger wife can calculate and demand for herself and her children the amount consumed by her co-wife and her children over the years of her marriage. A second wife, therefore, can become a heavy burden to the household.

Frustration over decreased influence in crop production and frustration with second wives are two fairly recent causes for middle-aged women to leave home. If they have no relatives to return to, they often engage in petty trading, in the trade from Gakoromone market in Meru to the Isiolo market for example. They are partially supported by their children who usually also dislike the co-wife, since a second marriage leaves a smaller share of inheritance to them.

Another category of migrant women are the young rural women who become pregnant before getting married. They are expected to make public the name of the child's father. If they refuse, they are expelled from the local community and lose all chances of getting married in a customary fashion. For these women, there are two major alternatives. One is to become a second wife to an unattractive old man outside the family's clan's land, where they are not known. This alternative may be degrading and lonesome but economically attractive, since the young women can demand consumer items such as good clothes and perfume. The other alternative is to engage in prostitution in centres such as Meru town or Isiolo town. Unlike the young men, the migrant women

have no access to an institutionalized network of contacts, and their pattern of migration is rarely of a circulatory nature, like that of M'Riboi (see above). For those without education who seek economic independence or liberation, prostitution provides practically the sole opportunity available. Their possibility to succeed lies in acquiring enough capital over a short period of time, while they are still attractive, to invest in a shamba or to establish regular trading activities.

The main purpose of this chapter has been to outline the two patterns by which origin of birth and social networks play a key role in the migrant's economic future. One pattern operates when social networks and references to an established social structure are resources in themselves and can be marketed. The other pattern is described by the women's example given above, where lack of such resources hinders the struggle towards economic stability. The first part of the chapter dealt with the town and pastoralists, and the second part with the town and farmers. It has described the varying conditions in the respective umland and the differing economic opportunities which give rise to migration both in the rural and the urban context. Effective access to economic opportunities in the town is influenced by a migrant's birthplace and the reasons for his/her migration. Hence, a migrant's rural ties are also of primary relevance for the urban opportunities; the umland is decisive for resource availability in individual cases, particularly through the various traditional principles for redistribution that can be claimed also in town as long as they are sanctioned

through social control. Such solidarity principles greatly influence the opportunities for the Isioloans to secure their subsistence as well as their involvement in town life. The following chapter elaborates some aspects of the latter issues.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 4

1. "Such a domestic unit is viable when the labour it can provide is suitable for the exploitation of its means of subsistence, while the latter is adequate for the support of the members of the domestic unit" (Stenning 1966:92).
2. For a more substantial discussion of these aspects see Dahl and Hjort (1976:224-256).
3. Out of the 84 Turkana heads of household interviewed in the shambas, 24 % were born in the Baragoi area, 31 % in Kerio Valley and 34 % in Isiolo. The remaining 11 % were born in Lodwar, Maralal or Wamba. The distribution of the other sections of the Isiolo Turkana is similar. Out of the 102 Borana and Sakuye interviewed, 31 % have come from around Merti or Bulesa, 29 % from around Garba Tula, 19 % from Sericho and 14 % from Madogash. Most Borana from Garba Tula live in Kampi Ya Garba, while those from Madogash, Merti, Bulesa and Sericho live in Kampi Ya Juu. The Sakuye from Garba Tula are found both in Kampi Ya Garba and Kampi Ya Juu, while those from Merti live in Kampi Ya Garba.
4. Some information on the severe situation for the Turkana is provided in Kenya (1962b:32-38).
5. Long'onyo is made of dōm-palm fruits which are dried and ground and mixed with blood tapped from live animals.
6. For details see Gulliver (1955:133-149, 159-169).
7. The difference between the figures mentioned by Gulliver and the level of bridewealth in Isiolo town is considerable. The basis for this is most likely a difference in circumstances. The transaction involved in a marriage is traditionally expected to have a certain degree of continuation through further demands under difficult circumstances. Such demands can materialize in the rural area to a greater extent than in town. Marriage in Isiolo town involves a once-and-for-all kind of transaction. Moreover, few Turkana men in Isiolo can afford to pay the bridewealth at marriage and so it is paid gradually afterwards. This credit can then be seen as a new method of social control, equivalent to the just mentioned future demands which can be made in a pastoral economy and which are so essential in difficult situations.

8. The fluctuating demand for manpower (and woman-power) is mentioned by Lewis (1975:439) where further references on this issue can also be found.
9. Finally, the boundary issue was recently solved. In 1973 and 1974, however, it was one of the most important local political issues.
10. Roughly, 2,000 KSh, alternatively 4-5 head of cattle and 500 KSh.
11. He had been the specially elected Elder who had supervised the circumcision of M'Riboi and his age-mates in Karama. This made him the classificatory father of the whole group.
12. About one year later he finally managed to get a job as an untrained teacher, and recently he has been accepted to a college with this job as one qualification.

5. SUBSISTENCE SECURITY AND INVOLVEMENT IN TOWN

The preceding chapter dealt largely with living conditions in the umland of Isiolo town and reasons for migration. In this chapter I shall discuss newcomers to the town and their need for subsistence security and involvement in town life. The opening section accordingly concerns those migrants who arrive without any known contacts in town. I shall touch upon the different types of solidarity principles which are

referred to by those who need help in establishing themselves in the new community. Since ethnicity is helpful in an initial stage for the newcomer who seeks security, the process of incorporation of newcomers in particular is illustrative for an understanding of how and to what extent the ethnic situation is perpetuated and how ethnic boundaries are reinforced.

Before I go any further, it may be useful to relate this study to some of the current anthropological discussions of ethnicity. The term "ethnic" has been clarified by Barth (1969:13) in the following way: "A categorical ascription is an ethnic ascription when it classifies a person in terms of his basic most general identity, presumptively determined by his origin and background." I accept this statement -- noting, however, that the more specific meaning of "basic most general identity" could still remain an issue¹⁾.

The term "ethnic ascription" is, I feel, slightly more pregnant than "ethnic affiliation"; "affiliation" has a connotation of an institution adopting somebody, whereas "ascription" has actual interaction as a prerequisite. And since I wish to emphasize the fact that ethnic ascription may sometimes vary depending on context, I prefer "ascription".

In principle, a distinction has to be made between internal and external ethnic ascription, that is whether ethnic ascription is made from "outside" or "inside" the ethnic group. This question of ethnic ascription could also be expressed as one whether a

relation is in fact perceived as ethnically based or not. What is perceived by non-members as an internal ethnic ascription and, accordingly, becomes an external ethnic ascription, may in fact involve other principles. This means that relations that are not internally regarded as of ethnic character, may be seen as "tribalistic" from the outside. In this interactional context it is possible to speak both of an ascription of ethnic status and of an assumed ascription of ethnic relations. An individual is classed as belonging to a particular ethnic group but also assumed by the "outsider" to be involved in relations of a particular nature and motivated by ethnic solidarity. As an illustration, when a Boran customer enters a Meru shop and finds that the rice is finished, his conclusion is that the trader keeps it hidden in order to sell it to other Meru. The Borana interprets the situation in ethnic terms. The trader might actually sell his hidden rice to other Meru. Yet this may not just be an expression of ethnic solidarity because he discriminates also within his own ethnic group, selling to particular Meru to whom he has more specific relations.

While Barth's discussion on ethnic ascription deals with interacting individuals' ascription of ethnic content, relations which are seemingly ethnically based is another issue. Harries-Jones (1975:71) has demonstrated how relations communicating ethnic solidarity to "the outside" actually involve tighter principles. This theme is fundamental in the present study. Furthermore, internal ethnic ascription is also of importance, in Isiolo town, in the introductory phase until other principles have been established.

Cohen treats ethnic groups as interest groups, where members facing outward conflict exhibit an internal solidarity (cf. Cohen 1969:3 and 1974a:97). Such a perspective differs from Barth's emphasis on ascription which implies a less specialized view on ethnic groups. When Cohen treats groups based on a common ethnic ascription as interest groups, he suggests that, in situations where class cleavages do not follow ethnic boundaries, there will be a shift in focus of identification of members of ethnic groups from internal ethnic ascriptions to identification across ethnic boundaries involving instead a class identification (cf. Cohen 1974a:95). Such a suggestion of an emerging class consciousness, at least for the foreseeable future, has been further discussed by Hannerz (1974: 39-42). He emphasized the complex role of ethnicity when inequality increases within ethnic groups. One possible development in situations of scarce resources and increased inequality is also an emergence of patronage within each ethnic group (*ibid*: 41). This is illustrated in the present study by the Borana elite controlling resources from the public arena and the poor Borana who seek a shamba or some government employment. The inequality between members of the two categories takes a permanent form of patron-client relations. In this way new alliances emerge between members of the same ethnic group who are engaged in complementary niches.

A person's ethnic identity or composite set of identities can be stressed, undercommunicated or kept secret, both by himself and by others who belong to other ethnic categories. When an ethnic identity is displayed sym-

bolically, or when a classification into ethnic categories is utilized deliberately in some manner as a basis for action, I label this "ethnicity". To a greater degree than "ethnic ascription", "ethnicity" depends on situational circumstances. Those who have the same ethnic identity and who display a common ethnicity in order to enhance shared interests, form an ethnic group.

The discussion of prospects for class identification as an alternative to ethnic identification when inequalities become obvious to the oppressed, is as yet of limited relevance to this study. However, I shall return to it briefly in the last section of this chapter. The discussion referred to deals primarily with large cities. In Isiolo town, with its rural ties and the social control that is still exercised in the town-umland system, many Isioloans seek support in their umland or with town dwellers with ties to the same "home area", i.e. within social control. Only in cases where rural ties are non-existent may one expect localized forms to develop. The alternative outlined, that of unequal access to resources generating patron-client relations within ethnic groups, is therefore of significance in the context of inequality for the Isioloans. Such relationships, as well as others within an ethnic group, become accessible once a group membership is established (claimed by an individual and accepted by the other members). This is why I suggest that it may prove particularly beneficial to concentrate on the newcomer to see what aggregate of resources may be obtainable. I shall demonstrate how a

display of ethnicity in an initial interactional phase is the prime key to other solidarity principles in Isiolo town.

The political aspect of ethnicity that has been emphasized by Cohen (1969:190) has been further underlined by Parkin (1974:119) in an article on ideologies in political ethnicity. Parkin's discussion concerns "the different cultural themes or idioms most useful to competing ethnic groups under a number of different structural conditions". He elaborates the distinction made by Cohen (1969:194f) between clearly corporate ethnic groups and loosely organized ethnic aggregates. Coherence in the former, he suggests, refers to congregational ideologies, for example referring to the structure of descent or religious orders, while interpersonal ideologies form the basis for the more informal groups. The former refers to "more 'public' and therefore less-insulable proclamations of group identity and political aims" (*ibid*: 120). If the situation in Isiolo town is expressed in these terms, the Somali may represent a congregational ideology; they sometimes behave in the way they do (also in their own eyes) because they are Somali: Their segmentary lineage system unites all Somali in a confrontation with non-Somali. Another example is the emerging congregational ideology of the impoverished Turkana who now tend to become Catholics. Towards the other extreme (an interpersonal ideology) are the Borana who base their solidarity on kinship (and clanship and friendship), and the Meru who base it on neighbourhood (and friendship). I have already discussed how they are perceived by "outsiders" as basing their solidarity on ethnic grounds while, to themselves, it is based on interpersonal rela-

tions. Parkin suggests in the case of the Kampala Luo that links such as kinship, neighbourhood and friendship tend to be exaggerated both to remind people "of their common language of custom" and to communicate "information about matters of common ethnic interest" (*ibid*: 149). I shall return later in this chapter to how an emphasis on such links is an important factor for ethnicity to be perpetuated in Isiolo town.

The sentence that follows after the one quoted above in connection with the term "ethnic" (Barth 1969:13), gives a presentation of "ethnic group" which is also in accordance with my use of the term in this study: "To the extent that actors use ethnic identities to categorize themselves and others for purposes of interaction, they form ethnic groups in this organizational sense." Although a person's ethnic identity may be ambiguous due to the origin of his parents and his own life career, and may have several levels of which only one may be relevant at a time (cf. Cohen 1974b:xv and Southall 1975:265-266), the total set of ethnic identities to which he can make a claim is usually limited by factors that he does not control himself; he can change these identities no more than he can change his age or sex. In all cases that I have encountered in Isiolo town, it takes several generations after a person's association with members of another ethnic group (through intermarriage or adoption) before the ethnic identity of his offspring has changed²⁾. Generally speaking, for a person to belong to a certain ethnic category, other persons identifying with that particular identity must agree to define him as such. In the more restricted case of an ethnic group "the identification of another person as a fellow member ...

implies a sharing of criteria for evaluation and judgement" (Barth 1969:15). Where there is an ambiguity in ethnic identification so that one rather than another can be emphasized, out of a set of possible identifications, or one level of the ethnic identity rather than the other, the ethnicity displayed by a person may change according to situational conditions; a Tigania Meru is a Tigania when together with the miraa traders but a Meru at the cattle auction.

The fact that ethnicity really is relevant in the context of Isiolo town becomes immediately obvious to a visitor. Let us return to the imaginary walk that we embarked on in Chapter 1 along the duka line and into the market-place, but now add an ethnic dimension to the description. Just outside the market-place we pass some Elders in worn trenchcoats sitting under a tree, involved in a discussion. Already from a distance it seems likely to an observer that they are Turkana, judging from their complexion, posture and ornaments. Also, they do not wear loincloths as Borana and Somali men normally do. Coming closer, there can be even less doubt. They underline arguments by beating their walking sticks on the dusty ground while discussing how the Turkana should defend their water holes beyond Geromet Hills, and what they should say to the District Commissioner. Four Somali men stand nearby, their loincloths flapping in the dry strong wind, talking in low voices of the possibilities of establishing their own cooperative for collecting gemstones to sell at the Nairobi market. The woman quarrelling loudly with a miraa trader in front of one of the stalls inside the market, has shaved her head, except for the top part.

She shouts in the Turkana language at the trader who does not understand. He calls for assistance from the neighbouring kiosks in Kimeru, with the result that the discussion continues in Kiswahili. The woman claims that she has been cheated and sold miraa from yesterday's delivery. The traders insist that they renew their stock every day. Two Samburu moraa also display their ethnicity (obvious at first glance to the observer) with their typical clothing and hairstyle. They have come to town simply to see what it looks like. They walk along quietly, shyly holding hands, and enter the shops without purchasing anything, although they show openly that they have several hundred shillings. A Volkswagen tourist bus stopping at the petrol station on the way to the game lodge attracts the noisy interest of the traders who have specialized in tourist items. Traders request assistants to bring particular objects, both in the Borana and Turkana languages, they argue with each other in these languages and in Kiswahili. The foreign tourists have to speak English loudly in order to make themselves heard. An occasional joke is cracked (not in English) about the price level. The two women who sit at the market entrance, discreetly sell aromatic roots that they have collected the day before. They wear dresses that are typical of married Borana women. The well-informed observer sees that they are Sakuye from details in their clothing, such as the head trinket, signifying that they are mothers. Their only customers are married Borana and Sakuye women. Some of the roots are for medicine, others for incense; some are for women who wish to obtain an attractive smell before sexual intercourse. Two stout women pass by clad in bright cotton

clothes and wearing head cloths. They move decidedly through the crowd at the market entrance, turn up their noses at the sight of the Sakuye women, while muttering something to each other in Somali about "bush people". They belong to the "town Somali" and are on their way to the Asian retail kiosk inside the market, perhaps to purchase "Binti el Sudan" perfume or Arabian incense.

This walk illustrates a display of ethnicity. Inter-course between members of ethnic groups is restricted to a limited number of occasions as people meet along the street, at the market-place and in the administration offices. The roles vary but the inter-play is generally one of inequality; employee-employer, servant-master, customer-trader. Multi-ethnic inter-course in these situations is frequently characterized by abusive joking, a sign of suspicion. Spontaneous contacts, in the street for example, are normally made with members of one's own ethnic group. This is obviously a situation where ethnicity is displayed as a principle for selection. Social interaction in leisure time is normally intraethnic (but without the conscious display of ethnicity, since other principles, friendship or kinship, are established). This is true both for institutionalized social gatherings of the different ethnic groups and the small scale interpersonal intercourse, though naturally exciting outdoor events such as the Somali sar dances³⁾ will attract spectators also from other ethnic groups.

When ethnic ascription is overtly manifested, this is not always an expression of conscious opposition to

other groups. Its display in appearance, behaviour, language, etc., can also be seen as a transformation from the respective rural area. What is folklore at home, for example, where ethnicity is not a relevant phenomenon, could become in town, with its multi-ethnic setting, an unintended expression of ethnicity, communicating to members of the same group the existence of a common basis for solidarity and, to foreigners, distinctiveness.

NEWCOMERS SEEK SPONSORS

Viewing it as a mechanism for social categorization, I discuss ethnicity in Isiolo as one varying factor in the overall dynamics, involving the establishment and incorporation of immigrants into the town. Ethnicity, thus, encompasses the context in which migrants interact in the town as well as the degree to which they become involved in town life.

The migrant who arrives in town as a stranger has to establish relationships within the township in order to obtain help with a series of problems. Some kind of a common identification is needed as a means of developing such relationships with townsmen. Hence the fundamental issue for the stranger is the one set out by Goffman (1959:1):

"Information about the individual helps to define the situation, enabling others to know in advance what he will expect of them and what they may expect of him. Informed in these ways, the others will know how best to act in order to call forth a desired response from him."

My intention with the present discussion is not to go into presentations of self in everyday life, but rather to concentrate on aggregates of opportunities that are available to the migrant. For, as Goffman states, there are usually practical reasons for acquiring information about the person with whom one interacts. These reasons in the case of Isiolo town can be looked upon as a desire to obtain "subsistence security" and "involvement" in town affairs or those of the applicable ethnic group. This section deals with the person who is a perfect stranger in town, and how ethnicity forms the basis for common identification. My basic assumption concerning ethnicity is that it offers a primary organization principle whereby strangers can be classified by the newcomer as potential "helpers" or merely strangers. If one is to further ask how the process occurs that causes ethnicity to be so relevant, a number of partial answers can be suggested, such as:

- (1) Displaying ethnic ascription indicates a possibility of common contacts, which in turn implies obligations or demands.
- (2) Displaying a non-membership of other groups communicates that one is "not dangerous" to other people of the same ethnic group.
- (3) Those who consider themselves to be in town only temporarily have as their focus of interest the rural context. They represent an extension of the rural community into the town and have little other than formal interactional interest in people from other places, that is members of other ethnic groups.

The newcomer without acquaintances in town will seek her or his first contacts with members of the same ethnic group, though the procedure will differ according to culture. The following brief cases are intended to demonstrate how a newcomer may seek and find a sponsor, a person who is willing to help him or her through the first period until he/she has managed (or indeed given up) to establish a more independent position in town.

When M'Mwaranira first came to Isiolo town from Tigania by matatu -- the common low-cost "taxi" -- he was surprised and frightened to see so many dangerous Somali around him. The driver laughed at him, warned him about Bula Besa and advised him to go to the market-place, where he would find many Meru from his own sublocation. At the market-place he began talking to some miraa traders who felt sorry for him, when they saw how nervous he was, and who gave him a bundle of miraa and invited him to sit down. After some time word had gone around that a young boy from Muthara had arrived in town in search for a job, and the party sitting inside the shady kiosk was joined by an age-class brother of M'Mwaranira, who was working as a miraa assistant. They recalled having met also a few times after their circumcision ceremony. Towards the afternoon the age-class brother asked his employer, who had just returned from Wamba, if M'Mwaranira could not join him and sleep in the small shop this night. He stayed there for a few weeks while looking around for jobs, much as M'Riboi did (Chapter 4). In return he helped in the shop doing odd jobs. He seldom dared to leave the market-place during these first few weeks.

While he was helping his father with the cattle somewhere between Garba Tula and Kinna, Galgallo, a twenty-year-old Borana Gutu boy, received a letter from a class-mate from the secondary school, who was just leaving for Nairobi. His friend stated that he had recently left his employment and had suggested to his employer that Galgallo

should replace him. The letter was brought by a neighbour who had walked to Garba Tula the day before, but it had been lying there for ten days. Galgallo walked to Garba Tula the following night and took the bus to Isiolo town only to find that he had come too late for the job. He then moved along the street meeting many Borana and a number of clansmen. These were all friendly contacts who invited him to stay overnight in their houses. He later met a sodda (classificatory brother-in-law) with whom he decided to stay for some time, while looking around for another job. His sodda, who was a member of one of the work groups, tried in vain to convince the other members that Galgallo could join the group. In the meantime, Galgallo was lucky to get help from one of his clansmen, who was working with the County Council and who had heard that an untrained teacher was urgently needed for three months in the Sericho Primary School. Galgallo applied and got the job.

Habiba, a divorced Garri woman around 45 years old, decided to leave her home in Moyale, because of troublesome relatives who continuously urged her to marry another husband. She took the weekly bus up to Isiolo town, where her former husband and daughter were living together. She met with her daughter and the clan women of her former husband, though not with him, and was invited by one of them to stay in her house as long as she wanted. Habiba accepted this and stayed for about one month. For some time she worked for a Meru miraa trader selling miraa outside a Somali shop. She made many friends and the Somali women liked her pleasant company. With the support of her new friends and the income from her small-scale trade she then rented a small room of her own.

The newcomer's problem of whom to contact upon arrival is universal. He will always need a sponsor who can at least help with the first introductions into the local society to establish the various contacts that are needed; with employers, the Education Officer, or with those who distribute shamba plots. Practical

information about housing possibilities, where to buy charcoal cheaply, how to avoid con men or the whereabouts of the dangerous places in Bula Besa is also essential.

Generally speaking, contacts are sought with members of the own ethnic group and non-members are avoided. For the external observer it may appear that ethnicity is important in this context. For the actor, however, more narrow principles of solidarity are involved. I would suggest that in the Isiolo context ties that are sanctioned in traditional rural social systems become instrumental also in town: The clan solidarity of the Borana, the neighbourhood solidarity of the Meru or the lineage solidarity of the Somali. A similar restricted importance of ethnicity (which I have already referred to in the general and more theoretical introduction of this chapter) has been noted for Luanshya, a town in the Zambian Copperbelt by Harries-Jones (1975:71). His study concerns political mobilization and control, and he demonstrates that ethnic contacts in town are instrumental. People in Luanshya utilize ethnic identification only to a limited extent, however. When they do, this is with an explicit intention to get certain things done. Common ethnicity does not in itself imply any obligations, but it suggests the possibility that there is a "home mate tie" which can be used for some practical purpose, its instrumentality maybe being of a rather short duration. His conclusion is that "home mate ties" are of greater significance for social relations than are "tribal ties". The distinction is important in the Copperbelt

case, since the category "home mates" is more narrowly defined than "tribe" and also contextual. The term might signify different sets of people on various occasions, sometimes with common blood relations and at other times "a more instrumental tie" (*ibid*: 72). The "home mate ties" make political mobilization in Luanshya more complex, since it supplies an alternative solidarity principle to kinship ties within the ethnic group. Both principles are localized to the town but refer to the rural area (*ibid*: 95). In the Isiolo case one may see a similar utilization of "home mate ties" when newcomers seek sponsors through a search for, primarily, blood relations by displaying ethnicity.

Of interest for the present discussion are also the fictive kinship ties which are embedded in the Luanshya unstructured "home mate ties": "Instrumental kinship in this case means the fictionalizing of relations so that a distant kinship tie -- a tie of common origin but with no direct kinship bonds -- came to be perceived as the equivalent of a kinship tie for purposes of mutual aid" (*loc.cit.*). In Luanshya, it appears, ethnicity does not take over in the structureless field of social relations, but the applicability of traditional kinship solidarity is expanded. This occurs also among, for example, the Borana where on an individual level, classificatory kinship links may be activated and intensified, and, on a collective level, a fission of closely related segmentary lineage groups may take place.

The need of the newcomer to Isiolo town for a sponsor

can be met by ethnic solidarity, basically since the groups are sufficiently significant in Isiolo town both in terms of number of people and in access to resources. The choice of the newcomer to seek contacts within his own ethnic group is then obvious for cultural reasons, language if nothing else. A comparison with another East African small agro-town, Mto wa Mbu in Tanzania, where ethnicity does not have this significance, shows how religious solidarity may offer yet another solidarity principle in this introductory function. The Muslims in Mto wa Mbu have an organized form of sponsorship for newcomers (Arens (1976:452-453)). A newcomer, a potential religious convert, seeks a sponsor for entrance into the Muslim faith with the consequence that a father-son relationship is established. Hence, the sponsor gains prestige and the new arrival achieves an introduction into the town's social life. "The advantage of this custom to the individuals involved and its role as an agent of community integration are obvious since it creates special and close ties between a number of people of different ethnic backgrounds where previously none existed" (loc.cit.). The ethnic categories in Mto wa Mbu are so numerous that they may have no corporate dimensions, with the occasional exception of the Chagga, the economically dominant ethnic category in northern Tanzania (Vincent 1975:133). This means that, in contrast to Isiolo town, the immigrant is not likely to find kinsmen or friends of friends by seeking members of his own ethnic group. Hence, ethnic ascription can obviously not fulfill the newcomer's needs for such an introduction in Mto wa Mbu. Rather, the quasi-ethnic category Waswahili has emerged, signifying townsmen in contrast to the Iraqw inhabitants of the surrounding rural areas (Arens (1975:435)).

Another difference between Mto wa Mbu and Isiolo town, related to the prevalence of various ethnic categories, is the fact that Isiolo town is economically and socially well integrated with its rural surroundings, which is in contrast to Mto wa Mbu. This means that while an immigrant to Isiolo town is likely to establish links by means of acquaintances from "back home", this is less likely to happen in Mto wa Mbu society. In Isiolo town the Borana immigrant will always find clansmen even if he finds no sodda, the Meru will find age-class members or neighbours, and the Somali will find some kinds of lineage kinsmen. Members of these three ethnic groups will accordingly always manage to find a sponsor, of greater or lesser help, of course, through traditional systems of rights and obligations by means of displaying their ethnicity in the initial phases of seeking contacts. The case of Turkana is different. Many of the impoverished immigrants who have come, have found no relations, either age-class members or kinsmen, through traditional systems. One reason is that they do not exhibit the same degree of collective solidarity as, for example, the Borana do, and another reason is, because they have already exhausted the possibilities of these relations. For historical reasons the Turkana also have another resource than traditional claims on solidarity. Many come primarily to become wage employees, and, since the Turkana have a reputation for being reliable labourers, they have good prospects. They might continue southwards, if there are no jobs in Isiolo town (Chapter 3). Turkana migrants therefore have the possibility of isolating themselves from social ties in order to be more independent.

Interestingly, the fairly recently established Catholic mission has provided patrons for the destitute Turkana, and hence has fulfilled a similar role to that of the Muslim religion in Mto wa Mbu. The proportion of converts is high and many Turkana households, especially in Kula Mawe, rely for their subsistence largely on food relief from the mission. There is mutual satisfaction over the arrangement.

THE CONTINUED RELEVANCE OF ETHNICITY

The newcomer who is introduced into town life through informal sponsorship, whether selected ethnically or according to a more "narrow" principle, is likely to solve his housing and livelihood problems through his early contacts. This means, as I shall discuss in the present section, that the newcomer gains access to opportunities that are ethnically specific, and that he or she apparently contributes, through the process of incorporation, to perpetuating ethnic boundaries. Language barriers, settlement decisions, marriage strategies, resource control and local political strategies are factors that seem to add to this perpetuation.

Managing language barriers

Apart from external signs such as clothing or physical appearance, ethnicity is manifested through language or in interactional preferences. The choices made for interaction are typically motivated from a practical

point of view, while their implication for outsiders is a reinforcement of membership within a particular ethnic group. Hence Sakuye, Wata, Gutu and Garri in Isiolo town are all considered "Borana" by outsiders, since their appearance is similar and they speak the Borana language. Similarly both Hertti and Isaq as well as Geri are "Somali", while Igembe, Imenti and Tigania all are "Meru" to outsiders. In interaction with strangers the important message of language as an indicator of ethnic identity is that "here is somebody who speaks your language and probably shares your way of life and some of your acquaintances". When the identification of a common base has been made, further interaction becomes possible.

The aboriginal languages that are spoken in Isiolo are (Whiteley (1974:21-24)): Borana and Somali, which are Cushitic languages belonging to the Galla and Somali Groups respectively; Meru, a Bantu language belonging to the Kikuyu Group; and Samburu and Turkana, which are Para-Nilotic, of the Maasai and Teso Groups respectively.

It was not until after Kenya achieved her independence, or even until after the secessionist war, that large sections of the community of Isiolo town found it necessary to learn Kiswahili as a lingua franca. Independence raised the interest in Kiswahili as a national language generally, and interaction between different groups increased, especially when the transfer of people into Bula Besa took place, making it more difficult to keep segregated ethnic quarters intact. The improved farming on the irrigated shambas also brought

people of different ethnic groups closer to each other. This late acceptance of Kiswahili as the general lingua franca for all groups is shown in the fact that the older strata of the population speak it less fluently than young people do.

Difficulties with using language for ethnic differentiation occur first on a sub-group level. Among the Galla speaking groups, the Garri dialect is easy to distinguish from that of the Borana Gutu, while the Sakuye dialect can be hard to differentiate. The Meru subgroups, Igembe, Imenti and Tigania, do speak different dialects. Ascription to one or the other of the subgroups can easily be claimed on the basis of home location if found necessary.

Language knowledge was one of the issues dealt with in the survey carried out in the various parts of Bula Besa, in the shambas of Bula Besa Juu and Kampi Ya Garba as well as in the Garba Tula Manyatta⁴⁾. Garba Tula is largely a monoethnic Borana area (though there are some Somali groups within it, and a few Meru and Asian traders have shops in the centre). The choice of Garba Tula for comparison is made because many of the impoverished Borana migrants come to Isiolo town from the rural areas by way of Garba Tula.

The proportion of people speaking at least some Kiswahili is presented in Table 5.1. It shows that this language can serve as a lingua franca in Isiolo town; a very clear majority of those interviewed know some of it. It must, however, be noted that the standard of knowledge is not shown in the table. This is generally

not very high, and old people especially have difficulty in speaking Kiswahili. The dialect is a poor up-country version that the people of the coast hardly accept as Kiswahili, as the grammar is over-simplified and many English words are used. On the other hand, the "errors" are consistent and do not render speech less mutually intelligible.

TABLE 5.1: Proportion of groups speaking their own language and Kiswahili

Category	Total No of interviews	% speaking own language only	% knowing Kiswahili as well
Borana:			
Bula Besa	29	17.2	79.3
Shamba Ya Juu	22	9.1	90.9
Kampi Ya Garba	77	27.3	72.7
Garba Tula Manyatta	65	92.3	7.7
Geri:			
Bula	19	5.3	94.7
Meru:			
Bula Besa	25	4.0	96.0
Somali:			
Bula Besa	47	10.6	89.4
Turkana:			
Bula Besa	18	22.2	72.2
Mashamba	84	1.2	95.2
Nayanae-Katwan	80	8.8	88.7

Substantial numbers of people of the different ethnic groups speak no other languages than their own mother tongue and Kiswahili. English is spoken only by 0 % - 2.5 % of the heads of household except in Bula Besa, where the figures are for Borana 6.9 %, for Somali 12.8 % and for Turkana 22.0 %. The Bula Besa figures should be viewed cautiously, however, since the sample here is not very large, as can be seen from the table.

The proportion of persons speaking both their mother language and another language but not Kiswahili, can be calculated from the table. A few of the Borana in Bula Besa speak the Somali and Galla languages only, and some Turkana know either Galla or Samburu language in addition to their mother tongue.

The differences in degree of knowledge of Kiswahili among the Borana in ethnically heterogeneous Isiolo town and in homogeneous Garba Tula, as it shows in the table, is striking. In the Garba Tula Manyatta very few speak Kiswahili. Among the Borana in Kampi Ya Garba on the outskirts of Isiolo town (which is heavily dominated by a Boran majority) about three quarters speak Kiswahili. The inhabitants in Kampi Ya Garba are active in irrigation farming, and communication across ethnic boundaries is essential for the organization of the irrigation, for learning from the agricultural advisors supplied by the government and for marketing agricultural produce. However, since many are newcomers the figure for the proportion of people knowing only their own language is higher than for other Isiolo groups, including the Borana living in Bula Besa. It may be interesting to note that today (1978) the rural

Borana in the district see their opportunities to learn other languages as the most beneficial thing offered by primary school education, even more so than reading and writing (Dahl, personal communication). Such knowledge is said to open up new economic possibilities.

It is fairly uncommon for the Borana and the Meru to know other local languages. With the exception of barter trade with the Meru, the Borana have had little reason for learning other languages before, due to the nature of their traditional activities, that is grazing their stock within an area, where the Galla language has been sufficient for communication. The newly arrived Meru in Isiolo town have similar reasons for not speaking other languages. Those who came early to be employed by Somali or Asian households, have often been liable to learn the Somali language. The Isiolo Somali, who previously made a living through stock raising and trade, have sometimes learnt the languages of their trading partners or employees. In contrast to the others, many Turkana know several other local languages than their own, partly because their move to Isiolo has been more permanent than that of the Borana and the Meru. They also are active in such economic activities as those of labourers and herdsmen, where it proves suitable to know other employees' languages. A high proportion (at least one third) of Turkana on the outskirts of the town speak the Samburu language, probably as a result of contacts between the two groups. Also, most of the LMD employees are people who are likely to have Samburu acquaintances.

The picture of language barriers that emerges is that

inter-ethnic contacts are increasingly necessary in Isiolo town. Young people and people who have long been in town do know some Kiswahili, and newcomers who want to seek a livelihood in the shambas are forced to learn it. Hence, the tendency seems to be towards a greater degree of interaction and a gradual reduction in language barriers, which is true also in the rural areas.

Settlement decisions

The Borana, Meru, Somali and Turkana constitute 95 % of all households in Bula Besa, clearly dominating Isiolo town's ethnic make-up (see Table 1.1). Most of the other 5 % are Kikuyu, who live in a particular section of Bula Besa Juu. Settlement in Bula Besa was more strictly based on ethnic ascription before the recent war. Even after the war, however, the various sections differ greatly according to ethnic composition (see Table 1.1). Each section actually contains ethnically homogeneous clusters of households, where much of the members' social lives take place. The compounds of a Somali, Sheikh Aden and his neighbours in Bula Besa Chini, illustrate both the settlement process and the ethnically homogeneous neighbourhood "pockets".

Sheikh Aden settled in Bula Besa in the 1920s, when it was strictly a Herti settlement. His compound was large and surrounded with huge hedges, which were all cut down during the secessionist war, but which are now partially recovering. The following sketch provides an outline of the compound:

FIGURE 5.1: Sheikh Aden's compound and its inhabitants

Sheikh Aden's two wives live in houses 1 and 2 in the sketch. All children have moved away with the exception of one son, Mohamud, who inhabits house 4. This house is of poor quality; the mud walls are not repaired properly and the madebe roof needs a complete replacement. Mohamud is hoping to move as soon as he finds a place where he can afford to live. The secessionist war and the scramble for plots within the Bula Besa camp, resulted in this compound adding another household. Sheikh Aden allowed a brother of his second wife, Ismail, who had lost all his cattle during the war, to build house 3 for himself and his household. Sheikh Aden lives in an ethnically homogeneous neighbourhood. In his own block there are but a few houses which are not inhabited by Herti Somali. House 5, at the border of the compound, is one of the exceptions. It is inhabited by Junice, an old Tigania Meru woman, who has been employed for many years in Sheikh Aden's household

as a housekeeper. She used to live outside Bula Besa, but during the war moved closer in. Her intention was to settle in Kampi Ya Shauri Yako, but she found no room to rent during those hectic days when many newcomers needed housing. Sheikh Aden then decided to build house 5 for her, since Junice is much appreciated in his household.

The neighbouring shop, however, does not belong to the compound. It is kept by a Meru trader, and was built during the war in the middle of the old path, which now bends around the shop. The trader's reason for insisting upon this location for the shop is that many people pass on the road in front of the shop. He has no relationship with Junice in house 5, himself being an Imenti Meru, though her house acts as a buffer between the shop and the houses of Sheikh Aden's household. It would have been practically impossible for the trader and his household to settle in Bula Besa Chini at all before the secessionist war, and to build a shop in close proximity with a Somali compound would have been especially difficult.

Those (four) neighbours who are indicated on the sketch map above are all Somali. These five households interact regularly with each other, though they are not kinsmen (but all are Herti). Hence, they also provide an illustration of the kind of neighbourhood "pockets" that have emerged during and after the war. They reflect the rapid population increase in Bula Besa and the housing shortage, and are caused by the need to obtain help through claiming traditional solidarity principles. Even if the ethnic segregation has been decreasing since the war, newcomers who seek a more permanent solution to their housing problem than staying with a friend, use their early contacts to find a room to rent. Hence, the effect is that many immigrants come to live in such small neighbourhood "pockets" as that of Sheikh Aden.

Marriage strategies

Marriages across ethnic boundaries are unusual, generally requiring high bridewealth payments. In a few instances the partners in such marriages have been forced to leave town in order to stay alive. The relationship between the Somali and the Meru is particularly tense, reflecting the historical master-servant relation. This can also be seen in many other contexts; there is for example a taboo against sharing food between Somali and Meru.

The Somali in Isiolo town, predominantly Herti and Isaq, have developed what they term a town culture, a life-style (including dialectical differences) that is easily distinguished from that of former pastoralist migrants, such as the Geri. However, a high degree of endogamy is maintained even between the members of the lineage segments Herti and Isaq in the town. This can be illustrated by a brief survey of marriages during 1972-74. Out of 123 marriages, 76 % (93) occurred between partners of the respective lineage segment, either Herti or Isaq. The remaining 24 % were almost exclusively between members of these two groups.

The following case of the aborted marriage between Edukoni and Buke depicts how complicated inter-ethnic marriages may be, what kinds of complications non-conformists may face, and how very decisive ethnic ascription is even for those rejecting its significance.

Edukoni is the oldest son of Kadong, a Turkana woman around 40 years old. She came to Isiolo town

with her former husband in 1952. Edukoni has now finished secondary school and attends a boarding school outside Nairobi on a government grant. During his last year in Isiolo, he had a Borana (according to him, but actually she was Sakuye) girlfriend, Buke, who lived with her parents in the shambas along the road to Nayanae Katwan. Since he started schooling outside Nairobi, he has been visiting Buke occasionally and they agreed to marry. Therefore, when it became evident that she was pregnant, he immediately asked his stepfather (through his mother) to negotiate with the parents of his Borana girlfriend about the bridewealth. Her parents demanded an extremely high bridewealth, 10,000 KSh to be paid in cash. This was in compensation for the fact that he was a Turkana and not a Borana, and for the fact that he had made the girl pregnant before they had married. Edukoni had no possibility of raising the needed money and, therefore, he flatly refused to marry Buke. Her parents became extremely annoyed, stating that this was what they had expected all along and that they would now kill their daughter. Kadong, Edukoni's mother, now joined the negotiations, after accusing her husband of having made a mess of everything by arousing the anger of both Edukoni and Buke's parents. She spent several days convincing the latter that there was no possibility of paying the bridewealth demanded. After they finally agreed on a considerable reduction and accepted livestock as a partial payment, Edukoni continued to refuse to marry Buke. Kadong could not persuade him, since Edukoni by this time, living away from home, was beyond her influence. In order to prove her sincerity, she then suggested that Buke should instead marry Lohichale, her second oldest son. This was agreed upon, though both Lohichale and Buke resented the marriage. Soon after these negotiations, which took place in early 1974, during the prolonged drought period, a group of Borana from the Garba Tula area raided a Turkana settlement just outside Isiolo town. They stole all the cattle and killed several people, who were foolish enough to try to prevent the theft. Though most cattle were later recovered, the bloodshed led to utterly hostile relations between all Borana and Turkana in Isiolo town for several months. People from the two groups would on no occasion talk to each other. For Lohichale and Buke this meant that nothing more was said about their marriage and Buke delivered her child out of wedlock.

Clearly, Isioloans in general marry within their own ethnic group (and among the town Somali even within their own lineage segment as we have seen). This means that ethnicity is strongly perpetuated through the marriage rules. One may, however, take an opposite stand as well; since ethnicity is perpetuated, people find it necessary to marry intra-ethnically. With the latter perspective the argument is that marriage is an agreement involving not only immediate economic transactions, but also an investment in future subsistence security expressed through the possibility of making claims on economic redistribution in a disastrous situation. The degree of social control is obviously much greater within an ethnic group with contacts "back home" as well as locally, than it is inter-ethnically. Hence, claims on redistribution across ethnic boundaries are weaker. It is then only logical to increase the level of bridewealth as a compensation, as in the above case of Edukoni and Buke.

Resource control

The kinds of resources that ethnic ascription offers an inhabitant of or an immigrant to Isiolo town are access to capital or politico-administrative power in the case of the rich and access to subsistence niches in the case of the poor. In both these cases, whether an immigrant comes for intended social mobility or for sheer survival, the fundamental issue for him is one of obtaining access to resources, given a restricted opportunity structure. Ethnicity proves to be one

possible asset in the competition for resources, since it provides an effective discrimination principle. Those in need of some service from the local administration, for example, will contact "their people" with an expectation at least that the likelihood for success increases. Hence the familiar situation emerges with a vicious circle of favouritism on ethnic grounds caused by a universal expectation that everybody else uses ethnicity as a device to gain access to whatever scarce resources may be available.

The claim by "outsiders" that ethnic criteria are used as a resource may in itself indirectly perpetuate ethnicity. This is so because while ethnicity is effective for a newcomer to town only in an initial stage when he is seeking subsistence security, his subsequent intra-ethnic claims on other solidarity principles are interpreted in ethnic terms in later inter-ethnic interactions. Ethnic membership becomes a necessary but not sufficient criterion for joining many subsistence niches⁵⁾. The argument, again, is that other, structurally more "narrow", principles than ethnicity are involved for the actor in the Isiolo case. For him or her, ethnicity in the town is but an introduction into other kinds of contacts, usually involving references to the rural areas, either through contacts there or through demands for solidarity based on structural principles that involve property rights (clan solidarity in the Boran case, neighbourhood for the Meru and so on). The effect for non-members is a recruitment seemingly based on ethnicity, while the members are involved in other, more personal relations. This is one important explanation

of the opinion that ethnicity per se is operational and in itself perpetuates ethnicity.

Let us for example look at the various subsistence niches that have been presented in Chapter 3. These are summarized in Table 5.2, where the respective ethnic dominance is also indicated. To "outsiders" each niche is practically inaccessible, for the apparent reason that ethnicity is utilized as a principle to monopolize the particular resource by the dominating ethnic group. To the "insider", however, ethnicity may prove an insufficient resource for obtaining access to the desired niche. Other structurally less inclusive qualities are also required; a proper clan membership, an age-class mate already engaged in the activity. The result is precisely as stated above that ethnicity becomes perpetuated not in that it is operational, but in that it seems to be so to "outsiders"⁶⁾.

The Isiolo situation differs from that in the large East African cities, where no a priori social ties are likely to be found through a display of ethnicity. There, instead, formal ethnic organizations emerge. A man from Kisumu joins the Luo Union in Nairobi since he will find people there who are of the same origin, and who lead the same way of life as he does, in a situation where he needs some kind of security or reassurance before he can establish his own urban network of friendships. In the large cities ethnic ascription becomes a collective key to a new, fairly weak (meetings sometimes occur irregularly, for example), kind of corporate group for the immigrants, where se-

TABLE 5.2: Ethnic ascription and economic activities in town

	Borana	"Old" Meru ¹⁾	"New" Meru ²⁾	Samburu	Geri Somali	Herti & Isaq Somali	Turkana	Kikuyu	Asians
Firewood gathering for Somali restaurants				X					
Firewood gathering for trade in town					X		X		
Charcoal burning					X		X		
Tourist trade	X						X		
"Prostitution"	X		X						
"10 cent trade"	X		X						
Miraa trade		X	X						
Cattle trade			X			X			
Trading wild life products			X			X			
Market trading in kiosks		X	X						
Market trading in the open	X	X	X		X		X		
Selling milk			X	X			X		
Selling traditional medicines	X				X				
Retail trade in cement <u>dukas</u>			X			X			X
Taxi			X						X
Farming in Isiolo town	X			X	X		X		
Selling local <u>shamba</u> products	X						X		
Artisans								X	X

1. Migrated around the 1940s (see Chapter 1)

2. Migrated essentially after independence (see Chapter 3)

curity no longer -- as in the rural community -- lies in common interests in land or domestic animals (whether expressed through clan solidarity or some other principle). The base for solidarity in the cities rather has shifted towards the culture itself that members have in common.

If we turn to the affluents in Isiolo town and their access to capital, a similar picture to that of the subsistence niches emerges. In order to enter either the miraa trade, the posho trade, the trade in livestock or that in game trophies, one needs the kinds of contacts to which the Meru and the Somali long distance traders have access (Chapter 2). Just as in the case of the economic niches within the township, recruitment to these niches seems to be based on ethnicity and, thus, perpetuating ethnic boundaries while in fact recruitment is more differentiated.

Local political strategies

In the case of control over the politico-administrative power the display of ethnicity is in fact instrumental, and therefore perpetuates ethnic boundaries. This was properly demonstrated in the 1974 elections, where the affluent traders had to protect their interests by launching their "own" candidates, who had to make certain commitments before they could be elected. The common view taken by the electorate of a candidate, was that the election gave the latter the opportunity of making a personal career. The individual voter supported the candidate upon whom he or she could

possibly exercise some forms of traditional demands or who had already convinced the voter of the prospect for future favours. One of the methods the candidates used to obtain support was to hand out gifts of cigarettes, T-shirts and even money, demanding reciprocity in votes. Such a method was possible since the total number of registered voters was not very high. The difference between first and second placement in the national elections in the two Isiolo constituencies was 500-600 votes. One of the Borana candidates for Parliament sighed towards the end of the campaign: "The Borana have become like hyenas and snakes and only vote for he who pays". In order to obtain local support for himself as an MP candidate, he formed an alliance with candidates to the Isiolo County Council, who would get support during the later local elections in return if the MP candidate won. In that case his status would have improved to the extent to enable him to influence the local elections.

In town the Borana and Somali badly needed economic rehabilitation to recover from the war. Support for community development programmes, however, proved to be difficult to mobilize among those inhabitants who considered themselves only temporary residents. On the whole, the collective gain of the electorate from supporting a particular candidate was limited due to the various individual expectations.

As early as a few months before the national elections, before the candidates had been officially sanctioned by the party, all ethnic groups had "their" candidates as follows⁷⁾. The Borana had several candidates for

MP in the Isiolo North constituency, which includes Isiolo town. Both incumbent MPs were among the candidates as well as sons of traditional Boran leaders. The Somali in the same constituency had several early candidates for the national elections as well. It was obvious, though, that no Somali candidate would win, unless all Somali support was rallied behind one candidate. Therefore, one by one the candidates were gradually persuaded to withdraw, by methods that included physical violence. One of the remaining candidates allegedly had the support from the dealers and producers of game trophies and great economic backing. The Turkana in this constituency started out with two candidates, a young educated teacher with support from the young urban population, and an old man appointed by the elders with the support of the rest of the Turkana. Both candidates later withdrew, though too late to avoid a rift in the local Turkana community. The Turkana votes registered, particularly those of the young people, were mainly cast for the Meru candidate in the elections. The remainder of the Turkana support and the support from the Samburu and from the few Kikuyu were given to one of the Somali candidates. The Meru hesitated for a long time in deciding whether they should present their own candidate or if they should support the Borana candidate most likely to win, in order to prevent a Somali candidate from gaining the seat. Seeing how difficult it was for the Somali to unite around one single candidate, they decided to launch their candidate who did quite well in the elections, partly due to the Turkana support.

The background to this voting behaviour, with the dominance of ethnicity, is to a great extent found in the history of the region. As I have already mentioned, Isiolo District as created by the British during the colonial time, was intended as a Borana district. The Somali immigration has increased lately. A major cause is actually the heavy Borana losses of cattle in the war and the eradication of camels from the camel areas north of Uaso Nyiro. This opened up the possibility of migrating into the vacated Borana areas when population pressure, animal and human, increased among the Somali to the east of Madogash. This was one of the two most discussed issues among the Borana during the elections, i.e. how to prevent these Somali immigrants from gaining too much influence, since they had the right to register, being Kenyan citizens.

The second issue under discussion in the Borana community was how to counter the rumours that the Meru might suggest making Garba Tula the district headquarters. Such a suggestion would be quite logical since Garba Tula is located in the centre of the district and well within the Borana area. This would in reality mean that the boundary between Isiolo and Meru Districts could be settled with Isiolo town on the Meru side of the boundary; if the town had no administrative ties with the district, the case for its remaining there would be weakened with the possible result that Isiolo District would lose its only major centre. Primarily for this, but also for other historical reasons, the Borana would never vote for a Meru candidate. Neither would they vote for a Somali

since their distrust for this group has increased since the secessionist war; many Isiolo Borana feel that they were cheated during the war, and were clearly worst hit of all. To support a Turkana candidate was also considered out of the question by the Borana community, especially during the time when tension was high between these groups due to the limited water and grazing resources during the drought, and when fights and cattle raids were common.

The Meru did not want a Somali representative, because of old antagonistic relations. The Meru community in Isiolo town felt that with a Somali Member of Parliament they would be forced out of town. The established intention among the Meru was instead the opposite: No Somali should be allowed in Isiolo town. This claim was based on the theory that Somali had immigrated recently and illegally. In support of this claim they referred to an agreement between the Meru Njuri Ncheke council and the British colonial administration made in 1950 that all Alien Somali should have left Isiolo town ten years after the agreement⁸⁾. Since the Meru were conscious that the Borana would never vote for a Meru candidate, they were prepared to vote for a Borana candidate to prevent a Somali from winning. Due to the difficulties of the Somali to settle for one candidate, they decided to have their own candidate to challenge the Borana one for the seat. It never was an alternative to support a Turkana candidate since the chances of the Turkana to win were considered to be too minute.

The Somali felt that it was their turn to get a can-

didate and that the elections were a matter between them and the Borana. When they realized the strength of the Meru candidate they were taken by surprise, and many voted for the Borana candidate "to keep Isiolo to the north", as one informant expressed it.

As mentioned already, the Turkana were split into two groups; modern versus traditional, new versus old, educated versus illiterate, farmers versus non-farmers. Those who had identified with the new nation and its independent government were in one group, and those who had maintained dependent relations to the Somali or had engaged in economic activities other than the new irrigated farming or employment with governmental departments were in the other.

In contrast to the ethnically split situation, the government representatives strongly emphasized that the elections had nothing to do with tribal membership. All Kenyan citizens had the right to vote in the place they were living and where they had their property. Hence neighbourhood and not tribal membership should be the basis for support. The candidates often had to manoeuvre carefully between assuring one significant portion of the electorate a continued dominance on ethnic grounds, and de-emphasizing the significance of ethnicity in other contexts, much in accordance with Vincent's (1975:121) description of "the skilled manipulation of the roles of both tribesman and townsman". All candidates sought to secure the support of one local group in the constituency, sometimes a local community but normally an ethnic group, and then hoped to achieve sufficient support within marginal groups to win the elections.

CHANGES IN ETHNIC CATEGORIES AND CATEGORIZATION

The previous section has dealt with how ethnicity in town is perpetuated, for various reasons. Social control, reciprocity and redistribution principles have been of particular importance. In this section I shall concentrate on these principles, and on their implications for other groups than the newcomers to town: The established town dwellers and more permanent migrants. The basic difference between these and the newcomers is a decreased importance of the umland. For those who migrate permanently there may be but a theoretical possibility of claiming land rights (for farming or pasture) or of rebuilding a family herd. Hence, they lack these resources, which in interaction are useful for maintaining social control or demanding reciprocal relations.

An appropriate example of the consequences of such a situation in Isiolo town is provided by the impoverished Borana Gutu, Sakuye and Wata. Ideally, or at least ideologically, there is an economic diversification between members of these groups so that the Wata are hunters, the Sakuye camel herders and the Gutu cattle herders. The Wata are low caste with exogamous clans parallel to those of the Gutu "hosts". The Sakuye do not have such a relationship to the Gutu but exhibit independent exogamous clans. Inter marriages among these three groups have been limited. In Isiolo town, however, where members of all three groups live particularly in Bula Bao and the shambas, many of the barriers have broken down. This has occurred as a result of the members' poor or even destitute status. They mix, live

together and intermarry. For all practical purposes their ethnic identification has shifted from that of these groups to the next structural level, that of Borana. This shift in identification has to some extent been made easier in the particular case of the Borana, since all Galla speaking groups mentioned here, as well as the others (in Kenya Gabbra, Ormo or Wardaa or Tana Galla, and Ajuran) respect the Nagaya Borana, the Boran peace. This means that members avoid fighting or raiding each other, which is in contrast to their Somali neighbours and their rivalry between different lineage segments.

One cause for this shift in identification is the lack of additional wealth to redistribute, that no claims can be made and no significant economic security can be found (for example, through marriage alliances). The bonds of all groups to their rural areas are of little significance. Instead the Borana community in Isiolo town has become the new resource. Here, social control is exercised as people help one another with contacts, with advice, such as how to avoid the landlord and the like. The original economic security attached to ethnicity has been lost and identification has shifted to encompass a new group.

If the perspective is enlarged to involve the major ethnic groups, so that a conflict in town cuts across language barriers, support on both sides will be recruited within the respective language group, that is non-members' conception of ethnic groups in Isiolo. On a higher macro-level, solidarity may attach along lines of religious ascription (Christian versus Muslim).

With this perspective on ethnic ascription for the Isiolo case, ethnicity and ethnic boundaries become ordered to a segmentary system⁹⁾. Such a segmentation can be seen as an extension of basic structures that exist primarily in the pastoral societies into ethnic categories. These structures allow relative strangers to establish contact with each other, perhaps through an age-class system, a generation class system or a clan system that cuts across territorial boundaries. The principle involved in either of the latter structures (which concern the umland) or in a differentiation along ethnic or religious lines (primarily in town), is that some kind of a segmentary organization is needed in order to find a common denominator for recruitment and identification in specific situations.

An alternative to the recruitment principles that prevail in Isiolo town, which is found in many East African towns and cities, is the emergence of a new quasi-ethnic group, the Waswahili¹⁰⁾. The Waswahili represent a group of people who typically inhabit the majengo of the urban and periurban areas, and who need to speak Kiswahili with each other for communication. They are landless and hence less likely to return to a rural area. The members have shifted their focus of economic security from claims on rural land, more or less valid, and the ensuing social positions, to new forms. Links with kinsmen become of little significance compared to those with friends in a similar position. Instead of relying on traditional solidarity principles, where the assets of land and domestic animals are of great importance, the Waswahili have to seek their subsistence security within their own group in town

and in monetary rather than in subsistence economic activities, mainly within the (partly illegal) informal sector. For outsiders the Waswahili category is ascribed an ethnic identity both on the basis of language, that is the forced use of Kiswahili in the absence of any common "local" interactional language within the group, and a shared frame of reference.

Recruitment to the Waswahili is by no means uniform. One category within the Waswahili is represented by the inhabitants of Mto wa Mbu in Tanzania, mentioned in a previous section, who are ethnically diverse, communicate in Kiswahili and are opposed by ethnically homogeneous surroundings. This group is both referred to and refer to themselves as Waswahili (Arens 1975: 434-435). The inhabitants no longer identify themselves with their original background but rather as town dwellers. Another example of this kind of process originating outside East Africa, though not from a particularly small town, is Schildkrout's (1975:169f, 178) account of how immigrants to Kumasi in Ghana have established a new urban culture in a separate settlement, and how they overrode ethnic divisions under pressure from the indigeneous Asante population. In her case as in Arens', religion and not ethnic affiliation provides a useful means of friendship and trade networks.

Another recruitment principle for Waswahili may, of course, be caused by inter-ethnic marriages, where the partners have different backgrounds and where their offspring gets an ethnically ambiguous situation. Yet another is accounted for by persons who want to

rid themselves of the obligatory bonds of their traditional societies.

The non-uniform recruitment of members to the category Waswahili, which implies an absence of a distinct culture, is in itself not a hindrance to labelling it ethnicity. The membership of an ethnic group is actually dependent on a common "home area", an acceptance of common forefathers and a common set of values (cf. ibid: 168). In the Kenyan context this is often "coded" into the more specific mother tongues. For the Waswahili the language in common, Kiswahili, gives similar associations in terms of a value system and an identification with a new "home area". Hence the argument that the ethnic category Waswahili is also the basis for a quasi-ethnic group.

Recruitment to Waswahili as a quasi-ethnic group in Isiolo town is at present limited to the few town dwellers who come from other ethnic origins than the four dominant groups. It should be noted, though, that many of the Meru women who earn part of their livelihood from trading or prostitution could similarly be referred to this category, in that they have revolted against the traditional authority structure and have therefore been forced to find an alternative livelihood, hence seeking new roles.

In the Isiolo umland, ethnically far more homogeneous than the towns and cities of course, membership of the local community is based on economic activities (land use) rather than on ethnic ascription as such; though most members are obviously recruited by birth, there

are also many instances of adoption. However, to be fully accepted as a member of another ethnic group is difficult, and the changer remains with a stigma that can be brought forth at any point of time. Such changes are often associated with long-lasting periods of clienthood, either on an individual or collective level. One local example of the former case is found in the Archers Post area to the north of Isiolo town, where pastoral Turkana have been adopted by (also pastoral) Samburu households in spite of the normally hostile relations between these ethnic groups. The Turkana settling in the originally Samburu area in the 1930s were employees at an abattoir. Eventually the male employees brought the rest of their household members and their domestic stock. Grazing now interfered frequently with neighbouring Samburu but, more importantly, the manyattas in the neighbourhood were raided by outsiders. The need for improved security, both in terms of unity against the common enemies and the establishment of loyalty bonds are reasons for intermarriage that are given today. The offspring today form an endogamous group within the Samburu society called Ilgira ("those who keep quiet"), who gradually (over generations) filter into the Samburu society. They seem to have relations both with the Turkana of Nayanae Katwan in Isiolo town and the Samburu fringe settlement at Maili Saba south of town (Hjort 1978).

The local phenomenon of Ilgira resembles the emergence of shegat client groups throughout northern Kenya. This (Somali) term includes Borana and Somali groups that have become too small for military protection of herds and pasture, and who therefore seek protection

with another larger kinship group through a collective adoption. Another type of client relations are those of the Wata to the Borana, mentioned earlier, and the Sab to the Somali, who make up permanent caste-like groups where artisans and ritual experts are found. Both types of client groups are represented in Isiolo town, where, however, the relation is of a partially different significance, since the respective parties are poor and the economic relations have changed. Members of the client groups have an ambiguous ethnic position in town which may prove advantageous, since they can emphasize alternative ethnic ascriptions. In many cases immigrants actually belong to some corporate kin group, which has probably lost its significance through the loss of property, and accordingly functions less as a corporate group. This is seen in decreasing individual claims on membership. However, such groups still exist and could be revitalized should the economic circumstances allow for it.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOCALIZED SOLIDARITY PRINCIPLES

The discussion so far has concentrated on how a display of ethnicity by the stranger arriving in town from its umland is effective in the search for sponsors, how this and other aspects of subsistence security and involvement in town lies at the bottom of the apparent importance of ethnicity, and, also, how ethnicity is perpetuated. Ethnicity can shift in an adaptation to new situations, particularly when control over new resources are concerned. The next step, already hinted at earlier in the discussion about dif-

ferences between the affluent and the poor, is, of course, to seek other forms for solidarity than ethnicity or contacts that are culturally specific. Such forms that emerge in Isiolo town are either localized, referring to conditions within the township itself, or to a national frame of reference involving vertical contacts, perhaps a KANU membership.

Those inhabitants regarding themselves as temporarily residing in Isiolo town have no reason to engage in local community affairs, other than what may directly concern themselves as individuals. The affluent social class members also have a limited interest to be involved in community affairs. They are content with looking after their interests (low taxation, few cattle auctions, monopolizing government contracts, for example). Remaining are migrants who have settled permanently in town or their descendents (in one or two generations). For them Harambee selfhelp projects are of direct relevance for increasing their social service, and the independent government's emphasis on "going back to the shamba" and on the right of citizens to live anywhere in the nation, are issues of extreme importance for survival and for definition of new roles. Logically, the KANU party has its most active support among the urban merchants and among the more permanent farmers in the irrigated shambas.

A recent development within Isiolo town is the opening of the Secondary School. Here a new basis for solidarity among the class mates (in both respects) has emerged, a kind of "Eton spirit" that cuts across ethnic boundaries. It seems likely that this solidarity

will tie the future affluent Borana, Somali and Turkana together and hence introduce a completely new principle, whereby "home area" will no longer be of primary importance.

The affluent Muslims who do not participate in the club life meet at the mosque. They emphasize religious purity and adhere to a High Islam in sharp contrast to the economically poor Muslims, many of whom are members of the Ḥusseiniya tarīqa. The latter are not allowed to enter the mosque and they find solidarity in town primarily on religious and not on ethnic grounds. This is probably the best case of solidarity between destitutes across ethnic boundaries (though not across religious). Another case is provided by the workgroups where membership is not necessarily ethnic, though normally a prerequisite for recruitment is to be sponsored by somebody who is already a member.

The conclusion for the development of localized solidarity principles is that such principles occur only to the extent that bonds with the umland are cut off and/or new roles or new principles for solidarity are established in town. For all the inhabitants to whom this is not applicable, the "home areas" remain significant in their lives and will continue to influence their decisions. This is in line with the general argument that one needs to see both town and umland as one integrated system in order to understand the social and economic life in the town.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 5

1. See Grillo (1974:159) for one critical discussion on various efforts to define "ethnic".
2. This issue of ethnic transformation is discussed elsewhere (Hjort 1978).
3. See Lewis 1971:75-79 for a presentation of the Somali sar dances.
4. The interviews carried out in Bula Besa have been randomly selected (see the appendix). Only nine interviews were made with people of other ethnic groups than Borana, Meru, Somali and Turkana. Throughout, the goal has been to interview heads of household.
5. There seems therefore to be no reason to expect that ethnic heterogeneity will diminish. As long as the subsistence niches remain and members continue to be ethnically distinct, the new roles that will develop "will be articulated in traditional ethnic idioms" (Cohen 1969:194) in a way that is significant for retribalized groups (*ibid*: 192) but the articulation will be made not least of all by "outsiders".
6. This discussion can also include the town Somali, although they do not have a specific umland within which they can seek social bonds. Chapter 2 demonstrates how members of the Somali affluent social class are bound by and make use of the complicated Somali segmentary lineage system. This offers geographically widespread contacts useful for trade purposes. To the "outsider", however, an individual Somali's exploitation of such structural principles as lineage segmentation is nothing but an expression of a collective Somali solidarity.
7. The actual outcome of the national elections is presented in Amin and Moll 1975.
8. Cf. Njuri Ncheke of Meru Min. No. 16/58 and a Memorandum of Njuri Ncheke of Meru 13.9.61.
9. The ethnic distance varies primarily with cultural similarity, geographical distance and social status (cf. Mitchell 1970:89ff). Depending on closeness, one may expect a more or less forced amalgamation of strongly heterogeneous populations into a

single ethnic category (Arens 1973:445).

10. This category should not be confused with the Swahili peoples of the coast, themselves hard to define (cf. Arens 1975).

MARKET WOMEN

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS ON RURAL TIES AND URBAN OPPORTUNITIES

It is now time to return to the perspective, outlined in the introduction, of the small town of Isiolo as a link between two contrasting poles in one economic system, involving the Isioloans in a peasant economy where households' subsistence production needs to be supplemented with cash incomes, or vice versa, depending on the perspective. Relations to the centre are

partly represented by the extensive administrative and trade relations; the township is a district headquarter and a key centre for the long distance trade to and from northern Kenya. Other relations are connected with migration and the influence of the Kenyan nation as it is felt locally in Isiolo town, ideologically, juridically and economically. The involvement in a national economy has generated a wide range of job opportunities, utilized both by households still involved in livestock rearing or farming in the rural areas, and by households or individuals who have been forced out of predominantly subsistence economy. I shall here briefly return both to the economic role of Isiolo town in a growing dependency relationship and to the bonds between town and umland, including the striving by newcomers to establish themselves in the town context.

ECONOMIC INTEGRATION OF TOWN AND UMLAND

With an ambition to integrate the umland into the study of Isiolo town, I maintain that some particular insights are provided. This perspective has helped to identify what Long (1977:188-189) terms "critical points of linkage", and brokers are seen in their larger context allowing for an identification of new structures, whereas otherwise a broker might have been seen, in a small scale study, as an individual with fewer constraints. The discussion of the economic activities in town became both more comprehensive and less puzzle-like when put in its regional context. For example the Meru and Somali local elite have different positions depending on such a background, and local level politics must be seen in this perspective.

The focus of this study, however, is primarily on the small town. The set-up in Isiolo is more complex than in the case of most East African small towns; the ethnic diversity, the geographical (and related political) position and the multitude of town-umland relations, all contribute to this fact as do the exceptionally dramatic historical events, which partially or totally destroyed the means of subsistence in the umland for some groups and altered an existing power structure. Isiolo town does provide ample evidence for the relevance of Vincent's suggestion, referred to in the introduction, that the East African small town and its umland constitute an analytically significant unit. Some people are able to use the town as a base for entrepreneurship, economic and political expansion exploiting both established and new principles for solidarity. In many instances the township activities are merely an extension of life from the rural area, from where some household members migrate in order to maintain the (rural) household viability. There are exceptions, though: Those who have lost or cut their social and economic ties with the countryside may find, in the town, new sources of daily bread, a new domestic security and a new focus of local identification. The town offers opportunities to those who have lost all claims to a living in the rural area, and to those whose share in land or animals still lies in the future.

Though some empirical information on household economy has been presented, my primary intention has not been to write a case study of life in one particular small town¹⁾. I have tried instead to pinpoint the economic

opportunities that are available both in town and umland. Taking note of the historical circumstances and depicting the total economic system available to the inhabitants, I have then tried to concentrate on the various opportunities that may be utilized for household survival. The township offers survival opportunities, opportunities which do not exist in the rural area. However, the picture is not one of harmony. Those who benefit are either the rich traders who exploit resources available to them, or poor, even impoverished, former inhabitants of the umland who are forced to migrate to Isiolo town for survival.

The fundamental reason behind the migration to Isiolo town, however varied the conditions of migration may be, is for households to maintain their viability. Life is trying for a great proportion of the migrants. The migrant may be a member of a pastoral household, in town temporarily, to relieve the household of a mouth to feed while the domestic herd is rebuilt, or to gain some cash; he may be a school leaver who needs some cash income to establish his land claims, or the migrant may be a single woman trying to find an independent survival. To remain in town often requires membership of a household with subsistence production since cash incomes can be considerably below what is needed for survival.

Much of the wage incomes earned in the township fall within the so-called informal sector (ILO 1972:21f), jobs that do not become registered as regular employment and thus do not show in public statistics. It has been suggested (cf. loc.cit.) that the activities of

such an informal sector deserve support. Such a position has been questioned, however, among others by Leys (1975:267), since "most of what it covers is primarily a system of very intense exploitation of labour, with very low wages and often very long hours, underpinned by the constant pressure for work from the 'reserve army' of jobseekers". Such a situation is evident particularly to those Isioloans who are forced to maintain subsistence food production as a supplement to wage incomes. While an individual contributes cash to his household, whether it is based in the town or its umland, other members have to produce enough food for all household members and are hence a prerequisite for the low wages paid.

One economic role of the town, besides the primary one of exploiting the umland's raw materials, is therefore that of supplying cheap labour from umland to town. Apart from this aspect, the case of Isiolo town demonstrates how migration from rural areas to metropolitan areas may be halted to a considerable extent through the existence of small towns. Isiolo town functions as a filter, delaying further migration to the larger cities in Kenya and thereby relieving them of some potential problems. A need for some economic security and, particularly, the uncertain prospects of an improved situation (some good years, for example, that would allow for rebuilding a domestic herd) have been factors that deter people, even in a difficult situation, from migrating. By and large, increased migration to Isiolo town has been a sign of increased vulnerability, due to circumstances outside the township community, rather than a desire to enjoy an urban lifestyle.

ETHNICITY, AN ASSET FOR THE MIGRANT

Barth (1973:12) has suggested that:

"If we stop for a while thinking basically of groups of people, and think instead of types of activity, we can then disaggregate the activities that take place in a region into some middle-range sub-systems which are systems of production, or 'productive regimes'."

In the case of Isiolo town and umland, one such distinction has been between camel and cattle pastoralism, in both cases supplemented with rearing of small stock, and between agriculture, trade, etc. In many instances systems of production coincide with ethnic ascription. The issue of ethnicity in Isiolo town could be treated as one where a broader cultural common frame of reference is involved. This means that within a given culture there are sets of ideas concerning membership and non-membership of various groups. Among them one finds ethnic ascription, which is one cultural resource expressed in the form of ethnicity or perceived as such in interaction. Another cultural resource may be religious ascription, taking the form of religiosity if expressed or perceived in interaction. Yet another one would be an identification with a development ideology, a "development-mindedness".

With the particular set-up in the case of Isiolo town, with its four approximately equally strong ethnic groups, ethnicity has been shown to be sufficiently discriminating in various respects. Members of the local elite need to mobilize a certain amount of political support, and a reference to ethnic solidarity

is one method (which either has to be supplemented with, or supplements others). Ethnicity provides a useful differentiating principle also for impoverished newcomers to the town. For them references to the umland influence central aspects of the town, such as access to subsistence resources, housing and social contacts. And such "home areas" are ethnically significant. All other principles of alignment are of relevance in the social games that people play in town, but ethnicity remains important not least because of this expression of "home area", communicating the possibility that two strangers have acquaintances in common, which may imply an opportunity to exercise demands by one upon the other of the actors. Such a possibility depends not only on existing traditional solidarity principles but also on the efficiency of social control which is linked with relations to, and in the particular umland.

The sides of ethnicity that have deserved attention since they are essential for the present study, are related to the quality of ethnicity as economically or politically significant -- particularly ethnic ascription as an economic resource under various circumstances, and the fact that a seemingly ethnic solidarity might be based on other principles of solidarity within an ethnic group. I agree with Parkin (1975:10), who maintains that ethnic identity is related to economic circumstances without being a direct reflection of them. It is precisely this partial connection which sometimes may seem mystifying. I want to emphasize that my intention in this study has not been to enter into a general and detailed discussion on the

complexity of ethnicity in Isiolo. More particularly, I have not intended to penetrate all facts of symbolic interaction expressed in ethnic terms. One side of ethnicity is that an ethnic membership may present a key for an individual or a group to exploit an existing situation for his own, or its own, benefit. On the one hand, ethnic ascription may of course be a resource in itself, a fact which is illustrated by the frequent accusations of "tribalism" that are made in many African nations, also in Kenya. On the other hand, a common ethnic ascription is a "first approximation" of a fellowship only, with other solidarity principles to follow when a common ascription has been established. Such principles differ between the various ethnic groups.

One focus of interest in connection with the analysis of the role of the small town in an opportunity system for the inhabitants is to identify the particular properties of ethnicity which allow access for a newcomer to other culturally specific bonds, manifested, I suggest, through various forms of social control. For example, a Borana townsman feels obliged to support a fellow clansman who comes to town, since the emphasis on clan solidarity is strong in the Borana rural community, expressed economically in redistribution principles for domestic stock within the clan. Those who have an ambiguous ethnic position and are stigmatized in the rural area get more favourable positions in town where they can emphasize one affiliation or the other depending on where they are most likely to get access to desired resources. The general conclusion

is that contacts within Isiolo town cannot be fully understood unless the umland ties (or lack of ties) and their cohesive qualities are considered. This is of particular importance for the issue of whether or not ethnic groups and categories tend to be perpetuated in the setting of the towns.

NOTE TO CHAPTER 6

1. Social anthropologists have over time produced a vast amount of micro-ethnographic studies, and also much critical writing over such studies. As for interest focus it is often claimed that they have been preoccupied with either rural areas or sections of large cities. Just to give one recent example, Olsen (1976) wants more efficient methods for regional analyses; comparative community studies based on individual cases are deficient in that boundaries and relations between various communities cannot be studied properly (ibid: 49) when the study focus has not been on these contacts. This critique is also valid for the "town- and city-based ethnography that, together with rural-urban network studies, seems to constitute much of what is now called urban anthropology" (ibid: 48). These studies are still based on methods appropriate to intensive studies of single communities rather than to the "organization of diversity" (loc.cit.). One anthropological response to such critique that has just been published is a volume on scale and social organization (Barth (ed. 1978)) which follows up an intradisciplinary discussion on micro-macro relations. Its focus is largely on "the complexity of complex societies", but conditional to the ambition that methods developed should be applicable to simpler societies as well (ibid: 9).

APPENDIX: IN THE FIELD

The fieldwork on which the present study is based was carried out partly in cooperation with my colleague and wife, Gudrun Dahl. We arrived in Isiolo town to start this, our first fieldwork experience, on a hot and dry afternoon during the height of the most severe of the dry periods. This was not our first time in Isiolo, however, since we had visited it a year before. The time in between had been de-

voted largely to preparing for the work by reading the literature relevant to the area. We had finished clearing all research formalities in Nairobi and in the provincial headquarters of Rift Valley and Eastern Provinces, and were now down to the district level in the administrative hierarchy. Our major concern that day was not so much whether we would find the District Commissioner or the District Officers, but how to obtain somewhere to live. We had been told that housing was a serious problem in Isiolo. Furthermore, we realized that the choice we made, if we had one at all, might influence our chances of getting in touch with the various sections of the town population. This, as we thought, delicate problem, was solved on the spot by the District Commissioner who shouted "Singh, come here" to a passing Asian. Singh was one of two local building contractors, and it so happened that he had a cement room under construction in his own compound. This proved to be almost ready, so we agreed to rent it right away and settled there a few days later. Our choice proved so satisfactory that I never moved away from Singh's compound during the entire fieldwork period. Gudrun also stayed there during the time she was working in Isiolo town. It was located to the east of the road behind the shopline. Our neighbours within the compound were government employees, who had been transferred to Isiolo on long term contracts, a few prostitutes from the Kianjai area and, of course, Singh's household: his wife, children and servant employees. Though tension between us and the Singhs was sometimes evident, especially due to the frequent traffic of what they described as bush people, we found that the advantages

outweighed the disadvantages. It was clearly beneficial to live here in comparison with renting a house in Bula Besa where we would have had much greater difficulty in avoiding association with one particular ethnic group.

By living in the centre we had good access to the gossip of the local elite. Second to the bars, our own compound proved most useful for compiling this kind of information. Both Singh and one of the civil servants had to travel extensively throughout the district in their work, and they both represented the "official" attitude toward development in the umland. This was usually derogatory, and terms such as "the reserve", "backward", "primitive" or "bush people" were frequently used during the many evening chats on the verandahs of the compound. These discussions could become heated: The total alienation from the bulk of the inhabitants on the part of some of our neighbours was quite provocative.

One drawback in living in Singh's compound was, of course, a somewhat lesser degree of participation, especially in some of the nocturnal events in Bula Besa. Used to roaming around by day, I was restricted to moon-lit nights for night wanderings. But then most social interaction within Bula Besa was similarly restricted for the same reason. At one time I thought of renting a room in Bula Besa but decided that it would seem to "deliberate", and thus provocative.

Without going into details about all benefits or drawbacks of being husband and wife anthropologists working

together in the field, it proved quite practical, at least for the professional side of our life in Isiolo District. We could help each other to get access to both male and female sectors of society, we could occasionally complement each other in covering events in two places simultaneously, and we could keep up a professional discussion during the periods when we were working in the same area. One prerequisite for a fruitful cooperation was, naturally, an early agreement as to who should be responsible for what. We had settled for a division so that Gudrun would make an in-depth study of the Borana community and I should concentrate on Isiolo as a small town and its relations to its surroundings.

The population of Isiolo town is about 6,000 - 8,000, depending on season and how large an area one includes (in the 1969 Census the figure was around 8,300, but this was high, due to the war). Size, in combination with the multiethnic set-up, caused methodological complications. Both aspects (size and complexity) made it useful for the "hanging around" approach of participant observation to be supplemented with some kind of a check through a household survey, in order to avoid unintentional systematic errors. If the fieldwork had been carried out somewhere in the surrounding areas of Isiolo town instead, such a check might have been less required. There, most inhabitants are tied together through contact networks, and I would possibly have achieved a sufficient coverage by gradually expanding my contacts, for example through meeting friends of friends systematically. In the town, however, no such inclusive contact networks exist. Apart

from some fundamental information on cash and subsistence incomes, on the statistical ethnic distribution in the various town segments and the like, the survey was useful for identifying the lack of certain contacts. Examples that were well documented through the survey are the absolute absence of Samburu actually living in town, the almost total lack of contacts between the Turkana settlements in Kula Mawe and in Nayanae Katwan (see Map 1.1), and the presence in town of various "low-caste" groups both within the Borana and Somali community, members of which would not be easily distinguished from other Borana or Somali but who largely kept to themselves. Some Samburu groups living on the fringes of town had a sort of "low-caste" membership as well, endogamous and actually of Turkana background. One thing that I learnt from the survey was, therefore, that contacts were not only particularly limited between people of different ethnic origin. Within the various ethnic groups there were also lack of contacts which was significant for the study. This demonstration, apart from the great benefit of establishing face-to-face relations, helped me in my need to avoid carrying out four largely independent field studies.

The other side of the coin, the actual existence of various forms of contacts, was well accounted for through the survey. Particularly the (rather sketchy) genealogies conveyed information on some cultural differences apart from showing the varying importance of kinship relations for those interviewed.

Since I refer occasionally to some survey results in

this study, a more formal presentation of the survey is required. After a few months of living in Isiolo town, I felt sure of achieving some useful results. My basic intention was to carry out systematic surveys of some fundamental issues, such as household economy, migration patterns and interaction. A first move towards carrying out the survey was to settle for a proper method of making random samples. As is often the case in undemarcated areas, the proper sampling of households proved difficult. After considering possible convenient methods, I decided to make a map of the entire area with all houses and quarters indicated and numbered. On the basis of this map I could make the needed random sample. From the main road (eastern boundary), the Veterinary road (northern boundary), the DC's Furrow and one connecting lagga, seasonally dry furrow, Gudrun and I moved back and forth in the area for a few weeks, to step out distances and note directions with compass in hand. Needless to say, this strange behaviour immediately aroused people's curiosity and, when they realized the degree of work involved, sympathy. The product, a sketch map of Bula Besa, has been presented above as Map 1.4.

The actual surveying was carried out with a standard set of questions (cleared by the Office of the President, in Nairobi) based on standard questionnaires and modified according to local conditions. My questionnaire was of the usual sort; that is, it was designed to avoid ambiguities, to extract pertinent information through as many different channels as possible and to indicate discrepancies. The questions were to be asked to the head of each selected household. Most of

the interviews were carried out in the vernacular languages by assistants who were first trained for this kind of work. Their task was to contact the households, selected from the map. Each interview required at least one hour of discussions. Towards the end of the working day I discussed the day's interviews (usually two or three per day) with the assistants concerned; we went through difficulties and uncertainties that had arisen, the accuracy of the map, and so forth. Whenever needed, and if possible, we tried to improve the reliability of the survey by checking up unclear issues. As many as a quarter of the total number of interviews had to be completed in this way through a second interview.

The map proved sufficiently accurate to find all households that had been selected. Altogether 130 interviews were carried out in the various parts of Bula Besa. 10 % of the houses (compartments) selected were either deserted (more than half) or the heads refused to answer. This positive reaction, with only a few refusals, was probably due to the fact that the survey was carried out after some months in the field: I already knew many people in the area, and even more knew me.

As a form of cross-checking the accuracy of the questionnaire, ten of the basic questions were asked of approximately one third of all households throughout Bula Besa. The selection here was more crude; moving through the entire area, skipping two households, and interviewing the third. No great discrepancies were found between the results of this survey and the comprehensive one.

About six months after the survey in Bula Besa, identical interviews were also carried out in the shamba areas, in Nayanae Katwan and in Bula Geri (see Map 1.1). The method for selection in the shambas was to try and interview every third owner (producing in all 183 interviews). The latter method was the only one possible, since time did not allow me to draw detailed enough maps of these areas. All inhabitants were interviewed in Nayanae Katwan (80 households), while in Bula Geri 23 households were interviewed, accounting for 70 % of the total number there. The others were not at home when I called.

Some other surveys which I occasionally refer to also need mentioning. Further interviews (65) were carried out in Garba Tula within Gudrun's work, accounting for all but ten households in an area inhabited by a group of stigmatized Borana, and in Meru town (132) to be used for another study (Hjort 1974a). The sampling principle in the latter case was to try and interview every fifth household, a task which proved difficult in the unplanned areas. The businessmen in Isiolo town have also been interviewed. All traders along the main road and in the small shops in Bula Besa have answered another set of questions, providing a total of 105 business interviews. This work, too, was primarily for the other study. The questionnaire was similar to but more simplified than the version appearing in Morris and Somerset (1971:266-274).

Much of the data collected through the survey is not presented in this study for reasons that I have already given in the introduction to Chapter 4. Some

have already been presented in Hjort (1974a). The material is deposited at the Department of Social Anthropology, University of Stockholm, where it is available for consultation. The major significance of both mapping and surveying for the present study was, I think, partly as a check and a reassurance (as I have just mentioned) and partly as an introduction of myself to the fairly large community. I made contact with many of my informants through this effort.

It would have been impossible to work in Isiolo town, without the help of assistants, due to language difficulties, it nothing else. During the months when the surveys were carried out I employed one assistant from each ethnic group, to carry out much of the actual interviewing (after some training). It also proved fruitful to have members of the different ethnic groups working as assistants and interacting also among themselves. We had many chats together about cultural differences, which was revealing not only for myself, but also for the Isioloan employees. These regular discussions usually posed essential questions that needed to be penetrated further. A pattern of work evolved whereby the survey could continue fairly independently, while I was discussing various issues with informants together with one of the assistants. The daily monitoring of interviews made, raised new questions that had to be followed up, and so for a long period the issues for further exploration kept increasing. This meant a slowing down of the survey, and possibly a somewhat low-quality result; but in return I could move continuously among the different ethnic groups in town by visiting informants with whom I spent half

a day or an evening together with an assistant, chewing miraa and smoking cigarettes. One problem was the avoidance of details in the many issues of a more ethnographic character; that is essentially the avoidance of gathering material for four different monographs. To some extent I failed, if one is to judge from the amount of notes which only have secondary relevance for the present study.

The language problem naturally created limitations for a study of Isiolo town. I often had to rely on interpreters particularly in interaction with older people who spoke little English or Kiswahili. In a way these difficulties are reflected in the focus of the present study. It certainly does not deal with the more subtle aspects of life in a multiethnic town, aspects which require a detailed knowledge of four "local" languages. On the other hand my intention has been to concentrate on the selected aspects, since I considered them vital for an understanding of the development process in the region before I embarked on the fieldwork. Language difficulties did not seem to be a serious problem with such a study and I still feel that this opinion holds.

The market-place was, perhaps, the most useful spot for seeking information about current issues and contacts, and I spent some time there, chatting with market traders and craftsmen. Here one could hear both town gossip and rumours from the rural areas. One would normally find groups of elders in, or just outside the market-place, conferring throughout the day. If I wanted to get in touch with people, a good method was also to move along the verandahs outside the cement

dukas, maybe to exchange a word with work group members, tourist item traders or with the shop keepers. At one end of the row was the mosque, where less informal meetings, particularly of Somali elders, were held. Yet another spot in town where people would meet, and where it proved useful to linger, was at the offices of the local administration, particularly since most local problems were brought there, be it a cattle raid, consequences of a drought, theft of shamba products, or some other complaint. Apart from these more "public" areas one could also move around in Bula Besa, and stop at a duka or at a small shamba where people would be working. Especially after working on the map, I seldom failed to meet somebody who would have time to offer me a cup of tea and eat some of my miraa. All the visits to the rural surroundings were made either to the households of acquaintances from Isiolo town or to other relatives.

As time went by and I developed a range of fairly special issues to talk about with specific persons, I began simply to agree to meet people in their homes. After obtaining an invitation I would often go there together with an assistant having bought some good quality miraa in the morning at the market. In a few cases these meetings were quite intense and continued on a daily basis for over a week. Like many other anthropologists, I also made a number of friends who acted as my key informants.

So much for a summary description of participation; now back to the difficulties. The size of the town was actually less problematic for gathering required

information, although the fact that I never managed to meet all the people I wanted to meet before the fieldwork period was over, since this kind of interaction is a social activity which requires a lot of time, was a disappointment.

Ethnicity created another problem in that my interaction within the various ethnic groups had to be reasonably equally distributed. A few words of comment on ethnic limitations are needed. Once I had been established locally and built up friendship bonds and other contacts, the limitations became clear as I realized that I had actually established a number of monoethnic networks. The situation forced me to be continuously deliberate with all interaction by dealing with one set of contacts at a time and shifting systematically so that all contacts were "revitalized" within an acceptable period of time. Though I was explicit about this approach from the very beginning -- I stated clearly that I had to and wished to get to know all the inhabitants of Isiolo town -- people would keep a close watch over my whereabouts and more often than not be hurt, since it took me such a time to get back to them. This made the fieldwork psychologically trying, since I had almost nowhere to relax (except my bedroom); even most of my friendship relations involved such control.

There are several aspects of my participation in the community that need comment. In order to give an impression of my life in the field, I would like to close this appendix by briefly sketching four of the roles which I think were of particular importance for

my involvement in the social life:

- a. Employer. People expected me to be authoritarian, an expectation that I never managed to fulfill. I adapted to the circumstances "under protest" by paying as high salaries as the local community would tolerate and only working office hours. Once I got to talk about these matters, claiming that what people saw were expressions of my culture, different from that of the British, for example, and that I could see no point in denying my own culture, my position was generally respected.
- b. Husband (or rather head of family). I could not fulfill any expectations at all in this role. My wife was working independently and did not obey me in issues, where she should have done so according to local tradition. Without the two-month visit by my then six-year-old son I would hardly have passed as head of a family. The claim that we could not afford another child yet because of the costs of living in our home country was never really understood.
- c. White man. I was assumed to be wealthy by local standards, and hence a potential resource. Furthermore, many at first expected me to be a member of "the development set", in Isiolo on an aid programme. In many cases I was initially thought to be a Catholic Father, and sometimes simply to be British, associated with the former colonial authorities or their value system. These preju-

dices soon fell, since I did not interact with the few other Whites in town, and I spoke English and Kiswahili with a different accent. This and other facts, which marked a difference in my attitude from a more common "colonialist" attitude, made for positive comments.

- d. Social scientist. Because my being a newcomer in town was normal rather than exceptional, and because I spent time discussing my aims and interests with the people I met, I was also accepted in my role as anthropologist.

Employer, husband, white man and social scientist; despite these and other ascribed or achieved roles, being in the field for the first time of my life meant a unique opportunity for me to experience living conditions so different from my own. I hope, am indeed sure, that I have not solely ascribed the Isioloans the particular role of informants in interaction, but also had normal human relations with them. Of course, the informants' role has been necessary for this study to see daylight. For this I am deeply indebted to all my Isiolo friends.

GLOSSARY

ayana	originally Galla nature spirits; in Isiolo associated with a Muslim syncretistic cult
chang'aa	alcoholic beverage
dia	Somali blood-money
duka	one-storey shop (Kiswahili)
ekal	Turkana genealogical line; "house"
ghee	butter-fat
hoteli	restaurant and resting place (Kiswahili)
M'	(m-tu-) a prefix that sig- nifies a circumcised Meru man
mabati	iron sheets (Kiswahili)
madebe	kerosene tins (4 gallons or approximately 18 litres); also iron sheets made of such tins (Kiswahili)
majengo	undemarcated settlement area; "shanty town" (Kiswahili)
manyatta	settlement or kraal ("in Kis- wahili"); originally meaning temporary cattle camp (Maa)
miraa	Catha Edulis, a toxicant drug that affects the central nervous system
moran	warrior ageset (Maa)
ng'imurok	Turkana diviners (sing. emuron)
ngoma	dance or drum (Kiswahili)

posho	maize meal (Kiswahili)
sar	a Somali cult
shamba	small field (Kiswahili)
shifta	bandit (Amharinja); also a name ascribed to the secessionist movement in northern Kenya
sodda	Borana brother-in-law (also classificatory)
ṭarīqa	mystical or Dervish Orders in Ṣufi movements (within Islam)
tumaal	Somali blacksmith

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