

A SHANTY TOWN OF TENANTS: THE COMMERCIALIZATION
OF UNAUTHORIZED HOUSING IN NAIROBI 1960-1980

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ABSTRACT

This thesis concerns itself with the provision and commercialization of unauthorized housing in unauthorized settlements within Nairobi. It is based on fieldwork carried out between 1979-1981 and is of relevance to the literature on African studies and third world urbanization. It traces the political and economic factors that have transformed housing provision. In 1960 the housing in such settlements was self-built but by 1980 it was characterized by the operation of a capitalist housing market, albeit illegal. It is this commercialization process that is the central focus of this thesis. It is related to general developments in Kenya's political economy; namely the development of capitalism and the emergence of African property relations in Nairobi. The changing responses of the administration to the growth of unauthorized settlements between 1960 and 1980 are studied, and in particular the shift in policy from demolition towards the tacit acceptance of unauthorized areas. This change encourages the commercialization of unauthorized housing by allowing security for capital investment. The resulting private housing sector is then examined in one specific area in Nairobi, Kibera. The organization, profitability, distribution of ownership and landlord-tenant relations are all studied. It is shown to be characterized by ruthless operation and by large-scale and small-scale capitalist intervention. The international agencies involvement in low-income housing and the implementation of site and service schemes within Kenya are examined.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

'Munira often interrupted the silence by telling him who owned what; and it seemed as if every prominent person in the country now owned a bit of Illmorog; from the big factory to the shanty dwellings. "Yes...", Munira was saying. "Even these falling apart workers' houses... you'll be surprised to see the landlords who come to collect the rent ... No shame ... they drive in their Mercedes Benzes ... and they have been known to lock the poor souls out. Occasionally, the Town Council has a clean-up, burn-down campaign ... but surprisingly... it is the shanties put up by the unemployed and the rural migrant poor which get razed to the ground. And do you see those Kiosks by the road? A year ago there was a big scandal about them. Some County Councillors and officials were allocated them ... free ... and then sold them for more than fifty thousand shillings to others who rent them out to women petty traders ... and now let me take you through our New Jerusalem".'

from Petals of Blood by Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, p.282

1.1 Preamble

The underdeveloped nations of the world have, since World War II, forced attention upon themselves. In 1945 Africa and Asia were divided between European colonial powers. By 1980 with a few notable exceptions both continents were politically independent. Their subsequent politics have taken on all possible shades from repression to revolution. In such underdeveloped areas the emergence of new elites together with endemic poverty are notable. Industrialisation has started more forcefully in East Asia and Latin America, shaky in Africa. However, perhaps the greatest of all these changes has been the process of urbanization. In 1940, 8.6% of the population in less developed areas lived in urban centres of 20,000 or more, by 1975 the level was 20.3% (Roberts, 1978, 7). The rapid urbanization of such areas represents mankind's greatest migration.

The consequent growth and inequality of such cities as Sao Paulo and Mexico City are legendary. Alongside the elegant apartments, offices and six-lane highways, the bidonvilles, the favelas and the "African locations" proliferated. Suddenly the third world was swamped with 'urban' problems as people flocked into their neighbouring cities; one such problem was housing. The urban poor seemed to be literally camping in these countries, as if to demand their place in the modern world. Thus it was hardly surprising that by the early 1960s the 'squatter' was academically discovered in Latin America, the most urbanized underdeveloped area.

The conventional view of this was that the urban poor were organizing themselves based upon previous social groupings (i.e. village) and invading land to which they had no title. (Roberts, 1978, 146-7). Here, after occupying this land they would then generally construct their own shelter. Quite simply the urban poor were 'camping' on land they did not own in the city and building their own houses.

At some point in the past this self-build pattern may have characterized the low-income housing situation within Latin America. We shall however suggest that it no longer does within Kenya and that the private sector is now involved. The argument that there is "no profit incentive to private builders to build working class housing" simply will not hold. (Roberts, 1978, 148). There are now extremely high profits to be made in this sector and it is this fact that has attracted capital and transformed low-income housing (i.e. the production of shelter) in many urban areas.

The argument of this thesis is more accurately depicted by the housing situation the Kenyan novelist Ngugi Wa Thiong'o describes at the beginning of this chapter. Here the provision of low-income housing has been commercialized such that it is better characterized by the operation of a capitalistic housing market, albeit an illegal one. An important aspect of this market is the way that the political system is used to provide

security for capital to be invested in this sector. Hence it is those in the administration who are often the most actively involved in this 'squatter real estate'. Thus at its simplest, the urban poor are renting rather than building their own shelter. The 'squatter' is a tenant.

This introductory chapter is structured as follows, firstly we shall present a general overview of approaches to 'squatting'. In the next section we shall attempt to explain how the general focus and argument of the thesis was arrived at. Then we shall briefly examine the theoretical approach taken and the areas of theoretical interest the thesis addresses. Finally we shall outline the structure of the thesis before a brief discussion of some methodological issues that have arisen from this research.

1.2 Approaches to 'squatting'

We shall start by reviewing the "official" and academic response to this "urban explosion" of shanty towns.

The official and colonial view in Africa in the early 1960s was to regard shanty town settlements as threats, an outrage or as a "blot on the urban landscape" often harbouring nationalists. (Stren, 1970). Their illegality was important; at best it meant neglect and at worst demolition rationalized in the name of health or security. Government improvements of the housing stock or help to the urban poor were impossible, since that would legitimate an illegal act (invasion of land); it would also, so it was thought, encourage further rural-urban migration. A complementary belief or myth was that of circular migration, namely that migrants to the city would at some future date return to their rural areas. According to this view African urbanization was a temporary phenomenon since the migrant would only stay in an urban centre until he had earned a target amount of money with which to go back to his rural "home". These attitudes were particularly common within the white settler economies of Africa; namely Kenya, Zimbabwe and South Africa. (Van Zwanenberg, 1972). These opinions

were strengthened by the popular belief that rural-urban migration was essentially irrational - the bright lights theory of migration. In particular these views were fuelled by the fact that to many observers urban poverty looks squalid while rural poverty looks 'charming'. Thus to migrate from a nice situation to a nasty one seems absurd.

Hence the solution was demolition to "clean up" the city. This would also discourage or at least contain the exodus from rural areas to the urban centres.

The academic response did little to challenge these conventional wisdoms. Thus the demolition of shanty towns was always reinforced by commentators deploring the poverty and squalor of shanty town areas or from a leftist view seeing squatters as a revolutionary force ignoring "the sanctity of property". (see Butterworth, 1981).

Marxists and mayors alike were saying the same thing, whether in terms of moral outrage or prejudice. The implication was the same - bulldoze, remove and replace these settlements. Besides what were they doing in the city in any case?

It is against these attitudes and their policy outcome - i.e. demolition - that a "new orthodoxy" among academics and to a lesser extent officials has sprung up based more upon fieldwork than simple prejudice. This basically pro-squatter case is particularly associated with John Turner, an architect, and William Mangin, an anthropologist, whose arguments are based upon their fieldwork experience in Peru where after 1969 the government was sympathetic to the squatters' case (Mangin, 1970; Turner, 1976).

This time the squatter is no longer portrayed as a temporary migrant, social deviant or revolutionary. Instead he is a long-term resident with middle class aspirations who is trying to establish himself by building a house for his family through his own labour. Turner's main thesis as summarized by Colin Ward was:

"When dwellers control the major decisions and are free to make their own contribution to design, construction or management of their housing, both the process and the environment produced, stimulate individual and social well being". (Ward, 1976).

The emphasis is anarchist: it is the process of self-build that is here being praised. Many of the almost existential advantages of this method of shelter provision are identical to the benefits claimed for owner-occupation by its supporters. This work and the "new orthodoxy" it spawned has entailed a move away from Western contractor-built housing affordable only to an affluent elite, to attempts to mobilize and harness the self-evident ability of squatters to provide themselves with shelter. Such views were greatly publicized at the 1974 UN Habitat Conference in Vancouver, which resulted in the establishment of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements which is itself now based in Nairobi.

These ideas have been used by the international agencies¹ in the institutional form of either site and service or squatter upgrading schemes. Site and service involves the public sector in providing basic infrastructure, i.e. water and sanitation, to an individual plot around which the allottee then constructs his own structure. The project will provide technical assistance and financial loans to the allottees who are chosen according to income criteria. Squatter upgrading involves the public sector in providing basic infrastructure to existing squatter settlements. Here too loans and technical assistance are provided for the inhabitants to improve their existing structures. Both approaches rely on legal sites combined with 'self-help' to effect an housing improvement for the urban poor. (Dwyer, 1975).

Before continuing it is important to understand the political context of this "new orthodoxy". Firstly it was very much a reaction towards what were seen as inhuman demolitions. Thus it has a tendency towards being a propaganda exercise against officialdom. In this the new academic commentators have been successful: squatter demolitions are almost a cause celebre

amongst the "radical chic". Two points emerge about the "new orthodoxy" from this. Firstly it tends to emphasize the "good" aspects of squatter living (i.e. community, autonomy) and ignore hard economic facts (i.e. poverty). Secondly, and this is particularly a function of the international agencies' involvement, it tends to generalize for the whole of the third world on the basis of the experience of one country (viz. Peru) which may well actually be atypical.

The second contextual point about the rise of this "new orthodoxy" is that it is part of a more general shift in 'development thinking'. This general shift in 'development thinking' and planning can be related to two factors: in the industrialized world, the rise of the environmentalist movement and Schumacher's advocacy of "small is beautiful", and in the third world, the critique of development by such writers as A.G. Frank together with a 'rediscovery' of the small scale (Frank, 1969; Schumacher, 1973; O'Riordan, 1976; Bromley and Gerry, 1979).

Thus we may characterise 'development thinking' in optimistic terms of big pushes and 'modernization' in the 1960s. The general emphasis was on rapid urban-industrial capitalist development. (Rostow, 1960; Brookfield, 1975 24-84). However, by the 1970s the tone is more modest if not becoming cynical as a result of the obvious failure of Rostow's "take-off" and the emergence of Neo-colonialism. (The latter term means that the formal political independence of many states has not resulted in any fundamental change in governmental policy or relations with the colonial power. (Leys, 1975)). The emphasis moves from big projects, such as dams, towards more modest small scale schemes. (ILO, 1972). By the late 1970s a further change has taken place which represents a virtual admission of the failure of "development": this is the "basic needs" strategy which openly admits to being a holding operation. As the term suggests "basic needs" is a policy aimed at providing the minimum for survival rather than effect any structural transformation. (ILO, 1979). Hence of

the three phases of development thinking it represents the most limited in its expectations.

It is important to see the change in academic approaches and official attitudes to unauthorized settlements as representing one very clear and influential example of general trends in development thinking. In particular it seems to be an example of the shift towards the encouragement of small scale activity by the international agencies. This development while in many ways representing a more appropriate and pragmatic alternative to the ethnocentricity of the "modernization" view and a counter-balance to the prejudices of elite groups, does have a tendency toward legitimizing and thus making 'acceptable' essentially unpleasant survival activities (Leys, 1975). Hence the hawkers, beggars and vagabonds of the colonial city are transformed into the "casual" workers or the "informal sector"² of today's city. The question is what lies behind this semantic change? Hopefully our particular case study of low-income housing in Nairobi will help to answer such issues.

1.3 The construction of the argument

My original interest was in third world shanty towns, and in particular the application of the self-help housing alternative advocated by Turner as opposed to the clear inhumanity of demolition. The "common sense" of this solution was appealing. Hence one major area of concern was the success or otherwise of institutionalized versions of this approach such as site and service schemes. Related to this was an attempt to evaluate and explain the shift in policy such schemes represented. The second major area of interest was to see if the pioneering work and insights gained from 'the new urban sociology' in the Western world might be profitably applied in such a field. (Harvey, 1973; Pickvance, 1976; Castells, 1977).

The decision was fairly quickly taken to choose Nairobi as a fieldwork site. The reasons were pragmatic rather than theoretical, e.g. the use

of English as a lingua franca. In retrospect the choice of Nairobi was fortunate since Nairobi represents an extreme case of the process of commercialization in the low-income housing market which was as a result easy to see. It was this process that was to become the central focus of the thesis. Nevertheless while I was in the U.K. familiarising myself with the relevant literature I came across something which surprised me about Nairobi's squatter settlements. According to the excellent report Mathare Valley, a case study of an uncontrolled settlement by the University of Nairobi Housing and Research Development Unit (HRDU) it seemed that there were extremely high profits to be made in squatter housing. This involved the construction of housing explicitly for renting out to the urban poor within unauthorized³ settlements (Richard, 1970; HRDU, 1971).⁴ At the time this seemed counter-intuitive. This thesis springs directly from an interest in this process and is an examination of the consequences of it. Since as the thesis progressed it became clear that money was being invested in these unauthorized settlements and effecting changes in the provision of housing. Thus I became involved in tracing the political ramifications and preconditions for this situation to be exploited by capital. This was to lead fairly directly to a reinterpretation of Nairobi's recent history and the international agencies' involvement in low-income housing.

In the UK I was also focusing upon site and service and other institutionalized versions of 'self-help'. The perennial difficulty in such schemes seemed to be to prevent the sell-out of plots which resulted in higher income inhabitants than originally intended gaining access to them. This process was almost always accompanied by a reduction in owner-occupation and a subsequent rise in landlordism (Weisner, 1976). Here there seemed to be some interesting parallels with a little known anthropological study of Montreal's housing market entitled The Other Economy (Krohn et al., 1977).

Their approach was to conceptualize the housing market in dualistic

terms: the "other economy" a close-knit, flexible, personal economy that was capable of cheap improvements which was seen as juxtaposed with the 'national economy' an institutionalized, formalized and expensive housing economy. The 'other economy' seemed to have some of the aspects of shanty towns that had been noted. Intuitively it seemed to me that self-help housing schemes were an attempt to encourage the 'other economy'. From this I increasingly began to conceptualize Nairobi housing market in dualistic terms. What the Montreal study made clear was that the 'other economy' could only operate in the absence of the 'national economy', and this suggested that site and service was failing precisely because the national economy was being encouraged. As Weisner put it; "In sum, the Kariobangi Site and Service Scheme was, in the words of one former official, "capitalism by the back door" (Weisner, 1976, 95).

Thus it seemed to me that in both examples of low-income housing within Nairobi (unauthorized housing and site and service schemes) "capitalism" was destroying some previous mode of operation. Increasingly it seemed to me during my stay in Nairobi that site and service merely represented a legal version of the process that was occurring in unauthorized settlements.

Hence my interest shifted away from site and service to the more general case of the capitalist penetration of the low-income sector of the housing market. In particular this involved the relation between landlords and tenants, and the construction of houses explicitly for rental purposes in unauthorized settlements.

Within Nairobi, to my amazement, while the presence of landlords in unauthorized settlements was often acknowledged, it was always in a peripheral fashion. Everybody seemed to have noticed the emergence of landlords and a large tenant population in such areas but had not understood or examined its significance (Jørgensen, 1977; Hake, 1977). This silence may partly reflect the politically sensitive nature of the subject, since some landlords in unauthorized settlements are from the higher echelons

of Kenyan society. Thus it is expedient for officialdom to pretend this sector of the housing market does not exist. Chege's recent paper "A tale of two slums" is a notable exception to this rule but unfortunately only became available at the time of writing up. (Chege, 1981). Chege's political analysis of electoral behaviour in two unauthorized settlements (Mathare Valley and Kwangware) is in terms of landlord and tenant groups. He provides a political analysis of the economic developments that this study is interested in, and in particular the patronage role politicians can play.

The main contribution of this thesis is that its explicit focus is on the operation of the housing market in unauthorized settlements, the consequent development of landlord-tenant relationships together with the political factors that allowed such developments to occur.

In such a situation we must reject a purely judicial definition of ownership, since it is our belief that an overemphasis upon the legal aspects of ownership has for too long mystified the nature of the economy. For example within our case-study of an unauthorized settlement within Nairobi we find the existence of individual de facto ownership of land despite its de jure ownership by the State. Throughout this thesis we shall use the term ownership to refer to de facto ownership.⁵ This is the way the term is used by the inhabitants in our settlement and corresponds to effective control rather than legal ownership.

To conclude this section, this thesis will attempt to put a bit of "nastiness" back into studies of unauthorized settlements; thus 'our' settlement will be shown to have more in common with Harlem than Hampstead Heath. In doing this we are consciously rejecting the more "community" type approaches with their implicit assumptions of the homogeneity of 'squatter' populations; instead we shall investigate interest groups and sources of possible future conflict within unauthorized settlements. Hence we shall present new material which contrasts sharply with either Peru in Latin America or Zambia in Africa which have a self-help system

of housing provision that has until now been taken as the 'norm' for the third world. Whether our evidence is unique and as such a 'special case' or whether these self-help systems are becoming commercialized throughout the third world is an important question that we shall return to in the conclusion.

1.4 Overview

Having outlined the origins of our interest we conclude this chapter by firstly making explicit the main theoretical threads which run through this thesis and the traditions to which this thesis addressed itself. Hopefully this will suggest to whom this study will be of interest. Secondly we shall outline the structure of the thesis before raising a few methodological points that are relevant to the study.

In general this thesis relies broadly upon the Marxist method of analysis. Firstly this implies an analysis grounded at an economic level rather than an analysis at a political or a cultural level. Secondly it involves an emphasis upon historical change rather than a static analysis, and an interdisciplinary approach rather than a single disciplinary approach. Specifically this involves a rejection of neo-classical development theory, conventional urban studies and finally structural-functional anthropology. Nevertheless it is to the concerns of these three disciplines that this study is addressed, namely the nature of development, housing markets and urban planning, and social organization.

At a theoretical level this thesis may be located within the more general debates concerning the nature of development within the third world. This involves discussion of the nature and potentialities of capitalist development in such nations (Frank, 1969; Warren, 1980) and in Kenya (Leys, 1980; Kaplinsky, 1980). More specifically and at a more local level we shall draw on discussions concerning the small scale or "informal" sector (ILO, 1972). Hence we shall use the low-income housing market to investigate aspects of capitalist development and as a case study of the small

scale sector.

Secondly we shall draw upon liberal and Marxist approaches to urban studies and housing markets. From the former we shall take up and develop the critique of urban planning as a politically neutral activity (Rein, 1969) while the latter will offer us insights into the relationship between urbanism and capitalism. (Castells, 1976). Within in the third world the debate over the nature of squatting and the potential of self-help housing will be significant (Burgess, 1978; Turner, 1978). More specifically our data will be relevant to the growing argument that squatting may be a transitional urban form which is being destroyed by market mechanisms.

Finally social anthropology's emphasis upon social relations is important in understanding some of the dynamics*operating. Here of special interest will be the relationship between capitalism and tribalism and kinship on the one hand (Saul, 1979) and also the relationship between capitalism and the domestic economy (Meillassoux, 1981).

The thesis itself falls naturally into four sections. The first two chapters are a general introduction to the relevant literature; the next two chapters provide an overview of the political economy of Kenya and Nairobi; the third section (Chapters 5 to 9) is an examination of our data from a particular unauthorized settlement in Nairobi called Kibera; and Chapters 10 and 11 examine attempts at housing improvements within Nairobi before making some international comparisons and a general summary. The focus of the thesis thus narrows down as it proceeds before opening out again in the final section.

In Chapter 2 we shall consider the relevant literature concerning development, urban studies and anthropology. As a result of this we shall attempt to develop an alternative (Marxist) approach to African urban studies and urban squatting.

In Chapter 3 we shall give a general outline of Kenya's political economy and history and some of the theoretical debates that arise from it.

Here we shall consider Nairobi and the evolution of its urban policy together with the emergence of African property relations.

From this in Chapter 4 we shall consider in depth the relevant developments in Nairobi between 1960 and 1980. Here we will attempt to trace the political and economic factors that have transformed unauthorised settlements in Nairobi in such a way that they are now characterized by the operation of a capitalistic housing "market" (albeit illegal). In particular we will focus on the process of increased de facto political recognition, control and legitimation of such areas. We shall also examine the international agencies' involvement in this.

Chapters 5 to 9 are the direct result of our fieldwork in Kibera, the second largest unauthorized settlement in Nairobi. We shall present a brief history and description of the characteristics of the settlement before illustrating some of the above processes, and in particular the ownership and profitability of this sector, the political control by the local administration, landlord-tenant relations and the increased impossibility of 'squatting' without administrative control (albeit "informal" control). We shall also examine the impact of this commercialized housing development in terms of economic stratification and ethnicity by comparing different areas of the settlement.

In Chapter 10 we shall investigate attempts at housing improvements both informally by landlords and in the form of site and service schemes. Then we shall consider the important question of housing and individual welfare; here we shall suggest that housing 'improvements' and its commercialization may be achieved at the expense of individual welfare.

Finally in Chapter 11 we shall give a brief summary together with some international comparisons. As a conclusion we shall speculate upon the future of squatting in third world cities.

While the methodology and technical research questions are included in the appendix there are a few points which are useful to make at this stage.

As the subject of our study was politically sensitive it was not always easy to get "reliable" data. Consequently we have sometimes had to rely more on "impressionistic" sources. There seems to be a paradox here for the researcher that is particularly acute in modern Kenya: for the most important and interesting topics the data are often unavailable or unobtainable and thus difficult, while information is often forthcoming on essentially trivial issues. Hence it is relatively easy to produce work based upon official statistics which often tell us little more than we already know. However studies of power relations and 'illegal' activities for example, which may tell us a lot more about the organization of a particular society, are extremely difficult. Here we have tended towards the latter choice.

In this thesis there are few direct policy suggestions; those who are interested may consult an "applied" paper I wrote on Kibera while in Nairobi entitled "Notes on Kibera" that remains with HRDU. This seems a more appropriate and relevant outlet for such material than the rarified world of academia. Ultimately this is one of the few justifications for "pure" research, which through its intrusiveness upon individuals least able to defend themselves requires considerable justification.

Finally a few words on such matters seems an appropriate way to conclude this introduction. Firstly if the tone of this thesis is angry it is intentional. The poverty and intransigence of the Nairobi administration can produce few other emotions. Anger is better than cynicism, action better than fatalism.

This study belongs to a long tradition of European involvement in Africa. Thus as in the case of the search for and "discovery" of the white Nile, those living in the area did not need it to be "discovered" to understand its existence. Likewise the inhabitants of Nairobi's unauthorized settlements already know the inequalities and exploitation of the housing market they live in. One hope of this study is that by publicizing such a situation the administration may find it harder to 'brush under the carpet' some of the

issues raised and be forced toward corrective action. Intuitively one hopes this to be a possibility; intellectually one knows that the probability of action is slight.

Hence perhaps all that one may hope for is that this study clarifies rather than clouds our vision. Ultimately that and its justification can only be determined by the reader.

Chapter 1 - Footnotes

1. Throughout this thesis we shall use the term international agencies as a shorthand for the World Bank and other bilateral aid agencies.
2. The 'informal sector' was a term popularized by the 1972 International Labour Office Study of Kenya entitled 'Employment, incomes and equality'. At this stage we will not attempt a rigid definition as much of the argument surrounding the term is definitional. In Chapter 2 we shall seek to replace it ourselves. For the moment Robert's 'small scale sector' will suffice thus:

'all activities which are not carried out within factories or by those services associated with large scale production, such as financial and professional services, large retailing and wholesaling establishments or transport and construction enterprises, possessing substantial amounts of capital equipment' (Roberts, 1978,114)

3. Throughout this thesis we shall use 'unauthorized' housing as a general term that refers to buildings and areas that do not comply with Kenyan building standards. We should note that land is sometimes legally owned in unauthorized settlements in Nairobi consequently it is more useful to focus on the housing status in such areas.
4. Joan Richard's little known unpublished paper in fact forms the basis for the central part of the HRDU study.
5. The use of such a concept of ownership is particularly relevant in Kenya as historically and still today much of Kenya's economic activity does not have a formal legal basis. In particular this may offer interesting insights into the 'African' economy during the colonial period.

CHAPTER 2

CAPITALISM, URBANISM AND KINSHIP: TOWARDS AN ALTERNATIVE

APPROACH TO "SQUATTING" IN AN AFRICAN CITY

'The foundation of every division of labour which has attained a certain degree of development, and has been brought about by the exchange of commodities, is the separation of town from country. One might well say that the whole economic history of society is summoned up in the movement of this antithesis. However, for the moment we shall not go into this.' (Marx, 1976, 472)

Capital Vol. 1

'We started seeing these Kanu private lorries. The bar girls were the first to be rounded up. But I somehow escaped the net. I was ill or something on the night the girls were taken to tea. When they came back they were angry. Some were laughing mockingly. For to us what did it matter who drove a Mercedes Benz? They were all of one tribe: the Mercedes family: whether they came from the coast or from Kisumu. One family. We were another tribe, another family.' (Ngugi, 1977, 98)

Petals of Blood

This chapter's central foci are highlighted in the two quotes above. Thus we shall concern ourselves with the development of capitalism and its relationship to urbanism that is captured in Marx's quote and secondly the relationship between class formation and tribalism or kinship structures that lies behind Ngugi's fictional character Wanja's comments.

As a result we shall attempt to produce an alternative approach to urbanism and squatting. This will of necessity involve an examination, critique and reformulation of the relevant literature. This will involve us in following the approach of the 'new urban sociology'. In this the city is treated not as an autonomous or self-contained

entity but as an integral and necessary part of the prevailing political economy. Thus our analysis starts with an examination of peripheral and capitalism/theories of development since this is the determining factor in any discussion of urbanism. We will emphasize and investigate the development of capitalism and class formation as the starting point for our analysis rather than focus explicitly or exclusively upon such factors as 'tribalism', 'urbanism' or 'squattling' in isolation. Hence, we shall suggest that 'clientilism', 'proletarianization' and 'subsistence shelter' are more appropriate concepts than those above.

This chapter broadly falls into two main parts. In the first part we shall examine theories of development and underdevelopment before considering the dynamics of capitalism in more detail. In the second part we shall examine the literatures on urbanism, social organization, shelter provision and the informal sector in more depth.

2.1 Theories of Development and Underdevelopment

In this section we shall attempt to review the main approaches to development. It is easiest to do this chronologically since many of the reformulations are responses to the experience of third world nations since 1945. As the limited success of capitalistic development on the periphery has become apparent, the explanations have moved from optimistic neo-classical models through underdevelopment to more explicitly Marxist approaches. Correspondingly policy development has moved from a maximalist approach to a minimalist one. The two main theoretical approaches to third world development we shall examine are firstly the conventional western based neo-classical development models that are associated with the notions of 'modernization' and economic growth, and secondly, the theories of development that have been founded upon a critique of this neo-classical theory. This second group we may classify as theories of 'underdevelopment' due to their emphasis upon

economic stagnation as a result of structural factors.

The essence of neo-classical development theory is the combination of 'factors of production' to achieve economic growth. These are land, labour and capital. More specifically we can identify four key factors 'population, natural resources, capital formation (domestic or imported), and technology' that are relevant to the process of economic growth (Samuelson, 1976, 779). Development is the result of achieving the right mix of inputs to facilitate economic growth. Thus, providing the mix of saving, investment and foreign aid are correct it is possible for the nations of the third world to follow the well-worn path of economic development that the industrialized nations have so successfully followed. (Todaro, 1977, 87). This theory is particularly concerned with the impacts of investment and capital formation upon economic growth (Hirschman, 1958).

Rostow's The stages of economic growth, a non-communist manifesto (1960) was a key work in the neo-classical approach. In this analysis he identified five stages through which all societies must pass from the 'traditional society' to 'the age of high mass-consumption'. However the most important stage was that entitled 'take-off' which was to lead to self-sustained growth. In this transition the rate of productive investment and savings were the essential determinants of 'take-off' and by inference economic growth and development (Rostow, 1960, 4-16).

These views have been supported by 'modernization' theories which emphasize the breaking down of sociological barriers to development as Western influence penetrates such areas. (Brookfield, 1975, 76-84). In part 'modernization' theory was an attempt to provide an explanation for the non-realization of Rostow's stages of economic growth by reference to sociological or traditional barriers. Hence the 'solution' was to 'modernize' such societies so that economic growth could continue. Indeed we may characterize much of this neo-classical

development theory by its focus on 'removing obstacles and supplying various 'missing components' (Todaro, 1977, 90) in order that third world nations might follow in the footsteps of the industrialized west.

This approach therefore stresses the belief that (capitalist) economic development is for the common good and that Western foreign involvement in the third world in terms of trade, aid and investment is to the benefit of both groups of countries. This position is best exemplified in the recent Brandt report's suggestion, which seems to owe a lot to Keynes, that to get the world economy working generally and for everybody's benefit the industrialized world must see to it that the third world develops (Brandt et al., 1980). In essence 'free trade' is for the benefit of all.

When discussing neo-classical development theory it is worth mentioning the historical context in which it emerged. Firstly in 1960 with a few notable exceptions nobody considered that it might not be possible to use 'western economies' in the third world¹ and secondly under the Marshall plan devastated Western Europe had just experienced rapid economic growth mainly as a result of massive United States financial assistance (Todaro, 1977, 88). Consequently in 1960 with the pace of decolonization quickening the rapid economic development of the third world seemed a plausible prospect. After the Cuban revolution in 1959 together with the heightening of 'cold war' tension we may suggest that the desirability of 'development' took on a more overtly political aspect in preventing the 'spread of world communism'.

The major attack upon neo-classical theory was to come from the third world itself. At a political level the revolutions in China in 1949 and Cuba in 1959 were at least examples that there might be alternative strategies for economic development and that the West did not have a monopoly of these. However it was in Latin America - the most developed, unequal and unjust of third world continents - that a

rigorous critique of neo-classical theory was developed. The work of the United Nations Commission for Latin America (ECLA) and the subsequent 'structuralist'² perspective were particularly important.

The starting point of this critique was an acknowledgement of an interdependent world economy divided into a 'centre' and a 'periphery'. The 'centre' refers to the capitalist economies of the industrialised West while the 'periphery' may be loosely taken to mean the third world, namely Africa, Asia and Latin America. ECLA's main interests were in trade relations and the terms of trade between centre and periphery, the need for industrialization in the periphery and the structural causes of the periphery's stagnation (i.e. underdevelopment) (Brookfield, 1975, 140).

Whereas orthodox trade theory argued that trade between the centre and the periphery was mutually beneficial, the ECLA structuralists argued that the periphery was not gaining from free trade, that 'outward based development' was not occurring and that the terms of trade had moved against the periphery. In sum they challenged the orthodox view that there were a priori reasons why 'free trade' should benefit the periphery. The data and importance of this terms of trade argument have been 'inconclusive' (Brookfield, 1975, 140) but their attack on the a priori assumptions behind free trade is well-taken.

From this analysis a policy of economic nationalism was suggested. In order to reduce dependence via external trade links investment might be more usefully directed towards import substitution industries built up behind a shield of protective tariffs. Such a nationalist industrialization policy was carried out in many Latin American states in the 1950s and 1960s. Within Brazil and Mexico it has been partly successful resulting in the industrial complexes that surround Mexico City and Sao Paulo. The 'structuralists' work was a justification for this industrialization even if its products were more expensive than

the same product imported (Brookfield, 1975, 141).

Unfortunately the value of intermediate goods which had to be imported to effect this import substitution policy was often greater than that which it was 'substituting'. The result was that the imports still required to effect import substitution have become relatively more 'strategic' to the national economy. This combined with the increased foreign debt needed to finance import substitution resulted

paradoxically in an increase in the structural constraints on the peripheral economy rather than a lessening of them (Booth, 1975, 52-57). This debt crisis is a common feature of many peripheral economies. Indeed the recent experience of Poland suggests similar constraints operating within the Socialist sphere as well (Shapiro, 1981).

However we might end our discussion of this ECLA work by suggesting that in a sense it is 'revisionist' in that it remained within the basic assumptions of conventional economics. (Brookfield, 1975, 142). In particular it was to be associated with a national-capitalist development strategy. Increasingly a critique of theories of development was developed with a much more explicit third world and socialist content. (Frank, 1969). In part we may suggest that this was as a result of the relative failure of the national-capitalist strategy.

A good starting point for this radical critique was in 1963 when Dudley Seers made the 'modest' suggestion that 'western' economies could not and would not work outside its original area. He argued :

'that conventional economics was based almost exclusively upon the "special case" of a handful of industrially developed economies... (and) when applied elsewhere it tended to focus on the wrong factors and to yield models which did not fit at all closely the way in which economies actually operated'. (Booth, 1975, 50)

Implicitly the argument here is that more than just qualifications and adjustments are needed if conventional development theory is to be helpful in understanding the third world.

The first major insight of the radical critique was the realization

that the present experience of the third world is both qualitatively and quantitatively different from the historical experience of the industrialized nations. In essence this reflected an interest in historical data and the historical processes that are occurring (Bernstein, 1973). From this it becomes obvious that the third world simply cannot follow the historical experience of the industrialized nations since they did not industrialize in the presence of more highly developed nations. A nation industrializing in the late twentieth century does not for example have virgin markets that it may sell its products to and further its development as did Britain in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Hobsbawm, 1969). Hence increasingly alternative approaches to development start with history rather than treating it as an 'external' factor. For example in conventional theories of development colonization is simply not considered.

The second major novelty was the use of an inter-disciplinary approach as opposed to a purely economic analysis or to a purely sociological analysis in terms of modern values and motivations that 'modernisation' theory offers. This critique thus makes the ethnocentricity of 'modernisation' and neo-classical development theory apparent. Both assume that Western industrial capitalist society is 'best' and is the end point of the development process for the third world. Thus it is often narrowly assumed that to replicate the sociological characteristics of the West will miraculously produce 'development' in the same way as the economists assume a shift in the investment-savings ratio will produce 'development'. (Rostow, 1960). Development means the transformation of society and as such requires an interdisciplinary approach.

Finally the development experience of the third world since 1945 offers at best only partial evidence to support conventional development theories in retrospect it certainly does not justify the

the optimism of the 1960s.

This radical critique leads to an alternative view of development, namely that known as 'underdevelopment' which was developed in the late 1960s and is mainly associated with the name of Andre Gunday Frank. His work owes much to the economic legacy of ECLA and general critiques of neo-classical development theory. In a sense he ties together all the disparate criticisms and develops his own theoretical perspective mainly based upon an economic history of Latin America (especially Brazil and Chile) between the 1930s and the 1950s. Frank's thesis is that:

'Economic development and underdevelopment are the opposite faces of the same coin. Both are the necessary result and contemporary manifestation of internal contradictions in the world capitalist system. Economic development and underdevelopment are not just relative and quantitative, in that one represents more economic development than the other; economic development and underdevelopment are relational and qualitative, in that each is structurally different from, yet caused by its relation with, the other. Yet development and underdevelopment are the same in that they are the product of a single, but dialectically contradictory, economic structure and process of capitalism. Thus they cannot be viewed as the products of supposed differences in stages of economic growth achieved within the same system. One and the same historical process of the expansion and development of capitalism throughout the world has simultaneously generated - and continues to generate - both economic development and structural underdevelopment.' (Frank, 1969,9)

Underdevelopment therefore refers to the economic stagnation that is caused as a result of the capitalist penetration and subsequent integration of third world economies into the world capitalist system. In Frank's terminology the latter is the Metropolis, i.e. the industrialised west, while the former, i.e. the third world, are its satellites). In this terminology, as in popular use, the satellite is 'dependent upon the Metropolis'.

Thus for Frank it was the integration of Latin America (specifically Brazil and Chile) into the world capitalist system that turned such areas into satellites in relation to the Metropolis (Europe/North

America). Thus the development of the Metropolis structurally required the underdevelopment of the periphery or satellite. This pattern of a developing metropolis continued with a stagnant or underdeveloping satellite is also repeated at a national and regional scale. Thus Sao Paulo might be described as sub-metropole with the Brazilian economy (Frank, 1969).

Frank saw this system as a self-reinforcing one in which the economic and political strength of the Metropolis reinforces the satellite's weakness. In this process the elite within the satellite economy has a vested interest in its further underdevelopment because of its involvement in trade. This group which Frank calls a comprador bourgeoisie together with the state in the satellite economy like the Metropolis thus benefits directly from underdevelopment (Frank, 1969, 119). In this situation the interests of the comprador bourgeoisie and of the Metropolis are identical.

In Frank's analysis any contact or link in terms of trade, aid, investment and technology between the Metropolis and the satellite is necessarily to the advantage of the former at the expense of the latter. We can summarise Frank's position by listing the three contradictions he identifies:

1. Expropriation - appropriation of economic surplus
2. Metropolis - satellite polarization
3. Continuity in change (Frank, 1969, 3-14).

Underdevelopment theory, on account of the assumptions concerning the detrimental impact of Metropolis' involvement in the periphery, amounts to orthodox neo-classical economic theory in reverse. Consequently for underdevelopment theorists the 'solution' is disentanglement from the capitalist world economy, a break which can only be achieved it is argued, through socialism. It is this belief in the desirability of disentanglement and the non-viability of a national-capitalist development strategy that distinguishes underdevelopment theory from the

earlier ECLA structuralist work and neo-classical theory. To an extent underdevelopment and the ECLA structuralists share a concern with the centre and the periphery. They differ on their policy suggestions and the assertion (underdevelopment theory) that linkages are necessarily harmful. In conclusion it is worth noting that these theories and issues we have discussed in this section are as much an overview of the evolution of development theory as they are competing views.

Having outlined the major theories of development and underdevelopment and their historical development in the present section, we shall in the next section attempt to develop a synthesis. In this we shall use the recent debate concerning the nature of peripheral capitalism (Warren, 1980) as a starting point from which to critically examine notions of development and underdevelopment.

2.2 Warren, neo-classical theory revisited: Elements of a non-debate

In this section we shall attempt to review a recent debate concerning the nature of capitalism in the periphery that has been unleashed by Bill Warren's posthumously published book Imperialism, the pioneer of Capitalism (1980). This debate also partly involves a critique of underdevelopment theory some of which we shall first consider. From this section we shall attempt to create a synthesis that will help us in an analysis of the development of capitalism in the periphery which is our ultimate goal.

The earliest objection to underdevelopment theory concerned its conception of development and was raised by the Brazilian Cardoso who concentrated his attentions upon the 1960s rather than the inter-war period mainly studied by Frank. For Cardoso

'.... - foreign investment no longer remains a zero sum game of exploitation as was the pattern in classic imperialism ... it is not difficult to show that development and monopoly penetration in the industrial

sectors of dependent economies are not incompatible... In fact, dependency, monopoly, capitalism and development are not contradictory terms: there occurs a kind of dependent capitalist development in the sectors of the third world integrated into the new forms of monopolistic expansion'. (Cardoso, 1972, 89).

The legacy of the ECLA structuralist work seems fairly apparent in Cardoso's analysis. The main criticism here and throughout this section is that underdevelopment theory misses the contradictory nature of capitalist development and its potentially progressive role in destroying out-moded economic structures.

A second criticism of underdevelopment theory is that it concentrates almost exclusively upon the nation-state as its unit of analysis. This as Bettelheim points out implies that the exploitation that is occurring is between nations and not classes (Bettelheim, 1972). Consequently underdevelopment theory is able - which for elites in the periphery is politically convenient - to ignore the internal class structure of peripheral nations (O'Brien, 1975).

Exploitation as outlined in Marx's labour theory of value, on the other hand, can only occur between classes. Consequently within this schema to focus upon exploitation between nations does not make sense. However underdevelopment theory is perhaps better described as neo-Marxist since its focus is predominantly on exchange and not production which brings us onto a more fundamental criticism. A major criticism of Frank's work is that he assumes that capitalism totally destroys pre-capitalist economies. Laclau has argued against this view from a Marxist standpoint, suggesting that Frank treats capitalism as an exchange relation and not as a mode of production. Hence he is unable to differentiate the difference between a country's integration into the world capitalist system and the presence in it of the capitalistic method of production (Laclau, 1971). As we shall see the two are not synonymous. The question of the 'articulation' between a capitalist mode of production and other pre-existing modes is crucial

to our understanding of development. Frank's assumption of a ubiquitous capitalism is too crude to be useful.

Recently Warren has synthesized much of this criticism in his book Imperialism, pioneer of Capitalism where he takes a classical Marxist rather than a Leninist approach.³ Here he argues that Lenin has corrupted Marx's view of capitalism. At its simplest Marx sees capitalism as 'progressive' or dynamic, through its 'revolutionizing of productive forces' and breaking down of outmoded economic systems but also 'exploitative'. (Marx, 1976). Lenin, so Warren argues, ignores capitalism's potential historically progressive function and in so doing omits a major element in Marx's thought (Warren, 1980).

Warren attacks both the theoretical and empirical basis of Lenin's theory of imperialism which he claims underlies modern underdevelopment theory.

Warren's key thesis is that foreign intervention will necessarily lead to the development of peripheral capitalism and this is treated as always being historically progressive (Warren, 1980). Marx himself suggested that the British involvement in India in particular the construction of the railway network would have a similar impact (Marx, 1973).

Warren maintains that underdevelopment theory with its Marxist trappings has served as an anti-imperialist pro-national capitalist ideology: it has been used as a nationalist ideology by the comprador bourgeoisie to help create and justify peripheral capitalism. Warren sees this development as theoretically diluting Marxism: at the centre Marxism remains a socialist strategy while in the periphery in the guise of 'underdevelopment' theory, it is a national capitalist strategy.

Warren's controversial thesis has generated considerable debate over the nature, existence and potential of peripheral capitalism.

In essence we may characterize the poles of the debate as the 'optimists' (Warren, 1980; Brandt, 1980) and the 'pessimists' (Frank, 1969).

As the debate ultimately concerns the precise nature of capitalism it is relevant at different geographical scales: while the main concern is at an international level the questions raised are equally relevant to the development of the 'informal' sector.

The 'optimists', and this includes Warren, almost represent a throwback to the neo-classical approach. For them capitalist development in the periphery is almost a necessary condition of involvement in the world economic system. This view is also held by the international agencies. It leads to a stress on the diversity within the periphery, which now includes, for example, the so-called newly-industrialising countries and oil-exporting countries as well as the 'traditional' third world countries. It also leads to an attempt to stress the dynamism of capitalism and finally an interest in internal class structure, the state and 'culture' within specific peripheral nations. In this last category there may be a subtle re-introducing of the sociological explanations that were associated with neo-classical theory (i.e. 'disciplined workforce').

The 'pessimists' stress international dependency and the view that the underdevelopment of the periphery is the necessary condition for the development of the metropolis or centre. Hence they see capitalism as blocked on the periphery. As a generalization this 'stagnation' thesis tends to stress the uniformity of the structural conditions facing third world economies. Similarly it stresses the exploitative nature of capitalism. Here there is an emphasis on the historical continuity of the situation. Underdevelopment theory in general is not all that interested in the specific social or 'cultural' conditions within peripheral nations.

In summary both schools tend to imply capitalist development is

pre-determined and that it is either inevitable (Warren, 1980) or impossible (dependency theory). We would reject the latter position, but unlike Warren be interested in the preconditions of capitalist development (Bernstein, 1981, 382).

While the above exposition may do injustice to the subtlety of the respective positions their arguments are often presented in such terms. As we mentioned earlier, capitalism in Marx's analysis is both dynamic and exploitative and this is the essence of contradiction that lies at the heart of a capitalistic economic system. The two sides in the above debate focus on only one side of this contradiction: thus the optimists emphasise the dynamism while the pessimists the exploitation. In our opinion both are partly right but neither acknowledges fully the contradiction that lies at the centre of capitalist development.

Thus if we accept, which surely we must, that some capitalist development is occurring within peripheral economies and that no capitalist development anywhere is totally autonomous, then the only question at issue is the degree of autonomy of capitalist development in such areas. Hence our focus should be on the nature and contradictions of 'peripheral' capitalism. This means that we must study the rise of and subsequent development of capitalism within a specific situation rather than assume that it follows any single path. In particular we must study the 'articulation' between different modes of production in the development of capitalism (Clammer, 1978).

To achieve this we must understand the internal structures of peripheral economies and their relation to the dominant capitalism (Furtado, 1964). For example within Kenya we shall see that capitalism is not monolithic (Cowen, 1976), but contains a variety of levels or fractions within it. However some caution is required in transferring arguments from Latin America to Africa, given their

different experience of imperialism. Thus Chile's copper industry was 'underdeveloped' in the sense that it became increasingly foreign controlled (Frank, 1969) whereas in most of Africa such industries were never locally controlled.

In summary therefore, to understand peripheral economies and capitalism we must be familiar with the contradictory nature of capitalist development and acknowledge its historically progressive role on occasions and its 'articulation' with other economic systems. In the next section we shall examine Marx's theory of capitalist development focussing upon primitive accumulation and the articulation of different modes of production. This will make the dynamics and contradictions of capitalist development that we are interested in, clearer.

2.3 Marx and primitive accumulation: articulation

In this section we shall examine Marx's concept of capitalism paying particular attention to primitive accumulation and the mechanisms that result in the rise of capitalism as an economic system. We shall suggest that Marx's theories concerning the rise of capitalism must be modified to make them applicable to the white settler economies⁴ of Africa. Given the discussion in the previous two sections concerning the nature of underdevelopment it should not be surprising that this is necessary.

For Marx the essence of capitalism is the fusion of capital and labour in the productive process. In this process the bourgeoisie is able to extract surplus value due to the surplus labour carried out by the proletariat. To initiate this process the capitalist must have money in order to purchase capital goods and pay the workers' wages. On the other hand in order to be obliged to participate in it the proletariat must be alienated i.e. cut off from its means of survival,

(i.e. subsistence) such that to continue living it must sell its labour to the capitalist in return for subsistence. Hence the capitalist must have sufficient money to invest and the proletariat must have no other option but employment by the capitalist if it is to survive. In this pure model, the capitalist wants to increase his capital, i.e. accumulate while the proletariat has no option but to work. It is this relationship that is central to the capitalist mode of production.

Surplus value corresponds to the difference between the value the worker creates for the capitalist and the money he receives in return from the capitalist with which to subsist. It is the capitalist's ability to expropriate this value created by the proletariat that is exploitation in a Marxist sense (Marx, 1976). The concept of exploitation is an integral part of this analysis (Dobb, 1973).

Primitive accumulation is the key to the start of this process, as it simultaneously creates sufficient starting capital for the capitalist and also creates a labour force that is divorced from its means of subsistence such that it must interact with the former. Proletarianization is crucial to capitalist development since it refers to the way that individuals are divorced from their means of subsistence and become dependent upon wage labour for survival. We shall later suggest that this proletarianization process is a more important 'transition' than rural-urban migration in terms of development. Unfortunately Marx's model was not originally intended to deal with peripheral capitalism. In particular it has a tendency to assume that capitalism's total domination of the productive process was inevitable. Thus he foresaw capitalism quickly destroying and replacing previous modes of production:

'the organization of the capitalist process of production, once it is fully developed, breaks down all resistance'. (Marx, 1976, 899).

The evidence from the periphery however suggests a more complex situation than this: capitalism often co-exists with other economic systems, it has not as Marx (and Frank) suggested inevitably replaced them (Furtado, 1964; Meillasoux, 1981).

Bettelheim makes a useful contribution to this issue, for while it is accepted by most commentators that one of the dynamics of capitalism is to expand, the actual processes are debatable. Bettelheim (1972) maintains that capitalist penetration either transforms and destroys previous modes of production ('dissolution') or preserves the previous mode in a subordinate form ('conservation'). Here we have an approach which encompasses the dialectical nature of the expansion of capitalism and enables us to consider the internal structures and their articulation with the capitalist mode of production.

Bettelheim's 'dissolution' concept is similar to Marx's concept of primitive accumulation in its outcome. However, Bettelheim's 'consolidation' concept seems more problematic for some varieties of Marxism. At its crudest Marx's concept of capitalism seems to ignore the role of articulation between different modes of production in the emergence of capitalism. In particular it ignores the role of the 'domestic economy'⁵ of pre-capitalist economic systems in the development of capitalism (Meillasoux, 1981). In Marx's model such pre-capitalist systems will be transformed and destroyed by capitalism's emergence. However the continued existence of such systems suggests that they are more than just transitional systems and may in fact be an inherent feature of peripheral capitalism. Here we are suggesting that the continued existence of pre-capitalist economic systems is not some historical 'mistake' but a necessary part of peripheral capitalism.

As the French Marxist anthropologist Meillasoux says, in relation to East and Southern Africa:

'It is thus not enough to assert that primitive accumulation is a transitory and initiatory phenomena: it is inherent in the process of the development of the capitalist mode of production'.
(Meillasoux, 1981, 105)

The point at issue is whether or not it is through the preservation of primitive accumulation and the domestic economy that capitalism has developed in the periphery (and especially in South Africa).

If this is the case peripheral capitalism would actually require pre-capitalist modes of production for it to develop. For example, if the reproduction of labour power takes place in the domestic economy and not through the capitalist mode or to be exact through the wage paid by the capitalist, then in opposition to Marx's schema the subsistence of the worker is not directly paid for by the capitalist. For this process to operate the worker must not be 'proletarianized' (i.e. deprived of a means of subsistence other than the wage) and must retain connections to the domestic economy. In this system the 'domestic economy' effectively gives a subsidy to capitalist development. Consequently it has been suggested that it is because of this effective 'subsidy' that the domestic economy is not always destroyed in the periphery (Meillasoux, 1981). At the very least it should be clear that the necessary relationship between capitalism and proletarianization as envisaged by Marx is problematic in the periphery.

A final comment on Marx's analysis is that it is more concerned with the dynamics of an already established capitalist system than with some of the processes involved in the actual rise of capitalism (Dobb, 1973). Hence there is little in the analysis that is concerned with the social or even cultural pre-requisites of the development of capitalism.⁶ For example he tells us little about why an individual will decide to invest in the first place.

To conclude this section we have attempted to show that an approach that considers the articulation of different modes of

production is relevant to our understanding of the development of capitalism. Secondly we have suggested that it is important to locate the development of capitalism in the specific pre-capitalist society within which it occurs. One of the transformations which is a necessary and integral part of the development of capitalism is the process of commercialisation which we shall consider in the next section.

2.4 Commercialization

In this section we shall examine the process of commercialization within the agricultural sector, since within the housing sector we shall identify a parallel process. Here it is worth mentioning the stimulus of agricultural studies to my work. In particular, as should become apparent, the work involved with commercialization and the parallels between site and service schemes and the Green Revolution are relevant (Cowen, 1976; George, 1976; Hyden, 1980).

One of the clearest and most studied examples of the 'articulation' of modes of production occurs in rural areas. This involves the relationship between capital and the peasant household economy on the process of commercialization. The term commercialization is normally used to refer to the process by which subsistence agriculture is transformed into commercial agriculture. This basically involves a move from production for local consumption to a situation where crops are sold for cash on the market. Within Africa subsistence agriculture was originally autonomous from capital. Agricultural activity by the household was directly for the household's own consumption, so no monetary exchange was required at all. This is the simplest form of subsistence agriculture and clearly there are many variations. Kenya is an excellent example of the way in which capital's penetration together with political control destroy this autonomy.

In particular we can see how political considerations shape the specific form this penetration and consequent commercialization take. Thus the physical implantation of the capitalist settler economy and the alienation of Kikuyu land at the start of this century almost completely destroyed the Kikuyu economy by turning resident Kikuyus into a wage labour force upon the settler estates (Wolff, 1974; Cowen, 1976). However, in other non-settler areas there were attempts to commercialise and conserve the existing economy, for example the Buganda. (Mamdani, 1976). Thus generally the levy of hut and poll taxes were explicitly designed to require Africans to obtain cash either by working on settler farms or by farming 'cash crops' for export. This latter process is usually referred to as commercialization: since agricultural production is directly for cash and not for home consumption as before. The social consequence of these processes, which were accelerated by the 'Green Revolution' have been well documented (George, 1976). They include the creation of private as against collective ownership, the creation of monetary value for agricultural activity and a 'market' for land. Economic stratification is accelerated, as 'progressive' (i.e. successful) farmers buy out the unsuccessful who are often forced to sell by debt. As a consequence landlessness increases. Similarly most activities increasingly become governed by economic and 'market' considerations rather than social obligation. This process had been criticized for the stratification it causes together with the greater vulnerability of producers to fluctuations in world market prices over which they have no control.

This process tends to have an element of irreversibility about it after a certain stage. However, as Hyden has pointed out, until this point is reached, peasants have an 'exit' option of reverting back to subsistence agriculture isolating themselves from the state and market forces (Hyden, 1980).

It is the contention of this thesis that a similar process of commercialization has transformed the provision of shelter particularly for low income groups in urban areas such that what we shall define as 'subsistence' shelter now no longer effectively exists. Thus low income groups are now no longer able to 'exit' from the housing market. We shall even take the argument further and suggest that this 'subsistence shelter' no longer exists and that the provision of shelter is becoming dominated by larger scale capital.

In this section we have given a brief overview of the process of commercialization in an agricultural context since broadly speaking it is a similar sort of 'model' that we shall apply to unauthorized housing in an urban context. However before we can establish this we must first consider the specific context of African urbanism which is what the next sections address themselves to.

2.5 African Urban Anthropology

In this section we shall examine the theories used in African urban studies and anthropology and suggest that their concerns may be better approached in terms of an understanding of the workings of capitalism and class formation. We will suggest that the term 'urban' is a misleading starting point for such an understanding since urban phenomena largely reflect the development of capitalism. The relationship between urbanism and the development of capitalism is however an extremely complex one; there is no one to one correspondence between the processes of urbanization and the development of capitalism. We will argue that the term 'proletarianization' is more useful, albeit problematic, than 'urbanism' for an understanding of the processes studied by African urban anthropology.

Most studies of urban Africa have until recently been carried out by anthropologists. In general they have seen urbanization in terms

of the transition from a 'rural-traditional' to 'urban-modern' society. In part this seems to have come from anthropology's traditional concern with tribal societies, (Gluckman, 1961), and subsequent attempts to adjust it to the urban environment.

This approach parallels and complements that of 'modernization' theory discussed in Section 2.1, which was particularly important in the 1960s. The research questions asked within this framework tend to be conservative and backward-looking, e.g. the study of how traditional customs are maintained or altered in the city, rather than the investigation of the creation of new norms. This rural-urban transition approach, which is always assumed to be difficult for the individual, is epitomized by the title of Mayer's (1961) book Townsmen and Tribesmen. Debates often centre around the question 'is there an urban Africa?'⁷ We shall attempt to suggest what lies behind this concern.

However, it is worth noting that the rural-urban transition view is not merely a matter of academic debate. It is a view which is widely held in Kenya. Hence from this perspective Nairobi's housing problem is often rationalized in terms of the migrant's difficulty in 'integrating' or 'adjusting' to an urban 'way of life'. For example it is often suggested in official circles in Nairobi that one of the causes of Nairobi's housing shortage is that Africans do not have a tradition of living in towns and therefore lack an urban housing technology. (It is not at all clear what this is or might include). Much of Turner's (1976) work sees squatter settlements as providing areas which can 'integrate' immigrants into urban culture. Such explanations are greatly favoured by architects given their latent environmental determinism.

The view that the lack of integration into urban culture is the problem is the reverse side of the view that the solution is to go back to the land, i.e. rural poverty is charming. This implies that rural-urban migration is in some way irrational. In understanding

contemporary urbanism it is important to see the two views for the myths they represent. Such myths serve as an important ideological function in that they ignore structural factors and 'blame the victim' for the situation he faces (Ryan, 1971).

Nevertheless let us consider the contribution of urban anthropology. In general anthropologists were interested in the maintenance and adjustment of 'traditional' behaviour in an urban setting. In so doing they were to consider trade unionism, tribalism and urban politics. Much of this work was stimulated by the colonial administration's fear that the process of urbanization would 'detrribalize' the African population, i.e. lead to a disintegration of tribal values. This would, it was thought, have undesirable results. Hence underlying much of this work was the notion that urbanization was a 'destabilizing' process, both at a societal and individual level which needed to be controlled. The implicit assumption was that migrants experienced a painful adjustment between two mutually exclusive closed systems, the 'rural-traditional' and the 'urban-modern'. (Grillo, 1973, 183).

It is a paradox that the discipline that has made this rural-urban dichotomy its central assumption should then proceed to produce excellent empirical data which contradicted this assumption. We shall now examine this literature and reinterpret it in terms of the functioning of capitalism before offering an alternative view of 'rural-urban' migration.

Mayer's (1961) study of East London is a classic of the traditional anthropological approach. The differing behaviour of Red and White Xhosa migrants in integrating into the urban economy is explained in terms of the differences in their 'traditional' social networks. The Red migrants' "traditional" social network is a closeknit or multiplex one, i.e. each member knows most of the other members, in which 'traditional' norms are reinforced. In this situation the migrant has

little chance of 'getting away with' bad behaviour. To integrate into the urban environment in this case is seen as 'bad', consequently the Red migrant does not integrate to any great extent. Conversely the White or School migrants' "traditional" social network is loose-knit and open, i.e. few members will know each other. Here it is impossible for the group to put pressure upon the individual, thus the School migrant can integrate if he wants to, even if such behaviour is considered 'bad'. (Mayer, 1961). This interpretation of the two groups' differing urban behaviour in terms of the persistence or otherwise of 'traditional' social networks is somewhat weakened by Mayer's own admission that the two groups' historical reactions to foreign-imposed education was equally important, i.e. the "traditional" reaction was by the group which rejected foreign education. Indeed, in the long run, he sees this historical reaction to education as determinant (Mayer, 1961, 293).

This example illustrates the difficulty of incorporating outside involvement which has to be treated as an exogenous factor. But the history of South Africa clearly shows that to treat the influence of foreign involvement as merely an exogenous factor is quite untenable.

A second case which enables us to point out the weaknesses of the urban-rural transition approach is the work of the Manchester 'school'. The main theme of this school is the notion of 'situational selection'. This is best illustrated by Epstein (1958) who sought to explain at work and tribal-based action the co-existence of class-based action/in the domestic sphere. More generally the argument is that Africans behave according to different norms in different situations. This leads to the argument that changes in social behaviour resulting from 'overall changes in the social system should be called "historical"' while changes resulting from 'participation in different social systems should be called "situational change"' (Mitchell, 1966, 44). As Mitchell writes,

"Customs and values in tribal areas are part of a particular social context and cannot be compared with their counterparts in urban areas where they fall into another context." (Mitchell, 1966, 45)

A clear danger here is that this approach tends to assume self-contained systems that do not interact and change each other. However the distinction between changes in social behaviour that are the result of the overall 'historical' change or the specific 'situational' change seems useful. We shall return to this in discussing the dialectic between class and tribe.

The implicit assumption of two self-contained social systems is also apparent in Gluckman's famous assertion about the process of urbanization that:

"an African townsman is a townsman, an African miner is a miner" and that ... "he (the townsman) is detribalised" (Gluckman, 1961, 69).

This implies that on arrival in the city the rural-urban migrant goes through an experience similar to a gestalt switch.

We now turn to a more recent anthropological study based at Makerere University College, Kampala. Here Parkin's work in two housing estates in Kampala reveals a greater stress upon economic opportunities. He uses a host-migrant framework to explain the differing behaviour in Kampala of the host (Ganda) and migrant groups (Luos and Luhyas.) The latter group form ethnic associations and maintain their urban-rural links whereas the host group did not. This he explains in terms of differences within their respective rural tribal society, i.e. collective or hierarchical, the former maintain their links (Parkin, 1969, 145). He also shows how urban-rural links are maintained and ethnic associations formed for economic and political security reasons.

Thus, for Parkin, the host and migrant groups' behaviour are as much a function of urban economic opportunities as of 'traditional' norms. The host group may seem more 'urban' as a result of their use of economic investment opportunities in the city. Similarly, and as we

shall see more commonly, migrant groups maintain their urban-rural links as a result of their lack / ^{of urban} economic investment opportunities. While Parkin's focus on urban economic opportunities is useful, he fails to investigate the reason for their existence - which we shall attempt to relate to the development of capitalism.

A crucial aspect of urbanization in settler economies was in fact the denial of urban economic opportunities to Africans on the grounds that they were 'temporary sojourners' (Kane-Berman, 1979). This was institutionalized in Kenya, Zimbabwe and of course in South Africa through apartheid. Consequently it is important to understand that the continuation of urban-rural links is not simply a survival of traditional values within the city. On the contrary these urban-rural links are predominantly structured by economic necessity deriving from low urban wages and are - within settler economies - officially and institutionally encouraged. Amongst the colonial authorities it was popular to see 'urbanism' per se as creating a nationalist movement. Thus 'it was in the towns that Europeans first lost control in Africa'. (Illife, 1979, 381). In part we may see the apartheid structure of South Africa as a response to such pressures and to the fear of being surrounded by shanty towns (Kane-Berman, 1979).

Our argument here is that it is not 'urbanism' as such that is primarily creating the changes described by Mayer, Mitchell and Gluckman, but the emergence of capitalist economies and their subsequent industrialization.

For example within Nairobi many individuals are simply too poor to risk becoming urbanized and cut off their rural links; they must maintain access to their rural areas as a source of economic security.

The lack of attention to the economic experience of migrants is part of a broader neglect of economic processes in anthropology. As the French anthropologist Meillassoux remarks:

'Lineage patterns have so permeated the minds of most anthropologists ... that even the most perceptive of them see social relations first of all through kinship categories' (Meillasoux, 1981, 17-18).

This failure to understand the economic processes occurring has led to an assumption of the universality and replicability of the urbanization process of industrialized Europe in Africa. It has been argued that the development of rural capitalism and the centralization of the state are the key determinants of urbanization in Africa (Hart, 1975). Urbanization in Kenya has not been a direct result of industrialization but a result of the need for administrative and service centres. Consequently it has not provided the economic stimulus that occurred in Western Europe (Van Zwanenberg, 1972, 116-168). Here we can see once again the fallacy of thinking in terms of narrow 'rural' and 'urban' categorizations.

Thus we may suggest that what is meant by 'urban' in African urban studies is fundamentally a cultural term. The features of this 'urbanism' consist of the following; detribalization, trade union activity, 'Europeanism' and non-traditional behaviour. Implicit in this is as we shall show the invalid assumption that the 'urban' is a self-contained entity distinct from the 'rural'. Anthropology treats urbanism rather than capitalism as the best analytical starting point. However we would see the emergence of class rather than tribal allegiances observed in trade union activity in Zambia as due to the industrial setting rather than to any specific function of urbanism. The same is true of the detribalization which is held to result from urbanism. It is therefore, we would argue, the development of capitalism rather than urbanism that is the prime cause of such social changes. Consequently, in our analysis we shall consider 'rural' and 'urban' as part of the same system, namely the Kenyan national economy. We shall not view migration as a move between systems but as move within the same, albeit differentiated, social and economic system. Implicit in this

is a rejection of a simple 'push-pull' analysis of migration, since 'push' and 'pull' forces interact with each other.

Hence we would argue that 'rural-urban' migration and the subsequent urbanization is best understood as a function of the operation of the entire national economy. Rural land shortage is as important in this processes as the growth of the industrial economy. Equally off-farm ('urban') earnings are crucial to the commercialization of rural agriculture and the development of capitalism in this sector (Kitching, 1980). This may also imply increasing landlessness and the destruction of the subsistence or domestic economy such that the townward drift increases. Thus to attempt to solve urban problems by urging or forcing individuals 'back to the land' is to miss the point about the economy's interdependence.

In this section we have examined some of the literature of African urban anthropology. We have argued that it is important to conceptualize the 'urban' and the 'rural' as part of the same but differentiated social system and not as self-contained units. In the next section we shall attempt to examine the process of urbanization from this integrated approach.

2.6 Urbanism and Proletarianization

In this section we shall attempt to reinterpret the processes referred to as urbanization in terms of the functioning of capitalism. In so doing we must consider the domestic economy and 'proletarianization'. The debt our argument owes to Meillasoux's work will be self-evident. In essence we are interested in the process of proletarianization rather than urbanization. This means that we are concerned with proletarianization wherever it occurs, rather than with processes occurring only in urban areas.

As we have already seen the idea that the African urban worker's

subsistence derives solely from his wage is incorrect since it depends in part also on the domestic economy. Thus he is not a classic member of the proletariat in the strict marxist sense. This situation is typical of urban workers in much of East and South Africa, particularly in ex-settler economies and in South Africa today where it is institutionalized. Thus as Meillasoux argues:

'Before they were completely urbanised, workers out of necessity continued, as far as they were able, to maintain ties with the land, via members of the family who remained in the country. This progressive destruction of the peasantry, the decline in rural emigration and the gradual weakening of the urban workers' ties with the countryside, correspond to the formation, within the industrial sector, of an increasingly stable proletariat, the counterpart of an integral capitalism, in which labour-power is produced, maintained and reproduced exclusively in the framework of capitalism. In which in other words, labour is a commodity in every sense, according to Marx's schema'. (Meillasoux, 1981, 108).

Thus the urban-rural (traditional) ties are maintained and restructured as the worker literally cannot afford to be urbanised. The worker's continued subsistence requires that he have access to the domestic economy which offers economic security. In part this may be to supplement his wage but this link is more important for long-term economic security in an uncertain employment situation. Hence few workers are willing to risk being dependent solely upon the wage if they can help it. Thus the ultimate social insurance is access to land. The domestic economy is the equivalent of the welfare state of advanced capitalism. To have 'access' to this may require concessions. As Gluckman writes, 'a man's right to land in the tribal home depends on his accepting membership of a tribe, with all its obligations' (Gluckman, 1961, 78). This link to the domestic economy is often actively strengthened, for example by circular migration and the denial of urban economic opportunities. For the same reason 'detrribalisation' was discouraged by the colonial administration.

Let us summarize our view of the migrant's position in the economy. He is a member of the proletariat in the making since his means of subsistence come partly from the domestic economy, rather than from the capitalist economy alone. In effect he cannot afford to break his urban-rural lifeline, one reason for circular migration. The pressures towards circular migration are economic and in some cases legal too. Thus low urban wages and continuing access to rural land are important in Kenya, whereas in South Africa circular migration is institutionalized in the 'rotating worker' and the Bantustan system. Hence the urban worker is a 'temporary sojourner' in what is legally another country, i.e. White South Africa (Kane-Berman, 1979). This system has much in common with the 'guest workers' of the European community. (Böhning, 1972). Indeed this system of organizing labour with the minimum cost to capital was in fact 'pioneered' in Nazi Germany. (Meillasoux, 1981, 140).

However, forces also exist which destroy urban-rural links. The development of agricultural capitalism may destroy the domestic economy and effectively create a proletariat dependent solely upon the wage. Likewise the worker in the capitalist economy may lose contact with the domestic economy. Similarly skilled workers may be stabilized as a 'labour aristocracy'. Thus there seem to be forces that push towards the creation of a proletariat, and towards rural transformation. However, in some ways it is more profitable for capitalism to freeze at this 'primitive accumulation' stage where the domestic economy provides a subsidy. This avoids the expense to capital of stabilizing labour by breaking the urban-rural linkage. This is a major rationale behind apartheid. Thus according to Meillasoux in such systems:

"the (dual) labour market sets out to divide the proletariat into two categories corresponding to the forms of exploitation which are experienced; that of the workers who are integrated (or stabilized)

and who reproduce wholly within the capitalist sector, (and) that of the migrants who only partly reproduce themselves within it. This (dual) market takes shape around various forms of discrimination."

(Meillasoux, 1981, 120)

In a sense urbanization involves the process of moving from the latter to the former categories above, i.e. from a circular migrant to a stabilized worker who subsists solely within the capitalist economy. Political and economic behaviour will in part be determined by the worker's position within this dual labour market. For example, the rotating migrant will be more interested in or will be 'allowed' tenancy while the integrated worker may want or be legally able to obtain house ownership in the urban area.

Fig. 2.1 below outlines the ideal-types of this dual labour market.

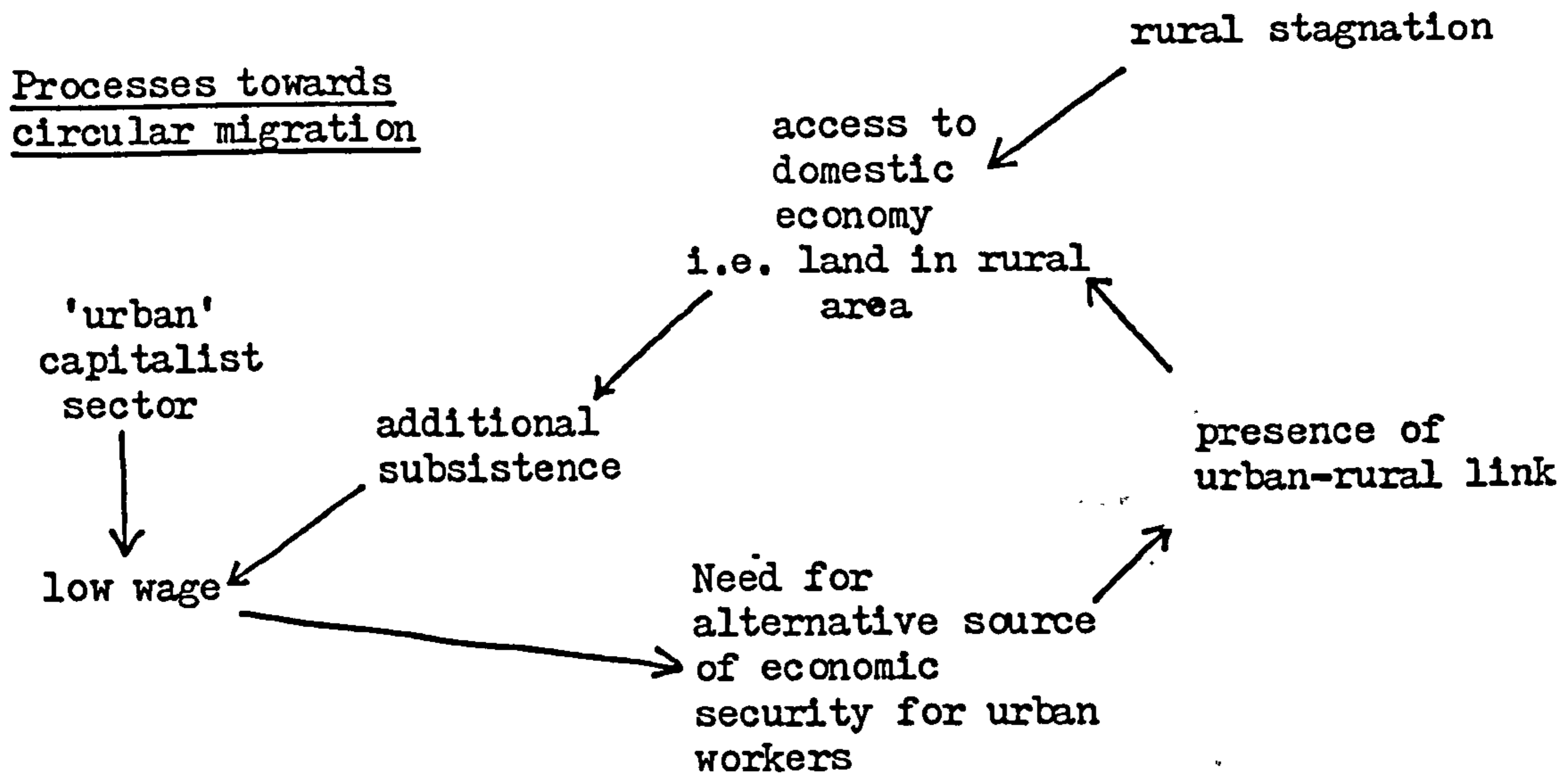
In this section we have examined the problematic relationship between the processes of urbanization and proletarianization. We have suggested that since our major concern is with the functioning of the capitalist economy it is more consistent to focus upon proletarianization as the main process underlying urbanization. Thus to conclude we would replace anthropology's question "is there an urban Africa?" by a new question "does he solely depend upon his wage?"

2.7 Class and Kinship

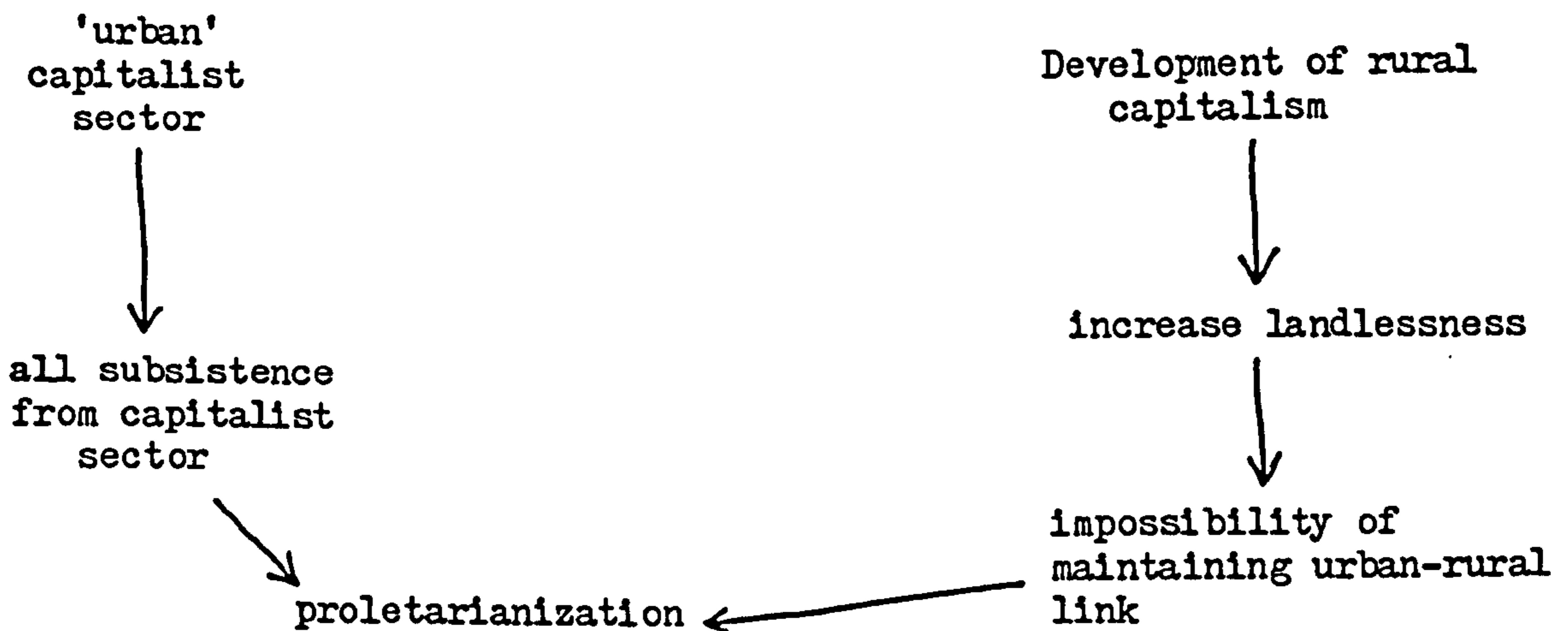
In this section we shall attempt to relate kinship structures and tribalism to class formation. In other words we will be attempting to understand kinship in terms of the development of capitalism. In this we are continuing the critique of structural-functional anthropology that was implicit in the last section.

Conventionally anthropologists have seen man's social behaviour as determined by the rules and norms attached to the positions he occupies within his society. These rules and norms were assumed to be relatively stable over time since pre-capitalist societies were seen as

Figure 2.1 Ideal types of dual labour market



Processes towards proletarianization



is to overreact to the critique of anthropology's historical linkage with colonialism.

We shall now examine the relation between the development of capitalism and tribe and kinship. Firstly we consider the interdependence between capitalism and tribe, and secondly that between capitalism and kinship.

Capitalism and tribe

The main argument we shall outline follows the political scientist John Saul in maintaining that there is a dialectic between tribe and class; namely /that the development of capitalism simultaneously strengthens and weakens tribal allegiances (Saul, 1979, 391-423).

To start with we shall look at the ways in which capitalism weakens tribal allegiance. It would seem that the economic stratification and exploitation associated with capitalist development is likely to create potential class interests. Thus within Kenya

"One is as likely to find an angry, unemployed, landless Kikuyu complaining about corruption, hardship and the conspicuous consumption of the elite, as a Luo or a Luhya". (F.T. 13.8.1982)

While it is still speculative, the attempted and unsuccessful coups in the 1980s in Kenya, Liberia and Ghana may be the result of such economic discontent, which appear to be class based. At the very least they do not appear to be exclusively tribally based.

The development of cross-tribal trade unions throughout modern Africa is perhaps the clearest actual example of the emergence of potential class based interests. These non-tribal based interests (i.e. class) may be paradoxically an indirect spin-off of most African states' 'nationalist' ideology. Thus the official ideology in most African States including Kenya is 'nationalist' which means that tribal interests are frowned upon as a political schism. The result of this may be to let more explicitly class-based interests in through the backdoor as it were, by the official anti-tribal ideology.

We now turn to the ways in which capitalism (and the political system) strengthens tribal identities. There are two main processes. Firstly, there is the mechanism whereby unofficial appeals to tribalism are used as a tactic to 'divide and rule' political opponents. This is an unofficial continuation of the classical colonial policy. Secondly the use of tribalism and patronage is one of the easiest ways of mobilising political support. Both these strategies are in evidence in modern Kenya.

This 'divide and rule' use of tribalism is never explicit, and as such is difficult to produce custom built examples. However we may suggest some possible instances of a scapegoating strategy that may fit. Thus in the 1969 Kenyan election KANU (the party in power) was able to treat the opposition party as an exclusively Luo party, i.e. from one ethnic group (despite some prominent Kikuyus being involved) and so prevent it gaining any support outside its ethnic base. The Ngugi quote at the start of this chapter implicitly suggests a divide and rule tactic being used.

However, to simply assert that ethnicity is 'false' consciousness is to misrepresent the situation. For many individuals to get involved in a patron-client network is a rational economic strategy (Leys, 1971). In many situations mobilizing along ethnic lines is easiest and one's involvement in a client-patron network is a more realistic way of achieving economic objectives. This is particularly relevant in many African states where more specifically class-based or collective action is likely to be severely repressed.

At this stage it would be premature to suggest that class-based action is increasing at the expense of ethnicity as a mobilizing force. We are simply suggesting that both co-exist within Africa and that the development of capitalism simultaneously strengthens both. As a speculation it seems that within the 'economic' sphere class-based action

may become more important; while ethnicity may become more important at a 'political' level (assuming one can ever make such a distinction between the two spheres).

Capitalism and social networks

We shall now investigate the relationship between capitalism and social networks as a means of allocating resources. In particular we are interested in whether social networks reinforce class-based inequalities or provide a redistributive mechanism between classes.

Traditional African society is often seen as providing the 'binding material' that prevents the emergence of class relations precisely because of the linkages between the different economic groups. Thus, for example, kinship is seen as a redistributive tax and as acting as a moral constraint upon the development of capitalism. It is this idea which is at the heart of African politicians' and socialists' claims that African society is inherently classless (Mboya, 1969). Thus in the major Kenyan policy document African Socialism and its Application to Planning in Kenya written in 1965, we hear that:

"The sharp class divisions that once existed in Europe have no place in African Socialism and no parallel in African society. No class problem arose in the traditional African society and none exists today among Africans ... The concept of political equality in Africa rules out in principle the use of economic power as a political base." (p. 12,13)

In what follows we shall suggest that this is not the case. We shall use the term social network to refer mainly but not exclusively to relationships based on kinship.

In order to pursue the relationship between capitalism and social networks it is useful to construct a model of the possible intra-class and inter-class exchanges. Thus we may imagine a matrix, see Fig. 2.2 below:

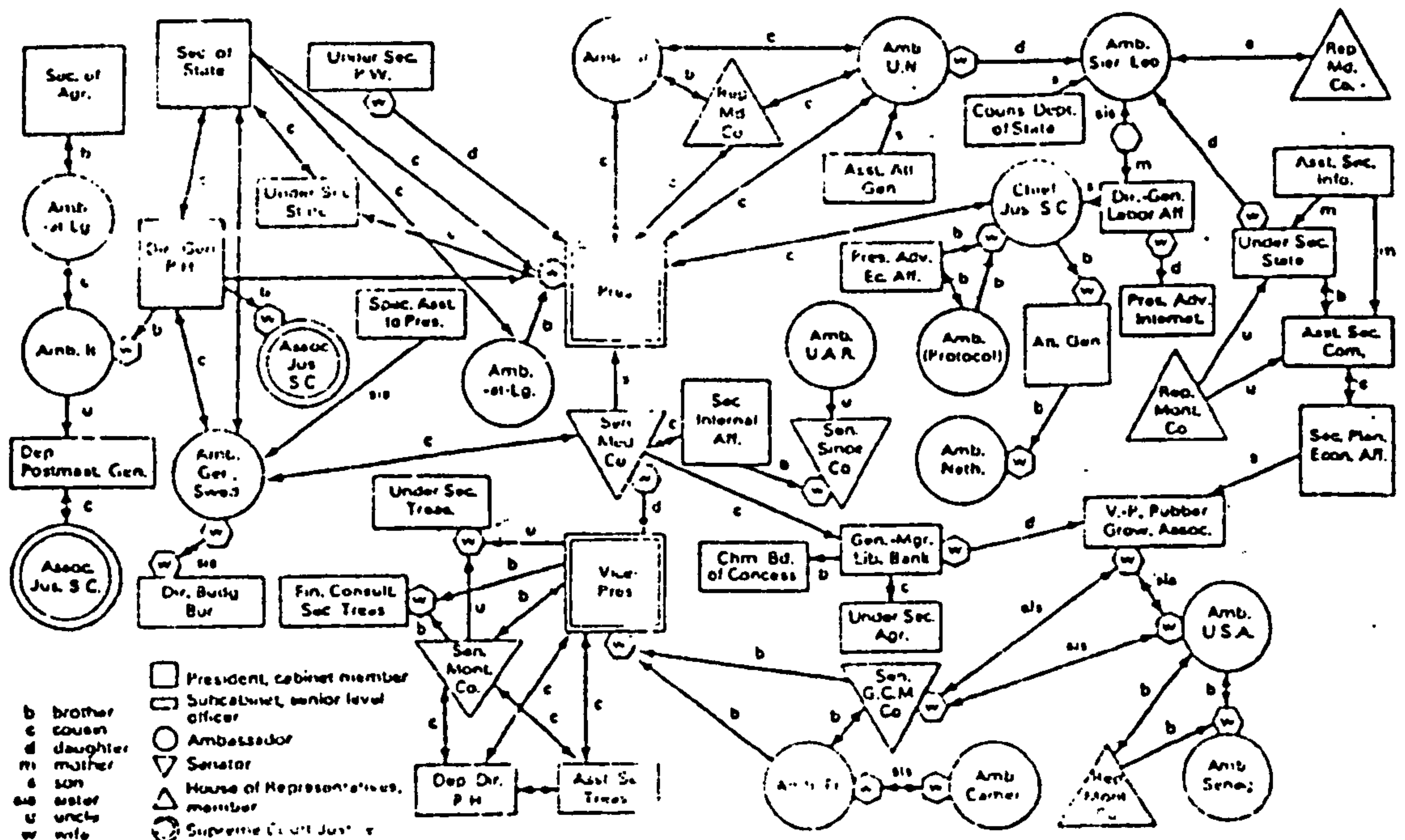
	'bourgeoisie'	'proletariat'
'bourgeoisie'	1	3
'proletariat'	3	2

We will now discuss the social content of the interaction in each cell in turn. The first cell refers to social exchanges within the bourgeoisie, and we shall argue that such exchanges are used to consolidate the bourgeoisie's economic and political position. Social exchange in this category is in Britain often referred to as the 'old boy' network. Through such networks it is possible for members of the elite to maintain large financial empires by, for example, keeping them within the family. Such social interaction is particularly important in illegal or quasi-legal activity where an element of trust or social obligation may be crucial to the operation or business involved.

Within Africa where the emergent bourgeoisie's sources of accumulation are often illegal, such social networks are particularly important within the state since the use of positions in the state to further private financial interests is often the major source of capital accumulation available to African elites. As many of these transactions are quasi-legal, it is often important to be able to 'trust' one's business associates as the law cannot be appealed to in such cases. Social networks ensure such trust. Within Kenya social networks which are predominantly within the same ethnic group appear to have been utilized by the Kikuyu elite to consolidate substantial control within the State (Swainson, 1980). These social elite networks are particularly evident in the case of members of the embryonic Kenyan bourgeoisie who learn their skills with multinational companies and then collectively

leave and set up rival concerns with the help of the State (Swainson, 1980). Figure 2.3 below gives a vivid example of such networks in Liberia. We should note that this diagram does not even include business positions.

Figure 2.3 Elite networks in Liberia



Source: Lanning, G. with Mueller, M. (1979, 272)

This concentration of power, while extreme in Liberia could most probably be found throughout Africa. Often such social networks become strengthened by attendance at the same schools. It is worth mentioning that the existence of such networks is not an exclusively 'African' phenomenon nor do they always lead to corruption. Rather they seem to be one of the ways in which elite dominance is maintained in any capitalist economy. Thus the interlocking nature of public schools, industry, the civil service, the government and judiciary within the UK is constantly commented upon (Miliband, 1969).

Turning to the second cell of our diagram, social networks among the 'proletariat' have frequently been commented upon by anthropologists acting as a 'support system' for the poor. They may also function, as we have already suggested in our discussion of rural-urban links, as a means of increasing economic security by providing access to land. As we shall see from our fieldwork in Nairobi such networks, which are usually kin based, are particularly important for new migrants to the city in getting access to extremely scarce resources like jobs and housing. Similarly this support system is important in providing credit to friends. Within a given group the debt can be juggled around: for example, the tenant with the softest landlord may lend to friends with tougher landlords. This reciprocity amongst the poor has been well documented but as we shall argue is most probably exaggerated. On the other hand, the proletariat have very little to exchange in terms of access to jobs, information and credit in comparison with the bourgeoisie.

We shall now turn to cell 3 in Figure 2.2. The argument of this section is that social relationships that are fundamentally reciprocal are being complemented by unequal relationships (i.e. client-patron) characterized by domination and dependency. Thus referring back to our 4-cell mode, there is an increasing amount of exchange across class lines, namely between the emergent bourgeoisie and proletariat i.e.

those in cell 3 in Figure 2.2. In part this is the result of the development of capitalism with its associated economic stratification.

Within Nairobi's squatter settlements, as we shall see, there is an important element of client-patronage between the local MP and squatter landlords (Chege, 1981). The point, it seems to me, is that the elite as a class gain more in terms of control, grassroots information, and business from patron-client links than the 'poor' receive as crumbs from the rich man's table. The more so as the poor increasingly cannot economically afford to reciprocate the social obligations that would reinforce their economic system. Within the 'slums' of Cairo Wikan (1980) demonstrates this point.

These examples form a critique of the general tendency among the Kenyan elite to underestimate the changes capitalism has wrought on 'traditional' Kenyan society. Thus some cabinet ministers still appear to assume that land is communally owned and that tribal elders can adjudicate in land disputes whereas from the mid-1950s it has been apparent that only private property in the legal sense could operate (Sorrenson, 1967). It is common in parts of Kenya for brother to sue brother over rights to land. It is thus quite clear that legal sanctions are necessary to replace the more 'traditional' methods.⁸

In this section we have seen how the development of capitalism simultaneously both strengthens and weakens tribal structures. We have also attempted to show that social networks do not necessarily act to redistribute resources. We have shown that those with the most resources i.e. the bourgeoisie can and do economically benefit from such networks to a greater extent than their impoverished neighbours. Hence those who economically most need kinship as a source of security can least afford it, while those who do not are in a position to distribute 'largesse' at will, thus consolidating their position.

In the next section we shall examine the informal sector and we

shall see that it is through the use of some of the social networks described in this section that affluent individuals are able to get access to a profitable source of capital accumulation.

2.8 Whither the Informal Sector?

"Economists speculate about this so-called 'informal' employment and debate the question whether it should be included in the statistics of national income. This is typical of economic analysis, which concerns itself with physical products, not with people. Informal business arises from the obstinate desire of human beings to remain alive. The shanty dwellers, having no 'formal' source of income, make a little money in any way they can. Where capitalist enterprise does not yet cover the ground, there are openings for self-employment in providing indispensable services, without which urban life would be impossible."

From Robinson, Aspects of Development and Underdevelopment, p.6.

In this section we shall attempt to examine the 'informal' sector in relation to capitalist development before examining the more specific case of housing and squatting in the final section of this chapter.

In the 1970s development studies, as we have already suggested, became involved in what amounted to ^a 'rediscovery' of poverty and the small-scale in the third world. Thus street sellers, hawkers and traditional craftsmen suddenly found themselves the focus of attention.

Analysis of the so-called 'informal' sector is often hampered by problems of definition. However in this section we shall argue that the informal sector refers to two contradictory types of economic activity: an emerging small-scale capitalist sector and a fundamentally subsistence (non-capitalist) economy. The 'informal-formal' sector dichotomy was popularised after the International Labour Office's (ILO) report on Kenya in 1972 following on from Hart's earlier work on informal economic activities in Ghana.⁹ (ILO, 1972; Hart, 1973). The Government of Kenya invited the ILO to send a mission to 'solve' their unemployment problem and encouraged them not to be frightened of making 'radical' suggestions. The mission's approach was to reject the concept-

ualisation of the problem as one of unemployment and instead focus upon poverty. To be in poverty was therefore operationally defined as to be facing an 'urban employment problem' namely 'lacking the opportunity of earning a reasonable minimum income' - which was taken to be 200Kshs a month (ILO, 1972, 63).

Since the ILO mission's starting point was poverty they began to investigate its causes and this led them into an analysis of Kenya's political economy and the introduction of the formal-informal dichotomy. The informal sector was said to be 'the way of doing things, characterized by:

- (a) ease of entry
- (b) reliance on indigenous resources
- (c) family ownership of enterprises
- (d) small scale of operation
- (e) labour-intensive and adapted technology
- (f) skills acquired outside the formal school system and
- (g) unregulated and competitive markets"

(ILO, 1972, 6).

This ILO definition of the informal sector has become widely accepted. (Others most notably Roberts use a wider term namely 'the small scale sector' which is defined as a residual, i.e. it is the part of the economy which lies outside the formal sector (Roberts, 1978, 114)). It is important to understand that the informal sector is more than just another name for the traditional sector.

In our study we shall seek to make a division within the informal sector between one sector where capital accumulation is possible and another where it is not. Implicit within our approach is a concern with the accumulation of capital and the reproduction of labour power. The main conceptualizations of the 'informal sector' hide this crucial difference. In stressing these features of it we are attempting to go beyond a position on 'marginality' developed by the Peruvian sociologist

Quijano. He argues that the 'modern' sector will expand into and absorb areas where capital accumulation is possible, leaving a 'marginal' sector where accumulation is not possible. This latter sector and its labour force are thus seen^{as} economically and politically irrelevant in capitalist society since they are essentially not involved in capitalist relations (Quijano, 1974). In essence, therefore, we are concerned with capital accumulation within the informal sector.

While the main argument of this thesis concerns the process by which the profitable sections of the informal sector attract capital investment and legalisation, it would be a mistake to assume that this is an inevitable and necessary function of the 'logic of capitalism'. Indeed, it is possible to suggest that it is useful to have profitable sections of the informal sector outside the official economy. As we have already seen, the domestic economy is one example of capitalism conserving rather than replacing different economic systems.

Here there is a parallel with the relationship between the monopoly and non-monopoly (i.e. competitive) sectors in advanced capitalism discussed by Poulantzas. The ILO definition of the informal sector is in fact almost a definition of a perfectly competitive market, (see characteristics (a) and (g) in ILO definition). Poulantzas argues that monopoly capitalism has a functional interest in preserving a non-monopoly sector since it is useful in bearing the risks of innovation and exploiting new markets. Once the conditions of profitability have been established monopoly capital may expand into such sectors. (Poulantzas, 1975, 142-3). Similar processes can be clearly seen within Nairobi's informal sector in particular in squatter housing and private pirate taxis or matatus. Here it is important to understand that legality is not a prerequisite for the investment of capital. Investment requires some security but this may be provided by the state rather than by legal status (Gilbert, 1982). This clearly gives the state a powerful

economic resource for political patronage and clientilism.

At the moment therefore through such informal political channels it is possible to establish a monopoly situation in the small scale sector. Within Kenya this is said to be the case with the charcoal business for example. In such a situation the legalization and establishment of a free market would erode a politically established monopoly, since access would be via the market place rather than social networks. Hence there are interests nominally opposed to such legalization attempts. Thus we might re-interpret the ILO's aims of "establishing links that are at present lacking between the formal and informal sectors" (ILO, 1972, 6) as the opening up of politically consolidated small scale sector monopolies. The point here is that paradoxically the establishment of a free capitalist market -where the price mechanism controls access - can in some situations be more equitable than politically controlled systems (i.e. corruption) where allocation is determined by membership of the right social networks. Thus the introduction of capitalism can in certain situations reduce rather than increase inequality.¹⁰

There are other advantages in having some parts of the small scale sector outside the official economy. Firstly for some individuals it is a good sector for tax avoidance. Secondly it is often expedient for governments not to legalize the small-scale sector as this might mean increased government responsibility and perhaps the enforcement of legislation (e.g. on minimum wages) which would destroy some of the bases of this economy. The small scale economy is often of considerable importance to the formal economy. However, in the legalization process the government would be able to increase its revenue through increased taxation. This increase in revenue is one of the rationales behind the increasing policy attempt to integrate unauthorized housing into the urban economy. Nevertheless in a situation where access to the informal sector remains personalized rather than a function of price,

social networks become extremely important in explaining interaction between the formal-informal sectors. It is through patronage and social networks that the Kenyan elite are able to benefit from the high rates of return upon investment in certain parts of the informal sector.

To conclude this section, we should note that while much of the argument seems to parallel our earlier discussion of the relationship of the domestic economy to capitalism, this is not the case, whereas that discussion related to those parts of the informal sector that have yet to be capitalized, here we are discussing the interaction between the capitalized informal sector and the capitalist sector.

The subsistence sector of the informal economy operates in the same way as the domestic economy in reducing the costs of the reproduction of labour power for the capitalist economy. It can thus be seen as giving a 'subsidy' to the entire capitalist economy as the labour costs of the latter are in part met outside it. Nowhere is this 'subsidy' more important than between the capitalized and domestic elements of the informal economy. Since in no sense can the former itself pay for the maintenance of its labour force, the deficit must be made up from the domestic economy.

In summary in this section we have suggested that the term informal sector is of limited use since it encompasses both areas where capital accumulation is possible and others where it is not. It is important to relate the elements of the informal economy (both capitalized and domestic or marginal sectors) to the wider economy and the state. In the next section we shall use this division within the informal sector concerning the possibilities of capital accumulation to investigate unauthorized housing.

2.9 Squatting or Subsistence Shelter

In this section we shall attempt to show the confusion that exists around the term 'squatting' and draw up a new definition in line with the argument of the last section. The term we shall use is 'subsistence shelter'. This will enable us to see the mechanisms of commercialization more clearly. Thus the unauthorized section will contain both what we call subsistence shelter and a commercial rental sector. To start with let us consider the approaches that have been taken to the phenomenon of urban squatting.

Historically the approach to urban squatter settlements has been to describe them in terms of their impermanence, social pathology, illegality and revolutionary potential (Butterworth and Chance, 1981). This served as a justification for demolition. It was in direct opposition to these views that a 'new orthodoxy' associated with John Turner and William Mangin grew up. Rather than seeing the squatter as a social misfit they saw them as people who were housing themselves. At its simplest the catch phrase was: "the problem (i.e. the squatter) was the solution".

We shall now examine this important work briefly. The justification for this is that Turner's work is mainly concerned with Latin America and one of the arguments of this thesis is that his work is irrelevant to Kenya and perhaps much of Africa. Indeed the use of his conceptualization outside its original setting seems to have hindered a general understanding of squatter settlements.

Underlying Turner's conception of squatting is the argument that:

"When dwellers control the major decisions and are free to make their own contribution to design, construction or management of their housing, both the process and the environment produced stimulate individual and social well being."

(Ward, 1976)

The emphasis is anarchist; it is the process of self-build that is being

praised. The argument also emphasises the 'use-value' of housing, i.e. what it does for the household rather than its quality or position in the housing market. (By contrast we shall look at how squatter settlements are increasingly becoming dominated by 'exchange-values'). To achieve maximum benefits from housing, control must be decentralized and management and organization kept to a minimum. Thus through individual control the maximum individual utility can be achieved in the housing process. Related to this Turner builds up a model of housing trajectories in which individuals demand different combinations of security, location and size and quality of accommodation over time. (Turner has consistently argued that the cost of accommodation is every bit as important to the individual as the physical accommodation). Thus for example the individual may trade size and quality of accommodation against location. Land invasions are a function of these general trade-offs. In invaded settlements there is a process of environmental improvement involving the succession of the first arrivals or 'bridge-headers' by the later arrivals or 'consolidators'.

From this pioneering study an entirely 'new' school of thought has developed concerning the housing problems of the third world. In summary the Turner thesis implies an attempt to harness the self-evident ability of squatters to house themselves - "give them a chance and they'll build". In essence this involves self help together with government legalization of settlements. (Dwyer, 1975).

This work has generated a lot of interest from the international agencies who are now funding and implementing schemes (site and service together with squatter upgrading) that at least nominally draw on this approach. (In Chapter 10 we shall evaluate the outcome of such schemes in Nairobi).

Turner's approach has been criticized from a number of perspectives. Firstly the policy suggestions attached to this work have been criticised for being unrealistic since they ignore the vested interests involved

in urban land. (Dwyer, 1975). At a more theoretical level, Burgess has offered a rigorous marxist critique of Turner's work to the effect that it presupposes a non-market economy, and thus ignores market forces and the 'exchange-value' of housing. (As we shall see the failure of self-help stems partly from a neglect of this market context). Burgess also suggests that Turneresque schemes are unlikely to be implemented as they will be against the interests of some or all fractions of capital (Burgess, 1978).

We shall now attempt our own approach to the phenomena of squatting in terms of our analysis of the informal sector presented in Section 2.8. It is helpful at this stage to distinguish two meanings of 'squatting' in common usage. The first is basically legalistic, thus: "SQUAT (Skwat) to settle upon new, uncultivated land without any legal title and without the payment of rent org. US 1800" (Oxford English Dictionary). The second usage refers to the organization of the housing economy itself (e.g. the provision of shelter) within such settlements rather than their legality. It is this aspect that we shall define as subsistence shelter and concentrate upon rather than illegality per se. 'Subsistence shelter' may be defined as the case where the provision (i.e. production) of shelter and its consumption are carried out within the same household unit. In other words the household provides its own shelter. Thus in as much as the terms are relevant, the 'builder', 'owner' and 'occupier' are contained within the same social unit. In the 'purest' form of subsistence shelter tenancy is impossible and there is no monetary exchange involved in construction or occupation. Clearly this is an ideal-type definition and as we shall show in empirical cases reality is more complex. However it is our contention that it is this pattern of housing provision, i.e. subsistence shelter, which John Turner saw as embodying the advantages of 'squatting'. (In many ways what we have just described represents what the international agencies call 'pure self-help').

Clearly there is no necessary connection between these two meanings of squatting: illegal occupation does not always imply the provision of subsistence shelter - as the squatters of London and Amsterdam testify. In short a confusion has arisen between the state (i.e. illegality) and the process (i.e. self-construction). While the two were associated in Peru this is not necessarily the case as we shall show in Nairobi. It is often assumed that the illegal character of squatting automatically prevents capital investment in this sector. But what we would argue is that the penetration of capital in this sector (and the consequent destruction of subsistence shelter) depends upon the security of investment and legality is only one among many factors which influence this. For example in the absence of legality there may be political means of ensuring security and thus investment. It is factors such as this which determine whether illegality and self-construction coincide; there is no necessary connection. Indeed the notion that illegality and self-construction are essential elements of squatting refers to a special case that has been popularized by much work in Latin America. Our aim will be to show that illegality and the intervention of capital are not always incompatible and that it is perfectly feasible for the private sector to operate in illegal areas.

Unfortunately there are extremely few studies of the emergence of private rental housing in unauthorized settlements. This may mean two things, that rental housing is either of limited scope or that it is an unfashionable subject to study. We should suggest the latter. Evidence in fact exists of rented sector and unauthorised settlements in Columbia (Edwards, 1982), Peru (Mangin, 1970), Zambia (Schlyter, 1979) as well as Kenya.

Within Kenya, such evidence is provided by Joan Richard and the Housing and Research Development Unit (HRDU) who document the emergence of the land buying movement and speculative rental housing

in Mathare Valley (Richard, 1970; HRDU, 1971). Even within our case study area (Kibera) Clark (1970) documented landlord and tenant characteristics in the late 1960s. This work has all been useful in providing material but has been essentially descriptive rather than theoretical and has not made the private rental sector its central concern. The aim of our study is to meet this gap by arguing that capitalist relations are being established in the form of property ownership and accumulation. Here we shall be arguing the reverse of McGee (1979) who suggested that 'consolidation' is the key element in shanty towns. By this he means that shanty towns continue to be characterised by non-capitalist economic systems.

In conclusion we are investigating a housing market that theoretically, judicially and socially does not exist. At the theoretical level, a reading of the literature would suggest that to undertake such a study is as absurd as looking for landlord-tenant relations in a camp site. The implication of our study is that third world urbanism may be better described as 'cities of tenants' rather than 'cities of peasants' (Roberts, 1978; Edwards, 1982).

2.10 Conclusion

In this chapter we have presented a critique of the relevant literature relating to our research. This has involved us in reviewing the literature on the processes of economic development which we have sought to understand in terms of capitalist development. Secondly we have considered the anthropological contribution which we have attempted to reinterpret in terms of the processes of capitalist development and in particular the notions of proletarianization and class formation. Finally we have examined the literature on the informal sector and urban squatting and suggested these terms do not refer to homogenous phenomena; in particular they refer to processes where

capital accumulation occurs and others where it does not.

It is our contention that it is most profitable in understanding African urbanism to start from the development of capitalism, proletarianization and class formation. Implicitly we are suggesting that a version of 'marxism' offers a more worthwhile interpretation of the third world city despite the fact that Marx touches upon the third world and urbanism only in a peripheral way. It follows that our study necessarily begins with a consideration of Kenya's political economy which is the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 2 - Footnotes

1. While some of the Latin-American structuralist work was earlier it had not yet seriously filtered into Western development thinking. Indeed the fact that it could not gain an entry suggests the strength of the existing paradigm. The only other contender might be Lenin's theory of imperialism which in my view is not fundamentally concerned with the third world. Rather it is an attempt to explain the continual success of capitalism in the industrialized world. Its starting point is economic development in the West not an analysis of the third world as such.
2. This Latin American 'structuralist' school of economic thought bears no relation to the French structuralist schools led by Althusser or Levi-Strauss and should not be confused with them.
3. Lenin's argument is that a situation of capital surplus and stagnation in Europe from 1890 results in pressures towards territorial expansion. Hence imperialism is the result of the search for new markets, cheap raw materials and an outlet for capital investment. As a result of inter-imperialist rivalry political colonization is necessary to secure markets, materials and investment outlets. In essence capitalism is a 'parasite' and 'moribund' system to which imperialism gives an extra lease of life before its 'inevitable' collapse. (see Warren, 1980, 50-57).
4. We may roughly divide African countries between those where Europeans went to live and farm and those in which their role was essentially administrative. The former are commonly called settler economies and include Kenya, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Algeria (Davidson, 1978).
5. Throughout this thesis we shall use the term 'domestic economy' to mean all pre-capitalist economic systems and not just women's domestic labour. However our critique of Marx's labour theory of value is basically the same as the feminist critique. The main difference is that our 'domestic economy' is not defined by gender.
6. Tentatively I would suggest that to answer this sort of question requires a more 'anthropological' approach towards specific pre-capitalist societies. Within Kenya it would seem that some 'traditional' pre-colonial social structures were 'better' able to cope with the emergence of colonial capitalism than others; the Kikuyu are a striking example of a group adapting to capitalism.
7. The basic argument of this section comes from a paper Jerry Eades gave in 1979 at the British Sociological Association Urban Studies seminar in London.
8. Personal communication David Salter, lecturer in the Faculty of Law at the University of Nairobi.
9. Hart's work is acknowledged by the ILO but I have not found an earlier reference than 1973 which post-dates the ILO study.
10. This is the basic point that Szelenyi makes about East Europe (Stretton, 1981).

CHAPTER 3

AN OVERVIEW OF KENYAN DEVELOPMENT

"This is a story of exceptional achievement and of massive problems to be overcome."

Kenya into the Second Decade
Report of a Mission sent to Kenya
by the World Bank (back cover)

"Fill your glasses to the brim. Gentlemen, here is my toast: To the prosperity of the Manor Farm!'. . . . Twelve voices were shouting in anger, and they were all alike. No question, now, what had happened to the faces of the pigs. The creatures outside looked from pig to man, and from man to pig and from pig to man again; but already it was impossible to say which was which".

George Orwell, Animal Farm, p.120

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is concerned with Kenya's political economy and is divided into three sections. In the first section we shall present a general overview of Kenyan history. We focus particularly on its colonial experience. As a result of the settler nature of the economy we can better understand the political importance of the concept of private ownership of land. Secondly we shall see the emergence of quasi-apartheid labour reserves with attempts to control the labour force and urban growth. Finally we shall draw attention to the 'open' pro-Western capitalist nature of Kenya.

In the second section we shall discuss some of the theoretical issues raised in the first section. We shall examine the recent debate concerning the nature and future of Kenyan capitalism. In particular we will suggest that it is useful to make a distinction between the different fractions or levels of capital that are involved.

The last section of this chapter provides the historical context

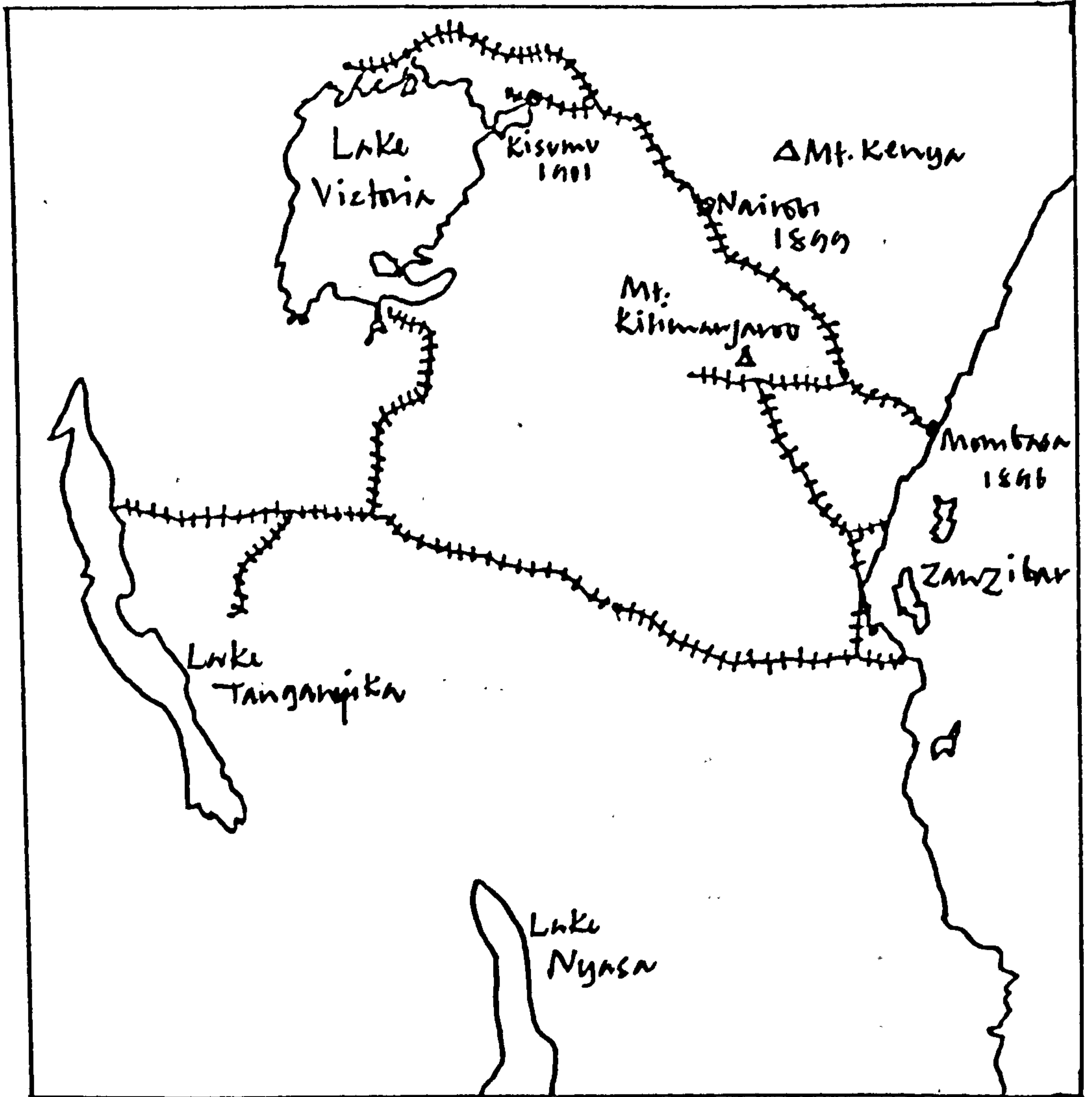
to Chapter 4. Thus we shall attempt to trace the colonial state's responses to the growth of Nairobi and its housing. We shall examine the growth of a 'temporary' African workforce within the settler social structure of Nairobi. We shall point out the contradictions involved in the colonial state's attempt to control this African workforce. One aspect of this control is the provision of urban housing; thus until 1954 Africans were not legally allowed to own urban property. This is very relevant to one of the main interests of this thesis, namely the origins and development of African property ownership within Nairobi.

3.2 Kenya: An Historical Overview

In the nineteenth century the European interest in East Africa centred upon Zanzibar. It was from this offshore island that the 'external' penetration of Africa was effected. This process involved missionaries, 'explorers' and traders, the latter dealing in humans (the slave trade) and ivory in 'exchange' for cloth and simple commodities. This process was administered by the Sultan of Oman in Zanzibar, himself a puppet of Britain. (Iliffe, 1979). Figure 3.1 gives the basic picture of East Africa at this period.

This period of indirect British involvement which was a characteristic of the British 'informal' empire was brought to an end when Kenya became an official protectorate in 1895 and subsequently a crown colony in 1922. This direct British political control in Kenya was a response to a variety of developments which challenged Britain's economic interests. These included the German involvement in East Africa, the anti-slavery lobby in Britain which, combined with the 'unfair' trading advantages that the Arab slave traders had gained in the interior, were to pressurize the British to take direct control in the name of abolition but to further their economic interests. In addition,

Figure 3.1 A map of East Africa circa 1900



the investment in and construction of the Uganda Railway was to greatly increase Britain's economic stake in the area (Wolff, 1974).

From 1895 until 1963 Kenya was a British colony. A key feature of British colonial policy was an attempt to make the colony finance the administrative expenditures its colonial status required and to make it pay for the Uganda Railway. The latter reached Lake Victoria in 1902 from Mombasa despite considerable difficulty in its construction. In hard economic terms this railway was always a speculative venture. Its construction was important in encouraging the migration of indentured Asian labour to East Africa.¹ This Asian community was to play an important middle man position in Kenya between the European minority and the African majority.

European (i.e. British and South African) immigration and settlement in Kenya was encouraged by the colonial power to create an agricultural export economy within the British Empire which would help pay for the Uganda Railway. The creation of this settler economy was to involve a total restructuring of land, labour and capital (Wolff, 1974). Land was alienated from Africans to make way for European agricultural settlement. This was the origin of what subsequently became known as the 'White Highlands'. New profitable crops were introduced, e.g. coffee, after much experimentation, and an African workforce was created. This labour force was created by direct coercion (slave labour) and by the introduction of a hut and poll tax upon the African population with the explicit aim of forcing them to earn cash upon European farms and thus provide a workforce (Wolff, 1974).

We should notice at the outset that within the area of European settlement in Kenya the policy was to create a European agricultural export economy using an African workforce and not (as was the case in neighbouring Uganda) a commercial African agricultural sector. However African peasant production continued in Kenya. The creation of this

European agricultural export economy involved the alienation of land (i.e. its expropriation from Africans by Europeans) and the creation of marketing boards, licensing etc. which helped to create a monopoly structure behind which European export agriculture was protected from African competition. This system was reinforced by prohibiting Africans from growing cash crops - in particular coffee and tea - on dubious 'technical' grounds.² The European agricultural export sector was protected by institutional barriers (from competition) from a potential commercial African agricultural sector.

The growth of Nairobi resulted from its role as the agricultural service centre to this settler economy. Its location is the result of historical accident as much as anything. In 1899 Nairobi was made a railway depot since it was a convenient stopping point for the engineers who were attempting to construct the railway line across the Rift Valley with its steep escarpments (see Fig. 3.1). From then on, Nairobi quickly grew as an administrative, commercial and political centre serving the 'white highlands'. In 1905 the political capital was moved from Mombasa to Nairobi. Almost from the outset Nairobi was conceived as a European city where Africans were temporarily 'allowed' in their own locations. In 1918 a pass law system was introduced linking African residence in Nairobi to employment; combined with various vagrancy measures this was 'intended to control the inflow of people to the city' (Van Zwanenberg, 1972, 194-196).

This 'immigration control' policy was partly a response to the desire to restrict municipal expenditure upon infrastructure (e.g. sanitation) and housing for Africans. Van Zwanenberg has suggested that it was also an attempt to restrict Africans from earning sufficient to pay taxes in Nairobi, rather than on the white settler farms (1972, 194). This seems a plausible suggestion, in view of the fact that at this stage wages were already higher in Nairobi and there

was an agricultural labour shortage.

Interestingly, this simultaneous need to control an urban workforce and limit urban immigration combined with an agricultural labour shortage lies at the heart of the Nationalist Party's philosophy and political base within South Africa. (Lanning and Mueller, 1979, 127-8). In South Africa this was to be institutionalised in apartheid and the Bantustan system. Thus in South Africa Bantustan areas are created which are basically labour reserves for both the white agricultural and industrial (urban) sectors. The development of Kenya's colonial economy is essentially similar but never reaches the institutionalised level of South Africa. In part this reflects the small scale of Kenya's industrial sector in comparison with the Witwatersrand (Johannesburg) of South Africa. Nairobi never required the degree of social control that the gold mining industry required and was not affluent enough to pay the costs (i.e. wages) of a partially 'stabilised' African labour force.

Thus, by the inter-war years Kenya's economy contained a settler agricultural export sector combined with non-commercial African agricultural areas which partly operated as labour reserves for the former. However the creation of this settler economy had and was causing severe social dislocation among the African population. The depression in Europe was to exacerbate the problems of the colony. Firstly a loan system had to be devised to keep the settler economy afloat in the face of rapidly falling world prices (Brett, 1973). Secondly this depression was to lead to attempts to cut African wages by a third. Within Nairobi this led to the beginnings of African political organization and protest. This was to lead to the arrest of their leader Harry Thuku in Nairobi and a subsequent riot in 1922 (Furedi, 1973, 278-9).

The problems of colonial policy in Kenya in 1922 are essentially those which were to precipitate the Mau-Mau uprising in 1952. Thus

Rev. Dr. Arthur, a Protestant missionary, identified the 'native' grievances as insecurity of land tenure, the humiliation of the registration certificate (pass laws) and the growing burden of taxation. (Times, 16 May, 1922). Furthermore he prophetically warned that:

"Unless government undertakes to have a definite native policy, unless government is prepared to go into the grievances of the native peoples, the natural aspirations of these people will find a vent in insurrection and in murder, and it is therefore our duty, whether government officials, missionaries or settlers, to act in such a way as to bring to these people the realization that we are out to help them and give them proper education and to teach them how to govern themselves". (Times, 16 May, 1922)

In summary the next thirty years of Kenyan history reveal an increasing divergence between settler and African interests, with the 'reforms' always being too little and too late. Hence the fundamentally racist nature of the economy with its co-existence of African labour reserves and settler agriculture continued unaltered.

A crucial point is that^{at} least 'officially', Africans were denied upward mobility by a racial barrier on occupations and by attempts to prevent the development of African business and commercial agriculture, e.g. by discouraging private African ownership of land by reinforcing traditional communal land ownership.

However, there seem to have been economic forces at work that were to break down these barriers with the emergence of African commercial ventures. There is some debate over the timing of the emergence of African commercial agriculture. The conventional historical view would suggest that it did not start until the 1950s. However, recent research in Kenya suggests that African commercial agriculture has much earlier historical roots (Cowen, 1976; Kitching, 1980).

Hence it may be suggested that from the 1930s onwards capitalist relations of production were beginning to establish themselves in the African sectors of the colonial economy (Cowen, 1976; Swainson, 1980, 174). This early African capitalist sector however was often illegal or informal which partly accounts for it having been ignored until

recently by historians.³ The colonial administration's view was that this sector did not exist, but this seems to have been far from the truth. Indeed in some areas the settlers were on the side actively involved in trading, albeit illegally, with this African agricultural sector. Nevertheless before World War II it seems that the scale of African capitalistic enterprise was certainly limited.

The outbreak of war in Europe in 1939 seems to have had an important impact upon Kenya's political economy. Indeed were it not for the preoccupation of historians with the events between 1952 and 1960 (Emergency or Mau-Mau) one suspects that this impact would be more commonly recognized.

Firstly during the 1939-45 period Kenya experienced some light import-substitution industrialization (led by the settlers) as a result of its isolation from British industry (Brett, 1973). As we shall see in subsequent sections of this chapter this was to alter the nature of Nairobi since it increasingly required labour stabilization. Secondly, the war itself and the high food prices were 'a great boon to African agricultural producers in Kenya' (Kitching, 1980, 108). This was to result in speeding up the process of agricultural commercialization and economic stratification. Hence after the war there was a 'rapid expansion in African commodity production' (Swainson, 1980, 175). It was from this embryonic bourgeoisie that the nationalist leadership was to come (Cowen, 1976, 32).

Thirdly, during the war the settlers were for the first time able to gain effective political control of the colony from the Colonial office and London. The main job of the post-war governor of Kenya Sir Philip Mitchell was to undermine this control.

Nevertheless:

"After the Second World War, when the realignment of forces within the colonial state favoured the expansion

of commodity relations, the administration made a conscious effort to encourage African trade".
 (Swainson, 1980, 178).

Previously the African trade and enterprise which had occurred in Kenya was officially discouraged and ignored. Now the colonial state was basically legalizing and encouraging an existing situation. For example African retail trade was often encouraged by multinationals, eager for example to increase the marketing of cigarettes (Swainson, 1980, 180-182). However, these concessions to African capitalist development were not enough to prevent African political discontent. The final legacy of the war was to create a group of Africans with military and organisational experience gained outside Kenya who would later form a militant nucleus against the colonial state.

While our previous discussion has touched upon the beginnings of African commodity production there is a considerable danger in over-emphasising its economic size and political importance in comparison with settler agriculture. The fundamental grievances, resulting from the settler economy, particularly over the expropriation of land and the reserve system, remained untouched. Hence given the pressure on land, a dispossessed landless group was increasing at the same time that some African capitalist aspirations were being stifled by the colonial state. These were the main elements to be involved in the 'nationalist struggle' with extremely different motivations, methods and intentions.

The 'frustrated capitalist' and well-educated nationalist group essentially formed the Kenyan/^{African} Union (KAU) in 1944 to push for constitutional change and African representation. Their aim was simply to be allowed into the European settler economy. Kenyatta was associated with this element.

The settler political control in the Rift valley was to result in the eviction of agricultural squatters from European farms.⁴ This was to further increase the pressure on land in the reserves and popular

discontent with the colonial regime and its African counterparts, the chiefs. Within Nairobi a more radical nationalist group was gaining strength, in particular the 40 group. Their interests were different and more radical than the constitutional KAU who by 1947 had lost much popular support in the capital. Increasingly Kenyatta and the KAU were losing their hold upon the masses in both Nairobi and central province who by now wanted direct action. The chiefs in particular were a target being essentially part of the colonial administration. It was the assassination of a chief that led, on the 20 October 1952 to the declaration of a State of Emergency or 'Mau-Mau' in Kenya.

The colonial administration arrested all the Constitutionalist KAU leadership and attempted to move predominantly Kikuyu agricultural squatters back into the reserves which further exacerbated the chronic situation and paradoxically increased militancy. (Throup, 1982). From 1952-1960 Kenya was under something approaching martial law. Most commentators consider this period as crucial in Kenya's subsequent development. Here we will suggest that it represents more the summation and acceleration of previous periods' policies than a radical break as is often implied. (Throup, 1982).

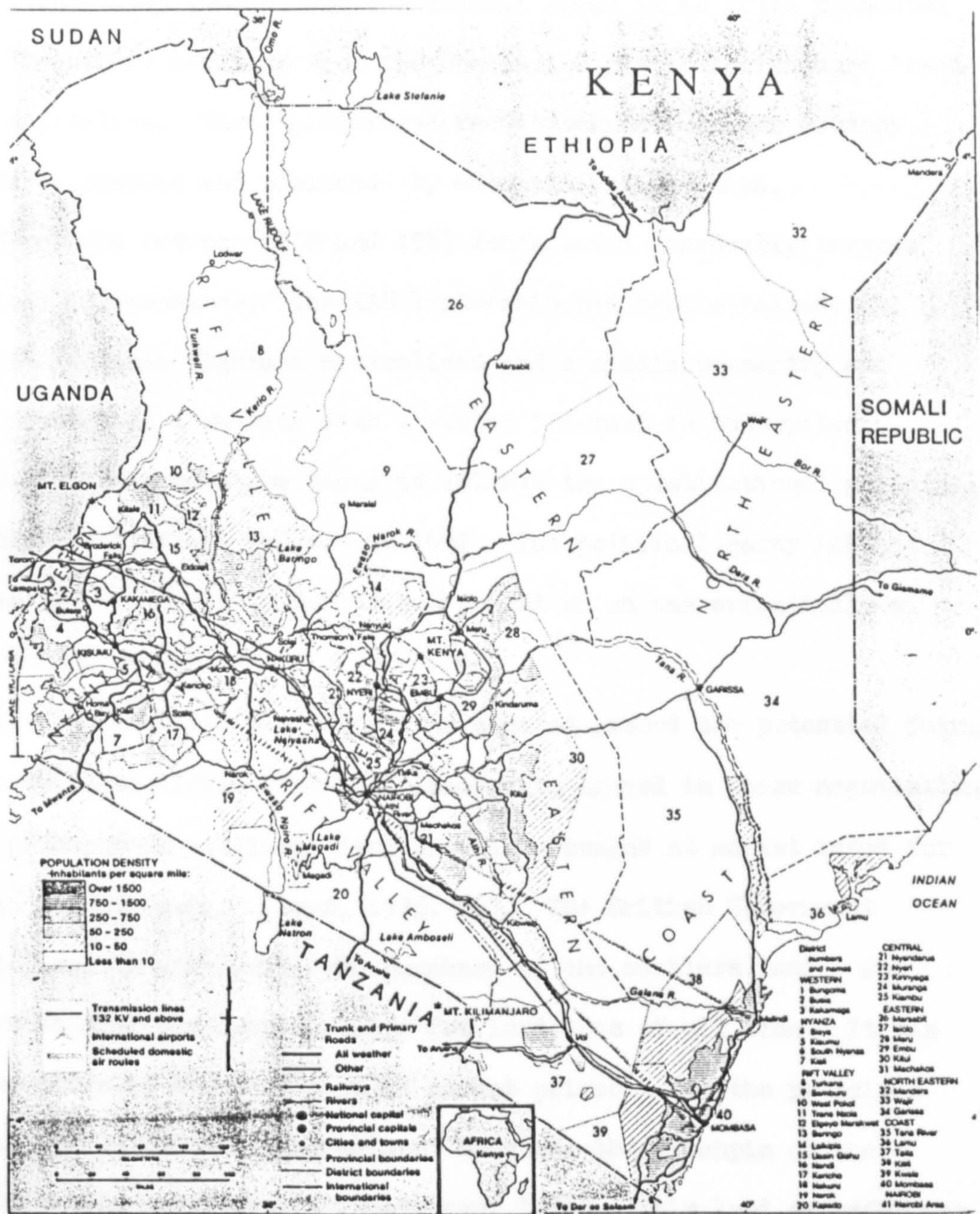
The colonial policy was explicitly to drive a wedge between the militant and the loyalist elements in the African population by isolating the former and cultivating the latter. Thus the predominantly dispossessed landless who made up the militant group were driven into the Upland Forest areas of Mount Kenya and the Aberdares and effectively isolated (see Fig. 3.2). Meanwhile the more constitutionalist embryonic capitalists were greatly encouraged, by a process of land consolidation and rationalization while the dispossessed landless militants were out of the way either in the forest or in detention centres. In many ways one can interpret Mau-Mau as the struggle between these groups, i.e. the

haves and the have-nots, hidden under an anti-colonialist 'nationalist' banner. Thus, while the militants were isolated or in detention, the colonial policy was to create a 'stable middle class' as a bulwark. In order to achieve this many of the restrictions upon African economic enterprise were lifted or at least rationalized. Within the (mainly Kikuyu) Central Province (see Fig. 3.2) individual title to land ownership was created extremely quickly. Similarly commercial agriculture was developed under the Synnerton plan of 1953. Since many of the landless who might have had land claims were physically isolated at this stage it was possible to consolidate holdings rapidly, by, as one official put it 'striking while the iron was hot'. (Sorensen, 1967). It is worth mentioning that in many cases this individual title was often a formalization of an already unofficially existing land market within Kikuyu land (Sorensen, 1967). Thus having consolidated and rationalised land holdings small-holder agriculture was to be encouraged by 'allowing' commercial cash crops to be grown, mainly tea and coffee. The state was self-consciously creating a group of what they liked to call 'yeoman' farmers.

This policy was accelerating previous trends towards individual title, commercialization and economic stratification. We have already noted the existence of an illegal land market; we can also note that tea had been grown unofficially since 1933 and that differentiation of land holdings had already occurred. (Cowen, 1976, 9 and 33-34). Nevertheless the subsequent expansion in smallholder tea and coffee production was spectacular. The area under smallholder tea increased from 3,527 to 32,000 hectares in the ten years between 1963 and 1973, (Swainson, 1980, 258). Within Central Province the pent-up capitalist aspirations had been released.

The colonial government's approach to this period is epitomized in the East African Royal Commission 1954-6 which was a response to

Figure 3.2 Map of Kenya



Source: Kenya into the Second Decade

the declaration of a state of emergency in 1952. The Commission's report was the summation and official endorsement of much colonial policy since 1945 rather than the radical break it is often presented as.⁵ The policy deriving from the Commission was to insist upon 'raceless' capitalism. Thus 'arbitrary' racial barriers on the economy were to be removed and replaced by economic (class) ones.

Meanwhile between 1952 and 1963 Kenya moved inexorably towards political independence. The KAU leadership had been detained, the militant landless fighters neutralized and a middle peasantry and class created as a bulwark with a vested interest in the system. Slowly the colonial state began to release the constitutional politicians with Kenyatta's final release in 1962. The political party KANU (Kenyan African National Union) was formed which was essentially a continuation of KAU.

The decolonization negotiations centred around the potential future of the white settlers. The KANU leadership agreed in these negotiations that the European settlers' land should be bought at market rates for African resettlement. (Leys, 1975, 63). The British Government was prepared to underwrite the purchase of the settlers land - one of the most generous compensations for land loss of all time. It was this transfer of European land at market prices under the principle of 'willing buyer - willing seller' that was the lynchpin of the decolonization settlement. (Wasserman, 1976). This land transfer was institutionalized in the Million Acres scheme through which the embryonic capitalist group were able to buy their way into the 'white highlands', and consolidate their economic base. It would not be an exaggeration to say that modern Kenya has been built on the principle of the private ownership of land. Consequently its political importance cannot be underestimated.

In 1963 Kenya became politically independent under Mzee Jomo

Kenyatta as President. Since then its economic policy has been marked more by continuity than change. Many commentators consider it to be a classic neo-colonial society in which the African administration has pursued similar policies to the Colonial administration (Leys, 1975).

Hence Kenya has followed a pro-western capitalist development path encouraging both multinational investment and international aid. (See the paradoxically named African Socialism sessional paper no 10.1965). This policy has been helped by Kenya's political stability. Since 1960 the Kenyan economy has undergone rapid economic development mainly at the expense of social equality, so that by 1980 the inequality in Kenya is extreme. From income distribution figures in the World Development report 1982 Kenya comes out as being the fourth most unequal of the 23 listed.⁶ The most important economic change resulting from decolonization has been the Africanization of the economy.

In the next section we shall discuss some of the issues relating to the emergence of an African bourgeoisie that are a result of decolonization and Africanization.

3.3 Kenyan Development: Some Theoretical Issues

In this section we shall examine some theoretical issues arising from our historical review of Kenyan development. In so doing we will be re-emphasizing the aspects of Kenya's political economy that are important for our subsequent analysis. We shall focus almost exclusively upon the period since political independence in 1963. At the most basic level Kenya has followed a capitalist development strategy. However beyond that bland assertion the debate starts. In this section we shall examine some of the debates concerning the nature and possibilities of capitalist development in Kenya.

The 'conventional' underdevelopment position we discussed in

in Chapter 2 was first used to interpret Kenya's recent development by Colin Leys in his classic text Underdevelopment in Kenya (Leys, 1975). For him capitalism is effectively blocked and the African 'elite' are not a bourgeoisie in a classical marxist sense able to 'revolutionize the productive forces'. Instead they are reduced to being fundamentally economically 'impotent' agents of international capital. Leys also puts forward the classic exposition of the 'neo-colonial' thesis, namely that the African elites' policies represent a direct continuation of those of the colonial administration and that these are predominantly in the interests of international capital. (Leys, 1975). This continuity has been made easier by the fact that politically created monopoly structures of the settler economy have remained intact. It seems implicit in the independence thinking that to break up the settler monopoly structure of the economy, would most benefit the Asian community. (It is estimated that at Independence Asians probably owned 75% of non-agricultural assets in Kenya. (Leys, 1975, 45). Hence by maintaining these monopoly structures, in particular through licensing, an African/^{political} elite (mainly Kikuyu) have been able to use state power to leapfrog over the Asian community. Until recently this has been the conventional radical underdevelopment interpretation.

In the last five years this position has been subjected to sustained criticism and modification. In part this has been a result of the Warren reinterpretation of imperialism and capitalist development in the periphery we discussed in Chapter 2. However it is also fair to say that the work on Kenyan capitalism has been an important element in the more general debate.

The first and most complicated work in this field is that of Mike Cowen who emphasized the 'internal' historical roots of Kenyan capitalism. In his analysis he seeks to show how a class of primitive accumulators are transformed into an embryonic bourgeoisie. In his analysis he seeks

to distinguish between different capitals and explain the trajectories of each rather than treat capital as a uniform and monolithic block (Cowen, 1976). Consequently he is able to show the indigenous origins and transition of the indigenous bourgeoisie by separating them from the dependent class created by the intervention of settler capital or international finance capital. (This is a very brief and simple, resume of an extremely subtle argument).

After a visit to Kenya in 1977 Colin Leys developed a critique and reformulation of his earlier 'neo-colonial' argument that the Kenyan elite were impotent, that the state operates for multinational capital and that capitalism was stifled. Thus:

"Instead of seeing the strength of the historical tendency lying behind the emergence of the African bourgeoisie I tended to see only the relatively small scale and technical weaknesses of African capital in the face of international capital, and to envisage the state as little more than a register of this general imbalance; rather than seeing barriers of capital scale and technology as relative, and the state as the register of the leading edge of indigenous capital in its assault on those barriers"
(Leys, 1978, 251-253)

He then argues following Cowen's work that because of Kenya's specific history:

"The dialectics of capital accumulation in Kenya thus involved (a) the subordination of indigenous capital to settler capital, but not its destruction; (b) the assertion by settler capital of claims on labour power and the means of production which greatly limited the scope for international capital to enter into direct relations of exploitation with peasant commodity producers, and undermined much more radically than in most African countries the precapitalist relations of production; and (c) the ability of the indigenous class of capital not only to substitute itself effectively for the settler fraction of capital at independence - i.e. as an internal bourgeois, not a petty-bourgeois, class - but also to set about recovering from international capital a good part of the field of accumulation which it has succeeded in occupying. In effect, the indigenous capitalist class assumed the hegemonic place in a new 'power bloc' (i.e. alongside international capital and elements of non-indigenous local capital), in the context of an economy which was already capitalist in more than the usual sense:

i.e. not merely one in which the still preponderant precapitalist relations of production (peasant household commodity production in particular) were subjected to the laws of the capitalist mode of production, in both direct and indirect ways, but also one in which for some important sectors, and to some extent for the 'economy as a whole', the 'structure of profitability' no longer depended simply on extending relations of exploitation based on absolute surplus labour (intensifying labour in various ways, but increasingly on raising labour productivity).

In less abstract terms, Kenya appears, from this analysis, as a modest example of a 'systematical combination of moments' conducive to the transition to the capitalist mode of production. This does not imply that no further obstacles remain in Kenya to the uninterrupted domestic accumulation of capital, i.e. the uninterrupted development of the productive forces through the extension of capitalist production relations progressively throughout the entire economy."

(Leys, 1978, 260-261)

What is being said here is that because of the specific nature of its history the Kenyan economy contains the seeds for a capitalist transformation. Despite the protests of the critics of this view the claim being made about capitalism in Kenya is really as simple and modest as that. In essence it is a critique of underdevelopment theory's assumption that capital accumulation in the periphery is by definition, impossible.

This general argument was given further support by Nicola Swainson who traces out the evolution of corporate capitalism in Kenya from 1918 to 1977. She shows how in the post-independence era the state has been used by the indigenous bourgeoisie to further their own capital accumulation. Here she shows that contrary to the underdevelopment thesis the state has been used in the interests of the national bourgeoisie against and not for multinational capital. She urges us to look at the dynamics of capital accumulation rather than assume capitalist relations are static. (Swainson, 1980). Hence the argument is that the comprador bourgeoisie in Frank's terminology do have a measure of autonomy; they are not simply the puppets of international capital. A consequence of this is that the history and the development of the internal class structure of any peripheral state

have specific independent ramifications. Thus it is not possible to interpret all of each peripheral state's behaviour to some universal 'underdevelopment' process. It is a result of a combination of specific external and internal forces. It seems that implicit in this is the criticism that underdevelopment theory has become ahistorical.

Within Kenya for this emergent post-independence 'bourgeoisie', 'the primary sources of accumulation of capital ... have been real estate, farming, transportation and commerce.' (Swainson, 1980, 185). A crucial aspect of this indigenous capital accumulation is the process which may be described as 'straddling'. Straddling is the way that individuals in the Kenyan public sector use their positions to further their own personal accumulation of capital. Swainson describes this as 'the hallmark of the present stage of indigenous capitalism' (1980, 191). The right of civil servants to have outside business interests even in the same fields as their public sector jobs was officially endorsed in the Ndegwa commission of 1971.

The impact of this, combined with an extensive licensing system operating in Kenya, was to exclude the smaller scale operators from being able to expand.

We can see interesting parallels in this with the situation that prevailed in Kenya in the late 1940s where as we pointed out in section 3.2 the colonial state was frustrating an indigenous capitalist group. By 1975 the result of the Ndegwa commission and the continuing access to capital by those larger scale capitalists was that 'the small trading class were clamouring for better access to state support in order that they also could join the ranks of the bourgeoisie' (Swainson, 1980, 191).

Within the commercialized unauthorized housing sector the larger-scale state-supported capitalist group i.e. those involved in 'straddling' can be identified as/ ^{can} the smaller-scale capitalist group who are being excluded.

We shall argue that it is this small-scale capitalist group who are prevented from developing by state control who are an important source of potential political opposition in Kenya in the 1980s.

However, the argument that capitalist relations of production are being established in Kenya has not gone unchallenged. Indeed it has generated considerable debate. Kaplinsky has attacked Colin Leys' (1978) reanalysis of the Kenyan situation with a wealth of statistical data. He uses this data to attempt to show that the scale and size of this indigenous bourgeoisie makes it insignificant. (Kaplinsky, 1980). Both Leys and Swainson have always admitted that what they are referring to is small in comparison with multi-national capital but it is indigenous capital's very existence and its potential dynamics that are significant, and damaging to the underdevelopment thesis. Kaplinsky does not disagree with this since he writes that:

"The extension of capitalist relations of production is not challenged".
 But where he does disagree is that he is:
 "more sceptical as to past performance and sustainable nature of accumulation and in the extent to which indigenous capitalists have been able to squeeze out foreign ones" (Kaplinsky, 1980, 103)

This shows that he is arguing with Leys over the extent and future potential rather than the existence of indigenous capitalism. Indeed, we could suggest that he is attacking a position that Leys does not hold and that the 'capital accumulation camp' are much more cautious than he thinks (Henley, 1980).

To conclude this section we would maintain that there is indigenous capitalism in Kenya and that it is important to make distinctions within it. At the moment the potential of such a capitalist transformation cannot be ascertained.⁷ In what follows we shall investigate one underestimated source of capital accumulation; namely unauthorised urban landlordism.

Even in the unauthorised housing market we can differentiate

between different capitals involved. It is consequently important in understanding the situation to attempt at least theoretically to distinguish between different functions or levels of capital involved and their historical context. Urban real estate until 1954, like tea or coffee was not a legal source of African capital accumulation. In the next section we shall examine the colonial authorities attitude to urban growth which will provide us with the historical background to the factors which shaped Nairobi in 1960, from where our more detailed study begins.

3.4 The Colonial Response to the Urban Growth of Nairobi

We now examine the colonial response to the urban growth of Nairobi. In particular we shall focus on the settler nature of the city, the state's attempts at controlling the African labour force and provision of housing, and finally examine the historical roots of urban landlordism. In Fig. 3.3 we can see the population growth of Nairobi throughout this century.

Figure 3.3 The Population of Nairobi 1906-1979

Date	Population
1906	11,000
1920	23,000
1930	49,000
1939	65,500
1948	118,976
1962	343,500
1969	509,300
1979	827,800

Source: HEDU, 1971; Hake, 1977; Economic Survey, 1981. (1906-1939 estimates, 1948-1979 Census)

It is apparent that the urban growth of Nairobi has been relentless and extremely rapid. This growth has been fuelled by rural-urban migration. Such migration has throughout been propelled by population increase, wage differentials, and the increase of landlessness; in short the general development of the national capitalist economy. The agricultural sector still holds the key to future urban development. Land is still politics in Kenya.

We have already noted that Nairobi was conceived as a European city. The fundamental 'problem' with Nairobi for the colonial power was that they wanted African labour but not African urban residents. The 'response' described below is basically an attempt to wrestle with this contradiction. From 1899 until World War II Nairobi essentially grew as a result of its functions as a service centre for the 'white highlands' and not as a centre of economic growth. (Van Zwanenberg, 1972, 170). This non-industrial urban growth was an active policy to fit in with ideas of complementary development for the British Empire (Brett, 1973).

Up until World War II Nairobi's workforce was basically non-industrial and unskilled, and employed predominantly in the service sector (Furedi, 1973, 276). In this situation of a labour surplus in Nairobi the colonial authorities had no economic reason to house their African workforce.

Instead their response was to segregate the city into European, Asian and African residential zones. The African population was basically left to fend for itself and house itself in the African 'locations', i.e. residential areas. The rationale for this may be seen from a 1930s Colonial Secretary's comment that:

"he could not understand why the government should be responsible for housing its native servants when they are living in their own country"

(Van Zwanenberg, 1972, 186)

The view of the African worker as 'temporarily' resident in Nairobi is clear, and this was reinforced by the use of short term contracts for African employment. This encouraged a system of 'rotating migration' which was reinforced by the insecurity and low level of African wages which meant that few individuals had enough savings to 'risk' a permanent stay in Nairobi. Thus in many ways while the African was not 'allowed' to settle permanently in Nairobi he also could not afford to.

From the colonial authorities point of view the difficulty with this very low wage situation was the likelihood of disease which could threaten the health of the European community. The colonial response was to establish segregated areas to isolate the African community.

However:

"The problem was that the needs of the authorities were mutually incompatible. They wanted cheap labour, an urban environment free of contagious diseases and segregated areas set aside for African habitation, but no coherent policy existed for the achievement of these objectives. Cheap labour could not afford sanitary housing and although the relationship between poverty and disease was understood, the Municipal authority was unwilling to shoulder the responsibility of providing adequate subsidized housing."
(Van Zwanenberg, 1972, 185)

Hence throughout the inter war period Nairobi Council's policy was:

"guided by an effort to temporize between dislike of expenditure and the need of housing on sanitary and economic grounds".

(Parker, 1949, 89)

One solution was to control migration together with urban segregation to minimize council expenditure. By controlling rural-urban migration they hoped to keep the African population to the minimum required, while segregation allowed for bad sanitation away from the European city. Both these measures could reduce expenditure by reducing the quantity and then the quality of sanitation necessary. Similarly before 1939 as the labour force was unskilled there was no economic need to house it. It was not worth paying high wages or providing

decent housing to hold a 'special' group, i.e. labour stabilization, since anybody could do the job required.

Instead a system of social control was devised for the African population consisting of pass laws (Kipande) and police control (Van Zwanenberg, 1972, 182-3). The aim was to attempt to control flows of migrants, restrict Africans to native locations, eliminate undesirables and in general only allow Africans in Nairobi if they had employment. It is worth emphasising that throughout Nairobi's history rural-urban migration has been economically rational for the individual migrant. Moreover Nairobi has nearly always been in a state of labour surplus in contrast to much settler agriculture where there has always been a labour shortage. Much of the pass law system was an attempt to rectify this situation. That Nairobi has continued to grow despite active attempts to prevent its growth, tells us much more about the economic desperation of the Africans in the 'reserves', than it does about Nairobi's alleged 'bright lights' (which were reserved for Europeans in any case). Nevertheless migration control and the 'go back to the land' attitude still dominate much thinking about urbanism in Kenya.⁸

Within the locations there were some dormitories provided by the municipality as far back as 1925, since not enough African capital could be generated to build upon previously designated sites. (Parker, 1949, 77-83). However, a parallel economy was operating which as we shall see later is common in Nairobi. Thus at the same time, there was tremendous overcrowding such that alongside the very limited official dormitory villages illegal squatter villages grew up,

"In 1938, the Municipal Native Affairs Officer reported that... very large numbers of natives for lack of accommodation are unable to sleep in Pumwani... (the official native location)... It is estimated that some 600 are in River Road and Canal Road alone, living in undesirable squalor. About 2,000.... employed as

casual labourers mainly at the quarries... live in huts, sheds, cow houses and goat pens near their work with few or no sanitary facilities."

(Furedi, 1973, 276)

In the inter-war period it is unlikely that such squatter villages were commercialized in the sense of the pronounced development of landlord and tenant groups. From our own study commercialization does not seem to have occurred to a great extent in Kibera in this period. The evidence for the presence or absence of commercial relations is at best tentative. However we should notice that at this period in the official native location of Punwani that some tenancy was involved and institutionalized in the (Swahili) housing stock. (Bujra, 1973).

Meanwhile in passing we can note that for the European and Asian communities in the 1920's 'landlordism was established as the express lift to the top income brackets'. (Hake, 1977, 41). This seems to have been particularly important for the Asian community who were prevented from investing in agriculture in the colonial economy. As we have already suggested the continual in-migration to Nairobi was making the pass-laws and the related social control and urban racial segregation increasingly difficult to maintain. In the absence of the municipality providing African housing the system was becoming self-defeating. Thus as The Native Affairs Committee reported in 1938 it was:

"manifestly absurd to order a native to reside in a native location if there is no accommodation available for him there."

(Van Zwanenberg, 1972, 193-4).

The Mombasa Dock strikes in 1939 clearly illustrates the African workforce's discontent with low wages and housing provision. The Willan Commission which was appointed as a result, while clearly shocked at what they saw did not suggest further social control despite being urged to do so; neither did it attack the low wage structure which would have undermined the entire colonial economy.

Instead they reminded employers of their legal obligation to house their workforce or provide an adequate housing allowance (Stren, 1972, 60, 67). This at least was a pragmatic approach which recognized that social control and brute force alone were not enough. However, it is depressing to note how Kenya's and Nairobi's housing problem still remains effectively unresolved in the absence of subsidies in a low wage economy.

As we saw in Section 3.2 after 1939 Nairobi began to develop as a light industrial centre and this was to have repercussions in the housing sphere. (Van Zwanenburg, 1972). This sudden industrialization combined with the increasingly evident African discontent and the impracticality of more direct social control was to lead towards a policy with a greater emphasis upon labour stabilization. Housing provision was now being seen as an economic and political necessity. Thus as the Native Affairs Office in Nairobi put it in 1939:

"Native policy in Nairobi should encourage the better type of native worker and provide accommodation for him and his family in the town. Fewer natives, better fed, properly housed, constituted with their families, a permanent and controlled native population should be our aim".
(Stren, 1972, 62).

The advantage of such an approach is that the urban labour force would be more productive. It is also interesting to note the emphasis upon the family unit, possibly as a bulwark against prostitution in Nairobi. The latter was greatly 'encouraged' by women being prohibited from domestic jobs until the mid 1940s (Furedi, 1973, 277). The 1943 Housing Bill accepting government responsibility for urban African housing which was symptomatic of the general change in emphasis towards the growth of an African population in Nairobi. (Stren, 1972, 64).

By 1946 the Kenya Information Office observed that 'stress has recently been laid on the lack of African housing as a prime cause of past and possible future civil discord'. In this situation we can see

a more overtly political reason for labour stabilization. However we should note that the labour stabilization is prior to the declaration of the State of Emergency in 1952. Hence while the educated African elite, weaned as clerks in the administration, were beginning to enjoy some of the benefits of this policy, urban discontent was increasing (Furedi, 1973, 280).

Nevertheless, while the Nairobi African elite were gaining from better housing, local administration and constitutional change, little was improving for the majority of African inhabitants of Nairobi. Between 1947 and 1954 the Colonial State was effectively to lose control of Nairobi where militant African organisations like the '40 group' were effectively running an informal administration-cum-protection racket in the African locations. This group's power base was the urban poor struggling to live upon subsistence wages; indeed their headquarters was in an illegal shanty town. (Furedi, 1973, 270-284).

It was this group from Nairobi that went out into the 'reserves' and created the organisational structure of the Mau-Mau uprising in central province. Indeed it was the '40 group's' political assassination of a loyalist that precipitated the 1952 declaration of a State of Emergency. (Furedi, 1973, 284). Here again the indivisibility of the 'urban' and 'rural' should be apparent.

The extent of the involvement of this and other organizations in squatter landlordism after 1947 is something we simply do not know about. However, it would seem to be a perfectly possible activity. Whether or not this is the case, the Colonial authorities effectively destroyed all these underground activities with Operation Anvil in 1954. Houses in Mathare Valley were totally destroyed and 24,000 Kikuyu were removed from Nairobi. Thus the Colonial State wrested back its control in Nairobi. It then set about systematically

removing the Kikuyu from Nairobi - most of the militancy in Nairobi was associated with the Kikuyu - and isolating them. Thus housing was reorganized on a tribal basis to isolate other tribes from the 'contaminated' Kikuyu. (Furedi, 1973, 285). In 1953 47% of Africans in employment in Nairobi were Kikuyu, Embu or Meru; and a year later in 1954 the figure had dropped to 27%, falling to 22% in 1956 before 'recovering' to 26% in 1958. The figures for Luos and Luluya (Nyanza) increase from 28% in 1953 to 39% in 1956, while Kamba increase from 18% to 28% in the same period (Furedi, 1973, 288).

Between 1954 and 1960 migration into Nairobi was effectively controlled. Meanwhile African property ownership was encouraged in 1954 when Africans were allowed to own urban property in Nairobi. Here as in all the official thinking at the time the aim was to create the 'stable middle class' as a bulwark against the militants. It is from this time that we may begin to trace the origins of a property-owning African elite.

During the 1950s and increasingly after 1960 ownership of urban real estate has been an extremely important African investment outlet. This was helped by the 'boom' which followed the slump associated with the Emergency and Independence which allowed members of the emergent African bourgeoisie to buy into the European real estate market at favourable rates.

The unequal distribution of urban land in Nairobi between different groups is an extremely important historical legacy. Thus the plans for Nairobi drawn up in 1905, 1927 and 1948, mainly by South African planners, systematically established racial zones in Nairobi and set up an Industrial Estate. The 1948 plan was the most important and created the following extremely unequal racial residential densities. (800 Africans, 32 Asians or 7 Europeans, individuals per acre of land (Kimani, 1972). This essentially 'apartheid' system imposed at the

height of settler political power has become fossilized into Nairobi's present day spatial structure. The difference is that since 1960 income rather than race determine which sector one is in.

A similar colonial inheritance we shall discuss in the next chapter concerns planning standards which were essentially designed for the settler minority. Today they seem totally inappropriate, forcing many inhabitants to live illegally out of economic necessity.

In this section we have examined the colonial response to the growth of Nairobi. In this we have seen how until World War II the African population is to be tolerated as a temporary workforce. After World War II with some light industrialization the colonial response moves towards labour stabilization. Finally we have seen that with the onset of decolonization urban property has become a source of African capital accumulation. In the next chapter we shall investigate some of the repercussions of this phenomena in Nairobi after 1960.

3.6 Summary

In this chapter we have considered Kenya's political economy from a historical perspective. We have tried to emphasise the importance of the settler nature of the economy; in particular the way it forestalled and interacted with the emergence of indigenous African capitalism. We then focussed upon the debate over the potential emergence of African capitalist relations of production within Kenya. Furthermore we have seen that it is important to distinguish between different levels, fractions or elements of capital.

In the last section we investigated the settler state's response to Nairobi's urban growth. This has provided us with the general historical background for our more detailed discussion of Nairobi that follows.

Chapter 3 - Footnotes

1. Throughout this thesis I use the term 'Asian' in the way it is used in East Africa. Thus 'Asian' in effect means individuals from the Indian sub-continent i.e. Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi.
2. The absurdity of these allegedly 'technical' arguments, e.g. that African coffee would be diseased, is shown by the fact that the Chagga of Northern Tanganyika were successfully growing coffee from a very early stage (Illife, 1979).
3. A notable exception to this is the African Studies Centre at the University of Cambridge, see the forthcoming book by David Anderson and Richard Waller entitled 'Kenya by Moonlight'.
4. Within the settler farms there were Africans who were allowed to squat or occupy land in return for labour on the settler farm. This system in Kenya was known as 'squatting' and bears little relation to the phenomena of urban squatting.
5. Personal communication David Throup University of Cambridge.
6. This was done by comparing the percentage share of National Income of the lowest and highest 20% of the population. In Kenya the top 20% had 23.3 times more of the National Income than the lowest 20%. This figure was behind Brazil 33.3, Peru 32.1 and Panama 30.9 but higher than Mexico 19.9.
7. This is a point made by Beckerman in a review of the debate. (Beckerman, 1980, 53-4), and by Kitching who maintains that the important issue is whether this capitalist will lead to large scale industrialization (1980, 428-30). A more recent point in view of the increasing destabilization of the Kenyan state, itself a result of economic failure, culminating in increased political repression, the de jure one party state and the aborted coup on 1st August 1982; is whether Kenyan society politically can take the severe social dislocation associated with a full scale capitalist transformation. Put another way will the system be torn down before it has time to achieve any serious transformation. We are suggesting that the 'political' constraints, which have been underplayed, may be as great, if not greater, than the 'economic' constraints on capitalist transformation in Kenya.
8. For example the ILO mission to Kenya wanted 'controlled migration and redistribution of population, again with judicial use of quotas' (ILO, 1972, 28).

CHAPTER 4

NAIROBI 1960-1980: MANAGING URBAN GROWTH

'Clearing away the Shanties'

"Nairobi City Council askari's went into action early yesterday and evicted thousands of people who lived and worked in shanties along the Nairobi river in an area popularly known as 'Grogan Road'. The shanties were demolished by bulldozers.

The Council action was one of many such operations that have taken place in the past few years. They are designed primarily to pull down structures which are essentially illegal and pose a major health hazard...

...In many ways the council operation sad and pathetic though it may seem, is the price of progress...

... There is no denying the fact that for many years now the Nairobi river area and its environs have been a major eyesore, an ugly wart on the face of our fair city.

It has become a giant workshop for hundreds of self-employed motor mechanics and fix-it men (and boys). It has become a place where anything goes. It has become something of a haven a home from home, for petty crooks, and some not so petty criminals.

...Those evicted in yesterday's exercise must resist the temptation to return to their old haunts and their old ways. They must make the best of their new surroundings and opportunities. They must realise that they cannot hold back the sweeping forces of change, the march of progress."

Nation, editorial, October 14th 1977

'Civic Leaders and Shanties'

"Over the last fifteen years or so, greed and abdication of responsibility by councillors and civic officials? has meant that urban housing can only compare with unemployment in the daunting tasks facing our towns.

The problem only attained its new dimensions when people started putting up unauthorized, unplanned and unsanitary structures for rental. Previously, the shanties that existed at the periphery of the old city boundaries were 'owner-occupied' - in Mathare for example - and could be controlled. As the City of Nairobi and other towns expanded, someone somewhere spotted the potential gold mine and the rush was on.

Some of the first people to do so were the councillors themselves and the officers who serve local authorities. They have capitalised on the situation, either directly or through their friends and political supporters. With

such vested interests, it is no wonder that the problem has not found satisfactory solutions. It is the reason why one finds that shanties and kiosks in a particular location are demolished while others are left standing."

Standard editorial August 11th, 1980

4.1 Introduction

This chapter concerns itself with the official and unofficial responses to unauthorized settlements in Nairobi between 1960 and 1980 that are typified in the two editorials above. The first editorial sums up the conventional "bulldoze and remove shanty towns since they are full of social deviants" approach. The second editorial describes something completely different involving Government officials and their friends in capitalising upon the opportunities for rental housing in such areas. These two newspaper editorials neatly encapsulate the political economy of unauthorized housing in Nairobi over the last twenty years.

We shall attempt to trace the political and economic factors that have transformed unauthorized settlements in Nairobi such that they are now characterized by the operation of a capitalist housing "market" (albeit illegal). In particular we shall focus on the process of increased de facto political acceptance and control of such areas.

This process will be shown to involve both political and economic factors in the urban land market. The relevance of the land market resulting from the settler policy of racial segregation and the rise of African property ownership will be shown. Similarly the use of urban land and housing as rewards for political patronage is important to our understanding. For example it will be argued that it is political control that provides security for capital to be invested in unauthorized areas. The commercialization of unauthorized housing is not solely the result of economic forces; it is the result

of a subtle interaction of both political and economic developments within Nairobi. Indeed like the Colonial authorities' experience after 1945 this chapter is ultimately concerned with the process by which the state loses and then regains control of a rapidly growing Nairobi. In this latter process we can see the international agencies' interest in Kenyan housing policy. Consequently we can see their influence in encouraging what are essentially policies of labour stabilization and self-help.

This chapter is structured as follows: in the first section we shall examine the failure of a conventional housing policy with the authorities subsequent loss of control; in the next section the resultant proliferation of unauthorized settlements, their internal organization and subsequent commercialization. This will be followed by a description of the authorities' responses to such settlements in particular demolition which has resulted in the expulsion of the urban poor from central Nairobi. Next we shall give an overview of the extent and mechanisms of commercialization within unauthorized housing throughout Nairobi. Finally we shall examine the "new" pragmatic responses to such areas that are associated with the international agencies and the processes by which the authorities are regaining control over "outcast" Nairobi.

4.2 The failure of conventional housing policy

The end of the State of Emergency in 1960 marked the end of any official attempt to control population movement. Since then there has been rapid in-migration to Nairobi such that its population has grown from 343,500 in 1962 to 827,800 in 1979. This represents an annual growth rate of 5.8% between 1962 and 1969 and 5% in the later period between 1969 and 1979 (Economic Survey, 1981). However, such figures hide the extremely high annual growth rates amongst the low-

income inhabitants - a recent estimate was 22.5%.¹ These growth rates are predominantly the result of the high level of rural-urban migration to Nairobi. In essence it is this process that creates the insatiable demand for housing. While the causes of such migration need not concern us here it is crucial to note "that to the migrants themselves, it (migration) is seen as a private gain" (ILO, 1972, 50). Rural-urban migration is not irrational. In the immediate post-independence years the migration rate to Nairobi was also increased by some "deferred" migration caused by the Emergency. In particular with the lifting of controls the Kikuyu were returning.

Nairobi like almost all urban centres in East Africa is urbanizing rapidly. Unfortunately it is also the worst prepared for this development as a result of its settler past. Thus one legacy of the settler attitude that Nairobi was a European settler city is that the inappropriate official housing "standards" originally designed for the settler minority have, at least on paper, been maintained after independence. Many of the recent attempts towards politically accepting and stabilizing unauthorized settlements within Nairobi are thus also attempts to dismantle the settler nature of Kenya's "urban" policy. Or to put it another way, attempts to make the political and legal system better reflect the prevailing socio-economic conditions of independent Kenya.

A recent study succinctly spelt out the basic problem and rationale of unauthorized housing.

"The Building Code and Local Authorities' interpretation of the Public Health Act have combined to set an effective minimum standard, which is for each urban housing unit, built of 'suitable materials' to have at least two rooms, plus its own kitchen and toilet and with a maximum of five occupants. Insistence on such a minimum given the low incomes of the majority of urban households, implies a need for a widespread and heavy subsidy. In the absence of the effective possibilities of such a subsidy, an enormous housing shortfall is necessary."

(ILO, 1979, 33).

As a result of this official housing standard a significant group must find accommodation in unauthorized settlements where planning legislation is not enforced and secondly where they can obtain shelter that is compatible with their meagre incomes. In the 1960s this mainly involved subsistence shelter (i.e. self-built) and squatting. However in the next two decades it has systematically evolved into a rental market. The result of this has been that the 'advantage' of squatting, namely the ability to live in Nairobi rent-free no longer exists for the urban poor. Since "Operation Anvil" in 1954 when the colonial authorities cleared Mathare valley Nairobi's unauthorized settlements have grown extensively until by 1980 they account for approximately 40% of Nairobi's population. This growth has been particularly concentrated in the three settlements of Mathare Valley, Kibera and Kwangware. We shall now attempt to document the 'official' housing policy.

Conventional housing policy: Institutional reform

In 1964 the newly independent Government of Kenya invited a United Nations mission (Bloomberg & Abrams) to assess the housing situation in Kenya, and their report forms the basis of Kenya's housing policy. The report starts by documenting the size of the problem and emphasizes "... the lack of capital with which to build houses and disparities between what the average family can pay for its shelter and the cost of producing it". (Bloomberg & Abrams, 1964,1) The problem is one of capital shortage rather than land shortage within Nairobi. Indeed they even suggest that the city can absorb without difficulty at least five times its then population. (Bloomberg & Abrams, 1964, 2). The report recommended inter alia the establishment in the Ministry of Housing of a National Housing Authority, the training of relevant personnel, "that a concerted effort be made to finance as large a part of the programme as possible with external aid", that

"government funds be directed toward serving the lower income groups", that sub-letting only be tolerated in special circumstances, that property itself not be subsidized but help given to potential purchasers, the establishment of a Mortgage Finance Corporation, the "utmost attention" for the development of site and service projects and the maximum participation of local authorities in the programme. (Bloomberg & Abrams, 1964, 32-58). While this report provides the backbone to Kenya's housing policy some of its recommendations have not been implemented and remain contentious issues even sixteen years later in 1980; in particular the emphasis upon site and service, the prohibition of sub-letting and control of subsidies.

The Government of Kenya's housing policy is spelt out in Sessional Paper No. 5 of 1966/1967 which was entitled "Housing Policy for Kenya". In this document much of the emphasis is upon organisational change and innovation to tackle a capital shortage to solve a housing problem that it is admitted has reached a 'critical stage'. Thus the Housing Finance Company of Kenya (H.F.C.K.) was set up to provide private mortgages. This institution was jointly owned by the Government of Kenya and the Commonwealth Development Corporation (C.D.C.),² which is the first evidence of international finance capital's involvement in Kenyan housing in partnership with national institutions. The emphasis in its lending policy has been predominantly in favour of middle income housing. The Colonial Central Housing Authority was reformed and renamed the National Housing Corporation (N.H.C.) to coordinate and channel funds to other institutions i.e. local authorities and to play a 'dynamic' role in a progressive low-cost housing programme. Finally in association with the University of Nairobi the Housing Research and Development Unit (H.R.D.U.) was set up to provide a technical and social research input.

These institutions with local authorities have continued until

today as the main agencies involved in the State's intervention in housing. This has taken the form of public (i.e. Council) housing and the encouragement of the private sector. At an institutional level this involved the N.H.C. building public housing while the H.F.C.K. was financing middle income private sector housing. Despite policy statements to the contrary this official housing policy, at least until the early 1970s focused predominantly upon legally acceptable formal housing estates that only middle-income inhabitants could afford. Thus for example the 1970-1974 Kenyan Development Plan stated that the government would only fund public housing which cost below K£1,200 a unit. However the implementation was different: between 1969 and 1972 the average cost per unit of K£1,377 was above the official maximum. (Stren, 1975, 269).

Conventional housing policy: middle income bias

In the remainder of this section we shall explore some of the implications of this official housing policy. It is very revealing in terms of Nairobi's political economy, in particular the operation of Nairobi City Council, and the nature of the housing market. There are more than technical reasons why the official housing policy in Nairobi has been predominantly middle-income orientated despite its populist rhetoric. Hence we shall examine why the conventional housing policy was failing.

The public housing which was built was essentially middle-income but subsidized such that rents were below market levels. In a situation of extreme housing shortage the allottee (i.e. recipient) of such public housing would immediately sub-let some or all of the rooms at market rents thus realising for himself a handsome profit over and above the rent-free accommodation for himself. Here the allottee is effectively realising himself the subsidy in the public sector's provision of housing by reletting at market levels. Such practices are extremely common throughout Nairobi's housing markets.

It is thus possible and indeed common for a person to be simultaneously a 'tenant' in public housing and an (illegal) landlord letting to sub-tenants. Indeed often the official 'tenant' may not even live in his public sector house but live elsewhere and use his allocation exclusively for rental purposes. While this effective redistribution from the public sector to individual potential tenant landlords might be justified in terms of income-generation for low income families the allocation procedures point otherwise. Thus public housing in Nairobi is used by the emergent elite as a lucrative source of personal accumulation. As Harris writes:

"What is disturbing in Nairobi is that it is far from clear that the administration apparatus allocates the housing units to those who are most 'socially deserving' of the subsidy. In fact the opposite seems to be true."
(Harris, 1969, 6).

Hence we may begin to understand why the allocation of public housing and land is so sensitive. According to official documents such allocations are carried out in two stages. First applicants must meet some universalistic criteria such as income level or being registered on an official waiting list. Then from among those eligible plots or houses will be allocated by some 'fair' technique. Random selection by computer is a popular method. Unfortunately this procedure does not occur outside official documents. Instead those with political power simply allocate such housing assets to themselves, their relatives and to political patrons and clients as rewards. Here we can see clientilism and corruption in operation but also the financial rewards the elite are able to obtain from their social networks.

By the nature of things data on such allocations is not readily available. However one example can be given. It comes from an expose quoted in the Sunday Standard on 8th and 15th June 1980 which contained allocation lists for sites in the United States Agency for

International Development (USAID) funded Inner Umoja site and service scheme. This was intended for low income individuals who would then develop the site themselves, but according to the lists an astonishing 52 out of 89 (58%) of the plots were allocated to Nairobi city councillors and government representatives. Needless to say none of these 52 could conceivably be eligible in terms of formal criteria.

Indeed the situation of public housing allocations and their subsequent profitable subletting is so scandalous that the Kenyan Government was recently forced to announce a 'one man one house rule' for public housing; the legal enforceability of this is at best debatable. In a sense this was official recognition of a problem that is widely known throughout Nairobi. Thus not only do the 'wrong' individuals get public housing since the officials allocate them to themselves but officials often allocate more than one unit to themselves by using wives' names or any 'stool pigeons'. Within Nairobi there is multiple 'ownership' or 'tenancy' within public housing.

The point we are attempting to make here is one we shall return to in later chapters: that the use of political power to allocate housing assets to further the personal business ventures - in this case subsidized landlordism - of administration personnel is common in all sectors of Nairobi's housing market. As we have already pointed out housing (both in the public and private sectors) is an important source of capital accumulation for the emergent bourgeoisie. It is also, since it must be allocated, a simple resource for a self-interested bureaucracy to control to its own economic advantage.³ Thus paradoxically the administration's involvement in protection racket type allocation in unauthorized settlements makes these areas look more not less like the official formal sector housing market.

In part the failure of public housing to meet low-income housing needs can be interpreted in terms of the vested interests involved in

public housing. Certainly these interests were and still are interested in blocking moves away from middle-income conventional housing solutions towards more pragmatic low-income housing options.⁴ However there are some 'technical' reasons for the middle income bias in public housing policies.

Firstly it is relevant to note that due to the uncertainty prior to independence and the loss of real estate and building skills as a result of the exodus of Kenyan Asians the private sector building industry did not return to its 1957-58 levels of activity until the very end of the 1960s. Hence in such a situation during the 1960s

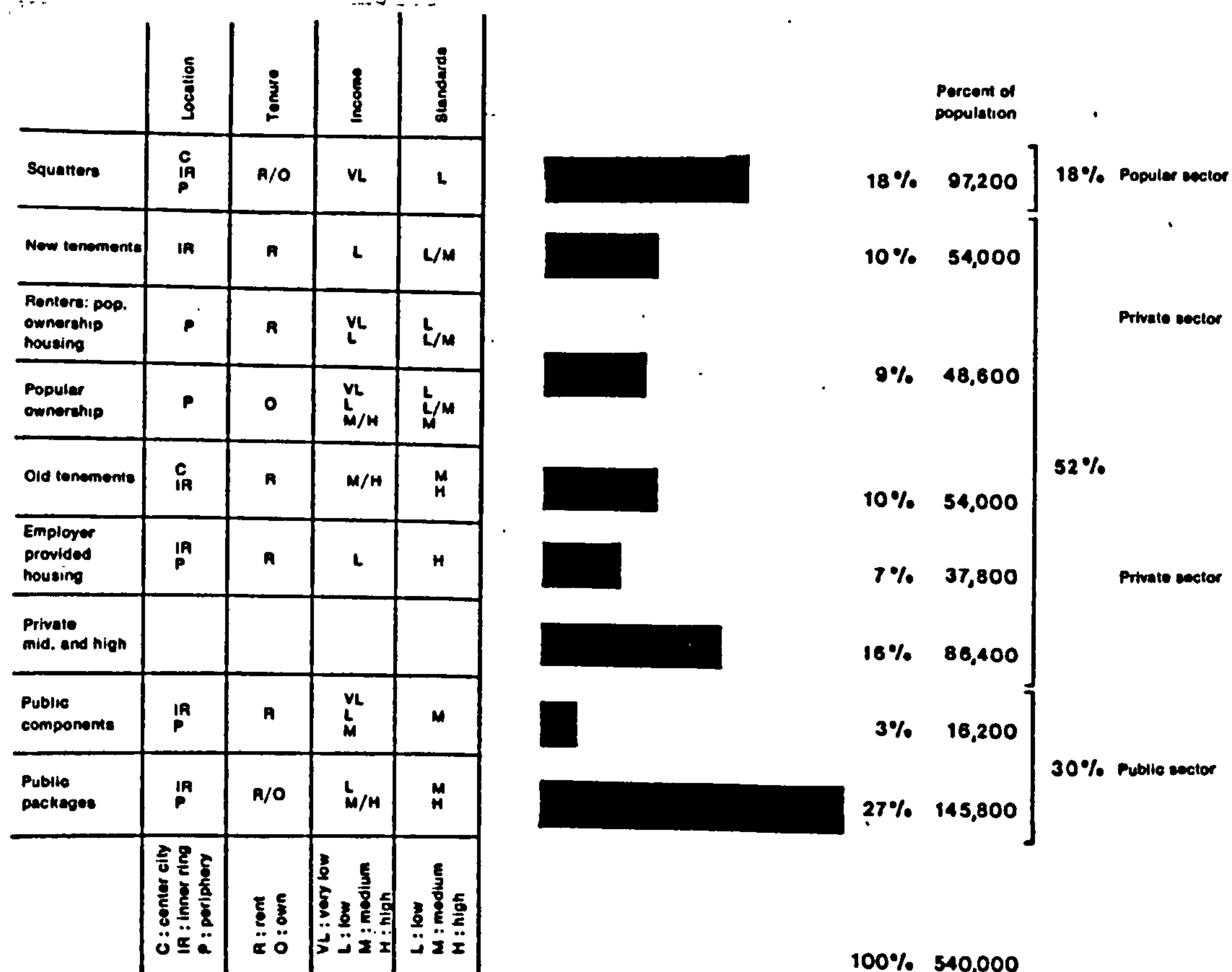
there was some 'justification' for public housing to help fill in this private sector slump in middle and high income house building. However, this middle income bias was to continue long after it could be justified as a temporary expedient. (Temple, K., 1973, 194-200). It is also worth pointing out that these government agencies as we have seen (with the exception of HFCK) were explicitly supposed to be concerned with low income housing.

Another important reason why until recently the official housing policy ignored low income housing was that it was not considered as safe an investment as middle income housing. Thus HFCK housing finance was exclusively used to loan money to the middle income sector. An important aspect of the relatively recent shift in housing policy has been the increasing encouragement of institutional loans to low income recipients. The argument that such loans were high risk has been challenged by consultants (Jorgensen, 1977). As we shall show in subsequent chapters, given the favourable rates of return the financing of low income housing is a lucrative venture for finance capital. Indeed this partly accounts for the shift in emphasis in policy during the 1970s and the interest of the international agencies in this sector.

Undoubtedly there has been inflation in the cost of building materials which has made it increasingly difficult to construct cheap legal, i.e. low-income, housing within Nairobi. The legacy of Nairobi's settler-orientated by-laws is often cited as a reason and a justification for middle-income housing since it is built to the minimum standard that the by-laws permit. While this is undoubtedly true to an extent it is important to understand that it was^{not} the legislation itself that prevented low income housing but the administration's interpretation of such legislation in subjective terms of acceptability (By-law Study, 1980, 5, 33). The by-laws were in fact operating to justify the middle income bias and not as a constraint on low-income housing.

However, despite all these points it was the sheer scale of the housing problem, which was symbolised by the spectacular growth of unauthorised settlements that was ultimately to result in the administration's reluctant move away from conventional housing solutions. Figure 4.1 below shows Racki et al's (1974) breakdown of Nairobi's housing market into housing subsystems with some of their characteristics.

Figure 4.1 Nairobi's Housing Sub-systems



At first glance the public sector contribution in housing 30% of Nairobi's population is significant. However on closer examination we should note that only in their 'Public components' subsystem (3% of the population) are very low income inhabitants represented at all. Secondly unauthorized housing includes both their squatters (approximately subsistence shelter in our terminology) and new tenements (commercialized) subsystems. The unauthorized sector from Fig. 4.1 therefore accounts for 28% of the population of Nairobi. Furthermore since they report that the squatters account for 25% of the low-income population we can calculate that unauthorized housing accounts for 38% of the low-income population and a substantially higher percentage of the very low-income group. The data used is from the early 1970's since when it seems certain that the relative importance of the unauthorized sector has increased. In the next section we shall examine the growth and evolution of this sector.

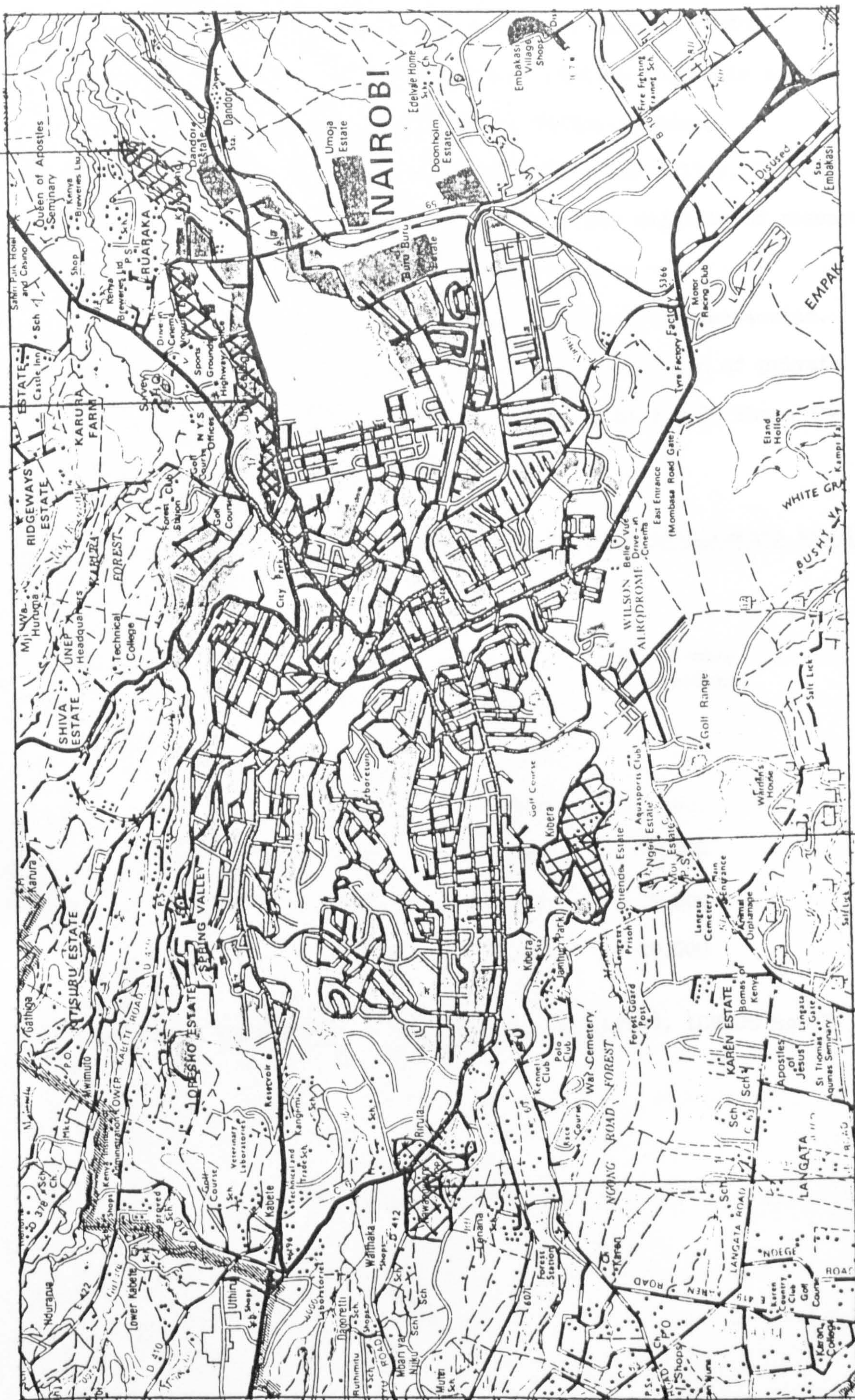
4.3 The Transformation of Nairobi's Unauthorized Settlements

The aim of this section is to examine the commercial revolution that has radically altered Nairobi's unauthorized settlements. We shall focus upon their internal organization and growth; in so doing we shall trace the emergence of a rental sector in such areas. Due to the availability of material we shall focus mainly but not exclusively upon Mathare Valley, Nairobi's most infamous shanty town. However this is fortunate since it was the emergence of Housing Companies in Mathare Valley after 1969 making spectacular profits that arguably represents the most significant event in Nairobi's housing economy since independence. Later on we shall examine the official responses to some of these developments.

Figure 4.2 shows the main areas of unauthorized settlement within Nairobi between 1960 and 1980.⁵ The existence of Nairobi's unauthorized

Figure 4.2 Map of Nairobi's main unauthorized settlements 1960-1980

Koro Kocho /
S. Karobangi
Mathare Valley



Kibera
Kwangwame

Scale 1:100 000

settlements has never come about through organized invasion which is common in Latin America but by a process more akin to gradual accretion. As we can see, by 1980 Nairobi contained four main areas of unauthorized settlements, namely Mathare Valley, Kibera, Kwangware and KoroKocho. While the nuclei of Mathare Valley, Kibera and Kwangware were all in existence before 1960 the majority of research and public interest has focused upon Mathare Valley.

The growth of these four main settlements has been spectacular. One reason for this is, we shall suggest, the intervention of private capital in housing provision. The table below (Figure 4.3) shows the increase in population within each settlement.

Figure 4.3 The population of the major unauthorized settlements within Nairobi

	Mathare Valley	Kwangware/ Dagouetti	Kibera	KoroKocho/ S.Kawobangi
1960	-	18,000	3,000	-
1965	3,000	30,000	6,000	-
1970	35,000	41,500	11,000	2,000
1975	65,000	65,000	20,000	5,000
1980	120,000	90,000	60,000	40,000

Source: Estimates from HRDU (1971), Temple, N. (1974), LCHSUS no. 7 (1976), Hake (1977), Chege (1981).

We shall now consider some of the earlier research into the internal organization of Mathare Valley in the 1960s.

There are basically two historically specific interpretations of unauthorized areas in Nairobi. The first interpretation, which is mainly associated with the 1960s, emphasizes the autonomy and community control within such areas; the second view, which became prevalent in the 1970s, instead emphasizes the control of such areas by the state. These are not mutually exclusive interpretations since they differ only in emphasis. As we shall see, they reflect changes in the situation of unauthorized settlements within Nairobi.

Mathare in the 1960s: community control

Historically Mathare Valley has been associated with militant nationalism (mainly Kikuyu) and for this reason the housing was destroyed by the Colonial administration in Operation Anvil in 1954. One result of this was to encourage the subsequent growth of the non-Kikuyu loyalist settlement of Kibera as a settlement for the urban labour force. Secondly the community that existed in Mathare Valley immediately after 1960 was bound together by a common ex-detainee and ex-mau-mau tradition. These individuals who were forced out of Nairobi in 1954 returned as soon as Emergency regulations were lifted in 1960. (Hake, 1977, 148).

The Valley was settled in nine distinct villages. Each village had its own form of political organization, though generally each would contain a governing committee and a chairman. The latter's duties were reported as:

'allocating house plots and regulating the village's growth; maintaining order through a system of unpaid police and local courts; and dealing with the civil authorities'. (Chana and Morrison, 1973, 218)

The last phrase highlights a difficulty in trying to disentangle different aspects of community development. The question is whether such organizations are examples of 'grassroots democracy' or whether they have been co-opted to become vehicles for state control? It seems

likely that any form of community development will contain both elements; it is their relative importance and emphasis that matters. A major argument throughout this thesis is that the state control element is increasing at the expense of the 'grassroots democracy' element in community development within unauthorized settlements, and that it is through such mechanisms that the state has increased its general control in such areas since the 1960s.

Nevertheless all the available evidence suggests that Mathare Valley in the 1960s was not subject to such state control and that there was a significant amount of local community control and autonomy. Undoubtedly this was enforced by the ever-present threat of demolition and the KANU party organization. (Hake, 1977, 151). Here the state's policy was direct harassment and demolition rather than integration and control. The high level of mobilization and organization of Mathare Village II seemed to depend upon the personality of the village chairman Kiboro. This village chairman has a kind of client-patron relationship with the MP for the area, Dr. Waiyaki in the political party KANU. Hence in such a situation the village supports Dr. Waiyaki's political candidature while he in turn has consistently argued the squatters' case against demolition in parliament and elsewhere (Hake, 1977, 151). We can see how it is often politically useful for such unauthorized settlements to have an outside political patron.

While the exact nature of such political linkages is unknown there can be little doubt that throughout the 1960s Mathare Valley operated with a fair degree of community control over urban development, i.e. in terms of allowing home construction, and that the community was able to mobilize itself to provide funds for social halls, an informal police force and, as we shall see later, a water supply (Hake, 1977, 147-170). It also seems clear that it was the ever-present

which threat of demolition/helped bind the community together against a common enemy i.e. the state as well as the ex -detainee tradition and the KANU party. However we should not over-emphasize the importance of this autonomy as grinding poverty more than anything else typifies Mathare Valley. Also it is extremely difficult to determine whether some community development schemes are really 'voluntary' or not. For example does the collection of money involve 'fund-raising' or a 'protection racket'? It is a contention of this thesis that the latter is more common in Nairobi and Kenya than is often realised.⁶

Until the end of the 1960s housing in Mathare Valley seems to have been partly self-built, i.e. what we called subsistence shelter in Chapter 2, together with an embryonic rental sector. The original Mathare dwellings were made from cartons or cardboard boxes (makotoni) (Hake, 1977, 158). However it appears that in this period, i.e. before 1969, the earliest squatters were starting to add extra rooms onto their structures for rental reasons. (HRDU, 1971, 36). Consequently even before 1969 there is evidence of market forces penetrating the provision of housing in Mathare Valley since individuals were buying houses from original squatters despite the lack of any legal basis for such sales.⁷ However, it would appear that such transactions were recognized by local custom (Richard, 1970, 5). Whether such a housing market even at this stage was free and competitive with no barriers to entry as much of the literature (e.g. ILO, 1972) suggests, is open to debate. There is some evidence that due to local control of building no more houses could be built in Mathare Village II and that this forced up the price of houses sold on the illegal market as well as rents. (Ross, 1973, 140).

Mathare: The Housing Companies

In 1969 a series of events took place which were to revolutionize the scale of rental housing in Mathare Valley. The inhabitants of

Mathare felt that demolition was imminent and decided to form a co-operative⁸ to buy the land upon which they were living illegally (i.e. squatting) in order to ensure their future security. This movement to form co-operatives included both original self-build (subsistence shelter) squatters and later arrivals who had bought such property. Unfortunately,^{as} these cooperatives sought to buy the land upon which they collectively squatted, the price rocketed. In a sense their action almost created a land market which did not exist beforehand. Previously this land had a deflated value partly as a result of the uncertainty associated with the squatters themselves but also due to the general fall in Nairobi real estate values associated with the political uncertainty around the time of independence. (Richard, 1970, 7). But the plot owners who were mostly Asian were able to ask a high price for the sale of their land to the co-operatives. It seems not implausible to suggest, given the uncertainty over the Asian community's future in Kenya, that the Asian plot owners were either willing to sell or amenable to political threats resulting in their selling an appreciating asset.

As a result of this inflation in land prices it became necessary for these co-operatives to seek additional funds, since with their limited funds they were unable to afford to buy the land upon which they squatted. These co-operatives or companies effectively went 'public' and sold shares. They had no difficulty in selling shares and attracting funds since the expected rate of return was high⁹ and land whether urban or rural is always perceived as a safe investment in Kenya. The effective control of these companies in terms of share-ownership became increasingly dominated by individuals from outside Mathare Valley. Even those formed by small-scale squatter landlords showed the same trend. Thus by the end of 1969 new companies were being formed with the object of buying land in Mathare Valley which were

composed entirely of 'outside' members. (Richard, 1970, 7). Up till Spring 1970 size of the eight companies buying land in the Mathare Valley originated there. For these first companies the average share price was 500/-. However, after Spring 1970, of the seven companies buying land only two originated in Mathare. For this group the average share cost was over 3000/-. This increase illustrates the increasing recognition of the profitability of such housing development. The high cost of the shares also illustrates an increasing outside involvement by speculative property developers as opposed to the urban poor. These outsiders could see that despite the high cost of shares - land costs only slightly less per acre in Mathare Valley than land in Muthaiga, Nairobi's diplomatic enclave - Mathare Valley represented an excellent site for urban development, since it was one of the most accessible underdeveloped tracts of urban land to the city centre (Richard, 1970, 7-8). The strong suggestion was that these outside funds were from influential sponsors, even from sophisticated real estate developers. (Jorgensen, 1977, 141). Clearly this is a very different situation and represents a different motivation than that of squatters collectively attempting to buy the land upon which they illegally live. The formation of such external companies provides the clearest example of the intervention of capital in this sector.

Increasingly these outsiders were pressurizing their companies to start house construction, presumably to yield some return on their investment. To start with they investigated legal housing development. However, given the official minimum requirements this was too expensive.

Then:

'After considerable hesitation the companies elected to ignore the regulations and begin construction. They in effect invaded their own land, building unauthorized housing according to their own plans and (to) suit their own needs. The risk paid off handsomely. No demolition orders were issued, and returns on investment were very high'.
(Richard, 1970, 8).

In part this lack of demolition was attributable to the proximity of the General Election in November 1969. It also seems likely that there was some tacit agreement with Nairobi city council and the government.¹⁰ Since the original squatters had increasingly lost control of their companies to outsiders, much of this housing development was not in their interests in terms of shelter but was motivated by profit for the shareholders. Hence the limited objective of owning the land upon which their houses rested was swept aside in an orgy of speculative wooden back-to-back tenement building. Thus on occasions the original squatters have been subject to more eviction pressure from the companies than they were from either the state or the former Asian landowners. (Richard, 1970; HRDU, 1971; Temple,^{F.} 1973, 272). Partly this was due to the financial control of the outsiders but also it would seem that the more sophisticated were able to confuse the original squatters and thus take advantage of the latter group's limited education. This was elegantly put by a spokesman for the, appropriately named, Quick Service Company, who said that:

'They (squatters) are becoming a bother. They are still sitting on land we purchased and we would like to demolish the shanties and put up new houses.'
(Nation, August 13, 1970)

The rationale here is clearly that of an urban real estate developer.

The return on capital investment in this tenement housing was extremely high - somewhere in the region of 50-100% (HRDU, 1971, 62; Hake, 1977, 159). It is this profitability that has transformed the entire provision of low income housing in Nairobi. In a 16-month period in 1969-1971 the companies built 7,628 room units in Mathare Valley, doubling its population (Temple, 1973, 268-275). It was spectacular construction rates such as this that were to impress the international agencies.

In this section we have shown the transformation that the housing companies have effected in terms of housing provision in Mathare Valley.

In the next section we shall investigate the demolition of unauthorized housing before giving an overview of the commercialization process within Nairobi. This is necessary as unlike Mathare Valley the commercialization of unauthorized housing in other settlements was dependent upon administrative control whose sanction is partly the threat of demolition.

4.4 Official Responses to Unauthorized Settlements: Demolition and Expulsion

The Minister addressing Mathare Valley:

'For long you have thought the Government has forgotten you. You must have heard this morning over the radio or read in the newspapers how much the Government is offering you'.. A Mathare resident: 'I personally have never thought the Government has forgotten us, for we are often visited and arrested for illegal things. We appreciate now that the Government realises we have suffered enough'.

Nation, 6 June 1969

In this section we shall examine the policy of demolition which has had the effect of concentrating unauthorized settlement within the city and removing the urban poor from central Nairobi. In the 1960s the official Kenyan housing policy was directed towards legally acceptable formal housing which, as we saw in Section 4.2, was only available and affordable by middle income inhabitants. Meanwhile the other aim of this policy was direct harrassment and demolition of unauthorized settlement. This policy has a strong continuity with colonial attitudes. The urban poor are urged to 'go back to the land' in the same way that the settlers insisted that Nairobi was a European city. In such a situation the administration (colonial or neo-colonial) considers itself to have no responsibility to such groups since they should not be in the city in the first place. Whereas previously the colonial authorities said Africans could only be 'allowed' in Nairobi if they provided labour, essentially what is said today, if it is

decoded, is that one must be 'modern, western and educated' enough to be allowed into Nairobi and that the urban poor must return to the rural areas to preserve 'national' culture. Here as in many cases we can see how the assumptions and pretensions of settler society have been preserved in modern Kenya. (ILO, 1972, 87).¹¹

The administration's only responsibility is towards the maintenance of 'law and order' and health in the city and the preservation of Nairobi's image. Consequently many of Nairobi's unauthorized settlements have been demolished under the banner of 'keeping the city clean'. In Figure 4.4 there is a very approximate list of some of the major demolitions in Nairobi since 1960, that we could discover. This is not an exhaustive or accurate list. However, it most likely under- rather than over-estimates the scale of demolition.

Figure 4.4 Major Demolitions in Nairobi 1960-1980

		Individuals	Structures/units
1963:	Pumwani Road	not known	not known
1966:	Langata	400-500	80-100
1969:	Grogan Rd	not known	200
1970-71:	Kaburini	48,000	8,943
1971	Eastleigh sec III	10,000	1,900
	elsewhere in Eastleigh	12,000	2,000
1977-78:	Nairobi river valley area	10,000	

Source: Hake, 1977; Nation and Standard cuttings

As we can see from the map below Figure 4.5 these demolitions have concentrated on certain areas notably Nairobi river valley and left other areas of unauthorized settlement intact. In part this reflects the fact that their location is mainly in central Nairobi, and therefore were highly visible, and partly the political power-

Figure 4.5 Map of demolitions in Nairobi

Nairobi River Valley Area
Grogan, Kaburini, Eastleigh Section III



LAMATA

Scale 1:100 000

lessness of these urban squatters (Temple,^{F.}/1973, 260). However we shall also argue that it results from an implicit policy of stabilizing certain settlements, which results in the development of a commercialised rental sector, and the destabilization or removal of other settlements. The result has been the containment of unauthorised housing and urban poverty in specific locations.

In 1969, the year the major demolitions started in Nairobi, we learn that the Minister of Housing was warning about 'mushrooming shanties' and is quoted as saying that 'The Government would not hesitate to bulldoze such shanties in the interest of public health in the city'. (Nation, 16 December 1969). The justification of demolitions in 'scientific' terms is common, for example public health acts are used to justify house demolition in terms of the prevention of disease. Within Nairobi this is particularly interesting as the by-laws have no scientific basis at all; they are based upon a pre-germ theory of disease transmission with such archaic concepts as 'bad air' (By-law Study, 1980). Urban planning's role in rendering political decisions as 'technical' is well known and within an underdeveloped context extremely obvious.

As an example in 1963 it was claimed by Nairobi City Council that the provision of water to unauthorized settlements would legitimize an illegal situation. Nairobi City Council would not, therefore, connect Mathare Valley to the water system despite the residents' stated ability to pay for the service. Indeed through community action money was raised and a pipe laid which was subsequently attached to an adjacent private plot. The water that was legally obtained on this plot was then resold privately to the settlement. Unfortunately this system was not adequate. However, the outbreak of cholera in Nairobi in 1971 cut through such legal niceties and 'technical' difficulties, and water standpipes were installed within five days in

Mathare Valley and Kibera (Hake, 1977, 154-155). The fundamentally self-interested nature of this action by the authorities was quite obvious.¹² (Temple,^{F.} 1973, 280). By 1978 individuals were able to obtain official licences in unauthorized settlements to sell water from a 'water kiosk' to their neighbours. Since then the number of kiosks has increased dramatically partly on account of their profitability. In Chapter 6 we shall discuss the provision of water in Kibera.

The provision of water is an excellent example of the trend in official thinking towards 'accepting' and stabilizing some settlements while destabilizing others. These two trends have also been noted in the informal sector and in the casual labour market elsewhere. (Bromley and Gerry, 1979). Consequently Mathare Valley, Kibera and Kwangware appear to have been stabilized to the extent that water provision implies some form of de facto political recognition. Meanwhile those settlements in Nairobi River Valley (i.e. Kaburini and Grogan or Kirinyaga Rd) as Figures 4.4 and 4.5 show have been continually demolished and harassed. From 1969 till 1978 the city council askaris demolished sections of Nairobi River Valley settlements at least five times, sometimes actually setting fire to the settlement.

The exact reasons for this essentially dual policy towards unauthorized settlements are complicated. Firstly the settlements in Nairobi River Valley as we can see from Figure 4.5 are the most central and visible. Land here probably has high value for alternative uses although as we shall see the same is true of Kibera. Certainly the policy towards Nairobi River Valley would fit in with the objective of cleaning up the 'image' of the city. Interestingly in the 'temporary' settlements in these areas there was a higher level of owner-occupation and less building by landlords than in Mathare Valley. They also had no links to their MP and less social and political organization. (Hake, 1977, 115). We have already seen in section 4.3

how Mathare Valley benefited from a powerful patron.

However, the demolitions in Eastleigh section III involved, and were partially justified in terms of, ridding the city of exploitative wealthy shanty landlords. Here legal plot owners were building unauthorized shacks for rental on their own plots (Hake, 1977, 102). This is an example of the sub-letting we discussed in section 4.2, the difference here is that new extra unauthorized rooms are built on the same plot as one's legal structure. From 1971 onwards these unauthorized extensions were systematically demolished.

Meanwhile the three major unauthorized settlements remained and were given at least de facto recognition. We would account for this partly by the fact that all three are more or less 'out of sight' from an image viewpoint. They are also larger in size and finally have or had important client-patron links with important individuals particularly their M.P.s (Chege, 1981). This was particularly significant during the late 1960s and early 1970s when demolition was at its most aggressive (Nelson, 1982).

While the anti-landlord ideology expressed in the case of Eastleigh is an important part of everyday politics in Nairobi, it does not explain this dual policy towards unauthorized settlement. However at a political level it seems likely that it was only after the African political elite had consolidated itself after independence in 1963, that it had the political confidence to start a policy of demolition.

While the size of settlement and land values are fairly important in explaining demolitions political patronage and the involvement of outside investors in the housing market are equally important. It seems that settlements with outside political and economic interests are less likely to be demolished. Consequently the operations of the land market are refracted through political considerations, in terms of patronage and expediency. For example while land in Kibera

has high alternative use value its demolition so far is not politically expedient. In part this reflects the overall policy aims of containment and control.

However, within Kenya political patronage is fluid and can be competitive, thus the demolition of unauthorized settlements can be used for political ends. In the November 1979 Election in Mathare Valley one candidate (Ngumba) who was the Mayor of Nairobi had limited local support, but used his offices to attempt to demolish his opponent Dr. Waiyaki's areas of local support - a case of gerrymandering by bulldozer. His campaign was unsuccessful despite limited demolition (Chege, 1981).

The most spectacular event in this pattern of containment and concentration of unauthorized settlements and consequently the urban poor occurred in October 1977. On this occasion the entire Nairobi River Valley site was demolished and approximately 10,000 inhabitants were effectively removed 15Kms out of Nairobi to the new peripheral sites of KoroKocho and Ngomongo. Since then these two sites have seen extremely rapid commercialized rental housing development often physically on the same site as earlier more subsistence-like shelter. Even in 1983, five years after this demolition, nobody has reinvaded the Nairobi River Valley site. Amazingly, the administration have actually managed to 'clean up' central Nairobi's image albeit at the cost of hounding 10,000 citizens to the very edges of the city. It is our suggestion that it is the stabilization and commercialization of housing in other unauthorized settlements that has allowed simultaneously such 'clean up' policies to be pursued 'successfully'. Since the housing market now offers some alternative accommodation - albeit outside the city - it is now easier to police and prevent the reinvasion of sites in the central city (i.e. Nairobi river valley). This linkage between housing and social control is well established and as

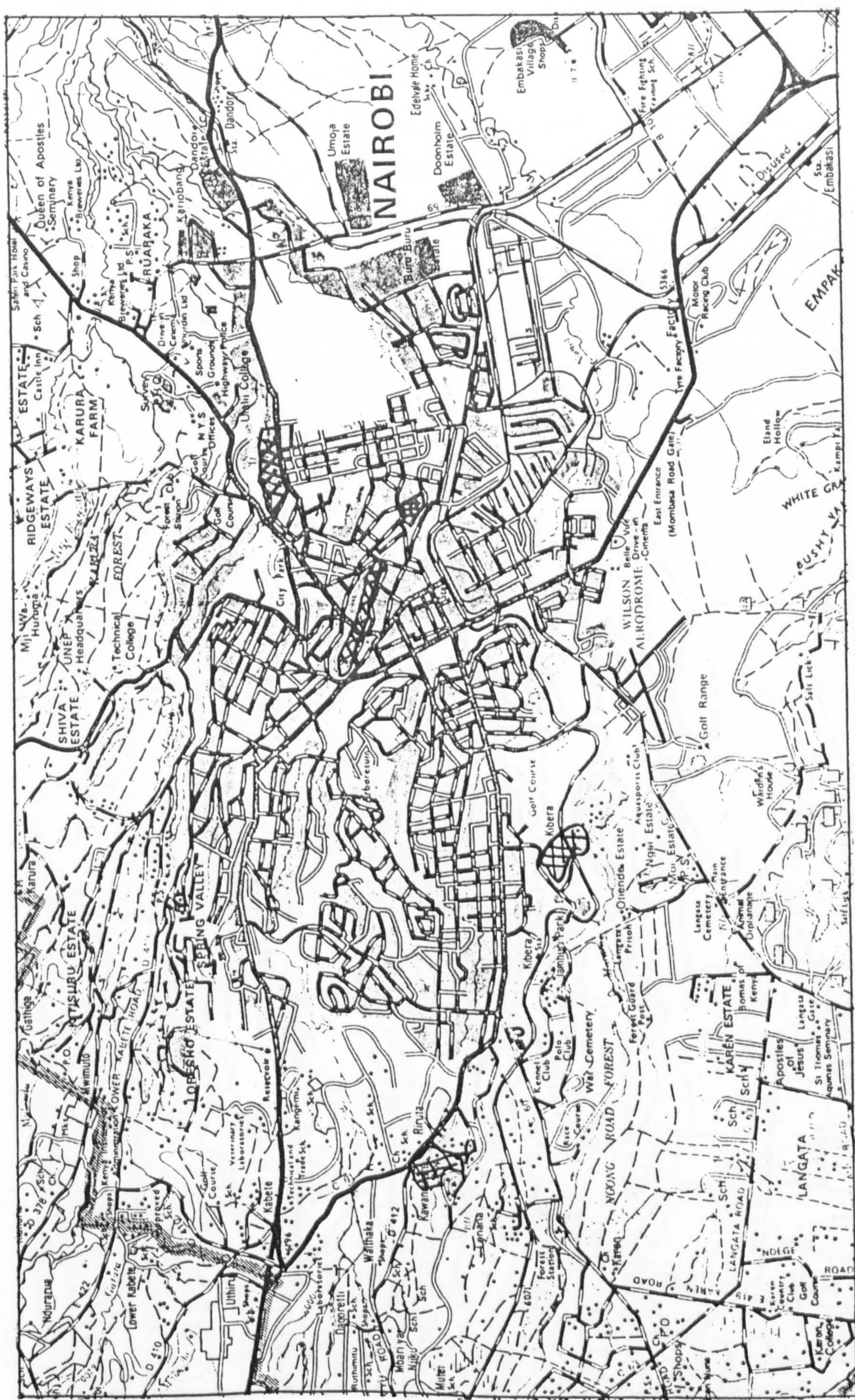
we saw in Chapter 3 a contributory factor in the breakdown of the pass law system in the 1930s. (Van Zwanenberg, 1972).

It is the peripheral location of this squatting alternative that maintains central Nairobi's affluent image. Where no alternative is 'provided' it becomes as we have seen operationally impossible to prevent reinvasion of unauthorized sites. By 'providing' some minimal alternative the authorities have broken the invasion-demolition-invasion cycle. They have effectively cleaned up central Nairobi by removing the urban poor and contained and concentrated them in a few specific unauthorized settlements. The location of Nairobi's unauthorized settlements in 1960, in 1970 and 1980 as shown in the maps in Figures 4.6, 4.7 and 4.8 below show these two processes of containment and concentration. It is also interesting to see how we could characterise the 1960s as the period when the squatters' almost appeared to 'invade' central Nairobi while the 1970s might be characterized by the administration's successful attempts to expel them. In so doing residential segregation in Nairobi has been increased. Effectively this dual policy towards unauthorized settlements has much in common with urban apartheid in South Africa. Indeed the rulers of Johannesburg would be proud of this successful removal operation. Herein lies the secret to Nairobi's western image: the poverty is exported out of city. Nairobi is a mirage.

4.5 Nairobi's Unauthorized Settlements: an overview of commercialization

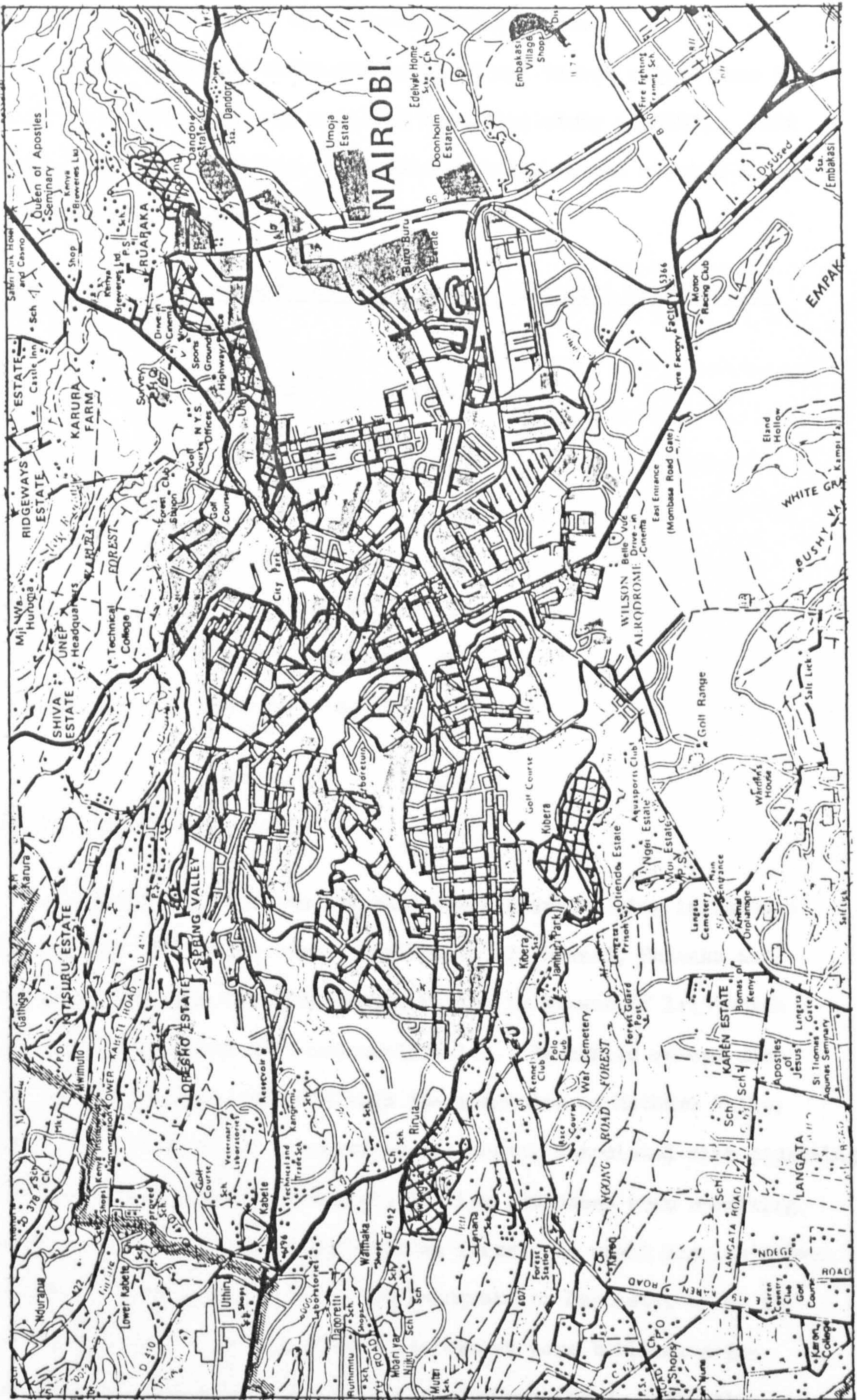
In section 4.3 we showed the commercialization of unauthorized housing that was associated with the housing companies in Mathare Valley. Here we shall examine similar processes throughout Nairobi and some general consequences of this phenomena. In the previous section we saw how demolition had the effect of stabilizing some specific settlements. Here we shall also show how the threat of

Figure 4.7 Map of unauthorised settlements in Nairobi 1970



Scale 1:100 000

Figure 4.8 Map of unauthorised settlements in Nairobi 1980



Scale 1:100 000

demolition within some of these specific settlements was necessary for the intervention of the private rental sector.

Figure 4.9 below shows the landlord and tenant ratios from the 1976 low cost housing and squatter upgrading study (LCHSUS). This makes clear the extent to which Nairobi's low income housing sector has been commercialized.

Figure 4.9 Landlord and Tenant Ratios in Nairobi's Unauthorized Settlements

Pumwani ¹³	1:15.7
Mathare Valley	
Village I	1: 4.0
Ngei II	1: 2.0
Ngei I	1: 5.9
Village IV	1: 1.5
Company housing	1: 99
Ruaraka/Baba	
dogo	1: 18
Kwangware	1: 15

Source: LCHSUS no 5, 1976

From the above we can see that the company housing in Mathare Valley, and the unauthorized settlements of Pumwani, Ruaraka and Kwangware all have landlord-tenant ratios in excess of 1:15 which implies a high level of commercialization. Meanwhile we can also see the more modest ratios within the remainder of Mathare Valley which is indicative of a modest rental sector associated with squatting. In Kwangware and Kibera commercialization processes were occurring but they took different institutional forms. We shall discuss Kibera at length in Chapters 5 to 9. In Kwangware or Dagoretti there is evidence that in 1970 individual landowners were building a lot of technically unauthorized rental structures (HRDU, 1971, 81). However it is also suggested that this private sector development had

strong social ties with the 'community' (Temple^{F.}/1973, 302) and was more locally initiated than the development in Mathare Valley. Nevertheless the evidence for a private rental market in Nairobi's unauthorized settlements is quite simply overwhelming. This is in complete contrast to the theoretical 'squatter' settlement which would contain owner occupiers.

While the intervention of capital in Mathare Valley was via a cooperative land buying movement, in other parts of Nairobi it was facilitated through the administrative structure. The demolition of squatter housing has become increasingly individualized with highly effective (informal) development control. The administration is increasingly demolishing individual structures within settlements rather than entire settlements. In effect, like the mafia, the administration allocates 'protection' from demolition. It was often individuals within the administration itself who by 'straddling' between the public and private sectors were able to invest in unauthorized settlements despite the threat of demolition. It would seem that it was the information of knowledge that individuals had access to from their public sector posts that gave them and their friends and clients the security for their personal private capital investment in unauthorized settlements. For example the World Bank team in 1976 looking for upgrading and/or site and service sites decided not to choose Kibera as there was so much official uncertainty over its alternative land use. They also mentioned that uncontrolled house construction was proceeding at such a pace that a moratorium was necessary. (LCHSUS, No. 7, 1976, 122 and 117). Obviously, since housing was being constructed, some individuals were prepared to invest despite this uncertainty, or else had private assurances that removed the uncertainty over demolition.

It is the contention of this thesis that such assurances were

obtained through these individuals' access to the administrative structure and that it is this which partly explains the intervention of capital in the provision of low income shelter. The latter process is itself conditional upon the administration having effective control in unauthorized settlements. It is through such 'inside' mechanisms that investment in unauthorized areas seems able to reap very high profits without bearing much risk: investors have personal guarantees of the security of their buildings from demolition. As the administration now has control over house building in such areas it is becoming increasingly difficult for low income inhabitants to 'exit' from the housing market (i.e. practise subsistence shelter) since unless they have 'protection' their attempts at self-build will face demolition.

However, as we shall suggest later, at the extreme periphery of the city individuals may still live rent-free. In other words the point at which land values become so low that individuals are tolerated living rent-free is moving further out from the centre of Nairobi. This is consistent with a conventional neo-classical cone shape model of urban land values.

It is worth attempting to quantify the scale of unauthorized real estate within Nairobi. If we assume that three-quarters of Nairobi's unauthorized population are renters and that approximately 40% of Nairobi's population live in unauthorized settlements, we can estimate a tenant population of around 300,000. Then if we assume they live three to a room they will occupy 100,000 rooms (or if 6 to a room, 50,000 rooms). Assuming the average rent level to be 100/- a month, we can then estimate the total expenditure on rents within Nairobi's unauthorized settlements.

Figure 4.10 Estimates of Rental Expenditure in Nairobi's Unauthorized Settlements

Assumed level of occupation (persons per room)	Room units required	Annual rental expenditure
3	100,000	K£6 million
6	50,000	K£3 million

If we also assume an annual capital return of 50% - a conservative estimate for the housing companies in Mathare - then the capital investment in this sector is approximately double the annual expenditure. This would give capital investment figures of K£6 million and K£12 million depending upon the occupancy rate. It is clear from such calculations that this unauthorized rental sector is far more than simply an interesting economic backwater. Secondly it is important to note that this sector does not appear in Kenya's official statistics or tax revenue. Finally it is interesting to speculate as to what proportion of this capital invested is as is popularly suggested 'hot money' in the process of being 'laundered'.

There are some interesting general consequences of the political control in unauthorized settlements and the intervention of capital in the provision of low income shelter. Firstly as the probability of demolition declines the more unauthorized settlements are determined by the operation of the urban land market. Secondly the actual operation of this housing market is 'capitalistic', and characterized by poor landlord-tenant relations and housing construction by sub-contracting. Thirdly there is an increasing concentration of capital in this sector, since the scale of operation is no longer constrained by poverty. In 1980 we would estimate that three-quarters of all unauthorized structures were completely commercialized, with all the new housing stock being constructed explicitly for rental rather than

as subsistence shelter. The remaining quarter that was not built explicitly for rent is the residual from an earlier period (i.e. 1960s) of subsistence shelter. As we have seen this development was in part dependent in some settlements in the state establishing control. This administrative control was needed for capital to effect its intervention.

4.6 Official Responses II: Towards a Pragmatic Housing Policy

This section is an attempt to trace the other official and individual responses to unauthorized settlements apart from demolition. In particular the way official responses are moving towards legitimising the intervention of capital in unauthorized settlements with the evolution of a more pragmatic housing policy. The move towards a more pragmatic approach was particularly associated with the international agencies' involvement. This private sector involvement in unauthorized settlements was not the raison d'etre of these pragmatic housing policies; instead they may be seen as a response to Nairobi's worsening housing crisis that we discussed in Section 4.2. At a political level this policy shift can be interpreted as an attempt by the administration to regain control. Nevertheless it is important to understand that the policies pursued do not always appear to be mutually consistent. Thus for example, during the 1970s Nairobi City Council was simultaneously demolishing illegal settlements, privately making money out of them and publically involved in a pragmatic low-income housing policy with the World Bank. This section is an attempt to unravel some of this complexity.

In the early 1970s, we can trace almost a 'rediscovery' of urban poverty in the third world. In part this was part of the increased cynicism about 'development' but it also reflected the international agencies' increasing involvement in urban affairs and housing. For

example the HRDU study of Mathare Valley, which was strongly influenced by Turner, stated that:

'The main purpose of describing Mathare Valley is to bring the problem of uncontrolled settlements into focus in the hope that it will no longer be regarded as socially marginal and physically insignificant but rather as one of the most crucial aspects of the city's future developments'. (HRDU, 1971, 1)

Like a lot of work at this time it had at its heart the desire that such areas should be conceded the right to exist and not be demolished.

Secondly they suggested that:

'The public sector can best provide technical services as a permanent framework for the previously uncontrolled and under-valued efforts of the people to build their own housing when and how they can'. (HRDU, 1971, 71)

This bears strong resemblance to Turner's prescriptions that were being internationally touted at the time. In what follows we shall show how this 'self-help' concept essentially becomes corrupted to mean the intervention of the private sector.

This interest in small scale activity was highlighted even more in the famous report of the ILO mission of Kenya in 1972. It was this report that publicized the informal-formal dichotomy despite earlier work in this field by Hart which was only published in 1973. The Kenyan Government was recommended not only to stop harassing this sector, but to actively encourage it:

'from the vantage point of central Nairobi, with its gleaming skyscrapers, the dwellings and commercial structures of the informal sector look indeed like hovels...., it requires a leap of the imagination and considerable openness of mind to perceive the informal sector as a sector of thriving economic activity and a source of Kenya's wealth.' (ILO, 1972, 5)

In the field of housing this pragmatic approach gained more weight with the involvement from 1972 of the World Bank in this sphere. Increasingly 'site and service' and squatter upgrading schemes were being internationally promoted. Both rely upon legal land titles, and the construction of services by the state, around which

housing is either built or improved with the help of technical assistance and a loan. Self-help was expected to be the mode of construction: these schemes were an attempt to harness the squatter's ability to house himself. To be legal and affordable by such individuals, such schemes implied a lowering of standards regarding what was a legally acceptable structure.

These ideas were strongly opposed by the African political elite who interpreted such schemes as 'colonial' and reminiscent of the old settler philosophy of two sets of standards, one for Europeans and a lower set for Africans. There was an element of deja vu for the African political elite being told by predominantly white experts that their 'standards' were too high. Hence as a commentator noted in 1971 the gap between the politicians ^{and} / the experts was 'immense' (Werlin, 1974). Indeed, in 1972 Kenyatta, in a speech that was well remembered by relevant officials, went as far as to say that he would sack any Minister for suggesting such schemes. (Temple,^{F.} 1973, 236). Nevertheless within a few years such schemes were being implemented in Nairobi.

The reasons for such a shift in emphasis are complex. However what is of particular interest here is the strong involvement of the international agencies. Thus:

'Although there was a growing awareness among some professionals of the need to change the emphasis of prevailing policies, there is no doubt that the magnitude and conditions of the AID and IBRD/IDA projects did influence the speed at which these changes occurred'.
(USAID, 1979, 34).

It was in such a situation of financial leverage that the Kenyan Government and Nairobi City Council reluctantly began to accept a more pragmatic low-cost housing/^{policy} which explicitly used self-help. Secondly the sheer scale of the housing problem combined with the inability of the conventional housing strategy to cope as we saw in section 4.2 was very significant too.

The beginning of this more pragmatic low income housing policy was marked by the starting of the Dandora Community Development Project - known as 'Urban One' - in 1973 (HRDU, 1980, 30). This was a site and service project. It is worth mentioning that the by-laws had been revised 'downwards' in 1968 with the introduction of Grade II laws which allowed for more modest legal housing in Nairobi and that all policy statements had advocated serving low income groups since independence. But what matters is implementation rather than exhortation (Stren, 1975). It was only in 1973 that low income groups became a conscious target group for housing policy.

By chronologically examining the international agencies' reports we can trace the evolution of this 'pragmatic' housing policy. This will enable us to identify the trend towards acceptance of unauthorized settlements and the increasing dependence upon the role of the private sector in them. All these reports were commissioned from private consultants and were funded by the World Bank; nominally at least their audience is the government of Kenya to whom they are submitted.

In 1974 the Nairobi Metropolitan Growth Strategy (NMGS) submitted by the Nairobi Urban Study Group, a group of individuals and consultants, represented the first major master plan for Nairobi since the 1948 settler plan. This document more clearly than most exhibits the 'export' of planning in that it is centered upon a transportation plan borrowed from Buchanan's work on Manchester in the UK despite the enormous differences in context. One effect of this is that issues of distribution are ignored in favour of technical analysis. For example, the enormous disparities in residential densities (the legacy of the 1948 plan) remain untouched and are treated as givens in the model. Amazingly we find blanket application of British planning practice. Hence the plan is based upon the British standard neighbourhood units of 5,000 residents

to provide a primary school intake despite the difference in the respective age structures of the population (Emig and Ismail, 1980). In housing it is recommended that subsidies to public housing for middle income groups should be abolished with the establishment of market rents. As we saw in Section 4.2 the present practice subsidizes a well-off landlord group. For low income inhabitants the plan suggests that services should be provided around which self help and the private sector can provide housing (NMGS/¹⁹⁷⁴30). The private sector should also be encouraged to build low income accommodation by technical assistance, mortgage finance and legal sites (NMGS/¹⁹⁷⁴930).

The philosophy of using the private sector in low income housing was further encouraged in the 1976 report 'Nairobi Housing Needs: Meeting the Challenge' prepared by Coopers and Lybrand. This report estimated that Nairobi will need 10,000 dwelling units a year. To this end corporate management structures should be encouraged with a rolling stock of capital. And for unauthorized settlements, the consultants suggest:

'... that the council can most effectively, and humanly achieve improvements in the City's unauthorized settlements by seeking to negotiate a 'package' in which the council offers security and services in return for a commitment by the landlords to improve their buildings to comply with minimum standards to bear the costs of providing and maintaining basic services and to pay nominal rates.' (Coopers and Lybrand Vol. I p2)

The consultants were clearly impressed by the impact and profitability of the Housing Companies in Mathare Valley (Coopers and Lybrand Vol. II, 7 and 13) and felt that landlords had financial room to effect improvement and to pay rates. This report breaks new ground; no longer is self-help or 'assisted squatting' to be the main vehicle for the improvement of unauthorized settlements. Instead there is the realization that unauthorized housing in Nairobi is now (1976) dominated by the private sector, albeit illegally. Consequently the suggestion is for the state to give way on legality.

in return for which the landlords will provide services out of their high profits. The policy is in effect to tax the landlord; it has nothing to do with self-help.

This 'bargaining' aspect with the private sector was also apparent in the Low Cost Housing and Squatter Upgrading Study (LCHSUS, 1978). This study was commissioned by the World Bank to investigate suitable sites within Nairobi for squatter upgrading and site ^{and} /service schemes. They suggested two sites for upgrading and four site and service schemes for which in 1978 the Government of Kenya and the World Bank (IBRD) agreed to a loan of U.S.\$50 million. The series of LCHSUS reports that were generated provide the most detailed and up-to-date description of Nairobi's unauthorized settlements.

Significantly their terms of reference included 'to what extent the private sector can be included to play a significant role in the low cost housing market'. (LCHSUS, Final Report, 1). Within Mathare Valley they openly admitted that they needed the cooperation of the, by 1976 economically and politically powerful, Housing Companies and even hinted that planning agreements of the kind common in the UK would be necessary; a private developer provides a benefit for the community in return for being allowed to continue in operation. This admission reflected the strength of the private sector in Mathare Valley. Revealingly Waweru and Associates, the consultants, noted that: 'It is clear that the wishes and desires of all parties involved in Mathare Valley cannot be respected and accommodated in their entirety'. (LCHSUS No 7, 1976, 64).

This report marks a further progression in the role of the private sector. Not only is the private sector to be involved in any improvement but any improvement without the private sector's involvement is seen as impossible.

An indication of the evolution of thinking by the international agencies is contained in the following statement by USAID in 1979:

'It has often been stated that availability of funds was the main constraint to the solution of Kenya's shelter problems. One major lesson learned from the AID experience is that this is not necessarily so.'
 (USAID, 1979, 17)

Hence by 1980 the problem is no longer a capital shortage, instead the availability of land is viewed as a bottleneck. This shows a complete reversal of the view in the 1964 Bloomberg and Abrams report on housing in Kenya which suggested that a lack of capital was the major bottleneck in the provision of housing and that Nairobi could accommodate five times its then population. Indeed within Nairobi it seems that the 'problem' was not so much one of starting or encouraging the private sector in low-cost (i.e. unauthorized) housing but of controlling it. There is also an interrelated distributional issue; namely who benefits from this lucrative sector.

The final report we shall consider is the Kenyan By-law Study (1980) whose brief was to re-examine Kenya's building by-laws in an attempt to make them more appropriate to the nations needs; and more specifically to make legal accommodation affordable to the low-income majority. This is to our knowledge the only such report undertaken in post-colonial Africa and within Kenya represents an attempt to dismantle the legacy of settler urbanism.

This report suggested the reduction of building standards to a more realistic level. In an attempt to close the chasm between formal legal standards and actual practices in unauthorized developments such that the urban poor might afford legal accommodation. Thus building laws would then be enforceable from the 'bottom up' to include all sections of the housing market rather than the previous dualistic structure in which high standards were enforced for the affluent minority while none were enforceable for the impoverished majority (By-law study, 1980; ILO, 1972). The implicit logic in this was that the affluent minority would house themselves decently in any case in which case there is no point in enforcing these standards.

The second main thrust of the report was, like earlier reports, the suggestion that, in return for legalizing existing unauthorized settlements and making future private sector operations in low-income housing legal by the revision of the building standards, the landlord or developer would build better housing and infrastructure from their substantial profits. In a nutshell the report's target was the total legalization of private sector in unauthorized housing. To this end it suggested that the HFCK should expand its lending beyond middle income occupiers, the property built would be eligible for insurance and finally Nairobi City Council could levy rates. It also recommended that there should be no subsidy in public housing. In essence the housing problem of Nairobi would be 'solved' by the market, and a key element in this would be a legalised and controlled private sector building low-cost housing.

Finally we may interpret these proposals as a political attempt to re-establish state control in unauthorized settlements and increase popular respect for the legal system since to have approximately a third of a capital city's urban population living in technically illegal structures can hardly be healthy.

As a result of the international agencies' involvement in urban affairs in Kenya, Nairobi City Council is starting to become obliged to consider the needs of all income groups within Nairobi rather than its previous policy of blind indifference. The increasing acceptance and involvement in unauthorized settlements is accompanied by a move towards technical rational planning rather than simple harassment and demolition. To supply the necessary inputs a research industry is born financed by the international agencies. Private consultants are actively involved in obtaining information from unauthorized settlements with the aim of providing data for a progressive policy. Between 1972 and 1980 Nairobi experienced two

urban projects for low income areas, a by-law study and a major metropolitan plan. Both major housing institutions (NCC and NHC) are subject to reports on their organizational performance. And more recently the secondary and tertiary urban areas of Kenya have received similar attention. The general orientation of these reports is towards corporate management structures at the institutional level and community development and self help for the projects. This process seems to mirror what Cockburn called 'gearing up to govern' in a study of similar events within British urban planning. (Cockburn, 1977). One may wonder if this similarity is more than coincidental given the way in which planning practices are 'exported' from the West to the periphery, often even involving the same individuals and urban legal systems, however inappropriate they may be to the 'host' nation. (King, 1979; Keneiyamba, 1980).

It is worth emphasising the change in official approaches to unauthorized settlements. In 1960 such areas were almost 'no-go' areas within Nairobi - at best neglected at worst under a threat of demolition - where the provision of shelter was in a subsistence fashion or by a small scale rental sector. The early researchers who wanted to get such areas 'accepted' were often labelled as 'communists' By 1980 many of these areas had been subjected to at least two major surveys the aim of which was 'improvement', their housing had become almost totally commercialized, water had been provided, and research on them was by now almost chic! Indeed as a result of the competition between private consultants for lucrative contracts from international agencies even the data itself was becoming commercialized.

4.7 Conclusion

In this chapter we have examined the responses to and the history of unauthorized settlements within Nairobi between 1960 and 1980. It is a complex and contradictory story out of which we have attempted to unravel meaningful threads. Ultimately all the various shifts in policy are reducible to the processes of capital accumulation and the necessity for social control.

Firstly we have seen the inability of the conventional housing policy to cope with the low-income 'demand'; however we have also seen the political interests involved in the maintenance of this inappropriate policy due to the potential personal accumulation it allows via subletting. Secondly and partly as a consequence of this 'failure' we have seen the proliferation of unauthorized settlements. By the late 1960s two related processes are in train: firstly the commercialization of unauthorized housing and establishment of political control in unauthorized areas and secondly a policy of selective demolition. Both seem dependent upon the establishment of political confidence by the African elite and the state. Consequently on the one hand there is security for capital investment in 'stabilized' settlements which allows for their growth and containment within certain areas. Meanwhile the other settlements are systematically destroyed and removed. The growth of the former allows for the destruction of the latter. The result has been that the urban poor have been effectively removed from central Nairobi and residential segregation has increased.

Meanwhile, despite the African elite's objections, site and service and squatter upgrading schemes have been introduced. We have seen that the logic being pursued by the international agencies favours the legalization of the private sector in unauthorized settlements. By 1980 it was becoming apparent that it makes more sense in terms of

taxes, revenues and control to integrate unauthorized settlements into the formal economy than it does to demolish them, especially since they are now concentrated in conveniently out-of-the-way sites. In what follows we shall examine these processes within a specific settlement that has been 'stabilized'.

Chapter 4 - Foot-notes

1. This estimate comes from an article in the Nairobi Times (28.6.1981) which was based on a report by the United Nations information group Earthscan. In this report they also say that Nairobi as a whole is growing annually at ten per cent. To an extent the migration stream into Nairobi can be simplified in terms of occupation and incomes into two: firstly an educated upwardly-mobile elite looking for white collar work and secondly an impoverished majority who are being forced off the land by the emergence of rural capitalism together with land pressure. The educational system and the distribution of land within Kenya are clearly important in relation to rural-urban migration.
2. The Commonwealth Development Corporation (C.D.C.) is the successor of the Colonial Development Corporation set up by the 1945-51 Labour Government. It was originally set up to buy controlling shares in individual colonial trading companies. Its funds came from the British state and it was also intended to encourage British capital to invest in important sectors of the colonial economy. (Swainson, 1980, 106).
3. It is for reasons such as these that Nairobi City Council is popularly regarded as the most 'corrupt' organization in Kenya. This is partly because it has the most opportunity to be corrupt, but it may also suffer (or benefit) from more direct public and press criticism than the National government. Indeed in March 1983 the situation has degenerated to such an extent that the Government suspended Nairobi City Council from operating.
4. Or at least until it was understood that site and service was also amenable to 'misallocation'. However the financial return may not have been as good as middle-income housing estates. Also the World Bank's involvement may have made such activities harder.
5. From necessity this map (Figure 4.2) and the subsequent population table (Figure 4.3) are at best rough and ready estimates.
6. Community contributions to self-help primary schools (Harambee) are a case in point. Many collections in Kenya involve such debatable practices as 'compulsory' donations organized by the local administration. Clearly in order to operate, such systems must have a sanction for non-payment.
7. It is interesting to note similarities with other sectors of the 'African' economy. Thus informal land titles were being exchanged in Central province and particularly Kiambu district as early as the 1930s long before such transactions were officially sanctioned by the colonial authorities in the late 1950s. (Kitching, 1980; Leo, 1981).
8. These co-operatives legally and organizationally are in fact structured as companies. Throughout Nairobi and in this section we shall use the terms Housing Companies and Housing Co-operatives interchangeably.
9. It is unclear whether at this stage the companies' objects were a) to simply purchase the land or b) to become involved in speculative rental housing. Secondly the assumption that the expected rate of return was high is problematic. The housing companies themselves

established this point at a later date in relation to speculative rental housing. However it is possible, but perhaps too clever an argument, that this expected high rate of return was based on some earlier (i.e. pre-1969) limited speculative rental housing in Kwangware that in fact precedes the housing companies in Mathare. In general it is more plausible that these initial external funds were attracted by the traditional 'safety' of land as an investment outlet rather than because of a direct interest in speculative rental housing.

10. According to informants this tacit acceptance was from the highest possible source. The agreement was that these housing companies would be allowed to proceed with unauthorized housing development if at some later date they redeveloped the site with legal, i.e. formal, housing. Since 1981 this agreement has come home to roost with disastrous consequences. The word is now out that the companies must redevelop the site and the plans are being drawn up by consultants - many of whom work in the low-cost field themselves. Unfortunately Mathare Valley contains a lot of people (100,000+) who live in the housing companies' own informal sector housing development. In order to 'simplify' this urban redevelopment problem, so it is strongly implied, these housing companies have resorted to arson of their own property. Since 1981 there have been four or five major 'accidental' fires in the Valley; the largest of which in November 1982 left 10,000 individuals homeless (Financial Times, 24.11.82). Given the attempted coup in August 1982 and the related political instability the arrogance, stupidity and lack of self-interest, to say nothing of the inhumanity and callousness of the housing companies and by implication the Kenyan Government and elite is hardly credible. It is important to understand that as a result of the by-laws the present inhabitants, i.e. tenants of Mathare will not be able to afford to live in the formally redeveloped Mathare Valley. For them the process is not renewal or redevelopment it is eviction. (For a similar argument regarding urban renewal in USA and France see Castells, 1977). Nothing else epitomises the transformation that has occurred in Nairobi's unauthorized settlements more than this. It is now urban real estate development not urban squatting. What happens to those driven out of the city by the profit motive is of no concern to those involved in this new game.
11. The psychological processes involved in this need not detain us. Fanon (1967) and Freire (1972) have given excellent accounts.
12. There are striking parallels here with Victorian Britain in the relationship between Cholera and social reform.
13. Punwani is not in fact an unauthorized settlement. (All that follows is based upon Bujra's work). It was set up as the 'native location' by the colonial state as the sole area of African residence in Nairobi after the squatter settlements of Mjiwa, Mombassa, Maskini and Kaburini were demolished in 1922. Plots were on a monthly lease from the colonial administration on which Africans would build their own houses, the intention was 'owner-occupation'. Those fortunate to get these early plots exploited the situation by building structures on their plots mainly for rental. Since African housing was prohibited elsewhere they were able to exploit their monopolistic position. These landlords were the early inhabitants of Nairobi who were mainly Islamic and from the coast of Kenya. The scale of landlordism is limited and corresponds approximately to one structure per landlord;

thus 317 houses were owned by 360 persons (Bujra, 1973, 29). This petty-bourgeoisie landlord group are essentially the descendants of the original inhabitants of these plots in the 1920s. For an analysis of the rise and fall of this African petty-bourgeoisie group and the politics of Punwani see Bujra, 1973. As we shall see there are very interesting similarities between the Muslim landlords in Punwani and the Nubians in Kibera.

CHAPTER 5

THE GROWTH OF KIBERA: FROM NUBIAN ENCLAVE TO SQUATTER

REAL ESTATE

'To continue with the supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, I think the people who erected these temporary structures at Kisumu Dogo, Line Saba and Siranga in Kibera area had special authority from the City Council of Nairobi. Would the Minister see to it that he does not grant special authority to people to construct such houses leading to deliberate slums?'

Parliamentary Question 1st Aug. 1980
by Dr. Mango

5.1 Kibera: Introduction and Overview

The next five chapters are concerned with one specific unauthorized settlement within Nairobi called Kibera. Here we shall draw almost exclusively upon our own fieldwork carried out at intervals between April 1980 and December 1981. The precise details of the organisation of the fieldwork and the methodology may be found in the Appendix.

In this chapter we shall give an outline of the history of the Kibera settlement before examining its social organisation and housing market in more detail in the subsequent chapters. This will of necessity involve us in a consideration of the Nubian community,¹ since historically Kibera has almost been their ethnic enclave. Hence this chapter is partly a story about the destruction of their 'community'.

The main focus of this chapter is the transformation of Kibera from an area controlled informally by the Nubian community to one controlled by a Kikuyu dominated administration. This involves two processes: firstly, a change in the ethnic composition of those who control the settlement, i.e. from Nubian to Kikuyu, and, secondly, a

change in the method of land control, i.e. from informal to formal.

Whereas previously there was a free-for-all in which allocation of building land seems to have been informally restricted to the Nubians, the local administration has now established a de facto land control and allocation. Thus the local administration has been able to establish control over who builds what where.

We shall argue that it is this local administrative control over land that has greatly encouraged the commercialisation of low income housing by providing some security for capital investment in house building. This will also show the way members of the local administration use their political position to further their own economic interests and as a source of patronage.

This chapter illustrates two general points we are concerned with involved in the rise of Kenyan capitalism. Firstly we shall see it has a tendency towards the destruction of self-contained ethnic enclaves and 'traditional' communities. Secondly we shall show the way kinship and tribalism become used in instrumental ways to further economic ends. More specifically the client-patron networks deriving from the involvement of the local administration will become apparent.

This chapter is structured chronologically, the first section concerns itself with Kibera until the 1960s during which time it could be characterised as a Nubian enclave. The remaining sections show how after the late 1960s a Kikuyu controlled administration has gained control of the area's land use. Finally we shall examine the future prospects for the settlement.

5.2 Kibera till 1960: a Nubian enclave

The Nubian community in Nairobi owes its existence to British imperialism in East Africa. The Nubians were used by the British as soldiers particularly in the colonialization of Uganda (Wolff, 1974).

The Nubians in Nairobi migrated from Uganda as they followed Britain's imperial adventure in East Africa predominantly as soldiers or police for the colonial administration. They fought as troops in the 1914-18 war on the side of the British against the Germans in present-day Tanzania. The casualty figures in this war are even today appalling, in particular those associated with portering. The names of some of the earliest 'African locations' in both Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam are a result of this war. Thus there are districts in both cities called Kariokor which is a phonetic spelling of the Carrier Corps that were used in this theatre of the 1914-18 war. The original Nubian garrison was based at Dandora in East Nairobi (somewhere near the site of the major site and service scheme we shall examine in Chapter 10). It was then moved towards the hill area of West Nairobi, before finally coming to rest in 1913 in the area known today as Kibera.

From 1913-1928 Kibera was a military reserve administered by the Kenya African Rifles. Soldiers who could prove 12 years service in the army were allocated a plot of land in the area. It is estimated that in 1917 the total population of Kibera was approximately 600 (HRDU, 1971, 82). It is the relatives and descendants of these soldiers 'imported' by the colonial government which forms the Nubian community in Kibera today.

This early military nature of Kibera is reflected in some of the local names. Lineshaba, an area of Kibera for example, means 'rifle range' in Kinubi. (Kinubi is the Swahili word for the Nubians' native languages). The name Kibera itself means forest in Kinubi due to the fact that the original site occupied in 1913 was wooded. The Nubians had to clear the land for agricultural use which clearly involved a lot of labour. Some Wazee (Swahili for old man) interviewed can remember some of this and the existence of wild animals in the

area such as lions and gazelles. (Kibera is adjacent to the present day Nairobi National Park). At this stage Kibera must have been something akin to a Nubian agricultural reserve.

The exclusiveness of Kibera to the Nubian community is crucial since the Nubians effectively have no rural area to retreat to and thus they see Kibera as their land and indeed home. To the Nubian community it is 'us ' and 'them'; Nubian vs 'outsiders'. This partly explains their reaction to outsiders which on occasions verges on the xenophobic.

In 1928 the civil administration took over control of the area, making it 'Crown Land', and new settlers were required to prove their relationship to the original Nubian servicemen. This measure clearly shows the colonial government's use of tribalism. It is unclear what sort of employment the Nubians had at this time but from informers' accounts much of Kibera was rural and so agriculture may well have been the most important activity. By 1933 the administration was pressing for the removal of the settlement and the Carter Land Commission recommended gradual eviction and compensation. From that time until today land-use has been uncertain in Kibera and is the major reason for the alienation and bitterness of the Nubians today. The history of this Nubian insecurity continues. At least since 1933 the land in Kibera has technically been Government owned and the Nubians have had some historic claim to it based upon equity rather than ownership.

Nevertheless before World War II Nubian agriculture had evolved to the extent that additional labour in the form of predominantly Kikuyu herdsmen were required. It would seem that at this stage a pattern of agricultural squatting not unlike that in the 'white highlands'² was occurring with Africans settling on 'white' land as unofficial 'tenant' farmers. In the 'white highlands' such squatters would provide labour to the European Owner in return for being allowed.

to squat. Within Kibera we can only speculate as to the situation. However, at this stage Kibera had the characteristics of a predominantly agricultural area. With the increasing industrialization and growth of Nairobi during and after World War II it would seem that the Nubian community increasingly became involved in industrial, or at least non-agricultural activities. Their military training and loyalist reputation would probably have been a positive advantage in getting such jobs.

Thus, after World War II the population of Kibera was increasingly becoming integrated into the capitalist economy and was ceasing to rely on subsistence agriculture. As we have seen this reflects the general trend of Kenya's political economy.

And so before 1952 - when the outbreak of Mau-Mau was officially signified by the declaration of a state of emergency - Kibera seems to have been a fairly homogeneous Islamic Nubian community of approximately 2,000 inhabitants combined with some mainly agricultural Kikuyu settlements on the fringes of the area.

As we saw in Chapter 3 the emergency powers meant very strict control over movement especially for Kikuyus, many of whom were forcibly returned to their 'reserve' areas. In 1954 the colonial authorities demolished Mathare Valley in 'Operation Anvil' on the grounds that it harboured Mau-Mau activists. This demolition was also part of a general policy attempt to isolate the Kikuyu so that they did not 'contaminate' other ethnic groups. This was to involve an attempt to 'deKikuyuse' Nairobi which was helped by the encouragement of migration from Western Kenya (particularly Luos and Luhya) which led to the partial replacement of the Kikuyu within Nairobi's industrial labour force.

With the destruction of Mathare Valley, Kibera was one of the few areas left in Nairobi offering cheap African accommodation and

the possibility of self-build housing. Also at this time Kibera, as some interviewees testified, was considered a 'safe' place because of its loyalist reputation and was actively encouraged as an area for Luos and Luhyas to settle in, being away from Mathare Valley which was essentially Kikuyu. Such tribal segregation was a feature of colonial policy. Its aims were firstly to keep the Luos and Luhyas free from 'contamination' by Kikuyus and Mau-Mau activists, and secondly to prevent detribalization which was considered to be destabilising. Indeed some housing estates were explicitly built for one tribal group (Emig and Ismail, 1980). The legacy of all this is that even in 1980 Kibera exhibits an over-representation of migrants from Western Kenya and an under-representation of Kikuyus.

It seems that this influx of new migrants in the 1950s was capitalized on by the established Nubian community who began to extend their houses and build new ones for rental purposes. Although this was officially forbidden it may well have had tacit approval (Temple, N. 1973). This was clearly a profitable activity especially since the Nubian landlords were not liable to tax and obtained the land free of charge - one calculation suggests that the capital cost of a rental structure could be recouped within seven months, (171% annual return)(Temple, N. 1973).³ The Nubians consequently built as many of these houses as they thought the administration would tolerate on land which they technically did not own, but had been settled upon by the colonial authorities. The emergence of landlordism in unauthorised settlements thus goes back at least as early as the mid-1950s.

At this stage the scale of capital involved was fairly small, judging by the size and number of rooms in the older buildings in Kibera. It would seem that the population was concentrated around the Nubian settlement of Makina where rental units would be likely to be

constructed near their owners' plots.

And so up until the 1960s we might characterise Kibera as a Nubian controlled area with an emerging small-scale rental sector, albeit unauthorised. It is this Nubian 'golden age' in Kibera that was to be so radically transformed within the subsequent twenty years. The next section concerns itself with formal redevelopment schemes that have systematically whittled away the land area of this Nubian enclave.

5.3 Kibera after 1960: Formal redevelopment

We shall now turn to the post 1960 period and examine some of the formal redevelopment schemes for Kibera. This will involve us in looking at the precise nature of the relationship between the Nubian community and the colonial and independent state. In particular we shall focus upon land use in Kibera.

In 1960 the Nubian community must have faced the prospect of an independent Kenya and subsequent Nationalist control with some trepidation. They are non-Kenyan in origin and were identified with the military in the service of the colonial state. In many respects their worst fears, like those of the European settlers, have not materialized in the 'forgive and forget' atmosphere of modern Kenya. However, as David Clark concludes based upon his fieldwork in Kibera in 1969-71,

'... the economic position of the Nubian residents in Kibera has deteriorated, and the demise of the colonial regime had represented a real loss to them (Clark, 1978, 44).'

This change is mainly the result of their loss of a special relationship with the administration, both colonial and military on whom they depended for jobs, etc.

In what follows we can see how the 'special relationship' the Nubian community had with the colonial state has disappeared, and new groups have gained from patronage from within the post-colonial

state. While the Nubians were external to and dependent upon the colonial state, the new groups can operate within the post-colonial state. As is common in other respects the Kenyan experience of decolonization has changed the form but not the content of many economic relationships. Thus patronage still exists but is now internal as well as external to the state.

The flow of migrants to Nairobi after 1960 combined with the chronic shortfall in official housing was to affect Kibera in two ways. Firstly land was required for the official housing estates that were built by the National Housing Corporation. And secondly as we have seen Kibera became and continued to grow as a low-cost housing area with both rental units provided by Nubian landlords and conventional self-build squatter units (i.e. subsistence shelter).

Thus:

'much of the land on the fringes of the settlement area which had hitherto been cultivated by Nubian residents was in the 1960s increasingly taken over by landless Kikuyu peasants dispossessed by the upheavals of the emergency.'

(Clark, 1978, 37)

At this stage and up until the late 1960s or early 1970s there seems to have been very little administrative control. From informants' information it seems to have been relatively easy to construct one's own dwelling on the peripheral sites. Therefore we may conclude that at this stage it was still possible to 'exit' from the housing market in Kibera, i.e. to house oneself without entering a market relation as a tenant (or owner). By 1972 the population of the settlement had grown to around 17,000 composed of predominantly Nubian landlords, their tenants and some 'squatters' on the periphery. (Temple, 1974, 6).

Meanwhile the issue of Nubian land rights in Kibera became more acute: land 'ownership' in Kibera had to be classified before land could be acquired for official National Housing Corporation

housing estates (In 1963, the boundaries of Nairobi had been extended to include Kibera). Hence at some stage between independence in 1963 and 1969, the Ministry of Lands and Settlement had to face the issue of whether the Government of Kenya (GOK) accepted the 'agreement' between the Nubians and the colonial government. The precise nature of this 'agreement' between the Nubian community and the colonial state was problematic. To the Nubians the agreement was that Kibera was their exclusive ethnic enclave, their reserve. To the colonial state the Nubians were considered as 'tenants at will'. Such confusion over the legal aspects of land ownership in Kenya is extremely common. This stems in part from the existence of two essentially competing systems of law: namely a 'traditional' tribal collective system and a fundamentally English legal concept of private property.

The Independent Government's ruling seems to have been that the 'agreement' meant that the Nubians had rights to the housing but not the land. The land is now formally owned by the GOK in one plot. Compensation for housing demolished seems to depend upon proving one's relationship to the original Nubian settlers or on the appearance of one's name in a 1948 list of households in Kibera, popularly known as the 'Doomsday Book'. There are difficulties arising from the fact that the original agreement was made with a collective group of people rather than with specific individuals.

While the GOK's interpretation accepts the 'letter' of the law, to Nubian eyes it does not reflect the 'spirit' of the original 'agreement', namely that Kibera should be exclusively Nubian.

This and the subsequent redevelopment of Kibera seem to be the major reasons for the Nubian's present-day bitterness. They feel as if they have been cheated and betrayed. Indeed one Nubian likened their position to that of the European settlers who were compensated and bought out at independence. Why could they not be treated in the same

way was the sentiment.

Nevertheless since 1963 four housing estates have been built in what was originally Kibera: Salama in 1963-4, 1967-8 and 1969-70. The Hill, or 'Olympic' estate between 1970-71 and New Kibera Village in 1972-3. Finally a self-help site and service scheme called Ayanga is still in operation funded by German Aid. The latter has been a disaster even in Nairobi terms. The site remains with half-finished houses. All of these housing estates have required limited demolition. The early estates built in 1963 and 1967 (Salama) were mainly allocated to Nubians who had to demolish their own houses to make way for the development. (Clark, 1978, 40). However a different pattern emerged later. Thus

'Since then (1967) the NHC has built several hundred units in Kibera. Some of these have been allocated to Nubian residents in Kibera who have applied for them, but are increasingly being allocated to non-Nubian applicants, whether resident in Kibera or elsewhere in Nairobi.'

(Clark, 1978, 40).

The reason they are going increasingly to non-Nubians is often that they are simply too expensive and do not offer opportunities for landlordism which as we will see is an important source of income for the Nubian community. To the administration the Nubians have been offered a housing alternative and refused. Consequently it would seem that in some circles they are regarded as having had their 'last chance' and no longer need to be considered in future redevelopment schemes.

Kibera is an area with a high land-value for alternative uses which further exacerbates the general historical uncertainty over its land-use. This fact together with the need for land for housing estates explains the general 'encroachment' into the Nubian enclave. Thus the Nubian area which was originally 4,197 acres has now, after continual whittling away, been reduced to 500 acres (Clark, 1972).

Consistent with this general trend it was reported in 1972 that the National Housing Corporation (NHC) had plans to redevelop the entire site with buildings made out of permanent materials within a decade. (Temple, 1974, 2). No evidence of this had emerged by 1981. However, Nairobi Metropolitan Growth Strategy in 1974 designated it as a 'middle-low' income housing area with the Trans Africa Highway bisecting the site. (Was Kibera destined to be the New Illmorog of Ngugi's novels?) So great was even the official confusion that the Low Cost Housing and Squatter Upgrading Study (LCHSUS) in 1976 sponsored by the World Bank to identify sites for upgrading and/or Site and Service were unable to choose it as a site partly because of the uncertainty concerning neighbouring land uses (LCHSUS No. 7, 1976, 117).

The possible future land uses suggested for it have included a new spur to the Uganda railway, a medium income residential area and a National stadium for the All-African games originally scheduled for 1979 but now postponed. However, despite all this uncertainty over the future land use of the site we also find the following statement in the same World Bank sponsored study.

"... unless some formalized development and guidance is introduced into the site, an uncontrolled situation similar to that in Mathare Valley may arise. Judging by the current construction in Kibera, the pressure for low cost housing in the area is great and is expected to continue. Thus, immediate controlling action is required from the NCC. This may take the form of an enforced moratorium on all construction, coupled with an upgrading exercise in the four existing villages. Particularly the settlement of Linisaba, which is growing uncontrolled with increasing momentum should be the subject of immediate attention by planners'. (LCHSUS No. 7, 1976, 122)

Despite appearances to the contrary, this informal housing development was not uncontrolled. Indeed its rapid development was conditional upon the local administration establishing effective informal control over land use in the site.

In the next two sections we shall examine the establishment of this control in Kibera and ^{show} how it meant that despite all the official uncertainty over the land use in respect to formal redevelopment, some individuals were sufficiently certain of its future land-use to commit funds for investment in unauthorised housing.

5.4 Nubian informal development

By contrast to the discussion of formal redevelopment in the last section in this section we shall examine the unauthorized housing development occurring in the 1960s. This housing development was partially uncontrolled and was predominantly associated with the Nubian community. During this period, i.e. the 1960s, Kibera's population increase was fairly modest: it rose from 10,000 in 1966 to 16,000 by 1972 (Temple, 1974).

Kibera in the late 1960s was summed up well by Clark, thus:

'Most of the mud houses were owned by Nubian residents. The remaining few were owned by non-Nubians. In the core of the settlement area such house owners were generally Muslims who had lived in the area for a long time and had established strong ties with Nubian residents. In the outlying areas of Kibera some of the mud houses were owned by landless Kikuyu residents who were cultivating plots on the fringers of the settlement area'.

(Clark, 1978, 40)

Thus at this time there was a small scale mainly Nubian rental sector combined with some peripheral mainly Kikuyu 'squattling' or subsistence shelter. By 1969 this Nubian rental sector was sufficiently well developed for Clark to use the term 'landlord' and 'tenant' in his fieldwork. Clark in fact had to stop his fieldwork as he was being (wrongly) accused of being associated with an emergent tenants' association. (Clark, 1970). From this we may infer that as early as this potential conflict was possible between the landlord and tenant groups.

Nevertheless at this stage it appears from Clark's data that

eight was the maximum number of rooms owned by one landlord (Clark, 1972). In 1972 Nellie Temple found in Kibera, mainly Makina, an average of 4.3 rooms let per mud house owner with an average rental income from renting of 143/- a month. She identified only two of 72 'landlords' with over eight rooms - one with ten and the other with twenty.

Similarly in keeping with this picture of relatively small-scale Nubian landlordism we find that most landlord-tenant relations are personalized (Temple, 1974). However, we should note that the continual uncertainty over the long term future land use meant that in 1972:

'Housing in Old Kibera must be built in temporary materials by law since the government has been planning to redevelop the area since the Carter Land Commission of 1933-1934. The local administration has been instructed not to allow erection of permanent buildings, with the exception of the mosque.'

(Temple, 1974, 2)

Similarly there is a suggestion that between 1963 and 1969 there was a total 'ban on the construction of all new mud housing in the area' (Clark, 1978, 34). Whether this was rigidly enforced is extremely difficult to ascertain; however, during the 1960s there is no evidence of rapid unauthorized housing development.

Hence from his fieldwork in 1969 to 1971 Clark was able to maintain that the formal housing redevelopment was decreasing the possibilities of landlordism for the Nubians (Clark, 1978, 43-44). From my own work we may question this statement. According to one informant it was around 1969 that the idea of building houses specifically for renting became more popular and that some construction presumably began. This seems to have involved the Nubian residents. The precise reasons were not disclosed but the demand for housing must have been evident and the rates of return such investment offered excellent. The Nubians had already had experience with urban landlordism during the 1950s which may have made it easier for them to see the potential

economic openings. It would seem that the spectacular 'success' and profitability of the Housing Companies that we discussed in Chapter 4 must have been important at this time in encouraging investment in unauthorized rental housing.

In 1969 Yunis Ali, a Nubian, was elected MP for the Langata constituency that includes Kibera. His election appears not to have significantly affected either the uncertainty over the future land use of the area or the emerging unauthorised rental sector. Thus despite his asking questions in parliament the land issue remained unresolved. It was said that the Nubian community was promised 5,000 acres, but no evidence of this Nubian land has appeared to date. Similarly he was unable to operate as an effective patron for his community. Chege notes for example how Waiyaki was able to do this in Mathare Valley which was the constituency he represented (Chege, 1981). These non-developments reflect the politically marginal position the Nubians occupy in Kenya's political system.

However, those with much more central political connections and by implication more powerful ones were able to 'exploit' the opportunities the Kibera site offered.

Thus as we have already noted it was sometime in the late 1960s or early 1970s that the Nubians began to build and expand their rental sector. This sector was expanding throughout Nairobi at this time. According to informants it was at this stage that 'big personalities, permanent secretaries' became interested in shanty housing as an investment outlet. Given the clientilistic structure of much of Kenyan politics it is not difficult to understand how powerful political individuals could achieve this. Thus each influential individual will have 'his people' who are connected to him who are operating for him within the shanty town. In such a client-patron system it is likely that ethnicity would be exploited - in this case by the Kikuyu.

A point to note here and throughout the remaining chapters is the way that certain groups and individuals are able to use their positions to monopolize, protect and control such economic opportunities in unauthorized settlements. Whereas at an earlier stage ethnicity (Nubian) appears to be the criteria of entry as a landlord, later on it is replaced by linkage or connection with the administration.

While the latter system may also involve ethnicity as in the case say of the Kikuyu patron-client system within Kibera it is not dependent upon ethnic criteria as had the earlier Nubian system.

Meanwhile and in a complementary fashion to this control of urban development, it also seems that these 'big shots' were explicitly using a 'tribalist' tactic. Hence according to a Nubian informant, it was at this time that the Nubians became aware of being a special 'ethnic minority'. It would seem that these 'big shots', (who would automatically be assumed by Nubians to be Kikúyus) began to unsettle the Nubian residents by telling or 'putting it around' that 'they were not Kenyan' and those born before 1963 i.e. the majority - were British and not Kenyan. The Nubians themselves tended to encourage such attitudes by their common refusal to see themselves as 'African'. This strategy as an informant admitted to me was clearly designed to unsettle them despite having no foundation in law.

It is unclear how much these threats affected the Nubian residents but they may well have been taken seriously and the subsequent expulsions of Kenyans and then Asians from Uganda would suggest that they were not unfounded (Parkin, 1969). Clearly in such a political climate Nubians would not be inclined to invest in illegal housing.

Two points emerge from this. Firstly such threats tended to increase Nubian solidarity and encourage the 'retribalization' process. Interestingly Parkin notes very similar behaviour when Kenyan workers in particular Luos and Luhya were threatened with expulsion from

Uganda. In this case they emphasized their national rather than their tribal identity (Parkin, 1969).

The second and central point is that to operate in the 'underworld' or quasi-legal world of unauthorised housing development on a large scale one must have political security from the occupant of a central and powerful political position or patron. It is only those who feel themselves to be politically secure and confident who are able to 'get away with' large scale unauthorized landlordism.

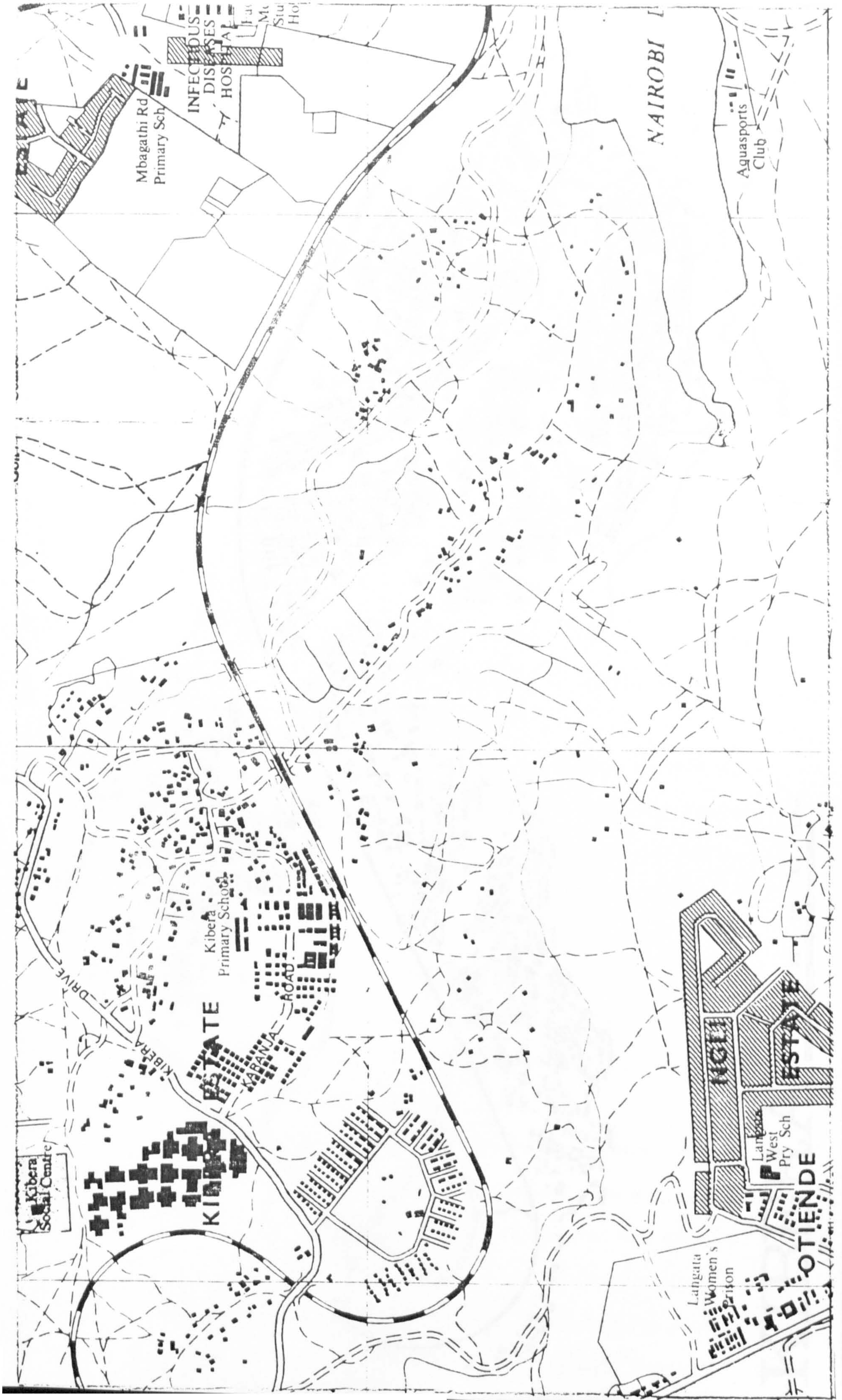
However we should also note that there are some individuals and groups who operate in such sectors as a result of their politically and economically marginal position as this is their only potential source of capital accumulation. Historically the Nubians have fitted into this category. It would seem that this is likely to produce a limited scale of operation. To operate on a large scale one needs to feel politically secure. This, we would argue, is why the Nubian community did not become involved on a large scale in unauthorized housing development.⁴ Their insecurity derives from their loyalist role prior to independence. For the same reason the Asian community despite their historical involvement in Nairobi real estate is not to our knowledge involved in the unauthorized housing sector.

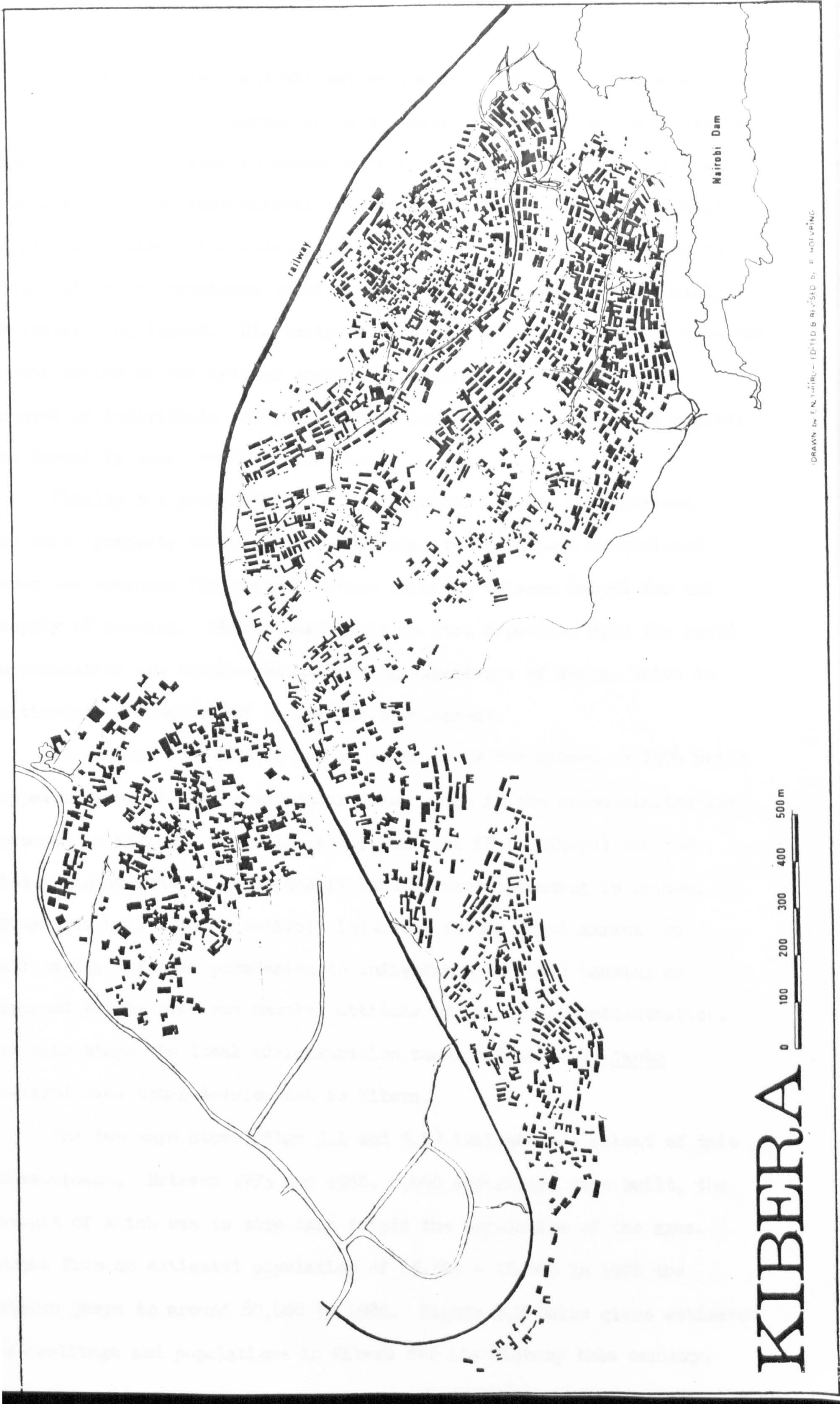
In this section we have seen the limited scale of Nubian informal housing developments. In the next section, which is concerned with 1974-1980, we shall investigate the rapid housing development that was associated with the local administration's informal intervention in Kibera's land market.

5.5 Kibera 1974-1980. Squatter real estate

In this section we shall trace the spectacular informal housing development that occurred in Kibera after 1974. This development was a function of the profitability of this sector, the local administration's

Figure 5.1 Map of Kibera 1970





informal control over land allocation and the increasing confidence of the Kenyan elite. The spread of landlordism in unauthorized settlements, and the later increase in concentration and scale of capital involved was a function of decolonization. The neo-colonial elite had to wait a period of time after independence before they had the confidence to 'exploit' such investment openings with their potentially politically destabilizing impact. Similarly, it was only after Independence when the restrictions of the settler economy were lifted that a sufficient number of individuals had gained sufficient political power and capital to invest in such 'twilight' sectors.

Finally the profitability of this sector was and is important in this 'property boom'. This profitability is in part conditional upon the enormous 'imbalance' within Nairobi, between demand for and supply of housing. This imbalance is in part dependent upon the rapid urbanization and rural-urban migration experience of Kenya, which is ultimately a function of capitalist development.

It was the election of Mwangi Mathi as MP for Kibera in 1974 which appears to herald the spectacular final stage in the commercialization process in Kibera. It would appear that the MP (a Kikuyu) and the local administration (also mostly Kikuyu), were operating in unison. Thus they were able to actively intervene in the 'land market' by allocating informal permission to individuals to build housing as opposed to the previous passive attitude by the local administration. At this stage the local administration takes effective de facto control over urban development in Kibera.

The two maps above (Figs 5.1 and 5.2) indicate the extent of this development. Between 1975 and 1980, 1,400 structures were built, the result of which was to more than triple the population of the area. Hence from an estimated population of 15,500 - 17,000 in 1972 the figure jumps to around 60,000 by 1980. Figure 5.3 below gives estimates of dwellings and populations in Kibera for its history this century.

Figure 5.3 The population and number of structures in Kibera 1917-1980

Date	Population	Number of structures	Source
1917	600	-	(HRDU, 1971, 82)
1966	10,000	-	(Clark, 1978, 38)
1969	8,000	-	(Hake, 1977, 96)
1969	13,175	-	Census
1972	15,500-17,000	1,300	(Temple, 1974, 6)
1979	62,197	-	Census
1980	51,292	-	District Officer's Estimate
1980	64,976	2,200	Landlord survey

While all such figures are estimates there is little debate over the rapid population increase associated with this commercialized unauthorized urban development. Over 40,000 extra individuals came to live in Kibera. As an illustration of the sheer size of the settlement by 1979 Kibera on its own would be Kenya's seventh largest urban centre (1979 Economic Survey) thus making it larger than for example the town of Eldoret. Just as Mathare Valley expanded in the early 1970s it would seem that after 1975 it was Kibera and Kwangware that grew explosively to absorb Nairobi's rapidly growing low-income population.

We shall now consider how and why this growth took place. The key factor was that some time during 1974 the local administration gained effective control over land allocation and was thus able to informally intervene in the unauthorized housing market. Previous to this, as we

have already stated, the administration took a passive attitude to what was basically a 'free for all', and there was no effective control over the construction of subsistence shelter and rental accommodation. However in 1974 the administration took a more active stance, and started to allocate permission to build in Kibera. In order to support this new allocation process it threatened to demolish any new housing built without permission. Without 'permission' to build a potential builder risks demolition. There are many half-finished buildings in Kibera which testify to this. In such cases the fluidity of political relationships patron-client/may have led to 'permission' once given being subsequently withdrawn. The local administration was thus able to intervene in this unauthorised sector by allocating 'protection' for new construction.

There is some debate about whether permission to build is stated on paper, e.g. a temporary occupation licence (TOL). Firstly no-one to my knowledge has seen such a document and secondly the arbitrary nature of 'permission' and subsequent demolition do not suggest such a formalized system. At best such a document would represent an attempt to legitimise a system that is ultimately determined by political patronage.

The allocation of informal building rights gives access to a lucrative source of capital accumulation and is a major resource controlled by the local administration. It is through this allocation process that individuals can gain access to this source of capital accumulation which would otherwise be banned to them. Here we can see parallels with colonization in that power is exercised in order to allow specific groups access to sources of accumulation.

As we have seen, since 1974 the local administration has taken control of the allocation of these building rights: these rights are informal rather than legal and amount to an assurance of protection from demolition for individual allottees. Since the legality of this

allocation process is at best debatable, political patronage within the public administration and wider political system was and is important in providing protection. Hence the local administration itself is a client of more powerful political backers. Indeed the recent history of 'stop-go' regarding the availability of land is a function of shifts within these networks of political patronage. These networks are often internal within the Kenyan public administration; thus in many cases the landlords are also from the same public administration. This was true of 35% (i.e. ten out of 29) of the large landlords whom we could identify. The local administration may be paying back favours, consolidating potential clients, or rewarding friends or fellow tribesmen by effectively giving out free land for urban development. Inevitably information on such matters is difficult to obtain but it is rumoured that bribes change hands as well.

The process by which individuals use their position within the public sector generally to their own personal financial advantage has been well documented in Kenya. This 'straddling' behaviour between the two economic sectors is considered to be the hallmark of Kenya's emergent bourgeoisie (Swainson, 1980). Non-academic commentators might call it 'corruption'. Within Nairobi generally the allocation of building rights is an important source of political patronage for politicians and the administration. In this respect we can again note how the 'informal' sector closely resembles the 'formal' sector.

This analysis of land allocation is consistent with some of our data on landlords. Thus the predominance of Kikuyu among the large landlords in Kibera - 66% (71) of those we surveyed were Kikuyu while 22% (24) were Nubian - is probably a result of patronage by the predominantly Kikuyu administration and politicians attempting to consolidate their power base. The Nubians in this case were all relatively recent recipients of land for building and such allocations may have been made

in order to forestall any potential opposition from them. The individuals involved are often seen as 'collaborators' with 'outsiders' by the Nubian community.

Given the Kikuyu predominance among both administration, employees and land owners in Kibera it is hardly surprising that it is commonly suggested in the settlement that this was an intentional attempt to swamp the place by GEMA (Gikikuyu Embu Meru Association).

GEMA, as its name suggests, is a / ^{tribal} association of the Kikuyu and the related tribes of Embu and Meru. This association is extremely important both economically and politically within Kenya. In practice GEMA 'has come to represent large-scale Kenyan capital' and 'is the clearest instance of the large-scale concentration of indigenous capital' (Swainson, 1980, 205-6). It has been suggested that GEMA is associated with Kibera in two ways: as an organisation lending money to individual members who are landlords and as having some involvement in large scale formal redevelopment plans.

At a less sensational level there is clear evidence of particular client groups among owners of housing in Kibera. The fact that some blocks are owned by individuals who are employed as cleaners in the Kenyatta National Hospital seems extremely unlikely to be the result of a process of random allocation. What is more likely is that this occupational group may be an important element in the power base of some politician and that the land allocation is a political reward. Another group of beneficiaries of land allocation is a tribal dancing group who were rewarded for their loyalty with opportunities to become landlords.

Around 1978-9 the pace of informal housing construction in Kibera began to slow down and stabilize. The reasons for this are unknown but may be associated with an attempt by Nairobi City Council to control and prevent any more unauthorized housing in Nairobi, which may be

related to the increasing involvement of the international agencies in urban affairs in Nairobi. Local officials in discussion in 1981 were quite explicit that their (successful) attempts to control unauthorized housing development were part of a city-wide policy. Here again we can note the high level of informal control exerted through these formal administrative channels, i.e. Provincial commissioner, District Officer, chief, sub-chief, etc. They can not only stimulate informal development but also stop it.

An exception to this halt in building in Kibera is worth mentioning: in Spring 1981 a fairly large amount of unauthorized housing was constructed on a new site in Kibera. The official involved was subsequently transferred to a new post in another district. The suggestion was that this was as a result of this official allowing this recent housing development which was not in line with the prevailing policy.

To conclude this section we shall evaluate some of the general political implications of this land allocation process. At a macro-level we might suggest that this informal real estate bonanza represented an attempt by the relevant Kikuyu politicians to obtain support for their own re-election to office. In this respect it represents a large scale example of clientilism and machine politics.

As we have seen allocation decisions could be taken to reward political supporters and backers but also to pack one's constituency with likely supporters. Such instrumental use of position for electoral advantage is not unknown in Nairobi. In 1979 there was an unsuccessful attempt in Mathare Valley by the Mayor of Nairobi to physically demolish his opponent's power base, with bulldozers (Chege, 1981, 80-83).

In Kibera in 1979 the incumbent Kikuyu MP Mwangi Mathai was not re-elected which implies a 'failure' to consolidate his power base. Philip Leakey, the first European to serve in Kenya's parliament since Independence, was able to capitalize upon accusations of corruption

against the Kikuyu administration combined with the European population in Langata (a neighbouring wealthy area) to defeat the sitting MP. The Nubians it seems also offered their support. From what one can gather the Leakey campaign was offering some form of rent control and a reduction in the price of water. Thus as Chege has noted for Mathare the transformation and commercialization of the unauthorized housing can be made into a political issue. For Kibera we can agree with Chege's comments on Mathare Valley:

'... an anti-landlord ethnic coalition based primarily on the tenants could be galvanised for political reasons, using opposition to "Kikuyu hegemony" as its rallying point'.

(Chege, 1981, 79)

There are some interesting political lessons we can draw from this. The former Kikuyu administration was unable to pack Kibera to its electoral advantage. This may partly reflect the fact that Kikuyu landlords do not guarantee Kikuyu tenants. The electorate are also much more astute and politically sophisticated than the 'leadership' give them credit for. Much of the population in Kibera could 'see through' the administration's tactics and deplored its general corruption.

Here we can see the general complacency of the Kenyan elite and politicians towards the urban poor who are regarded as too 'uneducated' to notice how the system works and who gains. Tentatively it may be suggested that a more explicitly class-based politics is emerging in Nairobi. The process of land 'allocation' in Kibera illustrates the relationship between ethnicity and capitalism. The increasing commercial rewards available in the form of unauthorised housing are strengthening ethnic links as a form of clientilism. As we have seen this is being encouraged by the local administration and politicians. However, simultaneously a landlord-tenant relationship is emerging as a source of potential political conflict.

In this section we have investigated the rapid unauthorised housing development that has happened since 1974 in Kibera making the area the second largest shanty-town in Nairobi. In the next section we shall examine the future of Kibera as a low-income housing area.

5.6 The Future of Kibera⁵

In this section we shall briefly consider the future prospects for Kibera. There is considerable evidence to suggest that Kibera is an attractive site for formal urban development. In particular given its 'parkland appearance', good stabilised red cotton soil and location in Western Nairobi, it has a high potential land value. Consequently if any legalized housing scheme was built in Kibera, without subsidy - as is current policy - it is economically inconceivable that the urban poor could afford to live there. The likely high land value of Kibera would lead to prices which could only be paid by middle and high income groups. The middle and high income character of the residential areas adjoining Kibera together with their encroachment supports this argument.

Here we can see a continuation of the process by which the operation of the urban land market itself increasingly 'expels' the urban poor from the urban centres and thus increases residential segregation by income. Until the uncertainty over Kibera's future land-use is removed there is no likelihood of any meaningful improvements in the area. Kibera's future land-use is a question that only the Government of Kenya can tackle and guarantee. Market forces alone seem certain to push the urban poor from the area, with the enormous social dislocation this entails. This suggests that the state should directly intervene in the urban land market to correct the 'irrational' outcome of market mechanisms. Unfortunately such action touches the "Achilles'

heel" of Kenyan politics, the sanctity of the private ownership of land, and consequently is highly unlikely at present. However, this impasse over land must be faced sooner rather than later, not least because of the land shortage prevailing in the rural districts in Kenya. Unjust and shocking as Kibera is its demolition and replacement by a middle income area would be more so.

5.7 Conclusion

In this chapter we have given a historical overview of Kibera. Thus we have seen how the area was originally a Nubian enclave as a result of colonial policy. During the 1950s and 1960s we saw how the Nubian community partly taking advantage of their trustworthiness in the eyes of the colonial administration were able to become small scale landlords. This situation continued until 1974 when Kibera saw a spectacular example of Nairobi squatter real estate.

From 1974 to 1980 the population of Kibera increased by a factor of more than three. This was as a result of rapid unauthorised housing development which was dependent upon the local administration's intervention in the land market. The local administration was effectively able to issue building rights to certain individuals who have subsequently become landlords. It was this 'hand-out' of free land that accounts for Kibera's rapid development.

Throughout this Chapter we have seen how Kibera has increasingly become dominated and controlled by the local administration, which is predominantly Kikuyu controlled, at the expense of the Nubian community who are fragmented, alienated and bitter. In the next four chapters we shall consider Kibera and its housing market in more depth.

Chapter 5 - Footnotes

1. At the outset it is worth mentioning that my interest in the Nubian community is 'instrumental'. As an ethnic group they hold no particular significance for me; rather I am interested in the relationship between ethnicity and capitalism within the settlement at a more abstract level. Indeed the Nubian community in East Africa is in fact an amalgamation of different groups from the Sudan. Here we can see a process of what is termed 'retribalization'; thus for their own benefit this relatively heterogenous group forms a cohesive unit (Clark, 1972). Thus in an East African context the Nubian community is as much an occupational category as an ethnic one as we shall see.
2. The 'white highlands' is a colloquial term used to describe the areas of Kenya that were designated for European agricultural use. It includes most of Kenya's central highlands from Nairobi towards Eldoret and Kericho.
3. I can only assume Nellie Temple's 171% capital return figure does not have any discounting in it. Thus it simply means that £100 invested will yield an income of £171 within a year.
4. However individual Nubians may well have benefitted in almost a 'collaborator' fashion through access to the relevant networks.
5. This important question is given a more detailed treatment in my paper 'Notes on Kibera' which is available from HRDU in Nairobi.

CHAPTER 6

KIBERA: THE PHYSICAL AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT

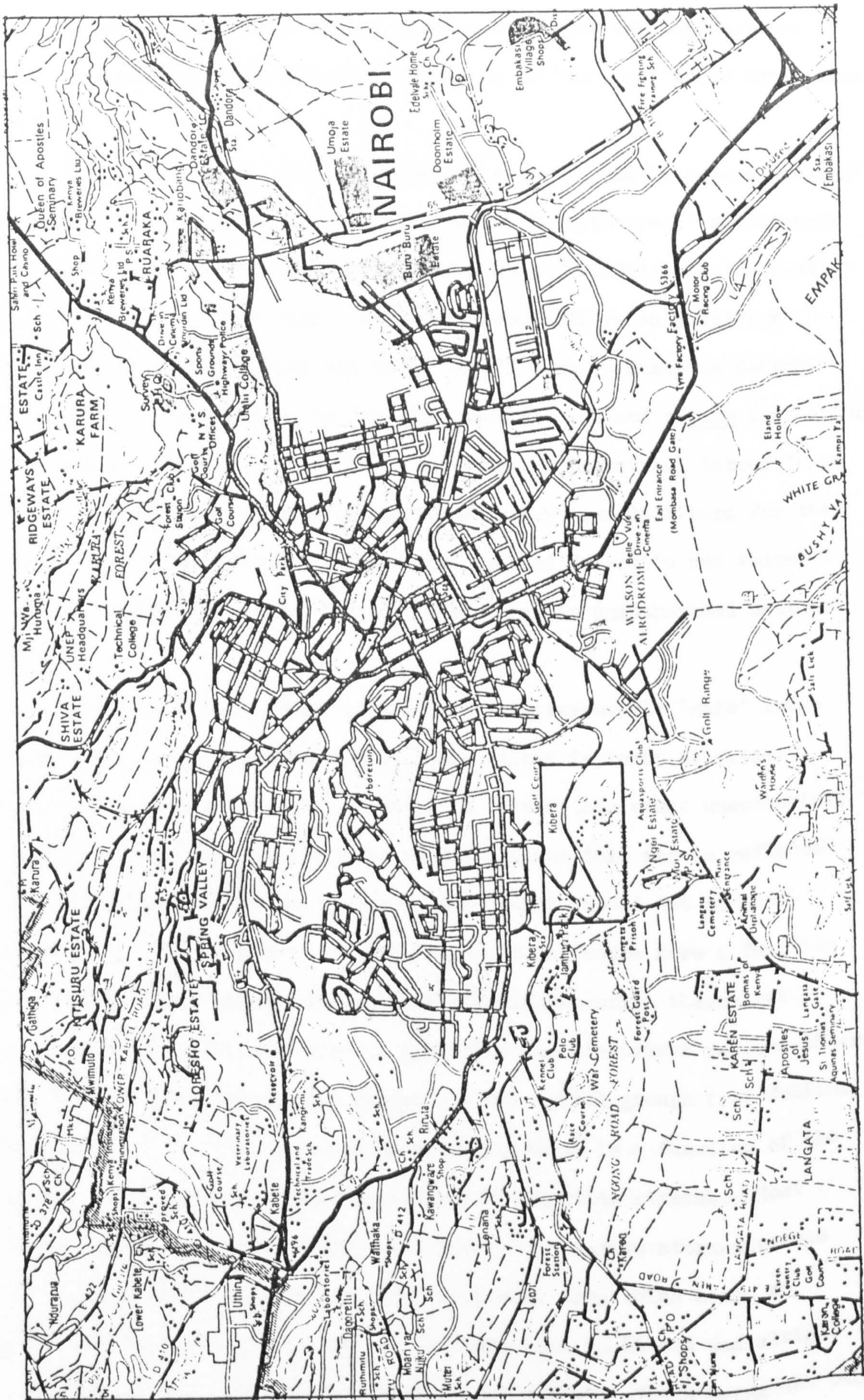
6.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide a description of the physical and economic context of the Kibera settlement. In the first section we shall examine Kibera's physical site and its relationship to other unauthorized settlements in Nairobi. In the next section we shall explore the housing differences between old and 'new' i.e. post 1974 Kibera. The following section is a discussion of the local economic activity within the settlement; in particular we shall examine the capitalist nature of the informal sector. Finally as a contrast to the previous section we shall examine the public sector's lack of provision of public services and basic infrastructure.

6.2 Kibera: Its site and location within Nairobi

To start with it is useful to give a general overview of the Kibera site and how it fits into Nairobi's spatial structure. Figure 6.1 below shows the Kibera site on a general map of Nairobi. As we can see, the physical site is bounded by Kibera Drive to the North, the Royal Golf Course on the East, Nairobi National Park down to the South and some new housing developments and Kenya prisons to the West. Few places in Nairobi have the juxtaposition of poverty and affluence, modern Africa and the Savannah (National Park) so clearly visible. Indeed Kibera's mud houses form the foreground to the view towards the National Park from the French Embassy and one of the president's personal houses. To an individual standing in central Kibera the impression of official housing estates advancing to enclose the site is unmistakable. The Golf Course Estate, Nairobi's latest

Figure 6.1 The Kibera Site in Nairobi



Scale 1:100 000

middle-income tenant-purchase scheme is now only 100 metres from the mud and wattle structures of the urban poor. Such affluent estates often put pressure upon the administration to 'tidy up' their unpleasant vistas.

However to those unable to command entry to middle-income housing estates Kibera is seen as one of the better 'unauthorized' settlements in Nairobi. There are three reasons for this. Firstly, is the fact that Kibera's location within Western Nairobi offers easy walking access to Nairobi's industrial area, to affluent ex-European Nairobi for 'service' employment and finally excellent bus and matatu connections to Central Nairobi. At six in the evening the industrial labour force can be clearly seen walking along Mbagathi Way towards Kibera for the night. It is significant to note that much of Nairobi's and indeed Kenya's, formal industrial labour force lives in unauthorized settlements.

Secondly Kibera seems to have a fairly favourable 'safe' image particularly when compared with Mathare Valley in terms of crime. Similarly its housing stock seems to be better than other unauthorized housing areas, particularly Mathare Valley, and this may be reflected in slightly higher rents. However, this point should not be over-emphasized. Any relative attractiveness it has seems more a function of environmental factors than of the actual room-units themselves.

Finally as we have already suggested for historical reasons Kibera has had a certain attraction for particular tribal groups i.e. Nubians, Luos and Luhya. That this should continue today is a function of the permanence and self-reinforcing nature of migration streams. Most residents seemed fairly clear about Kibera's relative attractiveness particularly its location near the industrial area which means no expenditure on transport. As one informant put it Kibera was alright because "Kwangware is too far, Mathare too dirty". These being the other

main unauthorized and therefore cheap areas of accommodation within Nairobi.

As we saw from our earlier estimates Kibera is the second most important unauthorized settlement in Nairobi after Mathare Valley. It most probably accounts for around 20% of all unauthorized accommodation in Nairobi.

The site of Kibera is bisected by the Uganda Railway which serves as the dividing line between old Nubian Kibera which is called Makina and the more recent housing development. The 'new' villages lie upon relatively flat ridge plateaux which are bisected by two rivers that run roughly eastwards towards the Nairobi dam.

According to a World Bank study 49% of the site has slopes of 10% and above with 20% slopes fairly common. (LCHSUS No. 7, 1976). The increasing house construction in the last few years (1978 onwards) has utilized the steeper valley sides and poorly drained valley floors. Building on such sites is especially dangerous for sanitation and flooding reasons: flash-flooding is quite common in Nairobi during the rainy season, and in a storm in Spring 1981 some of the housing was washed away. However, in general Kibera is a ridge rather than a valley site. The relative openness of the site partly explains why visually it is not as depressing as the more enclosed Mathare Valley. As we have already suggested the site has a high alternative use-value which increases the prospects of its redevelopment. That an unauthorized settlement should exist on such a site is surprising, since conventionally squatters are conceptualized as occupying geographical and economically marginal sites such as areas liable to flooding or steep slopes. While the settlement includes such sites the majority of the area consists of flat plateau sites.

The entire site is owned by the Government of Kenya (plot no. 1702) but there are important differences in peoples claims over the land. In

the Nubian part of the settlement, i.e. north of the railway line, as we saw in Chapter 5, the land tenure is exceptionally complicated with the Nubians having some claim in terms of equity. In the area south of the railway line where most of the post-1974 housing development has occurred, "The land within the study-area (i.e. south of the railway line) is entirely government-owned. Thus, technically, all present inhabitants can be classified as squatters". (LCHSUS no. 7, 1976, 121).

6.3 Housing in Old and New Kibera

We shall now describe the physical conditions of housing stock in both the 'old' Nubian core area of Kibera and the new area (i.e. south of the railway line) that was associated with the rapid informal development that occurred after 1974.

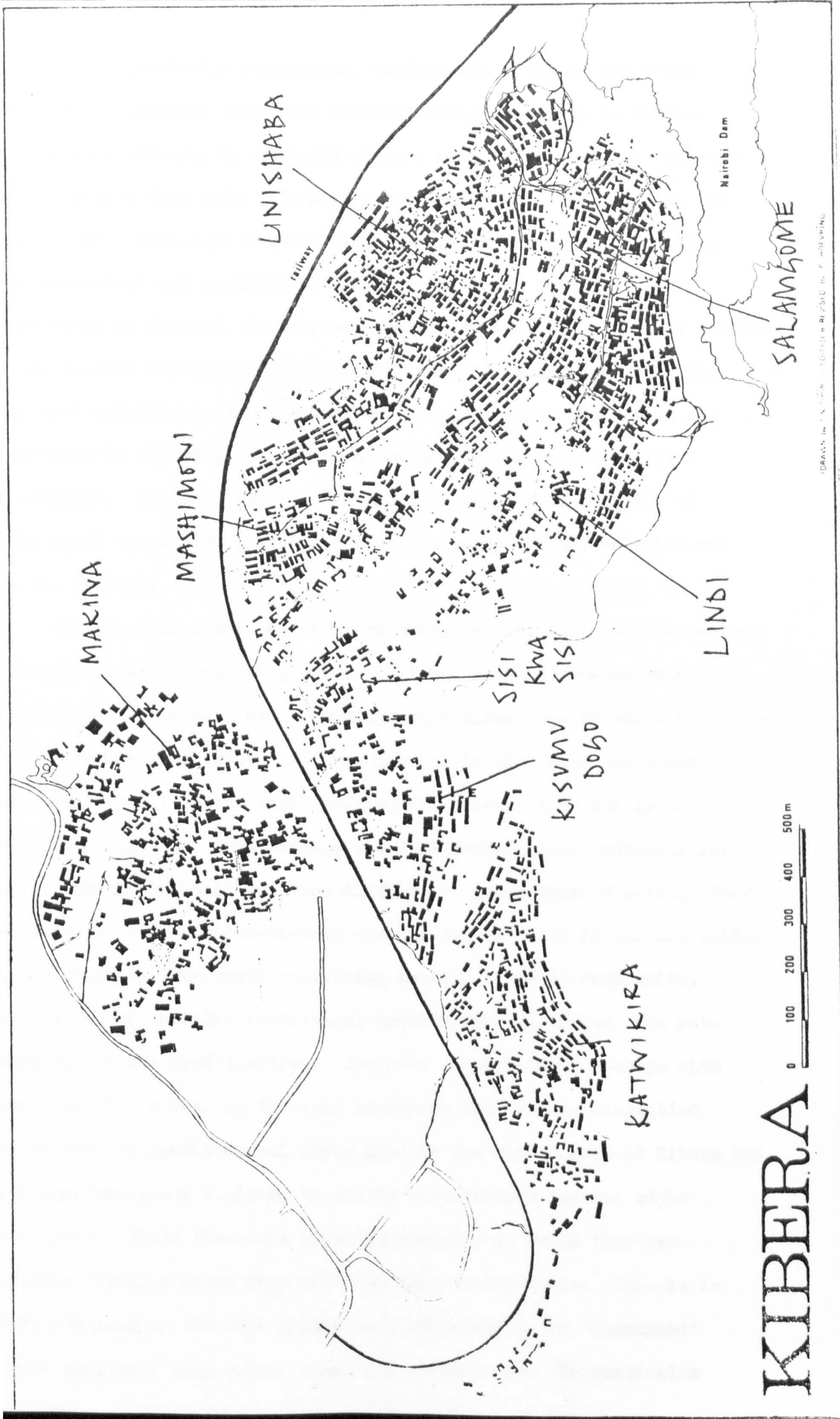
An important physical difference within the settlement concerns levels of housing quality and density. This has important implications for sanitation problems which are appreciably worse at very high density levels than at low densities. While Kibera's relatively pleasant rural character is a result of its being a relatively low-density housing area, the distance between buildings varies from parts of Linishaba where blocks may be separated by only 1-2 metres to other areas like Lindi or Makina where buildings may be over 10m apart. During 1980 it was becoming common for owners to establish and define their 'patches' by constructing fences. In part this may have reflected a desire for security and privacy but it was also a way to establish control over adjacent land. The increasing development within Kibera increases site densities and is of crucial planning importance, since above a certain residential density any form of squatter upgrading inevitably involves a lot of demolition. There are also vast differences within Kibera in building quality and housing

conditions. The best Nubian homes in Kibera had hedges and gates and four rooms for the family; they were rather like semi-affluent 'enclaves' amid poverty and the houses would not look out of place in ex-European Nairobi. However, other 'houses' or blocks were in a state of total disrepair and were often built extremely close to each other, sometimes on swampy sites upon the valley floor.

As we can see from the map below (Figure 6.2) Kibera is composed of a series of villages. It is important to understand that the settlement is fairly well differentiated, so that each 'village' almost has a separate character. The main apparent axes of differentiation are the level of economic activity, ethnicity and the level of 'owner-occupation'. There is also a high level of intra-settlement residential mobility. We shall first consider Makina i.e. old Kibera before describing the conditions in the villages south of the railway line, i.e. new Kibera.

Makina is the Nubian part of the settlement and was first settled in 1913. It is thus one of the oldest areas of continuous settlement within Nairobi. Today it remains as the focus of Kibera. It contains a mixture of fairly large houses which are owner-occupied by well-off Nubians, interspersed with 4, 6, 8 room structures built for renting. As in the whole of Kibera with a few exceptions, houses are built from mud and wattle with a corrugated iron roof. Plaster and concrete for the walls and floor are an optional extra. The big Nubian owner-occupied houses are sometimes built around a central courtyard in an adaptation of some architectural styles that are traditionally associated with the Swahali coast of East Africa. Indeed the visual appearance of Makina is slightly reminiscent of the old Swahali towns within Mombassa, Lamu and Zanzibar. Makina is an area of mixed functional uses which gives it a feeling of activity. In particular it contains shops, a market, bars and a fair amount of informal sector

Figure 6.2 Map of the 'village' of Kibera



activity, in particular carpenters, tailors and cobblers who often practise in companies with such unlikely names as Biafra or Soweto. Most of this activity is centered along a main street running west-east through Kibera that ends as a square with the Nubians' Mosque¹ as its focal point. Makina is a lively, bustling urban district containing both commercial and residential uses together with fairly large differences in income. In many ways Makina represents an African version of the classic features of urbanisation, neighbourhood and community that have spawned an entire school of thought among sociologists and architects in the US and the UK concerning the 'organic' quality of urbanism. (Jacobs, 1961). Similarly it would seem the sort of place which would convince people that squatters are the solution and not the problem.

Outside Makina the new villages which are all south of the railway line grew up around existing nuclei. These nuclei were existing Kikuyu squatter or subsistence shelter structures some of which have been there at least since 1960. The new housing in this area was almost exclusively built in the rapid development between 1974 and 1980. As we have suggested this housing was constructed almost entirely for rent. Thus while there are some differences among these dwellings they all take the form of back-to-back housing blocks built in mud and wattle with corrugated iron roofs containing between 4 and 20 room units. Here we can see how the traditional architectural form has been subordinated to the profit motive. The more 'traditional' U-shape with rooms arranged around an internal courtyard that was an adaptation of the Swahali architectural style used in the Nubian area of Kibera has been abandoned, and replaced by simple back-to-back barrack style structures. While these are slightly cheaper to build they are socially inferior since they offer no semi-public space. This is in sharp contrast to the more traditional style where the 'courtyard' offers excellent semi-public space for outdoor use. In particular

such space is useful for children to play in; for informal economic activities and provides a safe place to hang washing. In policy terms the importance of such outdoor space use is only now beginning to be given the recognition it merits. (Taylor, 1981).

It is this 'new' part of Kibera which includes sites on steep slopes where gully erosion causing subsidence and flooding is common during the rainy seasons.

In this section we have very briefly described the physical housing conditions in old and new Kibera. In the next section we shall examine the proliferation of local economic activity within the settlement.

6.4 Local Economic Activity

One of the first things to strike an outsider in Kibera is the staggering level of visible economic activity. We shall see that many of these informal sector operations are highly capitalistic and profitable. Within Kibera there are local carpenters, builders, cobblers and tailors among others who are involved in production. The majority of these are small scale 'informal sector' enterprises but in the clothing industry there is a significant amount of out-working for the formal sector. For example, school uniforms were made in Kibera upon sewing machines that were on loan to the outworkers from the formal sector Asian retailers in central Nairobi who marketed the uniforms. The link between the two formal and informal sectors is particularly important and exploitative within the clothing industry.

In contrast the small scale carpentry workshops seemed to be economically autonomous. Indeed informants complained about the difficulty they had in marketing outside of the settlement. Within this sector the degree of product uniformity is interesting. For example, the wooden schools, tables and tin lanterns are of uniform design throughout Kenya.² However, there is also evidence of product

innovation, for example an out-of-work Zaire musician specialises in 'exotic' tin lanterns.

The major food retailing in the settlement involves vegetable selling both informally i.e. marketing and in 'official' markets. The 'new' part of the settlement contains areas that approximate to 'dormitory housing estates' with economic activity mainly located in a strip or ribbon development along the main access routes on the ridges. This is well illustrated from our approximate map of the centres of economic activity within the settlement. In 1980 the 'official' vegetable market in Kibera was moved from Makina to a site in Lindi (see Figure 6.2). This move was allegedly for health reasons. The previous market was also demolished as the site was needed for a police station. This police station has yet to be built and given the general uncertainty over the area's land use seems unlikely to be built. The new market in Lindi does not have running water consequently the health advantages of the move are at best marginal. However, what is certain is that the local administration will benefit from the move by the re-allocation of market stalls as a form of patronage. Market stalls are an important economic resource whose allocation is controlled by the local administration and Nairobi city council. In part this reflects the potential profitability of this sector. A ^{informant} vegetable seller/admitted that the mark-up was 100% on sukumawiki (a popular spinach-like vegetable) and from other figures we were able to calculate that her monthly income was around 1,400/- which is a lot higher than is popularly imagined, and is about double the average for the settlement.

As well as this official market there are informal hawker's vegetable markets in Linishaba, Lindi and Katwikira where the vegetable sellers (almost exclusively women) will lay their produce on the ground for sale. Given the proximity in some of these hawkers' markets of

large amounts of refuse the risk of infection must be high. Similarly there are many butchers in the area who represent a health risk given the lack of refrigeration or a regular water supply.³

The settlement has many bars and hotelis (little cafes) catering for the area's inhabitants. These hotelis mainly cater for single male migrant workers.

An important aspect of the area's local economy is the illegal distillation of alcohol. The drink produced (changaa) is extremely cheap and potent. It is made from the distillation of traditional beer (busia) which is made from maize and millet. These activities require a large amount of water and are carried out in secret locations in the river valleys near the settlement. The spirit is then brought into the settlement and sold in private rooms, 'speak easys' or unofficial bars, for as little as one shilling a measure. This activity has many classic features of the informal sector; namely the ambiguous role of the state, high profits and social costs. There is both active police harassment for some outlets and tacit recognition for others. For example, one informant said that the regular customers at the bar in her room were the police. When a neighbour irritated by the noise complained to the police station about the bar's existence, a different group of police came to investigate. There then ensued an internal police discussion, presumably where rank was pulled, about what to do about this bar. According to informants the profit margins for distilling are extremely high. In part this must reflect the risk and insecurity involved. Alcohol provides cheap escapism for the urban poor to numb themselves from the harsh reality they face. However, since this sector is illegal, there is no control on whether the alcohol produced is methanol or ethanol. While ethanol (C_2H_5OH) is what is normally consumed as alcohol, methanol (CH_3OH) is poisonous (e.g. 'meths') and causes health damage, i.e. eye problems. Those who

romanticise the informal sector with its entrepreneurial spirit might care to consider the social and health damage of methanol consumption.⁴

The fuel used in the settlement is primarily required for cooking; charcoal is the most popular as kerosene is expensive. The retailing and distribution of charcoal is organized at a nationwide level. The wood is collected in the rural areas and then transported by truck into Nairobi where it is retailed at numerous outlets; there were many of these in Kibera. It is rumoured that influential individuals and large sums of capital are involved in this 'informal activity' since the price mark-up and profitability are substantial.⁵ This activity has been the focus of some attention as the continual search for wood may produce environmental degradation, through deforestation. This is likely to exacerbate Kenya's problems of soil erosion and run off.

The most important informal sector activity within Nairobi is matatus or pirate taxis. There is a frequent matatu service from Makina and the nearby golf course estate into central Nairobi. However it is surprising that no matatus carry passengers from within the settlement to central Nairobi on a regular basis. This may reflect the state of the roads within Kibera. A matatu is a private vehicle, often a Peugeot 504, that has been converted to carry passengers. They carry passengers for money but are not licensed. They represent a spontaneous response to the need for public transport within Nairobi and began in the 1960s. By the early 1970s there were approximately 400 such vehicles working in Nairobi. In 1973 there was a Presidential decree that exempted vehicles of under 3 tonnes from the provisions of the Transport Licensing Act.⁶ The reasons for this 'deregulation' are not clear but it may have been a response to political pressure to open up this potential source of accumulation. Nevertheless the impact was spectacular; the numbers of matatus in Nairobi grew from 400 in 1973

to 1,500 in 1977 and by 1981 had reached 3,000. It is estimated that 160,000 people use a matatu daily in Nairobi or approximately 16% of the city's population. This rapid increase has been a result of the sector's high profitability. While there is no data it is popularly rumoured to be the most lucrative source of investment in Kenya. (Recent figures suggest that a daily income for a matatu is between 500/- and 740/- (Mazingira, 1981).

A matatu operation involves usually three or more individuals; namely an owner, a driver and a 'turnboy' or conductor. From the owner's viewpoint there is a perennial problem that the driver may disappear with the matatu and thus the owner's investment is lost. Less spectacularly the owner has little guarantee that he receives all the income that the matatu earns. A possible easy solution for the owner is to have a relative, whom he can trust, in one of the matatu jobs. In some cases a relative of the owner may be employed solely as a money collector sitting in the matatu all day.

There are many similarities between matatus and unauthorized housing. Both are extremely profitable, have experienced rapid growth and capitalist penetration and are characterized by competition between different levels of capital, e.g. the World Bank are now interested in both sectors. The most striking similarity between the two is in the difficulty which matatu owners and landlords have in maintaining control and hence in securing returns of their investments.

The relation between risk and return is also borne out by the economics of running a hoteli. Thus a hoteli owner was able to do a quick calculation of the profit and loss on his tea business and inform me that the profit margin on an oil-drum of tea was 40/-. As if informed by textbook discussions of risk he then told me that changaa (illegal alcohol) distillation had both the highest profits and the highest risks, but, in his view, was not worth the risk.

The result of the profitability of economic activities such as those described is that Kibera has the number of retail outlets and services befitting a low-income community of 60,000 inhabitants albeit at a high cost. More interestingly while the evidence is lacking it seems that almost every purchase by a low-income inhabitant can be made within Kibera. All varieties of food, meat, beer are available, his charcoal for cooking, his furniture and his clothes may be locally purchased and sometimes even made locally.

In keeping with this we can note that some formal sector companies have their official retail outlets in such settlements. For example in Lindi there is an outlet of Bata shoes. This formal sector involvement in an unauthorized sector emphasises the interdependence of the two sectors.

In this section we have examined the local economic activity in Kibera. Of necessity we have focused upon the informal sector. This has been useful in providing background as unauthorized housing is a similar kind of economic activity. Secondly this local economic activity is an important part of Kibera. We have tried to show that much of this sector is capitalistic in its orientation, and that within the more profitable sections, namely matatus and charcoal there is clear evidence of 'external' funding and involvement by the formal sector. There are few sectors in Kenya's economy that exhibit this 'capitalist spirit' so clearly as this local economy. This may be because for many there is no alternative ('eat or be eaten'(Ngugi, 1977)). The ambiguous attitude of the State was apparent in the case of the 'official' vegetable market and in its partial connivance in the illegal distillation of alcohol. In the next section we shall investigate the provision or non-provision of infrastructure and public services by the state.

6.5 Infrastructure in Kibera

The public sector's involvement in Kibera is limited. At the moment the local administration has effectively abdicated responsibility for service and infrastructure provision. Consequently there is no public transport within the settlement, nor are there any public toilets. We will consider the various aspects of infrastructure in turn.

The road system which is important for the provision of such public services as fire protection, police and ambulance is totally inadequate. The settlement is serviced by a hierarchy of murram (dried earth) roads and footpaths. Vehicle access is almost exclusively by Kibera Drive to the North or from Mbagatti Way into Linishaba (see Figure 6.2). From these two main entry points there are tracks along both ridges along which most economic activity takes place. Running from this there is an elaborate and well defined network of footpaths. In the dry season the access is adequate although dusty. However in the wet season without appropriate storm drains the majority of routes are impassible. For example in many places the mud forms to a depth of one metre. In such situations vehicle access is impossible; one retailer explained how, during the wet season, the delivery trucks would stop approximately 1 km from his shop and the subsequent delivery was made by portage. Despite the inadequacies of the road system there is little public pressure for its improvement.

Turning now to consider the issue of sanitation in Kibera the first point is that there is no water-borne sewage system. Thus excreta disposal is provided for by pit latrines constructed by landlords for use by their tenants. These pit latrines will be shared by the tenants. There are many problems with this system: firstly there is the problem of non-provision by landlords. Thus among 80 structures we visited eight did not have any pit latrines (10%). However, this hides substantial differences; in some villages 1 in 20

structures (5%) did not have pit latrines while in Linishaba 1 in 4 (25%) did not.

The second major problem with such an excreta disposal system is the pit latrine's maintenance and replacement when the latrine is full. This problem is acute since the working latrines become overutilized. The 'communal' use of latrines by tenants often results in poor levels of maintenance and cleanliness since nobody has 'responsibility'. Those latrines which are in private houses are in excellent condition. The sanitation problem of Kibera is thus intrinsically not a technological one but a social one. The result of the present situation is that tenants use 'open' sites in the valleys of the settlement or sanitation facilities elsewhere in Nairobi. The health importance of the sanitation situation in Kibera cannot be over-emphasized. Without improvement in sanitation or water provision cholera must remain an ever-present threat. Indeed it was amazing that the cholera outbreak of 1980 was contained.

Finally, the water supply in Kibera owes its existence to the Nairobi cholera outbreak of 1972. Within Nairobi cholera, as one saw in Chapter 4, often results in public sector actions to the benefit of the urban poor. A cynic would suggest that this is because cholera has no respect for social class.

Water is provided to the consumer in the following way. Water is sold by Nairobi City Council-licensed kiosk owners who pay for the installation charges and pipes. Their profits are made in a middleman position between Nairobi City Council/Water Authority and the consumer. In percentage terms their mark-up is extremely high (760%, according to Dekruijff, 1979), although in absolute terms it is not so great. Throughout the settlement the lowest price water is retailed at is 20 cents a debe (20 litres), despite the official maximum of 10 cents. The level of water consumption in the settlement is extremely low. The

figures from our survey are below - the consumption of children has been included at 66.7% of adult consumption.

Figure 6.3 Daily Water Consumption per Capita in Kibera

<u>Level of daily consumption</u>	<u>Cumulative frequency</u>
10 litres	30% (21)
20 litres	73% (51)
30 litres	89% (62)
40 litres	98% (68)
Total	100% (70)

Source: tenant survey

These figures compare extremely unfavourably with the WHO 'minimum' of 40 litres per capita per day. (The average per capita figure for Kibera is 19.6 litres per day). It would seem that distance from the source of water supply and the inconvenience in collecting it are the most likely explanations for such low figures rather than the pricing mechanism. However low income inhabitants pay more per litre of water as well as collect it themselves than do high income inhabitants within Nairobi. (Dekruijff, 1979). It is possible for the very poorest to spend nearly 10% of their incomes upon water.

The provision of water represents a good example of the tacit acceptance of unauthorized settlements together with a commercialization process. Water provision is an interesting example of the disadvantages of providing a basic need via the market place. Thus since water is being sold explicitly as a commodity its consumption is extremely low even by third world standards. For example, in conversations with an expert from India he assumed my figures must be in gallons rather than litres from their magnitude, i.e. a reasonable figure to him was four times mine. A second aspect of this water supply system is that water kiosk owners' interests may be different from those of the local administration and the community. Thus in the 1980 cholera outbreak

the administration was unable to enforce its ruling that water should be provided free; the kiosk owners shut the system down rather than trust in the administration's claim that it would foot the bill for this free water as it promised. The result was that within a few days the administration was forced to reintroduce the normal system. Nevertheless whether for reasons of cost or convenience some inhabitants do use alternative sources for water. In health terms this is very dangerous given the overall level of sanitation.

Thus the overall sanitation situation is further exacerbated by the lack of an adequate refuse or rubbish disposal system. Refuse collection by Nairobi City Council is minimal; except as in 1980 when cholera threatens the settlement when it is cleared rapidly. Similarly there is very little burning of rubbish by the inhabitants of the settlement; consequently there are large quantities of refuse around the area. This fact is clearly a health risk.

To conclude it is clear that the administration provides the absolute minimum level of public infrastructure.⁷ It does not provide metalled roads, or a sewerage system and the water supply is limited and expensive. The fact that the water supply exists at all is directly linked to the health risks associated with cholera. More generally the lack of infrastructure is due to a lack of public expenditure which reflects the low political priority of such areas. The administration's main interest in unauthorized settlements is to gain access to the economic opportunities they offer rather than to undertake social reform.

6.6 Conclusion

In this chapter we have provided a general overview of the physical environment and economic activity within Kibera. The private sector has been actively involved in providing services, selling vegetables

etc. for the urban poor. The public sector meanwhile has abdicated any responsibility for providing facilities for the settlement. It is only when it feels threatened as in the case of potential cholera outbreaks that anything is done. The next chapter addresses the central concern of this thesis; namely the economics of the informal housing market, from a developer or landlord's viewpoint.

Chapter 6 - Footnotes

1. It is interesting to note that an Asian muslim girl at the University of Nairobi Architecture faculty was doing the scale drawings for renovations and improvements to the Mosque. Here we see another side to the conventional client-patron model. Thus some professional individuals i.e. lawyers like Willy Mutunga quite often offer their skills to protect and help their less educated 'patrons' or kinsmen.
2. The tin lanterns that are made in the informal sector in Nairobi are apparently the same design as those found in India. This may be the result of the Asian community's historical involvement with such craft industries in Nairobi (King, 1977).
3. I do not want to suggest that I am blaming the retailers for this health risk. It is a general function of the area's poverty.
4. A solution might be to legalize and control this alcohol production as has been done with some success in Tanzania and Uganda.
5. Personal communication Dennis Kabagambe Planning Department, University of Nairobi who is working on the informal sector.
6. Despite this decree the precise legal status of matatus remains unclear; in particular in relation to their maintenance and insurance.
7. It is interesting to note that electricity is provided to a few individual plots in Makina, it would seem that the installation cost is paid by the consumer not the utility. Similarly a few plots have a telephone connection the installation of which is paid for by the consumer.

CHAPTER 7

THE ECONOMICS OF SHANTY REAL ESTATE IN KIBERA

"These houses most of them are commercial"

Comment by Kibera local official

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter we shall examine the construction, profitability and ownership of 'shanty real estate'. We also examine the mechanisms by which this sector grew. Thus the argument of this chapter and data presented are totally at variance with the conventional view of squatting in the third world. Hence it is a key chapter in the overall argument of the thesis. In this chapter we are concerned with the economics and operation of this rental sector. We are thus implicitly looking at the situation from what might be considered as a 'landlord's viewpoint'. In Chapter 8 we shall redress this balance and take a 'tenant's viewpoint'.

The first section of this chapter is an investigation into the construction and profitability of shanty real estate. In the second section we shall examine housing demand and the rent levels within the settlement. The third section presents data on the concentration of room-ownership and the extent of large scale landlordism. Finally in the last section we shall examine the dynamics of the commercialization process in unauthorized housing.

7.2 The construction and profitability of unauthorized real estate

In this section we shall examine the economics of the construction and rental of unauthorized housing in Kibera.

Let us first consider the economics of the construction process. In

Chapter 5 we discussed the process of allocation of plots of land for building. Assuming one is lucky enough or well connected enough to have been informally allocated a plot, how does one proceed? Quite simply one contracts out the construction of the building to an informal sector construction company many of which abound in Kibera. Unfortunately we did not have time to investigate this sector in depth but it would seem to be an important economic spin-off from the commercialization of unauthorized housing. The construction of a building will involve sub-contracting relationships with one or more informal companies which undertake the building of the wooden frame and roof, the application and consolidation of mud walls and the construction and digging of pit latrines. The division of labour in this production process should be noted. The owner is a different person from the builder in direct contradiction of the image of 'subsistence shelter' or self-build. The existence of this specialization is an important pre-requisite for the emergence of capitalist relations of production in building.

The construction cost of such a building can be illustrated by the particular case of one building that was being constructed in Linishaba, at the time of our fieldwork. The structure consisted of ten rooms and took two weeks to construct.

The figures in Figure 7.1 are estimates and if anything they are on the generous side, e.g. wage levels might be under 800/- a month. We would suggest that for a 10 room mud and wattle structure with a pit latrine, 11,000/- is a fair estimate of the total cost.

The profitability of building such housing for rent can be seen from the potential rental income. In one year a structure of 10 rooms will yield a gross income of 14,000/-, assuming a rent of 120/- per room, which was the rent being charged in the case described. Thus it can be seen that the initial cost would be recouped in about 9 months, after which the rental income would be pure profit - if depreciation and maintenance

Figure 7.1 Building costs of 10 room (27 walls) rental structure

Poles (the main vertical structural support) 27 x 4 @ 5/-	540/-
Bamboo poles (for strengthening walls) 27 x 6 @ 9/- (horizontal)	1,458/-
Roof (corrugated iron sheets) 132 @ 30/-	3,960/-
Long poles (horizontal roof supports)	500/-
Nails	500/-
Labour 6 men for 2 weeks at 800/- a month 6 x 400/-	2,400/-
Mud & wattle sub-contract	1,600/-
Pit latrine (sub contract at 45/- per ft and 15 ft deep)	675/-
	<hr/>
	Grand total 11,633/-
	<hr/>

costs are ignored which are very low. These figures give a capital return of approximately 130%. In the case of another block the relevant figures were 14 months and 86% respectively. In both cases even if we allow for a fairly hefty bribe to obtain the plot which is usually not required, the capital returns are substantial.¹ Needless to say such returns are always tax free since they are undeclared. The scale of these returns explains the involvement of capital in the unauthorized housing market of Kibera.

A further point may be made here. Since the land is provided free or at least (if a bribe is paid) below market cost the state is effectively subsidizing a developer/landlord group by the difference between the actual cost of the land and its market value. In the case of self-build squatting where land is obtained free it is the squatter household which receives the benefit of this implicit subsidy. In the case of rental housing however this hidden subsidy has effectively been taken away

from the urban poor by capital's involvement and control. Whereas squatters used to get the benefit of free land, now the urban poor are tenants and as such no longer live in Nairobi rent-free. It is the landlords who are getting development land cheaply. There is a parallel here with official public housing in Nairobi where those lucky enough to be allocated a house or plot can sub-let at a profit; the state thus effectively subsidizes sub-letting.

Finally we shall examine a second stage in the commercialization process which is starting to develop: this occurs when unauthorized housing itself becomes marketable, i.e. when landlords sell the rental blocks constructed for them, thus realizing their full value. (In one case it seems that a prospective buyer was able to raise a 49,000/- (£2722) loan from a bank to buy such a block). This 'second stage' capitalist transaction is not dependent upon political connections and gives some indication of the real value of such connections. Thus a hypothetical landlord in a two year period might do the following (on conservative estimates from our own data): build a ten room unit for 12,000/-, rent it out for two years (28,000/-), then sell the block for 40,000/-, which would result in a net overall profit of 55,000/- (£3,155). To achieve such a return within two years on an initial investment of only 12,000/- (£666) is staggering; such are the rewards in modern Kenya for knowing the right people. The existence of this second stage market suggests that rental housing is still considered to be a safe investment and that there is a general lack of alternative economic openings. It also suggests that some individuals are excluded from patronage networks which would have enabled them to buy such property at 12,000/- rather than 40,000/-. Interestingly a similar process has been noted in Latin American squatter settlements where the majority of inhabitants bought their plots from original squatters. (Gilbert, 1981). Here the original squatters are effectively getting a cash reward for their nerve

in occupying land, whereas in our case landlords who sell out are realising a monetary gain for being connected to the local administration.

It is returns of the dimensions we have quoted which account for the inflow of capital into unauthorized housing, and the political competition to gain access to such a rewarding investment. It would seem quite possible that, as is often suggested, unauthorised housing and matatus are the most lucrative investments in modern Kenya.

7.3 Housing demand and rent levels in Kibera

Having discussed the construction and profitability of unauthorized rental housing in a general sense we now present some more systematic data on the actual operation of this market in Kibera.

Clearly a key element in determining the high level of profits from rental housing is rent levels which in turn reflects the demand for housing within the settlement. As we saw in Chapter 4, the scale of rural-urban migration in Kenya and the inadequate supply of public housing means that there is so much pressure on accommodation in Nairobi that every available room can be let. In 1962 Nairobi's population was 343,500. By 1979 it had risen to 827,800. This represents an annual urban growth rate of approximately 5%. Estimates for the rate of increase of low-income inhabitants are substantially higher. Thus throughout the 1960-1980 period Nairobi has been a city undergoing rapid urbanisation. As a result of this growth we may characterise Nairobi's recent housing market as in a permanent condition of excess demand.

As we saw in Chapter 4 there is a process by which different unauthorized sites sequentially absorb the majority of this growth. Thus, in the late 1960s and early 1970s Mathare Valley was the main area absorbing rural migrants, during the mid 1970s it was Kibera and Kwangware, while after 1978 it was Korokocho.

Turning now to our data from our survey of tenants in the four villages

within Kibera the average monthly rent level was 99/-. Perhaps the most obvious initial point to make about this is that according to the conventional image of squatting rent as such does not exist. That we should have no difficulty obtaining data about rent levels illustrates the degree to which this is a housing situation dominated by 'the market'. The rent level varies according to the size and quality or finish of the room, i.e. whether the floor is concreted and the wall plastered. Figures 7.2 and 7.3 illustrate this general relationship. Figure 7.2 shows that higher rents tend to be associated with better finish either of the floor or the walls.

Figure 7.2 Breakdown of rent level by finish of floors and walls

Rooms with mud and wattle walls			Rooms with either concrete floor or plastered walls		Rooms with plastered walls and concreted floors		
<u>Monthly rents (K Shs)</u>							
60-79	14%	(13)					
80-99	30%	(27)					
100-119	14%	(13)	16%	(15)	1%	(1)	
120-139	2%	(2)	4%	(4)	4%	(4)	
140-159	1%	(1)			5%	(5)	
160-179	3%	(3)			2%	(2)	
180-200	1%	(1)					
<hr/>			<hr/>		<hr/>		
Total	65%	(60)	20%	(19)	12%	(12)	97% (91)

Source: Tenant survey

Figure 7.3 Distribution of monthly rents by room size

<u>Monthly Rent (KShs)</u>	<u>Size of room (m²)</u>						
	9-11	12-14	15-17	18-20	21-23	24-26	27+
60-79	5	3	5	-	-	-	-
80-99	5	8	6	4	1	1	-
100-119	4	1	14	3	-	2	2
120-139	2	-	2	3	-	-	-
140-159	-	2	2	2	-	-	-
160-179	-	-	1	1	1	-	1
180-200	-	-	1	-	-	-	-

Source: Tenant survey

Figure 7.3 shows the tendency for larger rooms to be associated with higher rents. These data are not broken down by room quality. However we can illustrate the importance of both size and quality of finish in the following way. Whereas for all the rooms included in the survey we find that the average monthly rent per square metre is 6.94 Kshs, for rooms with a mud and wattle finish it is 6.67 Kshs, while for those with both a concrete floor and plastered walls it is 8.91 Kshs. The average for rooms with either plastered walls or a concrete floor was not significantly different from the mud and wattle figure at 6.62 Kshs. From this it should be apparent that the rent charged is a function of room size and finish. However it is also worth noting that there is a fairly large amount of variation around these averages. Thus while the average rent per square metre was 6.94 Kshs the standard deviation was 2.50 Ksh. In practice, therefore, we can only say with any certainty that 66% of the rooms in our settlement have rents lying between 4.44 and 9.44 per sq. metre. Thus there are substantial differences within the settlement in the rents paid for accommodation of a given size. For example for a

16 sq metre room monthly rents could be expected to vary between 71/- and 151/-. In view of the generally low incomes of most of the tenants such differences are extremely important. For the same reason as we shall see in the next chapter the flexibility landlords allow their tenants in the payment of rent is critical to tenants living standards.

Unofficially within the settlement it was suggested that the local administration had ordered that mud and wattle rooms should be let at 80/- while those which are plastered at 120/-. From our data these figures are certainly not observed if they are intended to be maximum levels; they are however fairly close to average levels (see Figure 7.2). In any case the rent levels are not subject to legal controls but their upward movement is constrained by what tenants can afford to pay, i.e. rents only rise when incomes rise. Thus for example in May 1980 when the minimum wage was raised and despite explicit Presidential warnings to the contrary the rent level also immediately increased. Hence in our survey in June-December 1980 we found that in 33 out of 76 blocks (43%) visited, the rent level had recently increased.

In this section we have examined the demand for housing and the subsequent rent levels in Kibera; in the next section we shall concentrate on the scale of landlordism. This will confirm the potential gold mine this sector represents for some fortunate individuals.

7.4 The concentration of room-ownership amongst landlords in Kibera

Having illustrated the profitability and rent levels of the rental sector, we shall now present systematic evidence on the scale and distribution of landlordism within the settlement.

In the absence of a register of landlords and their holdings it was necessary to make our own estimates. A crucial measure in this calculation is the number of rooms contained in each structure. Since most landlords only occupy one or two or occasionally three rooms in their

own structures² there is a connection between the number of rooms contained in a structure and the number of rooms let.

Historically we can note a tendency for the number of rooms per structure to increase in unauthorized settlements. Thus our survey figure of 10.3 rooms a structure in 1980 is higher than Nellie Temple's figure of 4.3 rooms in 1972 (Temple, 1974). At a very general level this suggests an increasing concentration of room-ownership and suggests the possible involvement of larger quantities of capital.

In our detailed survey of four villages within Kibera the average number of rooms per structure was 10.33 or approximately 8, 11, 12 and 8 within each of the four villages. Figures of this size clearly reflect the construction of housing explicitly for renting. In no way can such figures be interpreted as owner-occupation with a limited number of house extensions for rental purposes which was the case in the 1960s. Hence, even if we assume that a landlord owning a structure in Kibera will occupy three out of the 'average' number of ten rooms, which is a generous estimate, seven will be available for rent. Such an activity would yield a gross income of approximately 700/- to 800/- a month, which is equivalent to an unskilled worker's wage in Nairobi's industrial sector. However the figure of rooms per structure is only a preliminary measure since it does not reflect the number of structures and therefore rooms let by individual landlords. From our major survey of landlords in the settlement south of the railway line, i.e. excluding the predominately Nubian part of Kibera, Makina, we were able to draw up Figures 7.4 and 7.5.

Figure 7.4 shows the distribution of landlords between different categories of number of rooms owned and Figure 7.5 shows the same data in cumulative form. Figure 7.6 is a summary version of Figure 7.5.

Figure 7.4 Distribution of landlords by number of rooms let

<u>No. of rooms let</u>	<u>No. of landlords with this no. of rooms</u>		<u>Total no. of rooms in this category</u>	
1-3	64	(7.0%)	128	(1.1%)
4-7	225	(24.7%)	1013	(9.1%)
8-11	303	(33.3%)	2879	(25.9%)
12-15	160	(17.6%)	2160	(19.4%)
16-19	46	(5.0%)	805	(7.2%)
20-29	60	(6.6%)	1372	(12.3%)
30-39	21	(2.3%)	725	(6.5%)
40-49	12	(1.3%)	514	(4.6%)
50-59	7	(0.8%)	362	(3.3%)
60-69	3	(0.3%)	189	(1.7%)
70-79	2	(0.2%)	153	(1.4%)
80-89	3	(0.3%)	248	(2.2%)
90+	4	(0.4%)	571	(5.1%)
Total	910		11,119	

Source: Landlord survey

Figure 7.5 Cumulative distribution of room ownership

<u>No. of rooms let</u>	<u>Cumulative no. of landlords</u>	<u>Cumulative no. of rooms let</u>
90+	4 (0.4%)	571 (5.1%)
80-89	7 (0.7%)	819 (7.3%)
70-79	9 (0.9%)	972 (8.7%)
60-69	12 (1.2%)	1161 (10.4%)
50-59	19 (2.0%)	1523 (13.7%)
40-49	31 (3.3%)	2037 (18.3%)
30-39	52 (5.6%)	2762 (24.8%)
20-29	112 (12.2%)	4134 (37.1%)
16-19	158 (17.2%)	4939 (44.3%)
12-15	318 (34.8%)	7099 (63.7%)
8-11	621 (68.1%)	9978 (89.6%)
4-7	846 (92.8%)	10,991 (98.7%)
1-3	910 (100.0%)	11,119 (100.0%)

Source: Landlord survey

Figure 7.6 Summary distribution of room ownership

<u>No. of rooms let</u>	<u>No. of landlords</u>	<u>Total no. of rooms</u>
1-7	289 (32%)	1141 (10%)
8-15	463 (51%)	5039 (45%)
16-29	106 (12%)	2177 (20%)
30+	52 (6%)	2762 (25%)
Total	910	11,119

Source: Figure 7.5

These tables show that there is a relatively large number of small landlords, and a smaller number of large landlords. Thus 32% of landlords own seven rooms or less, and the rooms they own represent 10% of all rooms. But the average number of rooms owned is 12.2 and this is due to the existence of much larger landlords. The 6% of landlords owning 30 or more rooms own 25% of all rooms. The high degree of concentration of ownership is most dramatically shown by the four landlords in the 90+ category of rooms owned who between them own 571 rooms, or 5% of the total number of rooms for rent in the area of Kibera covered by the survey. The average size of the property 'empire' of these four landlords is in excess of 100 rooms.

The financial rewards from such landlordism can be illustrated. Within a year at most, landlords will be able to recoup their initial capital outlay, and the rental income from 100 units after this will yield a monthly income of approximately 10,000/- (£555) (assuming an average room rent of approximately 100/- a month). This income will also be tax-free, being impossible to declare. Even on a more modest scale, a landlord owning 30 units, will have a monthly income of 3000/-, after the initial capital is recouped, which is equivalent to the salary level of some middle rank white collar jobs in Nairobi. However it is important to realise that for some individuals this sector represents their only source of income. In particular for those who are landless and without employment in Nairobi rental housing provides the income for their survival. Similarly this small scale urban landlordism provides an important source of economic security for many women for whom alternatives are closed. Indeed this sector seems to be a favoured place for prostitutes to invest their hard-earned money and retire. Consequently while some of these landlords are well-off, and may have other sources of income, it would be a mistake to underestimate the number of those from the urban poor who are dependent solely upon this

sector for their livelihood. Indeed for the landless it may be their only source of potential capital accumulation.

Nevertheless it is apparent from our figures and from direct observation that the capital involved in the large scale operations could not be exclusively generated locally. Partly in keeping with this there was a high level of absentee landlordism among those landlords who let out more than 20 units. No less than 64% lived elsewhere in Nairobi or Kenya - some lived in other cities and rural areas - while 14% were absentee but lived elsewhere within the settlement - itself an indication of multiple ownership - leaving only 22% living on site with their tenants as resident landlords.

Comparing the income levels of landlords and tenants, a landlord with the average holding of about 12 rooms will enjoy approximately 1,200/- a month as income, whereas only 9% of the sample in our tenants survey had monthly earnings as high as this. On the other hand the 32% of landlords with seven rooms or less would have an income of up to 700/- a month, a level exceeded by 50% of the tenants we surveyed. Thus as a category landlords are very heterogeneous in income level, though on average they are in a stronger economic position than their tenants. Also from personal observation within the settlement this is readily apparent. When visiting landlords their rooms were better furnished with 'luxury' items more often in evidence, namely record players or bicycles. Thus the commercialization of squatter housing is producing economic stratification though given the high level of absentee landlordism this economic stratification is to some extent invisible in the local area itself being 'exported' out of the settlement.

In this section we have investigated the concentration of room-ownership among the landlords in Kibera, and have seen the staggering level of concentration reached. In short the evidence of this section is that not only is the 'squatter' a tenant, but often a tenant of a large scale landlord at that.

7.5 The dynamics of commercialization in unauthorized housing

In this section we shall investigate the conditions of the growth of landlordism in Kibera. We shall suggest that increasingly capital invested in rental property comes from outside Kibera. Given the sector's profitability this should not surprise us. The most compelling argument for this as we have just seen is the sheer scale of landlord holdings, and the non-availability on the whole of the money to finance such property ownership from within Kibera.

To understand the growth of this rental sector we need to examine the three functions which landlords must fulfill. They are:

- (a) access to land
- (b) access to capital
- (c) estate management³

The original squatter who starts to rent out a few rooms has no problems providing he has access to both land and capital (i.e. his own savings). This situation represents the emergent private rental sector in unauthorised settlements that has a long historical legacy within the 'African locations' of Nairobi (Bujra, 1973). However, there is an inherent contradiction in the expansion of a small-scale landlord's operations. As his scale of operation increases and as access to land becomes politically controlled he may have difficulties securing land and capital, i.e. fulfilling functions (a) and (b). To solve this difficulty the small scale landlord must look elsewhere. Thus he must use links with patrons to gain access to land and/or look elsewhere for additional capital funding. The result of both of these processes is that the small scale operator loses his autonomy. Of course he can operate independently if he has (a) sufficient capital in relation to his venture and (b) access to land via his personal social networks. There are some members of the Nubian community who are able to fulfill these two functions through their own resources. However, given the

profitability of the sector it would seem that the pressures for small scale landlords are to become dependent upon 'external' capital to increase the scale of their housing operations. Looked at from outside this can be seen as one of the ways in which external capital penetrates this sector.

Similarly the political control of land in unauthorized settlements facilitates the emergence of large scale operations. This is because land may be directly allocated to those with sufficient capital but who do not live in the area to invest in it. This allows for a scale of operation that is not restricted by the general poverty of the settlement. However, this is not to say that a small scale sector does not also exist; it does. These are the mechanisms which encourage the commercialisation of low-income housing and also its increasing dominance by large scale landlords.⁴

7.6 Conclusion

In this chapter we have examined the economics of shanty real estate; the results have been extraordinary. We have seen the extreme profitability and concentration of ownership. Similarly we have seen the market determination of rent levels and the mechanisms that are encouraging concentration and commercialisation within this sector. It is perhaps salient at this point to mention yet again that all the data within this chapter would have been unobtainable in a conventional owner-occupation shanty town. However as we have seen Kibera has more characteristics of a private rental sector, albeit illegal. In the next chapter we shall examine the landlords and tenants and their interaction within this sector.

Footnotes - Chapter 7

1. Unfortunately we do not have any specific data on the economies of scale in this sector; however it would seem from personal observation that they are slight.
2. In a similar way multiple ownership of the same block is sufficiently uncommon that for our purposes here we can ignore it.
3. Estate management involves the collection of rent, which is not always easy, finding new tenants and sometimes day-to-day maintenance. Clearly this function is only a constraint for absentee landlords. We shall discuss it in Chapter 8.
4. In Chapter 3 we suggested that it was important in understanding indigenous capitalism to distinguish between the different capitals rather than assume capital to be a uniform and monolithic block. In the analysis in this chapter this is only done at a very implicit and empiricist level - thus we discuss the domination of small-scale by large-scale landlords. In part this reflects the general difficulty of relating theoretical constructs to empirical data, but it also reflects the inadequacies of our data. Nevertheless in the terms of the three 'capitals' we identified in Chapter 4 as having an interest in low-income housing; namely international finance capital, the indigenous national bourgeoisie and the small scale trade group. The evidence of Kibera since 1960 is consistent with the indigenous national bourgeoisie gaining at the expense and to the exclusion of the local trader group. This is the interpretation of the local administration establishing control over the allocation of building rights in the settlement and by implication unauthorized landlordism as a source of capital accumulation. Indeed in an earlier paper I wrote 'Capital and Shelter: The commercialization of low-income housing in Nairobi 1960 -1980' (available at HRDU) I attempted to interpret events in Nairobi and Kibera more explicitly in terms of these three 'capitals'.

CHAPTER 8

LANDLORDS AND TENANTS IN KIBERA

'According to my income I am not supposed to have any entertainment, except the church.'

a Kibera tenant

8.1 Introduction

This chapter is concerned with landlords and tenants in Kibera; in particular who they are, their characteristics and the nature of the relationships between them. Consequently the first four sections of the chapter concern the characteristics of the tenants. We then consider the characteristics of the landlord population and give an overall social profile of the actors in this unauthorised housing market. The remainder of this chapter is concerned with the operation of this housing market and the landlord and tenant relationships within the settlement. The exploitation and hostile nature of landlord and tenant relations within unauthorized settlements is a politically embarrassing and sensitive issue in Nairobi politics; the aim of this chapter is to show why.

8.2 Kibera tenants: demographic data

We start by examining the demographic data we obtained from our tenant survey of four villages in Kibera.

Ethnically Kibera contains representatives of all major groups in Kenya. Kibera has an over-representation of Nubians, Luos and Luhyas and an under-representation of Kikuyus and Kambas. This is a result of the historical development of Kibera as compared to Mathare Valley which we discussed in Chapter 4. The Nubian historical involve-

ment with Kibera and their lack of a rural area is of particular importance for policy suggestions.

The breakdown by province of the rural area of the inhabitants in our survey is shown in Figure 8.1.

Figure 8.1 Tenants' rural area by province

Nyanza	36 (40%)
Western	27 (30%)
Rift Valley	5 (6%)
Central	9 (10%)
Eastern	10 (11%)
Coast	1 (1%)
Non-Kenya	2 (2%)

Source: Tenant survey

These are therefore the areas of out-migration for inhabitants who have to live in Kibera. The majority of the tenant population come from the areas of severe land shortage in Western Kenya, where there is such a population pressure on land that it is almost an economic necessity for one member of the family to migrate to Nairobi. The economic rationality for the individual of rural-urban migration was illustrated by the respondents in my tenant survey who found the question 'why did they come to Nairobi,' to be ridiculously obvious and unanimously answered 'to look for work'.

As we can see in Figure 8.2 below, the population in Kibera like many recent urban settlements is young.

Figure 8.2 Age distribution of tenant head of household

Age	Population
18-29	53% (46)
30-39	26% (22)
40-49	14% (12)
50-59	7% (6)
60+	1% (1)
Total	101% (87)

Source: Tenant survey

Thus 53% of heads of households are 29 or under with a further 26% between 30 and 39. Such 'bottom-heavy' age structures are typical of developing nations and particularly those with a rapid population increase such as Kenya. We should note that children are not included in the above table; their inclusion would further emphasise the youthfulness of the settlement. This age structure implies a severe strain on the provision of primary education within Nairobi in terms of resource allocation.

From our own observation of room-occupancy there are two main domestic units in Kibera, firstly married couples with children and secondly single males sharing accommodation. Out of 88 households the wife was present in Nairobi in 50 (57%) of them, and most of the remainder were single males. Thus simultaneously in an unauthorized settlement there is 'bachelor' and family accommodation. These 'bachelors' are in fact likely to have wives who have remained in the rural area; this separation of husbands from wives is a common feature of urbanization in ex-settler Africa. While the presence of wives in urban centres is often taken to be synonymous with a stable urban community it seems to us that landlessness is a more important determinant of the likelihood of stabilized populations in urban centres. It is partly a result of the rental nature of Nairobi's

unauthorized settlements that such settlements are now 'reception' areas for rural migrants as well as stable 'urban' communities.

8.3 Kibera tenants: incomes, occupations and education

The income distribution of the population in Kibera ranges from middle income inhabitants right down to those on the lowest possible subsistence level. The Nubians in particular as we have already seen are over-represented in the 'higher' occupations while also exhibiting significant internal stratification. Some smart Nubian families own houses or even 'estates', e.g. these may include a shop, a water kiosk, and say, 40 room-units for renting, such that the net household income will be upwards of 4,000/- a month. Other Nubian inhabitants are employed in such skilled occupations as computer programming, professional photography and even professional golf! This over-representation of Nubians in the higher occupational groups is a function of the loyalty to the area by well-off Nubians. However, at the other end of the scale some members of the Nubian community are tenants and are engaged in low paid formal sector employment and in such survival professions as prostitution. While other ethnic groups in Kibera do not have such a preponderance of those in the higher occupational groups they nevertheless show significant differentiation.

However, in what follows we shall focus exclusively upon the tenant population. In Section 8.5 we shall combine this and compare it with the characteristics of the landlord population.

The tenants' occupations range from skilled manual jobs like aeromechanics and clerical jobs down to those involved in basic survival or those involved in the so-called informal sector. Figure 8.3 below shows the occupational composition of the tenants included in our survey.¹

Figure 8.3 Occupational distribution of Kibera tenants

Clerical	13% (12)
Skilled formal	23% (21)
Unskilled formal	40% (36)
Informal sector	12% (11)
Casual work	7% (6)
Unemployed	4% (4)
Total	90

Source: Tenant survey

The most common occupational group is unskilled formal, this includes labourers, industrial manual workers, night watchmen (askari) and domestic servants. The clerical category would involve junior jobs in government, banks and international hotels. The skilled formal sector would include such jobs as mechanics or machine operators.

It is important to note that fully three-quarters of the survey population are employed in the formal sector. This relatively high level of formal sector employment in part reflects both Kibera's reputation as an 'upmarket' shanty-town located near to the industrial estate, and also the extent of Nairobi's housing crisis. The result of the latter is the process known as 'bumping down' by which the operation of the market is increasingly forcing higher income inhabitants into housing originally occupied by less well-off groups, who are pushed elsewhere. Nevertheless 23% of our sample are outside formal wage employment and suffer from insecurity of earnings. This compares favourably with the similar estimates for the proportion in informal sector employment of between 30% and 50% within Mathare Valley, 36% in Old Pumwani and 25% for Kwangware (LCHSUS, No 6, 1976, 40). This supports our general contention that Kibera is an 'upmarket' shanty town. However it is interesting to note that even in the 'worst'

sections of Mathare Valley half the population are employed in the formal sector.

Figure 8.4 shows the income distribution for the tenant population we obtained from the tenant survey.

Figure 8.4 Income distribution of tenants

Kshs/month	
0-199	-
200-399	5% (4)
400-599	33% (25)
600-799	25% (19)
800-999	14% (11)
1,000-1,199	13% (10)
1,200-1,399	4% (3)
1,400-1,599	4% (2)
1,600-1,999	1% (1)
2,000+	1% (1)
Total	100% (76)

Source: Tenant survey

The average monthly income from our data was 756/-, this represents approximately one and a half times the 1980 official minimum monthly wage at 450/-. However, despite the underlying poverty of the area the population is not homogeneous. The income distribution within the settlement is highly skewed. It is important to understand what these income levels mean at an individual level. Thus while the average tenant household income in our survey was 756/- a month, a significant group (38%) had incomes below 600/- a month and/or suffered from insecurity of income. The crucial point about this is that both World Bank consultants and the Kenyan Trade Union Organisation (COTU) estimate that 625/- a month are required for a family in Nairobi to fulfil their basic nutritional requirements alone. (COTU, 1980)(Kenya By-law Study, 1980). The general poverty of the settlement is borne out by

the fact that in one section of the settlement (Linishaba) the Catholic Relief Service estimate that 50% of the children suffer from malnutrition as judged by ratios of weight and height to age. Similarly in another part of Kibera (Katwikira) Mother Teresa's nuns are handing out food aid. From personal observation malnutrition and Kwaisikor are fairly widespread in Kibera and in Nairobi's other unauthorized settlements. These observations give the lie to Nairobi's image of affluence.

There are a few additional points worth making; firstly, in such a situation it is not surprising that the payment of rent represents a major financial difficulty for most tenants. Secondly the settlement's poverty is as much a function of low wages as it is of lack of employment. And finally the '(nutritional) problem (of the urban poor) is partly low income and partly nutritionally sub-optimal expenditure pattern.'² (ILO, 1979, 31). We can compare our approximate income distribution with the following overall distribution for Nairobi.

Figure 8.5 Nairobi Household Income Distribution, 1977

Cumulative % of households	Monthly household income, Shs/month	
	Range	Mean
0-20	0 - 500	343
21-40	551 - 1,050	667
41-60	1,051 - 2,000	1,277
61-80	2,001 - 4,000	2,090
81-100	over 4,000	5,438

Source: Research Division, Nairobi City Council

If one allows for some inflation since 1977 it would still seem that 90% of the tenants in our survey (i.e. those with incomes below 1,200/-) were in the bottom two quintiles (0-40%) of the Nairobi household income distribution. We should also note that any large landlord will be in the top quintile with monthly incomes of 4,000/- or above.

At this stage it is worth mentioning how notoriously difficult reliable income data is to get in unauthorized settlements, in the Appendix we shall discuss these problems at greater length. As a consequence there are substantial variations in such estimates. Our Kibera average monthly income of 756/- seems to be consistent, allowing for inflation, with a 1976 survey in Nairobi which had median income groups of between 301/- and 500/- in Kwangware and sections of the company housing in Mathare Valley. However the poorest sections of Mathare i.e. (Ngei 1) median income group was less than 190/- in 1976. (LCHSUS No. 6, 1976, 34). This is also consistent with the higher incomes in Kibera one would associate with its proximity to Nairobi's industrial estate.

However our data is not consistent with two more recent contradictory estimates. A recent (1981) HRDU report³ suggested that the average monthly household income in Kwangware in 1981 was only 300/-. Meanwhile an ODA (Overseas Development Administration) study on six tertiary towns in Kenya (i.e. Embu, Meru, Isiolo, Kakamega, Busia, Bungoma) produced the extremely high figure of average monthly incomes in these tertiary towns unauthorized settlements of between 970/- in Kakamega to 1,600/- in Bungoma (ODA, 1981). These latter figures for tertiary towns seem unreconcilable with our monthly mean of 756/- for arguably the richest shanty-town in Nairobi many of whose inhabitants are industrial workers. The accuracy of such income data is more than just a sterile academic concern since the international agencies lend money to specific individuals and calculate their repayments according to such estimates. As a result overestimations of income are likely to lead to subsequent debt repayment problems.

Traditionally education in Kenya has been seen as the 'escape route' from poverty. In Figure 8.6 we show the number of years of education of the tenants in our survey cross-tabulated against age.

Figure 8.6 Cross-tabulation of number of years of education against age among Kibera tenants

No. of years of education	Age					Total
	18-23	24-29	30-39	40-49	50+	
4 years or less	3	7	3	5	4	22(27%)
5 or 6	1	3	3	2	1	10(12%)
7 or 8	3	11	11	3	0	28(34%)
9 or 10	1	3	2	1	0	7 (9%)
11 or 12	5	5	2	1	0	13(16%)
13 or 14	0	2	0	0	0	2 (2%)
Total	13(16%)	31(38%)	21(26%)	12(15%)	5(6%)	82

Source: Tenant survey

The first point about the above table is the wide range of the formal education of the inhabitants of Kibera. Hence while 27% have had less than four years education we also find that 18% have had more than ten years education. The average for the tenant survey as a whole is 6.6 years (within Kenya the first seven years of education are in primary schools). However there are significant differences in the formal educational level achieved depending upon the age of the tenant. Table 8.7 shows the average number of years of education according to the tenants' age group.

Figure 8.7 Average length of education by age among Kibera tenants

Age group of tenant	Average number of years of education
18-23	7.7
24-29	7.3
30-39	7.0
40-49	5.3
50+	2

Source: Tenant survey

Clearly, to some extent, the fact that the younger tenants have had more education than their older counterparts reflects the success of Kenya's educational policy. However unfortunately the data above also tells another story; thus if we can make the approximate assumption that the inhabitants of Kibera occupy roughly similar occupational and income niches in Kenyan society, then it is clear that the new arrivals i.e. (18-23 age group) are considerably more educated than their elders. This is because the qualifications needed for a given job are continuously rising which reflects the inability of the Kenyan labour market to absorb the output of its education system. The point is that secondary education in Kenya, as well as primary education, until 1979 had to be paid for by private fees. In such a situation rural peasant funds, mainly from kin, are being mobilized for secondary education in the belief that the recipient of the education will gain a good job to pay back this 'investment'. This expenditure on school fees represents 20.3% of all regular *i.e. non food* expenditures, of households in Nairobi generally. This is the second largest item of regular expenditure individuals make after rent which absorbs 31% of all regular expenditure in Nairobi (Urban Food Purchasing Survey, 1977). But while education no longer offers the 'escape route' from destitution it once did, the investment in it by those unable to afford it continues. There is hence a political time-bomb in the frustrated aspirations generated by Kenya's educational system. Educational fees are an important element in urban-rural remittances which are an integral part of the rural links of our tenant population which we shall discuss in the next section.

8.4 Kibera tenants: The rural links

In our tenant survey only two respondents, both Nubian, were born in Nairobi; the remainder are first generation migrants. Consequently

it should not surprise us that they maintain social and economic links with the rural districts they have migrated from. Indeed as was suggested in Chapter 2, such links are partly a function of economic necessity. The continuing existence and strength of urban-rural links suggests that the domestic economy may still function as an important source of economic security and that 'proletarianization' does not seem to be well advanced in Nairobi.

The table below (Figure 8.8) gives the length of time since Kibera tenants first arrived in Nairobi and Kibera.⁴

Figure 8.8 Period since first arrival in Nairobi and Kibera

<u>Years</u>	<u>Nairobi</u>	<u>Kibera</u>
0-2	29% (25)	58% (50)
3-4	9% (8)	13% (11)
5-6	15% (13)	15% (13)
7-8	14% (12)	3% (3)
9-12	14% (12)	5% (4)
13-20	10% (9)	2% (2)
20+	8% (7)	2% (3)
Total	99% (86)	98% (86)

Source: Tenants survey

Here we can see that there is substantial variation in the length of time that Kibera tenants have been in Nairobi. Thus while 29% have been in Nairobi less than 2 years we also find that 18% have been in Nairobi over thirteen years. This suggests that while Kibera has the longer term 'stable' urban immigrants as is often suggested in the literature on unauthorized settlements (Turner, 1976) it also has a significant number of recent migrants. In part we may suggest this reflects the commercialized nature of the unauthorised housing. The relatively short time spent by many tenants in Kibera is purely a function of its recent expansion since 1974. Those who have been there longer are almost exclusively in the old Nubian area of Makina.

An indication of the extent of urban-rural links is in Figure 8.9 which illustrates the number of times a year the tenant heads of households in Kibera visited their rural areas.

Figure 8.9 Number of visits to rural area by Kibera tenant heads of household in the previous year

	None	5% (4)
	1 or 2	53% (45)
	3 or 4	24% (20)
	5 or 6	2% (2)
(once a month)	12	9% (8)
(twice a month)	24	7% (6)
		100% (85)

Source: Tenant survey

It is apparent from this data that while it is rare (5%) not to visit one's rural area at all; it is also not particularly common to visit one's rural area frequently i.e. more than once a month (16%). It seems that the majority only visit their rural area on 'leave' (77%). This seems a likely conclusion as 70% come from Western Kenya (Western and Nyanza provinces, approximately 300 kms from Nairobi). The expense and time of travelling (a 6-day working week is the norm in Kenya) must also mitigate against frequent visits.

However despite the relative infrequency of visits to rural areas (i.e. most commonly once or twice a year) we found that fully 84% of our sample claimed to be sending monthly remittances to their kin in their rural districts. It is likely that this money was almost exclusively channelled to agricultural purposes or kinsmen's education. This supports the contention that 'off-farm earnings' are a crucial ingredient in the commercialization and development of Kenyan agriculture. (Kitching, 1980). The table below (Figure 8.10) gives the monthly amounts the tenants said they sent as rural remittances.

Figure 8.10 Rural remittances sent by Kibera tenants

Monthly kshs		
0-50	16%	(10)
51-100	27%	(17)
101-150	13%	(8)
151-200	24%	(15)
201-250	3%	(2)
251-300	11%	(7)
300+	5%	(3)
Source: Tenant survey	Total	98% (62)

The average figure for the tenants who sent remittances was 164 kshs a month; which represents roughly 22% of the average tenant income. From personal experience and in relation to the other demands on low-income inhabitants these figures seem too high;⁵ there seems to be an element of wishful thinking involved here. Nevertheless, according to the Urban Food Purchasing Survey (1977) gifts (i.e. remittances and gifts to charity) represent 12% of regular expenditure by inhabitants in Nairobi, and school fees - which are often an important part of remittances - must be added to this figure since they are placed in a separate category.

Two points emerge from our discussion so far: firstly, rent, schoolfees and remittances are the major elements of regular expenditure (63% from Urban Food Purchasing Survey) by low income inhabitants in Nairobi; secondly despite the possible inaccuracy in our data fairly substantial amounts of money are being sent back into the rural districts in Kenya, emphasizing the strength and importance of urban-rural links.

In part these links may reflect the fact that many Kibera inhabitants still have access to land albeit limited, which is the only practicable source of economic security for many individuals. 15% of the tenants in the survey said they were landless, consequently the

remaining 85% at least thought they had some access to land. Since it was unclear whether it was tenants themselves or their kin who had land and the likelihood of future subdivision our data on land holdings are not reliable. However it is likely that approximately 50% of our tenants while not technically landless were faced with a land problem. (Given the high percentage (70%) of tenants in our survey who came from Western Kenya where there is generally a high ratio of population to land this figure does not seem implausible).

From this we can draw a number of conclusions. Firstly, at the risk of repetition, rural-urban migration for the individual is a rational economic move and secondly urban workers feel an economic necessity to maintain a link with their rural districts. The continuation of these links for many is a result of the absence of total alienation of individuals from their land and the lack of economic security from wages and possible alternative openings in Nairobi.⁶ In many ways the continuation of such links is simultaneously a result of the specificity (i.e. settler nature) and immaturity of Kenyan capitalism.

8.5 Residential mobility within Kibera

An interesting result of the commercialization of unauthorized housing is the residential mobility within the settlement. This is in strong contrast to subsistence shelter which has very limited mobility as individuals remain in the houses they have constructed. However high rates of mobility are compatible with the operation of a rental housing market; indeed the higher residential mobility of tenants compared with owners is a world-wide phenomenon.

The table below shows the approximate length of time the tenants in our survey have been in their present accommodation.

Figure 8.11 Length of time tenants have been in present room

Years		
0-1	30%	(25)
1-2	27%	(22)
2-3	20%	(17)
3-4	12%	(10)
4-5	5%	(4)
5-6	4%	(3)
6-7	1%	(1)
7-8	0%	(0)
8-9	1%	(1)
Total	100%	(83)

Source: Tenant survey

From this we can note that 57% of the sample have been in their present rooms for less than two years. The estimated average length of stay in each room is 2.58 years. This represents an extremely high level of residential mobility; comparable with the U.S. which is popularly reckoned to be the world's most residentially mobile society.

The table below showing the tenants' previous place of residence is even more revealing.⁷

Figure 8.12 Place of last residence of Kibera tenants

Same 'village' in Kibera	26%	(22)
Different 'village' in Kibera	30%	(26)
Other unauthorized settlements in Nairobi	3%	(3)
Formal housing areas in Nairobi	29%	(25)
Rural area	12%	(10)
Total	100%	(86)

Source: Tenant survey

From the above data we can see that fully 56% (48) of our sample had lived elsewhere in Kibera. This is made up of 33% who had lived in two separate 'villages', 6% who had actually lived in three separate

'villages', and the remaining 17% who had lived in only one other 'village'. In part this high level of intra-settlement mobility may reflect landlord's eviction of their tenants together with differential rent levels within the settlement.

A related ^{development} / is that there seems to be a process of residential segregation and differentiation occurring within the settlement. Thus areas seem to be taking on reputations as 'good' or 'bad' villages. This differentiation is an often noted function of urban growth (Timms, 1971). Indeed, while we do not have sufficient data to substantiate this, it does appear that individuals are moving between areas as their economic fortunes change. Hence some individuals we talked to had moved to cheaper accommodation in different locations when they were unable to meet their previous rent levels. However other individuals had moved 'up market' in keeping with their income levels as such property became available. This latter category may well include individuals who are in the process of establishing themselves within Nairobi who are forced to start at the bottom of the housing market. It is interesting in this respect that 12% (10) of our sample have come direct from their rural area to the unauthorized settlement of Kibera. Increasingly it seems that the rental nature of unauthorized settlements means that such areas are taking over from inner-city tenements as the 'reception' areas for migrants. There is also a related phenomenon occurring in such unauthorized settlements in that recent migrants stay with their kin upon first arrival in the city.

Another interesting feature of Figure 8.11 is that only 3% (3) of our tenants have come from other unauthorized settlements within Nairobi. In view of the fact that Kibera is an 'up-market' unauthorized settlement, one might expect that residents of other unauthorized settlements would move to Kibera as their incomes increase. The fact that this happens on such a negligible scale if at

all suggests the hypothesis that each unauthorized settlement within Nairobi is almost a 'closed system' for people whose incomes change little, i.e. residential mobility in such cases occurs within each settlement rather than between settlements. Within Nairobi this exclusivity seems to be ethnically reinforced since as we have already seen different unauthorized settlements are favoured by different ethnic groups e.g. Kikuyus in Mathare Valley and KoroKocho while Luos predominate in Ngomongo and Kibera.

As a conclusion to this section we might again emphasize the high level of tenant residential mobility within the settlement which has important policy repercussions; for example participatory development schemes will be difficult to achieve in such a population. In the next section we shall investigate the state of landlord and tenant relations in Kibera since sometimes they are a factor responsible for the high level of residential mobility.

8.6 Landlord and Tenants: a comparison

The characteristics of landlord and tenants in Kibera are revealing. In this section we shall combine data from our landlord and tenant surveys that formed the basis for Chapter 7 and the earlier sections of this chapter to form a social profile of Kibera. The table below (Figure 8.13) presents a social profile of Kibera. For comparability we have attempted to relate the occupations of landlords and tenants in Kibera in terms of the overall ILO income profile of Kenya. This was an income profile drawn up for the ILO's 1979 report on Kenya entitled Planning for Basic Needs in Kenya and as such represents the best income categorization and cross-section through Kenyan society available. Here we have used all their urban categories to categorise our data from the tenants and landlords surveys. The final three columns of Figure 8.13 refer respectively to: (1) the tenant population in our tenants' survey, (2) the landlord population in the tenant survey, and

(3) the large scale landlords (> 20 room-units) throughout the settlement from the landlord survey. In classifying our data in terms of the ILO's categories we used both occupation and income data if available or either depending upon the situation. Thus the landlords were classified by occupation and the tenants by averaging occupation and incomes, having inflated the ILO's 1976 income levels to be compatible with our 1980 data.

Figure 8.13 shows how some of the landlord group are from markedly different social backgrounds from their tenants. It would be fair to say that members of all Kenyan occupational groups are involved in some way or another with the Kibera housing market whether as landlords or tenants. It is important to understand the social inequality of Nairobi that is encompassed in these five categories. Category 1 represents 'middle-class' individuals as well as the Kenyan elite and the emergent bourgeoisie. These individuals might well frequent Nairobi's smart, modern international hotels. Fully 17% of the landlords in our tenant survey and 31% of the large landlords we could identify in our landlord survey are in this category. For example we found doctors, top civil servants and managers from both the parastatal (public) and private sector who were supplementing their incomes by quasi-legal (tax-free) landlordism. Indeed if some informants are to be believed extremely senior politicians in Kenya are also involved in this sector. It is worth noting the variety within the landlord population. Thus at one extreme there are doctors, top civil servants and managers from both the public and private sectors among the landlords. In the middle there are landlords who are policemen, prison officers and a professional photographer. However, as we mentioned earlier there is a significant landlord group from amongst the urban poor. For example fully 61% of the landlord sample are in ILO categories 3 and 4 which might involve such occupations as

Figure 8.13 Social Profile of Kibera: Occupational distribution of tenants, landlords and large landlords

ILO Urban Categories and monthly incomes, 1976	Tenants	Landlords (all)	Large (> 20 units) landlords only
1. (a) Owners of medium enterprises in commerce, industry and services (b) Rentiers (c) Professionals (d) Managers and top bureaucrats (Incomes over 2500/-)		17%	31%
2. (a) Skilled employees formal sector (Incomes between 1666/- and 2500/-)	1%	22%	38%
3. (a) Clerical employees in formal sector (b) Semi-skilled employees in formal sector (c) Owners of some informal sector enterprises (Incomes between 500/- and 1666/-)	48%	55%	31%
4. (a) Unskilled employees in formal sector (Incomes between 250/- and 500/-)	37%	6%	
5. (a) Informal sector employees and smaller entrepreneurs (Incomes below 250/-)	14%		

Source: First column: ILO, Planning for Basic Needs in Kenya, Geneva 1979. Table 2.11, p.43.
 Landlord survey and tenant survey

local traders, barbers or retired prostitutes.

However as we have already seen the tenant population are not so fortunate as their landlords; in ILO terms 99% of our tenant sample are in urban categories 3, 4 and 5 all of which, according to the ILO, having a 'basic need indicator' of housing. This means, at the most optimistic, that they 'cannot afford unsubsidized housing of minimum standard' (ILO, 1979, 43). We can also note that ILO urban categories 4 and 5 (91% of tenants and 6% of landlords) in nutritional terms are 'below an urban poverty line' (ILO, 1979, 43). However, it would be a mistake to assume that all the tenants are on the bread line, there are some who hold down middle ranking clerical jobs who may choose to live in such areas to minimize their expenditure on housing. At the other extreme are tenants who are some of the poorest in Nairobi without a regular income and for whom each day represents a battle for survival. In the middle as the table shows there is a degree of similarity between the circumstances of landlords and tenants.

The place of residence of the landlords in Kibera tells the same story. Figure 8.14 shows that 64% of the large landlords (>20 room-units) lived outside Kibera.

Figure 8.14 Place of residence of large landlords (>20 room-units)

On site	22%	(24)
Absentee, but in Kibera	14%	(15)
Absentee, but in Nairobi	55%	(61)
Absentee, outside Nairobi	9%	(10)
Total	100%	(110)

Source: Landlord survey

In keeping with the differentiation within the landlord group we found that even in the sample of large scale landlords 36% (39) live in Kibera; and that 22% live with their tenants. Similarly it is interesting to note that 9% of these large landlords actually live

outside Nairobi, predominantly in Central Province. We may wonder whether this landlordism is another source of off-farm earnings, in addition to tenants' remittances mentioned in section 8.4. However, from the table it is apparent that the commonest category (55%) of large-scale landlord is absentee but living in Nairobi. Unfortunately for 33% of these their precise location was not obtained, but 18% live in public housing estates, while a surprising 5% live in other unauthorized settlements within Nairobi, such as Mathare Valley and Punwami. The last figure is not implausible. A feature of Nairobi, like many other cities in the world, is for members of the urban poor often to let out property they acquire yet remain themselves in what objectively seem to be less salubrious surroundings.

In this section we have touched upon the politically sensitive issue of who are the landlords in unauthorized settlements; the answer as we have seen is both the elite and the relatively poor. Their tenants are predominantly but not exclusively from the urban poor. As a conclusion suffice it to say that if all the landlords actually lived in the settlement the impression of inequality would be greater than it is today. Even today the differences between the objective conditions of many inhabitants and particularly landlords and their tenants is striking. In the next two sections we shall examine the nature of the relationship between these two groups in the housing market.

8.7 Landlord-tenant relations: Estate management

In this section we shall examine landlord-tenant relations from a landlord's - or 'estatement management' - perspective. The day-to-day management of housing blocks represents a problem for absentee landlords. Here we can clearly see some of the difficulties 'external' individuals have in gaining access to this lucrative ('informal')

source of capital accumulation. In particular we shall focus upon the role of intermediaries between the landlord and tenant. Secondly we shall also see a process where the rent relation is becoming 'formalized' where the landlord and tenant do not know each other.

The payment of rent by tenants is formalized with 48% of our sample receiving receipts from their landlords; the remainder receive no receipts. It is interesting to note how the landlord's signatures appearing on these receipts often appear to be intentionally disguised for their protection. In one case a tenant showed us four receipts with totally different signatures which he assured us came from the same landlord.

In our survey 28% (24) of the tenants reported that their landlords used an intermediary. Depending upon the specific situation such intermediaries may fulfil some or all of the following tasks; rent collection, maintenance, and choice of new tenants.

The table below gives a breakdown of the content of the twelve landlord-rent collector (intermediary) relationships that we were able to obtain any information about.

Figure 8.15 Landlord-rent collector relationship

Close kin	4
Same rural district	2
Lover	1
Builder	1
Friends from <u>different</u> tribe	4
Total	12

Source: Tenant survey

This landlord and rent collector relationship is not always a harmonious one between client and patron, between kin or between lovers. In relation to this the last category, i.e. 'friends' of a different tribe as the landlord is very surprising given our general

argument that kin or fellow tribesmen are used in roles where they must be trusted, and in particular in a situation where the rental income may be worth sufficient to tempt the collector to run off with possibly a few months accumulated rent money. In such a situation some additional social sanction is useful to the landlord in maintaining control over his investment, consequently we might expect landlord and intermediary to be related.

However, from our landlord survey rather than the tenant survey it seemed that in 26 of the 41 landlord-rent-collector relationships we could discover anything about, both were from the same tribe, and of these in five (11%) both were from the same family, while in fully 21 (45%) landlord and rent collector were from different tribes. Again we can see the surprisingly high amount of cross-tribal landlord-intermediary relationships (4 out of 12 (33%)) in the tenant survey and 45% from the landlord survey. These figures reflect the high level of Kikuyu landlords (66% amongst the landlords with over 20 room-units) who are not employing Kikuyu intermediaries but individuals whose tribal background is more typical of the predominantly non-Kikuyu tenant population. An obvious possible explanation, for which unfortunately we do not have data, is that rent collectors are in fact 'elevated' and long-standing tenants.

A second possible explanation of mixed tribe landlord-rent collector relations would be less in terms of the importance of 'trust' than in terms of the requirements of good business practice. It has been noted that African entrepreneurs prefer to do business on a 'professional' basis which often means avoiding one's kin or fellow tribesmen since they would be more likely to introduce kin-based considerations into a business relationship (Marris and Somerset, 1971). Here again we can see how the emergence of capitalist relations increasingly relies upon formal, rather than 'traditional' sanctions.

It seems that such intermediaries offer both tight control over tenants without the possible social constraints on exploitation which might be entailed if the landlord lived in the same building. To some extent they serve as an intentional means of depersonalizing the landlord-tenant relationship. There is here an implicit assumption that depersonalized social relations are more likely to be characterized by conflict and exploitation than more personalized social relations. As we shall see this may not be a tenable view.

These processes of social 'distancing' and 'formalization' i.e. by the use of intermediaries, are part and parcel of the emergence of capitalist relations. It enables affluent Kenyans to avoid involvement in the unattractive side of rent collection which may entail anything from argument to the ultimate sanction of physical violence.

That conflict between rent collector and landlord exists is certain. In a number of cases we heard of open conflict in which the most common feature was an attempt by the rent collector to run off with the rent money. In one such case hired thugs were used to intimidate and finally remove an uncooperative collector who was not passing on the rents to his landlord.

At this stage an actual example may help to illustrate the general confusion over establishing ownership, and problems of estate management from a landlord's perspective. In Mashimoni five adjacent blocks seemed to be linked under the same management. Often one can suspect this from the fact that the blocks are constructed in an identical way and use the same numbering system on the doors. From our fieldwork it seemed that all five blocks were owned by a particular individual, a landlord who held an important position in the previous local administration. However the tenants had been issued with quasi-legal statements, drawn up by solicitors, saying that two of the blocks were owned by the landlord's brother and that the two others were owned

by the then rent collector. The most interesting feature of this is the use of legalistic statements for the tenants' benefit, despite the quasi-legal nature of the entire economy. Such documents were in Kiswahali - the most applicable lingua franca - rather than English. Despite this it is still almost impossible to tell who controls these five blocks. In the end all we can say is that the 'management' of the five blocks seems to be highly interlinked.

In the second example we can see how tension between those contesting the ownership of a property can create problems for the tenants. The land for building was obtained by a Kamba woman, while the capital to develop the site was put up by her Nubian lover. (It is worth mentioning that the site was outside the Nubian area of Kibera). While the relationship between the woman and her lover remained in this state there was no difficulty at all for the tenants, since presumably each of the two took an agreed percentage of the rent money. At this stage the Kamba woman lived on site and operated as collector of rents on behalf of them both. (To 'set up' one's mistress in this fashion seems a not unusual form of rent-collector-landlord relationship). The Kamba woman then left the block, and attempted to return at a later date to reinhabit her room. While the reasons for this were undisclosed it seems likely that her relationship with the Nubian had changed and was now one of hostility. Consequently the 'ownership' of the property was in open dispute with the tenants caught like children in a divorce case with both parents trying to get their support. The upshot was that while the Nubian had rent letters sent from an advocate asking for rent, the Kamba woman on site was asking as well. Such conflicts seem fairly common in the landlord-rent collector relationship.

Finally to end this section we can note that intermediaries are often used to disguise the identity of the owner; since it is politically embarrassing for affluent Kenyans to be seen to be involved in such

cut-throat activities. The ruthlessness and inequality of some aspects of this sector would appear to offend even the highly instrumental and capitalistic 'moral norms' of modern Kenya.

('Eat or be eaten' as the Kenyan novelist Ngugi wa Thiongo puts it).

Nothing typifies the social transformation that the commercialisation process has wrought in unauthorized settlements as much as this formalization of the landlord-tenant relation combined with a refusal to 'admit' to ownership. Clearly the fact that individual landlords should seek to hide their identity speaks a lot about the nature of this unofficial housing market.

8.8 Landlord and tenant relations: the tenants' strategy

Landlord-tenant relations in Kibera are generally poor, although there are significant differences between villages. There are two main sources of conflict; the payment of rent and the quality of the housing services provided. Here we shall start with the provision of services and then rent.

Housing quality and the provision of services represent a potentially major source of conflict; specifically in this context we mean the provision and maintenance of pit latrines. As we saw in Chapter 6 there was a significant variation in provision, unfortunately despite widespread tenant grievance there were extremely few cases of tenants making this an issue with their landlord. This powerlessness by the tenants is conditioned by the severe housing shortage in Nairobi. Consequently very few tenants in Kibera are able to escape from the hard realities of the situation; thus when a landlord says, which is quite common, 'if you don't like it get out', the tenant has no option but to stay. Nothing suggests the asymmetry in landlord-tenant relations as clearly as this. At a more specific level, however, conflicts over rent are a function of the commercialization of

unauthorized housing. At least within Kibera the housing 'exit' option of practising subsistence shelter is no longer possible; the tenant is now caught up in the rental economy and groups who were previously outside the system, living rent-free, are now having to pay rent. For many low-income individuals this is a hard additional expenditure to make.

Indeed from the limited evidence available it appears that rent levels in Nairobi and Kibera are increasing faster than wages. Thus if we compare rent levels in the Makina part of Kibera with the prevailing official minimum monthly wage, we find that 31/- in 1970 represents 18% of a minimum wage of 175/-, in 1972 45/- is 26% of the same minimum wage while in 1980 we find that 104/- is 23% of a newly increased minimum wage of 456/- a month. Within the decade 1970-1980 Kibera rents increase by a factor of 3.3 while the minimum wage increases by 2.6 times. (Temple, 1974; Clark, 1978; Economic Survey, 1981). Similarly using consumer price indices for Nairobi as a whole (1975 = 100) we find that by 1981 rent levels are 238.5, 200.1 and 190.8 for lower, middle and upper income groups respectively. It is notable that the highest rate of increase (238.5) occurs in rents for the lower income category. In comparison price increases on other items are as follows between 1975 and 1981: all groups 205.9, food 190.5 and others 190.8. (Economic Survey, 1981, 64). While this data is by no means exhaustive it does appear that as a result of inflation and the commercialization process that for low-income individuals in Nairobi rents are increasing faster than wages and as such are likely to become harder to pay rather than easier.

Hence given the general poverty of Kibera a good starting point is to assume that apart from those in the higher income groups everybody faces a rent problem. As an illustration both the World Bank consultants and COTU (Central Organization of Trade Unions) reckon that 600/- a

month is required in Nairobi for a family to meet only its basic nutritional requirements. (By-law study, 1980; COTU, 1980).

Since as we saw in Section 8.3 38% of the tenant sample earn under this and 63% under 800/- a month, the difficulty in paying rent is obvious. This is true despite the fact that for the settlement as a whole rental payments represent 14% of household income; at this low level of income, the percentage which has to be spent on food means that even 14% spent on rent is a heavy burden. As we shall see in Chapter 10 the international agencies maintain that low-income households should be able to afford 20% of their income upon housing; this assumption is not only arbitrary but dangerous for low-income households. In this situation what is crucial to the individual's welfare is the degree of flexibility that is allowed over rent arrears since often a low level of income^{is} compounded by its insecurity. It seems that apart from those involved in casual work most inhabitants of Kibera suffer from having to match regular (or irregular) incomes to irregular annual expenditures such as termly school fees and urban-rural remittances which vary according to seasonal agricultural demands. These annual expenditure demands further compound the urban workers 'cash-flow' and by inference rental problems; in such a situation a sympathetic landlord can make all the difference to the individual's attempts to balance his income and expenditure.

The ultimate sanction 'encouraging' the payment of rents is violence. Short of this landlords may remove a tenant's door or lock him out; such threats are not idle and we know of quite a few occasions when they have been carried out. A landlord known to us was in the habit of 'encouraging' the payment of rents by taking with him potential new tenants when collecting rents from his existing tenants.

Consequently the amount of time a non-paying tenant is allowed before eviction by his landlord is important as are the strategies

adopted by a tenant when faced with a rent problem. The length of non-payment represents an objective measure of the quality of the landlord-tenant relationship. Thus when faced with a rent problem 70% (55) of our tenant sample said they would 'negotiate' with their landlord or rent collector. The aim of such a negotiation would be to postpone payment. Below are tenant estimates of the possible number of weeks of nonpayment individual landlords would allow their tenants before subsequent eviction.

Figure 8.16 Tenants' estimate of length of time of non-payment before eviction

Less than 2 weeks	30	(38%)
2-4 weeks	33	(42%)
4-8 weeks	10	(13%)
8-12 weeks	6	(8%)
Total	79	(101%)

Source: Tenant survey

Here we can see that the majority must pay either 'on the nail' or are allowed one month's grace. Clearly in practice this means paying a double rent the next month. It would seem that those allowed more than a month's grace (i.e. 21%) are an exception.

From our own observations the length of stay of a tenant appears to be important in allowing flexibility with rental arrears as familiarity and trust develop between landlord and tenant. The table below (Figure 8.17) seems to provide some evidence for this general impression.

Figure 8.17 Non-payment length of time before eviction and length of tenancy

Length of tenancy in years	Weeks of non-payment					Total	Average no. of weeks
	2 weeks	4 weeks	8 weeks	12 weeks			
Less than 1 yr	10	7	2	-		19	3.4
1-2	8	9	2	1		20	4
2-3	4	7	3	1		15	4.8
3-4	3	4	2	-		9	4.2
4-5	2	1	-	1		4	5
5-6	-	2	-	1		3	6.7
6-7	-	-	1	-		1	8
Total	27	30	10	4		71	

Source: Tenant survey

While the small numbers entail caution in drawing conclusions we can note that the average number of weeks of non-payment rises (with one exception) with each additional year of tenancy, consequently those tenants who have stayed less than a year may reasonably expect to 'get away with' 3.4 weeks of non-payment, while those who have stayed five years can hope for 6.7 weeks of 'grace'. However having noted the general trend it is also significant to note the wide variation in the 'grace' allowed within each category of length of tenancy.

The length of stay of tenants does not however seem to be related to rent levels. For example, within a given block, i.e. in rooms owned by the same landlord, longer-staying tenants do not pay lower rents than more recent tenants. Landlords vary in their practice regarding rent increases. The majority increase the rent of all their tenants simultaneously while some only impose an increase when there is a tenant change-over.

We shall now summarize the tenants strategies to cope with rent

problems. In essence the problem for such low-income inhabitants is how to cope with their income shortfall; the first strategy is to postpone payment and effectively take credit from the landlord, and if this is not possible then credit must be sought elsewhere, hopefully interest-free from friends if not at the extortionate rates of the money-lender.

The figure of 38% of the tenant sample who said they must produce the rent on demand or face eviction is consistent with the 30% of tenants who said the solution to rent difficulties was to borrow money. Such money was usually mobilized from relatives, friends, employers or sometimes a tribal association. Here we may see kinship and a kind of solidarity of poverty providing an economic supportive function. For example in some cases tenants with tougher landlords would borrow money from their kin or friends with sympathetic landlords. However, borrowing is not always possible and so the last option is to go to the money-lender. In this market the prevailing rate is 20/- interest per month on a loan of 100/-. This is an interest rate of 20% a month or a simple interest rate of 240%.⁸ Such moneylending is illegal, surprisingly there does not seem to be a 'pawning' system.

Clearly being thrown on the the moneylender only increases one's financial difficulties. The Central Organisation of Kenyan Trade Unions (COTU) maintain that this is one of the steps that low-income workers have to take to survive (COTU, 1980). The ultimate tenants response or strategy is to/ ^{'vote with} their feet' and move elsewhere; in Chapter 10 we shall examine the practicability of this strategy and its implications.

8.9 Kibera Tenants: Coping or Cracking?

In a 'formalistic' way we have seen the inequality and harshness of the settlement; here we shall attempt to speculate on the outlook of those who live in Kibera. While it is extremely dangerous to presume to speak for others especially those in so vastly different a material condition as that of a British research student, it seems important to make some attempt to see the situation from the inhabitants' own perspective.

Thus we shall first summarize those developments that seem to account for the settlement's political stability before discussing some of the signs of instability. More specifically, for example, we are interested in the likelihood of collective action by tenants against the landlords.

On first impressions the population of Kibera do not seem politically militant. In part this is a function of the general individualistic philosophy and 'work ethic' that is prevalent in capitalist Kenya. Related to this is that many individuals have little practical option but to accept the system, they are constrained by the market. The housing shortage means that most tenants have little option but to accept without argument the room they can get. Clearly whether 'acceptance' is a function of choice or necessity is indivisible. Secondly this relative lack of militancy is a function of many recent migrants perceiving themselves as upwardly mobile having escaped from rural impoverishment. This itself is a function of their being first-generation migrants whose 'frame of reference' is still predominantly agriculturally (rural) based; as evidenced by the popularly held belief of an eventual return to the land. It is our contention that rightly or wrongly many of Nairobi's poorest inhabitants do not see their personal future in Nairobi. To an extent this is likely to generate political acquiescence and passivity within

Nairobi.

As is common throughout the world, religion is important in such destitute conditions.⁹ On Saturday and Sunday Kibera is full of the noises of religious meetings; more often than not they are what might be called 'fringe churches' and clearly evoke a great deal of passion. The other emotional outlet is alcohol and particularly chang'aa. On days at the end of the month when workers have been paid the settlement often appears to be at least half drunk; usually in a depressing rather than a jovial way. Many groups combine both church and bottle in various ceremonies. After pay-day in Kibera the social costs of Kenya's economic development are clearly seen.¹⁰ In case there is any suggestion of moralizing here, Engels remarks on 19th century Britain are instructive:

"Drunkenness has here ceased to be a vice... it becomes a phenomenon, the necessary, inevitable effects of certain conditions upon an object possessed no no violation in relations to these conditions. They who degrade the working-man to a mere object have the responsibility to bear". (Engels, 1982, 133-4)

While at one level the interest and energy that the church and alcohol attract might be considered to be a 'stabilising' influence; they also clearly suggest the latent tension in the system.

However this relatively reassuring picture is not the whole story; there are factors at work and symptoms of instability. Firstly, as the number of second-generation migrants inevitably increases the prevalent 'frame of reference' will be more and more that of Nairobi rather than some rural district. Such individuals are more likely to perceive themselves as at the bottom of the pile in Nairobi than as having made a fortunate 'escape' from rural destitution.¹¹ Indeed, the older inhabitants in Kibera seem more bitter and cynical than their younger counterparts partly as a result of the greater number of years they have spent struggling to survive within Nairobi. In addition, the inability of Kenya's educational system to offer the

good jobs it once did is also increasing the level of dissatisfaction and alienation of the young.

Similarly, despite the generally optimistic attitude of the majority about their prospects most Kibera inhabitants were extremely cynical about their politicians, the government, the police and the local administration. This reflects these institutions' and individuals' generally repressive, instrumental and neglectful nature. The police are often seen to be involved in raids on changaa distillers and in harrasing individuals. To many inhabitants the law and government seem actively against them. Certainly very few individuals would see the state in a protective or providing role. Similarly the politicians' self-interest is apparent to most.

Kibera at the moment is characterized by what Fanon would call 'horizontal' as opposed to 'vertical' violence. Thus the aggressions and frustrations of the urban poor are internalized and directed towards fellow sufferers rather than towards the system. (Fanon, 1967). Clearly this is not a static situation. Consequently the passivity of the settlement should not be overemphasized; quite a few inhabitants expressed disgust at those Kenyans who for example would not sit next to a poor vegetable seller in a matatu (private taxi). The resentment here was towards a member of the elite who were 'too proud' to demean themselves by getting into such a squashed form of transport. Housing potentially may be an issue which can politicise the urban poor as we shall see in Chapter 10. In this chapter we have drawn attention to some possible causes of such a development.

8.10 Conclusion

In this chapter we have investigated and highlighted the inequality of Kibera. We have examined the characteristics of the landlord and tenant groups and their interaction within the housing market. While there is some degree of similarity in the characteristics of the

two groups in general the landlords have a substantially higher income than their tenants. Similarly while some landlords are sympathetic to their tenants a significant group are unyielding and ruthless in their practice. However there seems to be no systematic difference between big and small landlords or between absentee landlords or those living on site; the tenants' rationalization that 'some are born bad and others good' seems to be moderately borne out. In the next chapter we shall examine the social context and characteristics of the commercialization of the housing market and landlord-tenant relations in more depth. Indeed paradoxically it seems that from economic necessity the hardest landlords are often amongst the poorest; namely those who in objective terms are closest to their tenants.

Footnotes - Chapter 8

1. These are my own approximate occupational classifications.
2. This expenditure pattern is important especially in relation to schemes to increase rental payments which we shall discuss in Chapter 10.
3. This figure comes from the University of Nairobi Architecture Department's study of Kiboro Community Development Scheme in Kwangare. It will be published by HRDU.
4. Unfortunately this data only tells the date of migrants first arrival in Nairobi. Consequently we are unable to say anything about the continuity of residence in Nairobi or the prevalence of circular migration. From personal observation such migration seems fairly common.
5. My research assistant Jeremy Jakoya continually maintained that the respondents were indulging in generous estimation. It would thus be best to treat this information as referring to what the tenants felt they ought to be sending home rather than what they actually did send.
6. Within Kenya it seems that some divergence from this general rural-urban migration pattern may be emerging. Thus while the migration from Western Kenya still has important elements of circular migration about it in terms of the strength of urban-rural links, access to rural land and lack of urban economic opportunities. The migration from the more developed parts of Central Province may have elements of classic proletarianization it. In a sense we are suggesting a dual migration stream that has similarities with the dual labour market model we sketched out in Figure 2.1. It seems that the development of rural capitalism in Central Province and population growth is increasing total landlessness and not just subdivision. These individuals have no rights to land and consequently the 'soft option' of circular migration is no longer available. Hence these individuals must make a go of it in the 'urban' centres. In essence they have two options: become a capitalist of whatever scale, or a wage-labourer; there is no possibility of being a self-sufficient peasant. Intuitively it seems that this is one of the forces that is propelling Kenyan capitalism from the bottom. Such an interpretation is consistent with that outlined by Marx in Capital Volume 1.
7. As we shall see in Chapter 9 there are discernible 'villages' or neighbourhoods within Kibera that are fairly generally recognized.
8. In fact the annual interest rate would be greater than 240% as the 20/- per month would be related to a declining sum owed.
9. This comment and the tenant quote at the start of the chapter are not intended to undermine the work being done by the Church amongst the urban poor in Kenya. The work of 'Undugu' with whom I was privileged to have had personal contact, is outstanding. Indeed, increasingly, some sections of the Church, predominantly Catholic, are approaching Kenya's problems in 'structural' rather than 'individualistic' terms. This is a central tenet of Liberation theology developed by the Christian marxists in Latin America.

10. Within South Africa in the early years of the century alcohol was explicitly used to control the labour force; while to my knowledge nobody has written on this in Kenya it does seem likely. (see Van Onselen, 1982).
11. The presence of first and second generation migrants in part explains the difference in behaviour between Latin American and African squatters. The former are second generation and are considerably more politically active than the generally 'passive' African squatter who is a first generation migrant.

CHAPTER 9

THE IMPACT OF COMMERCIALIZATION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY
OF LANDLORD-TENANT RELATIONS

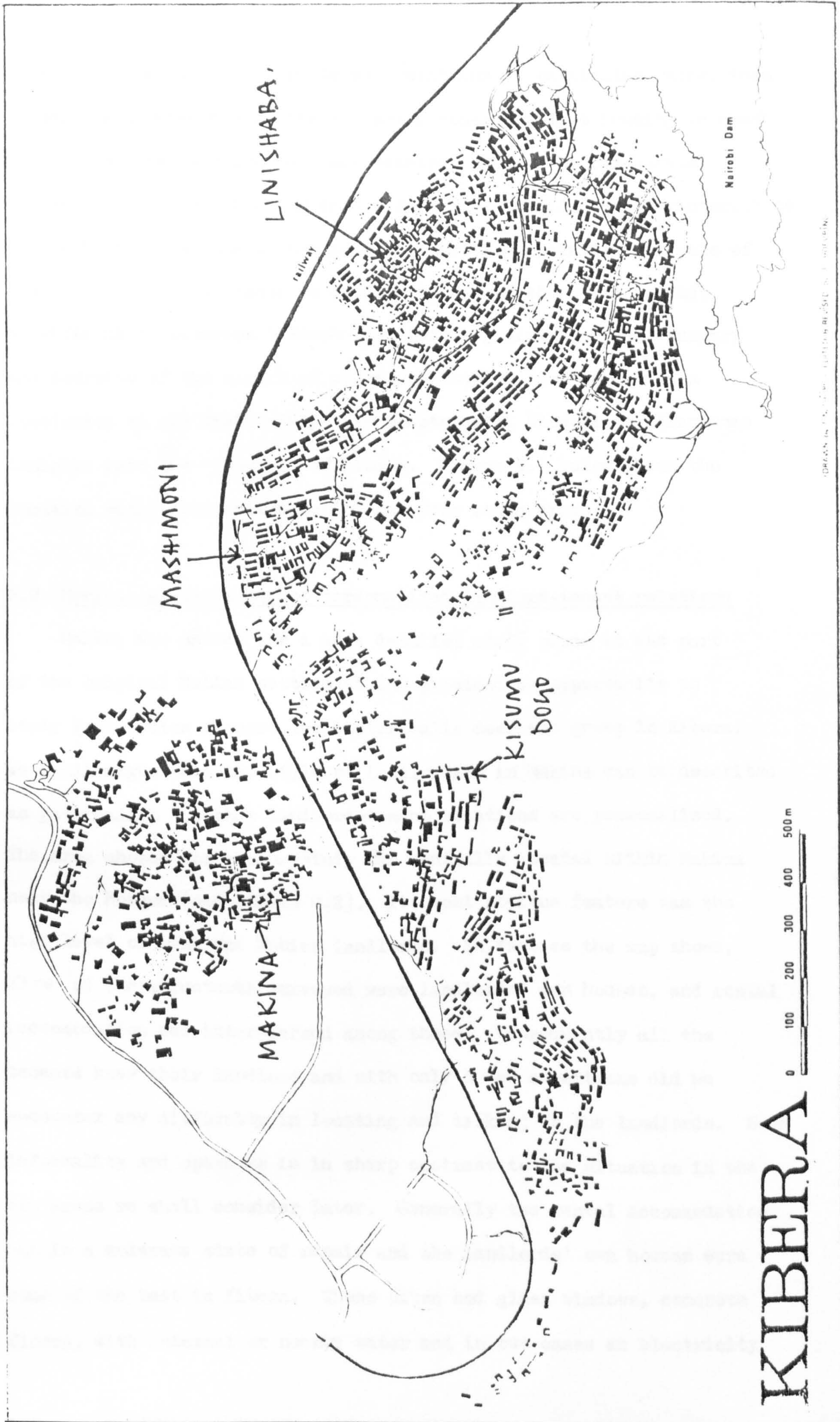
'...It's better now as they used to have carton (cardboard) houses and they used to leak, but nowadays some of them who have got these houses (mud and wattle) they are better because they don't leak. But there is another problem as a group some of them don't have houses (and) they have to rent them and as they don't have a permanent income so you find that sometimes the landlord locks their houses (rent arrears); that's the problem they see.'

Member of a Kibera Women's group.

9.1 Introduction

This chapter concerns itself with the social impact of the commercialization of unauthorized housing. It does so by undertaking a comparative analysis of areas within the settlement. The original reason for making this comparison was that it was thought that Old Kibera i.e. the Nubian enclave where settlement had started in 1913 would exhibit some 'traditional' housing economy, that could be compared with the post-1974 capitalist rental sector that characterized New Kibera.

The 'traditional' housing economy we had in mind was that of a close-knit autonomous community where 'subsistence shelter' was the normal method of housing provision. Old Kibera (Makina) at the moment still exhibits some aspects of the close-knit islamic Nubian enclave we described in Chapter 5; its housing market is no longer characterised by 'subsistence shelter'. Hence while Old Kibera might at some earlier date crudely have fitted such a 'traditional' housing economy by 1980 this was no longer the case since a private rental sector had emerged in Old Kibera. Consequently this chapter represents a comparison between different styles of a capitalist



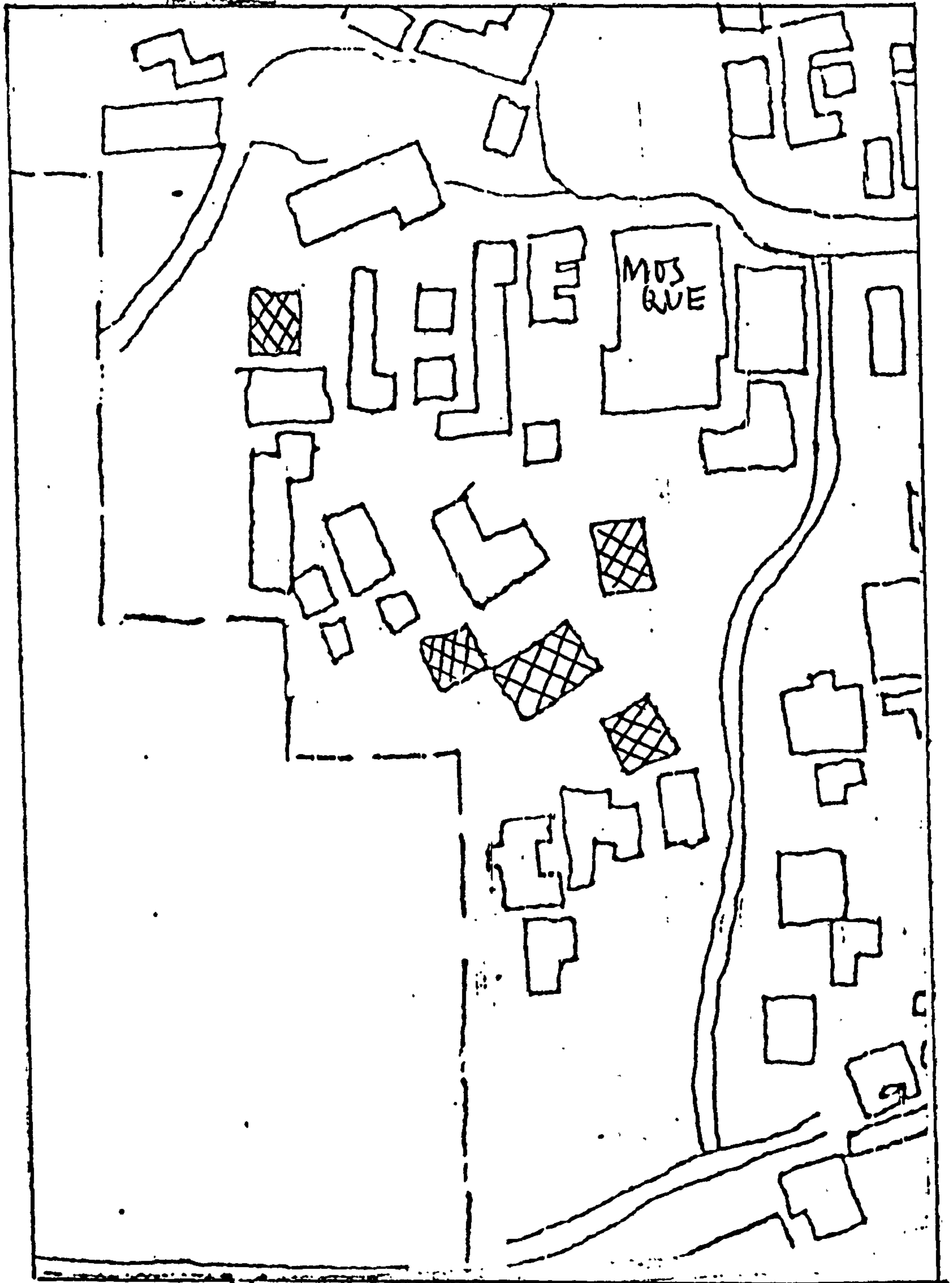
housing economy and landlord-tenant relations in particular rather than a comparison between a capitalist and a non-capitalist housing economy.

In the next section we shall examine Makina the old Nubian enclave before investigating in the following section the characteristics of new Kibera. We shall then provide a brief comparative analysis of the four specific villages we studied to see if there are in fact significant differences between them before giving a general summary and overview of the impact of commercialization in Kibera. As a conclusion to our field study this chapter will attempt to offer some insights into the 'flavour' of Kibera. Figure 9.1 below shows the location within the settlement of our four study areas.

9.2 Makina: A case study of personalized landlord-tenant relations

Makina was chosen for a more detailed study since it was part of the original Nubian settlement and provided an opportunity to study landlordism amongst the historically dominant group in Kibera. We shall argue that the style of landlordism in Makina can be described as paternalist and that landlord-tenant relations are personalised. The area chosen for closer study was centrally located within Makina near the Mosque (see Figure 9.2). Its most obvious feature was the high level of resident Nubian landlords. In fact as the map shows, five of the structures surveyed were landlords' own houses, and rental accommodation was interspersed among these. Consequently all the tenants knew their landlord and with only a few exceptions did we encounter any difficulty in locating and talking to the landlords. Such informality and openness is in sharp contrast to the situation in the new areas we shall consider later. Generally the rental accommodation was in a moderate state of repair and the landlords' own houses were some of the best in Kibera. These often had glass windows, concrete floors, with internal or nearby water and in two cases an electricity

Figure 9.2 Map of Makina study-area



Landlord's own houses



supply. In 'objective' terms the difference between the standard of landlords' own housing and that of their tenants was large. The site was extremely clean and generally free of refuse and dust as a result of regular sweeping and brushing by women. While it was not apparent what combination of tenants' or landlords' wives this involved, the fact that only one out of eight tenants had their wives with them in Nairobi strongly suggests that this external cleaning was carried out by landlords' wives who in keeping their own 'property' clean would also clean their tenants' external space. While the motivations for keeping the area tidy and clean may be self-interested or paternalistic they are in striking contrast to the 'I'm not going to do it since so-and-so will benefit' philosophy that is perceptible in other parts of Kibera.

The Nubian landlords seemed predominantly elderly and were involved in the following occupations: university technician, Kenya Bus Service driver, employment on local golf course, together with those who were 'professional landlords' or were retired. All these landlords, as would be expected in a close-knit ethnic group like the Nubians, knew each other. Their general presence was very apparent in the area; since Makina is in every sense 'their home' this should not surprise us.

The Nubians have been involved in the construction of room-units for rental at least since 1971, when the earliest surveyed block in our survey was built. The construction of extra houses and room-units by individuals who do not intend to live in them themselves or allow their kin to live in them suggests an economic (exchange-value) orientation rather than an orientation towards meeting social obligations (use-value). Such social obligations might involve 'traditional' customs, such as building separate huts for one's offspring or initiated young women. The non-existence of such a housing pattern

was supported by the complaints of some landlords that due to the increased de facto administrative planning control outlined in Chapter 5 they were not able to build additional houses for their children and that this offended against traditional values.¹

One suspects that this may be a 'traditional' response that conceals the landlord's real interest in the construction of rental accommodation for profit. However there is evidence of non-economic factors in the sale as opposed to the construction of housing in that Makina does not seem to have reached the 'second stage' of having a 'market' in buying and selling buildings, or if it does such transactions are generally likely to be exclusively between Nubian owners.²

It is interesting to note who has occupied the room-units that the Nubians have built on infilling sites between their own homes. Immediately one perceives a problem for the Nubian 'community' in the fact that there are not enough Nubian or culturally similar groups to go round as tenants. Hence even if they refuse to sell their property to 'outsiders' the construction of rental accommodation implies the destruction of Makina as a demographically homogeneous Nubian enclave as the number of non-Nubian tenants rise. It may be for reasons such as this that we were told by one Nubian that he would not talk to us, after he had seen the names of fellow Nubians in my notebook and said that these were the men who had destroyed Kibera. The names included prominent landlords who had been suggested as good informants. Similarly the commonly heard complaints concerning 'outsiders' with their corrupting influence (i.e. crime and alcohol) is a direct function of the influx of non-Nubians into rental housing. Here as in most of Kibera we see the more general process by which capitalism is breaking down traditional groupings.

What remains to be seen is whether landlord-tenant relations in Makina are different in quality as a result of landlords and tenants

knowing each other. We shall describe this pattern as 'personalized' in contrast to the 'formalised' pattern where the tenant does not generally know the landlord; in such cases intermediaries are common.

We will answer the question by looking at landlords' treatment of rental arrears, and the selection of tenants. Within Makina landlord tenant relations were generally fairly good. Eleven out of the twelve tenants estimated they would be allowed four weeks or more 'extension' to their rent payments. This compares with a figure of 21% for the entire tenants' survey. Similarly only three out of the 12 tenants said they would resort to borrowing money; instead they said their best strategy was to 'discuss' it with the landlord. (This figure is comparable with the 30% for the entire survey). In one particular case an Abaluhya tenant had not paid his rent for three months. In this case the landlord 'understood' his tenant's situation; his wife had just died and he had been forced to pay for his wife's funeral expenses and the transport of the body back to Kakamega (300 km from Nairobi). The mobilization of tribal and kin associations for funeral expenses was the main function tribal associations fulfilled.³

Such tolerant behaviour by landlords seemed fairly common in Makina. Most tenants throughout Kibera preferred Nubians as landlords as they generally had a fairly 'soft' reputation over rent collection. None of the Nubian landlords in the area interviewed regarded violence, or the threat of it, as a viable rent collection technique. The main reason given was that one would still have to live nearby to potentially vengeful tenants. In the long run most of these landlords thought the disadvantages of a violent rent collection method in terms of alienation, difficulty over future payments, possible damage to property were greater than the advantages they brought, i.e. securing immediate payment. It was also interesting that the only landlord who did not allow rent arrears was the landlady, discussed further on

in a case study, who was the most dependent upon rent as a source of income. This fact was not lost on her tenants who seemed more willing to borrow money in order to avoid arrears rather than throw the burden onto their landlady.

We shall now consider landlord-tenant relations in two different blocks to illustrate some of the differing patterns of such relations within Makina.

Landlord-tenant relations in Block F: careful management by a poor landlord

The landlady of one part of Block F was a single middle-aged Nubian woman with seven children. In 1964 she claims she was divorced by her husband (whether this was a legal or traditional divorce was unclear). In 1978 it seems that her brother lent her 6,700/- with which to build a nine-room extension to his already existing property. (The brother lives in Lindi in another part of Kibera and owns both Blocks F and G). Of these nine rooms she occupies one and her children two, the remaining six are rented at 100/- per month. To date she has not made any loan repayments to her brother. She admitted getting permission from the local administration to build and that the Administration Police (i.e. tribal police) sometimes checked this permission during construction. At this point in the interview she became very defensive, and we turned to the question of how she found her tenants. She was very clear that she picks them through friends who know what they are like, and that this was the way to get good tenants. Generally she said she preferred Luhya tenants and surprisingly, for a Nubian, Kikuyu tenants whom she liked as they 'kept themselves to themselves'. Luo tenants she does not like since they fight and are noisy. On difficulties with collecting rent she said that if you knew they had a problem then you did not ask for rent. This is not quite the case, since her tenants say they have to pay at the end of the month or in one case that if you have a 'problem' you must notify

her on the 26th of the month.

While it was not said in so many words it seemed fairly obvious that the landlady was a retired prostitute - landlordism seems to be a popular profession for retired ladies of the night. She appeared to have a preference for letting rooms to other women, in particular prostitutes, whether Nubian or not. Nevertheless she was fairly 'sharp' with her rent collection, but it also seems that within reason the tenants did not argue much as it was obvious that she was not well-off given that her only other source of income was from selling her own hand-woven baskets and mats and from hair-dressing - or more accurately plaiting, a skill Nubian women are renowned for in Nairobi. To see women plaiting each other's hair in the open air is a common sight of Kibera as in all of Kenya.

To sum up, the landlady's family occupy three rooms out of nine and in some respects they were fairly close to their tenants, sharing facilities, etc. Over rent collection however there was little flexibility but neither was physical intimidation used. It seemed that rent payments were fairly readily obtained. Her choice of tenants gave preference to women and in this sense was not simply via market mechanisms. However for a landlady this is a rational economic strategy since it most probably makes rental payments more regular. The construction of the block and its basic operation was explicitly as a source of income. Thus while the landlady's practice was atypical of the Nubians in that she was less flexible in rent collection, this is consistent with her relative poverty. As we shall see in our discussion later in this chapter, the poorest landlords are often the hardest.

Landlord-tenant relations in Block K: paternalist social control

A quite different pattern of landlord-tenant relations can be quickly illustrated from Block K. The elderly Nubian landlord of

this block lived on site with his family and his tenants, and they were often to be seen sitting and talking in their courtyard. The most interesting thing about this situation was that according to the landlord every Sunday they had a meeting to discuss mutual issues. The landlord explained this in democratic terms (i.e. open discussion), in fact what actually happened was that the landlord would use the meeting to sanction those tenants who were drunk the night before. This shows the possibility of a kind of patronizing social control by resident landlords. It illustrates again some of the social difficulties that the growth of rental housing has brought for the Nubians. It also shows how tenants, especially in a housing shortage, may have to modify their social behaviour to suit their landlords.

In conclusion although in Makina the rent levels are not cheap and housing conditions are not particularly good there is not as yet a great deal of antagonism between landlord and tenant. This is despite the fact that almost without exception the landlords are Nubian and the tenants non-Nubian. Neither is it true to say that there is a great deal of co-operation between landlord and tenant. Nevertheless while in objective terms the landlords' behaviour can substantially alter their tenants' welfare and the Nubian landlords higher than average incomes are a direct result of their tenants rents, these Nubian landlords are not the object of open hostility or conflict.⁴ In part this may reflect the fact that tenants distinguish between the individual actors and the nature of the system. For example, many tenants did not think their landlord's behaviour 'unfair' and said they would do the same themselves. This reflects the general individualistic ethos in Kenya and suggests that early capitalism is self-legitimizing via the belief in fair exchange in the market place. However it is important to understand that the tenants, given the housing situation, have little option but to accept the legitimacy

of the system; they have no choice.

In this section we have examined landlord-tenant relations in an area, Makina, where they are personalized, i.e. landlords and tenants live in proximity and know each other. What has emerged is two-fold. Firstly at no time have we argued that Nubian landlords were acting in any other way than as capitalists. For example, the careful choice of tenants by the landlady in Block F was guided by economic motives. However it is clear that they are flexible in their treatment of rent arrears and that there is no overt hostility between landlord and tenant in the area.

9.3 New Kibera: Capitalism and Ethnicity

It is often acknowledged that the establishment of capitalist relations transforms or modifies traditional social forms. In this section we shall use material from two of our study areas to illustrate the relationship between capitalism and ethnicity. In so doing we shall continue our discussion from Chapter 2. Thus our first study area illustrates processes that are eroding ethnic enclaves in unauthorized housing, while our second study area shows the strength and rationality of patronage. Both these study areas are situated in 'New' (post-1974) Kibera where we maintain that the housing economy is fundamentally capitalist.

Kisumu Dogo: Ethnic Mix as a Landlord Strategy

The name Kisumu Dogo translated literally means 'little Kisumu' - Kisumu being the major urban centre in Western Kenya associated with the Luos. The cities of Kampala and Mombassa also have areas with such names. As the name suggested it was an ethnic enclave, it seemed particularly interesting to study.

The continuing importance of ethnic enclaves has been explained as a response to the scarcity which the market creates which means

that ethnic ties are reinforced as a strategy for access to resources.

Thus Parkin writing about housing notes that:

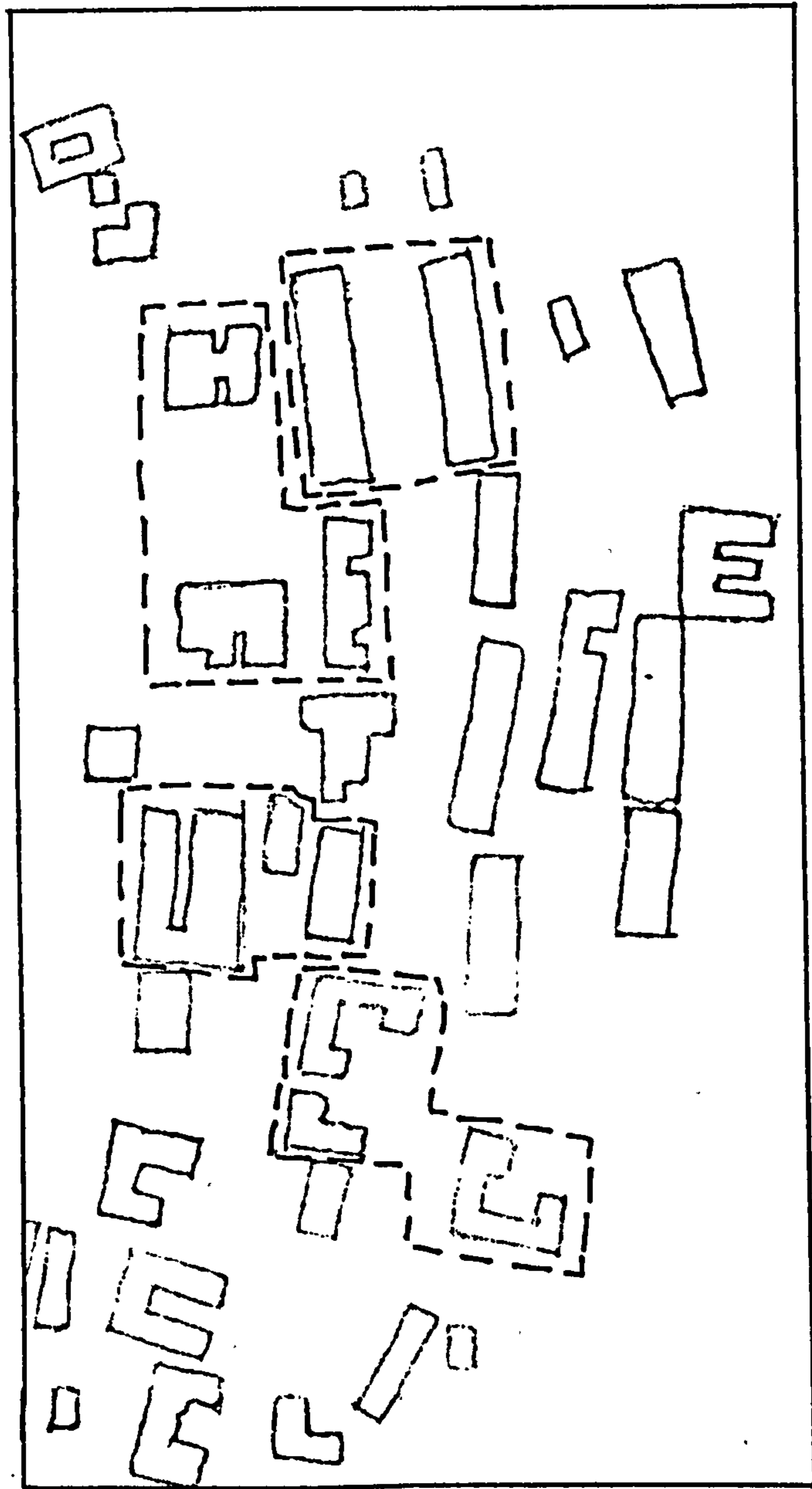
'...ethnic enclaves are variously reported and with rapidly growing urban populations having to rely more and more on self-built housing in 'unauthorized' areas, seem likely to increase...' (Parkin, 1975, 33)

Parkin's statement is valid in a self-build housing area where co-operation is important. However we shall argue that it does not necessarily hold in a capitalist private sector housing market with a defined landlord-tenant relationship. The landlord-tenant relationship is in essence one of exploitation to which ethnicity may operate as a social constraint.

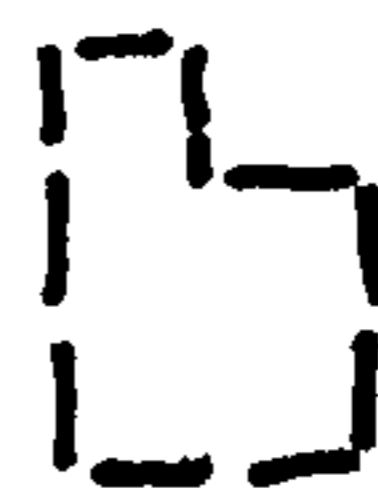
Kisumu dogo is socially typical of new Kibera and is situated across a steep slope. In general the area was like a dormitory estate with little commercial activity, from the map (Figure 9.3) we can see that there was a fairly high level of concentration of property ownership. The average landlord let out 16 rooms while the two largest let out 44 and 34 rooms respectively with another two landlords controlling 27 rooms each. However at the other end there were seven landlords who let out less than eight rooms. The landlords came from a typical occupational cross-section, including a university lecturer, an employee of Kenya Airways, a salesman, some professional landlords and a kiosk owner. Similarly the tenants were a typical group inhabiting the recently constructed housing in Kibera with an average monthly income of 810/-, although only 6% of the sample do not receive a regular wage.

Despite the area's name associating it with the Luo community it is interesting to note that only 53% of all the room-units in the study area were inhabited by Luos as tenants, while they are the majority it is far from being an ethnic enclave. Even if we also include the Luhyas, also from Western Kenya, the overall figure of those from Western Kenya is still relatively low at 73%. The remaining 27%

Figure 9.3 Map of property ownership in Kisumu dogo study-area



Multiple Ownership



are drawn from a variety of other ethnic groups (see Figure 9.4).

The same ethnic diversity is apparent among the landlords. 43% of landlords are Kikuyu and 33% are Nubian; Luos and Luhyas are in a minority of 19% of landlords in the area.

Figure 9.4 The Landlord and Tenant Populations in Kisumu dogo
by ethnic group

	<u>No. of</u> <u>landlords</u>	<u>% of room-units owned</u> <u>by landlords</u>	<u>No. of</u> <u>tenants</u>
Luos	14% (3)	11% (24)	53% (103)
Kikuyus	43% (9)	61% (133)	3% (6)
Luhya	5% (1)	6% (14)	20% (39)
Kamba			4% (8)
Nubian	33% (7)	15% (33)	2% (4)
Kalenjia			5% (9)
Others	5% (1)	7% (15)	12% (24)
Total	100% (21)	100% (219)	99% (193)

Source: Tenants survey

But the most interesting feature of Figure 9.5 is the mismatch between the ethnic backgrounds of landlords and tenants. Thus while 43% of the landlords are Kikuyu and they control 61% room-units in our study area, we find that only 3% of rooms are occupied by Kikuyu tenants. On the other hand Luos inhabit 53% of the room-units as tenants but only control 11% of the room-units as landlords. The disparities are equally apparent in the case of the Nubian and Luhya communities, the former being overrepresented as landlords and the latter as tenants. It is clear from this table that landlord-tenant relations in this area predominantly involve members of different ethnic groups.

Although the above table does not provide a figure for the percentage of mixed ethnic landlord-tenant relation, we can calculate the minimum

figure which could be reached if within our sample a landlord lets to a tenant of the same ethnic group. Such choices would account for 32% of the combinations of landlord and tenant, in which case 68% of landlord-tenant relations would be mixed in ethnic group. The real figure is likely to be above this in so far as, as we shall see, most landlords prefer not to let to tenants of the same ethnic group.

This 'ethnic mixing' is more apparent at the level of the individual block. Out of the seventeen blocks for which the information was available in Kisumu dogo none, not even those with three or four rooms, were monoethnic. Indeed of the 65 blocks in our overall tenant survey, (i.e. covering all four field study areas) where the information was available only four (6%) were monoethnic and these all contained only a few rooms with six being the maximum. This distribution suggests the hypothesis that landlords are adopting a clear strategy of ensuring 'mixed tribe blocks'. The likelihood of such a strategy is the stronger given that in a situation of housing shortage with a surplus of potential tenants, landlords can afford to discriminate between tenants, e.g. a landlord wishing to let to his fellow tribesmen would have no difficulty in doing so.

Most landlords when asked about the prevalence of 'mixed tribe blocks' explained it in terms of 'it being bad to be tribalistic as it is against the official nationalist ideology. We would explain it differently and speculate that it is in fact an intentional landlord strategy to make it harder for the tenants to organize, the assumption being that such mobilization would be less likely across tribal boundaries.⁵ Secondly we can also suggest that from the landlords' financial viewpoint one's kin and fellow tribesmen may not make good tenants as they may expect preferential treatment. Both factors are likely to result in the mixed tribe blocks which are the norm in Kibera.

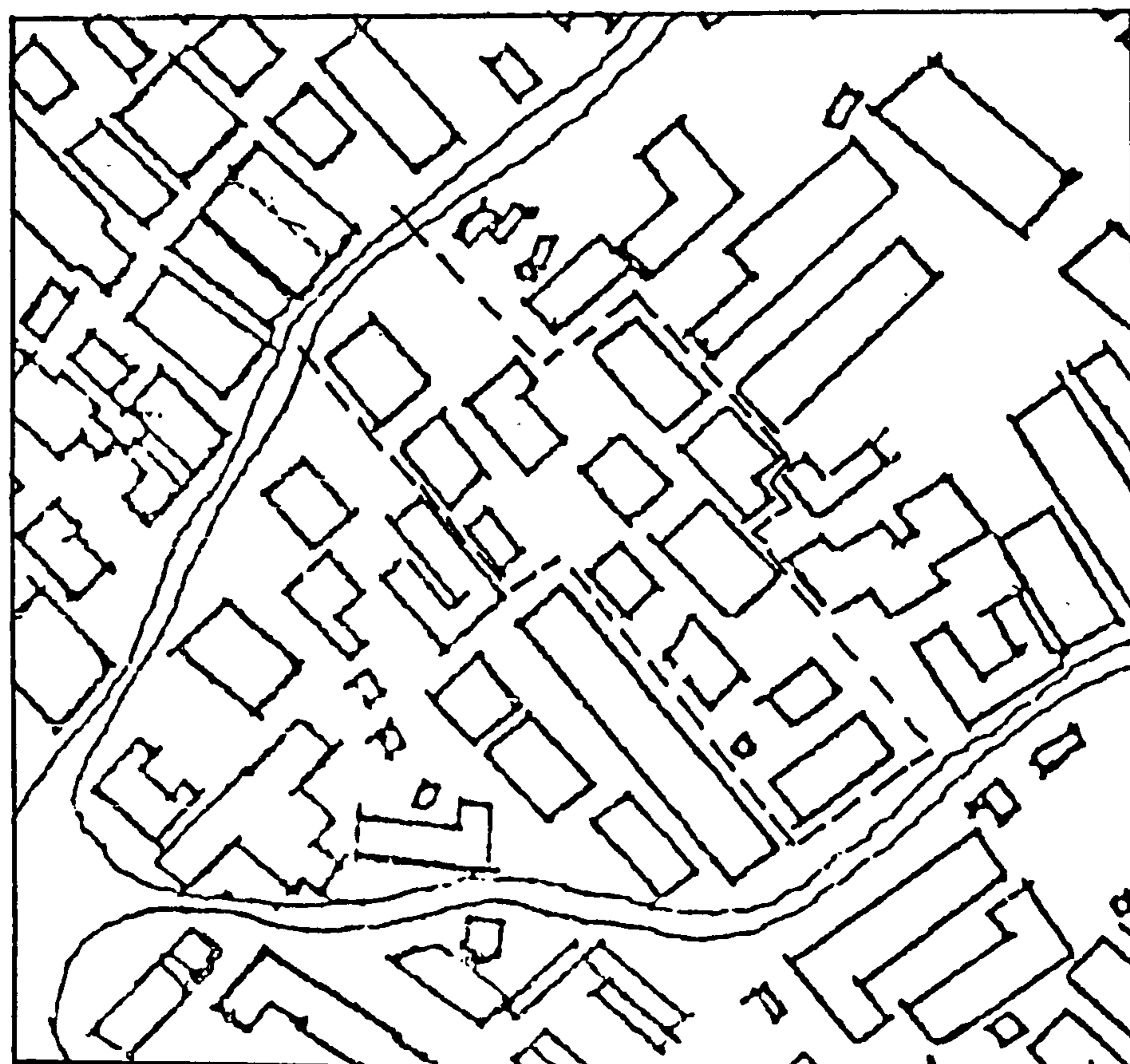
In the Kisumu dogo example again we can see the relationship between capitalism and ethnicity. In different ways and for different groups the commercialization of unauthorized housing is having opposing effects. The system of land allocation is strengthening ethnicity, in particular amongst Kikuyu, while the landlords' strategy is weakening ethnicity by encouraging mixed tribal residential patterns. At a political level we can see that a possible outcome of this is to build a cross tribal political base attacking Kikuyu hegemony (Chege, 1981).

Linishaba: patronage and cohesion: the case of a women's group

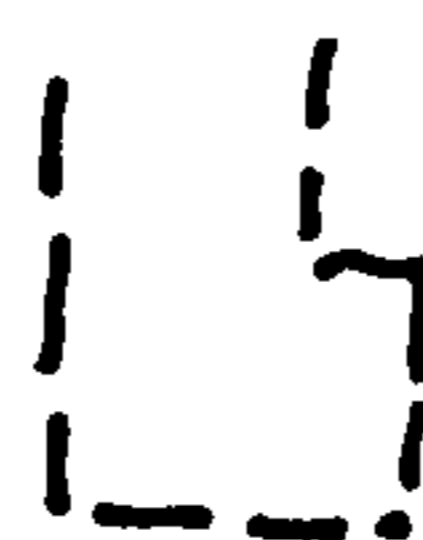
Linishaba is one of the poorest villages in Kibera with the worst housing conditions; it was because of this that we chose it as an area for intensive study. That there is an element of voyeurism in this cannot be denied. However despite the depressing nature of the area we were to find a degree of social cohesion within a particular co-operative within our field study that was remarkable. Similarly as a result of the presence in Linishaba of commercial activity i.e. retailing and a vegetable market combined with some 'informal sector' activity it was the most lively and exciting place to do fieldwork. Unlike the purely dormitory residential housing areas of other parts of 'new' Kibera, Linishaba had the feel of a 'community'.

As we can see from the map below (Figure 9.5) the housing density in the area was extremely high, and there was minimal provision by landlords of latrines, i.e. one in four buildings were without any form of latrine. The tenants in the area openly expressed their fear of cholera - this is likely to have been connected with the cholera outbreak that occurred during our study period in 1980. The average monthly income of the tenants was 640/- while 57% (9) of our sample had no regular income. This was the village where the

Figure 9.5 Map showing area owned by women's group in Linishaba study-area



Women's Group Area



Catholic Relief service estimate that half the children suffer from malnutrition judged by weight and height criteria. Consequently while Linishaba was in some respects one of the more vibrant areas in Kibera it was also one of the most impoverished.

The housing situation was controlled locally with 86% of the landlords living on site or next door. These landlords were either 'professional landlords' or involved in occupations like building and carpentry to give two examples. All the landlords without exception were Kikuyu, one Kikuyu female landlord was married to an Arab who had the exotic job of 'tic-tac' man at the Nairobi race course. The degree of concentration of ownership within our study area was not as marked as in the other parts of Kibera with the average landlord controlling eleven rooms. One female landlord who lived on site and was a secondary school student controlled four blocks with 33 rooms - it appears that she had 'inherited' this estate. There were two landlords who controlled 17 room-units each while the remainder had less than ten each.

It became apparent as the study progressed that most of the landlords and particularly the female landlords seemed to be in some way connected. Indeed all the houses built within the line drawn in Figure 9.5 are connected with a specific women's group.⁶ We shall use our data on this group to illustrate the importance of patronage, and the extent of the group's cohesion.

In 1960 the women in this group had come to Nairobi and squatted in Langata i.e. the vacant land adjoining Kibera. This was as a direct consequence of the end of the 'war' i.e. state of emergency when migration controls were lifted and the Kikuyu could return to Nairobi. It was unclear whether the women had formed some group prior to arriving in Nairobi but from what was said this seems to have been a possibility; thus it was suggested that the group 'co-ordinated'

itself in the rural areas before arriving in Nairobi and building themselves houses out of cardboard cartons. It may be that like some of the original squatters in Mathare Valley these women had had some common experience in Mau-Mau (Ross, 1973). It seemed that they were all Kikuyu but it was unclear if they were all from the same rural district. Whatever the original links there seems to be no doubt that the common experience of living side by side under threat of the government and in cardboard houses that leaked and were a severe fire risk was to create a sense of common identity. Indeed in the twelve years between 1960 and 1972 their cardboard houses were to be demolished seven times. Their persistence in remaining in Nairobi in the face of this repression, as well as their arrival in 1960, is most probably attributable to their landless state.

At some stage while squatting in Langata these women formed a tribal dancing group of around 30 members. In Kenya 'traditional' tribal dancers are used to welcome the President on visits, for the reception of dignitaries at Jomo Kenyatta Airport and to campaign in parliamentary elections and provide political support for specific candidates. This group was involved in all these activities and in particular in being the 'dancers' for the 1974 Kibera M.P. Mwangi Mathi as well as the current mayor of Nairobi. For these services the women are usually given a 'soda' and some small sum of money as a reward. (Anon., 1982, 25). However in this case it would seem their patrons - and given their high social status this is not surprising - were able to give ten out of the original 30 squatters in Langata building rights in Linishaba in either 1972 or 1974 - the exact data is unclear. Where the money to build with came from was unclear, the group did have a connection with GEMA (Gikuyu Embu and Meru Association) who might have provided loans. Nevertheless by 1980 the members of this group were involved in the commercialized unauthor-

ized market both as landlords and tenants; it seems that the fortunate ten owners had let their rooms to the other members of the group as tenants. In part this may reflect the high percentage of Kikuyus in our study area; thus 47 (61%) out of the 66 rooms let were occupied by Kikuyus.

This example is a clear case of the role of political patronage in Kenya. It also shows how individuals become integrated into the system; thus the women reported that whereas previously their houses were 'unsafe' now they have 'licenses' and their housing is 'safe'. Similarly, compared to the harassment they received in 1960, the chief (i.e. local administration) now talks to them politely. Finally although this is an excellent example of the permanence of client-patron relations and the cohesion of the group we can again notice how capitalist relations can have an eroding effect on community. Consequently those in the group who are now tenants - they all still dance together - complained about the problem of paying rent without a regular source of income. We can take it as axiomatic that this rent would go to other members of the group. Thus even amongst those who have struggled together for two decades in Nairobi ultimately the rent must still be paid. However we should not overemphasize this point since the fact that this women's group has stayed together for twenty years represents a remarkable degree of group cohesion in the face of poverty.

9.4 Four study areas: a comparative analysis

The internal differentiation within unauthorised settlements has been amply documented throughout the third world. (Roberts, 1978). In this section we shall make an attempt at a comparative analysis of our four study areas. In so doing we are assuming that the differentiation will have a spatial dimension as we are in fact

Figure 9.6 The social characteristic of the four study areas in Kibera

	Makina	Mashimoni	Kisumu dogo	Linishaba
Average rent levels a month	103/-	104/-	102/-	76/-
Average room size in sq. metres	14.3	16.9	15.6	11.5
% of blocks without pit latrines	8%	5%	5%	25%
% of landlords using intermediaries	0%	35%	44%	13%
% of landlords giving receipts	17%	70%	44%	19%
% of resident landlords	100%	31%	30%	86%
Average number of weeks of non-payment of rent	5.8	4.2	3.7	3.1
% of tenants paying rent on demand	10%	41%	41%	45%
% of tenants borrowing money to pay rent	27%	37%	17%	33%
Average income of tenants	921/-	735/-	810/-	640/-
% of tenants not in regular wage employment	25%	18%	6%	57%
Average number of rooms owned by each landlord	14.4	18.5	16.1	11.0
Ethic composition of landlords				
Nubians	100%	30%	33%	
Kikuyus		53%	43%	100%
Luos		9%	14%	
Luhyu		2%	5%	
Others		4%	5%	
Total number of tenants and blocks in sample	12	46	18	16

Source: Tenant survey

comparing the characteristics of different geographical locations or 'villages' within the settlement. As we argued earlier we do not see the differences between areas as a qualitative one, e.g. with Makina representing 'self-build', and the newer areas representing capitalist housing provision. Rather, we see them as illustrating different styles of landlord-tenant relations within a fundamentally capitalist housing pattern. A social profile of the four zones is presented in Figure 9.6.

In using this table, the most important point to make at the outset, is that by disaggregating the tenant sample the numbers in each zone are extremely small and consequently our conclusions must be treated with caution.

A first overall impression from Figure 9.6 suggests a general level of uniformity across the settlement, the average monthly rent levels are almost identical at 105/-, 104/-, 102/- and 76/-, the latter being accountable by the smaller room sizes in Linishaba. Again we can note the consistent relationship between room size and rent. The average tenant monthly incomes shows some variation from a high of 921/- in Makina to a low of 640/- in Linishaba with 57% in the latter area suffering from income insecurity. As expected, on most of the indices Linishaba tenants are the worst off in terms of their housing situation and their income - fully a quarter of Linishaba do not have access to a pot latrine.

However the most interesting comparisons refer to differences in the nature of the housing market and in particular whether, in areas where landlord-tenant relations are personalized, landlords are more easy-going towards their tenants. To start with let us consider Makina and Linishaba where landlord-tenant relations are both personalized: 0% and 13% of landlords used intermediaries to collect rent, 17% and 19% gave receipts while 100% and 86% of the landlords were resident

respectively. However, despite these superficial similarities landlords' practices regarding rent arrears differed markedly between the two areas. Whereas the average tenant in Makina might expect to stall the payment of rent for 5.8 weeks and only 10% (one individual) had to pay on the nail, their counterparts in Linishaba were given only 3.1 weeks grace and 45% had to pay on demand. On the other hand, in the two areas where landlord-tenant relations were formalized Mashimoni and Kisumu dogo 35% and 44% of landlords using intermediaries, 31% and 30% resident landlords and 70% and 40% giving receipts respectively. In these areas landlord-tenant relations were nevertheless intermediate: average grace periods were 4.2 and 3.7 weeks and 41% in both cases had to pay on the nail. Thus, there is little systematic difference between Makina and the three new areas as we had originally imagined. Indeed our suggestion that personalized landlord-tenant relations might lead to differences in landlord behaviour is not borne out by the data.

However, we will argue that there is a possible explanation for the difference in landlord behaviour between the four areas and that it lies in the economic position of both landlord and tenant. This can be seen by contrasting the two extreme cases.⁷ In Linishaba the poorest tenants with the largest problem of income insecurity face generally poor landlords and are allowed the least amount of leeway in payment. Meanwhile in Makina tenants with higher and more regular average incomes are allowed more flexibility by their generally better-off landlords. This contrast reflects a single economic rationale among landlords. Namely, that landlords' flexibility over rental arrears depends on their dependence on rent as a source of income and their tenants' ability to pay. This rationale thus reflects a rational economic assessment of risk.⁸

We will conclude this section by pointing out a paradox regarding

the political response to landlordism. Large scale absentee landlords while often behaving quite sympathetically as landlords were often the subject of tenant hostility. Meanwhile resident landlords were able to 'get away' with a similar if not higher level of economic exploitation without tenant hostility. This suggests the possibility that in tenants' eyes, resident landlords had more right to be exploitative, while absentee landlords had no right to be there in the first place.

9.5 Conclusion

In this chapter we have investigated the impact of the commercialization of unauthorized housing upon landlord-tenant relations in Kibera. We have done this by means of a comparative analysis between different areas within the settlement. Our original ideas concerning the differing style of landlord-tenant relations have not been borne out; namely the difference between a capitalist and a non-capitalist, i.e. 'traditional' economy or explanations in terms of differences between a 'personalized' and a 'formalised' system. Instead we found the same economic rationale behind such landlord-tenant relations despite different social contexts. In a nutshell landlord-tenant relations were ultimately reducible to an economic calculus dependent upon landlords' and tenants' level of income; there seemed to be no systematic social constraint or difference. This observation seems consistent with the development of capitalist relations of production.

In the next chapter we shall explore with data from our fourth study area the process by which the poorest individuals in Kibera are increasingly being forced out by market mechanisms. In a sense this follows on from the main theme of this chapter; capitalism's relentless ability to transform social situations.

Footnotes - Chapter 9

1. We can also note how from economic necessity traditional African customs in terms of sleeping arrangements within the family are having to be abused. COTU notes that this is a 'strategy' that low-income workers in urban centres must practise to survive (COTU, 1980).
2. We have limited but very reliable evidence that this ethnic solidarity may be disappearing. Thus a block in central Makina was owned by a non-Nubian politician from Western Kenya. Whether he built it himself or bought it its location in the centre of Nubian-dominated Makina is surprising.
3. Such tribal associations were banned in Kenya in 1980. This was an attempt to destroy the politically and economically important Gikuyu Embu and Meru Association (GEMA) which is a major force in the Kenyan economy and politics and was seen as a threat to the President. Not only GEMA but also benevolent tribal associations have also been banned and with them the last potential collective organization for the urban poor in Kenya. This action also simultaneously alienated the President from the indigenous class of capitalists associated with GEMA (Anon, 1983, 229).
4. A comparable group in a similar situation are the Mekinna in Lagos, Nigeria. (Peace, 1979).
5. A landlord in the co-operative housing movement admitted this explicitly to HRDU's sociologist Rose Gatabaki who is researching into housing co-operatives in Kenya.
6. All this information comes from one unstructured recorded interview with a group of about six members of this co-operative. This is not an ideal situation and what follows is the best I could manage in piecing together a complex story. All the women, all over 40 years old, had a contented look as if they had after 20 years struggling in Nairobi finally made it; now in a sense they had retired from the struggle.
7. Unfortunately we do not have enough data of sufficient quality particularly on the landlords' income to systematically explore this. In Mashimoni we compared the behaviour of the five largest landlords with the remainder and there was no difference however this scale of landlords tells us little about overall landlords' income. While we have data on landlords this is not systematically related to income since landlords have alternative sources of income.
8. The differences in landlord behaviour between the four villages are also consistent with a simple tribalist interpretation; Kikuyus are harder landlords than Nubians. Many tenants would not wish to dissent from such a view. However such an interpretation in terms of inherent characteristics of ethnic groups is too simple. The Kikuyu are predominantly poorer landlords than their Nubian counterparts so this ethnic difference tends to be simple reflection of our general economic argument. Nevertheless as a result of their pre-colonial society and their historical experience with colonialism it is a truism that today the Kikuyu are the most capitalist in orientation of Kenya's ethnic groups. If there is an ethnic difference here it reflects the differential penetration and assimilation of capitalism rather than any inherent difference.

CHAPTER 10ATTEMPTS TO IMPROVE LOW-INCOME SHELTER

Yesterday Mr. Olsen
Was an ordinary employee
In his own country
Suddenly today
He wakes up
Surrounded by lush vegetation
And black-faced people
In a foreign land
And finds
That he is an expert.
Many even call him doctor.
It doesn't feel too bad.
In fact Mr. Olsen
Is rather pleased by this
And quite soon
Himself starts believing
He is an expert.
And why not?
He has a long and expensive
education
Behind him
And is not lacking in experience;
Surely he is making
A significant contribution
To the well-being
Of the country
He now is helping.
So why not?
And when you are an expert
And that is that.
So when Mr. Olsen's conscience
Every now and then
Starts wheening
(Consciences have the bad taste of
not getting expertise overnight)
He quickly silences it
By putting out
An extra report
On his latest unnecessary
Development project.
When you are an expert
You don't any longer
Talk about this job
Or that task.
No, everything becomes a project.

And when you start evaluating
 And administering
 And coordinating.
 Soon Mr. Olsen is so involved
 In his project
 And in keeping it going
 That he forgets
 What it is about.
 That is the point
 When Mr. Olsen should be
 Sent home.
 But usually gets his contract
 Prolonged by two years.

Anon: Poem on HRDU wall.

10.1 Introduction

This chapter's central focus is on attempts to improve the housing situation of the urban poor within Nairobi. As we saw in Chapter 4 this is both a 'populist' government strategy and the result of the international agencies' involvement. However we shall also examine improvements that are the result of the operation of market mechanisms. There are in principle three agents who can effect improvements in housing conditions - the tenant, the landlord and the state - and we shall consider them all in this chapter. It is implicit in our approach that the similarities between the public sector sponsored (i.e. site and service) and the 'market' initiated schemes in economic context and structural constraints to improvements are greater than their institutional or legal differences. It may help at this point to state these similarities since they are the logical underpinnings to this Chapter. They are also the basic parameters which any 'solution' to Nairobi's housing shortage must face up to.

The most important and fundamental constraint to the improvement of low-income housing is poverty itself. While this is in a sense tautologous, the amount of money individuals are able to pay in rent ultimately determines the possible housing options that are effectively available to them. This gives rise to a recurring problem with housing improvements: that they often require individuals to devote a greater

percentage of their income to housing services than they are able or willing to do. The notion of 'value for money' in housing terms is important, thus individuals often have a lower demand for housing improvement than is expected. Invariably this is a function of their basic poverty in that they prefer to devote a greater percentage of their income to alternative forms of expenditure, e.g. food.

The common result of such a process of rent squeeze is that the original inhabitants whose housing is being improved are forced to move elsewhere or sell-out, depending upon the situation. It is through sell out that market mechanisms predominate in public sector schemes. In such situations it is of paramount importance to distinguish between improvements in the physical structure, i.e. the building, and improvements in the 'housing situation' of the individual. The former does not always imply the latter if the original inhabitant moves away. Consequently it is important to focus upon individual's 'housing situation' as well as the physical structure.

However it is also relevant to consider the case where either through effective regulation in public sector schemes or due to the difficulty in finding alternative accommodation individuals are forced to remain in a situation where they spend a higher percentage of income on housing than they might otherwise wish to.

In the next section we shall examine a case in which small-scale housing improvements are being undertaken by landlords. We shall then examine the experience of site and service projects within Nairobi before discussing what seems to be the new philosophy behind the international agencies' approaches to housing. In the final section we shall examine the crucial trade-off between housing improvements and health.

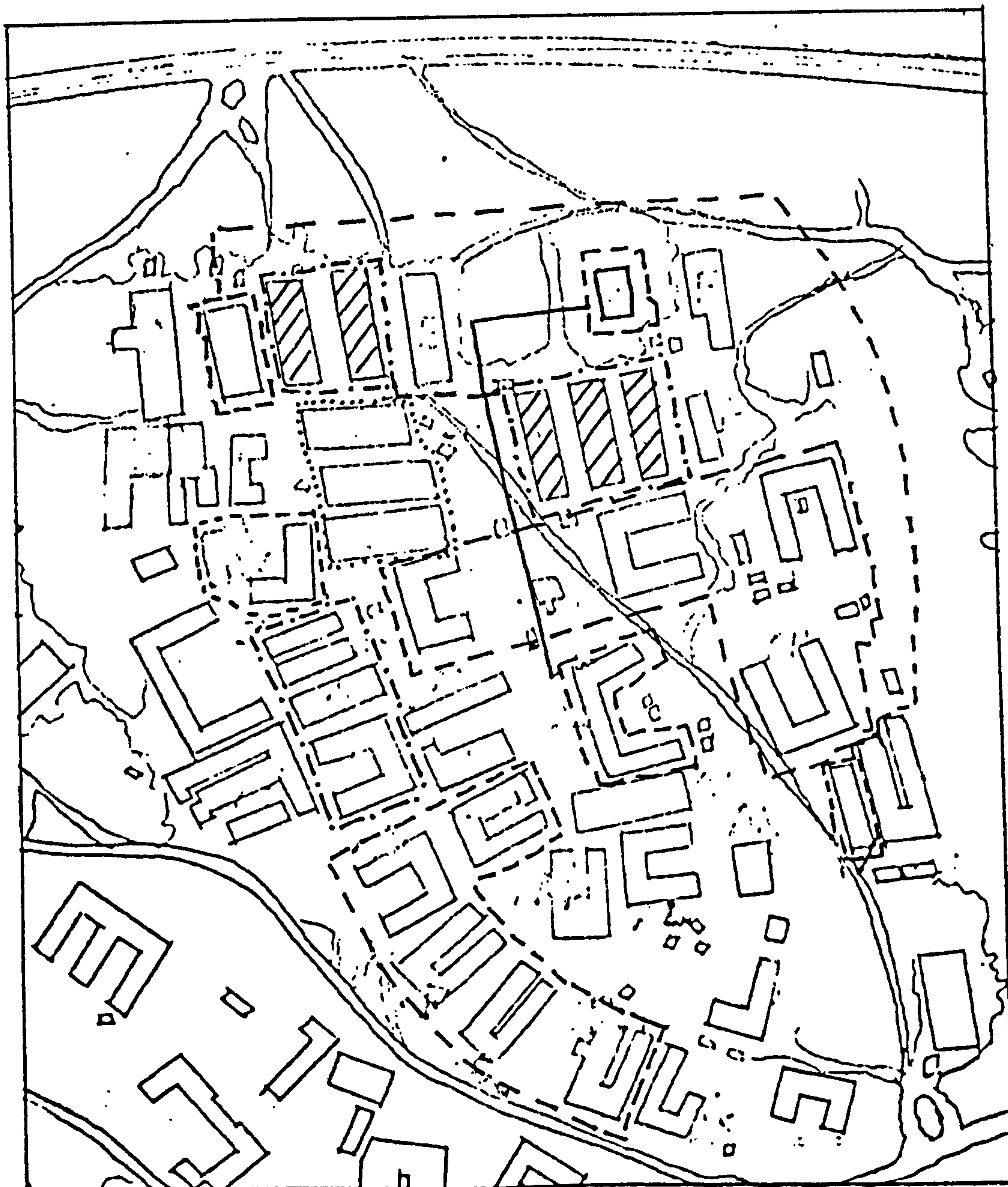
10.2 Landlord-initiated housing improvement: the case of Mashimoni

In order to study housing improvement instigated by landlords we draw on data from the Mashimoni area of Kibera, where we conducted an intensive survey. We originally choose Mashimoni as it seemed to involve a high degree of concentration of property ownership and secondly because it's housing stock appeared to be improving.

Mashimoni was a typical part of new Kibera but with a complex and concentrated ownership pattern as we can see in Figure 10.1. Thus the two largest landlords controlled 72 and 64 room units respectively which within our study area was 26% of all room units. The five largest landlords controlled a total of 238 rooms which represented 46% of the total number of rooms. The average landlord owned approximately 18 rooms, but there were nine landlords who owned less than ten rooms. Figure 10.1 also illustrates very clearly the complexity of ownership patterns within unauthorized settlements; it is worth noting that multiple ownership does not always mean ownership of adjacent blocks. However there is a process of delimiting 'ownership' by fencing which occurred after our fieldwork in our study area was finished which seems to imply some confidence among the landlords about the future of the area. The tenant population are typical of the settlement with an average monthly income of 735/- while 18% were not engaged in formal employment. Generally Mashimoni was considered as a 'good' part of Kibera.

In our study area there seemed to be a private sector dynamic towards improving the housing stock led particularly by the largest landlords. Mashimoni like the similar part of 'new' Kibera Kisumu dogo both had 17% of their blocks with concrete floors and plastered walls. Similarly 20% and 44% of the areas respectively had either one or the other of these improvements. Meanwhile in Linishaba no rooms had been improved at all, while only 8% had concrete floors and

Figure 10.1 Map of ownership in Mashimoni field study-area



Multiple Ownership



plastered walls in Makina. Consequently Mashimoni like Kisumu dogo seemed to be areas where housing improvements are being carried out.

The logic of improvement can be seen as follows. As we saw in Chapter 7 there is a close relationship between rent levels and amenities. Hence the landlord who carries out an improvement such as plastering the walls or concreting the floors is able to ask for an increase in the rent, usually of 20/- a month. It would seem that this housing improvement, which also protects and increases the life of a mud wall, overall makes the housing block a more profitable enterprise. For example/ⁱⁿa ten room block such 'an improvement' would bring in an extra rental income for the landlord of 2,400/- annually. It is very unlikely that the cost of such plastering would be as much as this.

While in some respects such small-scale improvements represent progressive capitalism in the sense that they are improving the housing stock we should also consider their effects on the tenant living in improved housing. Although we should note that some tenants will be priced out.

Our argument is much the same as that of the recent Kenya by-law study, namely that the advantages of 'better' housing to the tenant may be outweighed by its increased cost. At a simple physical or structural level the housing stock is improved and has had its life span extended. On the other hand, the tenant whose accommodation is improved must ultimately finance such an operation through increased rent. Those with incomes towards the higher levels in our sample can comfortably afford such additional expenditure. But for those with incomes under 600/- a month increased rents involve a simple substitution of expenditure from food and basic necessities toward rent, assuming they stay.

In health terms such housing improvements bring no benefits at all,

since it is the provision of infrastructure rather than the built form and/or higher incomes that leads to improvements in health. Housing improvements may in fact have negative effects on health since the rental increase means that expenditure is likely to be diverted away from food. In a similar vein the recent By-law study even goes so far as to say that the main contribution housing makes to health is through the opportunities it creates for increased incomes through landlordism.

We can see here a contradiction in the international agencies' housing policy of encouraging landlordism as a source of income generation; namely that it rests on tenant impoverishment. However this is not the entire story since tenants can always take the inconvenient step of moving. While we do not have adequate data on this point, individual interviewees did say they would move elsewhere to cheaper parts of Kibera in response to housing improvements. Here we can detect a process common within Nairobi of higher-income inhabitants moving into 'improved' accommodation and 'bumping down' lower income inhabitants. Increasingly it seems that market mechanisms are pushing the urban poor out to the fringes of Nairobi.

At present the marginal improvements in Mashimoni are not having this impact as most tenants are paying the extra rent since housing is extremely difficult to find. However as unauthorized settlements become commercialized the operation of the urban land market becomes significant even within such settlements. The market at the moment is increasingly saying 'get out or pay'. Neither will help the urban poor since these choices mean that they must either become spatially and socially marginal or remain at the cost of lower living standards. For those not in regular employment the problem is even more acute since most informal methods of earning an income are centrally located. There is here a well-known major contradiction in an uncontrolled capitalist

urban land market. On the one hand we can see that the land market has a tendency to 'expel' the urban poor from the city. But on the other hand many of the functions that the urban poor fulfil for the capitalist mode of production in terms of labour and small-scale enterprise are by their very nature located in central city sites.

At the moment it is difficult to know what the limits to this landlord-led improvements strategy might be. On the one hand the poverty of the settlement may act as a constraint, however if higher income new tenants can be attracted this represents no barrier. Ultimately it seems that institutional constraints in terms of the provision of services or the security for further investment are the most significant.

In general in this section we have seen how landlord-initiated small-scale housing improvement leads to rent increases which either impose a squeeze on the tenant's other spending (e.g. food) or force the tenant to leave. In the latter case housing improvement leads to a turnover of tenants in which higher income tenants displace lower income tenants.

10.3 Site and service schemes

Site and service schemes represent the major institutional form taken by the international agencies' involvement in low-income housing.¹ At the outset we should note that it is not a particularly new idea. Indeed in Kenya it has a colonial legacy that goes back to 1917. In essence site and service involves the provision of a plot on which the inhabitant is then 'allowed' to build himself a house. In the colonial era such schemes were tantamount to the authorities telling the African population to house themselves. For example the original African location of Punwani set up in 1922 involved such a system (Bujra, 1973). Today, ironically, they are seen as a

'progressive' policy measure. Hence site and service schemes are an attempt to provide a housing system that is economically viable among low-income inhabitants. Its supporters would argue that given the low level of many urban inhabitants self-help is the only viable method; it is a necessity and not a luxury.

As we suggested in Chapter 4 the view that site and service schemes are a 'colonial' idea, together with the question of who was to benefit from such schemes, have been at the heart of the negotiations between the Government of Kenya and international agencies over them. Such schemes were internationally promoted in the earlier 1970s and the first such scheme was started in Kenya in 1974. There can be no question that the international agencies' financial leverage was significant in securing the acceptance of site and service schemes. It has been suggested for example that the low-income Dandora site and service scheme was informally linked to a loan by the Commonwealth Development Corporation for a middle income housing estate. The latter could be seen to be the international agencies' means of getting the Kenyan Government to accept the former. Despite the reluctant acceptance of site and service schemes within Nairobi since 1974 there is still substantial opposition to them. This opposition is manifest in the administration's absurd intransigence over the maintenance of building standards despite their evident unrealism given the incomes of the majority of Nairobi's population.

While, as we have already suggested, similar schemes were suggested for African housing as long ago as 1917, the recent resurgence of site and service and the international agencies' interest comes directly from the Turner approach to squatting (Turner, 1976). At its broadest this represents an attempt to mobilize the people's ability to house themselves. However site and service schemes have in fact been disowned by John Turner². This reflects the sad fact that to institutionalize processes of self-help and community development is to destroy them.

Here we can start to see the central contradiction between the intentions of the international agencies and the intellectual legacy the policy draws upon. Thus, in a nutshell, Turner's position was that the conventional low-income squatter was able to fulfil his housing needs precisely because he had control, and administration and management were kept to a minimum. It was precisely the lack of government or large scale involvement that enabled the urban poor to 'solve' their housing problems. Unfortunately involvement of the international agencies and state in attempts to sponsor such activities - entailing extensive external control rather than autonomy - are the antithesis of Turner's almost anarchist argument. We shall see that site and service is caught upon this contradiction, the result of which is the unforeseen emergence of landlordism rather than self-build for owner-occupation.

Site and service schemes involve the preparation and division of a green-field site into individual plots upon which the public sector provides basic sanitation and water core units. The latter usually consist of a water-borne toilet³ and the supply of mains water and perhaps a sink. (These structures are not dissimilar to the services provided in camp sites in Western Europe). The allottees are randomly selected from initial applications from within an income 'target group'. The allottees are then expected to build their own structures around this core unit, within a certain time limit. The structures built are inspected and supervised by the authorities. There is in fact a high level of technical specification. Indeed often it amounts to the allottee more or less constructing his structure to the authority's plan. To help the allottee he is given a financial loan for materials which he has to pay back within a certain time period as well as his regular monthly payment for the services and the 'ground rent'.

Site and service and the related process of squatter upgrading rest upon the following assumptions:

1. 'Fair' and legal sub-division of land.
2. Reliance on self-help and community development, especially in house construction.
3. Willingness and ability of low income inhabitants to spend 20% of their income upon housing.
4. Provision of loan finance for housing improvement.
5. Absence of direct housing subsidy by Government (i.e. in international agencies jargon 'cost recovery').

By examining the implementation of one such scheme we shall attempt to show how despite deliberate institutional and legal obstacles a highly commercialized rental sector emerged. As in our examination of unauthorized settlements we shall show how market forces are creating pressures towards commercialized housing despite, in this case, the obvious difficulty of legality. We shall also see how, as a result the international agencies' thinking moves away from self-build and owner-occupation towards institutionalized landlordism. Hence we shall see that by 1980 site and service schemes now contain a new central assumption; namely reliance upon the 'income-generating' effect of sub-letting to raise the income levels of the urban poor.

In this section we have examined the logic behind site and service schemes. In the next section we shall consider the implementation of the main site and service scheme in Nairobi at Dandora using secondary material.

10.4 The implementation of the Dandora site and service project

In this section we shall examine the implementation and highlight some of the difficulties associated with the Dandora scheme. While site and service has been officially part of Kenya's housing policy since Independence, with the possible exception of Kairobangi, Dandora represents the first serious attempt at such a policy.

The Dandora project was started in 1974 and is the first concrete example of international finance's (i.e. World Bank's) involvement with self-help and low-income housing in Kenya. This and the next section are predominantly based on the reports of the consultants who evaluated the project. (MEDIS reports). The Dandora project was specifically aimed at those earning within 300/- to 1,200/- a month. This is approximately those within the 10th to 30th percentile of the urban population (HRDU, 1979, 55). It was the lucky allottees from this group who would then be expected to construct their own dwellings on their plots at Dandora through self-build. We shall now attempt to evaluate the scheme as a way of increasing low-income owner-occupation through self-build.

The most obvious feature of Dandora is that it is effectively outside Nairobi. Thus as we can see from Figure 10.2 it is 8 kms from central Nairobi. This is a function of the urban land market, and, one suspects, political pressures: it is significant that two of the major recent low-income housing developments - the Dandora site and service scheme and the neighbouring unauthorized settlements of Korokocho - are on the extreme periphery of Nairobi's built-up area. In many people's perceptions they are outside the city. Nevertheless let us consider the internal economy of Dandora. The most striking feature of Dandora is that the majority of its inhabitants are tenants and it has been estimated that they represent two-thirds of the total population (MEDIS 8, 1980, 2)(HRDU, 1979, 56). This suggests that the housing units built were being sublet. As an HRDU report states 'it is indisputable that the site and service programme is creating a landlord class among the allottees' (HRDU, 1979, 60). It was similarly discovered that 21% of MEDIS team's sample were using a contractor as their construction method while 62% were using self-build and 17% were in building groups (MEDIS 3, 1978, 69). It would

Figure 10.1 Map showing position of Dandora in Nairobi



SCALE 1:100 000

appear from these figures that self-build was the major method of construction. However it is likely that these figures overestimate the extent of self-build by classifying allottee's as using 'self-build' even if the work done by this method was only a fraction of the total. It should be noted that this data was collected when the scheme was at a fairly early stage and before some of the economic pressures of building led to those in the self-help group selling out. Consequently this data may be a more accurate picture of the expected building methods of the first allottees than of the subsequent situation.

Further evidence of the position of self-help in site and service schemes generally within Kenya comes from an HRDU report which states that:

'Another major assumption connected with site and service is that the urban worker building his house with his own hands. In reality this takes place only rarely.'
(HRDU, 1979, 95)

It seems then that the two cornerstones of community development namely owner-occupation and self-help, have not been realised at Dandora. However in terms of houses constructed the Dandora scheme has been a success. In this sense site and service has 'worked' for all the wrong reasons.

One explanation of the failure of site and service schemes to develop through 'self-build' has been administrative and organisational factors (HRDU, 1979, 6). While undoubtedly site and service schemes have been plagued by organizational and administrative difficulties (i.e. inefficiency and corruption) these are symptoms of the problem rather than the cause. In part they result from the aims of the project which are mutually contradictory. Thus the establishment of security for capital investment in the form of judicial property rights (rather than protection from demolition as is the case in Kibera) encourage an inflow of capital which destroys a self-help

economy. Legal tenure and self-help are likely to be contradictory aims. The problems of site and service are inherent in its basic character. Consequently schemes set up to encourage low-income owner-occupation through self-build turn out to encourage the development of a private rental sector with middle-income landlordism, and be constructed by contractors rather than by self build. This 'alternative' housing policy therefore comes to resemble conventional real estate development where the public sector provides the basic infrastructure and the private sector then develops the housing stock.

In the next section we shall examine the processes by which market mechanisms have 'entered' site and service schemes. Secondly we shall examine how the international agencies transform 'self-help' into 'landlordism' in an attempt to resolve the projects' contradictory aims.

10.5 Site and service: From self-help to landlordism

Request for help

Miss Wanja Kamau who is one of the cleaners responsible for keeping your office clean has recently come to the Dean's office seeking financial help.

She has three children, whom she is supporting on a meagre salary.

Recently Miss Kamau has been allocated a plot at Dandora by the Nairobi City Council. According to the documents, she was supposed to pay a deposit of 600/- by the end of November last year. This she was able to do with the help of an advance from the University. With effect from December she is paying a rent for the plot amounting to approximately 100/- and at the same time she has to start building a house on the plot otherwise it will be reallocated to somebody else. Miss Kamau has no funds for this and it is in this connection that I am appealing to you for any help you can offer her, no matter how small.

Letter circulated in the University
of Nairobi, 1981

It would be impossible to produce a more poignant example of some of the difficulties associated with site and service schemes than

the letter above that was circulated within the Faculty of Architecture and HRDU at the University of Nairobi. In the first part of this section we shall examine the political and administrative difficulties in the allocation of site and service plots. We then examine the economic difficulties of those who are 'correctly' allocated plots. While this section concerns site and service schemes in general, as a result of the availability of material it is based almost exclusively upon the Dandora project in Nairobi.

The first point about site and service relates to the process of land allocation. As we saw in Kibera the process of 'straddling' (or corruption) through which individuals in the public sector use (or abuse) their position to their own financial advantage is common throughout the low-income housing market. In site and service schemes the HRDU report refers coyly to 'interference' and states that:

'the corporation has been forced to make certain concessions regarding the allocation of plots because of political pressures. As a result plots have been allocated to 'special cases'.
(HRDU, 1979, 7).

In such situations mansions rather than low-income housing have been constructed and:

'the local authorities who are vested with the power have no interest in demolishing the houses due to some selfish and parochial motives'.
(HRDU, 1979, 25).

This is the most obvious and simple way in which site and service schemes fail to provide low-income accommodation. Politicians or administrators allocate plots to themselves, their relatives or friends and then develop them. It is as simple as that.

Here we can note the difficulty facing the funding agencies when they find that schemes designed to stimulate and encourage low-income housing are being directly subverted by the host nation's administration. Instead of housing the poor they find they are subsidizing landlordism by the affluent.

The international agencies seem to respond in two ways to such difficulties. Thus at one level they attempt to introduce allocation systems that are immune to 'interference' and may even seek to control such systems themselves. It has been noted in Kenya how the international agencies are increasingly attempting to control the ministries and projects they fund. (ILO, 1979, 58). The other international agency 'response' is to ignore such difficulties. A cynic would suggest that this is the pay-off the administration exacts for going ahead with such 'colonial' schemes. For the international agency this may not matter too much as according to one interpretation their main concern is simple to 'consolidate the state' rather than with any distributional issues.

However while such 'interference' in the allocation process does hamper the implementation of site and service schemes there are more important reasons why such projects fail to reach their 'target income groups'. This is that those in the 'target group' cannot afford to meet the cost of housing in site and service schemes from their employment alone. They thus attempt to resort to subletting and so become landlords.

According to the HRDU evaluation:

'the majority of the beneficiaries have so low incomes that they simply cannot afford the cost of the houses even with the stipulated minimum standard'.
(HRDU, 1979, 3)

Thus it can be seen that site and service is a Catch 22⁴ situation: the paradox is that only those from the 'wrong' income group can afford to develop their plots and that those who are from the right income group cannot afford to develop their plots. This suggests a point we shall return to: namely that such schemes are attempting to burden those allocated plots with excessive housing costs. The simple truth that poverty is the constraint is again apparent.

The early suggestions of such difficulties were the incidence of

sub-letting in the scheme and the sale of plots, neither of which was legally allowed according to the initial conception of the scheme. (However as we shall see subletting has become accepted). In July 1977 the monitoring team accidentally discovered that a plot in Dandora had been sold. (MEDIS 5, 1979, 19). It seemed that the extensive sale of plots that had happened in the earlier Kairobangi scheme might be recurring. A systematic survey of this sensitive topic in Dandora revealed that 16% of the original plots had been sold. (MEDIS 5, 1979, 46). That these plots had a much higher level of arrears over the repayment of initial building loans than average strongly implied that those who sold plots did so for financial reasons (MEDIS 5, 1979, 5).

In public sector housing in Nairobi where there is a subsidy, the process of low-income inhabitants 'selling out' their plots or sub-letting their houses is common. Harris has pointed out the economic rationale of such activity for low-income groups. In effect by selling their plots they are realizing the 'gift' the government subsidy represents and by moving they are reducing the amount of their effective income (includes subsidy) that is committed to housing. (Harris, 1969). This in fact reflects a situation where they give a lower priority to housing expenditure than the government thinks they should.

Site and service allottees face a similar dilemma. Allottees from within the target group face a severe squeeze on their income as they attempt to build their housing and maintain their loan repayments. Almost inevitably they experience a 'repayment crisis' to which there are two ways out: to sell out their plot to a willing buyer or to sublet to gain additional income to finance further construction. Clearly the latter strategy is dependent upon having already built one room. To achieve this, allottees will attempt to cut down on all other sources of expenditure, food included. Unfortunately due

to their poverty and the projects' building specifications there is little room for manoeuvre by altering expenditure patterns. Consequently many are forced to sell out before they can build even one room to sublet, which could help in financing further construction. It is a race to construct to sublet before the pressure of loan repayment forces one to sell out. This is a cruel battle in which short-term financial hardship is weighed against the long-term reward of economic security that landlordism offers. At a micro-scale it epitomises the abstinence theory of capitalism: today's 'pleasures' are withheld, resulting in excessive hardship, in the hope of a better economic future.

The following text from MEDIS 5 captures this crucial aspect of site and service schemes as they presently function:

'The pressures on the poorer allottees to move are significant. Wealthier people are ready and able to buy them out. In any case, they can sublet rooms for much more than they ever paid in rent where they lived before. The lucky allottees are the ones who can survive the financial trauma of building and hang on to collect room rents. They can increase their income steadily. This could explain why half the occupied plots are totally sublet: many people may be trying to recover their investment on building. However, for some, the appeal of a cash payment is more attractive and in some cases perhaps the only alternative they perceive as open to them....'
(MEDIS 5, 1979, 50).

Here we can see how debt repayment crises are forcing the low-income allottee to sell out to more affluent potential developers, or sublet their entire property. Given the housing shortage in Nairobi the returns on rental property are sufficient to encourage outside investment. Secondly since alternative sources of investment are limited we can see how it makes sense for the more affluent to buy such plots.⁵

This debt repayment problem partly results from the difficulty of meeting regular payments from an often irregular income. However, it also derives directly from the totally unrealistic assumptions

and technical specification of the project. Thus it was estimated that to repay the debts and construct a house in the project a monthly income of approximately 800/- is required. (HRDU, 1979).⁶ It is the near impossibility of meeting the debt repayment conditions and the building standards (i.e. technical specification) of the project from the target income group that result in site and service schemes having a Catch 22 character. The result is either a sell-out to higher income groups or low-income individuals experiencing severe hardship as they construct their own housing.

Interestingly it was the emergence of sub-letting which seemed to offer a way out of this impasse. The de facto legalization of sub-letting as an 'income generation' method was seen as a way of allowing low-income groups entry into the formal housing market. In the next section we shall examine some of the consequences of this policy.

To conclude we shall examine an administrative rather than an individual response to the difficulties we have pointed out. This was the establishment of the 'building groups' we referred to earlier as the building method used by 17% of the allottees. This initiative followed the administration's observation that some allottees (i.e. the poorest), were slow to start building. Hence in mid-1977 they organized such allottees into building groups. The idea was that individuals in the group would make monthly contributions to a fund and would collectively manage their debt repayments. The groups would then build collectively upon the members' plots. These groups were successful as a vehicle for the lowest income groups to construct accommodation. (MEDIS 6, 1979). Interestingly, there are similarities here with the original building societies in Britain.

Three points are worth making about this construction method. Firstly, the administration was increasingly supervising construction,

i.e. self-help and autonomy have been replaced by control. Secondly, the membership of building groups was basically instrumental and was not based upon prior friendships. Here we can again note the instrumental economic nature of many social relations. Finally, and crucially as a prelude to the next section, members of building groups were described by the monitoring team as follows:

'respondents said they often went without food, and had completely given up such luxuries as meat. Six out of 14 said their children had suffered through lack of school fees and uniforms.'

(MEDIS 6, 1979, 45)

This reveals some of the other costs of legal housing for low-income groups.

In this section we have seen how site and service schemes have faced difficulties through allocation and 'straddling' and as a result of the poverty of the allottees. We have also seen how small-scale landlordism was used and is being seen as a way that low-income inhabitants can generate sufficient income to construct their housing. In the next section we shall re-examine the international agencies' involvement and their new rationale.

10.6 Housing improvements: the international agencies' rationale

In this section we shall examine at a more general level the rationale of the 'urban' policy that the international agencies are promoting in the Nairobi context. In the next section we shall critically assess the trade-offs this implies in terms of housing and individual welfare. However we must first outline the policy's basic philosophy before looking at the interests that may be involved.

In Chapter 4 we suggested that the new policy was to integrate and control unauthorized settlements. To this effect the 1978 loan agreement between the Government of Kenya and the World Bank essentially froze the unauthorized settlement situation. No new

settlements were to be allowed but existing ones were not to be demolished. Any breach of this understanding would be grounds for reconsidering the loan. The World Bank can thus now be seen as the squatters' most powerful political patron! However they have been only partially successful in preventing demolitions since there was some limited demolition after the loan was given (MEDIS 3, 1978, 15). Nevertheless, there can be little doubt that the World Bank has had a restraining influence on potential demolitions within Nairobi.

The international agencies' housing rationale is to encourage the private sector, i.e. the intervention of capital in low income housing through loans, mortgages and insurance facilities. In return for legality, landlords or private developers will be controlled and pay rates. The belief is that money to pay for better housing and infrastructure can be squeezed from the landlords' high profits. They also suggest that there should be no subsidy on public housing; in essence the housing problem of Nairobi is to be 'solved' by the market. A recent statement on site and service is revealing:

'...The fallacy in the s and s programme as implemented in Kenya, and the single factor which has contributed most to rendering this programme next to completely inefficient in this country, stems from the assumption that in order to benefit the poor, plots must be developed by the poor'. (HRDU, 1979, 107)

The approach now being canvassed is explicit in its attempt to encourage the private sector as opposed to self-help or subsistence shelter. We should note the transformation this represents from the original conception of site and service.

Similarly, the By-law study when emphasising the advantages of infrastructure improvement is illuminating in terms of the 'integration' of unauthorized settlements. Thus, it refers to:

'(f) increased involvement of house owners in the urban economy through a revised tenure system
(g) an enhanced tax base, and
(h) a more manageable urban environment with a reduced threat to the established administrative and political system'
(By-law study, 1980, 161)

Here we can see the rationale of the international agencies. Their goal is to maintain political stability by extending capitalist relations and integrating unauthorized settlements into the wider political economy. To effect this, the By-law study was set up to recommend changes in the legal standards applying to unauthorized developments such that the urban poor might afford legal accommodation. The aim was to draw up more appropriate laws which would be enforced at the 'bottom' rather than the previous dualistic structure in which high standards were applied to the affluent minority and none at all to the impoverished majority (By-law Study, 1980 & ILO 1972). In this we can also see a political attempt to re-establish control within unauthorized settlements. The general approach is to bring such settlements into the legal and political system so that they may be improved and controlled.

However the experience of the integration of Nairobi's unauthorized settlements within the last few years is revealing. Despite the suggested policy of regaining control to effect improvements and reform (By-law study, 1980) in fact the authorities' effective control of such areas has so far only been used to facilitate capital's intervention. At the moment the authorities are 'having their cake and eating it'; thus they seem to have 'control' yet admit no responsibility for the provision of infrastructure or basic services. There are no attempts to provide refuse collection, water provision is minimal, and consequently the general level of sanitation is appalling. Even on the official Dandora site and service scheme refuse collection was a major complaint. Only when cholera threatens do the authorities begin to clear up the area. This is a subject that should receive more policy attention.

In the next section we shall investigate the impact of this integrationist policy which aims to encourage small landlordism through

the private sector; here we shall speculate about the rationale behind the policy. At one level the international agencies' concern is with the political stability of Kenya. For such agencies this will be synonymous with the preservation of a capitalistic development strategy. However it is important to note that the international agencies' interests tend to concern the long-run and that there are important tensions between the different factions and levels of capital involved. Consequently it is quite conceivable and indeed likely that the international agencies' interests are in conflict with other capitals. While it cannot be established as such we can assume that the international agencies ultimately and in general work in the interests of their funding sources i.e. international finance capital. At the minimum they certainly do not work against international finance capital's interests.

It has been argued that one of the effects of agricultural development projects financed by international finance capital (i.e. World Bank) in Kenya is to consolidate a 'middle peasantry' and thus limit the emergence of an indigenous capitalist class (Cowen, 1976). Scott MacWilliam has applied a similar approach to the urban sphere when he argues that the housing co-operatives in Mathare Valley are characterized by primitive accumulation as a result of international capital's ability to overthrow indigenous capital (MacWilliam, 1978). In general while being sympathetic to the idea that this is the intention of international capital our own study suggests that indigenous capital has not been prevented by international finance from accumulating in unauthorized housing.

It is worth referring at this point to a familiar marxist argument concerning class alliances in housing which identifies a conflict between rentier capital and industrial capital over the cost of worker's housing. Industrial capital is seen as attempting to

reduce its workers' housing costs (rents) on the assumption that if housing costs are reduced wages may be cut. The rentier on the other hand will seek higher rents to increase his income. In such a situation industrial capital may link up with working-class interests in order to sponsor 'progressive' policies on housing, e.g. rent control, which benefit industrial capital and their workforce at the expense of rentier capital (Harvey, 1978). Within Nairobi we would argue that there is a similar process in which the commercialization of squatter housing has given rise to a conflict between (Kenyan) property interests and industrial capital which is predominantly multinational. Since the workers in the industrial sector are increasingly paying rent with a resultant upward pressure on wages whereas previously their shelter may have been free within the 'self-help' sector. However this 'economistic' argument is not entirely convincing; firstly there is no suggestion that the international agencies' encouragement of small-scale landlordism will reduce workers' rents at all and secondly the differences are marginal. Finally partly as a result of the linkage within the capitalist system in the 'domestic economy' it is likely that capital could without affecting their subsistence, unilaterally reduce its workers' wages. The search for a subsistence minimum which can operate as an economic anvil in this kind of calculation is notoriously difficult if not impossible (Sen, 1981) and the political element is probably more important in explaining these phenomena. Consequently while there does seem to be a conflict between indigenous capital and the international agencies its roots are political as well as economic depending upon the circumstances.

The international agencies' interest and the long-term concern for political stability seems partly to explain their 'progressive' housing policies. In general their aim seems to be to encourage a

small-scale private sector integrated into the formal economy.

As we have seen the encouragement of small- rather than large-scale landlordism is self-legitimizing: it helps political stability by increasing the numbers with a vested interest in the system. Similarly by preventing large-scale affluent landlordism with its obvious inequality it removes a potential source of politicization and conflict from the urban poor. Finally the impact of such a policy (whether it is an intentional aim or not) would be to limit the emergence of an indigenous bourgeoisie which presumably requires a concentration of rental capital. The international agencies' aim is in effect to extend instead of intensifying capitalist relations.

However while this may be the aim of the international agencies the data we have presented throughout this thesis suggests that the international agencies have in fact not been successful in this and that indigenous capital is accumulating (i.e. through large-scale landlordism) in site and service schemes and unauthorized settlements as well as its smaller cousin. In the next section we shall consider the impact of the 'international agencies' policy suggestions upon the individual.

10.7 Housing Improvements and Individual Welfare: Shauri Moya Na Sukumawiki

The argument of this section is in the Kiswahali sub-title. Shauri Moya means Hobson's choice and is the name of a housing estate in East Nairobi which was built in 1938 when Paugari, an African unauthorized settlement, was demolished and the inhabitants were transferred to the estate (Hake, 1977, 48-50). This operation was not viewed by the participants as a benevolent exercise.

Sukumawiki is a popular green vegetable sold in Nairobi that resembles greens or cabbage. Its name means literally 'force the

week'; since this is what low-income inhabitants eat to stay alive till the next pay day. The contention of this section is one we have mentioned before: that there is a direct connection between people's difficulty in making ends meet and housing improvement policy. Thus the increasing lack of choice for shelter that low-income inhabitants have as a result of the commercialization process is having a detrimental effect on low-income expenditure patterns. Furthermore this seems to be an unintended consequence of international agencies' policies.

As we explained in Section 10.6 the international agencies' solution to Nairobi's housing crisis is the integration of unauthorized settlements and the encouragement of small scale landlordism. Let us attempt to examine some of the thinking behind this. (It is important to realize that international agencies' policies are often inconsistent and that the following argument is hence a personal interpretation of their underlying logic).

The first point to realise is that direct subsidies in housing are considered inappropriate by the international agencies as the general evidence suggests they go to the 'wrong' groups through misallocation. Subsidies on infrastructure are preferable but ultimately run into similar problems. Consequently the international agencies' talk about what they call 'cost-recovery' from the beneficiaries of both housing and its related infrastructure. For these and ideological reasons the 'market' is juxtaposed with the state as possible solutions and the latter is rejected on 'efficiency' grounds. The international agencies' possible housing improvement policy must consequently be sought within an unsubsidised market system. As a result they must work within the context of the prevailing income-levels as determined by the labour market. Their solution is to encourage the private sector in housing such that it builds enough units to end the shortage and presumably reduce the prevailing rent

level. In Neo-classical terms the aim is to encourage the supply of houses such that prevailing demand can be legally housed. As a result of its legal rather than unauthorized nature such housing will be of better quality and the health and general welfare of the inhabitants will be improved.

But the problem with this policy is that put bluntly it is almost impossible to house someone earning 600/- a month decently through market channels. The question arises given the low income of many urban inhabitants whether they can afford legal structures even under the new by-laws. The hard truth is that many Kibera inhabitants are too poor to afford 'decent' housing. This situation is clearly exacerbated by the spread of commercialized housing and the elimination of subsistence shelter. An apparent way out of this contradiction is for the international agencies to allow some members of the urban poor to accumulate capital through landlordism. The assumption is that this group then let to tenants who benefit from improved and legal housing conditions. The key question is what the tenants pay for this improved structure which must reflect the prevailing market situation.

It seems that the scale of the housing improvements in the form of site and service schemes so far attempted is sufficiently small that they are not leading to reduced rent levels. In saying this we are disagreeing with an evaluation report concerning site and service, which:

'tentatively concluded that the project subsidies are benefiting both allottees (by permitting a real net income from subletting) and their tenants (in that rents are lower than would otherwise be the case)' (MEDIS, 7, 1979, 2,31)

Rather we are in agreement the Peter Marris:

'So long as public intervention is directed at the housing stock itself its endeavours are bound to be frustrated unless they are on a scale that they substantially alter the market.'

(Marris, 1979, 431)

We shall now examine how these 'housing improvements' affect individual and particularly tenant welfare. Thus while they only increase the supply of housing marginally surely the tenant now lives in a better structure and that must be an improvement? The By-law study previously quoted highlights extremely effectively the possible trade-off in health terms between expenditures on housing and food. In health terms the benefits of better and more costly housing may be outweighed by a reduction in expenditure on food. As the By-law study puts it:

'The price of a house is every bit as important an influence on health as are its physical attributes... In summation it (the inhabitant) may well have gained a house at the expense of (his) health and wellbeing. This issue is at the heart of the debate on standards and needs.'

(By-law study, 1981, 24)

The key argument in the By-law study was that the main impact of housing on health is not through the house's physical attributes, e.g. concrete v. mud walls, but through its use as an investment to increase the owner's income which would improve his health by allowing higher food expenditure. Hence, if this is the impact housing has on health it would seem the tenant will not benefit from it. Instead the tenant is likely to meet higher rents by cutting his expenditure on food, since as we have already seen low-income tenants in Nairobi are 'price-takers' and have little facility to exit from the system.

In relation to this expenditure on housing whether by tenant or landlord it is assumed by the international agencies that low income inhabitants in site and service schemes can afford to spend 20% of their incomes upon housing. This figure is taken as the starting assumption for all housing improvements. This 'assumption' is absurd and dangerous. Firstly it is completely a priori and is not backed by empirical studies of people's capacity to meet this level. Effectively it amounts to what the international agencies think such inhabitants ought to be able to pay, it tells us nothing

at all about ability or willingness to pay. Secondly it is important to distinguish between landlords and tenants. Landlords may be prepared to devote substantial percentages of their income to housing construction as we saw in section 10.5 since for them this represents capital investment with an expected return. For tenants however housing is a simple expenditure with no return. It is consequently a dangerous mistake to assume the same willingness to spend on housing between landlord and tenant when their housing has very different economic functions for each of them.

From our tenant survey we found that fully 80% are paying below 20% of their incomes on housing and 46% stated that the maximum rent they could possibly afford was below 20% of their income. Given the poverty of the area and that malnutrition is present - it is estimated that a family needs 625/- for basic nutrition needs alone in Nairobi - it is little short of criminal to promote a policy which implies that such inhabitants are not spending enough on housing. Even at the present approximate average of 14% they are spending too much with detrimental effects on other expenditures, i.e. food, and hence on their health. Here lies the danger of reliance on market processes which encourage tenants to subsidize landlords. This is precisely what the international agencies' policies involve. The improvement in housing is paid for by increasing the tenants' rents so that the landlord may generate enough funds to construct legal housing.

Sub-letting may yield extra income for the owner so that he can afford his legal accommodation, but this is being achieved directly at the tenants' expense. The tenant meanwhile is completely at the mercy of an uncontrolled market. This policy approach is economically incoherent; what is happening is that a few fortunate individuals (the landlords) are increasing their income at the expense of the majority (the tenants) who experience rent problems. Fundamentally such a

landlord-orientated policy cannot work for the majority as by definition not everyone can be a landlord. The experience of Kibera suggests that despite exhortations to the contrary landlords have almost total power and the market's operation is uncontrolled. Legal accommodation may be achieved but at the expense of a tenant group who face rents they can barely afford.

The logic of this housing policy is almost to 'internalize' poverty, i.e. everybody lives in good housing at the expense of their health and education. Such a controlled urban environment is also easier to control. (Van Zwanenberg, 1972). In Singapore and in the depression in Glasgow there is also evidence of 'better' housing leading paradoxically through higher rent levels to increasing malnutrition. (Ferguson and Pettigrew, 1954). It would not be outrageous to suggest that it may even be better for individuals on low incomes to sleep on the streets and spend all their income on food or invest it in their children's education, than to subsidize a landlord group. However, Kenyan capitalism is most probably not developed enough to be able to house and stabilize the urban population in this way as has happened in Singapore. It seems that the population of Nairobi is simply too poor for such a policy to work. Many can only afford the most minimal rent; hence even the cheapest legal structure will be so far from their means that such a policy even with highly repressive measures would be inoperable.

Thus the question that has to be asked about the international agencies' housing improvement policies is whether housing is so important that individuals should pay for housing improvements by malnutrition. In our view it is not but the calculus of capitalism has ignored this. Unbelievably it sometimes looks as if the urban poor in Kenya rather than the elite are paying for themselves to be politically bought off and acquiesce in the development of capitalism.

10.8 Conclusion

In this chapter we have examined two attempts at housing improvements: those which result from market mechanisms (i.e. are landlord initiated), and site and service schemes which are financed by the international agencies. In both cases a similar problem emerges: they entail an increase in expenditure on housing by the recipient. The evidence in both cases is that the housing 'improvement' - which may only be marginal in health terms - is 'thrust upon' the recipient, sometimes causing a detrimental impact on alternative expenditures such as food. The most extreme case of this is the commercialization of unauthorized housing which has improved the housing stock but has effectively removed the possibility of 'exiting' from the housing market. Consequently individuals are caught in a rent relation they can barely afford. The possibility of living in an urban area rent-free was one of the 'advantages' of conventional squatting, the other being that housing improvements since they were initiated by the recipient would be in keeping with his income (Turner, 1976). Unfortunately both of these two 'advantages' have been lost in the process of commercialization and consequently housing improvements are more and more rarely in line with the individual's income. We have also seen in this Chapter that possible housing improvements are constrained by the income level of the recipients. Consequently we might end by making the suggestion that, naive and complacent as it sounds we should stop worrying about housing: the issue is poverty.⁷

Footnotes - Chapter 10

1. Site and service involves the government in providing central sanitation units on plots around which the plot allottees build their own house. In this process the administration provides technical assistance and a loan to help construction. Squatter upgrading involves the demarcation of plots around structures within an existing unauthorized settlement. Demolition is kept to a minimum to allow for the provision of water and an appropriate sanitation system. Finance and assistance is given to improve the existing structures. In theory these two approaches are complementary. However in fact they are often seen as alternatives indeed this debate mirrors that in the UK between comprehensive redevelopment and rehabilitation (Pasteur, 1979). In this chapter we are not considering squatter upgrading since its implementation has been limited within Nairobi. There are many similarities in the difficulties with the implementation of upgrading and site and service schemes, in particular in relation to the 'affordability' of such schemes to low-income inhabitants without subsidy and the related problem of infiltration of such schemes by better-off inhabitants. For the case of Colombo in Sri Lanka, see Steinberg (1982).
2. Personal communication by Colin Ward at a seminar at the University of Kent in 1980.
3. The provision and indeed the insistence of the Kenyan administration upon water-borne sanitation systems, when equally effective but cheaper non-water alternatives exist represents the most important stumbling block to a realistic low-income housing solution in Nairobi. (see The Pit Latrines of Lamu published by HRDU in 1980 and By-law study, 1980). The problem is that water-borne systems require substantially larger amounts of capital investment than alternative systems and thus increase the total cost and affordability of the project. In the site and service and squatter upgrading schemes in Harare, Zimbabwe they are using alternative sanitation systems.
4. 'Catch 22' was the title of a book by Joseph Heller about World War Two. The hero of the book wishes to stop flying missions, to achieve this you had to be listed as insane. The Catch 22 is that anybody who wants to stop flying missions cannot be insane.
5. In general there is a tendency in this process to increase the concentration of ownership within the scheme. This is analogous to one of the impacts of the 'Green Revolution' by which the concentration of ownership increases as the affluent buy out their poorer neighbours who are forced to sell to survive (George, 1976). Famines have a similar impact which is analogous to the debt repayment crisis.
6. In fact I learnt that this figure was 'massaged' downwards for political reasons and that the real monthly figure was at least 1,200/-.
7. The implication of this is that the solution to the housing problem cannot be sought within the housing market; instead we must look at and change the wider political economy. This means going beyond Engels' famous dictum:

"As long as the capitalist mode of production continues to exist, it is folly to hope for an isolated settlement of the housing question affecting the lot of workers. The solution lies in the abolition of the capitalist mode of production and the appropriation of the means of subsistence and the instruments of labour by the working class itself" (Engels, 1975, 74).

It is not as 'simple' as that; it is our contention that there is more 'flexibility' in capitalism, than Engels gives it credit for. It seems that within Nairobi substantial housing reforms could be achieved without requiring necessarily the abolition of capitalism.

CHAPTER 11

CONCLUSION: THE MYTH OF SQUATTING

Every great city has one or more slums, where the working class is crowded together. True, poverty often dwells on hidden alleys close to the palaces of the rich; but in general a separate territory has been assigned to it, where, removed from the sight of the happier classes, it may struggle along as it can. These slums are pretty equally arranged in all the great towns of England, the worst houses in the worst quarters of the towns; usually one or two-storied cottages in long rows, perhaps with cellars used as dwellings, almost always irregularly built. These houses of three or four rooms and a kitchen form, throughout England, some parts of London excepted, the general dwellings of the working-class. The streets are generally unpaved, rough, dirty, filled with vegetable and animal refuse, without sewers or gutters, but supplied with foul, stagnant pools instead. Moreover, ventilation is impeded by the bad, confused method of building of the whole quarter, and since many human beings here live crowded into a small space, the atmosphere that prevails in these working-men's quarters may readily be imagined. Further, the streets serve as drying grounds in fine weather; lines are stretched across from house to house, and hung with wet clothing.

from Engels *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, p. 60

In this chapter we shall both attempt to bring together some of the disparate threads of this study and pose a few questions for the future. We shall begin by examining some theoretical issues we have raised. We shall then examine the Kenyan situation paying attention to what our study implies for the future of capitalism in Kenya. We shall also suggest some avenues for future research. Finally we shall cast our net wider and after an overview of the international scene. Hence we shall suggest that the experience of Nairobi is not atypical and that the conventional conceptualization of squatting is now a myth. Indeed as the title quote to this Chapter reminds us there are similarities between the social conditions prevalent in third world cities today and those described

by Engels in the cities of Victorian Britain.

11.1 Theoretical, Empirical and Research Implications

In this section we shall reconsider the theoretical approach we have taken in order to evaluate how useful it has been. We shall also attempt to draw out the implications of this thesis for further research. Finally, we shall make some speculative comments on the relevance of our study to debates over the future of capitalism in Kenya.

Theoretical perspectives

In Chapter 2 we suggested that the dynamics of capitalism and the related processes of proletarianisation and class formation should be our starting points. Similarly we suggested that we should consider the political and economic content of the use of social networks. Finally we argued that the most important question to ask about the informal sector and squatting was whether capital accumulation was possible and if so whether it was occurring. Let us consider these claims in turn in the light of our study.

Since the development of capitalism was our starting point we focused in Chapter 3 on an overview of Kenya's economic development. We were consequently able to identify the specific i.e. settler nature of Kenya's economy. This led us to consider the colonial racist and anti-urban policy which has had, and still has, important repercussions within Nairobi. We thus saw the historical origins of the building standards and unequal urban land distribution that characterize Nairobi. Finally we were able to trace the roots of African capitalism. We saw how this capitalism was constrained in the colonial era but was to greatly expand once Kenyans gained control of the levers of the state after Independence in 1963. It is within this overall context that we should consider the

penetration of capital within unauthorised housing. From our approach we were consequently able to relate this to general trends in Kenya's political economy. For example it is no coincidence that it was not until the late 1960s that capital was able to penetrate the unauthorized sector since only after approximately five years of independence did the African elite have sufficient confidence and available capital.

We argued that proletarianization was a more meaningful term than 'urbanism' since it drew attention to the development of capitalist relations as the underlying cause of urban phenomena. By focussing upon this we were able to show the immaturity of Kenyan capitalism and the specific form its urbanization took since from our data it seemed that proletarianization in its classic marxist sense was not well-developed in our shanty-town. We were consequently able to interpret the persistence of urban-rural links in terms of economic rationality and not as the result of 'traditional' structures.

In keeping with this general marxist tradition we focussed upon class formation and the class content of urban planning, social networks and 'tribalism'. This enabled us to show firstly that urban planning and administration were not neutral activities. For example we argued that the establishment of administrative control in unauthorized settlements was a pre-requisite for the bourgeoisie to gain access to a source of capital accumulation that previously was not available. Similarly we saw the international agencies' policies ultimately in terms of their role in increasing political stability. Secondly we suggested the instrumental use of social networks and tribalism was a function of capitalism. We saw in Kibera how a Kikuyu dominated-administration allocated building rights to themselves. More specifically we suggested that ethnicity was dialectically related to the development of capitalism i.e. it

simultaneously strengthened and weakened ethnic loyalties. Again this was elegantly shown in Kibera. Thus on the one hand the allocation mechanisms strengthened ethnicity as a means of gaining economic resources i.e. becoming a landlord. However we also saw landlords actively attempting to create mixed-tribe blocks in order to strengthen their position vis-a-vis tenants, but that there was some evidence of a mixed-tribe anti-landlord tenant coalition being possible.

Finally by differentiating between the informal sector and unauthorised housing according to whether capital accumulation was possible or not we were able to focus on the growth of commercialization. We ignored illegality per se and instead asked was there security for capital. We were consequently able to document the rise of a capitalist sector that is at least officially illegal. For example, to our knowledge we have presented the first distribution of property ownership within a shanty-town ever and one of the first studies of landlord-tenant relations in these areas. Thus we have investigated a sector that theoretically should not exist and which has previously been almost totally neglected.

Capitalism in Kenya

While the wider capitalist economy in Kenya has not been our central concern it seems that from our study we may be able to contribute to debates over its nature. The first point to make is that we are in general agreement with an approach that distinguishes between the different functions of capital. Secondly our approach supports a methodology that focusses upon the specific historical experience of the development of capitalism in the periphery rather than one which makes deductions from universalistic statements about the underdevelopment process.

The main contribution of this study to this debate is to focus

attention upon urban real estate in general and more specifically unauthorized housing as a source of potential capital accumulation. We would suggest that the importance of urban rentier capital in Kenya has generally been ignored. Indeed it may have been one of the earliest sources of African capital accumulation within the colonial economy. In terms of the different fractions of capital involved in unauthorized housing it seems that despite the efforts of international finance the role of capital associated with the indigenous bourgeoisie is gaining ground in this sector at the expense of the capital associated with local traders. Nevertheless all three capitals are still actively involved in accumulation in unauthorized housing. From our study there can be little doubt that capitalist relations of production are being extended in the Kenyan urban sphere. Indeed one of our main arguments has been that they have been extended to low-income groups to their own material detriment. In policy terms the encouragement of capitalism for such groups may be premature.

It is interesting to relate some of these observations back to the Frank-Warren debate discussed in Chapter 2. The 'optimists' i.e. Warren would presumably interpret our data in terms of a progressive and dynamic capitalism breaking down out-moded structures and creating a new source of accumulation. In general our data is consistent with such a position. Meanwhile the 'pessimists' would find some support for their position in terms of the exploitative nature of the sector. The difficulty with these two positions is that they tend to focus exclusively upon one side or the other of the phenomena. Consequently it seems to me that capitalism's ability both to transcend social barriers and situations and 'revolutionise' the productive forces are well illustrated in the shanty-towns of Nairobi. In policy terms the debate is more revealing. The optimists'

view is that such social dislocation is 'justifiable' in order to achieve a capitalist transformation. The pessimists (or populist) view is that the latter is impossible in which case there can be no reasonable rationale for the social dislocation caused. Ultimately it seems the side one takes is reducible to an article of faith as both views hinge on an interpretation of the future which by definition is unknown.

In summary then we would suggest that the provision of low-income housing involves small and large scale capital and international finance rather than self-build. Whether the presence of large scale capital in unauthorized housing is a result of the failure of Kenyan capitalism in that it has nowhere else to invest or whether it is a source of 'primitive' accumulation with which a full-scale capitalistic transformation can be built must remain an open question. That shelter for low-income groups in Nairobi is commercialized is not.

A new research agenda

It is customary at the end of a piece of research such as this to suggest possible future avenues for research. In this section we shall follow the tradition. However rather than suggesting areas for future research we shall concentrate more on useful approaches in future research. In keeping with our argument that unauthorized housing has been transformed it therefore seems logical that our approach should change.

Firstly we should look at the shanty town at a detailed empirical level, in order to trace the emergence of capitalist property relations within such settlements. This is in contrast to the more common perspective which sees such sections of the economy purely in theoretical terms as subsidising the costs of reproduction of labour power and hence serving the needs of capital in general. This would enable us to bring out the internal differentiation and social processes in such

settlements rather than treat them as uniform as the label 'unauthorized settlement' might suggest. The function of research is to go beyond and behind official categories.

Secondly it seems interesting to investigate processes of social control in shanty towns. This means questioning the assumption that these settlements are characterised by autonomous community development, and trying to elucidate the power relations involved. What may appear at first sight to be grassroots mobilization often turns out to involve state control. It seems that mechanisms of social control including politics, in African cities are an almost untapped field of research. (Van Onselen's(1982) work on the Witwatersrand shows what can be done).

Finally we would suggest that rather than stress the differences between squatter settlements and the rest of the city we might start looking at the similarities. Indeed if we ignore the illegal occupation aspect, it is pertinent to ask whether 'squatting' is actually different in any meaningful economic sense from owner-occupation or renting depending upon the circumstance. It is our contention that it is not.

To conclude this section it seems that to investigate the specific form that the commercialization process takes in other urban centres is an important area of future research. Throughout the third world at the moment a significant social transformation is occurring in silence. That transformation is that squatting as it is conventionally defined is being replaced by commercial property relations. In the next section we shall examine what limited evidence there is about this and speculate upon its causes.

11.2 The Third World City in the 1980s

In this section we shall broaden our focus and examine the limited evidence throughout the third world of the commercialization process we have been discussing and suggest the factors that have caused this transformation. Hence in part this section is an attempt to understand the developments we have documented in Nairobi in terms of developments in third world cities generally. In other words to show that the experience of Nairobi cannot simply be dismissed as an interesting but exceptional case.

My argument can be set out very simply. It is that the 'urban crisis' in the third world in general tends to lead towards a political acceptance of unauthorized settlements, and that the result of this is to increase the security for capital to be invested in such sectors. This allows squatting to be replaced by commercialized housing.

Before we provide evidence of this process it is useful to consider different state responses to urbanization. We shall build up two ideal-types of such responses; namely a 'repressive' and a 'laissez-faire' model. This will make it easier to analyse the changes in political responses to unauthorized settlements that have occurred since the form or indeed the existence of squatting is itself historically associated with these different responses to urbanization.

The 'repressive' model is characterized by the following features that tend to be mutually reinforcing. Firstly and most importantly there is an attempt to control or prevent rural-urban migration; secondly access to urban land by market mechanisms by the urban poor is limited (i.e. there is an extremely unequal urban land distribution); and thirdly there is a generally well-developed legal system and a well enforced system of property ownership. In such a situation the urban poor are forced to occupy land illegally, i.e. they are obliged to squat - usually in direct confrontation with the state.

This results in the insecurity of tenure which is likely to discourage capital investment in low-income housing. Circular migration is more common in such a system as is the belief in the essential irrationality of rural-urban migration.

The 'laissez-faire' model is characterised by two main features: the lack of any state attempt to control rural-urban migration and a generally less-developed legal system - often there is a confused system of property ownership or at least a poorly established notion of private property. In this model the distribution of urban land is generally characterized by greater equality. The urban poor can either purchase land or if they occupy land 'illegally'¹ their dwellings are not particularly likely to be demolished - since in this case, unlike the repressive model, the state has no strong legal and property system to defend. In this situation of either 'illegal' occupation or access to land via the market it is likely that a small scale rental sector will develop since there is security for capital investment. However it is unlikely to be particularly profitable as it is relatively easy for others to have access to urban land thus making this sector relatively extensive.

At the risk of oversimplification we can define the applicability of these two models as follows. Within Africa, we may characterize the settler states as 'repressive' in their responses to urbanization while the non-settler states adopted a 'laissez-faire' policy. Similarly we may classify the majority of Latin America as 'repressive' while the Middle East and the majority of Asia could be described as approximating to the 'laissez-faire' model.

Such a classification would seem appropriate in 1960. However by the 1980s the situation had changed. The key point was that the sheer scale of demographic increase in urban areas was making the 'repressive' policy untenable, and the result of this was to encourage the commercialization of squatting.

In what follows we shall first consider the 'laissez-faire' model which has always been associated with a small-scale rental sector which is therefore of limited interest in the processes of commercialization and political integration. There has been little change in the political response to unauthorized settlements in such cities since 1960. We shall then examine the cities associated with our repressive model by firstly examining evidence for the changes in their policies toward unauthorized settlements and then the literature on the commercialization process that has been brought about. In so doing we shall suggest that the changes that are happening are leading to an increasing convergence with the 'laissez-faire' model in some respects.

Three cities that are associated with a 'laissez-faire' model of state urbanization will be mentioned: Lusaka, Mombasa and Dar-es-Salam. Squatting in Zambia has generated considerable interest and it is often held up as the classic example of self-build squatting in Africa. However within the famous 'George' settlement in Lusaka the existence of a small-scale level of landlordism has been noted which has been constrained by political control (Schlyter and Schlyter, 1979). In the unauthorized parts of Dar-es-Salam it was reliably reported to us that it was the local party control that prevented the emergence of large-scale landlordism.² From our earlier discussion we would classify these two countries as 'laissez-faire' in their attitude to squatting and consequently the emergence of this modest small-scale sector is to be expected. Within Mombasa in Kenya - which effectively was a non-settler city and consequently adopted a 'laissez-faire' approach - there has been an historic rental sector that seems to have^{been} allowed and integrated into the local Islamic land tenure system. (Stren, 1978) These examples give further support to our general argument concerning the importance of security for capital investment. It is crucial in this to understand that this 'security' is de facto and as such is social and not legal.

It is also interesting to note that even such classic examples of self-build squatting as Lusaka there are in fact commercial property relations.

We shall now examine the experience of those states adopting a repressive policy. In Chapter 4 we saw how in Nairobi the state's policy has moved from one of harrassment to reluctant acceptance for a few stabilized settlements. By 1980 the policy seemed to involve simultaneously both more tolerance in some areas combined with a more repressive policy in other areas.

Gilbert and Ward in a recent paper describe a strikingly similar process for Mexico City and Bogota (Gilbert and Ward, 1982). As in Nairobi state policies are confused and contradictory in these two cities but there has been a noticeable shift away from demolition towards legalization and integration since 1960. Moreover there are also signs of a 'dual' policy operating - namely the acceptance of some settlements combined with an increasingly strict approach to other areas (Gilbert and Ward, 1982, 96, 105). The other parallel they report is the attempt to bring the agents of urban development under state control. In Nairobi this applied to the private landlord while in Mexico and Colombia it applied to the illegal sub-divider and the real estate developer both of which result in owner-occupation.

Similarly within Latin America Burgess (1982) has drawn our attention to the use of both 'stick and carrot' policies by Latin American states towards the urban poor. He is particularly concerned to point out that Latin American urban politics do not consist solely of repression and the promotion of capital accumulation. There are countervailing urban movements and state policies which are to do with legitimation rather than simply class-domination and repression. This seems a worthwhile viewpoint from which to consider the changing responses by the state to unauthorized settlements.

It is our contention that such a dual policy is now typical of those third world cities that were previously typified by our repressive model and that it is this development that accounts for the emergence of commercialized squatter housing. The result of this is that these cities are developing characteristics similar to those in cities where the laissez-faire model has applied.

Unfortunately there are few accounts of the extent of commercialization in unauthorized settlements in such states. In part this may reflect the relative recentness of the phenomenon and secondly the extent to which the Turner orthodoxy with its ideas of self-build owner-occupation has dominated our thinking resulting in the fact that the process of renting has been almost totally ignored by the academic community. (But see Edwards, 1982). Here we shall give a selective survey of this literature. In general it seems that the process of commercialization tends to lead to owner-occupation in Latin America and toward a rental economy in Africa. This may reflect the relative recentness of urbanization in the latter.

From Harare in Zimbabwe which in terms of political development is most probably the closest in nature to Nairobi i.e. with a strong settler legacy there is a suggestion that 'lodgerism' may now be occurring in the unauthorized areas. (Horrell, 1981). If this is the case then it looks as if a private rental sector is emerging like the one we have documented in Nairobi.

But perhaps the most striking observation is that even within the famous settlements studied by Turner and Mangin in Lima, Peru we find that the local squatters committee

'decide on requests to sell or rent. Renting is against the rules of the association ... As of 1963 a few land titles had been given out by the government, but the people have been buying and selling for years with home-made titles' (Mangin, 1970, 53).

Two points arise from this example. It suggests that the commercialization process is not necessarily a new phenomenon and secondly that local political control is important in preventing or allowing it to occur and in shaping its form. More recently in other parts of Latin America the illegal sub-division of land for owner-occupation has been documented (Doebel, 1975; Gilbert, 1981).

In more conventional squatter settlements in Venezuela it appears that the majority have purchased their plots from earlier invaders (Gilbert, 1981). In Colombia Edwards (1982) has shown how renting in unauthorized settlements and pirate settlements (i.e. illegal subdivision) is common and seems likely to grow. Consequently it may be premature to assume that the commercialization process in Latin America in the form of illegal sub-division will solely result in owner-occupation.

In a recent general survey of third world housing Gilbert and Gugler note that:

'...it is an undeniable fact that as settlements become older and consolidate, the proportions of renters increase; owners deliberately extend their houses to accommodate renters, thereby increasing their incomes'. (Gilbert and Gugler, 1982, 93)

While this survey makes no claim to be exhaustive it suggests that the emergence of commercial property relations in unauthorized settlements is increasingly being recognized by commentators. Clearly their type and form will be a function of the specific political economy within which they are located. However one generalization may be suggested: that once security of investment is provided, by whatever means, commercial property relations are entering such settlements, transforming the provision of shelter.

Let us examine the processes behind this transformation. By the 1970s the actual process of urbanization had made a repressive state response untenable. Hence it is the sheer scale of population increase

that has forced the authorities to recognise unauthorized settlements. The administrative difficulty and extent of repression which South Africa has had to go to attempt to maintain such a policy are ample evidence of the operational difficulty if not untenable nature of such a policy. In the end for most states there was no other option; they had to adopt a combination of the laissez-faire and repressive approaches. Once it became obvious that to attempt to prevent rural-urban migration was a hopeless task, the only question remaining was how to cope with the tide. In terms of political stability it made more sense to integrate or at least tacitly accept such settlements and contain the urban poor rather than bulldoze them. Such a position was being promoted by the international agencies whose involvement in housing and urban problems started in 1972. This approach was further publicised at the 1976 UN conference in Vancouver which set up Habitat (United Nations Centre for Human Settlements UNCHS which is centered in Nairobi). Thus those states which had started by adopting a repressive approach to the process of urbanisation ultimately had no alternative but to at least partially accept their unauthorized settlements.

While political considerations were the main rationale behind this more tolerant approach to unauthorized settlements taken in the previously 'repressive' states there are also some economic arguments in favour of the legitimation and legalization of such settlements. Firstly it was possible to make money from unauthorized settlements in terms of property taxes and other revenues for the public purse, and profits for real estate developers and the construction industry. Secondly integration would involve only limited expenditure since all infrastructure would be paid for by the urban poor through 'cost-recovery'. Indeed this was becoming a necessity as in many cities illegal connections to public services (i.e. electricity) were increasing and starting to worry the authorities. (Gilbert and Ward,

1982). Rather as the original squatters had done in the 1980s with land, the threat was that the urban poor might simply take what services they wanted and hijack the city.³ Finally there is the familiar argument that by tolerating unauthorized settlements the housing costs of the urban poor would be kept down enabling the general wage level to be reduced, to the advantage of industrial capital.

While clearly there is some truth in these economic arguments behind the move towards integration we find them less convincing than a political interpretation. In general given that similar policies are being pursued in countries with vastly different economic situations, a simple 'economistic' argument is difficult to sustain. Indeed since the economic benefits of an integrationist approach have always existed, it seems to us that it is the change in the political conjuncture which has been decisive. However it is also important to understand that the integration approach in those states that formerly pursued a purely repressive policy does not mean that they have entirely abandoned repression. Rather they show a combination of repression and laissez-faire.

If our argument is correct it may be interesting to make some comparisons with urbanization in Victorian Britain. Conventionally from an underdevelopment approach to make such a comparison is considered misleading. However the simple underdevelopment view has been recently subject to sustained criticism from those interested in the historical development of capitalism in the periphery. Kitching urges us not to ignore the historical experience of the economic development of the industrialized nations within their specific context (Kitching, 1982).

In a recent comparative analysis of the experience of industrial Manchester during the nineteenth century and Sao Paulo today one of the most interesting differences was the responses of the different

cities to threats from the urban poor.⁴ In Victorian Britain the response was to integrate the urban poor into the system while Sao Paulo was able to ignore such demands through an authoritarian response (Walton, 1979). The difference is because of the Brazilian state's comparatively high level of policing and internal security and relatively low level of working class organization. Consequently the Brazilian state was considerably more confident than its British Victorian counterpart. It would seem that this partly explains the ability of such states to ignore the demands of their urban poor for so long. As we have seen this ability is diminishing with the emergence of integration-
alist policies.

To conclude this section on the future of the third world city we would suggest that it is becoming increasingly difficult for these states to simply ignore or repress the demands of their urban poor. If for no other reason than the sheer weight of numbers it seems they must give the urban masses some stake or say in the system.

11.3 Conclusion

The argument of this thesis is therefore that self-build squatting is a transitional form of urban housing. Hence we would suggest that rather than emphasize autonomy, self-help community development or illegality in unauthorized settlements, increasingly we must use the more familiar tools of the analysis of market mechanisms and power.

Within the context of Nairobi, as we have seen, the evidence for the commercialization of unauthorized low-income housing such that the 'squatter' is a tenant is now beyond dispute. What remains to be seen is the future capitalist development of this sector. The contradictions will surely deepen, as will efforts to overcome them.

Footnotes - Chapter 11

- 1 The point about this system is that it is not easy to define legal or illegal occupation.
- 2 Personal communication Richard Martin Bowcentrum and Ardhi Institute Dar-es-Salam.
- 3 Within Nairobi Davinda Lamba made this point to me.
- 4 There are some intriguing similarities. The development of speculative housebuilding and renting for the urban poor in Victorian Britain has been pointed out as one of the facets of the development of capitalism. (Ball, 1981). Clearly the development of capitalism in housing represents a major form of capital formation without which it is difficult to imagine a capitalist transformation. It would seem that within the third world that the commercialization and integration of unauthorized settlements is part of this more general process.

APPENDIX

This thesis was prepared between October 1978 and March 1983. Between December 1979 and December 1981 I was fortunate enough to be a Research Associate at the Housing and Research Development Unit (HRDU) at the University of Nairobi. The main research for the thesis was done in this period.

Throughout the fieldwork I was helped by my research assistant Jeremy Jakoya who acted as a translator between English-Kiswahali and Duluo. While I had a rudimentary knowledge of Kiswahali and many inhabitants had a reasonable knowledge of English it was still necessary to have a translation, though where possible we talked in English. The 'success' of our interviewing is in great part a result of Jeremy's subtlety and sense of humour. It would be difficult to imagine a better assistant who was considerably more than a translator; he was my friend and colleague. Indeed it was often Jeremy's enthusiasm and interest in the subject rather than mine that kept us going. I am extremely grateful for his help.

It is perhaps worth saying that much of the subject of this thesis was politically sensitive both at a macro and micro level. For example at the micro level landlord-tenant relations between neighbours may be difficult. Fieldwork is considerably harder in areas that are characterised by conflict rather than consensus. In this environment to establish the trust of the respondents in researching information was crucial. At a macro level to investigate the intervention of capital in unauthorised settlements with the resulting exploitation of the urban poor by the elite similarly requires subtlety. This point was particularly acute given the high level of government surveillance and interference at the University of Nairobi. I am grateful to the academics and students there with whom I could discuss my work in confidence and

without fear. Sadly this was a limited group which is being made smaller by the increasing intervention of the Kenyan government.

I chose Kibera primarily as I had personal contacts but it was also the most recent shanty town in Nairobi and as a result was unresearched in comparison to the relative wealth of material on Mathare Valley.

The information we have gathered was collected via three main research methods; namely informal interviewing and direct observation, surveys and the use of secondary sources. I shall discuss each in turn.

Informal interviewing and direct observation

The first and indeed recurring major problem centres around how to get in to the shanty-town and be accepted. The problem is that of necessity my role was ambiguous. How I approached this problem is as much a function of my own resources than of any correct methodology. It is worth remembering at the outset that the settlement has a population of around 60,000; we are not talking about a small 'community'. Since there were no obvious community structures that seemed helpful my approach was to walk into the settlement and introduce myself to specific individuals. The justification was that I was interested and would individuals like to talk to me. It was as simple as that. In essence such an approach relies on whether individuals trust you and this is ultimately reducible to impressionistic qualities. In establishing such a rapport it was absolutely crucial to distance myself from the agencies of the state in particular Nairobi City Council, the local administration and the police. In part this was where being a European may have worked to my advantage, since it was unlikely that I would be a police informer. To an extent being a foreigner in African terms meant that I was 'classless' e.g. just European. This meant that it may have been easier to play the 'interested outsider' role. It says a lot about the nature of Kenyan society that the

establishment of trust was in good part conditional upon my ability to distance myself from the state. Indeed in part for such reasons it seemed more profitable and quicker to interview the inhabitants directly rather than use the existing administrative structures i.e. village chiefs, chairman, etc. However, it also reflects the importance of the sequence in which research is carried out. Thus I found it more useful to interview the local administration once I was familiar with the settlement.

The first stage - which lasted about three months - involved totally unstructured in-depth interviews with anybody who was willing. These interviews were written up afterwards in the hope that our interviews would be fairly frank, since I was not taking notes. This was crucial since our subject-matter and economic data in general were sensitive. The object of this first stage was to achieve a kind of 'gestalt' or 'feel' for the settlement so that it would be possible to determine whether subsequent evidence was plausible. It was also from the experience of this early stage that our questionnaire for the tenants was developed. Thus these qualitative unstructured conversations generated the questions for the more formal quantitative surveys we carried out. We shall discuss these surveys in the next section.

While in a sense it was not an intentional research strategy I gained a lot of useful research information from my involvement with HRDU and the Kibera Development Committee. The latter was a non-governmental organisation made up of voluntary organisations involved in Kibera that was set up in March 1981.

Formal surveys

In order to pursue further research it was necessary to have a detailed map of the area, which was not available from the survey of Kenya. Fortunately the Land Development Dept at the University of Nairobi had recent aerial photographs of the area and their technician N. Thiuru produced a partial map of the area. I was able to borrow their aerial

photos and after enlargement was able to copy off a map of the entire settlement (scale 1:2,500). This was traced in drawing-ink so that it was possible to ammonia-print the map. I was fortunate in having a Danish colleague, Peter Hoerring who combined the maps and reduced them to A4 size; these are the maps of Kibera that we have used in Chapters 5-9.

We carried out two surveys, an intensive tenant survey and an extensive landlord survey. The tenant survey was developed from our earlier informal conversations. A copy of the actual questionnaire used is at the end of this Appendix. I chose to focus the survey on four specific spatial areas rather than carry it out randomly throughout the settlement. By doing this I thought it would be easier to reveal the concentration of ownership since multiple-ownership

often but not always involves adjacent blocks. Compared with a more generalised random survey such an approach allowed one intensive contact with a particular group of inhabitants. It also, given the size of the settlement reduced the amount of time spent in revisiting rooms where the inhabitant was absent. Thus in a small area it was possible to keep checking if those who were difficult to get in the sample had returned home.

The four areas chosen were in general representative of the settlement but also had interesting specific features. Thus:

Makina - Historic core area of settlement

Mashimoni - Spontaneous improvement

Linishaba - The poorest section

Kisumu dogo - Ethnic enclave

In general as we saw in Chapter 9, with the exception of Linishaba these were the themes focussed on in each area.

Within each area we interviewed one respondent from every block. The survey was therefore a census at this level. In order to make the choice of respondent random within the block we first surveyed the

number of doors in each block and then selected from random number tables the door number which we should visit. This method ensured that

a) we got information on all the landlords within the area since the block is the basic unit of ownership and

b) that our sample was random at the level of the blocks. We were totally strict in this random sample which required considerable patience. In general the majority of the interviewing was carried out between midday on Saturday and sunset on Sunday since this was the best time to catch industrial workers. However we also used to do one interview a day on the weekdays around 6 p.m. between workers arriving home and sunset. An important advantage of using a random sample is that the estimate of the average income of the settlement was perhaps twice what previous conversations had suggested; this reflects the fact that those with the highest incomes are rarely around the settlement. Below are the response rates of our four areas.

Kisumu dogo 18 out of 26 (69%)

Makina 12 out of 14 (86%)

Mashimoni 46 out of 47 (97%)

Linishaba 16 out of 26 (62%)

92 from 113 (81%)

In part these figures reflect some inhabitants being difficult to track down, but it also reflects some individuals who refused to answer. Indeed at the start of each interview we would ask the occupant permission invariably there would then be a discussion about the point of this survey. We were at pains to explain that as far as we could see there was no material benefit they or the settlement might gain from answering. Rather than falsely raise expectations we were asking them as individuals to cooperate out of their goodwill. Ultimately such a survey must come down to this as the information respondents give could also be used against them. In such a situation one must respect

the right of individuals to refuse to answer one's questionnaire. Paradoxically by the end of this survey I had a lot of respect for the individuals who refused to answer, and was having considerable difficulty in justifying the survey to myself.

Such surveys require considerable skill and flexibility in particular in relation to elucidating information on individuals' incomes. If from previous unstructured interviews and experience one has an idea of the likely range of incomes as they relate to occupations, it is possible to tell whether an answer is realistic or not. If an answer was quite unrealistic we would often become involved in a process of 'negotiation' with the respondent. However in other situations we simply rejected data that we felt was unreliable.

In general in conducting such a survey it is helpful to attempt to work out if there are likely to be any systematic biases i.e. whether the respondent was likely to underestimate or exaggerate. Thus for example income would be likely to be underestimated and urban-rural remittances exaggerated. It is for reasons like these that it is essential to have some knowledge of the general context of an unauthorised settlement before embarking upon a formal questionnaire. The tenant survey provided the hard quantitative framework to which we could refer our more qualitative material. It is perhaps worth mentioning that the most detailed and reliable information on individual landlords in fact comes from the tenant survey.

For our general description of the settlement we have aggregated the data from the four areas studied in the tenants' survey in an unweighted fashion. Although we do not know the weights of the respective populations or their uniformity, at an impressionistic level the absence of weighting does not seem unreasonable. Thus Mashimoni, which accounts for approximately half the sample, was the most typical of the settlement as a whole.

The landlord survey was carried out by ^{my} research assistant Jeremy Jakoya in which he visited approximately 1,600 blocks that were south of the railway line, i.e. in non-Nubian post-1974 Kibera. He excluded those blocks that we had visited in the tenant survey. In each block - which we mapped and numbered - he attempted to find out information about the landlord and the block from any available tenant. Namely: landlord's name; tribe; job; residence; any other plot; when built; rent; no. of rooms.

More often than not such specific data was not available. However the overall picture obtained of the concentration of ownership from this survey is unique to our knowledge. I would estimate that this survey had a coverage of about 85%.

In addition to these two systematic surveys, we interviewed important ^{specific} individuals particularly in the Nubian community in an attempt to gain some insights into the historical development of the area. In a sense this was a piece of limited oral history.

Secondary sources

In general in Nairobi I attempted to familiarise myself with the consultants' reports for the World Bank. I also took advantage of HRDU's cuttings library. Indeed given the enormous amount of available material on Nairobi and the often dubious quality of the research, it is perhaps worth saying that in my opinion the best and most important documents are contained in the HRDU Library - in particular in the steel cupboard. This is by far the quickest place in Nairobi to gain access to such documents.

I would conclude this Appendix by suggesting that to do research on sensitive issues in third world nations a flexible research strategy is essential and that the sequence with which research is carried out is crucial. This involves starting with low-risk enquiries and only at the end making 'high-risk' investigations that might jeopardise one's position or access to sources of information. It is best to start with

the uncontentious and easy and build up a framework before exploring further. It may well help to start away from the formal administrative structures so that one can build up one's own picture rather than to allow officials to predetermine the reality one investigates. This approach is often more efficient in terms of time as dealings with the bureaucracy can be extremely time-consuming and frustrating. In general our approach was to explore the subject from all possible angles, firstly to build up a general picture and secondly to discover the avenues that seem profitable and/or possible to explore. Research is the art of the possible.

LOCATION	(₁)(₂) DATE	(₃)(₄)(₅) Number	(₆)(₇)(₈)	Interview (₉)
Section A Head of Household		Section B Structure		
Name		Walls		(₁₈)
Sex	(₁₀)	Floor		(₁₉)
Age	(₁₁)(₁₂)	Size (sq. m.)		(₂₀)(₂₁)
Marital status	(₁₃)	General condition		
Tribe	(₁₄)	Roof		(₂₂)
Education	(₁₅)			
District	(₁₆)(₁₇)			
Clan				

Section C House hold members

Who else lives in this room?

Relation to H of H, sex, age, occupation , Temporary

1

2 (₂₃)3 (₂₄)4 (₂₅)5 (₂₆)6 (₂₇)

7

Who lives in rural area?

Relation to H of H

1

2 (₂₈)3 (₂₉)

4

5

How many times a year do you visit your rural home? (₃₀)(₃₁)How many times a year do they visit you in Nairobi? (₃₂)(₃₃)Do any of them intend to come and join you in Nairobi? (₃₄)

Section D Income

H of H,

Occupation (35)

Employer (36)

Location of work (37)

Nature of work 1 seasonal (38)

2 casual

3 temporary

4 permanant

Income (39)(40)(41)(42)

House allowance (43)(44)(45)

Are their free meals or other perks at work? (46)

Anybody else in house have a job? if yes fill in D again (47)/(48)(49)(50)(51)

if self-employed, type of buisness (52)

location (53)

is anybody else involv:d? (54)(55)

Average income (56)(57)(58)(59)

Do you own any land(shamba)? (60)

Where? if different from rural area,

How many acres? (61)(62)

What crops do you grow?

Average income a year from land (63)(64)(65)(66)(67)

Who farms it? (68)

Do they send any money or food to you in Nairobi? (69)

How much money do you send to your home area a month? (70)(71)(72)

Do you have any savings? if so, how much? (73)(74)(75)(76)(77) NE

Any other sources of income(i.e. wife's)? (1)(2)(3)(4)

(General comments, possessions,etc..)

Radio (5)

Bicycle (6)

(7)

(8)

Section E Mobility

Why did you come to Nairobi and when?

(9)/(10)(11)

Where have you lived since in Nairobi?

Dates, Location, Rent, Occupation, Other Comments,

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

(12)

8

Why did you move to Kibera?

(13)

Why did you move to this house?

(14)

How did you find this house?

(15)

Did you pay a deposit(i.e. above one month's rent in advance)?

(16)(17)(

Did you previously know or are related to?

Landlord

(19)

Rent collector

(20)

Tenant(s)

(21)

How long had you been looking for a house?

(22)(23)

(General comments)

(24)

(25)

Section F Landlord/Tenant

How much is the rent?

(26)(27)(

How many rooms do you rent?

(29)

Is there/do you get?

Receipt

(30)

Written contract

(31)

Verbal agreement

(32)

- When in the month do you pay? (33)
- How and to whom do you pay? (34)
- 1 landlord collects
 - 2 Rent collector collects
 - 3 go to landlord
 - 4 go to rent collector
 - 5 other
- Do you always give your rent to the same person? (35)
- if no, How do you know its the 'right' person? (36)
- Have you ever seen your landlord? (37)
- What is your relationship with your (38)
- landlord (39)
- rent collector (40)
- What do you do when you can't pay the rent or would you do?
- 1 discuss it with landlord
 - 2 discuss it with rent collector
 - 3 borrow money
- Who from?
- 1 relative
 - 2 workmate
 - 3 friend
 - 4 employer
 - 5 other
- 4 other strategy, specify (41)(42)
- How long can you postpone rent before eviction? (43)(44)
- Have you ever had to postpone rent or had a difficulty with payment? (45)
- What do you do when you have to pay school fees or some other unforeseen payment and rent at the same time? (46)
- In order to pay the rent do you sometimes have to miss out on other things? if so what? (47)

Do you ever offer a favour or are you asked to do one instead of rent?	(4)
Who contributes to the rent?	(4)
What is your landlord's name	
tribe	(50)
occupation	(51)
Where in Nairobi does he live?	(52)
Is this his only job?	(53)
What is your rent collector's name	
tribe	(54)
occupation	(55)
Where in Kibera does he live?	(56)
Is this his only job?	(57)
What is their relationship(landlord/rent collector)?	(58)
Are your landlord and rent collector connected with	
1 N.C.C.	
2 Govt.	
3 D.O.	
4 Chief	
5 Others	(59)
Does he own any other plots?	(60)/(61)(62)
if so where?	(63) (64)
Has he done any improvements?	(65)
Has he increased the rent?	(66)/(67)(68)(69)
(what was it)	
if so when and what reason did he give?	(70)/(71)(72)
Has he provided pit latrines?	(73)
What are they like?	(74)
Does he own a nearby water-kiosk?	(75)
Have you done any improvements to this room?	(76)
if yes what made it possible?	(77)
What would you consider a 'fair' rent to be?	(78)(79)(80)

Would you be prepared to pay a higher rent for a better room? (1)
Given your income what would you say would be the maximum rent you could afford? Remember you'll still have to buy clothes etc..? (2)(3)
Is it possible for you to build your own house in Kibera? (5)
if no why not? (6)
Would you rather build your own house than rent? (7)
(L/T) General comments
(8)
(9)
(10)

" Section G Block

Total number of rooms (11)(12)
When built? (13)(14)
Any improvements? (15)
Has it changed ownership? (16)
if so when? (17)(18)
previous owner
price
Tribal allocation of rooms (19)(20)(21)(22)(23)(24)(25)(26)(27)(28)
Why do you think the allocation is as it is? (29)
Are the rents uniform? (30)
if not what is the criteria for the difference? (31)
(General comments) (32)

Section H Water

- Where do you get your water from? (33)
- How much does it cost a debe? (34)(35)
- How many debes do you use a day?
and sunday? (36)
(37)(38)
- Do you only use kiosk water? (39)
- When do you use river water? (40)
- Where do you get water from when you have no money? (41)
- What do you use river water for? (42)
- Do you know who owns your local kiosk?
is he connected with your landlord? (43)
- What hour's is it open? (44)(45)
- Since you have been in Kibera has the price of water changed? (46)
If so when? (47)
What was the previous price? (48)(49)
- Since you have been in Kibera has the number of kiosks changed? (50)
- Do you use the toilet and wash at work? (51)
if so why? (52)
- (General comments) (53) (54)

Section I Community

- Since you have been in Kibera what changes have you seen? (55)
(water, landlords, houses, people, etc...)
- What do you like, think are the advantages of Kibera?
this area? (56)
- What do you dislike, think are the disadvantages (problems) of Kibera?
this area? (57)

- Which areas of Kibera would you like to live in? (58)
- Which areas of Kibera would you least like to live in? (59)
- What effect has N.C.C.had in Kibera? (60)
- Are you a member of any association/organisation? (61)
- if so what does it do?
- Are there any community organisations in Kibera?
- Name?
- Where do your best friends live? (62)
- How many of your closest friends live in Kibera? (63)
- In an emergency who would you go and contact? (64)
- When you go out who do you leave your children with? (65)
- What do you think/expect will happen to Kibera in the future?
(66)
- and yourself?
- (67)
- (68)
- (69)
- (70)

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