

MS 562

## ABSTRACT

### KINSHIP MORALITY IN THE INTERACTION PATTERN OF SOME KIKUYU FAMILIES

By

Carolyn M. Clark

Kinship morality is made up of certain understandings shared by members of a society which indicate the proper behavior among kin in that society. Fortes in Kinship and the Social Order has suggested that a distinctive feature of kinship morality is a kind of "prescriptive altruism" which posits an axiom of amity in relations among kin. The axiom of amity includes statements which support the idea that kin should be supportive, co-operative, helpful, cohesive, amicable, and have solidarity. It was found that in an unpublished manuscript on the Kikuyu by the late L. S. B. Leakey that relations among kin were characterized by ideas centering on respect, obedience, modesty, love, and mutual support. The modalities through which these ideas were expressed included control and use of "abusive" language, touching and personal space, and limitations on nudity. Leakey's findings were consonant with those of Kikuyu ethnographer and President of Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta. Both authors wrote about a "traditional" period in Kikuyu life set around the turn of the century. There is a conservatism in major ideas in Kikuyu kinship morality though the modalities through which they are expressed changed as the general society changed. Kikuyu informants, basically

members of three families whom I knew, gave support to the following as understandings within Kikuyu kinship morality: Kin should have affection for one another. Kin should be responsible for the social and moral well-being of other kin. Kin should be loyal to one another.

Using the extended case method, several cases were investigated in which kin sometimes acted according to these understandings. The incentives which encouraged behavior in accord with the understandings and the constraints on behavior which encouraged behavior counter to the understandings concerning kinship morality were investigated. Affection was the most variable in that several factors influenced behavior counter to it. Responsibility emerged as a strong canalizer of kin behavior, while loyalty was seen as the most important of these understandings. It served as an "organizing understanding" in that it was acted in pertinent situations where the others were not. Loyalty to kin served to validate membership in the family group, and was a binding and compelling force for family solidarity.

Economic factors were among the strongest influences in creating conflict within the family group, especially in the marital relations of one closely studied couple.

KINSHIP MORALITY IN THE INTERACTION PATTERN  
OF SOME KIKUYU FAMILIES

By

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A DISSERTATION

Submitted to

Michigan State University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Anthropology

1975

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1975

To Corrine and Koren, my mother and daughter

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people, in many different ways, have helped me complete this dissertation. There are the friends who acted as babysitters and the babysitters who became friends whose loving care of my daughter allowed me the peace of mind to spend the hours necessary to write this dissertation. The support of women faculty members at Kresge College and on the Board of Studies in Anthropology at the University of California, Santa Cruz helped supply the energy needed to get through those hours. Several men and women of the faculty, staff and student body at U. C. Santa Cruz were well wishers-- I appreciate their concern and thoughtfulness. The Ethnic Minority Group at Kresge often listened to my gripes and helped me over trying periods. The typists who worked on the various drafts of the dissertation were women of good cheer who worked hard and well under great time pressure. The artist and cartographers who worked on the dissertation contributed their skill as well as good wishes.

Some of those who should be acknowledged for helping me in this project did not make solely positive contributions; they were stimulating irritants. The university administration whose rules and deadlines provided the impetus for me to begin writing falls into this category. My family and non-university friends who could not quite comprehend why

it was taking me so many years to write my "book" helped me keep the endeavor in perspective. The Black students with whom I worked wanted me to get my Ph.D., but were not quite sure that all that work was necessary to get it. I was never sure that they thought that having "to write" was a legitimate excuse for missing one of their activities. My husband was supportive in many ways, but his continual questioning of the value of an advanced degree for any Black person, at this time, made me come to grips with what I was doing and why I was doing it.

I appreciate the comments on an earlier version of this dissertation which are given by Nancy Tanner, Board of Studies in Anthropology, University of California, Santa Cruz; David Schneider, Department of Anthropology, University of Chicago; Harold Scheffler, Department of Anthropology, Yale University; and my husband, Cedric X. Clark, Director of Education, University of Islam, San Francisco. Gini Bianchi, Committee on Education, University of California, Santa Cruz, gave me help of various kinds, including editorial assistance on that draft.

The chairman of my doctoral guidance committee was Marc Swartz, Department of Anthropology, University of California, San Diego. I began studying with Professor Swartz more than ten years ago, when I was a sophomore at Michigan State University. He encouraged me to go on to graduate school there; worked closely with me during our

years at Michigan State, and maintained an interest in my work in the years after we both left East Lansing. Much of the way I view society and culture was gained in classes taught by Marc Swartz; his interpretation of the "processual approach" has greatly influenced the way I "do" anthropology, and his analysis of African social systems provided the framework in which I phrased many questions which I have pursued in my research. Professor Swartz painstakingly read several drafts of this dissertation, and give penetrating and detailed comments on them. I gratefully acknowledge his influence, help, and concern.

Other teachers whose influence on my approach to the study of kinship and social organization should be recognized are Ralph Nicholas, now at the Department of Anthropology, University of Chicago; whose questions on social organization have always intrigued me; William Davenport, Department of Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania; who showed me a different perspective on kinship and social organization; and Alfred Hudson, now at the Department of Anthropology, University of Massachusetts; whose attention to the details of unilineal and non-unilineal kinship systems helped me break out of old systems of categorization. Alfred Opubor of the African Studies Center, Michigan State University, was a member of my committee. When I was an undergraduate at Michigan State he introduced me to African literature, which helped bring to life the people in the social systems which I



studied. Sections of this dissertation in which I attempt character sketches of several Kikuyu family members show this influence.

In addition to Marc Swartz and Alfred Opubor, the other members of my committee were Bernard Gallin, Chairman of the Department of Anthropology, Michigan State University; and Robert McKinley, Department of Anthropology, Michigan State University. Professor McKinley's comments on the final draft of my dissertation were very encouraging, the thought and care he put into reading my work is sincerely appreciated. I would like to thank all of the members of my committee.

This dissertation contains some intimate details of Kikuyu family life. These are things which many Kikuyu would not reveal to non-family members, and which they might not have revealed to me had they or I known that I would analyze them in this dissertation. It was fortunate that I was accepted by these Kikuyu families; I hope that they will recognize the material presented here as an attempt to illuminate some of the aspects of Kikuyu culture which influence intrafamilial relationships.

I am deeply grateful to the Kikuyu families with whom I lived and worked. The young men who served as my assistants and who carried out the survey questionnaire in the village deserve special recognition. Kikuyu university professors, students, and government officials sometimes

used their special knowledge of position to acquaint me with various aspects of Kikuyu history or social life. It is not without some difficulty that I got to know Kikuyu in many walks of life; I am grateful to those who let this stranger into their lives.

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## FOREWORD

The fieldwork upon which this dissertation was based was funded by a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health of the United States of America Health, Education and Welfare Department. I was in Kenya from April, 1971 to February, 1972; with a brief trip back to the States in the fall of 1971.

In May, 1971, my husband and I began living with a Kikuyu family in Murang'a District, Central Province of Kenya. During our stay we got to know some members of this family well and fortunately became acquainted with some of their friends and relatives -- it is on this group that this dissertation is based. I am grateful to those Kikuyu who in helping me understand Kikuyu social life answered my many questions on family relations and shared with me their ideas about kinship. A study of intrafamilial relations was not included in my research proposal; it was because of the interest of the Kikuyu in this area and the willingness of some of them to talk to me about family life that this dissertation came about.

Many of the younger members of the families with whom I worked spoke English, and conversation with them and some others were largely conducted in English. Interviews with older people were usually done through an interpreter, and two separate transcriptions and translations of each taped

interview were completed in the field. I studied the Kikuyu language during my stay, but my comprehension of the language was considerably better than my speaking facility. By the end of my stay in the field I could follow some conversations quite well, to the surprise of my Kikuyu teachers. Swahili, the language which I had studied before going to Kenya, did not prove as useful as expected. Young people preferred to speak English, and the middle-aged, for whom Swahili was a major second language, were hesitant to use it in extended conversations; asking instead that their words in Kikuyu be translated into English.

To disguise the identity of the people discussed in this dissertation, I have not used their real names, and have changed the names of the village and market town in which I worked.



The orthography of Kikuyu words used in this dissertation follows that used by T. G. Benson in the Kikuyu-English Dictionary, published by Oxford University at the Clarendon Press in 1964.

## CHAPTER 1: KIKUYU KINSHIP MORALITY

In this dissertation a description and analysis of the pattern of kinship interaction among the Kikuyu of Murang'a, Kenya is attempted. More specifically it concerns the "kinship morality" of the Kikuyu: the understandings<sup>1</sup> about the proper behavior toward kin which the Kikuyu share; the actual behavior among kin; and the organizations of understandings by which some understandings are more highly ranked than others. Chapter 3 of the dissertation is devoted to the explication of cases, through which are demonstrated not only the cultural constructs or understandings concerning kinship interaction, but also the instances in which people do and do not act according to the expectations contained in these understandings. The final chapter includes a rank ordering of these understandings. In the second chapter a brief historical overview of Kikuyu social organization is presented. Here, in the first chapter, I would like to explain the approach to the study of interaction among Kikuyu kinspeople which I take and to answer certain questions necessary for this analysis.

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<sup>1</sup> A rather specialized meaning of the term "understandings" will be used throughout this dissertation. Following Marc Swartz (1975, in press) the term "understanding" will be used to connote for any given society "the range of responses acceptable in given situations and how to interpret and evaluate what other people do." Shared understandings, according to this approach, "are experienced by group members as the correct and necessary way of looking at the universe and its contents. (Swartz's emphasis)".

### Who are Kin?

Kikuyu refer to themselves as the children of Gikuyu and Mumbi, the primordial couple who were created by God, placed in Mukurwe wa Gathanga in Murang'a and given land in all directions as far as the eye could see. Middleton and Kershaw (1953:41) in a compilation and updating of Kikuyu ethnographies state "the common right of all Kikuyu in the ancestral land as children of Gikuyu and Mumbi makes them all brothers to each other; they are not only children of Mumbi but also children of this ancestral land which is their father and mother." Thus land and kin are closely intertwined for the Kikuyu to such an extent that in the past land, held in common, was one of the primary symbols of kinship; and in recent history, culminating in the Mau Mau movement of the 1950's, "Kikuyu control of Kikuyu land" was a rallying cry which united almost the entire Kikuyu population.<sup>2</sup> Traditionally, rights to specific plots of land were vested in the mbari (family group), a group which varied in depth from three to eight generations and in size from 30 to 5,000 members, according to Middleton and Kershaw

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<sup>2</sup> There is no historical record of the entire Kikuyu population ever acting wholly in concert on any particular issue or event (see Middleton & Kershaw, 1953; an overview of Kikuyu traditional social and political organization is presented in Chapter 2). The issue of land, particularly the alienation of land to European settlers, did serve to unite various Kikuyu groups in a common cause. Not all were united in their opinion on the way to regain their land. The Myth of Mau Mau (1966) by Rosberg and Nottingham explores the nature of the support for this movement.

(1953:27). Membership in a mbari was generated by tracing descent through males from a male ancestor, but was usually validated<sup>3</sup> by participation in "common initiation ceremonies, family and "group" sacrifices, contribution to blood money, eating of sacrificial animals in marriage transactions, and family ceremonial eating of meat" (Middleton and Kershaw, 1953:24). An alternative means of joining a mbari included adoption through a special religious ceremony by which poorer strangers were incorporated into a group, or other men attached themselves to men who were wealthier and more important.

Although land still remains an important political symbol for the Kikuyu, it does not seem to occupy the central position in the kinship system which it once did. People now hold individual title deeds to land, with limitations on the inheritance pattern placed on them by

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<sup>3</sup> In an unpublished doctoral dissertation (Cornell, 1967), Alfred Hudson delineated three kinds of rules used in the formation of descent groups: generative, validative and co-ordinative. According to his usage, a generative rule included the cultural steps by which a person could trace descent from an ancestor, while the validative rules involved the construction of ascent lines from ego by the use of culturally acceptable limbs. The validative rule and co-ordinative rule which involved relationships among descent groups were of particular importance in the cognatic kinship system Hudson studied. The use of individual option in the construction of ascent lines was a means through which people validated their membership in one descent group or another. For the Kikuyu the cultural expectations concerning descent and ascent lines are not so variable, and participation in specifiable events looms important in validating membership in a particular descent group.

the government.<sup>4</sup> Most Kikuyu readily give genealogical ties when asked about their relatives. Both older and younger informants were able to give genealogies of considerable depth (seven generations for the oldest female informant, and one of six generations, taken at a different time, from her 25 year old grandson) and of great collateral expansion. Appendix A contains four genealogies, numbers A1 and A2 are those of the grandmother and her grandson. When collecting these genealogies it became clear that an emphasis was placed on male descendents of male ancestors-- fathers, father's brothers, father's fathers, father's father's brothers, etc. The wives of these men were generally included, but the consanguinal kin, except for ego's mother, were usually not included. Relatives within this genealogical range which were most likely to be "forgotten" were mother's parents, father's father's sisters, and father's father's brothers; yielding the broad-based pyramidal form which has become a familiar anthropological symbol for an ancestor focussed group whose

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<sup>4</sup> A land consolidation program in which the various parcels of land owned by an individual were demarcated and consolidated into one large holding was completed in Kikuyu land by 1965. The number of people who may inherit any one piece was fixed so that the land holdings would not revert to small un-economic parcels, but this also served to limit interest of the group in the land. Gary Ferraro, in an unpublished doctoral dissertation (Syracuse University, 1971) indicates that in some areas this ruling has not affected the traditional inheritance pattern.

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members are recruited on a unisexual basis, here restricted to ties to males.<sup>5</sup>

Even though all the people listed on a genealogy are considered relatives or kin, they were not all considered "family". The Kikuyu word which I translate as "family" is mbari; it has been defined as an exogamous segment of a sub-clan (cf Middleton and Kershaw, 1953:24). I think the most effective translation of the term is "family group", for today the term is often used to refer to a loose association of extended families, and in the literature on traditional Kikuyu social organization it may refer to a lineage or a sub-clan.

A family or mbari is a sub-set of the group of relatives listed on a genealogical chart. To my knowledge, none of the families with whom I had close contact included adopted members or other non-genealogical members. Although the generational depth described for a family was similar to that given for relatives, the collateral extension given for a family was considerably reduced. In Figure A2

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<sup>5</sup> Robin Fox (1967) in an attempt to present a schematic which encompasses unilineal and cognatic descent groups identified the kind of recruitment of members -- unrestricted and restricted, by sex or other -- and the type of focus -- ego or ancestor -- as the primary dimensions of the paradigm. By this paradigm a cognatic kindred is a group whose recruitment of members is unrestricted and which has an ego focus. The ideal Kikuyu descent group would fit the pattern of a unilineal lineage which is ancestor focussed and has membership restricted by sex (cf Fox, 1967; 171-172).

in Appendix A, the broken line encloses those positions whose occupants are considered "close relatives". This informant was not asked to indicate his family or mbari, but the process of narrowing the range of relatives from all those included in the genealogical mesh to a sub-set of those has clearly begun here.

Figures A3 and A4 in Appendix A do represent depictions of a mbari or family group. The two young men from whom this information was taken claimed to be "cousins"<sup>6</sup>, members of the same mbari, and were specifically giving me information concerning their mbari or family. The two disagreed on the name of the mbari to which they belonged, but each asserted strongly that indeed they were members of the same family. They were not able to relate their exact genealogical connection, though the father of one of them explained to me at our first meeting that the two young men had the same FFF. This relationship did not show up on the charts, taken independently from the two young men, nor on the one taken after the one young man had consulted his father, who had originally told me of their relationship. It is likely that the two had the

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<sup>6</sup> English was the language in which much of my fieldwork was conducted. The English term "cousin" was used to identify close patrilineal cousins, determined on the basis of genealogical relationship and the nature of the interaction. More distant patrilineal relatives, and many matrilineal relatives were referred to simply as "relatives". Figure A3 in Appendix A gives the English terminological equivalents to some Kikuyu kin terms in parenthesis.



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same FFFF or FFFFF and trace descent through a pair of half-brothers. The disagreement over the name of the mbari lay with these brothers: One called it mbari ya Ngurure and Burugu (the pair of half-brothers in question), while the other identified it as mbari ya Burugu.<sup>7</sup>

It should be noted that members of a family believe that it is possible to trace these connections -- the young men considered it a challenge to do so; but that they are not usually called upon to do so, i.e., the social recitation of genealogical relationships seldom figures into Kikuyu social or religious activities. There is no interest in tracing the genealogical relationship to a person a Kikuyu only called a "relative", indeed the general impression given is that they "could not know" how they are related.

Which relatives are to be considered members of the family varies, but the core of the mbari tends to be a set of brothers and their unmarried sisters, and the wives and children of these brothers. The mbari in Figure A3 includes unmarried women only in ego's generation or the younger

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<sup>7</sup> A comparison of the two charts, Figure A3 and A4 in Appendix A, reveal that Figure A3 goes one generation further back than Figure A4. Chege in Figure A4 traced descent through Burugu while Irungu in Figure A3 traced descent through his half-brother. Both young men were asked how they were related to Wanjiru, a woman each identified as a cousin. Both traced their connection to her through Wahoria, but Chege in Figure A4 identified Wahoria as the son of Burugu's brother, while Irungu identified him as a son of Burugu's half-brother. Neither young man included the other in his genealogy.

generation. The ego of this chart, George Irungu, was a young man of about 21 years of age; the women of his generation were close to him in actual age. The people of the younger generation were all children. His sister's husband lived on George's family land and he and his children were included as members of the family. Unmarried women were included in the first parental generation in Chege's chart, Figure A4. Two of these women, Chege's FZ(s), one of whom was a widow, lived at Chege's father's homestead. Chege was about 20 years old and was the eldest of the people listed in his generation. The actual age of people listed in the first parental generation, however, varied from 19 years to about 45 years.

Though the Kikuyu believe that ideally a woman becomes a part of her husband's family, many married women maintain close ties with their natal families. Younger married women are likely to cite their father's mbari after identifying themselves as members of their husbands' families.

Presenting only a static picture of the structure of the Kikuyu family would be misleading. Family membership like other aspects of social organization involves dynamic processes. This discussion has centered on how people generate membership in the mbari, with only passing mention of the modes of validation of membership. It is true that by using specified ties through male ancestors individuals may claim membership in a mbari, but other ties such as the MB and ZH in Figure A3 may also be utilized in particular

situations. Validation of membership in a group to which one has legitimate claim in the past included participation in certain ceremonies and contribution to blood money. Today how does a person act like a member of a mbari? -- by taking an interest in his fellow kinspeople, by associating with them, attending meetings where group decisions are being made, by contributing to bridewealth, and generally acting in accord with the Kikuyu understandings concerning kinship morality.

Ultimately family members and kinspeople are those who identify themselves as such, and are accepted by the people to whom they claim relationship as such. All of the people discussed in the cases in this dissertation have identified themselves as family members of, relatives or kin of at least one other person involved in the case with them. In almost all of the cases the participants were able to trace their exact genealogical connection. George Irungu and Chege, discussed above, are exceptions to this, as is a young woman who though "unmarried" tried to validate her position as a member of the family of her son's father.

#### How is Kinship Morality Investigated?

A useful device for the investigation of social processes, which this study of kinship morality purports to do, is the case study. This concept has its roots in the "trouble cases" studied by Llewellyn and Hoebel (1941)

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in their investigation of Cheyenne law. In an attempt to assess "more than merely what 'is done' in general living, or merely what men say (their emphasis) ought to be done in general living" (28); Llewellyn and Hoebel turned to the study of "crises" which give evidence of the "relation of the individual to culture" and of the "living interaction of differing aspects of culture" (28-29). The "trouble case" allows this kind of investigation for such a case is a crisis for the individual involved and often tests the rules or institutions of a culture. Moreover, it is through such cases that the understandings or "rules" which inform expectations of behavior emerge or change. Llewellyn and Hoebel state:

The case of trouble, again, is the case of doubt, or is that in which discipline has failed, or is that in which unruly personality is breaking through into new paths of action or of leadership, or is that in which an ancient institution is being tried against emergent forces. It is the case of trouble which makes, breaks, twists, or flatly establishes a rule, an institution, an authority. (1941:29)

Others have followed Llewellyn and Hoebel in their interest in events which represent a "hitch" in the "normal" activities of everyday living. Two of the earlier adherents to this approach were Max Gluckman (1954 and 1958), whose study of colonial Africa led him to investigate the changes in a society when discrepant values and principles come into conflict; and Victor Turner (1957), whose study of "social dramas" or "marked disturbances in social life" enabled him to highlight what he calls "processional form": 1) Breach; 2) crisis; 3) redressive action; 4) re-integration

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or recognition of schism. Gluckman and Turner have made additional contributions to the development of this area of study and a number of others (Swartz et al., 1966 and 1968; Nicholas, 1968; Epstein, 1958; Mitchell, 1954; and M. G. Smith, 1960) have used and refined this approach which has been referred to as the "extended case method" or the "processual approach".

The case study method is one way of getting at the processes occurring in society. According to Marc Swartz (1969:4), "what is new about the processual approach is the absence of the assumption of lasting structures and the refusal to assign these structures primacy in investigation and analysis." An explanation of structural arrangements of the sub-systems of society is not the goal of the study, but rather an exposition of the dynamic phenomena of social life, including decision-making and conflict resolution. The social system, following this formulation, may be seen as constantly emerging through the decisions of individuals and the changes in their relations resulting from these.

Most people who have used this approach have been primarily interested in political or juridicial behavior, the discussion of which was found with notions of "conflict" and "interest" pervasive. Turner (1967:113), however, commends its use to anyone interesting in understanding society, for according to him, "Data provided by this method enables us to apprehend not only the structural principles of that system but also processes of various kinds, including



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those of structural change." The method has proved valuable to the non-specialist as Swartz (1975, in press) demonstrates in his effective use of the "extended case method" to present basic concepts and ideas in an introductory anthropology textbook.

Conflict is not a necessary ingredient of a case study. What is necessary is that some event or set of events be taken as a starting point and that the personnel, resources and understandings important in the unfolding of the event or events be brought into the analysis.<sup>8</sup>

The cases presented in this dissertation show kin, primarily members of the domestic group, interacting with one another in various situations. In one sense of the way Llewellyn and Hoebel use the term, these cases are "trouble cases", for they usually deal with a crisis for

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<sup>8</sup> Swartz, Turner and Tuden (1966) have refined a way of dealing with the dynamic processes involved in the unfolding of events. By defining a social "field" in terms of the understandings, resources and personnel which come into play in a given situation, Swartz is able to handle the changing boundaries and activities which make up social life. His characterization of a political field fits the kind of situation discussed here: "It is, rather, a field of tension, full of intelligent and determined antagonists, sole and corporate, who are motivated by ambition, altruism, self-interests, and by desire for the public good, and who in successive situations are bound to one another through self-interest, or idealism -- and separated or opposed through the same motives. At every point in this process we have to consider the entire situation which their interdependent actions occur (1966:8)".

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the individual, areas in which the "range of leeway"<sup>9</sup> or "variation, invention and experiment" in personal conduct are tested, and perhaps new understandings arrived at or old ones affirmed. This material is presented for two reasons; first, so that the reader would be exposed to the actual unfolding of events. The second reason and more importantly, is that it is through the study of cases that the observer learns of the understandings used to guide behavior, or conversely of the consequences of acting in unexpected ways, breaking the rules. Moreover, it is within cases or the events isolated in cases that the kinship morality of the Kikuyu emerge and are defined and evaluated.

Although some argue that the understandings (cultural constructs) that people hold and the actual behavior which these understandings inform should be studied separately, an equally valid approach would be to consider the interaction between the two. What is the nature of this interaction? Clearly, a strictly unidimensional one-way relationship such that cultural rules or understandings

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<sup>9</sup> Llewellyn and Hoebel (1941:23) discuss two main kinds of deviations, and state that there are two kinds of "ranges of leeway" -- "the range of permissible leeway and the range of actively protected leeway." According to them, "the kind and degree of permissible variation, invention, experiment and 'play' are as important a part of any institutional scheme as the kind, degree, and direction of its canalizing or organizing behavior."

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determine behavior, or a simple behaviorism, such that observed behavior is the locus of cultural rules or understandings cannot be supported. A more adequate perspective is the one from which our knowledge of understandings which inform behavior and the organization of these understandings emerge from the events in which they are used, and in turn, the events are created in part by the understandings brought to them.

### What is Kinship Morality?

The behavior which I discuss under the rubric "kinship morality" -- the understandings about the behavior which it is believed ought to demonstrate toward one another -- has also been discussed under the title of "content of social kinship." The crucial question in this area was posed by Beattie (1964): "What is left after the social relations having to do with economics, religion, politics, and the judiciary are stripped away from kinship?" Beattie maintained that nothing was left, that kinship is an idiom in which other social relationships are discussed. Schneider, one of the other participants in the debate on the content of kinship, suggested that kinship is a way of handling biological processes (1964), but after an investigation of American kinship on the cultural level, he takes a view which decries a priori definitions of kinship.

Meyer Fortes addresses himself to the question of the content of kinship in a chapter entitled "Kinship and the

**Axiom of Amity**" in his book Kinship and the Social Order (1969:219-249). Arguing against specific positions taken by Worsley in his work on the Tallensi and Leach in Pul Eliya, Fortes begins his case by demonstrating that kinship, descent and affinity, in both these cases is more than economics or politics, or the allocation and transmission of rights. The proof in the case of the Tallensi rested on Fortes' demonstration that Worsley's statement -- ". . .in Taleland co-operation between more people than are contained in the elementary family is necessary for survival: one cooperates in economic activities with people to whom one is already related by blood or marriage" (Worsley 1956: 68) -- begs the question of how one becomes related by blood or marriage. Since "marriage, parenthood, filiation, siblingship and other relations of kinship occur in similar arrangements in societies very different from the Tallensi in their mode of production" and other economic activities they cannot be determined by specific economic arrangements (Fortes 1969:221).

Leach's argument that kinship is "not a thing in itself" is disposed of by citing Leach's own evidence which points out that a person cannot be a member of the political community, the village of Pul Eliya, if he does not have proper kinship credentials. To participate in the political and economic activities of the village a person must own

land.<sup>10</sup> This land may be obtained through inheritance, gift or purchase. All three of these are limited by kinship: inheritance usually goes from parent to child; gift includes gifts to adopted children, to children while the parents are still living, and as dowry to daughters; purchase, the crux of Fortes' argument, involves kinship in that land sold to an outsider is within a short period of time bought by a member of the kin group, obscuring the original transaction. To be a citizen of Pul Eliya one must be a member of a kin group.

The argument which Fortes tries to resolve here is basically the same as the Beattie-Schneider controversy over the content of kinship in the pages of Man (1964). There no attempted resolution was provided. When Beattie asked Schneider what then is kinship, Schneider replied that it is not necessary for him to provide a correct answer, but for that particular discussion it was sufficient to point out a wrong one. Several years later in American Kinship (Schneider, 1968), and in "What is kinship all about?" (Schneider 1972:32-63), Schneider did address himself to that question, as did Fortes in the chapter

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<sup>10</sup> Leach's argument in Pul Eliya might best be stated in his own words: "What we need to understand about a society is not whether it is patrilineal, matrilineal or both or neither, but what the notion of patrilineal stands for and why it is there (1968:11)" Within the Pul Eliya villagers' "scheme of values" land was a symbol of kinship.



"Kinship and the Axiom of Amity." Both these scholars agree that understandings which typically guide interaction among kin have to do with love, solidarity, and amity, with Fortes giving an additional proviso of generosity.

### The Axiom of Amity

Fortes phrases the question of the distinctive features of kinship in this manner:

Familial and kinship norms, relationships and institutions are not reducible to economic factors; they are not reducible, either, to political, or religious, or juridical or any other non-kinship basis. Granted, then, that we are concerned with what is from both actor's and the observer's point of view a quite specific, relatively autonomous domain of social life, what are its distinctive features? (1964:231).

In the following paragraph he answers the questions as follows:

Our paradigmatic specimens confirm what is well known, that kinship concepts, institutions, and relations classify, identify, and categorize persons and groups. They show likewise, that this is associated with rules of conduct whose efficacy comes, in the last resort, from a general principle of kinship morality that is rooted in the rule of prescriptive altruism which I have referred to as the principle of kinship amity and which Hiatt calls the ethic of generosity. (Emphasis added) (1968:232)

Though the structural connotations which the notion of kinship carries vary widely, the central value premise associated with it is uniform: "Kinship predicates the axiom of amity, the prescriptive altruism exhibited in the ethic of generosity" (Fortes 1968:237).

A number of other anthropologists have pointed to the nature of the moral imperative between the relatives in their discussion of the interrelationships among kin, but have not subjected it to extensive analysis, probably because anthropologists have been too busy analyzing kinship structures and kinship terminology. Robin Fox, in the introduction to Kinship and Marriage, poses a question to the "relatively kinshipless" western student of anthropology which approaches the basis of kinship morality: "Would we not, if a long-forgotten first cousin turned up having fallen on hard times, feel some obligation toward him simply because he was a cousin? (his emphasis; 1967: 14-15)". Are you not more likely to take him in, treat him kindly, and feel a kind of identity with him? That reaction shows the power and meaning of a principle of amity extended to kin.

Schneider's study of American kinship tackled this question from the cultural level. Identifying his interests as cultural and not social, Schneider defines the cultural level as follows:

This consists in the system of symbols and meanings embedded in the normative system but which is a quite distinct aspect of it and can easily be abstracted from it. By symbols and meanings I mean the basic premises which a culture posits for life: what its units consist in; how those units are defined and differentiated; how they form an integrated order or classification; how the world is structured; in what parts it consists and on what premises it is conceived to exist, the categories and classifications of the various domains of the world of man and how they relate one with another, and the world that man sees himself living in (1968:38).

On the cultural level the primary symbols of American kinship are "shared genetic substance", often expressed as "blood", and love which is translated into sociological language as "diffuse, enduring, solidarity". "Shared bio-genetic substances" here is a symbol whose relationship to biological facts is, by definition, arbitrary, and whose power lies in the fact that it stands for certain kinds of social relationships. Indeed, bio-genetic elements, such as conception and parturition may be an aspect of the primary cultural symbol -- diffuse, enduring solidarity. In this sense sexual intercourse is a symbol of the love and unity between husband and wife, and to speak of being born of woman and sharing bio-genetic traits or "blood" with parents, siblings and other relatives is a means of expressing the social identity shared by family members.

Diffuse, enduring solidarity shares many of the properties of the axiom of amity; e.g., Fortes mentions irresistible claims and concern for relatives, solidarity, cohesion and mutual support, while Schneider speaks of trust, co-operation, supportiveness and helpfulness. A child's remark concerning the definition of relatives, Schneider takes as an elegantly simple statement of what kinship is about:

One of our informants, a twelve-year-old girl, was asked, "What's your definition of a relative?" and replied, "Someone who you generally love, who's kind to you, and who in some way is related to you by blood like a daughter or something." There is really nothing more than can be added to her statement. It sums up the matter perfectly (1968:40).

This love is in the general sense "doing what is good for or right for the other person, without regard for its effect on the doer" (1968:51). According to Schneider, love is translated as diffuse, enduring solidarity because the relationship is supportive, helpful, and cooperative, but is not narrowly defined in terms of specific goals or behavior, nor is it limited in time.

Fortes' most concise statement of the meaning of kinship amity and generosity is contained in a paragraph which reads as follows:

What the rule posits is that "kinfolk" have irresistible claims on one another's support and consideration in contra-distinction to "non-kinsmen", simply by reason of the fact that they are kin. Kinsfolk must ideally share -- hence the frequent invocation of brotherhood as the model of generalized kinship; and they must, ideally, do so without putting a price on what they give. Reciprocal giving between kinsfolk is supposed to be done freely and not in submission to coercive sanctions or in response to contractual obligations (1969:238).

This essential amity and generosity among kin is supported by looking at the contrast between kin and non-kin and between consanguinity and affinity. Fortes holds that "in societies of the type we are dealing with [such as the Tallensi and Ashanti] the actor in his status as kinsman perceives his social universe as divided, in the first instance, into two opposed spheres of moral alignment" -- the familial domain and kin, and the "sphere of non-kinship" (1959:232). The Australian type system is one extreme of this in which assignment to a kinship status is necessary for "social relations in conformity with moral or jural

norms to take place at all (1969:232)". Kinship need not mark out a "bounded collectivity" such as a lineage or section to be seen as functioning in this capacity. Many societies with cognatic kinship systems do not divide into restricted ancestor-focused descent groups, but rather the range of people drawn into the kinship sphere may vary according to circumstances. Fortes maintains that systems of this type are characterized by the following:

In systems of this type, kinship establishes for the actor an internal field of moral relations that are also politico-jural relations, as against the outside world at large, on the principle of amity within and enmity without; and there are not rules or criteria by reference to which an outside observer can determine unequivocally where the boundaries of the field lie (emphasis added)(1969:232).

The social "fields" in such societies are probably infinite, but the boundary processes--the rules of descent used to validate or generate membership in a kin group--are considerably more limited. The nature of the interpersonal relationships within these units is described as being based on consensus and solidarity. Fortes implied that this kind of relationship is even more likely for optative cognatic systems since the out-group is defined in contradistinction to the internal solidarity of the ad hoc kin group.

Variations in the locus and range of the efficacy of kinship amity are common, Fortes asserts. Rules of cognatic extension determine who will be within the category governed by the principle of kinship amity, distinguish

kin from non-kin, and also in many cases categorize marriage-able partners, distinguishing consanguinal from affinal relatives. In many societies affinals are enemies before marriage; after marriage they must be incorporated into a system of jural and moral rules which extends amity to them, but still does not include the full range of amity. Fortes summarizes the position as follows:

Enemies who marry can do so only if, in the last resort, they accept some common norms or morality and jurity, together with the corresponding procedures and sanctions for implementing them. Failing this, the rights and obligations engendered by marriage and affinal relations could not be maintained. Enemies thus turned affines become legitimate opponents within a common politico-jural framework. Against the rest of the world, however, they may become allies to whom the norms of kinship amity then apply (1969:235).

Certain rules, especially those found in many African tribes regarding separate eating arrangements for husbands and wives, and for visiting affinal relatives, as well as rules concerning litigation among affinal relatives are examples of the limitation of affinal amity. That is not to say that Fortes holds that cool relations exist perpetually among affinal relatives, or that, conversely, he does not admit of adversity within the domain governed by kinship amity.

The kinds of control of the expression of animosity among kin is one of the primary distinctions between the kin and non-kin spheres. Fortes describes the distinctions as follows:

....I want to draw attention to some features that are distinctive of the contraposition of kinship and non-kinship amity. Two of the commonest discriminating

indices are the locus of prohibited or prescribed marriage, and the control of strife that might cause bloodshed. Kinship, amity, regulation of marriage and the restriction of serious fighting form a syndrome. Where kinship is demonstrable or assumed, regardless of its grounds, there amity must prevail and this posits prescription, more commonly proscription, or marriage and a ban on serious strife (1969:234).

Many anthropologists have outlined a graduated scale of weaponry and violence based on the closeness of kin tie. The example of the Tiv is instructive: Brothers of a minimal lineage use clubs and stones in a fight, more distantly connected segments may use bow and arrow, but avoid killing, very distantly related persons try to kill with poisoned arrows and guns, fighting with non-kin means with non-Tiv and here there are no restrictions or supernatural sanctions as occur for fighting with Tiv.

The axiom of amity then is a "moral principle", or a cultural understanding with considerable moral force which not only influences the behavior of kin, but in some societies serves to distinguish kin from non-kin, and consanguinal kin from affinal kin. The behavior influenced by this kinship morality is not specifiable in terms of definite behavior, tasks and goals, but generally may be spoken of as a kind of solidarity which carries with it "binding" and "inescapable" moral obligations and claims.

Much of the disharmony among kin Fortes sees as having to do with the economic and political relations built on kinships; e.g., the tension between an "estate 'holder' and a predesignated inheritor", or sibling rivalries of

various kinds, and the numerous other kinds of conflicts shown as the underlying causes of accusations of witchcraft and sorcery. The position which Fortes holds is that "kinsmen must have concern for one another and therefore refrain from wantonly injuring one another or heedlessly infringing one another's rights" (1969:238). No society anywhere invariably adheres to these "general and diffuse moral principles", those individuals who transgress these principles or act against the expectations contained in cultural understandings are often described as "criminals", "sinners", "selfish, foolish, dishonest, and others of weak character". In such instances of conflict or breach usually some form of redressive action restores kinship amity; this is the case for the rituals discussed by Turner for the Ndembu (Turner, 1957). Using an example similar to that cited for Robin Fox above, Fortes maintains that the crucial evidence of kinship amity is "when persons seek out remote clansfolk or classificatory cognates and without further ado claim and receive hospitality and protection" (1969:239).

In sum, Fortes suggests that a universal characteristic of the understandings which guide behavior within the kinship system is the axiom of amity--"a general principle of kinship morality that is rooted in prescriptive altruism" (1969:232). The axiom of amity is not inviolate, but cases in which actors transgress the understandings are special cases to be explained by the aberrant "character" of the



actor or the influence of the political or economic forces active in the society. Schneider does not claim his findings on the importance of "diffuse, enduring, solidarity" in American kinship to be applicable to other cultures, but implies that following his style of inquiry might actually reveal such symbols in unexpected places. A question relevant to this dissertation is whether the Kikuyu kinship morality includes the axiom of amity.

### Understanding Kinship Morality

The term "kinship morality" refers to understandings which guide behavior among kin, lie behind their behavior, but in no sense could be considered identical to the behavior itself. Marc Swartz, whose conceptualization of "understandings" I am following, holds that the components of culture are "these learned, shared and prescriptive understandings" (1975:ms). He elucidates the relationship between culture and behavior as follows:

"Culture" does not refer to behavior or to such products of behavior as tools, art, and other artifacts. Culture is made up of shared prescriptive understandings and these reside in people's minds. When we discuss the organization of the understandings shared by the members of a group, we will see that although the units of which culture is composed are totally inside the human organism, the organization of these units often emerges in interaction, in the relations between people, and is, therefore, superorganic....

The point is that shared understandings are a powerful guide to behavior, but they are not the only force working to influence how a person actually behaves. (1975:24-5)

Yet it is from behavior that these understandings are abstracted; from observed behavior and from statements by the actors about their cultural concepts, another kind of behavior. The observer, over a period of time and after several observations of particular types of behavior, may infer a pattern to the action observed. The pattern might meet standards of predictability and might explain a great deal of the behavior. Yet in a larger sense the information about behavior so gathered is incomplete. The observer does not know what the actors believe themselves to be doing, or on what premises they base their behavior. Such information is often gathered by asking actors to tell about the principles or understandings which guide their behavior, the cultural constructs which give their model for society.

Having actors relate their conscious models of society is just one of the ways in which anthropologists learn about the cultural level. After theoretically separating the aggregate or conglomerate level on which behavior occurs from the cultural level, David Schneider poses the question: "how are cultural units located, described, and defined?" (1968:8). He answers that this is done, for the anthropologist, primarily through the use of informants. The anthropologist starts out as a child in the culture, and is taught by the informant. Schneider's comments on the relationship between anthropologist and the informant make an insightful statement about what field work should be. I

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The relationship with the informant, therefore, is one of the crucial elements in learning the culture. The message has to be conveyed to the informant that the anthropologist wants to know what the informant thinks about the subject, how he sees it, how he understands it, what it means to him, what it is like.... The fundamental position of the anthropologist is that he knows nothing whatever but that he is capable of learning and anxious to learn.

This is the fundamental condition of work with an informant which seeks to locate, define, and describe cultural units or categories, or constructs. The more rigid the frame which the field worker presents to the native, the more likely it is that the informant will behave like a human being and fill just that frame for him. The more positive the field worker is that he knows exactly what he wants and just what to look for, the more likely it is that the informant will behave like a decent human being and help him find just exactly that and nothing else. The more clearly the field worker has in mind what he is after, the less likely it is that he will discover what the native's cultural categories are; how the natives define them, construct them, and manipulate them; or what they mean to the natives.

By the very same token, the fundamental rule of field work is that the informant is seldom if ever wrong, never provides irrelevant data, and is incapable of pure fabrication. Short of simple errors of hearing, etc., the integrity of the informant and the integrity of the data are inviolate, and I cannot think of any exception to this rule. (Schneider's emphasis)(1968: 10-11)

No particular field methodology is best suited to this approach. What is necessary, Schneider asserts, is that 1) a mass of data be collected over time, 2) trial hypotheses be formulated which refer back to the data, and 3) these hypotheses be tested against new data which is "elicited in such a way as to allow for disproof of the hypothetical construct." (1968:11)

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The information which I obtained on kinship morality among the Kikuyu was gathered in a very similar manner, though I did not address myself specifically to this area while I was in the field, i.e., I did not elicit new data in an effort to test hypothetical constructs. Rather my understanding of Kikuyu culture is based on my trying to make sense of what was going on around me, in some of which activities I was intricately involved. I accomplished this primarily through lengthy discussions with two or three particularly reflective and insightful informants. I talked with actors in the cases presented below, sometimes about what occurred in the particular cases, and sometimes about more general understandings involving in behavior toward kin. The cases illustrate what people do and what they believe they ought to do.

I sometimes asked questions about the proper behavior in certain situations and toward certain kin. Responses to such queries were important in my learning about the specific content of Kikuyu kinship morality; in addition they made clear some of the areas in which people felt able to comment on their ideas of proper behavior. Yet this aspect of my field method does not fully demonstrate how I know what understandings the Kikuyu share. Statements by actors about their culture are a kind of behavior, and are one way of apprehending what the cultural constructs or shared understandings are. My knowledge of Kikuyu culture and society also derives from my interaction with the Kikuyu

in several types of situations, and from whatever ability I have to empathize and identify with them. Such knowledge ultimately rests, as Schneider states in the passage quoted above, on the relationship between the anthropologist and the informant.

I was privileged to work closely and well with two Kikuyu who began as my language teachers, but who did not despair at my inadequate attempts to grasp the language, and shared with me, in English, many of their thoughts and reflections. The understanding of Kikuyu culture which I received from them is deeper than any single or complex set of statements they have made, or that I might now make. It involves, not only their verbal behavior, but their non-verbal behavior as well -- their attitudes, postures, inflection, tones, and many little things too numerous to mention. I got to know the two of them quite well, though I have very far from complete knowledge of them and certainly only an infinitesimal understanding of the rich Kikuyu culture was gleaned through my relationship with them and the other Kikuyu with whom I had contact. In Chapter 2, I will discuss in greater detail these informants, whom I like to call friends, and the other Kikuyu upon whom my observations and conclusions are based. The information on Kikuyu culture and society presented here was gained from women and men of widely different ages, occupations, and orientations toward modern and traditional life; some

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of it was gathered through the use of interpreters. Only to the extent that the observations and conclusions presented here are concordant with the views of others who have worked among the Kikuyu, such as Leakey and Kenyatta whose data I will present later, do I claim any generalizability for my work. What I am attempting here is to write about Kikuyu culture and behavior as I understand it, and in a way which I hope will be an adequate interpretation of the way the Kikuyu whom I know understand it.

Kikuyu kinspeople, like other humans, do not always do what they and their other kinspeople believe they ought to do or expect them to do. Beyond describing the aspects of kinship morality for the Kikuyu, I would like to investigate areas in which kinspeople do and do not act according to that morality. Schneider, though not particularly interested in this problem-area, adequately sums up topics of concern here in the following passage:

One essential problem, then, is to chart the relationship between the actual states of affairs and the cultural constructs so that we can discover how the cultural constructs are generated, the laws governing their change, and in just what ways they are systematically related to the actual states of affairs of life. (1968:7)

My interest is in revealing the dynamic processes in which these cultural constructs or understandings inform actual behavior, and the interrelationship between the two. The case study approach, described above, pages 8-13, is particularly suited to this interest, for it allows for focus to be placed on the various resources, understandings,

and personnel which are brought into play in particular situations. Just as structures do not receive primacy in the processual approach, so too cultural constructs or understandings are not considered paramount; but rather are seen as being variously used in interaction, and receiving different evaluations or ranking through their use (cf Scheffler, 1965). In discussing the cases I shall try to see whether or not a person is using an understanding having to do with kinship morality as would be expected, and when that is not the case, I shall try to explain, not why the person is not acting according to the expectations, but rather what the person is doing -- how he or she is de-valuing or re-valuing the understandings usually assumed for the interaction among kin.

### The Axiom of Amity and the Kikuyu

Understandings about the proper behavior toward kin form a part of Kikuyu culture. These understandings become intelligible to the observer through behavior in which people use these understandings in various ways and in which they talk about them. Now I would like to turn to the question of the content of the understandings which comprise Kikuyu kinship morality.<sup>11</sup> Fortes suggests that

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<sup>11</sup> The question of the ontological status of the Axiom of Amity for the Kikuyu whom I knew is taken up on page 79 below.

the axiom of amity -- which posits that interaction among kin is governed by principles which emphasize love or diffuse, enduring solidarity; trust, mutual support, generosity and cohesion -- is an universal characteristic of kinship morality.

Few ethnographers have presented any detailed accounts of Kikuyu kinship morality.<sup>12</sup> Two of those who have addressed themselves to this question wrote about the Kikuyu of the end of the nineteenth century to around the 1920's. These two "old men" of Kenya are Jomo Kenyatta, a Kikuyu whose career has included the study of anthropology, political organizing and the founding of independent schools and churches, being a political prisoner during the colonial regime, and for the last twelve years serving as the president of independent Kenya; and the late Louis Leakey, the famous archeologist, whose autobiography is entitled White African. Leakey and Kenyatta were of the same generation, but of very different backgrounds, and sometimes opposite opinions and attitudes.

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<sup>12</sup> The primary Kikuyu ethnographers are listed on page 92 below. Kenyatta (1938), Lambert (1966) and Routledge (1910) are among the most detailed published sources on Kikuyu kinship behavior. A short article by Feraro (1970) supplements the data on the Kikuyu, and both Gary Feraro and Greet Kershaw have unpublished work on the Kikuyu. Novels and autobiographies by Kikuyu authors have increased in recent years; of particular note for their information on kinship are Gatheru's Child of Two Worlds and the several novels by James Nughi, including Grain of Wheat, The River Between, and Weep Not Child.

Leakey was born to missionary parents in Kenya, and was reared in Kikuyuland; his first language was Kikuyu -- he proudly claims to dream in Kikuyu.

Leakey took it upon himself to explain the Kikuyu to the white world, and wrote several books and articles about the "syncretistic" Mau Mau movement in an effort to expose its roots and help the British defeat it. His major work on the Kikuyu, an ethnography based on his early association with them, has not been published. Leakey reluctantly let me see the chapter on social organization, but expressed concern that I not publish a book before his comes out.<sup>13</sup> Leakey has since died, and I am not sure if there are plans for the publication of the Kikuyu ethnography.

The chapter which I read consisted of 40 tables of kinship terms, showing all real and classificatory kin who should be called by the term, the reciprocals of the terms, differences in usage for males and females; and a final section giving a generalized discussion of the kinds of behavior associated with each term. The chapter is extremely tedious and only rarely does he venture any analysis or exploration of aspects of social organization other than kinship.

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<sup>13</sup> Quotations from Leakey's manuscript are taken from the extensive notes which I made while reading the chapter. The original was not reproduced, and regrettably, some mistakes may have occurred in transferring the information. All statements given here as direct quotations were faithfully transferred word for word from the original manuscript.

Leakey explained to me that several social anthropologists, including Lucy Mair, had offered to edit his manuscript, but he refused their offers. The work could use the hand of a good social anthropologist, especially to aid in the analysis of the data. Leakey tends to explain through speculative history or by use of formulas containing "primary elements". On the relationship between mother's brother and sister's son, he makes the following statement:

If a man's sister had been born male instead of female, her sons would have had a legal right to claim help from their uncle who under those circumstances would be paternal (uncle). The accident that made her be born a female instead of male does not wipe away his obligations to help her sons and daughters. Moreover, supposing that the man's sister did not marry by normal patrilineal rules, but instead had married as a proportion of girls do -- matrilineally and matrilocally, her brother would have had full responsibility to find first wives for her sons, since they would then be legally his children and not the children of their physical father. Therefore a man must help his male muhwa (sister's son) to marry by giving a contribution to the uracio (bridewealth).

The formula by which Leakey further explains this is that a man is the same as his sister and therefore his sister's children are the same as his children. He must help them, "he is their male mother and a mother must help her children as far as she can."

Leakey's explanation of the term tata (father's or mother's sister) is an exercise in speculative history:

It seems fairly clear that the term tata was originally applied only to a man's matrilineal aunts, and that its extension to a father's sister and half sisters came with the change over to a patrilineal system, and its more likely that in this fact lies the explanation why there is not avoidance rule between a man and his tata. Under a matrilineal or

matrilocal system a man's maternal aunts should be living in the same homestead as himself and their relationship would be one of close intimacy in daily life, and in fact, they would be like mothers to him. Similarly, in a matrilineal society a girl would seldom see or meet her paternal uncles so that the avoidance rule became unnecessary in preventing the likelihood of incest taking place when they did meet as complete strangers. With the change over to patrilineal and patrilocal marriages as the general rule, the old customs were maintained although in fact the new life needed a new set of rules to make it consistent.

The evidence upon which Leakey bases this belief in the evolution from matrilineality to patrilineality for the Kikuyu is primarily the kinship terminology itself (Omaha-type) and Kikuyu myths of matriarchy. The study of myth has become a very complex field within the discipline of anthropology, but within all this complexity it would be hard to find an anthropologist who would hold that myth should be taken at face value as a statement of actual events in the past. And even Murdock, who is prone to evolutionary analyses, does not posit a matrilineal past for the Kikuyu. According to Murdock, among the highland Bantu, who include the Kikuyu, Meru, Chaga, Pare, Shambala and Teita peoples, "except for minor traces of a possible matrilineate among the Chaga and Shambala, descent, inheritance, and succession follow the patrilineal principle (1959:345)".

Obviously the value of Leakey's work lies not in his analysis, but in his presentation of specific data, which fortunately he has separated from his analysis. His discussion of "Family Life and Behavior" aims at identifying

the rules by which kin conduct themselves. Where he does not find such rules, such as between great-great-grandparents (cukuru) and their great-great-grandchildren (cukuru), he states that there is no special rule governing this relationship, or for the relationship between people who call each other mwana wa muru wa aiya (child of the son of my female relative, especially MZSS and MZSD), he states that the relationship is friendly; though these people are well removed from one another; and their behavior is based on that friendship -- not governed by rule or custom.

It is clear that Leakey was trying to record the proper behavior of Kikuyu kinspeople. Kenyatta, too, tried to do the same in a much briefer and immensely more readable discussion of Kikuyu kinship terminology and behavior in his book, Facing Mt. Kenya (1938). Where Leakey's work is infused with a paternalistic attitude toward the Kikuyu, this Kenyatta's major work on the Kikuyu is a cultural nationalistic treatise in which Kenyatta defends the integrity of his people's customs to the white world. Using the analytical framework introduced to him by Malinowski, Kenyatta showed the intricate interrelationship of several Kikuyu institutions, with special emphasis on the central position of land within the Kikuyu social system, as portions of Kikuyu territory were appropriated by the colonial government for settlement by whites; and on the importance of

clitterodectomy, which was under attack by European missionaries.

Interestingly, Leakey and Kenyatta agree on the basic ideas which inform the behavior, attitudes and dispositions which characterize Kikuyu kinship interaction. The vocabulary with which they discuss ideal behavior among kin includes an emphasis on the terms "respect, obedience, modesty, love, and mutual support". These terms are generally defined in regard to behavior among kin, rather than on a more general or abstract level, such that respect emerges as an important concept because of its pervasiveness in the interaction pattern among various kin. Not all categories of kin for whom Leakey and Kenyatta have data will be presented here; the information discussed here will concentrate on the following relationships: parents and children, grandparents and grandchildren, parent's siblings and sibling's children, siblings, husband and wife, and in-laws, particularly father-in-law and son-in-law. Because this dissertation is concerned with the understandings which compose Kikuyu kinship morality, the focus for the following discussion will be on the ideas which Kenyatta and Leakey believe characterize the interaction among kin, notably respect, obedience, modesty, love and mutual support.



## Modesty

Modesty is probably the most curious trait in its combination of nuclear family and affinal relatives -- father and daughter, and father-in-law and son-in-law -- within the same behavioral types. Leakey also states that the behavior between husband and wife in public, including in their own courtyard, should be seen as being modest. Both Kenyatta and Leakey characterize the relationship between relatives by marriage as "bashful and polite," almost a literal translation of the term muthoni (pl. athoni), which is used to refer to in-laws and to address several categories of them.<sup>14</sup> According to Leakey there is an exception to the reserve connected with relationship between in-laws in the relationship of a man to his wife's mother, who may be called either muthoni or maitu (mother). A man might behave "fairly free" with his wife's mother, but should take care not to insult her or her co-wives, for fear of the mother's curse.

Neither Leakey nor Kenyatta write specifically of love between a father and his sons and daughters; in this context Kenyatta explains the greater "attachment of the child

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<sup>14</sup> According to Leakey's manuscript a male ego calls the following persons muthoni: wife's father, wife's father's full and half brothers, father's full and half sisters' husbands, mother's full and half brothers' wives, wife's father's wives, wife's father's full and half brothers' wives, and mother's sister's husbands. Males generally call males and females of his wife's father's generations and family and the males and females of his parents' generation who are related to him by marriage by this term. The list of relatives whom females call muthoni is given on page 43 below.

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to its mother" because she takes care of the child, is his or her nursemaid. The Kikuyu father is the "lord and master of his home", Leakey states; and Kenyatta agrees in the following statement:

The father is the supreme ruler of the homestead. He is the owner of practically everything, or in other words, he is the custodian of the family property. He is respected and obeyed by all the members of his family group. His position in the community depends largely on the type of homestead he keeps, and how he manages it, because the capability of good management of one's homestead is taken as a testimonial that one is able to manage public affairs (1938:9).

Father Cagnolo, a missionary whose work is imbued with a sense of superiority of the European style of life published a book on the Kikuyu in 1933, which takes a somewhat different view:

In Kikuyu the husband is not the absolute tyrant, the terror of the other members of the family, the master of life and death, such as we read in certain tribes of the Far East, but he is the moderator, to the native mind, of every detail of the family routines, into which he admits no outside interference.

The uncouth atmosphere, the complete want of civilized kindness and of good manners, may lead one to think of the head of the family as an ill-natured despot aloof from all natural affection; but in most cases the father's attitude is mere outward show, necessary to uphold his prestige and the power to command and to intimidate his dependents, who are readier to obey through fear than from kindness. For evidence of this statement, it would suffice to enter a native hut, late in the evening, where you will find a small family cowering around the traditional fire. In the middle of the hut a pot of beans and peas mixed with maize will be bubbling; round about the father with a child between his knees and another sitting by, a small girl poking the fire, and the mother holding the last born in her arms. Conversation is going on merrily, sometimes in a confidential manner. When the time comes to pour out the food, the father himself sees that everyone receives sufficient, for

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as they say, one must go to bed well fed if one is to sleep well, even though the morrow must be spent fasting and longing for the coming of evening.

If one member of the family suffers an injustice, the father will at once see that right is done. It is the father who supplies the family with clothes, who provides for cultivating the land, and builds the hut and necessary granaries -- though assisted by neighbours and friends, according to the custom of the tribe.

Leakey's statement of the proper behavior between father and daughter gives some support to Cagnolo's position. The relationship between the daughter and her father is close until the time when she is "old enough to be conscious of the impropriety of relieving nature in public," according to Leakey. Before that time the father may hold her on his knee, but after that time she is taught not to play with her father or her classificatory fathers.<sup>15</sup> A pattern of avoidance develops which prohibits her from eating a meal in her father's presence or accepting meat from him. Her father should not touch her, and asks her mother or brother to punish her. When his daughter is initiated a father must pay a fine of one ram for every time he verbally abused her or physically punished her from the time of her birth.

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<sup>15</sup> Table 1 of the Leakey manuscript gives the following as the persons called baba: father, father's full and half brothers, father's father's full and half brothers' sons, and other male patricousins of father's generation. A woman calls her daughter's husband by this term, and generally a woman uses this term to address those whom her husband addresses as baba. Baba mukuru means senior father and baba munyini means junior father.

The same rules apply for classificatory fathers with these additions: 1) If a girl and a classificatory father meet on a path, both must leave the path; she to the left and he to her right or his left. 2) The father must not look the daughter in the eyes. 3) If an initiated woman accidentally touches a father she must pay a fine of a pot of gruel. If a father accidentally touches a daughter he must immediately remove one of his ornaments and give it to her. 4) If a daughter uses obscene words in the presence of a father, she must pay a fine of a pot of gruel, and he send her a goat skin "because he has heard her rumama (abusive words)".

The one case in which it is permissible for a classificatory father to talk to a daughter is when she has refused to marry a particular man and her father asks his brother to convince her to do so. The classificatory father then becomes responsible for the marriage, and for the return of the bridewealth if the marriage fails. According to Leakey, when a girl marries the avoidance rules no longer hold; he adds that a daughter may then be called maitu (mother) by her classificatory fathers, but does not give any additional information on the new relationship. It can only be noted that fathers seem to treat their daughters who marry out and leave the family group as affines, but little data are given to allow for full analysis of this.

Above the bashfulness and politeness which Kenyatta states characterizes the relationship between a man and his

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relatives by marriage (athoni), Leakey states that friendship with great respect should exist among such relatives, but he adds that a man must be careful not to insult his athoni, not to touch or sit next to them at a beer drink. If their feet touch a man may ask his muthoni to pay a fine.

The relationship between a man and his wife's relatives and his daughter's husband's relatives differ. Senior members of the wife's family may always ask the son-in-law for further goats or sheep as a bridewealth installment. A son-in-law may ask a father-in-law to help pay a fine, but not to give ruracio (bridewealth) for another wife, though he does need his father-in-law's permission before he may take another wife. A son-in-law may also ask his father-in-law for land to cultivate. A man must never "expose his nakedness" in front of his father-in-law, on penalty of a fine of a fat ram. This is retroactive -- if a man has bathed with a man into whose family he later marries, then he must pay a fine of the past offense.

When a man meets a female in-law on a path he goes off the path to let her pass freely, but does not avert his eyes. He should greet her with a handshake. He has "fairly free" behavior toward the mother of his wife and her co-wives, but if he abuses this relationship he is liable for the mother's curse from them.

Kenyatta only mentions the husband's brother is discussing a woman's relatives my marriage. He is called by a



nickname which is a term of endearment. The others whom a woman calls by the name muthoni are, according to Leakey, her husband's half sisters and his full and half sisters' husbands, her husband's brothers' wives, her father's and mother's full and half sisters' husbands, her husband's father's brothers' wives and her own father's brothers' wives. Leakey does not specify rules of behavior for a woman toward these athoni, but he clearly emphasizes the idea that a woman has two families of the same type with the nature of interaction partially depending which family she is living with, her father's family or her husband's family. A man on the other hand has at least two different types of relatives -- those of his mbari and other agnatically related relatives and his affines, his wife's family, and often a third, his daughter's husband's families.

Kenyatta's early discussion of the husband-wife relationship centered primarily on the co-ordination of activities in the polygamous household, in which "the relations between wives are those of partnership based on collective possession of the husband, and not on the ownership of the property with the precinct of a wife's hut or granary" (1954:10). Leakey more closely addresses the interpersonal relationship between husband and wife and finds that there is "real love and comradeship" between husband and wife, especially the first wife, who is "taken for love." The husband discusses events and happenings in the community with his wife, and consults her about "doings" in the home.

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Sexual jealousy is frowned upon by the Kikuyu, according to both Kenyatta and Leakey. A man may have sex with his age-mates' wives and his wife with his age-mates; they should tell one another when this occurred.<sup>16</sup> A man should consult his wife before taking another wife, and wives usually support their husband's taking another wife. A polygamous husband should not publicly display favoritism toward one wife.

The modesty associated with this relationship has to do with the rule that it is taboo for a man and his wife to see each other naked in the courtyard; when this happens a ram should be slaughtered on the following day for purification of the homestead. Another rule governing modesty, Leakey states, is that a woman must never wait naked in bed for her husband.

Ideas concerning modesty in behavior seem to be generally confined to the relationships mentioned above, except to some extent modesty is expected in the behavior between initiated brothers and sisters, whose behavior toward each other should be "seemly and modest." A sister should take care not to see her brother's sexual gestures or to be around him when she or he is engaging in ngweko (fondling), a form of sexual activity, short of intercourse,

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<sup>16</sup> Kenyatta (1938:181) states that "it is an offense for a wife to invite a man secretly to her hut, even a member of this age group. To do so would be regarded as committing adultery."

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carried out between warriors and initiated girls, usually in a young man's house.

### Love

Leakey discusses love in the relationship between grandparents and their grandchildren, mother's sister and father's sister (both called tata) and their sibling's children<sup>17</sup>; he characterizes the relationship between mother's brother (mama) and his sister's children as "fatherly love" and describes the relationship between mother and son as the "closest which is ever formed in Kikuyu life; a bond which lasts for life." In contrast, the relationship between mother and daughter remains close only until the daughter marries. The bond between brothers and patrilineal cousins is described by Leakey as a representation of the solidarity of family life and as such is "the most valuable thing in the whole social organization" -- "the foundation of all Kikuyu life and social organization."

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<sup>17</sup> According to the Leakey manuscript a tata (MZ or FZ) calls her sibling's child mwana wakwa (my child). The data on the term used by mama (MB) to refer to his sisters' children is somewhat contradictory. My notes on Leakey's manuscript include his Table 22, in which he stated that for males only muihwa is the reciprocal for mama, but adds that it is used for full and half sisters' sons and daughters, full and half brothers' daughters' sons and daughters. Kenyatta (1938:13 and 324) gives the definition as "cousin".

The exact attributes of "love" described here is not made explicit. Clearly a kind of "diffuse, enduring solidarity" is indicated in the relationship between mother and son and in that between brothers. The idea of familiarity and freedom of interaction receives emphasis in the relationship between grandparents and grandchildren. This relationship too is characterized as one in which kin are expected to have warm and close relations. The relationship between tata (MZ, FZ) or mama (MB) and their siblings' children has many of the qualities implied in the relationship between grandparents and grandchildren. Conflict over family power or property seldom enter into these relationships. Grandparents are above the political machinations of their grandchildren, who seldom occupy positions of authority during their grandparents' lifetimes, and tata and mama are outside the family politics of their siblings' children.

It was seen in the discussion of modesty above, that the use of language is a crucial factor in setting the tone for the kind of relationship; e.g., children are forbidden to use abusive language in the presence of their parents or classificatory mothers and fathers. The relationship between MB and ZS and between grandparents and grandchildren does not totally prohibit the use of abusive language. The muilhwa (ZS) cannot use abusive language toward his mama without fear of a fine of a fat ram, but his MB (mama) may use abusive language toward him. Grandchildren may use

abusive language in the presence of their grandparents, but not directed toward them. According to Leakey's use of the criterion of "abusive words", this seems to represent an intimate and free relationship. He describes the relationship between grandmother and grandchild as having "no shyness or restraint", but with "freedom and great friendship". The idea of friendship rather than obligations pervades Leakey's discussion of the relationship to one's tata and mama. These relationships, he states, are not based on a sense of obligations, but on friendship between the parties, though there are some supernatural sanctions which enforce the relationship. The relationship between a man and his mama is appropriately very close and this Leakey states "is an exception to the rule that the closest ties are in the clan." Of the relationship between a woman and her tata, he states the relationship is not based upon obligation, but love -- "as they are not members of the clan they can have no obligation to any claim but their own."

The relationship between a man and his muihwa, both male and female, is similar -- a man who denies a request of his muihwa is believed to be punished supernaturally, and the muihwa should not refuse to help his or her mama without forfeiting the right to expect things from him, and in doing so committing a grave breach. When the first and last born children of his sister are initiated the mama

is given a ram or he-goat by their father in order to obtain permission for the initiation. After initiation the mama should give a goat to the neophyte. He must give permission for the first born to get his or her ears pierced; this is generally granted with the understanding that the mama will receive a ram when the child is initiated.

Food figures prominently in the cultural understandings concerning the interrelationships between tata and mama and their siblings' children. The muihwa is given the choicest food at the home of his mama, and may slaughter a fat ram with permission, which he cannot do at his father's home. A person should not be refused food by his or her tata. Leakey states that a male muihwa may take food from her granary without permission. Kenyatta (1938: 15) makes the following statement in discussing the relationship of FZ to her BS or BD and of their children:

If there is mutual agreement between the two families and frequent visits are exchanged from both sides, the children become well acquainted with their aunt and respect her as one of the close relatives and one who entertains them. But unlike her brothers, who are looked on as fathers and have supreme authority over the children, she has very little influence in affairs concerning the children or the homestead of her brothers, except in social functions.

Her children and those of her brothers address one another as muihwa, there is a strong bond of kinship between them, and whenever they pay a visit to one another, the host provides a special meal for the guest. Even when they are just passing by, it is considered as a bad omen not to visit the homestead of your cousin or to leave it without eating something, no matter how little it may be. This is illustrated by a Kikuyu saying that "muihwa ndaimagwo runyeni", which means, a cousin cannot be denied a meal.



Leakey concludes that men and women help their mama and tata with building and harvesting, etc., in return for the right food.

There is no avoidance between a man and his tata and a woman and her mama, though Leakey states that a man may not dance with or engage in "horseplay" with a young tata. No mention is made of such rules for a woman and her mama.

The relationship between a man and his tata was contrasted by Leakey to that between a man and his classificatory mothers, especially father's wives and father's brothers' wives. Although the behavior toward a tata is seemly it is closer and more informal than that between a man and his classificatory mother. A man is under obligation to help his classificatory mothers in clearing land for cultivation. His worst offence would be using abusive language toward her. If this occurs he must beg her forgiveness and give a ram or a goat as a fine for his bad manners. Such a man would be avoided by his age group members; Leakey explains by reference to a Kikuyu proverb, Mundu urumaga nyina ndaguaya wega (A man who abuses his mother does not fall well). The meaning of this Leakey holds is that a man who abuses his mother is beset by misfortunes and his age mates are reluctant to let him go with them on adventures because he will bring bad luck. Beyond the misfortunes believed to naturally occur when a person abuses his mother, a mother may curse a son, causing misfortune and infertility for him and his land. Only the father's curse which threatens

disinheritance and disownership is more feared than the mother's curse.

A man's behavior should be more circumspect in the presence of his classificatory mothers than in the case of his real mother. The intimate connection between a boy and his mother is severed at the second birth ceremony<sup>18</sup>, but he is still dependent on his mother for food. Even after marriage a mother sends some food to her son every evening, if his house is near hers. Both Kenyatta and Leakey emphasize the strength and enduring nature of the tie between mother and son.

Women, too, have close attachments to their mothers, but in discussing this relationship Leakey states that the relationship remains close until the girl marries, but that her first public act after marriage is to visit her mother, again emphasizing the tie. She should obey her mother "implicitly". A young girl sleeps in her mother's house and should inform her mother of her comings and goings when she moves out of her mother's house after initiation. The daughter, unlike the son, is an essential participant in all ceremonies associated with her mother's house until she marries.

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<sup>18</sup> The second birth ceremony was a necessary step before initiation, usually performed when the child was under twelve years of age. Routledge (1910:152) gives details of this ceremony.

A girl is not so strictly bound to obedience to her classificatory mothers as a son is, but is taught to help them because their help is needed in her marriage ceremony, Leakey holds.

Great affection marks the relationship between guka (FF, MF) and cucu (FM, MM) and their grandchildren, the first born of whom are named after their grandparents, in the following order: the first son is named after the FF, the first daughter after the MF, the second son after the MF, and the second daughter after the MM. According to Kenyatta, a grandmother calls her grandson "my husband" and her granddaughter "my co-wife", while the grandfather calls his grandson "my equal", and his granddaughter "my bride". A close relationship is described for both the parents of the mother and father with children often visiting them and preferring to live with them for, as Kenyatta explains "they feel more free in playing and joking with their grandparents than they would with their own parents" (1954:16).

Leakey grants that a warm and free relationship exists between grandchildren and both sets of grandparents, but concentrates his discussion on the father's parents. The grandfather's position as head of the homestead gives protection to the grandchild such that the grandchild can enjoy privileges which even his father dare not infringe. The grandchild belongs to the same generation set as his or her grandparent and is treated as an equal on ritual

occasions. The relationship between the grandparents and grandchildren is free and equal, and could be characterized by leniency and tendency on the grandmother's part to spoil her grandchildren, Leakey holds. Both grandparents tend to give special presents to their grandchildren and the grandchildren do special work and errands for their grandparents.

The bond between uterine brothers and sisters, according to Leakey, is close, but is pervaded by rules of modesty which limit contact between initiated brother and sister: It is taboo for brother and sister to dance together or even next to one another such that the sister might touch her brother or see his sexual gestures. An initiated but unmarried girl must not sleep in a friend's house where her brother is sleeping, whether he is alone or with a girl. A girl may join a party in her brother's house, but never participate in ngweko (sexual fondling short of intercourse) in his presence. Generally a girl is taught to be respectful and obedient to her brothers and to regard them as her guardians. Ideally each sister has a particular uterine brother who acts as her guardian; it is this brother to whom her tie is closest.

The relationship between brothers and sisters of the same father, but different mothers only approaches the closeness between such brothers when the girl has no uterine brothers. In such cases a half-brother serves as her guardian and often establishes a close bond. The

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relationship between such brothers, mur wa baba (son of my father), is characterized by mutual respect and solidarity. Leakey suggests that it is rare to find dissension in this unit. Kenyatta describes the development of their relationship as follows:

This is how sub-clans are started. In the first place the sons of the same father and different mothers continue to perform collectively their religious and sacrificial ceremonies. They do this generally during their lifetime. But after they are dead the relation between their sons begins to drift apart slowly until the divergence reaches a point where collective action or participation in religious or other private functions or a family is not longer considered necessary. At this juncture the only bond left between such a group of people is that of a common distant ancestor with whom all commune according to the needs of their particular family group (1954:13).

According to Leakey, the closeness of the bond between mur wa baba increases as the young men enter the warrior age grade. When a young man marries he asks his mur wa baba for help with the bridewealth. This group also takes major responsibility for blood compensation. The clearest statement of the nature of this relationship is Leakey's comment -- "they are 'the family'". They represent the family for their generation.

The relationship between daughters of the same father is said to be close, before marriage; but after marriage, Leakey states, their "obligations lie with those families." Before marriage they expect and should give help to one another. They call upon each other to carry out their brother's orders. This set of women also tries to work in groups, working on successive days in each other's gardens.

An older sister should contribute a necklace or ornament when her junior sister is initiated. All initiated unmarried sisters have a right to share the sacrificial animal given the bride at her wedding.

### Respect and Obedience

Generally it was believed, Leakey suggests, that sisters should obey brothers and that juniors should respect and obey seniors. Relative age seems to supersede relative status, for Leakey mentions that a man is not expected to respect and obey a father's brother who is younger than he. Elders, in general, are respected and obeyed, not only in terms of their kin position, where they are related to ego, but also because of the wisdom which age accumulates, and their position in the age grade system.

Respect and obedience pervade the pattern of Kikuyu kinship interaction. Only in a few of the primary relations discussed by Leakey and Kenyatta does respect show up that it is not followed by obedience. Those relationships include the grandparent-grandchild relationship in which neither characteristic is discussed, and the relationship of tata and mama to their siblings' children where Leakey states that the juniors are expected to obey their seniors only after they have followed the orders of their mothers and fathers and then the behavior has an air of reciprocity in that the muihwa follow the orders of their tata and mama because they expect certain privileges in return; if the

privileges are not forthcoming they do not have to obey.

Leakey and Kenyatta concentrate on respect and obedience in discussing the son's relationship to his father. The same kind of behavior is pressed on son toward his father's brother; according to Leakey a son is told to obey his FB without question and to be careful never to anger him. A father might ask his brother to speak to a son with whom he is having trouble -- "only a wayward son would disobey a father's brother." (Leakey, ms). Leakey charges that a son's dependence on his FB for bridewealth, and fear of the father's curse, disinheritance, and of being disowned help compel his respect and obedience. Sons learn about life from their mothers and fathers, but after the second birth sons spend most of their time in the presence of their fathers and father's brothers. A man is not expected to respect and obey a father's brother or classificatory father who is younger than himself, though he (BS) should help his FB with his bridewealth.

A fuller discussion of the idea of "respect" which is so often mentioned in the material on kinship interaction among the Kikuyu would be useful. I shall make some brief comments on it before presenting information on the final characteristic of kinship morality, mutual support. Neither Leakey nor Kenyatta define the term respect. Though their usage does not seem to differ from the everyday sense of the word, which definitions in Webster's Third International Dictionary includes for the noun "high or special regard in



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esteem", and for the verb form "to consider worthy of esteem: regard or treat with respect (loved and [respected] his parents) : esteem, value" (1966:1934). For the Kikuyu the demonstration of respect seems closely tied to ideas concerning proper use of language, personal space and touching, and nudity. Control of these modalities is a major way of showing respect: language should be non-abusive and gentle, physical distance should be maintained, and nudity avoided in front of those to whom one shows respect. The notion of respect is similar to the way the idea of modesty is used except for the fact that modesty may be aptly thought of as reciprocal and respect tends to be complementary. If the daughter's behavior is modest toward her father, so is his toward her; and therefore relative status ranking are not of importance where modesty prevails. Generally a woman must obey and respect her father's brother; he has greater power and authority relative to her, but in areas where modesty is breached, each must pay fines. The idea of respect differs in that the behavior is more aptly seen as complementary, where the junior shows deference and the elder responds graciously, but with a sense of his proprietary rights to such prestations.

Respect conveys recognition and legitimacy to the person and/or the position which he or she occupies.<sup>19</sup> Leakey's data indicate that what a Kikuyu kinsperson recognizes as legitimate in another kinsperson to whom he or she gives respect is 1) a set of religious, economic, or social obligations which make the person respected responsible for the other. This is shown in Leakey's discussion of the relationship between father's brother and brother's son in which he states that a man is taught to obey and respect his baba (F, FB) and to take care not to anger them because to a certain extent he will be dependent on them for all his life. It is also seen in the relationship between mothers (including classificatory mothers) and sons in which a son is taught to respect, honor and obey

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<sup>19</sup> Marc Swartz et al. (1966:10-11) makes the following comments on the concept of legitimacy:

The derivation of legitimacy from values comes through the establishment of a positive connection between the entity or process having legitimacy and those values... These expectations are to the effect that the legitimate entity or process will, under certain circumstances, meet certain obligations that are held by those who view it as legitimate.... Legitimacy is a type of evaluation that imputes future behavior of one expected and desired type (Parsons, 1963:238).

In a discussion of the concept of legitimacy in Black Psychology (Clark, 1971), Cedric Clark identified the two main steps in the process of communication of legitimacy as the communication of recognition through which the existence of another is taken into account; and the communication of respect, whereby one shares with another the definition of the other's behavior, the assessment of his or her behavior, and an accountability for that behavior.

his maitu whose displeasure could bring misfortune upon himself, his wife and children, and the fertility of his land. 2) The person recognizes as legitimate and respects also an inherent relationship upon which certain reciprocal ties may be built. This is especially clear in Leakey's discussion of the relationship between tata and mama and their siblings' children in which Leakey stresses that the privileges granted to the sibling's child is dependent upon his or her performance of certain duties. The implication is clear that this relationship must be activated by the parties involved, while the relationship to those who are more strictly mbari members receives legitimacy within a more formal realm of social behavior.

Between muru wa baba (sons of my father - B, BS) Leakey describes mutual respect as an important aspect in the pattern of interaction. There is little evidence of what he means by this except that by virtue of the fact that they represent "the family" in their generation, they are interdependent and must rely on one another for contributions to bridewealth, sacrifices to the ancestor, and other activities through which they define themselves as a group. The muramati (administrator) in the group is given deference in many instances, though Middleton and Kershaw (1954:26) state that in many instances his voice is just that of "one among many".

Leakey states that the relationship between father and son, while characterized by respect, includes "little

demonstration of affection." This separation, and in some sense opposition, of respect and demonstration of affection for the Kikuyu has to do with the fact that respect is shown through circumspect behavior which includes limitations on touching and the use of abusive or off-color language, while demonstration of affection often includes that kind of behavior. But caution should be taken in concluding that this circumspection of behavior precludes the existence between father and son. Kenyatta's work suggests a kind of affection between father and children which is based on a sense of reverence and admiration. In the pages that follow I hope to look at cases which involve the notion of responsibility, which seems to be part and parcel of the idea of respect, and at cases which involve affection and loyalty in the interaction pattern of the Kikuyu.

### Mutual Support

The last characteristic which Leakey discusses in his section on family life and behavior is mutual support. Mutual support is said to hold for the relationships between murū wa maitu and mwari wa maitu (Full B and Z), baba and murū (F, FB and S, Bs), tata and muihwa or mwana wakwa (FZ and BS&D, and MZ and ZS&D), mama and muihwa (MB and ZS&D), a mother and her children, and father-in-law and son-in-law, and in a few

other cases outside the realm of this discussion. Interestingly, no mention is made of the real father's dependence upon his son in any respect other than perpetuation of the family, and the fact that as his children mature the father progresses in grade age which is important in the political activities of the area.<sup>20</sup>

Mutual support between brother and sister includes the sister's helping her brother with certain agricultural activities and home-building and the brother's action as his sister's guardian. His specific duties in that regard are unexplained, but the Kikuyu make comment on the nature of that relationship in the following folktale (Routledge 1910:290-293):

A long time ago a young warrior and his sister lived together in a hut. They lived alone, for their parents had died when they were children, and the hut stood by itself; there were no other homesteads near. The name of the young man was Wagacharaibu, and the maiden was called Mweru. Wagacharaibu had beautiful hair which reached his waist, and all the young women admired him greatly, so that he often went away from home to a long distance to see his friends, and Mweru was left quite by herself.

Now one day when he came back after he had been thus away, Mweru said to him, "Three men came here last night when I was all alone, and each had a club and each had a spear, and if you go away and leave me all alone I know that they will come back and carry me off." But Wagacharaibu only said, "You talk nonsense," and he went away again as before. And the three men came back, as Mweru had said, with the three clubs and the three spears, and they took hold of the girl by the neck and by the legs, and they lifted her up and they carried her away. When Wagacharaibu came home again he went

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<sup>20</sup> Lambert (1956) contains one of the best discussions of the Kikuyu age grade system and political organization. A brief overview of the age grade system is given in this dissertation on pages 97-100.

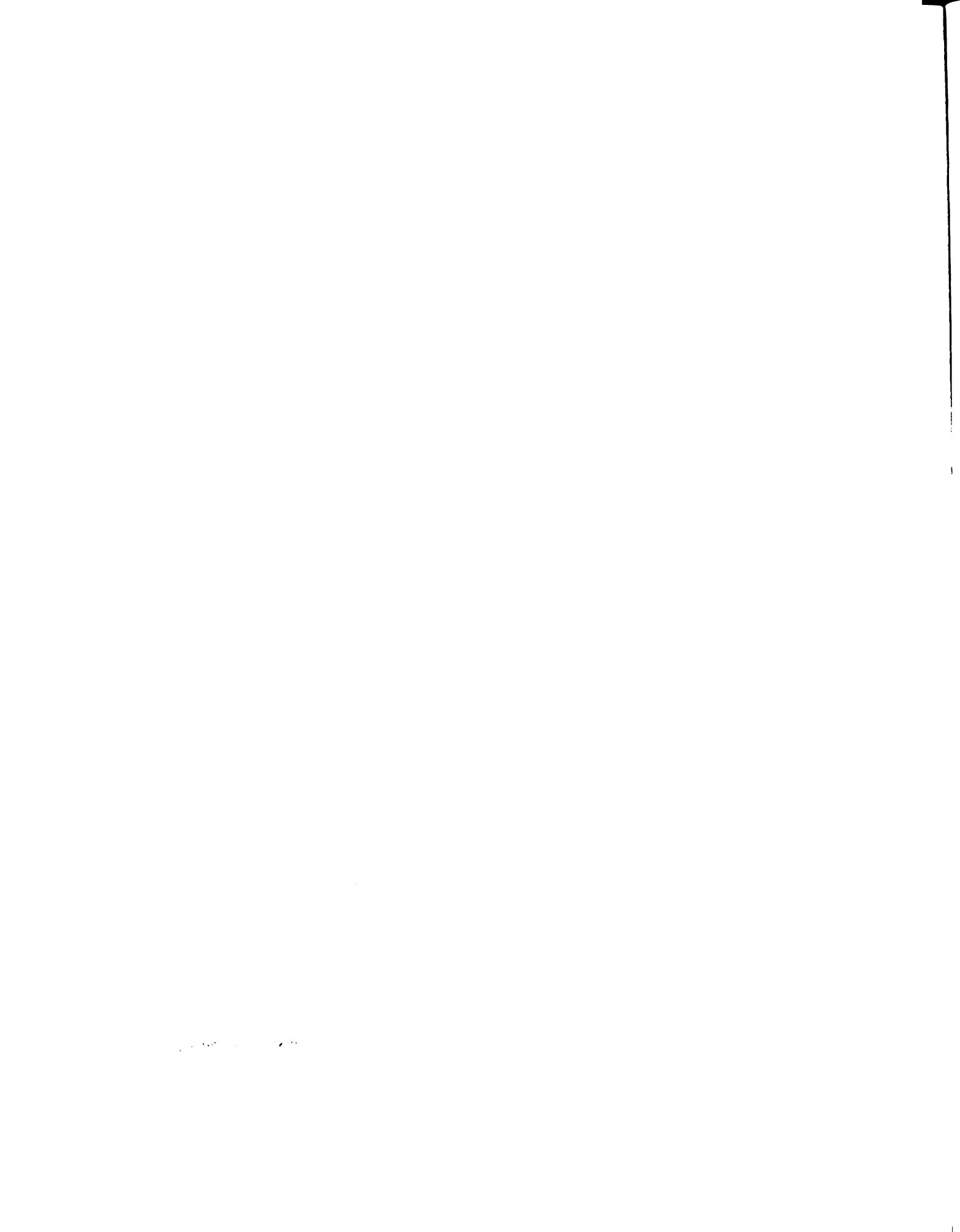
to the house and found it quite empty, and as he went he heard a girl's voice crying from the opposite hillside, and the voice was the voice of his sister, and it said, "Wagachraibu, men have come and carried me away. Go into the hut, you will find the gruel on the stool," and Wagacharaibu cried aloud and said, "Who will shave the front of my head now you are gone, for we have no neighbours?" And he plunged into the grass after Mweru, and the farther he went the farther she was carried away from him; and he heard her voice and she heard his voice, but they could not see one another; and he followed and followed for one month, and he became very hungry. And he wore a hat such as men used to wear in the old days; it was a piece of goatskin, and it had two holes cut in it and strings to tie under the chin, and the skin stood out over the forehead so that rain could not touch the face; and you may see such hats even now among the mountains where there are many trees and much rain, and among the Masai. So Wagacharaibu cut a piece of the leather and ate it, for he was very hungry, and he felt strong again; he went on and on a second month, and again a third month till the hat was all finished; and then he took his garment of skin and ate that, and so he went on a fourth month and a fifth month, until he had travelled one year and four months, and the cape was finished. Then being again hungry, when he came to a big homestead he went inside, and he saw a woman cooking food and he begged a little; and she gave him some, but she did not hand it to him in a nice vessel, but in a broken piece of an old pot. And that night he slept there, and the next morning he went out with the little son of the woman to scare the birds from the crops, for the grain was nearly ripe, and he took stones and threw them at the birds, and as he threw a stone he would say, "Fly away, fly away, little bird, like Mweru has flown away, never to be seen any more." And the little boy listened and he went home, and when Wagacharaibu was not near, he told his mother the words the stranger had said, but she paid no attention to the tale of her son and did not listen to it, and the next day the same thing happened again, and the third day the woman went herself to the fields and she heard the words of Wagacharaibu, "Fly away, fly away little bird, like Mweru has flown away, never to be seen any more," and the woman's name was Mweru and she said, "Why do you say those words to the birds?" And he said, "I once had a sister named Mweru, and she was lost, and I have followed her many months and years, but I have never seen her again." And the woman put her hand over her eyes and wept, for she was indeed his sister, and she said, "Are you truly my brother?" for she had not known him, so changed was he by his long travels, and she said, "Truly your hair is unkempt and your clothes

are not as they were, and I did not know you, but you shall be once more dressed as in time past, and I shall see if you are my very brother Wagacharaibu."

So she went to her husband, who had carried her away in the old days, and she got four sheep and three goats, and the four sheep were killed and Wagacharaibu ate of the flesh and became big and strong once more and his sister took of the fat and dressed his hair, and put it back on his shoulders; and of the three goats two were black and one was white, and she made a cape, and she took a spear which her husband had carried when he came to the little hut when she was alone, and gave it to her brother. She put on his arms brass and iron armlets, and ornaments on his legs and round his neck, and then she said, "Now I see that you are indeed my brother Wagacharaibu." And the husband of Mweru loved Wagacharaibu dearly, and he gave him twenty goats and three oxen, which was much more than the price of his sister, but he gave it because of the affection he bore him, and he built him a hut in the homestead and gave him thirty goats to buy a wife. And Wagacharaibu bought a maiden and brought her to the hut, and the goat of Wagacharaibu increased and multiplied, and he took ten of the goats and his sister's husband gave him twenty goats and he bought a second wife, so that Wagacharaibu did not go back to his old life any more, but lived with the sister he had lost and with her husband.

This story and the other version in Appendix B have several elements in common: the isolation of the brother and sister, his leaving her alone after her warning, the sister's preparation of food for her brother and his helplessness without her, his searching for her and not being recognized when he finds her, the sister's child telling her of her brother's presence, reconciliation of the brother and sister, restoration of the brother to his former beauty, the brother's receiving livestock and other goods from his sister's husband, and the brother's prosperously settling near the homestead of his sister's husband. The differences in the story are interesting and upon in-depth





analysis might prove to be comments on the deep structures of Kikuyu social structure; these differences include the following: In the second story the sister leaves a trail of fat which turns into trees which her brother is to follow, she tells her children to expect him, and the brother is recalcitrant in his refusal to forgive his sister and her husband and extracts large amounts of livestock and good.

A complete analysis of this story would be lengthy and detailed and will not be attempted here. If this story is looked at as a myth the function of which is "to portray the contradictions in the basic premises of the culture" (Douglas, 1963:52), then the elements presented above may be seen as commenting on the interdependence of the brother-sister relationship and the necessity for them to marry outside the group. The interdependency of brother and sister must stop short of incest; sister marries an enemy or stranger who must be changed into a friend; the sister's son mediates between the two families; and a man marries with the bridewealth obtained when his sister married; all reflect important understandings with Kikuyu culture.

This story, which was told by mothers and elders to children, underlines the importance of mutual support between brother and sister, and emphasizes the sense of responsibility which brothers assume for their sister's welfare.

Full and half sisters help each other with their chores, and take turns working as a group in each other's gardens. Neither Kenyatta nor Leakey give any details on the support

which brothers expect from each other. Their strong solidarity indicates close dependence, with its foundations in the family land which they inherit, the backing they give each other as warriors, and their reliance on one another for help with bridewealth and blood compensation.

Leakey states clearly the son's obligations to take care of his mother, who often goes to live with a son after her husband dies.<sup>21</sup> The mother's support of her son is symbolically expressed through the food which she continues to send him each evening, even after he marries. After the second birth, a son no longer remains in close day to day contact with his mother; this, Leakey states, without explanation, strengthens the tie between mother and son. It turns out that because he now works with his father, he has little time to help his mother. Whenever he is within their realm, a man should obey not only his mother, but also his classificatory mothers -- he obligated to help them clear their land for cultivation.

Daughters who are in closer contact with their mothers until they marry are clearly under obligation to obey their mothers and classificatory mothers with whom they work in day to day activities. It is through their daughters that women are able to increase the land cultivated, females

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<sup>21</sup> A widow usually is "inherited" by her husband's younger brother or by his sons. Middleton and Kershaw (1953:47) give a summary of the process of widow inheritance.

and younger males are responsible for the planting, weeding, harvesting and threshing. Traditionally, Kikuyu farmed several small plots of land which might be scattered over some distance, men do the heavy agricultural work of clearing land, planting certain crops, and also scaring birds, but women are responsible for the other farming activities. Women too are responsible for changing the raw products from their garden into cooked food for the family, and for preparing sugar cane beer for guests and for use at ritual and other occasions.

Mutuality of support does not require specific agreements on duties expected, but the recognition of the fact of interdependence of the people involved. In the case of mother and daughter, their contribution to the family and to each other is without question essential to the economic well-being of all members.

Other relationships which Leakey characterizes as including understandings about economic support include the MB, MZ, FZ and father-in-law and son-in-law relationships. In discussions of tata (MZ, FZ) and mama (MB), Leakey describes a kind of reciprocity through which the junior person should help his or her senior with chores, such as housebuilding and cultivation in return for, in the case of SZ, the privilege of receiving the choicest food and the right to kill a fat ram from his MB herd, and the right to be fed and have free access to the granary of his MZ and FZ. The situation for women is not as

straightforward. Leakey states that the relationship between MB and ZD is similar to that between MB and ZS. A MB will give his ZD almost anything she wants; she especially goes to him when she wants new clothes, and he is bound to give her skins for a wrap, or the wherewithall to buy a skin. She should help him with house-building, if it does not involve her disobeying her father or mother. The sense of reciprocity is not especially indicated here, however Leakey does make a juxtaposition which indicates such reciprocity in his statement that a woman will always help her tata and will always be given food.

The support relationship between a man and his wife's father is such that a father-in-law and senior members of that family may ask for additional goat, sheep, etc. as further installments of bridewealth. A son-in-law may ask them for money to pay a fine, but not bridewealth for another wife. Kenyatta makes the following statement about economic support between son-in-law and father-in-law:

With regard to economics, both sides give each other a great deal of mutual help. In agriculture, relations by marriage generally help one another. Cultivation rights are, moreover, given to a relative by marriage who has not sufficient land of his own to maintain himself and his family. There are numerous gifts exchanged among them, especially in times of ceremonies connected with initiation, marriage, or religion. For example, if a man is having his son or daughter circumcised, and has not sufficient grain to entertain visitors and friends who attend the initiation ceremonies, he will send to his relatives-in-law to supply the necessary food and drink, knowing they would ask for the same help if they were similarly placed. This exchange of gifts is governed by the principle of "give and take." (19)

### Traditional Kin Interaction and the Axiom of Amity

Leakey's and Kenyatta's discussion of rules concerning proper behavior among kin highlight respect as a primary characteristic pervasive throughout the interaction between kin. Respect is often seen coupled with obedience, such that a kinsperson tends to obey the people to whom he or she gives respect, though this is not always the case. Respect is generally demonstrated through circumspection in behavior, especially is the use of "abusive or obscene" language, control of personal space and touching. It does not obviate the co-existence of love as a characteristic of the relationship, but does sufficiently curtail the demonstration of affection through the use of less than formal language and touching. Love, in the sense of admiration and reverence, is often part of the relationship which includes respect. Respect, itself, for the Kikuyu is a recognition of the legitimacy of certain rights and duties, and of an inherent relationship between kin.

Another side of love, represented by familiarity and warmth, was also presented in the interaction pattern among kin discussed by Leakey and Kenyatta. While the combination of respect, love, and obedience are the characteristics which are associated with the father, father's brother, and classificatory mothers, the relationship with the actual mother, mother's siblings, father's sister, and grandparents stress the traits of love, amity and respect. All these relationships have an air of warmth and closeness, upon which

the claim for certain obligations may be placed.

A number of relationships among kin may be analyzed as expressing modesty. Of particular interest is the relationship between father and daughter, which evolves into father-daughter avoidance when the daughter is an unmarried adult. Leakey connects such avoidance with ideas concerning father-daughter incest, since all members of a man's age-grade are enjoined from marrying his daughter. In-laws too are treated in a similar manner, which generally involves prohibition on seeing each other nude, restrictions in the use of "abusive" language and on touching one another.

All of these kin are involved in mutual support networks. Brothers are invoked to respect one another and depend upon each other for their social and economic well-being. Sisters are told to obey their brothers, and provide for their brothers through their agricultural activities. The responsibility of parents for the moral, as well as economic well-being of their children was discussed as part of the reason why children engage in economic activities to support their real and classificatory parents. Mother's siblings and father's sister also are a part of this network, though there are specifiable differences in the nature of the exchange between them and their sibling's children. A far-reaching network of exchange is established between a man and the relatives of his wife, especially her father and the senior men of her family.

A number of points stand out when this survey of the Kikuyu pattern of kin interaction is compared to the axiom of amity discussed by Fortes. First of all, it is not "friendship" which on the whole describes the relationship among kin, but respect. Granted this difference, however, elements of prescriptive altruism are found throughout the system. Fortes states that what the rule of kinship amity posits is "that 'kinfolk' have irresistible claims on one another's support and consideration in contradistinction to non-kin" (1969:238). Indeed, the analysis of the aspect of respect in Kikuyu kin relationships indicates the existence of a generalized understanding which holds that kin are to be accorded prime consideration, and that in the case of the members of one's family group, these claims are non-negotiable. That the hospitality and support discussed above for Kikuyu kinspeople is not seen as a more general charity is supported by this observation by Routledge (1910:247):

....One of us came across a man, old, poor, and ill, sitting in the wilds by a little fire, which he had approached so near in the endeavour to keep himself warm that he had burned himself most terribly. His back was placed in a hollow tree to guard, if possible, from the attacks of the hyenas, a calabash of water was near him, but no food. The natives, when remonstrated with, replied that "the man was a stranger, and that he could do nothing for them, neither of good or harm."

Schneider's findings on American kinship are partially supported by the data in Kikuyu kinship. Indeed, love or diffuse, enduring solidarity is a part of the Kikuyu understandings concerning kin interaction, and to the extent



that the relationships are supportive, helpful, and co-operative they meet these criteria; but reserve, distance and circumspection are equally part of the understandings shared by Kikuyu kin. In no sense are the latter characteristics offered as the opposite of the former, instead they stand as limiting factors on the warmth and closeness implied in Schneider's definition. The symbols which Leakey and Kenyatta report that the Kikuyu use to describe kin relationships are land (discussed on pages 2-3 above), and brotherhood -- the ideal of mutual respect and support between brothers is a symbol for the relationships within the family and with other kin.

The extension of kinship amity does not include all genealogical kin, but is chiefly confined as an "irresistible claim" to patrikin. The children of siblings have a moral obligation to give each other food, while mother's siblings and father's sister hold certain reciprocal rights and obligations. Relatives connected through a female recognize a special relationship between them and may use it as the basis for mutual support and exchange.

Affinal kin, Fortes suggests, begin as enemies and through the acceptance of certain norms of morality and juralty are received, as against the rest of the world, as kin to whom the axiom of amity applies. For the Kikuyu this seems to be the case; there was no discussion of cross-cousing marriage or other practices in which the marriage partners are understood to come from related groups; nor was there a clear statement of the affine as enemy.

Affines are considered "shy and polite", and understandings concerning modesty are most prevalent in these relationships. Fortes' analysis of the affinal relationship seems aptly to apply to the Kikuyu male's concern with his wife's relatives. Because a woman is ideally incorporated into her husband's group, her situation is quite different. Compared to her husband, she has a limited set of relatives whom she calls muthoni (in-law) and since she becomes a member of her husband's family, she ends up with two of the same "kind" of families.

In sum, the Kikuyu's understandings about kinship morality traditionally included the axiom of amity which may be presented for them as a general statement that kin are expected to respect and love each other, to render each other economic and moral support; generally juniors should obey seniors and women, men; and that certain relationships, especially between affines, should be supportive but circumspect.

#### Some Changes in the Pattern of Kin Interaction

Many of these ideas about Kikuyu kinship morality were supported in my work among the Kikuyu from May, 1971 to February, 1972. Obviously, the modalities through which the kinship morality is expressed had changed somewhat. This is especially true about the injunctions concerning modesty in terms of nudity. Many Kikuyu today wear western style clothes; some older men wear a blanket

draped over one shoulder, or a blanket and short pants. I observed some mothers openly nursing their babies, but others covered the breast and the nursing infant with a towel. Generally, I would conclude that there were few instances in which breaches of codes concerning nudity could occur among the Kikuyu today. Nonetheless, other aspects of modesty still remain important. In terms of in-laws, the literal definition of muthoni -- shyness, politeness -- is still used to describe the behavior of in-laws. It is through a general circumspection of behavior, narrowing of broad movements and gestures, and the maintenance of spatial distance when in each other's presence that this modesty is expressed. The interaction of fathers and daughters with whom I was familiar no longer included avoidance, but, as before, many of the characteristics discussed for in-laws apply to this relationship.

Language comes to the fore as the chief modality through which respect, modesty or familiarity are expressed. Distinctions between "abusive or obscene" language are maintained. In a study of 100 consecutively entered cases from the Kiharu Divisional Court (formerly Kiharu African Court) for the years 1961, 1966, 1970, and 1971, the number of cases of verbal abuse showed the following pattern: 1961 - 4, 1966 - 3, 1970 - 13, and 1971 - 11. Court clerks attributed the increase in the number of abuse cases taken to a change in the law which allowed abuse cases to be tried under modern as well as customary law; cases tried under

modern law usually give greater leeway in the amount of compensation claimable. I could only get information on twenty-seven of the thirty-one abuse cases, of those six involved kin. Verbal abuse in these cases included one accusation of witchcraft. Three cases involved brothers or patrilineal cousins; the others were father-son, mother's brother-sister's son, and father-in-law and son-in-law. In the latter cases the younger man was accused of abusing the older one. The use of a sexual referent<sup>22</sup> as an abusive term is tantamount to disownership, it was explained to me; this was the case in four of the cases. Disputes over land were behind half the cases. The judge (a magistrate in the latter years and three elders in the earlier ones) sought to set straight the underlying problems, and then commented on the proper behavior among relatives. Four of the cases were found in favor of the plaintiff and two were dismissed. The court records indicated that the judge found it very rare to hear a case between father and son, and the case between mother's brother and his sister's son included the proviso that the nephew brew beer for his uncle in order to ritually remove the "uncleanliness".

The court record and my own experience among the

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<sup>22</sup> The sexual referents used in these cases included terms translated as "your mother's vagina", threats of sexual intercourse with husband and wife, and in the 1966 case, only reference to the fact that a man's daughter had not undergone clitterodictomy, part of the Kikuyu initiation ceremony.

Kikuyu underline the importance of the spoken word -- through praise it helps to make a man's reputation and through abuse tarnishes that reputation and challenges the nature of the relationship between him and the person who "abuses" him. Respect may be shown through refraining from using obscene or abusive terms in the presence of certain persons; familiarity may be shown by a relaxation of that code.

My observations on the use of personal space also support this as a significant modality through which particular understandings concerning the interaction of kin are expressed. An examination of photographs taken during my stay with the Kikuyu shows that young children are the most likely to stand or sit with their bodies in contact, and that adults stand close to, hold, or touch children. Most of the slides and prints of young people are of young men with their friends. They stand close to one another and often have their arms around each other. Slides of young women fall into three categories: (1) work scenes in which there is less than arm's length distance between the women, (2) leisure scenes in which they may sit arm's length away from one another, but occupy themselves with the children they are holding or cuddling, (3) pictures of women standing alone taken at their request. (Similar requests for pictures by young men usually include a friend.)

Pictures taken of the wife of the eldest son of the family with which I lived illustrate her relationship to others.<sup>23</sup> Except for two pictures, all were taken near the doorway to her room. One of the pictures was taken during a brief visit to my room - the picture is of her getting up to leave, indicative of the fact that she seldom visited, rarely stayed long when she did. The other is of a conversation she had with her husband's mother. In the photograph, her mother-in-law is sitting under a tree and she is standing about eight feet away, carrying on a discussion about marketing, in a subdued voice I might add. One of the pictures taken near the doorway shows her and her husband's sister, laughing but standing some distance apart, on opposite sides of a small table. Another shows Eunice, the son's wife, in the doorway talking to her husband standing just outside, as a friend departs.

The above description of photographs shows not only her attitudes toward the photographer, who usually had to move toward Eunice, rather than Eunice move toward her, but indicates that she did not often move far into the personal space of others. In an atypically warm exchange with her husband's sister she still maintains her distance. The distance she put between herself and her mother-in-law was an exhibition of the respect she taught me in relation

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<sup>23</sup> A brief sketch of members of this family is included in Chapter 2.

to her husband's father. Once when I had finished talking to him, she said to another family member of me, "She has no shame; see how close she stands and how she laughs." I had been standing less than two feet away from a low concrete railing on the porch of the greeting room, and probably moved closer to Githingi, her father-in-law, in the course of the conversation during which he remained on the porch, sometimes resting on the railing. Needless to say, from that time on I took special note of the way people maintain space between themselves and others, or admit closeness.

These photographs almost confirm her fear that she was an outsider, "not a daughter of Githingi" as her husband's sister said. Though I have no photographs, I did observe that her husband, in talking to his father, stood from four to five feet away from him, not as far away as did his wife, and that Githingi's sister's son closely approximated Eunice's distance while talking to his mother's brother; sometimes they would stand half the distance of the yard apart. The younger children came closer, and Githingi once held and took care of the youngest when she was ill. Githingi's daughter seldom spoke to her father; messages from him to her were usually delivered by her mother. If she were around when he was at home she quickly left his presence and went to her room or performed the duties expected of her and left. He seldom had to ask that something be done. It was usually anticipated. Githingi's

daughter-in-law, too, seldom remained long in the same area as her father-in-law.

The Kikuyu traditionally practiced a form of father-in-law--daughter-in-law avoidance, and though few would admit it today, their use of space confirms an underlying belief in the propriety of this tradition. So too is the "avoidance" between fathers and daughters played out in the use of personal space. Fathers too were to minimize contact with their daughters after the daughters developed a shyness about their bodies, or during puberty.

Brothers often kept minimal distance between each other. Brothers were just as likely to share a chair and a beer with one another as were friends, but friends were more likely to put their arms around one another or to dance with one another. A brother would definitely not dance with his sister. Traditionally, Kenyatta notes, brothers and sisters could not attend the same dance (1938:161). Leakey states that they should not dance with or near one another.

Sisters, who would go to live with their husband's people after marriage, did not always live near one another. Githingi's wife, Njoki's sister, lived in town, not very far from her sister, yet I never saw them together. The sister came to Githingi's homestead often and might have seen her sister when I was not around, but what I observed is that most of her time there was spent with her sister's daughter who was only a few years younger than she, or talking to the young children. When Githingi's sister came to visit,



she too spent most of her time with the other women and children, chatting primarily with her mother when she was living there, with her brother's daughter and his daughter-in-law, and then with her brother's wife. Githingi's sister was very comfortable and at ease during these gatherings, as she was when she visited her other brother's wife in Nairobi. There too she spent little time talking to her brother, but quickly engaged in lively and animated conversation with her mother, who had requested that she come see her, and her brother's wife, Ellen. Ellen's sister lived in Nairobi in a housing development on the other side of the city from her. They seemed genuinely fond of each other and sat close together, but obviously did not see each other often.

### Responsibility, Loyalty and Affection Within Kikuyu

#### Kinship Morality

The understandings concerning kin interaction which I found among the Kikuyu whom I knew are phrased differently than Leakey's and Kenyatta's terms, but encompass many of the same ideas. Love, familiarity and "warmth" of feeling are discussed with the understanding which holds that kin should have affection for one another. The understanding which holds that kin share responsibility for each other's social and moral well-being seems to have its foundation in the compelling nature of the relationship between kin. This relationship, Leakey states, sometimes makes them

liable to supernatural sanctions if they act in contradistinction to the shared understandings. Loyalty, the last of the understandings which I will discuss, was also not brought up as such by the two authors, its presence nonetheless implied in notions concerning solidarity. The set of understandings discussed here does not exhaust the universe of kinship morality for the Kikuyu, but are those which I found most accessible and more easily analyzable -- they are clearly part of the way some Kikuyu think about kin. A brief statement of these understandings are as follows: Kinspeople should love one another. Kinspeople should be responsible for the moral and social well-being of one another. Kinspeople should be loyal to one another, stand with one another against outsiders.

Each understanding came to my attention in a different way. I first began to think about responsibility as an understanding among kin in discussions with young men about their "duties" toward their sisters. They stressed the idea that they were expected to control their sister's moral and sexual behavior, that whatever trouble their sisters got into reflected on them. At another time, the subject of father-son responsibility was broached, and with another set of informants I talked about the idea of responsibility for members of one's mbari. The idea was formed after the latter discussion that kinspeople feel a compelling tie to other kinspeople such that they feel

they share the same destiny, or at least, they are responsible for each other's social and moral well-being. While in the field I did not administer a questionnaire on this subject, though I did do a survey which included questions on the kin support network (see Appendix C). Generally, this area was treated as I did the others, by investigating my field notes to see where this aspect of kinship morality, as I understood it, appeared and how the people involved handled it.

It would be misleading to suggest that I went into the field without certain ideas concerning intrafamilial interaction, not the least of which was a belief that such relationships should be warm and close. My apprehension of understandings concerning affection began on that note. I noticed some coolness in the relationship between a couple of brothers and their mothers. I asked the young men why they behaved so, and received the answer that "women are closer to their mothers." For this same set of brothers there was some awkwardness about what to call their mother. They said that they used no term of address for her (they called their father Mzee, a respectful term of address translated as old man); they simply told their mother what they had to say. This was contrasted to their sister, who was older than they, who used the English term "Mommy" in addressing their mother. I continued to observe interaction among mothers and their children, and talked at length with two informants about their

interaction with both their mothers and fathers. A considerable amount of my information on the parent-child relationship is based on these data, and on cases in which these people interact. My knowledge of and expectations about grandparents and grandchildren was gained primarily through talking to grandchildren and observing their interaction with their grandparents.

I first discussed affection between brother and sister with a sister who was trying to explain to me why, contrary to expectations, she was not on good terms with one of her brothers. In a sense she explained the expected understandings and the exceptions to it. With this same informant, but at another time, I also discussed the nature of the affective relationship between patrilineal cousins. She talked of the feeling of joy and comfort in being with one of her own family. Relationships between matrilineal cousins was not brought up in the same way, but rather through my comment on the different relations of a young man to his mother's brother's daughter and to his mother's brother's son, one of which was warm and familiar, the other more distant and hierarchical. The former was stated as the ideal. I talked with these same people about their understandings concerning their parent's siblings, and generally found that one is expected to "fear" or respect his or her father's brother, but that no clear statement of expectations, based solely on genealogical relationship, was given for mother's brother.

The other major area in which I received information affection was that of husband and wife. One of my closest friends, and a good informant, was involved in marriage negotiations. I spent a good deal of time talking to her and her fiance about the expectations of husbands and wives, including ideas about affection. Her father's brother's wife was also open and willing to talk about this area, after I got to know her well.

I cannot say that I reached my understanding of the position of loyalty in the kinship morality of the Kikuyu in quite the same way. I rather learned about it as I learned to live among the Kikuyu, and how they live among each other -- no one sat me down and explained its meaning, but again and again the lesson of sticking with one's kin, no matter how variously kin was defined, was played out before me. It is only through the analysis of cases that I arrived at clear statements of the value of kinship loyalty. In these cases kin act out this principle of loyalty, and in talking to me about some of the cases mention that they must stand with kin against outsiders.

In the pages which follow I hope to show instances in which these aspects of Kikuyu kinship morality come into play, and discuss variations in behavior in regard to them.

### Summary and Discussion

The Kikuyu distinguish between kin related to them through male and female links. In genealogical reckoning those ties to a male ancestor through male links are most likely remembered, and are the basis of assignment of certain rights and statuses. A mbari (family group) is generally said to be composed of the descendents of a male ancestor, his sons and their wives and children, and his unmarried daughters. The mbari is distinguished from "kin" or "relatives" who may include a wider range of patrilineal relatives, members of mother's mbari, and members of wife's mbari. Traditionally, the tie to the land was regarded as a crucial element of mbari membership.

This study is about the pattern of interaction among kin, with particular interest in the intrafamilial interaction. The method of investigation is the case study method, which lays out events and allows analysis of the role of certain cultural understandings with particular social fields. "Understandings" here refers to expectations about behavior which allows for predictability within a society.

Meyer Fortes has suggested that the understandings which comprise kinship morality may be classed under the heading, the axiom of amity, a principle which includes as its basic element an irresistible claim of kin for each other's support and consideration. Based on a model of brotherhood, Fortes includes solidarity, cohesion and

amity as aspects of kinship morality. Love, defined as diffuse, enduring solidarity was found by Schneider to be a central factor in American kinship. Fortes states that the amity among kin may vary depending on the culturally defined nature and closeness of the genealogical tie, and it may be extended to affines who are incorporated into the group.

In an unpublished manuscript Leakey described Kikuyu family life and behavior very similarly to Kenyatta's description in Facing Mt. Kenya. Relationships within the mbari and with mother's brother and mother's sister were characterized as being based on rules concerning respect, obedience, modesty, love, and support. The relationship between mother and son were said by Leakey to be among the warmest and most enduring. The father-daughter relationship included modesty as a central understanding, as did the relationship between affinal relatives. Respect and obedience were the most pervasive aspects of the expectations among kin, contrasted with familiarity which was most well-developed in the relationship between grandparents and grandchildren, and between father's sister, mother's sister, mother's brother and their sibling's children.

The particular modalities through which these characteristics are expressed includes genres of verbal behavior which distinguish "abusive and obscene" language from other types, touching and control of person space, and nudity and exposure of the genitals. Some changes in

the modalities were discussed, but a basic conservatism remains.

The network of kin who support one another is quite extensive, with more of a sense of reciprocity existing between affines and mother's sister, mother's brother and father's sister and their sibling's children than within the mbari.

Some changes have occurred in the pattern of kin interaction but generally my findings support many of Leakey's and Kenyatta's observations. Instead of ideas which hold that kin or categories of kin should respect, obey, be modest toward, love and support one another, in my findings it was phrased that kin are seen to feel a sense of responsibility toward one another, should be loyal to each other, and should have affection for one another.

Clearly love and affection represent similar areas, while Leakey and Kenyatta did not directly address the area of responsibility, analysis of their material lend support to the interpretation that the nature of respect includes a sense of responsibility. Loyalty might be interpreted as including aspects of love and solidarity, but this study intends to show how the Kikuyu view the two differently. These do not exhaust the understandings which make up the kinship morality of the Kikuyu whom I knew, but represent areas in which I have the best information.



## CHAPTER 2: THE CONTEXT OF RESEARCH

### The Kikuyu: Pre-Colonial Interethnic Relations and Physical Environment

Research for this thesis was conducted among the Kikuyu of Kenya, East Africa. The Kikuyu are one of the largest ethnic groups in Kenya, numbering 2,201,632 according to the 1969 census (Republic of Kenya, 1970). The related groups, the Embu and Meru, are frequently classified with the Kikuyu. Although there has been much movement by the Kikuyu the largest proportion of the population is still to be found in the traditional Kikuyu homeland, three districts of the Central Province. Research on which this dissertation is based was carried out in Mbiri Location of Kiharu Division in Murang'a District. Table 1 gives the population, area in square kilometers and population density of the three districts, Nyeri to the north, Murang'a in the center, and Kiambu to the south, and the population and area of the Division and Location in which I lived.

The Kikuyu technological system, culture and language are closely related to that of the Kamba, also of Central Province, and their linguistic system relates them to the Bantu-speaking peoples of the Kenya coast. These Bantu-speaking people, the Kikuyu, also have a heavy overlay

Table 1

## Population, Area, and Population Density

Government Division	Area in sq. km.	Population	Population Density/ sq. km.
Central Province	13,233	1,655,647	127
Nyeri District	3,351	360,845	108
Kiambu District	2,578	475,576	184
Murang'a District	2,529	445,310	176
Kiharu Division	406	91,675	226
Mbiri Location	48	12,707	263

of Masai characteristics, and are sometimes called Hamitized Bantu.<sup>1</sup> According to Kikuyu migration myths, they came from the coast of Kenya and traveled across the Chania River to the slopes of Mt. Kenya. Lambert (1950:27) supports this view saying that the migration to the present area was from the northeast to the south, from north of the Tana River near the coast. This migration began about 500 years ago with the Kikuyu arriving in Murang'a around 1500 A.D., and spreading south to Kiambu District by the 1800's.

Mt. Kenya is the most prominent geographical feature of the hilly area in which they settled. The Kenya Highlands, as this area is sometimes called, has altitudes ranging from 5000-8000 feet; Mt. Kenya's peak is about 17,000 feet above sea level. The altitude gives Kikuyuland a generally temperate climate. The three districts which comprise Kikuyuland are about 100 miles long and 30 miles wide. To the north beyond Mt. Kenya this area is bounded by the Nyombeni Range; in the east it is bounded by the Athi plains, occupied by the Masai and the Ulu Hills, occupied by the Kamba; the western boundary is the Aberdare Mountain Range and the eastern edge of the Rift Valley Escarpment, and in the south are the Masai who live on the

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<sup>1</sup> Huntingford (1961), in a discussion of the distribution of cultural traits in East Africa, puts the Kikuyu in the Kiama (council) culture of the Bantu speakers, but goes on to document the similarities between the Kikuyu and Masai in terms of shield types and decorations, hair styles, body ornaments and various features of the material culture.

plains beyond the Ngong Hills.

Much of the Kikuyu territory borders on the Masai plains. Although peaceful relations often prevailed between these two groups such that there was ritual and ceremonial interdependence, continuous trade, especially between the women of the groups; and frequent inter-marriage among members of the Masai and Kikuyu; the older Kikuyu men and women with whom I talked always stressed the wars between the Kikuyu and the Masai. Kikuyu territory was forested hill, while the Masai live on the plains. Each was almost invincible in its own territory, with the Kikuyu using strategically placed staked war pits to stop the advancing Masai (Middleton and Kershaw 1953:13). In warfare the Kikuyu viewed themselves as clever and cunning while the Masai were strong and foolhardy. In the following statement about warfare between the Kikuyu and Masai the characteristic differences which the Kikuyu see between the two groups is emphasized:

In the dead of the night the Kikuyu warriors, marshalled by Wangombe, rose and went stealthily with their rattles covered with dried banana leaves, and hid themselves in the bush....There they waited excitedly for the enemy. Early in the morning.... the Masai, unaware of the preparation which the Kikuyu had made for the defence of their cattle, marched boldly toward the kraals, determined to kill anyone who came in their way...(1962:42) (emphasis added).

The Kamba bordered the Kikuyu to the east. The languages of these two groups are mutually intelligible to native speakers of either, with many Kikuyu saying that the Kamba speak a "childish" version of Kikuyu.

Sometimes I heard the Kamba spoken of as brothers to the Kikuyu, though this phrase was more frequently used to refer to the Embu and Meru peoples of Central Province, whom anthropologists consider to be part of the same cultural stock as the Kikuyu. A similar pattern of relationship existed between the Kikuyu and the Kamba as existed with the Masai. Basically peaceful relations, including inter-marriage and trade, were broken up by raids for cattle and women. One of my informants, a woman who placed her age at about seventy years, told of being captured by the Kamba in a raid as a girl and traded back to the Kikuyu for a sack of grain during times of famine. Indeed it was during times of famine that the most friendly and the most hostile relationships seemed to prevail among these neighboring groups. Before things got very bad, the warriors of the groups would go on raids, but as times worsened they were likely to live together or to become extremely dependent on the trade of leather goods for food-stuffs and other necessities.

Kikuyu territory has been described as "a sea of ridge-like hills... These hills and ridges are from 200 to 600 feet high, divided by well-watered valleys, and a traveller standing on the higher levels of the Aberdares Mountain Range and looking toward Mt. Kenya is reminded of the waves of a heavy cross sea" (Routledge 1910:2).

The Kikuyu are basically an agricultural people, though traditionally they also kept cattle, goats and sheep. Very

small numbers of goats and chickens are still kept. The chief subsistence crops are maize, beans, millet, sweet potatoes, European potatoes, and pigeon peas. They also grow bananas, tobacco, sugar cane, peppers, onions, and other fruits and garden vegetables in smaller quantities. In some areas coffee, tea, and pyrethum are grown as cash crops.<sup>2</sup>

Kikuyu land had great natural fertility, with deep rich volcanic soil which supported dense forests. Today the area is almost deforested, and the soil immensely deteriorated. Although some observers (Fitzgerald 1950 and Routledge 1910) state that the area was in the advanced stages of deforestation when the first Europeans entered the area toward the end of the nineteenth century, it should be noted that the processes which led to the soil deterioration and greater deforestation were exacerbated by the British colonial policy which included early plans of containment in what they called the "Kikuyu reserves."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> During the colonial period Africans were not allowed to grow coffee, for fear of the spread of disease from their trees to the Europeans' estates. Today coffee growing is not very profitable and few Kikuyu grow it. Both coffee and tea are handled through government co-operatives.

<sup>3</sup> A number of Colonial Commissions were established to investigate Kikuyu claims that they needed more land in the "reserve" area. The last boundary change occurred in 1933 after the Carter Land Commission agreed to a slight increase in the boundary. Other cases were handled individually or through less extensive commissions.

Problems in Kikuyu Ethnography

Early accounts of Kikuyu social and cultural institutions were written by trained ethnographer Routledge (1910) who began living among the Kikuyu in 1902, by colonial officers, Dundas (1908) and Lambert (1950), by Catholic missionary, Father Cagnolo (1933), and by the President of Kenya, Kenyatta (1938) who studied anthropology under Malinowski. Many other accounts of Kikuyu land tenure, law, and main cultural features have been presented by numerous other investigators, including anthropologists, geographers, and political scientists. Middleton and Kershaw (1953) compiled most of the available information on traditions of Kikuyu life in a Volume for the Ethnographic Survey of Africa. After collating the data they concluded that additional information on Kikuyu territorial, clan and age-grade systems was needed. Through interviews with older Kikuyu informants I attempted to fill in the gaps in the knowledge in some of these areas.<sup>4</sup> The problems turned out to be more apparent than real. It was more a matter of ethnographers trying to find permanent territorial division and other structures, which did not exist. A processual approach to the data on territory reveals that basic units combine and re-combine in variously

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<sup>4</sup> I conducted interviews with several other informants on questions concerning clan organization, territorial division and political processes. I used an interpreter during the interviews, which were all tape recorded. Each interview was transcribed and translated by two different interpreters.

composed groups, according to the situation.

Rights to specific plots of land were vested in the mbari (family group), in which a person became a member through his or her links to a male ancestor. An alternative way of joining a mbari included adoption through a special religious ceremony. Rights to cultivate and build on mbari land were sometimes granted to others, including sons-in-law, but these people could not inherit the land. Land was inherited from a father to his sons, and was equally divided among them.

The next largest kin group beyond the mbari is the muhiriga (pl. mihiraga; clan). This term is used to refer to the nine clans established by the daughter of the primordial couple, and to the localized clans which were usually long-established in an area. Sometimes the term mbari is used interchangeably with muhiriga, with distinction generally being made on the basis of the processes involved; e.g., if inheritance of property was the main issue then the term mbari (family group) would be central, but when the circumcision ceremony was the central issue the same group might refer to itself as a muhiriga and stress its ties to other muhiriga of the same name (cf. Swartz, 1960).

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<sup>5</sup> Property is usually divided between sons such that each son shares in cultivated land, livestock and movable property associated with his mother's house (Middleton and Kershaw 1953:46).



A loose system of territorial divisions figured into the Kikuyu social and political divisions. The hills of Kikuyuland provided natural boundaries for the basic territorial divisions, the rugongo (pl. ng'ongo). Depending on the size of the rugongo and the size of the mbari, the rugongo could be the home of one, several or part of a mbari. The term for this settlement is itura (pl. matura), which has been translated as village. Middleton and Kershaw (1953:29) state "an itura might be inhabited by one mbari, part of one mbari with or without ahoi [tenants] or by several mbari."

The mbari and the matura or a rugongo [hereafter referred to simply as rugongo] had separate sacred trees under which they made sacrifice. The mbari and the rugongo were symbolically distinguished in this way.

Councils of male elders were the main decision-making bodies for the rugongo and the mbari. For the mbari, this group was composed of all the circumcized, married males. The rugongo council of elders was open to all married men with adult children. Mbari membership was not necessary in order to be on the council, so that those who cultivated or built their homes on the land of others could become members of this kiama (council) if they satisfied the other criterion, usually movement through the age-grade system with each level marked by the payment of a goat to the kiama. A leader or spokesman selected from among the council was chosen for his wisdom and ability to command



respect beyond their rugongo. The athanaki, leader of the council of elders (athuri), were often very prominent men. Religious, legislative, and judicial duties involving people of the rugongo rested in the hands of these elders. Sometimes the elders of one rugongo joined the elders of another in making sacrifices or in settling disputes.

It is most likely that ad hoc councils formed from the members of the elders' councils of several ng'ongo were organized by disputants to deal with particular problems. There is no doubt that several ng'ongo worked in concert, on special occasions. Nor is there any doubt that they sometimes fought one another. Death and blood compensation often followed a fight between members of different ng'ongo. Death and the violence of the battle between two ng'ongo can be contrasted to a fight between members of an itura on one ridge. One informant gave the following answer to the question, "Did the itura fight within itself?":

Yes, if two people quarreled they usually fought. But since they were brothers, the fight was short-lived. Two old people could come and separate them with long sticks so that they couldn't be cut by pangas (big knives). You should understand that the fighting people could not use shields.

If one itura member hurt another, he would have to pay a fine of one goat, and to slaughter another goat, to be eaten with the injured person.

Alliance beyond the rugongo was usually facilitated through a wealthy, influential athanaki (leader of the elder's council) or through a medicine man (mundu mugo) or a war magician (mugu wa ita), who gained a reputation

through the power of his medicine and the wisdom of his counsel. Such a medicine man might unite many ng'ongo in an area the size of the present day location; e.g., Mbiriri location is 48 sq. kilometers, or a present day division; e.g., Kiharu Division is 406 sq. kilometers.

The territorial term of the widest referent is bururi, which may be used to refer to the country or territory of the Kikuyu, and a district; district here referring to segments as large as the present-day districts -- Kiambu, Murang'a and Nyeri. The chief bond in one district seemed to have been their taking advice from one medicine man (Routledge, 1910:197). It is difficult to know the exact extent of a bururi, but the most informed opinion is that such divisions were flexible and temporary, defined by allegiance to an influential man; and of moderate size, more than the periodic alliance of close ng'ongo, and less than that of a major district or section of the tribe.<sup>6</sup> The "focal points" of interdistrict combination included markets, public grazing grounds and salt-licks (cf. Middleton and Kershaw, 1953:52). Middleton and Kershaw (1953:30) found no evidence that the present-day districts ever united in war, and the maituika (generation change ceremonies), the occasions for the most extensive combination of Kikuyu when last held in Nyeri district were held in three separate areas, present-day divisions.

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The term "section" refers to major divisions in a district. Only Nyeri district to the north of Murang'a has clearly recognized sections.

The age-grade, age-set, and generation-set systems cross-cut ties based on kin and rugongo membership, but evidence points to the fact that these too were limited in the geographical area concerned, and that circumcision and clitterodectomy ceremonies which initiated males and females into the age-set (rika) varied according to the initiates' clan membership. Nonetheless, the age-set system was a basis of cohesion for segments of Kikuyu territory larger than the rugongo. The idiom of kinship used by the members of the age-set system, particularly those initiated by the same circumcision "father", signalled the fact that many rules applicable to consanguineal brothers and sisters were followed by members of the same age-set; e.g., sexual relations were forbidden between men and women initiated in the same house, and injury to a member of one's own age-set was seen as an injury to a member of one's own family.

Details of the ceremony of initiation are included in Kenyatta (1938) and Routledge (1910); here I will briefly describe the age-grade, age-set and generation set systems. The age-grade system incorporated all members of society into different status groups, without regard to mbari affiliation. Each status level had certain tasks attached to it. Figure 1 below depicts the Kikuyu age-grades.

At circumcision young men and women became members of a named age-set, but sometimes women's age-sets were unnamed. Comparable age-sets of various areas would compete

## Figure 1

Age Grade Organization

<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
Gakenge -- baby boy	Kaana -- baby girl
Kahi -- small boy	Karigu -- small girl
Kihi -- large uncircumcised boy	Kirigu -- large uncircum- cised girl
Muumo -- circumcised youth -- neophyte	Kairitu -- initiated girl
Mwanake -- warrior, adult man	Muhiki -- betrothed or married woman without child
Muthuri -- elder	
Kiama kia kamatima (council of learners)	
Muthuri wa mburi igiri (full membership after 1st child circumcised)	Mutumia -- mother of one or more initiated children
Kiama kia maturanguru (very old, ceremonial, religious, inner council at arbitra- tion)	Kiheti -- toothless old woman



in dancing displays, and if one age-set was exceptionally distinguished, then the other age-sets initiated at the same time would probably be known by its name. Besides the competition involved in dancing contest, the anake, males of the age-set, were the warrior grade of the Kikuyu. They had a war council, with a leader chosen from among them. With his guidance and that of a war magician the age-set waged war against their enemies. Their peacetime activities included maintenance of public roads and law enforcement functions. This group did not disband all at one time, but instead an individual was allowed to move up in age-grade levels and out of the age-set, according to his age, wealth and personal wisdom. The warrior and elder age-grades had several specified levels, such that it might take a man twelve or more years to advance from junior warrior to junior elder. A man who was a particularly good warrior might remain in that age-grade long after most of the members of his age-set had left to marry and become elders.

Members of women's age-sets shared the women's chores, including planting, hoeing, weeding, harvesting, and thatching and plastering houses. These age-sets were also important in the preparation for marriage. It is interesting to note that though men's age-sets have virtually died out, women's groups abound, and sometimes the symbol used to unite them is that of the traditional age-set system.



Persons moved individually through the stages of elderhood from junior elder, who acted as messengers for the more senior elders, to kiama kia maturangura, the council of the sacred leaves, who were responsible for "ceremonies and religious affairs of the community, they lead the igongona (sacrifices) for the community, can remove thahu (ritual uncleanliness) and curse evildoers, other functions are to decide the dates of circumcision and the holding of the ituika ceremony. They form the ndundu, or 'inner council' at the arbitration of legal cases" (Middleton and Kershaw 1953:34).

Such councils of elders existed on the itura and rugongo levels. Indeed the process described earlier, whereby councils of matura (villages) send representatives to the rugongo council is presented here as a part of the age-grade system. In brief, it is the age-grade system through which the rugongo achieves integration in instances where more than one mbari reside on a rugongo.

Among the things known about the generate-set system are (1) it divided the male Kikuyu into named cyclical moieties, Maina/Irungu and Mwangi; (2) a man was in the moiety opposite his father, but junior to his grandfather; (3) a generation-set rules the country for 20-30 years; (4) the ituika ceremony, which took many years, marked the change-over from one generation to the next. Lambert (1956) has good information on this subject. All indications are that the last ceremony took place between 1890 and 1903

(Middleton and Kershaw 1953:37). It is also indicated that a person's fast or slow movement through the elders' age-grade affected his membership in the generation set, such that "if a young man belongs to a senior generation (set) which retires before he has attained an age at which he could take part in the common sacrifices, he will be forever excluded from the exercise of priestly function" (Dundas 1915:246-7).

### The Kikuyu Today

One of the best known facts about the modern Kikuyu is that they participated in the "Mau Mau" war. Some attempts have been made to interpret this war as a civil war between the Kikuyu, but these attempts are misdirected, though no one will deny that factions and rivalries among the Kikuyu influenced the hostilities. Bennet's (1963) history of Kenya covers events leading to independence from the African, Asian and European perspectives. His work and Rosberg and Nottingham's Myth of Mau Mau (1966) are two of the best overviews of this movement. Bennet (1963) suggests that the daytime assassination of a powerful Kikuyu chief was the immediate cause of the declaration of a State of Emergency which officially began the war in 1952. Kikuyu forest fighters did kill and burn the houses of pro-government or loyalist Kikuyu in an effort to dissuade other traitors. Their main efforts, however, involved getting ammunition from government depots,

securing food through raids or from sympathetic villagers, and organizing attacks on government bases. The Kikuyu loyalist who joined the Home Guard government forces tended to be wealthy, while many of the forest fighters were landless. During the Emergency a number of people switched their loyalties to the government because of money or other inducements.

In effect, this movement began in 1921 with the establishment of the Young Kikuyu Association by Harry Thuku. From that time until political parties were banned by the colonial government shortly before World War II, the Kikuyu tried to change their status in Kenya through many well-accepted and legal means; e.g., petitions, delegations to the colonial officers, newspaper and magazine articles and strikes. Little was accomplished by these methods as the white settlers in Kenya made moves to consolidate their power in a minority white rule policy. The colonial government did not support the settlers' position, but did not take a firm stand on the issue of majority rule. First a European was appointed to represent Africans, and then an African, a Kikuyu, Eliud Mathu, was chosen to sit with him on the Legislative Council in 1944. But still vacillation and change of guards in the colonial administration occurred, while the underground political parties of the Kikuyu consolidated their strength in opposition to the settlers and the British government which ruled the country.

From the time the British first arrived in Kenya they had had land disputes with the Kikuyu. Sizeable portions of land claimed by the Kikuyu was alienated by them for European estates. With the introduction of taxation, Kikuyu were forced to work as tenants on some of this land. Remaining portions of land were designated as the "Kikuyu reserves" and Crown land. With increases in population and pressures on the land, the Kikuyu made moves to be awarded more land. Numerous commissions and investigating teams tried to establish Kikuyu land tenure practices, to set the rate for compensation for land, or the redefine boundaries in some areas. The Carter Commission of 1933 established the most permanent boundaries between the Kikuyu reserves, the "white highlands", and Crown Land. Few changes were made after that, until the land consolidation program at the end of the "Mau Mau" Emergency and the departure of Europeans after Kenyan independence.

The age-set system, which was in its waning years in the late thirties, emerged as a cohesive force for the Kikuyu, joining together more Kikuyu than had ever worked in concert before. They joined together in opposition to the common enemy, the Europeans.<sup>7</sup> In the late

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<sup>7</sup> Rosberg and Nothingham (1966) and Bennet (1963) both suggest that the "Forty group", a group of men who had been initiated in 1940 were the prime movers in the Mau Mau movement. Other evidence supports an extensive hierarchical system composed of the itura, location, division and district elders' councils and warriors' age-grades throughout Kikuyu, all of whom reported back to a central committee in Nairobi (Rosberg and Nothingham, 1966 and Barnett and Njama, 1966).

1940's, young men took a warrior's oath to fight to regain their land and drive the Europeans from their soil. These men then formed regiments according to area and age-set. As time passed more Kikuyu, including women and children, were given the oath. There are reports that some people were tricked into taking the oath or were forced to do so. There were several kinds of oaths, the ones administered before the Emergency were milder and primarily asked for loyalty to the Kikuyu cause. Oaths in themselves are acts of binding solidarity. The Kikuyu oaths taken before and during the Emergency usually were taken while the person held some soil in his or her hand. Early oaths of loyalty to the Kikuyu Central Association, whose platform included the return of the highlands to the Kikuyu, were taken while the person placed his hand on the Bible and held some soil to his navel (Rosberg and Nottingham, 1966). Later oaths involved other more powerful Kikuyu symbols and ritual paraphernalia.

By the time the State of Emergency was declared by the new colonial governor in 1952, most Kikuyu had taken an oath which pledged their support to a movement whose goals included (1) removal of Europeans from the Kenya highlands, (2) participation of more Africans in the government, and (3) elimination of discrimination in all aspects of life. Few Kikuyu refused to take the oaths, though the loyalist contingent sometimes did, or otherwise did not abide by it. As the struggle against the British intensified, the warrior's

oath, taken by those who would engage in armed struggle, became more explicit in regard to the violence considered necessary to regain control of Kikuyu land. It was not until after the movement was underway that Kenya independence was a clearly stated objective.

The Kikuyu term most often used in discussion of the oath givers for the Mau Mau movement is "kiama". This term is used to refer to political parties today and was the political-religious-judicial council of the rugongo and larger territorial groupings in the past. The English term "movement" is also used. The men who were the actual combatants during the Emergency were generally called "forest fighters", though the same person might refer to them as "terrorists", "freedom fighters", "the Land and Freedom Army", or "Mau Mau".

The term "Mau Mau" has been explained in many ways, but most Kikuyu whom I met agree that the British initiated use of the term to refer to certain segments of the Kikuyu population.<sup>8</sup> Kikuyu themselves began using the term after the British fashion, but some old men refuse to

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<sup>8</sup> There is a great deal of ambiguity about the derivation of the term "Mau Mau". Vanys (1970) gives a good review of the various theories about the origin of the term. One view is that it is an anagram for Mzungu arudi ulaya, Mwafrika apate uhuru (Europeans return to Europe, the African gets freedom); another popular meaning attached the phrase was that it meant "greedy, greedy", the admonition that mothers give children who eat too much or too fast -- the forest fighters were greedy for land, I was told by informants.

answer questions when the term is used, indicating that the questions are based on colonial propaganda.

The State of Emergency lasted nine years. The major leaders of the movement were imprisoned a few days after the declaration of the State of Emergency, and a few, such as Jomo Kenyatta, remained in detention until shortly before Kenya received its independence in 1963. Large portions of the Kikuyu population were placed in detention camps; in one village in which I worked 70% of the nyumba (elementary or polygynous family) heads were either detained or had a family member detained. Placing people in detention camps did not stop the war in the forest between the Kikuyu and the British and African Home Guard soldiers. It wasn't until a villagization program was begun in 1956 that much of the fighting ceased.

The Kikuyu were removed from their homes which were scattered along the ridges, and placed in large villages, surrounded by barbed wire and ditches. Guards watched the movement of people, controlled forced labor, and enforced curfews. This effectively cut off most of the forest fighters from supplies and information. Within two years the restrictions began to be relaxed, and more Kikuyu were released from detention camps.

While the Kikuyu were contained within the villages, the British began a program of land demarcation and consolidation aimed at making one plot out of the scattered plots of land which the Kikuyu inherit; another aim of

this program was to grant title deeds to the individual land owners. Everywhere this program was used as a system of rewards and punishment for loyalists and pro-freedom fighters respectively, but this was taken to extremes in the area where I worked, Murang'a district.<sup>9</sup> After Independence the entire area was re-demarcated and more equitable consolidations allotted.

This land consolidation program basically accounts for the spatial distribution of the Murang'a Kikuyu today. In most instances land was allocated in areas in which the person had lived, so that mbari groups are still together. Men who had very small holdings, however, were given land nearer to a village or town, and some men's plots are some distance from their kinspeople.

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<sup>9</sup> Sorenson (1967) states that in Murang'a the land consolidation program worked in the following manner: (1) A public notice was posted before a decision was to be made on a particular piece of land. If the owner did not make claim to his land in thirty days the land was forfeited. A large percentage of the people in Murang'a were in detention camps during the Emergency, making it impossible for them to meet the deadline. (2) Loyalist, pro-government, elders were used to adjudicate the cases. These people were not seen as legitimate office-holders-judges by the majority of the Kikuyu, who did see adjudication by elders as legitimate. (3) Loyalist Kikuyu had their cases adjudicated first, and were given the best land. Kikuyu had traditionally inherited land in narrow strips from the top of the ridge to the river valley. In some cases this was maintained but more generally wider plots of well-watered land were allocated first to those who had acted as informers or otherwise shown their worth to the government. (4) People with little acreage were given plots near the Emergency village which was often at some remove from their clan territory.



I did research in three slightly different areas, all within an approximate five mile radius of one another. The village of Kanje fits the description of post-land consolidation settlement patterns. Kanje is one itura of a ridge. I will use the term village to refer to this area. There are approximately 600 people in the village, divided in 68 joint of polygynous families which belong to 15 mbari groups and mainly fall into two of the nine Kikuyu clans; 50% Agaciku and 41% Ethaga.

A dirt road runs along the crest of the ridge. On either side of the road the homesteads of members of one mbari lie in close proximity along the hill; e.g., the first house in mbari ya Burugu belongs to an agricultural officer, his neighbor about 500 yards away is his father, who lives with his two wives, just past this house is the home of his FB, and slightly below that is the home of a FBS, his wife and married son. Each man holds title deed to the property which he occupies, or in the case of the young married sons, will receive a deed when he inherits from his father. Other than more such homesteads, the only buildings in the village are a primary school which was built near the sacred tree used for sacrifices and ceremonies for the itura, and a small grocery shop which sold milk, tobacco, bread, tinned margarine, and a small assortment of dried and packaged products.

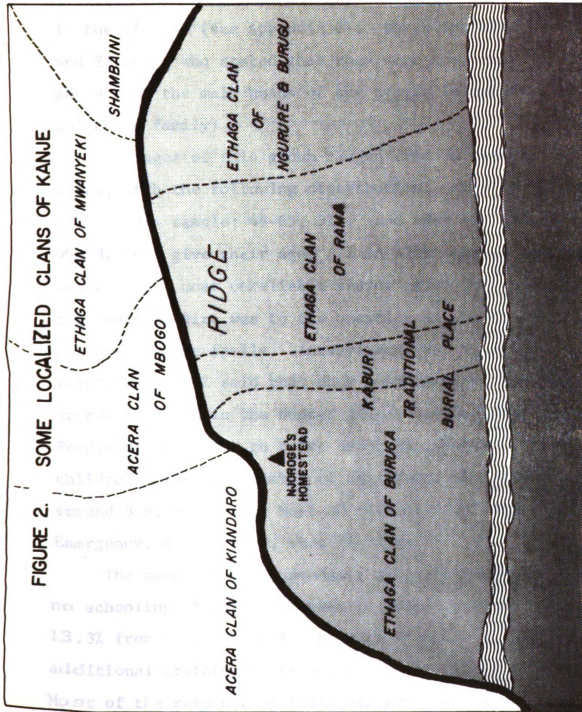


Figure 2: Some Localized Clans of Kanje

### The Population of Kanje

The following information was gained through a questionnaire administered to all of the heads of nyumba in the village (see Appendix C); these included 47 men and 21 women who stated that they were answering in the absence of the male heads of the nyumba (elementary or polygynous family).

The ages of this group ranged from 26 years to 95 years, with the following distribution: ages 26-45 were 44% of this sample; 46-65, 31%; and over 65, 25%. (People who did not give their ages (11 in all) were not included above.) The most unreliable answer given to any item on the questionnaire was to the question of the number of children in the family. Interviewers who knew the respondents well said that they consistently left out one or two children in the number given; it was explained that people did not want to boast about the number of their children. The mean number of children reported then was around 3.8, mode 4.0. Most of the children born after the Emergency, around 1959, were in school.

The majority of respondents themselves had received no schooling (57.4%), 25% went to school for 1-4 years, 13.3% from 5 to 12 years, and three people, 4.3% received additional training after primary or secondary school. Most of the respondents (78%) stated that they did not have wage employment. Those who did work had jobs as agricultural officers, teachers, barworkers, tailors, medical assistant, and casual laborers.

Most of the respondents were born in the Location (87%) or in another location in Murang'a District (10%), but a sizeable number of them (73%) have spent time outside of Murang'a, a number of them working in other major areas in Kenya.

As indicated above, most people say that they live on clan land, 93% of the respondents. The number of acres owned by respondents varied from 0.5 acres to 14.5 acres, with a mean of 4.733 acres and a mode of 3.5 acres. Though I didn't do comparative statistics on this subject, discussions with land officers indicate that the mean number of acres per title holder in Murang'a is higher than that in the other prime Kikuyu districts.

There was no church building in the village and most people said that they went to church infrequently. The religions given by the respondents were Protestant 2.9%, Catholic 35.3%, Muslim 1.5% and traditional Kikuyu religion 50.0%. Most respondents (55%) said they did not visit a mundu mugo (medicine man) within the last year. Those who said that they consulted a mundu mugo (45%) did so for the following reasons: advice on jobs or how to live longer, death of a family member, "disease" in the family, cattle, home or problem in the home, and illness of self or family member.

The dirt road which runs through Kanje is impassable for cars during the rainy season. About five miles from Kanje it meets the tarmac highway which leads to the market

town, Dukani, and to Fort Hall Town (also known as Murang'a town), the capital of the district, referred to generally as Tauni. Most people from Kanje visit Tauni about once a month, giving the following reasons for the visit: official or private business, buy clothes and supplies, seek work or works there, sell produce and livestock, go to hospital or church, or recreation -- drink at bar or on national holiday.

Dukani is a second area in which I worked. It is situated off the main tarmac road about two miles from Tauni. Dukani is built around a grassy square where large outdoor markets are held on Sundays and Wednesdays. Surrounding the marketplace are several business establishments housed in closely connected buildings. The businesses in Dukani include bars, grocery and clothing shops, a seamstress, a pharmacy, butcheries, and a leather worker. Behind the shops on one side of the square are private residences. Most of these are the dwelling places of the businessmen and women who own or work in the shops and bars, as well as some clerks who work in the District capital.

The third area in which I worked is a little more difficult to describe. It is the homestead of Matthew Githingi and lies about one mile north of Dukani, and very near an area referred to as "the Muslim village", Kwako. The Githingi homestead and the village, Kwako, are on a ridge opposite Tauni. Only a few other individuals own land and live with their families on fenced-in farms in this

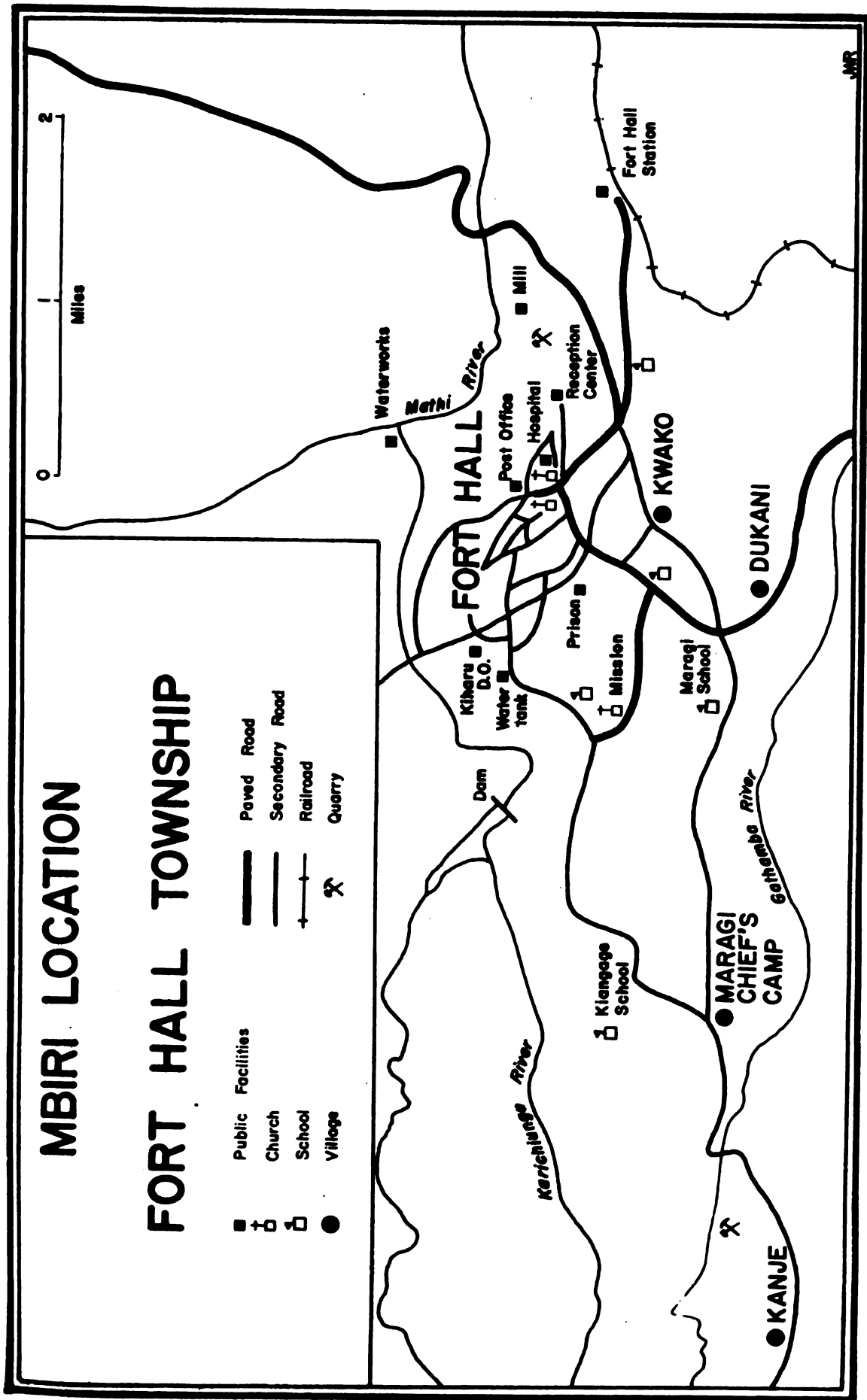


Figure 3: Mbiri Location and Fort Hall Township

area. People sometimes referred to this area as Kwako, but it was not properly in Kwako which was a few hundred yards away. None of the Githingi family ever used that appellation in referring to their area of residence, and indeed, most people I met knew where I lived if I told them that I lived at Githingi's homestead.

### Three Kikuyu Families

In addition to living with the Githingi family, I got to know families in the other two areas described above, one in each area particularly well. Both these families represent extensions of the social network of the Githingi family: the family in Kanje was that of Githingi's sister, and the one in Dukani was that of close friends of Githingi and his wife. Githingi's eldest daughter, Katherine, was my closest friend in his family, though I was on good terms with most of the family. His sister's son, Chege, was a valuable informant and it was through him that I was introduced to Kanje, from where one of my research assistants came. Another assistant was a son of Isaac and Rebecca Mungai, Githingi's friends in Dukani. Their only daughter, Waithera, became a close companion of mine on the occasions when she was in the area.

### The Matthew Githingi Family

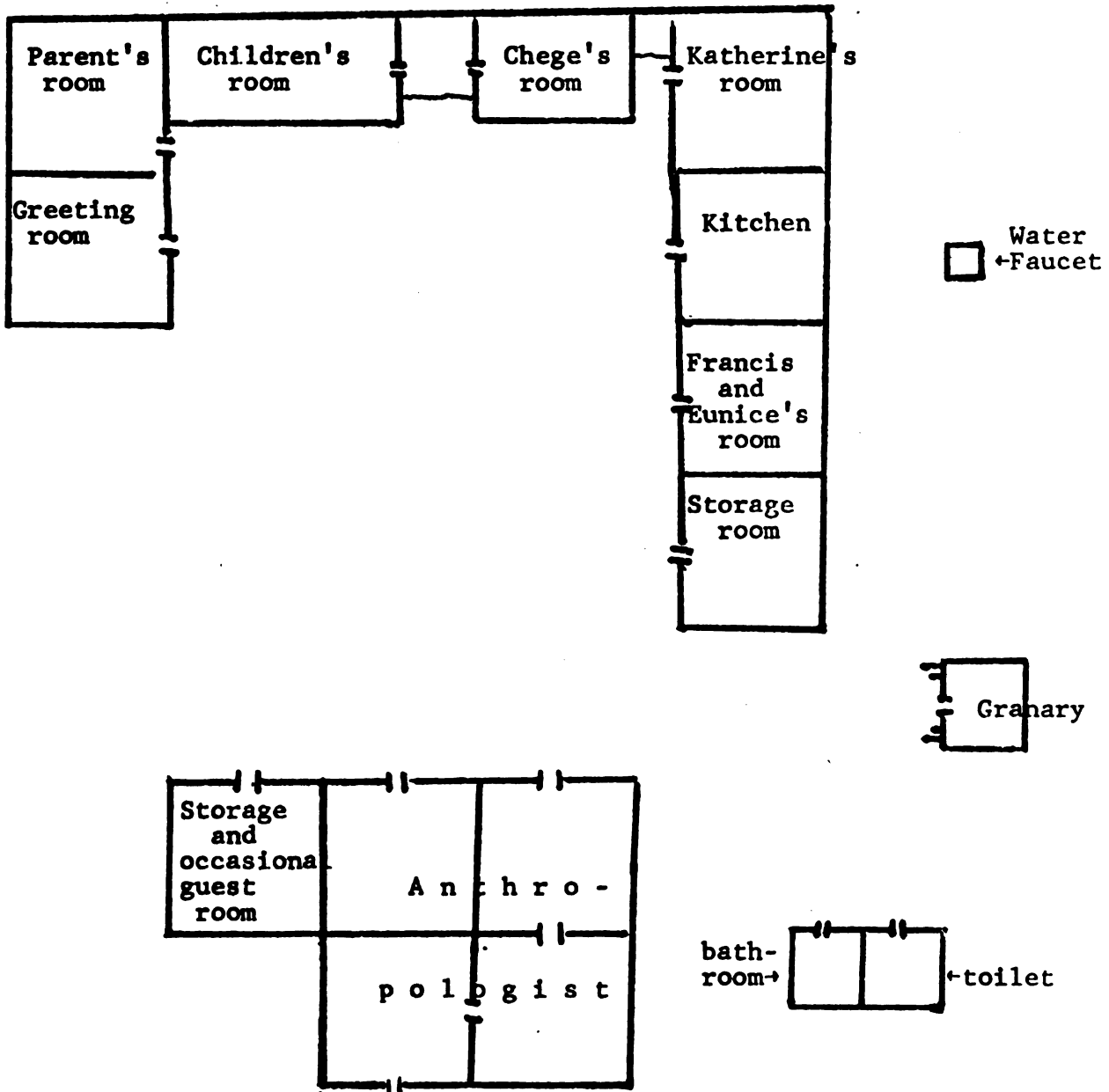
The Matthew Githingi family lives between the market town, Dukani, and Fort Hall town on a fenced-in shamba (farm)

of about two acres. The Githingi's homestead consisted of two main stone buildings surrounding an open courtyard, with farm land behind the family's dwelling. Other buildings on the property were the granary, toilet and bathhouse. The layout of the homestead and the members on my arrival are given in Figure 4 below. The houses on the homestead are made of stones taken from a quarry in which Matthew, the father of the family, is part owner. Shortly after I met him Matthew explained that he had built the houses with an eye to boarders; his family would not live there long. Indeed, a few months after we began living at the Githingi homestead, his wife and the younger children moved to another shamba, not very far away from the village of Kanje.

The people living at the homestead were Matthew's mother, Cũcũ, 77 years old; Matthew, late 40's; his wife, Njoki, mid-forties; their children: Francis, aged 25, with his wife, Eunice, about 21 years old, and infant son, Mzee; Katherine, 19 years and her infant son, Jimmy; two younger sons aged 11 and 7; three younger daughters aged 10, 5, and 3; and Matthew's sister's son, Chege, aged 19. All of the younger children slept together in a room with their grandmother, and the nursemaid. Matthew and Njoki's room was between theirs and the greeting room; Katherine's room was in an open alcove behind the kitchen; Chege's room adjacent to hers, was across an enclosed hallway from the children's room. Francis and Eunice lived next door



Figure 4: Sketch of the Githingi Homestead



to the kitchen and adjacent to a vacant room. I was originally told that the nursemaid was not a relative, but later it was said that she was of Njoki's family.

### Matthew Githingi

Matthew Githingi was first referred to us by his son as "my father, the businessman, a capitalist", all said with obvious pride. Matthew himself uses the appellation "businessman" to refer to himself; his wife says he is "the farmer". Indeed Matthew owns quite a bit of property: two farms, the one described above and the one near Kanje; another large farm in a neighboring area which is not under cultivation; a bar in the market town; a corn "mill" in the district capital; and a stone quarry. He is joint owner of the mill, quarry and large farm; the farm to which his wife and younger children later moved is part of his family inheritance.

Matthew remains busy, looking after all his interests, but his main interest, and the one which takes up most of his time, is his bar. The bar is rather popular, attracting mostly men of Matthew's age, around 45 or older. On weekends and holidays, olden women are often seen sitting together in one of the back rooms. European-type beer is sold there, but most of Githingi's customers prefer njohi muratina, Kikuyu honey beer. This beer is much cheaper than the European-style beer bottled in the national breweries. It sells for twenty-five cents a glass (one quarter of a

shilling) compared to the two shillings per bottle of Tusker's bottled beer. Njohi muratina may be brewed and bottled at home. Matthew uses a couple of rooms behind his bar for this purpose. The beer is put into clean soda bottles and stoppered with pieces of newspaper; such a bottle would sell for one-half a shilling.

Matthew spends a great deal of time travelling around this and the neighboring district in search of honey to buy in bulk. For this purpose he owns a truck, and has hired a man to drive it. Members of Matthew's family look upon the truck as a vehicle to be used in business and seldom ask to be taken anywhere in it. When his daughter-in-law complained that she would have to move to the hospital because she was going on the night shift and didn't want to walk so far at night, I asked why she didn't ask her father-in-law to let John, the driver, take her there. She replied in astonishment that the truck was needed for business. Nonetheless I did see the truck being used for other purposes -- to take the family to the Catholic church on Sunday, to carry the coffin and members of a funeral party, and transporting people to and from a New Year's Day Celebration and other public meetings.

A wealthy man, by Murang'a standards, Matthew did not lavish his money on conspicuous consumer goods. His house was simply furnished, with upholstered chairs in the "greeting" room and a radio, which he kept locked away most of the time, his most obvious luxuries. Family meals were

cooked over a charcoal burner or in fireplace in the kitchen, and though he owned a china tea set, metal teapot, cups and saucers were most frequently used. Most of his children dressed as did the others in the area -- school uniform during the day, simple cotton dresses and underpants for the girls on evenings and weekends, and shorts and tee-shirts for the boys. The children had very few changes of clothing, as was typical of the area, but unlike others they did have shoes which they wore when "dressing up." Matthew's second son, Stephen, his avowed favorite, who attends boarding school in another district, was an exception. Stephen wore shoes most of the time, and was bought new clothes during each school holiday. Matthew himself wore cotton and polyester trousers and shirt, while his wife, Njoki, usually wore cotton dresses and went barefoot as did most of the women of her age. Only once did the couple change their style of dress; that was for a District-wide Harambee meeting at the Chief's camp (see Figure 3 above).

"Harambee" is a Swahili work which is said to mean "pull together". It is the slogan used by the government to encourage self-help groups and is often included in the names of such groups. The major Harambee meetings took place while I was in Murang'a. One was sponsored by the Group for the Murang'a College of Technology, and featured President Kenyatta breaking the ground for the future School. Dances by men and women in traditional garb and

by members of Women's Harambee groups in their matching dresses and scarves added to the festivities of the day. A similar festive attitude exuded at the smaller meeting for which the Githingis took special care in dressing. The reason for celebration was that members of a Women's Harambee group had raised enough money to buy mabati (corrugated iron sheets) for the roofs of their houses. Members of the group paraded from the district capital to the Chief's camp, beating on the rolled sheets as drums. This occasion was the first time that I had been asked to join the district, division and location officials and other important people who were sitting under a shelter behind the speaker's platform. I found Matthew and Njoki sitting there, Matthew in conversation with several men, one of whom was his partner in the mill. When the fund raising part of the meeting began Matthew contributed generously.

As an elected member of the County Council, Matthew has a say in some of the decisions affecting his area, yet he sees the County Council as relatively ineffectual and says that he has no interest in politics. When questioned closely he continued to disavow interest, but suggested that he was considering supporting his sister's husband for office. Other than that he expressed little interest in the coming election, which ultimately was postponed because of the general national "apathy". It is clear that this is one area which Matthew did not want to talk about openly

with me, for after I returned to the States I received a letter from one member of the family saying that Matthew often held "political" meetings at the homestead, sometimes lasting late into the night.

Matthew was also reluctant to talk about the time he spent in detention camps, about six years; but he did tell me why the Kikuyu fought for uhuru (freedom/independence). After he had been drinking he came home late one night and knocked on my door. He said that he wanted to tell me about Kikuyu customs, in which I had said that I was interested. We had only briefly talked about marriage practices, when he began to tell me a series of reasons "why we got uhuru". First was the "kipande" which all Africans had to wear around their necks. On the sheet of paper carried in the kipande would be his name, thumb print, the names of his employers and date of termination of employment; sometimes comments about the wearer would also be included. Any European could stop an African and ask to see his kipande. If he wasn't wearing one he could be imprisoned. Next he mentioned the land -- European farmed land which belonged to his grandfather. During the colonial period Matthew had worked on a European farm, part of which he now owned -- the large farm in the neighboring district mentioned above. Last on his list was a series of indignities suffered at the hands of white men: "even a little European boy, this high, would have to be called 'master', while he called African old men 'boy' "; Africans

couldn't purchase European beer; they had to stop and take off their hats when a European drove by; an African driving a car could not pass a European driving a car; and any European could take any African to court and have him thrown into jail. The end of the recital of each abuse was punctuated by the bitter statement "that's why we got uhuru."

Matthew is generally assumed to be a man of few words; both his eldest son and daughter described him to be so. Another member of the family said, when he is at home "there is no noise," but at any other time it would be difficult keeping all his children quiet.

#### Njoki, Wife of Githingi

A quiet, self-assured woman, Njoki never raised her voice, and was seldom angry. When I first arrived we made attempts at conversations, and always managed to be understood when we were talking about food or working in the garden, but we never had a long discussion on any subject. A number of reasons account for this, including the reluctance of her children to interpret for her, often saying that she must be drunk if she wanted to talk, and the fact that by the time I had achieved any facility with the Kikuyu language, she was living at the other shamba (farm). Already at the beginning of my stay she went to the other shamba often, to check on the garden and construction of the houses. If she stayed at the homestead where I was

living she walked about the garden checking on the progress of plants, did a considerable amount of the weeding or harvesting and organized the family to do farming chores or hired workers to do the remainder. She went shopping on market days and when there was sufficient surplus, took the children with her to sell the extra produce. I never saw her do any of the food preparation or cooking herself. Leaving this to her maid, Njoki often left the homestead around dinner time and returned a couple of hours later after having a few beers in the market town.

When she moved to the other shamba in Maragi she took the younger children with her. Her husband's mother, who was addressed and referred to by the kinship term, *Cũcũ*, had by this time gone to live in Nairobi with Joseph Mwangi, Matthew's younger brother, to get more comprehensive treatment at Kenyatta Hospital. Njoki continued to look after both farms, but now shared the cooking and housekeeping duties with her maid. Water had to be brought some distance, up hill, from the river and the upkeep on the mud-walled house was more exacting. At the first the children didn't like the move. Wairimu, the ten-year-old, said that she missed Jimmy, her older sister's baby. Wairimu had often complained about having to take care of Jimmy, but when the time came to go she and another of her younger sisters debated leaving him, but decided that they would rather stay together with their mother. I saw the children about every Sunday. Either they would come to the old homestead



after church or I would visit them and their mother. Whenever I visited Njoki would show me the latest development in the garden, and briefly talk about the children, their progress in school or activities at home.

### Cũcũ, Grandmother

Cũcũ is a wonder; a woman of about seventy years whose joie de vivre had not diminished though her health was deteriorating. Much of the laughter and warmth in the household centered around Cũcũ. She looked after the children while the nursemaid cooked and cleaned, and Njoki worked in one or the other gardens. A very indulgent grandmother, she often held the three youngest children. Their oldest sister said they were more attached to Cũcũ than to their mother. The other young children often teased Cũcũ, but she took their jokes and pranks in stride, sometimes giving them mock lectures on proper behavior.

When it was time to weed the garden Cũcũ joined the women and children in this work, but she did not do the more vigorous harvesting and threshing. When she wasn't taking care of the children, she helped with the preparation of food, but she mostly sat in the sun talking to the others while they worked.

Cũcũ was ill during my stay in Kenya. She complained of back pains and leg cramps, but I was never told the name of her ailment. (I generally found it hard to find out the name of a disease, for most Kikuyu weren't interested

in labelling the illness, only in finding a cure which worked.) A few months after I began living with the Githingi family, Cũcũ left to live with her younger son in Nairobi. She supposedly would receive better treatment at the Kenyatta Hospital there. A letter I recieved after I left the field reported that Cũcũ had had a leg amputated.

### Francis, Son of Githingi

Francis, the eldest son, was unemployed at the beginning of my stay. At home with the women and younger children, he sometimes stayed in his room and read or set out to visit friends. In the evening he would often go to a club meeting in the Muslim village, Kwako. Because of his concentrated interest in that club and in the neighboring community, one of his friends once asked, "What is he becoming, Muslim?"

Francis told us that he was on sick leave from his job at a bank in Nairobi. He was having trouble getting his papers transferred from Kenyatta Hospital in Nairobi to the hospital at the provincial headquarters in the next district. His ailment, bilharzia, I believe, was often untreated, causing him considerable discomfort. Francis spent a great deal of time with us during the first few months of our stay; oftentimes he appeared pale and distressed but he kept up animated conversation in very fluent English. He, as well as his father, was particularly interested in the American political scene, but Francis also enjoyed analyzing

national politics in Kenya and the Emergency. His conversation often included discussion of his friends, many of whom were black Americans. He once said, "I think I know almost every Black American in Kenya because they all use my bank in Nairobi." Needless to say Francis was prone to hyperbole; his sister later told me that both he and his wife were great liars. She added that Francis was not on sick leave but actually had been fired for some irregularity concerning money. Indeed he never returned to Nairobi, but instead got a job through the County Council as market inspector, after almost a year of unemployment. Whenever possible I always double-checked any information that I was given, and found that Francis gave straight information sometimes, "fancied up" information often, and provided unsupported fabrications on occasions, one of which, significant because of its motivation and consequences, will be discussed below.

#### Eunice, Wife of Francis

The common accusation made against Francis is that he is "proud". This too was said about his wife Eunice, a nurse at the hospital in town. More than one person told me that Eunice deliberately did not come to visit or eat in my room so that it wouldn't seem that she was trying to get something from me. I visited with Francis and Eunice, and sometimes their friends, in their room many times, but more often talked with her in the courtyard. A talkative

a lively person, the twenty-one year old seemed most to enjoy discussing child-rearing practices and events in town and the hospital.

Eunice's mother's father and his second wife lived on the ridge opposite ours. Most of Eunice's early years were spent in Kirinyaga, a neighboring district, at the home of her grandfather's first wife, her mother's mother. Eunice's mother made her natal home her permanent home until she married a member of the Baluhya tribe and moved to the Western District. After Eunice finished high school she attended a Nurse's training school in Kisumu in central Nyanza. Later she worked in Kisumu and both she and Francis worked in Mombasa for a short period.

Usually Eunice was up early no matter what shift she had at the hospital. She closely supervised her maid in preparing the baby's food. During my stay Eunice had four different maids and went through one period in which the family's nursemaid looked after her baby. When I started living there, her 10 year old mother's sister's daughter, Wanjiru, worked for her. She, however, was dismissed in an incident which I'll describe in Case 2 in Chapter 3. Once in referring to the girl who worked for them, Francis said "my maid." When Eunice questioned him he switched to "Eunice's maid," then to "Mzee's ( the baby's term of reference) maid," but was finally told that she is to be referred to as "Mzee's ayah" (a term used by Europeans to describe their African nursery maids). Eunice

clearly wanted to have a European-type life style, though she did not like Europeans themselves. The fact that she stopped breast feeding her baby at four months, in contradistinction to the Kikuyu norm (even among working mothers) and teased Katherine who continued to breast feed her baby for several months more, is evidence of her desire to imitate a European lifestyle. It seems that much of this high evaluation of the European lifestyle was already internalized, for she seemingly felt secure in herself that she was acting as a "modern" woman and needed little confirmation of lifestyle which she wanted to adopt.

Eunice would leave for the day after giving her maid her orders for the day. She walked about two miles to the hospital, and returned most days for lunch. At the end of the day, when she came home, she usually prepared a special meal for Francis and herself, complaining that Francis could not eat the maize and beans which the family ate. In the evening, she might walk with Francis to Kwako or stay at home with the baby.

#### Katherine, Daughter of Githingi

Katherine, a strong-willed and determined young woman, was my best friend in the family. She spoke excellent English, and sometimes interpreted for me, but she was not as competent as Francis in informal English and American usage.

Katherine, Matthew's eldest daughter, usually remained at home during the day -- washing, cleaning her room, and taking care of her baby. She joined in the work in the garden as did Eunice who spent several full week days harvesting corn when the season came, and supervised the activities of the younger children. She seldom went anywhere in the evenings, many of which I spent in her room talking to her, her father's sister's son, Chege, and Cũcũ, her grandmother, to the accompaniment of the children's play. On Sundays, however, Katherine usually put on her best clothes and took the children into town to visit her mother's sister. On such occasions she was animated and bright, appearing to be the nineteen year old girl that she was. She searched her aunt's place for food immediately upon entering, and seemed to relish the opportunity to do so. Katherine's Tata (Aunt) Njeri, was also a young woman and the two of them listened to the radio, played records on a battery-operated record player, and danced and sang.

At other times Katherine was seldom moved to laugh. She was well aware of the monotony of her chores and carried them out without great interest. A high school graduate, Katherine had attended boarding school in Thompson's Falls, almost 100 miles away. Shortly after graduation she surprised her parents by giving birth to a baby boy. She named Jacob Mungai as the father of the child. Agreeing to accept responsibility for the pregnancy,

Jacob said that he would marry her. Much of Katherine's time and interest surrounded getting married.

### The Mungai Family of Dukani

The Mungai family was one of the few families living in Dukani who were not involved in a business of some sort. The father of the family, Isaac, was an old man of ill-health who had not worked on his land himself for some time. His wife, Rebecca, seemed younger and more vital. She certainly was more active than he, often helping other women in Dukani and sometimes working with them in their gardens. Only one other member of this family lived permanently in Dukani, the Mungai's youngest son, Moses. He was a recent high school graduate who worked in a bank in Fort Hall Town. Waithera, the Mungai's only daughter, maintained a residence in Dukani where her sons lived with a woman whom she hired to take care of them. The other Mungai children included Dr. Irungu, a graduate of Makerere University who worked in a hospital in Njuja, Uganda; Githuni, a medical student in France; Jacob, Katherine's fiance, who worked for the Immigration Department at the beginning of my stay but was a university student when I left; and Kibaki, my assistant, who had just finished Form VI when I came, and was also at the University of Nairobi when I left Kenya.

Waithera worked for the Board of Land Settlement and Consolidation. Her job required that she travel a great

deal; she had lived in Mombasa, Kisumu, Kakamega, and was working in Machakos during my stay in Kenya. Waichera had three healthy, active sons, but lost three daughters -- one of whom died shortly after my arrival in Murang'a. Like her brothers, Waithera had never married, but she was thinking more about the possibility of settling down and keeping her children with her. A generous and kind person, Waithera had just begun to make her own interests paramount.

The Mungai family is intricately connected to the Githingi family. They were the first persons outside of the Githingi's kinship network whom I met. The friendship of the Mungai and Githingi families went back many years; I was told that Isaac and Rebecca Mungai were "best man and best maid" at the wedding of Matthew and Njoki. Jacob, their son who is to marry Katherine, was one of the best men at Francis' and Eunice's wedding.

Members of this family are exceptionally well-educated and well-placed. Waithera explained that her father was once a rich man, but spent all his money educating his children and is now poor. His children's success does not seem to have substantially changed his economic position. A number of the families in Dukani are relatively rich, the heads of these families are usually "businessmen". Their sons were generally educated through high school, and sometimes Form VI, pre-university curriculum or teacher's college, as was the case with the Mungai's son, Kibaki and two of his friends. When Kibaki began helping me in the



field, a number of these young men shared the work. Kibaki was reluctant to enter into contractual agreement with me: he asked how could he work as an interpreter or research assistant? He would only work for the government or a large corporation, but if I needed help he would certainly help me out without pay. "Without pay" involved my purchasing beer for him and his friends, and making strategic loans. Kibaki turned out to be a diligent worker, who continued to do translations even while job-hunting in Nairobi. His friends, on the other hand, often tagged along on interviews for a lark, and in spite of themselves asked illuminating questions, pointed out persons who had special knowledge, and spent many hours with me talking about themselves and their hopes and wishes.

#### Mbari ya Burugu of Kanje

Kibaki eventually left the area to attend the University of Nairobi and most of his friends also left to teach school or to seek jobs elsewhere. My next assistant came from the village of Kanje. By the time I met George Irungu I already knew several people from the village, including his father. George was a member of the mbari (family) into which Matthew's sister, Watere, had married. Her son, Chege, lived at the same homestead that I did. When I was searching for household help he brought a "cousin" to work for me, and helped her get another cousin to replace her when she left to have a baby. He also brought George to me,

saying that he was from "mine" (his home area) and too was a "cousin". After George started working with me, I spent more time visiting and interviewing in Kanje, where I had done formal interviews earlier.

### Njoroge, Father of Chege

Njoroge was of average height, about 5'5", but his small-boned frame and light weight gave him an overall impression of smallness. I first met him after I had been in the field several weeks. His wife, a lively and energetic woman, had come to visit the Githingi family several times; but he had not accompanied her to the homestead, instead lingering with friends at a bar in the market town. That first meeting was rather awkward. His son, Chege, introduced us; I complimented him on his fine son; he thanked me in halting English and went on to tell me about his job as agriculture officer. As time went on he became more comfortable using English, and while we never talked for long periods, we did deal with issues of importance to him.

As agriculture officer he felt it was imperative that he set an example by using the kind of innovation which he wanted others to adopt. Crop rotation, use of fertilizer, and cultivation of coffee trees, are some of the practices he was interested in promoting. His coffee trees represented one of his major projects. Notoriously difficult to take care of because of the time and attention they

they demand, coffee is a prestigious crop, especially because the cultivation of coffee trees was denied to Africans during the colonial period for fear of the spread of disease, and lowering of the price of Kenya coffee on the world market. Today the price of coffee is relative low -- Njoroge gets only about 20 shillings a year from the produce of his few trees. Another enterprise that Njoroge began which was not very successful was the raising of milk cows. He had one cow and a calf on his land when I arrived. While showing me the enclosure he had built for them and the grain planted for them, he admitted that he had had two cows die in the past. These though, he said, were doing well. Later during my stay these developed problems and he bought another cow, but kept this one on the Githingi's shamba on the ridge opposite his. My assistant, George, Njoroge's neighbor and relative, told me that it was widely believed that the reason Njoroge had problems with his cows was that he was living on land which had a curse placed on it by his grandmother. I never questioned Njoroge about this belief.

### Chege and George

Chege and George were near the same age, around 20 years old. George had finished Form IV at Murang'a High School the term before he began working for me, and awaited the results of his certificate examination to see how high his standing would be. With the limited job

market in Kenya, only those who scored well on the certificate examination had a chance of finding a good job. The scores also determined who could go on to college and university.

George was rather anxious around me when we were first introduced, but later relaxed and began to ask me questions about my life. He was quick to give a Kikuyu proverb or story to highlight incidents which occurred, and of all the young people I met had the greatest knowledge of and pride in Kikuyu customs.

I had known George for more than a month when I learned that he was married. When I asked him about it he first denied it, then admitted that he was unwillingly wed to a girl whose child he fathered. He lived with her and the child in a mud-walled house on his father's property.

Chege lived with his mother's brother, Matthew Githingi, at the Githingi shamba near Dukani. A young man of great intensity and sensitivity, Chege seemed to relax best when visiting with his brothers and sisters in Kanje. At Matthew's shamba, in Dukani and in town Chege smarted under the onus of poverty. Many town people of his age had more spending money than he did.

Chege was one of my best informants, often bringing bits of information to me to discuss and mull over. Like his mother, he seemed to enjoy being around people, and generally gave respect to persons of all ages and statuses.

The Context of Research -- Summary

The Kikuyu of the highlands of Central Kenya are a Bantu-speaking ethnic group whose main economic activities are agricultural. Historically the Kikuyu lived in the homesteads scattered along the ridges of their hilly homeland. These homesteads were grouped according to mbari (family group) member and sub-clan membership. The major territorial division under which mbari's were subsumed was the rugongo (ridge). The governance of the ridges was in the hands of the athuri (elders) who achieved their position through the age-grade system as well as their personal qualities. Loose associations of ridges were brought about through their reliance on one medicine man or a powerful leader of a rugongo. Though the Kikuyu as a group only achieved a semblance of concerted action through the oathing which united them in opposition to the Europeans who colonized their country, they do all consider themselves to belong to one family, the mbari of Gikuyu and Mumbi, the first man and woman.

The Kikuyu share many customs with neighboring ethnic groups. Their relations span the range from friendly relations in which trade and intermarriage occurred and hostile ones, characterized by warfare and raids.

Kikuyu have been active in Kenya politics almost from the beginning of the colonial period. Protest over land alienation and Kikuyu lack of self-determination laid the foundations for the political movement which was catapulted into "Mau Mau" war by the colonial government's declaration

of the Emergency in 1952.

The Kikuyu upon whom this study is based vary according to place of residence, village, market town or separated homestead; age, 95 to 19; occupation, agricultural officer, businessman, nurse, student, bank clerk; attitudes toward European ideas, pro-western attitudes versus emphasis on Kikuyu customs; and personality characteristics, reticent to gregarious. The Githingi family lived in a separated homestead. Matthew Githingi, the father of this family, was recognized as a wealthy businessman. While both he and his wife adhered to many Kikuyu customs, they at the same time stressed the importance of education for their sons and daughters. The adult children of the Githingi family and the eldest son's wife in addition to placing emphasis on certain family ties saw their future livelihoods in the modern economic sphere. These young people were well-educated, but had not received as much formal education as the Mungai sons, four of whom attended universities. Nonetheless, the Mungai family saw itself as financially poor. The younger members of the family did not like the life in the rural town, but the mother of the family enjoyed the fellowship of the older residents of the town. The families in the village Kanje were economically in the worst position; the land used for subsistence was impoverished and the money of the few wage-earners thinly distributed. These villagers believed in and practiced many of the traditional Kikuyu customs.

### CHAPTER 3: FIVE CASES OF KIN INTERACTION

The kinship morality of the Kikuyu includes shared understandings which hold that kin should be loyal to one another, share responsibility for one another's well-being, and have affection for each other. These understandings may be deemed "prescriptive understandings" (cf. Swartz, 1975, in press) in that they are ideas which people hold about what should be done; they basically are positive expectations through which Kikuyu may reasonably predict the behavior of other kin. Behavior, however, is not always in accordance with these expectations, nor are all kin subject to the same expectations, as Leakey and Kenyatta demonstrate in the discussion above. In the cases in this chapter, the behavior of kin, primarily members of the domestic group, will be examined. Actors in the cases have stated or otherwise indicated that they hold expectations that kin should be loyal, responsible for each other, and have affection for one another. In some cases individuals act in accord with these expectations, in other, competing expectations or incentives seem to supersede those having to do with kin.

Just as respect, modesty and the other characteristics of kin action discussed by Leakey and Kenyatta are not equally distributed throughout the domain of kin, i.e. not all kin are expected to behave modestly toward one another, so too the understandings which hold for present-day

Kikuyu are not thought to be uniformly distributed. In regard to the understandings concerning affection among kin, informants especially stressed the grandparents-grandchildren relationship as one in which affection and the demonstration of affection played an important part. The other relationship which informants readily spoke of as an affectionate one was that between mother and child. The relationship between mother and child, but most strongly between mother and daughter was thought of as being characterized by understandings concerning affection. Leakey suggested that the reverse was true traditionally, that the most enduring relationship was that between son and mother, and that the daughter's tie to the mother weakened with time as the daughter was incorporated into her mother's family. In view of this it is interesting to note that this idea was first mentioned to me by brothers whose unmarried sister was the prime source of support for the family. Her permanent home was near her parent's, though she often worked some distance away from home. This sister, as well, held the same view, and explained her brothers' failure to change their demeanor or their sudden silence when their mother entered their presence in terms of showing less fondness for their mother. Women who live virilocally also expressed a great fondness for their mothers. One woman nostalgically discussed her relationship with her mother and stressed the warmth and closeness of the tie. Only one man felt free



to express his feeling for his mother -- he spoke of her with obvious admiration and pride, but this affect was most clearly evident when he compared this relationship to the one he had with his father, with whom he was not on good terms.

No one told me that they loved their fathers, and unfortunately, I did not pose the simple, straightforward question to anyone. As noted earlier, the behavior associated with respect sometimes stands in contradistinction to behavior by which affection is expressed. One instance in which affection cum familiarity was demonstrated between father and son, rather than the kind of affection characterized by "love and respect" was ridiculed by several Kikuyu. This father bought his son a beer and drank with him; informants said that the father was not acting responsibly toward his son. The familiarity demonstrated between the two was thought to be improper and frankly ludicrous.

The father in the Kikuyu family today seems to combine authoritarian and nurturant behavior. His presence and demeanor command respect, but when the situation calls for it he can be gentle and outwardly affectionate. A sense of awe and sometimes adoration accompanies the feelings for the father. In the Githingi family, the father, Matthew Githingi, was both feared and cherished. His appearance at his homestead was usually enough to send the children running to their rooms to play or talk, or straight

to the completion of neglected tasks, yet when his youngest daughter was ill, Matthew stayed home with her. And on one day took a blanket outside so that the two of them could lie in the sun and rest.

Whenever Matthew Githingi was at home in the early evening there was little noise. Chege, his sister's son, said that he had to be "found studying" whenever Matthew arrived. He always stopped his conversation and headed to his room when he heard Matthew's truck approach. Francis was also affected by his father's presence. Normally very talkative, Francis seldom spoke when he was around his father, except to translate difficult or misunderstood passages. Matthew himself was more verbal when his children were not present. He discussed a wider range of topics and relaxed and laughed more during those times.

Katherine, Matthew Githingi's daughter, exhibited a profound respect of her parents, especially her father. Once in chastizing me for misconduct she told me that it was very bad of me to leave my clothes on the line overnight, for her father took them in at night and rehung them in the morning. To my husband, she said, "That's not work for my father to be doing!" That was woman's work which her father should not have to do, and moreover, he should not have to do chores for others. Even though it was me that she was annoyed with, the last comment was directed toward my husband; in a sense she seemed to be appealing to his idea of what is appropriate for males to

do, and to his authority over me which should be used to get me to do the right thing in this situation.

Another relationship which may be subsumed under the understanding concerning affection is the relationship between tata (MZ and FZ) and her sister's or brother's children. This relationship tends to be obviously warm and close. Visits from both the father's sister and mother's sister of the Githingi children were anxiously awaited. Katherine, the eldest daughter, often took her younger brothers and sisters to visit their mother's sister in town. Once she entered the house, whether or not she found her aunt there, she would begin to search for food. After eating she might try on some of her aunt's clothes, and if her aunt were present the two of them, who were rather close in age, would talk about events in town or at the homestead, or about their plans for the future; listen to or dance to records on the aunt's battery-operated record player.

The relationship between mama and his sister's son and that between cousins, both patrilineal and matrilineal was pointed out as potentially close. Whenever the question of the relationship between mother's brother and sister's son was stressed in conversation it became clear that factors other than the genealogical relationship were essential in the expectations about this pattern of interaction.

The mother's brother-sister's son relationship and the father's brother-brother's son relationship both share some of the same qualities. The interaction between both sets of relatives can be warm or stern, genial or disciplinarian. What seems to matter most are (1) the status of the individuals -- a young unmarried mother's brother and a young sister's son are likely to have close, familial relationship, while an older mother's brother and young sister's son may take the respect given to senior relatives as the hallmark of the relationship; (2) proximity -- mother's brothers and father's brothers who live some distance away from their relatives are likely to be treated with greater hospitality and special courtesy than people who stand in those relationships who live near or with their brother's or sister's children; and (3) wealth -- a sister's son or brother's son might change his behavior in relation to both categories of relatives in accordance to the potential he sees for advancement through the help of either or both of them. e.g., Chege's, Githingi's sister's son's behavior toward both Githingi and his father's brother was controlled and polite; having established himself as a responsible young man he might later ask them to help him in seeking employment and in other financial difficulties.

The notion of responsibility, another of the understandings in Kikuyu kinship morality, ensues from the set of rights and obligations associated with categories of kin, but is a more general statement than a list of specific

rights and duties. It holds that the activities of one relative influences the development of another in various ways. The area of kin interaction in which I saw this most highly developed was in the relationship between brothers and sisters, but in Case 1, reported below, the responsibility of father's brother for brother's daughter, and of parent for child, is discussed. Young men stated that they were responsible for their sisters at least until those sisters were out of school, at which time they might be considered adults. If their sisters became pregnant before marrying, the young man might be asked how he allowed his sister such freedom or why he abdicated his responsibility. One young man explained that he would take his sisters to dances, but would not let men "touch" them so as to arouse them.

Traditionally, the belief about the nature of interaction with ancestral spirits was typical of this notion of responsibility. There were two kinds of ancestral spirits: (1) The spirit of the father and mother who communicate directly with their children and can advise or reproach them, and (2) clan spirits, which are interested in the welfare and prosperity of the clan. Both these are manifestations of the principle of responsibility for kin. In questioning old informants I found that they had no interest in ancestral spirits, and spoke only of Ngai (God), as the supernatural being to contend with. Sacrifices for the well-being of the tribe which Kenyatta (1938)

ascribe to "communion with the ancestors" are today spoken of in terms of sacrifices to Ngai, god. The mundu mugo (medicine man) who in the past sought to explain events through the supposed action of ancestral spirits, now looks to the quality of the relationship between living kin or the actions of sorcerers. All these areas, however, indicate a kind of relationship between kin, such that they are responsible for one another's social and moral well-being.

Responsibility under the axiom of amity does not necessarily imply financial support, but rather than the kinsperson's life in the broadest sense is entrusted to his/her kin. They are concerned about and share in the development of his or her personality, morality and general success in life, whether that be defined as generally as an ability to lead a "good life" or as specifically as getting married or even surviving. When a person becomes ill relatives try to find the cause and prevent death through modern or traditional medicines and prescriptions for behavior. If a person dies relatives take charge of disposing of the body and having Christian and/or traditional rites performed over it. Traditionally a ritual of purification would be in order for all nyumba and mucii members who touched the body. The relatives of a person believed to have died of poison also had special rites to get rid of the poison.

The mother's curse which Leakey mentioned as a supernatural sanction controlling the behavior of sons is also applicable here. Mothers are responsible for one's well-being, and to the extent that one fulfills the duties expected of him or her by a mother then the person insures his or her own well-being. George Irungu, one of my assistants, told the following stories to reinforce belief in the power of supernatural sanctions which bind relatives together. They are all incidents of which he supposedly has first hand knowledge:

1. A woman did not take care of her husband's mother while he was in Nairobi. The woman's mother-in-law starved, and was eaten by dogs as she lay dying. The woman was later stricken with an inexplicable disease which caused her mouth not to open [lockjaw]. She died from this. Doctors and the medicine man could not cure her.
2. George Irungu's grandmother left her husband's land, but could not live with her son, his father, because there was a curse on his land. Even though she lived at another place, they took care of her. She might have cursed them in her old age, but it could not take effect because they had treated her correctly.

As Routledge indicated in the passage quoted above, page 69 , a person who is of no relationship could neither harm nor benefit one. What is indicated here is that to the extent that Kikuyu believe that people who share the same name or are from the same ancestors therefore share the same spirit or soul, they also believe that they share in the same destiny. They are responsible for one another. Moreover, being kin, even affinal, as the woman in the story makes one vulnerable to the influence of one another.

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Loyalty, the last of the understandings discussed here, emerged in conflict situations, where kin have the opportunity to be loyal or disloyal. Kinspeople differentially define their kin according to the situation in which they find themselves. The patrilineal principle is by far the most prevalent one used among the Kikuyu in defining kin, but sometimes matrilineal or affinal ties may be emphasized in contradistinction to one another or to other competing allegiances. One of the clearest statements of loyalty I received was Katherine's comment that her brother's wife should not speak with non-family members about her (the sister-in-law's) husband or father-in-law. Outsiders or non-family members in this instance included Katherine's "affines". The sister-in-law was seen as part of her husband's family, in this respect, but on other occasions both the sister and the sister-in-law were reported to have seen the sister-in-law as a non-family member. In another instance, discussed in Case 4 below, one young man stood with a patrilineal cousin as opposed to his MBS. The loyalty demonstrated there indicates the primacy of the patrilineal principle when it is juxtaposed to matrilineal ties.

### The Distribution of Affection, Responsibility and Loyalty:

#### A Summary

The three shared understandings about kinship morality are variously distributed within the Kikuyu population

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which I knew. Generally, these family members felt that grandparents should love grandchildren, mothers and daughters should be close. In the absence of specific statements to the effect I inferred from observed behavior and other related statements that sons feel a relative fondness for their mothers, children admire and revere their fathers, and the relationship with tata is close, familiar and warm. The relationship between cousins was given as one in which expectations of affections hold, while father's brother and mother's brother relationships tended to include non-genealogical factors in the very make-up of the expectations.

Responsibility is a generalized and diffuse concept, but was most carefully pointed out in terms of the brother-sister relationship, and parent-child relationship. It can include other relatives who feel they share a bond with each other. Those who share the same name are thought in a sense to share the same destiny, and the fulfillment of rights and duties associated with specific categories of kin contributes to the actors well-being of all kin involved. When things go wrong, it is often the nature of the interaction among kin which is looked to for explanations.

Loyalty involves the declaration of alliance with one group of kin as opposed to another, or with kin as opposed to the rest of the world. The interpretation of understandings concerning loyalty come from the analysis of field notes in which people declared their positions in conflict

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### The Case Studies

The five cases presented below represent instances of interaction among kin, primarily members of the domestic group; in each at least one person identified at least one of the understandings which help make up Kikuyu morality as being of importance in the interaction. Two of the cases have been expanded by including events which happened before my arrival, but are crucial to the cases.

It is hoped that presentation of case material will illuminate social processes involved in family relations. Van Velsen (1967:145) states the following goals for the extended case method:

The use of extended-case material...is aimed at illuminating certain regularities of social processes, not at highlighting personal idiosyncracies, therefore in collecting and presenting data on the actual behavior of individuals reference must also be made to the norms which govern or are said to govern that behavior. Thus one will be able to assess whether deviation from certain norms is general or exceptional, why such deviation occurs, and how it is justified. The ethnographer should seek in each instance the opinions and interpretations of the actors and also those of other people, not in order to find out which is the 'right' view of the situation but rather to discover some correlations between the various attitudes and, say the status and role of those who have those attitudes.

I do not claim to have such complete data as will allow a full analysis of kin interaction. Information in some areas is missing, but sufficient material is presented to give an indication of the dynamic processes of social life.

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The cases presented were chosen, first of all, because I have more adequate data on them than on other issues, and secondly, because they incorporate, in various combinations, the aspects of kinship morality discussed above. The cases overlap; the same people appear in more than one case, and the issues taken up in one case are sometimes relevant to another. The best advantage of this overlap is taken by the order of presentation. The internal organization of cases includes presentation of a series of incidents or conflicts and their partial resolution. After each case an analysis is given in which the actors' comments and other explanatory data are offered.

#### Case 1: The Would-Be Bride

Katherine, the nineteen year old eldest daughter of Matthew Githingi, lived with her son at her father's homestead when I arrived in Murang'a. I was told by Chege, Katherine's father's sister's son, that the birth of Katherine's son came as a complete surprise to her parents, though many of her friends knew that she was expecting a child. After she completed high school, Katherine returned home from her boarding school in Thompson's Falls. While visiting with friends in town, a day or two later, Katherine complained of stomach trouble; she was given a laxative, but when her pains continued she was rushed to the hospital. There she gave birth to a healthy, full term son. The mother and child went to Githingi's homestead upon leaving the hospital.

Shortly thereafter, a "case"<sup>1</sup> was held which "determined" who the father was the child was. Chege also gave me information on this, but was uncertain of some details and reluctant to talk about others. The following is how the events were pieced back together. Katherine named Jacob Mungai as the father of her child. As is the custom, a "delegate", or messenger, was sent to Jacob, who was working in Mombasa, to tell him of the "accusation". Jacob twice refused to acknowledge paternity of the child, but on the third occasion (after consulting with his brother) said that he was the father, and returned to Murang'a to appear before a group of family elders and other members of the community. I am uncertain about the settlement of the case. The possibilities include paying a fine of 500 shillings for the "womb" (having gotten a girl pregnant), and an additional 200 shillings for child support, after which no further legal ties are claimed; or paying the fine for the womb and promising to marry the girl. Jacob did promise to marry Katherine, but the handling of the fine is unclear; in the court cases with which I am familiar the fine was infrequently waived.

When I met Katherine she explained that she was engaged, and also that she periodically received money from her fiancé to support her son. Jimmy, Katherine's son,

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<sup>1</sup> The term "case" is used to refer to an argument of dispute or any situation which is being settled by or could be settled by arbitrating elders, the chief, or in court.



was about seven months old when I arrived. He was often held by Katherine's 10 year old sister. She and Eunice's (her brother's wife) maid would walk around or play with their respective wards on their backs. The younger children delighted in playing with Jimmy, who, as an older baby, responded eagerly to their attention. In separate conversations with Jacob, the child's father, and Waithera, the father's sister, I was told that this was not always the case.

Jacob said that Njoki and Matthew Githingi, Katherine's parents, were cruel and miserly people. They never gave anything to Katherine for the support of her child, "not one towel," he said angrily. "They would quarrel [with] the children if they held Jimmy, but were very happy when they held Mzee [their son's son]," he added. Njoki, Katherine's mother, was given most of the blame -- "she puts money above everything" were Jacob's words -- but Waithera also echoed the same feeling. Katherine, however, said that she would not take money from her parents -- if her son's father did not send enough money for her to buy him eggs then he would have to go without eggs, even though her brother's wife or her parents had eggs to give her.

A couple of weeks after I arrived, Katherine's fiance came to the homestead and talked with Githingi and Njoki, Katherine's parents. I was told that he asked that Katherine be allowed to leave Murang'a and go live with him in Mombasa, where he worked. The request was refused.

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Katherine became very upset and said that her parents refused because they were "Christians!"; she blamed her mother for not trying to persuade her father of the rightness of her position.

Viewing Katherine's despondency, I asked whether she would speak to her parents about changing their decision; but she was incredulous at the idea. She said that she usually spoke with her mother about issues she wanted raised with her father, but on this issue she said that they were of "the same mind". When her father asked her mother's opinion of the issue, she did not speak in favor of Katherine's position. Katherine said that she would try to get her father's brother to speak to him. This too failed, and Katherine was again refused permission to go to Mombasa without being married.

Within two months after this incident, Katherine moved from her parents' home to Dukani, living there in a room rented by Waithera, her fiance's sister. She was still angry with her parents when she left, and said that she would never again visit them. When Waithera left to return to work in another district, Katherine remained and helped her fiance's mother take care of Waithera's children. Katherine also cooked an evening meal, which she shared with her fiance's brother.

About six weeks or so after Katherine had moved to Dukani, her father's brother asked her to come to Nairobi because he had a job for her. He had been looking for a

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job for her for some time. Before leaving, Katherine had to find someone to take care of her son, whom she could not take with her. If they had been on good terms, her brother's wife, she said, would have been a good choice. Failing that she would prefer that he live with his father's sister, her own mother's sister, or his father's mother. The solution reached was to hire a maid who would live in Waithera's room and take care of Katherine's son and Waithera's children, under the supervision of Waithera's mother.

Katherine went to Nairobi, but did not find employment there. She was primarily confined to the house where she helped her father's brother's wife with the children. After Jacob moved to Nairobi, she was allowed to see him but if she requested permission to see him too often, or stayed out too late, she was denied permission to go to Murang'a to see her son.

Katherine returned to Murang'a for periodic visits and both she and Jacob came to Murang'a during school holidays. Once, while she was visiting Murang'a, Katherine refused to go to see her parents, even after her father sent his truck which he used primarily for business, to pick her up.

When visiting Murang'a, Jacob spent the night at Waithera's house with Katherine, when Waithera slept away from home, often at my house; but they officially had separate residences. During this time Jacob made several comments on Katherine as a wife. He said that he expected

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her to be a dutiful wife, conscious of all the tasks involved in taking care of a husband. This was particularly relevant because Katherine did not prepare meals on time, about which Jacob said "I will not train a wife." He went on to explain there would be repercussions if he had to eat lunch at 2 p.m. again. Katherine, he said, knew that he ate lunch at noon in Nairobi. She should have started lunch by 10 a.m. When Katherine explained that she was doing the laundry in the morning, Jacob fumed, "These women are always washing." It is clear from these comments that Jacob separates things that women do for the family in general from those which a wife should perform for her husband. The husband should be of prime importance and women should not have to be told this.

Jacob once said that he loved Katherine, though Katherine (to whom I was closer) never used the term to describe her feeling for Jacob. Jacob's clearest statement of his feeling for Katherine was made in my presence to Katherine's brother, Francis, his wife, and Duvai, a friend (who, along with Jacob, had been "best men" at Francis' wedding). He said that he loved Katherine because she trusted him; if he were not trusted, he could prove to be very untrustworthy.

Jacob was concerned about Katherine's relations with her family. He asserted that she had had a rough life, but he strongly disclaimed Katherine for her treatment of her family, especially her refusal to go to see Eunice, her

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brother's wife, and the fact that she did not go to see her father when he sent his driver to get her. Jacob once said, "A wife should first get along with her family, then her husband's family." How could he marry a woman who did not get along with her own family?

When I returned after a five week visit to the States, Katherine went back to Murang'a with me. Katherine, Waithera, and I visited her mother at the new shamba. Katherine talked briefly with her mother about the crops and the children, and then spent most of her time visiting with her sisters and brothers while Waithera and I talked to her mother.

### Analysis

When talking to Chege about the prospects of Katherine getting married, he commented, "She was married the day she moved to Dukani." Indeed, a number of her neighbors, both in Dukani and in the village, Kanje, saw it that way. Bride removal is an accepted form of marriage in this area. One informant suggested that half the marriages of young people she knew were begun in this way. Once the neighbors accept the couple then the husband is in a good position to make the father accept whatever bridewealth installments he gives, if any at all.

A survey conducted in Kanje indicated that 89% of the married men interviewed said that they gave bridewealth for their wives, while only 65% of those with married daughters said that they received bridewealth for their daughters.

The survey does not indicate whether or not the installments began before or after removal, or whether a Christian ceremony was a part of the marriage transactions. It does show that 70% of the men who gave bridewealth say that the bridewealth included the gift of livestock, while only 30% of those who received bridewealth for their daughters were given livestock.

There are variations in the types of marriages practiced. George Irungu, one of my assistants, had an unusual marriage. George Irungu had little regard for highly educated young men, such as Jacob and his brothers, but he did share some of their conceptions of a good wife: she should be hard-working and obedient. He said that what the Kikuyu look for in a wife was not beauty, but obedience to the husband, the ability to work hard, as well as an ability to get along with the husband's people. George was married at the time that I met him, though he denied it. After I had known him a while he explained that he had admitted to being the father of a girl's expected child. When he couldn't raise enough money to pay for the fine for the "womb", her father sent her to live with him (George). In the eyes of most of the community they are married, but he avows that he will one day raise the money to pay off the fine and send her back to her father. In the meantime the child has been born and George has full conjugal relations with his "wife". None of his relatives expect this marriage to be dissolved, especially in view

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of the fact that George will have a difficult time raising the money for the fine, since he received a very low score on his certificate exam and will probably not find very lucrative employment.

Several young men claimed that the easiest way to get a father to lower the amount of bridewealth asked is to get his daughter pregnant. This was not effective with Githingi, who continued to place obstacles in Jacob's way. Nor did bride removal work here; the union was not accepted by Githingi or his brother, and Katherine's move to Nairobi to live with her father's brother reinforced the idea that she was still single, and under her father's control. Later when one of Githingi's deceased brother's daughters moved into a house with a young man, Mwangi, the father's brother, with whom Katherine was living in Nairobi, bodily took her from the house and returned her to her homestead. In George Irungu's case, members of his family clearly defined him as being married; in the second instance it is likely that she could have been accepted as married over a period of time, if her "father" had not acted as he did.

This question of the definition of marriage is a complicated one which I hope to develop in a separate article. It should be noted that many people in the community recognized different types of marriage. These include (1) Bride removal: If a young woman leaves her father's place to live with a man, and no steps are taken to bring her back to her father's place, then, over a period of

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time, they are accepted as married. By this rule, George Irungu is married, since his wife lives with him, by her father's permission.

Some people by this same token consider Katherine married. Her father, however, does not hold that that constitutes marriage. He is waiting for the form of marriage covered in points (2) and (3) below.

(2) Church wedding: Marriage through a holy sacrament, performed by a priest after the announcement of bans.

(3) Exchange of Bridewealth: The gift of bridewealth from the groom to the bride's father is a major step in the traditional marriage pattern. It is usually followed by bride removal, at which time a new nyumba, elementary family, is set up. The exchange of bridewealth also legitimately accompanies a church wedding.

(4) Civil Ceremony: Marriage by civil authorities, District commissioner or magistrate. Although some people use all the marriage practices presented by (2), (3) and (4), some who have civil ceremonies do not follow the traditional exchange of bridewealth. The most prevalent belief about the civil ceremony is that it prevents a man from taking a second wife, while polygamists are tolerated among those who have a religious ceremony.

Katherine's father was holding out for both a religious ceremony and exchange of bridewealth; not until then would Katherine be legitimately married in his eyes. In an essay on modern marriage practices, Francis, Katherine's

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brother, stated that religious ceremony and exchange of bridewealth was the preferred form of marriage.

While living in Dukani, Katherine's behavior toward her fiance's relatives was consistent with that expected of a bride. Her fiance's brother came to depend on her for his evening meal, and for washing some of his clothes; Waithera's children were often in her care; her fiance's mother checked with her before buying food, and periodically visited with her. Her behavior was circumspect, and she put up with her fiance's brother and his friends, even though she was peeved by their chronic drunkenness.

Katherine did not see her parent's desire for money as the prime factor which held up her marriage, as did Jacob, though she knew that bridewealth would have to be exchanged. She emphasized their wish to do the right and "Christian" thing. Jacob's refusal to meet Githingi's request had to do with the fact that he had little money, but also involved was the fact that he was unwilling to give the amount asked. His hesitancy in acknowledging paternity influenced his opinion on the amount of bride-wealth which should rightfully be asked. Chege informed me that Katherine and Waithera met to discuss Jacob's reluctance to press for marriage and to plan a strategy to insure the marriage. Waithera did not enthusiastically endorse any strategy.

Katherine effectively maintained the idea that her son was a part of his father's family. Following tradition



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in which the first son is named after the father's father, she named her son for Jacob's father. Katherine also preferred to think that only the Mungai family supported her son. Part of the continuing animosity between Katherine and her brother's wife, Eunice, was over the fact that Eunice told others that she supported Katherine's son through gifts of food and clothing. Katherine vehemently denied this. I am not sure of the extent of Eunice's support, but I do know that contrary to Katherine's statement, the two babies did on occasion share food.

Both Jacob and Waithera were bitter about the way Katherine had been treated by her parents, especially the fact that they did not support her son. Katherine did not see the situation in the same light. For her the only people who could legitimately support her son were his father's family, and she was determined that others see that he was being supported by his father.

Clearly, Waithera and Jacob saw Katherine's father and mother as acting counter to the expectation that grandparents should love their grandchildren. In the only conversation which I had with Githingi on this issue, he expressed disappointment with Katherine, and quickly brushed past this subject. The behavior of the grandparents in this regard may be interpreted as a questioning of the legitimacy of the child as a grandchild of theirs.

Katherine saw her son's ties as lying primarily with his father's family, but even though she tried to define

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herself as a member of that same family, she returned to her own family's sphere of control when she moved to Nairobi. Katherine had begun to look upon a job as a way of escaping from the repetitiveness and drudgery of her life. She readily left Dukani in expectation of the economic independence which it offered. She interviewed for the position when she arrived, but failed to get it. Because it is generally believed that women are taken advantage of when they go job-hunting, her father's brother refused to let her search for a job. It should also be noted that most of the Kikuyu whom I met felt that one usually gets a job through contacts with friends and relatives, not just through applications. Katherine's visits with Jacob, who began studies at the University of Nairobi a couple of months after her move there, were also limited.

By agreeing to the rules imposed on her about seeking employment, seeing her fiance, and the number of visits home that she could make, Katherine recognized as legitimate the sense of responsibility for her actions which her family through her father's brother had. Katherine's move to Dukani communicated her wish to be free of her parents and to deny that they have a responsibility for her. Because of her desire to get a job, which at one point she held as the same kind of move as getting married, she was caught up again within the family's sphere of influence, in which she was compelled to respect their sense of responsibility for her actions.

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In making her decision about who to leave her son with, Katherine thought first of all of Eunice, whom she said would be the most likely person. Eunice, her brother's wife, worked as a nurse and hired a maid to help take care of her son, who was just a few months younger than Katherine's son. Eunice was ruled out because Katherine had a distinct lack of affection for her. The two of them were once best friends, I was told, but during almost the entire time of my stay were not on good terms. One reason for this animosity (besides the dispute over support of Katherine's son), which is relevant to this case, was related to me by Jacob: At one point in time, Francis, Eunice and Jacob were all working in Mombasa, during that time Eunice inveigled to get Jacob interested in a friend of hers, her godmother's daughter, who was also working there. When Katherine found out about this it helped ruin the previous friendship between the two young women. Other aspects of the enmity between the two will be taken up in following cases.

Immediately after ruling out Eunice, Katherine thought of Waithera, her son's father's sister. The fact that Waithera worked and lived some distance away from Murang'a and Nairobi did not bother Katherine, nor did the fact that Waithera's own sons did not live with her. She said that Waithera loved her son and would take good care of him. But Katherine finally decided that this was not such a good idea; part of the reason for this decision was that

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untimely death of Waithera's daughters, who had lived with her. Katherine thought fondly of her mother's sister, but thought that she probably could not fit care of a child into her busy life. A single woman without children, she worked in a notions shop in town. The solution reached was a compromise in which the child lived in Waithera's room in the care of a maid who also looked after Waithera's children under the supervision of Waithera's mother. Katherine searched for a woman to fill the position, but made it clear that Waithera would be paying her salary.

From Katherine's point of view, the most important factors in determining who should take care of her son were the affective relationship between herself and the other woman, and the family membership of the woman. After these points the woman's situation, history and life style were considered.

Katherine moved to Nairobi shortly after she hired a maid. When she returned to Murang'a to see her son on short visits, or for longer stays during the holidays, she stayed in Waithera's room. It was during one of these periods that Jacob began referring to Katherine as his "wife". On several occasions he discussed what he considered to be the proper relationship between husband and wife. After an argument between Eunice and her husband, Francis (Case 2), Jacob gave his most earnest statement on the husband-wife relationship. He said that a husband should control his wife, but give her a little freedom. She could make





suggestions and they could talk, but in the end she should obey. If they had problems then they should take them to their best man or best maid, or to his father; but a wife should never "abuse" a husband in public. When Eunice, Francis' wife, did that, he felt that she should be beaten.

Katherine agreed with Jacob's assessment of the husband-wife relationship. She said that Eunice had acted very badly. She had abused her husband as she went into the Country Club by saying to him, "Who are you to tell me what to do? I have money." Katherine blamed Eunice's improper behavior on Francis, whom she said did not handle Eunice correctly. She thought Eunice deserved to be beaten.

Jacob valued highly Katherine's trust in him, but worried over her relationship to her family. Both Jacob and his sister, Waithera, expressed amazement at parents who treated their daughters who were unmarried mothers with insensitivity, as they felt Njoki and Githingi did. Waithera had taken one such young woman to live with her when she worked in Kakamega in the Western Province. Matthew Githingi was cruel and "stupid", she asserted. He never gave a cent to Katherine to help support her child. Katherine is not seen as being entirely without blame, though Waithera, of course, cast no aspersions on her because her child was born while she was unmarried. (Waithera had six children out of wedlock.) Still

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Waithera did not like Katherine's own movements to estrange herself from her family.

Both Jacob and Waithera said that Katherine "does not talk very much." Jacob admired this trait and said that she could decide never to speak to someone and keep that decision for life. Katherine herself saw this as an admirable quality, comparing herself to her father whom, she said, was also not very talkative. While Waithera praised the Kikuyu's ability to keep secrets, she disliked Katherine's reticence. The implication was that this was the reason that she could not repair the relations between herself and her parents. Katherine's feeling for her father and mother was something less than love and affection, but as will be seen in the next case, she still maintained a determined loyalty to her parents: When she felt her father's position as head of his household threatened she passionately defended him, and when her mother's maid threatened to leave and return home, Katherine severely castigated the young woman for thinking about leaving her (Katherine's) mother alone with so much work to do.

Katherine did remove some of the strain from her relationship with her family by visiting her mother at her shamba. It was the first time that she had spoken face-to-face with either of her parents in the months since she left their homestead. Katherine asked her mother about the crops and the children, and told of activities of family members in Nairobi. For the rest of the time that we were

at the shamba, Katherine talked with the children. By that time Katherine had become very cynical about marriage, and said that she was not too concerned about marriage, but was anxious to go to business college or start work. Several months earlier when I asked a patrilineal cousin of Katherine if she (the cousin) were going to get married someone in the group of women standing by jokingly said, "Why should she get married? She knows how to type." Although most of the young women I knew did want to get married, they recognized that their ability to support themselves gave them some leeway.

The understandings which come into play in this case are primarily affection and responsibility. The expectations that grandparents should love their grandchildren was originally not fulfilled by Githingi and Njoki in regard to Katherine's son. The reasons for this seems to be Katherine's lack of candor about her pregnancy, the delay in acknowledgement of paternity, and the absence of a legitimate marriage. Although their position concerning Katherine's son softened from what it reputedly was before, neither Njoki nor Githingi extended the same warmth to him that they did to their son's child. Njoki and Githingi's actions may be taken as a refusal to recognize Katherine's son as a legitimate grandson, for they clearly knew and used the understandings concerning the grandparents-grandchildren relationships in other instances, and other grandparents acted warmly toward both son's and daughter's children.

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In another sense it appears that they maintained a sense of responsibility for their daughter's social and moral well-being, but did not extend this to her son. The parents held the "case" to determine paternity -- in a similar situation another father kicked his daughter out of the house without benefit of any hearing. Githingi and Njoki reinforced their responsibility for their daughter by maintaining as legitimate their rights and duties in regard to her, and thereby commanding reciprocity from her. Katherine was brought back into her home after the birth of the child, and was expected to assume a strict moral and sexual code while there.

Katherine's comment that her parents were "Christians" and Jacob's and Waithera's that they were money hungry probably both point to incentives which helped influence Githingi's and Njoki's behavior, and which incidentally kept it in line with the more conservative policy. Because they were Christians, they would not have her, or any female for whom they assumed responsibility, live openly with a man to whom she was not married in a religious ceremony. Since they also accepted the exchange of bride-wealth as a legitimizing aspect of the marriage ceremony, they held this to be necessary for an acceptable marriage. That the bridewealth so gained could be used to their benefit was probably not a small point to them, but neither ever said directly that this was so. I understood both parents to be frugal, and this was the impression of them

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that I received from many others: They spent very little on consumer goods -- furniture, food, clothing, etc.; though they were among the wealthier families in the area.

Although Katherine expressed great emotional attachment to her parents, especially her father, she left home shortly after they refused to let her go to Mombasa. She was quite angry with them, and spoke of them in less than affectionate tones. Her move did not provoke her parents to bodily remove her from Dukani; but they did try to get her to come back home. This again, as I interpret it, represents the parents' continuing sense of responsibility, no matter what the influences (Christianity, money) on their behavior were.

Katherine left Dukani when her father's brother said that there was a possibility of a job for her in Nairobi. A job, in a sense, represented the same kind of move as marriage. A kind of independence from her family, the image which she had tried to present in Dukani. But in Nairobi she found herself under the control of her father's brother, who did not perceive her as a married woman, with a degree of independence. He instead asserted his responsibility for her actions, by setting standards for her behavior.

Before she left Murang'a, Katherine left her son in the care of a maid who was supervised by Jacob's mother. In making this decision she relied on already affectionate relationships, but also strove to see that her son was

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viewed as a part of his father's family. Affection as well as the development of an atmosphere in which Jacob's family would see and act on their sense of responsibility for the child were important issues here.

Jacob was concerned that Katherine's loss of affection for her parents and her brother's wife represented an obstacle which would prevent their ever marrying or their having a successful marriage. It was undesirable for a wife to be on bad terms with her own family. Katherine did not communicate a respect for the responsibility which her family had toward her, or which she had for her family. This responsibility or interconnection, Jacob suggested, continues after marriage to a certain extent, and should be acknowledged by the family members for good fellowship.

The relationship between Katherine and Jacob fell short of what Jacob considered to be proper for husband and wife, in that Katherine did not always put his concerns and wishes above her other activities. Their relationship suffered some strain from this and from Katherine's bad relationship to her family. Jacob used the term "wife" to describe Katherine, but was clear about the fact that they were not really married -- he continually appraised Katherine as a potential wife. Katherine stubbornly maintained her position on issues in conflict with Jacob's views, but to outsiders tried to give the impression of domestic bliss.

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While in Nairobi, Katherine saw Jacob sometimes less than once every two weeks. Jacob complained of a heavy work load at the university, and seldom tried to see her. When I left Kenya, Katherine, again despondent over the failure of the marriage negotiations and disappointed at the quality of her relationship with Jacob, had begun to place more and more hope in finding lucrative employment.

A postscript to this case is that about two years after my return from Kenya, I received word that Jacob and Katherine were living in Nairobi and had had a second child. I was not informed of the kind of marriage.

Figure 5 summarizes the major features of this case, looking primarily from Katherine's position. Affection and responsibility were the understandings of Kikuyu kinship morality which were examined in this case. There were variations in the use of these understandings according to the situation, or more aptly, the actors' definition of the situation. Although the prescriptive nature of understandings concerning kinship morality is recognized, it is instructive to note the additional incentives which encourage actors to behave in accordance with these aspects of kinship morality. This is what is attempted in Figure 5.

Where "concern" appears in the chart, it represents a shorthand statement which may be represented in Fortes' terms as the claim of kin on the "consideration" of their kinsfolk. In other words, the idea of prescriptive altruism and the moral imperative it includes, which

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Figure 5: Case 1; The Would-be Bride

Understandings of Kinship Morality, and Kin Relation- ships	Incentive and Constraints Which Encourage Behavior	
	In Accord with understandings (positive)	Counter to understandings (negative)
<b><u>AFFECTION</u></b>		
grandparent→ grandchild	Concern, legitimate marriage of parents	Unmarried M Deception by M
Child→parent		Conflict over kind of marriage
Other family members MZ↔ZD	Age, common interests concern	
Affinal W→H family	common interests, support	
H↔W	Trust, sexual intimacy	Disrespect of H, infrequent vists
<b><u>RESPONSIBILITY</u></b>		
grandparent→ grandchild		Unmarried parent
Parent↔child	Concern, economic gain, religion (M & F)	Conflict over kind of marriage
Other family members FB↔BD	Domestic help & concern (FB), Future autonomy (BD)	

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underlies the entire concept of kinship morality, is represented in the table under the term, concern. It is listed there as one of the incentives for acting in accordance with specific understandings. To discount any notion that this represents a tautology, it should be noted that the existence of certain shared understandings in a culture, and the use of these by members of a society are different phenomena. As his wife reports, Mwangi's (Katherine's father's brother) behavior toward Katherine was encouraged by his idea of what should be his proper behavior toward her, but to the extent that Katherine was a useful and contributing member of his household this was also an incentive to keep Katherine within his household. A concern for Katherine's well-being motivated many of the actions of her parents, but Katherine and some others saw it in a different way. As it turned out, those incentives encouraged conformity with expected behavior.

On the negative side of the ledger, behavior contrary to the accepted understanding is explained with regard to the influences which constrain "proper" behavior. The affinal interaction presented include Katherine's bad relations with her brother's wife, and the good relations Katherine tried to maintain with the family of her child's father. Relations between Katherine and Jacob are looked at as marital interaction, in accordance with her definition of the situation.

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## Case 2: The Talkative Wife

This case includes three primary incidents and is closely related to the case which follows it.

Eunice, the wife of Githingi's eldest son, Francis, was born in the next district. She grew up on her mother's father's homestead there, and was reared by her grandmother. Her mother worked and lived in various places. When I arrived Eunice's mother was living in the Western Province, having married a member of the Luhya ethnic group. The only relatives of hers who lived permanently in Murang'a District were her mother's father, who lived just outside of town with his mother, his second wife, and their eight year old daughter. Katherine and Chege explained that Eunice's grandfather wanted to have little to do with the children of his first wife. There were at least six of them; the youngest was about sixteen years old. When any of his sons and daughters came into Murang'a, they would come to see Eunice at the Githingi homestead or at the hospital. A brief stop at their father's house often ended the visit. Eunice seldom visited her grandfather's home in town or any of her relatives outside of the District.

Eunice and Francis were married less than a year when I arrived. Francis worked in Nairobi for awhile, and after the birth of their first child Eunice worked in the hospital in town. The child, a son, was warmly received. Eunice claims that Cũcũ, her husband's grandmother, gave her

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thirty shillings upon the birth of the baby, explaining that if she had had a girl the money would have been given to Katherine for her son.

Sometime after their son's birth, and while living in Nairobi, Francis became seriously ill. I believe that he was suffering from Bilharzia. Around the same time, Francis was laid off from his job at a bank in Nairobi. Chege and Katherine said that he had been fired because of some suspicious activity of his at the bank. He remained in Nairobi for several weeks after he left the bank, taking treatment at Kenyatta Hospital. It was during that time that the following incident reportedly occurred: Katherine's father came to talk to her because he had heard gossip, supposedly spread by Eunice, which indicated that he was not concerned about Francis' ill-health, that he did not go to Nairobi to see him while he was taking treatments there. He asked Katherine if Eunice had said this; he was inclined to believe that she had since one of Eunice's colleagues at the hospital was instrumental in spreading the rumor. Katherine did not tell me whether or not she blamed Eunice for spreading the rumor, but did counter the rumor by stating that her father was in constant contact with his brother, Mwangi, about Francis' condition. This incident remains clear in Katherine's mind because it is one of the few instances in which her father initiated conversation with her.

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When I arrived Francis was living in Murang'a, he was unemployed, and said that he was recuperating from his illness. About six weeks after my arrival, Eunice, Francis, the baby, and Eunice's cousin (MZD) who worked for Eunice as a nursemaid, moved into the nurse's quarters at the hospital. Eunice said that the move was necessary because she was going on night duty and did not want to walk home to town at night. She also wanted to be able to keep an eye on her cousin who took care of her baby. None of them seemed to like staying at the hospital; Francis especially disliked it, saying that he did not like the people who came around their living quarters.

About a month after they moved, they returned to the Githingi homestead. One of the reasons which Eunice gave for her move back to the homestead was the unreliability of her cousin as a nursemaid. She complained that the girl, who was about eleven years old, had let the baby cry for hours while she (Eunice) was at work. The nursemaid could not be awakened even by the neighbors pounding on the door and walls of the room. At the Githingi homestead other members of the family might hear the baby's crying and come to his aid. This arrangement did not last long, for shortly after their return, Eunice shaved her cousin's head because as Eunice put it, she was very dirty and refused to wash. The girl ran away from the homestead and went to live with their grandfather, but was not allowed to stay. She returned to the Githingi homestead

and within a few days was taken back to her home in the next district by one of her mother's brothers.

After Eunice's move back from the hospital, Francis sometimes walked with her when she had to go to work at night, and sometimes he accompanied her during the day, when she had that shift. Since he was not working he would linger in town or in Kwako and talk to friends, but still a good deal of the daylight hours were spent at the homestead.

After almost a year of unemployment, Francis began working at a new job in November. Around the second week in December he asked me to be his guest for drinks on New Year's Eve. At about 5 p.m. on the 31st, Francis reminded me that the date was still on. Just after that I joined Eunice and Francis and two friends of theirs, a married couple, in their rooms. A Black Peace Corps volunteer came there to talk with Francis. Trying to be discreet, he took him aside and asked Francis if he could repay the money which he had lent him. I did not see any money exchange hands, and I am not sure what Francis told him.

When Francis rejoined the rest of us, he and his friend said that they wanted to go out without their wives. Eunice said that if they did that Francis would have to use his own money, because she wouldn't give him any. She asserted that she held all his money. Their friend said that they were "men", and should not have to take their wives with them. I said that I thought that the original



invitation included wives, and asked if I should go if the other women were not going? Eunice and Francis argued over this point, but reached a conclusion in which Francis and Eunice decided to go, but their friends, the other married couple, would not go.

After I drove the Peace Corps volunteer home, Eunice and I went to Dukani to see if Katherine would go out for the evening with us. At first Katherine refused, but Eunice insisted, saying that if Jacob wanted to go then Katherine must go: Katherine must do what Jacob asked; Jacob must keep discipline. Katherine quickly got ready to go. While we were waiting for her, Jacob took me aside and said that he had no money and need to know what the "arrangements" were. I explained that Francis and Eunice had quarreled over money, and that Eunice seemed to be holding the purse strings.

When we reached the car, Francis seemed sullen and annoyed. There was some discussion, at this point, about where we were going. Francis finally decided that we would go to the most modern bar in town. Before we went to the bar, we stopped by Francis' mother's sister's house, but did not find her at home.

There was an admission fee to the bar for New Year's Eve. Francis paid the fee for all of us in the party, five people in all. Francis' aunt (MZ) was already there. Francis and Katherine wanted to sit near her, while Eunice wanted to sit near two of her mother's brothers who were

visiting the area. We sat near Francis' aunt, and Eunice's uncles joined us there. Immediately Jacob ordered drinks for us. He was very anxious to see that all the women in the group had beer to drink.

Katherine spent most of her time talking to her aunt at the nearby table, and Francis only brightened up when friends of his came through the door.

Before the second round of drinks, Jacob asked to speak to me privately. He wanted to borrow ten shillings; The smallest I had was 20 shillings, which I gave him. Jacob then talked about his efforts to get Eunice and Katherine talking to one another by plying them with beer. It was very important that a wife had good relations with her own family, then her husband's relatives, he said. How could he be expected to get along with her family if she didn't, he went on. Around this time Eunice and Katherine walked passed us on the way to the toilet and back. Jacob proudly pointed out that now they were talking together; the beer was working. Shortly after this we returned to the table.

Jacob had been taking the bills for each round of drinks all night; when the waitress asked that they be paid, he pulled out the pound note with a flourish.

At about 12:30 a.m. Francis began asking if we could go. Shortly after that Eunice's uncles bought us a final round of drinks, and we all agreed to go. By this time, the brother of one of my informants from Dukani had asked

me to give a lift to the Country Club. I said that I would, but Francis complained of a terrible stomach ache and said that he did not want to stop there. I said that we would only be there a minute. When we arrived at the Country Club, the brother of the informant quickly left the car, followed by Jacob, Eunice and Katherine. After a short wait, Francis tried to talk the ticket-taker at the door into letting him in free, but to no avail. When I got out of the car I found him talking to Jacob; he said that he held him responsible for Eunice's going into the Country Club. A couple of minutes after this, one of the young men from Dukani came out with a ticket for me, which Eunice had asked him to buy. I went inside and tried to get everyone to leave and go home as we had agreed. While I was inside, Francis came to the window and said that he was ill, that he would walk the three miles home, and that if he did that, then Eunice would have to find another place to sleep that night. Eunice, Katherine, and Jacob quickly finished the soft drinks they were drinking, but did not leave until after they had danced to one song.

In the car on the way home, no one spoke except Eunice. She went on about how bad a year 1971 had been, and said if 1972 was as bad, she might as well die. After a brief argument, I decided to take Katherine and Jacob home first. When they left the car, they immediately began looking for a car to take them back to the Country Club. I said that I would take them, then we went to Githingi's to take

Francis and Eunice home. Eunice's parting remarks to Katherine and Jacob were "You are young; you should enjoy yourselves."

Back at the Country Club, Katherine, Jacob and I sat in the car and discussed the proper husband-wife relationship. Jacob said that a husband should control his wife, but give her a little freedom. She could make suggestions and they could talk, but in the end she should obey. If they had problems then they should take them to their best man or maid, or to his father, but a wife should never "abuse" a husband in public. Eunice would be beaten, he said.

Katherine agreed with Jacob's assessment of the husband-wife relationship. She said that Eunice had acted very badly. She had "abused" her husband as she went into the Country Club by saying to him, "Who are you to tell me what to do? I have money." Katherine blamed a lot of this on Francis, whom she said did not handle Eunice correctly. She thought Eunice deserved to be beaten.

Jacob later explained that he saw money as the root of the problem. Eunice had told his brother, Kibaki, in the morning of the 31st, that Francis would be made to feel what she had been feeling by paying the bills while he was unemployed -- he had to clear all his debts. Both Katherine and Jacob agreed that she never should have said that, and she especially should not have talked about money problems to anyone outside the family. Moreover, they added, Francis had a lot of private debts which he was

trying to avoid. Jacob knew that the money situation was tight, and admitted that to a certain extent he tried to stir up trouble.

Indeed, Francis did beat his wife. Very early in the morning afterward he came to me full of remorse saying that he hated to "fight with women", and tried to get me to concur with his opinion of the cause of the altercation -- namely Jacob.

A couple of hours after my conversation with Francis, his father called me over to ask what had happened the night before. I recounted the events of the evening as I had seen them, and related some of the comments which Francis had made. Francis and Eunice then met with Francis' father, his mother, and his father's driver, to discuss the situation. Eunice said that she did not want to stay there, and later that morning Eunice left the homestead to move to her mother-in-law's other shamba. Eunice and Francis were separated for about three weeks, then they were seen walking together in the market town. Eunice moved back shortly after that, and relations between her and Francis appeared to be going smoothly from that point until I left several weeks later.

Relations between Eunice and other members of the family, however, did not improve greatly. The night of her argument with Francis, Eunice went to Dukani and spent the night with a seamstress whose room was across the courtyard from Katherine's. On the following day, she went to

Katherine's room to talk about what happened. Even though Dr. Irungu was visiting with Katherine at the time, Eunice related her version of the story. Katherine gave her little sympathy, and later explained to me that Eunice should never have said anything about her problems with her husband in front of Dr. Irungu. In the following incident, Katherine was also concerned about her sister-in-law's talkativeness.

Matthew Githingi chased Eunice's maid away from the homestead (Eunice had several maids while I was there; this one was about fourteen years old and came from outside the town area). Wambui, the maid, had spent the night away from the homestead and returned early in the morning. Githingi, calling her a prostitute, told her to leave and never return. Wielding a stick, he chased her from his property. When Eunice learned of this she was irate. She said that she had hired the girl and she should be the only one to dismiss her. Further she said that she would leave and never come back, be buried in Western Province (where her mother lived), send the baby to her mother; she was not under the authority of her husband's father.

When Katherine heard of what Eunice had said she was outraged, but said nothing to Eunice. According to Katherine, Eunice was trying to test her father and if he heard of the talk he would be very annoyed. Eunice had also told others that she was now paying rent to her

father-in-law, which Katherine dismissed as utter nonsense. Noting that her father took care of Eunice and Francis -- buying charcoal, housing, and such, Katherine said that even Francis could lose his job with the County Council if their father so willed. At this time Katherine accused Eunice of telling what should be family secrets and talking about being beaten in front of Dr. Irungu when she didn't know him, nor him her, telling Kibaki about her money situation on New Year's Eve, and talking about her mother-in-law and father-in-law. She spread stories about others, she added, "Eunice has no friends." Katherine was concerned with the talk against her father and said that he had the right to control who should stay at his home.

Before Githingi chased the maid away, Eunice had expressed disappointment with her maid, intimating that she was a prostitute. She told me and others that the maid went out too often at night and came back very late. But when her father-in-law acted on this premise she said that if she was satisfied with her then he had no right to approach her. Eunice refused to broach the subject with her father-in-law. When the maid came back, she decided to say and Eunice agreed to it. She was there when I left.

### Analysis

The major issues in this case are Eunice's incorporation into her husband's family and the nature of the husband-wife

relationship. Within the field which bounds the study of incorporation into husband's group also falls the relationship between Eunice and her husband's sister, and her husband's father. Eunice's attitude toward and treatment of members of her own family is part of the wider arena of this field. The nature of the husband-wife relationship occupied a rather pivotal position within this field, for to some extent the strength and warmth of that relationship influences those of the wife's activities aimed toward being seen as a member of her husband's family; but it can also be said that the extent of the wife's membership in her husband's family influences the husband-wife relationship.

The arguments which Eunice used about going back to her family were never taken as serious threats to do so, but merely as a statement of her dissatisfaction with and distance from her husband's family. Indeed, Waithera intimated that Eunice found little support from her natal family group. Only twice during my stay did Eunice go to the next district to visit her grandmother; and she visited her mother only once when she was trying to find maids for Katherine and herself there. Eunice stated that she kept in touch with her mother through her mother's husband, but Eunice and Francis' accounts of the frequency of his visits to Central Province, where they lived, were widely discrepant.

Eunice did seem to take pride in her family, but more in their accomplishments and material possessions than in



their supportiveness of her. Eunice never mentioned her father or her father's people to me. Her mother's sisters from Nairobi were very fashionably dressed on the two occasions on which I saw them. They also seemed to have ample money -- on one occasions buying soft drinks and beer to entertain Francis, Eunice and their friends at the homestead. (Hosts are usually expected to supply drinks and food.) Chege, Francis' FZS, said that not all of Eunice's aunts' means of supporting themselves in Nairobi were legal. This element of criminality also influenced Francis' attitude toward Eunice's uncles. He said that they were "thugs" and wanted to have little to do with them. The uncles whom I saw were dressed in the cowboy fashion popular with Kenya Asians during my stay in Kenya, and almost incessantly used American slang terms. They had a sharp and abrasive manner, and rather high-powered way of talking. Just as with the aunts, these brothers seemed to live and work together in Nairobi. They had a kind of camaraderie among one another which they extended somewhat to Eunice.

In their absence, Eunice never referred to or talked about any of these relatives around me. The relatives she talked about or associated with more frequently, besides her mother, were her grandmother, who lived in town, her cousin, who worked as her nursemaid, and another mother's sister, a sixteen year old primary school graduate who lived at the Githingi homestead while enroute to Nairobi to apply for a job which her brother had found for her. This

mother's sister lived in my rooms and often ate with me during her stay. On the whole Eunice's relations with her natal family group were shallow. Yet she evidenced loyalty to them, fiercely defending her young MZ against an implied accusation of theft; and a kind of affection for them which more involved a sense of familiarity with her mother's brother and mother's sister, as well as a kind of admiration for their accomplishments. Except for her relationship with her mother, no sense of compelling connection which may be associated with the understandings concerning responsibility seemed to exist.

In view of the shallow and weak ties which Eunice had with her mother's family, the question of her incorporation into her husband's family becomes even more crucial. Her relationship with Katherine, her husband's sister, was an important aspect of this incorporation. The relationship between Eunice and her husband's mother, his other sisters and brothers, and the various family members who visited the homestead was cordial and pleasant. Katherine's ill-feelings about Eunice were based on the factors discussed in Case 1, namely Eunice's trying to persuade Jacob to marry her godmother's daughter and Eunice's statement that she supported Katherine's son above Katherine's insistence that only the child's family did; and in addition, on what Katherine interpreted as Eunice's disloyalty to the family. In this case, the instances which Katherine described as acts of disloyalty were 1) Eunice's statement to others

that Francis' father did not visit him in Nairbbi, 2) Eunice's statement to Kibaki, Jacob's brother, about her financial situation, 3) Eunice's discussion of being beaten in front of outsiders, and 4) Eunice's statement that she could do what she wanted in regard to her maid, and her re-hiring of the maid after her father-in-law had "dismissed" her. (For more on Eunice's view, see Case 3.) The nature of the marital relationship between Eunice and Francis did not enter into Katherine's assessment of Eunice as a family member; the responsibility for Eunice's improper behavior as a wife lay with her husband, Francis. In all of these instances except the one concerning Githingi's visits to Francis in Nairobi, Katherine took a position supporting her family members even though she was not on good terms with them.

Any of the "disloyal" acts mentioned above would have been enough to convince Katherine that Eunice was not behaving in a manner expected of a family member; but the discrepancy in their economic standing made Katherine more apt to reinterpret Eunice's behavior in this light. That Eunice was proud of her job, her ability to hire a maid, her room and furnishings, her clothes, and of the "modern" food and clothing her son had was very difficult to miss. Eunice accused Katherine (Case 3) of saying she was "proud because she had a maid." I am not sure whether Katherine made that exact statement or in the context in which Eunice placed it, but it does point to Eunice's awareness

of part of the problem between her and Katherine. On many occasions, Katherine did jealously try to denigrate Eunice's activities and possessions. The worst attack, however, that Katherine could make on Eunice, from the point of view of both young women, was to say that Eunice was not a member of the family, or more mildly that she acted contrary to the understandings concerning family loyalty.

Eunice's move to the hospital was indeed an effort to remove herself from this hostile environment, as she reported Katherine had said. (Francis' mother later expressed the hope that the young couple might move into the new housing development built by the County Council, and that perhaps things would be better for them there.) The surface explanation given for leaving, the distance to walk and the danger of walking at night, was regarded by few as a legitimate concern. Francis considered living at the hospital equally dangerous for her, because of the men, many of them drunk, who came around to see the nurses. After she returned, Eunice walked with Francis, and sometimes alone, to the hospital.

The move from the living quarters at the hospital back to the Githingi homestead was not based on an amelioration in the relationship between Katherine and Eunice, but rather on Francis' insistence that the hospital was not a good place to live, and on Eunice's concern for her child's welfare. The relationship between the two young women was

sometimes cordial, but the over-all interaction was cool, sometimes stormy. When Katherine moved to Dukani she promised that she would not visit Eunice and did not. Eunice sometimes visited Katherine at her home in the market town.

The difficulties which Eunice had with her nursemaid cousin were not viewed sympathetically by Katherine. In this instance, Katherine and others in the family felt that Eunice over-reacted to the cousin's incompetency, and did not give due consideration to the girl, whom they saw as a troubled youngster.

Eunice explained her cousin's presence in her household originally by saying that the girl was asked to leave primary school because of behavior problems, and that she (Eunice) was taking care of her. I found out that it was not unusual for cousins, particularly those of the wife, to work in a household in exchange for room and board, and a small monthly wage. In this case, however, a number of residents at the Githingi homestead, including Njoki's (Githingi's wife) cousin who worked there as a maid, said that Eunice's treatment of her cousin was not as good as that usually expected between maid and employer, or between kinswomen; i.e., the girl was not paid, she was strictly supervised and allowed little say in her activities, and she was periodically beaten as a form of punishment. Eunice saw her behavior, particularly the beatings, as part of her taking care of her cousin. She explained to me, after she

and beaten the girl and cut her hair a day or so after their return from the hospital, that the girl was dirty and that she (Eunice) had to teach her proper behavior. Others in the family did not agree with Eunice's assessment of her "duty" toward her cousin; they saw it as at the least overbearing behavior. After the girl ran away to her grandfather's, who did not wish her to stay there, Eunice arranged to have her taken home. Eunice seemed to lose interest in the girl after her return home, and had little to report on her after a visit to their grandmother's home in the next district.

Corporeal punishment in some instances is looked at as a legitimate form of punishment; this was the case in regard to wife-beating, and for children. I never witnessed or heard of either Matthew Githingi or his wife, Njoki, spanking or hitting any of their children, though Katherine and the older children sometimes hit the younger ones when they misbehaved. In Case 3, an instance in which Waithera beat one of her children is reported. She spanked another son when he asked for ten cents (one tenth of a shilling) for running an errand for a neighbor. He had to be taught not to beg, she said. Both Katherine and Jacob saw wife-beating as the proper and necessary reaction of Eunice's misbehavior. Katherine maintained her position on wife-beating when hypothetical situations were put to her, but retracted from that position when asked if she should be beaten in such situations. Fights between adult brothers, which is

not properly corporeal punishment, are not seen as legitimate ways to settle disputes. (Case 5 contains such an incident.)

Francis' beating of his wife came as no surprise to those, other than me, who had witnessed her rebuke of him at the Country Club. Her statement was an example of verbal abuse which was not tolerated from a wife to a husband. Moreover, Katherine and Jacob found Eunice's continuing tirade against Francis on the way home equally as abusive, and further cause for punishment since it occurred in front of me. According to Jacob, he as best man at their wedding would have been a proper person with whom the couple could discuss marital problems. By acting as best man he established an interest in the success of their marriage. The first person to contact in times of trouble, most people told me, was the husband's father. In answer to an item on the questionnaire given in Kanje which read "Suppose a problem arose concerning your marriage, to whom would you go for advice?", the following answers, which differ slightly from other statements, were given: Father or clan elders, about 58%; father, parent or husband's parent, about 28%; others, including witnesses at the wedding, other relatives, mundu mugu (medicine man) and the government, about 14%. Father or husband's father was not a general preference over father or clan elder for members of the village of Kanje. In this case, however, the dispute was taken to Francis' father, who presided over the discussion when it was decided that Eunice should go to live with Francis' mother at the other shamba.

Those involved gave different reasons for the argument and fight. Immediately following the incident, I talked to everyone about it except Eunice, with whom I spent the following day at a feast held by Githingi and his neighbor for their friends and relatives. Chege, Githingi's sister's son, who overheard the meeting between Githingi and the young couple, reported that when Githingi asked, Eunice had said that she did not know why she was beaten. According to Katherine, Eunice told her about the beating, but stressed her innocence. Katherine refused to give her any advice on how to handle the situation.

In the early morning discussion after the incident, Francis was the first to tell me what happened. He explained that he was upset and remorseful and blamed Jacob as the culprit behind all of this. He said that Jacob had insulted him by saying that he (Jacob) would pay for the drinks because Francis did not have any money. Moreover, Francis asserted he did have a bad stomach ache and needed to go home quickly. He knew that if we stopped at the Country Club the others would go in, and had warned Eunice not to do so. When he tried to stop Eunice on the steps of the Country Club, she had said, according to him, "Who are you? What can you do to me?" For this she was beaten. Francis did not give this explanation to his father in the meeting; in fact Chege reported that Francis remained silent during the discussion.



According to Jacob, the main problem came when he paid for the drinks. Francis knew that he did not have any money, and must have surmised that he got the money from Eunice, whom he was sitting next to. Francis was infuriated at this. He hated for people to know how little money he had; he didn't like the idea of Eunice's uncles buying beer for the group, and was furious when Eunice went into the Country Club and left him outside without the amount of the admission fee.

Jacob was afraid that Francis would place the blame on him, in discussing the incident. Francis would probably not be attuned to the sensitive position that Jacob was in with regard to this marriage negotiations with Katherine and Francis' father. Francis, Jacob declared, was not grateful; after all, he had gotten Francis and Eunice together and had helped to plan the wedding. From his point of view, Francis loved Eunice too much and that is why he did not control her.

Katherine did not see Jacob's behavior as instrumental in the cause of the fight. Instead she concentrated on Eunice's behaviour, especially Eunice's earlier statement to Kibaki, Jacob's brother and my former assistant, that Francis would be made to feel what she felt in paying bills during the months of his unemployment. Francis had to pay the debts that had accrued at the shops at which they bought food and supplies, as well as a number of personal debts. Jacob thought that most of Francis' friends would

expect to be paid from his first paychecks. Eunice's insistence that Francis pay the merchants from his salary was held as unreasonable. Katherine found Eunice's statement to Kibaki disloyal and vindictive.

My analysis supports the idea that the incident seems to have been compelled by economic forces -- not just Francis' lack of money to buy beer or pay his admission into the dance, but by the increasing tendency to value people by the amount of money they make.

Although the relationship between Francis and Eunice had previously had its ups and downs, when Francis was out of work Eunice endeavored to shelter him from embarrassment because of the lack of money. Francis, at that time, frequently borrowed money from his friends to buy necessities and to "invest" in various enterprises. Although he would help out with the child care duties, his prime interest lay outside the home. Once he started working he took a renewed interest in his home and child, helping his wife prepare for work and taking care of the baby whenever possible. Eunice was euphoric and went on a spending spree, buying new clothes for herself and the baby, and tablecloths and doilies for the furniture. Francis, after his first paycheck, was strapped for money. His creditors hearing of his good fortune, wanted to be paid. Eunice had already spent most of her pay and they had less money than usual during this holiday season.

The young couple, and especially Eunice, did not want to be left out of the holiday festivities. The other couple with whom they had planned to spend the evening declined to go primarily because they did not have the money, I was later told. Instead of sharing and compensating for Francis' shortage of funds, as she had done in the past, Eunice was determined that Francis pay his own way.

Eunice's statement at the Country Club was not only a challenge to Francis as the family provider -- as Katherine interpreted it -- "Who are you to tell me what to do? I have money", but also was a challenge to his authority as head of his family of procreation. Francis interpreted the statement as "Who are you? What can you do to me?" Eunice resented the fact that she had played the role of provider, without concomitant authority, while Francis found renewed self-respect, and became more expansive in his role as wage-earner. When this new image of himself was challenged by Jacob's showiness in buying beer, and by his wife's better financial standing, her disobedience, and her insulting him, Francis vindicated himself through a culturally legitimate means, wife-beating.

Others, including Katherine, did feel that Eunice had an inflated image of herself, due to the fact that she had a good job -- she valued herself highly because she brought in money. This was one of the reasons which caused the friction between the two young women, and which Katherine

law as a reason for Eunice's lack of acceptance of the authority of her husband and father-in-law. (See Case 3 for more on this from Eunice's point of view.) Jacob saw that Francis too thought of himself in terms of the money he could spend, and unwisely chose to manipulate those values in this situation.

Figure 6 shows the aspects of kinship morality involved in this case and the influences which act as constraints or incentives on behavior in accordance with those understandings. In this case in particular, constraints from the economic sphere encourage behavior not in conformity with kinship morality, while other economic considerations and the use of the understandings themselves influence behavior in accord with the understandings of kinship morality.

### Case 3: The Unruly Children

There are two primary incidents in this case; the central issue in each is the perception of Waithera Mungai's children as "unruly." In the first incident Katherine's relationship to her brother's wife, Eunice, and to her husband-to-be's sister, Waithera, comes into the question as does Chege's relationship to Eunice, his MBS's wife, and to Katherine, his MBD. The second incident involves Waithera and her brother, and brings into the discussion the image and role of grandmother.

On A December evening about two weeks before Christmas Waithera came to visit me with two other friends, the

Figure 6: Case 2; The Talkative Wife

Understandings of Kinship Morality, and Kin Relation- Ships	Incentives and Constraints Which Encourage Behavior	
	In Accord with understandings (positive)	Counter to Understandings (Negative)
<u>AFFECTION</u>		
MZ, MB ↔ ZD	Age, generosity, concern	
H ↔ W	"Love"	W financial control
HZ → BW		Bad character, Disloyalty, Economic Difference
BW → HZ		Bad character
H → W family		Bad character
<u>LOYALTY</u>		
Child → parent	Concern	
W ↔ H family		Interference of autonomy, bad character
<u>RESPONSIBILITY</u>		
MZ, MZD ↔ MZD	Age, domestic help, concern	Incompetency, bad character, overbearing, insensitive
H ↔ W	Propriety	W Financial independence
Father-in-law Daughter-in- law	Modesty	Disrespect and disobedience of male authority

seamstress from the market town, and Konyi, the sister of one of my informants from the market town. Shortly after they arrived Eunice came over. Although Waithera frequently visited me and often stayed overnight, Eunice seldom crossed the yard to my rooms. This time Eunice and Waithera seemed anxious to talk. They immediately began to talk about Katherine, in English, leaving the other women, non-English speakers, out of the conversation. Waithera had told Eunice that Katherine had written in a letter to her that Eunice had said that Waithera's children were "dirty and might infect Jimmy [Katherine's son]." Eunice denied having said this and further said that Katherine herself had made the statement. "Katherine was spreading untrue stories all around about me," Eunice said, "and this time she must be approached." She went on to say that Katherine had said that she (Eunice) had gone to live at the hospital because of "bad feelings" between the two of them. Among Eunice's other complaints against her husband's sister were the following:

1. Katherine was ungrateful for the money she gave her for her (Katherine's) son.
2. Katherine accused her (Eunice) of stealing a table cloth.
3. Katherine abused her saying "Eunice is not a daughter and when she leaves I [Katherine] will remain a daughter of Githingi.
4. Katherine accused Eunice of being proud, because she has a maid.

Waithera did not question the veracity of Eunice's passionately delivered list of complaints, but instead repeatedly said that one should not go after a person who spread stories. Waithera explained, "You cannot be concerned with what people say about you and confront them with it. When I hear that someone has told a wife that I was with her husband, I let it pass. People will try to separate you and your husband, what will you do?" The seamstress, she continued, had often told her the names of people who said things about her, but she didn't bother with them. If someone comes to her with a story she would tell them to talk to the person who first told them the story. Her second theme in explaining Katherine's behavior was that she was young and bored; she had nothing to do except to take care of her baby and to talk. Waithera's air of resignation and deliberate counselling was at a marked distinction from Eunice's excited harangue.

Eunice switched from English to Kikuyu and attempted to extract agreement from all present that Katherine was indeed as she described her. Katherine told false stories about others also, she said. She wasn't so concerned about what Katherine said to the family -- "they don't feed me, I didn't marry Francis' parents, I owe them nothing," Eunice fumed. But she thought that it was really terrible to spread stories to outsiders. Waithera countered this attack by taking up the first tact and saying if Katherine spread stories on others, she should let the others

approach her; Eunice should maintain patience which she was running out of.

The seamstress now joined in with a story of Katherine's ingratitude. Dramatically acting out the story she told of how she had made a dress for Katherine who had later borrowed the thread that had been used to sew it. When the seamstress started on a dress of the same color, she asked Katherine to return the thread. Katherine responded by asking, "How much does thread cost, 75¢?" This, Eunice explained, was the reason Katherine and the seamstress who lived opposite her in Dukani weren't speaking. (Katherine had told me, after she moved to Nairobi, that Waithera had told her not to talk to the seamstress, who spread stories through the many women who visited her shop.)

Chege dropped in shortly after the seamstress finished her story. Eunice immediately tried to get him to validate her story that Katherine had made the remark about Waithera's children. Chege, who often seemed to enjoy the attention of these older women, did not take a seat, nor did he answer the question. He simply turned and left. Soon after this the seamstress said that they should be leaving. I drove them home, and when I returned Francis and Eunice came to my room for coffee, and Eunice acted her friendliest ever toward me.

The following day Chege explained to me that he had actually heard Eunice make the remark which she accused Katherine of, but refused to be cornered into saying



anything or making a statement which could be interpreted as indicating that Katherine essentially agreed with Eunice's comment. When I later suggested to Waithera that Eunice might have made the comment attributed to her, Waithera immediately reported this to Eunice in Kikuyu, who said in my presence, but not facing me, "So people are still back-biting me."

During the Christmas holiday, Waithera's brother, Dr. Irungu, who works in Uganda, spend several days in Dukani. While visiting at Waithera's house one day he said to her that her children were not being brought up properly, that they were "unruly". Waithera's mother, Rebecca, was given the responsibility of supervising Waithera's maid, and of looking after the children while Waithera was away. Rebecca divided her time so that she might spend a part of every day at Waithera's house. She took care to see that the boys were properly dressed and fed. But Dr. Irungu said the boys' home lacked discipline. When Waithera beat one of her sons because he was away from home all day on Christmas, her brother repeated his comments and added, "What can you expect from children raised by grandparents?"

### Analysis

The relationship between Katherine and her sister-in-law Eunice was strained, but Katherine's attitude toward her would-be sister-in-law Waithera could generally be characterized as a warm, dependent one. Waithera, on the other hand, had some hesitancy about it. She, and to a

certain extent. I, were important resources in both Katherine's and Eunice's social fields. Both Eunice and Katherine clearly wanted the legitimation which Waithera could bring by taking Eunice's side as opposed to the other. Eunice in spending time in my room acted against her earlier statements about not visiting me because she did not want it to seem as though she wanted something from me, and demonstrated a desire for my patronage and good fellowship. If Waithera also supported her position, she would have gained the support of a respected family friend. Katherine, to whom I had all along been close, was somewhat confident that her relationship to me might affect her father's and father's brother's attitude toward her. Waithera's support was necessary in order for Katherine to define herself as a member of the family of her son's father.

The situation is more complicated from Waithera's point of view: in addition to being a resource in the social field of Katherine defined her position in regard to Eunice, Waithera's relationship to Katherine is important in Katherine's ability to present herself as a brother's wife of Waithera's and as a member of her family. The negative attitude that Waithera sometimes manifested toward her brothers for continually wanting money from her might also be true of the view she takes of her relationship with Katherine. Katherine was dependent upon Waithera for food and shelter when she moved to Dukani. On several occasions Waithera complained about her brothers' dependence on her. She never overtly mentioned Katherine's dependence.

Gossip, essentially what occurred in this session, has been studied as a means of social control (Gluckman, 1968), and such functions are clear in this case. Certain values were contravened and through gossip, the threat of gossip or the knowledge of gossip, behavior of the errant persons is subjected to public scrutiny and sometimes brought into line. Important values discussed here were as follows:

1. Mothers should take care of their children -- the remark -- Waithera's children are dirty.
2. Relatives should help one another. Eunice gives money to her husband's sister.
3. One should be grateful for the help of others and acknowledge their generosity. Eunice and the seamstress complained that Katherine was ungrateful.
4. Daughters-in-law should be considered members of the husband's family. Katherine said that she would remain a daughter of Githingi after Eunice left.
5. Family discord should not be discussed with outsiders. Eunice's complaint against Katherine (and Katherine's against her). Eunice was acting in contravention of the rule in discussing it here, while Chege supported it by having little to do with the discussion.

The last value, a statement about loyalty to one's family, is of importance here. Loyalty is discerned in instances where there is an opportunity to be disloyal to one's affinal relative in an attempt to gain support from Waithera, the other women, and me. In her testimony against

therine she made it clear that she made a distinction between statements made to the family and the same statements made to others, outside the family. Phrasing this in terms which indicate that she owes no debt to her husband's family and that they have no responsibility for her, she implied that she should be free to make contracts and enter into relationships with outsiders regardless of the family's attitude toward her, or the things they say about her. Changing her position from the earlier one in which she belittled Katherine's alleged statement that she (Eunice) was not a daughter and that she (Katherine) would remain one, Eunice evidences a desire to be part of the family, and to have her activities and relationships with others of the family treated with the respect and loyalty of family members. Eunice held Katherine's statement about her as reprehensible and tried to get agreement from others on that point.

Eunice's lying about or misrepresenting the original statement about Waithera's children did not stop her from expressing her point on Chege. Obviously she must have thought that she had a chance of having her position supported or she would not have attempted asking for verification in such a high-risk atmosphere. Chege's refusal to answer may be seen as devotion to the truth, though that view would be more likely if he had made some statement. He had been known to make conciliatory or neutral statements in ticklish situations in the past. His own

planation seems the best fit in this situation: He refused to become embroiled in supporting either his mother's brother's daughter or his mother's brother's son's wife in front of the other women. Moreover, it seems that a refusal to support Eunice, in such a strategic situation was tacit support for Katherine, in the zero-sum game played by the two principles, for both Katherine and Eunice seem to count a loss by the other as a gain for herself. Note should be made here that hege is defining himself as a member of the Githingi family in contradistinction to the other women, and a matrilineal rather than an affinal relative in his backhanded support of Katherine over Eunice.

It was after this session that Waithera's brother arrived and made similar comments. All of these comments worried Waithera greatly--she felt responsible for her children's behavior. Her brother assumed a kind of distance from his relationship to his sister's children in this regard; he expressed his criticism to Waithera only. While there he often bought the children sweets and soft drinks and on the whole was very generous to his sister's children. The main point made in this incident concerning the understanding having to do with affection is the following: The strong affection between grandparents and grandchildren is thought of as being liable to turn into overindulgence; it is not tempered by the respect and deference due parents. Waithera worried that her mother and father might be "spoiling her children with kindness."

Figure 7 gives a summary of the major understandings involved in this case. In the absence of any statement of incentive to act in accordance with understandings of kinship morality involved here, it was concluded that the moral imperative of those aspects of kinship morality were essentially dominant in channeling behavior.

#### Case 4: Family Loyalty

In Chapter 2 I mentioned that Francis once told what I considered to be an outright lie which had interesting ramifications. That incident occurred a couple of weeks before I was to leave the field and is the starting point of Case 4. I will give highlights and some of the events that from hindsight seemed to presage the incident.

By the middle of January most of the young men who had worked with me had left Murang'a to seek employment elsewhere. Kibaki, though looking for a job in Nairobi continued to work on the language in the questionnaire, which was finally administered in February. Jacob left to begin studies at the University, but before he left he cautioned me that some of my "good company" would leave me once I decided what to do with my furnishings before leaving -- most people knew that I planned to leave Murang'a after administering the questionnaire. He counselled me to say that I hadn't made a decision about my things, whenever anyone asked.

Figure 7: Case 3; The "Unruly" Children

Understandings of Kinship Morality, and Kin Relation- ships	Incentive and Constraints Which Encourage Behavior	
	In accord with understandings (positive)	Counter to understandings (negative)
<u>LOYALTY</u>		
BW→HZ 1		Previous dis- loyalty, bad character
HZ→BW 2		Dependence, financial support
FZS→MBD	Concern	

1 Eunice→Katherine

2 Waithera→Katherine

As it turned out only two people asked about the furnishings in the weeks immediately prior to my departure. Ruthera, Jacob's sister, wanted to buy a bed which I agreed to sell her for very little. Later Francis contracted to buy the other furnishings which included two tables, two chairs, one bed, a wash stand, a cabinet and a gas burner and tank. The bookcase, I told him, I had promised to Chege. Making a list of all the items and the prices, Francis inquired specifically about the bed linen and blankets, some of which I promised to give to him. A total price was agreed upon; we both signed the paper on which the list was made.

As the time for my departure neared, a few other inquiries about the furniture were made, primarily by neighbors whom I hadn't seen very often, and by Chege, who couldn't believe that I had agreed to sell it all to Francis for so little. Even Matthew Githingi came in to say that he could have bought the gas burner for his wife. When I mentioned this to Francis he said that he was buying it for his mother.

Periodically Francis would check with me about our agreement; sometimes I became annoyed and said "a deal's a deal" and that he had nothing to worry about. On one such occasion Francis confessed that he was worried because I didn't know the "character" of the person I had hired to replace Kibaki. George Irungu, my assistant then, he said, was a convicted thief who had spent one year in jail.



e came from a bad family, and was certainly not to be trusted. Also he said at the same time that I should be watchful of my domestic helper, Irungu's cousin, who could steal all my clothes, shoes, and utensils before I left. I took little note of the second admonition for whatever things my maid would take I was sure I would have given her. As it turned out, these things were much more valuable and desirable than I had thought, for Catherine made a special trip from Nairobi to collect the dishes and flatware that I had promised her, counting each piece and noting, as I had not, that several forks and spoons were missing.

The warning about Irungu did bother me since I depended so much on him. I decided to ask Chege about what Francis had said. This I did reluctantly, for Francis and Chege had never been on good terms and this would likely cause an explosion. I was surprised when Chege took the news with restraint. He became angry, but he seethed rather than angrily walking out as he had done when irked on other occasions. He said that the story was totally untrue and that Francis had maligned him as well as Irungu since they came from the same family. I said that the story seemed highly incredible to me, but that I wanted to talk with him about it. Chege said that if Irungu ever heard of this story he would leave my employ.

He heard of it in a day or so. Chege told Wanjiru, his cousin, who worked as my domestic helper, and she

comptly told Irungu. In only about two days after I had talked with Chege, on a morning when I was planning to go to Nairobi to begin plans for my departure, Irungu arrived and confronted me with the story. He was very angry -- he wanted to know why I hadn't brought the story to him. I must have believed it or else I would have asked him about it. He never mentioned the name of the person spreading the story, but said that he would take the person spreading the story to court, send Chege's father as a delegate<sup>2</sup>, and bring it all out in the open. The sale of my furniture was the motive he said. I protested that I didn't believe the story, but that the deal with my furniture was settled --

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More is said about the role of "delegate" in the text. "Delegate" is the term used to describe the person who takes a complaint to the defendant, as well as the defendant's representative in the early stages of a case. The sending of a "delegate" is usually a necessary step in the judicial process: in one of the court cases which I studied a delegate had not been sent, and the judge took note of this by stating that the plaintiffs' case was weakened because he did not send a "delegate".

An interesting pattern concerning delegates for cases emerged from the survey data. Only one third of the respondents had been sent as delegates in cases, and these tended to be older men. This trend was even greater among those who had acted as judges in disputes: 11 (about 20%) of the 68 respondents had been judges in cases dealing with pregnancy, verbal abuse, assault, debts, land, and bridewealth. All but two of these were men over 56 years of age. A chi square test of difference between those who were judges and those who were not was significant at  $p = .003$  (cf 9.042).

Why would Francis be concerned? Irungu continued, how could I eat with him, as I did the day after I heard the story, without mentioning it? It was clear I did not trust him. I didn't know how to handle this entire episode and at this point I gave in to a desire to cry and tears began to fall. Seeing this Irungu ended his harangue and said that he had not planned to do any of the things which he (Irungu) had said he'd do. He'd take no one to court, what he wanted was to go to Nairobi to see his "step-father" (father's elder brother) about a job. This was the father of the first young woman who had worked for me.

He asked for an advance on his salary for the trip, which I agreed to give him, but before I handed the money over to him, he went to the market town and got drunk on Karobo, Kikuyu traditional beer. He accompanied me as I picked up Chege's parents and collected the food Watere, Chege's mother, wanted to take to her mother in Nairobi. Both Watere and her husband, Njoroge, tried to get Irungu to be quiet, but, calling them by their first names, he tried to explain that he had been verbally abused. Both of them had heard the story by then. All the way to Nairobi Irungu continued to talk and Watere tried to shush him by telling him that he was disturbing me.

After some difficulty Irungu finally found his relatives. He spent the night with a man from his village and the following day he explored Nairobi. I spent most of that evening at the Mwangi's with Katherine, Ellen, Watere,

icũ, and the children. The major topic of conversation was the story about Irungu which Francis had told me. Ellen and Watere laughed about other stories which Francis had told, and wanted the details of this new one. Katherine said that Mwangi wanted little to do with Francis, his brother's son.

Irungu returned with me to Murang'a on the following day; we worked closely together, finishing up by projects. He never mentioned the slander again, but inviegled me to help him get a job with the County Council. I introduced him to the Chairman of the County Council and took the name of the Chairman's son who wanted to study restaurant and hotel management in the States. A few days before I left Irungu found out that he had passed low on his certificate examination; this almost sealed his chances of ever getting a good job.

I sold all the agreed upon furniture to Francis, after some debate about the blanket which was given to Waithera, for which a small sum was knocked off Francis' total price.

### Analysis

The understanding concerning loyalty is of importance in the analysis of this case: the notion of responsibility also plays a part in the participants reactions and expectations.

Genealogies in which Chege, Irungu, and Wanjiru appear are given in Appendix A; Irungu's is Figure A3, and Chege's is Figure A4. It was noted earlier that although Chege and

and Irungu consider each other cousins, they do not appear in one another's genealogies. From the information given by them and by Irungu's father, it was surmised that they probably had the same FFFF or FFFFE. Their relationship to Wanjiru is given on their respective charts; Chege is FFFBSSSS to her and Irungu is her FFBS. Regardless of their exact genealogical connection the three generally consider themselves of the same family. When the accusation was made against Irungu and Wanjiru, Chege stood in support of them, while Wanjiru did the same for Irungu, and Irungu threatened to call another kinsman, Chege's father Njoroge, to be a character reference for him and to act as a "delegate" for him in a case which would involve Njoroge against his wife's brother's son.

Notions concerning family loyalty emerge in the way the actors line up in support of one another. The element of choice more greatly highlights the function of the understandings concerning loyalty. Chege had earlier taken a position which was interpreted as expressing a degree of loyalty to his MBD. In this instance he could be loyal to his MBS or to his patrilineal cousin. Incentives for him to stand with his MBS Francis included his indebtedness to Francis' father, and the possibility that he might gain from Francis' good fortune in buying the furniture. The constraints on that move was primarily the enduring enmity which existed between the two young men. I am not sure of the genesis of the cool relationship between the two;

was already established when I arrived. Chege complained primarily of the fact that Francis treated him as though he were a child, when indeed he was a circumcized man. The seniority Francis exercised over Chege had to do with absolute age, Francis was older; and with the fact that Francis was a married man. Chege never challenged Francis' authority over him, and usually quickly but dispiritedly carried out Francis' orders. So although the possibility existed for Chege to stand with the matrilineal cousin with whom he lived, the history of their relationship did not encourage him to exercise that option.

The prime incentive for standing with Irungu which Chege identified was his belief that Irungu had been maligned, wrongly accused; and the overpowering fact that Irungu and he were of the same family. In a sense, Chege's feeling of responsibility, that to the extent Irungu's name was besmirched so too was his, influenced his display of loyalty to his kinsman. Chege recognized that he shared responsibility for his cousin's actions and stood with him against a common outsider, non-mbari member.

Irungu's statement that he would call Chege's father as a "delegate" also indicated the primacy of the patrilineal principle in determining legitimacy. A "delegate" or a "messenger" in a case is usually a relative of the disputant who can be trusted to act on behalf of his "client" or kinsperson in delivering a message. Wise and respected elders may sometimes act on behalf of

n-kin. Asking a person to act as a "delegate" is a communication of respect and a recognition of the mutuality of their interests. Irungu felt that Njoroge, Chege's father, was a credible name to mention as a "delegate", even though Njoroge had many ties to his wife's family. These included the fact that his son, Chege, lived with them without Njoroge's paying any room and board for him, and that Njoroge used the land on Githingi's other shamba, to graze his new "grade" cow. Njoroge's second son also was living at the Githingi homestead at the time of this incident. Njoroge's and Githingi's younger children periodically spent a few days at each other's homesteads.

The case was never made, so I never got a chance to see if Irungu would have actually asked Njoroge to be a "delegate", or if Njoroge would have accepted. I did find out that Njoroge and his wife, as well as Francis' father's brother and his father's brother's wife found the charge preposterous; and probably would not have supported Francis in a case. Francis' father's brother, Mwangi, according to Katherine, had lost all faith in Francis by the time of this incident -- in a sense he had disavowed responsibility for Francis' actions.

Francis still stayed with these relatives when he went to Nairobi. Irungu too was readily accepted by his relatives when he went to Nairobi. Irungu's acceptance by his relatives in Nairobi is an example of the hospitality extended to relatives who come to the city from "up country". They

und him a place to sleep, and talked to him about how to survive in the city, but encouraged him to return to Murang'a because jobs were scarce in Nairobi.

As to Francis' reasons for telling the story about Murungu, most people were agreed that the reason Francis did it was to protect his agreement with me about the sale of my furniture. Francis and Eunice said that they would keep the furniture where it was and move into my rooms when I left. To this Katherine asked, "Why? When they lived there before they only used one room. Would they use more now?" Chege thought they might move to the County Council Housing Development where Eunice had wanted to move for some time, but also suggested that they might not be able to afford to do so. Others, including Jacob and some of the neighbors, thought that Francis would sell the furniture piecemeal for a considerable profit.

The attractiveness of my furniture was not based on its quality, for it was the same type of furniture which most people there had. That included Francis and Eunice who had duplicates of almost every piece of furniture I owned, except for the wash stand, gas burner, and bookshelves. It was rather that this attractiveness lay in the way the furniture was used and the "European" manner of its distribution throughout three adjoining rooms. For Eunice, who especially wanted to be "modern", and Francis, who shared this wish, they were buying into a different lifestyle and status.



Figure 8 summarizes the understandings of Kikuyu kinship morality involved in this case and gives some the incentives and constraints toward acting in accord with these expectations discussed above. It seems to be a rather clear-cut case of kinspeople acting in accord with the understandings concerning kinship morality when more material interests might not be served by doing so. Reasons why Francis was not supported include his past history of "telling stories", and what is seemingly considered to be a defect in his character.

#### Case 5: The Loutish Brother

This final case deals with friction between a set of siblings; the main incident concerns a fight between brothers.

I was told that the Mungai brothers and sister tried to get together to see one another, and to visit their parents, during the major holidays. Waithera, Moses, Jacob, and Kibaki saw one another more frequently than any of them saw Dr. Irungu, their brother who worked in Uganda. Moses visited Waithera when she was working in Kisumu, and the two of them once visited Dr. Irungu in Uganda. During the Christmas season which I spent in Murang'a, all of the Mungai children were there, except for the brother who was in medical school in France.

Much of the time during the holiday was spent drinking, either in Moses' or Waithera's rooms or at one of the bars.

Figure 8: Case 4; Family Loyalty

Understandings of Friendship Morality, and Kin Relations- hips	Incentives and Constraints Which Encourage Behavior	
	In accord with understandings (positive)	Counter to understandings (negative)
<u>LOYALTY</u>		
Cousin, mbari member	Concern	
FZ-BS		Bad character, personal history
FBW-HBS		Bad character, personal history
<u>RESPONSIBILITY</u>		
Cousin, mbari member	Concern	

Jacob didn't drink very much, but his siblings did. Most evenings Moses and Kibaki went out together with their friends from Dukani; sometimes Waithera and I joined them. On the occasions when I joined them, I would drive my car. Several of these evenings were spent at a bar in town which was popular with salaried people, especially government employees. When I would return from town with a car load of very intoxicated people, I often had a hard time removing them from the car. Kibaki generally became annoyed with Moses who drank the most and was the most intractable about leaving the bar or the car. The two of them stopped sitting together at the bar, and exchanged sharp words. Late one night when Moses refused to leave my car, Kibaki became exasperated and tried to drag Moses from the car. Moses fought back and Jacob separated the two of them. Moses stormed off complaining that his brother had become a foolish drunkard. Moses complained that his two brothers were against him.

On the following day, Kibaki packed his bags and moved from his brother's place. Later that evening, the brothers took their problem to their father, who had just returned from a stay in Kenyatta Hospital in Nairobi. Their father called another family meeting on the day after the first one. I did not attend either meeting, but Katherine and Waithera indicated that in the first they discussed the relationship between the brothers, and in the second, other topics, including the house which Waithera and Dr. Irungu

ere building for their parents, were discussed.

After these meetings Kibaki moved back into his brother's room, but the relationship between them remained cool. Kibaki would not go drinking with his brother, nor would he ride in a car with him. In social gatherings, Kibaki stayed away from Moses. He said little against his brother, but his facial expressions and posture indicated disdain for him.

From time to time, Waithera complained that Moses was becoming "rough", and blamed it on the influence of his friends in the market town.

### Analysis

Waithera and Moses seemed most proud of their brother, Dr. Irungu, not only because he was a medical doctor, but also because he was a Daktari ya Pombe, he had a reputation as a big beer drinker. Waithera said that she too had a large capacity for beer when she was young, but that Moses, while still in high school, had surpassed her capacity. She enjoyed recounting tales of his visit with her in Kisumu and the amount of beer he drank then. Now Moses, the young bank clerk, had a drinking problem, which was exasperated during the holiday season. The problem was not that he drank, was drunk almost every day, but rather that he became "rude" and stubborn when he drank. Waithera and his brothers might spend an hour or more trying to get him to leave a bar. Before the argument between Kibaki

Moses, none of his brothers or sister would go home leave Moses in a bar with his friends. They took care see that he returned safely. Moses resented their concern and became increasingly surly when they tried to tax him home. It was after a few nights of such behavior at Kibaki lost his temper and struck back at Moses as he tried to remove him from the car.

The understandings from Kikuyu kinship morality involved here are primarily affection and responsibility. Maitera and her brothers felt responsible for Moses actions, but became more and more reluctant to act on this sense of responsibility as Moses increasingly rejected their offers of help. Kibaki became exasperated with his brother's outish behavior and after a fight in which Kibaki and others felt that Kibaki had taken the proper position, Kibaki withdrew his affection from him. Following the wishes of his father, he continued to live with his brother, but no longer liked to associate with him, and did not do so when he had a choice. This information is included in Figure 9, which summarizes all the cases presented here.

### Chapter Summary

Figure 9 includes an encapsulation of the major issues involved in the five cases presented in this chapter. The information in the chart is organized according to the understandings involved and the set of kin relationships

Figure 9: Summary of All Cases

Understandings of Kinship Morality, and Kin Relation- ships	Incentives and Constraints Which Encourage Behavior	
	In accord with understandings (positive)	Counter to understandings (negative)
<b>DEFECTION</b>		
grandparent→ grandchild	Legitimate marriage namesake, concern	Unmarried M, deception by M
Child→parent		Conflict over kind of marriage
MZ, MB→ZD	Age, generosity, common interest, concern	
H←→W	Trust, "love", sexual intimacy	Financial inde- pendence of W, dependence of H, disrespect, dis- obedience, leni- ency, infrequent visits
HZ←→BW	Common interests, concern, support	Bad character, disrespect & disobedience of male authority, economic depen- dence, economic difference, dis- loyalty
W→H family	Common interests, support	
H→W family		Bad Characters, criminality, wife's dis- affection
Siblings	Companionship, common interests	Bad character, drunkenness, intractability

Figure 9 (continued)

RESPONSIBILITY

Grandparents→ Grandchild	Namesake, support by parents	Unmarried M
Parent↔Child	Concern, economic gain, religion	Conflict over kind of marriage
FB↔BD	Future autonomy, domestic help, concern	
Cousins, mbari members	Concern, solidarity	
Siblings	Concern, authority of father	Incorrigibility of B
MZ, MZD↔MZD	Age, domestic help, concern	Incompetency, bad character, insensitive, overbearing
Father-in-law ↔ Daughter-in-law	Modesty	Disrespect and disobedience to male authority
H↔W	Propriety, "love"	Financial inde- pendence of W

LOYALTY

Child→parent	Concern	
Cousin, mbari member	Concern	
FZ→BS		Bad character, personal history
FBW→HBS		Bad character, personal history
W↔H Family		Disrespect, disobedience, envy
FZS→MBD	Concern	

involved in each category. The chapter summary should be seen as an explanation of Figure 9.

### Affection

The expectations concerning affection which informants placed emphasis on were the mother-child bond and the relationship between grandparents and grandchildren. The relationship between mother's sister, mother's brother and sister's daughter and son were potentially affectionate ones, while the husband-wife relationship was understood to be supportive and close. The relationship between husband's sister and brother's wife was not specifically mentioned as one for which expectations of affection existed. It was said, however, that it was of prime importance in choosing a wife that she be able to get along with her husband's people. Although one woman specifically talked of her fondness for her brother, the sibling relationship was not one in which others saw that the expectation concerning affection were of overriding importance.

All of the relationships mentioned above figure into the cases within the domain of affection for kin. The nature of the interaction between Mungai siblings, Case 5, before the fight between the brothers, could be characterized as one in which affection was shown, primarily through their desire to associate with, be with, one another, and the joy of anticipation of the arrival of more distantly located brothers. The common interests, sense of companionship,





and cohesion they felt influenced their warm feelings for one another. The fight between the brothers was generally described as being caused by the one brother's drunkenness and foolish character. This caused the remaining brothers and sister to love and respect him a little less than before.

The marital relationships included in this section include those between Francis and Eunice, and between Jacob and Katherine. Incentives which influenced their behavior in accord with ideas concerning affection include the wife's trust in the husband and sexual intimacy between the pair. This last especially reinforced the bond between Katherine and Jacob; together with what I have labelled "love". Schneider's (1968:5) description of love seems to apply here; i.e., "doing what is good for or right for the other person without regard for its effect on the doer." It was just such "love" carried to an extreme which Jacob characterized as "leniency" and which he said caused the friction between Eunice and Francis. The other constraints on their relationship show up in this section as the wife's financial independence and the husband's previous dependency, and the wife's disrespect, through the use of abusive language and her disobedience of her husband. Katherine and Jacob's relationship is included in this category, in that Jacob became increasingly irritated with Katherine's lack of respect for his wishes concerning the serving of food. Interestingly, the women's complaints against "husbands" do not figure prominently here. One of the reasons for this is based on Katherine's desire to be

simply and calmly incorporated into Jacob's family. When Jacob's visits to her became infrequent, after her move to Nairobi, she experienced some change in her feelings for him. With Eunice, on the other hand, the information is lacking because my notes do not show the few instances in which she spoke with me about her marital relations. Her resentment of her husband, based on the feeling that she both had to support and obey him, was brought out in the events of New Year's Eve, Case 2.

Eunice's and Katherine's relationship to each other was important in all but one of the cases presented here. Clearly it was not affectionate. The reasons for this lack of affection are various, but include Katherine's perception of Eunice as a person of bad character -- a liar, and a "proud" person, who was disloyal to her and to her family, and who was disrespectful and disobedient to the male authorities of the families. The economic difference between the two young women was an underlying reason for this enmity. Just as Katherine saw Eunice as being of "bad character", so too Eunice made the same charge against Katherine: Eunice accused her sister-in-law of being a thief and of being ungrateful. Moreover, Katherine generally did not act amicably toward Eunice, her brother's wife.

The incentives for acting in accord with understandings focussing on affection listed in "HZ-BW" category in Figure 9 represent Katherine's relationship to Waithera. They shared a common experience in having borne children while

unmarried, and both were interested in each other's children. They managed to maintain the close tie they had before Katherine's pregnancy case and subsequent press for marriage. Waithera's support of Katherine and her son also figured into the nature of the affect between the two women. In addition to their common interests, this influenced her feelings of affect for other members of the Mungai family. On the negative side, Waithera sometimes saw her support of Katherine as an extension of her support for her brothers. She complained that she had put her brothers through school and now must continue to support them, even the ones who had jobs. Waithera increasingly felt that the money used to support her brothers, and Katherine and her son could be used for her own sons whom others called "unruly".

The husbands' affection for their wives' families might well be mentioned here. The constraints against affection in this relationship which are listed in Figure 9 represent Jacob's statement that he could not be expected to get along with Katherine's family if she did not, and Francis' dislike of Eunice's uncles, whom he thought of as "criminal".

The relationship between aunts and uncles and their sister's children, represented here, is warm; and in some instances close. For both Eunice and Katherine (and for Francis too though it is not mentioned in a case here) mother's sisters were perceived as equals since they were near each other in age and were possible confidants. Katherine shared many interests with her mother's sister

who lived in town, and Eunice, while not having frequent contact with her mother's sisters did enjoy their generosity and concern for her welfare. Eunice's relationship to her mother's brother is included in Figure 9 in the section on affection. This relationship was similar to the one which Eunice shared with her mother's sisters. Although she saw them infrequently, the fact they did visit her, combined with the fact that Eunice and her mother's brothers were relatively close in age, and that her mother's brothers generously bought her drinks and food were important influences of Eunice's feelings of affection for them.

The major parent-child relationship covered in these cases was that between Katherine and her mother and father. Because Matthew Githingi communicated his disappointment in Katherine to me without explanation, and Njoki, Katherine's mother, never directly revealed how she felt about Katherine, the direction parent→child is not represented here. Katherine's main complaint against her parents was that they did not let her leave with Jacob and thereby establish marriage through bride removal, but instead held out for the exchange of bridewealth and a religious ceremony. She spoke with hostility toward them in this regard. The relationship of Katherine's parents to her son was based on Katherine's not being legitimately married to the child's father. Their attitude toward Katherine's son was definitely cool, while those same grandparents were very warm toward their son's son, who in addition to being the issue of a legitimate marriage was also Githingi's namesake.

## Responsibility

Expectations concerning the notion of responsibility among relatives are associated with the relationship between brother and sister, parents and children, grandparents and grandchildren; and in regard to the idea of a kind of vulnerability to kin and obligations to assist kin, may be found throughout the network of kin including mbari members and affinal kin. These expectations are sometimes complementary in the sense that brothers may be seen as guardians of their sisters' moral behavior; while except for uninitiated boys, sisters do not share that responsibility for brothers. Adult children are expected to care for their aged parents, and sometimes parents-in-law, but children are also asked to recognize and respect as legitimate their parents' sense of responsibility for them.

In this chapter the cases which deal with responsibility involve the interaction of grandparents and grandchildren, parent and child, father's brother and brother's daughter, brothers and sisters, patrilineal cousins, mother's sister and sister's daughter, mother's sister's daughters, husband and wife, and father-in-law and daughter-in-law. All of these fall within the broad range of relationships which expectations concerning responsibility cover. Though the relationship between father-in-law and daughter-in-law was not specifically mentioned, its inclusion here is predicated on the idea of the father as the head of his family, especially those living at his homestead. The particular

relationship between mother's sister's daughters in the case presented here (Case 2) is special in that the cousins involved grew up at the same homestead, and did not have strong patrilineal ties.

Two sets of grandparents are represented here. Isaac and Rebecca Mungai recognized their responsibility to Isaac's namesake, Katherine's son; and to their daughter's children. The support given them by their daughter seems to have influenced this idea of responsibility for her children, though a real concern for them predominated. On the other side of the ledger, Matthew and Njoki Githingi were reported to lack a marked sense of responsibility for their daughter's son, due primarily to the fact that she was unmarried. Again, the issue of Katherine's marriage turns out to be important in the constraints and incentives influencing behavior in accord with the understandings surrounding the notion of responsibility. In addition to their concern for her welfare, her parents were believed to be influenced by their religious beliefs and desire for economic gain. Katherine, by moving away from their homestead, refused to respect their sense of responsibility for her, while her acceptance of her father's brother's responsibility for her was motivated by the hope that she might, through getting the job he promised, achieve some measure of financial autonomy. The father's brother in this case (Case 1) was working in concert with his brother; his behavior was influenced by his concern of her brother and his brother's daughter, as well as by

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the need for temporary domestic help.

The solidarity of patrilineal cousins in Case 4 is dramatic in that potential economic gains were overlooked as mbari members declared that they share the same "character"--any aspersions against one of them was against all. But in Case 5 the cohesion and solidarity among siblings, which received strong support from the authority of the father, was challenged by the weak "character" of one of the brothers.

The relationship between mother's sister and mother's sister's daughter, and between mother's sister's daughters themselves in Figure 9 represents Eunice's relationship to her mother's sisters and mother's sister's daughters. The fact that she was older than the two of them, she indicated, gave her reason to control them and act on their behalf, and to punish their incompetency. Through this she said that she evidenced her "concern" for them. Both girls helped Eunice with household and child care duties while living at the homestead. The younger one dramatically removed herself from a situation in which Eunice could exercise such authority over her, because of what may be characterized as Eunice's insensitive and overbearing attitude.

The relationship between father-in-law and daughter-in-law, which was never very warm, never erupted in an explosive confrontation because of a sense of modesty maintained by both father-in-law and daughter-in-law -- neither would directly confront the other on any issue. Nonetheless, the



daughter-in-law's lack of respect for and disobedience of her father-in-law's wishes was perceived by others as behavior which challenged his responsibility for her as well as his authority over her. A challenge to authority also precipitated the crisis between husband and wife in Case 2, in which the couple did not agree on the understandings appropriate the situation and the husband acted in accord with his sense of propriety which held that as a husband he was responsible for the behavior of his wife. The wife in this case did not accept her husband's sense of responsibility for her actions, and assumed an independent pose which she backed by her financial independence of her husband.

### Loyalty

The idea of loyalty to one's parents was important in Cases 1 and 2, in which Katherine supported the justness of her parents' position against attack by others, even though during that same time she had avowedly lost affection for them and had challenged their sense of responsibility for her. Her behavior in this regard was primarily motivated by what Fortes calls an "inescapable bond" which she felt for her parents. On the whole Katherine's position seemed greatly influenced by the moral imperative of kinship loyalty. Katherine perceived Eunice's actions as blatantly disloyal to the Githingi family. This includes statements against her father-in-law which Eunice made to her friends and

colleagues; Eunice's re-hiring of her maid whom her father-in-law chased away; Eunice's statement to non-family members about her financial condition and family problems, as well as Eunice's statements which characterized Katherine as ungrateful. Eunice, on the other hand, perceived some of Katherine's statements against her as being motivated by Katherine's envy of Eunice's status as a married and employed woman. Eunice saw this as one reason that Katherine refused to extend kinship amity to her and to welcome her into the Githingi family.

In Case 3, when Eunice asked Chege to support her allegation against Katherine, Chege refused to make a statement or to be used in Eunice's argument against Katherine. Instead of "re-interpreting" or "bending" the truth, Chege refused to talk about such matters in front of outsiders, non-relatives. Indeed he was demonstrating loyalty to his matrilineal relatives, and Katherine, in particular, by leaving the room rather than participating in the discussion.

The other items in this category in Figure 9 refer to events of Case 4. There patrilineal ties were seen as the most important and cousins or mbari members declared their loyalty to one another, without regard to other obvious constraints. The person who made the accusation against a member of Chege's mbari, Francis, was not supported in this by members of his mbari, including his father's sister (who was Chege's mother), his father's brother's wife, and,

incidentally, his grandmother, who all looked to his history of questionable statements and acts to discredit him. The belief that Francis had a character defect, he was a liar, absolved members of the family from having to maintain loyalty to him in this instance where overlapping ties were prevalent.

An overview of the chart indicates that behavior in accord with the understandings concerning loyalty is most strongly influenced by what Fortes calls the "binding and inescapable moral obligations and claims" on which kinship morality is built. No other incentives were stated or inferred for behavior in accord with this understanding. Indeed, kin acted loyally toward one another when they could have gained economically by doing otherwise, and when they did not express affection or responsibility for one another. The understandings focussing on responsibility include several instances in which the idea of "irresistable claims and concern for relatives" plays a part in channeling behavior, but only in one instance is this not combined with other influences whose weight must be considered. A glance at Figure 9 shows that the incentives which encourage behavior in accord with the understandings concerning affection are of more different kinds than the incentives listed for the understandings concerning responsibility and loyalty. The same is true for the constraints which encourage behavior counter to the understandings concerning affections; these are more variable than the constraints in the other major

categories. A number of kin do not act in accordance with the expectations concerning affection. The relationship among the understandings concerning affection, responsibility and loyalty will be looked at more closely in the final chapter, in which the "organizing understanding" of the understandings comprising Kikuyu kinship morality will be discussed.

#### CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSIONS: "ORGANIZING UNDERSTANDINGS"

The understandings of Kikuyu kinship morality investigated in this dissertation may be phrased as follows:

Kin should have affection for one another.

Kin should recognize responsibility for one another's social and moral well-being.

Kin should be loyal to one another.

The ethnographic record, particularly Leakey's and Kenyatta's data which was examined in detail, support these findings on Kikuyu kinship morality, though the terminology used here was not employed by the other observers. Traditionally, as well as today, these understandings were not equally distributed throughout the kin network, such that all kin are expected to have affection for one another, be responsible to and for all other kin, or be loyal to all other kin. Basically, affection, warm and familiar relationships, were thought to run counter to structured power relationship though a kind of affect, e.g., admiration and reverence, was seen as appropriate in such relationships. Responsibility, which appear in Leakey's data as the obligations and duties of patrilineal kin to each other and the reciprocal support and ties of matrilineal kin, was relatively widespread among the kin. The cases presented emphasized the parent-daughter and father's brother-brother's daughter relationships as ones in which the moral and social standing of the junior was being controlled by the senior,

but other instances of this kind of responsibility certainly were evident. Loyalty too is a broad based understanding, but its application usually implies a narrowing of focus, either "my kin against the world", or more often patrilineal relatives against matrilineal and other relatives.

The understandings of kinship morality studied here do not exhaust the full range of understandings shared by kin among the Kikuyu (my nine months stay with the Kikuyu was not long enough to allow me to be apprised of or follow up on many aspects of this rich culture). These understandings, however, do form a set which co-occur in many of the same instances. Interesting questions concerning these understandings are: What is the organization of this set of understandings? Is one understanding more important than others?

This raises issues which Swartz' (1975, in press) has dealt with under the heading "organizing understandings". According to him, "having the same understandings others have is necessary but not sufficient. The way the shared understandings are combined (i.e., organized) must also be highly similar for the members of a group in order to have the basis for predictability essential to group life." This organization determines which understandings are more important and which go with what others. The second half of this issue is generally answered for this study -- we are dealing with kinship morality, understandings which are identified as pertaining to behavior among kin. It is not



assumed that all interaction among kin include each of these understandings, but they generally are held within the field of kin interaction. The first half, however, remains a question: Which of the understandings concerning affection, responsibility, and loyalty is the most important? That one which is most important we may identify as an "organizing understanding".

Swartz (1975, in press) identifies this kind of understanding as follows: "Shared understandings which are just as prescriptive as any others guide sharers of a culture in putting together and ranking other understandings. We can call these "organizing understandings". There are two kinds of "organizing understandings": Those understandings which people bring with them to a situation, and those which "arise from new social or physical situations which bring together prescriptive understandings which had previously not been applicable in a single situation (Swartz, 1975, in press)." The situation in which Francis and his wife had a disagreement concerning his authority (Case 2), is one in which understandings from the economic domain are brought in juxtaposition to those which deal with kinship. This represents an instance in which a previously non-applicable understanding was brought to bear on a situation. I shall return to a discussion of that situation later in this chapter.

The data which bear on the rank-ordering of the understandings which people bring to situations in which kin

interact include information presented in the cases discussed in Chapter 3, i.e., the actual events in which kin use these understandings, and the explanations given for their failure to act in accord with these understandings.

An analysis of the incentives and constraints on behavior in accord with the understandings of kinship morality indicated that affection was most sensitive to pressures of various kinds. Figure 9 in Chapter 3 gives a summary of these variables. The incentives to act in accord with the understandings concerning affection include similarity of age, common interests, generosity, companionship, legitimate marriage of child, having a grandchild as a namesake, financial support and what I've called "concern", or "prescriptive altruism". The constraints against acting affectionately toward kin include parents' and daughter's conflict over the type of marriage the daughter should have, deception or lack of candor by daughter, financial independence of a wife and dependence of a husband, a woman's disrespect, disloyalty, and disobedience of male's authority, a husband's leniency, economic differences between HZ and BW, and the "bad character" of various relatives. Affection itself, represented in the chart by the terms "concern" and "love", seldom was the moral imperative behind behavior.

The sense of responsibility, though bombarded by challenges from different areas, still emerged as a considerable force in influencing the pattern of kin

interaction. The idea of "concern" for relatives frequently appeared in conjunction with other incentives which encouraged behavior in accord with the understandings concerning affections including the "bad character" and incorrigibility of kin, economic factors and unexpected disrespect and disobedience in certain relationships. In situations where loyalty was an issue, however, the major constraint which prevented kin from acting in accord with their understanding was what Kikuyu called the "character" of the individual, here particularly bad character of kinspeople who were considered habitual liars and ungrateful. A sense of binding obligation or concern for relatives motivated most kinspeople to declare their solidarity with one another.

This pattern indicates that loyalty to kin has the most binding effect on kin, and is the most important of the understandings of Kikuyu kinship morality discussed here. An examination of the material in the cases, in which loyalty and other understandings play a part supports this view. In Case 1 Katherine left her parents' homestead to live in Dukani, avowing a loss of affection for them, and refusing to recognize their sense of responsibility for her. While she was thus acting counter to the understandings concerning affection and responsibility toward her parents, her behavior in regard to her parents was in accord with the understandings concerning loyalty. During this period Katherine's father chased Eunice's maid away from the homestead, but Eunice went against his wishes and rehired her.

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In this instance Katherine was supportive of her father's right as head of his household to decide who should live at his homestead. She behaved loyally toward her father. In a similar instance when Katherine was told that her mother's maid had threatened to leave, Katherine was greatly angered, and chastised the girl for even thinking of leaving her mother without help. This incident occurred when Katherine had spoken to her mother only once in more than five months and while she was not on good terms with her.

Case 2 which involves Eunice's incorporation into her husband's family is also instructive. An aspect of incorporation into her husband's family is the extension of kinship amity to the wife by members of the husband's family and by her to them, so that it might be seen that she is validating her membership in the family by acting according to kinship morality. Eunice felt that her husband's sister, Katherine, did not follow the precept of kinship morality in her behavior toward her, that she (Katherine, the HZ) denied Eunice's generosity and financial support and disclaimed her as a member of the family. This comment, a statement not in accord with the understandings concerning loyalty, greatly angered Eunice, whose reaction was to carry the statement to its logical extreme and say that she would indeed go to live with her mother, her own family.

It should be mentioned that incorporation of a son's wife into his family, a factor often mentioned in anthropological literature, is a gradual and difficult process

(see Paulme, 1963, for an overview of this process for various African tribes). The cases represented here, though they illustrate the nature of the process, are atypical in two respects. It is often the mother-in-law and several other women, not just the husband's sister, with whom the young bride has difficult or antagonistic relations. Njoki, Eunice's mother-in-law was frequently absent from the home. This along with the fact that the Githingi family lived on a homestead which was isolated from their other kin perhaps intensified the relationship between brother's wife and husband's sister in that they were the only adult females at the homestead who constantly had occasion to interact with one another. Katherine's incorporation into her "husband's" group was atypical in that she pressed to be accepted as a member of the family in the absence of a legitimate marriage, and therefore sought very strongly to fulfill the positive expectations concerning the proper behavior of an affine. The extension of kinship loyalty to the new bride is one of the ways of validating her membership in the group. Katherine saw Eunice, her brother's wife, as an outsider to the extent that Eunice did not abide by understandings of kinship morality. Eunice, on the other hand, had expectations of loyalty from her husband's sister which were not met, allowing Eunice to say that she would leave the family.

Case 4, in which Chege and Wanjiru immediately supported their cousin, George Irungu, does not so much bring the understandings concerning loyalty into relationship

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with other understandings as it shows the importance of loyalty to patrilineal kin as a general principle. Kin recognized their responsibility for their patrilineal cousin and demonstrated solidarity in their support of each other. In Case 5; The Loutish Brother, loyalty was not an issue, though I might observe that though the siblings came to like and respect one of their brothers less, through the influence of their father, they remained reluctantly supportive of him.

Though the Kikuyu did not say it, the empirical evidence shows that of the understandings of kinship morality which they bring to a situation in which they are interacting with kin, loyalty is the most important. Of the three understandings discussed in this study, loyalty is acted on in situations where the others are not, and loyalty appears as a significant factor in validating membership in the family group. Loyalty, in light of this evidence, is seen as an "organizing understanding".

According to Swartz, there are two kinds of "organizing understandings", those which are brought to a situation, and those which arise from unique or unusual situations through the choices made by individuals. Loyalty is of the first type. The latter type of "organizing understanding" arises when understandings from different domains enter into a situation in which they had not previously been combined. If indeed this situation is unique or novel for the actors involved, and they do not share ideas concerning the



overriding or "organizing understanding", then a new "organizing understanding" might arise, or an old one might come to be pertinent to this situation. I would like to examine the events in Case 2: The Talkative Wife as such a situation.

Llewelyn and Hoebel (1941) indicate that through cases one sees the individual's relation to culture. In this case two aspects of a changing culture come into conflict, and individuals have to choose what is appropriate to the situation. The situation is not unique in the society, but is so for the individuals involved. The understandings which come into conflict involve the evaluation of persons, especially women, in terms of the money economy, and the respect and obedience a husband traditionally expects from his wife. A brief look at certain aspects of the Kikuyu's participation in the money economy is valuable here.

Levine (1966) has suggested that the Kikuyu like some other ethnic groups he studied are highly rated for their "opportunism and industry". This means, among other things, that they work very hard to attain political and economic gains. This view is consonant with the view of themselves that many Kikuyu whom I know hold. Several of them contrasted themselves to another ethnic group in Kenya by indicating that the other group did well in the university, and that was the reason there were so many of them there, but that the Kikuyu were good at business and owned much of Nairobi. Most outside observers submit that there are as well large

numbers of Kikuyu at the university, but this does not deny that the Kikuyu see themselves as excelling in business and economic endeavors.

Kikuyu told me that a number of large buildings in Nairobi are owned by Murang'a Kikuyu. The pattern of land use in Murang'a supports the Kikuyu myth which states that they began here and spread to the north and south. When the soil fertility of the area began to decrease some Kikuyu left the area to set up farms elsewhere. After the coming of the Europeans, and the establishment of cities; some started businesses as petty-traders and worked as laborers in those cities.

A money economy was introduced into Kikuyuland with the institution of the Hut tax and Poll tax. An increase in taxes was one of the reasons for the foundation of one of the first modern political parties among the Kikuyu, The Young Kikuyu Association, which was mentioned earlier. Taxation was a major means of inducing Kikuyu to work on the European farms established in the highlands, and limitation on the amount of land an African could hold was also considered among the methods for recruiting laborers (Bennett, 1963: 24-25). Kikuyu whose land was alienated by the white settlers were forced to enter into this labor market.

During the colonial period men were primarily engaged in wage labor, though where Kikuyu were tenant farmers or worked on coffee or tea plantations, all members of the family worked. In my visits to tea-growing areas in

Kiambu and a rice co-operative in Murang'a, I found this to still be the case.

Women who worked at home, in the past and today, performed most of the agricultural activities. They made their own decisions in day-to-day activities, and could use surplus as they wished, but they did not own their own land and major decisions about the management of the land were made in consultation with their husband or fathers. Men and women in this type family were truly interdependent, each performing tasks crucial and necessary for the maintenance of the family.

After Kenyan independence, Africans assumed a much wider range of jobs. The president of Kenya is a Kikuyu and Kikuyu occupy many of the top posts in the government. Kikuyu men whom I talked to aspired to positions in the national government, in the banking field, and to managerial positions in industry. In reality they would settle for a position as teacher or clerk almost anywhere, or perhaps start a small business, grocery or bar. It was clear, however, that farming, and working the land was not important to these young men, though owning land remained of utmost importance.

The educated Kikuyu women whom I knew almost all wanted to work. They, however, aspired to positions such as teachers, nurse, secretary, local government assistants, sales clerks, policewomen, typists and barmaids. This last category was confined to those with only a few years of schooling or with none. Most of them hoped to marry as

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well as work. Some of the money which they made at work would be used to pay a maid to take care of the children and house.

In the questionnaire conducted in the village Kanje, respondents, 47 males and 21 females, were asked to agree or disagree with the following statements about women: 1) Women should care for the home and not go off to town to work. 2) Women cannot control money, you should not talk about money with them. 3) Education is not very important for girls since most of their work will be in the home. About 60% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that education was not important for girls, but around 84% agreed that women should care for the home and not go to town to work. On the question of handling money, 68% of the respondents agreed that women should not handle money and that one should not talk to them about it. Most respondents supported women in traditional roles. The education of women received the widest margin of support, but it was not a majority opinion that women should be educated. That women should not work was the most strongly held opinion among the respondents surveyed in this village, and more than two-thirds felt that women could not handle money. Although follow-up questions on these items were not pursued during the interview, in separate conversations with informants I was told that women tend to keep their money. Mothers often bury the money given to them by their sons and use it to help their children or grandchildren in time of need.



Young men with whom I had long conversations differed on whether or not their wives should be educated or should work. All agreed that women who were university graduates were undesirable as wives because they were hard to control. One thought a primary school graduate would be ideal and the others believed a high school graduate best. If the wife worked, which not all agreed she should, they thought she should be a teacher or a clerk in her husband's business. Moreover, one young man said that educated girls "throw their education up in their husband's faces", and are always buying things on their own. His wife could work, but could not buy furniture and such things for the house; she could buy her own clothes. He would not want her to be able to say that the household items were hers, and if she left him, she should just go and leave the children with him.

So it is that young men perceived this as a potential conflict area. Women who had their own income could, in times of stress, decide not to obey their husbands. The interdependency of men and women which existed when women's duties included the primary cultivation and preparation of food did not hold in the modern system.

In Case 2, Francis was met with just such a challenge from his wife. The situation, from her point of view, was exacerbated by the fact that she had had economic power and had been responsible for the purchase of food and supplies necessary to maintain their house. She also had exerted considerable influence on Francis' decisions, which Jacob,





their best man, claimed to be a part of Francis' leniency. Despite her power and influence, she lacked authority. (See Rosaldo and Lamphere, 1974, for a discussion of power, influence and authority in reference to women.) She was not seen by others, including her husband, Francis, as the person who should exercise power and make decisions within that household. The understanding she brought to the situation -- in which she wanted to go to the nightclub but Francis didn't want her to -- included the idea that she could properly make her own decisions, since she had the money to follow through on them. From the wife's point of view economic power was seen as capable of being converted into familial authority, i.e., the value that a person, man or woman, gained into the economic arena could be translated into increased authority within the field of kin relationships.

This was counter to Francis' understandings which held that wives should respect and obey their husbands, and should defer to them, especially when in public. Clearly the husband and wife in this case did not share the same understandings, but my follow-up conversations with participants indicated that this was the first incident in which these understandings came into open conflict for the couple. No new "organizing understanding" emerged from this breach, which began with the wife's abusive language to her husband and quickly progressed to a crisis, when the husband beat his wife. After this crisis, the young wife, who was going through a period of incorporation into her husband's family,

acknowledged the authority of her husband's father, who took into consideration her desire to be separated from her husband and instructed her to live with her mother-in-law at another homestead. Following through with the idea of "processional form" it may be said that reintegration occurred after this period of separation, when the couple began living together again.

Indeed, a new "organizing understanding" did not arise, but an old one was extended to cover this new situation -- wives should respect and obey their husbands. The resolution of the conflicting understandings might be stated "wives who work or have financial independence are still expected to respect and obey their husbands."

The pervasiveness of the money economy, and the increasing power and prestige gained by women who participate in it suggests that situations such as these will continue to occur for years to come. Different resolutions may be expected according to the difference in the field which encompasses the events; the cumulative effect of choices in similar situations may likely create a change in the organization of understandings.

### "Organizing Understandings" -- an Overview

The Kikuyu kinship morality includes ideas which hold that kin should have affection for one another, be responsible for each other's social and moral well-being, and be loyal to one another. Expectations attaching to these

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understandings are differentially distributed throughout the network of kin. The moral imperative that kin should be loyal to one another is an "organizing understanding" in that it is seen as more important than the other two, and occurs in situations where they are not upheld. Acting according to the understandings concerning loyalty is one way of validating membership in the family group. The incorporation of a wife into her husband's family predicates the extension of kinship morality to her, including expectations that she and members of her husband's group affirm the understandings of kinship loyalty in their behavior toward one another.

"Organizing understandings" also arise out of unique or unusual situations in which understandings not usually applicable to the situation are brought into play. In such situations, new "organizing understandings" arise or old ones are extended to the new situation. The participation of women in the money economy and wage employment sometimes creates situations in which understandings concerning the proper behavior of a wife is challenged. Individual choices in situations of this type will influence the emergence of a different organization of understandings.

### Summary

Political and economic changes have influenced changes in Kikuyu kinship morality from the time when Leakey and Kenyatta studied the Kikuyu. Major changes have occurred in



the modalities through which ideas about kinship morality were expressed. Fewer changes were evident in the ideas themselves. That categories of kin should respect, obey, love, be modest toward, and support one another still holds. The domestic units studied here were smaller than those studied in the past, and the range of relatives included in kinship morality was more limited; classificatory relatives other than baba (FB), brothers and/or patrilineal cousins seldom figured into kin relations among the people I knew.

Certain expectations, such as those concerning mother's brothers and father's brothers were found to be more sensitive to the generosity, prestige, political status and interests of the occupant than was believed in the past, though Kenyatta (1968) indicates that wealth and generosity influenced the interaction of father's brothers and brother's sons in the past. The ceremonial and formal aspects of these relationships have lost importance in the modern era, as I understand it. The wives of these men were generally treated with respect and a sense of decorum. The mother-daughter bond is today seen as a more enduring one than it was in the past, while the mother-son bond seems to have taken on a more formal atmosphere. The change in the mother-daughter relationship seems greatly influenced by the changing position of women, especially in regard to their participation in the economic sphere. The nature of the father-child bond seems remarkably conservative, with the

fa

sh

d

s

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f

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y

father generally respected and revered, but the relationship is not without conflict.

The nature of the relationships which Leakey and Kenyatta described for mother's sisters and father's sisters and their siblings' children still maintains, as does that between grandparents and grandchildren. These tend to be warm and familiar relationships. The ceremonial aspects of the relationships and conventionalized supernatural sanctions no longer seem to apply, though mistreating this and other categories of relatives is seen as reprehensible and might cause illness or other misfortune.

The relationship between brothers and between patrilineal cousins, which was described as among the most important relationships of the Kikuyu, remains close and generally supportive. Solidarity may be expected among brothers and patrilineal cousins. The relationship between matrilineal cousins was found to vary greatly, though the idea of a friendly and supportive relationship to mother's people was maintained. Brothers' guardianship of their sisters has changed somewhat, primarily in terms of the modality for expression, as in the case with all of the relationships; but brothers still assume responsibility for their sisters, and sisters are expected to be helpful and supportive of their brothers.

Affinal ties do not seem as broad or wide-ranging as in the past, and affines within the same homestead live in closer contact with one another than in the past, but ideas of



modesty and "shyness" between affines still remain. Some challenges to the authority of the father-in-law over his daughter-in-law were presented here.

The husband-wife relationship was examined in two cases here. A number of the expectations concerning the wife's respect for and obedience to her husband were given by informants as statements of what should be, but in reality were challenged. The processes set into motion by such conflict might condition the emergence of new understandings concerning this and other relationships among kin.

**APPENDIX A**

**Genealogies**

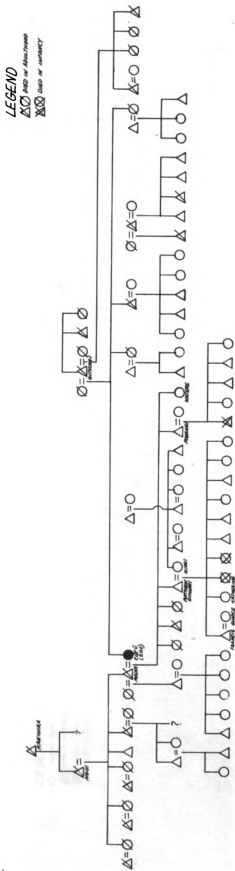


FIGURE 1: GENEALOGY OF CUCU, MOTHER OF MATTHEW GITHINGI  
 (WITH MR. GAMBHIRI, KATHINGI, AND GRANDFATHER, MR. MATHU)

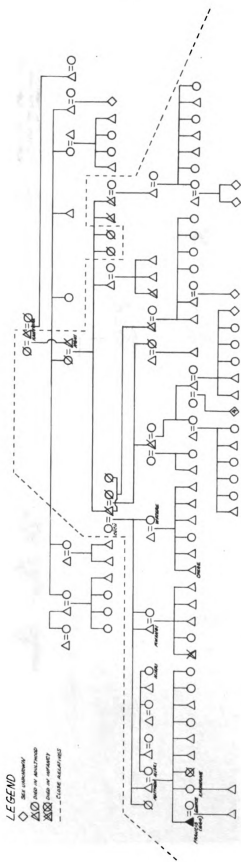







FIGURE 12. PARTIAL GENEALOGY OF FRANCIS, SHOWING CLOSE RELATIVES

GENERATION

LEGEND

-  DIED IN CHILDHOOD, INFANCY
-  DIED IN ADULTHOOD
-  ARRANGED DISOLVED, UNKNOWN STATUS
-  KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY (SEE FOLLOWING EXPLANATION)
-  ♀

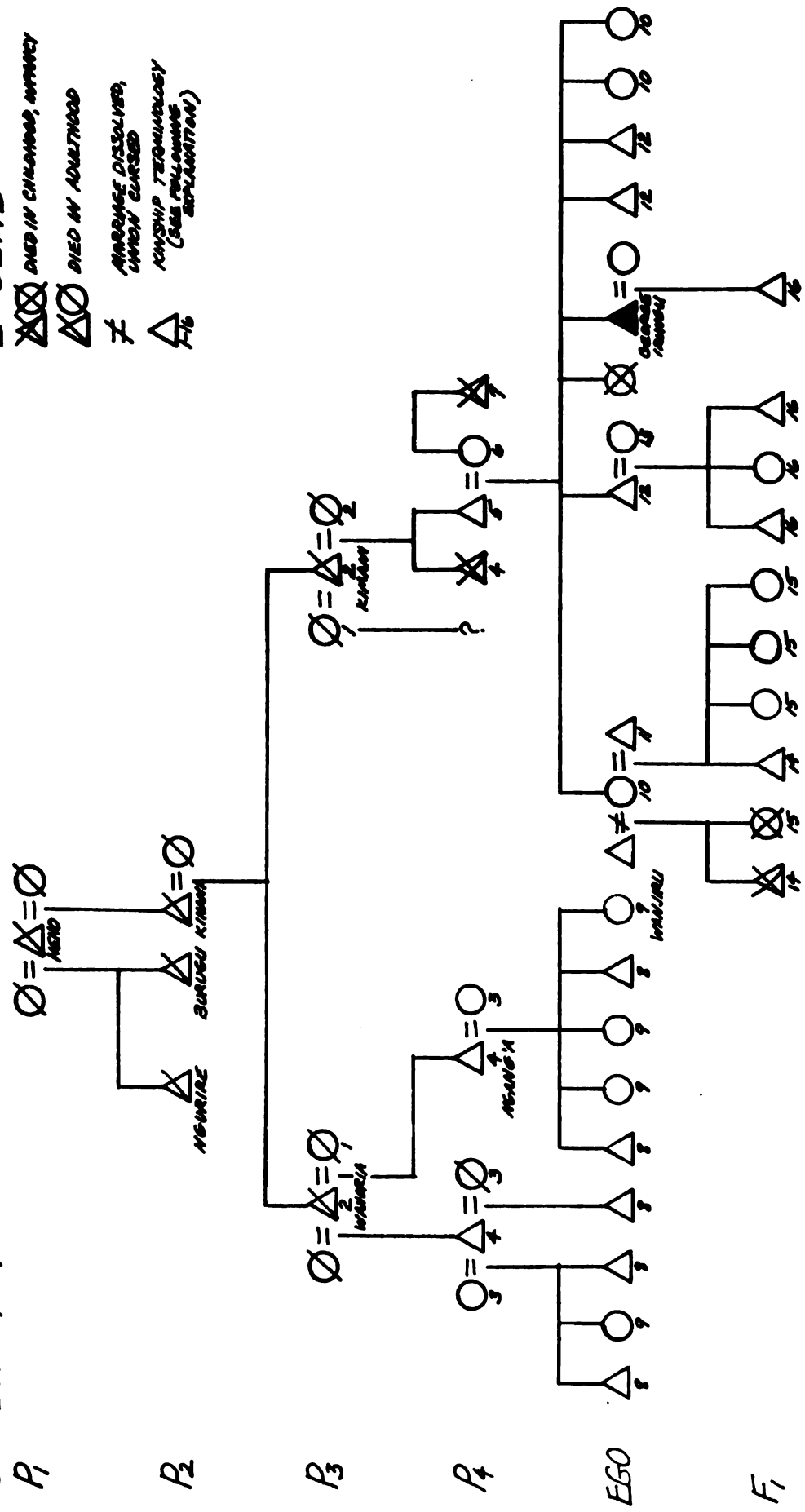


FIGURE A3: GENEALOGY OF GEORGE IRUNGU OF MBARI YA BURUGU AND NGURU

Figure 3 (continued)

Kinship Terminology Reference

- P<sub>1</sub> and P<sub>2</sub>: Wagui (ancestors)\*
- P<sub>3</sub>: 1. Cucu (grandmother)  
2. Guka (grandfather)
- P<sub>4</sub>: 3. Maitu Munyini (mother)  
4. Baba Munyini (stepfather)  
5. Baba (father)  
6. Maitu (mommy)  
7. Mama (uncle)  
8. Muru wa baba (cousin)
- Ego's generation
9. Muru wa baba (cousin)  
10. Mwari wa maitu (sister)  
11. Muthoni (brother-in-law)  
12. Muru wa maitu (brother)  
13. Mutumia wa muru wa maitu (brother's wife)
- F<sub>1</sub>: 14. Mwari wa mwari wa maitu  
15. Muru wa mwari wa maitu  
16. Mwana wakwa (my children)

\* English usage

Terms of Address

- P<sub>3</sub>: 1. Cucu  
2. Guku
- P<sub>4</sub>: Teknonomy for all women except 6 maitu  
4. Baba
- Ego: 8. Name, Muru wa maitu (brother)  
9. Name  
10. Name, Muthoni  
11. Name, Mwari wa maitu (sister)

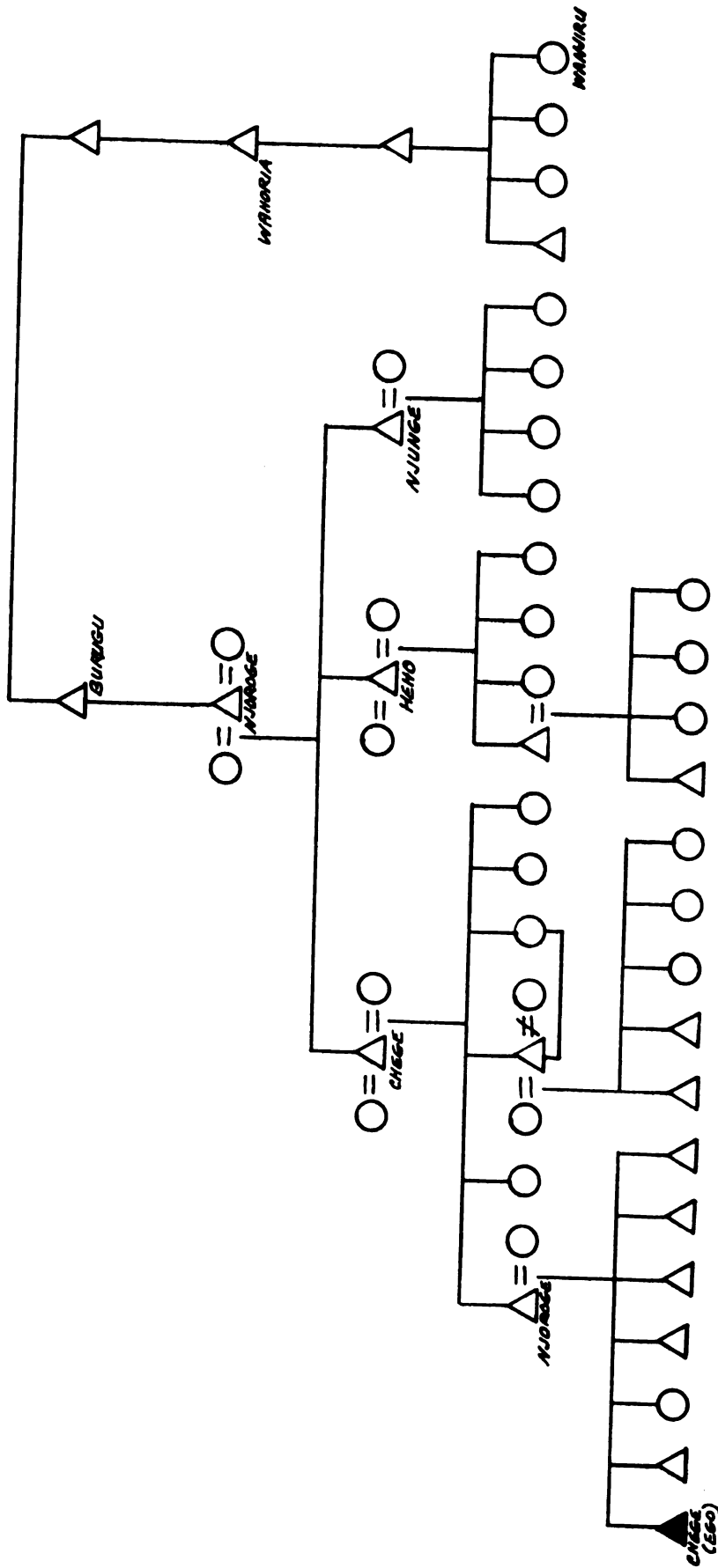


FIGURE A4: GENEALOGY OF CHEGE OF MBALI YA BURUGU

## APPENDIX B

The Lost Sister

Routledge (1910:290) distinguishes the two versions of the folktale called "The Lost Sister" according to the informants who told them the story. The version given in the text above was told by a young man; this one by an old woman. The second version of the story goes:

Once upon a time there were a brother and sister who lived together, and the mother died leaving many goats, and the brother looked after the goats in the daytime, but in the evening he went away from home, for he was very beautiful, and had many friends. The name of the girl was Wa-ché-ra, the name of the brother Wa-m'wé-a.

Now one day when the brother returned Wachéra said to him, "Two men were here yesterday, and if you go away and leave me they will carry me off," but he said, "You talk nonsense," and she said, "I am speaking the truth, but when they take me I will bear a gourd full of sap which is like fat, and along the path I will let it drop, so that you can follow my trail." Now that night when Wam'wéa brought the goats home, Wachéra made a great feast of gruel, but again he went away. And when Wam'wéa came back next morning he found the homestead empty, for his sister had been carried away as she said, but he saw the track where drop by drop she had let fall the sap which is like fat. And Wam'wéa followed over hill and down dale, and ever and again he heard her voice crying from the opposite hill side, "Follow after where you see the trail." The following day the sap began to take root, and to spring up into little plants, but his sister he saw not. And at last he returned to his home to herd the flock, and he took them out to feed, but he had no one to prepare food for him when he returned at night, and if he himself prepared the food there was no one to care for the flocks, so he slew a goat and ate it, and when it was finished he slew yet another, and so on till all the goats were finished. Then he killed and ate the oxen one by one, and they lasted him months and years for the flock was large, but at last they were all gone, and then he bethought him of his sister.



Now the plants which had sprung were by this time grown to trees, which marked the way she had gone, and so he journeyed for one month and half a month, and at the end of that time he came to a stream, and by the stream were two children getting water, and he said to the younger, "Give me some water in your gourd," but the child refused; but the elder child spoke to the younger and said, "Give the stranger to drink for our mother said if ever you see a stranger coming by the way of the trees he is my brother." So he and the children went up to the homestead, and he waited outside, and Wachéra came out, and he knew her at once, but she did not know him, for he was not dressed as before with ochre and fat; and he came into her hut, and she gave him food, not in a good vessel, but in a potsherd, and he slept in the hut, but on the floor, not on the bed.

Now the next day he went out with the children to drive away the birds from the crops, and as he threw a stone he would say, "Fly away, little bird, as Wachéra flew away and never came back any more," and another bird would come, and he would throw another stone and say the same words again, and this happened the next day and the next for a whole month; and the children heard, and so did others, and said, "Why does he say the name Wachéra?" And they went and told their mother, and at last she came and waited among the grass and listened to his words, and said, "Surely this is my brother Wam'wéa," and she went back to the house and sent for a young man, and told him to go and fetch Wam'wéa to come to her, for she said, "He is my brother." And the young man went and told Wam'wéa the words of his sister, but he refused, for he said, "I have dwelt in the abode of my sister, and she has given me no cup for my food but a potsherd," and he would not go in. And the young man returned to Wachéra, and told her the words of her brother, and she said, "Take ten goats and go again and bid him come to me," and the young men took ten goats and said, "Thy sister has sent these ten goats," but Wam'wéa refused, and the young man returned. And Wachéra said, "Take ten oxen and give them to my brother," but Wam'wéa would not; and Wachéra sent him ten cows, and again ten cows, and still Wam'wéa refused to come in. And Wachéra told her husband how she had found her brother, and how he would not be reconciled to her, and her husband said, "Send him yet more beasts," so Wachéra sent ten other cows and again ten more, till Wam'wéa had received forty cows besides the goats and the oxen which Wachéra had sent at the first, and the heart of Wam'wéa relented, and he came into the house of his sister. And she killed a goat and took the fat and dressed his hair and his shoulders, for she said,

"I did not know you, for you were not adorned as before."

After Wam'wéa had been reconciled to his sister, he decided that eight wives should be given to him, so the husband of Wachéra sent to all his relations round about, and they brought in goats, and Wam'wéa bought eight girls, some for thirty goats, some for forty. Other relations all came and built eight huts for the wives near to the dwelling of Wachéra, so Wam'wéa and his wives dwelt near the homestead of his sister (Routledge, 1910:293-296).

## APPENDIX C

Questionnaire conducted in the village, Kanje, Feb., 1972. Some items were taken from surveys done in Nyeri District by Ronald Stockton and in Kiambu District by Gary Ferraro. All items were written in Kikuyu and English. The interviewers, four young men of the village, were asked to read the item to the respondent in Kikuyu and to check or fill-in the appropriate answer.

1. Name of Interviewer\_\_\_\_\_
2. Respondent number\_\_\_\_\_
3. Date of Interview\_\_\_\_\_
4. Place of Interview\_\_\_\_\_
5. Sex of Respondent\_\_\_\_\_

To begin I would like to ask you some questions about yourself and your family.

6. Are you married?

- |            |              |
|------------|--------------|
| 1. Married | 4. Divorced  |
| 2. Single  | 5. Separated |
| 3. Widow   | 6. No answer |

7. If married male ask: How many wives do you have?\_\_\_\_\_

8. If married female ask: How many other wives does your husband have?\_\_\_\_\_

9. How old are you?\_\_\_\_\_

10. Were you born in this location?

1. Born in this location
2. Not in this location, but in Murang'a District
3. Outside of District
4. No answer

11. How far did you go in school?
1. Never attended school
  2. 1-2 years
  3. 3-4 years
  4. 4-5 years
  5. 7-8 years, or primary certificate
  6. 9-10 years, or some high school
  7. 11-12 years, or secondary certificate
  8. 12-13 years, or higher school
  9. Primary certificate plus additional training
  10. Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_
  11. No answer
12. How many children do you have? \_\_\_\_\_
13. How many of your children were born after the emergency (1952)? \_\_\_\_\_
14. Of those born after the emergency: How many are now in school? \_\_\_\_\_
15. Of those born before the emergency: What are they doing now?
- 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
  - 4.
  - 5.
16. Do you have wage employment?
1. Yes If yes, specify \_\_\_\_\_
  2. No
  3. No answer
17. Do you have a business?
1. Yes If yes, specify \_\_\_\_\_
  2. No
  3. No answer
18. How do you get money for your children's school fees?
1. From employment or business
  2. From selling crops
  3. From selling livestock
  4. From selling crops and livestock
  5. From relatives
  6. Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_
  7. No answer

19. If sells crop ask: How much do you get from crops each school term? \_\_\_\_\_
20. If sells livestock ask: How many goats or cows did you sell last term? \_\_\_\_\_  
What was the average price? \_\_\_\_\_
21. Do you cultivate a garden?
1. Yes
  2. No
  3. No answer
22. How many gardens to you have?
1. None, renting, or using someone else's land
  2. 1
  3. 2
  4. 3
  5. 4
  6. 5
  7. More than 5
  8. No answer
23. How many acres do you own?
- |         |                  |
|---------|------------------|
| 1. 0-1  | 7. 11-12         |
| 2. 1-2  | 8. 13-14         |
| 3. 3-4  | 9. 15-16         |
| 4. 5-6  | 10. More than 16 |
| 5. 7-8  | 11. No answer    |
| 6. 9-10 |                  |
24. Have you hired a shamba worker?
1. Yes If yes, how many?
  2. No
  3. No answer
25. What is the name of your father's muhiriga? \_\_\_\_\_
26. What is the name of your father's mbari? \_\_\_\_\_
27. Do members of your mbari meet to discuss mbari affairs?
1. Yes If yes, how often did they meet last year?
  2. No
  3. No answer
28. What is the name of your rika? \_\_\_\_\_

29. Did you have a ceremony of second birth before your initiation?
1. Yes
  2. No
  3. No answer
30. Would you like your daughters to be circumcised?
1. Yes
  2. No
  3. No answer
31. Have you ever consulted a mundu mugo?
1. Yes If yes, how many times last year? \_\_\_\_\_
  2. No
  3. No answer
32. For what reasons have you consulted a mundu mugo?
1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
  4. \_\_\_\_\_
33. If male ask: Did you give ruracio?
1. Yes If yes, how much? \_\_\_\_\_
  2. No
  3. No answer
34. If female ask: Was ruracio given to your people?
1. Yes If yes, how much? \_\_\_\_\_
  2. No
  3. No answer
35. If you have married daughters, did you receive ruracio from their husband's families?
1. Yes If yes, how much for each daughter? 1.  
2.
  2. No 3.
  3. No answer 4.
36. If you have married sons did you give ruracio for their wives?
1. Yes If yes, how much for each son? 1.  
2.
  2. No 3.
  3. No answer 4.

37. Can you speak Swahili?

1. Not at all
2. Able to follow simple conversation
3. Fluent (very well)
4. No answer

38. Can you speak English?

1. Not at all
2. Able to follow simple conversations
3. Fluent (very well)
4. No answer

39. When you die where would you like to be buried?

1. On own shamba
2. In Kaburi
3. At Church cemetary
4. Elsewhere, specify \_\_\_\_\_
5. No answer

40. Have you ever lived outside of Murang'a?

1. Yes If yes, where? \_\_\_\_\_, for how long? \_\_\_\_\_
2. No
3. No answer

41. How many times did you go to Nairobi last year?

1. Never been to Nairobi
2. Less than once a year
3. 3-4 times
4. 5-6 times
5. 7-8 times
6. 9-10 times
7. 11-12 times, or once a month
8. More than 12 times
9. Now lives in Nairobi

For what reasons?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

42. How many times did you go to town last year?

1. Never
2. Goes infrequently, less than once a month
3. 1-2 times
4. 3-4 times
5. 5-6 times
6. 7-8 times
7. 9-10 times
8. More than 10 times
9. No answer

For what reasons?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

43. How many times did you go to Mukuyu last month?

1. Never
2. Goes infrequently, less than once a month
3. 1-2 times
4. 3-4 times
5. 5-6 times
6. 7-8 times
7. 9-10 times
8. More than 10 times
9. No answer

For what reasons?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

44. Have you borrowed money from any relative within the last year? How much? From which relative?

45. Have you lent money to any relative within the last year? How much? To whom?

46. Have you received anything from a relative? What? From whom?

47. Have you given anything to any of your relatives last year? What items? Which relative?

48. Have you borrowed money from a non-relative within the last year? How much? From whom?



- 49. Have you lent money to a non-relative within the last year? How much? To whom?
- 50. Do you support any relatives other than your husband/wife and children?

Relationship                      Kenya Shillings per month

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Have any of your relatives been helpful in the following ways?

	Very helpful	Moderately	Not at all
51. Finding jobs	_____	_____	_____
52. Housing	_____	_____	_____
53. School fees	_____	_____	_____
54. Emergencies	_____	_____	_____
55. Childcare	_____	_____	_____
56. Advice	_____	_____	_____
57. Other, specify	_____	_____	_____

- 58. Have any of your relatives stayed over night at your home in the last year? Which? How long?

Relationship                      How many days

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

- 59. List your 5 most important relatives. List relationship only.

- |    |    |
|----|----|
| 1. | 3. |
| 2. | 4. |
|    | 5. |

60. How far can you trace your father's male ancestors?

Father's father \_\_\_\_\_  
 Father's grandfather \_\_\_\_\_  
 Father's father's grandfather \_\_\_\_\_  
 Father's father's father's grandfather \_\_\_\_\_  
 Any further?

61. Have any of your children lived with anyone else?  
 What relationship? For what period of time?

62. Have any of your children received school fees from  
 anyone? What relationship? Amount?

Are you a member of the following types of organizations?

/Write in name of group/

	How often do you attend	How long a member	Rank or office?
63. Political party	_____	_____	_____
64. Trade/labour union	_____	_____	_____
65. Co-operative	_____	_____	_____
66. Harambee group	_____	_____	_____
67. People who play sports, music	_____	_____	_____
68. Other, specify	_____	_____	_____

69. Were you or any member of your family detained during  
 the Emergency?

1. Family member detained, respondent not detained
2. Respondent detained
3. Respondent detained, family member also detained
4. Respondent not detained, family member not detained

70. If not detained, what did you do during the Emergency?

1. Was detained
2. Working for government in home guard, or in  
loyalist activity
3. Working in government as labourer, etc.
4. Working on farm, doing communal work, doing  
nothing, just doing my work, etc.

(70, continued)

5. Working somewhere in occupation--teaching, business, European farm, etc. -- or student.
  6. Freedom fighter
  7. No answer
71. Is it possible for you to lead a good life with the income you get from your farm?
1. Yes
  2. No
  3. Don't know, no opinion
  4. No answer
72. Are you satisfied with land consolidation? Why?
73. The government has argued that the people who get land vacated by Europeans should pay for them. Others feel they should not. What do you think?
1. Should pay
  2. Should not pay
  3. Don't know, no opinion, don't care
  4. No answer
74. Why do you feel that way?
75. Do you think those European farms who leave Kenya should be paid for their farms, or should the government just take the farms and distribute them to African people?
1. Should be paid
  2. Should not be paid, land should be distributed to Africans
  3. Don't know, no opinion, don't care
  4. No answer
76. What do you think is the major problem facing this area?
77. Do you think the government is doing all it can to solve the problems of this location or could it do more?
78. I asked you what the major problem was in this area. Now not thinking of this area alone, but of the whole of Kenya, what would you say is the major problem facing the nation?

79. Have you ever visited the D. C. or D. O. with a problem?
1. Yes If yes, what was the problem?
  2. No
  3. No answer
80. Have you ever gone to the Agricultural Officer with a problem?
1. Yes If yes, what was the problem?
  2. No
  3. No answer
81. Have you ever gone to the Chief or headman with a problem?
1. Yes If yes, what kind of problem?
  2. No
  3. No answer
82. Have you ever gone to the M. P. with a problem?
1. Yes If yes, what problem?
  2. No
  3. No answer
83. Have you ever gone to KANU with a problem?
1. Yes If yes, what problem?
  2. No
  3. No answer
84. Have you ever gone to a member of the County Council with a problem?
1. Yes If yes, what problem?
  2. No
  3. No answer
85. Is it better to have one party or two?
1. One party better
  2. Two parties better
  3. Mixed feelings, no clear answer
  4. Don't know, no opinion
  5. No answer
86. Why do you think that number is better?

87. Do you own a radio?
1. Yes
  2. No
  3. No answer
88. How often do you listen to radio?
1. Seldom, less than once a week, when someone brings one to me
  2. Occasionally (1-2 times a week)
  3. Often (3-4 times a week)
  4. Most days (5-7 times a week)
  5. No answer
89. How often do you get a newspaper?
1. Seldom, less than once a month, when I get money, etc.
  2. Occasionally (2-4 times a month)
  3. Often (3-4 times a week)
  4. Most days (5-7 times a week)
  5. No answer
90. Do you agree with the following: The government does not understand the people and their needs.
- |             |                           |
|-------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Agree    | 3. Don't know, no opinion |
| 2. Disagree | 4. No answer              |
91. Do you agree with the following: Women should care for the home and not go off to town to work.
- |             |                           |
|-------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Agree    | 3. Don't know, no opinion |
| 2. Disagree | 4. No answer              |
92. If you belong to a church, how often do you go?
1. Every week
  2. Twice a month
  3. Occasionally, sometimes, on Holy Days, etc.
  4. Never
  5. No answer
93. Did you build your home?
1. Yes
  2. No, already standing when moved in
  3. Hired contractor
  4. No answer

94. Who helped you build your home, if built own?
1. No one
  2. Women's group
  3. Relatives (Family members)
  4. Friends and relatives
  5. Hired a contractor
  6. Other, specify
  7. No answer
95. Who helped you and your wife clear your land for planting?
1. No one
  2. Women's group
  3. Relatives (Family members)
  4. Friends and relatives
  5. Hired helper
  6. No answer
96. Who helped you and your wife harvest last season?
1. No one
  2. Women's group
  3. Relatives (Family members)
  4. Friends and Relatives
  5. Hired helper
  6. No answer
97. Suppose a problem arose concerning your marriage, to whom would you go for advice? (Relationship only)
98. Have you ever been sent as a messenger/delegate in a case?
1. Yes If yes, how many times: Once  
A few times (2-4)
  2. No Several times (More than 5)
  3. No answer
99. If yes, what kind of case?
- /If more than one tick each/
- |               |                   |
|---------------|-------------------|
| 1. Pregnancy  | 6. Land           |
| 2. Abuse      | 7. Dowry          |
| 3. Debt       | 8. Other, specify |
| 4. Assault    | 9. No answer      |
| 5. Witchcraft |                   |

100. Have you ever acted as a judge in a case?

1. Yes If yes, how many times: Once  
A few times (2-4)  
Several times (more than 5)
2. No
3. No answer

101. In what kind of case were you a judge?

- |               |                   |
|---------------|-------------------|
| 1. Pregnancy  | 6. Land           |
| 2. Abuse      | 7. Dowry          |
| 3. Debt       | 8. Other, specify |
| 4. Assault    | 9. No answer      |
| 5. Witchcraft |                   |

102. Have you ever brought a case against anyone?

1. Yes If yes      What kind of case?      When?  
  - 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
  - 4.
  - 5.
2. No
3. No answer

103. Has anyone ever brought a case against you?

1. Yes If yes      Of what kind?      When?  
  - 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
  - 4.
  - 5.
2. No
3. No answer

104. Have you ever taken a case to any of these people?

1. Chief
2. Court
3. Clan elders
4. Father or father's brother
5. Other, specify
6. No answer

105. Suppose you needed 400 shillings by tomorrow? Who would you ask for help?

106. Of what religion are you?

1. Protestant
2. Catholic
3. Muslim
4. Traditional Kikuyu Religion
5. Independent Church
6. None
7. No answer

107. If your father is living, where is his home?

1. Father not living
2. Lives with respondent
3. Lives in Mbiri location
4. Lives outside of Mbiri location, but in Murang'a
5. Lives outside of Murang'a
6. No answer

108. Is your shamba on your clan's land?

1. Yes
2. No

109. Did you own land before land consolidation?

1. Yes
2. No
3. No answer

110. If you owned land before land consolidation, how did you get it?

1. Inherited from Father or other close relative
2. Purchased
3. Acquired through land case
4. Given by wife's family
5. Other, specify
6. No answer

If inherited, from whom?

111. If did not own land before land consolidation, what did you do?

1. Lived on clan land
2. Did not farm, worked elsewhere
3. Owned land but sold it
4. Land lost through case, or other reason
5. Other, specify
6. No answer



112. At which place do you sleep when you have to stay overnight in town? In Nairobi?

113. How many times did you go to the hospital for treatment last year?

1. Once.
2. Occasionally (2-4 times)
3. Often (More than 5 times)
4. Never
5. No answer

I will read a list of statements, you tell me if you agree or disagree with each of them.

114. Women cannot control money, you should not talk about money with them.

- |             |                           |
|-------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Agree    | 3. Don't know, no opinion |
| 2. Disagree | 4. No answer              |

115. Kikuyu people should try to increase their number in this country

- |             |                           |
|-------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Agree    | 3. Don't know, no opinion |
| 2. Disagree | 4. No answer              |

116. Education is not very important for girls since most of their work will be in the home.

- |             |                           |
|-------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Agree    | 3. Don't know, no opinion |
| 2. Disagree | 4. No answer              |

117. There were more ceremonies--marriages, initiation--for everyone to attend in the past.

- |             |                           |
|-------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Agree    | 3. Don't know, no opinion |
| 2. Disagree | 4. No answer              |

118. There are too many people in Kenya. The country cannot support so many people.

- |             |                           |
|-------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Agree    | 3. Don't know, no opinion |
| 2. Disagree | 4. No answer              |

119. Communal labour, ngwatio, was more often done in the past.

- |             |                           |
|-------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Agree    | 3. Don't know, no opinion |
| 2. Disagree | 4. No answer              |

120. All tribes cannot enjoy the fruits of uhuru equally.  
Those who fought for it should get more.
- |             |                           |
|-------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Agree    | 3. Don't know, no opinion |
| 2. Disagree | 4. No answer              |
121. Since life is changing very quickly it is not as important as in the past to listen to the advice of elders.
- |             |                           |
|-------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Agree    | 3. Don't know, no opinion |
| 2. Disagree | 4. No answer              |
122. A man should not enter the home of his married son without first killing a goat or a sheep and having a feast.
- |             |                           |
|-------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Agree    | 3. Don't know, no opinion |
| 2. Disagree | 4. No answer              |
123. Be a fool (with money) and people will flock to you.
- |             |                           |
|-------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Agree    | 3. Don't know, no opinion |
| 2. Disagree | 4. No answer              |
124. Your father's sister has less authority over you than your father's brother.
- |             |                           |
|-------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Agree    | 3. Don't know, no opinion |
| 2. Disagree | 4. No answer              |
125. It is all right to joke with your mother's brother.
- |             |               |
|-------------|---------------|
| 1. Agree    | 3. No opinion |
| 2. Disagree | 4. No answer  |
126. All my neighbour's are relatives.
- |             |               |
|-------------|---------------|
| 1. Agree    | 3. Don't know |
| 2. Disagree | 4. No answer  |

## APPENDIX D

Glossary of Important Foreign Terms

- Ahoi (sing. muhoi) -- tenant
- Athamaki (sing. muthamaki) -- elder who acts as judge, spikeman
- Baba -- father; baba munyini -- younger father; baba mukure -- elder father
- Bururi -- country, territory
- Githaka -- bush land which is cleared for settlement, also Kikuyu land tenure system which was based on settlement on land of first clearing
- Igongona (pl. magongona) -- sacrifices
- Ituika (pl. maituika) -- generation change ceremony
- Itura (pl. matura) -- village, sub-unit of a rugongo
- Karobo -- honey beer
- Kiama - council
- Kiama kia maturangura -- council of the sacred leaves
- Kipande [Swahili] -- identification card carried in a small metal box, and worn around the neck
- Mabati [Swahili] -- corrugated metal, usually iron sheets, used for roofing
- Maitu -- mother
- Mama -- mother's brother, uncle
- Mbari - family group, several related extended families, sub clan
- Muihwa (also mihwa) -- nephew, niece, a man's sister's child; according to Kenyatta, cross-cousins
- Mucii -- extended family, primarily the dwelling place or homestead of an extended family
- Mugo was ita -- war magician
- Muhiriga (pl. mihiriga) -- clan, one of the nine mythical clans or localized sub-clan

Mundu mugo -- medicine man

Muramati -- leader of a mbari, head of an itura

Muru -- son; muru wa maitu -- brother

Muru wa baba -- sons of one father, half-brothers

Muthuri (pl. athuri) -- elder, usually a man with a child  
who has been circumcized

Mutumia -- adult woman, mother of a child; mutumia wakwa --  
my wife

Mwanake (pl. anake) -- young man, traditionally of the  
warrior age grade

Mwari -- daughter; mwari ma maitu -- sister

Ndundu -- inner council of the elders kياما

Njohi muratina -- honey beer fermented with the plant  
referred to as muratina

Nyumba -- elementary or polygynous family

Rika -- name age-set into which young men and women are  
initiated

Rugongo (pl. ng'ongo) -- ridge

Rumama -- abusive language

Ruracio -- bridewealth

Shamba [Swahili] -- farm, garden, land

Thahu -- ritual uncleanliness

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