

BRITISH COLONIALISM AND THE MAKING OF THE  
MARAGOLI DIASPORA IN WESTERN KENYA,  
1895-1963

DECLARATION

BY CANDIDATE

BY

HENRY ONZERE CHAVASU

THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY IN HISTORY

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY  
MOI UNIVERSITY, ELDORET, KENYA

JULY 1997



## ABSTRACT

The main concern of this study is the Logoli societies in the southern part of Nandi District and Kanyamkago in Migori District. With rapid population growth and the development of cash crops the Avalogooli realized that they were lacking land. Some of them reacted to this by moving and settling in sparsely occupied areas of Nyang'ori, Koibarak-Kemeloi, Kanyamkago, and even to Mugumu in Tanzania and Kigumba in Uganda.

The emergence of the Maragoli diaspora is perceived within the Marxian theory of articulation of modes of production. It is argued that the economic aspect of a society is the engine behind the organization of the community. Consequently, changes in the material existence lead to economic, social and political coordination of the community. This took place among the Avalogooli once their precolonial and precapitalist mode of production was articulated with the capitalist mode of production engendered by British colonialism.

The study has also employed the concept of consciousness of men in explaining why the Avalogooli in Maragoli and the diaspora have borrowed certain cultural ideas and practices from the other societies with whom they have interacted. The ideas and practices adapted by one group from another are taken up because of their usefulness and relevance to the recipients. Thus man does not borrow cultural ideas and practices from others because he considers himself primitive but rather because he is conscious of their practical usefulness and relevance to his material conditions.

In terms of methodology, archival and oral sources were made use of. The documents in form of files at the Kenya National Archives in

14

Nairobi on Western, Nyanza and Rift Valley Provinces relevant to this study were looked at and the information contained therein analysed. Oral interviews were undertaken in Maragoli, Kanyamkago and in the southern part of Nandi District.

To begin with, the study has looked at the Maragoli society on the eve of British colonial rule in terms of political, social and economic organization. The precolonial land tenure system changed when the colonial government set aside land for settler economy and created reserves for the Africans. The introduction of Western education coupled with rapid population increase and the introduction of individual land tenure system saw the Avalogooli internalize the importance of land to their survival. Given that the colonial government was unwilling to assist in relieving the pressure on land, spontaneous settlement was started by the Logoli people as a conscious response to the adversities generated by the historical process of articulation between the pre-capitalist indigenous economy and the capitalist economy.

In these new areas, the Avalogooli initially met with hostility from their hosts. This tended to aggravate ethnic exclusiveness and isolation. However, several years of articulation have resulted in a process of acculturation and exchange of ideas. Consequently, the Logoli people have economically, socially and politically been integrated in these areas. A good number of them have been earning their livelihood as cash crop farmers; others hold administrative positions.

Be that as it may, the Avalogooli in diaspora have, in the wake of limitations and challenges posed by the colonial political economy, maintained links with their ancestral homeland. These links have

mainly centered on socio-cultural ideologies which are still potent despite the spread of capitalism in Africa. This explains why the dispersed Avalogooli continue to maintain some of the Logoli cultural customs and practices. Little wonder then that these areas appear like cultural islands in the host areas.

#### DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the memories of my grandfather, Mr. David Loring, who passed away on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1982 and my father, Donald Loring, who passed away on 1<sup>st</sup> May, 1981. May God rest their souls in eternal peace until we meet again.