

**"The Flowers Are Carrying Us"**  
**Agro-industrial Labour and Migrant Workers' Settlements at Lake Naivasha, Kenya**

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presented by

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## Abbreviations

AEA	Agricultural Employers' Association
AR	Annual Report
CBA	Collective Bargaining Agreement
COTU	Central Organization of Trade Unions
DC	District Commissioner
DO	District Officer
HR	Human Resources
KES	Kenyan Shilling
KFC	Kenya Flower Council
KHRC	Kenya Human Rights Commission
KISIP	Kenya Informal Settlements Improvement Project
KNA	Kenya National Archives
KPAWU	Kenya Plantation & Agricultural Workers Union
LNGG	Lake Naivasha Growers' Group
LNRA	Lake Naivasha Riparian Association
LNROA	Lake Naivasha Riparian Owners' Association (previous name of the LNRA)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
RCR	Research group "Resilience, Collapse and Reorganization"
SACCO	Saving and Credit Co-operative
SES	Social-Ecological System

## Glossary Swahili - English

<i>Chama (pl. vyama)</i>	Private saving group
<i>Chang'aa</i>	Illicit brew
<i>Hoteli (pl. hoteli)</i>	Small restaurant serving local food
<i>Kambi (pl. kambi)</i>	Workers' compound provided by a farm or ranch
<i>Mitumba</i>	Second-hand goods (mostly clothes)
<i>Mzungu (pl. wazungu)</i>	White person
<i>Nyumbani</i>	Home



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## 1. Introduction

Over the past forty years, the shores of Lake Naivasha in Kenya have become scattered with greenhouses. An export-oriented cut flower industry, primarily financed by foreign investors, has established itself there and attracted labour migrants from other regions in Kenya. Labour migration has in turn led to the development and expansion of unplanned, densely-populated settlements in this previously rural area. In the words of one of the flower farm workers, the flowers are carrying the residents of these settlements. This dissertation sketches the historical context of agro-industrial labour at Lake Naivasha and follows migrant workers from their arrival to their departure.

Agro-industrial labour has received little to no attention in anthropological literature, especially when it comes to farms or plantations on the African continent. This dissertation addresses this lacuna by describing work procedures and labour relations within the flower farms in Naivasha.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, although sociologists and anthropologists studying industrial labour have posed the question why workers consent to work, this question has received little attention in agro-industrial contexts. This is the more surprising because the conditions under which employees work in such farms has gained the attention of activists. As I explain in Section 1.2, the farms in Naivasha have been scrutinized by NGOs and journalists and thus, this case shows that conditions in agro-industrial firms can be particularly controversial when these are located in the Global South. Questions such as the employment of women and the accommodation of workers are heavily contested. These contestations make clear that the presence of a disciplined labour force for the flower farms is not self-evident. It needs to be questioned, not assumed. To provide an answer to this question - how did labour arrangements within the agro-industrial firms in Naivasha come into being? - is thus the main aim of this dissertation.

Although the flower firms in Naivasha have not been studied extensively, the lake has received much scholarly attention. The contributions of other researchers are discussed in the following section. The subsequent section focusses on a specific type of publication, namely those commissioned by NGOs, and discusses how those publications have imagined the industry and the workers' settlements. This dissertation focuses on the migrant workers in Naivasha, who have not received much scholarly attention before, while moving beyond the one-dimensional image of these workers that is put forward in much of the relevant grey literature. It aims to describe and explain labour arrangements within the industry rather than to evaluate them. The final section of this introduction elaborates on this aim and explains the structure of the dissertation.

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<sup>1</sup> Naivasha is the name of the lake as well as of the town located next to it. In this dissertation, I use 'Naivasha' to refer to the area around the lake unless I specify otherwise.

## 1.1 Lake Naivasha as a Research Site

Lake Naivasha has been researched intensively and, as a result, much is known about its biophysical features. Becht, Odada and Higgins (2005), Mavuti and Harper (2006) and Harper et al. (2011) have provided comprehensive introductions to the geological, ecological and economic characteristics of Lake Naivasha and its surroundings. As a way of introducing the area, I summarize some relevant elements discussed by these authors.

Lake Naivasha lies at an altitude of approximately 1890 metres above sea level and is situated in the semi-arid Eastern Rift Valley, about 100 kilometres north of the Kenyan capital, Nairobi. Lake Naivasha is one of the few fresh-water lakes in the Rift Valley and is fed by the rivers Malewa and Gilgil. As the lake is very shallow, its surface fluctuates tremendously whenever water levels change: "The water level can change several metres within a few months, causing a horizontal change of several kilometres" (Mavuti and Harper 2006: 30). Soils developed on volcanic ashes and therefore do not retain water well, making frequent irrigation necessary for farming. This need for irrigation meant that large-scale cultivation did not take place in the area for a long time. Instead, the area was used for keeping livestock, first by Maasai pastoralists and since the early twentieth century by colonial settlers. It was not until the 1960s that farmers started to use the lake water for irrigation for the production of vegetables and later of flowers. The arrival of these horticultural farms turned Naivasha into an agro-industrial hub.

The above-mentioned authors furthermore explain that Naivasha has also become a well-known environmental conservation area. The ecosystem of the lake is characterized by a high biodiversity, especially of birds and plants. The lake has a national park (Hell's Gate) and several private conservancies in its vicinity. Partly because of these natural attractions, it has developed into a popular tourist destination, for both international and domestic tourists. Finally, since the 1980s, Naivasha has become an important site for geothermal energy production. The sum of these developments created more economic opportunities. The area attracted ever more labour migrants, and as these migrants had to live somewhere, a number of workers' settlements have sprung up around the lake.

Kioko (2012: 38) found that all the main economic activities that have developed in the area depend directly or indirectly on the lake's resources. Conducive ecological conditions were a primary reason to come to Naivasha, also for the flower industry. The export of flowers from Kenya to (mainly) European markets has increased steadily ever since the industry started in the 1970s. It is therefore not surprising that the industry figures in a World Bank report titled "Technology, adaptation, and exports. How some developing countries got it right" (Whitaker and Kolavalli 2006). There were several reasons for flower firms to choose Naivasha as a production site. One reason was the existing infrastructure and the relative

proximity to an international airport. Also, in later years, the presence of good and affordable labour made Naivasha attractive. At least as important are the availability of irrigation water and the favourable climatic conditions. The temperatures and light intensity associated with Naivasha's altitude are agreeable to the crop and therefore reduce production costs considerably when compared to production in Europe (Whitaker and Kolavalli 2006: 337; Schneider 2010: 29).<sup>2</sup> Hence, there are clear connections between both the socio-economic developments and the ecological conditions.

In the past four decades, the ecological state of the lake has been investigated in depth. Numerous, mostly foreign, researchers have written about Naivasha.<sup>3</sup> The lion's share of this body of research focuses on the ecological, biological and hydrological state of the lake and the catchment area. It asks how resilient Naivasha's ecological system is to major changes that have taken place since the 1980s: the rise of the flower industry with a concurring influx of migrant workers, the increase in tourism and the introduction of alien plant and animal species in the lake. Within these studies, people were initially either completely ignored, or their presence and their economic activities were mainly seen as problematic. The presence of an increasing number of people was considered to be detrimental to the ecological state of the area (cf. Becht & Harper 2002; Mavuti & Harper 2006). More recently, however, increasing attention has been paid to the social aspects of ecological changes in Naivasha. Researchers have raised the question of how people living around the lake deal with ecological changes and how the residents of Naivasha could assist in sustainably developing the lake (e.g. Morrison et al. 2013). But the starting-point of almost all research on Naivasha continues to be the ecological state of the area.

Not many studies have taken the major social transformations as a point of departure. The main exception here is other research conducted within the framework of the research group in which this doctoral project is embedded. This is an interdisciplinary group, based at the Universities of Bonn and Cologne and funded by the German Research Foundation: Resilience, Collapse and Reorganization in Social Ecological Systems of Africa's Savannahs (RCR). This doctoral research forms part of the second phase of the group's research, which started in 2013. I elaborate briefly on the central concepts of the research group - the

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<sup>2</sup> Jan, general manager of Karibu Farm, interview on the farm by Gemählich, Tolo and the author, 10 March 2014; Adam, general manager of a small seasonal flower farm, interview on the farm by Gemählich, 8 June 2015.

<sup>3</sup> The research group surrounding Professor David Harper, a limnologist of the University of Leicester, has published extensively on Naivasha and has actively disseminated its findings to a wider audience. I cited some of the publications above. Furthermore, the International Institute for Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation (University of Twente) has regularly sent Master and PhD-students to Naivasha to do their fieldwork there. Some of the students' findings have been summarized in Becht (2007). Notably, some of this research has been facilitated or even financed by flower farms in Naivasha, see for instance Girma and Rossiter (2001).

resilience of social-ecological systems - in Section 2.6.1. Here, I highlight the main research topics of some of my colleagues who also worked in Naivasha, as their respective research questions provided a framework to my own.

The work presented in this dissertation is part of a sub-project that carries the title *Global Economic Influences and Local Labor Relations in the Reorganization of an Agro-Industrial Center*. It was initiated by Prof. Dr. Michael Bollig and Prof. Dr. Detlef Müller-Mahn. For the same subproject, Andreas Gemählich, a geographer from the University of Bonn, conducted research on the flower's global value chain and investigated perceptions on the environmental impact of the flower industry. Another geographical subproject focussed on the translocal relations of labour migrants in Naivasha. Prof. Dr. Patrick Sakdapolrak and Vera Tolo of the University of Bonn investigated the effects of translocal relations on social-ecological transformations. Fieldwork within this sub-project was conducted in both Naivasha and western parts of Kenya, where many migrants originate from. Whereas both these studies took Naivasha as a starting point and then moved outwards, following global flower markets and regional labour networks, the research discussed in this dissertation was primarily set in Naivasha. This was also the case for another sub-project in which Prof. Dr. Dorothea Schulz and Nicole Wagner investigated the environmental discourses of religious leaders and their followers in the area. Although some of the followers were flower farm workers, that research did not focus on the farms and the settlements as such; the research presented here does.

During the first phase of the RCR-project, five MA-students from the universities of Cologne and of Bonn used fieldwork in workers' settlements to study various aspects of social relations in Naivasha. These exploratory studies provide valuable insights, which I have been able to build on. Schneider (2010) has described the use of resources for various agricultural activities taking place at Lake Naivasha, including the flower farms and small-scale cultivation at the lakeside. Lembcke (2015) investigated perceptions on social-ecological change among residents of DCK, a settlement at the southern shores of the lake. Lang and Sakdapolrak (2014) have described the position of migrant workers in a settlement in Naivasha that was hit hard during the ethnicized post-election violence in early 2008. Kioko (2012) looked into the challenges that migrant workers residing north of the lake encounter and investigated their 'social resilience'. Finally, Kunas (2011) addressed the question of consent: why do workers agree to work in the flower farms? This is a question I also elaborate on in this thesis but from a different perspective. Whereas Kunas conducted her fieldwork primarily in a settlement, I investigate this question by focussing on the farms in relation to the settlements.

In summary, although Naivasha has been studied as an important destination for wage labourers and as a place where resources are contested, its agro-industrial character has received less direct attention. In this dissertation I argue that crucial for understanding workers' experiences and social relations in the settlements is the fact that it was flower farms

that were established in Naivasha, and not for instance a manufacturing company or agricultural enterprises with little need for labour. Since the topic of agro-industrial labour in Naivasha has, until now, only been touched upon and has not been studied in its own right, I investigate the topic in this dissertation.

As will become clear from the following section, the scope of this research was further refined through an engagement with another type of publication, NGO-reports, which did focus on the flower farms as such.

## 1.2 Lake Naivasha as a Site of Contestation

Although Naivasha's flower industry and its workers has figured as a given in much of both the natural science and social science research conducted on the area, it has not itself been focussed on by scholars. However, the farms have caught the attention of national and international non-governmental activist groups (NGOs). These NGOs have examined possible environmental damage caused by producing flowers and investigated the situation of the farm workers. The main product of the industry - the rose - easily sparks the imagination: NGO- and media-reports on the industry carry expressive titles such as *Wilting in Bloom* (Kenyan Human Rights Commission 2012) and *Naivasha's Withering Rose*.<sup>4</sup> Campaigns by large international NGOs have been influential in the consumer markets and have shaped the public perception on the flower industry in Kenya.

An example is a campaign by Hivos, one of the largest NGOs in the Netherlands, which promoted flowers that are produced under the Fairtrade-label. The website of the campaign - in Dutch, thus targeting Dutch consumers, focuses on female workers in the industry in Kenya (Hivos n.d.). This website and similar campaigns criticize the industry for long working hours, low payment, a lack of proper housing, job insecurity, the danger of chemicals to employees and cases of sexual harassment. They voice their findings and concerns through numerous news items, reports, websites and television broadcasts, thus exposing the industry to negative media attention both in Kenya and in the main market, Europe.<sup>5</sup> The flower industry became a symbol for gross injustices within globalized capitalism (Dolan 2007).

Concerns about labour conditions in the industry have also brought forth a mass of grey literature. Numerous, often foreign, consultants and researchers, including

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<sup>4</sup> Ken Opala, "Naivasha's Withering Rose: Flower Companies Threaten to Move to Ethiopia as Workers and Council Protest," *Daily Nation*, 2 April 2007.

<sup>5</sup> Examples of newspaper articles in Kenya are: Eric Orina, "Flower Industry under Scrutiny," *Daily Nation*, 22 October 2002; *Daily Nation*, "Complaints by Workers Mar Bloom in Flower Farms," 25 August 2005; Macharia Mwangi, "Naivasha Town: Where Poverty and Affluence Live Side-by-Side," *Daily Nation*, 18 August 2007. In Europe, the campaign leader of HIVOS was for instance interviewed in a Dutch television show (Tros Radar 2013).

anthropologists, have conducted quick surveys and more in-depth research in flower farms in Kenya after being commissioned to do so by national and international NGOs. Studies have appeared on ethical standards within these farms (Dolan et al. 2003), on labour rights (Kenyan Human Rights Commission 2012) and on the value chain of the flowers (Hale & Opondo 2005). They are based on interviews with farm managers and on focus group discussions with general farm workers. The main goal of those studies has usually been to evaluate the flower industry against certain international standards or labour laws. In such reports, and especially in NGO-campaigns based on them, workers are described in a stereotypical and generalizing manner. They are typified as being unskilled, originating from rural areas in the western parts of Kenya, predominately female (moreover, mostly single mothers) and young.<sup>6</sup> Although there is some truth in these descriptions, this dissertation will show that they are too generalizing.

The reports have been used as a basis for NGO-campaigns in which even more sweeping statements are being made. For instance, a report commissioned by Hivos claims that more than fifty percent of the households in Naivasha are headed by single women (True Price 2015: 11). The authors based their claim on a survey conducted by the Kenyan Human Rights Commission (KHRC) (2012) among flower farm workers all over Kenya. However, only of the female workers within that survey did more than fifty percent say they were single. The survey thus did not focus exclusively on Naivasha and did not include non-flower farm workers. Moreover, that particular percentage only referred to the female respondents in the survey. In short, the remarkable statement that more than half of the households in Naivasha was female-headed was simply based on a sloppy use of data.

Another instance of the imprecise representation of the workers is that Hivos' online campaign edited out all the men employed in the flower industry. The campaign's homepage states:

"The campaign 'Power of the Fair Trade Flower' tells the story of women in the African flower industry. Every year, billions of flowers are being shipped from Africa to our country. Flowers which are being cultivated and harvested by women. Often under bad conditions. Elementary labour rights are being violated, sexual harassment is rampant and exposure to pesticides harms the health of the workers."<sup>7</sup>

When considering this example of selective representation of the workers in the industry, it seems problematic that, despite all the good intentions behind these campaigns, discourses

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<sup>6</sup> See for instance Happ (2016: 16) and Hivos (n.d.).

<sup>7</sup> In Dutch: "De campagne Power of the Fair Trade Flower vertelt het verhaal van vrouwen in de Afrikaanse bloemeteelt. Jaarlijks worden miljarden bloemen vanuit Afrika naar ons land verscheept. Bloemen die door vrouwen worden gekweekt en geplukt. Vaak onder slechte omstandigheden. Elementaire arbeidsrechten worden geschonden, seksueel misbruik komt veelvuldig voor en blootstelling aan pesticiden richt gezondheidsschade aan" (Hivos n.d.).



they have put forward have become hegemonic in consumer markets in Europe. It is also not surprising that the flower industry has attempted to counteract such discourses through the creation of its own lobbying organizations (see Section 3.4). Much is at stake for both farms and workers, and these different representations have real effects. An example is the increased influence of consumer standards that impact labour conditions within the farms (see Section 5.6).

The question what is happening on the farms in Naivasha as well as in the settlements where the flower farm workers live is clearly highly contested. I therefore argue that, to attain a more nuanced understanding of the position of workers in the agro-industry in Naivasha, this question deserves more scholarly attention than it has received until now.

### 1.3 Aims and Outline of the Dissertation

This dissertation speaks about migrant workers who reside in workers' settlements in Naivasha and about the largest employer in the area: the flower industry. As I will outline further in Section 2.6.2., I consider the flower farms to be an 'agro-industry'. The farms' product is 'natural' and the location of the farms and the organization of the production depend partly on ecological conditions. The farms are also labour-intensive, and require discipline and a strict work rhythm that are reminiscent of factory work. Thus, the case of Naivasha challenges the binary that associates 'Africa' with 'traditional' peasant agriculture and 'the West' with 'modern', large-scale and industrialized agriculture (cf. Piot 1999).

This dissertation provides a case study of agro-industry on the African continent. It aims to show how labour conditions and relations within the flower industry, including the accommodation of the workers in compounds and - mostly - in spontaneous settlements, came into being and how these have changed over the years. First of all, in line with the approach of Mintz (1985) and Besky (2014), I investigate how the connections between the ecological characteristics of the crop and the organization of labour and the rhythms of work within the farms are connected. Second, following Burawoy (1979) and other sociologists studying industrial labour, I ask: how is consent on the work floor 'manufactured'? In other words, why do labour migrants come to Naivasha and agree to work in the farms? Following Ong (1987) and other researchers who wrote about women working on assembly lines around the world, I probe into the roles of gender and ethnicity within the divisions of labour and hierarchies within the farms. Finally, inspired by Greiner and Sakdapolrak (2013) and other scholars working on the topic of translocality, I investigate the influence of the migratory background and the translocal connections of many of the workers on their position within the farms and in the settlements where they live.

The outline of the dissertation is as follows. In Chapter 2, I reflect on the research process and on four themes in the literature that have shaped my understanding of the lives of migrant workers residing in Naivasha. Chapter 3 describes the gradual development of Naivasha as an agro-industrial hub. The chapter shows that the flower industry did not establish itself in an 'empty' area: Naivasha was a place with a distinctive history of agricultural wage labour. This history has shaped the labour arrangements within the flower farms. The next four chapters build the backbone of this dissertation. These chapters follow the migrants who form the labour force of this 'global' industry, from the decision to come to Naivasha to the point of leaving again, often many years or even decades later. This chronological description brings to the fore very individual choices and decisions, taken in Naivasha as well as in labour-sending regions and in the consumer markets in Europe, which together keep the flower industry going. Chapter 4, on arriving in Naivasha, shows how the flower industry depended both on existing patterns of labour migration in Kenya and on aspirations of workers and landowners in Naivasha for recruiting and accommodating labour. Chapter 5 provides a description of the workplace, including labour conditions and labour relations, and shows how the industry has attempted to retain and control labour. Chapter 6 describes the workers' settlements in Naivasha, which were mostly not planned for by the flower farms or the local government. It questions the presumed disorder of these settlements. Finally, Chapter 7 describes how migrants residing in Naivasha prepare for a future elsewhere and what happens once migrants decide to leave. By providing a historical background and by following migrant workers from their arrival until their departure, this dissertation aims to provide a more nuanced understanding of their working and living experiences in Naivasha. It furthermore aims to show how labour arrangements and conditions within this agro-industry have come into being and how these have changed over the years.

## **2. The Research Process: Methodology and Themes**

Naivasha is a dynamic place, and consequently my days of fieldwork were varied. I moved between very different and sometimes even contrasting circumstances within short timespans and within a relatively confined geographical space. To give an impression of some of these eventful encounters, this chapter starts out with a description of one of the fieldwork days. The chapter continues with a description of the methodology in which this research is grounded. The chapter ends with an introduction to four theoretical strands of literature that have informed my approach in this research.

### 2.1 A day in Kasarani

One morning in April 2015, my assistant Richard and I met at my house in Naivasha town, got on the car and headed towards the northern part of the lake where we went for an interview and tour on a vegetable farm. The aim of this visit was to get an impression of the production process of vegetables, in order to be able to compare it to the processes in the flower farms. One of the farm managers, a Kenyan man, showed us around the fields and the packing and storage area. After this tour of the production site, Richard and I took a look at the workers' compound on the premises of the farm, which used to be a livestock ranch in previous times. It was only then that Richard told me that he had been born there: his grandfather had worked on the ranch as a mechanic. However, he also told me that his mother, a civil servant working in a local government office in Town, does not like to go back to this place, which she associates with poverty. Furthermore, in the eyes of Richard himself, the compound had become dilapidated compared to twenty years ago when he lived there as a small child. When we visited in 2015, we found mainly mud houses with thatched roofs, plus a few brick buildings for management. The few functional buildings – such as the first shop in the area, and the social hall where Richard's aunt had had her wedding reception years ago – seemed to be no longer in use, presumably because their functions have been taken over by newer facilities in Kasarani, the more recently established settlement next to the farm.

We left the farm by noon and headed for this settlement. We paid a visit to Richard's aunt and uncle, who were still living in Kasarani and who were running a small grocery store there. Most of the days that we were in the settlement, we would pass some time at their store. The shop was a quiet spot, from where I could observe the daily movements in the settlement. On this day, one of the customers of the grocery shop started to chat and asked me whether I already knew Jesus. This opened up a conversation and when I told him about my research, he explained to me that he used to work in a flower farm himself. However,

some years ago, he had changed his career and had become a pastor in one of the many Pentecostal churches in the area.

I had lunch at the house of Lucy, a friend whom I introduce further in Section 4.1.2. We knew each other from my visits to Karibu Farm,<sup>8</sup> a flower farm where she worked as a supervisor. Lucy lived in a regular one-room brick apartment with her husband and two young children. Like most migrant workers, they are tenants in Naivasha. However, Lucy and her husband have managed to acquire a plot of land in the western part of Kenya. When I visited her on this day in April, she had just been travelling to her 'home' the week before. She had planted maize on their plot and she had visited her family on the way. She had not had a resting day since she had come back. She therefore was very tired and I did not stay long.

Later that afternoon I had an appointment with the lady whom I cited in the introduction, who had seen life in Naivasha change after the flower industry had been established. Her parents were a French-Italian couple, the Rocco's, who came to the area during colonial times. Ori Rocco still lived on a remaining part of her parents' estate not far from Kasarani, in a beautiful colonial house set in a green environment full of signs of wildlife. She told me about the changes in Naivasha since the flower industry emerged. However, she surprised me most already before this conversation, when I was still in Kasarani and called her from there. I asked her at which time I should come, and she replied in a matter-of-fact way that I could come once I heard her husband leaving with his airplane. This sign of wealth stood in stark contrast to the modest environment in next-door Kasarani.

After this interview, Richard and I headed back to town. We gave a lift to another supervisor of Karibu Farm, Yvonne, who went to town for her day off the next day. This gave her the opportunity to see her children who lived in town with her sister. During our forty minute-drive, Yvonne told us enthusiastically about the process of planting new seedlings in 'her' greenhouse.

Thus, within one day, I met a range of people who lived and worked on the same few square kilometres and who in multiple ways related to each other but who at the same time had very different positions in life. Days such as this one, including its extremes – where I moved between affluence and "abject poverty",<sup>9</sup> from green space and pristine wildlife to orderly greenhouses and vegetable fields and to cramped workers' housing – were common during my stay in Naivasha. These eventful days were interesting and exciting, but initially

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<sup>8</sup> Even though I cannot guarantee anonymity, I have chosen to replace the names of farms that I visited with pseudonyms. I have reasons similar to Orr's (1996: 6) who wrote about technicians of a well-known firm. He only mentioned the name of the company once: "I believe that very little of what I say is unique to Xerox, and I do not want to burden the observations with that identification."

Likewise, my aim is not to write about one specific farm and I therefore use pseudonyms. For similar reasons, I cite people whom I interviewed about the history of Naivasha by their own name while using pseudonyms for those about whom I narrated more personal details, for instance for 'Lucy'.

<sup>9</sup> Paraphrased from Mwangi, "Naivasha Town."

also confusing. How could I make sense of this complex, changing and large agro-industrial area?

## 2.2 Ethnographic Research in an Agro-industrial Context

As exemplified by this description above, I found Naivasha to be a dynamic and diverse, sometimes even contradictory, place. Despite its reliance on an agro-industry, Naivasha seems to be more an urban than a rural area. According to the most recent national census, there were 376,243 inhabitants in Naivasha in 2009 (KNBS 2010). Obvious units of analysis are still quite large: the smallest farms have several hundreds of workers and the smallest settlement has thousands of inhabitants. In addition, the population is shifting, as labour migrants are moving in and out of Naivasha (see Chapter 4 and 7). Moreover, Naivasha is a varied place. Although the greenhouses are landmarks in the landscape, the flower farms occupy relatively little space. Other room is taken up by settlements, private estates, hotels and even a national park. This modest use of space by the flower industry stands in contrast to the use of space by many other agro-industrial enterprises, where the fields dominate the landscape. Mintz, in his work on the sugar cane industry in the Caribbean, described how he felt himself "floating in a sea of cane". Cane occupied almost all space, except for the road, villages and an occasional barren field (1985: xviii). In contrast, Naivasha has a varied landscape and a varied economy. The variability of the area, combined with the massive scale and the mobility of the residents, posed challenges in designing my research. My approach was rooted in the epistemological conviction that good ethnographic research is based on intersubjectivity: on interactions and connections, developed over time, between the researcher and the researched (cf. Fabian 1971; Burawoy 1998; Okely 2012). But to whom could and should I make connections in such a large, urbanizing, agro-industrial area?

A possible way to narrow the research down would be to focus exclusively on the workplace: the flower farms themselves. This approach has been followed in much of the research on (agro-)industrial labour, for instance by Burawoy (1979) in his classic monograph on industrial relations. In such an approach, a factory or farm is studied as an "integrated social system" (Holzberg and Giovannini 1981: 328). However, I did not want to make such an analytic distinction between 'home' and 'work'. For one, in some ways the workers can be considered to be at home *in* the workplace, when the green- and packhouses become a "zone of intimate knowing" (Ingold 1995: 16). In addition, workers' motivations and experiences are not constituted either at home or in the workplace but in both of them. As Westwood (1984: 1) argued, "home and work are part of one world". Hann and Hart (2011: 152) likewise emphasized the interconnectedness between households and the workplace in their discussion of studies on mine workers on the Zambian Copperbelt. According to these

authors, "it is always necessary to situate the formal workplace in a local context households and family life, informal economy and community, as well as within the larger framework of relations between city and countryside."

Moreover, despite the high fences between farms and settlements, which at first sight indicated clear boundaries, I found the distinction between 'work' and 'home' to be fuzzy in Naivasha. Many migrant workers consider their region of origin as *nyumbani* ('home'), and regard the whole of Naivasha as a 'work-place', even their dwellings in the settlements. The question of what constitutes 'home' is discussed further in Section 7.1. For now, it suffices to conclude that an exclusive focus on the flower farms as the place of work would not provide a comprehensive understanding of labour relations in Naivasha.

Ferguson (1999), in his monograph on (economic) crisis on the Copperbelt in Zambia, aimed to develop appropriate tools to do anthropological research in an urban context where there is not a single 'whole' or stable 'knowledge system' to study. "I knew my informants in the way most urbanites know one another: some quite well, some only in passing, others in special-purpose relationships that gave me detailed knowledge of some areas of their lives and almost none of others" (*ibid.*: 21). I recognized this lack of a single 'whole' in the context of Naivasha, an ever-changing place, where most people do not stay their whole lifetime. Despite fluctuating lake levels and frequent changes in farm ownership, it is the lake and the farms that are the more constant features in Naivasha, not the people. According to Ferguson, the analytic object of study in such a fragmented urban context cannot be one space, one community or one occupational category; it is more "a mode of conceptualizing, narrating, and experiencing socioeconomic change and its encounter with a confounding process of economic decline" (*ibid.*: 21). Unlike in Ferguson's case, there has not been a crisis in Naivasha. However, even the economic 'boom' that Naivasha experienced has not been equally beneficial to all and had its failures (e.g. farms going bankrupt or closing down).

In line with Ferguson (*ibid.*: 78), I therefore turned my attention towards the various ways in which both workers and the people they were connected to conceptualized, narrated and experienced social, economic and ecological changes as well as continuities. These conceptualizations and narratives in their turn helped in formulating an answer to the question how labour arrangements in Naivasha came into being. With what expectations did migrant workers come to Naivasha, why did many choose to work in the farms, and how were these moves experienced by those who had arrived previously?

I put myself into the fragmented context of Naivasha in order to interact and to become familiar with the different meanings and experiences of change and continuity in this volatile place. "The use of the embodied, emotional, thoughtful self as a research 'instrument' is well suited to the enterprise of making connections between the purportedly public and private, between economics and gender, between the production of workers and that of their products"

(Salzinger 2003: 3). To systemize the research, I applied a number of methods that helped me to connect to a range of people. Interlocutors included flower farm workers; their managers on the farms; their neighbours in the settlements who have different occupations; in a few cases their relatives 'back home' or their former colleagues who had left Naivasha again; and people who aimed or claimed to defend their cause such as NGOs, the trade union and the government. Before presenting the methods and the ensuing encounters, I first reflect on my own position in Naivasha.

### 2.3 My Position in Naivasha

I think it is paramount - here and throughout the dissertation - to reflect on my position and relations in the field. As stated by Hastrup (2004: 456):

If in fieldwork the anthropologist gains knowledge by way of social relations, this relational aspect has a general bearing on the processes by which facts are established as (relevant) facts in the first place. The relation between the 'knower' and the 'object' of necessity bends back into the perception of the object itself and is cemented in writing.

I therefore describe my fieldwork here in some detail.

I have lived in Naivasha for thirteen months in total. I first came to Naivasha in November 2013, only one month into my research process, to attend a conference. This visit of not much more than a week gave me the opportunity to get a few first impressions of the area. In February and March 2014, I undertook an exploratory trip, together with two colleagues from RCR who also conducted research in Naivasha. The longest period of time I spent there was between September 2014 and June 2015. This was the period in which I applied most of the formal methods described below. Finally, I returned to Naivasha for a month in June 2016, one year after I had left. This final stay provided insights into changes within the flower industry, in the settlements and within people's lives. It therefore helped me to experience and grasp the dynamism of everyday life in Naivasha.

During the shorter stays, I slept in one of the modest hotels of which Naivasha Town had many, due to the busy highway passing the town, which was used by truckers. During the long stay, I lived in a shared project house in a middle-class neighbourhood close to the centre of Naivasha Town. Many researchers who worked on the topic of (agro-)industrial labour, stayed where the workers lived, at least for part of their fieldwork, see Ong (1987), Rutherford (2001) and Bolt (2016). Initially I also thought of the possibility of looking for a one-room-apartment for myself in one of the settlements, to be able to stay there part of the time. In the end, I never did. At first I was hesitant because I was worried about my own safety, specifically with regards to health. Once settled in Naivasha, I became less worried about that because the settlements turned out to be not as abhorrent as they sometimes have been

depicted by outsiders. Nevertheless, I realized that it would still be an intense experience to live in a settlement such as Karagita or Kasarani – cramped, loud, smelly and by times violent environments. Furthermore, I had become aware that it would be a conspicuous move for a foreign, relatively rich person to go and live there, and I was not sure how people would interpret such a move. An alternative to staying in one of the settlements would have been to stay in a workers' compound (*kambi*)<sup>10</sup> on a farm for some time but this was not possible: there were just a handful of farms around Naivasha that had a compound and none of these were very approachable or hospitable. One of these farms allowed me to do interviews in their workers' camp. However, I always had to be accompanied by a welfare officer during these short visits, as they deemed it unsafe for me to be there alone. It was impossible to get permission to stay there overnight. Hence, I stayed in the project house in Naivasha Town.

Staying in town has undeniably limited my research: I did not gain as many insights in everyday life as I would have if I had stayed in one of the settlements or a compound. Yet, I appreciated the possibility to retreat, which gave me time to type out notes and to start with analysis while in Naivasha. Moreover, despite the relative distance between my house and the farms and settlements, I was still well-immersed in 'the field'. On most days of the week, I would pay visits to settlements or farms. And even when not visiting, I could not forget my research: the settlement Kihoto was on a walking distance from our house, and I could see some of the other settlements and the greenhouses on the other side of the lake from our rooftop. The flower farms were also quite present in Naivasha Town, for instance through their trucks and staff buses. Furthermore, on days that I was not on 'official' field visits, I would regularly visit friends whom I had met in a settlement or farm, or receive them at my home. Still, only informants who stayed in town themselves or who were relatively well-off and could afford to travel, would visit me at my house. I consequently met most informants mainly in their own environment: in their house, on a farm where they worked or in a *hoteli* (small restaurant) for a cup of tea. Managers and government officials usually proposed to meet in their office. Nevertheless, the longer I stayed in Naivasha, the more often I also spontaneously met with interlocutors, for instance on the street or in church - despite my choice to stay in town.

An important reason to stay in town was that I was not living there on my own. I shared my house with either my partner or with a colleague, and for them it was more convenient to stay in town. My partner stayed with me for short periods throughout my fieldwork, about six months in total. I had met him during previous fieldwork in Tanzania and it was relatively easy

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<sup>10</sup> Farm compounds were referred to as 'kambi' in Swahili, which derives from the English word 'camp', indicating that workers' compound originally had consisted of make-shift accommodation (see also Chapter 3).



for him to come to Kenya. It was good for my well-being to stay with him. It also helped me in establishing a 'home' in Naivasha. People there appreciated that I had an African partner.

My stay in the field, especially the initial phase, furthermore was shaped to a large extent by the collaboration with my fellow PhD-students. We mostly stayed in the same house or hotel, and especially in the beginning, I did some of the field activities together with two colleagues. It sometimes was a challenge to make our different interests clear to informants and to not be hindered in my own endeavours by the presence of my colleagues. Yet, this cooperation was mostly helpful. It aided in getting access, as we could share contacts, and it was stimulating to be able to share impressions and ideas. Apart from these colleagues, we were also regularly visited by other PhD-students from the Universities of Cologne and Bonn. For many of them, our house was on the way from Nairobi to their field sites further away. I found it very motivating and valuable to be able to discuss experiences with fellow students during the course of my fieldwork.

My position in Naivasha was thus shaped by the fact that I was accompanied by several people. It was furthermore defined by a very visible feature: the colour of my skin. I found there were surprisingly many people of European descent (*wazungu*) living around Naivasha. Some of them were members of families that had stayed there from colonial times and that had made Kenya their home. Others, for example managers from flower farms, had arrived more recently. Whenever they had arrived, most *wazungu* were well-off and lived in fenced-off houses close to the lake or in a gated community. Even though some of them lived close to the informal settlements and even though most of them interacted on a day-to-day basis with the migrant workers whom they employed in their homes or farms, there was an immense social distance between them and the people whom I mainly wanted to connect to.

My interactions with workers and with other residents of the settlements were complicated by my status of *mzungu*. When visiting a farm, I was often automatically identified as part of the management, which sometimes made workers fearful of talking to me. And when I went to talk to someone in a settlement, that person sometimes assumed I was working for an NGO and would ask for material assistance or a job. Random children in the settlements approached me in English and asked for or even demanded money or sweets. Being classified as an *mzungu* thus gave me some insights into economic and social relations in Naivasha, but it was most of all an impediment to gaining people's trust. Many people, especially women, felt not at ease when meeting me for the first time. The other way around, I sometimes felt uncomfortable myself because my presence created expectations that I felt I could not fulfil. I was often asked, especially when we conducted the survey, in what ways my research would assist my respondents. In most cases, my answer that there simply were no immediate benefits sufficed. It was helpful here that education is highly valued in Kenya and that there was a familiarity with students doing 'fieldwork'. My position and appearance as a

young student convinced a few respondents who themselves had a child in university to participate. However, not everyone was satisfied with me coming empty-handed. On one occasion, I interviewed an employee from Karibu Farm at his house in Kasarani. During the interview, a former colleague of his passed by and decided to come in when he saw me. Without introducing himself or asking who I was, he immediately started to lament the - according to him - difficult situation of the flower farm workers. He gave examples of bad working conditions, not aware that I knew that some of his statements were not factually true. My interviewee seemed to be embarrassed by the rant of his former colleague. He afterwards told me that the man had left the farm voluntarily some time back for reasons unknown to him. This man apparently had been triggered by my appearance.

However, in many cases people's curiosity was stronger than their distrust or their wish to gain something, and so many agreed to talk to me without receiving any immediate benefits. Thus, although my position as a European researcher created a distance from the outset, in many cases my interlocutors and I were able to overcome some of that distance.

My assistants were invaluable in the process of gaining trust, as a few respondents only agreed to talk to me - an *mzungu* - after they had talked to my assistant. My thorough knowledge of Swahili, acquired in Tanzania, was another important factor. Although a majority of the people in the area understand and speak (some) English, almost all of them are more comfortable with speaking Swahili. Swahili is also the 'bridging' language in the area, the *lingua franca*. I conducted most of the interviews in Swahili or in a mix of Swahili and English, except for interviews and conversations with (both foreign and Kenyan) farm managers. These conversations were mostly in English or - when the manager was from the Netherlands, which was not uncommon - in Dutch, my native tongue. In a few cases the interviewee was more comfortable with speaking Kikuyu and my assistant had to translate for me. These interviews were fortunately exceptions. As Fabian (1971: 33) asserted, knowledge is constituted through language, and therefore the possibility to communicate directly without the assistance of a translator enhanced my learning process.

Furthermore, where my skin colour immediately classified me as wealthy, my language skills made me stand apart from other *wazungu*. Most flower farm managers did not speak any Swahili. People from European descent who had stayed in the area for a long time sometimes spoke Swahili, but they did so in a specific way: they were used to speaking it only with servants or subordinates. They spoke what Abdulaziz (1982: 4) called "Ki-Setla": Swahili of settlers. My ease in speaking 'everyday' Swahili created goodwill and made it much easier to connect to people, if only because I aroused their curiosity. This does not mean that communication always went fluently. The Swahili spoken in Kenya is slightly different from what I had learned in Tanzania, which occasionally hindered mutual understanding.

Nevertheless, I was able to communicate immediately with my interlocutors, which made forging connections and gaining trust much easier.

During fieldwork I could make use of a car provided by our research group, which greatly enhanced my mobility and enabled access to farms and settlements along the lake. It had an ambivalent role when it comes to my positionality. On the one hand, it accentuated my privileged status as a well-funded European student and created social distance. On the other hand, it made it easier to meet random people in a casual manner: especially on the North Lake Road, where the public minibuses would not go that often, my assistants and I regularly gave rides to people who were on their way from school or work to home. Such rides created an opportunity for interesting conversations. It was also a way of establishing myself as a 'normal' person: several people whom we took along emphasized how uncommon it was for an *mzungu* to give a ride. It furthermore provided an opportunity to establish reciprocal relations. For instance, a female vegetable farm worker whom we gave a ride to on North Lake Road, gave my assistant and me two of the enormous cabbages that she carried and that she had been allowed to take from her workplace. Finally, the car augmented my visibility: anyone who knew me and my car, would know when I was visiting a certain settlement or farm. It enhanced my presence there. Furthermore, the fact that I and my colleagues were regularly recognized through the cars we used, showed that Naivasha was still a provincial town and that it was possible to acquire a network there, despite the high population numbers.

During my several stays, I worked with five assistants who were all living in or close to Naivasha Town at the time, but who had different ethnic and professional backgrounds. On most days of fieldwork (though less so towards the end of my stay), one of them would come along to help me in finding my way, in establishing contacts, with driving and with interviews.

During my first two short stays in Naivasha, when I was mostly together with colleagues, we were assisted by a Maasai man who had previously assisted other researchers from our research group. Some years before, he had worked in the packhouse of a flower farm and he connected me to a few of his former colleagues. One of them, Flora, eventually became my friend as well as, on a few occasions, my assistant. She is introduced further in Section 4.1.1. A third assistant was a Luo man who mainly helped with driving (which I only at a later stage started to do myself). He had been the driver of a flower farm manager and he knew quite some people in the flower industry around the lake. He had a lot of stories about them, which he told me on our travels around the lake. The fourth assistant, Richard, whom I worked with most, was the one born in the camp of the vegetable farm described above. He was a young, middle-class, Kikuyu man who had previous experience with conducting research. I had met him at the workshop that I attended in November 2013. Richard's experience with formal research methods was helpful, and in addition - having lived in Naivasha all his life - he was well-connected. He helped me in getting contacts to

government officials, long-time residents and local activists. Finally, specifically for the survey, Richard asked his young female friend from the same middle-class neighbourhood he lived in, to assist us with the interviews.

I thus worked with a varied group of assistants throughout fieldwork, who were pleasant and also resourceful companions to me in the field. They provided me with many insights, through both their own stories and opinions and their interactions with others along the way.

## 2.4 Methods

Previous social scientific research on the cut flower industry and the settlements in Naivasha mainly made use of formal interviews and focus group discussions, supplemented with secondary data, see for instance Dolan (2007) and KHRC (2012). These studies were thus based on standardized questionnaires, which were administered by researchers who would only meet the respondents once. Occasionally, formal interviews were supplemented with more 'intersubjective' methods such as transect walks in a settlement (Lang & Sakdapolrak 2014) and participant observation (Kioko 2012). Partly taking inspiration from other studies on (agro-)industrial relations, I chose to apply a variety of methods, which allowed me to address processes in both the farms and the settlements, and which provided opportunities to connect to people in diverse ways. Although there were some quantitative elements in the method design, the emphasis was on qualitative methods.

### 2.4.1 *Survey*

The first and most formal method used is an explorative survey among 176 inhabitants of three different places where many flower farm workers live: Kasarani along Moi North Lake Road, Karagita along Moi South Lake Road, and the compound of a farm that I call Sharma here. These residential areas are quite different from each other and were selected primarily because I had some previous knowledge about them. Karagita is the most well-known and most notorious shantytown around Naivasha and has featured in newspaper articles about the flower industry.<sup>11</sup> It is larger and more easily accessible than Kasarani. The latter is a settlement with a more rural feel, located along the - at the time - non-tarmacked road. Kioko (2012) conducted anthropological fieldwork in this village before. Finally, Sharma was a large-scale flower farm of which the ownership changed in 2007 and that subsequently endured financial stress. It was under receivership of two banks at the time of my fieldwork. The

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<sup>11</sup> Cf. Macharia Mwangi, "Post-Election Chaos. Violence Ruins the Party for Naivasha Flower Companies," *Daily Nation*, 2 February 2008.

receiving managers allowed me to conduct part of my survey on the farms' compound where most of the workers lived. These settlements and the compound are described in Chapter 6.

Respondents in the settlements were chosen by dividing Karagita and Kasarani into four and five neighbourhoods respectively and by selecting a block of between eleven and twenty-two houses in each of these neighbourhoods. The selection of these blocks was random, except that I purposefully included blocks with different construction materials (either brick or more make-shift materials such as mud and wood). All houses on the Sharma Farm compound were constructed with brick and they were arranged in lines. There, I selected five lines of about ten houses, including one line where more skilled workers (supervisors, a nursery teacher) resided. I chose not to interview 'household heads'. Instead, I aimed to interview everyone who was residing in the selected blocks or lines and who was aged 18 years or above at the time of the interview. Feminist researchers have challenged the concept of a household as a 'sharing pool of resources' with one providing household head. They have argued that the way in which the concept usually is used, contains implicit gender ideologies and causes researchers to overlook power relations (Ong 1987: 62; Wolf 1992: 13-18). Furthermore, the empirical context in Naivasha suggested that the household in this case was not the most appropriate unit of analysis in order to understand (economic) relations between individuals or gendered divisions of labour (cf. Guyer and Peters 1987: 208; Li 1998: 667). As described in Chapter 6, household composition in the settlements varied considerably. In addition, most adults living in Naivasha – whether male or female and whether single or married – had a providing role. I deemed it therefore most appropriate to interview all adult individuals who were living in the selected plots. However, my two assistants and I did not manage to interview all of them. We have visited all compounds several times and tried to come at a variety of hours (although mainly in the late afternoon, after work on the farms was over). Nevertheless, some people were never at home when we visited their compound. They had travelled to their home area for a long period of time, or were just mostly at work. Especially men who were living alone sometimes would only come home to sleep. Women were home more often than men, which could perhaps explain the gender imbalance in our sample: we interviewed more women (61.9% of the respondents) than men. In addition, some residents refused to participate. The average response rate, when comparing the number of respondents per block with our estimates of the total number of residents, was about 65%.

Respondents were mostly familiar with the concept of a survey or census and a few of them said they had been interviewed before. Nevertheless, it could feel uncomfortable come to someone's doorstep and to ask a set of personal questions. A first limitation was that surveys were often associated with NGOs, and it was especially during the execution of the survey questionnaire that interlocutors asked for material aid or wanted to know how they would benefit from my research. My assistants and I encountered suspicion with a few

respondents and they would not share any information on their workplace or their family. As Okely remarked (2012: 77), an unknown, "detached" researcher may be more intrusive than an anthropologist who stayed a long time and whom people have become familiar with. The unfamiliarity between the interviewer and the interviewee is one of the reasons that the method of a survey has been treated with suspicion by anthropologists, even if they employ it themselves. It is questionable how much information people are willing to share with a stranger (cf. the experiences of Van Velsen (1964: xxviii)). Furthermore, a survey on its own cannot shed full light on social phenomena: it shows individuals, not relationships (Okely 2012: 13), and it shows just one moment in time while for instance household composition might be variable (Ross and Weisner 1977: 365; Ong 1987: 58). These two limitations become especially relevant when studying the dynamic processes of labour migration. Moore and Vaughan (1994: 147) criticized surveys which were used by earlier anthropologists to collect data on labour migration in Zambia. They gave the example of a woman who had seemingly been left behind by her husband in their village and who was recorded as such in a survey, but who at a later stage joined her husband in the urban area. This example implies that the numbers that result from the administration of a survey questionnaire can only be meaningfully interpreted with the help of observations that have been made over a longer time-span, with attention for interactions. Such a combination of methods was the approach of Wolf (1992) in her study on female factory workers in Java: "The quantitative data will guide us through these household characteristics and constraints that young women confront at the household level, and the qualitative data will demonstrate how they cope with, adapt to, or resist such constraints" (*ibid.*: 161). The goal of my survey was likewise to gain some broad insights into household and work characteristics of people living in the workers' settlements and on farm compounds.

After familiarizing myself with Naivasha during the stay in early 2014, I developed a standardized and pre-coded questionnaire. It contained questions about the personal background of respondents, their work situation and work history, and their membership in organizations. The survey was geared towards obtaining these immediate data. Even more importantly - and in contrast to the common detached ways of executing a survey -, an explicit goal was to establish (first) contacts and to make connections. The process of interviewing and returning to the same blocks of houses repetitively, helped me in becoming familiar with the settlements and with the people living there. Making these rounds over the course of, in each case, several weeks already provided a lot of insights, which helped me in interpreting the numbers derived from the interviews. The survey furthermore provided contact details from those who were able and willing to give their phone number (122 respondents, although a few of the numbers later turned out to be false). It was therefore helpful in identifying and contacting fitting respondents for other interviews later on. In total, 23 of the respondents from

the survey were at a later stage interviewed again. I also met some of the respondents again at a later stage, on the farm that I frequently visited. Specifically in Karagita, a number of respondents (4 out of 17 contacted people there) had moved out of Naivasha about half a year after the survey, which is an indication that it is common there to move away again after a few years. In short, the survey provided me with an indication of the socio-economic position of the residents of the settlements. The process of gathering the data also familiarized me with the context and enabled me to establish contacts. Follow-up interviews (which I discuss further below) provided more in-depth insights and made it possible to move beyond recording the situation at a single moment in time.

#### *2.4.2 Farm Visits*

Most ethnographies on (agro-)industrial work have been based on some form of participant observation. Many researchers - especially those who did research in their 'own' society and therefore did not stand out among the workers - worked in the factory or plantation themselves for a period of time, sometimes as a regular labourer in for instance a factory in the United States or Great Britain (Burawoy 1979; Westwood 1984) and sometimes more informally. For instance, Besky (2014) joined groups of workers during their working day on tea plantations in India without seeking formal consent of the plantation owners. Other researchers 'hung around' in a factory or plantation for a substantial amount of time, observing what was going on, without participating in the work, see Freeman (2000) on data entry workers in Barbados, Lee (1998), on factory workers in China and Friedemann-Sánchez (2009) on flower farms in Colombia. I likewise spent time in flower farms.

During the stay in early 2014, my colleagues and I visited five different flower farms together. These extensive visits lasted for several hours and included an interview with a manager and a tour on the farm. This served to get a general impression of labour conditions and of production processes in the different farms. Although these one-time visits allowed for observation, they did not provide time for a more in-depth engagement. I therefore at a later stage visited a specific farm repeatedly, 19 times in total, spread out over the course of about five months. This rose-producing farm, which I here call Karibu Farm, had around 600 employees. It was located close to Kasarani, where virtually all the employees lived. My main goal of spending some time there was to familiarize myself with the work itself (rhythms, procedures and conditions) and to gain insights into work relations. The management of the farm gave me a lot of freedom in moving around the farm, although I always had to announce my visits to one of the managers. Without their consent, the security guards would not let me pass the gate. However, apart from that condition I got the chance to freely talk to anyone on the farm and to enter most sections, except for areas with specific safety regulations such as the chemical mixing room. This freedom I had in moving around contrasted to the restrictions

on movement of the workers. They were expected not to move outside the area they worked in and a few shared spaces such as the canteen and the changing rooms (cf. Rutherford 2001: 67, who experienced the same on a farm in Zimbabwe).

Just as Pollert (1981: 6), I primarily positioned myself as a researcher and not as a fellow worker during the visits to Karibu Farm. Being an *mzungu*, it was clear from the start that I had not come as a regular worker. However, employees sometimes assumed I was studying floriculture and was an intern on my way to become a flower farm manager, like they had seen a few before. When introducing myself I explained that I was not part of the management and that I was a researcher. Nevertheless, I was not always successful in making my position clear. I could only enter the farm via the management and this automatically created some distance to general workers.<sup>12</sup> This distance in itself provided insights into hierarchies on the farm, but it could also form an impediment. For instance, one worker decided not to tell me her reasons for quitting her job because her decision was related to her superiors and she was aware that I knew them. On the other hand, some workers liked to talk to me because they thought I might communicate their perceptions and concerns to the management. The association with management, which to some degree was unavoidable, thus had ambiguous consequences.

I tried most of the work in the greenhouses and performed some of the easier tasks, such as sizing flowers, several times. This introduction to the work was useful as it showed me that most tasks were not easy to master quickly: "Participation necessarily involves confrontation with the researcher's incompetence in contrast to others' long-term embedded skills" (Okely 2012: 77). However, I did not deem it a priority to fully participate in the work: it would take too much time. On top of that, I shared the hesitance expressed by Pollert (1981: 6): "The women's work in the factory – while termed 'semi-skilled' – thoroughly intimidated me." Once I became aware of the great monetary value of the flowers and of the vulnerability of the plants, I refrained from insisting on working along, with the exception of a few light tasks with which the workers and supervisors trusted me and with which I trusted myself. As Parry stated (in Okely 2012: 94): "But nobody was going to have me bugging up their machine!" I thus did not attempt to work along as a 'regular' employee.

During my first visits, I went along in the greenhouse for two full days and in the packhouse for one day, and was 'trained on the job' by supervisors who would explain all the work to me and let me try some of the tasks. These trainings provided insights into labour conditions. I gained an understanding of the work process and felt how tiresome the heat in the greenhouse can be. After this initial phase, a range of employees of the farm – from the

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<sup>12</sup> 'General workers' are the employees without a specific job description. They are the bottom of the hierarchy within the farms, yet they form by far the largest group of employees (see Chapter 5).



director and other managers to supervisors and general workers – gave me their opinion on whom I should talk to and what part of the farm I should see. Their suggestions ranged from interviewing committee members and attending meetings to asking for a tour by the irrigation manager and the canteen supervisor in 'their' sections of the farm. Hence, my visits were largely shaped by what the employees of the farm themselves considered to be of interest for me. Furthermore, in between such 'official' activities, I would during every visit spend some time observing the work in a greenhouse or having lunch with the workers in the canteen. This 'hanging around' gave me a good impression of work rhythms and processes and of labour relations.

I was warned beforehand by other researchers working on the industry that it would be difficult to get access to the farms, although it was deemed even more difficult for Kenyan researchers than for Europeans.<sup>13</sup> Omosa, Kimani and Njiru (2006: 6) were forced to use "convenience sampling": they could only conduct research on farms that were willing to cooperate. The same applied to me and my colleagues, although I had the impression that most farms were willing to receive visitors. Nevertheless, we always had to go through the management. Moreover, there were a few farms (including the largest farm in Naivasha) that denied access. It was therefore crucial to also approach workers in the settlements where they lived if I wanted to find out about their perceptions on their places of work.

#### *2.4.3 Listing and Piling Exercise*

More or less parallel to my visits to Karibu Farm, I conducted listing and piling exercises on the different types of jobs performed in the settlements and in the flower firms. The ranking of occupations is an old method in studies on stratification in changing African societies, see for example Mitchell and Epstein (1959) on occupational prestige. I was interested in perceptions on work and on job opportunities, and in how these perceptions varied according to variables such as place of residence and profession. I organized meetings with ten small groups of three to four participants. The core assignment was to make a list of all the possible jobs that people do in the settlement where the participants lived ("what do you and your neighbours do to make a living?"). In the case of flower farm workers, I also asked them to list all the possible positions on the farm where they were working. The participants were then asked to rank the mentioned jobs and positions according to different criteria. All groups made piles for low, middle and high income. The other criteria varied per group: I added and changed some after the first meetings and I also left some out on a few occasions, when participants started to grow tired of the exercise. For jobs in the settlements, these varying criteria were: popularity or status, availability and gender (that is: "which jobs are predominantly done by men, which

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<sup>13</sup> E.g. Maggie Opondo, personal communication, 26 February 2014.

by women, and which are regularly done by both?"). For positions within farms, the varying criteria were educational requirements and, again, gender.

To enable comparisons, five discussions took place close to Naivasha Town, in Karagita and Kihoto, whereas five took place in Kasarani at more distant North Lake.<sup>14</sup> Five groups consisted of flower farm workers (sometimes from the same and sometimes from different farms) whereas the other five groups mainly consisted of people with other occupations. Sampling was done in different ways: four groups were sampled by randomly asking people on the street to participate in exchange for a cup of tea or a soda in a hotel. The participants in those groups did not know each other, or only vaguely. Two other groups were selected in Karibu Farm, two were formed by asking one flower farm worker to gather a few of his or her colleagues, and two groups were sampled by gathering a few of the survey respondents. In most groups, the exercise was a shared pleasure between me and the participants (cf. Tsing 2005: 162). One participant afterwards exclaimed with relief that she did not know that doing research was so easy. In these groups, there were animated conversations. However, in a few groups, some participants did not have much time or they were too shy to fully participate. In these cases, the discussion turned into a group interview where I asked direct questions.

I left the choice of language to the participants, although I always introduced myself and the exercise in Swahili. Perhaps because of this, the discussions were mainly held in Swahili. However, the lists written down by the participants were invariably in English, with the exception of some terms for which the participants only knew the Swahili word. On the other hand, a few of the ranking criteria, such as 'status', were difficult to translate to Swahili and these criteria were interpreted differently by different groups. Because of this translation problem and because of time pressure with some of the groups, I did not apply the method of piling rigorously enough to enable a quantitative analysis of the data. Consequently, the piling exercise was mainly interesting because of the comments that people gave, not for the resulting piles themselves. Whereas the listing revealed job and business opportunities in the settlements and in the flower firms, the comments made during the piling exercises provided insights into the motivations for and perceptions of the different types of work among the respondents.

#### *2.4.4 Social Network Analysis*

In order to recognize social structure in a place that seemed to be constantly fluctuating, I conducted a social network analysis. I aimed to explore the relations between workers within

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<sup>14</sup> The areas along Moi North Lake Road and Moi South Lake Road are commonly known as 'North Lake' and 'South Lake' respectively. I also use these terms in this dissertation to refer to those areas.

a farm and the relations between the workers and their neighbours in the settlements. Social network analysis is a classic method in studies on labour relations in industrial production. It was in origin a mathematical method, which focussed on relations between individuals (Scott 2013: 3). Kapferer (1969) used this method in his analysis of a dispute on the shop floor in Zambia where he did his research. He showed that the existing social relations and an individuals' position could explain why this individual would invoke a certain norm, and not a competing norm, during the dispute. My own aim in using this method was not to explain but to describe. I used two types of social network analysis, one within a farm and one in settlements. I did not base my analysis on observations, as Kapferer (*ibid.*) had done. In order to save time, and in line with other researchers' approach (cf. Scott 2013: 41), I designed a questionnaire and based my analysis on data gathered during interviews.

For a total network analysis, I interviewed all 31 workers in one greenhouse of Karibu Farm. This included the supervisor of the team, Yvonne, whom I mentioned in Section 2.1. By the time of the interviews, most of the workers already knew me, which made interviewing easier. The interviews aimed to assess the strength and type of connections between workers: how much did they interact during work time and lunch breaks? And did they also meet each other outside the farm? The analysis aimed to establish the social importance of a working team in the wider context of the farm and of the neighbouring settlement. A practical problem during these interviews was that the composition of the team was regularly modified: some employees rotated regularly between working in the greenhouse and in the pesticide spraying department. Others were at some point permanently transferred to another greenhouse or the packhouse. I managed to interview almost all workers before there were any changes in the composition, except for one employee who was on leave during that time and whom I had to interview a month later. Nevertheless, this instability was an important reminder that this 'total network' was a momentary and fluid entity, which was an indispensable insight in interpreting the outcomes. It already prepared me for an outcome that showed the limited relevance of the working team as a social group in wider labour relations and in relations between neighbours in Kasarani.

In a second type of network analysis, I did not focus on the characteristics of a total network but on the networks and relations of individuals (Scott 2013: 49). For this ego-network analysis, I interviewed 22 individuals who lived in Karagita, Kasarani and Kihoto and whom I purposefully sampled. The sample included both flower farm workers and other inhabitants, whose average age was comparable to the average age in the survey (34 years against 36 years). Also the diversity in region of origin was representative when compared to the survey results. Some of the respondents had been interviewed for the survey before; others I had met during visits to Karibu Farm or in one of the settlements in the course of my fieldwork; and a few of them were acquaintances of my assistant Flora. I asked the participants about

their motivations to come to Naivasha and their networks there. I also asked about their connections to their region of origin and to other regions in Kenya. In addition, I asked them ten hypothetical questions about their support network. The 22 interviews showed common biographical elements, for example that most of them were migrants, and hinted at which types of relationships were central for the interviewees, for example the relations to parents and other close family members in the region of origin. The questions and the aggregated results of this ego-centred network analysis have been summarized in Table 8 in Chapter 6.

#### *2.4.5 Archive and Oral History Research*

Archival research and analysis of secondary data such as newspaper articles, websites and promotional material, is a common way to contextualize findings acquired through other methods in studies on (industrial) labour relations (see out of many examples: Burawoy 1979; Salzinger 2003; Besky 2014). To find out about the historical background to contemporary labour relations in Naivasha, I likewise looked for relevant archive material in both the Kenya National Archives (KNA) in Nairobi and the Provincial Deposit of the KNA in Nakuru.<sup>15</sup> Especially Annual Reports of several (local) government departments and documents on land transfers provided insights into the development of the flower industry and of the settlements around Naivasha. In addition, I accessed newspaper articles from the 1960s onwards in the digitalized archive of the Nation Media Group in Nairobi. These articles provided factual information and they also showed the changing perceptions on the flower industry over the course of the past five decades. I furthermore accessed court cases and government announcements online. These legal sources contained details on some of the farms and settlements.<sup>16</sup>

The archival material was supplemented by oral history interviews with a range of individuals who had stayed in Naivasha for a long period of time. These included some of the first inhabitants of Karagita and Kasarani, a long-time employee and a few former employees of Sharma farm, and several Kenyans of European descent (see the appendix).

Finally, several websites and documents of Fairtrade and NGOs provided insights into more contemporary labour and land relations in Naivasha. Some of the documents could be classified as 'grey literature' as they provided factual information about the flower industry. Yet, as outlined in the introduction, many of the NGO-documents were written with the aim of

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<sup>15</sup> Officially the eight provinces of Kenya did not exist anymore as administrative units at the time of my fieldwork. They had been replaced by counties (see Cheeseman, Lynch and Willis (2016) on the administrative restructuring process). Yet they had not lost all of their significance: they were still used in names of institutions such as the archives and also in everyday conversations. I therefore still refer to these provinces in this dissertation to confirm to common usage.

<sup>16</sup> All court cases cited in this dissertation have been accessed via the database on the website of Kenya Law: <http://www.kenyalaw.org/caselaw/>. The Kenya Gazette has an online archive, which can be accessed via [http://books.google.co.ke/books/about/Kenya\\_Gazette.html?id=SiZddRcP0BcC](http://books.google.co.ke/books/about/Kenya_Gazette.html?id=SiZddRcP0BcC).

evaluating the industry against certain standards, whereas output of the industry itself of course aimed to install a positive image. I have therefore critically engaged with these sources and have triangulated them with findings that I acquired through other methods.

#### *2.4.6 Interviews and 'Spaces-in-Between'*

Almost all authors working on industrial labour supplemented their other, more formal methods with open-ended or unstructured interviews with workers and other relevant actors (e.g. Burawoy 1979; Freeman 2000; Salzinger 2003). Throughout fieldwork, I likewise conducted unstructured and semi-structured interviews with government officials, members of workers' committees, social and environmental activists, union officials and farm managers. To gain insight into workers' prospects after leaving Naivasha, I interviewed three employees who recently had resigned at Karibu Farm. I asked them about their reasons to leave and their future plans. In addition, I went to Kisumu in the western part of Kenya to interview three former workers from Sharma who had left already years ago. Finally, in June 2016, I conducted seven semi-structured biographical interviews with migrant workers. I had already met all of these respondents during previous stays in Naivasha. I recorded five of these interviews. This was an exception, as I hardly ever used my audio-recorder during interviews. I had the impression that recording the interview would make people more cautious to speak.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, I liked the time created by the need to scribble down notes. It prevented both myself and the interviewee from rushing. Rather than recording interviews with an audio-recorder, answers to my questions were 'recorded' and turned into 'data' immediately by making notes. I would process and digitalize these notes later on the same day. The only exceptions, where I did use an audio recorder, were longer interviews, such as the life history interviews and several interviews conducted together with colleagues.

In addition to these planned interviews, there were numerous encounters and moments for observation 'in between' the more formal methods (cf. Davies 2010: 23). Walking through settlements, having lunch there, chatting with friends, organizing occasional get-togethers with our assistants at our house, teaching in a secondary school for one afternoon, giving rides to people along the way and visiting church services were all occasions for learning. These unplanned moments filled my field diary. My 'field' in the end did not consist of one settlement or one farm, but was defined by my diverse encounters and repetitive contacts within the larger volatile context of Naivasha (cf. Okely 2012: 28).

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. Kunas (2011: 13) on her experiences with a recorder in the settlement Kwa Muhia.

#### *2.4.7 Comparison to Project Data*

Staying together in Naivasha with colleagues from the project was productive in several ways. It saved some organizational work and Andreas Gemählich, Vera Tolo and I conducted several interviews together, thus saving respondents the time of meeting us separately. Furthermore, I could use data that was gathered individually by Gemählich and Tolo for this dissertation. Wherever I have made use of this data, I have mentioned this in a footnote.

Gemählich, who conducted research on the global value chain of the flowers, provided me with transcripts from interviews with farm managers in Naivasha and with other industry players in Nairobi and in the Netherlands. These interviews provided further insights into labour relations in the industry. Tolo, who studied migration processes and translocality, provided transcripts from interviews with labour migrants in both Naivasha and their home region in western Kenya. These transcripts provided insights into the motivations and aspirations of the migrant workers and their families. This input was valuable as my own research - being primarily located in only one 'node' within wider networks - could only provide limited insights into processes of labour migration (cf. Moore and Vaughan 1994: 147).

Furthermore, Tolo provided me with the results from an explorative survey (n=94) that she conducted in Naivasha. She sampled some of her respondents by offering lifts along Moi Lake Road. In addition, she went to the stops of staff buses, farm gates and farm compounds. She asked her respondents questions about their household composition, their migration to Naivasha, their work situation and their remittance behaviour, and her survey thus partly overlapped with mine. I could therefore compare my own results to the results of Tolo's survey. Moreover, I compared these results to the results of surveys among flower farm workers conducted by others, as reported in articles and grey literature (e.g. Dolan, Opondo and Smith 2003; Gibbon and Riisgaard 2014).

#### 2.5 Analysis and Writing

These methods together created a variety of data. I made use of several types of software for the analysis of these data. With the assistance of Ken Ondoro, a social scientist based in Nairobi, I analysed the outcomes of the survey in the program SPSS (versions 22, 23 and 24). In this dissertation, I mostly refer to frequencies, e.g. which percentage of the respondents work in a flower farm (see Figure 5 in Chapter 4). I have also included a few correlations, e.g. between gender and reported income (see Table 5 in Chapter 6). I used the Chi-square test (as calculated in SPSS) to determine whether an apparent association between two variables might simply be the outcome of chance or can be considered statistically significant. As the survey was exploratory, I chose a relatively high p-value and consider values under 0.1 to indicate a significant association (Russell Bernard 2002: 561-

614). However, as outlined in Section 2.4.1, I am aware of the limitations of a survey. I interpret the resulting numbers not as 'facts' but as indications that have to be triangulated with data gathered through other methods.

For the analysis of the social network questionnaires, I made use of the programs Microsoft Excel (for data entry) and UCINET 6 )for producing the graphs displayed in Figures 14-16 and 23-26).<sup>18</sup>

I coded my field diaries and interview transcripts in the program QDA Miner Lite (version 1.4.3). This coding process primarily helped me to get an overview of the large mass of data, to sort it and to discover similarities and differences between several pieces of data. Moreover, during the writing process the coding assisted in navigating my data.

Apart from a conventional field diary, in which I wrote down observation notes and analytic thoughts, I also kept a bi-weekly emotions field diary. This diary was part of my participation in a project on researchers' affects in the field.<sup>19</sup> I decided to participate in this project because I was aiming for intersubjective research in which I, as referred to above, aimed to make "use of the embodied, emotional, thoughtful self as a research 'instrument'" (Salzinger 2003: 3). In this context, I reckoned it inappropriate and even impossible to separate my analytic thoughts from my emotions (Davies 2010: 25). I felt there was a need to reflect on emotions and affects experienced during fieldwork, as these shaped my relations in the field and, therefore, my research outcomes. The emotion diary - consisting of a short questionnaire and a table with a list of emotions - assisted in this reflection. It helped in analysing how the cooperation with my colleagues and assistants impacted on my research activities. It also showed my gradual immersion into the field. I initially wrote about organizational matters and feelings of apprehension about getting access, whereas later diaries were filled with more comfortable feelings, such as feeling at home and feeling well on track with my research. And whereas I initially mainly wrote about colleagues, assistants and my partner, my interlocutors on the farms and in the settlements became more prominent in the diary at a later stage.

However, apart from these more circumstantial insights, detecting the empirical value of intersubjective experiences and, especially, putting that into writing is easier said than done. Since the 1980s, anthropologists have reflected on the difficulties of representing personal experiences and intersubjective connections from the field in writing:

In terms of its own metaphors, the scientific position of speech is that of an observer fixed on the edge of a space, looking in and/or down upon what is other. Subjective experience,

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<sup>18</sup> Borgatti, S.P., Everett, M.G. and Freeman, L.C. 2002. *Ucinet 6 for Windows: Software for Social Network Analysis*. Harvard, MA: Analytic Technologies.

<sup>19</sup> The "Researchers' Affects" is an interdisciplinary project on the impact of emotions on fieldwork and writing. The project is based at the Freie Universität Berlin and the University of Bern. See for a project description: <http://www.loe.fu-berlin.de/en/affekte-der-forscher/index.html>.

on the other hand, is spoken from a moving position already within or down in the middle of things, looking and being looked at, talking and being talked at. To convert fieldwork, via field notes, into formal ethnography requires a tremendously difficult shift from the latter discursive position (face to face with the other) to the former. Much must be left behind in the process (Clifford 1986: 32-33).

Even though it is often no longer deemed necessary or even appropriate to write as an 'outsider', there is undeniably a certain need for closure in writing. In the words of Hastrup (2004: 458), one needs a "temporary objectification of relational knowledge" to enable others to evaluate and work with the material. Anthropological literature has provided several strategies to achieve such a temporary closure and to connect to theory, while at the same time staying true to the world under study and to one's own experiences (*ibid.*: 469).

First of all, historicizing findings is one way of providing a narrative without reifying research outcomes. This entails the description of social processes instead of 'social facts'. "To substitute *strategy* for the *rule* is to reintroduce time, with its rhythm, its orientation, its irreversibility" (Bourdieu 1977: 9, emphasis in original). In particular scholars who study the division of labour in small-scale agriculture on the African continent have used time and rhythm in their analysis and writing. An example is the work of Heald (1991), who used temporal processes, such as historical time, developmental cycles of households and agricultural cycles, as tools. With these tools, she analysed individual decision-making processes as well as larger changes occurring within two different tobacco-producing communities in Kenya. Another example is the approach of Moore and Vaughan (1994: 225), who included what they called biographical, structural and historical time in their analysis of changing divisions of labour in agriculture in Zambia. Likewise, I explicitly address temporal dimensions in this dissertation, first of all when I describe the history of Naivasha as a place in Chapter 3. I furthermore elaborate on the specific rhythms of the crop, which - as I explain in Chapter 5 - has shaped production processes in the farms. I have also tried to preserve this attention for temporal dynamics in writing, for instance through the chronological chapter outline and through providing biographical sketches in Section 4.1 and Chapter 7. Moreover, more than a tool in writing, a description of the rhythm of the work is integral to my theoretical understanding of agro-industry (see Section 2.6.2).

A second strategy for presenting data without losing sight of actual practices is to include the ethnographic context as an integral part of analysis. "But to capture that 'full house' of variation – to convey the sense of a real 'bush' of possible trajectories, thick with branches (and not a spindly tree with a few spare ideal types) – we need to move from the general analytic model (...) toward the ethnographic concreteness of actual lives played out over time" (Ferguson 1999: 123). This approach stands in a long tradition. Gluckman's (1961) extended case method and Van Velsen's (1964) situational analysis are tools that - similar to Ferguson's



approach - emphasize the integral inclusion of observations and experiences into analysis and writing, especially when studying societies that are heterogeneous or that are undergoing rapid change.

To include the ethnographic context in this dissertation I have for instance used the above-mentioned biographical sketches (cf. Ferguson 1999: 23). Furthermore, references to my observations within the farms form an integral part of the description of labour processes in Chapter 5 and show how these observations informed my understanding of 'agro-industry'. Finally, the appendix to this dissertation contains three lists of interviews. The first two lists simply contain oral history interviews and interviews on the topic of the flower industry (including interviews conducted by Gemählich and Tolo that I refer to). However, the third list contains a short description of interlocutors of whom I narrate biographical or personal details or whose opinion I refer to in this dissertation. I consider it important to provide some ethnographical context and to allow the reader to have an overview of where in the dissertation I refer to these individuals, especially for those whom I refer to more than once.

Including the ethnographic context also assisted me in addressing another challenge that I encountered in writing: the prominence of ethnic and gendered categories in the labour processes and in the workers' settlements in Naivasha. I wanted to avoid reifying such categories and therewith making them even more powerful, yet I could not ignore them. I have chosen to use such categories ('single mother', 'Kikuyu') in this text yet to also provide the historical and ethnographic context of these categories. I have thus attempted to show how they have been deployed in the creation and sustenance of inequalities (cf. Nash 2008: 6).

A final strategy in writing is to let go of the idea of complete closure. Instead of describing a coherent and complete 'truth', one can let the argument be 'side-lined' by - sometimes disruptive - ethnographic fragments such as newspaper articles or vignettes (Ferguson 1999: 23; Tsing 2005: 271). Although I have not used this tool in a literal sense, learning about the possibility to abandon the idea of complete closure helped me in approaching another challenge I encountered in writing. I asked myself where my research fits within the tense debates on the Naivasha flower industry, as introduced in Chapter 1. Stakes are high and representations of the industry - whether in favour or against it - are highly political, especially representations in the consumer markets in Europe. It initially seemed to be impossible to write about the industry without 'evaluating' it and without positioning myself in these debates. Furthermore, fear of my work being appropriated by one party or the other and being used in ways that I would not agree to, hindered me in writing. I felt I had to put forward a competing 'truth' when challenging certain coherent but partial and stereotypical images of 'the flower farm worker in Naivasha'. I eventually abandoned that idea. Instead, I have focussed on the variability, complexity and ambiguity of work on the farms and of daily life in the workers' settlements. Like Ong's (1987: 216) monograph, this dissertation is

"incomplete, fraught with ambiguity and shifting perceptions, the way life is experienced by people who live outside ethnographic texts."

Apart from these more practical tools for writing, the analysis and writing process has furthermore been comprehensively informed by more theoretical concepts and debates. I present these debates in the following section.

## 2.6 Themes from the Literature

There are four strands of literature that have shaped my thinking while writing this dissertation. This includes literature on social-ecological systems, agro-industry, (gendered) labour relations in global firms and translocal (labour) migration. These four themes have in common that they have been studied not only by anthropologists but by scholars from a variety of disciplines - from ecology and agronomy to disciplines closer to my own, such as sociology, history and geography. Thus, although my methodology and writing style have been predominantly anthropological, this dissertation has been informed theoretically by interdisciplinary debates. It engages with but also challenges globalizing theories, e.g. theories on socio-ecological systems and on 'women along the global assembly line'. A critical engagement with theories related to global capitalism, agro-industry and labour migration can bring to the fore some of the specificities of the flower industry in Naivasha and can shed light on how its labour arrangements came into being.

### 2.6.1 *The Resilience of Social-Ecological Systems*

As explained in the introduction, this research was initiated in the context of an interdisciplinary research group working on the topic of the resilience, collapse and reorganization of social-ecological systems (SESs). These interdisciplinary concepts do not immediately speak to the everyday experiences of flower farm workers in Naivasha. Nevertheless, critical debates around these concepts have shaped the way in which I approached Naivasha as a research site and I therefore elaborate briefly on these debates here.

Anderies, Janssen and Ostrom (2004: n. pag.) use the term SES to refer to "the subset of social systems in which some of the interdependent relationships among humans are mediated through interactions with biophysical and non-human biological units." The concept was developed with the aim of analysing the social and ecological domain in a holistic manner. It furthermore argues against the assumption that systems will always return to a certain equilibrium and therefore opens up the possibility of analysing complex and nonlinear dynamics (Fabinyi, Evans and Foale 2014). Thinking about Naivasha as a SES aptly draws attention to the complex interdependencies between for instance the flower industry, labour

migrants and the ecological state of the lake, or between the tourism industry and the presence of wildlife. Yet, it is difficult to set clear boundaries and to discern clearly definable 'systems' within this complex: each of these 'components' is on the one hand influenced by global or regional dynamics while on the other hand showing internal variation on a small scale.

Fabinyi, Evans and Foale (*ibid.*) and Naumann (forthcoming) have reviewed and critically appraised literature on SES from a social science perspective. Their reviews show that the difficulties that I encountered in applying the concept of SES on a particular case are not unique. First of all, these authors argued that defining the temporal and spatial boundaries of a SES and of the components within a SES is an, often unacknowledged, challenge in SES-research: the setting of boundaries is not in any way 'objective' but is always shaped by the research question at hand. Moreover, they observed that SES-research tends to have a strong focus on the present and consequently lacks historical depth. Finally, these authors applied insights from political ecology thinking to research on SESs and have argued that much of the SES-research has not recognized the complexity and heterogeneity of social and ecological processes, including the diverse ways in which human and non-human agents can respond to change. Furthermore, the application of political ecology thinking to this strand of research brought to the fore that it has largely ignored the role of material and discursive power in shaping response to change. In short, these authors have problematized the seemingly objective setting of spatial and temporal boundaries in defining, studying and modelling a SES.

Challenging the assumed spatial boundedness and homogeneity (the 'spatial fix') of SESs was one of the explicit aims of the research project I was a part of, as it was laid out in the original proposal written by the principal investigators of the sub-project. Hydrological research on the lake has shown that its ecological state is influenced by what happens north of Naivasha, along the rivers feeding into it (see for a summary Becht, Odada and Higgins 2005: 285-287). Furthermore, the idea of a bounded social system has proven to be problematic in a context where global capital and regional labour migrants are flowing in and out of the 'system'. Nevertheless, the straightforward idea of a bounded social-ecological system does not only appeal to researchers. It has also resonated with environmental activists. It has as such gained political traction in the context of Naivasha.

A concept which is closely related to SES-thinking, is resilience. This concept was originally developed within ecological studies. It was meant to define the ability of an ecological system to retain its functions in the face of change. After the term had been adopted to study social-ecological systems, it was furthermore used to refer to the capacity of such systems to adapt and transform. In other words, the concept of resilience has been used to define the level of change or disruption that a SES is able to absorb without losing its identity

and (functional) structure and thus without transforming into a different state or different type of SES (see Cote and Nightingale 2012; Leslie and McCabe 2013; Anderies, Janssen and Ostrom 2014; Fabinyi, Evans and Foale 2014; Anderson and Bollig 2016; Naumann forthcoming).

Social scientists working on the topic of resilience have questioned the seeming factuality of the concept. Leslie and McCabe (2013: 116) treated resilience as an emergent property of a system and not as a readily measurable 'fact'. Furthermore, Anderies, Janssen and Ostrom (2014: n. pag.) argued that the question whether a system can be perceived as of being robust or resilient depends on the scale of analysis, and, I would add, also on ones point of view within the 'system'. As Naumann (forthcoming) argued, some actors might establish their own resilience at the cost of others. In the words of Fabinyi, Evans and Foals (2014: n. pag.): there can be "trade-offs" in making a 'system' resilient. These modifications to the concept of resilience can all be summarized in the question posed by Cote and Nightingale (2012: 479): resilience to what, and for whom? This question implies that resilience needs to be situated: it is not about 'facts' but about contestations over knowledge.

Such contestations over knowledge also took place in the case of Naivasha. There emerged a narrative that maintained that the 'natural' environment of Lake Naivasha had come to be under an existential threat after the arrival of the flower industry and the establishment of unplanned workers' settlements.<sup>20</sup> Chapter 3 discusses as well as challenges this (inherently political, partial and normative) narrative. Rather than attempting to define the SES of Naivasha and its 'resilience', the chapter takes the questioning of the setting of boundaries at its core. It aims to expand the temporal scale by describing social-ecological changes that took place over a longer time-span than is usually taken into account when discussing the possible collapse of 'Lake Naivasha'. This description brings out some of the heterogeneity within social and ecological 'sub-systems' and draws attention to the role of power. The management of the environment is not as objective, straight-forward, factual and easy to model as much of SES-thinking seems to presuppose. "It is a value-laden exercise that is contested by groups with differential power, who employ a range of strategies that include debating and negotiating the very ways in which environmental issues are commonly understood and represented" (Fabinyi, Evans and Foale 2014: n. pag.). The deconstruction in Chapter 3 of the narrative of an imminent collapse of the SES surrounding Lake Naivasha is inspired by this criticism of social scientists on mainstream interdisciplinary SES- and resilience-approaches.

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<sup>20</sup> In the case of Naivasha, not 'resilience' but the related term 'sustainability' played an important role in discourses on social-ecological change, see Kuiper and Gemählich (2017).

Despite all the possible criticism of these approaches, a merit of the concept of SES for this research has been that it has forced me to keep sight of the complex interdependencies between the social processes I studied and the (non-static) ecological conditions in Naivasha. The most conspicuous ecological condition is the presence of the lake, which has attracted much attention (see Becht and Harper 2002; Mavuti and Harper 2006). However, instead of focussing on the lake, I highlight the ecological characteristics of the crop that is grown. Besky (2014) studied, what she called, the 'social ecology' of tea, i.e. the relations between the tea bushes, the Darjeeling landscape and the labourers. I likewise argue that it is paramount to note that the product produced in Naivasha is agricultural and therefore is influenced by ecological circumstances. The characteristics of the crop poses certain demands on the organization of its production and this has shaped hierarchies and relations within the farms. The following section discusses this theme further when addressing the question whether the flower farms in Naivasha could be perceived of as an 'agro-industry'.

### *2.6.2 Agro-Industrial Labour*

Hann and Hart (2011: 149) remarked that anthropologists have paid remarkably little attention to the topic of wage labour in the agricultural sector. I found that most anthropological and sociological dictionaries and encyclopaedias - especially the more recent ones - have not included an entry on industrial agriculture. These omissions reflect the emphasis in anthropology on the peasantry and on small-scale agriculture, which has effectively relegated the topic of large-scale agricultural production to agronomists and economists. This neglect among anthropologists of what is going on within large-scale agricultural firms is perhaps due to their use of a narrow, technological definition of 'agro-industry'. According to the scarce anthropological review literature that includes the topic of 'agro-industry', its main characteristic is an increased mechanization of the production process. Agro-industry "uses the products of industry in its own production process. Industrial agriculture is capital-intensive, substituting machinery and purchased inputs such as processed fertilizers for human or animal labor" (Barlett 1989: 253).<sup>21</sup> Authors who follow such a technological definition take mechanized agriculture in the United States as the predominant example of 'agro-industry'. They state that as far as this type of agriculture exists in less wealthy nations, it is mainly export-oriented. They furthermore critically appraise such agro-industries for exacerbating wealth differences between the elites and 'peasants' or between skilled and

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<sup>21</sup> Some authors use the word 'agribusiness' as a synonym for 'agro-industry' (see Seymour-Smith (1986: 7) and Hann and Hart (2011: 149) for general literature and Jacobs, Brahic and Olaiya (2015: 1) specifically on the flower industry). However, I follow the distinction made by Barlett (1989: 267), who uses the term 'agribusiness' to refer to distinct companies that provide farms with agricultural inputs and services. In this dissertation, I therefore only use the term 'agro-industry' when referring to the flower farms.

unskilled labour, and for being environmentally unsustainable (Seymour-Smith 1986; Barlett 1989; Giddens 1989; Woodhouse 2010).

As outlined in the introduction, the flower industry in Kenya was also burdened with this image of unsustainable agro-industry. Implicit in this conventional definition of 'agro-industry' is a teleological modernization narrative, which perceives of 'modern' mechanized agriculture as replacing or even ousting 'traditional' small-scale peasantry. However, this is a deceptively simple representation of the variety of ways to organize agricultural production and of the diverse trajectories of agricultural histories. In the case of Naivasha, the agro-industrial production of flowers did not replace small-scale production of the same crop. Instead, it succeeded a colonial system of livestock ranching, a system described by Odingo (1971). Furthermore, cut flowers, and especially roses, are a difficult product for smallholders, as the production process requires large capital investments.<sup>22</sup> In short, the narrative that juxtaposed agro-industrial production with small-scale production assumed that these are two alternative ways of producing the same product - but they are not necessarily so. When applying Besky's concept of social ecology (2014), it becomes clear that the 'natural' perishability of the crop shaped the organization of its production and consequently also influenced labour conditions and relations.

Another underlying premise of the conventional definition of agro-industry is that it is less labour-intensive than 'regular' commercial agriculture due to increased mechanization, and that it therefore provides less job and income opportunities for (unskilled) labour. However, although the flower industry in Naivasha is innovative and uses expensive input such as greenhouses and chemicals, it is not mechanized to an extent that less labour is needed. On the contrary: despite innovations in the production process, the process remains labour-intensive. Nevertheless, I maintain that the flower farms in Naivasha can be characterized as an 'agro-industry'. This is not due to the use of industrially produced, technical inputs or to constant innovation. After all, other types of commercial farming (on whatever scale) can also make use of such inputs and be innovative. I argue that the flower farms are 'industrial' in character not because of a *lack* of labour but because of the *disciplined organization* of labour.

For this assertion, I take inspiration from Sydney Mintz' seminal work "Sweetness and Power" (1985). In this book, Mintz showed the interdependencies between the industrial revolution and the emergence of a proletariat in England on the one hand and the development of a plantation economy, based on slave labour, in the Caribbean on the other. Through analysing these connections, he furthermore showed that the sugar production in the

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<sup>22</sup>Sarah Higgins, (flower) farm owner who resided on her lakeside plot close to Karagita, interview at her house, 10 February 2015. When no interviewer is mentioned in footnotes in the remainder of this dissertation, the interview was conducted by the author.

Caribbean was already industrial in nature even before the industrial revolution in England took off. This was most importantly so because a large part of the processing of the cane took place on the plantations due to the perishable nature of the crop. The production process of refined sugar therefore required mechanization and an industrial division of labour. It is worthwhile to cite Mintz' (1985: 51) at length when he explains why he characterized these plantations as 'agro-industrial':

"Today we speak of 'agro-industry,' and the term usually implies heavy substitution of machinery for human labor, mass production on large holdings, intensive use of scientific methods and products (...) and the like. What made the early plantation system agro-industrial was the combination of agriculture and processing under one authority: *discipline* was probably its first essential feature. This was because neither mill nor field could be separately (independently) productive. Second was the organization of the labor force itself, part skilled, part unskilled, and organized in terms of the plantation's overall productive goals. To the extent possible, the labor force was composed of interchangeable units - much of the labor was homogeneous, in the eyes of the producers - characteristic of a lengthy middle period much later in the history of capitalism. Third, the system was time-conscious. This time-consciousness was dictated by the nature of the sugar cane and its processing requirements, but it permeated all phases of plantation life (...)."

Consequently, cane workers in the Caribbean were not small-holder peasants. Instead, "[t]hey were wage earners who lived like factory workers, who worked in factories in the fields, and just about everything they needed and used they bought from stores" (Mintz 1985: xxiii). Citing Mintz, Freeman (2000: 69) argued that new types of companies made use of the legacy of industrial labour in the Caribbean: "In short, the growing and processing of sugar requires aspects of efficiency, discipline, and supervision that are reminiscent of the qualities sought by contemporary industrialists investing in developing economies."

According to Mintz' characterization, industrial labour is thus defined by discipline, a segmentation of the labour force and time-consciousness (and not by the type of product or the level of mechanization involved). When applied to our case at hand: even though it took place in an agricultural setting, the 'unskilled', repetitive and standardized manual work on the middle- to large-scale flower farms in Naivasha, geared towards mass output, resembled industrial labour and can be interpreted as such (cf. Friedemann-Sánchez (2009: 5) on flower farms in Colombia).

Holzberg and Giovannini (1981: 318), in their review article on the anthropology of industrial relations, likewise asserted that 'industry' in general does not only include "operative forces" such as tools and raw materials. These "(...) become operative only within the context of definite social relations." Those social arrangements, in connection to for instance technological determinants, have been the focus of anthropologists and sociologists studying industrial labour.

This strand of literature has focussed on two main themes, which were also mentioned by Mintz in his definition of agro-industry cited above. The first set of questions centres on work rhythm, a theme which notably - and as explained in Chapter 2.5 - has also been prominent in studies on small-scale agriculture on the African continent (cf. Heald 1991). In the context of industrial work, the attention for rhythm follows from Thompson's distinction between "pre-industrial task-time" and "industrial clock-time". In his article *Time, work-discipline, and industrial capitalism* (1967), Thompson called attention to a historical shift in the sense of time in English society, from a task-oriented way of organizing work to labour governed by abstract clock-time. This shift increased labour discipline and also implied a more thorough break between 'work' and 'life'. According to Thompson, this shift was caused by a process of mechanization, which called for an increased synchronization of labour. Although compelling, this distinction has been attenuated by other authors. Ingold (1995: 7) argued that task-orientation ("an orientation in which both work and time are intrinsic to the conduct of life itself, and cannot be separated or abstracted from it") might be denied by modern technology but is nevertheless persisting in the experience of industrial work.

Parry (2012: 159) also argued that not all types of machines ask for constant labour, and on the other hand argued that the need for a synchronization of labour was not exclusive for industrial production neither. He pointed out it also exists in some types of peasant agriculture. Similarly, in the case of the flower industry in Naivasha, it was the perishability of the 'natural' product of flowers that called for a strict time discipline, not mechanization. Chapter 4 and 5 about the job market and about the labour relations in the flower farms show that the distinction between task-time and clock-time to some extent had relevance in Naivasha. For instance, work hours were strict, and payment was mostly - but not exclusively - based on the amount of hours worked. Hence, even though such a sharp break as defined by Thompson is no longer presupposed in current studies, and even though I do not want to interpret the distinction in a teleological manner, the question whether and how (work) rhythms and conceptions of time change when people start working in an industrial setting, remains a central one (cf. Parry 2012).

The second set of questions relating to industrial labour was most prominently posed by Burawoy in 1979: why do workers consent to do their work? How and where (i.e. in the production locality or also elsewhere) do employers attempt to control their employees? And how and why do workers attempt to resist or comply (Parry 2012: 147)?

Braverman (1998) described the effects of so-called 'scientific management', which entailed an attempt to make labour control more effective by applying scientific insights. This includes for instance the process of 'de-skilling': tasks are deliberately fragmented, thus leaving workers with no specific skills and therefore with a weak bargaining position. Workers become "interchangeable parts" in the production process (*ibid.*: 125). Building on these



insights, anthropologists studying industrial labour have described the reactions of workers to these attempts to control them (cf. Ong 1987). However, as argued by Kondo (1990), some of these studies have been too schematic, classifying workers' reactions either as resistance to or accommodation of management's control. Wright (2006: 18) pointed out that resistance to certain hierarchies might unintentionally affirm others, for instance gendered inequalities, a point I come back to when describing the role of gender committees within the farms in Naivasha in Section 5.7. Moreover, as asserted by Du Toit (1993: 331): "We should not equate anger with militancy - of even acceptance with false consciousness." We should also not assume a need for resistance by considering industrial work as necessarily more exploitative than other economic systems. As argued by Parry (2012: 159), it might be that "for many neophyte proletarians in many parts of the world, the fields were never so happy nor the mills so dark and satanic."

Nevertheless, the question of workers' consent - which is mostly discussed in the context of industrial labour - is also relevant when studying agro-industry. However, wage labour in agriculture has received little attention, as was also pointed out by Ortiz (2002) in her review article titled "Laboring in the factories and in the fields".<sup>23</sup> She attributes this lack of attention to the analytic divide between urban and rural studies, which resulted in two separate strands of literature on industry and on agriculture. There have been attempts to overcome this divide, most prominently in studies on the gendering of labour, which clearly played a role in both factories and fields. Strategies for labour control such as a process of 'de-skilling' can be recognized in both industry and wage labour agriculture. Furthermore, workers in both settings react in diverse ways to those strategies. "The major contribution of anthropologists to the literature on labor control has been to highlight the connection between modes of control, contestation, and confrontation with social realities outside the workplace" (Ortiz 2002: 409). In other words, and as argued in Section 2.2, the organization of labour and hierarchies within a factory or farm should not be studied as confined places but should be assessed within the context of the society in which they are located.

Moreover, although anthropologists have studied structural relations surrounding work, work as a situated practice received remarkably little anthropological attention (Orr 1996). In other words, not only wider societal relations but also the immediate physical context in which work is carried out shapes the execution of the work as well as labour relations. As argued by Orr (1996: 155): "(...) the examination of practice reveals a complexity that cannot be seen from a distance; this complexity constrains how the work can be done and therefore has a crucial implication for those making policy about work." Anthropologists have paid little

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<sup>23</sup> An exception is literature on labour relations in commercial farms in South-Africa and Zimbabwe (see Du Toit 1993; Rutherford 2001; Bolt 2013; Bolt 2016).

attention to work as an 'interaction with things' (Spittler 2009: 163). Work as such an interactional practice might thwart attempts to control labour but might also form a source of motivation to work. "Work becomes a *game*, a *fight*, a *service*, a *caring*, an *exchange*" (emphasis in original; *ibid.*).

These major themes - the rhythm of work, consent to work and work as a practice - are also touched upon by Roy (1960) in his article "Banana Time". Roy conducted participant observation in a factory where he and his co-workers had to conduct repetitive labour in a closed environment. He showed how they found ways to "fight the clock" and to tame "the beast of monotony". They would for instance split up their work in small tasks and thus create certain production goals for themselves, simply to get them through the day. In other words, they re-introduced "task-time" to the factory work. Workers, including Roy himself, developed a "game of work", which made the work manageable and was a source of motivation. An even greater source of job satisfaction were the informal social interactions on the work floor. Roy described how the work team developed certain recurrent themes, which included both topics for conversation and small interactions. An example was "banana time": every morning, one of the employees would steal the banana of a colleague and would eat it, which would then lead to a small argument, to the amusement of the others. Such interactions brought a certain structure to the day but also provided something to think about during work. Roy's study thus showed the importance of informal daily interactions in a working team for job satisfaction. His observations also showed how the "group memberships" (e.g. ethnicity and generation) of the workers shaped the themes and interactions in this specific case. This observation brings us to the large body of literature on gendered labour relations in global, export-oriented firms.

### *2.6.3 Women along the Global Assembly Line*

The flower industry has been compared to other industries that move across the globe, employing mostly women in unskilled positions. "Yet while the flower industry has flourished through market liberalization, deregulation and corporate consolidation, it also bears the familiar social imprimatur of economic neoliberalism. Like its kin the maquiladora, for example, the flower industry depends on migrant women who face low wages, excessive working hours, job insecurity and embedded gender discrimination" (Dolan 2007: 243). As I discuss in Chapters 4 and 5, this description of conditions in the flower farms differed from the situation that I encountered during fieldwork in 2014 and 2015. Nevertheless, the quote aptly illustrates why the flower industry - as many other global industries - has attracted attention for the relative large percentage of women it employs.

Considering the lack of attention for industrial work in anthropology, there in the last three decades have appeared a remarkable number of ethnographies – written by both anthropologists and sociologists – on women working in global factories. The most well-known

example of this 'women on the global assembly line' literature is Ong's (1987) ethnography on female factory workers in Malaysia. There are numerous others. This strand of literature started with explicitly feminist studies on female workers in factories in Great Britain (e.g. Pollert 1981, Westwood 1984), followed by ethnographies on the 'maquiladoras' - assembly-line manufacturing plants in a special export zone on the border between Mexico and the United States (e.g. Fernández-Kelly 1983; Peña 1997; Salzinger 2003) and on similar global manufacturing companies located in Asian countries (e.g. Ong 1987; Wolf 1992; Kim 1997; Lee 1998).

These ethnographies discussed industrial labour within manufacturing companies, not agro-industry. Furthermore, none of these factories was located on the African continent. Finally, many of these authors followed a feminist or Marxist tradition and perceived of management and (female) workers as two separate, antagonistic groups. Some explicitly 'took sides' with the workers in this perceived conflict in their writings (e.g. Peña 1997). They pre-supposed that women working in global firms were exploited (cf. the approach of Wright, 2006). Studies on management/capitalists have been rare, an exception being Yanagisako (2002), who wrote about the founders and owners of small family firms in Italy. However, in line with Kondo (1990), I do not consider 'labour' and 'management' to be two closed, antagonistic groups and interpret labour relations as more fluid. Although I focus on workers, I do not perceive of them as a homogenous and fixed group. Employees move in and out of farm work. Moreover, they over time can assume varying positions in hierarchies within the flower firms. There are also individuals within the farms who cannot be neatly categorized as either worker or manager, for instance the supervisors. Nevertheless, despite this more fluid understanding of labour relations, some of the questions on the organization of industrial labour that have been put forward by the above-mentioned authors, informed my research on the Naivasha flower farms.

I do not aim to draw a literal comparison between the conditions on the flower farms in Naivasha with conditions in factories in Asian countries or in sweatshops along the border between Mexico and the United States. Instead, I take from this strand of literature its attention for the 'production' of the work force: how do firms attempt to recruit and control labour, and why do workers consent to this work? What is the role of gender and other factors that segment the work force in this process?

Most of the ethnographies on women working in global factories relate to the two main themes which are central to the general literature on industrial work. These are workers' consent, compliance and resistance; and struggles over conceptualisations of time and timing of work. Economists Elson and Pearson (1983) were the first to describe explicitly how female workers are typically portrayed in global capitalism: as being 'naturally' docile and dexterous, which would make them especially suitable to perform unskilled labour. Elson and Pearson

asserted that there is nothing natural about these characteristics and that they are socially produced. For instance, the sociologist Thomas (1985) showed how agro-industrial lettuce farms in the United States made use of distinguishing statuses that already exist in society, such as citizenship or gender, and transform them to the organization's advantage. Others took this assertion further and showed that docile female labour is produced differently in different cases (Salzinger 2003). Both Salzinger (*ibid.*) and Freeman (2000) argued that capital cannot simply tap into a reserve of labour but has to 'produce' workers. This 'production' of workers takes place both at the point of hiring and in the daily routines at the work floor. These authors furthermore argued that gender is an important factor in these processes. Lee (1998) exemplified this by showing how in her two case studies different mechanisms of labour control constructed different gendered identities and practices. In a more generalizing vein, Wright (2006) even describes a 'global myth', which portrays women working in global firms as easily disposable and therefore exonerates managers and consumers from the responsibility for improving workers' situation. As argued by Ong (1987: 155), employers use "pre-existing cultural constructions of inequality", such as skills, ethnicity and gender, in their system of labour relations. However, Freeman (2000) argued that such differences among workers take on unpredictable forms and get recreated, within an historical context, by employers as well as by the workers themselves.

Some of this literature has been reviewed by Mills (2003) in her article "Gender and Inequality in the Global Labor Force". Her review indicates that this body of literature primarily focuses on the interaction between structure and agency. Specifically with regards to export-oriented agriculture she wrote: "Varied combinations of gender, class, and ethnic divisions structure agricultural labor inequalities in ways that limit employers' costs and also undermine the possibilities for workers' collective action (...)"(*ibid.*: 43). This raises the question whether similar processes occurred in the flower industry in Naivasha. Specifically the ethnography of Friedemann-Sánchez (2009), on women working in the flower industry in Colombia, is of interest here. This book links up to the question of consent and examines the relationship between the structure of the global firms and the agency of the female workers: why do women choose to pick or pack flowers, even if labour conditions are not good? And (how) are gender inequalities in this locality (re)produced through the global firms?

Moving beyond a narrow conceptualization of labour control as a process between the employers and the workers, I would like to expand on these questions. (How) did the Naivasha flower tap into an existing system of migrant wage labour, which hinged on 'cultural factors' of inequality such as ethnicity, class and gender (cf. Ong 1987, Tsing 2009)? And how did workers themselves define these differences among them and (how) have they made use of it (cf. Freeman 2000)? Finally, because of the focus on women in NGO-campaigns discussed in Section 1.2, I ask how gendered ideologies shaped representations of the industry in the

consumer markets in Europe and in policy circles in Kenya, and what impact such representations might have had.

This section ends with a short discussion on one specific aspect of female labour along the global assembly line: the fact that women's jobs are often flexible and temporary (cf. Wright 2006). Remarkably, there was a shift towards more permanent labour (for both women and men) in the case of the flower industry, on which I elaborate in Chapter 5. Millar (2014) used the concept of 'precarity' in her article on people living on a garbage dump in Rio de Janeiro. This concept was developed to describe the deteriorating labour conditions for and increasing feelings of insecurity among employees worldwide. It draws attention to both social-economic conditions and ontological experiences. Although useful, Millar emphasized that in cities such as Rio de Janeiro, this 'precarity' has for many people always been the norm. In other words, in many places it is not a new phenomenon. The same could be said for many of those who looked for employment in the flower farms in Naivasha. Furthermore, Hoffmann (forthcoming) presented a case that shows a trend contradictory to increasing precarity, namely an increase in regularization and in (job) security. However, in his case the increased regularization only applied to some of the workers, depending on the type of job and - due to an ethnicized division of labour - to the ethnicity of the worker. The move had been enabled by a broader political context in which a trade union had been able to establish itself and make more demands. In the case of Naivasha, and as I show in Chapter 5, there was a more general trend towards more permanent labour, due to the specificities of the crop and to market demands. Such processes challenge generalizing claims on the role of gender in global capitalistic processes.

#### *2.6.4 Translocal Labour Migration in Kenya*

Whereas the role of gender in the flower industry has received due attention, this is less so for another outstanding characteristic of most of the workers in the flower farms in Naivasha and of some of the other inhabitants of the low-income settlements: their migratory background. Labour migration to cities and mines on the African continent has been a popular anthropological object of study since colonial times. Ross and Weisner (1977: 359-360) summarized three main approaches, which I shortly introduce here.

Some scholars perceived of labour migration to the city as a threat to the "tribal" way of life. Moore and Vaughan (1994: 140-1) asserted that anthropologists and colonial officers alike feared that migration and the concomitant absence of men in the villages might cause a collapse of agricultural production and of kinship relations. Ferguson (1999: 123-128) described how the colonial Zambian government stimulated retired mine workers to "go back to the land." Also in the Kenyan context, colonial officials intended labour migration to be a temporary process and expected migrant workers to return to their rural regions of origin

(Oucho 1996: 10). Scholars who followed such an interpretation perceived of the labour migrants as temporary residents of urban centres who ultimately remained rural dwellers.

A second group of scholars advocated studying labour migration as a more permanent move. Take for instance the following famous quote of Gluckman (1961: 69): "An African townsman is a townsman, an African miner is a miner." Gluckman thus perceived of the urban worker and the rural peasant as two different categories of Africans. This and similar approaches have an evolutionary undertone, describing a shift from circular migration via return migration to permanent migration (Moore and Vaughan 1994: 141-2).

Finally, anthropologists in later years started to focus on the connections *between* the city and the village and on how these two geographical areas impact on each other. This was the approach of Oucho (1996) in his study on the impact of urban labour migration among the Luo in Kenya on the rural areas they originated from. He stated (*ibid.*: 69): "The ambivalence of urban migrants, with one foot in the transient urban destination and another in the rural areas with which they identify as home, is a well-established phenomenon of African migration." Some scholars even argued to stop perceiving of 'the urban' and 'the rural' as two distinct entities. An example is the study of Ross and Weisner (1977) on the relations between labour migrants in Nairobi and their family members in western Kenya. They considered the city and the village to be part of one 'social field'. The migrants they studied maintained close connections to their rural regions of origin while residing in the city. "Visiting and various forms of exchange between the urban and the rural areas are frequent, migrants plan to leave the city when they no longer need a cash income, and rural and urban goals are hard to separate" (*ibid.*: 360). The connections between families moving back and forth result in a "mixed rural and urban life cycle" (*ibid.*: 364).

Those studies show the connections between the city and the village. They furthermore show that migrants employ a variety of strategies. Moore and Vaughan (1994: 143-144) stated that labour migration in the context of the Zambian Copperbelt has been conventionally portrayed as circular. Yet, oral interviews and a re-appraisal of archives showed that migrants employed diverse strategies, for instance with regards to household arrangements and the amount of time spent in the urban areas. In short, there was not one 'typical' pattern of migration. Moreover, although for instance the gender division of labour in agricultural production changed, it did not collapse, as was feared by colonial officials (*ibid.*: 156-7).

Ferguson (1999: 123-128) pointed out that colonial governments that 'pushed' migrants back to the rural areas did not take into account that social and economic factors might make a return difficult or even impossible. Return migration has been perceived of as something to fall back on when failing to earn a wage. Ferguson has argued that in the case of miners in Zambia, it was the other way around. Due to high costs of living in town, almost

all retired miners left the urban areas. However, only those who had been successful in wage labour and in preparing for their retirement could afford to make a success out of their return to their regions of origin. As Ferguson stated (1999: 165): "it was not so much as a remembered past that rural life was influencing urban conduct but as an anticipated future."

These authors have drawn attention to both networks and individual strategies. They departed from conventional explanations of labour migration that pointed to economic 'push'- and 'pull'-factors, for instance the lack of employment opportunities in rural areas (see the literature review by Oucho (1996: 1-7)). In such approaches, migration is seen as an individual step, motivated by economic considerations. However, Ortiz (2002: 397) argued that "the search for work is not an individual pursuit but an activity structured by family dynamics and by the character of migrants' social networks." That is, the decision to move is not made individually. Furthermore, labour migrants usually find work by mobilizing their networks. Moreover, not only is the act of moving itself shaped by migrants' social environment, their rural-based networks also continue to support migrants while residing in the city (Ross and Weisner 1977: 366-367).

In the Kenyan context, especially the migration of Luo from western Kenya to cities such as Nairobi and Mombasa has received scholarly attention. It has been established that many of them migrate with the intention of returning to their region of origin later in life (cf. Oucho 1996). Cohen and Odhiambo (1989) wrote on the importance of such connections for Luo people, who consider the region Siaya their 'homeland'. "Everyday life for the Luo outside Siaya is affected by connections with and images of Siaya; everyday life inside Siaya is affected by the fact of the diaspora" (*ibid.*: 4). Some of the villages and towns in Siaya (already then) were dependent on remittances. Cohen and Odhiambo furthermore found that family networks were assisting in the process of migration and were actively maintained with that purpose. Oucho (1996: 56) stated: "Wherever they are, the Luo are 'men of two worlds' (...)."

Being part of 'two worlds' was not unique for the Luo. It was common among many of the ethnic groups of whom some of the members reside as translocal migrants in present-day Naivasha, see for instance the above-mentioned study of Ross and Weisner (1977) on Luhya migrants in Nairobi in the 1960s. This specific type of 'stretched-out' return migration has developed since colonial times and is rooted in longer histories of mobility in relation to land tenure relations specific for Kenya, as will be explained further in Chapter 3. Moreover, that chapter will discuss additional patterns of labour migration, for instance the squatter system that was popular among the Kikuyu (Kanogo 1987).

Recently, the question of the connections between the regions of origin and the places of work have been reflected in debates on the concept of "translocality". As argued by McGarrigle and Ascensão (2017), migration is a process and not a completed act. Emplacement does not necessarily imply permanent settlement. Migrant workers can

therefore be characterized as 'translocal': temporarily grounded in the place of work while ultimately - when looking over a longer time-span - being on the move (cf. Brickel and Datta 2011; Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013).

In this dissertation, I use the concept of translocality and its emphasis on simultaneous connectivity and situated-ness to analyse the experiences of migrant workers in Naivasha. The concept furthermore informed the overall structure of this dissertation, which loosely reflects the migration process, from arrival in Naivasha to leaving again. The following chapter, which describes the history of Naivasha since the late nineteenth century, provides a historical context to the translocal migration patterns introduced here.



### 3. Naivasha's History: From Livestock to Flowers

This chapter describes the major social and environmental changes that took place around Lake Naivasha over the course of a century, primarily through the lens of the rich and complex history of agricultural wage labour in the area.

The establishment of the flower industry around Naivasha has been portrayed as a violent and sudden rupture with an idyllic natural past. The farms themselves have been depicted as a brutal industrial force, almost leading to the collapse of the social-ecological system around the lake. A Kenyan lady of European descent, whose family had lived in the area since colonial times, stated that life in Naivasha has changed 180 degrees since the flower industry arrived.<sup>24</sup> And consider the following quote from a biography on Joan Root, an environmentalist who lived in Naivasha at the time the industry established itself:

Over the preceding two decades, peaceful, pastoral Lake Naivasha had been invaded by armies of flower growers who created some of the biggest flower farms in the world. These farms covered the lakeshore with huge plastic hothouses, inhibited the natural migration of wildlife, and attracted a desperate tide of hundreds of thousands of impoverished migrant workers, resulting in slums, squalor, crime and, some insisted, ecological apocalypse (Seal 2011: xiv).<sup>25</sup>

When considering exploding population numbers – according to the national census, population grew from 95,339 inhabitants in 1979 to 376,243 in 2009 (KNBS 1981 and KNBS 2010)<sup>26</sup> –, it is obvious that major shifts have taken place in the coupled social-ecological system around Lake Naivasha, and perhaps increasingly so in the last decades. Nevertheless, this chapter aims to show that, although the reorganization of the area was profound, it was a gradual process that took place over the course of more than a hundred years. Furthermore, many of the major shifts cannot be wholly ascribed to the establishment of the flower industry alone. Harper et al. (2011: 93-96) found that some of the most sweeping and even devastating ecological changes in and around the lake have been induced by the introduction of several alien species into the ecosystem by European settlers and, after independence, by the government. In addition, agricultural activities by settler farmers in the catchment area caused major changes in the chemical composition and sediment accumulation rate of the lake (Stoof-Leichsenring et al. 2010: 365). Next to these ecological

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<sup>24</sup> Oria Rocco, owner of a former ranch at North Lake, interview at her house, 25 April 2015. She was not the only Kenyan of European descent who was critical of the flower industry, see e.g. also interviews in Joe Ombur, "No Longer an Island," *Daily Nation*, 27 December 1996.

<sup>25</sup> See also: Mildred Ngesa and Macharia Mwangi, "Scramble for Land Spells Doom," *Daily Nation*, 17 May 2005; Nigel Hunter, "The Tragedy That Is Lake Naivasha," *Business Daily*, 5 October 2009.

<sup>26</sup> It has to be noted that administrative boundaries also shifted: the 'administrative area' Naivasha in 1979 only covered 2,747 square kilometres, against the 3,034 square kilometres of Naivasha constituency in 2009. It furthermore has to be noted that Kenya as a whole experienced a large increase in population in this period. However, whereas the total population was 2.5 times bigger in 2009 as compared to 1979, the population in Naivasha had quadrupled (KNBS 1981; KNBS 2010).

changes, the arrival of European settlers in the area also brought about major social shifts. Consequently, when the flower farms established themselves many decades later, they arrived in an area that had a long history of agricultural wage labour. Instead of erasing this earlier history, the flower farms became an additional, influential actor in a "wealth of coexisting variation" (cf. Ferguson 1999: 80). Thus, the image put forward by e.g. Seal (2011), of a natural paradise under threat of agro-industry, reflects how a limited group of people in Naivasha experienced change and continuity. Another group of people, who had arrived in the area in the 1960s and 1970s - Africans owning small plots - gained sudden wealth when they could start to rent out housing to migrant workers. Therefore, and in line with Ferguson's (1999) approach to research in a fragmented urban context as introduced in Section 2.2, this chapter aims to provide a varied perspective on Naivasha's history. It does so by means of a chronological discussion of the continuities and discontinuities between the ranches of colonial settlers before independence, a few of which remain until today; African-owned cooperative farms after independence, which were subdivided later on and transformed into workers' settlements; and the mostly foreign-owned, export-oriented vegetable and flower farms that were established in the 1970s and flourished in the 1990s and early 2000s. The chapter starts out at a time when Lake Naivasha was not yet associated with fish and flowers but with wildlife and livestock.

### 3.1 Colonial Period: Settlers and Squatters

One of the first written accounts on Lake Naivasha and its environs was provided by the explorer Joseph Thomson in a book that was published in 1887. Although Swahili and Arab trade caravans had been passing Naivasha before, Thomson was one of the first Europeans to arrive at the lake. In his descriptions of the landscape, he painted an idyllic picture: "Our way at first lay across the grassy plain which lies to the north of the lake, and we were amused and delighted by the way in which the numerous herds of zebra played and frisked in the pure enjoyment of life and utterly unconscious of danger, within forty yards of us" (1887: 189). And: "The bosom of the lake itself was one moving mass of ducks, with ibises, pelicans and other aquatic birds" (1887: 187). These and later descriptions of the pristine natural environment led colonialists to conclude that there were "no natural African tenants" in Naivasha<sup>27</sup> and that it was an area where they could settle freely. According to an article in the Daily Nation, the author of the famous book "Out of Africa", Karen Blixen, once wrote in a letter: "It is absolutely delightful here. I think that Naivasha is a paradise on earth, with the water and the mountains

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<sup>27</sup> The expression "no natural African tenants" derives from an interview that I had in 2015 (with S. Higgins). It shows that this colonial representation of the early history of Naivasha – discussed further below – has sustained itself.

around the lake, and the air is so lovely here and it is so peaceful without any people and so much game."<sup>28</sup>

This image of a natural paradise, untouched by humans, is regularly invoked when describing the changes induced by the flower industry. However, this image is incorrect, as the savannah around the lake was more or less permanently inhabited by pastoralist Maasai who were roaming the area. The explorer Thomson (1887: 188) for example described his meetings with Maasai warriors, who were amazed when they saw Thomson and his porters. The name "Naivasha" is even believed to derive from a Maa expression, *E-Nai'posha*, which could be translated as "rough waters". Furthermore, apart from the nomadic Maasai who used Naivasha as a grazing area for their livestock, Kikuyu traders were also present at the lake (Chege, Tarus and Nyakwaka 2015: 143-146; Kioko 2016: 69).

Moreover, as elsewhere in East-Africa, social-ecological arrangements around the lake started to change drastically with the colonization of the area by the British around 1900, long before the flower industry arrived. Eventually Naivasha became part of what was unofficially known as the 'White Highlands': an area of approximately three million hectare that was reserved for European settler farmers (Morgan 1963: 146; Odingo 1971: xix).

Like Naivasha, all of the Highlands – officially known as the 'Scheduled Areas' – were perceived of as being uninhabited previously: "the country in question is either utterly uninhabited for miles and miles or at most its inhabitants are wandering hunters who have no settled home, or whose fixed habitation is the lands outside the healthy area" (Special Commissioner Sir Harry Johnston in 1901, as cited in Morgan 1963: 140). Truly, some of the land in the Scheduled Areas had before been left empty and unused as these spaces functioned as a buffer zone between rivalling pastoralist groups. But apart from these fallow zones, large parts of the 'White Highlands' had been in use by Africans before. However, the existing types of land use were not recognized as permanent occupation by the colonialists. The highlands were an area consisting of extensive plains, located on a high altitude, which received uncertain rainfall. The area therefore was unattractive for African agriculturalists, who did not have the aids that European farmers used later on, such as ox-drawn ploughs and bore-holes. Instead of being used for cultivation, much of this land, just as the area around Lake Naivasha, served as grazing grounds for pastoralist groups, predominantly the Maasai. The colonialists did not consider the pastoralists to be permanent inhabitants because of their nomadic lifestyle. Drawing the conclusion that the land in use by the pastoralists was unoccupied, was also convenient, because it opened up legal opportunities to take over the pastoralist areas. The Land Ordinance, created by the colonial government in 1902, namely contained a provision that postulated that land occupied by Africans could not be sold or

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<sup>28</sup> Quoted in Phillipe Oberlé, "On Safari. Lake Naivasha and Hells Gate," *Daily Nation*, 18 April 1990.

leased out. Hence, the only way in which the colonial government could freely give out land to settlers, was by determining that there were no permanent African occupants on a certain piece of land. Colonial officers concluded for most of the White Highlands, including Naivasha, that there were no permanent occupants. Apart from this legal possibility to take over the land, the colonialists also did not need to use much force to expel the Maasai from the area. At the time that the first Europeans arrived, around the turn of the century, the Maasai as a group were weakened and had been diminished considerably in numbers due to civil war between rival Maasai factions, diseases such as smallpox and cattle plague, and drought.<sup>29</sup> "In these circumstances the Masai were willing (or were persuaded) to move away from the Naivasha area, where the railway crossed the floor of the rift valley and to accept two reserves guaranteed to them 'so long as the Masai as a race shall exist'. This was agreed in 1904 (...)" (Morgan 1963: 146). In this way, the area around Naivasha indeed had been made void of permanent African occupants by the early twentieth century and the way had been laid open for Europeans to move in (Morgan 1963; Odingo 1971: 28; Bradshaw 1990: 5; Chege, Tarus and Nyakwaka 2015).

Hence, after the construction works for the railway from Mombasa to Uganda had reached Naivasha in 1900, the Maasai were swiftly replaced by new inhabitants. A small town emerged, there where the steam-engine train would stop to refill water (see Figure 1). The railway had been mainly constructed by migrant labourers from India. Those Indians who remained in East Africa after the construction work was over, turned to small trade, as it became forbidden for them to own land outside townships. A few Indians started to run shops at the new station in Naivasha, which they rented from a former railway official, and a trading settlement was started. Next to these few residents of Asian origin, more and more pioneering European settler farmers moved to the area around the lake. There were 86 occupied plots in Naivasha District by 1920, which had increased to 125 by 1930. The farms were extremely expansive - also when compared to other parts of the White Highlands - with an average size of over 2,000 hectare in 1960 (Sorenson 1967: 16; Odingo 1971: 34, 45; Clayton and Savage 1974: 14; Chege, Tarus and Nyakwaka 2015).<sup>30</sup>

The European farmers were attracted to the idyllic surroundings of the lake (see Figure 2 for an image of the lake around 1930). They were also encouraged by the colonial government to settle there. After having invested heavily in the construction of the railway, the colonial government entreated on white farmers – Brits, but also Boers from South Africa and Italians – to settle in East Africa, in order to make the colony economically productive and to

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<sup>29</sup> The Kikuyu faced similar predicaments during this period. The diminished population numbers after these crises were another reason why large parts of the White Highlands had seemed to be unoccupied at the time of European settlement (Sorenson 1967: 16-18; Odingo 1971: 28).

<sup>30</sup> Interview with S. Higgins.

make sure the efforts of building the railway would pay off. The settlers were initially given freeholds to a limited portion of land on which could build a homestead. They moreover were given leases of 99 years, which in some cases were even converted to leases of 999 years, for large tracts of land meant for production. The government chose to settle the European farmers in the 'White Highlands': it was relatively easy to alienate the African population from the land there and the area was deemed suitable for Europeans due to its relatively cool climate. After 1902 it became explicitly prohibited for non-Europeans to own or even to manage land in the 'Scheduled Areas'. This prohibition was reinforced after official boundaries for these areas were set in 1939.<sup>31</sup> Africans were removed to 'reserves' that were separated by, what was then called, tribe. The creation of the reserves institutionalized the importance of ethnicity in the allocation of land by the central state, a feature that enhanced the formation of ethnic communities and continued to have political, social and economic consequences until the present time (Morgan 1963; Sorrenson 1967: 15, 184; Ominde 1968: 52-55; Odingo 1971: 28-30; Cohen and Odhiambo 1989: 39; Bradshaw 1990: 5; Berman and Lonsdale 1992: 34-39; Kanyinga 2009: 327-328; Boone 2012: 78; Kioko 2016: 94).<sup>32</sup>

Land in some of the reserves was scarce and of poor quality, and the production of cash crops such as coffee became prohibited in certain areas close to European areas (Sorrenson 1967: 41). Many Africans had little choice but to come to what were now European areas to temporarily work for the settler farmers, who had been turned into the economic backbone of the colony. "Capitalist production and authority over Africans became inextricably mixed" (Berman and Lonsdale 1992: 36). This link between production and government was also reflected in the strict labour regulations during the first decades of settler colonialism. The legislation provided little protection to the workers, as its main goal was to provide the settlers with abundant cheap labour. Moreover, the approach of the colonial government was firmly rooted in racist attitudes towards the 'natives'. The Africans were portrayed as being reluctant to work, or as children who should be disciplined. They had to be 'civilized' through wage labour. Legislation was therefore geared towards controlling the African workers, not towards protecting them. One example of this oppressive legislation is the infamous *Kipande* system, which was introduced in 1916. All African males who were over 15 years of age, had to carry an identity certificate (*kipande*) that contained fingerprints and a record of employment. The system effectively meant that if a labourer left his employment without the

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<sup>31</sup> Ominde (1968: 53), Odingo (1971: xviii) and Kioko (2016: 14) all provide good maps of the 'White Highlands', which clearly show the integration of Naivasha into this area.

<sup>32</sup> Previously, boundaries between peoples and between territories had not been as strict as the colonial government imagined them to be. This becomes clear from a case described by Kioko (2016: 15). A young Kikuyu man living on a settler farm in the hinterland of Lake Naivasha was adopted by a Maasai family just outside the White Highlands in 1903. He could then move to what had become the Maasai reserve. Africans thus attempted to circumvent the restrictions put on their movements and on their access to land.

signature of the employer, he could not get a job anywhere else anymore. Moreover, he could even be prosecuted for desertion and be convicted to flogging or imprisonment. In addition, the display of previously earned wages made it difficult to negotiate for better wages when changing jobs. The *Kipande* system is just one example of the many ways in which Africans were informally and formally coerced into poorly paid wage labour. Another formal example was 'conscript labour': temporary compulsory labour, facilitated by the government. This system officially only was meant to be put to use for government projects and not for private farms. However, during the Second World War, the main task that the settlers in Kenya set for themselves was to produce food for the British Empire. This task gave them an opportunity to press for labour conscription on the farms. This system of compulsory labour, in which chiefs or district administrators had to select men to be send out to work and who risked a fine when refusing to do so, had been developed to recruit labour for state enterprises, such as road works. However, during the war, the settlers successfully argued that the production of sufficient food was a 'state concern' and they were allowed to use conscript labour for some time. In the area around Lake Naivasha alone, 219 European farmers applied for the employment of conscript labour on their farms in 1942. Apart from these (at the time already controversial) coercive methods, labour was also mobilized through more informal pressure, such as the obligation to pay taxes, a lack of access to land and the prohibition on cultivating export crops in native reserves (Sorrenson 1967: 47; Clayton and Savage 1974: xvii, 28-30, 131-134, 235-247; Spencer 1980; Kanogo 1987: 1; Berman and Lonsdale 1992: 101-122; Cooper 1996: 44; Anderson 2000; Kanyinga 2009: 327).<sup>33</sup> Settlers furthermore actively facilitated such moves by sending trucks to the reserves to fetch prospective labourers (cf. Kioko 2016: 96). "Thus British labor policy evolved in a complex spatial structure: small islands of wage labor, dependent on the poverty, induced or otherwise, of surrounding areas" (Cooper 1996: 45).

Naivasha soon turned into such a "small island of wage labour" and became an important employment area, despite settlers around Naivasha choosing for agricultural activities that were not labour-intensive. They primarily opted for products that they already knew from their countries of origin. Settlers in the areas on higher altitudes towards the east of the Naivasha, in the Kinangop, practiced mixed farming and produced cereals such as wheat, barley and oats. The most valuable crop that was produced in the area was pyrethrum. However, the semi-arid climate close to Lake Naivasha was less favourable for (non-irrigated) cultivation and settlers there turned to ranching. Their main activity was keeping livestock such as cattle (mostly for beef) and sheep. They also produced fodder crops such as lucerne.

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<sup>33</sup> Kenya National Archive (KNA), DC/NKU/5/1, "Applications for Conscript Labour, Nakuru & Naivasha," 1942-1943.

Irish potatoes, which needed irrigation, were primarily cultivated on the shores of the lake. Sisal was the only plantation crop grown in the area. The plot of the sisal plantation at South Lake would be taken over by the first flower farm in the early 1970s but the production of sisal already seemed to have come to an end by 1960. Thus, livestock ranching was the predominant agricultural activity around the lake in the colonial period (Ominde 1968: 56-58, 103; Odingo 1971; LNROA 1993: 50).<sup>34</sup>

The ranch-owners in Naivasha employed some casual or seasonal labour. Moreover, they heavily relied on labour from so-called 'squatters'. "The term 'squatter', which originated in South Africa, denoted an African permitted to reside on a European farmer's land, on the condition that he worked for the European owner for a specified period. In return for his services, the African was entitled to use some of the settler's land for the purposes of cultivation and grazing" (Kanogo 1987: 10).

The decision to employ squatters was related to a wider, at the time often unrecognized, problem among the settler farmers in Kenya: a lack of capital. The colonial state especially depended on a few large-scale settlers: Kenya became, what Berman and Lonsdale (1992: 88) termed, a "big man's country". However, as it turned out, these 'big men' did not fulfil the expectations: the settlers did not have sufficient capital to put all of their large tracts of land to use. They also did not use the land in the most effective way, as they mostly opted for practices that they knew from their countries of origin and not for the agricultural activities that fitted best to the climate in their new environment. The settlers could not put all their land to use with only temporary labour, and had to accept Africans more or less permanently back into the 'White Highlands' as squatters. "By 1928 it was estimated that almost twenty per cent of the European farm area in the highlands was occupied by resident labourers and their stock" (Sorrenson 1967: 35-36). Through the agricultural activities of these squatters, more land was made productive. The squatter system also was an effective way of retaining employees. It made labour not only cheaper but also more reliable, as the squatters could bring their family and keep their own livestock. However, the disadvantages of this system also surfaced after a while. For the squatters, the main disadvantage was the strong dependency on a single patron or employer. They could end up in precarious situations if a farm was sold or the owner passed away. There were also risks involved for the settlers. In some cases, the squatters were competing with the settlers with their produce and, worse, the livestock brought by the squatters came with diseases that affected the livestock of the settlers. Moreover, the squatters felt they were developing tenant's rights. This is not

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<sup>34</sup> KNA, AN/42/35/10, Annual Report (AR) of the District Agricultural Officer South Kinangop Covering Naivasha Agricultural Committee District (Except Olkalou) 1961; KNA, DC/NKU/5/1, "Applications"; interview with O. Rocco; assistant chief of Olkaria Sub-Location (located at South Lake), interview in his office in DCK, 9 June 2016.

surprising when considering that landlessness in previous times would have been solved by clearing virgin land. From their own perspective, the squatters were therefore colonists in their own right, as they helped developing the land. Competition over land between settlers and squatters was also reported by the District Commissioner (DC) of Naivasha in 1917 (Berman and Lonsdale 1992: 109). Moreover, not all squatters had an official agreement with the ranch owners, as becomes clear from the following report from Naivasha in 1922 (cited in Kanogo 1987: 39): "They creep on all unbeknown; first of all living with a friend or relation, then occupying the hut of a deceased person. Later a wife appears and a few handful of maize are planted. If enquiries are made it is stated by all that the person concerned is only on a short visit and was kind enough to give a hand in the hosts' garden." In a reaction, legislation soon started to limit the rights of the squatters, especially with regards to land use and the keeping of livestock. For instance, "[i]n 1946, the Naivasha District Council imposed a limit of fifteen sheep and reduced the cultivation area to one acre for each wife, with a maximum of two acres" (Sorrenson 1967: 81). The number of days a squatter was legally required to work for the farmer was also increased from 180 to 270 days per year, even though wages were not increased. Such restrictions culled the space for squatters to pursue their economic aspirations, made their position increasingly precarious and eventually destroyed their autonomy (Sorrenson 1967; Clayton and Savage 1974: 128-129; Kanogo 1987; Berman and Lonsdale 1992; Cooper 1996: 47; Anderson 2000: 465; Kanyinga 2009: 328).

However, alongside these attempts to limit the rights of squatters, the colonial government took on an increasingly ambivalent and diffuse role when it came to issues of labour. On the one hand, the government aimed to facilitate profitable agricultural production in the colony. On the other hand, it tried to forestall excesses and to guarantee a minimum amount of protection towards labourers. There were often differences of opinion between the several departments and offices within the government, especially between the administrators based in Nairobi and those in London. Initially, labour issues were primarily left to the settler farmers. The government only had labour officers on a local level. There were also no general minimum wages: the minimum wage depended on the industry and the locality, which left a lot of room to manoeuvre for the employers. Finally, there were no central pension schemes or other social benefits. However, later on the administration in Nairobi became more and more influenced by industrial relation practices in Great Britain. In 1940, a central labour department was established. This department stimulated the formation of trade unions, which were successful in ameliorating labour conditions (Clayton and Savage 1974; Berman and Lonsdale 1992: 101-122). Naivasha also had an office of the General Agricultural Workers Union already before independence. The local branch had 3000 members in 1960.<sup>35</sup> Some

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<sup>35</sup> KNA, DC/Nais/1/1/1/68, AR of the Labour Office of Naivasha District, 1960.



local government officials and individual farmers opposed this formal system of wage labour. Other settler farmers were more adaptive to these changes. They had managed to become more profitable through commercialization and mechanization after the Second World War. They therefore depended less on squatters and could pay higher wages.<sup>36</sup> In 1955, wages in Naivasha were among the highest in Kenya (Clayton and Savage 1974: 358).

In addition to conditions of labour, the colonial government also started to pay attention to the question how the labour force could be sustained, for instance by the improvement of housing, all under the framework of 'development' (Clayton and Savage 1974: 297; Cooper 1996: 207). The local government of Naivasha had a community development officer in the 1950s. This European officer coordinated adult literacy classes on the farms, and a community centre and a football league in town. However, this "progressive and expansive" welfare program curiously enough was mainly paid for by the profit of three beer halls – and therefore was effectively paid for by the workers themselves.<sup>37</sup>

In short, Naivasha and the wider Highlands had undergone profound social and ecological transformations by the end of the colonial era. Before the turn of the twentieth century, there had been relatively few people living in the area permanently and the land had been in use as grazing fields for livestock. After the colonization of East Africa, the system of land tenure changed completely. The European settlers who started to lease the land confiscated by the government, kept livestock as well, but they also started cultivation in the area. Moreover, they brought in labourers to work on their farms. According to Morgan (1963: 153), over 580.000 Africans were living in the 'Scheduled Areas' by the late 1940s. "Although termed the White Highlands, it will be noted that they were occupied by over 200 Africans to every European" (*ibid.*).

A majority of the Africans who came to Naivasha were Kikuyu who were originating from Central Province, where land was most scarce (Sorrenson 1967: 35; Kanogo 1987: 14).<sup>38</sup> The importance of the Kikuyu for the ranches in Naivasha became especially apparent after 100,000 Kikuyu from all over the country were forcibly removed to Central Province during the Mau Mau Rebellion in the early 1950s, in order to prohibit this violent resistance movement from spreading. After this 'repatriation' of the Kikuyu, settlers in Naivasha complained about a shortage of (good) labour. Consequently, some Kikuyu squatters were brought back after

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<sup>36</sup> This diminished importance of labour by squatters was one of the causes for the violent Mau Mau Rebellion from mainly Kikuyu peasants in the 1950s, which also affected the settler farms in Naivasha. The population kept on growing in the reserves, yet Africans could no longer fall back on squatting in the European areas. Landlessness became an acute problem, most of all among the Kikuyu (Clayton and Savage 1974: 309; Kanogo 1987).

<sup>37</sup> KNA, DC/UG/2/1/18/2, "Newsletter of the Ministry of Community Development and Rehabilitation," July 1957.

<sup>38</sup> The origins and consequences of the land shortage among the Kikuyu in Central Province have been described by Sorrenson (1967).

the Rebellion was quelled (Sorrenson 1967: 99; Clayton and Savage 1974: 353; Kanogo 1987: 138).<sup>39</sup> Hence, the establishment of the settler farms changed the population in the area: "Maasailand was being turned inside out, as African cultivators, the majority of them Kikuyu as they had been expropriated a lot, now invaded the choicest areas of the pastoral plain, under the protection of its new overlords" (Berman and Lonsdale 1992: 90).

Although the Kikuyu towards independence had replaced the Maasai as the dominant group in the area, and were also considered by the government to be the main group of Africans living in the area,<sup>40</sup> other ethnic groups were also well represented in Naivasha. For example, with the start of the Mau Mau Rebellion, 1,400 special farm guards, all non-Kikuyu, were employed in Naivasha (Clayton and Savage 1974: 359). A few years later, in 1958, it was reported that both the Luo Union and the Abaluhya Association were active in Naivasha district, and that relations between all tribes and communities in the area were "cordial".<sup>41</sup>

There were diverse migration patterns, which were partly linked to access to land and the labour situation in the regions of origin (cf. Moore and Vaughan (1994: 143-144) on labour migration in colonial Zambia). Kikuyu often came as (formal or illegal) squatters and took their families and livestock with them. They sometimes even held ceremonies, such as marriages and circumcisions, in the White Highlands and severed ties to Central Province. Members of other groups were "target workers", who worked only for a short period of time to earn money for a specific goal, or "career workers", who stayed away from their region of origin for many years. However short or long they stayed, most of these labourers stayed in close contact to their region of origin (Kanogo 1987; Cohen and Odhiambo 1989: 111). Whereas squatters could build their own houses in a designated area of the farm where they were working, contract labourers were housed in standardized lines of wattle-and-daub huts, often of poor quality (Kanogo 1987: 19).<sup>42</sup> The more temporary labourers even received their food rations because settler purchased the maize and beans that were produced by the squatters (Kanogo 1987: 20). Furthermore, apart from these categories of farm labourers, the settlers also employed clerks and domestic staff (Kanogo 1987: 132). The result of these diverse patterns of labour migration was an ethnically mixed population by the time Kenya became independent. Even though the number of Kikuyu was not as high anymore as before the Mau Mau rebellion,<sup>43</sup> the census of 1962 still counted 12,446 Kikuyu living in Naivasha ward, on a

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<sup>39</sup> KNA, DC/Nais/1/1/1/15, AR Naivasha Division 1953: 7.

<sup>40</sup> See KNA, AR Naivasha 1961 and 1962, where "the African population in Naivasha" is equated with "the Kikuyu".

<sup>41</sup> KNA, DC/Nais/1/1/1/52, AR Naivasha District 1958.

<sup>42</sup> KNA, DC/Nais/1/1/1/52, AR Naivasha District 1958: 16; KNA, DC/Nais/1/1/1/63, AR Labour Officer Naivasha, 1959.

<sup>43</sup> According to Kanogo (1987: 127), there had been 22,136 registered Kikuyu squatters in 1945.

total population of 18,437. Furthermore, there were among others 1,227 Luhya, 1,180 Maasai, 737 Luo, and only 304 Europeans staying in this supposedly 'European' area (MEPD 1965).

As argued by Clayton and Savage (1974: xiv), the work on the farms shaped the interethnic relations in the Highlands. A division of labour in which certain ethnic groups were assigned certain tasks gave ethnicity a meaning it had not had before. However, interethnic encounters on the farms also assisted in the creation of Kenya as a nation and in the spreading of Swahili as a shared language. The relation between the European settlers and the Africans was also determined by the context of wage labour: members of these two groups usually knew each other only 'in the relationship of employee of employer,' or in Swahili terms in the relationship between *bwana* (master) and *mfanyakazi* (the person who does the work) (*ibid.*).

Before the Second World War, it mainly were men who came to the European areas to work. These men received a so-called 'bachelor's wage', which only sufficed to support the worker himself (Sorenson 1967: 43; Cooper 1996: 327; Anderson 2000: 479). However, squatters who moved to Naivasha more or less permanently could bring their family along. Women and children initially took care of the squatters' plots and livestock. When property of squatters became severely restricted in later years, women and children were seasonally employed to pick pyrethrum (Kanogo 1987: 48). This labour was at some point even more sought after by the farmers than the labour of men, as pyrethrum was considered to be a "money-spinner".<sup>44</sup> An Annual Report of Naivasha mentions that even 'unattached' (i.e. unmarried) women came to work as pickers.<sup>45</sup> In addition to the job of picking pyrethrum, a cereal and vegetable canning factory ("Pambora") in Naivasha Town provided employment to around 200 people, mainly women, in the early 1960s.<sup>46</sup> In general, it was not uncommon for women to be (seasonally) employed in the agricultural sector during the colonial period (Clayton and Savage 1974: 151; Cooper 1996: 463).<sup>47</sup>

Thus, by the end of the colonial period, the area around Lake Naivasha has been settled by European farmers. As will be explained below, some ranches initially continued to exist after independence. However, most of the European families moved away in later years and only a few remained until the present time. These families had originally all been involved in livestock keeping (cattle, sheep and pig) and in growing fodder crops. In addition, they cultivated pyrethrum and potatoes, as well as maize for consumption by the squatters living

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<sup>44</sup> KNA, DC/Nais/1/1/63, "Annual Report."

<sup>45</sup> KNA, AR Naivasha 1962.

<sup>46</sup> Kenya National Archive, Provincial Deposit Nakuru (KNA Nakuru), GU/9/1/64, The District Officer (DO) of Naivasha to The Town Planning Department, Nairobi, "Naivasha Town Population Structure and Scope for Development," 4 November 1966.

<sup>47</sup> The study of Odingo (1971) contains illustrative images of women picking pyrethrum and coffee.

on their estates.<sup>48</sup> Although these families remained in Naivasha, their estates either have been diminished by now or have been mainly put to use for other purposes than ranching.

One of the first families to settle in the area, the Hopcrafts, was during the time of my fieldwork still residing on Loldia, its 7,000-acre estate located on the north-western part of the lake, next to current Kasarani. This ranch was already established in the first decade of the twentieth century. Descendants of the first Hopcraft have continued to keep livestock since then. However, they also started to run a tourist lodge, and parts of the estate have been leased out to vegetable farming companies (Chege, Tarus and Nyakwaka 2015: 156).<sup>49</sup>

The Rocco's, introduced in Section 2.1, were neighbours of the Hopcrafts. They purchased a ranch from a British settler at North Lake around 1930. The purchase is described in a book on the history of the area. The author mentions that the Rocco's "right of ownership had to be established with African squatters who seemed to believe the holding now belonged to them. Gilbert Colvile's Maasai helped settle the situation, rounding up squatter sheep and goats and refusing to release them until the Africans quit the farm" (Hayes 1997: 193). This description shows the tensions as well as the shifting cooperation that existed between European settlers, Kikuyu squatters and Maasai who were remaining in the area west of Naivasha. Despite these tensions, the Rocco's were able to set up a ranch and later exchanged livestock keeping for vegetable farming and the breeding of cows. More recently, the family sold parts of the estate and moved into tourism and conservation activities.<sup>50</sup>

Another European woman whom I interviewed, Sarah Higgins, only came to Kenya from Great Britain to visit family and then stayed to marry the son of a settler farmer in the 1970s. They lived on a plot situated close to Karagita. Her husband was one of the Kenyans of European descent who moved into flower farming after the industry had started to come up. However, the daily management of the farm was no longer in the hands of the family themselves by the time of my fieldwork. Sarah Higgins primarily was involved in conservation activities.<sup>51</sup> The move that these colonial families made from ranching to other activities, reflect wider changes that took place in Naivasha in the decades after Kenya gained independence.

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<sup>48</sup> The production programs in 1942 and 1943 of the settler families discussed below are all listed in KNA, DC/NKU/5/1, "Applications."

<sup>49</sup> Deb Snell, American missionary working in the field of community development at North Lake, interview in Naivasha Town, 6 April 2015; assistant manager of a vegetable farm at North Lake, interview on the farm, 25 April 2015.

<sup>50</sup> Interview with O. Rocco. I did not know at the time of the interview that Rocco and her husband Ian Douglas-Hamilton have become renowned conservationists with their efforts to protect elephants in Laikipia (see The Elephant Watch Portfolio, n.d.).

<sup>51</sup> Interview with S. Higgins.

### 3.2 After Independence: "A Farming Town with Steady Growth"<sup>52</sup>

With independence approaching in the 1950s, and even more so after the Mau Mau Rebellion, British land-owners in Kenya started to become nervous about their own future in the new nation-state (Kanyinga 2009: 328). It was reported that farmers in Naivasha wondered whether they would be allowed to retain their land. And would they be able to keep their farms running? Due to these fears, agricultural development in the area came to a standstill.<sup>53</sup> The lack of investment by settler farmers aggravated the already existing problem of unemployment in the country. Around the time of independence, population pressure in the reserves had caused many (generally uneducated) people to flock to Nairobi and Mombasa, in search of work that was not there. Unplanned shantytowns emerged in those urban areas. But also the rural production areas (such as Naivasha) received more job-seekers than there were jobs available. The unsuccessful job-seekers there in practice often ended up squatting on farms, with or without permission of the owner, even though the system of squatting had officially come to an end in 1963 when squatting was removed from the law as a formal system (Clayton and Savage 1974: 363). The emergence of these various informal modes of residence indicated that landlessness, combined with unemployment, was a pressing problem that had to be addressed (Cooper 1996: 360).

A first step was taken in 1960, when the provision that non-Europeans could not own land in the 'Scheduled Areas' was removed from the land legislation. The colonial government initiated settlement and land purchase schemes to redistribute land, a policy that was pursued further after Kenya had gained independence. However, the main aim was to secure economic stability and to protect the agrarian economy, not to provide land to all landless African people. Consequently, and unlike what settlers had feared, the redistribution of the land did not take the form of forcing European settlers to leave without any form of compensation. To protect the economy, land policies were not geared towards a sudden shift but towards a gradual transition in the ownership of land over the course of a few decades. And although land tenure systems in some other parts of the Highlands nevertheless changed drastically, the situation in Naivasha initially remained generally unaltered. This ranching area was not considered to be suitable for large-scale resettlement schemes as they were implemented in other parts of the Highlands, nor did individual wealthy African or Asian investors show much interest (Chambers 1969: 15-39; Odingo 1971: 187-192; Morgan 1963: 153, Kanyinga 2009: 329). A few European settlers, whose farms were being mismanaged in

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<sup>52</sup> Title derived from: George Kiaye, "A Farming Town with Steady Growth," *Daily Nation*, 5 August 1986.

<sup>53</sup> KNA, AN/42/74/32, Quarterly Report of the Naivasha District Agricultural Committee Area, 30 September 1962.

the eyes of the government, were forced to sell their farms (cf. Odingo 1971: 192).<sup>54</sup> But most settlers in Naivasha were able to retain their land. The above mentioned Loldia Estate at North Lake could for example renew its land grant for 942 years in 1963, against a new annual rent.<sup>55</sup>

It was not until the late 1960s that many European settlers started to sell their land. In some cases, land-buying cooperatives or companies, consisting of a group of Africans who often belonged to a single ethnic group, took over those plots and their members settled there.<sup>56</sup> These transfers accelerated the population growth in the area in the 1970s and 1980s, as most of the members of these cooperatives moved to the farms together with family members and relatives.<sup>57</sup> Next to groups of Africans, there were also individual buyers, including a few Kenyans of Asian origin, who took over complete estates or plots immediately adjacent to the lake. These rich individuals were usually based outside Naivasha themselves.<sup>58</sup> Sales took place on the basis of the 'willing-buyer, willing-seller' principle. The largest plots of land were reserved for those with the most capital, as the government expected that these rich farmers would be able to produce export products, which could bring in foreign currency. This policy of favouring the economic elite in the long term exacerbated class differences. The more so because these African large-scale farmers were often members of the upcoming political elite. As politicians-cum-businessmen (the new 'big men') were the ones who generally profited the most from these land policies, the redistribution program made land ownership a central political issue in Kenya (Odingo 1971: 192; Bradshaw 1990; Kanyinga 2009).

Kanyinga (2009) showed that the land policies not only intensified wealth disparities but also increased the significance of ethnicity. When selling land, the government favoured

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<sup>54</sup> In Naivasha, the farms of Mrs. LG Lee (with a size of 2,438 acres) and Mr. Arthur Williams (3,249 acres) were supposed to produce wheat, oats, pyrethrum, dairy and sheep. However, they were unsuccessful and were forcibly sold to New Karati Farmers Coop Society in 1970. KNA, AN/22/19/8, The Area Manager to the Executive Officer of the Provincial Agricultural Board, "Mismanaged Farms – Nakuru, Kericho & Nandi districts," 18 August 1967; KNA, AN/22/19/144, P Wambani to the Executive Officer of the Nakuru District Agricultural Committee, "LR No. 8752 – Mrs LG Lee – Naivasha," 20 March 1970; KNA, AN/22/19/145, P Wambani, to the Executive Officer of the Nakuru District Agricultural Committee, "LR No 8756 – Arthure E Bedward Williams and Daphine G Bedward Hurt – Naivasha," 20 March 1970.

<sup>55</sup> *Kenya Gazette*, Notice No. 2,483, 1 January 1964.

<sup>56</sup> Nakuru District, of which Naivasha was a part, had 57 land-buying cooperatives in 1973 (see: KNA Nakuru, GU/9/1/104, The Provincial Planning Officer Rift Valley Province to all members of the Nakuru District Development Committee, "District Development Plan 1974-1978," 16 August 1973). Kanyinga (2009: 332-336) described this process of resettlement through land-buying groups as it took place in other parts of the Rift Valley.

<sup>57</sup> KNA Nakuru, GU/9/1/96, The DO Naivasha to the DC Nakuru, "Organisation of the District," 29 January 1971; KNA Nakuru, GU/9/1/188, Naivasha Town Council, "Local Authority Development Program," March 1986.

<sup>58</sup> See KNA, AN/22/16, Nakuru District Agricultural Committee, "African and Asian Large-Scale Farmers in the Rift Valley," 1966-1970.

members of those groups that could form a threat to settler farms if they would lose out on land, for instance land-poor Kikuyu peasantry. In addition, former European estates were often allocated to those who had lived as labourers or squatters on these farms before – again in majority Kikuyu. These former workers felt they had helped develop the land and therefore had a claim on it. This pragmatic approach on the one hand led to a smooth transition of land without much violence towards European farmers. At the same time, it antagonized ethnic relationships in the former Highlands, between groups that had lived there before the Europeans came, such as the Kalenjin and Maasai, and the new landowners after independence (cf. Kanogo 1987: 173). Morgan already remarked in 1963 (153):

It is most noticeable, however, that the only tribe which used any significant proportion of this land before the Europeans, the Masai, are taking no part in the present take-over. The effect of the European settlement will have been to settle these areas with cultivating peoples who formerly would not have entered the area for fear of the Masai or other pastoral tribes.

The long-term consequences were profound. "The settler farms became primary sites of intense competition between and among different land purchase groups, a majority of which were distinguished by their ethnic or class composition" (Kanyinga 2009: 332). There have been simmering and occasionally violent conflicts between farmers and pastoralists in the hinterland of Lake Naivasha after former European-owned farms had been sold to farming cooperatives. Kioko and Bollig (2015) wrote about the violent conflicts in Ng'ati farm in Maiella in 1993,<sup>59</sup> while there were also cases of cattle theft in the cooperative farm Mirera, which were signals of a conflict between Kikuyu farmers and Maasai pastoralists there.<sup>60</sup>

The land-buying cooperatives did not only clash with other economic and ethnic groups over access to the land; the internal relations were also often strained (Odingo 1971: 212). Also in the area around Naivasha, there were regular complaints about mismanagement by cooperative leaders, which led to distrust and disputes among the members.<sup>61</sup> Another problem was the tendency to subdivide the large farms and to give out individual plots to the cooperative members.<sup>62</sup> The government, which favoured large-scale agriculture with its

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<sup>59</sup> Described from the perspective of the Maasai in: KNA Nakuru, GU/3/9/106, The Maasai Elders Community, Naivasha to the Provincial Commissioner Rift Valley Province, Nakuru, "Land Dispute (LR No 8398/1&2)," 3 July 1993.

<sup>60</sup> *Daily Nation*, "Herdsman Invade Naivasha Farm land," 30 December 1995; KNA Nakuru, GU/10/5/53, AR for the year 1999 by the Area Chief H.K.O. Narangaik, Hell's Gate Location.

<sup>61</sup> This problem was mentioned in: KNA Nakuru, GU/1/5/41, S.B. Anunda, District Agricultural Officer Nakuru, to the DC, Nakuru, "District Development Plan," 6 June 1978. See for one of many concrete examples that I encountered in the archives: KNA, TR/1/104/86, J.K. Mukamba, Hon Secretary of the North Karati Society, Naivasha, to the District Co-operative Officer in Nakuru, "Help," 13 August 1971.

<sup>62</sup> Described in: KNA Nakuru, GU/1/5/41, "District Development Plan." Examples are the subdivisions of the land of Highland Modern and New Karati Farmers, which were approved of on the same day (see: KNA Nakuru, GU/3/25, Minutes of the Naivasha Land Control Board, 12 January 1984).

potential to produce export products, was not pleased with this development (Bradshaw 1990: 11). The local government in Naivasha consequently attempted to discourage cooperatives to subdivide after acquiring a farm. It warned that this practice increased unemployment in the area.<sup>63</sup> These appeals by the government were unsuccessful: most cooperative farms eventually were subdivided. To make matters worse, in many cases company or cooperative directors did not actually give out the title deeds after a subdivision had been announced. Subsequent conflicts could persist for decades and were a constant nuisance in the area. Some of the settlements around Naivasha, which are discussed in detail in Chapter 6, have been heavily affected by these conflicts. As late as 1998, local leaders were informed 'that wrangles amongst directors of land companies and cooperatives are so prevalent and widespread throughout the division that no meanful [*sic*] development is taking place. This is because no financial credit can be given without title deeds.'<sup>64</sup>

Governmental reports from the period after independence showed that Naivasha's economy - with little development taking place on the cooperative farms - continued to rely heavily on ranches, even though initially little innovation took place in the agricultural sector. Many of the new African owners, whether cooperatives or individuals, continued to keep livestock and continued to cultivate the same crops (e.g. barley and potatoes) as the settler farms had done.<sup>65</sup> Livestock keeping therefore remained the main economic activity in the area until the flower industry started to take off in the 1980s. Naivasha's future position as an agro-industrial hub was yet unimaginable in 1978, when a government development plan stated: "The low potential zone of Naivasha, Bahati and Njoro divisions are mainly used for ranching purposes."<sup>66</sup> However, and although not recognized yet as an important sector, vegetable farming under irrigation was already introduced on a modest scale in the 1960s. Interestingly enough, it was not (only) new African and Asian owners<sup>67</sup> but also remaining European settlers (such as the above-mentioned Rocco family) who experimented with horticulture and who thus created some new job opportunities in the area. This sector slowly expanded and produced French beans, asparagus, strawberries, onions, capsicum, beans and tomatoes, for both the domestic market and the export market.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> KNA Nakuru, ANN/1/1/21, The Divisional Agricultural Office, "Minutes of the Second Meeting of Naivasha Division Farmers Leaders Conference," 26 March 1977; KNA Nakuru, GU/9/1/104, "District Development Plan 1974-1978."

<sup>64</sup> KNA Nakuru, GU/1/9/100, Minutes of the Naivasha Divisional Leaders' meeting, 19 October 1998.

<sup>65</sup> See for instance a report on former European farms that had been taken over by cooperatives: KNA Nakuru, ANN/1/1/25, The Divisional Agricultural Office, "Minutes of the Joint Naivasha/Gilgil/Elementaita ASC Meeting," 11 July 1977.

<sup>66</sup> KNA Nakuru, GU/1/5/41, "District Development Plan."

<sup>67</sup> For example vegetable farm Sunripe Ltd., located at North Lake Road, was started by a Kenyan family of Asian origin, already in 1969 (English, Jaffee and Okello 2006: 130).

<sup>68</sup> KNA Nakuru, GU/9/1/104, "District Development Plan 1974-1978"; AR Nakuru 1980, 1982; interview with O. Rocco.



In the 1970s, most of the job vacancies reported to the labour office in Naivasha were in the agricultural sector. Annual Reports from the period show that job seekers were generally unskilled and that unemployment was a problem. On the other hand, there were regular complaints about job seekers turning down vacancies on farms and plantations: agricultural wage labour seemed to be unpopular.<sup>69</sup>

Apart from this dislike of farm work, labour relations in the time after independence seemed to be relatively harmonious, especially when compared to the countless conflicts within cooperatives. Despite the rough and by times violent history of labour relations in colonial Kenya, the remaining European farmers later even gained a reputation of treating their workers relatively well. A report from 1973 stated: "It was interesting to note that European employers in this area were paying correct wages during the year while Asian and African employers underpaid their people."<sup>70</sup> As was the case during colonial times, it was mainly the farm owners who took it upon themselves to take care of the welfare of the employees, with little interference of the government. It was for instance reported in 1987 that the "Technical Public Health Assistant was also asked to pay frequent visits in the farm villages to see that the people were properly cared for. Farm owners and farm managers were positively amused to these visits."<sup>71</sup>

Nevertheless, labour issues such as the level of wages and the amount of working hours were not completely left to the discretion of employers. The industrial relations system in Kenya had taken further shape around independence and the main players were a federation of major expatriate firms, trade unions and the Labour Department (Clayton and Savage 1974: xxii). In 1963, several sectorial unions formed a federation called Kenya Plantation & Agricultural Workers Union (KPAWU) (Clayton and Savage 1974: 417). KPAWU soon became the major union in agricultural Naivasha and it seemed to be on good terms with the farmers. In 1977, it was for instance reported that KPAWU "did not have much during the year as the employers also are mainly members of Agricultural Employers Association complied with the requirements of their negotiated agreement."<sup>72</sup> The industrial relations system thus seems to have been in place already before the flower industry was established.

As Naivasha continued to attract a modest number of job-seekers in this period, the population in the area became more diversified. It was for instance reported that there an increasing number of immigrants from western Kenya who came to the wider Nakuru area to look for work.<sup>73</sup> The general increase in population in Naivasha division in the 1980s was

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<sup>69</sup> KNA AR Naivasha 1973, 1976; KNA AR Nakuru 1978, 1980.

<sup>70</sup> KNA AR Naivasha 1973.

<sup>71</sup> KNA Nakuru, GU/1/7/34, Minutes of the Ndabibi Sub-Local Development Committee, 15 April 1987.

<sup>72</sup> KNA AR Naivasha 1977.

<sup>73</sup> KNA AR Nakuru 1980.

around five percent per year. This process accelerated when gradually new employment opportunities opened up in the area, also outside of the agricultural sector. A development program from 1986 reported that there were new job opportunities in tourism and in a newly opened national prison.<sup>74</sup> Another new main employer was the first geothermal power station operated by KenGen, which was opened in 1982 and was followed by several other geothermal plants (Becht, Odada and Higgins 2005: 282). Hell's Gate National Park, which is located south of Lake Naivasha, was another new economic asset. It was created in 1984 and gave a boost to the tourism sector.<sup>75</sup>

The establishment of the National Park was not advantageous for everyone: it created a conflict over land between the local government and the Maasai community that formerly had lived in the area.<sup>76</sup> Whereas this particular dispute resembled earlier contestations over resources in the area, other new environmental conflicts around Naivasha in the 1970s and 1980s mostly did not revolve around ownership of or access to land. They centred on the lake and the lake water, and were related to the increase in economic activity and in human population in the area. An important and vocal group in these conflicts was a group of foreigners, who had only purchased their plots of land immediately adjacent to Lake Naivasha after Kenya had become independent. These new inhabitants had no intention of farming, as their predecessors had done. They simply were attracted to the natural environment of the lake and wanted to reside there. Among these new landowners at Lake Naivasha were famous and outspoken conservationists such as Joy and George Adamson and film-makers Joan and Allan Root. Their presence made Lake Naivasha more well-known outside Kenya, especially when some of them started to receive illustrious guests, for example Jacky Kennedy Onassis in 1974 (Seal 2011: 74). When from the 1970s onwards economic development in Naivasha started to take off, these new inhabitants saw the 'natural' paradise they had been attracted to, change before their eyes: more and more farms and other industries started to make direct use of the lake water. These farms were also using chemicals that were running off into the lake. In addition, the human population in the area increased rapidly. At this point, also nature-loving members of some of the old colonial families introduced above, such as the Rocco's and the Higgins', started to get worried about the future of the lake and became involved in conservationist activities (Becht, Odada and Higgins 2005: 278; Seal 2011: 47).<sup>77</sup>

Public expressions of this informal group of environmentalists created the image of Naivasha as a natural sanctuary under siege. This powerful narrative started to gain traction

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<sup>74</sup> KNA Nakuru, GU/9/1/188, "Local Authority."

<sup>75</sup> Kiaye, "A Farming Town."

<sup>76</sup> KNA Nakuru, GU/3/36/41, The Maasai Elders Hell's Gate Location, Naivasha, to the Land Adjudication Officer, Nakuru Head Office, "Land Dispute Regarding LRN 74771," 2 November 1998.

<sup>77</sup> Interview with O. Rocco.

in national and international media, especially after the flower industry came up. However, most of the early conservationist efforts and their outcries about the deteriorating state of the lake were based on the contemporary situation. They did not (explicitly) recognize that the natural habitat around Naivasha had already slowly but steadily started to change many decades ago, with the arrival of the first European settlers.

One salient example are fish: the doom scenario of a lake deplete of fish because of massive fish poaching was successful in mobilizing protests and actions (see e.g. Seal 2011). Not all activists recognized that this scenario for the future actually pictured the state of the lake in the past, in the period before the European settlers arrived. As stated in a report of LNROA (1993: 37), the history of fishery on the lake is "short and largely manipulated by man through introductions." The presence of fish in the lake was not a 'natural' given: when Thomson arrived in Naivasha in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, he only found hippopotami and ducks in the lake, no remarkable fish (1887: 193). Worthington and Worthington wrote in 1933 (174): "Previous to 1925 there were no fish in that lake except *Haplochilichthys antinorii*, a minnow-like fish of no value to anyone. In that year, however, Mr. R.E. Dent, Fish Warden in Kenya, introduced *Tilapia nigra* (...) and after three years this fish had multiplied so enormously that great numbers could be netted anywhere along the lake shores." Thus, previous to the arrival of the European settlers, there had been no larger indigenous fish species in Lake Naivasha, presumably because the lake had almost dried up earlier in the nineteenth century. The settlers, and later on also the government, introduced tilapia, bass, crayfish and common carp to the lake, with the goals of attracting rich sport fishers and of enabling a diversified fishing industry. Flourishing tourist businesses and increasing land prices at the lake in the early 1930s showed the early successes of these introductions. However, the introduction of alien species also markedly altered the complete ecological system and the chemical composition of the lake. It has had a strong, and for some species even devastating, impact on the indigenous flora and fauna in and around the lake (Worthington and Worthington 1933: 174-176; Mavuti and Harper 2005: 32; Becht, Odada and Higgins 2005: 287).

Paradoxically, it was precisely these introduced (and not indigenous) species that later became the subject of a pervasive environmental conflict in Naivasha. When net fishing was introduced in 1959, the fishing industry was valued for its economic value and potential (LNRAO 1993: 38).<sup>78</sup> Fisheries have thus formed both an important economic activity and a good source of food (Becht, Odada and Higgins 2005: 282). However, from the 1970s onwards, the poaching of fish has posed a constant challenge, as there were always more people who wanted to fish than there were fish to catch and licences to give out.<sup>79</sup> It was now

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<sup>78</sup> KNA Nakuru, GU/9/1/64, "Naivasha Town Population Structure."

<sup>79</sup> KNA AR 1973 Naivasha; KNA AR 1975 Nakuru; KNA Nakuru, GU/9/1/188, "Local Authority."

feared that the lake might be emptied of fish. Environmentalist Joan Root therefore initiated a 'taskforce', consisting of former fish poachers from Karagita, which should stop the practice. This taskforce was a private initiative, partly paid for by riparian land owners. After some time it became clear that it worked outside legal frameworks and even acted violently, and it was dissolved again. The approach of the government, namely to install yearly temporary fishing bans, seemed to have been a bit more effective. Nevertheless, poaching continued to be the source of major, sometimes violent conflicts around the lake (Becht, Odada and Higgins 2005: 292; Seal 2011: 159). Consequently, overfishing and fish poaching have gained a lot of attention and was sometimes blamed on the attraction of too many migrant workers by the flower industry.<sup>80</sup> However, fish poaching - including related violent conflicts - already became a problem in the area years before the flower industry came up. Moreover, the *introduction* of fish might have done more damage to the ecosystem of the lake (cf. Mavuti and Harper 2005: 32) than the later issue of overfishing has done.

Another problem blamed on the flower industry, were declining lake levels. However, and without denying that the irrigation by flower farms has an impact on the lake, fluctuating lake levels are also a natural phenomenon.<sup>81</sup> The lake is very shallow and small changes in water levels therefore have large effects on the surface area (Mavuti and Harper 2006: 30). Fluctuating lake levels have therefore already been a concern ever since farms were established at the lake shores. Around the years of independence, the lake was frequently flooding. These floods led to a loss of land for riparian land owners and damaged crops.<sup>82</sup> In the 1970s the situation changed and lake levels started to decline rapidly. Since then, the role of horticultural and later on floricultural farms has been continuously discussed whenever the lake levels were receding.<sup>83</sup>

In short, major environmental issues around Naivasha, such as fish and fluctuating lake levels, were already at play in the first decades after independence, when more and more people got attracted to the area: a new group of Europeans because of the natural environment, wealthy Kenyans because of possibilities to invest, and less well-off Kenyans because of the possibilities to acquire a small plot through a land-buying cooperative or to find a job in one of the farms or new industries. Next to a few remaining colonial families, these were the major interest groups in the area around the time that the first flower farms were established.

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<sup>80</sup> An officer of the Fisheries Department blamed the high number of unlicensed fishermen on the attraction of job seekers by the flower industry (observation during a stakeholders meeting in Naivasha, 26 November 2014).

<sup>81</sup> Cf. Stoof-Leichsenring et al. (2010: 363) on extensive droughts and resulting extremely low water levels in the nineteenth century.

<sup>82</sup> KNA, DC/Nais/1/1/1/52, "AR 1958"; KNA, AN/42/35/10, "AR 1961."

<sup>83</sup> See for example: KNA Nakuru, GU/1/7/59, Z.O. Gori, District Fisheries Officer, Naivasha Station, to the District Development Officer, Nakuru, "1988-1993 Draft Plan," 18 April 1988.

### 3.3 Blooming Business: The Establishment of the Cut Flower Industry

As described above, the only flowers that were grown on an industrial scale in Kenya during the colonial period and the first years after independence, were pyrethrum flowers. Nevertheless, the idea of growing cut flowers was not entirely new. Already in 1949, a colonial government official wondered whether it would not be possible to produce cut flowers of good quality in Kenya:

If suitable arrangements could be made for their collection from such places as the Kinangop, Molo and the higher areas around Njoro, first class blooms of many varieties of Lilies, Roses, Gladioli and Chrysanthemums equal to those of hot-house standard produced in the United Kingdom, could be obtained.

The officer also mentioned that there was already some cut flower production by small-holders around Nairobi at the time.<sup>84</sup> The first mentioning of cut flower production around Naivasha that I could find, dates back to 1961. It was reported that there were 15 acres on which cut flowers were grown in the "European areas" in Naivasha.<sup>85</sup> A report from the Ministry of Agriculture showed that in Kenya as a whole, production of flowers rapidly increased from 8,290 kilogram in 1965/1966 to 58,200 kilogram in 1969/1970. The Ministry expected more growth in this sector, because of the favourable climate in Kenya and because of a new agreement with the European Economic Community on the duty-free entry of certain products into Europe. The Ministry at that time already explicitly recognized the potential of flower growing, next to other horticultural production, for providing employment in Kenya.<sup>86</sup> A few years later, production indeed had increased tremendously, to 1,096,468 kilogram of flowers in 1973. These flowers were mainly exported to West Germany and the United Kingdom.<sup>87</sup>

The first flower farm that opened up in Naivasha was DCK ("Danish Chrysanthemum Kulter") in the early 1970s.<sup>88</sup> It was owned by a Danish investor called Jan Bonde Nielsen and had farms in Machakos, Nairobi and later on in Naivasha, where the company took over the estate of a former sisal plantation located at the murrum road along South Lake. It started to produce seasonal flowers such as carnations and statice there. The company had been invited by the Kenyan government to start up a horticultural business in the country and was given exclusive rights to cultivate certain types of flowers for a period of eight years. In addition, the company was financially supported by the Danish government through an

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<sup>84</sup> KNA, TR/14/8, The Officer Administering the Government of Kenya to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, "O. 687 Saving," 13 May 1949.

<sup>85</sup> KNA, AN/42/35/10, "AR 1961."

<sup>86</sup> KNA, BV/64/50, Ministry of Agriculture, "Horticultural Development in Kenya. Synopsis of Horticulture Working Party Draft Report and Recommendations for Government Action," June 1970.

<sup>87</sup> KNA, TR/8/148/82, Horticultural Cooperative Union, "HCU Fresh Supermarket," 1974.

<sup>88</sup> I do not use pseudonyms for the early farms, as the descriptions reflect public knowledge on these farms and on the development of the industry.

"Industrialization Fund". The company at its turn had chosen to come to Kenya because of the good climate, the availability of labour, the existing regular flights to the markets in Europe and the political stability in the country. The company was successful in providing employment: the farm in Naivasha had 3000 employees by 1975 (English, Jaffee and Okello 2006: 139-140; Whitaker and Kovalli 2006: 341-342).<sup>89</sup> However, the company collapsed in that same year due to financial mismanagement:

In the late sixties, documents show that DCK entered into an agreement with the Government of Kenya to grow chrysanthemum to be exported to Western Europe and the company rapidly started acquiring real estate and land in the country. In 1974, the DCK group consisted of companies operating in Switzerland, Germany, England and Denmark and in Kenya. The group employed thousands of workers. The growth was mainly funded by English, German and Swiss banks. DCK collapsed in 1975 with debts running to 100 million Danish kroner, which was largely unsecured loans and the management was blamed for the unexplained losses and accused of irresponsibility by a Danish task force that investigated the collapse.<sup>90</sup>

After the financial collapse, the DCK farm in Naivasha was taken over by a neighbouring farm, Sulmac.<sup>91</sup> Sulmac became part of the multinational Brooke Bond Liebig in 1978. At the time of this second take-over, the farm was growing around 50 varieties of carnations on 120 hectares of land. The farm continued to expand afterwards: the number of employees had doubled to 6000 by 1986. It also diversified its activities and started to produce roses and for a short time, around the year 2000, even vegetables (Girma and Rossiter 2001: 8; English, Jaffee and Okello 2006: 140).<sup>92</sup>

In 1979, Sulmac had been the main producer of flowers in Kenya, accounting for ninety percent of the total export. However, the farm soon got competition from Oserian, another pioneering farm. Oserian, unlike DCK, retained its original name until the present and continued to (partly) be in the hands of the founding family. The founder, a Dutch man called Hans Zwager, upon arrival in Kenya first started a company in chemicals and fertilizers for horticultural production: Kleenway Chemicals. He was also involved in growing coffee. In 1967, the family bought the estate 'Oserian' in Naivasha, which covered 5,000 acres of land

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<sup>89</sup> *Daily Nation*, "Improve Working Conditions in Farm Industry," 13 February 1974; *Kenya Gazette*, Notice No. 1,312, 26 April 1974; KNA Nakuru, GU/3/33/18, P.F. Alubbe, DO Naivasha, to the Manager, D.C.K., Naivasha, "DCK Trading Centre," 27 June 1975; Kauli wa Mwembe, "Flower power!," *Daily Nation*, 19 August 1979; interviews with S. Higgins, O. Rocco and the assistant chief of Olkaria.

<sup>90</sup> Mugomo Munene, "Every Business Nielsen Touched Was Left in Ruin," *Daily Nation*, 24 February 2013.

<sup>91</sup> Sulmac was already mentioned in the *Kenya Gazette*, Notice No. 1,579, 30 May 1969. Nevertheless, Sulmac was a relatively new farm: in 1963, its plot, LR 404/R, was still listed as one of the farms that had been abandoned by its former European owner, a certain Mrs. Graham, see KNA Nakuru, GU/7/1/37, Minutes of the Naivasha Agricultural Committee, 11 April 1963.

<sup>92</sup> *Daily Nation*, "Company Being Purchased," 1 October 1978; Mwembe, "Flower Power!"; KNA Nakuru, GU/9/1/188, "Local Authority."

and had a turbulent past. It included a colonial, oriental-style house, Djinn Palace, which now became the residence of the Zwager family. The previous owners<sup>93</sup> had hardly utilized the land except for some ranching activities, as the soil was considered to be unsuitable for cultivation. However, after acquiring the estate, Zwager decided to try vegetable farming there. The farm successfully started to grow vegetables under irrigation in 1971. The products were both exported and sold to local processing companies. Yet, Zwager was not satisfied with the profits that were being made. Oserian therefore shifted to the large-scale production of flowers in 1982, which proved to be more profitable. Initially, production included flowers such as statice and carnations. Later on - allegedly as the first farm in Naivasha - the firm also started to grow roses. Oserian had 2,000 employees by 1986 (Hayes 1997: 347-352; English, Jaffee and Okello 2006: 140; Seal 2011: 123-125).<sup>94</sup>

According to a government report, DCK and Oserian were producing carnations on a total surface of 400 hectares in 1983.<sup>95</sup> After these first two large flower farms turned out to be successful, other farms, on less acreage and with lower numbers of employees, were opened up. These farms also mainly cultivated carnations. Flowers such as chrysanthemums, statice and roses were grown on a much smaller scale. The production areas were mainly concentrated at South Lake. The less accessible area at North Lake initially continued to be mainly in use for pasture and for the production of lucerne and maize. Vegetable production also spread in this period. Whereas the vegetables that were produced around the lake were sold on the world market through middlemen, the flowers were mostly exported directly to Europe (LNROA 1993: 51; English, Jaffee and Okello 2006: 133).<sup>96</sup>

The farms that were established early on were either owned by foreigners or by Kenyans of European descent. They were the ones who recognized the profitability of the industry already early on: "the first farms made a fortune".<sup>97</sup> Not all of these pioneers were farmers by profession. The founders of Oserian and DCK were financial investors who were looking for a niche market and ways to make large profits. The financial downfall of DCK moreover shows that these profits were not always made in wholly clandestine ways.<sup>98</sup> In later years, flower farmers from Europe followed the business to Kenya after production in their

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<sup>93</sup> Among whom Lord Erroll, who was a prominent member of the Happy Valley Set, a group of settlers infamous for their decadent lifestyle. The above-mentioned Mr. Colville, who had helped the Rocco's with their trouble with land-claiming squatters, was another previous owner (Hayes 1997).

<sup>94</sup> *Kenya Gazette*, Notice No. 2,005, 26 May 1967; KNA Nakuru, GU/9/1/188, "Local Authority"; Muchemi Wachira, "Success Smells Sweet in the Land of Flowers," *Daily Nation*, 5 May 2011; interview with S. Higgins.

<sup>95</sup> KNA Nakuru, 15/1/Vol. 1, AR Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development, Naivasha Division, 1983.

<sup>96</sup> Kiaye, "A Farming Town"; Oberlé, "On Safari."

<sup>97</sup> Interview with S. Higgins.

<sup>98</sup> In this context it is telling that the Danish founder of DCK has been caught up in several other financial scandals in Kenya afterwards (see: Munene, "Every Business").

home countries became less profitable. Nevertheless, the industry also continued to attract foreign venture investors. There were echoes of the demise of DCK in the recent case of the Indian-owned farm that I call Sharma. This farm went bankrupt and there were also allegations of financial mismanagement in this case.<sup>99</sup>

It is notable that most investors were foreigners and that the upcoming African elite in Kenya has hardly been involved in the development of the flower industry. Just around the time that the flower industry became booming, Bradshaw (1990) wrote about the link between agriculture, class and the state in Kenya. The government had opted not to assist smallholders but to subsidize large-scale agriculture because much of the agricultural land had fallen into the hands of "politicians-cum-businessmen". Bradshaw (*ibid.*: 20) therefore concluded that the agricultural sector in Kenya was mainly benefiting a small, urban-based elite with many linkages to the Kenyan government. Initially it seemed that the flower industry would follow a similar path. There was a heated discussion in parliament about the special favours that DCK had received from the Kenyan government (Republic of Kenya 1973: 568-570). It was stated that the Minister of Agriculture who had given these concessions, Bruce McKenzie, acquired a considerable amount of shares himself in the same company a few years later. However, this controversial case turned out to be an exception: there has been relatively little interference in the flower industry by the Kenyan political elite, as most farms have been owned and financed either by foreign investors or by Kenyans of European and Asian origin, who mostly had no direct connections to the government.<sup>100</sup>

Next to this apparent lack of private involvement by politicians, the Kenyan government also officially has not played an active role in the development of the flower industry anymore after the initial support to DCK. There was a general trend towards less regulation and less taxation in the 1990s. The Minister of Agriculture decades later even named the lack of government involvement as the main reason for the success of the industry, as did a report of the World Bank, which praised the reduced control by the Kenyan government over for instance air freight rates (English, Jaffee and Okello 2006: 141; Whitaker and Kolavalli 2006: 352-353).<sup>101</sup> The local government in Naivasha has also not been actively involved in the flower industry that developed there. Whereas ranches were regularly monitored for livestock diseases<sup>102</sup> and whereas quota were set for the production of

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<sup>99</sup> Interview with S. Higgins; Hans, general manager of a middle-sized rose-producing farm, interview by Gemählich and the author in Nairobi, 27 February 2014.

<sup>100</sup> I do not mean to state that Kenyan politicians have not been involved in the flower industry at all but at least such connections were not publicly known. One of my assistants asserted that president Uhuru Kenyatta owned shares in a recently founded, large-scale flower farm that we visited. However, I could not verify his claim. Whitaker and Kolavalli (2006: 352) stated that "many politicians and civil servants" invested in the flower industry, yet they did not specify this statement.

<sup>101</sup> *Daily Nation*, "Govt Absence Spurs Growth," 14 June 1999.

<sup>102</sup> See, out of many examples of lists with affected farms, *Kenya Gazette*, Notice No. 1,579, 30 May 1969.



pyrethrum,<sup>103</sup> the topic of the rapidly growing flower industry was for a long time remarkably absent in the minutes of meetings of the local agricultural committee.<sup>104</sup>

It thus took some time before the potential of the cut flower industry was generally recognized. A newspaper article from 1972 reported that there were fears that the newly introduced cut flower chrysanthemum might bring viruses that could harm the pyrethrum industry, which at that time was providing thousands of jobs.<sup>105</sup> The spread of diseases was not an implausible scenario as pyrethrum is in fact a type of chrysanthemum. However, this type does not serve ornamental purposes. Its flowers are used to create biological insecticides, so-called pyrethrins. Due to conducive climatic conditions and well-organized marketing, Kenya became a world market leader in the production of pyrethrum towards the early 1960s (Odingo 1971: 101-102; Casida 1980: 190).

There are some interesting similarities between the cultivation of pyrethrum and the later production of cut flowers: the type of crop is similar and both industries were labour-intensive. Moreover, they had a comparable gendered division of labour. The pyrethrum flowers had to be picked by hand, and there was a stark preference among farmers to hire women (and initially also children) for this delicate job, partly because they could be paid lower wages than adult men (Odingo 1971: 110; Clayton and Savage 1974: 129; Casida 1980: 190).<sup>106</sup> The cut flower industry likewise developed a preference for hiring women for the delicate task of harvesting the flowers.<sup>107</sup> A difference between the industries was that due to fluctuating market prices, the production of pyrethrum was usually combined with other farming activities (Odingo 1971: 109). This was not standard in the flower industry that developed in later years. But the largest difference between the two industries was probably a matter of scale. As late as 1978, and despite the presence of the large cut flower farm DCK/Sulmac, an Annual Report mentioned pyrethrum as the only industrial crop grown around Naivasha.<sup>108</sup> However, by the mid-1990s, the expanding cut flower industry had started to outshine the once so significant pyrethrum industry.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> See KNA, AN/42/74/19, Naivasha District Agricultural Committee Area, "Quarterly Report," 30 June 1962.

<sup>104</sup> See for example KNA Nakuru, GU/7/1/37, "Naivasha Agricultural Committee."

<sup>105</sup> When the government reduced the quota for pyrethrum production in 1962, 3,000 employees became jobless, see KNA, AN/42/74/19, "Quarterly Report." See Godwin Wachira, "Virus Fear to Crop," *Daily Nation*, 23 April 1972, on the fears after the introduction of cut flowers.

<sup>106</sup> KNA, DC/Nais/1/1/1/63, "Annual Report."

<sup>107</sup> This gendered division of labour in the cut flower industry is discussed further in Chapter 5.

<sup>108</sup> KNA AR Nakuru 1978.

<sup>109</sup> Dolan, Opondo and Smith (2003: 14) and Whitaker and Kolavalli (2006: 336) provide estimates of the value and volume of the continuously increasing export of cut flowers from Kenya in the 1990s. The production of pyrethrum by smallholders, on the other hand, continuously declined due to a malfunctioning centralized marketing system (see *Daily Nation*, "Ailing Pyrethrum Sector Gets Sh300m to Revive Business, 2 May 2014).

Due to the growth of the flower industry, labour migration to Naivasha also started to take place on an accelerated pace, as explained in the introduction to this chapter. This accelerated increase in population has been described as a sudden rush that started out of nowhere instead of as the gradual process with historical roots, which it – despite the magnitude – was.<sup>110</sup> Worse, some of these descriptions, especially those about the environmental effects of the establishment of the flower industry, were making gross generalizations about the labour migrants, without doing them justice as acting and creative human beings. A flagrant example is the description by the biographer of environmentalist Joan Root: "Here was a migration as wild and savage as the wildebeest migration Joan and Alan had filmed. This time it was massive numbers of people, hundreds of thousands of hungry, desperate, out-of-work men and women" (Seal 2011: 127). In my opinion, there was nothing wild nor savage and not even desperate about the (ten thousands, not hundreds of thousands) women and men who came to look for agricultural wage labour in Naivasha. And when considering the history of Naivasha ever since the European settlers arrived, it also appears to be nothing new, even though increased in magnitude.

A novelty, perhaps, was the lack of care on the part of the new employers. Nor the newly established flower farms, nor the local government seemed to be prepared for the arrival of ever more migrants. Most of the flower farms did not consider it their task to accommodate their workers and paid out a housing allowance instead.<sup>111</sup> The local government of Naivasha was also not prepared for accommodating the increasing number of migrants, as it - as explained above - had been used to an arrangement in which the agricultural employers took care of their workers themselves. The result was a lack of affordable housing in the area. Owners of small plots in the area seized their chance and started to build make-shift housing on their plots to rent out.<sup>112</sup> Many of these small-scale landowners were Kikuyu, who had acquired their land some years earlier through their participation in land-buying companies or cooperatives. It becomes clear from letters in the archives that initially not all of these landowners were keen on selling their land or on renting out houses. They either preferred using their land for agricultural purposes<sup>113</sup> or they considered their plot in Naivasha to be family land that should not be sold. One man for example tried to prevent his father from selling their plot in Kihoto and wrote in his letter to the

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<sup>110</sup> See for example the perception of European settlers described in Ombur, "No Longer."

<sup>111</sup> In fact a decreasing number of farms provided accommodation to the workers (Gibbon and Riisgaard 2014: 109). Happ (2016) listed six flower farms with compounds in his appendix with an overview of flower farms in Naivasha.

<sup>112</sup> Interview with S. Higgins.

<sup>113</sup> KNA Nakuru, EA/2/22/115, H.T. Matiru, Nairobi, to the Chairman of the Land Control Board, Nakuru, "Application for Subdivision," 3 February 1993.

DC of Naivasha: "You know it is better to be dead than landless."<sup>114</sup> However, when rents and land prices started to rise sharply with the arrival of ever more migrant workers, more and more owners decided to either sell their plot or to construct rental housing on it. Whereas private land owners thus started to provide housing, no one provided infrastructure such as sewerage and water supply (Becht, Odada and Higgins 2005: 278).

The farms provided certain facilities for their workers, just as the ranches had done before. They paid for medical care for employees or opened up farm dispensaries.<sup>115</sup> Some farms also facilitated schools, for instance Maua ("Flowers") Primary school in DCK and Oserian Primary School.<sup>116</sup> Next to these on-farm facilities, the companies also sent representatives to meetings of local government committees that discussed the development of the settlements.<sup>117</sup> Yet, the lack of infrastructure in the settlements was not sufficiently addressed and this led to the regular outbreak of, especially water-borne, diseases, e.g. bilharzia in the settlement at Sulmac/DCK in 1980 and typhoid, again in Sulmac, in 1991. Even in the few farms that did have a workers' compound, conditions were not always optimal and infectious diseases such as dysentery could easily spread.<sup>118</sup>

The poor living conditions of the migrant workers initially received little public attention, as did the labour conditions within the flower farms. Pictures from a packhouse in 1979 showed workers without any protective clothing, which would be unimaginable in recent years.<sup>119</sup> Nevertheless, the union KPAWU already was active during that period and signed agreements on wages and labour conditions with some of the early farms. An example was an agreement with DCK from 1971, in which it was determined that working hours should not exceed 46 hours a week. It also included a paid annual leave of eighteen days and an unpaid maternity leave of three months.<sup>120</sup> And although KPAWU already had been present in Naivasha before, this union became especially influential with the rise of the flower industry. In 1998, the local branch was even named after the two biggest flower farms: Sulmac/Oserian Branch (instead of Naivasha Branch).<sup>121</sup> However, not all the flower farms were unionized.

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<sup>114</sup> KNA Nakuru, GU/3/26/212, Muniu Mbugua, Naivasha, to the DC Naivasha, no subject, 25 July 1989.

<sup>115</sup> E.g. Sulmac Farm dispensary, see KNA Nakuru, GU/1/6/23, Meeting of the Maiella Locational Development Committee, 9 November 1982.

<sup>116</sup> *Daily Nation*, "Public Tasks Facing Private Companies," 5 June 1987; KNA Nakuru, GU/3/33/64, DH Gray, Director of Sulmac Company Ltd., to the DO Naivasha, "Commercial Centre on Sulmac Land," 28 January 1991.

<sup>117</sup> See KNA Nakuru, GU/1/5/61, Minutes of the Naivasha Locational Development Committee, 30 November 1978; KNA Nakuru, GU/1/7/34, "Ndabibi."

<sup>118</sup> KNA Nakuru, GU/1/5/102, Minutes of the Naivasha Divisional Development Committee, 4 February 1980; *Daily Nation*, "Jabs Campaign," 6 July 1991; *Daily Nation*, "Dysentery Controlled," 28 July 1998.

<sup>119</sup> Mwembe, "Flower power!"

<sup>120</sup> *Kenya Gazette*, Notice No. 1,312, 26 April 1974.

<sup>121</sup> *Kenya Gazette*, Notice No. 7,174, 18 December 1998.

The secretary-general of KPAWU, Mr. Francis Atwoli, complained in the same year that only 24 out of the estimated 100 flower farms around Naivasha allowed their employees to become a member of the union.<sup>122</sup>

Industrial disputes within flower farms in this period, sometimes but not always involving KPAWU, mostly revolved around low wages. If we again take the example of DCK/Sulmac, there were disputes and (threats of) illegal strikes after the take-over in 1976 and again in 1985 and 1996.<sup>123</sup> Relations within the union itself have not always been smooth neither. In 1981, 3,056 employees of Sulmac went on strike against a rise in the union contribution.<sup>124</sup> There were from time to time also conflicts between the branch office and the union representatives within specific farms. For instance, the representatives in Sulmac requested to elect a new branch office in 1997, because the branch secretary in their opinion did not properly assist the employees.<sup>125</sup> In short, although a system of industrial relations has been in place ever since the flower industry started, it was not always functioning smoothly.

As stated above, there was initially little public concern for the labour conditions within the farms. The same held true for possible environmental damage caused by flower farming. There seems to have been some awareness early on that the pesticides used by the flower farmers could be harmful when running off into the lake,<sup>126</sup> but no action was being taken. One interviewee even claimed that some of her cows had died in the 1980s due to the pesticides that ran off from neighbouring farms. She said it took years, a lot of media pressure and finally increasingly strict government regulation before the farms started to use less harmful ways of pest control.<sup>127</sup> The use of water was likewise not regulated. When the first flower farms started, there were no charges yet for using lake water. However, there started to grow a consciousness that water users could or should pay for this resource. A local government plan from 1986 stated:

The lake water should be used on a commercial base by the farmers who irrigate their land for growing crops for sale. At the moment it is supplied for free. Some experts have expressed fear that the irrigation also interferes very much with the level of the water and that to control it, farmers should be charged, otherwise in the long run the lake will dry up completely as years go by. This may not sound true but at least such comments need a serious consideration and attention.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> *Daily Nation*, "Union Appeals to Govt over Workers' Welfare," 11 July 1998.

<sup>123</sup> AR Naivasha 1976; *Taifa Leo*, "4,000 Watisha Kugoma Naivasha," 18 March 1985; Mary Mwathi and Michael Njuguna, "Company Sacks Striking Workers," *Daily Nation*, 7 April 1996.

<sup>124</sup> AR Naivasha 1981.

<sup>125</sup> KNA Nakuru, GU/8/1/110, KPAWU Sulmac Co. LTD, Naivasha, to the DO Naivasha, "Branch Election Permit at Deb Pri. School Sports Ground," 1 August 1997.

<sup>126</sup> KNA Nakuru, GU/1/7/59, "1988-1993 Draft Plan."

<sup>127</sup> Interview with O. Rocco; Ngesa and Mwangi ("Scramble for land") describe a case in which it was claimed that 14 cows had died after they had drunk from a drainage trench of a flower farm.

<sup>128</sup> KNA Nakuru, GU/9/1/188, "Local Authority."

Nevertheless, it was only around the year 2000 that the existing legislation on water use and environmental issues, which stemmed from the colonial period and was not designed for managing the effects of agro-industrial production, was replaced by laws that were more fitting to the new situation (Becht, Odada and Higgins 2005: 279).

Not only legislation changed. Pressure on the farms to implement more environmental-friendly practices started to build up from several sides. As outlined in the previous section, a vocal group of conservationists emerged in Naivasha around the same time that ranches started to shift to horticultural farming. Furthermore, existing environmental issues such as the fluctuating lake levels also became more poignant with the increase in economic activity around the lake. As a result of these growing concerns, Lake Naivasha became a protected Ramsar Wetland Site under the international Ramsar Convention in 1995. This designation called for the development of an inclusive management plan for the lake. The statutory custodian of the Kenyan Ramsar Sites was the Kenya Wildlife Service but the stakeholders were primarily united through the efforts of the Lake Naivasha Riparian Organization (LNRA). This organization had taken the initiative for the Ramsar-application. LNRA was an organization of riparian landowners and had been founded in 1929. The original objective of the organization had been to prevent land and boundary conflicts between owners of land adjacent to the lake. However, the organization increasingly presented itself as the steward of the riparian land and of the ecological system of the lake. It set internal regulations for its members (e.g. a prohibition on cultivation and construction in the riparian land) and organized research and educational activities. The LNRA and their application for Ramsar played an important role in the emerging conservationist agenda surrounding Lake Naivasha (Harper et al. 2011: 99).<sup>129</sup>

Whereas conflicts over pollution and the use of lake water related immediately to the production of flowers, other environmental contestations were related to the human population that the flower farms had attracted. One example is the constant problem of fish-poaching described above. Another example were human-wildlife conflicts. Despite the increase in human population, there continued to be a lot of wildlife around Naivasha. Even at the time of my fieldwork, wild animals could be regularly seen along the Moi Lake Road and even on the premises of flower farms that were on riparian land. During visits to Karibu Farm, I for instance saw a monkey sneaking into a greenhouse and a group of zebras striding through an open field of roses. These animals sometimes damaged crops of both smallholders and large-scale farmers. Moreover, animals such as buffalos and hippos could be outright dangerous to people. In 2010, a member of the colonial Hopcraft family of Loldia Estate was killed by a

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<sup>129</sup> KNA Nakuru, GU/1/9/9, Minutes of the Nakuru District Environment Management Committee, 9 February 1995; Silas Wanjala, research officer of the LNRA, interview by the author at the LNRA-office, 24 November 2014.

buffalo. On the other hand, the people also formed a threat to the animals: there was an increase in the poaching of wildlife. Through such economic activities, including also the cutting of down trees and the watering of livestock at the lake, the increase in human population had a large impact on the flora and fauna in the area (Becht, Odada and Higgins 2005: 278).<sup>130</sup>

The assistant chief of Olkaria Sub-Location explained that the area along the (then) murrum South Lake Road, where he was born, had been "plain wilderness" where wildlife roamed around freely until the 1970s.<sup>131</sup> However, because of human-wildlife conflicts and an increasing feeling of insecurity, flower farms and other riparian landowners started to fence off their land. Some, including several flower farms, even turned part of their land into a private conservancy.<sup>132</sup> Previously, there had been sixteen corridors to the lake that were open to the public and that could be used by both wild animals and livestock. This number went down to five, due to the erection of fences (Becht, Odada and Higgins 2005: 290; Schneider 2010: 53). This lack of access was aggravated when some owners also made it impossible to pass their land via the lakeshore. Some even built permanent constructions on the riparian land, including greenhouses for flower production, even though they were officially not allowed to. While stakeholder groups such as the LNRA denounced the building of infrastructure, they at the same time supported restrictions on public access because of conservation purposes. The fencing severely hampered the economic activities of fishermen living in the settlements and of Maasai pastoralists, who after independence had started to come back into the area to water their animals at the lake during the dry season (Schneider 2010: 2).<sup>133</sup>

We can conclude that life around Lake Naivasha had changed markedly after the first farms had established themselves in the 1970s. This new situation caused tensions and conflicts over resources. However, this section also showed that many of the environmental and social changes that later would be blamed on the flower industry, had already been initiated in the colonial era and in the first decades after independence.

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<sup>130</sup> KNA Nakuru, GU/7/1/153, Minutes of the Naivasha Sub-district Agricultural Committee, 11 November 1993; *Daily Nation*, "Flower Farm Owner Gored to Death by Buffalo", 25 November 2010; interview with S. Higgins.

<sup>131</sup> In Swahili: "msitu kabisa".

<sup>132</sup> Oserian established its own conservancy on the estate (Hayes 1997: 370). Sulmac donated a 2.7 ha-piece of (their leasehold) land to Kenya Wildlife Service in 1998 (see: KNA Nakuru, EA/2/16/81, G. Ileri, for the Commissioner of Lands, to the Chairman of Nakuru Land Control Board, the Clerk of the County Council of Naivasha, the District Land Officer Nakuru and the Director of Surveys in Nairobi, "The Land Control Act (Cap 302)", 14 August 1998).

<sup>133</sup> Ngesa and Mwangi, "Scramble for land"; interview with S. Wanjala.

### 3.4 Naivasha in the Twenty-First Century: Paradise Lost?

By the turn of the twentieth century, Naivasha had started to change from a pristine 'paradise', containing nothing but wildlife and green pastures for scattered Maasai herds, to a colonized area with large stretches of under-utilized ranch-land for European settlers. Another hundred years later, livestock as the main product of the area had been largely replaced by flowers that were grown on an industrial scale. A government report stated: "The expansive flower and vegetable farms most of which are under beautifully constructed greenhouses are synonymous with Naivasha."<sup>134</sup> Towards the late 1990s, the floriculture industry in Kenya started to grow on an accelerated pace and flower farms 'mushroomed' around Lake Naivasha (English, Jaffee and Okello 2006: 191). A few of the larger farms, especially the ones that were established early on, provided housing and other facilities to their workers and their families. These farms even seemed to form a town on their own, with the above-mentioned schools and hospitals, and in some cases even with a private team of fire fighters or a professional football team. Nevertheless, it was estimated in 2007 that only one out of every four workers was housed by the flower farms.<sup>135</sup> Workers of other farms had to look for rental housing themselves, in the settlements that had sprung up around the lake. The expansion of production fields, greenhouses and residential areas is clearly visible on two satellite pictures from Naivasha, taken in 1995 and 2015 (see Figures 3 and 4).

There has been quite some continuity in the flower industry in Naivasha: many of the flower farms and breeders that were mentioned in reports from 2002 and 2003, still existed during fieldwork in 2014 and 2015.<sup>136</sup> Nevertheless, changes in ownership - which also always implied a change in name of the farm - were common. Just as the first flower farms had often taken over the land and infrastructure of earlier European settler and cooperative farms, later investors in the flower industry took over already established flower farms. Whereas there had been quite a number of middle-sized companies in the early years, sometimes locally owned, many of them merged together or were taken over by a multinational company. The result was that the core of the industry later on was formed by just a handful of, mainly foreign-owned, large-scale farms, employing thousands of workers each. This process can be exemplified by the history of the first flower farm DCK. It subsequently became part of Sulmac, Brooke Bond Liebig, the Commonwealth Development Cooperation (CDC)<sup>137</sup>,

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<sup>134</sup> KNA Nakuru, 15/1/Vol. 1, AR of the District Labour Officer Naivasha, 2002.

<sup>135</sup> Opala, "Withering Rose"; *Daily Nation*, "100 Families Homeless after Fire Guts Houses," 16 March 2009; Verah Okeyo, "The Tragedy of the Flowermen," *Daily Nation*, 16 September 2013.

<sup>136</sup> *Kenya Gazette*, Notice No. 3,016, 13 May 2002; KNA Nakuru, 15/1/Vol. 1, AR of the District Labour Officer Naivasha, 2003.

<sup>137</sup> CDC was a developmental bank of the British government. It is not the only developmental bank that invested in the flower industry in Naivasha; another example is the German bank DEG (*Daily Nation*, "Flower Firm to Gets [sic] Sh7m Funding," 4 June 2006).

Homegrown/Flamingo Holdings and Finlays, one of the largest horticultural firms in the world. The original DCK farm was eventually renamed to 'Finlays Kingfisher', but during my last stay in June 2016, I heard that Finlays had already sold the farms in Naivasha again. These regular transfers increased job insecurity because employees could never be certain that the new owner would re-hire them. The transfers could also lead to the termination of certain facilities provided by the previous owner. For instance, the take-over of Sulmac by Homegrown in 2002 led to the collapse of the Savings and Credit Cooperation (SACCO) of the farm. However, despite these changes in ownership, which brought about some insecurity, the farms themselves remained. Moreover, they continued to expand and they provided ever more permanent employment throughout the 1990s and 2000s (Lembcke 2015: 12).<sup>138</sup>

From around 2005, growth started to decline because of increasing competition of neighbouring country Ethiopia, where employees could be paid lower wages. Some farms moved there, while others who stayed in Naivasha used a possible move as a threat to put pressure on the government and the union. Farms warned to not make too high demands with regards to wages, taxes, labour conditions or environmental measures.<sup>139</sup> However, doom scenarios of a collapsing flower industry in Kenya due to the competition of Ethiopia, have not materialized as yet. An important reason for this was the quality of the labour force in Kenya, which for some farmers outweighed the disadvantage of having to pay higher wages.<sup>140</sup>

Despite the overall continuity, the flower industry was still undergoing transformations with regards to the production process, labour relations and environmental practices. The type of flowers that were grown and the way of producing were changing. "By the mid-1990s, roses made up about 50 percent of total flower exports. By 2000, they constituted 70 percent of exports" (Whitaker and Kolavalli 2006: 343). The farms thus gradually shifted from the production of carnations and summer flowers, which were grown outside or in wooden greenhouses, to the cultivation of roses, which was mostly done in large, modern, polythene greenhouses (Whitaker and Kolavalli 2006: 344). This shift was also discernible in Naivasha, where by the year 2002, a larger surface was used to produce roses (569 hectares) than other types of flowers (555 hectares).<sup>141</sup> More recent data on 17 farms in Naivasha show that these

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<sup>138</sup> KNA Nakuru, GU/10/4/71, AR of the Co-operative Officer Naivasha Sub-District, 2002; *Daily Nation*, "1,300 Flower Farm Employees Sacked," 17 August 2002; Catherine Riungu, "Flower Firms Scramble for Control of Export Market," *The East African*, 1-7 August 2005; Julius Wanjala, long-serving employee of Sharma Farm, interview in DCK, 5 February 2015; interviews with S. Higgin and the assistant chief of Olkaria.

<sup>139</sup> Paul Redfern, "Kenya Plays Down Crisis in Flower Industry," *The East African*, 30 October - 5 November 2006; Opala, "Withering Rose."

<sup>140</sup> Interview with Hans by Gemählich and the author; personal communication with a manager working in Ethiopia, a flower trade fair in Nairobi, 3 June 2015.

<sup>141</sup> KNA Nakuru, 15/1/Vol. 1, AR of the Agricultural Officer Naivasha, 2003. The shift to production in greenhouses is also clearly visible on the satellite images in Figures 3 and 4.



farms used 420 hectares for the production of roses while they used 235 hectares for other flowers and ornamental plants.<sup>142</sup>

Roses have thus become dominant and this shift also had consequences for labour conditions on the farms, due to the characteristics of the crop. For instance, roses are a more permanent crop than most other flowers. In a newspaper article on Sulmac from 1979, it was described that it took six months for a carnation plant to flower for the first time, after which it could produce for another six months.<sup>143</sup> In contrast to that, I was taught during my visits to Karibu Farm that rose plants are able to produce flowers for five or more years. Hence, the shift to roses created more employment opportunities and, importantly, made permanent (instead of seasonal) contracts the norm, as it became desirable for farms to have a stable and experienced labour force. In addition, the shift induced changes in the division of labour because the (less open) polythene greenhouses required stricter spraying procedures than cultivation outside or in wooden greenhouses. Whereas before employees would be given a certain task which they would have to perform in the whole area under cultivation, employees in greenhouses were typically given the responsibility over a certain number of beds where they would carry out all the tasks. This was done to achieve a tight planning of the work (Schneider 2010: 33; Gibbon and Riisgaard 2014: 112).

The industry also became more technically sophisticated in other ways. One of the farms we visited, which had only been established a few months before, had an assembly line in the packhouse. It also had automatized the transport of flowers from the greenhouse to the packhouse through a small railway, an innovation that had been developed on banana plantations in South America. However, most of the technical innovations of the flower farms were not meant to replace human labour through mechanization: as explained by Whitaker and Kolavalli (2006: 338), flowers need to be harvested by hand to ensure the quality of the product. Instead, innovations in the industry were geared towards creating better growing conditions for the flowers or towards producing in a more environmental-friendly manner. When it comes to production, the polythene greenhouses were further improved by introducing computer-controlled regulation of the climate (temperature and humidity) and by automatizing irrigation and fertilization ('fertigation') systems. When it comes to the environment, some farms invested in better irrigation techniques, biological pest control ('*dudutech*'<sup>144</sup>) and the creation of dams for recycling water and wetlands for the treatment of

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<sup>142</sup> Data provided by the Kenya Flower Council (KFC).

<sup>143</sup> Mwembe, "Flower power!"

<sup>144</sup> *Mdudu* is Swahili for insect. A scout of Karibu Farm, who had the task to monitor diseases, told me about the method, which entailed introducing natural predators of insects that were damaging the plants. The method was not easy to apply in practice: the scout told me that there had been too many mites to control them biologically in one of the greenhouses. On the other hand, in cases where there had been few mites, there was a risk that the introduced insects would starve.

waste water. Other farms made investments in renewable energy, through own geothermal or solar energy plants, and recently even a biogas plant fuelled with crop waste of the flower production (Becht, Odada and Higgins 2005: 291).<sup>145</sup>

Apart from changes in the type of product and the production process, the value chain of the flowers also started to change around the year 2000. This relates to the type of roses that are grown in Naivasha. Whereas farms in higher-altitude areas such as around Mount Kenya can produce high-value flowers with large heads, climatic conditions in Naivasha favour the production of roses with intermediately-sized heads. The 'premium quality' flowers from other regions continued to be sold exclusively to florists via the auction located in the Netherlands, but a second value chain developed for intermediate flowers. These were increasingly sold via so-called 'direct sales', to supermarket chains in several European countries (Whitaker and Kolavalli 2006: 344).<sup>146</sup> These supermarkets were more vulnerable to the disapproval of consumers than florists. Together with the increased scrutiny of NGOs (as explained in the introduction), this shift forced the industry to accept increased regulation - albeit mostly via industry-based initiatives - and to cooperate more with other parties.

For instance, relations between the farms and the trade union continued to improve. More and more farms became unionized and started to adhere to the collective bargaining agreements (CBAs). It sometimes were the workers who pressed for this step. The district labour office reported on several strikes in the year 2003 within farms where employees demanded a shift from payment according to the Agricultural Wages Order (which contained very low wages) to payment according to a CBA.<sup>147</sup> The increasing importance of the union was also closely related to another development in the industry, 'standardization'. In response to the mounting criticism of labour conditions and on possible environmental damage by the farms, the industry itself developed several certification schemes. These schemes typically contain a standard with environmental and labour-related regulations. Participating farms can only sell certified flowers when adhering to these regulations. The schemes were gradually adopted, especially by the larger farms who had more capital available, because they secured the access to markets. This standardization was another factor that enhanced the regulation and harmonization of labour conditions, including the process of unionization. Due to this standardization, which is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, criticism of both ecological

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<sup>145</sup> *Daily Nation*, "Govt Absence"; *Kenya Gazette*, Notice No. 2,674, 8 April 2004; Catherine Riungu, "Now, World's Biggest Solar Greenhouse Opens in Naivasha," *The East African*, 12 - 18 March 2007; production manager of a relatively new and large rose farm, interview on the farm by Gemählich, Tolo and the author, 7 March 2014; H. David, "Biogas Firm to Supply National Grid with 2MW of Power," *Business Daily*, 4 February 2015.

<sup>146</sup> Interview with Jan by Gemählich, Tolo and the author. This shift and its implications are discussed in Gemählich's dissertation (in preparation) with the working title "Cut Flower Production in Naivasha / Kenya: Global Impacts on the Resilience and Change of the Local Social-Ecological System."

<sup>147</sup> KNA Nakuru, 15/1/Vol. 1, AR of the District Labour Officer of Naivasha, 2003.

and social practices waned. The standards have been backed in this effort by influential lobby groups such as the Kenya Flower Council (KFC) and the above-mentioned LNGG. The reputation of the industry has improved to some extent in recent years (Dolan 2007: 243-245; KHRC 2012: 40).<sup>148</sup>

Nevertheless, the flower industry continued to be held responsible for environmental damage. Around the turn of the century, the European conservationists who asked for attention for the deteriorating state of the lake, started to cooperate with an active group of ecological researchers, whom I have introduced in Chapter 1. Some of these researchers eventually took on an activist approach and communicated their findings about the ecological state of the lake to the local public and policy makers. Over the years, the group started to work together with local politicians and with activist and stakeholder groups, most elaborately with the riparian landowners' organization LNRA, which had taken it upon itself to promote a good management of the lake and the wider lake catchment area. At first, the flower growers felt threatened by these concerted conservationist efforts, and established the Lake Naivasha Growers Group (LNGG) to lobby against the negative image. However, eventually the flower farms started to realize that being environment-friendly was an asset in the European market. It was also in the immediate interest of the flower farms to take environmental measures, as they depended on the water in the lake. For example, when a drought hit Naivasha in 2000, the flower farms could not fall back on some of their irrigation systems because of electricity shortages, which affected their production. However, although the industry acknowledged there was a need for regulation, it tried to retain control over the regulation processes. It for instance lobbied for standardization, to avoid stricter legislation. The LNGG have since the early 2000s worked together with the LNRA, other stakeholders and researchers in practical projects. These included the drafting of a Lake Naivasha Management Plan and the establishment of the "private-public-people initiative for sustainability" Imarisha Naivasha, an organization meant to coordinate the activities of stakeholders such as the flower industry, scientists, community groups, NGOs and several local government offices (Becht, Odada and Higgins 2005; Mavuti and Harper 2005; Harper et al. 2011).<sup>149</sup>

Finally, although the local government initially left the care for the welfare of flower farm workers to the farms, it slowly became more involved. It for instance started to organize adult literacy classes in the flower farms, just as it had done in the 1950s in the European-

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<sup>148</sup> Catherine Riungu, "Code of Conduct on the Cards," *Daily Nation*, 29 August 2004; general manager of a large rose farm, interview on the farm by Gemählich and the author, 3 April 2014; Jane Ngige, chief executive officer of the Kenya Flower Council, interview in the KFC-office in Nairobi by Gemählich, 17 October 2014.

<sup>149</sup> KNA Nakuru, 15/1/Vol. 1, AR of the Coordinator for Agriculture and Livestock, Naivasha Division, 2000; George Omondi, "State Drops L. Naivasha Water Use Control Plan," *Business Daily*, 22 February 2010; interviews with the chief executive officer of KFC by Gemählich and with S. Wanjala; observations during an Imarisha stakeholders meeting in Naivasha, 26 November 2014.

owned ranches.<sup>150</sup> In early 2007, the town council tried to force the flower farms to pay local taxes. The council claimed its services were overstretched due to the large numbers of migrants attracted by the farms. The industry resisted fiercely and claimed it was protected by national law against paying those taxes.<sup>151</sup> The town council and the industry came to an agreement only later that year, when the council dropped the plan for taxing the farms and instead requested the flower farms for immediate donations, which it received. This less confrontational approach proved to be successful. In 2009, the Lake Naivasha Growers Group (LNGG) agreed to pay annual taxes to pay for the use of infrastructure provided by the government.<sup>152</sup>

Farms have developed in diverse ways within the framework of these larger trends of scaling up, 'standardization' and increased cooperation with other stakeholders. These developments also had diverse implications on the farms' workers. For example, the employees of Sharma Farm were severely affected by a change of ownership. Sharma was established in the late 1980s by a Dutch investor. It was an exceptional farm in the sense that it from the start only cultivated roses and no other flowers. The farm grew quickly: it had several thousands of employees by 1996, in which year it also opened its own primary school. In 2002, the farm became unionized and it started to provide free transport to and from work for employees who lived outside the workers' compound of the farm. Sharma by that time also had its own company hospital and became known for its good labour conditions, for example a high rate of permanent contracts. It had become one of the largest and most successful farms in Naivasha. The situation changed markedly after 2007, when the Dutch owner had decided to start up a new farm in Ethiopia and had sold Sharma to an investor from India. The new owner allegedly did not make any investments in the production process, which started to show after a few years. For instance, I was told that when the polythene of greenhouses was ripped, it would not be repaired. One of my assistants who had previously worked at this farm sneered that the only thing the new owner had done, was changing the position of certain doors in the office buildings, in line with religious prescriptions. Next to this obvious lack of investment, there were even rumours about money laundry and tax evasion. From 2010 onwards, the farm started to make a financial downfall, until at some point salaries were not being paid out for several months. The employees went on strike and production almost came to a standstill. Subsequently, the number of employees went down from about 6,000 to 2,000

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<sup>150</sup> KNA Nakuru, 15/1/Vol. 1, AR of the Department of Adult Education, Naivasha Division, 2003.

<sup>151</sup> Notably, Friedemann-Sánchez (2009: 53) described a similar disagreement with regards to the flower industry in Colombia: much to the chagrin of the local authorities, the industry was exempted from taxes there yet it made use of the infrastructure maintained by the local government.

<sup>152</sup> Opala, "Withering Rose"; Mwangi, "Naivasha Town"; George Omondi, "Burying the Hatchet after History of Feuds," *Business Daily*, 7 November 2007; *Daily Nation*, "Council Seals Sh30m Deal with Flower Farmers," 23 October 2009.

employees, as some of them were laid off and others decided to leave themselves when they did not receive their salaries. The farm also did not pay its suppliers, who then stopped the deliveries, which further hampered production and affected the welfare of the workers. The workers' camp was cut off electricity and the company hospital closed down. The farm eventually was declared bankrupt and the banks that had lent money to the Indian owner, appointed receivers to manage the farm. That was the status quo when I arrived in late 2014, while court cases were still going on.<sup>153</sup>

After the receivers had taken over, the farm managed to get production back on track, until in spring 2016 the on-going court cases completely blocked the farm from producing. All remaining employees were rendered jobless and lost their regular income as well as, probably, their claims to service payments for retirement. Moreover, those staying in the compound were uncertain about their living arrangements there. Especially those workers whose households had fully depended on the salaries from Sharma Farm, were hit hard.<sup>154</sup>

Another farm that features prominently in this dissertation, Karibu Farm, was founded after independence – under a different name than the current one – by a British farmer. It specialized in fruits and vegetables. When the owner retired before or in 1979 and left Kenya, he sold the farm to a Kikuyu man, who continued with vegetable production and also started to cultivate roses around the year 1995. A few years later, the farm was bought by the current Dutch owner and although initially also seasonal flowers such as hypericum were cultivated, in-door rose production eventually became the main activity. The new owners constructed greenhouses but otherwise continued to make use of the existing structures such as offices, managers' housing and the packhouse. Its employees settled in neighbouring Kasarani. The farm has been continuously expanding its number of greenhouses over the years and became Fairtrade-certified.<sup>155</sup>

Like Karibu Farm, many of the early-founded flower farms were established on tracts of land with freeholds or long-running leases, previously occupied by ranches.<sup>156</sup> These early farms were not much affected by the later steep increases in land prices around Naivasha.<sup>157</sup> Some of the more recently opened farms started up at hitherto undeveloped or

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<sup>153</sup> KNA Nakuru, GU/10/5/52, The Chief of Hell's Gate Location to the DO, Naivasha Sub-District, "Ripoti ya Mtaa wa Hells Gate," 14 December 1999; interview with J. Wanjala; Allan, a long-serving employee and union representative within Sharma Farm, interview in DCK, 6 February 2015; interview with Evelyn, former employee of Sharma Farm, 10 April 2015.

<sup>154</sup> Interview with the assistant chief of Olkaria; conversations with Flora in June 2016.

<sup>155</sup> Interview with Jan by Gemählich, Tolo and the author; Dickson Gitahi, landowner in Kasarani and retired farm manager, interview in Kasarani, 22 January 2015; personal communication with several employees of Karibu Farm during farm visits.

<sup>156</sup> Cf. DCK and Oserian (KNA Nakuru, GU/3/33/18, "DCK Trading Centre"; Hayes 1997: 339).

<sup>157</sup> E.g.: 'For years an eighth of an acre in Villa View, Naivasha's first gated community, was priced at Sh100,000. Today, one pays as much as Sh1.8 million for that same piece of land' (Verah Okeyo, "From Flowers to Tourism, Naivasha is a Gem," *Daily Nation*, 6 March 2014).

underdeveloped plots, located at some kilometres from the lake. Examples are the farms located in the Flower Business Park close to town and the technically-advanced farm described above. Reasons for moving away from the lake were the decision of the government to stop giving out new permits to abstract lake water, the possibility to own land there instead of only leasing and the frequent social unrest along Moi Lake Road.<sup>158</sup> Accessing land was not uncomplicated, also not for the flower farms: two farms, located close to Kihoto and Karagita respectively, became caught up in land disputes. These farms were ordered to demolish (some of) their greenhouses after it had been claimed that these had been constructed on land that was not legally theirs.<sup>159</sup>

There were two main roads in Naivasha that shaped its economy and that both gained importance with the establishment of the flower industry. The first was the highway from Mombasa to Kampala that passed Naivasha. This road was heavily used by trucks, which made Naivasha into a transit town and a popular stop-over for truck drivers. At night, the main street would be full of parked trucks. This created economic opportunities but also caused certain social problems, such as a relatively high prevalence of HIV/AIDS (Happ 2016: 70). The highway was crucial for the flower industry, as it was used to transport the flowers to the airport. The second important road in the area was the only road going around the lake, Moi Lake Road. It for a long time was in a bad state. The south-eastern part of the road, stretching from town up to the high-end Lake Naivasha Hotel opposite of Karagita, was tarmacked early on, also because of tourism. However, it was not well-maintained. It had a lot of potholes and even complete stretches where no tarmac was left. The farms consequently were not well connected and there were continuous complaints about the state of the road. The following example comes from a letter sent to the Daily Nation at the time of President Moi:

The "road" referred to is the South Lake Road, if this rocky, sandy dust-blown track can be called a road. Beyond the tarmacked portion one enters a stretch of the most nerve-wracking car-wrecking and dangerous "highway" in Kenya. To name this appalling "road" after our revered President is shameful.<sup>160</sup>

After many years of discussion, the government extended the tarmac up to Kongoni in the late 1980s, after the opening of Hell's Gate National Park and the establishment of horticultural farms with perishable products. However, although the South Lake Road recently has been in a good condition, maintenance of the road has mostly been paid for and organized by the flower farmers and other private stakeholders such as the geothermal power plant and hotels

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<sup>158</sup> Interviews with Hans by Gemählich and the author and with a production manager by Gemählich, Tolo and the author.

<sup>159</sup> Geoffrey Muhoro v Lake Flowers Limited (2011) eKLR; James Kariuki, "Land Fraud Costs Flower Company Sh200m Venture," *Daily Nation*, 17 May 2015.

<sup>160</sup> Cosmos, "This Road Is a Shame," *Daily Nation*, 12 February 1981. The writer refers to a name change during the rule of President Moi, when the road received the official name Moi Lake Road.

around the lake.<sup>161</sup> Furthermore, North Lake Road - the stretch between the settlement Kongoni on the west side of the Lake and the Nairobi-Nakuru Highway at the north-eastern side - was not tarmacked for a long time. It was not until 2015 that a stretch, connecting the gated community Greenpark with the highway, was tarmacked. Being the only main route leading around the lake to town and further away, many flower farms depended on the Moi Lake Road for transporting their produce to the airport. For this reason, blocking this road proved to be an effective way of protesting. During my stay in Naivasha, both the unpaid employees of Sharma Farm and inhabitants of Karagita, whose public corridor to the lake had been shut down, used a blockage of the road, with for example burning tyres, as a way to invigorate their protests.<sup>162</sup>

Apart from such incidental protests, there was a widespread perception among both private landowners and the local government that crime in general was on the rise after the flower farms had attracted all these migrants who came to live in unplanned settlements.<sup>163</sup> The settlements Kihoto and Karagita were mentioned as areas that were most hit by crimes such as robbery and stealing in a special meeting in 2005, where security issues at South Lake were discussed. It was stated that criminals "reside in those slums as houses and life is very cheap. Also it is very easy for them to intermingle with the crowd as no one is concerned with what others are doing." The perceived causes for the 'crime wave' were unemployment, carelessness on the side of land owners when it comes to who is renting their houses, illicit brew, pool tables, and distrust towards officers.<sup>164</sup> Nevertheless, the scale might have changed, but *chang'aa* (illicit brew) was already sold at a large scale in settlements such as Karagita in the 1970s. Furthermore, there have been continuous problems with thefts and armed robberies since at least the 1960s, especially at North Lake.<sup>165</sup> Also here, it seems necessary to put developments in a larger historical context. Nevertheless, European people living around the lake started to feel ever more threatened in the mid-2000s, after several Europeans had been killed in the area and when also farms became the target for violent robberies, especially around pay day (Seal 2011: 180).<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> KNA Nakuru, GU/9/1/188, "Local Authority"; *Daily Nation*, "Rural Road Worrying Traders," 13 February 1986; P. Oberlé, "On Safari"; *Daily Nation*, "Farmers Group Demands Better Roads," 17 September 2005; interview with S. Higgins.

<sup>162</sup> Macharia Mwangi, "Flower Farm Protest. Workers Demand Delayed Salaries," *Daily Nation*, 13 February 2014; *Daily Nation*, "Transport Paralysed as Locals Block Road," 10 January 2015.

<sup>163</sup> Ombuor, "No longer"; KNA Nakuru, 15/1/Vol. 1, AR of the Probation Office, Naivasha Division, 1999; interview with O. Rocco.

<sup>164</sup> KNA Nakuru, GU/10/5/201, Minutes of a security meeting in Olkaria Sub-location, 5 August 2005.

<sup>165</sup> *Daily Nation*, "Police Rout Gun Gang," 9 February 1962; *Daily Nation*, "Chotara Orders Demolition of 'Chang'aa Houses'," 28 November 1984; KNA Nakuru, GU/1/7/34, "Ndabibi"; Peter Mburu, member of the land-buying company Karagita (EA) Ltd., interview in Karagita, 25 October 2014..

<sup>166</sup> *Daily Nation*, "Police Shoot Suspect Dead," 3 April 2005; Michael Njuguna, "Delamare Farm Workers Live under Fear after Violent Raids," *Daily Nation*, 4 August 2006.

However, in early 2008 it became clear that not only wealthy land owners and farm managers could be targets of violence but also the migrant workers residing in the settlements around the lake. After the elections in Kenya in late 2007, diverse militant youth groups enticed violence throughout the country with the support of political leaders. This violence also hit hard in Naivasha. As described above, there were ethnic and class tensions, which rooted in historically shaped land relations in the former White Highlands. Ethnicity, class and ownership of land got intertwined due to both the colonial invention of tribal reserves and land policies after independence (cf. Kanyinga 2009; Boone 2012). Furthermore, as argued by Anderson and Lochery (2008: 339), more recent political discourses on ethnic territories ('*majimboism*') drew attention away from class differences and emphasized ethnic struggles over land.

In Naivasha, where thousands of people live together as tenants in crowded settlements whereas large tracts of private land are fenced off, the land issue has become poignant. However, the issue has primarily been interpreted in ethnic and not in class terms. The violence in early 2008 was preceded by rumours that Luo tenants would no longer pay rent if 'their' presidential candidate would be elected. These rumours created tensions between plot owners and tenants, especially after plot owners started to evict tenants out of fear for the looting of their property. These tensions eventually culminated in violence, which took the form of retaliation for atrocities committed against Kikuyu in other parts of the country, who had been displaced to Naivasha. Enticed by members of the Mungiki gang, some Kikuyu aimed to take revenge by attacking Luo, Luhya and Kalenjin residents. They claimed Naivasha to be 'their' territory. Around 27 January 2008, an estimated 48 people were killed and houses were set on fire. However, the violence did not take place all around the lake. It were especially Karagita and certain neighbourhoods in town that were badly affected. Furthermore, the flower farms were not directly implicated in the violence. Some migrants even took refuge in the premises of the farms. However, thousands of others fled away from Naivasha, some never to return again. Citizens from targeted groups were even collected by government buses to be transported to their supposed 'homes' in western Kenya. The situation caused a sudden shortage of labour, especially for the farms that did not provide housing. Nevertheless, the flower industry was little affected in the long run. Production was soon back on track when some of the workers who had fled, started to return after the calm had been restored (Anderson and Lochery 2008: 338-339; Republic of Kenya 2008: 113-128; Kanyinga 2009: 340; Lang & Sakdapolrak 2014).<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> Mwangi, "Post-election chaos"; *Taifa Leo*, "Waajiriwa Watoroka Mashamba ya Maua," 6 February 2008; Steve Mbogo, "Sector Braves Crisis to Post Growth," *Business Daily*, 28 May 2008; Daniel Okanga, "Fujo za Naivasha Zilikuwa ni Kulipiza Kisasi Mauaji," *Taifa Leo*, 19 October 2008; interview with Helen, a flower farm worker, Kasarani, 22 June 2016.



### 3.5 Conclusion: Naivasha's Past and Present

This overview of the history of agricultural wage labour in Naivasha has described the thorough but gradual transformation of the area. It emphasized that ecological change did not start with the rise of the flower industry but was initiated already with the arrival of the first European settlers, for instance through the introduction of alien fish species in the lake (cf. Harper et al. 2011: 93-96). Furthermore, it highlighted the presence of squatters and labourers during colonial times and the arrival of small-scale landowners in the 1960s and 1970s. Their history in the area is mostly not discussed in accounts on how Lake Naivasha has changed. Becht, Odada and Higgins (2005: 278) for example stated: "Before the horticultural developments, the population was comprised mainly of people born along the lake shores, or who were attracted by its peace and beauty." They claimed that the people who have lived in Naivasha "all or most their live" were afraid that the "paradise might get lost". Articles such as this one, which have been influential in international debates on Lake Naivasha, give a partial and elitist view on the reorganization of the social-ecological system.

The interpretation of Naivasha as a 'natural paradise' under threat nevertheless has become a powerful narrative. As argued by Appadurai (2013: 287), the production of a locality is an active, constant, collective and imaginative process. I would add that the production of 'Naivasha' also is a contested process. Interpretations of Naivasha as a 'natural paradise', as an agro-industrial hub and as Kikuyu 'territory' have been in competition with each other. Migrant workers and their interpretation of Naivasha - primarily as a place to work, as will be further discussed in Chapter 7 - have been little represented in public discourse and in scholarly literature on the area. As argued by Cohen and Odhiambo (1989: 29-30), history can be "material of power", and hegemonic historical interpretations of Naivasha have enhanced the control over land of some, while justifying the lack of access to land for migrant workers. This chapter has challenged some of these narratives by describing Naivasha's rich history as a place of agricultural wage labour. It has attempted to do justice to diverse experiences by putting the development of the flower industry in Naivasha in a larger historical context and by showing how the industry made use of an earlier transformation of the area, which already started in colonial times. Flower farms could take over large tracts of land that had fallen in private hands due to the colonial land tenure system and they could work with an existing system of agricultural wage labour recruitment.<sup>168</sup>

The following chapter shifts the attention to the workers in this wage labour system. It discusses why recent migrant workers chose to come to this area, which by now has turned

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<sup>168</sup> The flower industry is not the only global agro-industry that has been able to establish itself because of earlier transformations. Siscawati (2017) described how oil companies in Indonesia could make use of earlier "disturbances of the landscape" created by logging companies, which literally provided the plantations with the open space they needed.

into an agro-industrial hub, and elaborates on how these migrant workers have accessed jobs and housing in their new place of residence.

*Figure 1: Naivasha Railway Station, c. 1910, picture by J.P. Clark (image courtesy of Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)).*



*Figure 2: View of Lake Naivasha, c. 1930, picture by E.B. Worthington (image courtesy of Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)).*



*Figure 3: Satellite image of Naivasha in 1995 (data available from the U.S. Geological Survey).*



Figure 4: Satellite image of Naivasha in 2015 (data available from the U.S. Geological Survey; numbers of the settlements added by the author).



- |              |             |
|--------------|-------------|
| 1. Kihoto    | 5. Kamere   |
| 2. Karagita  | 6. Kongoni  |
| 3. DCK       | 7. Kasarani |
| 4. Kwa Muhia | 8. KCC      |

#### 4. Coming to Naivasha: Finding a Place to Stay and a Place to Work

The previous chapter described how the management of the first flower and vegetable farms that were established in Naivasha encountered enabling infrastructure and a small population used to agricultural wage labour. Nevertheless, these labour-intensive horticultural farms did not find a labour force of sufficient size in Naivasha. This chapter discusses how the flower farms have drawn on existing, historically constituted regional migration patterns and land relations, as described in Chapter 3, for the recruitment of labour. It argues that the flower farms - as other global firms - depend on inequalities and hierarchies created outside of the industry itself for the mobilization of labour (cf. Section 2.6.3). "Supply chains draw upon and vitalize class niches and investment strategies formed through the vicissitudes of gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, sexuality, age, and citizenship status" (Tsing 2009: 158). To exemplify this argument, this chapter discusses how some of these factors - most explicitly gender, generation and region of origin - have been used to 'produce' a labour force for the flower farms in Naivasha (cf. Freeman 2000; Salzinger 2003).

It furthermore describes the role of migrant's networks in their decision to come to Naivasha (cf. Ortiz 2002). I argue against an overly simplistic representation of the migration process in which migrants are perceived of as individuals who are 'pulled' to Naivasha exclusively because of a lack of economic options elsewhere (cf. Section 2.6.4).<sup>169</sup> The chapter addresses questions such as: who are the labour migrants? Why do migrants decide to come to Naivasha and what are their aspirations for their stay there? How do they find a rental house and a job upon arrival? Answers to these questions indicate that recruitment by the farms depended not only on the above-mentioned 'cultural' factors of inequality but also on individual migrants' networks and aspirations.

The first section of this chapter introduces three female flower farm workers whom I encountered in Naivasha and whose position shaped my perception of the migration processes and of possibilities on the job market. Section 4.2 discusses the main reasons for migrants to come to Naivasha. Finding a job was the most mentioned and most obvious reason. However, also other factors, such as social networks and a historically shaped culture of migrant wage labour in Kenya, shaped the decision of migrants to come to Naivasha. Section 4.3 discusses the strategies for finding a place to stay upon arrival, which in most cases implied finding a rental house in one of the workers' settlements. Descriptions of the labour market in Naivasha and of recruitment practices of the farms in sections 4.4 and 4.5 indicate possibilities and strategies for finding a job. Finally, Section 4.6 discusses the

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<sup>169</sup> See for instance Seal (2011: xiv) on "impoverished migrant workers", and Mwangi, "Naivasha Town": "With an estimated 50 flower farms spread across the vast Naivasha constituency (...), the lure of employment has always been irresistible to both the young and the old."

ambitions and aspirations of migrant workers after they have arrived in Naivasha. I argue that such individual ambitions have facilitated the demand for cheap and reliable labour of the flower farms.

#### 4.1 Three Workers

There are two women - Flora and Lucy - who figured prominently in my fieldwork, who figuratively speaking helped me 'arriving' in Naivasha, and who inevitably also figure prominently in this dissertation. I therefore reflect on their role in my research here. Furthermore, their life stories can also function as ethnographic vignettes, as they reflect aspects of the life of every migrant worker living in the settlements around Lake Naivasha. At the same time, the position of these two women cannot be taken to be representative of the position of all migrant workers. At the end of the section, I introduce Glory, another female worker, whose story in many ways contrasts to that of Flora and Lucy. Moreover, my conversations with this woman - although friendly in nature and informed by curiosity from both sides - were based in an unequal and superficial relationship between interviewer and interviewee. This interview is representative for the way I interacted with many of my interlocutors, more so than the enduring and more reciprocal relationships I developed with Flora, Lucy, their families and to a lesser extent with a handful of others. Whereas the more ephemeral, formal contacts provided broad insights, the repetitive encounters with a few provided more in-depth understandings. Moreover, these people to a large part defined my 'field' (cf. Okely 2012: 28). As Davies (2008: 93) asserted, ethnographers' "(...) personal relationships with informants are a part of their data, a very fundamental basis of their analysis."

Especially my connections to Lucy and Flora influenced the direction my research took and enhanced my personal well-being in the field. I aim to acknowledge their role here by presenting their life stories and by discussing my relationship to them. Let me start by introducing Flora.

##### 4.1.1 *Flora*

I was introduced to Flora already during my first short visit to Naivasha in November 2013. She was employed at Sharma Farm and I met her through my first assistant, who knew her from the time he had still been working for that farm himself. Our visit to her home in Kihoto was also the first time I entered a house in one of the settlements. I noted in my diary afterwards that it looked much better than what I had expected beforehand, after having read NGO-reports and literature on the settlements: to my surprise, Flora had a sofa and a television. When I returned in February 2014, I visited Flora again for a formal interview, and



we then started to see each other on a more regular basis. Later that year, when I came back for the long stay, she helped me finding the house in Naivasha Town that was rented by my research group. I asked her then whether she knew of anyone who would like the job of doing our laundry once a week. She immediately said she could do it herself and she started to come to our house on her weekly day off. I also regularly visited her in her house in Kihoto. Furthermore, Flora assisted me with my research, first of all through our numerous conversations. She also assisted me with finding interview partners and she accompanied me on a trip to Kisumu, where she introduced me to three of her former colleagues from Sharma Farm. I wrote the following about Flora in an emotion diary of September 2014: "She is a small lady who knows very well what she wants and she also surprisingly well understands what I want." Flora's frankness and sensitivity enabled us to develop an uncomplicated friendship, despite our different backgrounds and different positions in life, and this friendship has been a tremendously important resource during my research.

Flora was born in a village in Narok County in 1987. Her father was working as a foreman in construction and resided in Nairobi while her mother stayed with the children on the family plot in Narok. She cultivated land there and kept a few cows. Flora visited a primary school on a few kilometres walk from her home and then went to a secondary boarding school in Narok Town. After finishing school, she worked in the administration department of a local hospital before she decided to pursue a certificate in catering in Nairobi. Even with this certificate, she only found casual jobs and she finally came to Naivasha to try her luck there in 2006. She moved in with a friend from Narok. After three months, she found a permanent job at Sharma Farm and moved into her own room. She started as a general worker but after three years got promoted to quality controller. Her task was to inspect the harvested flowers and spot any deficiencies (caused by e.g. pests or careless handling of the flowers). Finally, she became a supervisor in 2014 and had 27 people working in her greenhouse. Flora told me she was glad that she only had worked as a general worker for a few years. She thought the work would make you stupid if you did it for a long period of time.<sup>170</sup>

Flora explicitly identifies as a Maasai. Only when I visited her parental home in March 2015 did I learn that her father was half-Kikuyu and had grown up with his mother in a Kikuyu household in Kiambu. He had only moved to his (Maasai) father's plot in Narok County when he inherited it. He had married a Maasai woman there. We went to visit them to attend a planned meeting between Flora's family and the prospective family-in-law of one of her sisters. During our visit, I noticed that another sister of Flora frequently switched from speaking Swahili to speaking Kikuyu - not Maa. This sister was living in Nairobi, was working in an office there

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<sup>170</sup> In Swahili: "utakuwa mjinga". This section is based on the author's field diaries from 2014 and 2015 as well as on a formal interview in Flora's rental house in Kihoto on 8 June 2016.

and was married to a Kikuyu man. When I visited this sister in Nairobi some time later, I noticed she had flowers in her house as decoration, a rare sight in Kenya and a sign of her aspiration to be part of Kenya's middle class. It was interesting to see how Flora and her sister had different socio-economic positions and related differently to their mixed ethnic background.

One reason for this might be the different ethnic background of their respective husbands. Flora met her partner James at her workplace. James is a Luo and his family originates from Kisumu County. James himself was born in Limuru, which is located between Naivasha and Nairobi, in 1978. He also grew up there. His father was working in a shoe factory and they were living in the company compound. The family only went back 'home' to Kisumu when James was in secondary boarding school. Consequently he never lived on his family's plot. After finishing school, James became a professional football player and played for several premier league teams in Kenya and Uganda. The last team he played for was the professional soccer team of Sharma Farm in Naivasha. He played there from 2004 to 2011, when he was forced to quit because of a sustained injury. He then got a job in the packhouse there. He continued being involved in football by training local teams and he aspired a career as a football coach.

Although Sharma had a workers' compound (*kambi*), James and Flora decided not to stay there because they did not want to depend too much on the farm. Instead, they both received a housing allowance with which they could pay the rent for a house in Naivasha Town. They made use of the daily company buses from there to get to work and back, which departed outside of Kihoto, the settlement close to town where they rented their house. They lived in a two-room brick apartment with an inside bathroom (without running water) in a compound with only four houses. This relatively well-equipped house had a monthly rent that was about twice the amount of the average rent among respondents in the survey, namely 3,000 KES.<sup>171</sup>

Even though Flora and James presented themselves as a married couple, Flora one day told me they had not yet been married: James lacked the capital to pay for the bride price. They had a daughter in 2008, who after Flora had returned to work was brought to a private day care centre. An older woman took care of her and four other toddlers at her house in Kihoto. However, Flora's daughter was already in primary school at the time I met her and only needed to be taken care of outside school hours. Flora had to be in the greenhouse by seven in the morning, but James would only start at eight o'clock and made sure their daughter

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<sup>171</sup> Equivalent to approximately €27. The exchange rate between the Kenyan Shilling and the Euro was fluctuating tremendously during my stay in Kenya. When I started my long period of fieldwork, at the beginning of October 2014, the exchange rate was €1 = 113 KES (Investing.com 2017). Section 4.3 discusses the rents in the settlements.

would get to school in the morning. Flora would be home by the time school was over so that James could use the time in the late afternoon for his activities as a football coach.

Flora and James' life in Naivasha has been far from smooth. Their daughter was born at the time of the post-election violence in 2008, which was a hectic and frightful time for this multi-ethnic family. They fled to Nairobi and later to Kisumu, until the calm was restored after several months. They initially returned to the rental house they had originally resided in but did not trust their neighbours and decided to move to another house in Kihoto. James told me that during the violent period, it helped him that many people knew him as a football coach - being a Luo, he could otherwise have been a target early on.

A few years later, Flora and James got in serious financial trouble when the farm they both worked in went bankrupt, as explained in the previous chapter. They lacked a stable income and most probably they even lost their claims to service payments for retirement and the savings that they had with SACCO, the saving cooperative connected to the farm. These were substantial amounts: Flora told me she alone had already saved around 90,000 KES<sup>172</sup> with the SACCO. After losing their jobs at Sharma Farm, they eventually found other ways to make a living (which are discussed in Chapter 7). The financial losses they had suffered made them decide not to apply for a job in a flower farm again. Their experiences with working in a flower farm were different from those of Lucy, whom I will introduce in what follows.

#### *4.1.2 Lucy*

I met Lucy on my first day of observation within Karibu Farm in December 2014. The production manager took me to the greenhouse where she was the supervisor and told her to show me the work procedures there. Although I tried to introduce myself properly and to explain what I had come to do, Lucy did not really listen. Her remarks in the following days revealed that she simply assumed I was a Dutch intern on my way to become a flower farm manager, as there had been a few before (although previous interns had all been male). For two full working days, she showed me the work in the greenhouse in the same way as she would have done with a management intern. Walking along with Lucy provided many insights, especially as she was training two new employees on the second day and I could simply join. After those two initial days, I also spent time in other parts of the farm. Nevertheless, every time I visited Karibu I would pass by Lucy's greenhouse to greet her. It only dawned on her then, after I surprised her with my strange questions, that I was not about to become a manager but was a researcher. Once she realized I was interested in the social side of things, more so than in the plants, she started to make suggestions of departments within the farm and of certain organizations in Kasarani that I could visit. After two months she also started to

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<sup>172</sup> Equivalent to almost €800.

invite me to her home in Kasarani. I therefore still regularly visited her whenever I was in Kasarani, even after finishing my visits to Karibu Farm. During these visits, Lucy would often give me something to eat, either rice during lunch time or tea with buttered bread in the afternoon. On most days she enjoyed having me around and we would talk about her work and her life. On a few occasions, she was obviously tired of the work and I would not stay long.

Although I never formally interviewed Lucy about her life story, my regular visits to her familiarized me with it.<sup>173</sup> Lucy was born in Bungoma County in western Kenya. After finishing secondary school in 2006, she came to Kasarani, where one of her uncles was living, to look for work. She was employed by Karibu Farm in the same year. Lucy started out as a general worker in the nursery department, where new seedlings were being produced, until this department was closed down. Due to the knowledge she had gained in that specialized greenhouse, she could become a supervisor in a regular greenhouse in 2009, a position that she has had since.

Lucy was committed to her work. She enjoyed the process of planting new plants. She also was respected and liked by most of her colleagues. She was especially close to some of the other supervisors, probably due to their peculiar position between management and general workers. She for example once went to visit another supervisor, who had a long-term illness, in his home village on a two-hour journey from Kasarani. Lucy also participated in several small groups (*vyama*) of around six colleagues, who would exchange goods such as sugar or oil, or small amounts of money. She was furthermore an active member of the company SACCO and was part of one of the SACCO's committees. I discuss these saving cooperatives in Chapter 6.

Lucy had met her husband George in Kasarani. George was born there, as his father had been working in the irrigation department of a ranch nearby. However, George moved to their 'home' in Western Kenya with his mother and siblings in 1998 because there was no possibility at that time to go to secondary school in the vicinity of Kasarani. George came back to the settlement only a few years later, after finishing school in 2003. He started working for Karibu Farm, which had just been acquired by the Dutch owners around the same time, on short contracts. After that, he found a permanent job in another flower farm nearby and eventually became a supervisor in the packhouse there.

Lucy, George and their two young sons lived in a one-room brick apartment on a plot with around ten other rooms located in the middle of Kasarani. Just as many other people did, they had divided up their room in three parts with curtains and sheets. They owned two beds, a sofa set and a small TV. They paid rent including water on the plot, although for drinking

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<sup>173</sup> This section is based on the author's field diaries from 2014 and 2015.

water they depended on a water supply by Karibu or on private water vendors. Lucy and George could have moved to a flower farm compound, since George worked for a farm that had some company housing. However, Lucy refused to live in a neighbourhood where everybody else would work in another farm than she did.

Lucy called me by my name but nevertheless still sometimes told her young son to say hello to "the mzungu". Despite her use of this othering term and her obvious pride in having a European friend, we somehow were still able to bridge much of the social and economic distance that was usually there between me and my interlocutors, perhaps because she had been the expert who had taught me the work and had embraced that role. In contrast to most Kenyans I met, she also seemed to suppose that I, being a student, was not wealthy. She once asked me whether my parents had paid for my fieldwork, and was visibly relieved on behalf of my parents when I explained to her that it was paid for by the university. On one occasion, I gave her a lift to Naivasha Town when I left Kasarani around noon on a Saturday. She wanted to go to the supermarket in town, a trip that she undertook at least once a month to buy staple food in bulk, which was cheaper than buying food in small quantities in Kasarani. When we arrived in town and I dropped her off, she took a crumpled note of 200 KES out of her handbag and gave it to me, "to buy a soda". The amount was more than what the travel by public transport would have cost her. I was a bit baffled, moved and also amused by this gesture, as this financial reciprocity was something I - as a well-funded European student - rarely experienced (and also did not expect to experience) in Naivasha. I simply took the note and thanked her.

#### *4.1.3 Glory*

I am aware that my perspective on the inhabitants of the low-income settlements around Naivasha has been shaped by my relationship to Flora and Lucy, especially since there are some similarities between them. Both of these women lived in a settlement, not on a farm compound. They belonged to the same generation (in fact the same as mine) and had a similar level of education. Both had a husband who was also employed in a flower farm. Furthermore, both worked as a supervisor in a greenhouse, and were therefore examples of workers who had managed to move upwards, at least at some point in time - although for one of them this situation did not last. The majority of the inhabitants of the settlements never managed to get this far. I also met many of them in the course of my fieldwork but these were often one-time or perhaps two-time encounters. I did not reach the same level of familiarity with them as I did with Lucy or Flora, for several reasons. One of them was that general workers often simply lacked the time to meet me regularly. Furthermore, those living in poor conditions probably felt less inclined to invite me to their homes. In addition, whereas Flora and Lucy were used to speaking Swahili on a daily basis, those who spoke a vernacular

language in their households had a more limited ability in this language. They mastered it enough to be able to work on the farms, but it was not the language they used when talking about their lives or about personal matters. This posed a challenge during interviews. A final reason was that I myself was feeling uncomfortable asking personal questions to less fortunate interlocutors. In what follows I introduce one of those less fortunate workers, Glory, and describe the interview I had with her. This description differs from the relatively successful stories of Lucy and Flora.

Glory was a general worker of Karibu Farm. She had been part of the team working in the greenhouse where I had conducted the interviews for the total network analysis. I asked to interview her during my last stay in Naivasha in June 2016.<sup>174</sup> However, I did not know where she was living and had to contact her via her former supervisor, Lucy, in whose house I also conducted the interview. During the interview, Lucy was busy with her laundry in front of the house and did not interfere with what we talked about. However, her walking in and out probably did influence what Glory was willing to tell me. Glory's grandson - a toddler - was also present since there was no one at home to take care of him. He was quiet during most of the interview. He might have been too impressed by the presence of an *mzungu* to say much. I brought Glory a kilo of sugar, which I gave to her after the interview, as I did more often when conducting a long interview. This was one of the few interviews that I recorded.

Glory was born in Ndabibi, a village in the hinterland of Lake Naivasha, in 1959. Her father had been working as a manual labourer in the ranch of a European settler and later turned to farming his own plot of land, which her mother had been doing throughout. Glory came from a Kikuyu family, who presumably could be considered as squatters at the time Glory was born. The family later acquired some land as officially theirs, but her brothers had inherited this plot and Glory herself did not own any land in Ndabibi. After she got married, she lived in several villages in the hinterland of Lake Naivasha, where she was involved in small-scale cultivation. Her husband, with whom she had six children, was a mechanic. However, he started to have eye problems and they did not have enough money to pay for a proper operation. He could no longer work, and Glory and her family decided to move to Kasarani.

Glory only then entered formal employment, in 2003, and worked as a bean harvester in one of the vegetable farms nearby. In 2008, while being almost fifty years of age, she got the chance to work for Karibu Farm as a general worker in a greenhouse, which she had done since. For a long time she had lived in a mud house without electricity, which until recently was common in Kasarani. However, in 2015, her landlord needed the room for himself and told her to move. She was not able to find a mud house, which she would have preferred

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<sup>174</sup> The interview was conducted on 18 June 2016.

because it was more affordable. She and her family had no choice but to move to a brick house with electricity. This was of course comfortable but they also paid a higher rent: 3,300 KES per month. This was more than the 2,000 KES housing allowance that Glory received. She thus unwillingly moved to this house: "Now after I was told to leave, I looked for a [mud house]. I did not get one, so what should I do? Will I not just squeeze myself, even if I do not have it? Because I will not stay outside."<sup>175</sup>

Glory was involved in some organizations in Kasarani. She participated in a saving group where women bought chicken (to rear) together and she was an active member of the Full Gospel Church, where she went to every afternoon after finishing work. And despite her tight budget, Glory tried to save money through participating in the SACCO of Karibu Farm. However, she had not been able yet to save enough money to purchase her own plot. When I asked Glory whether she sometimes visited her home village Ndabibi, on only a few kilometres away, she replied:

I do not even go. You know it is far, and sometimes you have this money of three hundred, but the fare to go and come back is six hundred. Now even before I arrive, I just look at that mountain, and I go back home. I stay very long [without going]. A year can pass without me going. And I like it [there]. But if I look at that mountain, I think I cannot cross it. It is far.<sup>176</sup>

When I asked Glory whether she had plans to retire, as she was almost sixty years of age, she replied that she could not afford to as long as her school-going children (at the time still three of them) depended on her for food, school fees and shelter: "you just push yourself forward."<sup>177</sup> Her preference would be not to work but she simply could not afford to retire. Furthermore, she would like to buy a plot of land, wherever, but she simply did not have the money to do so. Whereas many of the inhabitants of the settlements I spoke to had a clear idea of where they wanted to go after retirement, even if they had not yet realized their plans, Glory did not put much thought into such day-dreams. She had little hope of being able to buy a plot in the future and it made little sense to make plans for such an unlikely event.

The last question I asked during the interview was where Glory would like to be buried. Whereas most interviewees whom I asked that question replied that if possible, they would like to be buried on their own plot of land, Glory gave me the following answer:

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<sup>175</sup> In Swahili: "Sasa baada ya kuambiwa sasa 'toka', nikatafuta. Nikikosa nitafanyaje? Sasa si nitajifinjilia tu hata kama sina? Juu sitakaa nje."

<sup>176</sup> In Swahili: "Hata siendagi. Unajua ni mbali na saa nyingine una pesa hiyo mia tatu, eti kwenda na kurudi mia sita. Sasa kabla nifike ile mlima naiangaliaga tu na macho, ninarudi kwa nyumba. Nakaaanga sana. Namaliza hata mwaka bila kwenda. Na ninapenda. Lakini nikiangalia hiyo mlima, naona siwezi fuka. Ni mbali."

<sup>177</sup> In Swahili: "Unajisukuma tu."

My burial? Let me laugh. (...) All these things are just funny. Because now if you don't have a plot, won't you just be buried at the cemetery? (...) It is better you are gone and you will not wake up. It is up to those who remain behind, I will be gone. What should I do?<sup>178</sup>

This final remark of Glory - "what should I do?" - summarized the interview, from which transpired the feeling of being stuck. She had no other option then to continue working in the flower farm, even though she would like to retire. She could not even afford to regularly visit her nearby village of origin. Glory's situation contrasted with the more secure position of Lucy and the aspirations for the future of Flora. As explained above, this precariousness also heavily shaped my encounters with Glory and other struggling residents of the settlements. After this interview, I noted in my diary that I had felt sorry for Glory for not being able to retire. When I look back now, I realize that her powerlessness confronted me with my own lack of power to assist her or others in her position. And even though Glory did not ask me to assist her in any way, this consciousness made me feel voyeuristic and presumptuous when I prompted her to tell me her life story. I do not know whether Glory felt the same about my role but I could tell she had felt uncomfortable herself towards the end of the interview: my questions about land ownership and family relations confronted her with her own unfortunate position.

In contrast to Glory, migrant workers who had arrived recently, usually were hopeful about the future. The following section describes their reasons for moving to Naivasha.

#### 4.2 The Decision to Move

Only a minority of the inhabitants of Naivasha are born there: eight percent of the respondents in the survey named as their place of birth either Naivasha, one of the settlements around the lake or one of the villages in its hinterland.<sup>179</sup> Consequently, the vast majority of people living in the workers' settlements and on farm compounds had migrated to the area, either on their own as an adult or during their childhood with their parents. Some of the respondents said they had been born not too far away, in another area in the former Rift Valley Province of which Naivasha forms a part (22.2% of the 176 respondents in the survey). Most others said they came from a region in the former Western and Nyanza provinces (31.8% and 25.0% respectively)<sup>180</sup>: Bungoma, Kakamega, Kisii and Siaya are regions that were mentioned

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<sup>178</sup> In Swahili: "Mimi kuzikwa? Acha nicheke. (...) Mambo yote ni kucheka. Juu sasa kama hauna shamba, si utazikwa kaburi tu? (...) Bora umeenda na hautaamka. Waliobaki shauri yenu, mimi nimeendaga. Sasa nifanye nini?"

<sup>179</sup> However, as my assistant Richard remarked, the percentage of people born in or around Naivasha would probably have been higher if we had also conducted the survey in parts of Naivasha town.

<sup>180</sup> The non-response to this question was 2.8%. Tolo found similar percentages in her survey among 94 residents of Naivasha: 30.9% of her respondents originated from the Rift Valley Province (including Naivasha), 20.2% from Nyanza and 35.1% from Western.



frequently. Moreover, many of the migrants moved relatively recently to the place where they lived at the time of the interview (see Table 1).<sup>181</sup> This migratory background formed a crucial factor in the inequalities and hierarchies that the flower industry in Naivasha drew on for producing a labour force (cf. Tsing 2009). For one, it made the workers more dependent on their jobs in the industry, as they did not have their own house in Naivasha and had to pay rent. So why did migrants decide to come to Naivasha, when in many cases this move implied making themselves dependent on the flower farms?

Farm managers stated that people come to Naivasha in search of work. They referred to the unfavourable economic situation in the most common regions of origin, where few jobs are available and where land is scarce.<sup>182</sup> Similarly, both a general worker and a supervisor of Karibu Farm told me literally: "We come here to work." Tolo reported that 89 out of the 94 respondents in her survey said they had come to look for a job. However, this category also contained somewhat broader answers (e.g. "to look for fortune"), and therefore should not be interpreted narrowly as coming to look for a job specifically in the horticultural industry. Only nine of the twenty-two respondents in the ego-centred network analysis mentioned a job search as the primary reason for migrating (see Table 2). Notably, three of the respondents (all women) had sought refuge in Naivasha for either domestic or political violence. Whereas many labour migrants fled from Naivasha in early 2008, one of the respondents arrived in Naivasha in the same period after she had been displaced from her home somewhere else in the Rift Valley. Another respondent came to escape a bad marriage: she did not want to depend on her parents and decided to look for an independent life in Naivasha. In short, some migrants had other reasons than pure economic necessity to come to Naivasha. For them, it was a place to make a new start.<sup>183</sup>

In addition, most migrants came at a young age and originally planned to stay only for a limited time.<sup>184</sup> Their ambition was usually not to work in a horticultural farm all their lives but to make some quick money and to look for other income-generating activities afterwards, either in Naivasha or elsewhere. An important group of fresh recruits are school-leavers who lack the funds to continue with their studies. One employee of Sharma Farm told me he came

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<sup>181</sup> This table can be compared to data from Tolo, who asked in which year people came to Naivasha. 8.5% of her respondents came before 1996 while 30.1% came between 2011 and 2014 (the year of Tolo's survey). These figures indicate that migration rates remained high. Nevertheless, the high number of migrants who moved only after 2009 or 2011, does not necessarily imply that migration rates had increased: some of the earlier migrants had left again already (see Chapter 7) and consequently we did not find them in Naivasha anymore at the time of fieldwork.

<sup>182</sup> Interview with Jan by Gemählich, Tolo and the author; HR-manager of a flower farm, interview in Naivasha by Tolo, 9 April 2014.

<sup>183</sup> Cf. Warouw (2007: 105) on female factory workers in Indonesia, for whom a move to the city was more a lifestyle choice than an economic move.

<sup>184</sup> In general, and not unlike the overall population in Kenya, inhabitants of Naivasha are young. Among the 176 respondents in my survey (all aged 18 or above), the mean age was 36 years, while Tolo reported a mean age of 35 in her survey with 94 respondents.

to Naivasha when his parents could no longer pay for his school fees. He then came to work for the same farm as his brother did, for what he thought would be a period of three months. Nineteen years later he was still there.

For some, migrating simply was a part of life. It was the norm that young people spend at least several years away from 'home' and - more or less temporary - labour migration had become an integral part of society (cf. Oucho 1996). Many of the labour migrants had - like James and George - spent little time in the region of origin of their parents and had lived elsewhere since their early childhoods. They had stayed in Nairobi or elsewhere with their parents, who had been labour migrants themselves and who only went back to their home region upon retirement. In short, it has become more the norm than the exception to migrate away from one's region of birth, at least for a certain period of time. In such a context, and as argued by Ross and Weisner in their study on migrants in Nairobi (1977: 364), "[i]dentifying precisely the migration decision or even the actual act of migration (...) is difficult."

Nevertheless, region of origin and age clearly influenced migrant workers' aspirations and shaped their decision to come to Naivasha. Gender also plays a role here. What is remarkable in Naivasha is that, not only for men but also for many women, migration and engaging in formal wage labour are valid possibilities. In colonial Kenya, the government had implicitly defined migrants as 'male' and settlers would only enter into agreements with male squatters. Women could only migrate to the ranches in the role of 'wives' (Nelson 1992: 120; Cooper 1996: 266). In cases where women had migrated to the city on their own, they had few opportunities to find official employment and often had to resort to the informal sector (Bujra 2005: 126). "All told, men's opportunities (access to jobs, cash crops, skills, education), mobility and productivity increased during the colonial period while those of women decreased" (Nelson 1992: 119). Also in the period after independence, there was only a minority of elite and trading women who could afford to migrate independently of men. The majority of migrants were men, who sometimes left their wife and children behind in the village of origin to take care of the family plot. They thus also avoided the high cost of living in the urban areas. In this manner, families could depend on both the men's urban income and the women's farming activities. However, this was only possible for those who owned a plot of land, and the landless - many of whom were Kikuyu - often came to the cities with their wife and children (Ross and Weisner 1977: 371-372; Oucho 1996: 54-55).

Whereas that literature indicates that, for a long time, Kenyan women in urban areas had to choose between marriage and economic independence within the insecure informal sector, many women in agro-industrial Naivasha at the beginning of the twenty-first century did not primarily depend on a husband or on a small-scale business but were themselves

engaged in formalized wage labour.<sup>185</sup> Managers of three different flower farms in Naivasha mentioned forty to sixty percent female workers in their respective farms.<sup>186</sup> Dolan, Opondo and Smith (2003: 28) also estimated the total amount of women working in the flower industry at sixty percent. The number of women employed in the industry should come as no surprise when these percentages are compared to overall employment rates in Kenya, as recorded in the most recent census of 2009. It was not uncommon at all (anymore) for women to work: 48.1% of the working population was female (KNBS 2009). And whereas in 1962 there had been a gender imbalance in the population in Naivasha (only 85 women for every 100 men), the census of 2009 showed there were just about as many women as men living in Naivasha, indicating an increase in female migration (MEPD 1962; KNBS 2009).

Although, when seen from this angle, there was not a remarkably large number of women migrating to Naivasha, NGO- and media-reports on the flower industry emphasized the employment of women and took it as an indication that conditions in the industry were exploitative. In those accounts, women were portrayed as extremely vulnerable. This is an example from a newspaper article: "(...) the majority of poor people in Naivasha are women who have lost their husbands to HIV and Aids. (...) Being single mothers, they have little to complain about as some of them have a modest education and prefer half a loaf of bread than none at all."<sup>187</sup> Although some of the women were indeed single mothers who came to Naivasha from pure economic necessity, there were more diverse reasons for women (just as for men) to migrate and to engage in wage labour. Moreover, it is difficult to distinguish economic reasons from more personal reasons (cf. Nelson (1992) on women migrating to Nairobi). As described above, some women looked for shelter in Naivasha after they fled political or domestic violence. Others got married to someone living there and therefore relocated. The other way around, it was rare for a man to move to the place where his new wife was living. Some of the women who moved to get married, simply took care of the house, another option that was not open to men. Others decided to look for a job themselves to have their own income. Even though (labour) migration had become a valid option for both men and women, the decision to migrate was nonetheless shaped by gendered identities. However, the choice of women to look for wage labour employment in the farms was not by necessity a sign of extreme vulnerability but could also be a positive choice, which could for instance enhance their bargaining position within their households (cf. Mills 2003). Farm

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<sup>185</sup> Women's participation in wage labour was no longer exceptional on the African continent in more recent times, see e.g. Coplan (2001) on Basotho women migrating to South Africa in the 1990s. These changing migration patterns fit into to a new gendered division of labour in global industries, as shortly discussed in Chapter 2.

<sup>186</sup> Personal communication with the HR-manager of Karibu Farm; interview with manager Adam; HR-manager of a combined vegetable and flower farm, interview on the farm by Gemählich and the author, 23 June 2015.

<sup>187</sup> Mwangi, "Naivasha town." See also the earlier mentioned campaign by Hivos (n.d.).

worker Dennis for instance told me (in his wife's presence) that his wife had followed him to Naivasha and once there, had decided to look for a job herself. As Dennis continued to pay the rent, she could retain most of her own salary, which enhanced her independence.<sup>188</sup>

While the reasons for moving are clearer, the question remains why workers with no skills in horticulture choose to come to Naivasha, instead of moving to Nairobi or a town in their region where they could also find a job. There are several reasons for that. Farm worker Gabriel mentioned the relative affordable cost of living in Naivasha when compared to Nakuru or Nairobi.<sup>189</sup> Flora likewise told me that the rent for an apartment in Nairobi could be at least three times as high as the rent for a similar apartment in Naivasha. Another farm employee, who had previously worked in Nairobi, said that he had decided to move to Naivasha because he disliked getting stuck in the traffic jam in the capital city every day.

However, a result from the ego-centred network analysis (see Table 2) is most revealing here: regardless of the reason for moving, almost all 22 respondents already had relatives or friends living in Naivasha before they decided to come to the area themselves. As I explain in the following sections, prior connections are crucial for migrants when looking for a place to stay and a job upon arrival in Naivasha. As observed by Ortiz (2002: 401), the mobilization of networks in order to find a job in a new place of living is a common pattern in processes of labour migration in general. Furthermore, it already was a strategy in the 'White Highlands' in colonial times: "People moved to areas where their relations had settled and initially lived with them as they sought employment" (Kanogo 1987: 30). Likewise, prospective migrants in present-day Kenya also mobilize networks to find a place to stay and a place to work. They tend to migrate to places they are familiar with, due to for instance previous visits to family. Such moves together have resulted in sustained chain migration (Oucho 1996: 13, 79). I found that specifically in Naivasha, where few farms provided accommodation to their workers, prospective migrants regularly mobilized networks to find a place to stay upon arrival.

#### 4.3 Finding a Place to Stay

Migrants, especially those who came from far, often arrived alone, at least initially,<sup>190</sup> and depended on their prior contacts in Naivasha for finding a first place to stay. Fourteen out of the twenty-two respondents in the ego-centred network analysis had relied on a family member or friend for accommodation during an initial visit or during the first weeks or months in Naivasha. Some had initially only come for a short period of time: after bringing job

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<sup>188</sup> Interview on 3 April 2014. Cf. Wolf (1992) on the importance of paying attention to intrahousehold dynamics.

<sup>189</sup> Interview in a hotel in Karagita, 24 June 2016.

<sup>190</sup> 68.1% of the 94 respondents in Tolo's survey said they had arrived alone.

applications to the farms, they had returned home to wait to be called to work. Initial short-term visiting was a common migration strategy in Kenya (cf. Ross and Weisner 1977: 364; Oucho 1996: 80). Others had stayed immediately and simply continued to make use of the hospitality of family members or friends until they had found a regular job and had started to receive a salary. Those migrants who had already been married and/or had children before coming to Naivasha, often decided to bring their family over once they moved to their own rental house. However, there were also frequent stories about unlucky ones, who were forced to continuously stay with their relatives because they never managed to get a permanent contract and moved from one casual job to another. Because of the insecurity of income, they could not afford to look for a rental house and to bring their families over (cf. Dolan, Opondo and Smith 2003: 33).

As explained in Section 3.3, only a handful of the larger flower farms around the lake provided housing to the workers. Hence, the majority of the flower farm employees (and all other migrants) had to rely on rental housing built by local land-owners. Moreover, even within the farms that provided accommodation, there were a considerable number of workers that chose to stay in a rental house in one of the settlements or in Naivasha Town for various reasons. The choice was sometimes informed by a lack of facilities in certain farms. For instance, at the time I conducted the survey in the Sharma Farm compound, electricity had been cut off there because of the farm's financial troubles. Or the choice to stay 'outside' was a matter of status. Especially among the supervisors, clerks and lower managers, it was considered to be more prestigious to stay in Naivasha Town. Or workers simply took the housing allowance as an opportunity to supplement their salary. One of the employees of Karibu Farm commented on the nice housing of his colleagues from a neighbouring farm, yet at the same time said he preferred receiving a housing allowance and paying a low rent for a house of poor quality in Kasarani. In this way, there was some money left every month, which he could spend otherwise. Finally, the choice to not stay in a workers' camp could be informed by an implicit wish to evade control over one's daily life and a reluctance to depend fully on the farm. Several workers told me they had lived on a compound before but had decided to move out because certain economic activities (such as selling vegetables in the evening hours or keeping livestock) were restricted there, or because they were not allowed to freely receive guests at their home. Similarly, respondents in a focus group discussion from Gibbon and Riisgaard (2014: 109) stated they experienced living on a farm's compound as being "socially and economically restrictive." Furthermore, workers I spoke to in Naivasha seemed to realize that staying on a farm made them even more vulnerable if they were to lose their job.<sup>191</sup> When

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<sup>191</sup> According to Section 12 (c) of the CBA 2011-2013, an employee should be given a one-month notice to vacate the company house when the contract ended. In this dissertation, I refer to the full text of the CBA that I have access to, which is the one for the years 2011 to 2013. Anker and Anker

I told Lucy about the employees of Sharma Farm who had been summoned to leave their homes after the farm closed down, she said that risk was one of the reasons she had refused to move to the compound of the farm where George works. It would make them too depend on that one company.

It has to be noted that not all workers disliked living in what they called a kambi. Several workers told me they preferred the security and ease of staying there, or the vicinity to one's place of work. Nevertheless, due to the limited number of farms providing a compound, the majority of the workers and all other labour migrants ended up in a one-room apartment in one of the unplanned settlements. Construction sites were omnipresent and yet it was not easy to find a well-located and affordable house. When asked how they had found their apartment, residents said they had relied on hearsay in their workplace, had asked around at construction sites, or had made use of the services of a housing agency, where they would pay a small fee.

Housing agencies have become a blooming business in Naivasha Town and at South Lake. I was told that many small-scale landowners, especially those not living in Naivasha themselves, prefer an agent to handle the cumbersome business of collecting the monthly rents. The agency would take on the risk of non-payment and would retain a percentage of the rents as a commission for this service. These agencies struggled to acquire enough plots to manage. On the other hand, it was not difficult for them to find tenants: there were always plenty of people looking for a place to stay. Consequently, the agencies were quite strict with late payments. The agencies had a penalty system with fines, and ultimately would evict tenants who failed to pay.<sup>192</sup> When Flora and James did not receive their salaries from Sharma Farm, Flora said she was happy they had not rented their apartment through an agent. They would have been evicted, as they several times failed to pay the rent before the fifth of the month (as was the rule). Because they personally knew their landlord and had always paid on time before, they could negotiate with him and were allowed to pay later. Such an arrangement for later payment would not have been possible with an agent. Hence, the establishment of these agencies increased the insecurity of tenants. The agent I interviewed explained that especially in the months when payments of school fees were due - January, May and September -, many tenants struggled to pay their rents and would try to avoid her, which she tried to solve by going to their houses at dawn.

The need to pay a monthly rent was one of the factors that made life in these settlements expensive and stressful. The average reported monthly rent in our survey in the

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(2014: 57-58) provide an overview of benefits in a more recent CBA for the years 2013 to 2015, which shows slight differences, such as increases in minimum wages and allowances.

<sup>192</sup> Esther, housing agent, interview in the agency's office in Naivasha Town, 8 June 2016.

settlements was 1,529 KES<sup>193</sup>, and the monthly rents ranged from 400 to 4,500 KES. The rent would depend on the type of house (e.g. whether it was constructed with quarry stones or with mud) and on the location and neighbourhood. Houses located far away from the Moi Lake Road would usually be more affordable because houses located close to the road are favoured. One of the employees of Karibu Farm rented a house in Tumaini, the most distant neighbourhood in Kasarani (see Figure 17 in Chapter 6), and complained about the walking distance in the morning. It took her twenty-five minutes to get to work instead of the ten minutes it would take when living close to the road. In the settlement Karagita, living close to the road meant living close to the stops of the farms' staff buses. This saved the workers time and it also was deemed safer. Flower farm worker Dennis, who lived in Mirera, east of Karagita, told me he would walk twenty minutes to the main road and back to accompany his wife whenever she was working late in the packhouse and returned at dusk or later. He considered it too dangerous for a woman to walk through Karagita on her own at night.<sup>194</sup>

After arriving in Naivasha, the migrants did not necessarily stay in one house for the whole period of their stay: many of them continued moving within the wider Naivasha area. People would decide to move again, sometimes several times, depending on the house they stayed in (e.g. because of an increase in rent, or an opportunity for a better located place), a change in household composition (e.g. because of getting married or getting a child) and a change in job (e.g. because of moving to a farm with a compound). This mobility within Naivasha was illustrated by the survey results from Sharma Farm: thirteen out of the fifty respondents there mentioned they had first lived and/or worked in another place in Naivasha before moving to the farm's compound. The motivations to move are further illustrated by the following excerpt from an interview with Gabriel, an inhabitant of Karagita:

Now, like I said, when I arrived I lived with my relative. From then, when I was still doing these casual jobs, I started to cooperate with my friend whom I had met there and he was also living with a relative. So I cooperated with him, we looked for a small house. Then we stayed, we stayed, until he got another job in Nakuru. So he left, and I stayed behind. But the place where we stayed, was far from Karagita. Actually, there in the back it was cheap. So once I received a permanent job, I moved to Karagita. Ya, so from there I moved only once. (...)

*And this house, did you get it by just asking around and hearing about an opportunity, or how did you get it?*

No, this house was close to where I was staying. So where I was staying, it was a mud, clay, house, and there was no electricity. Although it had a cemented floor. So there I

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<sup>193</sup> Equivalent to approximately €14. It is a substantial yet reasonable amount when compared to the income of 5,000 to 10,000 KES that was most frequently mentioned by respondents in the survey (see Table 5).

<sup>194</sup> Interview on 3 April 2014.

stayed all the time until last year. But when last year arrived, and actually last year when I was married, so I had to move.

*Oh, you married last year?*

Yeah, sure. Now next door there was a plot, it was newly built, so it was just close to where I was staying. Now when [the construction] finished, I talked to the owner and he gave me one room, I got it.<sup>195</sup>

#### 4.4 Finding a Job: The Labour Market in Naivasha

As explained above, the most important reason for migrants to come to Naivasha was to look for a source of income. Some of these migrants came to stay permanently only after they already had found a job, but by far not all of them. The security they had in coming was the presence of family members or friends; not the security of finding work. Once there, which opportunities did the labour market in Naivasha provide, and for whom? Which role did migrant's networks and related factors such as gender play in their access to jobs?

According to one of the labour officers in Naivasha, the flower farms were the main employer around the lake. He mentioned vegetable farms, tourism ventures, construction companies and a brewery in town as other important employers.<sup>196</sup> This impression was confirmed in the survey, in which 53.4% of the respondents said they worked in a flower farm<sup>197</sup> and an additional 13.6% in a vegetable farm. Others were engaged in other wage labour (for example in construction, tourism or security) or had a small business (see Figure 5).<sup>198</sup>

These numbers show that many of the settlements' residents ended up working for a farm - either for short periods of time as casual or seasonal labourers or as permanent

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<sup>195</sup> I translated this passage from Swahili: "Now, vile nilisema, nilipokuja nilikuwa naishi na my relative. From then nikiwa bado kwa kazi zingine hizo za casual, tukashikana na rafiki yangu mwenye tulipatana huko na yeye pia alikuwa anaishi na relative. So tukashikana na yeye, tukatafuta kanyumba. Then tukakaa, tukakaa, mpaka yeye akakuja akapata kazi kingine Nakuru. So akaenda, mi nikabaki. But kwenye tulikokuwa tunakaa kulikuwa mbali na Karagita. Actually huko nyuma ilikuwa bei rahisi. So wakati kazi ikaja nikawa permanent, nikamove to Karagita. Ya, so from there nimemove only once. (...) *Na ulipata nyumba hii, ulipata uliende kuulizia tu, ukasikia kuna nafasi, au ulipataje?* No, hiyo nyumba ilikuwa ni, kwenye nilikuwa nakaa ni karibu na hapo. So kwenye nilikuwa nakaa, ilikuwa nyumba ya matope, clay, na haikuwa na stima. Although ilikuwa na floor ilikuwa cemented. So hapo ndiyo nimekaa hiyo muda yote mpaka last year. But ilipofika last year, and actually last year when I was married, so I had to move. *Oh, you married last year?* Yeah, sure. Sasa hapo next ilikuwa na plot, ilikuwa inajengwa mpya, so ilikuwa tu karibu na penya ilipokaa. Sasa wakati ziliisha, nikaongea na mwenyewe, akanipea room moja, nikashika."

<sup>196</sup> Labour officer of Naivasha Sub-County, interview in his office, 22 May 2015.

<sup>197</sup> In addition, 9.8% of the non-flower farm workers had worked in a flower farm before their current job (or in some cases current joblessness).

<sup>198</sup> Compared to similar low-income migrant neighbourhoods in Nakuru, as discussed in Owuor (2003), there were relatively many opportunities in Naivasha in formal employment. In Owuor's survey among 344 household heads, only 43.3% was formally employed whereas 40.7 % was 'self-employed' and 14.6% temporarily or casually employed.



employees. At the time of fieldwork, there were an estimated 35,000 employees within the approximately 55 flower farms in the wider Naivasha area (including the Kinangop towards the east).<sup>199</sup> The flower industry was thus the largest employer in the area. The more so since some of the farms also started other economic activities, such as vegetable production or the exploitation of a lodge or restaurant at their lakeside premises. The farms furthermore provided some indirect employment opportunities. As I learned during visits to Karibu Farm, much of the material used by the farms was imported, for instance the polythene used in the construction of greenhouses and the scissors used for harvesting. One farm we visited used old buckets from the flower auction in the Netherlands. Nevertheless, other tools and materials were locally produced, either within the farm (e.g. grading tables) or by local companies (e.g. dust coats). Local construction companies and private masons also profited from the presence of the farms. In this way, the farms created more employment opportunities in the wider Naivasha area than only the permanent job opportunities in the packhouses and the fields.

Nevertheless, the farms were by no means the only possible employer and migrants had a range of options. Figure 6 depicts three important economic activities taking place in Naivasha: tourism (on the left), livestock keeping and flower farming (sign on the right). Table 3 gives an overview of the jobs in Naivasha that were listed during the exercises in which I asked residents of the settlements to list job opportunities there. The table includes all types of jobs that were mentioned by at least five out of the ten participating groups.

In addition to these direct jobs and business provided by the farms and by other formal employers, the presence of ten thousands of migrant wage labourers also created an abundance of opportunities for small-scale business people. The services that they provided were wide-ranging, from housing agents and mobile money agents to traders in *mitumba* (second-hand clothes) and tailors to hoteli and cyber cafes (including the "Utulivu Playstation Cybercafé" in Kasarani, where, for payment, one could play video games).<sup>200</sup> Figure 7 depicts different opportunities for businesses in Karagita: selling *mitumba* in the market, a petrol station and motor drivers waiting for customers. The opportunities for businesses were further illustrated when a new farm opened up in the hinterland of the lake. During a visit to the farm in 2014, I noticed there were few people living in the immediate surroundings of the farm. When I passed the farm just one year later, I found new greenhouses and new houses for the managerial staff within the premises of the farm. Moreover, I also found a small settlement

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<sup>199</sup> This estimate was based on data provided by the KFC and in interviews, conducted by Gemählich and myself. We were able to gather figures on the number of employees for 31 out of the 54 farms (including plant breeders and propagators) we knew of in 2015, which gave a total of 24,695. The three largest farms in the area - with 10,000 employees in total - were all included and the missing farms were all small- to middle-scale farms. Our estimate can be compared to the total number of 37,000 employees mentioned by Happ (2016) in his appendix with an overview of farms in Naivasha, which he compounded with the help of a local union official.

<sup>200</sup> *Utulivu* means 'serenity' or 'calmness' in Swahili.

had emerged outside the gate. Dozens of houses and shacks had been built and there were several hotels selling tea and food. A handful of mitumba hawkers had positioned themselves close to the company buses where most of the staff would get on in the late afternoon. The expansion of the farm thus created opportunities for small-scale business people. Figure 8 illustrates the opposite situation, namely the closing down of Sharma Farm: because of a lack of customers, also surrounding hotels and shops had to close. These examples show the large influence of the flower farms on the overall economy in Naivasha.

Not included in Table 3 are less formal, sometimes even illegal, ways of earning an income, such as selling chang'aa, selling firewood, fish poaching and prostitution. Although most of these activities were already important in the period before the flower farms arrived<sup>201</sup> and were still practiced,<sup>202</sup> these were not recognized as proper 'job opportunities' by most of the groups. Whenever a participant mentioned these activities, other participants would object to calling such activities 'work'. But whether work or not, these activities were at the least another possibility for earning an income.

The wage labour market in Naivasha was volatile, influenced by national and global economic dynamics and heavily dependent on the performance of single middle- and large-scale farms. For example, whenever a farm changed hands, the contracts of all employees would be terminated. Usually, some or all of them would be re-hired again by the new owner, but they would lose all the privileges attached to long-term employment such as a higher salary.<sup>203</sup> The Sharma Farm financial problems had even more impact than these 'regular' takeovers that occurred from time to time. In the case of Sharma Farm, eventually all employees lost their job, over the course of several years. Whenever I walked around town or Karagita with James or Flora in June 2016, we would meet former colleagues of theirs in the streets. One was hawking clothes, another was making fishing nets and yet another one was working at a petrol station. Furthermore, a new middle-sized flower farm that had started up in 2014 and that continued to expand, absorbed a part of this experienced workforce. Thus, whereas some opportunities for work shut down, new opportunities could arise every moment. This was not only the case for the flower industry. Another example was tourism: in the period of my fieldwork, tourism to the country had decreased tremendously after a number of terrorist attacks elsewhere in Kenya. Both the employees of large hotels and small-scale entrepreneurs who organized boat rides on the lake or who worked as drivers for tourists - including one of my assistants - felt the financial consequences and had to look for other sources of income.

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<sup>201</sup> Interview with P. Mburu.

<sup>202</sup> As becomes clear from a newspaper clipping on a conflict over chang'aa in Mirera (Macharia Mwangi, "Women Storm Den to Flush Out Drunk Husbands," *Daily Nation*, 14 October 2014).

<sup>203</sup> See *Daily Nation*, "1,300 Flower Farm Employees."

The labour market thus changed over time. Moreover, it differed around the lake. Along the tarmacked South Lake Road, relatively close to town and with the majority of farms and hotels settled there, there was a diverse range of opportunities for both wage labour and business. In Kasarani, at North Lake, the inhabitants almost fully depended on a small number of middle-scale employers: a handful of flower and vegetable farms and a gated community that provided employment to security guards, masons and housemaids. This difference in dependence on horticulture along the lake also surfaced in the survey: 67.2% of the 64 respondents in Kasarani said they were working in a flower or vegetable farm, against 49.5% of the 62 respondents in Karagita. Moreover, as argued by Kioko (2012: 12), even the small-scale businesses in Kasarani were mainly fuelled by wages earned in the aforementioned firms. Lucy, who lived in Kasarani and whose household depended on the income earned in two different flower farms, put it like this: "the flowers are carrying us."<sup>204</sup>

Opportunities for work furthermore differed per person. Educational level and earlier work experience of course played a role but individual possibilities were also shaped by gender and, as we will see below in the discussion on recruitment practices of the farms, by social networks. Gender played a role in the decision whether or not to move to Naivasha, as outlined in Section 4.2. Moreover, it played a role in the choice of economic activity once there. Outcomes of the survey indicated that only slightly more women than men were employed in a flower farm.<sup>205</sup> Nevertheless, it seemed that men had a more diverse range of opportunities outside of the farms: 20.9% of the male respondents were engaged in either permanent or casual wage labour elsewhere, against only 5.5% of the female respondents. On the other hand, 12.8% of the women reported having no income of their own, against 3.0% of the men. This lack of income was in some cases a matter of choice: it was a valid option for some women to decide not to engage in income-generating activities and to depend on their husband or on family members - a situation that was not acceptable for adult men. However, the differences on the labour market were also influenced by different structural positions. Women on average had received less education than men, which diminished their opportunities on the labour market (cf. Nelson (1997) on migrant women in a low-income neighbourhood in Nairobi).

Furthermore, gendered ideas on which occupations would fit which individuals shaped the opportunities for men and women further. "Let me tell you, we all do all jobs these days", was what one of the women participating in the listing and piling exercise said. Nevertheless,

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<sup>204</sup> In Swahili: "Maua yanatubeba."

<sup>205</sup> That is, 54.1% of the 109 women against 52.2% of the 67 men. In Tolo's survey, the difference, specifically with regards to flower farms, was much higher: 86.7% of the 45 female respondents reported working in a flower farm against 59.2% of the 49 male respondents. However, these results might have been influenced by Tolo's smaller sample and by her sampling methods, which were mostly geared towards selecting flower farm workers.

her group in the end set apart two gender-specific jobs anyway, just as other groups did. Private baby care centres, where working parents would bring their children to during the day, were exclusively run by women. Motorcycle and minibus drivers were typically male. However, the most prominent example of a gender-specific occupation was fishing. This arduous and even dangerous occupation was not necessarily liked. However, it was one of the most profitable economic activities and therefore popular. Despite the ongoing controversies on poaching, fishermen were quite visible on the lake shores. Fishery allegedly provided an income to several hundreds of men in Karagita alone<sup>206</sup> and thus formed an important (albeit partly illegal) economic sector - in which there was little space for women, who were only involved in the trading of fish.

Some farm managers, government officials and NGOs claimed that the flower industry attracts far more job-seekers than it can absorb. Yet the survey did not show a remarkably high unemployment rate,<sup>207</sup> nor did the settlements during the day give the impression that there was a large number of unemployed people hanging around (although there undoubtedly were some). However, despite the range of opportunities, it was also clear that the demand for labour was lower than its supply: it was not easy to find a steady job with a sufficient income. The flower industry has been scrutinized for its low wages (see e.g. Anker and Anker 2014), and the temporary or casual labour in which some inhabitants were engaged, provided even less income. This scarcity of well-paid jobs forced people to settle for work with either little pay or tough labour conditions, at least until they found something better. Vegetable farms never had a problem with filling vacancies, despite the early working hours and the low salaries. Flower farms paid more but could have other disadvantages, such as being located far away from town. A newly established farm, located in the hinterland of the lake along the untarmacked North Lake Road, had five daily staff buses running: one to a nearby village, one to Kasarani and three buses to Naivasha Town. Employees of one of the vegetable farms, located far away from any settlement, were even more unlucky: this farm did not have staff buses, and there was hardly any public transport along this stretch. The workers were forced to either find a ride or walk to work, leaving the house before dawn in pitch-black darkness. These women - whom I occasionally gave a ride when coming back from Kasarani in the late afternoon - would have preferred working on a farm that provided transport, but they simply had not come across that opportunity yet.

The flower industry was also well aware that employees had few other (better) options: "On accusation that farms pay peanuts to employees, Ms Ngige told *Business Daily* in a past

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<sup>206</sup> *Daily Nation*, "Transport Paralyzed."

<sup>207</sup> See Figure 5: 5.1% of the respondents was unwillingly unemployed and 4.0% of the respondents categorized themselves as housewives. In Tolo's survey, 8 of 94 respondents said they were unemployed.

interview that the industry was a mass employer of unskilled people, explaining that '80 per cent of the people employed on flower farms are unskilled. These are people who would not secure jobs anywhere else outside the farms.'<sup>208</sup> Managers also told us that one of the advantages of Naivasha was the availability of good and affordable labour.<sup>209</sup> This abundance of labour and lack of other well-paid options weakened the room for employees to negotiate better conditions.

To cope with the low salaries and insecure circumstance, and to reduce their dependency on the farms, some migrant workers attempted to diversify their income by performing more than one economic activity. These activities could take place in Naivasha itself, for example rearing chicken, fishing, renting out motor cycle or cultivating (illegally) on riparian land whenever lake levels were low (cf. Kioko (2012: 40-50) on income diversification in Kasarani). According to Schneider (2010: 46), most small-scale farmers in Naivasha were labour migrants, who already had stayed in Naivasha for some time, who were in a position to negotiate access to land, and who performed additional income-generating activities. The most expensive investment was to acquire a plot of land in one of the settlements and to build rental houses there.<sup>210</sup> A more affordable option, which has become more popular recently, was to buy or lease a plot in one of the villages in the hinterland of the lake, such as Ndabibi or Moi Ndabi, with the purpose for commercial farming (Kioko 2016: 18). However, land prices were also on the increase there, and most migrants could only invest in land in their home areas or even elsewhere, wherever plots were affordable. As further discussed in Section 7.2.2., assets such as plots or livestock - even when located outside Naivasha - could provide an additional source of income.

Apart from investing in livestock or land, some migrant workers started a small-scale business on the side. One example was the supervisor of the night shift in the packhouse of Karibu Farm, who during the day made some money with his own maize flour mill in Kasarani. Another example was Helen, one of the members of the team I interviewed for the total network analysis. She originated from the Kisumu region and moved to Kasarani after a divorce, where she started a business in food stuffs. She lost her capital when she had to bridge a period without any income after she fled during the post-election violence in 2008. She was forced to look for a farm job when she eventually returned to Naivasha. However, she did not leave business altogether: to make some extra money, she would go to Naivasha town on her weekly day off to buy some vegetables with her salary. She would then sell these

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<sup>208</sup> Omondi, "Burying the Hatchet."

<sup>209</sup> E.g. interviews with Hans by Gemählich and the author and with a production manager by Gemählich, Tolo and the author.

<sup>210</sup> See the life story of a mitumba porter in Naivasha town, who was eventually able to invest in a residential plot in Kihoto where he rented out one-room apartments (Macharia Mwangi, "Mitumba Dealer's First-Hand Account of Success," *Daily Nation*, 26 July 2002).

in Kasarani every afternoon, after coming back from work. Despite this range of opportunities, many people working in the flower farms either lacked the time or the capital to start diversifying their income, especially those who were not permanently employed and moved from one temporary contract to another.

The discussion in this section shows that, although the labour market in Naivasha was defined by the horticultural industry, migrant workers had more options than only farm labour. The area offered many opportunities to make some money. At the same time, few of these opportunities secured a stable and sufficient income. Inhabitants of the settlements frequently used the word 'hustling' (in English) when describing their economic situation.<sup>211</sup> This term referred to the perseverance and patience needed when looking for a job that enabled one not only to meet the daily needs but also to make some investments for the future. Furthermore, as argued by Ortiz (2002: 397): "(...) the search for work is not an individual pursuit but an activity structured by family dynamics and by the character of migrants' social networks. It is also structured by capital flows, by producers' management strategies geared to reduce the cost of labor, by government policies, by the cash needs of small producers and by ecological conditions." The following section discusses this search for work in more detail.

#### 4.5 Finding a Job: Recruitment Processes

How could freshly arrived migrants access these different job opportunities? The most visible way of looking for employment was to simply line up at the gate of a vegetable or flower farm in the morning in the hope of finding a casual job. However, as outlined below, procedures for getting a more permanent job in a rose farm were more formal. Family members and friends already living in Naivasha were again crucial here: not only did they provide aspirant migrants with a space of living during their job search, but they could also inform them about job openings in their own work place.<sup>212</sup> Flower farm workers in the survey mostly had heard about the opening for their current job through a family member or friend (see Table 4).<sup>213</sup>

I asked John, a former employee of Sharma Farm who had returned to his region of origin Narok, whether he had already known anyone working for the farm before applying for a job there:

I knew many people there.

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<sup>211</sup> Cf. Kunas (2011: 55), who observed similar uses of the words 'hustling', 'struggling' and 'trying' to describe one's situation in Naivasha.

<sup>212</sup> Again, cf. Kunas (2011: 41), who likewise observed that success or failure in securing a job or starting a business depended heavily on personal contacts.

<sup>213</sup> These results can be compared to results of a survey conducted by Gibbon and Riisgaard (2014: 106), who used somewhat different categories and did their research across the whole of Kenya: 40% of the 99 respondents were recommended by a friend or family member, 43% applied at the gate, and 14% wrote a letter responding to an advertisement.

*From here in Narok or from Nairobi [where he stayed before coming to Naivasha]?*

From Narok.

*So did they advertise [the job] first or did you apply?*

They advertised.

*And people told you?*

They told me there is an opportunity, try it. I tried, and I got it.<sup>214</sup>

John was not an exception. All three of the former employees of Sharma Farm whom I interviewed in Kisumu, had found a job at the farm through either a sibling or a brother-in-law already working there. And Sharma Farm was not the only farm where personal connections played a major role. They were important in the recruitment processes of other farms as well.

The importance of personal contact might seem odd, considering that recruitment practices in the industry had become formalized by the mid-2000s. "[I]n response to the challenges presented by certification to and implementation of social standards," the majority of the farms had created official human resource (HR) departments (Riisgaard & Gibbon 2014: 278). Farm managers would emphasize that they had these formal procedures, and that there were equal chances to employment: "they only need to be able to do the work they have to do".<sup>215</sup> Through these formal processes, the farms attempted to avoid accusations of nepotism or discrimination. Conversations with both managers and workers confirmed that the procedures made it difficult to acquire a job only on the basis of a recommendation and without a formal application.<sup>216</sup> When I asked the HR-manager of Karibu Farm about the farm's recruitment procedures, she answered in decisively, leaving no doubt about the formality and transparency of its procedure. She told me they would put an advertisement at the gate, people would send an application, the HR-department would make a shortlist, and the general manager would conduct the job interviews and make the final decision.<sup>217</sup> Although the farm did not make immediate use of recommendations by workers, this system nevertheless favoured those in the networks of the employees, as it was mainly the current workers who would read the advertisement at the gate in the first place and who could tell their relatives and friends to apply. Some farms did not even make a public announcement. Adam, the

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<sup>214</sup> The interview was conducted in Narok on 12 June 2016. In Swahili: "Niliwajua watu kadhaa. *Kutoka hapa Narok au Nairobi? Kutoka Narok. Kwa hiyo kwanza waliadvertise au uliapply? Waliadvertise. Na watu wakakuambia? Wakaniambia kuna nafasi, jaribu. Nikajaribu, nikapata.*"

<sup>215</sup> Interview with a production manager by Gemählich, Tolo and the author.

<sup>216</sup> This had been different in the past: several of my respondents who had found their jobs around the year 2000 told me that they had been hired based on the recommendation of someone else.

<sup>217</sup> This procedure was an exception in the sense that it was uncommon for a general manager to be directly involved in the recruitment process.

general manager of a seasonal flower farm, told me that vacancies for senior positions would be put on the internet or in a newspaper. But whenever they needed general workers, they would use 'word-of-mouth' and just tell current employees to announce the job openings in the settlements where they lived.

Educational levels in the settlements were modest: 43.3% of the 176 respondents in the survey had finished primary school and 44.9% had a secondary school diploma. Only 6.7% had continued their studies after finishing secondary school.<sup>218</sup> However, the farms did not need educated or specialized staff for the majority of the jobs available, and they could simply recruit in the settlements. Some flower farms have recently started to require secondary education, even when recruiting general workers (cf. Gibbon and Riisgaard 2014: 106), since secondary school leavers are considered to be more reliable and disciplined than uneducated staff. On the other hand, in informal conversations, several managers expressed the difficulties they encountered in working with people who are "too clever" for the jobs they are doing: the managers perceived of these workers as looking for "shortcuts" instead of simply doing what they are taught, or even suspected them of trying to "trick" the management. Thus, it comes as no surprise that some farms continued to only require a primary school education.

I noticed that several training institutes in Naivasha Town offered short-term courses in agriculture and even specifically in floriculture, but I did not meet many flower farm workers who had taken such a course. Most employees were trained within the farms and therefore did not benefit from such a certificate. And even vacancies for more specialized positions, such as for security guards, for scouts who had to monitor plant diseases and even for supervisors, were regularly filled by general workers who were already employed by the farm and who had not followed any external training. They were simply trained internally. Only managers were commonly required to have a diploma of a higher education institute. Nevertheless, even these managers claimed that they had learned their work primarily 'in the field' and not from books. The foreign top managers sometimes had an educational background in floriculture, but it was more important that they already had gained experience in flower farming before coming to Kenya. Likewise, many Kenyan managers who had a diploma or degree initially had only been able to acquire a job as a supervisor or even as a general worker, as they had not gained any experience yet. In other words, education in itself was not sufficient. The exception to the relative unimportance of education would be specialized managerial positions in, for instance, the HR-department or in irrigation. For these

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<sup>218</sup> The remaining 5.7% had not finished any formal education. However, some of those who had finished only primary or secondary education, had gained a certificate in for instance tailoring or computer studies, or a driver's licence (15.7% of the respondents).



positions, one would usually need a specific diploma. Yet, overall, education was not decisive in accessing jobs in the flower industry.<sup>219</sup>

Whereas managers needed some education and most of all experience, for general workers even previous work experience was not necessary to get hired by a farm. Of the 94 flower farm workers we interviewed in the survey, 77.7% had no experience in the flower industry before they had started their current job.<sup>220</sup> Moreover, some of the migrants arrived in Naivasha without having *any* experience in formal employment. One of the employees of Karibu Farm was 29 when she had moved from a village close to Kisumu to Naivasha in 1997. She had only finished primary school and had not been involved in any wage labour since: "at home, there is only agriculture".<sup>221</sup> She nevertheless could immediately start to work in a flower farm on a temporary contract and soon after was employed permanently in another farm. She was not an exception: although previous experience in wage labour, especially on a farm, could be an advantage when applying for a position as general worker, it usually was not a requirement. The only thing one typically would need, was a certificate of good conduct from the police, and for some of the heavier jobs, such as spraying pesticides, a doctor's statement about one's health.<sup>222</sup>

How job positions were announced, meant it was common to hear that people had one or several siblings, cousins and aunts or uncles who were working in the same farm.<sup>223</sup> I heard of many such cases during visits to Karibu Farm, even though this farm was strict on having a formal, open application procedure. This pattern influenced the overall composition of the workforce, as applicants regularly originated from the same region as current employees. Officially, region of origin - related to the more sensitive issue of ethnicity - did not play any role in recruitment processes. Managers would emphasize that everyone had an equal chance to get a job in their farm, regardless of education level, ethnic background, age or gender. But an unintended effect of the channels through which vacant positions were announced was that the desired equality did not always materialize in practice.

Furthermore, even though explicit discrimination was not acceptable, certain naturalized preferences and discourses played a role. As Salzinger (2003: 36) wrote on the

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<sup>219</sup> Personal communication with managers and other employees of Karibu Farm during farm visits; interviews with a production manager by Gemählich, Tolo and the author and with an HR-manager of a combined vegetable and flower farm by Gemählich and the author.

<sup>220</sup> These numbers are comparable to results from Gibbon and Riisgaard (2014: 105): 76.1% of their 113 respondents across Kenya had not had previous experience in the flower industry.

<sup>221</sup> At least when she left Kisumu, she added. I translated this quote from Swahili: "Kwetu kulima tu". Mary Achieng, long-term resident of Kasarani, interview in Kasarani, 11 February 2015.

<sup>222</sup> Conversation with the HR-manager of Karibu Farm.

<sup>223</sup> The classification of siblings and cousins in Swahili is different to that in English, which complicates the interpretation of my data on social networks. For instance, *dada* could mean both sister and the daughter of one's mother's sister. Although interviewees sometimes used the English terms to refer to their relatives, when an interview was conducted in Swahili, it was not always clear whether they meant their siblings or their cousins.

role of gender in recruitment practices of global factories in Mexico: "gender intervenes because it is the terrain upon which the question of who looks like a maquila worker, and who doesn't, is decided, thus establishing the context within which hiring takes place and production is initiated." In these factories in Mexico, 'femininity' provided the norm for hiring, even if also some men were employed. I argue that both gender and region of origin (if not ethnicity) likewise provided an implicit norm for hiring in the case of flower farms in Naivasha, despite official procedures that try to create equal chances. Unarticulated ideas about 'who looked like a flower farm worker' (and who did not) inevitably shaped the recruitment practices of the farms. As a (self-declared) Maasai spokesperson said in an interview with Tolo: "You can't say that Maasai people don't want to work! Maasai are good workers, but no one wants to employ them, because they have this bad image, that they are cattle herders and don't know about farming."<sup>224</sup> This spokesperson even accused HR-managers of using 'tribe' as the main criteria in hiring. However, in practice, the formal procedures made it difficult to openly favour a certain ethnic group over another. Nevertheless, when asked to explain imbalances in their workforce, (Kenyan) HR-managers regularly referred to group attributes, implicating that certain groups were less willing or less capable of working in farms than others. One HR-manager pointed at the long history of labour migration among people from western Kenya, and furthermore claimed that 'Kikuyu' were business-oriented and not interested in wage labour.<sup>225</sup> This explanation illustrates the prevalence of naturalized ideas on economic activities of ethnic groups (I take up the topic of people's own preferences in Section 4.6).

Hence, the answer to the question "who looks like a flower farm worker" was partly based on the region of origin of applicants, and inevitably (even if not explicitly or even consciously) influenced choices made in recruitment processes. These implicit imaginations of 'the worker', in combination with the practice of advertising open positions at the gate or via current employees, resulted in an imbalanced work force in some of the farms. For instance, of the fifty respondents in the survey who lived on the Sharma Farm compound, 52.0% had been born in Western Province and 34.0% in Nyanza Province.

As outlined above, farms also tended to have an unbalanced workforce when it comes to gender, with relatively many female employees. There was a perception (especially on the part of NGOs)<sup>226</sup> that the flower farms hired young women because they were easily exploitable. Working women in other global industries have been thought of as being in a stage between school and marriage, which justified paying them only a 'single's salary' (cf. Wolf 1992: 117; Kim 1997: 6). However, in the horticultural industry in Naivasha, the position of women was different. First of all, farms did not only hire women who were very young: some

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<sup>224</sup> Maasai-representative, interview in Naivasha by Tolo, 22 May 2014.

<sup>225</sup> Interview with an HR-manager of a flower farm by Tolo.

<sup>226</sup> See the campaign-website of Hivos (n.d.), cited in Chapter 1.

female respondents in the survey had already been in their thirties when they had started employment on a farm. For instance Glory, whom I introduced above, was already 44 years old. Moreover, like Gibbon and Riisgaard (2014: 118), I found that even though women were overrepresented in the worst-paying positions, women and men working in the same type of job were paid equal wages. The idea of a wage-earning woman, either single or contributing to a household income, was not as alien or exceptional in Kenya as in some other contexts where global industries hired women (cf. Ong 1987; Wolf 1992) and therefore could not justify lower wages. In other words, the vulnerability of women that NGOs have presupposed is not given; it is context-dependent (cf. Freeman 2000). The flower farms in Naivasha did not prefer employing women simply because they could pay them less or because they expected little resistance from them. More subtle, context-dependent gendered ideologies played a role. In contrast to the role of ethnicity, gender was a factor that was more openly discussed. Certain types of (physically demanding) jobs were not deemed fit for women. It was plainly unthinkable to hire a woman for spraying chemicals or for working in the night shift. This gendered division of labour, which I discuss in more detail in Section 5.7, had grown into a given: it was not achieved consciously but, in the words of a manager, "developed on its own".<sup>227</sup>

Thus, despite the formalization, the recruitment processes did not automatically create a balanced workforce; quite the opposite, recruitment required little effort from the farms. Both the initial accommodation of potential workers and the advertising of jobs was mainly taken up by the existing work force. This dynamic system of chain labour migration was not a creation of, and was also not unique for, the flower industry. It had been shaped by changing land and labour relations since colonial times (see Chapter 3). Global industries in other countries sometimes had to involve the local government to access labour (Ong 1987; Wolf 1992), especially in the initial stages. But the flower industry in Naivasha could tap into and expand on an existing system of chain labour migration in Kenya.

#### 4.6 Finding a Job: Migrant Workers' Preferences

As the previous section clarified, the flower industry could easily find employees in Naivasha. The reason for farms to install HR-departments was not a difficulty in attracting labour but outside pressure to formalize the recruitment procedures (cf. Gibbon and Riisgaard 2014: 124-125). From a global perspective, it therefore might look as if the industry was exploiting a proletarianized workforce, as there was an abundance of labour available. Nevertheless, on a local level, the presence of the industry implied opportunities for individuals (cf. Friedemann-Sánchez (2009: 4) on the cut flower industry in Colombia). How did migrant workers in

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<sup>227</sup> Interview with Jan by Gemählich, Tolo and the author.

Naivasha themselves evaluate the work in the flower farms? Did they perceive of the work as exploitation or as an opportunity? How did it compare to other possibilities on the local labour market? And did those who "looked like flower farm workers" in the eyes of an HR-manager (cf. Salzinger 2003: 36) also imagine themselves as such?

Perceptions on the industry became especially clear through the listing and ranking exercises. The main goal of the migrants seemed to be to make a decent living, regardless of the type of job: "is not any job good?"<sup>228</sup> When I met Flora for the first time, I asked her whether she liked her work in a flower farm. She laughed and then said she liked it because it helped her to survive. For her, as for many other migrants, the work in the flower farms was something they would resort to when there were no other, better-paying options available.<sup>229</sup> Yet, preferences and dislikes with regards to jobs were not always purely economically motivated. For some of the workers, it was a positive choice to apply for a job on a flower farm. Dennis, who tidied up the greenhouses, said that he liked his work because he liked seeing how the flowers grow.<sup>230</sup> And a supervisor in the Karibu Farm packhouse told me he had shortly worked in a flower shop in his home town and had discovered there that he liked working with flowers.<sup>231</sup> Especially at the supervisory and management level, working in the flower industry could be a positive choice. One manager, upon being asked whether he liked working in a flower farm, even called it his hobby.<sup>232</sup> Another manager expressed his explicit interest in the industry and said he liked the dynamics, which make the work exciting.<sup>233</sup> On the other hand, manager Adam told me he advised his children not to look for a career in horticulture: he found it a strenuous job as he had to navigate between the divergent interests of the workers, the company directors and the consumer market.

Unlike Dennis, most general workers were not particularly attracted to the work they did. They chose this job because of the security it gave. The listing and ranking exercises in Kasarani showed that work in the flower farms was highly appreciated there because of the likelihood of getting a permanent contract. And especially for specialized positions, the labour conditions in farms were often favourable when compared to jobs elsewhere. John, who had worked as an electrician for Sharma Farm, gave the following explanation for his decision to apply for a job there:

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<sup>228</sup> Quote from a discussion during a listing exercise on 6 December 2014. In Swahili: "Si kila kazi nzuri?"

<sup>229</sup> I here paraphrased the conclusion from the discussion cited in the previous footnote. In Swahili: "Flower farm wanafanya kwa sababu hawana otherwise".

<sup>230</sup> Interview on 7 March 2014.

<sup>231</sup> Cf. Friedemann-Sánchez (2009: 58) on the flower industry in Colombia: women there chose to work in farms out of economic necessity but also, for example, because they took pride in their skills.

<sup>232</sup> Assistant production manager of Sharma Farm, interview on the farm by Gemählich, 4 November 2014.

<sup>233</sup> Interview with Hans by Gemählich and the author.

It was good because with Kenya Power I only got a casual job. It was not permanent. I worked for three years with Kenya Power. I waited, and then I saw they just kept on renewing the contract. Now I got this other permanent job. I saw that it was better. I left. I looked at many things. You know there was a school there, there was a house there in Naivasha with that company. Now I saw that it was better, and I came.<sup>234</sup>

On the other hand, many people disliked the labour regime and the strict work rhythm of the farms. In a listing and ranking exercise in Karagita, it was explained that flower farm work is insecure because of the dependency on the management and the need to comply. In the perception of these residents of Naivasha, who were not working for a farm themselves, an employee could be fired after being repeatedly late or after speaking up. The dependency on the employer in wage labour was an important reason for these respondents to choose to engage in small-scale business ('self-employment'). Another reason to dislike the farm work was the strict time management, which I discuss further in Section 5.3. Flora's husband James joked that he wanted to leave his job in a flower farm and that he planned to sell *maandazi* (a type of doughnuts) outside the gate of the compound where I lived. This business would perhaps not be viable but, as he said, he would at least be able to plan his own time.

Whether someone appreciated work in the flower industry and the conditions attached to it, partly depended on traits such as level of education, region of origin and gender. Some people tried to 'escape' from flower farm work by continuing their education. It was not uncommon to study in addition to one's job.<sup>235</sup> Other, young, workers saved money to pay for further education later on. However, a better education was not a guarantee of a better job. General workers with a relatively high education level could be frustrated about the lack of opportunities. A union representative within Karibu Farm told me: "The work here is hard. A lot of us have studied but there is just no work." Others once did have a better job but had lost it. After having been fired, a former quality manager in a large-scale horticultural farm had to accept a job as a general worker elsewhere. He was very unsatisfied with his new position, which in his opinion was 'a woman's job'. Working as a general worker clearly was a step back, and not only the lower salary but also the loss of status and influence fell hard on him.

Gendered ideas on farm work were also expressed during the listing and ranking exercises, where a few men - including James - expressed their unwillingness to accept a job as a general worker. These men thought the monotonous work of harvesting in the greenhouse and grading flowers in the packhouse (that is, preparing the flowers for shipment)

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<sup>234</sup> In Swahili: "Ilikuwa nzuri kwa sababu Kenya Power nilipatiwa kazi casual. Haikuwa permanent. Nikafanya mwaka tatu kwa Kenya Power. Nikangoja, nikaona tu wanarenew tu. Sasa hii kazi nyingine nikapata permanent. Nikaona ni afadhali. Nikafanya nitoke. Nikaangalia mambo mengi. Unajua pale iko shule, pana nyumba pale Naivasha kwa hiyo kampuni. Sasa nikaona iko afadhali, nikakuja."

<sup>235</sup> Six of the respondents in the survey were studying in addition to their job.

was more 'fitting' for women. They stated that men only accepted this work because there were simply no other options

Even though flower farm work was not appreciated by everyone, it was generally liked better than work in vegetable farms. Work there was more demanding because of early working hours: work could start as early as 5 a.m. The vegetable farms also had poorer employment conditions than flower farms, for instance lower payment and the prevalence of temporary, instead of permanent, contracts. These discrepancies in labour conditions were especially clear in farms that produced both vegetables and flowers.<sup>236</sup> Some migrants first made a living with a casual or temporary job in a vegetable farm upon arrival in Naivasha, but they would usually switch whenever an opportunity in a flower farm arose. Some never got that chance. I was once asked by a lady in Kasarani to recommend her to the HR-manager of Karibu Farm.<sup>237</sup> She had been working on and off in (the same) vegetable farm for many years. However, being a single mother with no other source of income, she always had difficulties making ends meet during the off-season. Her request indicated that a job in a flower farm was more desirable than work in a vegetable farm.

Engaging in small-scale business was preferred over farm work (whether flowers or vegetables) because of the freedom and independence attached to it. Joking remarks about possible businesses such as the one made by James and discussions during the listing exercises indicated that many flower farm workers aspired to quit wage labour and start their own business. At the same time, they realized that business was more insecure than wage labour: one's income was dependent on the income of the customers. Participants in the listing exercises explained that craftsmen in Kasarani - which was not so well connected to Naivasha Town - were often out of work because there were relatively few customers around. And government interference added to this insecurity: some types of business needed a costly trading licence (Kioko 2012: 47). Other possible income-generating activities (such as selling chang'aa) were prohibited. Hence, although doing business was generally preferred over engaging in wage labour, security of employment was an important reason to appreciate flower farm work.

#### 4.7 Conclusion: The Use of Networks

This chapter showed that the flower farms did not create a new workforce but tapped into and expanded on an existing system of chain labour migration in Kenya. It furthermore discussed

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<sup>236</sup> Interview with the assistant manager of a vegetable farm; interview with an HR-manager of a combined vegetable and flower farm by Gemählich and the author.

<sup>237</sup> As this farm had the rule of not hiring anyone based on a recommendation, I could only promise to inform her whenever I heard about a job opening.

the aspirations of farm workers and small-scale business people migrating to Naivasha. It also described how they found a house to stay and how they found a job. It showed that whether these migrants were recruited by the farms, whether they decided to stay in a 'kambi' or to rent a house in a settlement and whether they appreciated this type of work was all influenced by personal traits such as level of education, region of origin and gender. Nevertheless, the migrants' decisions together have ensured the industry's access to a stable and experienced labour force - a crucial factor in its success, as the following chapter will argue.

Table 1: Period of moving to the current place of residence (n=176).

Period	Number of respondents	%
Before 1995	9	5.1
1995-1999	18	10.2
2000-2004	39	22.2
2005-2009	35	19.9
2010-2015	65	36.9
Never moved / year unknown	10	4.8

Table 2: The 22 respondents in the ego-centred network analysis and their move to Naivasha.

	M/F	Year of birth	County of birth	Occupation	Move	Reason for moving to Naivasha	Contact person
1	M	1986	Meru	Flower farm	2009	Came to visit and stayed	Sibling
2	M	1980	Bungoma	Flower farm	2008	Came to visit and stayed	Friend
3	F	1978	Nakuru	Hotel	2007	Came with parents	Parents
4	M	1980	Nyamira	Security guard	2010	Job transfer	Company
5	F	1972	Laikipia	None	1995	To look for a job	Sibling
6	F	1978	Bungoma	Flower farm	2012	Fled from violence	Sibling
7	M	1984	Vihiga	Small business	2003	To look for a job	Sibling
8	F	1982	Kisii	Small business	2005	Fled from violence	Sibling
9	M	1966	Homa Bay	Flower farm	1991	To look for a job	Sibling
10	F	1967	Nakuru	Vegetable farm	2007	Fled from violence	Sibling
11	M	1988	Bungoma	Flower farm	2014	To look for a job	Relative
12	M	1973	Narok	Flower farm	2003	To look for a job	Relative
13	F	1992	Murang'a	None	2015	Came to get married	Spouse
14	F	1977	Nyandarua	Vegetable farm	2012	To look for a job	Sibling
15	M	1990	Naivasha	Casual labour	-	-	-
16	F	1983	Homa Bay	Flower farm	2004	To look for a job	Sibling
17	M	1986	Kisumu	Flower farm	2010	To look for a job	Friend
18	F	1983	Naivasha	None	-	-	-
19	F	1975	Nakuru	Teacher	1985	Came with parents	Parents
20	F	1988	Nyandarua	Flower farm	2003	Came with parents	Parents
21	F	1988	Kakamega	Flower farm	2012	Came to get married	Relative
22	F	1989	Kakamega	Small business	2012	To look for a job	Friend



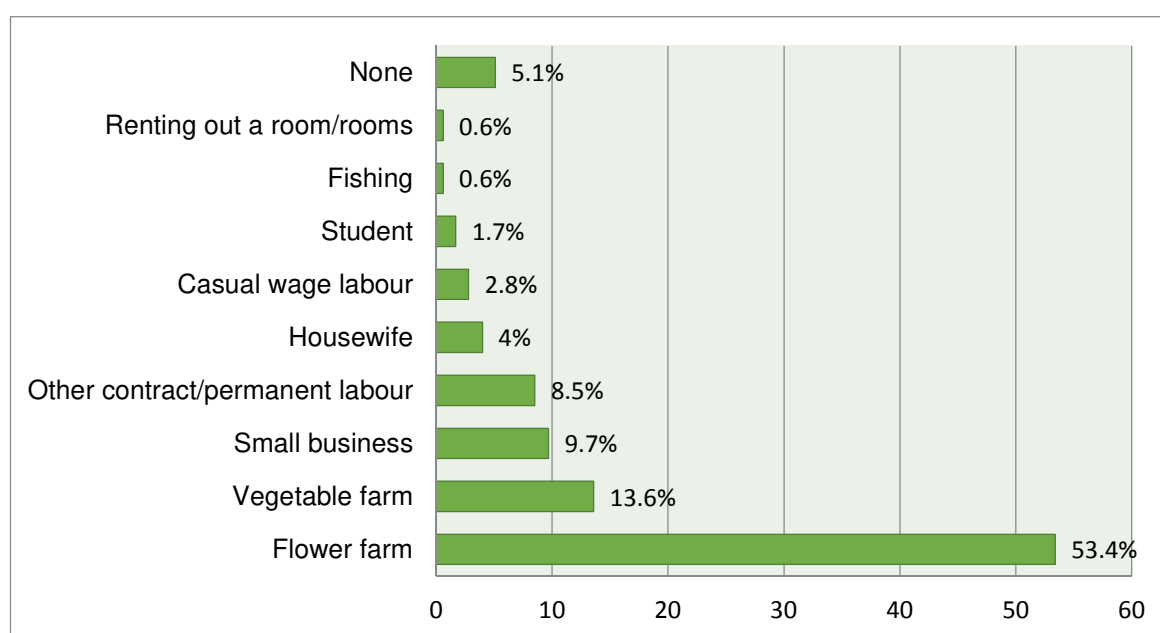
Table 3: Job opportunities mentioned by at least five of the ten groups in the listing and piling exercise.

Times mentioned	Types of job
5	Bar tender; mobile money agent; selling clothes or goods in the local market
6	Baby care; construction work; vegetable farm labourer; water vending
7	Motorcycle driver; small-scale business (e.g. selling fish); minibus driver or tout; shopkeeper
9	Flower farm labourer; employee in a hotel, restaurant or hoteli
10	Fishing

Table 4: Ways in which respondents learned about a farm vacancy (n=93).

	Number of respondents	%
Via a family member/friend	68	73.1
Via a broker	1	1.1
Via an advertisement at the gate	13	14.0
Via an open application	11	11.8

Figure 5: Main occupation in Karagita, Kasarani and the Sharma Farm compound (n=176).





*Figure 6: Three economic activities taking place along South Lake Road: Tourism, livestock keeping and flower farming (gate on the right) (picture by the author, 2014).*



*Figure 7: Business opportunities in Karagita (picture by the author, 2016).*



*Figure 8: Closed makeshift shops outside Sharma Farm (picture by the author, 2016).*



## 5. Inside the Farms: Rhythms and Hierarchies

"Working with flowers is like working with people."<sup>238</sup>

This comparison was made by Hans, the first flower farm manager my colleague Andreas and I spoke to. Hans told us he likes his job: not one day is the same. He explained that flowers are a natural product and therefore are affected by changing weather conditions and diseases. Furthermore, the demand for flowers also fluctuates with the time of the year and the weather conditions in Europe. I could see the challenges this volatility could cause. However, I only realized much later that a large part of the unpredictability did not derive from the crop itself or from the market but from labour. Flower growing is not only *like* working with people; it also *involves* working with people. Subsequent conversations with foreign and Kenyan managers revealed that perhaps the largest challenge was not to manage the crop or the unpredictability of the market but to control the labourers who handled the delicate flowers.

In this chapter, we enter the farms. Sections 5.1 and 5.2 provide a description of the typical lay-out of the farms and of the production processes, that is, of work on the farms as a situated practice (cf. Orr 1996). This description is primarily based on observations and informal conversations in Karibu Farm and during visits to other farms. As pointed out in Section 2.6.2, agro-industries as I understand them in this dissertation are characterized by a time-conscious rhythm of labour, high levels of discipline and a segmented workforce. These topics are discussed in sections 5.3 to 5.5. These sections show that working procedures, rhythms of labour and conditions within the farms were first of all shaped by the needs of the plants and the demands of the markets. They furthermore clarify why and to what extent large-scale cut flower production in Naivasha was relying on labour. It shows that, even though labour was abundantly available, the farms had an interest in retaining the workers they already employed. They needed to (re)produce a stable and experienced workforce to secure a profitable production. This need for a stable work force as well as the demands of the market induced the two recent developments in the organization of labour that I describe in Section 5.6. These developments, which I already introduced in Section 3.4, are 'standardization' and unionization. I argue that these processes implied an improvement in labour conditions but did not significantly alter hierarchies within the farms.

Apart from the economic, technical and agronomic considerations described in the first half of this chapter, the organization of the work also encompasses cultural elements (cf. Spittler 2008: 271). As phrased by Yanagisako (2002: 188) in her study on the owners of Italian family companies producing silk: "Culture does not produce capitalism; people produce capitalism through culturally meaningful actions that at the same time produce families and

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<sup>238</sup> Interview with Hans by Gemählich and the author.

selves with particular desires, sentiments, and identities." These processes encompass both employers and employees. In the case of the flower industry in Naivasha, culturally shaped gendered discourses have informed both the division of labour within the farms and (international) criticism of the industry. Sections 5.7 and 5.8 discuss how differences based on gender and ethnicity took on new meanings within the hierarchically organized, highly contested flower industry. Finally, reiterating the assertion in Section 2.2 that 'work' should not be perceived of as separate from 'home', I discuss the place of the farms within wider social networks in Section 5.9. Before all that, the following section sets the scene.

### 5.1 The Lay-out of the Farms

The main production areas in the farms were the fields with the crop, mostly inside greenhouses, and the packhouses (see Figures 9 to 12).<sup>239</sup> Other buildings included toilet blocks, changing rooms, offices, storage rooms, pump and generator houses, water tanks, often a canteen and sometimes housing for managers and supervisors. The living quarters for general workers - in the few cases in which these were provided - were usually located next to the farm itself, behind a separate gate. Several farms also had a tourist lodge or a restaurant on their premises, located at some distance from the production areas and, where possible, close to the lake. Finally, some of the farms had installed environmental constructions such as wetlands. The farms were vast, expansive areas, and some of the employees who had to move around a lot used bicycles or even motorcycles during their workday.

In what follows, I describe the layout of Karibu Farm, the farm I became most familiar with. However, all farms looked alike to a high degree. The only major differences were the surface of the farm and the type of crop, which determined whether the farm had greenhouses or produced outdoors.

Karibu Farm had eight greenhouses at the time of my fieldwork, all spanning several hectares and containing one to four varieties of roses. In addition, there was one field for outdoor rose production. The fields were divided into "bays", which were numbered. Each bay consisted of six to seven beds of plants. This division assisted in the planning and organization of the work. The greenhouses were spacious, light and calm. One could see the contours of objects or people outside through the polythene, and sometimes the roof would be slightly opened and one could see a strip of sky. Nevertheless, the greenhouses were enclosed environments and gave the feeling of being cut off from the world outside. There were one or two aisles running through each greenhouse, with doors on both ends. Harvested flowers

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<sup>239</sup> The descriptive parts of this chapter are based on the author's field notes on farm visits, unless noted otherwise in a footnote.

were collected on several tables on these aisles. Black nets were spanned above the tables to reduce the heat of the sun on the flowers (see Figure 10). This measure was meant to preserve the quality of the flowers, but it was also convenient for the workers. After harvesting was over, the tables would be empty and the greenhouse would become very calm. Once everyone had gone into the bays for weeding or pruning, it even appeared as if there was no one there, as mature crops were as tall as the workers themselves. Despite the calmness, there would be quite some sounds in the air: the singing of birds outside, the rustling of leaves, occasional talking or singing of the workers, the muffled rumble of tractors and other vehicles outside, the dripping of feeding water and the valve of the feeding system opening and closing. When it was raining heavily or when there was a lot of wind, it could be noisy inside. The air was filled with a not unpleasant smell of wet plants, sometimes mixed with fumes of the chlorine used in the water for harvested flowers. However, most overwhelming to me were not the sounds, sights or smells but the temperature and climate. The air was dense and humid, and I always found it exhausting to be in the greenhouse for a long time because of the heat. Employees would rarely complain about the physical strain of the work in the greenhouse, but it was affecting them nonetheless. Understanding reactions to my own wish to go outside now and then, revealed that I was not the only one struggling with the heat.<sup>240</sup>

The packhouse where the flowers were packed for shipment consisted of a large, light hall for grading and two separate cold stores where the flowers were kept before and after grading. The temperature in the grading hall would be more or less the same as the outside temperature. In the cold stores, the temperature was kept below 7 degrees. Each grader working in the hall had his or her own desk, and these desks were placed in rows. The packhouse was a cooler working environment than the greenhouses but also much more hectic. Especially in farms where workers were given individual bonuses when processing more flowers than was required, some graders would work frantically. Also in the Karibu Farm packhouse - the "house of competition", as one supervisor called it jokingly - the speed of work was high. There was a steady distribution of flowers to the packing tables and from the packing tables to the cold stores. The radio was usually turned on and there was the constant sound of buckets being put on the ground or on a cart. Despite being relatively close to each other, workers spoke little and were mostly absorbed in their work. The discipline was literally written on the walls of some of the grading halls. The walls of the hall of Karibu Farm contained certain prohibitions (e.g. "no eating or drinking"), while Kunas (2011: 63) reported that the walls of the packhouse in another farm in Naivasha contained proverbs. She noted that these

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<sup>240</sup> The heat in the greenhouse also made it an unfit working environment for people with certain health conditions. I witnessed a discussion between employees and the HR-manager on the future of a colleague, who was recovering from a stroke. They concluded she could probably not return to the same job due to the strain of the heat and the risk of resultantly suffering another stroke.

aphorisms (e.g. "Do not simply retire from something, have something to retire to") mostly emphasized diligence. Diligence was indeed needed in the packhouses, where work took place at high pace. The writings on the walls expressed the work ethos promoted by management.

Apart from such details, the layout of the different farms was similar. Another similarity was that working procedures were strictly regulated in all farms, mainly to avoid pests and diseases affecting the flowers. Hygiene was considered to be of the utmost importance. For example, anyone entering a greenhouse had to dip the soles of their boots into a basin with disinfectant at the entrance. Hygiene was crucial because fungal and bacterial diseases and insects such as mites and caterpillars could damage or even kill the plants by sucking up the nutrients. They could also leave marks and spots on the petals, which would make the cut flowers unsaleable. To avoid these damages as much as possible, farms adopted strict working procedures.

## 5.2 Daily Routines: Accountability and 'Responsibilization'

Despite the general need for hygiene and strict procedures, divisions of labour and daily routines differed considerably per farm. In farms that were growing seasonal flowers, workers had to rotate fields, while in rose-growing farms, workers were mostly based in the same greenhouse for a long period of time. Figure 11 shows a type of seasonal flower, hypericum, which unlike roses only grows in flushes. Moreover, not the flowers but the berries are the end product. Finally, it is cultivated outdoors, with the aid of artificial light in the evenings, which also shaped labour routines (e.g. outdoor production is more dependent on weather conditions).

In addition to the differences in type of crop and concomitant differences in work routines, some farms (regardless of the type of flowers) aimed for what they called an all-round workforce, in which all workers would be able to perform all tasks in the fields and in the packhouse. Other farms had split up the work into separate tasks and one employee would execute the same, single task every day. Despite the workers handling a 'natural' and not an industrial product, farms with such a division of labour resembled assembly lines that can be found around the world, in which - as mentioned in Section 2.6.2 - planning of the work was completely in the hands of the management (cf. Braverman 1998; Parry 2012).

However, such a segmented division of labour was not common. Gibbon and Riisgaard (2014: 112) described how the introduction of large polythene greenhouses created the need for stricter spraying schedules and better time management. Management therefore increasingly preferred a division of labour in which one employee would execute all tasks in a specific area in the greenhouse. Increasing quality demands from the market were another



reason for the preference for an all-round workforce, as pointed out by Whitaker and Kovalli (2006: 337). They explained that "product quality - including size, color, shape, and absence of disease and visual defects - determines marketability and price." Because workers who were handling the delicate flowers had to safeguard this quality, labour could not be made into an "interchangeable part" in the production process (Braverman 1998: 125). In contrast to the assembly lines described by Braverman and by many of the scholars studying female labour in global factories, the production of flowers required a system in which employees could be held accountable for the flowers they produced. This need for accountability prompted what Riisgaard and Gibbon (2014: 268) labelled a "responsibilization" of the work.

For example, Karibu Farm employees did not simply execute a single task. Although they had a fixed workplace, that is, either in one of the greenhouses or in the packhouse, those working in the greenhouse had a number of beds assigned to them in which they executed all the crop maintenance tasks. Each greenhouse also had one or two supervisors to plan and oversee the work. However, supervisor Lucy emphasized, when explaining the work to me, that they trained the workers to do their job responsibly.

The day in the greenhouse would start with harvesting flowers, a task that was not restricted to a worker's 'own' bay. The harvest had a specific, sometimes rotating, division of labour: some employees would enter the fields to cut the flowers, others would 'size' them (that is, sorting the flowers according to the length of the stem) and again others would wrap the piles of sorted flowers together in large bunches of fifty to eighty stems and prepare them for transport to the packhouse. I noticed that it was often women who did the actual cutting of the flowers and men who organized the packing and transport to the exit doors. However, this division of labour was not fixed and seemed to be more a habit than a norm.

The harvest itself was a delicate task, which started with the decision as to which flowers were ready for harvesting. The so-called 'cut stage' of the flowers defined when a flower should be harvested. This cut stage was measured on a scale from one to four. It was judged on sight and therefore making the decision whether to harvest or not required experience. Within Karibu Farm, flowers would usually be harvested when reaching cut stage two, which means that the petals have started to open up a bit. However, the cut stage could vary per variety and per order. After deciding that a certain flower was at the right stage to be harvested, the harvester had to cut it off at one centimetre above the so-called 'eye', the joint between the shoot and the stem. Cutting it off at a higher or lower point could affect either the length of the cut stem or the strength of the next shoot, which influences the value of the flowers. After cutting them off, the worker had to carry the flowers in a particular way so as not to damage the heads of the cut flowers. Finally, after cutting a flower, the worker had to dip the scissors into a plastic cup containing a paper tissue with disinfectant. This treatment prevented the spread of bacteria infecting the plants.

The task of sizing consisted of measuring flowers against a sizing board and piling them accordingly (see Figure 10 for the sizing area in the middle of a greenhouse). In addition, the worker had to check for any bad stems and take them out. This rejection of flowers was checked by the supervisor: the rejected stems were counted per greenhouse and reported to the management at the end of the day, including the reasons for rejection. Sizing was a monotonous task but it gave the opportunity to talk to other employees at the tables. For Karibu Farm, the job of sizing had previously been included in the task of graders in the packhouse, but it had been moved to the greenhouse to speed up the work of the graders.<sup>241</sup>

After harvesting flowers in the morning, and with some varieties after a second round of harvesting after lunch, all general workers would engage in so-called 'cultural activities' in their own designated part of the greenhouse. This part of the work included pruning, weeding and taking out so-called 'blind shoots', 'suckers', 'bullheads' and 'pelican heads', which were shoots that had not developed a bud or where the bud was deformed. These activities were meant to keep the plants healthy, to avoid wasting fertilizers on non-productive parts of the plants and to create space for new flowering shoots. As Lucy explained to me, "you produce flowers" by removing these parts.<sup>242</sup> The timing of these activities was planned by the supervisors because it influenced when new flowers would be ready for harvesting.<sup>243</sup> Pruning looked easy and the employees performed it quickly. However, when I tried it myself, I soon found it required as much accurateness as harvesting. Plants were easily damaged. Furthermore, the pruning also required tacit knowledge: employees had to be able to recognize the diverse types of unproductive parts, and they had to know at which point they should remove them. As Lucy expressed it, a worker had to "ask questions and talk to the plant" to determine which part to take out.<sup>244</sup>

Other, more straightforward, 'cultural activities' were sweeping, as to giving bacteria and fungus no opportunity to spread, and weeding. The cultural activities were rotational and they never ended. Because the plants kept on growing, there was always work to do in the greenhouse. In addition to attending to their own designated area, workers would also execute the planned activities for that day in the bays of those workers who were absent due to their weekly day off, a leave or illness.

The only other position allotted to one specific greenhouse - next to general worker and supervisor - was the position of scout. In order to avoid damage to flowers as much as

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<sup>241</sup> Gibbon and Riisgaard (2014: 113) described the same shift for the same reason in another farm.

<sup>242</sup> In Swahili: "Unazalisha maua."

<sup>243</sup> It takes seven days after a flower or a shoot has been cut before a new shoot will come up. From that point onwards, it will take 48 to 60 days, depending on weather conditions and the variety, before the next flower can be harvested. This knowledge on the rhythm of the crop was important in the planning of the work. Supervisors could for instance plan for more red roses before Valentine's Day.

<sup>244</sup> Cf. Spittler's (2009) assertion that the interaction with things is the essence of work in general.

possible, it was important to detect pests and diseases early on and to spray pesticides accordingly. Time was of the essence here, and the farms employed so-called 'scouts' to monitor the plants. Each Karibu Farm greenhouse had its own scout, who went around the whole greenhouse over the course of two working days. He or she would check for pests and diseases as well as for weeds and for problems in the irrigation system. These scouts, who needed to be knowledgeable, sometimes had a certificate from an agricultural training institute. However, others had simply been general workers before, who had shown that they had gained a good understanding of the plants.

On the basis of the scouts' findings, the management and the supervisor of the sprayers made a spraying schedule. Usually, each greenhouse was sprayed every other day in the afternoon, after all regular workers had left. The job of spraying was possibly the most arduous and dangerous task within the farms. Not in the least because of the weight and the oppressiveness of the heavy protective clothing, which consisted of an overall, a spray suit, a mask, a face shield, gloves and gumboots. This clothing protected the sprayers but it also made it impossible to communicate during the job. Furthermore, the sprayers were well aware that their work was inherently dangerous, despite this equipment, because of the toxic chemicals that they could get in touch with in an accident: "If you mess up, you might faint."<sup>245</sup> As we will see below, only men were recruited for this risky job.

Reacting to pressure from international and national media and NGOs, farms adopted increasingly strict health and safety regulations and started to follow (already existing) national legislation and guidelines of the World Health Organization. In the early days, not all farms provided personal protective equipment (PPEs), not even to the sprayers.<sup>246</sup> However, by the time I was in Naivasha, it had become unimaginable that an employer would not provide PPEs. The Collective Bargaining Agreement of 2011-2013 confirmed that at least all unionized farms had to follow the regulations with regards to the provision of PPEs from the Occupational Health and Safety Act.<sup>247</sup> Employees were regularly provided with dustcoats, gum boots and gloves. Workers in the open-air production received raincoats and those working in the cold stores were provided with thick overalls. Farms were also increasingly strict with not allowing entrance after spraying, and placed signs at the entrance to greenhouses with the date, the chemical used and the time at which one was allowed to enter again. Finally, most farms had installed a health and safety committee, in which elected

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<sup>245</sup> In Swahili: "Ukimess up, unaweza kupoteza fhamu."

<sup>246</sup> Dolan, Opondo and Smith (2003: 46) noted an increased use of PPEs by the year 2002, yet 50 of the 100 workers they interviewed at that time, said that the provision of PPEs was not always adequate.

<sup>247</sup> Section 20(a) of the CBA 2011-2013.

members monitored the situation on the farm. Despite these improvements, some workers remained concerned about their health, specifically with regards to pesticides.<sup>248</sup>

Work in the packhouse was more segmented than work in the greenhouse. There were almost ninety employees working in the Karibu Farm packhouse, under seven supervisors. There were three main activities for the general workers there. Only the most visible of these activities - 'grading' - was available to women. Grading included a range of tasks. A grader would start by taking some flowers, examining them and removing the bad ones. These rejected flowers, just as the ones in the greenhouse, were checked and counted by a supervisor. The grader would then continue by removing excessive foliage and by putting a fixed number of flowers of the same size and the same cut stage together into bunches. The size and composition of these bunches depended on the orders and could vary per day. Finally, the grader would cut the stems of the bunched flowers to the same length and in some cases would wrap plastic sleeves around them or would attach a sachet of flower food.<sup>249</sup> Creating one bunch of flowers would take around a minute. All bunches would be checked by a supervisor before being transported to the cold room. Any deficient bunches, for instance those containing a flower that showed marks of a disease, would be noted down and would have to be adjusted ('rectified') by the grader.

The second activity in the packhouse was to distribute the flowers from the so-called 'receiving' cold store - where the flowers that had been harvested in the greenhouses were brought to - to the packing tables, and to bring the ready bunches to the next ('dispatching') cold store. The distribution was done by the so-called 'runners', who in the case of Karibu Farm were all male. Additional tasks of the runners, which they distributed among themselves, were sweeping the floor, collecting waste, and cleaning buckets. The third activity, taking place in the dispatching cold store, was the packing of the flower bunches into large boxes and loading them onto the truck to be transported to the airport. The loading of the truck was done at night, by a special team for the night shift, again consisting of only men. The packhouse thus had a more gendered and segmented division of labour than the greenhouses.

Although the large majority of the workers performed one of the jobs described above, there were more possible positions within the farms. The number of types of positions varied

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<sup>248</sup> Occasionally, I met former workers who had left their flower farm job because they experienced that the chemicals affected their health. However, I did not find any evidence of former employees who tried to make their employer liable for respiratory or skin diseases. Court cases with regards to occupational health hazards mainly focussed on more immediate injuries caused by tripping over or cutting oneself, see for instance Umar Shibachi Omurunga v Wildfire Flowers Limited (2012) eKLR.

<sup>249</sup> Some farms had split up this job into several separate tasks, executed by several employees. In single cases, farms had a conveyor belt along which these tasks would be executed. However, because this division of labour required a good coordination, most farms preferred having one individual responsible for the whole process (cf. Gibbon and Riisgaard 2014: 114).

greatly per farm. The six groups of flower farm workers participating in the listing exercises mentioned 12 to 28 possible jobs within the farms they worked in. Positions mentioned by all groups were: general worker in the greenhouse, grader in the packhouse, manager, security guard and sprayer. Other frequently mentioned positions were packer, transporter, supervisor, driver, cook in the canteen, employee in the maintenance department, and carpenter in the workshop. The listing exercises furthermore showed that the work was more segmented within some farms than within others. Whereas the grader in the Karibu Farm packhouse would, if applicable, also put on a plastic sleeve on a bunch of flowers, employees of another farm mentioned "sleeves" as a separate job. However, with regards to the production work there were not many examples of such differences. The largest differences were found among office and technical staff, and related to the size of the farm. Whereas a small- or middle-scale farm would only employ a handful of people in the office, employees of Sharma Farm listed payroll clerks, data clerks, an HR manager, other managers, the accountant and a tea girl. This farm also used to have a special department of electricians, whereas in a smaller farm electrical jobs would be executed by the general maintenance department. Furthermore, providing a compound and other facilities also implied the need for more 'non-productive' staff. Participants in the exercise said that Sharma Farm in the past used to employ doctors and nurses for the company hospital, six nursery teachers, drivers and cooks for the managers, and 'welfare managers' to maintain the order on the compound.

Security guards formed a relatively large group of employees in all farms. Karibu Farm had 41 guards, who worked in two shifts of twelve hours. There were both male and female security guards, although only men worked on the night shift. A few of the guards would be posted at the gate during the day, where they would register everyone coming in and out and search all employees before leaving the farm (the latter task made it necessary to employ female security guards). The others would guard a particular area of the farm.

To sum up, the above description of the work processes on the farms shows that the work was rigorously monitored and that both the labour and the movements of employees were subject to tight control. One prominent aspect of this control was the rhythm of labour, set by management, which forms the subject of the next section.

### 5.3 Rhythms of Labour: Yielding to the Flowers and the Markets

The timing of the work was an important aspect of flower growing. Although the work was mostly not mechanized, there was nevertheless a need for strict time discipline, reminiscent of industrial production. As explained by Happ (2016: 53), the workers would be in a race with time once a flower was ready for harvesting, as it loses much of its value once it starts to wither. Hence, the timing of the work depended on the rhythms of the crop. It furthermore

depended on the rhythms of the market and, increasingly, on the hours of work as prescribed in collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) and legislation. The combination of different cycles and rhythms resulted in a complex production process that contained elements of both 'task-oriented time' and 'clock-time' and that shaped the labour arrangements within the farms (cf. Thompson 1967; Heald 1991).

First of all, the crop goes through a natural growth cycle. I here describe the cycle of the most prevalent crop at the time of my fieldwork, the rose. I witnessed during a visit to Karibu Farm that the planting of new seedlings only took a few hours of steady labour of a team of workers. After the planting, there would be little work to do in the greenhouse and most of the employees would be temporarily put to work in other parts of the farm. It would take around two months from the planting of the seedlings to the harvesting of the first flush of flowers. After several flushes, during which plants would produce several flowers at a time, the growth of the plants could be balanced and stabilized. Plants could then produce steadily for three to six years. Whenever an old crop was no longer productive or was not popular anymore in the market, it would be uprooted, and a new variety would be planted. These (licenced) varieties and the seedlings were acquired from, mostly Dutch-owned, breeders and plant propagators, which were mostly also located around Lake Naivasha.<sup>250</sup>

Apart from these growing cycles over longer timespans, the workload also varied on a daily basis and supervisors had to be flexible in the planning of the work. The hours of work differed per farm and also per department, although working hours had become more standardized since an increasing number of farms had started to follow the CBA. Typically, workers in the greenhouse started at 7 a.m. They had an (unpaid) lunch break of one or two hours. The time of finishing work differed per day. There would be more flowers to harvest after sunny days, there would be more time needed for spraying pesticides after the outbreak of certain diseases (and so less time to do other work in the greenhouse), and, as I once witnessed in Lucy's greenhouse, a sudden request for yellow flowers or flowers of a certain length could make workers harvest those flowers all day long, leaving maintenance tasks for another day. This variability demanded considerable flexibility of the employees, as they would have to work longer hours on certain days than on others. They could not refuse to work (paid) overtime when the employer demanded them to work longer.<sup>251</sup> Supervisors in the greenhouses of Karibu Farm attempted to balance the work over the week in order to attain the basic 46 hours negotiated in the CBA.<sup>252</sup> The reason for this was that paying out overtime was expensive for the farm. However, in the packhouse it was not possible to avoid

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<sup>250</sup> Gemählich writes in more detail about breeders and propagators in his dissertation (in preparation).

<sup>251</sup> Section 5 (c) of the CBA 2011-2013 stipulated the obligation to work overtime. Dolan, Opondo and Smith (2003: 35) and Kunas (2011: 62) reported hearing about mandatory overtime in farms.

<sup>252</sup> Section 3 (a) of the CBA 2011-2013.

overtime. Employees would typically start work there at 8 a.m., after the first flowers had been harvested. They would never know beforehand at what time they would finish. The working hours depended entirely on the amount of flowers produced on a certain day, and packhouse workers could return home as late as 9 p.m.

The pressure of the flexibility in working hours demanded from the employees, was alleviated through fixed days off and several types of leaves. Every employee, regardless of the department he or she was working in, had a fixed day off, "a day to sleep" as one employee called it,<sup>253</sup> per week.<sup>254</sup> Which day of the week would be the day off varied per employee and could not be chosen freely. Work in the greenhouses and the packhouses had to continue seven days a week, even on national and religious holidays. However, some groups of workers, such as sprayers and employees in the maintenance department, had the Sunday as a fixed day off. On any given day, there would be a handful of employees absent in every greenhouse, despite the six-day workweek. A common reason for absence was illness. Sick leave was only given when employees filled out a sick sheet and went to the dispensary nearby. In addition to this sick leave, there were diverse types of other leaves. In farms working under the CBA, there was the annual leave of 24 to 26 days, a maternity leave of three months, a paternity leave of two weeks and unpaid "compassionate" leave in case of for example bereavement. Most of these leaves were also prescribed by the Employment Act 2007 and with regards to these regulations, the CBA therefore merely confirmed of national legislation.<sup>255</sup>

The men who sprayed the pesticides in the greenhouses of Karibu Farm had a specific rhythm of work. They worked with a rotational system, in which one team would do the spraying for three months, after which a second team would take over for the same period of time. The reason for rotating was that the work of spraying was heavy and hazardous. In the period that the sprayers received other tasks, they performed regular work in the greenhouse or the packhouse, in the cold stores or in the maintenance department. In addition, even in

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<sup>253</sup> In Swahili: "siku ya kulala".

<sup>254</sup> Section 4 of the CBA 2011-2013 stipulated the weekly day off and it was also a requirement in the Employment Act 2007 (Section 27 (2)).

<sup>255</sup> Nevertheless, a comparison of sections 7 to 10 of the CBA 2011-2013 and sections 28 to 30 of the Employment Act 2007 shows also some discrepancies. The possible period for paid sick leave in farms participating in the CBA was much longer than what was required by law: 50 days of full pay and 52 days of half pay per every consecutive twelve months, versus the statutory requirement of seven days of full pay and an additional seven days of half pay per year. The negotiated annual leave was also a bit longer than the statutory minimum amount of 21 days per year. A compassionate leave was not prescribed in the Employment Act, whereas the two-week paternity leave was similar to the leave prescribed by law. On the other hand, in the CBA 2011-2013 it was stated that a female employee who made use of this maternity leave could not make use of her annual leave for that year. Yet, scrapping the annual leave would be a violation of Section 29 (7) of the Employment Act 2007, which explicitly stated that the employee should also get her annual leave. The CBA and the Employment Act thus occasionally contradict each other.

those three months of spraying, the sprayers did regular work for three hours in the morning, would then go on a long break and only sprayed for several hours in the late afternoon, when other employees had already left the greenhouses. Management created this schedule in order to have the sprayers work the same amount of hours as other employees. Not all farms gave their sprayers double tasks to compensate for short working days, and the Karibu Farm sprayers complained about it. However, as it was up to the management to set working hours and schedules, there was little they could do.

The farms not only required flexibility on the part of the employees with regards to working hours but also with regards to the content of the work. General workers could not choose freely in which part of the farm they wanted to work: "that's why they are called general workers," as one supervisor told me. However, they could express their preferences, and their wishes would sometimes be taken into account by the management. One employee of Karibu Farm told me she had requested to work in the open production area: "There is wind there."<sup>256</sup> Other employees requested to work in the packhouse because of the opportunity to earn bonuses. Nevertheless, the final decision remained with the management. One's work place was also not fixed. Workers could be deployed in another department temporarily, either for just a day when work pressure was high in a particular area, or for longer, for example when the plants in a greenhouse were being uprooted and replaced. Furthermore, working teams within Karibu Farm were reshuffled from time to time and workers were then moved permanently. Moving around like that was not a rule, at least not for general workers: there were also employees who had been working in the same greenhouse for the past twelve years. However, again, it was the management who made the decision where a worker would be placed and for what period of time.

In addition to being flexible, the farms also required their workers to be punctual. As I observed during visits to Karibu Farm, it was a gross offense to be repeatedly late for work. The quality of cut flowers deteriorates quickly if they stay outside cold stores for too long. As there were several steps involved in the production process of the flowers, it was important that all workers showed up in time.

Furthermore, the work was done under time pressure. Pressure was especially high in the packhouse, where employees could not go home until all harvested flowers had been graded. In the greenhouse, the atmosphere was more relaxed: employees worked steadily but most of the time without a hurry. Nevertheless, also here, there occasionally was time pressure, as all flowers ready for harvesting should be cut before the regular working hours were over, because otherwise they would go to waste. Farms set minimum production targets, especially for graders, which increased the pressure to work fast. Employees would get

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<sup>256</sup> In Swahili: "Pale kuna upepo."



reprimanded if they did not reach those targets. On the other hand, they would also get a bonus if they graded more than the minimum amount. The production target set for graders of Karibu Farm was 175 bunches per day.<sup>257</sup> As one of the supervisors in the packhouse told me, these were "the company's flowers." Anything extra was "for the employee": he or she would get a bonus of a few shillings for every extra graded bunch. Employees regularly graded several dozens or even a hundred extra bunches per day, and thus could increase their daily income considerably. In addition, there was a minimum target for the farm as a whole, which was 120,000 stems per day. A bonus of 750 KES per 10,000 extra stems was shared among all employees, except the supervisors, working in the packhouse on a particular day. These two bonuses would be calculated per day and then paid out together with the monthly salary. These bonuses could increase an employee's salary significantly, yet the individual production, and therefore the earned bonus, varied greatly.<sup>258</sup> These bonuses therefore motivated employees to work hard: packhouse workers within Karibu Farm talked little during the work and returned early from their (unpaid) lunch break. However, not all farms had bonus systems in place, and the calculation of bonuses differed furthermore considerably per farm (Gibbon and Riisgaard 2014: 117-8; Anker and Anker 2014: 40).

In short, the rhythm of labour was not necessarily characterized by either an orientation towards task or an orientation on clock time (cf. Thompson 1967) but by a high level of discipline and compulsion. Although the CBA fixed working hours, the rhythm of the work was determined by the supervisors and the management and varied by day, depending on the natural rhythms of the crop, on the demands of the market and on regulations. Employees were expected to be flexible and to agree to working overtime when needed. They were furthermore required to be punctual and to work at high speed. The lack of freedom to schedule one's own work and one's working hours was an important reason for many to dislike flower farm work. The need to be constantly available made it difficult to engage in additional income-generating activities and, especially for those working after regular school and day care hours, to take care of one's children. On the other hand, bonus systems and paid overtime made it possible to augment one's income and added a competitive element to the work, which in itself could be a source of motivation (cf. Roy 1960). They also induced employees to work long hours. Employment within a flower farm thus had a large impact on the rhythm and the organization of daily life.

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<sup>257</sup> These targets could be set by number of stems or bunches per minute, day or hour. They differed per farm and product (cf. Gibbon and Riisgaard (2014: 115) on targets in several farms).

<sup>258</sup> There could also be minimum targets in the greenhouse. Karibu Farm had set a target of harvesting 1,500 stems per day. However, this target was not coupled to a bonus system.

#### 5.4 Hierarchies within the Farms: Tight Control

As already becomes clear from the above discussions on the divisions and rhythms of labour, the farms were hierarchically organized. Because the flowers were so delicate, it was not only important to control the crop itself but also to control the labourers handling the plants and harvested flowers. This need for control shaped the labour relations within the farms. The farms had a pyramid-like structure: each farm had only one or two top managers; a small group of middle-level managers, supervisors and office staff in between; and a large group of general workers with varying tasks in the production process at the bottom. For example, a particularly small farm with 74 workers had two managers, a secretary and two supervisors. All the other (partly permanent, partly temporary) employees were general workers.<sup>259</sup> Larger farms employed more skilled and semi-skilled staff in absolute numbers, and the division of labour among managers and supervisors varied greatly per farm. Nevertheless, the ratio in this small farm of over 90 percent of the workforce being 'general workers', was representative for the industry as a whole (cf. the 94 percent of workers 'at the base' mentioned by Friedemann-Sánchez for the flower industry in Colombia (2009: 72)).

The hierarchies within the farms were visible on the work floor. For one, despite the obligation to wear PPEs, dress could betray (income) differences between general workers and higher-level employees, especially among women. Female employees with a higher income would have more jewellery and a more expensive hair-do than general workers, who mostly would just cover their hair or have simple braids. Furthermore, the colour of PPEs such as dust coats could differ, even within a single farm, and then would signify the area of work (e.g. greenhouse or packhouse) and/or the position of the employee (e.g. general worker, supervisor or new employee who was receiving training). These different colours enhanced the control over labour. It was immediately apparent if someone entered an area where he or she was not working on a daily basis, which was usually not allowed.<sup>260</sup> Another way to control the movements of the employees was the system of 'clocking in', with which the working hours were monitored to the minute. The 'clock' of Karibu Farm was a digital system based on fingerprints, which ensured that those who clocked in were really the workers themselves.

Workers' movements were controlled and also their work itself was strictly monitored. Supervisors made a short note on all the workers and their performance every day. If workers made a mistake in their work or showed up late, they would receive a verbal warning. I witnessed several of these first verbal warnings from a manager or supervisor. On one occasion, an employee, who had wrapped the flowers in the greenhouse wrongly, was called

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<sup>259</sup> Interview with Adam.

<sup>260</sup> I once overheard a supervisor reprimanding employees who passed through a greenhouse where they were not working in. She asked them rhetorically whether there was no path outside, and then told them to return outside and take the path.

to the packhouse together with his supervisor and was shown his mistake. He was reprimanded in front of his colleagues, who were meanwhile continuing with their work. He was also reprimanded in front of me, which happened on a few more occasions. This always made me feel uncomfortable, as I became part of the reinforcement of the hierarchy within the farm. However, it showed how much this hierarchy was taken for granted and not as something which should be hidden from a researcher.

Initially, it was the task of the supervisor to handle mistakes or misbehaviour. In case of persistent misbehaviour, an employee would be referred to the management to receive an official warning or offence sheet. After several verbal and written warnings from the HR-office for the same, repeated mistake, the ultimate penalty would be dismissal. As stipulated in section 16 of the CBA of 2011-2013:

- "a) The first and second warnings shall be recorded in the employee's file. The third warning shall be copied to the Branch Secretary of the Union.
- b) If an employee with three warnings in his/her file commits misconduct within 12 months from the date of the first warning, he/she shall be liable to termination of employment."

Despite the strict working procedures and tight control, there inevitably remained some room for cheating. A reason for not following the rules could simply be that an employee looked for ways to make his or her work easier. An example was to size several flowers at the same time instead of measuring them one by one. This was not allowed because it could lead to inaccuracy and so-called 'down-sizing': putting all flowers in the category of the shortest one, which would cost money because the longer ones could have been sold at a higher price. Yet, sizing several flowers at once also saved time, and many employees would do this whenever there was no supervision around.

Cheating and avoiding control could occasionally also be an expression of resistance. I once heard about an unofficial 'slow-go' in one part of a greenhouse. The employees involved thought that their new supervisor was too strict and they even said she harassed them. They decided not to work whenever she was not present in their part of the greenhouse. Their unannounced slowing down of the work was a silent way of protesting, and it took several days before the supervisor and managers realized why the work in that part of the greenhouse just did not seem to get done. As soon as the truth was out, the production manager talked to the employees. This talk must have been quite impressive: afterwards the employees were uncommonly quiet and one of them was laughed at because she had almost started to cry. In any case, the intervention was effective in restoring work discipline. That day, all flowers were harvested before lunchtime.

As this example makes clear, the farms were organized in a top-down manner. These hierarchies were embedded in inequalities that stretched beyond the workplace: there was a

large social and economic gap between the different groups of employees of the farms. This gap was reflected in spatial disparities. Middle-level and top management lived either in special housing on the farm or in Naivasha Town. If staying in town, they regularly commuted with their own car or a shared car instead of getting on a general staff bus. One manager said he was happy to live on the farm where he worked and not among the other employees in a settlement. He said his decisions at work influenced his relations in the community. Residing in the same settlement as the general workers would have complicated his job.

The same held true for supervisors, but they were seldom provided with special accommodation. They regularly lived among the other workers in the settlements. Their housing situation was symbolic for their ambiguous position within the farms and in the communities. Supervisors officially formed part of the management and could for example not join the union. However, in practice, they were awkwardly positioned between management and workers. They often originally had started out as a general worker themselves and in those cases mostly did not have a higher education than the people they were overseeing now. In addition, they spent their days among their team of workers without much contact to other supervisors or managers. I noticed during visits to Karibu Farm that, perhaps because of this position 'in-between', supervisors would look for contact to each other. They would talk for a few minutes while meeting a supervisor of a neighbouring greenhouse outside, they would sit together during lunch break or they would meet after work. They would then also discuss their job. I for instance once heard Yvonne say to Lucy that one of the rose varieties in her greenhouse gave her a headache because it did not do well. It was clear from such conversations that the supervisors were proud of their expertise in flower growing, felt their responsibilities and liked sharing experiences with each other. At the same time, when comparing salaries, living circumstances and their work histories, their position was more comparable to that of general workers than to that of the (top) management.

Next to the supervisors, middle-level managers had a strong presence on the work floor as well. They spent most of their time in the greenhouses instead of in the office, and they could easily step in to correct the work of a general worker. This presence was perceived to be necessary. Kenyan managers, who invariably said they worked under a lot of pressure, often complained about the difficulties they had with labour. The sudden outbreak of a disease or fluctuations in the market could lead to hectic situations, yet a larger part of the stress and strain of the managers' work stemmed from social aspects: it was hard to establish authority and to motivate people for their work.

The managers mentioned several reasons for the lack of motivation they perceived to be prevalent in the workforce. One Kenyan manager told me during an informal conversation that he thought the problem was that people were unskilled and even illiterate, and therefore needed guidance; however, another day he told me that the problem was that many

employees were "too bright" for the work they were doing: "they only work here because their time hasn't come yet." In the previous chapter, we saw that for some employees, work in the flower farms was a positive choice, either because they liked the work or, more prevalent, because of relatively good work conditions. Yet, managers I spoke to thought few people chose to work in the industry voluntarily. In their eyes, the farms were a last resort or a "hide-out" for the workers. The manager cited here thought it was therefore necessary to be tough, in order not to be "tricked" by the unwilling employees. He could fire someone after making a mistake more than once, although he would always work within the limits of the law. This "toughness" and the consequent lack of space for open resistance or defiance was effective in establishing control over labour and in ensuring workers would work timely and without mistakes. However, the strict discipline was also vehemently resented by some employees. Furthermore, non-flower farm workers often motivated their choice of not applying for a flower farm job by referring to the strict discipline. As one of the participants in the listing exercise said: "if you speak out, you will be fired."<sup>261</sup> Some had worked for a farm for some time but had quit because of the lack of freedom they experienced in their job. There seemed to be a vicious circle, in which the perceived lack of motivation on the part of the workers was aggravated by its remedy of 'tough' management.

The foreign owners and top management realized that the most important skills of their managers were social and not so much technical. One of them praised a Kenyan manager who was able to avoid giving the impression he favoured certain ethnic groups. Supervisors, who mostly received no formal agricultural training, were provided with a special training on industrial relations (Riisgaard and Gibbon 2014: 268). As one of the supervisors explained to me, they were taught on how to "stay with different people".

A point of contestation between the supervisory level and the top management of Karibu Farm, was the amount of labour needed. Supervisors complained among each other about the relatively small number of employees for the load of work to be done. Some workers complained to me about their workload. However, general manager Jan explained to me that they already worked with about twice as many employees per hectare as farms in the Netherlands did. He hired in accordance to a mathematical formula, based on, among others, the surface of a greenhouse and the production of a variety. He had decided to stick to the outcome of this formula, even if there were complaints. He thought the issue was not a lack of labour but a lack of efficiency and planning. This disagreement showed that different levels

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<sup>261</sup> In Swahili: "Ukiwa na mdomo, unafutwa." Section 44 of the Employment Act made it relatively easy for employers to dismiss workers, as dismissal was the ultimate form of disciplinary action. KHRC (2012: 56) reported on cases in which employers had looked for an excuse for disciplinary action and dismissal, in order not to have to pay the workers the regular end-of-contract gratuity.

of management did not always share the same interests and the same approach to organizing labour.

There was a large social and economic divide between foreign top managers and Kenyan staff. The divide between management and general workers was especially large. Workers would only meet with the managers in the workplace. Foreign managers occasionally took on a patriarchal and demeaning approach towards the general workers. As one manager stated in Dutch press: "We need strict control here, sometimes it's like I have seven hundred children."<sup>262</sup> Moreover, there was also a large gap between Kenyan managers and foreign (Indian and European) managers. This distance was partly caused by the differences in authority and power between the managers, as foreigners usually were part of the top management of the farms. When visiting Karibu Farm, I noticed that all employees, regardless of their position, would get a bit nervous when Jan would be around and they tried at all costs to avoid making a bad impression on him. Apart from these power imbalances, there was also a social gap: most foreign managers (invariably male) would not regularly meet black Kenyans outside work but would mingle with other Indians or with other expats in the area, the exception being a few European managers who were married to a Kenyan woman. Like the settlers a hundred years ago (cf. Clayton and Savage 1974: xiv), foreign managers mainly met Kenyans in the context of work, in an uneven employer-employee relationship. Also physically, they placed themselves outside the communities, as they were residing on their farms or in a gated community elsewhere in Naivasha or in Nairobi. They were sometimes referred to by their names but when employees were talking amongst themselves or even when they were talking to me, the foreign managers were often simply referred to as the 'mzungu' or the 'mhindi' (Indian person).

Despite these large cultural and economic gaps, labour relations within most farms were not wholly antagonistic. The prevalent perception among workers of Karibu Farm was that all, from manager to worker, would benefit if the company as a whole was functioning well and producing a lot of flowers, if only because it would enhance job security. Lucy explained the rationale behind tasks such as pruning and weeding by saying that it would avoid losses (*hasara*) for the company. She told me that the mzungu (meaning the general manager) had brought this fertilizer and it should not be wasted on unproductive parts of the plant.

The need for strict labour control was thus evident, even to most of the workers. It was also seen as part of life: as observed by Kunas (2011: 61), there was a general belief that one had to endure hardships and work hard if one wanted to move up the social ladder. Diligence

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<sup>262</sup> In Dutch: "We hebben hier strenge controle nodig, soms lijkt het alsof ik zeventhonderd kinderen heb" (in Gaarlandt 2013: 13).

was seen as a virtue and failure in life was often blamed on laziness. Kunas (*ibid.*) furthermore observed that children already got accustomed to this approach to life in the competitive school system in Kenya. In that sense, the "responsibilization" of labour that Riisgaard and Gibbon (2014: 268) referred to, was something workers in Kenya were well-prepared to adapt to, even if it also formed a source of discontent.

### 5.5 Unskilled Labour? The Need for Stability and Experience

Like the workers themselves, I also began to understand the need for discipline once I started to learn about the work processes within the farms. Moreover, I realized that these global firms, financed mostly from overseas and selling their flowers almost exclusively in Europe, depended on the quality of the local labour force in Naivasha for their profits. Managers sometimes acknowledged this dependency on their employees, for example when they explained their decision to remain in Naivasha and not to move to Ethiopia. Although the lower wages and other incentives offered by the Ethiopian government were attractive to the firms, the workforce there lacked the skills and the discipline that the workforce in Naivasha had acquired over time.<sup>263</sup> Apart from this example, the dependency on labour was not regularly discussed explicitly. However, this dependency explained the need for order, control and strict regulations within the farms. It furthermore implied the need for a stable, reliable and experienced workforce.

The general workers - who, as described above, formed the large majority of the workforce - were commonly referred to as 'unskilled labour'. As outlined in the previous chapter, there were no educational requirements for these workers, except for having finished primary or sometimes secondary school. Nevertheless, this labelling of their work as 'unskilled' can be questioned. Especially since the label had actual effects: negotiated wages for semi-skilled workers were slightly higher than wages for 'general' workers (see Appendix IV to the CBA 2011-2013). According to Gibbon and Riisgaard (2014: 108), the category of semi-skilled worker was hardly used by the farms. Even general workers with decades of experience were still labelled 'unskilled'. The exercise in which positions within the farms were ranked according to salary and education, showed that also in the perception of the workers, the jobs for which little education was needed were the lowest paid jobs. Positions that were unanimously ranked as high-income jobs were manager, accountant and doctor in the company hospital (when present). Positions such as sprayer or grader were occasionally also ranked as high-income jobs because of the bonus system in certain farms. All other jobs for which the participants said little education was needed, were perceived of to be poorly paid.

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<sup>263</sup> Personal communication with a manager working in Ethiopia, a flower trade fair in Nairobi, 3 June 2015.

However, the label of 'unskilled labour' disguised that these employees over time did gain certain skills and tacit knowledge, which were crucial for the production processes (cf. Riisgaard and Gibbon 2014: 274).

The training of workers was relatively short. Karibu Farm organized an introductory training, mainly on health and safety, which took just a few hours. After that, the new recruits would be trained 'on the job' for a couple of days by supervisors. I witnessed Lucy providing such a training to two new employees: she showed them how to perform the diverse tasks one by one and then told them to do it themselves. She would give them a lot of encouragement: "take your time" and "don't be afraid of the flowers."<sup>264</sup> Lucy compared this training with teaching a small child how to write: you had to start from scratch because the recruits knew nothing. Nevertheless, after these few initial days, the new employees were already expected to just work along. They were supposed to learn the work in practice over a period of two to three months and to have attained a moderate speed of work after that. Workers in more specialized positions, such as scouts and sprayers, were also mostly trained on the job, albeit for a longer period of time.<sup>265</sup> Thus, the official training provided by the farms was not extensive. Nevertheless, the work was easy to master. I was told there were recruits who turned out to be unsuitable for the job and who did not get a contract after the probation period was over,<sup>266</sup> either because they lacked the discipline or motivation, or simply because they could not perform the work properly. The different tasks for general workers were not difficult to understand, but they all had to be executed with care. For example, Lucy introduced me to the procedure of 'bending': for certain varieties of roses, the first shoot of a seedling had to be bended towards the ground. As Lucy explained to me, the goal of bending was to create a *mama* (mother) who could store food for the next shoots, the *toto* (children). By using metaphors and Swahili terms, she managed to make the procedure insightful to me and to the workers in her team. Yet, despite understanding the principle, I soon found out that bending was not that easy: when not being careful, one could break the entire stem and damage the (expensive) seedling. Like bending, most tasks had to be done meticulously and required care. At the same time, routine was needed to keep up the speed of production. These were skills that could only be acquired over time.

Furthermore, the knowledge needed in these jobs was rather particular and some of it could, due to differences in working procedures, only be learned within the farm in which

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<sup>264</sup> In Swahili: "Pole pole, hakuna haraka leo." And: "Usiogope maua."

<sup>265</sup> The HR-manager of Karibu Farm explained to me that subsequent formal trainings, such as on health and safety, gender relations or first aid, were provided by external training institutes. These trainings were paid for by a mandatory fee of 50 KES (€ 0.44) per month per employee, which the farms had to pay to a special government institution.

<sup>266</sup> The CBA for 2011-2013 stipulated a regular probation period of two months (section 2), whereas legally the probation period was set at a maximum of six months (Employment Act 2007 section 42).



one worked. An HR-manager of one of the farms affirmed that farms liked to keep turnover rates low, primarily because it saved the cost of training: "we don't like sending people away anyhow. We train them so that we can get good returns."<sup>267</sup> Friedemann-Sánchez (2009: 75) observed a similar attitude among flower farm managers in Colombia, who were also worried about losing trained labour. In contrast, in the 'maquiladoras' on the Mexican border and along assembly lines in Malaysia, high turnover rates of 5 to 6% per month were common (Fernández-Kelly 1983; Ong 1987). Thus, the flower industry, which was working with a natural product in a market with high quality demands, differed from some other global industries because of its need for a stable and experienced workforce.

Loss of skills was not the only reason that high turn-over rates were perceived to be disadvantageous by management. Long-term employees were also perceived to be more loyal than casual or temporary labour. They were considered to be more motivated for their job and they were always available. Even vegetable farms, which claimed not to be able to provide the majority of their workers with permanent contracts because of the seasonal production, still preferred giving these workers at least temporary contracts for several months instead of hiring casual workers on a daily basis. As one of the managers said, people who knew they would not have a job the next day were simply less reliable.<sup>268</sup>

Farms realized they profited from a stable workforce and they were also successful in retaining their workers. Managers reported that the farms had low turnover rates, especially when compared to flower farms in Ethiopia.<sup>269</sup> As explained in Chapter 3, the permanent contracts became more prevalent with the shift from seasonal flowers to rose production. It became the norm to give a permanent contract to new, well-performing workers after their temporary contract had run out (as reported by Omosa, Kimani and Njiru (2006: 37) and Gibbon and Riisgaard (2014: 110)).<sup>270</sup> Once employees had received a permanent contract, they often worked in one and the same flower farm for many years, especially if they worked for a farm that provided them with accommodation. Three of the respondents in the survey who worked for Sharma farm, had already started working there before the year 1995. I also met a number of employees of Karibu Farm who had worked for this farm ever since it started producing roses in 2002. Gibbon and Riisgaard (*ibid.*: 109) likewise observed a high level of

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<sup>267</sup> Interview with an HR-manager of a combined vegetable and flower farm by Gemählich and the author.

<sup>268</sup> Interview with Hans by Gemählich and the author; interview with the assistant manager of a vegetable farm.

<sup>269</sup> Interview with Hans by Gemählich and the author; personal communication with a manager working in Ethiopia, a flower trade fair in Nairobi, 3 June 2015.

<sup>270</sup> Providing permanent contracts after an initial temporary contract was also the standard practice within Karibu Farm. Furthermore, 64.9% of the 94 flower farm workers in the survey reported having a permanent contract. There were no significant differences here between men and women.

employment stability, at least among those on a permanent contract: the mean length of employment in their survey among 113 workers of 11 different flower farms was 5.8 years.<sup>271</sup>

It is remarkable that 'unskilled' labourers tended to stay around much longer than more skilled employees, such as managers and technical staff, who had the habit of moving to another farm every few years. Especially Kenyan managers often used the expression of 'moving to greener pastures' and said they would move if they could get a better(-paid) job in another farm.<sup>272</sup> Others were simply looking for a new challenge.<sup>273</sup> It was also common, as one of the middle-level managers in Karibu Farm told me, that a manager disagreed with a senior manager or with the company's directors and would then decide to move. The result was that managers were often moving around. As said, this was not the case for general workers. So why did workers - unlike managers - decide to stay in the same workplace for all those years? One reason was the lack of other opportunities, mentioned in the previous chapter: for many, flower farm work simply was the best or most secure option available, even if not ideal. According to a European manager, especially single mothers with a low level of education - being the employee with the least opportunities elsewhere - would stay in the same farm for many years.<sup>274</sup>

Thus, for many, the decision to stay on was informed by this lack of other opportunities, not by a particular preference for the work in the farms. Most workers were not even aware of the ultimate goal of their labour. Farms had a display in the packhouse or the offices in which the so-called vase life of the flowers was observed for fourteen days (see Figure 13). One or two stems of each variety would be put together in a vase every day, and these would stay on the display for fourteen days. This display could help in detecting diseases and weaknesses of the crop. In addition, it was a way of making the goal of flower-growing comprehensible to the workers, as Jan explained to me. However, the display seemed to be unsuccessful in that: surprisingly few employees were aware of the purpose of flower production. They asked me what the customers in Europe did with the millions of flowers that were being shipped there every year. Even a Kenyan production manager was surprised to hear that the flowers were really only produced for aesthetic reasons. He had imagined that perhaps part of them would be used to make perfume or soap. He simply did not see the point of putting flowers into a vase on the table. As he said, his mother would not be happy at all if

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<sup>271</sup> The mean length of employment in the survey I conducted in Naivasha was higher, namely eight years. However, this survey included Sharma Farm, where workers stayed around particularly long. After the financial problems started, workers did not get their gratuity paid upon retirement. Some of them therefore simply could not afford to stop working, even if they had reached an age at which they would otherwise have chosen to retire.

<sup>272</sup> Interview with an HR-manager of a combined vegetable and flower farm by Gemählich and the author.

<sup>273</sup> Interview with Adam by Gemählich.

<sup>274</sup> Interview with Jan by Gemählich, Tolo and the author.

he would bring her flowers. She would demand sugar or clothes instead. Thus, workers who knew perfectly well how to handle a plant in order to produce 'good' flowers, did not know what the final purpose was of the work they were doing. And even if they did, this purpose mostly did not make sense to them. However, the workers seemed not to be bothered. Their goal was to make a living, even if they had to do that through producing something that they themselves considered to be of little or no value. This lack of affinity with the final product of their work is in itself not remarkable: most of the early social scientific writings on the topic of work discussed by Spittler (2008) linked the motivation or consent to work to workers' material needs. This link to material needs also implies that work that creates a product which is 'useless' in the eyes of the workers can still be considered to be embedded in wider social relations and that employees can still feel 'at home' at work (cf. Spittler 2009).

Nevertheless, the decision to keep one's job was primarily based on material considerations. One consideration was simply the security of a basic income that a permanent contract gave. Moreover, the system of remuneration in the industry was geared towards retaining labour. The large majority of the workers in any farm, whether working in the greenhouse, the packhouse, the cold stores, the canteen or maintenance, would receive a fixed basic salary. In addition, as explained above, some general workers could earn a bonus. Moreover, the 'basic' salary for unskilled workers was also not the same for everyone, due to considerable yearly increments. Whereas a general worker who started to work for a farm that participated in the CBA in the year 2014, would earn a basic monthly salary of 5,401 KES, a fellow worker who had started in 1997 would earn 10,252 KES, almost twice as much (Anker and Anker 2014: 40).<sup>275</sup> Previous experience in another farm did not increase a worker's basic salary when he or she started to work in a new farm (KHRC 2012: 41). The system of yearly increments therefore formed an important incentive to stay on in the same farm for many years.

In this respect, the general workers differed from the skilled employees, whose salaries were not part of the CBA. They negotiated their salaries individually, and they could thus gain from moving to another farm. One supervisor told me she had decided to change her workplace because she could get a higher salary elsewhere. She had earned 15,000 KES per month plus 2,500 KES housing allowance in the first farm. She negotiated 20,000 KES per month plus 3,000 KES housing allowance in the second farm.<sup>276</sup> Her salary was still much lower than the remuneration of top managers: according to a Kenyan manager of a relatively small farm, the gross salary for a general manager would range from 350,000 to 500,000 KES.<sup>277</sup> The large differences in salary within the industry also become apparent in court

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<sup>275</sup> Equivalent to approximately €48 and €90 at the time.

<sup>276</sup> With this change of workplace, her total monthly income increased from about €155 to €205.

<sup>277</sup> Equivalent to approximately €3,100 to €4,400. Interview with Adam by Gemählich.

cases in which employees disputed their dismissal. These court cases disclosed the monthly salaries that were demanded to be compensated. Recent cases showed for instance a monthly wage of 7,700 KES for a general worker who worked for a farm close to Naivasha Town, but also a monthly wage of over 500,000 KES for a Chief Accountant in a rose propagation company.<sup>278</sup> These indications of salaries show the great discrepancies between the income of general workers and of (top) managers. Nevertheless, as seen, salaries of general workers could - although remaining low - increase tremendously over time.

Apart from the salary, also the gratuity that was paid when leaving the job depended on the amount of years the employee had worked for a farm. Section 24(a) of the CBA for 2011-2013 stated: "An employee, whose services are terminated, is retired or resigns after five (5) years' continuous service with the Employer, shall be entitled to gratuity at the rate of twenty-two (22) days basic pay for each completed year of service." This gratuity system provided a form of security for the old age and for a future after the work in the flower farms. The money could be used to start up a small-scale business or to buy a plot of land. As workers would only have a right to this payment after five years of service, the gratuity system induced some of them to stay on the job longer than they would have done otherwise. Some would for instance leave after exactly five years of service.<sup>279</sup>

A final incentive to keep one's job was the possibility to participate in the SACCO, at least for some of the workers. Such a 'Saving and Credit Co-operative' was a local phenomenon, incorporated by the farms.<sup>280</sup> SACCOs differed from other saving and rotations schemes in their degree of institutionalization. They were registered groups, working under rules and regulations set by the national government and audited on a yearly basis by an external accountant. They formed a more accessible option than other financial service providers such as banks. Kenyan legislation stipulated that SACCO-members needed to have a "common bond". Consequently, the cooperatives were mostly attached to a company or to a specific, unionized trade. From the mid-1960s, the Kenyan government has stimulated the formation of these cooperatives, and they have become especially important in urban areas (Alila and Obado 1990). Many of the flower farms operating in Naivasha also allowed and encouraged their employees to set up such a savings group. Like other employers, the farms facilitated the SACCOs by providing them with office space and by deducting contributions and loan repayments of the salaries before paying them out. The volunteers leading these

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<sup>278</sup> These wages were equivalent to €68 and €4,400 respectively. See Henry Isaiah Onjelo v Maridadi Flowers Limited (2015) eKLR; Patrick Chebos v Stokman Rozen Kenya Limited (2016) eKLR.

<sup>279</sup> Interview with Jan by Gemählich, Tolo and the author.

<sup>280</sup> SACCOs or similar organizations also exist in neighbouring countries, but they are remarkably prevalent in Kenya. According to the World Council of Credit Unions, 21.3% of the economically active people between 15 and 64 in Kenya were a member of a credit union in 2015. In neighbouring countries Uganda, Ethiopia and Tanzania, this percentage was lower than ten percent (WOCCU n.d.).

cooperatives dealt with large amounts of money. For example, there were 24 active saving cooperatives related to a company in Naivasha sub-county in the year 2001, with a total of 5,000 members and a total saved capital of 227 million KES. The largest cooperative, which had given out loans for a total amount of 85 million KES, was attached to a flower farm.<sup>281</sup> According to the cooperative officer of Naivasha Sub-County, there were 60 active SACCOs in Naivasha by the year 2015, of which 43 were attached to a flower farm.<sup>282</sup>

About one half of the Karibu Farm employees participated in the farm's SACCO, which is a large group, considering that participation was only possible for those on a permanent contract. Participants also had to contribute a minimum amount of savings every month. The Karibu Farm SACCO had a minimum contribution of 700 KES per month. Most participants saved 1,000 KES per month or even more, which would amount to ten to twenty percent of a month's wage. In addition to the savings, many members had an outstanding loan over which they made repayments, including a small interest. The maximum loan they could receive was 100,000 KES, to be repaid within three years' time.<sup>283</sup> Consequently, many of these members had already twenty or thirty percent of their salaries cut as payments for the SACCO before they would receive their salary in their bank account. Yet, they were glad to have the opportunity: the SACCO enabled them to borrow money at times when they needed it the most, for example when they had to pay the school fees for their children. It also enabled them to save some money for the future. As it was hard to access other financial institutions, the possibility to save money with the SACCO was another incentive to stay on for a longer period of time, until one had saved enough to retire or to start up one's own business.

In sum, the several types of payments and the savings in the SACCO all increased with long-term employment. These formed incentives for employees to stay on and they thus supported the creation of a stable, reliable and experienced pool of 'unskilled' workers for the farms.

## 5.6 Labour Conditions: Standardization and Unionization

The fidelity of the workers to their flower farm jobs might come as a surprise to anyone familiar with the bad reputation of the farms with regards to labour conditions. As explained in Section 1.2, the flower industry received a lot of negative attention over the years from NGOs and in press, on both a national and an international level (cf. Whitaker and Kolavalli 2006). Part of

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<sup>281</sup> KNA Nakuru, 15/1/Vol. 1, AR Co-operative Office, Naivasha Sub-District, 2001. A calculation on the basis of the exchange rate of 31 December 2001 shows that 227 million KES and 85 million KES was equivalent to respectively €3,250,000 and €1,215,000 at the time (Investing.com 2017).

<sup>282</sup> Cooperative officer of Naivasha Sub-County, interview in his office, 30 June 2015.

<sup>283</sup> The minimum contribution was equivalent to €6, the most common contribution to €9 and the maximum loan to €885.

this criticism focussed on environmental issues, but much of it was targeting the labour conditions and low payments in the flower farms. According to the KHRC (2012: 16), legislation to protect labour already existed for a long time but was outdated until its revision in 2007. Together with the new constitution of 2010, the new provisions - at least on paper - strengthened the position of the worker. However, there continued to be a lack of enforcement because the ministry of labour was understaffed (*ibid.*: 29). For example, female employees had been regularly denied maternity leave, even though already the old legislation had prescribed a (short) leave (*ibid.*: 17-18). Nevertheless, without denying there have been gross labour right violations in some of the farms, it seems that labour conditions improved drastically in recent years. Criticism has also waned. One of the labour officers in Naivasha called the flower farms a good employer because of the good system of industrial relations. He said: "We feel that the workers are well-represented."<sup>284</sup> Academics Gibbon and Riisgaard (2014: 94) called the problematizing of labour conditions a "narrative", created by academics, NGOs and the trade union. I do not fully agree to this statement, as labour conditions by times simply have been problematic and labelling criticism of that a 'narrative' disguises real problems. Yet, there clearly has been a change in recent years. How did this change come about? And are it the practices of the farms that have changed, or more the perceptions on these practices?

Gibbon and Riisgaard (*ibid.*: 95) argued that conditions started to change when the farms adopted an 'industrial' and 'civic' system of labour management, which was based on the principles of efficiency and welfare (instead of on traditions, as in a paternalistic system, or on the market). There has been a clear move towards 'legalization' (*ibid.*: 121): recruitment processes were formalized, permanent contracts became more prevalent, these contracts were regularly put on paper instead of being an oral agreement, and more farms provided their employees with payslips (as also noted in Dolan, Opondo and Smith 2003: 27; KHRC 2012: 59-62). These developments contrasted to trends towards casualization of labour in industries elsewhere, such as the horticultural industry in South Africa, where a traditional and personal paternalistic system was slowly replaced with a more formalized, market-oriented system (Du Toit 1993). Instead of shifting to such a market-oriented system, the farms in Kenya could afford to move towards an industrial-civic system of labour management including more permanent labour, due to the all-year round rose production and a stable market. Moreover, they were prompted to do so because of increasing quality demands and - under influence of NGOs - a wish for better labour conditions from the market (Gibbon and Riisgaard 2014: 124-125; Riisgaard and Gibbon 2014: 282-284).

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<sup>284</sup> Interview with the labour officer.

There were two main processes through which the industry became 'legalized'. The first was the process of 'standardization'. This process entailed an increased participation of farms in international certification schemes. More and more farms participated in these schemes in order to secure their access to markets in Europe. In 2011, 78 of the 177 large scale flower farms in Kenya were certified under at least one of the three most common standards (Gibbon and Riisgaard 2014: 104). These certifications included standards governing environmental practices and labour conditions, and farms were audited every year. Employees of an external auditing body (FLO-CERT) would visit the farms for several days and would afterwards instruct the farms at which points they should make changes. This auditing process was costly and entailed a lot of paper work (Omosa, Kimani and Njiru 2006).<sup>285</sup>

The certifications thus aided in the formalization of working procedures within the farms, yet it remains questionable how profound the changes were that they brought about. Most of these schemes originated from within the industry, either in Europe or, in the case of the certificate of the lobby organization Kenya Flower Council, in Kenya itself (Dolan, Opondo and Smith 2003: 11). The KHRC (2012: 35) argued that the increase in certifications was not a worker-driven process but was a mere reaction to consumer demands. One could therefore wonder whether the standards were the most adequate instruments for protecting workers. Nelson, Martin and Ewert (2007: 65) likewise observed that even though the codes of conduct they investigated covered some of the concerns of the workers, such as medical care and permanent contracts, other concerns, such as a lack of childcare and the inability to save for the future, were not addressed. More profoundly, inequalities in the value chain remained. "This finding raises the question of how far codes of practice can move beyond improving *practical* interests to making a difference to the *strategic* interests of all workers (including women, and especially casual and seasonal workers) or delivering anything approaching political 'empowerment'" (*ibid.*: 71). Furthermore, as concluded elsewhere there was no democratic control on these standards since the government was not involved in any way (Kuiper and Gemählich 2017). Moreover, it was usually the farms that were already complying with national legislation and had relatively good labour conditions that were adopting certifications, as they had to make relatively little additional investments (Nelson, Martin and Ewert 2007: 68). The effects of the standards on practices within the farms therefore seem to have been limited.

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<sup>285</sup> Interview with a manager responsible for the Fairtrade-procedures in a middle-sized rose farm, interview on the farm by Gemählich and the author, 31 March 2014.

There was only one certificate that originated from outside the industry, Fairtrade.<sup>286</sup> By 2015, fifteen farms in Naivasha were Fairtrade-certified. This certificate paid significant attention to labour. However, a comparison of the CBA for the years 2011 to 2013 and the Fairtrade Standard (2014) showed that most of the regulations were similar. As only unionized farms could become Fairtrade-certified in the first place, the standard did not add many regulations which were not already in place within these farms. The one unique substantive aspect of Fairtrade was the so-called 'premium': ten percent of the price paid for every flower was transferred to a special premium account. Although only a small percentage of all flowers produced in a Fairtrade-certified farm would be sold under the Fairtrade-label (simply because the market was not substantial enough to sell more Fairtrade-flowers), the premium would still be a substantial sum of money of at least several ten-thousands of euros per year. This money could then be used for projects for the employees and for the communities they were living in. Each participating farm had a premium committee consisting of elected workers and management representatives, who together had to make a plan for the spending of the premium money. There was a strict, detailed framework for such a plan (including budget, a description of the project, how the project would be monitored and which risks were involved), and the budget also needed to be approved by all employees of the farm during a general assembly.<sup>287</sup>

Examples of common projects were assistance in the payment of school fees of children of employees and the organization of computer, driving or tailoring courses for the employees themselves. It was also common and even required to spend a percentage of the premium on promotional and 'awareness' activities, such as Fairtrade-shirts. There were more restrictions, set by Fairtrade itself, on how the premium money could be spent. Another example was that a certain percentage of the premium had to be spent on "community projects" (Fairtrade 2014). The 'community' in this case was defined as the settlement where the employees lived while they were working for the farm. However, many of them maintained close relations to communities in their region of origin. From their perspective, it made little sense to call the settlements where they were living temporarily, their 'community'. As we will see in Chapter 6, the projects did to a certain extent improve the infrastructure of the settlements, for instance through constructing class rooms for a school or boreholes. The

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<sup>286</sup> The description of the Fairtrade procedures is based on interviews with the manager referred to in the previous footnote and with Caleb Kiptoo, Production Manager of Fairtrade Africa, interview in the Fairtrade Africa office in Nairobi by Gemählich and the author, 26 June 2015.

<sup>287</sup> The strict regulations did not always prevent the mismanagement or theft of Premium money. A recent court case described how members of the Premium Committee of a farm in Naivasha had forged the (mandatory) signature of the general manager of the farm and had been able to steal ten thousands of euros. It took six months before the scheme was discovered (see *Shalimar Flowers Self Help Group v Kenya Commercial Bank* (2016) eKLR).



employees also profited from these projects. Yet, when asked about Fairtrade, employees seemed to value those improvements less than the projects that helped them individually.

All in all, the projects of Fairtrade made life for employees, who had to survive on a tight budget, slightly easier. The employees in Fairtrade-certified farms therefore generally appreciated the premium money. They furthermore were made aware that Fairtrade increased the access to markets and therefore made their jobs more secure. The access to markets was also a major reason for farm managers to take an interest in certifications. As the chair of the Karibu Farm Premium Committee told the employees during a general assembly: "Fairtrade is a market, it's a business."<sup>288</sup> He added that everyone would profit from this business: the employer, the employees and the community around the farm. However, in the same meeting it also dawned on the employees that by far not all the flowers they produced were sold as Fairtrade and contributed to the premium. One of the employees then asked what they could do to increase the sales. The answer was: nothing. It all depended on what the customers wanted. This answer revealed that despite the attempts of Fairtrade to make their processes transparent and democratic, and despite the emphasis that the organization put on the 'empowerment' of workers, the ultimate power did not lie in Kenya but with 'the customer' in Europe.<sup>289</sup> Thus, although the standards had some positive practical effects for the workers, they were most of all successful in changing the perceptions on labour conditions within the farms.

The second process that aided in the formalization of the industry and in improving labour conditions, was an increased participation of farms in the trade union. The union KPAWU, which was part of the overarching Central Organization of Trade Unions (COTU), aimed to represent the workers in negotiations with the employers and in case of conflicts.<sup>290</sup> Its main achievement was the increased influence of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). Unionized farms either followed a general CBA for the flower sector as a whole, negotiated every two years between the Agricultural Employers' Association (AEA) and KPAWU, or they negotiated their own agreement with the union. In the early days of the industry, few flower farms had been unionized, as this is not a legal requirement in Kenya. However, both the Kenya Flower Council and Fairtrade required from farms that participated in their certification scheme that they allowed their workers to join the union, and this requirement accelerated the process of unionization (Riisgaard and Gibbon 2014: 280). According to a KPAWU-official of the Naivasha branch, about forty of the fifty-five flower farms

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<sup>288</sup> In Swahili: "Fairtrade ni soko, ni biashara."

<sup>289</sup> For a more elaborate discussion on the role of Fairtrade within the flower farms in Naivasha, see Kuiper and Gemählich (2017).

<sup>290</sup> A new, rival trade union, the Kenya Export Floriculture, Horticulture and Allied Workers Union (KEFHAU), tried to establish itself at the time of my fieldwork but it had so far been unsuccessful. The large majority of the unionized farms was still associated to KPAWU.

in the wider Naivasha area were unionized in 2015.<sup>291</sup> Furthermore, from the 94 flower farm workers in my survey, 46 were a member of the union. In comparison, only 2 of the 24 employees in a vegetable farm were unionized. An important reason for this disparity was that most vegetable farm workers had no permanent contract and therefore could not join the union.

The union was represented on the farms through an elected union committee, consisting of employees of the respective farm. KPAWU was further represented in Naivasha with an office at South Lake and a branch office at North Lake where a few union officers were employed. In case of a dispute, the union committee of the farm would try to come to an internal solution. If they failed, they would involve the local KPAWU branch, then the main office of KPAWU in Nakuru and ultimately the labour officer of Naivasha. Only in the rare cases that all these offices failed to settle a dispute, a case could be brought to court.<sup>292</sup> Despite this elaborate system for handling conflicts, respondents in the survey regularly said that they felt they received little support. Likewise, 97% of the surveyed workers in KHRC (2012: 30) thought the union would or could not protect them in case of unfair dismissal. Riisgaard (2009: 333) noted that feelings of distrust were further aggravated by the top-down, hierarchical structure of KPAWU and COTU. I would add that although the union is expected to be an organization representing the workers, it first of all worked within the framework of the industrial relations system and therefore was instrumental in keeping labour relations peaceful. As explained by the KPAWU-official, representatives would get trained after being elected. "Otherwise they'll do their own thing." Through these trainings, KPAWU avoided that individual representative would for instance call for illegal strikes.<sup>293</sup> In short, the union provided the only official forum through which workers could voice dissent, yet this forum was highly regulated.

Many employees joined the union nonetheless. When asked why, respondents in the survey replied they had done so because others did. The most well-known achievement of the union was the CBA, which was perceived to make a difference with regards to payment and labour conditions, and which also made it desirable to work in a unionized farm. Furthermore, also non-members in farms participating in the CBA had to pay a fee and so financially it did not make a difference whether one participated or not.<sup>294</sup> Remarkably, next to many workers, also a few of the union representatives within the farms distrusted the KPAWU-

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<sup>291</sup> Interview in the KPAWU-office in Kwa Muhia by the author, 6 February 2015

<sup>292</sup> Interview with the KPAWU-official and the labour officer.

<sup>293</sup> Interview with the KPAWU-official.

<sup>294</sup> "Unionisable employees who are not members of the union shall be required to pay agency fees subject to gazettelement by the Minister of Labour in accordance with Section 49 of the Labour Relations Act" (section 1 of the CBA 2011-2013). The union fee was two percent of one's gross salary for KPAWU plus 100 KES (approximately €0.90) per month for COTU (KHRC 2012: 30).

officers: they complained that the central office did little to assist them.<sup>295</sup> Finally, also managers were quite distrustful towards the union. One manager stated that the union in Kenya was hard to negotiate with.<sup>296</sup>

The union itself had a confrontational approach towards such criticism. It for example claimed to be the only organization that had the right to represent workers in unionized farms. The first statement in the CBA for 2011-2013 was as follows: "Whereas by terms of Recognition the Association and the Union agree that the Association has recognized the Union as a properly constituted body and the sole labour organization representing the interests of the employees within the membership of AEA." This claim is understandable for the purposes of signing a CBA, yet it also made the union quite powerful and left little alternatives for other ways of resolving conflicts within the farms. The union for a long time did not acknowledge the legitimacy of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and of accrediting bodies of certificates in advocating the improvement of labour conditions within the farms (Riisgaard 2009).<sup>297</sup> In sum, the increased unionization complicated power relations within the farms without necessarily empowering workers. However, at the least, the increased influence of the CBA stimulated the adherence to (legal) regulations and thus aided in improving labour conditions.

In short, where before each farm would simply adopt its own policy, the industry recently became much more regulated through the processes of 'standardization' and unionization. The reasons for this transition and the wish of farms to participate have been more elaborately discussed elsewhere.<sup>298</sup> However, crucially, participation in the CBA or in a certification remained voluntary, and the decision to join or not was mainly based on the markets a farm was targeting. Furthermore, as Nelson, Martin and Ewert (2007: 71-72) concluded for certification schemes, both these processes were successful in changing some of the practices within the farms, yet they did not ultimately re-shape power relations.

An unintended effect of the increasing adherence to the CBA and participation in certification schemes was that farms tended to do exclusively what was prescribed in these standards and nothing more. Whereas before, management could decide to spend a small

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<sup>295</sup> There were even occasionally conflicts within the organization itself. A politically conspicuous example was the case in which the contract of a local union leader from Naivasha was terminated by the branch after he testified about the post-election violence at the International Criminal Court in The Hague (see Peter Otieno Ombude v Kenya Plantation & Agricultural Workers (2015) eKLR).

<sup>296</sup> Manager of a large rose farm, interview on the farm by Gemählich, 24 October 2014.

<sup>297</sup> In 2004, the Secretary General of COTU Atwoli accused human rights activists of using the theme of workers' rights to access foreign donors. According to him, NGOs had no role to play in negotiating labour conditions (*Daily Nation*, "Leave workers alone, Atwoli tells lobbies", 31 August 2004). On the other hand, NGOs themselves were also not always keen on working together with KPAWU. For example, the organization Women Working Worldwide was quite critical of the union because of its "patriarchal" system (Jacobs, Brahic and Olaiya 2015: 6).

<sup>298</sup> See Kuiper and Gemählich (2017).

part of the profit on 'corporate social responsibility' projects and would for example pay for the construction of a classroom, farms that had become Fairtrade-certified tended to leave such projects to the Premium Committee. Also with regards to labour conditions, supervisors and managers would primarily follow the rules in the CBA. Anything extra would be perceived of as a favour. For instance, the CBA contained regulations on maternity leave and on limited working hours for nursing women.<sup>299</sup> However, there were no regulations with regards to the workload of pregnant women, and it was up to the supervisor to plan the work of these women according to their health situation. They could be given 'light duties' and be exempted from any work that involved bending over. However, such measures were up to the discretion of the supervisor and were not always granted.

Low salaries remained a main cause for discontent among the workers, even in unionized and/or certified farms. The salaries were the main bone of contention in the biannual negotiations for the CBA<sup>300</sup>, and they were also an important target for those criticizing the industry. NGO-commissioned researchers concluded that the wages were insufficient for meeting the basic needs of workers and their families (cf. Dolan, Opondo and Smith 2003: 37; Anker and Anker 2014: 47-48). Riisgaard and Gibbon (2014: 277) noted that the standards focussed on job security and welfare, and not on higher monetary wages. Significantly, real wages had decreased in the past few years. Although the workers paid no or little taxes, the salaries were nevertheless lowered further due to several deductions. There were national fees, such as for the National Hospital Insurance Fund. There were also personal fees, such as the membership fee of the trade union and the payment of loans with the company SACCO. On the other hand, workers received several allowances on top of the salaries. For instance, Karibu Farm paid for the medical treatment of employees and also for the medical costs of their (nuclear) family members.<sup>301</sup> Secondly, those farms participating in the CBA paid a monthly housing allowance (1,500-2,000 KES) and a travelling allowance for the annual leave (2,300 KES).<sup>302</sup> Section 31 of the Employment Act of 2007 also required employers to either provide accommodation or to pay a "sufficient sum, as rent, in addition to the wages or salary of the employee, as will enable the employee to obtain reasonable accommodation." Whereas the housing allowance paid by the farms covered the average rents in the settlements, Anker and Anker (2014: 18) argued that these one-room rental houses were too small for a family and sometimes were of poor quality. What counted as "reasonable accommodation" thus

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<sup>299</sup> Section 10 of the CBA for 2011-2013.

<sup>300</sup> Interview with the labour officer.

<sup>301</sup> Section 34 of the Employment Act 2007 stipulated that employers should pay for medical care for their employees, insofar care was not provided for free and was not covered by any insurance scheme. However, this stipulation did not include the family members of the employees, and in that sense, farms such as Karibu Farm did more than was required by law.

<sup>302</sup> Sections 7(d) and 12(a) of the CBA for 2011-2013. These amounts were equivalent to €13, €18 and €20 respectively.

remained vague. Nevertheless, allowances somewhat compensated for the low salaries. Finally, in addition to the salary and to allowances, some farms provided benefits in kind, such as the provision of drinking water to take home or a chicken for Christmas. These were all 'extra's', left to the discretion of the farm managers, and therefore could also be stopped again. They also did not always fit to the needs of the workers: the mentioned chicken happened to be of a foreign breed, quite different from local chicken, and Helen was still amused when she recalled how she and her colleagues had struggled to prepare these chickens properly.

Flower farms defended themselves against criticism of the low salaries by pointing out that flower farm workers on average earned more than unskilled workers in most other economic sectors in Kenya. For example, the wages in vegetable farms were lower.<sup>303</sup> A farm that produced both flowers and vegetables, paid less to the employees in the vegetable department than to those working with flowers.<sup>304</sup> Farm managers and owners furthermore defended the level of the wages by stating that they paid much more than the statutory agricultural minimum wage<sup>305</sup> - not acknowledging that these wages were set for labourers on small-scale farms in rural areas, who would live in an area where the cost of living was much lower than in Naivasha, as argued in the report of the KHRC (2012: 25). Thus, despite paying relatively high wages, also the flower farms did not pay a wage on which the workers and their families could reasonably be expected to live on. The average wages, even including the allowances, were considerably lower than a so-called living wage, which Anker and Anker (2014: 47) estimated to be 18,542 KES in the year 2014.<sup>306</sup>

Farm managers claimed that their farm would be no longer economically viable if they would pay much higher wages. They claimed that profit margins had dropped tremendously in recent years. One manager even called this debate about a living wage "dangerous", as it could lead to unrest among the workers.<sup>307</sup> Another manager said he preferred providing many law-salaried jobs to providing only a few high-salaried jobs. Occasionally managers were blunter and claimed their workers simply did not need more money.<sup>308</sup>

Farm managers felt offended by criticism (on wages or on other issues) from media and NGOs. They pointed out that they provided a lot of jobs and they blamed the Kenyan government for a lack of involvement and investment. They argued that the farms invested in schools, hospitals and infrastructure. They did not mention that the provision of some of these

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<sup>303</sup> Two payslips collected by Tolo from employees of a vegetable farm at South Lake showed a monthly salary of 4,000 KES per month plus a housing allowance of 1,500 KES in 2013.

<sup>304</sup> Interview with an HR-manager of a combined vegetable and flower farm by Gemählich and the author.

<sup>305</sup> The chief executive officer of the KFC in: Catherine Riungu, "Flower Farms Shed Bad Image," *The East African Magazine*, 18-24 September 2006; farm owner cited in: Mwangi, "Naivasha Town."

<sup>306</sup> This 'living wage' was equivalent to €164. As explained in Section 5.5, the actual basic wages for general workers in unionized farms ranged from €48 to €90 per month.

<sup>307</sup> Managing director of a large rose farm, interview in Nairobi by Gemählich, 11 December 2014.

<sup>308</sup> Interview with a manager of a large rose farm by Gemählich.

facilities also be in the interest of the farms themselves. For example, it was advantageous to have a company hospital to judge sick leave applications and cases of accidents, rather than to depend on an external clinic or hospital for that. As asserted by a farm manager in an article in a Dutch magazine: "this way you can retain some control."<sup>309</sup> Despite the recent move towards 'legalization', some managers (both foreign and Kenyan) took on a paternalistic attitude towards their workers, which surfaced from their justification of wages and labour conditions in the farms.

The processes of unionization and standardization prompted farms to install various workers' committees. These committees were meant to enhance the say of employees in farm policies and thus to reconfigure power relations within the farms. The committees usually had an advisory role to management with regards to a certain aspect of the work. The increase in committees created quite some specific roles within the farms with specific responsibilities. Each greenhouse of Karibu Farm had a union representative, a welfare representative, a gender representative, a health and safety representative, two first aiders and a fire marshal. Each working team or department would elect a committee representative for the duration of several years.<sup>310</sup> Sometimes the supervisor of the concerning team had to agree with the elected members and therefore effectively had a veto. For some of the committees the voting was done in an informal manner, either by simply appointing someone during a short meeting of the team or by lining up behind the candidate one wished to vote for (the so-called *mlolongo*-system).<sup>311</sup> For other committees, such as the Fairtrade Premium Committee, the elections were more formal. I noticed in Karibu Farm that election procedures included campaigns, an improvised voting booth and a balloting box. After being elected, the representatives would receive a training of several days and afterwards would have a monthly meeting, at which now and then also a representative of the management would be present.

Whereas, wherever present, the union committee and the Fairtrade Premium Committee had to follow the procedures set by the respective organizations, the exact role of other committees differed per farm. For example, the welfare committee of some farms had the quite limited task of supporting employees who had been bereaved or had fallen ill by collecting financial contributions among colleagues. In farms that were not unionized, the welfare committee would have the much broader task of being the intermediary between the management and the workers. Because the position of committees differed per farm, their impact on practices and labour relations also varied.

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<sup>309</sup> In Dutch: "Zo hou je ook nog wat controle" (in Gaarlandt 2013: 12).

<sup>310</sup> Interview with a manager responsible for Fairtrade-procedures by Gemählich and the author.

<sup>311</sup> Interview with Allan.

## 5.7 Gender within the Farms: Divisions of Labour and Gender Committees

One peculiar committee, existing in quite a number of farms, was the so-called 'gender committee'. As mentioned, women working in the industry had attracted quite some attention from NGOs and journalists, and particularly the issue of sexual harassment had been a central point of criticism, as I describe below. In response, and under pressure of standards, the farms introduced gender committees. The exact role of these committees varied per farm. But before elaborating further on the gender committees, I first provide a context by describing the gendered division of labour and the role of gendered discourses within the farms.

As explained in the previous chapter, there was a remarkable large number of women working for the farms, partly because they had fewer opportunities elsewhere than men did. However, contrary to women employed in many other global (agro-)industries, women in the flower farms in Naivasha were not only working in subordinate positions.<sup>312</sup> There was for instance quite a large percentage of female supervisors.<sup>313</sup> Nevertheless, men and women did not always perform the same jobs. More specifically, certain jobs were not available to women. Tasks that were considered to be risky, dangerous or physically demanding were given exclusively to men. Examples of such tasks were spraying pesticides, irrigation, working in night shifts, working in the cold store and transporting flowers on a pushcart (cf. Dolan, Opondo and Smith 2003: 28). One of the supervisors in the Karibu Farm packhouse told me, without me even asking, that there were just as many women as men working in the grading hall. He said: "As you can see we have gender equality here." However, when I asked him whether this meant that there were also women working in the cold room, he started to laugh: "Of course not." His amusement demonstrated that it was unimaginable to employ women in physically more demanding jobs. Especially with regards to spraying, it was said that women were "too delicate" for the job.

This division of labour, in which jobs that were perceived to be dangerous or heavy were not accessible to women, was never challenged. "Even among workers, such gender segmentation was viewed as a natural outcome of social norms and biological difference" (Dolan, Opondo and Smith 2003: 40).<sup>314</sup> It was furthermore supported by pressure of NGOs, which emphasized the vulnerability of women for chemicals and sometimes made explicit references to their reproductive roles.<sup>315</sup> In addition to these heavy or dangerous jobs,

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<sup>312</sup> See Ong (1987: 164) on the division of labour in factories in Malaysia and Samarasinghe (1993: 334) on a tea plantation in Sri Lanka.

<sup>313</sup> In a supervisors' meeting within Karibu Farm, there were 5 female and 11 male supervisors present.

<sup>314</sup> No one seemed to consider this naturalized division of labour to be a violation of Section 5(3)(a) of the Employment Act of 2007, which explicitly banned any discrimination on the basis of sex in matters of recruitment and training.

<sup>315</sup> For instance, the website of the Dutch NGO Hivos (n.d.) mentioned the risks of aggressive chemicals for, among others, the fertility of women.

participants in the listing and ranking exercise also mentioned a few more technical positions, such as carpeting and welding, which were said to be given exclusively to men. As one of the participants remarked, these jobs were also performed by women in the settlements, yet somehow they had remained a male domain within the farms.

Apart from these jobs that were clearly not available to women, there were yet other jobs that were gendered. These gendered ideas could be challenged and were not always adhered to. Nevertheless, certain patterns were discernible. "Women are concentrated in the segments of the production process that are most labour intensive and that also hold the most significance for the cosmetic quality of the final product. These include picking, packing, and value-added processing activities, which all require intense concentration and long periods of standing and bending" (Dolan, Opondo and Smith 2003: 28). Some (although by far not all) men thought the manual labour such as harvesting or grading was not 'fit' for them. This perception of the work not being fit for men was reflected in the composition of greenhouse working teams, which usually consisted of more women than men.<sup>316</sup>

Furthermore, as explained above, even within greenhouse teams, there were certain tasks that were more often performed by men than women and the other way around. Lucy explained to me why she gave tasks such as wrapping the flowers in the greenhouse to men. She said that, because of their traditional household chores, women were used to small but many tasks, somewhat similar to harvesting or sizing, while men were used to bulk work. Thus, supervisors and managers sometimes connected the planning of the work to (their perception of) the gendered division of labour in the domestic domain. A Kenyan manager (of European descent) also justified the common division of labour within the industry by using cultural arguments:

It's traditional that you will find most of the girls in the [...] fields and the greenhouse maintenance, sprayers and truck drivers tend to be male. It has never changed. It's not about the job. It's about the man's work. So gender equality is a lot of crap in this job. It comes from the West. Just open your eyes and look at Africa. You can't just sweep it away. But there is no reason not to employ the women for weeding, because that has always been their job. You rarely find a man in the greenhouse doing the weeding. Sometimes you do.<sup>317</sup>

Another Kenyan manager (also of European descent) consistently talked about "our ladies" in the packhouse when he gave us a tour of the farm, even though there evidently was quite a number of men working there. Foreign managers expressed similar opinions. Jan thought Kenyan women were more "responsible" and therefore fit for precise jobs. Hans even called

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<sup>316</sup> There were 21 female and 9 male employees in the greenhouse of Karibu Farm where I conducted the total network analysis. Observations during visits to other farms provided a similar picture.

<sup>317</sup> Interview with the manager of a large rose farm by Gemählich.



Kenyan men "lazy". He would prefer to only hire women, were it not that the farm needs men for the more heavy and technical tasks.<sup>318</sup>

Although these managers and supervisors all referred to what they perceived to be 'Kenyan' culture, their portrayal of women echoed a gendered narrative that has played a role in recruitment and labour control practices in industries worldwide. "Women are considered not only to have naturally nimble fingers, but also to be naturally more docile and willing to accept tough work discipline, and naturally more suited to tedious, repetitious, monotonous work" (Elson and Pearson 1984: 23). Whereas the managers in Naivasha did not portray the women to be 'naturally' docile, they did portray them to be 'culturally' subordinated and used to repetitive labour. They took this 'culture' as a given that could not be changed. But as Salzinger (2003) argued, docile labour was not something that simply existed and that these farms had stumbled upon: it had to be produced, for example by references to cultural gender patterns. The explicit connection that managers made between women's and men's roles on the work floor and the (perceived) gender relations in Kenyan society, made it difficult for women (as well as for men) to question the division of labour within the farms. Notably, these perceptions on gender roles were not necessarily disadvantageous for women. One manager expressed in Dutch press that he only hired women for the more responsible jobs, even as supervisors and managers, because in his opinion they worked harder than men. He also thought that he in this way could avoid having cases of sexual intimidation on the farm (Gaarlandt 2013: 13).

This last remark was salient: sexual harassment has been a central concern in the criticism of the flower industry.<sup>319</sup> The emphasis on this subject initially puzzled me because the issue of sexual harassment was hardly ever mentioned to me during my time in Naivasha. Admittedly, I hardly asked explicitly about the issue, yet women (as well as men) felt free to tell me about their disadvantaged position in general, even without me asking about it. It made me wonder: was sexual harassment as prevalent, and also as much experienced as a problem, as critics of the industry led to believe?

Jacobs, Brahic and Olaiya (2015) noted that sexual harassment in African firms has not been well researched and that there is a lack of official numbers on the prevalence of this issue. Their own research, executed in cooperation with local NGOs under the umbrella of the British organization Women Working Worldwide and coupled to educational activities and advocacy, was meant to generate knowledge on this subject. They interviewed employees of horticultural firms in four East African countries, amongst others forty female employees of Kenyan firms. A minority of these respondents reported to have been bothered with offensive

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<sup>318</sup> Interviews with Hans by Gemählich and the author and Jan by Gemählich, Tolo and the author.

<sup>319</sup> See e.g. Catherine Riungu, "Flower Farms Shed"; Hivos (n.d.).

comments or with unwanted touching. Thus, sexual harassment occurred, yet the researchers noted that the mentioned cases of harassment took place in the workplace as well as elsewhere (*ibid.*: 8).

In the study of Dolan, Opondo and Smith (2003: 8), who explicitly asked about it, sexual harassment was reported by workers of all seven farms in the sample. Harassment mostly took the form of only receiving benefits (including job security) in exchange for sexual favours. However, the authors did not provide a percentage of employees who had been affected by it. And significantly, these authors added that there were also other forms of harassment within the farms, such as verbal abuse and corruption. At the time, there were no facilities or boards to which workers could bring a complaint on (sexual) harassment. Managers mostly denied the issue, and if they recognized it, asserted that it was a cultural issue.<sup>320</sup> In addition, at the time of their research, some farms had a recruitment procedure in place in which the supervisors could hire and fire temporary labour, which made workers even more dependent on the supervisors. With the formalization of the recruitment processes and with the creation of HR-departments, workers have become less vulnerable to for instance random dismissal and therefore to harassment by superiors (*ibid.*). More recent research gives the impression that workers in some of the farms experienced sexual harassment, but by far not in all (KHRC 2012: 54).

Overall, it seems research has been too scanty to draw conclusions on the prevalence of sexual harassment within the farms. Apart from a lack of statistics, the issue is further complicated by the lack of a shared definition. When does coercion in a hierarchical wage labour environment turn into (sexual) harassment? As Kloss (2016: 4) argued: "sexual(ized) harassment is a means of sustaining (...) hegemony". Rather than being primarily about sexual attraction, it is about expressing and reassuring (both gender-based and role-based) power. Literature on sexual harassment cited by Jacobs, Brahic and Olaiya (2015: 3-5) showed that it was most likely employees in the most vulnerable position (that is, casual labourers and those who were financially dependent on their job) who would be targeted. The literature reviewed by these authors furthermore indicated that harassment could be used as a (systemic) tool in labour control. The attention to sexual harassment thus pointed at wider issues of (partly gendered) inequalities of power - but I noticed that these were much less discussed than the harassment itself.

The primary focus on sexual harassment might even have taken attention away from these underlying power imbalances. When media attention for the concerns on sexual harassment threatened the reputation of farms in the export markets in Europe - an explicit

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<sup>320</sup> Similar statements were made by managers in Naivasha. From an interview with a manager of a rose-breeding farm by Gemählich: "We did not invent sexual harassment, it is a cultural thing."

strategy of the NGOs pushing for better labour conditions (cf. Jacobs, Brahic and Olaiya 2015: 2) - farms started to adopt policies to address these concerns. Also a diverse range of other organizations working to improve labour conditions within the farms adopted this issue. It was furthermore addressed in the new labour legislation of 2007. The CBA required participating farms to formulate policy on sexual harassment.<sup>321</sup> The formation of gender committees was already in 2006 a requirement in the Code of Practice of the KFC.<sup>322</sup> Finally, the Fairtrade Standard for Hired Labour included the obligation (§3.1.6) to implement a policy counteracting "unwanted conduct of a sexual nature", which had to include "awareness raising on what constitutes sexual harassment." §3.5.27 added that the grievance procedure of the farms should include specifically appointed women or women's committees for cases of sexual harassment (Fairtrade International 2014). Special trainings and the installation of women's or gender committees were heralded as the solution to harassment within the farms, by both NGOs and industry-based organizations (see for instance Jacobs, Brahic and Olaiya 2015: 10). Ironically, the focus on sexual harassment in criticism of the industry thus induced measures that focussed on this single issue and that did not profoundly reshape power relations within the farms. Even more ironically, the increased awareness of sexual harassment did not always mean that complaints were taken seriously: employees of several farms told me that these accusations could also be false, uttered to discredit a manager. Twisting the original reason for establishing gender committees, one farm employee even told me that these committees were there to counteract false accusations, not to prevent sexual harassment itself (something similar was reported in KHRC 2012: 54).

The role of the gender committees, which in many cases only had female representatives, generally remained vague. They seemed to be there primarily because it was a requirement in certain certification standards (cf. KHRC 2012: 39). Employees themselves often were not sure what this committee actually did, except that it had something to do with 'women'. The committee of some of the farms would not even meet regularly. There, the gender representatives were merely persons where a female employee could report to when being harassed. In the case of some other farms, I was told that the committee dealt with "women's problems on the work floor" in general. An example of such a problem would be when a pregnant employee felt that her supervisor gave her a too heavy workload. Only women could become members of "gender committees", and the general perception among workers was that these committees only dealt with issues relating to women, not with relations *between* women and men.<sup>323</sup> Hence, although these committees could be helpful in specific

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<sup>321</sup> Section 6 of the Employment Act 2007 and section 31 of the CBA for 2011 to 2013.

<sup>322</sup> Riungu, "Flower Farms Shed."

<sup>323</sup> However, when I asked the chair of the gender committee of Karibu Farm whether the committee was only assisting women, she replied that it was also for men, because, as she said, a man could

cases, their overall effects might have been counterproductive. Their instalment designated certain issues as "women's issues" instead of enabling a discussion on broader relations of inequality that were integral to the organization of labour within the farms. In other words, while challenging certain hierarchies, it neglected others (cf. Wright 2006: 18)<sup>324</sup> Gender committees might have been able to counteract overt cases of sexual harassment but they did not profoundly change the disadvantaged position of female (as well as male) workers, and their dependence on their jobs and their managers.

The farms also organized trainings on gender relations. These trainings were meant to teach small groups of employees about 'gender equity'. When I asked Lucy what she had learned at such a training, she said she had learned that women also have responsibilities and that they should not only stay at home in the kitchen. The peculiar thing about these committees and trainings was that they were exclusively targeting women: men could not participate, and they likewise were not expected to make any positive contribution to 'gender equity'.

The HR-manager of Karibu Farm invited me to attend a meeting of the gender committee. Observing this meeting shed a new light on the functions of this committee. The chair opened the meeting with a reflection on the past year, stating there had not been many problems. "We are together with the superiors."<sup>325</sup> After the opening, each representative was given time to report on any problems within their departments. These discussions showed me that the gender committee did not deal with general or structural discrimination of women or men. Instead, it assisted individual employees with specific problems. The gender representative had the task of talking to the supervisor in case an employee reported an issue. If that did not solve the issue, the representative should report it in a committee meeting and to the management. However, when I heard the issues discussed during the gender committee meeting, it dawned on me that perhaps these committees did not even exist exclusively to protect individual workers but also to keep labour relations peaceful. Some employees had for example come to a gender representative to complain about a colleague who, according to them, regularly pretended she was ill, so that she could go on sick leave and leave the work to her colleagues. The gender representatives themselves, all women who had worked for the farm for several years now, were furthermore aggrieved by the behaviour

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also be harassed by a female supervisor. Nevertheless, also the gender committee of this farm only had female members.

<sup>324</sup> Dolan, Opondo and Smith (2003: 28) described a gender committee in a Fairtrade-certified farm that had a broad agenda, including stimulating women to take part in workers' committees, (sexual) health education and the opening of a crèche. However, I did not encounter a committee with such a broad and empowering agenda during my own fieldwork. KHRC (2012: 39) also noted that the committees mostly focussed on single issues.

<sup>325</sup> In Swahili: "Tuko pamoja na wakubwa."

of some of the more recent employees. They called them the "digital ones"<sup>326</sup> (i.e. the young ones), who came with their "behaviour from outside" and who did not listen. "If a girl gets reprimanded for making a mistake, she will just talk back. She doesn't watch her mouth. Those young educated girls have no manners."<sup>327</sup> The HR-manager urged the committee members to send those whose behaviour was "too much" to her. If they were still on an initial contract, they would not be hired permanently, and even those on a permanent contract could ultimately be fired for using "abusive language".<sup>328</sup> Thus, it seemed these committees, which on paper were supposed to empower the workers, could also be instrumental in enhancing labour control.

### 5.8 Ethnicity on the Work Floor: Which Language to Speak?

Unlike gendered categories, ethnic categories ('Kikuyu', 'Luo') did not play an official role in recruitment processes, division of labour and labour control. Ethnicity was deliberately kept out of the farms, especially political expressions of ethnicity.<sup>329</sup> However, ethnic markers such as vernacular languages inevitably seeped in.

There are two official national languages in Kenya, English and Swahili. However, the vernacular languages of different ethnic groups also remained widely-spoken. Abdulaziz (1982) described how in urban areas, with a large socio-economic stratification and a mix of people from different backgrounds, it had become hard to predict which language people would speak to each other, sometimes even for themselves. The farms in Naivasha attempted to regulate the choice of language. In this context, where most farms had foreign managers and where there was a risk that ethnic tensions that existed in wider society would seep into the farms, the choice which language to use on the work floor was not only a practical matter but could potentially take on political salience.

Swahili had already been the working language on the farms and ranches around Naivasha in colonial times. The settlers did not favour the population to become too educated and would speak a pidginized version of Swahili with their employees (Abdulaziz 1982: 4). Later on, English became the official language in primary and secondary school and consequently many of the current farm workers in Naivasha were able to speak (some) English. They could therefore communicate with foreign managers. Management used English or Swahili when communicating changes in policies, job vacancies, a monthly

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<sup>326</sup> In Swahili: "Hawa madigital".

<sup>327</sup> In Swahili: "Msichana akiongeleshwa akikosa, ana maneno tu. Mtu hachungi mdomo wake. Wasomi wasichana wadogo hawana adhabu."

<sup>328</sup> Section 44 of the Employment Act 2007 confirmed this statement of the HR-manager.

<sup>329</sup> Farms with a compound nevertheless allowed employees to organize themselves along ethnic lines when it came to non-political groups such as vyama (interview with J. Wanjala).

schedule of annual leaves and dates of union meetings and soccer matches of the company team via notice boards. Sheets of papers with safety regulations were present, in both languages, in most greenhouses and packhouses. However, just as in colonial times, Swahili remained the language used on the farms on a daily basis. Work meetings were regularly held in Swahili, unless a foreign manager was present. Out of the 94 flower farm workers in the survey, 76 said they spoke primarily Swahili in their workplace, while another 13 said that both English and Swahili were the working languages. Abdulaziz (1982: 9) observed that in Kenya in general, speaking English was associated with a higher class and higher level of education than speaking Swahili. I observed a similar difference in language use by different socio-economic groups. However, it was not always easy to decide which language would fit to which situation, regardless still of an individual's proficiency in both languages. At a meeting within Karibu Farm one member of the audience suddenly started to speak English. He was laughed at for his lack of confidence in Swahili and the audience also seemed to find him presumptuous in switching to English.

Only four of the respondents in the survey said that they regularly spoke another language than Swahili or English at work. Nevertheless, I frequently heard vernacular languages during my visits to Karibu Farm. Whereas work-related conversations were usually held in Swahili, more informal conversations at the lunch table or the exchange of greetings while passing by regularly took place in another language. One of the two groups from Karibu Farm that participated in the listing and piling exercise, by coincidence consisted of three Kikuyu women. Significantly, they started to discuss in Kikuyu amongst themselves, until I asked them to switch to Swahili. Hence, it became clear that vernacular languages were frequently spoken within this farm.

I also asked respondents in the total network analysis which language they regularly spoke with each of their colleagues working in the same greenhouse, including their supervisor and the scout. Swahili was by far the most commonly used language. Notably, English was not mentioned once, confirming my impression that this language was primarily used among and with foreign management and perhaps some of the Kenyan top managers. More surprisingly, only eleven of the team of thirty workers said to speak exclusively Swahili with colleagues. All others (occasionally) spoke a vernacular language with one or more colleagues of the same ethnic background. Figure 14 shows which languages, apart from Swahili, were spoken in this greenhouse. Ties include both the assertion to speak a certain language with another person oneself and being named by someone else as an interlocutor in that language. The graph shows that only one person never spoke a vernacular language with colleagues in her greenhouse. She told me no one else spoke her vernacular language (Nandi). The graph furthermore shows that some, who came from a mixed ethnic background, even spoke several vernacular languages at work, with different colleagues. Both the union

representative in the greenhouse and Yvonne, the supervisor, stated that it was not appropriate to speak a language that other colleagues did not understand. On the other hand, another employee took the plurality of languages as something positive: she said she taught colleagues from other ethnic backgrounds some of her vernacular, and they taught her theirs.

Furthermore, Yvonne was also pragmatic in her use of languages: she told me she would speak another language with an employee if he or she would more readily understand her explanation in that language than in Swahili. For many employees, Swahili was their second or third language and they spoke it imperfectly. One of the migrant workers who got trained within Karibu Farm at the time of my visits, had arrived straight from a rural area close to Lake Victoria, after finishing secondary school (Eric in Figure 14, which is based on interviews in his team half a year after his arrival). Lucy - who was his supervisor at the time - had to explain the work to him in English, which he spoke well, whereas his knowledge of Swahili was limited. However, after a few months, his immediate colleagues commented that he had become a 'local' (*mwenyeji*), and joked that he now was 'bothering' them in Swahili all the time.

An utmost priority of farm management, and also of lobby organizations such as the KFC, was to avoid the image of being 'tribalist' and of favouring certain ethnic groups over others. Management encouraged the use of the politically neutral language Swahili. Nevertheless, as I described in the previous chapter, there were occasional accusations of tribalism, especially with regards to recruitment practices. This seemed ridiculous in the eyes of the foreign general managers. As Karibu's manager Jan told me during an informal conversation: "Why would I care about tribe?" The managers were reluctant to become part of local political struggles, including ethnical enmities, and they managed remarkably well to stay out of it. For example, flower farms with workers' compounds were not immediately affected by the post-election violence in early 2008 and even became a safe haven for some people living around the farms. And manager Jan said that he emphasized all the time that employees were not judged on who they were but on how they performed. He hoped people would understand that decisions were based on the wish to increase production and to be able to pay employees their salaries, and not on ethnic considerations. He had experienced that it was important to employ managers who were able to avoid the impression of tribalism. This helped in keeping labour relations friendly and peaceful.

To summarize, although ethnicity was visible within the farms in Naivasha, for instance in the form of vernacular languages, ethnicized recruitment or an ethnicized division of labour were not a common strategy in labour control, unlike in some other global factories (cf. Ong 1987: 158). Whereas the foreign managers used 'Kenyan culture' to justify the gendered division of labour, they at the same time tried to keep the politically more explosive category of ethnicity as much as possible out of the farms.

## 5.9 The Farm as a Node in Social Networks

Unlike the taboo on ethnicity, most farms tolerated religious expressions on the work floor. Teams could start their day together with short prayers before the supervisors would give instructions for the day. Meetings of workers' committees usually would also start with prayers. In one farm, those working on Sundays would come fifteen minutes earlier to work to hold a small service together. The large majority of the residents of Karagita, Kasarani and Sharma Farm's compound interviewed for the survey (95.5%) identified as Christians, which indicates that this was also the dominant religion among flower farm employees. Although there were many different Christian denominations, religion was not such a political or controversial aspect as ethnicity and its informal but open manifestations were tolerated by the farm management. The space for religion on the work floor indicated that the farms were more than a workplace. As employees could work in the same flower farm for many years or even several decades, these workplaces not only provided a steady income and some cash to invest in the future. They were also an important space within the social networks of their employees. The more so since to many of the workers, the whole of Naivasha was a "work-place" and not a permanent home.

The incorporation of the farms within the social networks of the workers was also reflected in the existence of so-called *vyama* (singular: *chama*) within the farms. These saving groups were more informal than the highly institutionalized SACCOs. They mostly took the form of so-called "merry-go-rounds", in which the members rotated goods or money. An example was a group with six members in which each member contributed two kilograms of sugar every month. A different member was given the twelve kilograms of sugar each year. In another group, each member would put in 500 KES every month and would get 6,000 KES paid out before his or her annual leave.<sup>330</sup> These groups helped their members in budgeting. As Lucy explained, if she would be out of money by the end of the month, she at least still could make tea with the sugar that she received from the chama. Buying larger quantities at once could also reduce the price of food stuffs. Some workers preferred participating in such a chama in their workplace because they worked with their colleagues on a daily basis and knew who they could trust or not. Yvonne - supervisor in Karibu Farm - was even still participating in a chama of colleagues of her former workplace, a year after she had left that farm. There were also vyama that were based outside the farms, in a neighbouring settlement, or even in larger networks, encompassing the home region of migrants. These are discussed further in the next chapter.

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<sup>330</sup> The money that a group member received before going on annual leave was thus more or less equivalent to a month's wages of a general worker who just started (see Section 5.5).



Conversations between workers during working hours indicated shared interests. As argued by Roy (1960), recurring themes and interactions on the work floor can enhance job satisfaction. Moreover, they reflect the position of workers outside the farms, what Roy calls "group memberships". I noticed during lunch breaks in Karibu Farm that employees would regularly discuss work-related topics. Sometimes they would discuss the work itself, for example whether there were a lot of flowers to harvest that day or not. However, a more favourite topic was to compare the labour conditions in their farm to those in farms around. A non-work related topic that employees regularly discussed was their annual leave and their travels home, which reflects the migratory background of most workers.

Nevertheless, the total network analysis that I conducted among a working team in a greenhouse of Karibu Farm indicated that there was only a partial overlap between social networks within the farms and within the neighbouring settlements. Box 1 contains a description of the working team while Figures 15 and 16 display connections between the members.

Figure 15 shows the reported daily interactions in the greenhouse and includes only those ties that were mentioned by both respondents involved. The red nodes represent female workers and the blue nodes male workers. The greenhouse consisted of three sections around three aisles and the shape of the nodes reflects the section in which an employee was working. The square nodes represent the workers who worked in the middle aisle, and who consequently had most opportunities for interaction with workers in the other two sections. The diamond-shaped nodes represent workers who did not work in a specific area. Yvonne - represented by the largest node - was the supervisor.

*Box 1: A working team.*

As explained in Section 2.4.4, I interviewed all thirty workers of one greenhouse of Karibu Farm for a total network analysis in spring 2015. The team consisted of 21 female and 9 male employees. Their average age at the time of interviewing was 35. They had been on average 26 years old when they moved to Kasarani. The average age when starting to work for Karibu Farm was 29: most of them had started to work for this farm soon after arriving.

None of the respondents had been born in Kasarani itself, although a few came from one of the villages nearby such as Ndabibi. When compared to the overall population in the settlements (see Section 4.2), relatively many employees in this greenhouse hailed from the Rift Valley Province, of which Naivasha had formed a part: 13 of the 30. Eight had been born in Western Province, seven in Nyanza Province and two in Central Province. The employee who had stayed in Kasarani for the longest period of time, had arrived in 1994. The one who had arrived most recently only came in early 2015, a few months before the interview. The average length of stay at the time of the interview was ten years.

Six of the respondents had worked for Karibu Farm since it had been taken over by the current owners, in the early 2000s. On the other hand, six had been only hired recently, in the eighteen months previous to the interview. Twenty-four of the employees were general workers in the greenhouse, three men were rotating three months of working in this greenhouse with three months of spraying, one man was sometimes deployed in the greenhouse and sometimes in the packhouse, one woman was the scout and the supervisor was also female.

Eighteen of the respondents in the total network analysis participated in the SACCO. Some of the twelve who did not, were not allowed (yet) because they were still employed on a temporary contract. Apart from the SACCO, a handful of employees had formed a chama together. However, the existence of this group had little impact on the daily interactions and supervisor Yvonne had not even been aware of its existence until I asked the employees about it.

Figure 16 shows interactions outside the farm between the workers of the same team. I was interested to see how much overlap there was between networks within the farms and networks within the settlements, especially in the case of Kasarani, where these two spaces were literally bordering each other. I therefore asked all members of the team which I interviewed for the total network analysis about the contact they had to colleagues when they were outside the farm. I asked them whether there were colleagues whom they already knew before starting to work for the farm, whether there were colleagues who were a member of the same organization in Kasarani (e.g. a church or chama) and whether there were colleagues whom they could coincidentally meet in Kasarani, e.g. because they were neighbours. The answers combined resulted in the graph displayed in Figure 16. A comparison of this graph with the first one on daily interactions within the farm makes clear that workers who interacted a lot inside the farm, for example because they were working along the same aisle, did not necessarily interact much in Kasarani. Especially the position of supervisor Yvonne is remarkable: she was very central within the greenhouse, yet, due to her recent arrival and her habit of going to her family in Naivasha Town on her weekly day off, she did not have a lot of contacts (yet) in Kasarani.

The total network analysis showed that who the workers in this team would interact with on a daily basis, was primarily based on where they worked in the greenhouse. Workers mainly talked to their colleagues in the same area, especially to those harvesting in bays close to them and those sizing the flowers. However, those who regularly harvested flowers in bays bordering another area, mentioned they would sometimes also talk to their 'neighbour' who was harvesting in the next bay.<sup>331</sup> Furthermore, there were three workers in the greenhouse who did not have a fixed area: one general worker, Veronica, who rotated; and the scout Wilhelmina and supervisor Yvonne, who both moved around the whole greenhouse on a daily basis. They consequently had daily interactions with many, if not all, of the colleagues. Another relatively central person in the daily interactions was Anne, who was the representative for the union in this greenhouse. She told me younger workers came to her with questions about the work, which she clearly enjoyed and took pride in. Not only her formal or senior position but also gender played a role here: it was mainly young women who would come to her. The total network analysis showed that likewise, men had more contact to other men, even to those who worked in a different part of the greenhouse. They would for example meet in the changing room (separate for men and women), where there were daily prayers before work started in the morning. The meetings in the changing room for example put Eric

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<sup>331</sup> These interactions are reflected in Figure 15. The workers in the middle area, represented by a square, reported daily interactions with more colleagues than the ones working in the outer areas. There were relatively few workers who are represented with a circle, as their section had been recently planted with a new crop and there was relatively little work to do at the time of the interviews.

in a central position despite his recent arrival, only half a year before these interviews took place. He interacted with many colleagues, partly because he was working in the middle aisle, but also because he met his male colleagues on a daily basis in the changing room.

In some ways, the team seemed to be a tight-knit group. For instance, when I asked to talk to a certain employee who I had not interviewed yet, not only the supervisor but also the regular team members were able to tell me if that person was off or on leave, and even until when in case of annual leaves. Furthermore, most team members could tell me to which part of the farm former colleagues had been moved. However, as the discrepancy between Figure 15 and Figure 16 indicates, frequent daily interactions within the farm were not necessarily reflected in interactions after work, in the workers' settlements.

#### 5.10 Conclusion: Labour within the Farms

This chapter has discussed the work processes within the flower farms. It showed that both the ecological characteristics of the crop and market demands require a strict rhythm of the work. Moreover, the farms rely on a stable, experienced workforce. The industry retains workers by providing certain material incentives, such as considerable yearly increments when continuing to work in the same farm. The industry also makes use of a segmentation of the workforce. For instance, the attention for gender, and more specifically for the issue of sexual harassment, has successfully diverted attention away from the general disadvantageous position of general workers. Attention for such 'cultural' factors makes clear that the farms should not be analysed in isolation.

The next chapter therefore shifts the attention to the workers' settlements, which were connected to the highly-regulated farms but also stood in sharp contrast to them. The seemingly disorderly workers' settlements form the subject of the next chapter.

*Figure 9: A field in a greenhouse with a young crop (picture by the author, 2016).*



*Figure 10: A greenhouse with an older crop (picture by the author, 2014).*



*Figure 11: A field of hypericum (picture by the author, 2016).*



*Figure 12: Two graders at work in a packhouse (picture by the author, 2014).*



Figure 13: The vase life display (picture by the author, 2014).



Figure 14: The vernacular languages spoken by workers interviewed for the total network analysis, which they spoke in addition to the shared language Swahili.

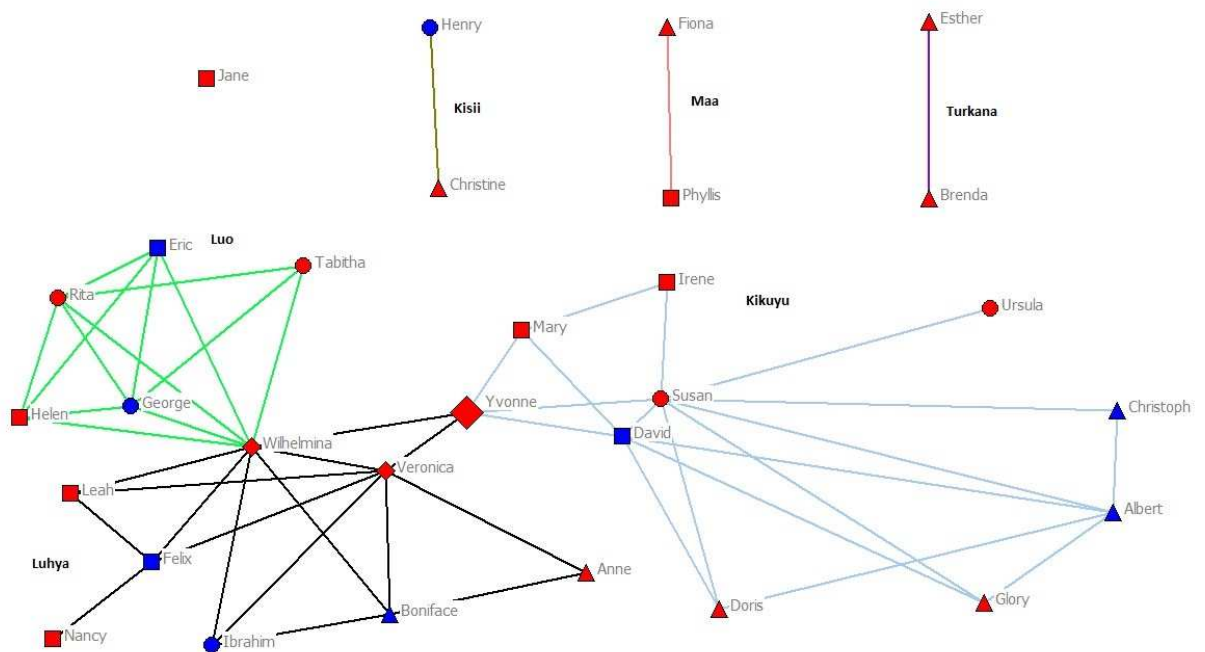


Figure 15: Daily interactions between workers in a greenhouse, as recorded in the total network analysis.

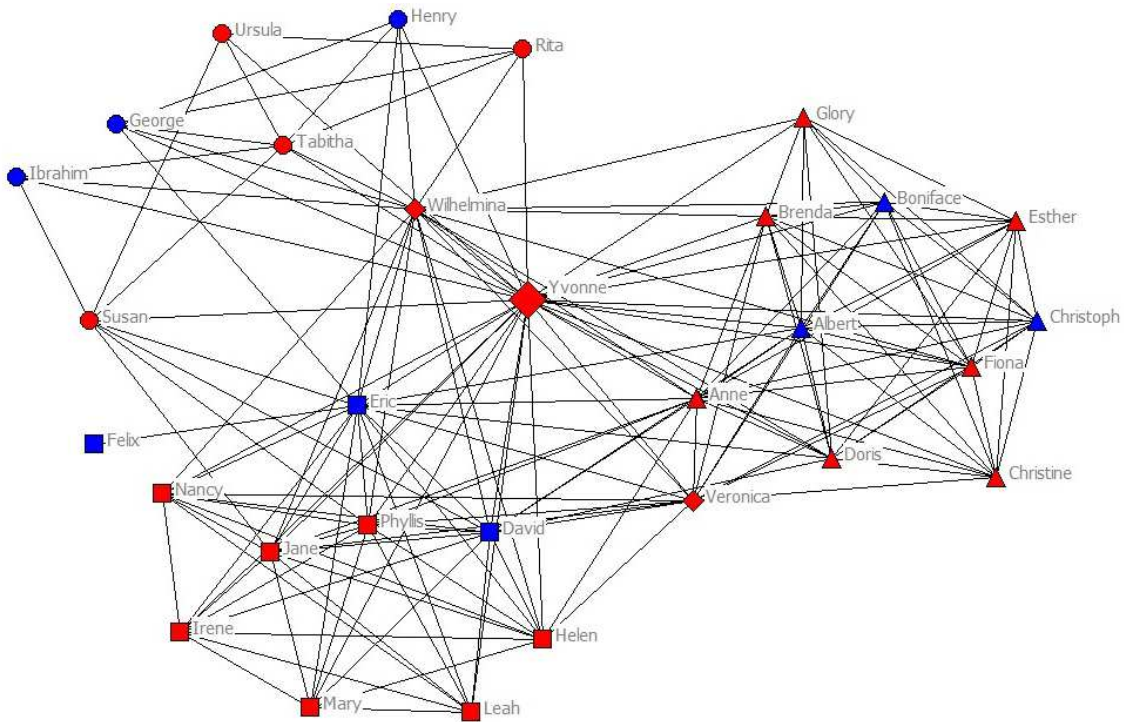
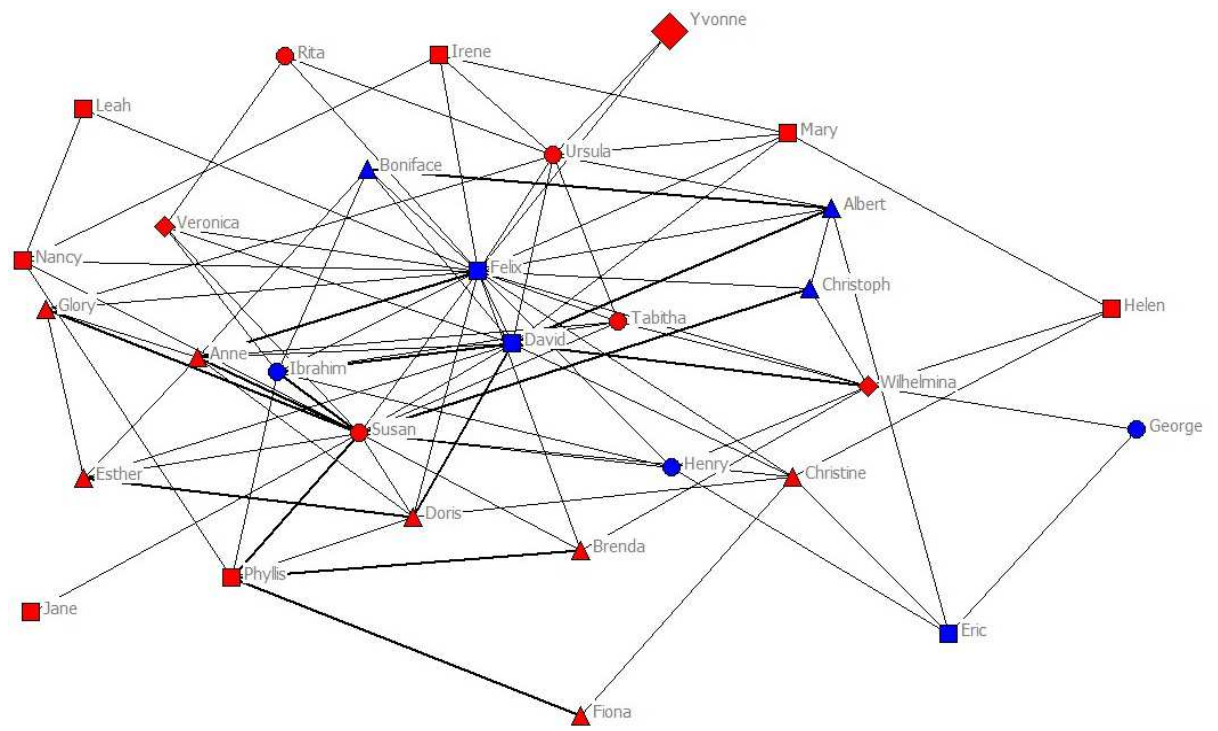


Figure 16: Interactions outside the farm between the workers of the team interviewed for the total network analysis.





## 6. Workers' Settlements: In Search of Order

This chapter describes the living environment of the migrant workers in Naivasha. As mentioned in Chapter 4, there are only a few farms in Naivasha that provided accommodation to their workers. This accommodation recently was of good quality, in contrast to the make-shift housing that farms provided until the 1990s. This improvement was stimulated by certification schemes such as Fairtrade, which required farms to follow regulations for workers' accommodation set by the International Labour Organization.<sup>332</sup> It was, perhaps not coincidentally, also around the time that more requirements were set that some of the farms had decided to close down their compound. One of the receiving managers of Sharma Farm for instance told me during an informal conversation that he would not have chosen to construct a compound if it had not been there yet: it was too expensive. Thus, a decreasing number of workers was housed by the farms. This chapter therefore mostly focuses on the settlements where the majority of the workers reside, together with those who are not employed in horticulture.

The tumultuous, dense, dirty settlements with a mixture of brick, wooden and mud houses stand in a stark contrast to the rest of the environment: the lush green areas around tourist resorts and remaining ranches, and the highly-regulated, technical and agro-industrial environment of the flower farms. These different areas are often only separated from each other by a single fence or by the Moi Lake Road. This vicinity makes the contrast between the farms and the settlements even more noticeable. It therefore does not come as a surprise that the informality and transiency of the settlements have played a major role in criticism of the flower industry. The question who is responsible for improving living conditions in the settlements has been highly contested.

The settlements have until now mostly been described in generalizing terms and from the point of view of those who would like to see an 'order' in these settlements. For instance, in a report in a Dutch magazine on development aid, Karagita was labelled a "slum". The author furthermore wrote that this settlement was "populated with harvesters, cutters, bundlers and packers", thus connecting it strongly to the flower farms.<sup>333</sup> She did not note that around half of the adult population was not employed in the industry, as described in Section 4.4. Local government officials were even more dismissive about these settlements and often associated them with crime. This is illustrated by the following excerpt from minutes of a security meeting, where chiefs and representatives of flower farms and hotels were present: "It was also noted that criminal [*sic*] reside in those slums as houses and life is very

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<sup>333</sup> In Dutch: "sloppenwijk". And: "Karagita is bevolkt met plukkers, snijders, bundelaars en verpakkers" (Gaarlandt, "Bloeiend Afrika": 10).

cheap. Also it is very easy for them to intermingle with the crowd as no one is concerned with what others are doing."<sup>334</sup> Scientific articles have mostly simply not mentioned the settlements, or at most in general terms: "The population has increased tremendously resulting in a proliferation of unplanned settlements around the lake. These settlements are without basic amenities such as water, sanitation and waste disposal programmes" (Becht, Odada and Higgins 2005: 278). Examples of studies that attempted to go beyond such generalizing approaches are the master's theses from Cologne University mentioned in Chapter 1.1, i.e. Kunas (2011), Kioko (2012) and Lembcke (2015). Apart from these, few of the accounts have looked into the 'constitution' of the perceived disorder.

This chapter investigates how and why these settlements took the shape they currently have. As argued by Appadurai (2013: 252), the daily order (or a lack of order) in a certain locality is not a given but is produced by social actors. In other words, daily life in the settlements in Naivasha has been actively produced through imaginative actions, despite the seeming disorder of these places. The choices of residents, including the migrant workers, influenced the settlements' configuration and the perceived disorder. This chapter therefore asks how the residents inhabited these places.

Secondly, the choices of flower farms and government officials also shaped the settlements. As argued by Cooper (1983: 25), the way workers are accommodated is not a coincidence but relates to questions of labour control and to the integration of workers in a larger social order. This argument can be illustrated by drawing a comparison between the farms in Naivasha and wine farms in South Africa which traditionally had a paternalistic system. Du Toit (1993: 315) asserted about the latter: "Farms are not factories in the field. (...) Obligations between worker and farmer extend far beyond the labour-wage nexus." This was much less so the case in Naivasha but the extent of mutual obligations was nevertheless contested. It is in that sense significant that most flower farms have not provided housing.

Stoler (1985: 6) has pointed out that plantations around the world "have reproduced the conditions for their existence, rarely by transforming a particular population into a full-fledged proletariat but more commonly by allowing – and more to the point frequently by *enforcing* – some degree of self-sufficiency on the part of the laboring poor" (emphasis in original). Likewise, I argue in this chapter that despite flower farm managers' and government officials' disapproval of the transiency and the apparent disorder of the settlements, they have had their part in the development of these places, if only because of shunning from taking responsibility for the migrant workers' accommodation.

The chapter starts out with a short introduction to the history of settlements and settlement schemes in Kenya since the 1960s. Section 6.2 describes the development of the

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<sup>334</sup> KNA Nakuru, GU/10/5/201, "Security Meeting."

eight workers' settlements around Lake Naivasha. Section 6.3 discusses the social economy of these settlements by providing a description of households and organizations. Section 6.4 discusses the sensitive topic of ethnicity, which has manifested itself more in the settlements than it has done within the farms. Section 6.5 describes the role of several organizations within the settlements. Finally, section 6.6 elaborates on the 'politics of order' in the settlements and points at the connections between the settlements and the government and the flower farms.

### 6.1 The Establishment of Settlements in Kenya after Independence

To understand the establishment of the workers' settlements around Lake Naivasha, we have to go back in time and take up a topic again that has been discussed in Chapter 3: the historical development of land tenure relations. The Kenyan state has played a central role in the redistribution of land in the former White Highlands in the period that Kenya gained independence. The government did not like to see large estates, which were supposed to be more profitable than small holdings, split up. Some of the large estates were therefore sold as a whole to members of the African (political) elite. However, land was also redistributed to small-holders - both commercial farmers and subsistence farmers - through settlement schemes. Settlers for these farms were selected by state officials and were aided with loans to pay for their plot. The aim of these schemes was to enable smallholder families to be self-subsistent. The most well-known scheme is the Million Acre Scheme. The scheme at the Kinangop Plateau is the one located closest to Naivasha. In addition to such official schemes, the government in the late 1960s also started to stimulate the formation of private land-buying companies, which were sometimes fostered by individual politicians. Ordinary citizens could purchase shares in such a company and could thus acquire a plot together (Chambers 1969: 34-39; Odingo 1971: 187-192; Bradshaw 1990; Boone 2012: 78-82).

As discussed in Section 3.2, Naivasha has been left out of these politically stirred redistribution efforts. There was no official settlement scheme in the vicinity of Lake Naivasha and many of the large estates remained intact in the period after independence, even when taken over by new owners. Nevertheless, a few private cooperative groups acquired relatively small plots in the area and settled there, as will be discussed below.

Settlement schemes have been a common feature throughout Africa, in both colonial and post-colonial times. Governments had explicit agricultural goals with these schemes, but they could also be used for more political (re)distribution programs. As the schemes were purposeful exercises, they could either fail or be successful, and they have therefore been a popular topic in literature from diverse disciplines (Chambers 1969: 1-39; Odingo 1971: 187-212; Boone 2012).

There is also some literature on settlements across the globe that have been established on land that is not owned by the settlers (Lloyd 1979). In Kenya, such 'squatter' neighbourhoods already developed in urban areas during colonial times, as the provision of housing was not a priority for the government. Africans were perceived to be migrant workers who were expected to return to their families in the reserves. Employers were obliged to either provide accommodation or to pay out an allowance, and most employers chose for the last option. Yet, even when employees received an allowance, they still needed a house to rent. Although the government constructed some housing this was but by far not enough. Consequently, settlements on squatted land, such as Mathare and Kibera in Nairobi, developed from the 1940s onwards (Obudho and Aduwo 1989: 17-21).

'Squatter settlements' have been discussed in literature on urban areas across the globe (Lloyd 1979), yet, as pointed out by Rapoport (1988), not all settlements are erected on land that is not legally owned by the constructors. Once Africans could own land in Kenya, yet another type of settlement developed, namely privately developed settlements on land owned by the investors, e.g. on plots of land-buying companies or on plots of individual owners who constructed rental housing. Also after independence, the government mainly put efforts into constructing housing for middle-income groups, leaving the construction of housing of low-income groups to the private sector (Obudho and Aduwo 1989: 17-21). Consequently, there are many such settlements in urban areas in Kenya, yet little has been written about them. The position of tenants on such plots has received even less attention, even though their arrival overturned existing arrangements in these settlements.

The formal settlement schemes were intended to benefit those ethnic groups that had originally been displaced when the European settlers arrived. Anderson and Lochery (2008: 335) have pointed out that in practice, land was sold or sold on according to the willing-buyer-willing-seller principle. The intended ethnic homogeneous communities for these formal schemes did not come into being. This seems to have been different with the private land-buying companies. According to Odingo (1971: 212), these were also deliberately organized along ethnic lines, in order to create homogeneous groups in specific territories. Kanogo (1987: 175) asserted that these groups in practice often consisted exclusively of Kikuyu. This seems to also have been the case with at least two of the companies that settled at Lake Naivasha, Karagita (EA) Ltd. and Kihoto Farmers Company Ltd., which are introduced further in Chapter 6.2.1 and 6.2.2.<sup>335</sup> The settlements that emerged on the companies' plots thus initially were fairly homogeneous - until migrant workers started to arrive in great numbers.

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<sup>335</sup> A more recent list of plot owners in Karagita only contains Kikuyu names (KNA Nakuru, GU/3/36/174, "List of Plot Owners Karagita per 24 June 1995"; walk in Kihoto with James, 8 June 2016).

Despite this homogeneity, cooperatives were often not running smoothly, as discussed in Chapter 3.2. Kioko (2016: 279-281) and Gravesen (2017) investigated conflicts within land-buying companies. Apart from these recent studies, there is a general lack of literature on the topic of such privately developed settlements on legally owned land.

Furthermore, there is a lack of proper terminology to describe them. They are mostly not squatter settlements, as they are constructed on legally owned or accessed land. Terms such as 'slums' or 'informal settlements' give the impression that the settlements are of a makeshift and temporary nature - which they are not. I also did not find an appropriate term in Swahili to refer to these settlements in Naivasha: in interviews and in newspaper articles, they were often referred to in generic terms, such as *eneo* (area) or *mtaa* (neighbourhood).<sup>336</sup> The architect Rapoport (1988) introduced the term 'spontaneous settlements' but also points at a problem with this term: even if these areas were not planned for by the government, that does not mean they are not the outcome of purposeful choices that shaped the physical environment. The difficulties in finding a proper term to describe these areas (which I by lack of a better alternative mostly refer to here as 'workers' settlements') reflects the lack of literature on the topic.

## 6.2 The Settlements around Lake Naivasha

Thus, most of the settlements where the workers lived, had emerged on sub-divided plots of land. With the arrival of migrant workers and the construction of rental housing to accommodate them, these patchworks of small private plots turned into dense residential areas. Being in the settlements was a very different experience from being inside the farms. They formed a chaotic, loud, dense, dusty and by times smelly environment, with little vegetation. The dust roads were scattered with potholes, and at various spots, waste water running off from plots had carved out small trenches, cutting through the roads. The roads had ditches next to them filled with plastic bags and other dirt. During the day, the settlements were quiet. There would be mainly toddlers playing outside, and small livestock dwelling on the streets. The tranquillity disappeared in the late afternoon, when farm workers would return from work and children from school. The settlements then turned into bustling places, with a lot of small-scale economic activity going on, especially along the road close to the bus drop-off points, where streams of workers were passing by on their way home.

The settlements all might appear similar at first sight. They for example all visibly lacked a proper system of garbage collection. Also, in most areas in all the settlements, the houses were cramped together, which increased the danger of fire and the spread of

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<sup>336</sup> Cf. Macharia Mwangi, "Kipindupindu Chawaua Watu 3 Katika Kasarani, Naivasha," *Taifa Leo*, 8 April 2008.

diseases.<sup>337</sup> Despite these shared characteristics, I found that living conditions varied along the lake. This variation can be exemplified by introducing the eight settlements that were established at or close to Lake Naivasha. Figure 4 in Chapter 3 shows the location of these eight settlements. A comparison with Figure 3 illustrates the rapid expansion of these settlements over the last two to three decades. The eight settlements generally developed without much deliberate involvement of the government or the flower industry. Nevertheless, they developed in diverse ways, as the following descriptions will illustrate. I will elaborate in most detail on the two settlements included in the survey (Karagita and Kasarani) and on a more atypical settlement (KCC).

### 6.2.1 Karagita

Karagita, the oldest and also most infamous settlement, is situated on the south-eastern side of the lake on about ten kilometres from Naivasha Town. The area around Karagita used to be called "Poverty Bay". The land had been divided into relatively small, ten- to twenty-acre plots in the 1930s. These plots were sold to impoverished European farmers. One such a plot was sold by one of these farmers to Karagita (EA) Ltd., a land-buying company consisting of a group of Africans from Nairobi, in 1966. The plot previously had been used for the cultivation of wheat and had only contained one permanent building, the house of the owner, which was left standing and was later turned into a community dispensary. The first, mud-and-stick, houses were built by members of the company in 1972 and they took up their residence there. The European-owned farms in the immediate environment mainly cultivated the fodder crop lucerne and did not provide much employment. The main economic activity for the early inhabitants of Karagita were informal or even illegal small businesses: chang'aa, fish and firewood. The economic situation changed when the first vegetable and flower farms started up at South Lake. Although most of the members of Karagita (EA) Ltd. were not eager to work in the new farms themselves, the arrival of migrants opened up new business opportunities for them. They started to make some money by constructing rows of one-room shacks on their plots, which they could rent out to migrant workers. The living conditions initially remained poor. Allegedly, the area became so crowded that some rooms were even rented out doubly, with a day and a night shift.<sup>338</sup>

Karagita had already an estimated 10,000 inhabitants by the year 1990. However, the land-owners slowly build more and better (brick) housing, which they could rent out for higher prices, and living conditions improved. The residential area also expanded to plots north and

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<sup>337</sup> See for examples of fires: Maina Kung'u and David Rogoncho, "Family of Six Wiped Out in Fire Tragedy," *Daily Nation*, 27 July 1988; *Daily Nation*, "100 Families." A recent example of an outbreak of diseases was cholera in Kasarani in 2008 (Mwangi, "Kipindupindu").

<sup>338</sup> Interviews with P. Mburu, S. Higgins and the assistant chief of Olkaria.

south of the original plot, and into Mirera-Suswa cooperative farm towards the east. The original 20-acre plots was officially subdivided into 50 by 100 meter plots in the early 1990s. These smaller plots were then sold off to both inhabitants of Karagita and outside investors.<sup>339</sup> By 2009, Karagita, together with its neighbouring settlements - all part of Mirera sub-location - had 39,209 inhabitants and was the largest workers' settlement in the area (KNBS 2010).

Most of the current infrastructure in Karagita was installed only after the first migrant workers arrived. One example is access to water. Initially, the only source of water was the lake, and the inhabitants had to pay a small amount of money to the European landowners living at the lake to pass their land to fetch water. The earliest reference that I found to a borehole in Karagita was for the year 1991, years after the first labour migrants had arrived. Furthermore, even though other water projects have been implemented since then, accessing good, fluoride-free drinking water continued to be a problem.<sup>340</sup> Sewerage and drainage also continued to be lacking. Nevertheless, other infrastructure has been in place for some time. The first primary school in Karagita area, Mirera Primary School, opened around 1980. In the year 2011, this was the school with the largest number of children (376) sitting for their final exams in the whole of Kenya, which illustrates how many people were living in the area by then. The dispensary in Karagita, located in a building that was put up by the previous European owner of the land, opened in 1991. It was partly paid for by the government, and the residents contributed through a *harambee*, a fund-raising event. In recent years, also several private schools, nurseries and clinics were established. Living conditions improved further: the roads were better maintained and the area became cleaner, due to a greater involvement of the local government. In the early 2000s, Mirera (including Karagita) became an official sub-location, part of the location Hell's Gate, and received its own chief and a local government office. Also corporate actors such as the flower farms and electricity company KenGen have initiated community projects at South Lake, including in Karagita.<sup>341</sup>

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<sup>339</sup> KNA Nakuru, GU/1/8/10, The Divisional Water Officer Naivasha, to the District Water Engineer Nakuru, "Survey of New Water Project: Karagita, Munyu and Kinamba," 3 April 1991; KNA Nakuru, GU/3/36/127, J.M. Nzukuh to the Secretary Central Authority, Nairobi, "The Land Planning Act (Cap. 303)," 12 November 1993; KNA Nakuru, GU/3/36/174, "List of Plot Owners"; Moses, long-term inhabitant of Karagita, interview in his rental house there, 30 October 2014.

<sup>340</sup> High levels of fluoride, naturally occurring in Naivasha's groundwater, were a major health issue. It first of all made visible who had stayed in the area for many years, as longitudinal consumption caused the teeth to turn brown. A more hazardous effect was the weakening of bones. Nic Pacini, an environmental scientist from the University of Calabria, stated at a stakeholders meeting in Naivasha on 26 November 2014, that it was safer to drink purified lake water than water from the boreholes in the settlements because of the high levels of fluoride. His statement appears significant when we consider the concerns among the general public (both in Kenya as in consumer markets in Europe) about the effects of pesticide use on the lake water.

<sup>341</sup> KNA Nakuru, GU/1/8/10, "New Water Project"; *Daily Nation*, "MP Thanks State for Donation," 8 April 1991; KNA Nakuru, GU/1/9/44, Minutes of the Naivasha Sub-Division Development Committee, 3 January 1997; KNA Nakuru, GU/9/1/202, The DO I of Naivasha Sub-District to the DC Nakuru, "Merging of Administration Boundaries," 10 August 2004; Kennedy Masibo, "Group Saving Lives of



Nevertheless, development in Karagita has been hampered by the many wrangles and disputes that have plagued the land-buying company. Already in 1984, there was a dispute over possible fraud with company money, and there was a conflict in 1995 about the subdivision of the first plot that the company had acquired in Naivasha. A particularly destructive case was the conflict over ownership of a neighbouring plot, which had been purchased by Karagita (EA) Ltd. later on but which was claimed by another land-buying company. This case even led to the forced eviction of the hundreds of people staying on that plot and the demolition of housing after a court case on it had been concluded in favour of Karagita (EA) Ltd. in 2002. Only the mosque that had been constructed there had been left standing.<sup>342</sup> The effects of this long-term insecurity over the ownership of this plot were also visible in the physical layout of the area: there were relatively few buildings on it when compared to the other neighbourhoods in Karagita.

### 6.2.2 DCK/Sulmac and Kongoni

A few years after Karagita was established, the first flower farm DCK opened up some kilometres further along Moi South Lake Road. There have been workers' camps and some shops on and close to this farms since the early 1970s.<sup>343</sup> Nevertheless, it took a long time before an official trading centre was established. The government started negotiations over the acquisition of a parcel of land from DCK Farm for the purpose of opening a trading centre in 1975. These negotiations continued until at least 1991.<sup>344</sup> By the time I conducted fieldwork, an official trading centre had been established, consisting of a few dusty streets lined with shops, hotels and an ATM. The main customers at that time were the inhabitants of the nearby Sharma Farm compound.

Also Kongoni, the settlement close to the small lake west of Lake Naivasha, Lake Oloiden, seems to have been waiting for the official status of trading centre for years. It has had a police station since at least 1971, and thus emerged before the flower industry arrived in Naivasha. Nevertheless it still featured as only a "proposed" trading centre on a map from 1986.<sup>345</sup> It is located at the end of the tarmac road, a bit further from Naivasha Town than the

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Workers," *Daily Nation*, 31 March 2005; Joyce Kimani, "Wanafunzi 376 Kufanya KCPE katika Shule Moja," *Taifa Leo*, 8 November 2011; interviews with P. Mburu and Moses.

<sup>342</sup> *Daily Nation*, "Mystery Surrounds Fate of Farm Company's Cash," 2 July 1984; KNA Nakuru, GU/3/36/174, Chief of Hell's Gate Location to Sonrahi Surveys, Naivasha, "Sub-Division of LR no. 396/31," 22 April 1995; *Daily Nation*, "Villagers Ordered to Leave Disputed Plot," 28 January 2002. This last case continued for a long time, see: Grace Wangui Mburu & another v Peter Mburu Nguri & 4 others (2015) eKLR.

<sup>343</sup> Interview with the assistant chief of Olkaria.

<sup>344</sup> KNA Nakuru, GU/3/33/18, "DCK Trading Centre"; KNA Nakuru, GU/1/8/26, Minutes of the Naivasha Divisional Development Committee, 26 July 1991.

<sup>345</sup> KNA Nakuru, GU/9/1/83, The DO Naivasha to the DC Nakuru, "Planning Development Data," 23 February 1971; KNA Nakuru, GU/9/1/188, "Local Authority."

largest flower farm in the area, Oserian. However, because Oserian has a workers' compound, Kongoni has remained relatively small until the present day.

### *6.2.3 Kihoto*

The most well-known low-income neighbourhood in Naivasha town, Kihoto, had an infamous reputation comparable to that of Karagita. A government report stated: "The development of cheap informal settlements such as Karagita slums and Kihoto area have helped to fuel antisocial activities such as brewing of illicit liquor, prostitution and drug abuse."<sup>346</sup> And just as Karagita, Kihoto also has had its share of disputes over the subdivision of the land.<sup>347</sup> Flora's husband James explained to me that Kihoto originally had been a cooperative farm, which was subdivided among the thirty Kikuyu shareholders. They all claimed a strip of land stretching towards the lake. With receding lake levels over the years, these long strips became even longer and more land was occupied, especially when the owners started to subdivide their strips of land and constructed rental housing. I noticed during visits in Kihoto that the owners of the plots usually resided in older, sometimes wooden, more spacious houses on one side of a plot, whereas they had constructed a row of brick one-room apartments and shops to rent out in another corner.

Commercial cultivation did not take place within the settlement. However, the riparian land was used for farming. In 1996, a flower farm was established at a strip of land immediately north of Kihoto. However, this farm had to close down in 2011 because of a land dispute. After a court order to demolish all permanent structures, the plot was ramp sacked by workers who had lost their jobs. Within two hours, nothing was left except for a few office buildings. The plot was left fallow and was later illegally occupied by livestock owners, who used it as a grazing area for their goats (World Bank 2014: 42).<sup>348</sup>

### *6.2.4 Kasarani*

Kasarani, officially called Tarabete sub-location, is located on the north-western side of Lake Naivasha, about thirty kilometres from Naivasha town. This settlement is an exception in the sense that it was officially founded by the government in 1987. Before that, people living in the area of Kasarani mainly lived as employees or squatters – who had received their own plot within a farm – on European-owned farms. Later on, some of the farms were sold to African cooperatives and their members also came to live in the area, but likewise only on the farms. There were originally two official trading centres in the area (Loldia and Tarabete),

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<sup>346</sup> KNA Nakuru, 15/1/Vol. 1, AR of the Probation Office, Naivasha Division, 1999.

<sup>347</sup> KNA Nakuru, EA/2/19/204, E.M.O. Opar, for the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Lands and Settlements, to the DC, Nakuru District, "LR No. 12079 Kihoto Farmers Company Ltd," 18 June 2003.

<sup>348</sup> Walk in Kihoto with James, 8 June 2016; Geoffrey Muhoro v Lake Flowers Limited (2011) eKLR.

which both also were situated within a farm. There were nine large farms in the area with an estimated population of 3,000 people in 1983. One of these farms was called Tarabete (sometimes spelled as Tarambete). This 6,000-acre farm cultivated pyrethrum and held cattle and sheep. It originally belonged to a British settler. In the 1960s, it was taken over by the company Tarabete Farmers, of which the office was located in Nairobi. However, the farm was mismanaged and understocked, and was not performing well for years. Eventually it was decided to subdivide the farm among its 182 Kikuyu members in the mid-1980s and some of these, now private, small-scale farmers have continued to farm on the same plots until today. Next to giving out parts of the land to the cooperative members, fifteen acres of original Tarabete - an area of fallow land that used to be a place where people would go to drink illicit brew and play football<sup>349</sup> - were given out to the Town Council to create a trading centre in the area. The Council advertised the plots in 1987: anyone who had stayed in Naivasha area for at least five years and was "financially capable" of developing a plot could be given one. Plots were sold for around 10,000 KES and the first house was built in 1988. The first inhabitants were mainly (children of) employees of the ranches and farms in the area. It was only after a few flower farms had opened in the early 1990s that new migrant workers started to come to this settlement, especially after these farms shifted from the production of seasonal flowers to the year-round production of roses. Just as plot-owners in Karagita did, those who had acquired a plot in Kasarani previously seized new economic possibilities by constructing one-room apartments to rent out.<sup>350</sup>

Kasarani/Tarabete became an official sub-location (part of Malewa location) in 1990 and has had a chief and an administrative police station since then.<sup>351</sup> In addition, one of the flower farms constructed a compound in the settlement where some of its workers were housed (see Figure 17). These houses had initially been made of wood but, according to an employee of this farm, were replaced with brick two-room apartments in order to comply with Fairtrade-standards (Kioko 2012: 33).<sup>352</sup> Overall, Tarabete sub-location, which mainly consisted of Kasarani village, had 8,699 inhabitants in the year 2009 (KNBS 2010).

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<sup>349</sup> This former use of the plot is why the village was coined "Kasarani" by a manager of one of the farms around: Kasarani is the name of a football stadium in Nairobi. Over the years, this nickname has become the unofficial name for the settlement (interview with D. Gitahi).

<sup>350</sup> *Kenya Gazette*, Notice No. 121, 10 January 1967; KNA Nakuru, ANN/1/1/63, Divisional Agricultural Office, "Minutes of Naivasha ASC meeting," 5 October 1980: 2; *Daily Nation*, "Chotara Threatens to Close Trading Centre," 9 May 1983; *Daily Nation*, "Failure of Meeting Explained," 17 September 1983; KNA Nakuru, ANN/1/3/23, Minutes of the Naivasha Land Control Board, 10 July 1984; KNA Nakuru, GU/3/30, The Naivasha Town Clerk, "Advertisement of Plots Tarabete Centre – Naivasha Town," 26 August 1987; Ali Sora, one of the first inhabitants of Kasarani and the first chief of Tarambete Sub-Location, interview in Kasarani, 22 January 2015; interview with D. Gitahi.

<sup>351</sup> Interview with A. Sora.

<sup>352</sup> Personal communication with a long-serving employee of the farm that has a compound in Kasarani, 14 March 2015.

The development of Kasarani has been more organized and planned for than the development of Karagita. To start with, unlike Karagita and most other settlements, the government intended for Kasarani to come into being and deliberately gave out plots for building houses. And because there had been people living around before, in the ranches, there were already some facilities in the area by the time a trading centre was created. This infrastructure had mainly been financed by the farms around. One example is Rocco Dispensary, which started in 1976 on a plot of land that was a gift from Rocco Farm and that is located on walking distance from present-day Kasarani. Its board mainly consisted of farm representatives and it was financed by fundraising events and yearly contributions of employers and farm employees. It continued to be the official dispensary for several farms around, also flower farms, throughout the years. At the time of my fieldwork, it was the only functioning dispensary in the vicinity of Kasarani. The primary school Loldia, which started in 1986, was also built on a (10-acre) plot donated by a farm. Despite these facilities provided by the farms, life in Kasarani was hard in the first few years. Initially, there were not many people living in the settlement itself and there was a lot of unused space. The people living on the farms and ranches around the settlement earned low salaries and consequently there were few opportunities for business. It was also difficult to access clean drinking water and there was hardly any public transport to go to Naivasha town: there used to run only one bus per day. However, with the shift from ranching to vegetable and later on flower farming, Kasarani started to attract new generations of migrant workers. Around 1992, "suddenly the world was dropped on Kasarani."<sup>353</sup> It turned from a trading centre with only a few shops into a settlement with many houses. After the population increased, water tanks were brought in and the centre was connected to the power grid. Rich people from outside started to buy plots in the centre, as a way of investment. Nevertheless, at least until 1998, most houses were still made of mud and sticks and not of bricks – which has become prevalent now –, and some houses did not have latrines yet. Also here, the quality of housing has continued to improve in recent years.<sup>354</sup>

Kioko (2012: 32) noted that, compared to the vast estates of the past or to the expansive greenhouses of the present-day flower farms, the workers' settlements are occupying little space, despite accommodating thousands of people. Figure 17, a map of Kasarani, can illustrate this point. The map shows that Kasarani was completely hemmed in between flower and vegetable farms, the main employers in the area. The area close to the main road had been developed first and it still contained many of the original wood and mud

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<sup>353</sup> Interview with A. Sora. In Swahili: "Kukaa tu kidogo, dunia inamwagika huko."

<sup>354</sup> KNA Nakuru, GU/1/5/21, Minutes of the North Lake Harambee Dispensary Committee, 23 March 1978; *Daily Nation*, "Briefly", 12 January 1983; interviews with A. Sora, D. Gitahi, D. Snell, M. Achieng and O. Rocco.

houses. The larger shops and offices - such as the local branch office of KPAWU - were also located there. The area in the middle, known as Ngurumuki, had developed more recently and primarily contained brick housing of relative good quality. The owner of the 'empty' plot in the middle had not constructed anything until now, and this plot thus awkwardly cut the settlement into half. The area towards the south-east was officially called Tumaini but carried the nickname 'Kosovo' because of the chaos and disorder there in former times, when it only had started to turn into an unofficial residential area. It was the least popular part of the settlement, due to the relative large distance to the main road and the entrances of the farms. Figure 18 zooms in on one of the neighbourhoods in Kasarani. It shows how densely built such neighbourhoods typically were. One 'arm' of housing contains two rows of ten to fourteen one-room apartments. This map also shows the presence of the local government and of the flower farms: the government buildings - a brick administrative police office and the wooden office of the chief - were centrally located, and one of the neighbouring flower farms provided drinking water at its fence bordering Kasarani. Figure 19, a photograph taken from the cemetery on a hill north-east of the settlement, provides a view over Kasarani.

#### *6.2.5 Kamere and Kwa Muhia*

The plot of another settlement, Kamere, located on the south-western side of the lake, was originally not owned by a land-buying company or cooperative but by an individual. The plot of 32 acres in total was the property of a former Attorney-General, Mr. Kamere, since at least 1983. In subsequent years, he subdivided and sold parts of his plot, on which a settlement developed haphazardly. The local government was not involved in this process and little infrastructure was put up in the area (World Bank 2014: 43; Lembcke 2015: 5).<sup>355</sup> When Mr. Kamere later on made a request to change the use of a neighbouring plot that also belonged to him, he was reprimanded for the way Kamere settlement had developed: "This has culminated in shanty type residential/shopping area in an otherwise high class agricultural area."<sup>356</sup> To make matters worse, the settlement was built on a steep hill close to the lake, and the lack of a proper sewerage or drainage system has led to problems during rainy seasons (World Bank 2014: 43).<sup>357</sup> The settlement, with an estimated 24,000 inhabitants in the year 2015, was also singled out as a main source of pollution of the lake.<sup>358</sup> The settlement was attractive to migrant workers, not only because of the presence of flower farms but also

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<sup>355</sup> KNA Nakuru, ANN/1/3/13, Agenda for the Naivasha Division Land Control Board meeting of 26 January 1983.

<sup>356</sup> KNA Nakuru, EA/2/18/114, The Town Clerk of Naivasha to Mr. J.K. Kamere, "Change of User L.R. 9005/5 South Lake," 18 September 2000.

<sup>357</sup> KNA Nakuru, GU/6/3/69, Minutes of Naivasha Sub-District Development Committee, 24 August 2004.

<sup>358</sup> Antony Gitonga, "Locals Initiate Move to Clean L Naivasha," *The Standard*, 12 May 2015.

because it was located next to one of the few official fish landing beaches at the lake as well as next to a new office and staff compound of electricity company KenGen. The settlement also had a lively market along the Moi Lake Road.

The relatively small, neighbouring settlement Kwa Muhia had a similar background as Kamere. The land used to belong to a British settler, who sold it to a Mr. Muhia Thuku, a Kikuyu man, after independence. Mr. Thuku subdivided and sold the land in parts in the early 1990s. The new owners then built rental houses on it and a settlement came into being (Kunas 2011: 11). As the settlement is surrounded by flower farms, it is not surprising that the branch office of KPAWU is located here.

#### 6.2.6 KCC

KCC is the only settlement in Naivasha that is entirely located on squatted land. It has sprung up next to the former governmental milk processing plant ("Kenya Co-operative Creameries"), located at a place called Morendat, not too far from town in between the Naivasha-Nakuru Highway and the railway. This creamery was already established in colonial times and it had an operating milk collection depot and a packaging plant until the early 1990s (Odingo 1971: 156; LNRAO 1993: 15).

I did not visit the settlement next to the creamery until June 2016, when I went there together with my assistant Richard and with a former resident, Omondi, who had grown up there. Omondi explained that the overall company had collapsed about two decades ago and that KCC in Naivasha only continued to be in use as a cooling station without any further processing, which provided few employment opportunities. After the plant had been closed down, the government started to rent out the run-down brick staff housing for low rents. Furthermore, former employees also started to construct make-shift housing next to the plant on a confined plot. They informally sub-divided this plot among themselves. As they were only squatters on this land, they never constructed permanent housing. Initially they used timber. As the sheds were built extremely close to each other, almost all housing was burnt down to the ground in two big fires.<sup>359</sup> After the last fire, most houses were re-built with corrugated-iron sheets instead of timber.

There was also a row of churches located at the entrance of the settlement, which were all constructed with corrugated iron sheets. The only formal infrastructure were two water tanks, a public toilet block and a nursery school. Electricity was illegally diverted, as there were no official connections. North of the village was Malewa River, and on the other side was an area of commercial small-scale cultivation. Due to the settlement's proximity to the river

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<sup>359</sup> An article in the Daily Nation reported that the last fire in 2013 left more than 3,000 families homeless (Ashley Lime, "Squatters Ordered Out of Rail Land," *Daily Nation*, 24 January 2012).

and the lake, hippopotami were a menace, yet as squatters the residents could not complain to the government. After the milk processing plant had closed down, residents mainly started to work in the ranches and flower farms around. Some started to cultivate on another squatted plot across Malewa River. Others rented out sheds to migrant workers. Furthermore, the settlement was notorious for its chang'aa industry.

The extremely densely built housing gave the settlement a peculiar atmosphere. I also felt observed during my visit, more so than when visiting other settlements. Our visibility was not reduced by taking along a 'local' informant, as I had expected. On the opposite, Omondi was wearing seemingly expensive clothes and a large watch that enhanced our visibility. Omondi was now a student in Nakuru and eagerly left KCC again together with Richard and me after our two-hour visit. Although he told us that KCC was his home, he felt visibly uncomfortable there. The visit to KCC was interesting, yet, due to its particular squatters' status, this settlement formed an exception in Naivasha.

### 6.3 Socio-Economic Positions in the Settlements

The previous section described the diverse ways in which the workers' settlements in Naivasha developed. Despite this variety, flower farm workers, and inhabitants of the workers' settlements in general, have regularly been glossed together as 'poor'.<sup>360</sup> Although I do not wish to deny the difficult and precarious position of many of the residents of the settlements, I would like to show here that labelling them as 'poor' overlooks the means and the possibilities that they do have. It furthermore disguises internal economic differences. Neither does it do justice to residents' own conceptualizations of themselves, as argued by Kunas (2011: 56). In Section 4.4, I explained that residents perceived of themselves as 'hustling' or 'struggling'. To explore what these qualifications mean (vis-à-vis 'poverty'), this section discusses the economic position of the settlements' residents.

Table 5 shows the reported incomes among the respondents in the survey and shows that a monthly income between 5,000 and 10,000 KES was most common.<sup>361</sup> Following the World Bank index for 2014, Kenyans with an income of less than 7,708 KES were considered to be living under the poverty line (cf. Anker and Anker 2014: 44), and a considerable proportion of the population of the settlements fell into this category. However, it is important to note that what was reported in the survey, were individual incomes, and again only the income of the main economic activity. As explained by Oucho (1996: 66), migrants' households in Kenya frequently do not depend solely on the wages of one household member but are also involved in small-scale businesses or in farming activities in the region of origin.

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<sup>360</sup> Cf. Mwangi, "Naivasha Town."

<sup>361</sup> Equivalent to €44 to €88 at the time of fieldwork.

I found in Naivasha that overall household incomes could - in cases of two or even three income-earning adults and in cases of successful income diversification - be significantly higher. Furthermore, there was considerable variation with regards to the levels and the security of income and with regards to the possibilities that one had with one's income (e.g. in accessing financial institutions).

In Section 4.4, I discussed some of the differences between job opportunities in the different settlements, for instance the greater opportunities for small-scale business in Karagita due to its proximity to Naivasha Town. Yet, there was no significant difference in reported incomes between the three places of residence included in the survey. There was also no significant difference in reported income between flower farm workers and residents with other occupations. However, it should be noted here that farm workers had the advantage of receiving several allowances, as explained in Section 5.6. Most notably, the housing allowance saved them the cost of paying rent. Furthermore, farm workers more often than not had permanent contracts, and therefore had a stable income. It was relatively easy for them to save some money with the company SACCO and to purchase certain luxury goods through these cooperatives. They also had an easier access to financial institutions, for one because most formal employers only paid out their salaries on a bank account (in some cases on a mobile bank account), and not cash, as explained to me by respondents in the ego-network analysis. This higher security of income, in combination with the easier access to financial institutions, could explain the differences between flower farm workers and other residents who participated in the survey with regards to reported ownership of land, livestock and other assets (see Table 6).

Although most of the inhabitants of the settlements were tenants there, they were not all landless. A substantial number of respondents in the survey reported owning a plot of land: 18.8% in total. Some of these plots had been inherited by the migrant workers or given to them by relatives and were located in the region of origin. For instance, Flora had been allocated a 1-acre plot of land by her father (who was still alive and had retained part of his land himself), on which her brother was cultivating for the time being, on her behalf. Whenever a plot had been acquired, it was also mostly located outside Naivasha, although Kunas (2011: 64) mentioned that a few of the migrant workers who had arrived early on had purchased a plot of land in Naivasha. I also met several employees during visits to Karibu Farm - some originating from other parts of Kenya - who owned a plot in Kasarani. There were furthermore two flower farms that had assisted their employees with purchasing a plot in Naivasha with the help of loans financed by Fairtrade Premium Committees.<sup>362</sup> Yet with steeply increasing land prices, acquiring a plot in Naivasha had become almost impossible in recent years.

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<sup>362</sup> Interview with Gabriel.



Furthermore, most migrant workers were 'translocal' and preferred moving away from Naivasha again at some point in time (see Chapter 7).

As with plots of land, also livestock was invariably kept outside Naivasha, with the exception of chicken. There was simply no space in the densely-populated settlements for larger livestock (cattle, sheep or goats). As residents of Sharma Farm's compound explained, it was forbidden to keep (large) animals there. Furthermore, livestock - like plots - was sometimes a family asset and not individually owned. Respondents in the ego-centred network analysis who owned livestock 'at home' explained that they either had a family member (sometimes even the spouse) to take care of it or they had hired a casual labourer to do so. Consequently, someone who lacked access to land or other types of wealth in the settlements, and who therefore seemed to be in a precarious situation, might nevertheless have access to assets elsewhere.

The relatively small but influential group of local land owners who had purchased their plot(s) between the 1960s and the 1990s had an exceptional position. Remarkably enough, they often continued to reside in the original make-shift housing, and therefore also might appear 'poor' (cf. the case of Moses, describe in Section 7.2.4). They mostly originated from a modest economic background themselves. However, they had suddenly gained wealth when they could start to rent out housing on their plots and when land prices increased steeply. Nevertheless, despite this relative wealth, also among this group one could find flower farm workers. One of the respondents in the social network analysis even told me that one of his immediate colleagues was his landlord. There thus was no clear contrast between flower farm workers and local landowners, as these groups partly overlapped.

The listing and ranking exercises revealed that the residents of the settlements themselves made another distinction between two economic groups residing there. These were the wage labourers, the majority of whom were working in horticulture, and what were called the 'self-employed', i.e. those having their own small-scale business or trade. According to Kioko (2012: 12), who wrote about Kasarani, these two groups were dependent on each other: the workers for goods and services and the self-employed for an income. However, I noticed that the distinction between these two groups was ambiguous, despite some differences in wealth between flower farms workers and respondents with other occupations in the survey as outlined in Table 6. I found that many inhabitants were wage labourers who were at the same time engaged in other income-generating activities, such as businesses or small-scale cultivation. These activities took place either in the same period or at different moments in time. An example were Lucy and her husband, who were both full-time employed in flower farms and who also derived income from their plot in western Kenya, where a relative was cultivating the land.

Unlike place of residence and occupation, gender seemed to be a category that influenced levels of income. Women in the survey sample fell more often in the lowest income categories (no income or less than 5,000 KES per month) and men more often in the highest income category (over 10,000 KES per month) (see Table 5). Yet, there was generally little difference between female and males respondents with regards to the possession of assets. The only types of assets that were clearly more often owned by men than by women, were bicycles and livestock.<sup>363</sup> It was not common for women to ride a bicycle, and it is therefore not surprising that they did not regularly own one. Owuor (2003: 34) pointed out that among migrants residing in Nakuru, livestock that was kept in the rural areas, was often perceived to be owned by male household members, due to its cultural meanings. This observation can also account for the higher percentage of male owners of livestock that I found in the survey in Naivasha. Perhaps surprisingly (considering Glory's statement referred to in Section 4.1.3 that women do not regularly inherit land), there was no significant difference between female and male respondents with regards to the access to a plot of land.<sup>364</sup> Perhaps some women consider their husband's or family's plots to be their own as well, but some of the female respondents presumably simply owned their own plot. As will be further explained in Section 7.2.2, some women have been able to acquire a plot of land of their own or to be allocated family land (as Flora did).

The income and access to assets of individual migrant workers is furthermore shaped by the composition of their household. Following Moore and Vaughan (1994: 225), I do not define a household as a coherent and stable unit but as "a nexus of overlapping interests and activities whose (sometimes very temporary) coherence is itself an achievement and not something pre-given." Decisions on labour, consumption and residence are taken individually but also within such shifting households and within wider (family) networks (Ong 1987; Wolf 1992; Friedemann-Sánchez 2009: 4). I therefore in what follows elaborate shortly on the marital status, the households and the support networks of the settlements' residents.

Section 4.5 discussed that the 'single working mother' is a recurrent theme in literature on industry in the Global South, yet Section 5.7 showed that it does not accurately reflect the composition of the workforce in the flower industry. It also does not reflect the diverse composition of the households within the settlements, which did not primarily consist of single mothers with their children. First of all, there were about as many women as men residing in the settlements. The sub-location in which Karagita was located, Mirera, had 19,554 male and 19,655 female residents in 2009. The sub-location in which Kasarani was located, Tarambete,

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<sup>363</sup> 15.6% of the female respondents possessed a bicycle, against 35.8% of the male respondents (Chi-square 9.498,  $p=0.002$ ). Furthermore, 16.5% of the female respondents had livestock, against 38.8% of the male respondents (Chi-square 10.997,  $p=0.001$ ).

<sup>364</sup> 17.4% of the female respondents and 20.9% of the male respondents said they owned a plot.

had 4,432 male and 4,267 female residents (KNBS 2010). Furthermore, outcomes of the survey indicated that neither the majority of the residents was single. Two-third of the respondents said they were married, and I found no significant difference between male and female respondents with regards to marital status.<sup>365</sup> However, not all of the married respondents were staying with their spouse, and might therefore appear single. Only 58.5% of the respondents in the survey stayed with another adult in their household in Naivasha. In a few cases, this other adult was not their spouse or partner but a relative or friend. Hence, quite a number of married couples was not residing in the same house at the time of the survey. Some of these respondents said that their spouse, typically the wife, had remained in or had returned to the region of origin, for example because she was farming there. Lang and Sakdapolrak (2014: 192) found that fear for renewed ethnic violence could be another reason to not take wife and children to Naivasha. In other cases, respondents told us that their partner, typically the husband, was not residing in Naivasha and neither 'at home'. The husband was in those cases working elsewhere, for instance in Nairobi.

The average number of children among respondents in the survey was 2.34, whereas the mode was 2. Female respondents more frequently had children (93.6%) than male respondents did (73.1%).<sup>366</sup> Notably, only 57.4% of the respondents with children, reported staying with all of these children in Naivasha at the time of the survey. Another 12.5% stayed with one or several while others stayed somewhere else. Finally, 30.1% of those respondents who had children, were not staying with any of their children in their household in Naivasha. If not staying with their parent in Naivasha, children usually stayed with their other parent, a female family member 'at home' or in a boarding school.

Kioko (2012: 34) found that to economize on the rent, unmarried residents sometimes (often temporarily) shared their room or apartment with a friend, a colleague or a relative, usually of the same sex. 4.0% of the 176 respondents in our survey said they were living together with a friend. Furthermore, as answers from respondents in the ego-network analysis indicated, some couples took in a relative, e.g. a brother or sister of one of the spouses, mostly temporary. It was also quite common to stay with a child that was not one's own, e.g. the child of a partner from a previous relationship, or a child of a sibling who had passed away.

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<sup>365</sup> However, as explained by Oucho (1996: 71), finding out about marital status through a questionnaire is not as uncomplicated as it might seem. What counts as a marriage is a matter of interpretation, related to for instance prolonged bride price negotiations (cf. Moore and Vaughan (1994: 166-167) on marriage among the Bemba). This ambiguity might explain why Tolo's survey (n=94) provided a somewhat different picture than mine: 81.3% of her 49 male respondents said they were married, against only 60.9% of her 45 female respondents.

<sup>366</sup> The percentage of female respondents with children in Tolo's survey was also higher than the percentage of male respondents (93.5% against 77.1%). One reason for this discrepancy could be that men on average were older when they had their first child: female respondents in my survey on average had been 20.8 years old when they had their first child; male respondents 24.5 years old.

Although there were some full-time housewives in our survey (4.0% of the respondents), the majority of the adults in the settlements, whether married or not, was involved in income-generating activities or aimed to do so. The income was not pooled but was managed individually. A flower farm owner told me that she had decided to install a cash machine on the farm premises, as she had the impression the husbands of female employees took away their money on payday. With the arrival of the cash machine, women could get the money on any day and thus were free to spend it according to their wishes. However, although there might have been cases in which a woman did not have the freedom to spend her own income, my impression of 'conjugal contracts' (cf. Li 1998) in Naivasha was that men and women were perceived of as individuals with the rights to use their own money. There were certain expectations and patterns, e.g. it was often the men who paid the rent. Yet women (and men) did not generally seem to lack control over their income. Nevertheless, women did not have the same level of autonomy as men, regardless of their marital status. They had a double work load, as mentioned in a report of the KHRC (2012: 3). This is illustrated by James' assertion that a man should not enter the kitchen, even though Flora was also employed full-time. Thus, even women who were involved in wage labour were expected to perform most of the domestic work. This is a common challenge for women working on plantations and in global firms (cf. Samarasinghe 1993; Freeman 2000). The farms did little in the way of alleviating that gender-specific burden.

Nevertheless, the flower farms, as the main employers in the area, impacted on living arrangements in the area. First of all, the decision to hire women had a large impact on household compositions in Naivasha, as it made it attractive for women to come to Naivasha, either alone or with a husband. Secondly, the increasing prevalence of permanent contracts also made it more attractive to bring one's family over to Naivasha. Furthermore, certain - more recent - policies of some of the farms, such as paying for the health care of dependent family members of workers, were another incentive to bring family along. Even the absence of compounds played a role: it gave workers more liberty in taking in relatives, which was not allowed in the compounds. Previously, it had not even always been allowed to bring a spouse and children along to a farm compound (Omosa, Kimani and Njiru 2006). Furthermore, it was possible to come to Naivasha even without finding employment on a farm. Friedemann-Sánchez (2009: 142) concluded that the intrahousehold bargaining position of female flower farm workers in Colombia improved when they took up employment. The financial independence gave them the ultimate possibility to exit the household. Women in the settlements in Naivasha who earned their own income likewise had a better bargaining position than those who did not. Hence, recruitment practices and facilities provided by the farms (or the lack of certain facilities such as compounds) greatly impacted on household and gender relations in the settlements.

To summarize, instead of labelling the residents of the settlements as 'poor', I have described their varying socio-economic positions, as these related to their occupation and to their access to certain assets (in both Naivasha and other places). I also showed that household arrangements - which impacted on individual economic positions - varied. It is moreover important to note that these positions were not static but could potentially change. The residents did not generally consider themselves to be 'poor' but saw possibilities for improving their situation and they were 'struggling' to do so. Likewise, household arrangements were dynamic and could change over time (cf. Ross and Weisner 1977: 365). For instance even if a woman resided alone in Naivasha, it should not be automatically concluded that she was unmarried or that she carried the responsibility for her children on her own. The households immediately observable in Naivasha should be put into a wider temporal and spatial perspectives. Both internal segmentations within households and external connections to broader family networks and to employers such as the flower industry are important when trying to understand the socio-economic position of migrant workers in the Naivasha settlements (cf. Guyer and Peters 1987).

#### 6.4 The Settlements as Multi-ethnic Environments

Some migrant workers came to Naivasha while they were already married 'at home' whereas others arrived while being single. Many single migrants eventually met a partner in Naivasha and interethnic marriages were not exceptional. This was not a new phenomenon in Kenya. For instance, among the respondents in the survey, 6.8% mentioned that their mother had had a different ethnic background than their father. Yvonne, the supervisor in the greenhouse where I conducted the total network analysis, was also an example of someone with a mixed ethnic background. Specifically for the area around Naivasha, Kioko (2016) found that there was a long tradition of inter-marriages between Maasai and Kikuyu in Maiella, in the hinterland of the lake. These connections had been made possible by the mobility of these, traditionally pastoralist and trader, groups. These could be strategic marriages, especially if arranged, which were planned to secure influence in a community or access to land (*ibid.*). Arranged marriages also took place among migrant workers residing in the settlements in present-day Naivasha, but in those cases, a man's family would usually look for a wife for him in his region of origin. Interethnic marriages were not arranged. They were closed between a man and a woman who simply had met in a flower farm or in their neighbourhood. According to Kioko (*ibid.*), ethnically mixed marriages strengthened the possibilities for peaceful coexistence in Maiella and created the possibility for individuals to have a "mixed" identity. Around the lake, where many ethnic groups were present, the situation was more complex. Whether mixed

marriages had the same effect there, is difficult to assess. However, what is clear, is that mixed marriages and relationships were not rare.

The multi-ethnic environment in such cases also made it necessary to find a shared language. As discussed in Section 5.8, farms selected Swahili as the official working language. Residents also frequently spoke Swahili in their leisure time. When asked which language or languages were spoken in the household in Naivasha, 93.2% of the 176 respondents mentioned Swahili. Moreover, 64.8% of the respondents reported that Swahili was the only language spoken in his or her household. For some couples with a mixed ethnic background, such as James and Flora, Swahili and English were the only languages that both partners were able to speak. Even those who had met each other already in their region of origin, did not always speak the same vernacular language and communicated with each other in Swahili. This was the case for flower farm worker Dennis, who had met his wife during his annual leave, when she was visiting family in Dennis' region of origin. They had a different ethnic background and thus spoke Swahili to each other. Others combined Swahili with English and/or a vernacular language such as Kikuyu or Luhya.<sup>367</sup> Many residents switched between languages. The choice of language for a conversation depended on the interlocutors, the context and even the topic (cf. Abdulaziz (1982) on language-use in urban areas in Kenya). While some adults were more fluent in a vernacular language than in Swahili, their children grew up with Swahili. Despite annual visits to grandparents in the region of origin and the use of English as a primary language in school, they mostly spoke Swahili with their peers and often also with their parents: "(...) it was becoming hard to say for certain what is [their] first language" (*ibid.*: 112).

Despite the occurrence of interethnic marriages and families and the widespread use of Swahili, ethnic identities remained important in the settlements in Naivasha. The (fuzzy) distinction between the two different economic groups identified above, of wage labourers on the one hand and the 'self-employed' on the other, partly overlapped with ethnic affiliations. For example, relatively many of the landowners in the settlements were Kikuyu (cf. Chapter 3). Furthermore, residents who originated from other parts of Kenya were fearful of investing money in starting up a business in the settlements. I for instance met a woman, married to a flower farm worker and originating from Kakamega, who would like to open up her own hair salon. However, she did not feel secure enough to do so in Karagita, where she resided. She explicitly referred to the (ethnicized) post-election violence of early 2008, confirming the observation of Lang and Sakdapolrak (2014: 192) that ethnic divisions in the settlements had increased, both socially and spatially, after the post-election violence. Migrant workers ever

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<sup>367</sup> Kioko's study (2016) makes clear that the choice for Swahili was not self-evident in a multi-ethnic environment. In his research area in the hinterland of Lake Naivasha, many non-Maasai land tenants learned to speak Maa, which over time replaced Swahili as the *lingua franca* there.

more perceived of Naivasha as a place of work (cf. Kunas 2011), whereas groups who considered Naivasha to be their 'home' (following a political discourse explained in Chapter 3) excluded others from making such claims. Also at the time of my fieldwork, fear for further violence influenced the behaviour of inhabitants. Some took precautions such as moving valuable goods to the region of origin or leaving family members behind (also noted by Lang & Sakdapolrak (2014: 192)). My assistant Richard observed an increased use of Swahili instead of vernacular languages in public areas since 2008, with the notable exception of Kikuyu. On the other hand, I did not encounter 'ethnic' neighbourhoods in Naivasha, marked by the dominance of one ethnic group, as these are reported for other ethnically mixed towns in Kenya (cf. Achieng' (2012: 31) on Eldoret). All of the compounds included in our survey had a multi-ethnic composition. And although migrant workers did not claim Naivasha as a home, they through their activities there did claim it as a place where they had certain rights, primarily the right to make a living. Thus, ethnic affiliations impacted on the decisions residents of the settlements made, yet these considerations did not have to be conclusive. The more so because boundaries between ethnic groups were in practice not as clear-cut as the ethno-political discourse presupposed: many residents of the settlements were part of a multi-ethnic family.

### 6.5 Organizations in the Settlements

The previous sections have pointed at the diverse and variable economic, gendered and ethnic positions of the residents of the settlements. An important way in which these different people attempted to live together and bring some 'order' to their surroundings was through membership of several types of organizations based in the settlements. Table 7 provides an overview of membership rates.<sup>368</sup> Overall, only a minority of the respondents (15.3%) indicated to be not involved in any of the organizations included in the survey questionnaire. It were mostly those who had arrived recently in Naivasha who were not (yet) part of these organizations. On the other hand, most respondents who were involved in one or more organizations, were not very active there. Only 5.1% of the respondents reported having a position such as chair, secretary or committee member in an organization.<sup>369</sup> Conversations

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<sup>368</sup> Three other types of organizations were included in the survey questionnaire but membership in those was not prevalent. These organizations were political parties, environmental groups and local peace committees. The latter were important in solving local conflicts in the hinterland of Naivasha, around Maiella, where Kioko (2016) did his fieldwork. However, it seemed they were not very present in Naivasha, as many of the respondents were not familiar with their existence. Answers to questions in the ego-centred network analysis indicated that chiefs, administrative police officers and informal groups of elders were the main bodies to resort to in case of a conflict.

<sup>369</sup> E.g. 21.5% of the 65 respondents who had arrived between 2010 and 2014 did not participate in any organization in Naivasha, against only 5.7% of the 35 respondents who had arrived between 2005 and 2009 (Chi-square 10.250, p=0.068).

with organization leaders in Kasarani indicated that all of them were actively involved as board members in more than one group.<sup>370</sup> It therefore seems that these groups depended on a small number of active leaders. In what follows, I discuss several of these groups and their role in the settlements.

When asked about religious affiliation, 95.5% of the respondents in the survey said they are Christian.<sup>371</sup> However, not all of them were active church members: 55.1% of the respondents said they were an active member of a religious group. Respondents in the survey mentioned twenty-seven different Christian denominations. This included international denominations such as the Catholic Church and the Pentecostal Church. There were also small, sometimes very local, churches with names such as "Hosanna Most High Foundation" or "Gethsemane Gospel" (see Figure 22 for an example of a small, make-shift church building).<sup>372</sup> Even within the one working team of Karibu Farm of which I interviewed all thirty members for the total network analysis, no less than seventeen different denominations were mentioned.

By far the largest denomination was the Catholic Church.<sup>373</sup> This church had two parishes around Lake Naivasha and there was a church building in almost every settlement. The congregations in the settlements were led by voluntary catechists. The catechist in Kasarani for instance earned his daily bread as a supervisor in one of the flower farms around. Although he was enabled by the farm to combine these two tasks, many of the workers did not have their day off on Sundays, as the work on the farms had to go on seven days a week. They therefore could not regularly attend the church service. Churches tried to accommodate them by organizing prayer meetings or counselling hours on weekday evenings.<sup>374</sup> The rhythm of the work within the farms thus shaped the activities of the religious groups within the settlements.

As explained in the previous chapter, many flower farm workers participated in saving and credit co-operatives (SACCOs) of their workplace. This participation was possible

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<sup>370</sup> E.g. Pastor Willy, the chairman of the self-help groups 'Huruma' and 'Disomne', interview in Kasarani, 17 February 2015.

<sup>371</sup> The others were either Muslims or did not identify with any religion. Although there were few Muslims living in Naivasha, they had been able to construct several mosques in the area, often on a central location. I was told that the construction of the mosque in Kasarani in 1993, only a few years after the settlement had been founded, had been paid for by a donor from Kuwait (see Figure 18 for the location of this mosque).

<sup>372</sup> The church "Repentance and Holiness", of followers of the prophet Owuor, was also present in several of the settlements. Nicole Wagner, a colleague from the RCR-project, conducted research on this prophet and his followers in and around Naivasha.

<sup>373</sup> This church was mentioned by 11.9% of the respondents in the survey and by six of the thirty team members in the greenhouse of Karibu Farm.

<sup>374</sup> Catechist of the Catholic Church in Kasarani, interview in the church, 7 May 2015.



because of the prevalence of permanent, formal contracts.<sup>375</sup> People with other occupations participated less frequently in SACCOs (see Table 7): they often did not have the opportunity to do so by lack of a permanent formal employer. Those who could not access a SACCO had the option to participate in a chama, which had lower requirements. As with the vyama based within the farms (see Section 5.9), participants paid a fixed amount of money or contributed a certain good (a kilo of sugar or five litres of oil) every month. Each month, one of the participants received all the money or all the goods. In addition, some vyama based in the settlements saved part of the money, to give out loans to its members or to invest together as a group, e.g. in a plot of land. Whereas SACCOs were large organizations with usually at least several hundreds of participants, vyama were small groups of perhaps five to twenty members. Contributions to vyama were often made in cash, although richer groups worked with (mobile) banking accounts. The more formal groups also registered themselves with the government as self-help groups.<sup>376</sup>

Whereas SACCOs had a relatively high minimum monthly contribution, due to regulations set by the government, some merry-go-rounds had very modest contributions. One respondent in the survey mentioned a contribution of only 20 KES per month. On the other hand, I later interviewed a member of a chama, consisting of local business men and one woman, which had a monthly contribution of 10,000 KES.<sup>377</sup> This example makes clear that these groups could also deal with substantial amounts of money. The average monthly contribution to the SACCO among the participants in the survey was 1,148 KES. The average contribution to a chama was with 923 KES slightly lower, yet it was still a substantial amount considering the low income levels in the settlements.<sup>378</sup>

Membership in a chama was not merely a substitute for participating in a SACCO. First of all, those who could not participate in a SACCO often also did not participate in a chama (40.3% of the 176 respondents in the survey participated in neither), either because they did not have the financial means or because they did not trust others with their savings. Furthermore, there was also a number of SACCO-members who, next to saving with the SACCO, also participated in a chama: 8.0% of the respondents did so.

More women than men were involved in a chama, whereas on the other hand so-called welfare groups were more popular among men.<sup>379</sup> Like merry-go-rounds, welfare groups could have a fixed monthly contribution. However, the goal and the rhythm of these

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<sup>375</sup> Cf. the higher membership rates of the trade union among flower farm workers when compared to workers in vegetable farms, as discussed in Chapter 5.

<sup>376</sup> Interviews with Pastor Willy and with respondents in the ego-centred network analysis.

<sup>377</sup> This was equivalent to €0.18 and €88 respectively.

<sup>378</sup> This was equivalent to approximately €10 and €8.

<sup>379</sup> 33.0% of the female respondents in the survey were involved in a chama against only 16.4% of the men (Chi-Square: 5.849,  $p=0.016$ ). Furthermore, 23.9% of the men were involved in a welfare organization against only 11.0% of the women (Chi-Square: 5.139,  $p=0.023$ ).

organizations were different. They mostly were meant to assist members in times of crisis, such as illness or bereavement. In some cases, the welfare committee of a farm took on the function of such a welfare group: it would collect a small contribution of all immediate colleagues of a worker who had fallen ill or had been bereaved. A specific type of welfare group, burial organizations, will be discussed in Section 7.2.3.

Membership to these organizations (unlike with SACCOs) could be restricted according to gender, age or ethnic affiliation. The groups could also be connected to another organization, such as a church. When based in a company, it could be that all members of a certain team were also participating in the chama. However, more often than not, and as I noticed within Karibu Farm, the members themselves chose who to admit to the group. Membership was then not automatically connected to one's position in a working team.<sup>380</sup>

The distinction between the different types of groups was not always clear-cut and many organizations could simply broadly be classified as a 'self-help group' that combined several functions. Such self-help groups had a long history in Naivasha and were already started in colonial times by squatters on the ranches, in order to organize schooling for their children (Kanogo 1987: 74). A present-day example of a self-help group was the Lake Naivasha Disabled Environmental Organization, based in Karagita, consisting of 27 members. Two of these members explained to me that this organization was formed by a group of people with disabilities who all had a hard time finding employment. First of all, the group functioned as a chama, with a monthly contribution of 600 KES (approximately €5). Furthermore, they engaged in income-generating activities together. They had started out by cleaning the area around Moi Lake Road at Karagita, for which they were paid by one of the flower farms next to the settlement. Later the group also started to collect garbage, in which it for some time had been assisted by the free use of the above-mentioned truck of the city council. In addition to the assistance by the city council, the group received funding from the World Bank in 2010 to organize a meeting in Karagita on raising awareness about disabilities, and members were trained by students of Leicester University on environmental-friendly activities such as recycling plastic bags and making briquettes from water hyacinth. The group was thus quite successful in attracting sponsoring and in finding ways to collectively make some money.<sup>381</sup>

Another multifunctional self-help group was "Huruma", a registered group based in Kasarani. This group had about sixty members and functioned as a welfare group: upon bereavement or hospitalization of a member, each would contribute 200 KES (resulting in a total sum of 12,000 KES). Furthermore, each member contributed 1,000 KES per month for

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<sup>380</sup> The characteristics of vyama and welfare groups were explained by several respondents in the survey and in the ego-centred network analysis, whom I asked about their memberships.

<sup>381</sup> Members of the Lake Naivasha Disabled Environmental Organization, interviews in Karagita by the author, 27 November 2014.

a loan scheme and for shared savings.<sup>382</sup> The group was in the process of purchasing a plot of ten acres in Moi Ndabi, an agricultural area in the hinterland of the lake, paid for with the shared savings and a loan acquired from a bank. The members planned to later subdivide this plot among themselves. Thus, this group was a chama, welfare group and land-buying cooperative in one. It was organized in a formal manner. It had its own bylaws, which for instance made it obligatory for members to attend meetings. The pastor who had founded this group in the year 2000, had founded another multi-functional group in the year 2006, "Disomne" (short for "Disabled, Orphaned and Most Needy Children HIV/AIDS Group). It aimed to assist the guardians of around 380 orphaned or what the group leader called "needy" children. Apart from receiving monthly contributions from the guardians, this group had been successful in accessing some funds from USAID and from the flower farms around. It provided loans to the guardians, had purchased a *shamba* "for the children" in an agricultural area in the hinterland of the lake, contributed to a feeding program in Kasarani and paid for school fees.<sup>383</sup>

Thus, these groups and organizations helped the residents of the settlements to make ends meet and to organize their daily lives in Naivasha. Furthermore, they enabled migrant workers to save or to make investments for the future. Nevertheless, for sudden emergencies, one could not easily borrow money at a SACCO or chama, due to formal procedures that took some time. Only two respondents in the ego-centred network analysis said they were able to suddenly borrow 2,000 KES at their chama. Five had the possibility to turn to a bank because they had a regular income. Four others said they had to fall back on the services of private money lenders in case of an emergency. The money lenders were easily accessible but they were demanding high interest rates. However, quite a number of respondents also said they could borrow some money from friends if necessary. It was remarkable that few people would turn to their family, and when answering the question, many respondents also expressed embarrassment in relation to borrowing money and not being self-sufficient. They would feel bad about borrowing money from someone else. One of the respondents stated she would not even lend money to buy vegetables. She said: "we'll just eat maize porridge with salt."<sup>384</sup>

In general, respondents in the network analysis seemed to have different levels of familiarity with different neighbours. Most of them distinguished between neighbours whom they could ask for help (usually just one or two) and others. One respondent, Lydia, who resided in Karagita, even stated that she would not ask her neighbours for any kind of help, not even for borrowing a tool or kitchen utensil. She said that everyone was busy and that

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<sup>382</sup> The amount received upon bereavement or hospitalization was equivalent to €106. The monthly contribution was equivalent to almost €9.

<sup>383</sup> Interview with Pastor Willy.

<sup>384</sup> In Swahili: "Tutakula ugali na chumvi tu."

people 'in the city' (*mjini*) do not like to depend on others. She also did not have any friends to chat with on her day off. She said she needs to wash her clothes on that day and simply wants to sleep the rest of the time. She was not alone in this isolation: a number of respondents claimed they were not talking to anyone during leisure time (see Table 6), which was caused by either a lack of (shared) leisure time or a lack of informal contacts. For these people, the network in Naivasha was primarily based in the workplace. This sole dependence on the workplace is also reflected in the ego-centred network of Lydia (see Figure 23). Even the sugar-rotating chama in which she participated was based in the flower farm where she worked. Lydia had originally come to Naivasha after getting divorced in Bungoma, her region of origin. She did not want to depend on her parents and followed her brother, who was working in a vegetable farm, to Naivasha. She came together with her son. However, her brother had moved back to Bungoma by the time of the interview. She had no other family in Naivasha and had made no friends. For her, 'town' was a place where people have to fend for themselves. The consequence of this lack of a support network was that she, as a single mother, did not manage to pay for the education and upkeep of her teenage son in Naivasha. He had moved back to stay with his grandparents in Bungoma, where life was much cheaper.

Hence, for some migrant workers, such as Lydia, life in the settlements in Naivasha (in 'the city') stood in stark contrast to life in the region of origin, at 'home'. They had few social contacts in Naivasha. For them, the whole of Naivasha was a 'work-place'. They did not expect any 'social order' there outside work. Nevertheless, other migrant workers established a support network that encompassed not only their region of origin but also the settlements in Naivasha and even other places in Kenya. The network of Patience (see Figure 24) forms a good example here. Patience had originally come to Naivasha to visit her aunt. She then met her later husband and decided to stay. Although Patience retained connections to her family in Kakamega, her region of origin, and went to visit there during her annual leave, she also was closely connected to some of her colleagues and neighbours in Naivasha, whom she considered to be friends. A major difference between Patience and Lydia was that Patience was married and had a husband to fall back on. Furthermore, she was not the only one in her family who had left 'home'. Although her aunt had retired by the time of the interview in 2015 and had moved back to Kakamega, Patience had several siblings who were also migrant workers. In fact, she received financial support from her siblings who were living and working in Gilgil and Nairobi from time to time. Thus, her elaborate support network was not only based in her region of origin but also in Naivasha and even in other places in Kenya. Furthermore, in Naivasha she not only relied on her workplace but also on contacts outside that, in the neighbourhood where she lived in.

This section has discussed the diverse ways in which residents of the workers' settlements organized themselves, both through formal organizations and through more

informal contacts such as relations to neighbours. The following section will discuss the role of the local government, NGOs and farms within the settlements.

## 6.6 Governing the Settlements

The large majority of the residents in the settlements were tenants of one-room apartments with shared bathrooms (World Bank 2014: 37-41). Some of these blocks of houses were make-shift, constructed with mud, wood or iron sheets, or a combination thereof. Recently, many of these make-shift constructions have been replaced with permanent brick housing of better quality. At the time of fieldwork, most of the houses were constructed with brick. Nevertheless, there remained some make-shift housing, especially in the settlements further away from town (e.g. Kasarani), and in those settlements that were on squatted land (e.g. KCC). Virtually all of the housing had roofs of corrugated iron sheets. Most of the houses also had a, sometimes dilapidated, cemented floor. In contrast to the disorder and dirtiness of the streets outside, the plots themselves - especially those with brick housing and an iron gate - were usually neat and clean. The narrow central alleys of the plots were used by women for doing the laundry and they were always full of clothes hung out to dry (see Figure 20). Inside, the houses were also tidy, although very full with furniture and other goods. The room could be divided into several compartments (e.g. into a sleeping and a sitting area) by curtains or bed sheets hung out from the ceiling. Tables and sofas - when present - could be decorated with cloths and pillows, and walls (including the 'walls' made of curtains) contained family pictures, calendars of political parties or posters of European soccer teams. In short, residents made an effort to make their houses homely. But in the perception of government officials and farm managers, the residents did not care about their living environment. Jan for example thought that Kasarani's residents could and should put more effort in making it a "proper village".<sup>385</sup> Where did this disparity stem from? Which infrastructure was present in the settlements and who had provided it?

As development took place haphazardly, the settlements for a long time lacked facilities such as electricity and water. More recently, infrastructure has improved. At the time of fieldwork, the settlements had been connected to the grid and most house owners had been able to pay for the costs to connect their own plot as well. However, some tenants we interviewed had not been able to pay their own bill and had been disconnected. Furthermore, most households still lacked access to running water on their plot. Nevertheless, whereas residents previously frequently would use water from the lake, there were now a number of ways to access water in the settlements, even if not on one's own plot. A project called WSUP

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<sup>385</sup> Interview by Gemählich, Tolo and the author.

had constructed water kiosks, selling both fluoride-free drinking water and non-treated water for different prices. A bit more expensive option was to buy water from donkey-cart drivers. Other types of infrastructure, such as sewerage and drainage, was lacking (World Bank 2014: 45-47; Happ 2016: 128-141).

A lack of management of solid waste and of waste water posed a further problem in the settlements (World Bank 2014: 37-41). Waste piled up, due to an increase in population and an increase in wealth. The waste also affected the wider environment, since much of it eventually ran off into the lake. The responsible local government department lacked the equipment and staff to put a proper waste management system in place. As with other departments, the resources for waste management had not grown (sufficiently) with the increase in population. Just as with the lack of housing, which provided an income opportunity to local land owners, private parties tried to take advantage here. Several self-help groups and private companies collected garbage on a weekly basis, against the payment of a fee. In Karagita, the fee per plot was 250 KES per month, which implied a contribution of about 25 KES per household.<sup>386</sup> Registered self-help groups - such as the members of the Disabled Environmental Group introduced above - could sometimes keep costs low by making use of a truck of the municipal council for the collection of garbage. This truck had been purchased by the municipal council of Naivasha in 2010 - with funding of the Lake Naivasha Growers Group, the local lobby organization of the flower farms.<sup>387</sup> However, by 2015, it seemed this truck was rented out to paying companies instead of it being lent out to self-help groups. Furthermore, much of the garbage was not collected because not all tenants or landlords paid the fees (Dittmann et al. 2016: 28).

Solid waste management was a typical example of a type of infrastructure for which no one wanted to take responsibility: the farms considered it to be a task of the local government, the local government thought the farms should contribute because they had attracted migrants to the area, and the people themselves simply did not know what to do with their trash. And although they were the ones having to live in a dirty and unhealthy environment, they were ironically enough also the ones blamed for this situation, as they were perceived to lack interest in the settlements due to the common wish to ultimately move away again. However, when students from the University of Bonn explicitly asked 24 inhabitants about their opinion on the waste situation in Kihoto, 22 indicated that it was problematic (Dittmann et al. 2016: 18). And when I asked Gabriel, who resided in Karagita, about the differences in environment between Naivasha and his village of origin in western Kenya, he immediately mentioned the dirt: "Ok, here in town I can say, with the high population, you find

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<sup>386</sup> Equivalent to €2.20 and €0.22 respectively.

<sup>387</sup> *Daily Nation*, "Town Buys Sh6m Garbage Collection Vehicle," 22 January 2010.

sometimes this garbage, that people carelessly throw away dirt. So you find that it is polluted almost everywhere."<sup>388</sup> In other words, some of the residents considered the dirty environment to be problematic. Some were aware that the piling up of waste, the lack of (affordable) clean drinking water and the lack of drainage could pose risks to their health (cf. World Bank 2014: 36, on perceptions on health hazards). However, the residents did not have the resources and the institutions to solve this, in essence logistical, issue themselves.

As the example of solid waste management illustrates, the main bone of contention between the flower farms and the local government in Naivasha was the question who was responsible for a proper development of the settlements where the migrant workers came to live. A local planning officer I interviewed did not see the provision of affordable and good-quality rental housing for low-income workers as a priority for his office. He asserted that people who were attracted by the flower industry "fit in automatically", because they just move in with their relatives. He acknowledged that there was a problem of overpopulation in these settlements and he mentioned the example of Kamere with 40,000 inhabitants. At the same time, he blamed "urban decay" in the settlements on the attitude of the people living there: according to him, they would not want their living environment and the housing to be upgraded because that would imply higher rents, which they would not be able to afford.<sup>389</sup>

Thus, the municipality seemingly paid little attention to the settlements. There, the local government was primarily present through the lowest office in the Kenyan administrative structure, the chiefs and assistant chiefs, who were each in charge of one (sub-)location. As stated in the Chiefs' Act (sections 6, 10 and 11), the chiefs have the duty to maintain order and can issue certain orders (for instance in order to prohibit the damaging of public roads) but they are not responsible for the *creation* of such order. They are also not (financially) able to develop infrastructure in the settlements. The chief of Mirera Location even told me that his office was not constructed with government funding but with funding of the flower farms. Funding for infrastructure in the settlements thus mainly originated outside the country.

An example of such an internationally funded program was the Kenya Informal Settlements Improvement Project (KISIP). It aimed to improve settlement infrastructure in the Kihoto, Kamere, Karagita and Kasarani. The project was funded by the World Bank, the French and Swedish Development Agencies and the Kenyan government. It planned to improve the roads within the settlements and the drinking water supply, to put (better) drainage and sewerage in place and to erect security lighting (World Bank 2014). However, when I visited Naivasha last in June 2016, only the security lights were in place. There were a number of tall, bright lights in each settlement, which lit the whole settlement at night and

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<sup>388</sup> In Swahili: "Ok, huku town naweza sema, with the high population, unakuta sometimes unakuta hizi garbage, zile watu wanatupa hiyo uchafu ovyo. So unakuta kuko polluted almost everywhere."

<sup>389</sup> City planner of Naivasha Municipality, interview in his office, 9 June 2016.

were even visible from the other side of the lake (see Figure 19 for an example of such a light). There were hick-ups in the other construction works, which were not finished or had not even started yet.

Next to the World Bank, there were many other international NGOs operating in Naivasha. However, not all of them worked within the settlements or with the general public. Many projects focussed on environmental issues such as water management. Imarisha, a government-funded program, was founded in 2011 to synthesize the work of NGO, researchers, private businesses (e.g. European retail chains buying flowers), and local and national government institutions with regards to sustainable use of resources. It also involved around fifty local self-help groups that had an environmental component, such as the above-mentioned Lake Naivasha Disabled Environmental Group and several groups of tour guides (e.g. "The Lake Naivasha Nature Club"). Imarisha initiated a Lake Naivasha Sustainability Development Plan. Such plans generated quite some funding but these were mostly geared towards conservation and environmental activities. They plans seemed to have limited effects within the settlements.

However, there were some international projects active in the settlements. There was an American missionary who organized a mentoring program in the secondary school in Kasarani, and there was also a feeding program for destitute children in Kasarani, mainly financed by American donors.<sup>390</sup> There were furthermore projects financed by individual farms or their Fairtrade Premium Committees (discussed below). However, a component of the World Bank-project KISIP illustrated the overlap and lack of coordination between organizations providing projects in the settlements. Part of the infrastructure that was meant to be put in place by KISIP were so-called community cookers, running on solid waste. These were meant to handle waste collected in the settlement and to provide an alternative source of fuel, more environmental-friendly than charcoal or firewood (World Bank 2014: 53-57). Although this plan sounds good on paper, the report did not mention that there was already a community cooker in Karagita, which had been put in place some years ago by the Fairtrade Committee of one of the flower farms.<sup>391</sup> This cooker was hardly in use by 2015. It is therefore questionable whether the community cookers by KISIP, once installed, would be of any advantage to the inhabitants of the settlements or to the environment of the lake.

Farms without a compound still had a presence within the workers' settlements, if only by determining the rhythm of everyday life. The streets would suddenly become lively after regular working hours in the farms were over. Another example was that I noticed one day that Kasarani had been invested by swarms of white flies, after one of the surrounding farms

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<sup>390</sup> Interview with D. Snell.

<sup>391</sup> Jeff Davis, "Smart Is When You Convert," *Daily Nation*, 1 March 2011.



had sprayed pesticides to remove the flies from their crop. Farms were also present in the settlements simply because colleagues could also be neighbours. Seven of the respondents in the total network analysis told me that one of their immediate colleagues was also an immediate neighbour. Since Kasarani was more distant from other places, and completely hemmed in between farms (see Figure 17), friendships and enmities could encompass both the farms and the settlement. Conflicts in Kasarani could seep into a farm, and the other way around. Management was conscious of this interconnectedness. One manager of Karibu Farm told employees during a meeting they should ask questions there and not afterwards in Kasarani.<sup>392</sup> A supervisor, who had lived in more anonymous Naivasha Town before and only recently had moved to Kasarani, complained to me about the amount of gossip. One day she had eaten fish in a hotel in Kasarani, and the following day a few employees, whom she had not seen at the hotel, made remarks about this luxury. It thus appeared that others had been talking about her.

The relation between the settlements and the farms was less immediate at South Lake, at least for the farms without a compound, because the employees there were not all residing in the same settlement. Nevertheless, Dennis, who worked in a flower farm at South Lake and resided in Karagita, also told me he lived in the same neighbourhood as his supervisor, and they would also regularly meet outside work. He said he might even go to her house, for example in case he wanted to ask for a day off because of an emergency. Furthermore, farms along South Lake Road could also be affected by events in the settlements, for instance when the road was blocked by protesters.<sup>393</sup>

Close connections between the farms and the settlements were also exemplified in the provision of lunch within the farms. Employees who lived on a farm compound or in a settlement close to the farm where they worked, could go home during the lunch break. However, most employees had to get their lunch in or around the farm. Some farms had canteens, where they provided basic food against subsidized prices and in single cases even for free. Food was cooked in large quantities in enormous pots, and lunch was served in shifts. The cooks of Karibu Farm used 25 kilograms of rice, 45 kilograms of maize flour, 30 kilograms of beans, 20 kilograms of maize and about 30 cabbages per day. Part of this food was acquired in a supermarket in Naivasha Town but most of it was provided by a local businesswoman in the neighbouring settlement. Also farms that did not provide lunch, created an opportunity for small-scale business people, who would place temporary food stalls outside the gate of the farm or simply would come with a bag of fruits or a few bottles of tea at lunch time.

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<sup>392</sup> In Swahili: "Asiende kuulizia Kasarani. Mtu aulize hapahapa."

<sup>393</sup> Interview on 7 March 2014; *Daily Nation*, "Transport Paralyzed."

Farms furthermore had a presence in the settlements through the infrastructure that they sponsored there. This infrastructure was either paid from the profits of the farm or, in the case of certified farms, through Fairtrade premiums. Examples were tree-planting projects, the sponsoring of clinics and the maintenance of the Moi Lake Road.<sup>394</sup> Due to the dependency on sponsoring, most facilities in the settlements - including class rooms of school, public toilets and boreholes - had signs showing which company, NGO or government body had financed them (see Figure 21 for an example). Lembcke (2015: 9) noted that, unintentionally, these signboards bore testimony of the transiency of the flower industry. Some depicted names of farms that had been taken over by a new owner and had changed names a long time ago. Yet, collective memory was short: I found that inhabitants of the settlement named after the first flower farm, DCK, were often oblivious about the source of this name and especially of the meaning of the abbreviation.

One type of infrastructure that farms liked to invest in, were schools for the workers' children. Initially, there had been few schools in the area, but new ones opened up with the increase in population. The heads of the secondary schools in Karagita and Kasarani told me these had been started in 1997 and 2009 respectively. In both cases, the start of the school had been initiated by parents of children who had finished primary school and had no possibilities nearby for further schooling. However, there were also some schools in the area that had been founded (but not fully funded) by a flower farm. According to Happ (2016: 80), there were 66 public primary schools and 26 public secondary schools in Naivasha District by 2011. Furthermore, there were a number of private schools and there were possibilities for tertiary training in Naivasha Town. Although primary education in public schools Kenya is free, parents had to provide for the obligatory uniform and in some cases paid for food provided at the schools. There was a fee for secondary education. Quite a number of farms, especially certified ones, had programs with bursaries for the children of their employees, which covered part of the school fees. Farms also contributed financially or materially to the schools themselves, as these received only limited funds from the government. The workshop of Karibu Farm made benches for a nearby primary school.

Karibu Farm was also one of the many sponsors of St. Andrews, the secondary school in Kasarani. This school was located on a hillside on a distance of several kilometres from the village. It had been built on a plot donated through a flower farm, its classrooms were constructed in phases with the assistance of (connections of) farms around and donations via residents of Greenpark, a voluntary teacher from the Netherlands had collected money to buy a water tank and the parents of the pupils had collected money to build a kitchen, a toilet block and teacher's housing. It seemed that the head of school was almost busier with fund-raising

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<sup>394</sup> Interviews with Gabriel and C. Kiptoo.

than with teaching. He even visited Germany in 2016 to thank students of a partnering school for their donations and to raise more funding. These international flows of money that were funnelled into the schools in Naivasha did not reach the areas where many of the migrant workers had originated from. Hence, the presence of good schools in Naivasha was an important attraction and it was a reason to bring one's family along, especially since parents attached great value to a good education for their children (cf. Ross and Weisner 1977: 363; Kunas 2011: 34-36).<sup>395</sup>

However, it was remarkable that despite the investments in the education for older children, proper day care facilities for babies and toddlers were lacking. Only a handful of the farms provided day care for the children of their workers or paid out an allowance for that, despite it being an obligation under international treaties signed by Kenya and being included in the Fairtrade-standard (Happ 2016: 101-103). As many of the employees had migrated to Naivasha on their own, they would not have someone in their network there with whom they could leave their child when they were at work. They had to bring their babies and toddlers to a private facility in their neighbourhood. Of the 176 respondents, 32 had one or more of their small children going to such a day care centre at the time of the survey. Conditions were generally poor: children were taken care of in unhygienic private homes, and were only provided with food (sometimes heated, sometimes cold) if their parents brought it with them. Parents in the survey reported an average monthly contribution of 710 KES.<sup>396</sup> Conditions varied greatly, as I observed in two different private day care facilities. One was run by a woman in her own clean rental apartment in Kamere, where she took care of eight babies and toddlers. The other was a private plot of a family in Karagita, where literally dozens of children were looked after by two women in a makeshift, two-room house. Children there took their afternoon nap on cartons spread out on the floor. This lack of proper care for the smallest children was an important point for those criticizing the flower industry. Yet farm managers did not acknowledge responsibility for this issue, which they considered to be private. Manager Hans stated he admired the female employees for deciding to raise their children on their own and explained they organize themselves in groups of around eight women to provide day care. He did not mention (and perhaps was not aware of) the poor and unhygienic circumstances in many of these private day care centres, and did not acknowledge that women had to bring their children there because of their work in his farm in the first place. In short, despite the emphasis on equal gender relations within the farms, the care for the small children of their employees was not something the farms wanted to take responsibility for. This instance showed once more that migrant workers did desire a certain 'order' in the

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<sup>395</sup> Principal of St. Andrews, interview in the principal's office, 25 May 2015.

<sup>396</sup> Equivalent to just over €6 per month.

settlements, namely proper day care for their children, but that they simply were not able to organize that in a more orderly manner. And as in the case of garbage collection, the flower farms nor the local government were willing or able to pay for it.

### 6.7 Conclusion: 'Spontaneous' Settlements?

This chapter has described the workers' settlements in Naivasha: how they developed, their physical appearance, and their population. The housing and infrastructure in the settlements developed haphazardly and in an uncoordinated manner in the past decades. Nevertheless, they are not the outcome of chance. Rapoport (1988: 55) analyses what he calls spontaneous settlements as the result of "vernacular design" (cf. Appadurai 2013). As Cooper (1983: 30) noted: these settlements "are rarely as anarchic as the terms used to describe them suggest – 'irregular', 'spontaneous', 'illegal' – but their social order is not the social order of state hegemony." Nor do these settlements reflect the social order associated with 'modern' capitalist agro-industry. Nevertheless, I have argued in this chapter that the government and the flower farms shaped the physical environment of these areas, if only because of their refusal to take full responsibility for the reproduction (for instance housing and care for the workers' children) of the work force (cf. Stoler 1985).

Table 5: Monthly income of residents of Karagita, Kasarani and Sharma Farm, correlated for gender (n=173) (Chi-square: 11.964, p=0.008).

Income category	Female (n=108) (%)	Male (n=65) (%)
0	13.0	6.8
Less than 5,000 KES	19.4	10.1
Between 5,000 and 10,000 KES	56.5	55.4
More than 10,000 KES	11.1	29.2
Total	100.0	100.0

Table 6: Reported wealth of inhabitants of Karagita, Karuturi and Sharma Farm, correlated for occupation (n=176).

Type of possession	Flower farm worker (n=94) (%)	Other occupation (n=82) (%)
Plot of land <sup>397</sup>	27.7	8.5
Livestock <sup>398</sup>	29.8	19.5
(Mobile) bank account <sup>399</sup>	80.9	68.3
Bed (in Naivasha) <sup>400</sup>	93.6	82.9
Mobile phone <sup>401</sup>	91.5	82.9

Table 7: Membership rate of organizations, correlated for occupation (n=176).

Organization	Flower farm worker (n=94) (%)	Other occupation (n=82) (%)
Religious group	55.3	54.9
SACCO <sup>402</sup>	57.4	22.0
Chama/merry-go-round	24.5	29.3
Welfare organization <sup>403</sup>	26.6	3.7
No membership <sup>404</sup>	9.6	22.0

<sup>397</sup> Chi-square: 10.513, p=0.010.

<sup>398</sup> Not significant.

<sup>399</sup> Chi-square: 3.684, p=0.055.

<sup>400</sup> Not significant.

<sup>401</sup> Chi-square: 2.936, p=0.087

<sup>402</sup> Chi-square: 22.826, p=<0.001.

<sup>403</sup> Chi-square: 17.223, p=<0.001.

<sup>404</sup> Chi-square: 5.166, p=0.023.

Table 8: Aggregated answers to the questions on networks in the ego-centred network analysis (n=22).

	Parent(s)	Partner	Sibling(s)	Other relative(s)	Friend(s)	Neighbour(s)	Colleague(s)	Institutions <sup>405</sup>	Not applicable
1. If you need a <b>kitchen utensil</b> that you do not have yourself, who do you go to to borrow one?	-	-	1	-	2	15	-	-	4
2. Who do you ask for some <b>vegetables</b> if that is the only thing you are missing to cook a meal and you are out of money?	2	-	-	-	5	4	1	9	4
3. If you need to <b>write an official letter</b> and you do not know how to go about it yourself, who do you ask for assistance?	1	2	1	3	3	3	3	1	8
4. If you suddenly need <b>2,000 KES</b> , to whom or where do you go to borrow?	2	-	1	-	7	3	1	11	4
5. Who do you most often <b>give money to</b> or send money to via mobile banking?	16	2	-	3	-	-	-	-	5
6. Who do you most often <b>receive money from</b> , in person or via mobile banking?	-	1	6	2	3	-	-	3	8
7. If you have questions about raising your children or about your relationship, who do you go to for <b>advice</b> ?	9	1	-	2	1	3	-	7	-
8. If you have <b>issues with a colleague</b> at work / fellow business(wo)man, where do you go for a solution or advice?	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	19	2
9. Who do you go to if you just feel like <b>having a chat</b> in your spare time?	1	2	-	-	9	3	1	-	7
10. Is there <b>someone else</b> in your life who's important to you but who you have not mentioned yet?	-	1	-	10	1	-	-	1	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>51</b>

<sup>405</sup> With 'institution' I here mean any type of formal business, organization or government office. It can be anything from vegetable sellers (question 2) and cyber cafés (question 3) to a bank (question 4), an employer or the local chief (question 8).

Figure 17: A map of Kasarani (cartographer: Monika Feinen).

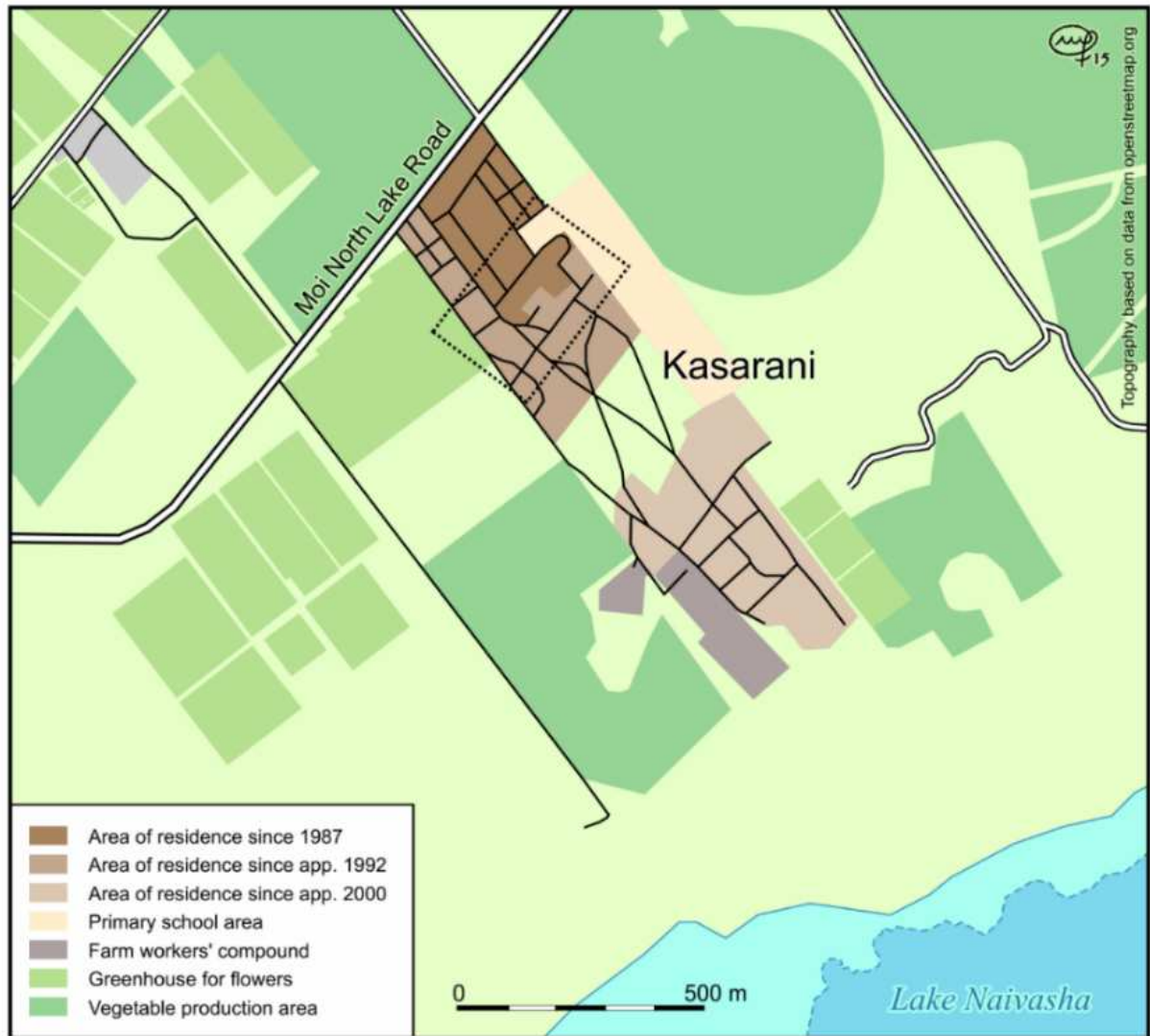


Figure 18: Map of a neighbourhood in Kasarani, as demarcated in Figure 17 (cartographer: Monika Feinen).





*Figure 19: A view over Kasarani (picture taken by the author, 2016).*



*Figure 20: Typical row of brick rental housing in Karagita (picture by the author, 2014).*



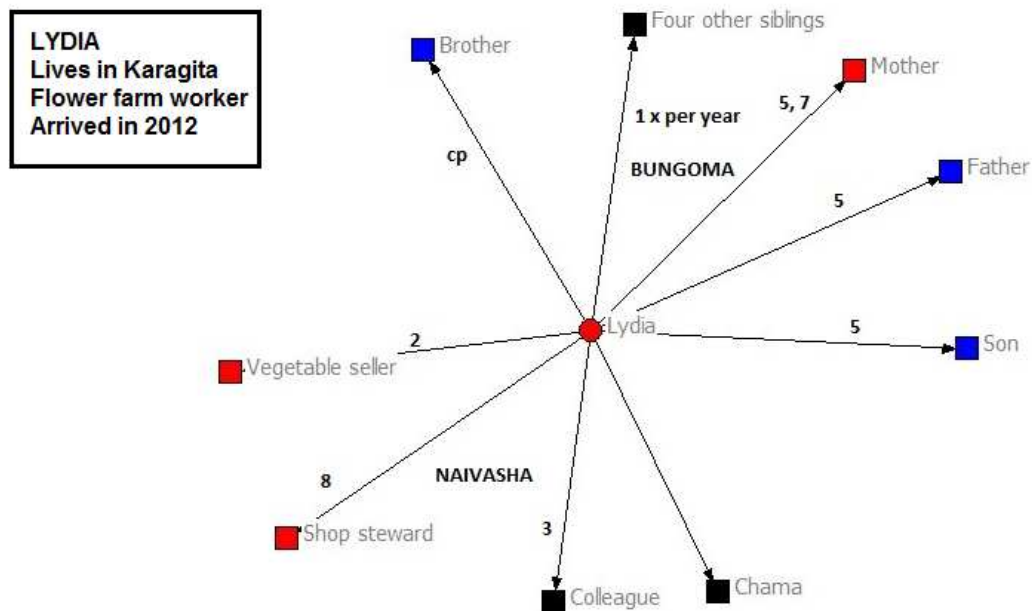
*Figure 21: A borehole in Karagita, drilled with Fairtrade premium money (picture by the author, 2014).*



Figure 22: One of the many small churches in Kasarani, with a flower farm next to it (picture by the author, 2014).

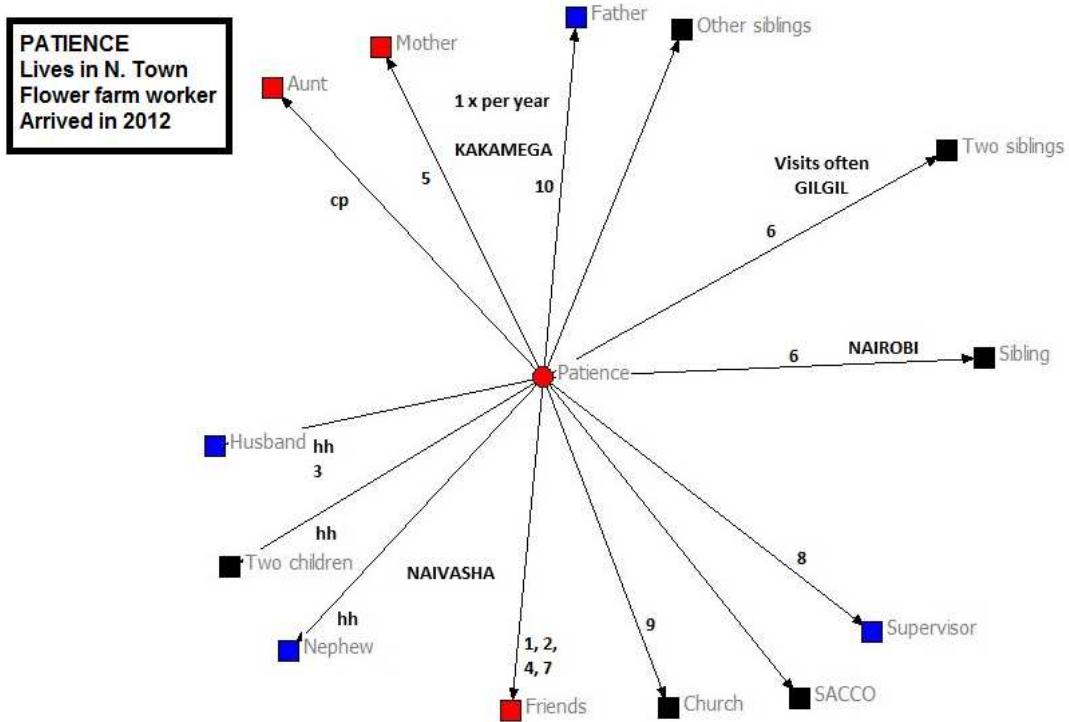


Figure 23: The network of Lydia, based on her answers in the ego-centred network analysis.<sup>406</sup>



<sup>406</sup> The letters 'cp' stand for contact person, i.e. the person who connected Lydia to Naivasha. The numbers represent the questions in the network analysis (see Table 2). Red nodes stand for female *alteri*, blue nodes for male *alteri* and black nodes for *alteri* where the gender is unknown or not applicable.

Figure 24: The network of Patience, based on her answers in the ego-centred network analysis.



## 7. Building a Future: Preparing to Go 'Home'

The previous two chapters have focussed on the workplace and living environment of migrant workers while residing in Naivasha. This final empirical chapter discusses how the migrants prepared themselves for a future outside Naivasha. I expand here on findings from research conducted by Kunas (2011) in the settlement Kwa Muhia. Kunas investigated how residents of the settlement made sense of their experiences of migration and wage labour. She found that almost all migrants residing there perceived of their stay in Naivasha as temporary. Wage labour in Naivasha was only a means to attain other goals, such as improving material living conditions, paying for children's education or being able to take up family responsibilities. Migrants usually planned to leave Naivasha again once these goals were reached. These findings of Kunas were confirmed during my fieldwork: most of the migrants residing in the settlements did not perceive of Naivasha as an end station. Rather, they planned to move on again, preferably to their own plot of land elsewhere. These imagined futures shaped their everyday life as tenants in Naivasha. The migrants led 'translocal' lives: they were temporarily situated in Naivasha, yet they had not settled there permanently and were ultimately still 'on the move' (cf. Brickel and Datta 2011). Migration for them was a strategy for survival in the present and, more than that, a strategy for development and a way to prepare for the future (cf. Oucho 1996: 54).

Appadurai (2013: 179-195) has called on anthropologists to pay more attention to the future and to future-making. He maintains that aspirations for the future are shaped by relational, permeable and possibly contradictory norms. "Aspirations are never simply individual (as the language of wants and choices inclines us to think). They are always formed in interaction and in the thick of social life" (*ibid.*: 187). Moreover, not everyone is equally able (or enabled) to plan the future. Appadurai thus considers aspirations to be cultural capacities. When including such capacities in our analysis, "(...) we are surely in a better position to understand how people actually navigate their social space" (*ibid.*: 195).

In short, the position of the migrant workers while residing in Naivasha cannot be fully understood without perceiving of their work and their life there in the light of these future plans. This chapter therefore elaborates on how various residents in the settlements imagined their futures and on the strategies they employed to realize their plans. The first section addresses the question of what 'going home' entailed in this context. Section 7.2 discusses some of the ways in which workers prepared for this move. The discussion includes both those who were still fully engaged in life and work in Naivasha and those who had immediate plans to move away. It also includes workers such as Glory (see Section 4.1.3) who felt "stuck" in Naivasha (cf. Kunas 2011: 51) and who had little hope for a future outside the farms and the settlements. To throw these images further into relief, the hopes and plans of migrant workers are

compared to those of a resident who owned land in Naivasha and had no plans to move away at all. Finally, Section 7.3 discusses the varied ways in which planned futures could materialize. I describe the plans of two employees of Karibu Farm who had just resigned and the current situation of four former colleagues of Flora at Sharma Farm, who all moved back to their region of origin. Some of them had been forced to move back to their region of origin without attaining their goals, for instance after being rendered jobless or during the post-election violence. These former workers were facing an insecure future, despite moving 'home'. These discussions show that 'home' was not necessarily a safety net to fall back on. Instead, only those who succeeded in Naivasha could afford feel secure when moving back. As Ferguson argued, "it was not so much as a remembered past that rural life was influencing urban conduct but as an anticipated future" (1999: 165). These descriptions together contextualize the position of migrant workers in the flower farms and in the settlements, as sketched in the previous two chapters.

### 7.1 The Meaning(s) of Home

What plans do residents of the settlements have for the future? The usual answer I would get when asking a resident this question, was that he or she was planning to move home.<sup>407</sup> However, this answer proved to be deceptively simple, because what does 'home' mean in this context (cf. Moore and Vaughan (1994: 172-173) and Ferguson (1999: 131) on labour migrants in Zambia)? I found during my time in Naivasha that the meaning of the word *nyumbani* ('home') was highly ambiguous. When I asked a supervisor of Karibu Farm where his home was, he made a distinction between *kwetu* ('our place', meaning the village where he had been born) and *kwangu* ('my place', meaning the town where he had bought a plot of land and built a house).

Kunas (2011: 52) found that 'home' in the context of Naivasha was broadly connected to three characteristics: region of origin, where family and in-laws lived, and where someone owned land. I found that these characteristics could all come together in one place, yet more often than not, they did not. Moreover, these interpretations of 'home' were influenced by gendered and ethnic ideas. For instance, a woman could consider her husband's village of origin as her future 'home', but a man would not commonly consider his wife's village of origin as 'home'. Furthermore, for many, 'home' did not only encompass the village or town where one was born. 'Home' could also encompass the larger area that following the cultural-political discourse of ethnically defined geographical regions in Kenya - explained in Chapter 3 - was associated to one's ethnic group. Definitions of 'home' could thus even be related to a looming

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<sup>407</sup> The exception was a small minority among the residents who considered the settlement to be their home. I discuss the future plans of one of those residents, Moses, in Section 7.2.4.

threat of ethnic violence in places where someone was not considered (by others) to be 'at home'.

Vernacular languages and cultural ideas on what constitutes a community also played a role in the definition of 'home', and therefore complicated the matter, as these languages and ideas were not shared among all labour migrants in Naivasha. Oucho (1996: 67) for instance explained that a word in Luo for 'home' is *dala* and that it is of the utmost importance for Luo men to have a *dala*. There are local political reasons for that, but also the simple need for having a place to be buried informed the importance of having a 'home'. A *dala* is established through a ritual and cannot be established in an urban area. In other words, the definition of home is not an individual venture. Cohen and Odhiambo (1989: 5) stated there were "pressures placed on Luo men to maintain good homes (*dala*) in the Siaya countryside, as places to be at home and to be buried, and as concrete acknowledgements of links to the past." Ritual constructions of home (e.g. the burying of the placenta at the parents' homestead after birth) put pressure on migrants to look for known relations wherever they would go to, on women to return to their rural home to give birth and on young men to invest in the countryside (Cohen and Odhiambo 1989: 25).

Furthermore, economic position and the presence or absence of infrastructure also played a role: among the Luo, constructing a 'home' in Siaya became increasingly important in the 1950s and 1960s, probably because of increased affluence and higher levels of mobility (Cohen and Odhiambo 1989: 57).

Finally, the meaning of 'home' was influenced by economic factors, such as land prices. Whereas some of the migrant workers had been able to purchase a plot in the same area where their family hailed from, many others could not do so, due to land pressure in these areas. In those cases, migrants purchased a plot elsewhere and thus established a second 'home', as the above-mentioned supervisor had done. In short, the definition of one's 'home' was hardly ever straightforward.

'Home' could furthermore be understood in contrast to what was by many considered as its antithesis: Naivasha. Respondents in the survey often did not immediately understand me when I used the word *nyumbani* when asking which language respondents speak in their households in Naivasha. As Kunas (2011) stated in the title of her thesis: many migrants considered of Naivasha as "just a place to work".<sup>408</sup> I heard migrant workers using the same expression, yet I found that this classification did not necessarily imply a negative qualification. In other words, I found that 'home' was not unambiguously positive, nor did residents consider Naivasha only negatively. Although life in Naivasha was difficult - described by inhabitants with the English terms a 'struggle' or a 'hustle' - it still could be easier than life 'at home'. For

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<sup>408</sup> In German: "Dies ist nur ein Ort zum Arbeiten."

instance, although the strict control and the working rhythm within the farms was resented, the work itself was considered to be less demanding and extracting than practicing small-scale agriculture. When I asked Lucy whether the work in the greenhouse could be compared to the cultivation of the plot she and George owned in western Kenya, she started to laugh and said that cultivation was much harder (*kazi ngumu*). Such statements show that the wish of migrants to ultimately leave Naivasha again should not be taken as a sign of unbearable circumstances, or as proof that they never felt at home there.<sup>409</sup> The qualification of Naivasha as a place of work did not preclude feelings of attachment to the place, or keep migrants from attempting to make their house there homely (as described in Section 6.6, some residents for instance decorated their house).<sup>410</sup>

In fact, not everyone had a home to return back to, even if not being at home in Naivasha neither. This was the case for Glory, whom I introduced in Chapter 4. Her family came from Ndabibi but she herself did not have a home there. It was even more the case for Juliet, one of the respondents in the ego-centred network analysis (see Figure 25). She had led a troubled life. She had separated from her husband in Bungoma and subsequently one her children had fallen ill. It was suspected he had been bewitched, and Juliet's sister, who lived in the settlement KCC, advised her to move to Naivasha.<sup>411</sup> Juliet followed this advice and moved to Kasarani in 2005. Her child recovered, but she struggled hard to make a living. She worked on a temporary contract in one of the vegetable farms for some time. When she gave birth to twins while being on her own, she did no longer manage to make it to work in the morning and she had to give it up. She then turned towards the cooking and selling of illicit brew in her home. This activity was precarious because of frequent police raids.<sup>412</sup> Juliet did not manage to make ends meet, despite some support from her sister and the possibility to buy on credit at the shop in Kasarani where she always did her groceries. She had a fairly small network, and remarkably, her region of origin Bungoma was no longer included in this

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<sup>409</sup> Cf. Ferguson (1999: 123-162), who described how some of the mining workers in Zambia he spoke with were anxious or even afraid of their return to the rural areas upon retirement, even though others were full of anticipation.

<sup>410</sup> Bolt (2013) analysed the differences between permanent and temporary workers on farms on the South African-Zimbabwean border. Whereas temporary workers did not make any changes to the rooms they were provided with by the farms, the permanent workers made these rooms homely and planted gardens. I did not find such a clear distinction between groups of workers in Naivasha, yet there was the same broad variety in home-making practices (or a lack thereof).

<sup>411</sup> Oucho (1996: 77) had seven respondents in his survey among 417 migrants who said witchcraft had played a role in their decision to move. Few of my respondents in Naivasha referred to witchcraft when discussing their motives for past decisions and their future plans. I attribute this to my position as a foreigner and my distant relationship to most of the respondents. It should therefore not be taken as an indication that such considerations did not play a role in more cases than only in Juliet's case.

<sup>412</sup> A criminal court case involving another woman who was selling chang'aa in Karagita, makes clear that it was a risky business: she was given a substantial fine of 50,000 KES (€440) or eight months of imprisonment in case she would fail to pay the fine (see: Mary Njeri v Republic (2015) eKLR).



network, as the family members she mentioned all lived somewhere else. Even though Kasarani was not Juliet's home, it was hard to assess which place would be.

Thus, even when trying to define 'home' by describing what it is *not* - namely, the place where one temporarily worked - this definition still has its ambiguities. These complexities can be further illustrated by describing what Lucy considered to be *nyumbani*. Lucy and her husband, who were both working as supervisors in a flower farm, had managed to save enough money to buy a plot of land. This plot was located in Western Kenya, their province of origin. Nevertheless, it was located in a different county than the counties where either of their parents were living because plots there were too expensive. This new plot, where they had built a house and started farming already, was what they considered 'home'. Kasarani was not home but a place for work to them, despite the many years they had spent there. At the moment, Lucy's younger brother was staying at their plot. He maintained it and took care of their chicken, in exchange for having his school fees paid by Lucy. During their annual leaves, when possible planned during school holidays, Lucy and her husband would have a busy program of both visiting their families and going to their plot to engage in farming.

However, even in those cases where it was relatively clear what 'home' meant, the question remained when would be the proper time to move there, and who exactly should move (for instance, the whole family or only one of the spouses). This decision was influenced by the diverse strategies for the future employed by migrant workers residing in Naivasha, which are discussed in the following section. How did residents in the settlements prepare for retirement and a life 'at home'?

## 7.2 Strategies for the Future: Constructing a 'Home'

There were several ways in which residents of the settlements prepared for their future outside Naivasha, 'at home' or elsewhere. In what follows, I discuss investments in social networks, investing in a plot of land 'at home' and taking precautions for one's funeral. After that, a description of several cases will show that not only the definition of 'home' but also the strategies someone chose to employ to prepare for the future was influenced by factors such as gender, ethnic background, age, household composition and financial possibilities.

### *7.2.1 Investing in Networks: Visits and Remittances*

A first strategy for the future was to maintain contacts by visiting 'home' and sending remittances to relatives residing there. As argued by Ferguson (1999: 134), one did not only need to have the economic resources to build up a life in the rural area but one also needed the cultural and social resources, after having lived in an urban area for so long. "The decision

of *where* people would go was largely about *to whom* they *could* go, and what treatment they could expect when they got there" (*ibid.*, emphasis in original).

Consequently, migrant workers invested in their relations in the place or places they considered to be home while staying in Naivasha. The frequency of visits differed, depending on the financial possibilities and the time period one could take off from work, and also on the relations at 'home'. Thirteen of the respondents in the ego-network analysis had a parent or both parents living in their 'home region', for which they felt a (financial) responsibility. Respondents would try to visit their parents once a year during their annual leave, and especially those who had children or a spouse living 'at home' would additionally try to find a possibility for one or several short visits throughout the year. All respondents had a sibling or siblings yet only three of the respondents who had migrated to Naivasha were the only ones in their family who were not staying 'at home' at the time of the interview. The others all had at least one sibling who had moved away as well, and eight of them even had one or more siblings who also had moved to Naivasha (either before or after them). Respondents who had siblings living elsewhere would often only meet them if there would be a 'function' such as a funeral or a wedding 'at home'. This home thus remained a meeting place for the family.

Another way of investing in a social network 'at home' was by sending remittances, a common practice in Kenya (Oucho 1996: 17). 72.2% of the respondents in the survey said that they regularly sent financial support to someone outside the household in Naivasha, mostly to parents or to a spouse or child living elsewhere. Other studies on the sending of remittances in Kenya found that the receivers would use the money for consumption and for paying school fees (Oucho 1996: 94). On the other hand, only 16.5% of the respondents said that they regularly received financial support from someone outside the household. Again, they mostly received such support from relatives or a spouse residing elsewhere. There was no significant difference between men and women with regards to giving and receiving financial support, nor between the three places of residence or occupation on the one hand and remittance behaviour on the other. Although the respondents did not regularly receive financial support from their rural homes, it can be expected that inhabitants of the settlements did receive support in other ways, such as food stuffs (cf. Oucho 1996: 53). Owuor (2003) found that many households in near-by Nakuru, especially those with a migratory background, depended on food produced on their plots in a rural area. The same applied to at least some of the residents of the settlements in Naivasha, either structurally or occasionally. When Flora and I went to visit her parents in Narok, her mother gave us kilos of potatoes and vegetables, freshly harvested from her plot, to take with us to Naivasha.

In summary, many migrants continued to invest in their connections to the region of origin. They did so with an eye to the future, as many planned to return there one day. Another reason to stay connected to the region of origin was that migrant remembered they had been

nurtured there in the past. However, in case of owning a plot of land and/or livestock 'at home', regular contact was also important for economic survival in the present.

### *7.2.2 Investing in Assets: Plots and Livestock*

Another way to build a future was by making material investments in the region of origin or - less frequently - elsewhere (outside Naivasha). As discussed in the previous chapter, a substantial minority of the respondents in the survey claimed to own a plot of land, and this plot was in almost all cases located outside Naivasha, mostly in the region of origin. The purpose of migrants who acquired a plot was to construct a house for themselves there for later. Moreover, they could for the time-being also involve family members in keeping livestock there or cultivating the land, thus generating some additional income. 25.0% of the respondents in the survey said they owned livestock. With the exception of chicken, this livestock was not kept in Naivasha, where there was little space. Instead, it was kept in rural homes of the respondents or their family members. These assets could assist the migrant workers while residing in Naivasha, for instance by providing an opportunity for income diversification activities (cf. Owuor (2003) on rural activities supporting migrant households in Nakuru).

A respondent in the ego-centred network analysis, originating from Narok County and working in a flower farm, told me that he had some additional income because of a plot "at home", where his family was cultivating maize, beans and sugar cane. And Lucy told me that she and her husband requested for their annual leave to be during the planting or harvesting season so that they could go home to help their family members with the work.

Although urban households used to have higher incomes than rural households, the cost of living was also much higher. Furthermore, there was little space in Naivasha for small-scale agriculture and most migrant labourers lacked access to land there (cf. Section 4.3). Except for growing some vegetables in a corner of the plot one lived on, there was not much space for 'urban farming.' Subsistence or commercial agriculture on a plot 'at home' therefore not only reduced the need to send cash remittances to family members who had remained there, it could also assist in providing food for the household in Naivasha, especially in cases where the plot was located on a relative short distance from Naivasha.

The uses of a plot can be exemplified by the network of Daniel (see Figure 27). Daniel was clearly invested in both Naivasha and his region of origin. He worked in Naivasha and, simultaneously, he and his family cultivated maize, beans and sugar cane on their plot in Narok, not far from Kisii. He resided in Naivasha with his wife and his youngest child while his three elder children stayed 'at home.' Daniel's elaborate network makes clear that a strong connection to the region of origin did not necessarily imply weak ties to Naivasha. It also

makes clear that such connections to a plot 'at home' can already assist migrant workers while still residing in Naivasha. In addition, such plots also provided security for the future.

This last point can be illustrated by the story of Gabriel. He was born in the western part of Kenya in 1988 and he moved to Karagita in 2011. He temporarily lived with a distant relative while working as a casual labourer in construction. He found a permanent job as a janitor in a flower farm in 2012 and he then could afford to rent a mud one-room apartment, together with a friend whom he had met at a construction site. However, he was quickly promoted to become a supervisor of the maintenance department. The concomitant increase in salary enabled him to move again, to a brick house located close to the main road. He even could afford to get married and brought his wife from Western Kenya to Karagita. Despite this connection to 'home', he did not regularly visit anymore. Since his grandmother, who raised him, passed away a few years ago, he had no close relatives anymore living in his region of origin, as all of them had moved elsewhere for work. Gabriel said he felt at home in Naivasha, yet the reason he gave for that is revealing: he found the cost of living to be relatively low when compared to bigger cities such as Nairobi. The lower cost of living enabled him to save money to invest in Western Kenya. Gabriel planned to work in Naivasha for some more years and was even thinking of opening up his own business. However, he did not aim to settle there permanently. The reasons he gave for his wish to move back 'home', were the relatively cold climate in Naivasha and the poor soils, which make it difficult to farm: "But there are those foods now, such as those we have been growing up with, there is food such as cassava and sweet potato, you know here they don't grow at all. But at home they grow."<sup>413</sup>

Another reason was that he finds it important to be buried on his own plot in his home region, an aspect I will come back to below. Remarkably, and unlike most migrant labourers, Gabriel had access to a plot in Naivasha. A land-buying scheme of the Fairtrade Premium Committee of the flower farm where he was working, enabled him to acquire a plot in a village in the hinterland of Lake Naivasha. However, he did not plan to go and live there. Instead, he planned to stay in his rental house in Karagita for some more years and then sell his plot for a good price: "I know I can sell [it] at a good amount and then maybe now I can get a double portion [of land] back in Western. (...) It's a calculation."<sup>414</sup> Gabriel thus did not show a long-term interest in Karagita, even though he said to feel at home there. All he needed there was a decent and affordable one-room apartment to stay in with his family and an opportunity to earn money to invest 'at home'. As Oucho (1996: 20) found, acquiring a plot for the construction of a house or for cultivation was often a priority of migrant workers in Kenya.

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<sup>413</sup> In Swahili: "But kuna zile vyakula sasa kama zile sisi tumelelewa nazo, kuna vyakula kama casava, sweet potato, huku unajua hazifanyi kabisa. But back home zinafanya."

<sup>414</sup> In a mixture of English and Swahili: "I can sell hii sasa because I know I can sell at a good amount and then maybe sasa naweza nipate a double portion back in Western. (...) It's a calculation."

### 7.2.3 Investing in Groups: Participation in Organizations

A final strategy for the future was the participation in organizations in the settlements or workers' compounds in Naivasha, as introduced in the previous chapter. Especially the vyama and welfare groups did not only assist migrant workers in their daily lives in Naivasha. These groups also made it possible to save money for the future (cf. Kusimba et al 2013: 22). This money could be used to send remittances or to invest in a plot of land. Furthermore, some of the migrant workers continued to participate in a chama based in their region of origin while residing in Naivasha. They had been enabled to do so by the introduction of mobile money (Kusimba et al. 2013). These were sometimes simple saving groups, but they could also be more elaborate self-help groups that financed economic activities and infrastructure such as schools and roads in the village of origin of the migrant workers (cf. Oucho 1996: 123-140).<sup>415</sup> Such voluntary organizations have been a common element among labour migrants across the African continent and have the double function of assisting newly arrived migrants in the urban areas and of maintaining connections with the region of origin (Ross and Weisner 1977: 361). Also in Kenya, this type of ethnic self-help group of migrant workers had a long history. For instance, the Luo Union - which also was active among Luo residing in Naivasha<sup>416</sup> - ran several businesses and an educational institute in Kisumu in colonial times. Exclusively ethnic organizations were banned by the government in the 1980s - not surprisingly when considering that these organizations also had political aspirations - yet groups of migrants originating from the same village continued to be active (*ibid.*). According to Cohen and Odhiambo (1989: 35), such organizations and associated clubs such as football team served political goals and enhanced the construction of a Luo nation during colonial times. They ensured the enduring importance of ethnicity despite high levels of labour migration.

A specific type of welfare group that was based in Naivasha but orientated towards 'home', was the burial organization, which assisted bereaved family members with the costs of transporting a deceased group participant to the region of origin to be buried there. Burial organizations had a long history in Kenya and existed already in colonial times, despite the dislike of the colonial government for saving arrangements for Africans (Ross and Weisner 1977: 361; Cohen and Odhiambo 1989: 32; Alila and Obado 1990). As for Gabriel, for many migrants residing in Naivasha an important reason to invest in plot was the wish to eventually be buried on that plot, 'at home'. However, owning a plot was not enough, because in case one died in Naivasha, the transport costs for being brought 'home' were high. Luckily, some flower farms assisted in paying these costs in case an employee died. The CBA even included

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<sup>415</sup> Members of a migrant self-help group based in village in Kakamega County, interview in the village by Tolo, 30 November 2014.

<sup>416</sup> KNA, DC/Nais/1/1/1/52, AR Naivasha District 1958.

an allowance of 24,000 KES to be paid to the family members of employees who passed away.<sup>417</sup> This allowance was meant to cover the funeral costs, including the coffin and the transport of the body to the home area. Furthermore, migrant workers formed welfare groups together, which covered these costs in case a member passed away.

A consequence of the migratory background of many of the inhabitants, was that there were relatively few cemeteries in the settlements. Kunas (2011: 53) found that in Kwa Muhia, there was only a cemetery for the Muhia family, the original owners. In Kasarani, there was a large public cemetery of 5 acres, which had been established when the original Tarambete Farm was sub-divided. However, there was still a lot of space: the caretaker told me that it was mainly used by people who had settled in the area a long time ago (mainly Kikuyu and Turkana) and that only Christians were buried here. Muslims had their own cemetery elsewhere in the area. The bodies of deceased migrant workers were usually transported 'home', except if there was no one to pay for the transportation. Furthermore, my assistant Richard later told me that people owning their own plot of land were - when possible - buried there. Although he had attended funerals of family members in Kasarani, he had never been to this cemetery before.<sup>418</sup> This dislike of cemeteries was confirmed by Flora, who said she would not like to be buried on a cemetery ("it is bad there") and would prefer to be buried on a family plot. Although Flora said it was up to those who left behind to decide where she would be buried, some migrants consciously prepared for a burial 'at home', participating in a burial organization and trying hard to acquire a plot.

#### *7.2.4 Individual Strategies*

I sketched three common strategies to prepare for the future. However, definitions of 'home' and the ways in which a migrant worker chose to prepare for a future there, depended on several factors. As becomes clear from Ferguson's description of ten retiring miners on the Copperbelt (1999: 123-162), not all migrant workers in the same location have the same (financial and social) possibilities when returning 'home'. For the Kenyan context, Nelson (1992) and Wurster and Ludwar-Ene (1995) have elaborated on the different ways in which women and men related to 'home' and to 'town'. Some of these differences surfaced in the case of James and Flora. Factors such as gender, generation and family situation played a decisive role in their decision not to move away from Naivasha (yet), despite several immediate pressures (a threat of renewed ethnic violence, being unemployed) to do so. I therefore describe their recent situation in more detail here.

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<sup>417</sup> Section 22 of the CBA for 2011 to 2013. Equivalent to €212 at the time of fieldwork in 2014.

<sup>418</sup> This preference among land-owning families in Naivasha to bury on their own plots of land also becomes clear from a court case in which the land-buying cooperative Kihoto Farmers attempted to prohibit a widow from burying her late husband on their (disputed) plot in Kihoto (see Kihoto Farmers Co. Ltd. v Mary Wanjiku Ndichu (2003) eKLR).

When I asked Flora in June 2016 - after she had become unemployed - whether she felt at home in Naivasha, she confirmed that she did. She liked to stay there because there were many possibilities to make a living. When I asked her whether there were any other places that she considered to be 'home', she mentioned both her parents' village close to Narok and the village close to Kisumu where her parents-in-law lived. This was a clearly gendered answer, as James would not mention Narok as one of the places where he felt at home. To him, Kisumu was what he called 'home'. He also did not seem to consider moving to Narok, despite the fact that Flora had been allocated a plot of land of her own by her father while James only had access to his fathers' plot, which he would have to share with his brothers after his fathers' death.

Shortly after I had visited Flora's parental home in Narok with her in spring 2015, as described in the vignette in Section 4.1.1, she took me to Kisumu. We visited her parents-in-law, who lived in a rural area on about a 30-kilometer distance from the city. They resided in a spacious house on the plot of her father-in-law. This plot had formerly been part of his grandfathers' plot and had been divided between James' father and uncles. In their turn, James and his brothers were expected to divide their fathers' plot among themselves after his father's death. James already had built a mud two-room house next to his fathers' brick house (a common practice among Luo described in Cohen and Odhiambo (1989: 11)). This house was the place James called 'home' and where he expected to retire to. Yet, from conversations with him it became clear that he did not *feel* at home in his place of birth. Perhaps this was so because he had hardly ever lived there, as his father had also been a migrant worker. James' plans to move to the family plot in Kisumu were plans for the far future: he considered it to be a place for '*wazee*', old people. There were simply too little opportunities there to make a living, either in employment or in business.

After the production of Sharma Farm completely came to a standstill in the spring of 2016, both Flora and James were rendered jobless. With a second child born the year before, it was a difficult time for the family. When I saw them in June 2016, they were moreover already a bit fearful for the elections of 2017 and the possibility of renewed violence. Nevertheless, despite these harsh times, they still had no plans to move away from Naivasha. Even though both of them thought of Kisumu as their future home, they were not seriously considering moving there already:

*'Now where would you like to live in your later life?'*

Live? Where work is available. Now I can't even say I will go and stay in Kisumu right now. I will stay and do what? Right now am I not still just looking for work?<sup>419</sup>

James was still heavily investing in his football network in Naivasha, not letting go of his dream of making a career as a professional football coach. Flora was waiting to get her savings recovered, with which she had vague plans of opening a small-scale business in clothing or in milk produced on her parents' plot in Narok. In the end, it was James who started a small-scale business in trading fish, while Flora went to work for a friend who had a hair dressers' salon in Naivasha Town. Flora earned less there than she had done as a supervisor within Sharma Farm. However, she was happy to have a steady job again, which moreover was located much closer to her house in Kihoto than the farm had been.

Both Flora and James clearly hoped they would continue to live in Naivasha in the near future, and the only threat to their existence there was not even their unemployment but the fear of renewed violence around the elections in 2017. It was confronting for me to see that the political climate in Kenya formed an impediment for my friends to keep on residing in the place where they had built networks across different ethnic groups and had started a family. Their wish to stay there was partly related to economic considerations, yet it also clearly came forth out of a sense of affection to Naivasha. Flora and James did not feel 'stuck' in Naivasha and had no wish to return 'home' (wherever that was for this multi-ethnic family) in the nearby future. On the contrary, they were against all odds trying to stay established in Naivasha, at least for the time-being.

Despite the common goal of staying in Naivasha, I was nevertheless struck by how little Flora and James discussed their plans for the future together. It even seemed that I spoke more to each of them about this question than they did with each other. They did not seem to make plans as a couple. I encountered even more individuality in making decisions for the future in the case of Helen, the flower farm worker-cum-business woman whom I introduced in Chapter 4. After she had moved to Kasarani to work there, she had met a man there and had three children with him. Whenever he was in Kasarani, they even resided in the same house. Yet, both of them had purchased an individual plot in different regions in Kenya, and seemed to plan to retire to these respective plots. In fact, the father of Helen's children had already lived on his own plot in Kitale for several years and had been farming there, even though he had returned now to his work in a flower farm close to Kasarani. Helen herself did not consider this plot in Kitale to be hers. Nor had she been able to inherit land, not even a part of plot, as she explained that among the Luo only the sons can inherit. However, she had

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<sup>419</sup> Interview on 8 June 2016. In Swahili: "*Sasa maisha ya baadaye ungependa kuishi wapi? Kuishi? Penye tu kazi itapatikana. Sasa hata siwezi sema eti naenda kukaa Kisumu saa hizi. Nitaenda kukaa ninafanya nini? Si bado saa hizi natafuta tu kazi?*"



invested the money she saved with her business and later with the Karibu Farm SACCO in buying a plot of land of her own in Siaya. She had constructed a house there made of corrugated iron sheets. She visited her plot frequently and hoped to be able to retire there in just a few years' time, after her youngest child would have finished secondary school. Having been born in 1966, she stated she was old.

Nevertheless, despite this wish to move 'home' in the nearby future (and apparently without her children's father), Helen's answers to my questions also showed the ambiguous feelings many migrant workers had towards Naivasha. Even Helen, who felt insecure there after she had fled during the post-election violence and had lost her business capital, expressed ambiguous feelings towards both 'home' and Naivasha. When I asked her to compare the two places, she said she preferred living in Siaya, simply because life was cheaper there. In Naivasha, she needed to buy everything, while she could get firewood and water for free close to her rural plot and could cultivate her own vegetables there. Nevertheless, when I asked her whether she felt at home in Naivasha, she laughed and said: "I stayed here for a long time. I am more used to the people here than at home."<sup>420</sup>

Apart from the many migrant workers who aspired to move to their own plot of land elsewhere at some point in time, there was also a minority among the inhabitants of the settlements who considered Naivasha to be their home. Their plans and strategies for the future did not essentially differ from the plans of other inhabitants - except that they were already living in the place where they wanted to live during old age and where they wanted to be buried. This group consisted mostly of (the descendants of) those who had settled in Naivasha and who had acquired a small plot of land there before the flower industry was established, either as former workers or squatters in a ranch or as members of land-buying cooperatives. It seemed that this feeling of being home was largely related to their access to land there. The life story of Moses can illustrate the similarities in both employment and migration biographies and in aspirations for the future between those who had settled in Naivasha and the migrant workers. I met Moses when we conducted the survey in Karagita in autumn 2014. I noticed then that he was knowledgeable about the area and was interested to talk to me, and I visited him again several times later on.<sup>421</sup>

Moses was born in Nakuru, about seventy kilometres north of Naivasha, in 1973. He came to Karagita when he was only seven years old, together with his parents and eight siblings. His father used to work as a pastry cook in one of the high-end hotels along the lake and acquired a plot in Karagita. Moses' family was among the group of first inhabitants of this settlement. Moses himself was trained as a carpenter after finishing secondary school, and

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<sup>420</sup>In Swahili: "Nimekaa sana. Nimewazoea watu hapa kuliko nyumbani."

<sup>421</sup> The following section is based on interviews conducted in Moses' rental house in Karagita on 30 October 2014 and in his family's house in the same settlement on 21 June 2016.

he had worked as such on short-term contracts. He had from time to time been employed by one of the flower farms around. However, he emphasized to me that he had been working in the construction departments and not in one of the greenhouses. He got married in 1994, to someone whom he had met while working in a flower farm. They had a son together, but soon after they split up. Moses moved to Mombasa in 1995, following two cousins, and worked there as a carpenter. While visiting Karagita ten years later, in 2005, he reconciled with his wife and decided to move back. He has resided in Karagita since then, and he and his wife had two more children since. At the time I met Moses, his wife was still working in the same farm where they had met each other more than twenty years before. Moses remarked that although she was still a general worker, she received quite some benefits because of her long-term employment. Although they were still a couple, Moses and his wife were not living in the same house at that time. He was renting a mud room in the old centre of Karagita, where he had a small-scale business in selling in fish. He was also still now and then employed by a flower farm on short-term contracts. Apart from these income-generating activities, Moses was also engaged in voluntary work in Karagita. He was a representative for the tenants in Karagita in the stakeholders' committee of the infrastructural project of the World Bank that I introduced in the previous chapter. He also had volunteered for a long time as a community health worker, in which role he provided home-based care to patients with long-term diseases such as diabetes or HIV. Furthermore, he was an active church member and participated in a chama with a monthly contribution of 1,200 KES. He was thus heavily invested in Karagita.

When I last visited Moses in June 2016, I found him in less favourable circumstances than when I had first met him. He had fallen ill, had been hospitalized for quite some time and had visibly lost weight. He had left his rental house and had moved back to his family's plot a few hundred meters closer to the main road. The plot contained several mud and plastered houses, including the one-room apartment he grew up in, and he stayed there with his sister and her family and a tenant. Moses' parents both had passed away already and had been buried on another family plot in Mirera, further away from the lake. Apart from these family plot, Moses had also purchased his own plot in Mirera. He had constructed makeshift housing there to rent out. Nevertheless, he had plans to construct his own house on the plot and move there in the future. When I asked him whether he had plans to move out of the wider Naivasha area again, he asked me in return where he should go: Karagita was his home. I also noted when I visited him at his family's house that Moses spoke Kikuyu to his family members. They even joked that after learning Swahili, I should learn Kikuyu now. It was clearly comfortable for them to live in an area that they considered 'home' and where they could for instance freely speak their vernacular language. Thus, as with migrant labourers who resided only temporarily in Naivasha, where Moses felt home was related to access to land. It also seemed

to implicitly be related to politicized ideas of where an individual with a certain ethnic identity could claim belonging. However, despite the different geographical orientations, the strategies of building a future were similar: also those who had settled in Naivasha more permanently built their future through investing in (more) land and in extending their networks. The fact that Moses for some years had been a labour migrant himself furthermore shows that this type of long-term return migration is not specific for the flower industry.

This section has shown the diverse ways in which residents of the settlements in Naivasha prepare themselves for the future and in which they attempt to construct a home, quite literally in the sense of building a house and more discursively in the sense of creating a social network that they can fall back on. The next section tentatively looks into what happens in practice once these futures become the present.

### 7.3 Leaving Naivasha: Wage Labour Pasts?

Do these future plans materialize? What happens when people decide to or are forced to leave wage labour in the flower industry? Do indeed most of them return 'home', as is the common narrative and also the most common intention among migrant residents of the settlements? And if so, how is their life at 'home' influenced by their wage labour pasts? Responses to a question I asked in the ego-centred network analysis could provide a start of an answer here. As discussed in Section 4.2, most of the respondents in the ego-centred network analysis already knew somebody in Naivasha when they moved there: usually a family member and in some cases a friend. Significant here is that not all of these 'contact persons' stayed in Naivasha. Ten of the interviewees reported that their initial contacts to Naivasha were still staying there at the time of the interview, yet the initial contacts of four interviewees had moved elsewhere (mostly to Nairobi) for work and those of six other interviewees had moved 'back home'.

Sometimes it was those who had been unsuccessful in securing employment in Naivasha who moved 'on' to Nairobi or to another large city. Another reason to move could be better job opportunities elsewhere. It was furthermore not uncommon to hear people moved to Naivasha for some years, left again, and came back, as the husband of Helen had done. One of the employees of Karibu Farm told me she had had to leave her previous employment in another flower farm in Naivasha when her parents went to Nairobi to pursue long-term treatment for her father who had fallen ill. The responsibility to take care of the house then fell on her and she temporarily had to move there. She only came back to Naivasha after her father had passed away. She then had to look for a new job and a new place to stay.

With regards to mobility, and as becomes clear from Table 9, the average length of stay also differed per settlement. Many respondents in Karagita arrived recently, more so than in Kasarani. The question of when to leave Naivasha was - for those working in a flower farm - partly influenced by policies of the farms, on which I elaborated in Section 5.6 (for instance the gratuity, which was only paid to those who had worked in the same farm for at least five years). To gain more insights into reasons for leaving Naivasha and into prospects after employment in a flower farm, I interviewed two of the workers of Karibu Farm who had given notice of resignation in the weeks before and who were about to leave Kasarani: Lawrence and Dominic.<sup>422</sup>

Lawrence was born in Laikipia in 1972. His family had a long connection to Kasarani. His father had already been working on one of the ranches in the area decades ago. Lawrence himself mostly grew up in Laikipia, had been a small-scale farmer and livestock keeper there, and only came to stay in Kasarani to look for a job in 2006. Lawrence was not alone in Naivasha: two of his sisters were also staying in Kasarani at the time of the interview and were even working in the same farm. And even his mother had moved to her own plot, purchased by her children, in nearby Ndabibi, where she was cultivating land. Nevertheless, in 2015, almost ten years after he had started working in Kasarani, Lawrence decided it was time for him to move back to Laikipia to develop the plot of land that he owned there. At the time of the interview, he had already stopped working and was waiting for his service payment and savings from the SACCO. He planned to use these to start up small-scale cultivation on his plot and to start constructing a house there, even though he expected the payments would not suffice to complete the construction. He consequently also did not foreclose the possibility that he would enter into wage labour again. He stated: 'There was nothing wrong with the work [on the farm]. (...) Let me go home to rest now.'<sup>423</sup> This quote makes clear that, even though a large part of Lawrence's family was residing in Kasarani and his mother even owned land nearby, he still considered their village of origin in Laikipia as 'home'. Nevertheless, he and his family could be considered to be thoroughly 'translocal': they were grounded in (at least) two places and always on the move (cf. Brickel and Datta 2011). Significantly, Lawrence also did not consider his move to Laikipia as final.

This was different for Dominic, whom I interviewed a few weeks later during one of his last lunch breaks on the farm. Dominic also happened to originate from Laikipia and had started to work for Karibu Farm one year before Lawrence, in 2005. He had followed a brother, who had been working in a ranch close to Kasarani at the time, but who had, by the time of

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<sup>422</sup> According to section 18 of the CBA for 2011-2013, workers who wanted to resign should give a notice of thirty to sixty days (the exact amount of days depending on the total period of employment) prior to leaving the job.

<sup>423</sup> Interview on 21 April 2015. In Swahili: "Kazi sijaona ubaya wo wote. (...) Sasa niende kumpumzika nyumbani."

the interview, already moved back. Dominic worked as a sprayer and resided in a rental house in Kosovo in Kasarani with his wife and some of his children (others were staying in Laikipia with their grandparents). By 2015, Dominic had no other siblings or close relatives anymore who like him were residing outside Laikipia: all who had left previously, had returned home. When I asked him why he now also had decided to resign, he said he had worked for Karibu Farm for a long time. It was time now to move ahead (not back!) (*kuendelea*).<sup>424</sup> He wanted to return to what he called 'Maasailand', where he planned to engage in small-scale business and livestock keeping. When I asked him whether he was happy to go 'home', his face lit up and he said: '*kabisa*', entirely.

Apart from these two employees who were about to leave Naivasha, I also interviewed several former workers who had already returned 'home' some years back. When Flora and I visited Kisumu, she arranged for us to meet with three of her former colleagues from Sharma Farm, who all had left employment some years before: Daisy, Evelyn and Sam.<sup>425</sup> On a different occasion, I interviewed John, a former colleague from Flora who had returned to his region of origin Narok and whom I already referred to in Chapter 4. The four interviewees had had diverse positions within the farm and had had diverse reasons to leave, which shaped their lives when they returned to their region of origin. I have summarized these positions and reasons in Table 10.

The interviews provided insights into what these former migrant workers had gained from their migration experience and their work in the flower farm. These included monetary gains but also relevant work experience and social experiences. When I asked Daisy and Evelyn what they had gained from their employment in Sharma Farm, they gave a similar answer: they had been able to save some money, with which Daisy (and her husband) had bought a plot and built a house, and with which Evelyn had paid for the school fees of her children in the past few years. Although both Evelyn and John had lost their jobs after the financial problems of Sharma Farm had started, they in hindsight had been fortunate: they, like Daisy, had come out of it with their service payments and savings from the SACCO, unlike those who lost their jobs later (such as Flora). These payments and savings together could be a considerable amount of money, even though John considered the service payments to be little: "Just a small thing. That is just a ticket to return home."<sup>426</sup> Sam was in that respect

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<sup>424</sup> Interview on 4 May 2015. Dominic used the Swahili word '*kuendelea*', which means 'moving on' or 'proceeding'. I would have expected him to use the word '*kurudi*', 'going back'. His wording revealed that he considered moving to Laikipia as a step forward and not as a step back.

<sup>425</sup> Interview with Daisy at her house and farm in a village close to Kisumu Town on 9 April 2015; interviews with Sam and Evelyn in Kisumu Town on 8 and 10 April 2015 respectively.

<sup>426</sup> In Swahili: "Kitu kidogo tu. Yaani ticket tu ya kurudi nyumbani." Nevertheless, when taking a fictive example in which a worker contributed 1,000 KES per month to the SACCO and worked for a farm for eight years, it shows that he or she could save 96,000 KES. The gratuity (22 days of basic pay for every year worked, according to section 24(a) of the CBA of 2011) would in such an example also

more unlucky and would probably have been happy with the 'small thing' that the others had received. He had literally fled the area after the post-election violence, in which the house that he rented in Naivasha Town was burned down. He had not dared to return to Naivasha to recover his service payments and, traumatized as he was, would never consider moving their again.

Fortunately, Sam had been able to secure a well-paying job in Kisumu, thanks to the experience he had gained in his farm job and to a diploma in machine operation, which he had earned through self-study at an institute in Nairobi while being employed in Naivasha. John had already earned a diploma in electrical engineering even before he started working for Sharma Farm and therefore could continue with this work after returning home. The two female workers on the other hand had not learned a trade during their time in Naivasha and their work experience therefore did little in terms of helping them to find a job back in Kisumu. However, although not providing any material gain, Evelyn stated explicitly that the flower farm work had given her the opportunity to learn how to work and live with people from different ethnic backgrounds. Even Sam had positive memories of the labour relations within the farm: he said he had learned there how to relate to people and had gained a bit of management experience as an assistant to the irrigation supervisor. All four were happy to see Flora and were eager to hear news about former colleagues and about the farm. Daisy even had several pictures hanging on her wall from the time she worked for Sharma Farm, some taken in the greenhouses.

Whereas Sam, Daisy and John all in some way or the other now had attained a secure (if modest) livelihood in their region of origin, Evelyn did not. Despite the low chances of finding employment as a low-skilled worker in Kisumu, she had decided not to stay in Naivasha because of the implicit threat of violence and the feeling of being unwelcome. She stated that 'people' say that migrant workers from the western parts of Kenya steal their jobs. John also felt too insecure to apply for another position in Naivasha but this related more to insecurity of employment than to ethnic tensions:

*Didn't you consider asking for a job somewhere else in Naivasha?*

I didn't like that very much.

*Why not?*

You know I thought if there things could change all of a sudden, it's not good.<sup>427</sup>

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amount up to several ten thousands of shillings. Together these amounts would make a lump sum that would be equivalent to at least €1,000.

<sup>427</sup> In Swahili: "*Hukufikiria kuomba kazi sehemu nyingine Naivasha? Sikupendelea sana. Kwa sababu gani? Unajua niliona hapo sasa kama mambo yanaweza kugeuka namna hiyo all of a sudden, siyo mzuri.*"

When comparing living conditions in Naivasha to those in the region of origin, Evelyn's situation in Kisumu City was actually not much different from her situation in Naivasha: she was renting a two-room apartment in an urban area. The contrasts were much bigger in the case of Daisy: she had stayed in a room on the Sharma Farm compound, together with her husband and (eventually) seven children. When I asked her whether the living situation had not been very cramped, she said it had not been a problem as the children still had been small. Nevertheless, the house they had constructed on their rural plot was much bigger: it contained several rooms, and her living room was even so exceptionally large that the chama she participated in had its meetings at her house.

Due to her precarious position in Kisumu, with no access to land nor permanent employment, Evelyn was the only one who vaguely seemed to consider becoming a migrant worker again. The others planned to stay where they were. These plans were informed by their economic security there but also by their biographies (in the case of Sam his encounter with violence in Naivasha) and by their stage in the life cycle (John and Daisy considered themselves to be too old to be a migrant worker). When I asked John about his plans for the rest of his life, he gave me the following answer:

Open my own company and continue with my work. If I will be employed, it will be with the government. Perhaps the county government or maybe the Maasai Mara University, close to home. The years have gone by, I'm not fit to go very far away.<sup>428</sup>

#### 7.4 Conclusion: Preparing to go 'Home'

Even though residents of the settlements around Lake Naivasha frequently stayed for years or even decades, many of them were migrants for whom their migration was not a completed act. Their position in the settlements could be understood as "emplaced mobility" (cf. McGarrigle and Ascensão 2017). This chapter has described the different understandings of 'home', which in their turn reflected different understandings of Naivasha as a place of work. The chapter furthermore discussed the different plans and strategies that developed out of this 'emplaced mobility' or translocality. It showed the various ways in which residents of the settlements prepared themselves for the future. It furthermore indicated that there were differences in the 'cultural capacity to aspire' (cf. Appadurai 2013), and showed how individual plans related to factors such as gender, generation, ethnic affiliation and economic position

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<sup>428</sup> In Swahili: "Kufungua tu kampuni yangu na kuendelea na kazi yangu. Kama nitaandikwa kazi basi na serikali tu. Labda kwa county government ama labda Maasai Mara University, karibu na nyumbani. Miaka imeenda, sistahili kwenda mbali sana." Notably, it had been John who had told me not to move back to Europe yet, as according to him I should stay outside my own country for at least ten years.

(land ownership and occupation). These plans in their turn influenced how migrant workers position themselves within farms and other places of work and within the settlements and farm compounds in Naivasha.



Table 9: Period of moving to the current place of residence<sup>429</sup> (Chi-square: 5.804, p=0.122).

Period of arrival	Karagita (n=55) (%)	Kasarani (n=61) (%)	Total (n=116) (%)
Before 2000	3.6	13.1	8.6
2000-2004	14.5	19.7	17.2
2005-2009	18.2	23.0	20.7
2010-2014	63.6	44.3	53.4

Table 10: Main characteristics of four former flower farm workers who had left Naivasha.

Name	Year of birth	Year of arrival	Last position	Year of leaving	Reason for leaving	Current occupation
Sam	1980	2002	Irrigation operator	2008	Post-election violence	Machine operator in a company that manufactures water tanks
Daisy	1972	2002	General worker (husband: maintenance)	2009	Husband fell terminally ill	Small-scale commercial farming (maize, beans, millet, peanuts) in her husbands' home village
Evelyn	1972	1997	Grader	2009	Contract terminated	Casual labourer in Kisumu City
John	1973	1997	Electrician (wife: none)	2012	Contract terminated	Self-employed electrician; farming (by his wife) and herding

<sup>429</sup> These are the same data as in Table 1. However, here it is split up for two of the three locations included in the survey. Not included are those who were born in one of the settlements or who did not answer the question (n=10).

Figure 25: The network of Juliet, based on her answers in the ego-centred network analysis.

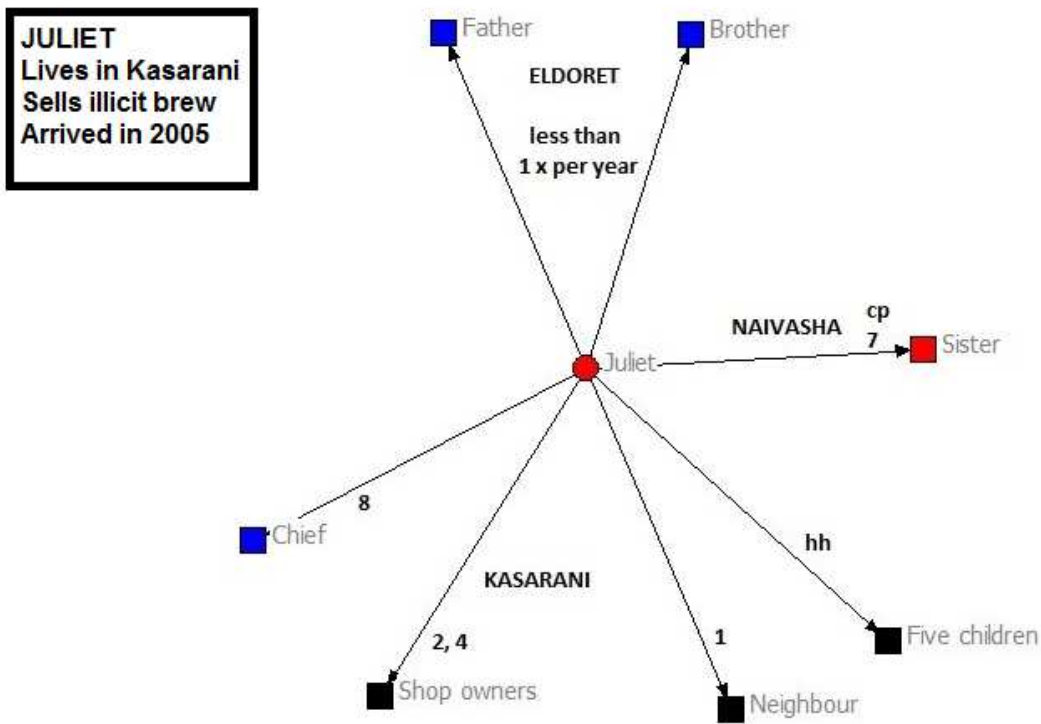
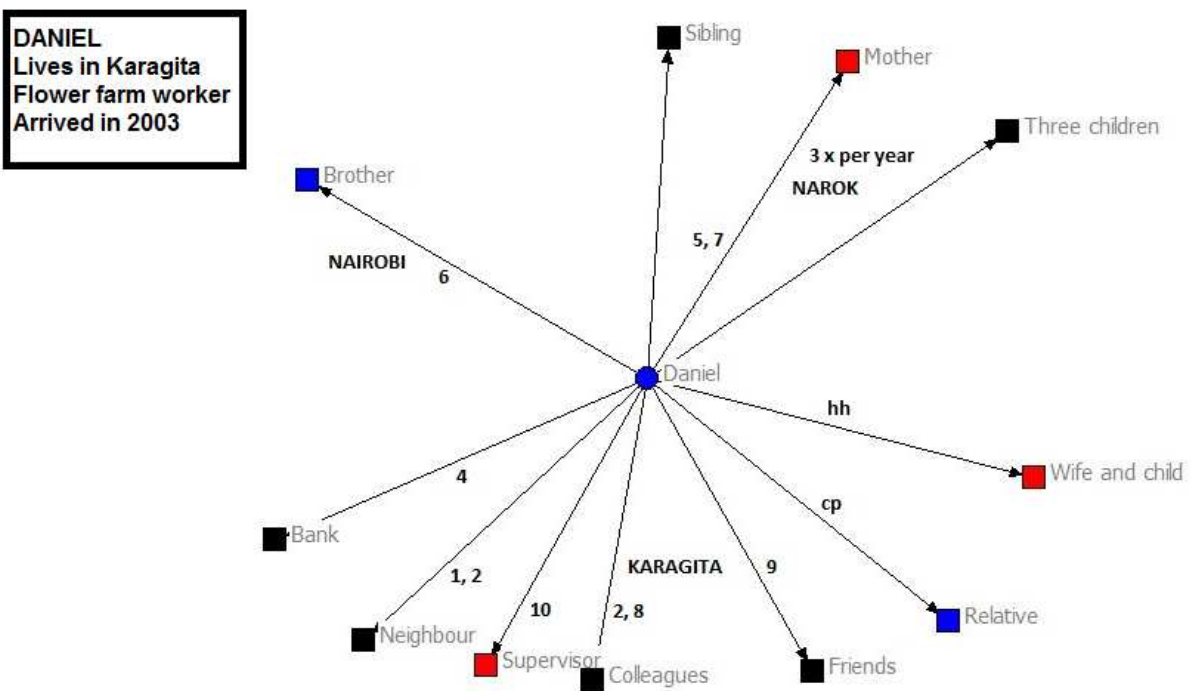


Figure 26: The network of Daniel, based on his answers in the ego-centred network analysis.



## 8. Conclusion

This dissertation has provided a case study of agro-industrial labour on the African continent. Agro-industry is commonly understood to be a highly mechanized way of farming with a decreasing need for human labour (e.g. Barlett 1989). However, in line with Mintz (1985: 51), I define agro-industry through its organization of labour, which is reminiscent of factory work. Such farms are - like factories - characterized by a high level of discipline, a segmented labour force and a strict rhythm of the work. Regardless of how it is defined, agro-industrial labour rarely figures in anthropological literature, especially when it comes to labour on farms or plantations on the African continent. This dissertation has addressed this lacuna by describing

Lake Naivasha has been researched extensively (see Chapter 1). Yet, most studies have focussed on the lake's ecological characteristics. Not many researchers have thoroughly investigated the social arrangements in the area, even though these have been the topic of intense public debate. NGO-campaigns have fiercely criticized the conditions within the farms while industry players have asserted that the farms provide relatively good wages and stable employment. Thus, the situation of labour within the flower farms in Naivasha has been highly contested. With this dissertation, I did not aim to provide yet another evaluation of the labour situation within flower farms. Instead, I have aimed to show how labour arrangements and conditions within the industry in Naivasha came into being and how these have changed over the years.

To provide an answer to this question, I first sketched the historical context. The flower industry's arrival has sometimes been portrayed as a sudden rupture with the past, which could even lead to the collapse of the lake's social-ecological system (e.g. Seal 2011). However, Chapter 3 shows that the flower industry established itself in an area with a long history both of agricultural wage labour and of environmental interventions (e.g. the introduction of fish into the lake). Furthermore, the chapter not only questions the idea of a sudden rupture but also of a bounded social-ecological system. It does so by elaborating on Naivasha's historically-shaped relations to migrant-sending regions elsewhere in Kenya, and to the countries elsewhere in the world where flowers are being purchased and from where the capital to invest in the farms hails.

A discussion of social scientists' critical appraisals of the concept of resilience indicated that environmental management is not 'objective' (Section 2.6.1). This lack of objectivity also applies to the management of Lake Naivasha, and I have argued that a representation of Naivasha as a natural paradise under threat (cf. Becht, Odada and Higgins 2005) is based on a partial interpretation of Naivasha's history. For instance, it does not reflect the perspectives of small-scale landowners or migrant workers, for whom the flower industry's arrival brought above all new economic opportunities.

Yet, I acknowledge the relevance of not losing sight of ecological aspects when studying social relations. The flower farms would not be in Naivasha in the first place were it not for certain climatic and ecological conditions. Furthermore, the crop is sensitive to changing weather conditions and to pests and diseases, and the end product, the cut flowers, are perishable. The vulnerabilities of this natural product thus require high levels of labour discipline and an industrial rhythm of labour.

The rhythm of labour within the farms is furthermore dictated by market demands and the increasingly influential CBA (see Section 5.3). Thompson (1967) argued that industrial labour is characterized by an adherence to "clock-time" instead of "task-time". Work in the flower farms shows signs of both. The fixed working hours for most employees, stipulated in the CBA and in labour legislation, indicate the use of clock-time, but the organization of the work within these fixed hours, for instance the varying amount of time spent on harvesting flowers, imply the use of task-time. In line with Mintz (1985), I argue that the rhythm of work within the farms is not characterized by an orientation either towards the clock or towards the execution of certain tasks but by a high level of compulsion and discipline. Employees are expected to be flexible yet punctual and to work at high speed. Notably, this is an aspect of the work that was particularly resented (see Section 4.6).

The roses' vulnerability also creates the need for a stable and experienced workforce. This requirement induced an increased prevalence of permanent contracts, especially after a majority of the farms shifted from the production of seasonal flowers to year-round rose production. With its move towards more permanent contracts and its 'responsibilization' (cf. Riisgaard and Gibbon 2014: 268), the flower industry is a remarkable exception in a world of 'flexibilization': "the substitution of permanent workers with occasional workers; the loosening of job demarcation; the reorganization of work from individual to team work" (Ortiz 2002: 400). This exceptional position can only be understood when taking into account that the industry is producing an agricultural product that poses certain demands and therefore requires a stable workforce.

Labour arrangements are planned for by management, but those plans can only materialize when workers consent to the work and to the conditions provided (cf. Burawoy 1979). This brings us to the topic of recruitment: how did the farms in Naivasha find employees who are willing to work for them? Colonial and post-colonial labour and land policies in Kenya created a specific type of chain labour migration to Naivasha (see Section 2.6.4 and Chapter 3). When the flower farms arrived in the area, they could expand on this system. The migrants who have arrived to work on the farms lack access to land in Naivasha because of both increasing land prices and political ideas on ethnic territories. These factors induce migrants to remain closely connected to their (supposed) region of origin and inhibit them from making Naivasha their permanent home. Nevertheless, the migrant workers often stay for many years

or even for decades. They are 'translocal': temporarily situated in Naivasha while ultimately being on the move (cf. Brickel and Datta 2011; Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013). This situation is not unique for labourers on the African continent, see e.g. Ferguson's (1999) monograph on mine workers in Zambia. Chapter 4 shows that this translocal disposition played an important role in labour arrangements within the farms. It has assisted farms in the recruitment of labour, as they mobilize their employees' networks that stretch beyond Naivasha. Moreover, the translocal outlook of the migrant workers enables them to aspire for a future as a landowner instead of as a tenant and as a small-scale businessman or farmer instead of as a wage labourer, as discussed in Chapter 7. The flower farms provide relatively good conditions that enable a worker to achieve such goals. For instance, when compared to vegetable farms, flower farms pay high salaries, frequently provide permanent contracts and have the advantage of having a company saving cooperative (SACCO) (see sections 4.6 and 5.5).

In addition to expanding on a historically shaped recruitment system and to the provision of relatively good conditions, the farms (re)created and made use of a segmentation of the labour force to access labour. That is, an answer to the implicit question of who looks like a flower farm worker (cf. Salzinger 2003:36) has been formulated on the basis of ideas on gender, ethnicity, generation and level of education, as elaborated on in Section 4.5.

Gender has been a particularly important factor within the industry, not only at the point of hiring but also in everyday production processes, as the description of a gendered division of labour in Section 5.7 shows. Moreover, the section illustrates that gender figured prominently in representations of the industry in the consumer markets. More specifically, women employed in the flower industry were assumed to be in a disadvantageous position, for instance because of the issue of sexual harassment (see e.g. Hivos n.d.). These representations echoed concerns about women employed by (agro-)industry elsewhere in the world. However, as Freeman (2000) argued, pre-existing differences between employees - such as gendered differences - take on unpredictable forms in specific cases. I have therefore asserted in Section 5.7 that measures taken to enhance the position of women, such as the installation of gender committees, through their focus on specific issues, such as sexual harassment, diverted attention away from broader power inequalities within the farms.

"Cultural constructions of inequality" such as gender and ethnicity are not only used and shaped in the workplace but stem from wider societal relations (cf. Ong 1987: 155). This was one of the reasons why I - unlike most anthropologists and sociologists who have studied industrial relations - did not focus exclusively on the workplace, that is, on the farms. I have argued that the accommodation of workers is integral to labour arrangements (cf. Cooper 1983: 25). For instance, the decreasing number of farms that provide workers with accommodation fits to the shift towards formalization, as described in Chapter 5.6, which

implied an increased emphasis on a separation between work and private life. Moreover, despite the apparent contrasts between the farms and the settlements, some migrant workers consider these two places as constituting one single space: a place of work that stands in contrast to their 'home' elsewhere in Kenya (see Section 2.2, Chapter 6 and Section 7.1).

Chapter 6 discussed the workers' settlements that expanded or were newly founded after the flower industry was established. Even though the settlements largely owe their existence to the industry, the farms have generally denied responsibility for the provision of infrastructure there. Farm managers blamed the government for a lack of investment in the settlements, while government officials hold the farms accountable for the provision of services to the scores of people they had attracted to the area. Moreover, both government officials and farm managers lamented the residents for not taking interest in their living environment. However, a discussion of the problem of solid waste in Section 6.5 made clear that residents are simply not always able to organize the necessary infrastructure, despite organizing themselves in self-help groups. The lack of investment resulted in dense, seemingly disorderly settlements, which stood in stark contrast to the order within the farms. This put a stain on the reputation of the industry. Yet, I argue that the settlements form an integral part of labour arrangements within the industry, as they indicate limits to the responsibility that farms were willing to shoulder for their workers.

I would like to come back to a quote that I referred to in Section 2.6.3. This quote shows that the industry, and therewith its workers, have been typified in a stereotypical manner, not only in news reports and in grey literature but also in other research on the industry. "Yet while the flower industry has flourished through market liberalization, deregulation and corporate consolidation, it also bears the familiar social imprimatur of economic neoliberalism. Like its kin the maquiladora, for example, the flower industry depends on migrant women who face low wages, excessive working hours, job insecurity and embedded gender discrimination" (Dolan 2007: 243). In this dissertation, I have challenged generalizing descriptions such as the one cited here (see also Section 2.5). I have not been able to put forward another typification of 'the flower farm worker'. The massive scale in Naivasha (see Section 2.2) has necessarily made my analysis partial. I could only visit a handful of farms and interview a limited number of workers. This limits the generalizability of my findings. However, I hope I have nevertheless been able to provide a more nuanced understanding of the position of workers in the cut flower industry in Naivasha.

I have argued that the agricultural character of the industry has been paramount in determining labour arrangements: it shaped the need for discipline and a specific rhythm of work. But to complete the picture, more research on agro-industry on the African continent is called for. A topic for further research could be a more explicit and elaborate comparison between the situation within the farms discussed here to the situation in other agro-industries

on the continent. These other agro-industries are rooted in different colonial and post-colonial histories resulting in varying ethnic and land tenure relations and are suspect to other crop-related and market-related demands, e.g. wine farms in South Africa (see Du Toit 1993) or tobacco farms in Zimbabwe (see Rutherford 2001). Is the increasing prevalence of permanent contracts in the industry in Naivasha really an exception in our 'world of flexibilization'? Does the unarticulated need for a stable and experienced worker force that I found also play a role in other agro-industries? And what is the price that workers pay for this security (e.g. increased 'responsibilization' and a compulsive rhythm of the work)?

A particularly interesting topic for future research would be the relation between agro-industry and other types of agriculture. As discussed in Chapter 7, many of the wage labourers employed by the flower farms use their payments to invest in land and livestock, mostly outside Naivasha. Moreover, with the current land prices in Naivasha and the persistent threats of ethnicized political violence, it seems unlikely that a majority of the migrant workers will opt for a permanent life as wage-earning tenants. In other words, agro-industrial wage labour enables migrant workers to eventually establish themselves as smallholder farmers in other regions of Kenya. Future research could address the question whether this is unique for the Kenyan context or whether such connections between different types of agriculture also exist elsewhere.

Finally, although Section 2.6.1 asserted that the question whether the social-ecological system in Naivasha is 'resilient' is a deceptively simple one, subsequent chapters have indicated that the flower industry, and therefore also the workers' settlements, largely depend on the lake. Concerns about the sustainability of the lake's ecosystem are all the more pressing because so many people depend on farms. Likewise, social tensions, such as political ethnic tensions flaring up during election time, have a profound effect on individual lives and could ultimately affect labour arrangements within the farms. Such insecurities raise the question how much longer the flowers will be able to carry Naivasha.

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## **Appendix: Interviews**

This appendix contains three lists with different types of interviews: oral history interviews, interviews on the flower industry and on other organizations active in Naivasha and interviews with (former) flower farm workers and other residents of the settlements whose biographical details are referred to in the text. The lists do not include references to interviews conducted as part of another method, such as for the survey, the listing and piling exercises or the ego-centred network analysis.

The lists in this appendix are alphabetically ordered, following the first letters of the first name, the function or the pseudonym (names between inverted commas) used in this dissertation.

### Oral history interviews (all conducted by the author)

Ali Sora, one of the first inhabitants of Kasarani and the first chief of Tarambete Sub-Location, interview in Kasarani, 22 January 2015.

Assistant chief of Olkaria Sub-Location (located at South Lake), interview in his office in DCK, 9 June 2016.

Deb Snell, American missionary working in the field of community development at North Lake, interview in Naivasha Town, 6 April 2015.

Dickson Gitahi, landowner in Kasarani and retired farm manager, interview in Kasarani, 22 January 2015.

Julius Wanjala, long-serving employee of Sharma Farm, interview in DCK, 5 February 2015.

Mary Achieng, long-term resident of Kasarani, interview in Kasarani, 11 February 2015.

Oria Rocco, owner of a former ranch at North Lake, interview at her house, 25 April 2015.

Peter Mburu, member of the land-buying company Karagita (EA) Ltd., interview in Karagita, 25 October 2014.

Sarah Higgins, (flower) farm owner who resided on her lakeside plot close to Karagita, interview at her house, 10 February 2015.

### Interviews on the flower industry and on organizations

'Adam', general manager of a small seasonal flower farm, interview on the farm by Gemählich on 8 June 2015 and by the author on 23 June 2016.

Allan, a long-serving employee and union representative within Sharma Farm, interview in DCK, 6 February 2015.

Assistant manager of a vegetable farm at North Lake, interview on the farm by the author, 25 April 2015.

Assistant production manager of Sharma Farm, interview on the farm by Gemählich, 4 November 2014.

Caleb Kiptoo, Production Manager of Fairtrade Africa, interview in the Fairtrade Africa office in Nairobi by Gemählich and the author, 26 June 2015.

Catechist of the Catholic Church in Kasarani, interview in the church by the author, 7 May 2015.

City planner of Naivasha Municipality, interview in his office by the author, 9 June 2016.

Cooperative officer of Naivasha Sub-County, interview in his office by the author, 30 June 2015.

Esther, housing agent, interview in the agency's office in Naivasha Town by the author, 8 June 2016.

General manager of a large rose farm, interview on the farm by Gemählich and the author, 3 April 2014.

'Jan', general manager of Karibu Farm, interview on the farm by Gemählich, Tolo and the author, 10 March 2014.

Jane Ngige, chief executive officer of the Kenya Flower Council, interview in the KFC-office in Nairobi by Gemählich, 17 October 2014.

'Hans', general manager of a middle-sized rose-producing farm, interview by Gemählich and the author in Nairobi, 27 February 2014.

HR-manager of a combined vegetable and flower farm, interview on the farm by Gemählich and the author, 23 June 2015.

HR-manager of a flower farm, interview in Naivasha by Tolo, 9 April 2014.

KPAWU-official of the Naivasha Branch, interview in the KPAWU-office in Kwa Muhia by the author, 6 February 2015.

Labour officer of Naivasha Sub-County, interview in his office by the author, 22 May 2015.

Maasai-representative, interview in Naivasha by Tolo, 22 May 2014

Manager of a large rose farm, interview on the farm by Gemählich, 24 October 2014.

Manager of a rose-breeding farm, interview on the farm by Gemählich, 22 November 2014.

Manager responsible for the Fairtrade-procedures in a middle-sized rose farm, interview on the farm by Gemählich and the author, 31 March 2014.

Managing director of a large rose farm, interview in Nairobi by Gemählich, 11 December 2014.

Members of a migrant self-help group based in village in Kakamega County, interview in the village by Tolo, 30 November 2014.

Members of the Lake Naivasha Disabled Environmental Organization, interviews in Karagita by the author, 27 November 2014.

Pastor Willy, the chairman of the self-help groups 'Huruma' and 'Disomne', interview in Kasarani by the author, 17 February 2015.

Principal of St. Andrews, interview in the principal's office by the author, 25 May 2015.

Production manager of a relatively new and large rose farm, interview on the farm by Gemählich, Tolo and the author, 7 March 2014.

Silas Wanjala, research officer of the LNRA, interview by the author at the LNRA-office, 24 November 2014.

Biographical interviews (all conducted by the author)

Name	Short description	Sections
<b>'Daisy'</b>	Former general worker of Sharma Farm. See for more details Table 10. Interview at her house and farm in a village close to Kisumu Town on 9 April 2015.	7.3
<b>'Dennis'</b>	General worker and member of the welfare committee on a flower farm at South Lake. Interview in a hotel on 7 March 2014 and in his rental house in Mirera on 3 April 2014.	4.2, 4.2, 4.6, 5.7, 6.4, 6.6
<b>'Dominic'</b>	Former sprayer of Karibu Farm who I interviewed on 4 May 2015 in the farm's canteen, after he had decided to resign and move back to his family's land in Laikipia.	7.3
<b>'Evelyn'</b>	Former general worker of Sharma Farm. See for more details Table 10. Interview in her rental house in Kisumu Town on 10 April 2015.	3.4, 7.3
<b>'Flora'</b>	Former supervisor in Sharma Farm. I have had numerous conversations with her, mostly at either her or my rental house in Kihoto and Naivasha Town respectively. Recorded interview in Kihoto on 8 June 2016.	2.3, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 4.6, 6.3, 6.4, 7.2
<b>'Gabriel'</b>	Supervisor of the maintenance department in a large flower farm at South Lake. Biographical interview in a café in Karagita on 24 June 2016.	4.2, 4.3, 6.6, 7.2
<b>'George'</b>	Packhouse supervisor on a farm close to Kasarani and the husband of Lucy. I have had several conversations with him at their rental house in Kasarani.	4.1, 4.3, 7.1
<b>'Glory'</b>	General worker of Karibu Farm. Interview for the total network analysis on 30 March 2015 and a biographical interview in the rental house of Lucy in Kasarani on 18 June 2016.	4.1, 4.5, 7.1
<b>'James'</b>	Husband of Flora. Former football player for Sharma Farm's team and former employee in the packhouse of the same farm. I have had many conversations with James in Kihoto, Naivasha Town or in the car when giving him a ride. He also showed me around Kihoto while telling me about the history of this settlement on 8 June 2016.	4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 4.6, 6.4, 6.6
<b>'John'</b>	Former employee (electrician) of Sharma Farm. See for more details Table 10. Interview in a restaurant in Narok Town on 12 June 2016.	4.5, 4.6, 7.3
<b>'Helen'</b>	General worker of Karibu Farm. Interview for the total network analysis within the farm and a biographical interview at her rental house in Kasarani on 22 June 2016.	4.4, 5.6, 7.2, 7.3

<b>'Lawrence'</b>	Former worker of Karibu Farm, whom I interviewed in his rental house in Kasarani on 21 April 2015, after he had decided to resign and was preparing to return to his region of origin Laikipia.	7.3
<b>'Lucy'</b>	Supervisor of a greenhouse in Karibu Farm, who introduced me to the work. I have had many conversations with her, both in the greenhouse and at her rental house in Kasarani, where she lives with her husband and two children.	2.1, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 5.2, 5.4, 5.5, 5.7, 5.9, 6.3, 7.1, 7.2
<b>'Moses'</b>	Long-term resident of Karagita, who has worked as a carpenter on and off, sometimes in flower farms. Interviews in his rental house in Karagita on 30 October 2014 and in his family's house in the same settlement on 21 June 2016.	6.2, 7.1, 7.2
<b>'Richard'</b>	One of my assistants. He was born in Kasarani and grew up around Naivasha Town. Being a college student interested in environmental conversation, he had previous experience working with researchers.	2.1, 2.3
<b>'Sam'</b>	Former irrigation operator of Sharma Farm. See for more details Table 10. Interview in a restaurant in Kisumu Town on 8 April 2015.	7.3
<b>'Yvonne'</b>	Supervisor in the greenhouse in Karibu Farm where I conducted the total network analysis. Although she resided in Kasarani, she regularly went to visit her daughters in Naivasha Town. Apart from the interview for the social network analysis, I had numerous conversations with Yvonne within the farm, at Lucy's house and in the car when giving her a ride to Naivasha Town.	2.1, 5.4, 5.8, 5.9, 6.4