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A PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF SOME SOCIAL SURVEYS  
OF OLD BONDENI, NAKURU: THE TENANT POPULATION

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NAKURU: THE TENANT POPULATION

ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is threefold:

- (1) to characterize Old Bondeni in terms of its demography and social organization in anticipation of a later discussion of the social structure of an established, urban-centred Muslim-dominated area, a significant kind of social **nucleus** in the development of Kenyan towns;
- (2) to make more generally available this information in the hopes that it might prove of interest to officials or groups locally who are interested in the redevelopment of Old Bondeni and to others, planners or students of urban development to add to the small stock of such cases for comparison and study; and
- (3) to discuss in general terms the utility of such surveys, conducted for very specific administrative or bureaucratic purposes, for social researchers.

INTRODUCTION - THE OLD BONDENI AREA

Bondeni was the name given to all that tract of land sloping very gently towards Lake Nakuru that was set aside by the then Municipal Board in 1929 as the area for the Native Locations. Old Bondeni proper is a northern subsection of this area which comprised the original African Location in Nakuru.<sup>1</sup> It was started after the first World War by grant of Temporary Occupation Licenses by the administration's Land Officer through the D.C. to Africans who had done service for the crown or who were otherwise deemed worthy or desirable residents. Old Bondeni began as cluster of 'Swahili-style' or 'Majengo' houses focused on the mosque (also a mud structure put up in 1918). The Location subsequently spread to the west and south in fairly orderly lines defined by the grid arrangement of plots.

Initially plottolders built rectangular 4 or 6-roomed houses, the broad side containing the central doorway fronting the plot. These were of mud pole or mud-brick construction, plastered over, with a peaked roof. The <sup>door</sup> opened on a central passageway which ran through the dwelling opening out on a rear courtyard with its outbuildings, stores, etc. These were traditional urban family dwellings of a kind widely found throughout East Africa.

The inherent flexibility and expansibility of this house form means that even slight land-pressure makes it worthwhile to extend the house and take in lodgers. The first minor influx of tenants came in the early twenties. These were people coming here from various parts of Kenya and Tanzania, doing work connected with the expansion of the railroad (to Eldoret). The railroad's African housing was going up on the plot just to the north of the bulk of Old Bondeni, but there was some overflow of labourers into Old Bondeni. Rents of perhaps 5/- a month encouraged the gradual commercialization of Old Bondeni and transformed it gradually into a lodging-house area served by many small shops and businesses.<sup>2</sup>

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1. The African Location per se was defined legally in Cap. 136, General Notice 1610 of 1938 as that area bounded on the north by the police lines, E.A.R. & H. lines, and the municipal lines, on the east by sections XXX11 and XXX111 (i.e. by what is now Shuleni Road), on the south by 100 ft. road (Kalewa R.), and on the west by Location Rd. (now Bondeni Rd.). This official designation and the restrictions on residential and visitation rights that went along with it were revoked at about the time of Kenya's Independence.

2. Interviews with Old Bondeni elders, June and July 1974.

Rows of smaller rooms grew back from the original house along one or both sides of the courtyard, eventually turning the house into a hollow rectangle, around a central courtyard/passageway with the front now being the narrower side. The larger rooms of the original family dwelling (still identifiable by its higher roofline) might be turned into business premises or shops fronting on the street. Old Bondeni grew in this way to absorb a good proportion of the African population coming to work in Nakuru, a population which declined slightly or grew only very slowly during the depression of the early and mid-thirties but which increased quickly again during the Second World War.<sup>3</sup>

Nakuru was in an expansionary mood in the post-war years. The Municipal Board was anxious to attract new investment and industry and to modernize and develop the town as a whole. A major constraint was lack of accommodation at all levels but this was particularly severe at the lower grades. Old Bondeni was seriously overcrowded, the large tenant population ill-served in many respects but especially in terms of sanitation. Civic authorities found themselves confronted with a twin problem: to increase as rapidly as possible the stock of decent low and moderate cost housing and to eliminate the health hazard they perceived Bondeni to have become.

In 1953 the now Municipal Council of Nakuru gave notice it was revoking the temporary occupation licences in anticipation of a phased programme of demolitions of Old Bondeni combined with an ambitious phased construction programme of municipal housing for Africans in the larger Bondeni area south of Old Bondeni. A segment of Old Bondeni's population, houseowners and tenants, was to be absorbed into portions of each new housing estate.<sup>4</sup>

During the remainder of the 1950's the Council undertook three phases of demolition. The pace of redevelopment was slower than the Council might have hoped for a number of reasons, not least of which was the problem of financing alternative accommodation. Also there was increasing opposition from businessmen who were being displaced and expected alternative locations to be provided in a suitable area with a good passing trade.

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3. Annual Reports, Municipal Board of Nakuru for the years 1932, 36, 38, 40, 43, 44, and 45.

4. See I.D.S. Working Paper 153 for an extended treatment of these phases of redevelopment.

IDS/WP/181

More difficult still, they encountered legal and political opposition from individuals and groups (not yet coalesced into formal associations) among the houseowners. Houseowners, being at best temporary occupation licensees, had no legal right to compensation or special treatment but they believed that by right of usage and common decency they were effectively landlords and should not at one swoop be denied their rental income and reduced to mere tenants in municipal housing. One final difficulty was the problem of creating housing that came up to the standards the Council thought suitable for a satisfactory, stable family life in a progressive municipality and which was still within the means of the poorer segments of the Bondeni population. These problems have become greater not less during the sixties and into the seventies, and while there has been all manner of plans for Old Bondeni redevelopment there has been no further demolition.

The bulk of Old Bondeni still stands today, providing very cheap (substandard) accommodation for a large population of tenants and a modest to moderate income to a long-established smaller group of 'landlords' and their dependents. Any workable solution to the problem of redeveloping this area presupposes an understanding of the major population groupings in Old Bondeni, what they want, need, and can afford. In an attempt to answer those questions, the municipal authorities have, over the years, conducted various sorts of surveys there. In the process they have collected information which, aside from its utility in suggesting the lines redevelopment might take, is also of general interest to all students of urbanization in Kenya. This paper reports on the tenant population, information on the landlord group will be presented in a separate paper.

#### THE SURVEYS

The planning involved in the demolition of sections of Old Bondeni and proposed redevelopment schemes utilized two kinds of surveys. The first was a mapping survey, the second a survey questionnaire. Demolition that was based on the Public Health Ordinance required an assessment of the condition of each dwelling, in practice a room by room survey. Moreover, for development plans to be drawn up by the Town Planning Advisors, a mapping of existing housing, plot by plot was required. Along with the mapping which concerned mainly the structural soundness and physical condition of the rooms, information was collected on the

number of residents by household, by age/and (child/adult) and sex; in addition, rooms used for shops or businesses were noted. In this way the extent of overcrowding (using 40 square feet of living space per person as a basic measure)<sup>5</sup> and more broadly, the nature of the problem from a public health point of view could be demonstrated.

Partial surveys undertaken for particular plots about to be demolished were careful to note down not only numbers but names of household heads and the precise composition of the households as they were not merely interested in assessing overcrowding and the number of alternative dwellings to be supplied, but in 'fixing' the population they were responsible for rehousing. This was done in anticipation of others, non residents, trying to sneak in on the benefits, i.e., access to municipal housing, (although despite this care, this did happen). Surveys done include an overall mapping done in the early 1950's (the map drawn in 1955 still exists, the census survey, conducted by Mr. P. Gathii of the then African Affairs Department, is apparently lost), part surveys (mappings and census survey) done for particular phases of demolition (the one for demolition phase III, 1959, still exists and will be reviewed below), and another overall survey conducted by the Chief Health Inspector, MCN, in 1966 for the Town Planning Advisor, Nairobi (which we have been unable to trace).

Questionnaire surveys were undertaken to see what redevelopment options were open. In these, information was collected on the constituent households in Old Bondeni to assess income levels, employment, current rent levels and ability to pay a higher rent, household composition, residential history, and some other details. The first was done by Mr. Mohamed R. Masilla of the Housing and Estates Dept. (himself a lifetime resident of Old Bondeni) in 1968 and updated in 1971 and was analyzed by Mr. J.N. Opiyo, Housing and Estates Officer, for a report to the Minister of Housing. It tried to gauge the maximum rental people were prepared to pay, to find out how many rooms they felt they needed, and if they had any savings. The second was designed by Miss M.L. Arscott of the Architects Office, Town Engineer's Department in 1973 and collected by 'landlords' on a voluntary basis (so that coverage is incomplete).

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5. Defined in the Nakuru Municipality (Overcrowding) By-Laws, 1951, in Cap. 136, Government Notice 229, which was amended changing 40 sq. ft. to 50 sq. ft. in 1954 and 1959.

IDS/WP/181

In addition to what the 1968 survey covered, it tried to plumb opinions on the relative attractiveness of rental housing vs. Some sort of mutual-aid approach, asking what savings, available time, and building skills existed within the interested segment of the population. (The original questionnaires from these two surveys, done 5 years apart, are still available, and form the basic source of data for this paper.)<sup>6</sup>

SURVEY RESULTS

Physical Plant

Table one shows the composition of the 86 remaining built-up sub-plots, a total of 1375 rooms, as counted in 1968 survey.

Table two lists the number of shops, workshops and stores existing in 1968 and 1973. It is not possible, however, to determine the number of rooms occupied as residences. On the one hand, some of these might well be used as sleeping quarters at night. In any case, many of the charcoal stores are not included in the above count of 'habitable' rooms.

Table 1

Number of Houses by number of Habitable Rooms, 1968.

No. houses	No. room/house	Total habitable rooms
1	4	4
2	9	18
1	10	10
3	11	33
6	13	78
8	14	112
8	15	120
18	16	288
20	17	340
8	18	144
5	19	95
3	20	60
1	21	21
2	26	52
86	-	1375

Source: report by Mr. Opiyo, Housing and Estates Officer, 28/9/71

6. We wish to acknowledge the assistance of Messrs. Opiyo and Masilla of the Housing and Estates Department, MCN. As well, we are grateful to Miss Arscott of the Town Engineer's Department for her help and encouragement.



Table 2

Licensed shops and Trading places

Type of business	1968*	1973**
Grocery, general store	38	38
Tailor	2	3
Eating house	2	3
Workshop	5	2
Charcoal store	50	40
Other	2	3
Total	99	89

\*Source: report by Mr. Opiyo, Housing and Estates Officer, 28/9/71

\*\*Source: files, licensing office, Town Clerk's Department.

Population Size

Although both the 1968 and 1973 surveys asked about the composition of the households, the information collected does not appear reliable and no precise estimate can be made of the total population of Old Bondeni.

The unreliability of data on household composition makes guesswork of many other basic questions. In a fundamental sense we do not know even how many households exist in Old Bondeni. This is of course a very complex issue at all times; what constitutes a separable household is one of the intractable problems of operational definition in census work. Here, the operational problem has been solved not in sociological or economic terms but rather in simple physical terms, ( a sort of landlord's view). Where a single room was rented, the occupants therein constituted one household and one of their number was identified as the head. In cases where two or more rooms were rented together, the inhabitants of those constitute a single household under one head, generally the person who pays the landlord.

In these terms, the 1968 survey, which purports to be a 100% sample, lists about 1100 tenant households. It is mainly with the designated tenant household heads that we will be concerned.

#### Household Heads

Table three compares Old Bondeni households to the Nakuru norm of about one female-headed household to three male-headed ones. It seems that Old Bondeni does have a larger proportion of female-headed households and that it might be that this proportion is growing slightly (to up to  $\frac{1}{2}$  greater than the overall figure for the town).

Table four gives a breakdown of household heads by age and sex for 1973, the only year for which data permits this. The median age for both sexes is about the same at roughly 37 years, but the modal age for male household heads is older than that, while the modal age for females is younger.

Table five compares heads by sex and number of years reported residence in Bondeni (not to be treated as a very reliable figure, so we have pushed the distribution towards the low end to be safer by upper-bounding categories with the 'round' numbers 5,10,15, etc.). There is no significant shift in pattern between 1968 and 1973 although the median number of years reported has risen slightly in the latter sample for both males and females. Of note is that the modal category for women is over 30 years residence, while for men the six to 10 year category is largest; i.e., while about  $\frac{1}{4}$  of male heads have been resident over 20 years, well over  $\frac{1}{3}$  of females make that claim (in the 1973 sample 2/5).

Table six gives the general pattern for household heads of marital status by sex (1973 data only). The data, with the usual caveats about the meaning of the various terms, speaks for itself. The notable but fairly obvious point is that only in a minority of cases would a married woman be considered the household head. Indeed we are surprised that this would be so in even  $\frac{1}{5}$  of the cases and are a little suspicious of that figure, especially as we haven't the household composition data to check if the husband is in fact resident.

Household Heads by sex (%)

sample population	Year	% Male	% Female
Nakuru Household Heads <sup>(a)</sup>	1969	76	24
Bondeni Household Heads	1968	71.3-67.1 <sup>(b)</sup>	28.7-32.9
Bondeni Household Heads	1973	63.7	36.3

(a) Source: Kenya census, vol. 111, 1969

(b) A range is given because some individuals in this survey were not identified as to sex.

Table 4.

Household Heads by Age and sex, 1973 (%)

	UNDER 20	20 - 24	25 - 29	30 -	35 - 39	40 - 49	50 -59	60 AND OVER	NO DATA	N	mode	Median
Male	1.5	9	13	18	15	24	11	6	2	363	40-49	37
Female	1	7	13	25	10	20	12	8	4	207	30-34	37
Total Pop.	1	8.5	13	21	12.5	22.5	11	7	3	570	40-49	37

Taken together these tables tend to confirm a number of widely-held views of Old Bondeni. Old Bondeni has long had the reputation of harbouring a large population of unattached women. While the age distribution of male and female household heads isn't very different, females have tended to live in Old Bondeni for a much longer time, or to look at it another way, women household heads seem now to be entering Old Bondeni in relatively smaller numbers. In fact, it would seem (from table five) that households, either male or female-headed, are not moving into Bondeni as they used to do. This probably a long term trend reflecting the greater choice and the greater desirability of housing outside Bondeni. That is, the population in Old Bondeni is a very stable one with a large core of very long-term residents, there either by choice or by force of circumstances. The slum clearance long/projected for.

Table 5. Household Heads by Sex and Number of Years Residence in Bondeni (%)

	6 mo. and over under	1YR and over	under 3yrs.	3-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-30	over 30	no data	N	Mode	Median
male, 1968	1.4	3.7	6.6	13.2	17.6	9.1	10.2	11.8	11.1	15.3	737	6-10	10
male, 1968(a)	1.6	4.3	8	15.5	20.8	10.7	12	14	13	..	624	6-10	10
male 1973	1	1	7.5	13	24	15	12.5	13	10	2	364	6-10	12
female 1968	1.7	2.7	6	13.3	16.3	9	10.3	9.3	25.3	4.7	296	over 30	15
female, 1973	0	2	4	10	17.5	11.5	10	18	21	6	205	over 30	18
Total, 1968(b)	1.6	3.7	7.1	14.8	20	10	12.5	12.5	17.8	..	972	6-10	13
Total, 1973	.7	1.3	6	11.7	22	13.5	11.5	15.5	13.8	3.5	569	6-10	13

(a) Distribution is corrected by omitting no data column, for ease in comparison with 1973 data,

(b) Total doesn't equal males and females, but rather males omitting no data column plus females, omitting no data column, plus 66 cases where sex is not specified. The addition of these latter cases doesn't change the rank order for either male or female distributions even if all cases are treated as being of one sex.

Table 6.

Household Heads by marital status and sex, 1973 (%)

	Unmarried	married	Divorced	Widowed	No data	N	Mode
Males	9	77.5	3	2.5	7.5	361	married
Females	25	12	15	30	17.5	208	widowed
Total pop.	15	53.7	7.5	12.5	11.3	567	married

Old Bondeni suggests the municipal authorities believe the latter to be predominant.

Aside from gross movements into and out of Bondeni, an attempt was made to assess residential mobility at the plot level. We compared the lists of household heads for 16 houses<sup>7</sup> for which coverage was good in 1973 to see how many tenants on the 1973 list could be found to have been resident in that same house 5 years previously. Of the 221 tenants in these houses on the 1973 list, 49 (32 males and 17 females) could be so identified. This works out to a rate of turnover of about 25% per annum (the division by sex, 64% to 35% being the same as for the whole sample, males and females can be said to share the same rate of turnover). If this is an accurate picture (given the disconcerting practice of names being altered, etc.), there is a lot of mobility to be explained. Movement takes place when people cannot pay rent and must shift, or because they find the situation uncongenial and prefer to try another house. Landlords with whom we have spoken feel the 25% rate is not unrealistic and not unnaturally that the reason is the first above.

Employment and Incomes

Table seven compares reported employment among Old Bondeni household heads in 1968 and 1973, giving also the estimate for adult employment for Nakuru as a whole.

7. These are houses number 1, 7, 10, 20, 22, 24, 25, 28, 31, 37, 42, 43, 46, 47, 51, and 52.

It seems that either in terms of reported employment or the percentage reporting an income (not surprisingly a little lower because of reluctance to quote income figures), the proportion of household heads who are apparently employed is growing, from a figure approximating that of the adult population as a whole to one 20% higher.

Table eight shows reported income by sex for 1968 and 1973 and again there is a sharp increase in 1973 in the proportion of household heads, especially among the females, who report an income. We might attribute this to the overrepresentation in the 1973 sample (landlord collected) of stable (in the sense of employed rent paying) tenants, to an improved employment situation in Old Bondeni or to increased candor. The latter two do not seem likely.

In '73 sample, there are about 50 male household heads who report jobs but do not disclose income and conversely about 30 women who do not report jobs but do report incomes. This latter fact goes some way towards explaining the apparently high level of unemployment among household heads which is especially marked among females. General opinion has it that the female population of Old Bondeni is heavily involved in the formal sector in goods (home brewed beer and native liquor) and services (especially prostitution). We would go along with this to the extent that we suspect the apparent unemployment figures of concealing a certain amount of employment, especially in marginal occupations in the **informal sector**. We do not doubt however that unemployment and underemployment (e.g. casual labour) affect a large proportion of the households.

Further to that point, tables nine and ten show the distribution of reported income by sex and for the apparently employed sample as a whole compared to estimates of the distribution for the employed population of the town. These show graphically that while the income levels in Old Bondeni are rising, and rising quickly, they still lag far behind those of the general townsfolk. Moreover, the income levels reported by females are rising fairly slowly and most remain in the very low income group.

Table 7

EMPLOYMENT (%)

Sample population	Year	Employment Estimate	% Reporting Income
Adult employment, Nakuru	1969	57.75(a)	-
Household Heads, Bondeni	1968	57.9	51.3
Household heads, Bondeni	1973	68.1	67.9

(a) Source: D.U.R.P.P.; M. Mattingly, "Nakuru Economic Base Survey", typescript, 1973.

Table 8

Reported Income by sex (%)

Sample population	Year	As a % of total Household Heads	As a % of total Reporting Income	As a % own sex Reporting Income
Male household heads	1968	71.3	89.5	64.6
Male Household heads	1973	63.7	70	74.4
Female household heads	1968	28.7	10.5	18.9
Female household heads	1973	36.3	30	57.5

Table 9

REPORTED INCOME DISTRIBUTION of Household Heads by sex (%)

sample population	Year	200/and under	400/- and under	Over 400	N
Male household heads	1968	66.4	28.6	5	476
male household heads	1973	38	48	14	270
Female household heads	1968	85.7	10.7	3.6	56
Female household heads	1973	72.7	26.5	0.8	117
Total	1968	68.4	26.6	4.9	532
Total	1973	48.5	41.5	9.5	387

Table 10

Income Distributions of Bondeni Household Heads and Nakuru Employed(%)

Sample population	Year	200/and under	400/and under	Over 400/-
Bondeni Household Heads	1968	68.4	26.6	4.9
Adult Employees, Nakuru	1968(a)	48.3	31.6	20.1
Bondeni Household Heads	1973	48.5	41.5	9.5
Adult Employees, Nakuru	1971(a)	35.3	33.3	31.4

(a) Source: D.U.R.P.P.; M. Mattingly, "Nakuru Economic Base Survey", typescript, 1973. Estimates only.



### Rents

Table eleven gives rental distribution. It can be seen that while the most common rent remains around 20/-, the rents have edged up significantly (perhaps by as much as 5% a year). Rents, in absolute terms, however, remain a great bargain compared to housing available in municipal estates<sup>8</sup> or private dwellings. In relative terms too, it can be argued that housing in Old Bondeni is good value compared to similarly priced housing elsewhere in the town, not the least of Old Bondeni's advantages being a central location with easy access to most of the amenities of the town and additionally a good position to attract passing custom for the various businesses found there, licit and illicit. From this point of view the stability of Old Bondeni's population can be explained as a rational response to the alternatives open to householders in Nakuru. The Bondeni household heads and especially the females (who are the most prominent long-term residents) cannot afford better housing and cannot afford to give up the advantages of Old Bondeni for otherwise broadly equivalent housing on the town margins. Without necessarily invoking intangibles, like sense of community among long-term residents engendered by family and friendship ties or religious ones (especially in the case of that segment of the Nakuru Muslim community focused on the mosque in Old Bondeni), it is clear that, given the current circumstances, people are not about to leave Old Bondeni.

The dilemma which has long faced the municipality in terms of redeveloping Old Bondeni is that there seems to be no way of putting the people into housing which is up to standard at a rental which is anywhere near what people are used to paying.

The two surveys tried to assess what people were prepared to pay, assuming their housing would be better (i.e., up to standard). While a number of the people who responded were willing to pay say 50% more (or an average of 30/-), this still puts them below the current rent levels in low-cost municipal housing. Application of other rules of thumb, like assuming the tenant can be made to pay 25% of his income for rent, still does not give much scope for planners since the group with incomes (often substantially) below 200/- is a large one.

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8. Aside from Pangani Estate which was always regarded as sub-standard, the Municipal Housing Estates range upward from 35/- in rent.

The 1973 survey included questions on attitudes towards some sort of mutual aid scheme for providing better housing to see if the cost/rental bind could be eased in this fashion. Aside from getting a generally favourable response from landlords, there was a fair response from tenants. Some 43% (male and female household heads in equal proportions) supported the idea. In fact the mutual aid response from tenants. Some 43% (male and female household heads in equal proportions) supported the idea. In fact the mutual aid respondents fairly mirrored the whole sample in terms of age distribution and employment status as well.<sup>9</sup>

Table 11

Distribution of Rooms by Rent (%)

	5/-to 10	11/-to 15	16/-to 20	21/-to 25	26/-to 30	over 30	N	Mode	Median	mean
%rooms, 1968	7	15.5	46	12.5	9.3	8.7	1160	16/- to 20/-	18/-	19/40*
% rooms, 1973	1	3.5	37	20.5	22.5	15	517	20/-**	25/-	25/40**

\*Calculated from landlords' income data.

\*\*Calculated from exact (non-grouped) distribution.

Household Composition

While unfortunately we cannot say anything about household mapping survey done in 1959 for the third (and to date the last) phase of demolition gives us an inkling of what might be learned if the other mapping surveys could be recovered. As the information is not comparable with the later data we have presented above, we will simply set it out here briefly.

Phase three of the demolition comprised 6 houses, numbered 73 through 77 ( there was both a 75 and 75A). The mapping listed 100 rooms housing 111 independent households. This survey did distinguish multiple households within a single room. There were instances where a room housed two households and two where a room housed three.

9. Figures taken from Miss Arscott's data, 1974.

Conversely there were two cases where a single household inhabited more than one room. The population consisted of 112 adult males, 95 adult females and 208 children. The breakdown by household allows us to set out the following:<sup>10</sup>

No. of households	111
No. of households with children	74
No. of households without adult females	23
No. of households without adult males	15
No. of persons per household	3.74
No. of persons per room	4.15
No. of children per household	1.78
" " " " " without adult females	0
" " " " " " " males	2.47
" " " " " with children	2.81
" " " " " with both male and female adults	2.90
No. of children per adult female in household without adult male	2.18
" " " " " " " " with both adult males and females	2.19

This survey throws up a number of perhaps unexpected figures. First of all, at about four persons per room, the area being demolished was not very overcrowded by Nakuru standards (although legally it exceeds the threshold). Household size is small -- even in the case of households having adults of both sexes, the average size works out to only 5.5 persons (1.33 women, 1.27 men, and 2.90 children). And women, whether in households with or without men, have the same number of children with them.

Households consisting of adult males only formed 20% of the cases and 1/3 of the men lived in these (none are listed as including children). This is suggestive of the importance of the typical migrant worker situation whereby men leave their families behind and work out a contract of variable length in the town. What data is available from recent years suggests this pattern is less strong in Nakuru today; job turnover seems to be low, and it seems to be more common for men to be joined by some member/s of

10. All figures are based on the survey bound in file A/5 Old Bondeni Phase III, Demolition, MCN.

their family who help them (and perhaps at the same time take advantages of opportunities in town, for example, easier access to formal education). Thirteen and a half per cent of households had no adult males in this sample; 1/5 of the adult women were found in these. This survey did not identify the household heads, but the low number of households without men suggests that here was a smaller per cent of households headed by females than we would expect, given the more recent survey data. We do not know how much to make of this as only six houses are represented, but it is worth considering what circumstances are conducive to the growth of female-headed households: death of male heads, greater opportunities for economically independent women, or whatever.

ADDENDUM

It is nothing if not ordinary to dredge through special purpose surveys such as these for material of interest in another context. Indeed, and especially in the absence of good census material in raw or disaggregated form,<sup>11</sup> such material forms the stock in trade of urban historians trying to reconstruct processes of urban development.<sup>12</sup> Social scientists dealing with contemporary problems and who therefore have access to the actual population, generally prefer to sample and survey themselves so as to collect data bearing directly on their own problems. Aside from other considerations, they want to be able to control the sampling so they can make certain claims about the quality, the validity of their findings. From this point of view, the documentation collected by local administrations and the like, i.e. designed and collected by people untrained in the subtleties of surveying populations, is likely to be coarse, difficult to interpret or otherwise suspect. A country like Kenya however, where so much research could be fruitfully done, can ill-afford not to make use of such low-cost sources. While we are hardly in a position to suggest a viable program whereby the general quality of such documentation could be improved and perhaps somewhat standardized for greater comparability, we do think that an awareness on the part of local officials that their work will perhaps be of more than short-term interest might in itself tend to raise standards (and at least encourage preservation of material) over the long run.

It is hardly surprising that local authorities, municipal departments, or whatever, who undertake such surveys in the course of dealing with their own pressing problems, don't always appreciate the potential utility of these for students and social researchers.

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11. The Central Bureau of Statistics has discussed projects which would continuously monitor selected areas of Kenya, including one tract in Nakuru, and there have been proposals to create a register of employees which would provide excellent material for demographic and economic studies aside from the obvious planning benefits, but neither sorts of data are available at present.

12. See for example H.J. Dyos, editor, The Study of Urban History, Edward Arnold, London, 1968.

IDS/WP/181

What is distressing is that so much of this material is likely to be lost (if these Bondeni surveys are any indication) even in well-established authorities, who keep archives. Again, although we can offer no plan for for instantly improving the handling and storage of documents by local authorities, we would argue for one project. This would be for an interested body, say the University of Nairobi, to undertake a survey of local authorities to find out what kind of documentation, or to make a more modest suggestion, what kind of surveys for example, they have conducted. The process of surveying the local authorities would in itself tend to make them aware of a broader interest in their surveys (welcome or not is another question). Ideally this should be done at intervals and the resultant register be kept up to date but even a single register would sensitive students and researchers to the kinds of material they might be able to retrieve. Given the current concern with problems of information retrieval and the present awareness that it is often not to a lack of data but the difficulty or inability to find and make use of extant documentation, we feel that funding for some small focused project along these lines (while not very glamorous) might be considered sympathetically and the potential benefits in working for the preservation of material for historical studies or for background, comparative, or ancillary material in demographic, sociological and economic research would be great.