BAMAKO BOUND
THE SOCIAL ORGANISATION OF MIGRATION IN MALI

DAVID T. PRATTEN

1996
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SOS Sahel is an association of African and European voluntary agencies founded in 1976 in Dakar. SOS Sahel (UK) works with rural people across the Sahelian zone of sub-Saharan Africa supporting community actions and initiatives that focus on the management and conservation of natural resources and on increasing small-scale food production. Parallel with project work is an applied research programme, which has explored three main areas: improving community participation in project planning and evaluation; the environmental consequences of migration, and links between rural and urban communities. SOS Sahel (UK) is a registered charity, no. 296311.

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During the course of this research we have become indebted to many groups and individuals who have shared their experience with us. Over thirty migrant associations participated in the project and we are especially grateful to the associations' members and their families who offered us their patience and hospitality. I would also like to thank Yacouba Kourouma in Bamako, SOS Sahel project staff in Tominian, staff at Plan International - Banamba, and the numerous individuals who acted as guides and interpreters during the fieldwork, in particular Sékou Doumbia, Salif Fofana and Sidiki Diarra.

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Special thanks to Duncan Fulton for his help and encouragement, and finally, thanks to my wife, Emma Hawksworth, for her unending patience and invaluable support.

David T. Pratten
August 1996
Glossary

Arrondissement  administrative division;
Association Villageois  co-operative;
Blon  village council among the Ganadougou communities;
Canton  colonial administrative unit;
Caisse  fund;
Carte de séjour  entry permit;
Chef administratif  village chief position introduced during colonialism;
Chef coutumier  traditional village chief;
Cercle  administrative division;
Coxeur  an agent who deals with visas and immigration papers;
Diguettes  a soil protection measure whereby stone lines are constructed along contours to prevent the top-soil washing away;
Dô  Bobo fetish;
Foyer  youth hostel;
Quartier  neighbourhood;
Kafo  institution of inter-village co-operation;
Kafo Jigne  rural banking system introduced by CMDT;
Medersa  Islamic school;
Navetanes  seasonal labourers on the ground-nut fields of Senegal and the Gambia (from ‘Navet’ meaning ‘dry season’ in Wolof);
Nidan  Bobo village council;
Soudure  ‘hungry’ season;
Suude  urban support network among the Haalpulaar;
Tabaski  Eid Al Kabir - Muslim festival;
Tontine  rotating credit and savings group, in Bamana it is known as pari;
Tamboudia  literally ‘children who have no roots’ - those who do not speak the language of the village of origin;
Ton  traditional village work-group and association;
Ton Villageois  co-operative;
Trousseau  outfit, normally wedding clothes;
Xompe xoore  urban support network among the Soninké.

Currency

The Malian CFA (Communauté Financière en Afrique) franc, fixed to the French franc (FF), was devalued by 50 per cent in early 1994. Approximate conversions are given below:

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<th>CFA</th>
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1. INTRODUCTION

Benkady, Ganikape and Wacezin are the names recently adopted by rural development organisations in various regions of Mali. Their names relate to concepts of ‘understanding’, ‘solidarity’ and ‘association’ which capture long-standing practices employed by households and communities to share the burdens of the agricultural seasons. These frameworks of collective action, re-organised at intervals by the state to manage cash crop production in many rural areas, have also served households and communities pursuing highly mobile and insecure livelihoods. Throughout the Sudano-Sahelian zone labour mobility or voluntary migration is a dominant economic strategy. The scale of inter-regional migration in Mali is indicated by the fact that between 1976 and 1984 the country’s rural areas lost the equivalent of over half their natural population increase, 38 per cent of whom left the country, while 62 per cent went to the urban areas (Westen and Klute, 1986: 42). To assert that responses to ecological and commercial opportunities through migration constitute the movement of labour rather than people (Amin, 1974: 66), however, overlooks the social organisation of the migration process.

The relationship between local institutions and migration in Mali may date to the use of rotating savings groups (tontine or pari) as a means of funding pilgrimage journeys (Meillassoux, 1968). Today, migrants are supported by kinship and community networks in their transition to the urban environment while, in areas experiencing high rates of male out-migration, their absence is said to be compensated for by, ‘... a tendency to use the work group to replace labour ‘lost’ through the migration of young men’ (Mazur, 1984: 218). Informal arrangements supporting urban arrival and rural absence have become highly organised. Formed on the basis of their community of origin, associations established by migrants in all urban destinations, nationally and internationally, constitute support structures for new arrivals and demonstrate significant capacities in responding to locally identified development needs. Malian migrant associations, representing communities throughout the country, operate credit schemes for urban members, support rural food security initiatives, invest substantially in rural amenities, and have, in recent years, become important lobbying groups and intermediaries with external agencies.

In the context of international donor priorities and the political and economic situation in Mali, the role of community-based organisations has assumed a particular contemporary relevance. The enormous proliferation of non-governmental, voluntary associations in many African states over the last decade has captured the popular and political imagination. Indigenous or introduced, institutions which aggregate demands and capacities at the community level operate at a significant interface in the development process. Local institutions are mediators between the state and society, and between development agencies and the household. Their assumed operational characteristics of flexibility, innovation, cost-effectiveness and participatory approach have led many commentators to argue that legitimate local institutions are a vital component in sustainable development programmes. Indeed, this represents a point of convergence between the views of agrarian populism which presents local participation as an instrument of empowerment, and the free-market approach which calls for the privatisation of development interventions. An additional factor in the prioritisation of local institutional development is linked to recent arguments promoting social pluralism and civil society in sub-Saharan Africa. Support for the institutions of civil society is advocated on the premise that community organisations promote democratic behaviour and represent a local counterbalance to state authority.

Since 1991, and the move towards multi-party democracy, the relationship between state and society in Mali has been transformed. This shift and the political changes it has induced, particularly a programme of decentralisation, have opened the flood gates on the formation, registration and promotion of community-based organisations. Until 1991 the institutional landscape in Mali had been dominated by the various organs of the single political party, agricultural para-statals and formal co-operatives. Formed and supported by
the Malian government, co-operatives were designed to control agricultural production and export of cash crops but were largely dissociated from issues of food security and local production. The inadequacies of attempts by the state to introduce collective arrangements to secure livelihood needs has further prompted the quest for alternative forms of organisation (Levi, 1988).

Similarly, economic factors, notably retrenchment in government services, investment and employment have meant that communities are forced to fall back on self-help initiatives. Throughout the country, hospitals, clinics and schools have been constructed and are maintained by community-based organisations who have engaged with the state in only limited ways. Migrant communities and organisations, as the nexus of a range of local institutions, therefore play a crucial investment and management role in the provision of public services and social infrastructure, frequently substituting for the state. In a survey of local organisational capacities in the lead-up to the decentralisation programme in Mali, for example, it was found that local populations throughout the country were mobilising resources to provide or supplement public services. In their analysis Thomson and Tall note that:

> Resource mobilization efforts range from full shouldering of all costs and management responsibilities ... to a structured participation in re-current cost recovery via fee for service arrangements in public health and education. The most common form of popular contribution to service provision is the mobilization of labour for infrastructure creation, most notably in road maintenance, school construction and construction of health facilities (1991: 7).

There is, as Pottier states, ‘... an empirically founded belief in the managerial capabilities of vulnerable groups...’ (1993: 1), and attempts to support self-help initiatives from among the rural poor with a self-reliance orientation are linked to the increasing attempt to re-appraise local traditional forms of organisation. This study examines how rural and urban society is drawing on re-defined concepts of solidarity and organisation, and illustrates how local institutions help communities negotiate the contemporary insecurities of migration and rural development.

It presents, in the form of extended case studies, the context of regional migratory strategies and highlights the scope of rural development initiatives supported by migrant communities. The research is based on fieldwork conducted between November 1993 and February 1996 with migrant groups representing over thirty communities in Mali. The featured case studies, however, highlight contrasts between four geographically and ethnically distinct rural areas and their relationship with Bamako and other urban destinations.

In Ségou Region cases were conducted in Tominian Cercle. As an enclave of an ethnic and religious minority group, the Bobo, the area is politically and economically marginalised. After many generations of resisting external penetration, highlighted in the Bobo Revolt of 1916 against French colonialists, numerous factors, including limited local seasonal employment, state policies, and declining agricultural productivity, have led to an exodus (‘l’exode’) from Tominian to Bamako. Inspired by the exploits and material gains of returning friends and relatives, young men and increasing numbers of young women circulate between villages in Tominian and the capital. The poorly-paid jobs they find in the city, as guards, drivers or in domestic service contribute to difficulties with maintaining links with the family and community at home. Institutions formed to facilitate these connections, therefore lack the economic capacity to invest in the necessary rural infrastructural and public service projects that they have identified. Rather, Bobo associations in Bamako serve to focus concerns of cultural distinctiveness and to provide essential socio-economic support for poor migrants in an urban environment.

The case of Niéna, in Sikasso Region, highlights similar, predominantly seasonal, migration strategies. Three significant factors, however, have contributed to a more consistent pattern of socio-economic development in Niéna: the capacity of rural producers to compensate for absent labour through the production of cash crops; the local institutional development programmes of the governmental marketing boards, and the role of an educated elite who are well established in Bamako. Migrants in this context are likened to young trees
(caicédrat), with their branches abroad replenishing their roots at home. There is a clear distinction between the majority of temporary migrants who join marriage societies to cater for their immediate urban needs and the elite who have formed associations based on their education and position. Informal marriage societies provide essential assistance to their members, while elite-based groups reinforce class positions without offering mutual support to the same degree, but have proved effective mediators in rural-urban linkages. For example, one such association has developed an effective twinning partnership with a town in France. This external support is complemented in rural Niéna by co-operatives and credit services offered by institutions linked to the cotton marketing board.

Unlike the Bobo, who have not been involved in an urban process over a extended time and have therefore not built social and economic networks throughout the country, the cases from Banamba in Koulikoro Region and from Kayes Region illustrate the importance of these networks in managing rural development. Both cases focus on the well documented migration of the Sarakolé. The cases differ in that Banamban migratory strategies are directed within Mali and Central Africa, while the primary destination for potential migrants from Kayes, psychologically at least, is France. In both examples, however, local communities are dependent on the remittance economy, and migrant organisations dominate the local institutional landscape. Their investments in mosques, irrigated agriculture, health services and education testify to an increasingly sophisticated system of locally identified, funded, implemented and managed development. These achievements have generated an international response which has led to the situation in which migrant associations have become the southern partners of international non-governmental organisations.

This study, however, highlights the fact that the Sarakolé cases are not representative of the situation in the whole of Mali. The models of associations from the Kayes Region in particular have been adopted by communities throughout the country, especially since the flourishing of associational life after 1991, but have experienced variable performance elsewhere. The case studies therefore illustrate local variations in a changing national landscape of rural-urban and state-society relations. The migrant association case studies highlight a range of different models of social organisation representing a spectrum of urban interests which gives rise to a fragmentation of the associational movement. Within each of the regional studies elite associations are formed and run on the basis of commercial interests and education. Such organisations function within local remittance-based economies while others represent poorer migrants with limited rural-urban ties in the process of urban adaptation and reinforce the cultural integrity of religious and ethnic minority groups. The context of these regional cases is further elaborated in the following overview of dominant migration trends and an outline of the role of community-based organisations in Malian civil society.
Map 1. The Republic of Mali
**Migration in Mali: Trends in Destination Centres**

Urbanisation is a fact of life and was predicted by the marabouts who said that the towns would end life.

Tatiknat Walet Touhano, SOS Sahel Oral History Project

The case studies which form the basis of this work are grouped according to communities of origin, each representing points of departure for urban bound migrants. It is also necessary to illustrate their interaction with the complex historical development of urban destinations. This study focuses on both national patterns of migration, to urban centres, notably Bamako, and international movement to Côte d'Ivoire and France.

**Migration and the Growth of Bamako**

Mali was a theatre of intense commercial contacts in the pre-colonial period and was a terminus on long-distance trans-Saharan trade routes to the coast. Bamako, originally the capital of a Bambara chiefdom of the ruling Niaré dynasty, grew as a result of this exchange. Caravans from Mauritania settled under the walls of the town during the dry season to exchange their merchandise (salt, cloth, arms, horses and cattle) for slaves, gold and local crafts. The northern Moors could not cross the Niger river with their camels, and traders from centres like Bamako, Sarakolé and Dioula took over the traffic on foot or with donkeys, to trade with the forest regions further south (Meillassoux, 1965: 126).

During the colonial period trans-Sahelian trade routes were severed and the country became part of the labour reserve of the interior of West Africa. Colonial administration, established in the region after 1883 when the French built a fort in Bamako, induced important structural changes throughout the region which were to shape future migrations and reinforce the traditional north-south direction of migration movements dictated by ecological factors. The improvement of transportation systems, monetization of the economy through the imposition of taxes requiring cash payments, conscription and forced labour, particularly during the inter-war years, all led to increased migratory pressure in rural areas. Most significant for the direction of future migration trajectories, however, was the development of certain areas as mining centres or as regions of commercial agriculture specialising in the production of export crops. The development of cocoa farms and gold mining in Ghana, the plantations and forest industries of Côte d'Ivoire, and groundnut production in Senegal and The Gambia therefore prompted migration of unskilled labour from the landlocked region of Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Chad towards the coastal countries.

In the years of colonial rule, rural-urban migration was a temporary phenomenon. In the post-harvest period villagers swelled Bamako’s population for just a few months each year where they sought to secure sufficient cash funds to pay family taxes. Bamako’s population in 1907 was 6,000. By 1912 it was 7,000, still smaller than the historical cities of Ségou and Sikasso which had about 8,000 persons each at this time (Meillassoux, 1965: 127). However, Bamako grew both as a strategic transportation hub and an administrative centre. In 1904, the railway from Saint Louis reached the town and a steamship company started to operate on the river to Gao. A Chamber of Commerce was created in 1906 and in 1908 the capital of the colony of Haut Sénégal-Niger was transferred from Kayes to Bamako.

Bamako’s population therefore increased steadily during the first half of this century and almost tripled between 1926 to 1958 from 26,000 to 76,000. Though originally a Bambara city, the arrival of groups such as the Dioula (a collective name for several ethnic groups engaged in trade), the Malinké, Moors, Fula and Sarakolé meant that the city’s Bambara population constituted 47.5 per cent by the 1948 census and just 25 per cent by 1960 (Meillassoux, 1965: 127-28). Bamako did not face a major population explosion, however, until the late 1950s when a period of relative prosperity and economic exchange, following the end of forced labour, the launching of post-war development projects and the opening
of the country to political life, contributed to the doubling of the number of inhabitants in the city between 1957 and 1960.

In the immediate aftermath of Independence in 1960, policies introduced by the Keita administration and the US-RDA party attempted to contain rural-urban migration. Between 1960 and 1968 the government therefore initiated a programme to subsidise collective agriculture and establish state firms to run key sectors of the economy. Measures such as political recruitment and the establishment of technical, education and health structures in rural areas, ‘re-patriating’ unemployed migrants and the introduction of a travel permit system further restricted movement. Socialist political and economic ideology after independence, however, was a guise for state capitalism and new taxes funded the expansion of the ‘dependent bureaucracy’ inherited from the French.

Declining output and the government's fiscal crisis of 1968, during which the French intervened to assume control of Mali’s monetary policies, led to the overthrow of the Keita government in November 1968. The coup brought Moussa Traoré and a coalition of military and trading interests to power. The new government held pro-urban sympathies since its power base in the capital required low wages for urban labour and low prices for an expanding state bureaucracy. As a result of policies of urban preference, subsidies to co-operatives and price controls were withdrawn. This in turn led to low producer prices, the depression of rural living standards and increasing pressure on communities to find alternative income sources in the capital, pressures which became acute in the 1973 drought. It was during this period that harassment from state bodies, notably the forestry service, also contributed to rural out-migration as outlined in several testimonies (see for example p. 37).

By 1985 the proportion of Bamako’s resident population born elsewhere was 42 per cent. Unplanned and unauthorised settlements in Bamako, with greater availability of accommodation and cheaper rents, have absorbed the majority of the cityward migration. This is reflected in growth rates of 10-14 per cent per annum in poorer, peripheral settlements compared with 1.5 per cent per annum in older parts of the city (Vaa, 1990: 174). Table 1.1 illustrates the rapid growth of Bamako District to 1987.

Table 1.1 Population of Bamako District

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<th>1960</th>
<th>1976</th>
<th>1987</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>129,300</td>
<td>419,239</td>
<td>646,163</td>
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</table>

(Source: Bureau Central de Rencensement, 1991)

As Westen and Klute (1986) showed in a survey of migrants in Bamako conducted in 1983-84, Bamako’s contemporary migrant population is drawn largely from the northern fringe of continuous rainfed cultivation. Communities from the Dogon plateau and the San and Niore du Sahel areas are strongly represented while the southern borders of the country provide few migrants to Bamako because of opportunities on the West African coast. A detailed picture of inter-regional migration patterns is illustrated in Table 1.2

This shows that communities from the Ségou Region have experienced the highest level of inter-regional mobility, moving mainly to Bamako for marginal urban employment and Sikasso for agricultural labour. The district of Bamako is also the primary destination for migrants from the Regions of Kayes, Koulikoro and Sikasso while those from Mopti travel principally to Ségou and Bamako.
Table 1.2 Inter-Regional migration by place of birth and residence (1987)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Residence</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kayes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kayes</td>
<td>12,997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koulikoro</td>
<td>10,549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikasso</td>
<td>6,461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ségou</td>
<td>6,009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mopti</td>
<td>2,198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tombouctou</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gao</td>
<td>469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bamako</td>
<td>41,589</td>
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</table>

Total 67,715 123,974 73,646 135,317 82,666 85,349 24,122 53,164

(Source: Bureau Central de Rencensement, 1991: 120)

Migration patterns shaped by colonial and state interventions, pertain today. Rural-urban migration has been predominantly seasonal. In the dry season migrants leave their home communities after the harvest of rainfed crops is assessed, during the months from September to December, to diversify household income sources and limit the sale of productive assets. Migration is also a mechanism of hungry season adjustment during the ‘soudure’. The ‘soudure’, can last from June (the start of the rains) to September (the start of the harvest) and migrants may only return to their home communities from March to May. Table 1.3 illustrates the gross proportion of regional temporary migrations and demonstrates the contemporary significance of these strategies for communities in the Ségou, Koulikoro and Kayes Regions.

Table 1.3 Regional temporary percentages of out-migration in 1976 and 1987

<table>
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<th>Regions</th>
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<th>1987</th>
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<tr>
<td>Kayes</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koulikoro</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikasso</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ségou</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mopti</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>18.8</td>
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<td>Tombouctou</td>
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<td>Gao</td>
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<td>3.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bamako District</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>4.5</td>
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(Source: Analyse du recensement de 1976: Caractéristiques démographiques, Vol. 3: 181; Recensement Générale de la Population et de l’Habitat, 1987 Vd 0 Tome 1, Tableau P-1)

Migration strategies are shifting, however, and recent indications suggest that temporary or seasonal migration is now becoming less important. An increasing proportion of urban arrivals are forced to stay longer in Mali’s towns and cities because of the difficulties in finding urban employment, and, ‘... many seasonal migrants no longer return automatically at the beginning of the rainy season, but wait for messages from home that their help in the fields is wanted’ (Westen and Klute, 1986: 45). The increased permanency of the ‘urban stay’ has contributed to the expansion of Mali’s urban population, which, in 1987 constituted 22 per cent of the total (Doumbia, 1990: 30). Coupled with this the difficulties of access to international destinations and political insecurities have contributed to the trend of permanent cityward movement.
International Migration

It is commonly estimated that half the Malian population lives and works abroad. While such estimates are notoriously unreliable, they nevertheless indicate the relative importance of international migration for Malian communities. Migration to Côte d’Ivoire, the groundnut basin of Senegal and The Gambia, Ghana and more recently Libya, Gabon and Guinea has been a striking feature of household trading and coping strategies. For certain communities in Mali, migration to European destinations, notably France, has also been an important route. Two international destination countries are discussed here, Côte d’Ivoire, the world’s top cocoa producer, where it is estimated that over two million Malians are working, and France, which has a particular relevance for communities from Kayes Region.

Côte d’Ivoire

The consequences of colonial developments turned certain regions within West Africa into intake centres for migrants, while others became specialists in supplying labour (Touré, Quattara and Annan-Yao 1992: 16). Present day Côte d’Ivoire was, in pre-colonial times, a transitional zone between the Sahel in the north and the southern forest belt and coastal strip; it was also a passageway between the Mande country to the west and the Akan area to the east. Since 1880, with the introduction of cocoa and coffee, the southern regions of Côte d’Ivoire operated a plantation economy and became a notable ‘intake centre’. Migration has therefore been a central part of economic planning in Côte d’Ivoire, particularly after the Second World War when specific governmental recruitment programmes were designed to assure plantation labour. These policies, which particularly targeted Burkina Faso, included freedom of movement between Burkina Faso and Côte d’Ivoire, drafting labour, and subsidies for the Abidjan-Niger Railway to provide free transport for plantation workers. Private organisations such as the Inter-professional Association for Labour Transport continued the practice of providing free road and rail transportation from Burkina Faso to recruitment centres established in Bobo-Dioulasso, Ouagadougou and Koudougou, though the workforce continued to be attracted by the higher wages of gold mines in Ghana.

From the late 1960s, however, Côte d’Ivoire replaced Ghana as a major destination for Sahelian migrants. The country’s consistent economic growth, based on the plantation sector, has depended on migrant labour. In 1965 the population of foreigners in Côte d’Ivoire was estimated at 23 per cent. In 1975 immigrants made up 26 per cent of the economically active population, of which 726,000 (almost half) came from Burkina Faso, 349,000 from Mali and 106,000 from Guinea (Adepoju, 1988). By 1982, the proportion of foreign-born residents had risen to 25 per cent, with the Burkinabe representing 15 per cent of the Ivorien population. From 1976 to 1980, therefore, the net average annual population inflow was estimated at 94,000 (Touré, Quattara and Annan-Yao 1992: 17).

Stimulated by the development of infrastructure such as the Abidjan-Niger railway, road networks, ports and administrative, social and economic facilities, urban growth in Côte d’Ivoire has mirrored that of the agricultural areas. The urban population rose from 32,000 in 1921 (2.1 per cent of the total), to about 160,000 in 1950 (7.5 per cent). Between 1975 and 1985 the urban proportion of the population grew from 32 per cent (2,146,300) to 47.3 per cent (4,815,000). There are four main urban centres in Côte d’Ivoire drawing in large numbers of migrants. In order of magnitude they are Abidjan, Bouaké, San-Pédro and Yamoussoukro. Abidjan, the capital of Côte d’Ivoire since 1934, hosted 43 per cent of the foreign urban population in 1975 (Direction de la Statistique, 1977).

A survey of Malian migrants working in Côte d’Ivoire published in 1973 indicated that there has been a significant long-term constituency working on the coast. For young men (their average age on departure was 23), the sojourn in Côte d’Ivoire constituted on average 8.8 years or 61 per cent of their migrant career (Haeringer, 1973: 199). More recently, Painter (1994a) has indicated that Malian migrants in Côte d’Ivoire are aged between 31 and 33, that 74 per cent are semi-literate or literate and a high proportion are engaged in trade or worked as paid, often unskilled, labourers. On average migrants had been involved in
travelling to the coast for between 10 and 15 years. In terms of destination, it is commonly stated that the Malian Bobo in Côte d’Ivoire work in Abidjan, that the Gana from Niéna go to Khorogo and Abidjan, and that the Sarakolé from Banamba to Bouaké. Bouaké has long been considered as a Malian town on Ivoirien soil, and in Abidjan Malian migrants settle in popular suburbs such as Treichville, Adjame and Marcory.

The size of the Malian migrant population resident in Côte d’Ivoire has had political consequences for both the Malian and Ivoirien governments. The Malian government’s response has been on two fronts, concern for the drain on physical and financial resources induced by such high out-migration and recognition of the importance of the expatriate electorate. In the 1992 for example, 85.5 per cent of registered voters in Abidjan and 41.32 per cent in Bouaké voted in the Malian elections.

Since the death of President Houphouet-Boigny and the formation of ethnically-based political parties, the migrant population in Côte d’Ivoire has been represented as a potential threat to political and economic security. The slogan of ‘Côte d’Ivoire to the Ivoiriens’ and a new nationality law which restricts voting rights to people whose parents are Ivoirien by birth, have heightened the feeling of insecurity among migrants. The potential influence of the migrant population in Côte d’Ivoire was most recently exposed in the lead up to the Ivoirien parliamentary elections in November 1995. The consequences of the recent nationality laws introduced in Côte d’Ivoire, and the prospect of an increase in the cost of an entry permit from CFA 5,000 to CFA 50,000, highlight a long-standing insecurity for Malian migrants abroad. Despite the important role which Malian migrants play in Côte d’Ivoire’s economic life, integration into Ivoirien social, cultural and political spheres is extremely limited.

France

France has absorbed some of the largest immigration flows in Europe though the sources of immigrants have shifted over the past 30 years. While in 1968 Europeans accounted for 78 per cent of foreigners (mainly from Italy, Poland, Spain and Belgium), by 1990 they accounted for less than 50 per cent as migration from Algeria in particular expanded. As a consequence of the oil crisis, immigration on a large scale was officially halted in July 1974. From 1960 to 1974 entry had been relatively open: Malian migrants arriving in France had to have a simple Malian identity card and a medical at l’Office National de l’Immigration.

With the closing of the French frontiers on 1st January 1975 sojourns which had previously been short, from two to three years, have become longer. Nevertheless, family reunification, the decline in the numbers of returnees and the increasing number of clandestine entrants, have given immigration a high degree of immunity to policy intervention. An amnesty for illegal immigrants, declared in 1981 did not end illegal immigration and by 1990, an estimated 200,000 illegal immigrants were living in France, generally from the same countries as legal immigrants. The capacity of the French economy to absorb the immigrant population is an indication of the growing trend towards subcontracting and the use of a ‘precarious’ workforce to provide labour market flexibility. The economic depression has hit the migrant community hard, however, both in terms of unemployment and political backlash which led to the initiation of voluntary repatriation schemes in 1991.

In 1982 the French census recorded 87,000 West African born citizens (Makinwa-Adebusoye, 1992). Malian migrations to France began in the 1960s. In 1968 there were 6,556 Malians in France, a figure which grew to 12,530 by 1975 and 24,250 by 1982 (Garson, 1992: 88). The French census of 1990 indicated that 37,693 Malians were resident in France, though it may be assumed that illegal immigrations would increase this figure. The census enumeration nevertheless represents a 55 per cent increase on the 1982 total. This rise is largely attributed to family reunion since 1981, the consequences of which are revealed in the facts that the Malian population comprises a high proportion of women (37 per cent of the total figure) and that 32.3 per cent of the population is aged less than 15 (Daum, 1994a). The most striking feature of Malian emigration to France, however, is the location of the sending communities. Since the early 1970s, when Abela de la Riveire estimated that there were between 10-15,000 Sarakolé from the Senegal River Valley area living in Paris and its suburbs (1973: 7), the
pattern has been reproduced. Current estimates suggest that up to 95 per cent of Malian emigrants in France originate from the Kayes Region.
THE SOCIAL ORGANISATION OF MIGRATION

While the magnitude and economic patterns of Malian migration are outlined above, it is also necessary to examine the social dimensions of migration strategies. This section examines the way in which the migration process is organised. It assesses conceptual frameworks of mobility affecting Malian livelihoods, the factors contributing to regional migration variations, the influence of gender and the role of social networks. Together these factors illustrate that migration is a socially and culturally organised process.

Action Spaces

One of the most informative ways of looking at Sahelian migration is through the concept of ‘action space.’ This approach highlights responses to changes in income-generating opportunities and constraints and refers to the geographical and temporal distribution of livelihood options that agriculturalists and pastoralists exploit. It illustrates that population mobility is not only related to household survival needs but that migration also represents an adaptive strategy to shifts in the pattern of available opportunities. The relevance of the concept of ‘action space’ is therefore linked to the markedly uneven pattern of development, in terms of agro-climatic conditions, natural resource endowments and development programmes, that distinguish the Sahelian area from the savannah and coastal areas of the south (Painter, Sumberg and Price, 1993: 10). The ‘action space’ approach therefore closely corresponds to conceptual frameworks adapted from portfolio investment theory which demonstrate that migration decisions are ordered by household income demands and are met by a diversified portfolio of male and female labourers such that, ‘... families allocate their labor assets over geographically dispersed and structurally different markets to reduce risk’ (Stark, 1992: 27).

There is therefore a range of places to which people move and activities which they conduct to spread risks and sustain incomes. High degrees of regional mobility are relevant for households in each of the regional case studies and illustrate how migrants negotiate complex action-spaces through strategies of circulatory migration. Ousmane Koné, a 39 year old married farmer from Bénéné, Tominian, for example, had been working for some time in Bouaké, Côte d’Ivoire, before returning home in 1983 to work his family’s land. He practised this for 3 years before leaving for Bamako where he spent 6 months selling charcoal. After helping his family at home in Bénéné during the rainy season of 1987 he left for Mopti. In the following season he moved to Bamako but could not find work and returned after a month. In 1989 he left again for Côte d’Ivoire, this time to Abidjan, to sell charcoal. He returned to Bénéné after the dry season and has not left since, but with the money he earned he has invested in livestock and now trades cattle in surrounding markets. From Kayes Region migrants, such as Hamedy Dramé from the village of Dialané who has worked in Paris (1976), Libya (1978), Bamako (1985) and New York (1992) and is now a trader in Bamako’s central market, may exploit even larger action-spaces.

A common feature of the Malian migration process, consistent with the ‘action space’ approach, is the pattern of ‘step-migration’. In this way migrants ‘phase’ their journey by working in a series of towns or agricultural areas before proceeding to the next step. This pattern is complicated in Mali, not only by the costs of transportation but also by fines imposed for the failure to produce identification cards and immunisation certificates which are not issued to people from rural areas. From some communities parents will fund the trip, which they see as an investment in their future security, but in other areas migrants may devote land and time to producing cash crops such as peanuts to pay for their journey and some may steal from their family. The trip to Côte d’Ivoire, however is expensive and the migrant may become indebted to the driver of the truck taking them to the coast. In this situation the migrants are forced to work on plantations owned by the truck drivers in Côte d’Ivoire for several months to pay off the costs of the trip and to be able to travel on to the capital. The process of ‘step-migration’ is outlined in Figure 1.2 which is based on migration strategies among migrants from Kouma in Tominian Cercle, Ségou Region. Here many young
villagers see migration as an escape from rural duties, drudgery and poverty, and many testimonies report that young people leave the family without parental consent.

Figure 1. The costs of ‘step-migration’

- **Kouma**: Sell cash crop, borrow or steal
- **San**: Fine for ID card - CFA 500
- **Sikasso**: Fine for ID card - CFA 1,000
- **Pogo (Côte d’Ivoire)**: No immunisation card - CFA 1,000
- **Bouaké**: Work for truck-driver on plantation
- **Abidjan**: 'Action space’ theory and its variants have two significant implications for standard sociological and economic approaches to migration. Firstly, wage differentials between areas have been taken as key determinants in migratory strategies (Todaro, 1969). The issue of risk minimisation in decision-making, however, indicates that family members may be allocated to an area to work predominantly to expand the portfolio of the family’s income-generating opportunities and not because wage rates are higher at the destination than at the place of origin (United Nations, 1994: 8). Secondly, in contrast with sociological approaches which proposed a rural-urban dichotomy in which the solidarities of rural society are eroded by the specialisation of urban labour, it is evident that the urban and rural poor have devised interactive coping strategies which include the intensification of rural-urban linkages. Indeed, analysts of the contraction in the rural-urban income gap in Africa’s economies since the 1970s suggest that, “It was never correct to divide African labour markets into neat categories - rural/urban, formal/informal. Most workers have always straddled both the rural and urban sector (“circulatory migration”) and the formal and informal sector (“moonlighting”)” (Jamal and Weeks, 1988: 289).

**Regional Variations and household status**

As the ‘action space’ framework indicates, regional variations in mobility are linked to the economic opportunities afforded by prevailing agro-climatic conditions. In Mali, therefore, the dryland areas of the north, which have a higher seasonal labour demand and a longer slack period, generate seasonal, long-distance migrants because of the absence of local dry season income generating opportunities. In this way it is argued that, “… short-term migration appears as a means of compensating for an insecure long-term position vis-à-vis agricultural production in the household’ (Mazur, 1984: 228). Regional variations in migration patterns in Mali are also characterised in terms of ethnicity (see for example, Traore, 1994). A series of analyses, however, has indicated that household-level socio-economic circumstances are more significant factors than ethnicity in determining the pattern of labour migration and
allocation. It is apparent that resource poor households are likely to be labour sellers while resource rich households are likely to be labour buyers and therefore, as Mazur’s findings show, ‘...higher socio-economic class is generally supportive of long-term migration and implies that ‘better-off’ households are able to bear the cost of long-term migrants’ foregone labour’ (1984: 257). Higher rates of migration are also expected among larger and more complex households, and individuals in marginal positions within the household, those who are younger or more distantly related to the head of household, have less to lose by migration.

In a comparative analysis of Soninké and Bambara villages, Lewis (1978) illustrates that household redistributive strategies have an equally significant influence over migration behaviour and that concentration on ethnic differences obscures factors of social organisation. He observes that young migrants from Soninké communities cannot be attracted back from wage labour opportunities along the coast because of the market-orientation of agricultural production. In contrast, migrants from Bambara villages were reported to return from dry season jobs in Côte d’Ivoire with more regularity because the product of their farming labour is not marketed or disposed of by the household head but is rather invested in the form of grain reserves. The Bambara compound granary therefore serves to feed labourers who stay in the village and represents a significant marriage asset.

Household status is also a key determinant in migration strategies among women. Female migrations are generally overlooked because of the focus on economic migration and because women are not perceived to contribute significant resources in maintaining the family’s economic status (Findley and Diallo, 1993: 17). Since female migrants are assumed to be motivated by marriage they are stereotyped as ‘associational migrants’ (Adepoju, 1995: 94). In some regions in Mali, however, the proportion of young girls who are away at a given time to work in the cities is very high. Usually, they are seasonal migrants, but some turn into permanent urban dwellers, who ‘graduate’ from housework into small-scale trade (Vaa, 1990: 174). The 1976 census, for example, showed that women were more mobile than men as 24.1 per cent of men and 37.5 per cent of women had migrated (Analyse du recensement de 1976, Vol. 3: 173). This is confirmed by Westen and Klute’s survey (1986) which indicated that of those migrants who had lived in Bamako for up to 3 years, women represented 54 per cent of the total.

Indeed, a number of recent studies have focused on female strategies of autonomous migration which are directed towards attaining economic independence through self-employment or wage income which would assure them greater control over their productive resources. A number of factors influencing female migration have promoted autonomous migration. Foremost among these are the changing structure of economic activities. In communities from the Senegal River Valley, for example, Findley and Diallo (1993) argue that the gender selectivity of migration has reduced dramatically. This is particularly relevant following periods of economic crisis during which gender role expectations are relaxed and women may be more directly involved in strategies to provide basic staples (Findley and Diallo, 1991: 5).

Since women’s educational achievement and participation in the wage sector are both very low in Mali, household status, a woman’s position within the household and potential to control household resources, serves as the most significant factor in determining female migration strategies. Lower household status relative to other women is therefore seen to induce greater mobility. Characteristic features of female migrants are that they are unmarried adolescents, divorced, widowed or separated women, that they are more distantly related to the head of household, that they are younger than non-migrants, that they belong to households with more adult workers, and that they come from families with prior migration experience and which suffer frequent grain deficits.

Regional economic conditions and household structure are also significant in shaping remittance flows. The areas of ecological vulnerability, the desert fringe and the northern area of rainfed cultivation generally receive staple foods while remittances to the agricultural core area of commercial cropping consists of less basic items like clothing. Those
from the north are therefore seen to contribute a far higher proportion of their urban income to the welfare of their families at home than those from less ecologically vulnerable areas. This pattern is reinforced by issues of culture and language since it has also been asserted that, 'The intention to return is markedly stronger among migrants from those parts of the country which are socio-culturally and linguistically different from Bamako' (Westen and Klute, 1986: 47). The intention to return home, along with factors such as the length of stay in Bamako and the nature of home ties, is a significant influence on remittance-sending. Few recent arrivals have the resources to contribute and long-term residents gradually stop sending money because they are returning home soon or their families have moved to the cities. Those intending to return home are therefore more likely to remit, since prospective return-migrants maintain stronger links with their areas of origin than 'new urbanites'.

Independent of regional factors, the benefits from migration accruing to the rural household are seen to depend on levels of food security. Remittances from migration are seen to be more important to food secure families than to insecure since they provide a means to invest in agricultural equipment and as a crisis management tool (Sunberg and D'Agostino, 1990: 7). Grain surplus households can therefore employ a range of migratory strategies to generate private income and accumulate their own sources of wealth (Toulmin, 1986: 65). For the migrant, failure to provide remittances or to return home with goods is a source of social embarrassment. While those who have left on the grounds of a family dispute may not be able to return at all, the situation for others is complicated by social expectations. Migrants may be ashamed to return home if they have not acquired the necessary cultural symbols and the element of social display is an important feature of the migration process in demonstrating the success of the visit:

The first market after you return is very important. If you have brought home some money and some goods you will show off what you have got. If you have brought back nothing you will just be ashamed.

Marima Djibo, Bankass

The Cultural Dimensions of Migration

While the theory of ‘action-space’ is based on the exploitation of economic opportunities it is apparent that personal and cultural dimensions are also important in organising the migratory process. Women often migrate to earn enough money to buy the clothes they require for marriage (trousseau), men may migrate to acquire status symbols such as guns, bicycles and radios, and both men and women migrate because of domestic quarrels as the following testimonies illustrate:

My family told me they could not afford to pay for my marriage so I came to Bamako to earn money. My friend who works as a maid fixed me up with this job. Before I started, I thought this was going to be a good job but I now realise it’s too much work for the money, CFA 5,000 a month, and I haven’t been able to save anything.

Mariam Ongoibo, Dolo, Bankass

I went on my first migration when I was 19. That year I found no work, but my friends helped me. The next year I came home with a Motorbicane motorbike. My father was pleased, and I was excited to go again.

Alai Gindu, Bankass

I was fed-up with my husband. I went to Koutiala where I worked preparing local beer. I left with a relative who knew the job and she paid for the transport. It cost us CFA 1,000 each to get a lorry from Kimpinara to Koutiala. I earned a lot brewing beer with other women. I sent money home to my father’s house not to my husband. This is the tradition - ‘when you are quarrelling with your husband someone else has to lead you to your husband’s house’.

Saboussé Théra, Kouma, Tominian
Other cultural incentives may also represent prime motives for migration. As Vaa indicates, urban centres not only present employment opportunities but are also, ‘... educational centers and places to receive medical treatment...’ (1990: 179). For minority ethnic groups in Mali the issue of language is a significant contributory factor to rural-urban migration. The ability to speak Bambara, the most widely-spoken language in Mali, is necessary to achieve socio-professional integration and promotion. As Sanou Konaté from Kouana in Tominian explains, ‘I was worth more than my companions because I spoke Bambara.’ Similarly, the testimony related in Annex 2 (p. 67) describes how learning English in Ghana was perceived as the language of ‘magic and fortune.’

In Côte d’Ivoire migrants with children often send them home to be educated in Mali’s free schools and to ensure that their children speak the language of the village of origin and are not cast as tamboudia (‘children without roots’). This process of securing home ties represents one of several cultural responses to the situation of political insecurity which Malians are facing in Côte d’Ivoire. Other strategies include settlement of migrants in ethnically-based quarters, a reluctance to invest in Côte d’Ivoire (see p. 47) and repatriation of family members. Among certain groups, such as the Dogon, migrants also attempt to conceal their identity from Ivoirien authorities by adopting the surname ‘Guindo’ (meaning simply Dogon) and assuming Muslim forenames so that, ‘they cannot be found in their village if they commit an offence or rob someone’ (see p. 67).

Social Networks

Circulatory migration serves as both a conduit for resources, such as remittances, and by providing information about urban opportunities it integrates the opportunity structure of destination areas into the options available in sending areas. Pressure to migrate, for example, is exerted by the display of goods and clothes by return migrants:

I was 10 years old when I saw migrants return to the village in their new clothes. I wanted to go immediately and I left with an older relative who knew Bamako.

Kinanou Théra, Kouma, Tominian

The process of circulatory migration therefore establishes networks which are ‘sets of interpersonal ties that link migrants, former migrants and non-migrants in origin and destination areas through the bonds of kinship, friendship and shared community origin’ (Massey, 1988: 396). Networks link sending and receiving communities and provide a coherent structure for populations of migrants (Gurak and Caces,1992: 150). Migrant networks serve not only to facilitate migration but also to support migrants in urban adaptation. The roles of migrant networks may therefore be classified as selective and adaptive. Access to a network of migrants is a key factor in determining who migrates from communities and households and influences the selection of destinations. At the same time the network also acts as a framework for adaptation, buffering migrants from the costs and disruptions of migration, insulating migrants from the destination society and securing their links to the society of origin. Even at the household level family life is also organised to accommodate the process of circulatory migration:

I am very happy to come back home to help my family. If there was not the need to get money to support the family during the dry times I would definitely stay here. I have two wives, they are both from the village. I take one with me each season to Mopti, and the next season I take the other.

Boukaré Sagara, Dogo, Bankass

People are ‘destinations’ as much as places. Knowing that a friend or relative will help the new arrival in the city is an important consideration, and in Bamako, as is indicated by the testimony below, there are many cases of established traders, particularly women, who ease the transition for the increasing number of young girls moving to the city by providing accommodation, employment opportunities, resolving disputes with employers, guarding migrant’s money and contributing to costs of the return trip.
When I went to Bamako I left with a group of girls my age. I was 10 years old but my mother still gave me money for the fare. We went to find work to buy clothes, that was our only motivation. We went via San and Ségou to Bamako. When I arrived in Bamako I stayed with Worome Keita who was a famous trader from our village. She found me a job as a housemaid for a civil servant. I spent three years there and Worome looked after my money until I came home.

Koumalia Keita, Kouma, Tominian

The operation of the migrant networks among domestic classes in Bamako therefore corresponds to Okediji’s study (1978) which highlights the importance of social networks in facilitating female domestic employment in Lagos. The study suggested that, in the absence of formal contractual agreements, the kinship and community network, ‘... operates to guarantee optimum commitment to mutual understandings and to prevent undue exploitation’ (Okediji, 1978: 204).

Indeed, the functions of the network are seen to be particularly important for women in Mali. It represents significantly more than a cost or risk-reducing device and leads observers to suggest that, ‘More than for men, women’s migration will be facilitated if not determined by the numbers and locations of prior migrants from the family and wider village community. In Mali, networking is structured by gender.’ (Findley and Diallo, 1993: 5). Adaptive network functions are equally important for women in Bamako. Among groups of female migrants engaged in food production, soap manufacture and trade, for example, networks based on systems of reciprocity offer mechanisms to assure their livelihoods. The patterns of obligations, of giving and reimbursing, reinforce social links. The extension and diversification of friendship networks, based on reciprocal gift-giving arrangements, has been identified as a significant strategy to insure and prolong urban residence (Findley, Vaa and Diallo, 1990).

By making available information and other resources to potential migrants, networks serve to lower the costs incurred in relocation (Massey, 1988: 397). It is therefore argued that, because of the higher costs involved, the network is more important for international migration. Indeed, the network influences migration decisions and adaptation to a degree that often insulates migration flows from the control of policy restrictions. In the European case, for example, successive migration waves and the high turnover of foreign labour that characterised the 1950s and 1960s created the impression that temporary migration could be controlled and would decline during an economic slow-down. This interpretation, however, overlooked several aspects of the growth dynamics of the foreign population such as family reunification and the role of social networks since ‘The continuation of migration movements even under restrictive policies is, to a great extent, a consequence of functioning social networks of migrants: the established immigrants use their rights and means to bring in relatives, friends, and acquaintances’ (European Commission, 1994: 12). The operation of the network may also make migration independent of objective economic conditions since it can serve to, ‘... inject a self-perpetuating dynamism into flows of population, which allows movement to continue long after the original, usually economic, reasons for the flow may have been superseded or rendered redundant’ (United Nations, 1994: 11).

For long-distance, and especially international migrants, social networks have also developed as welcoming centres in urban areas. On their arrival in Paris Malian migrants join village foyers or hostels. Fellow villagers help with food provided in canteens run by migrants and with finding a job. Once in employment the migrant’s priorities are to pay their rent and food, to reimburse loans from villagers in Paris and to contribute to the collective fund for the village. Migrant communities in Senegal and Côte d’Ivoire originating from the Senegal River Valley also developed welcoming centres known as xompe xoore among the Soninké and suude among the Haalpulaar as early as the First World War. In Bamako, the migrant network also serves as a société de mariage. With a high proportion of migrants marrying in Bamako these societies generate funds to contribute to the costs of weddings, naming ceremonies and burials. These societies continue to flourish and share the same lack of formality indicated in the 1960s when it was observed that, ‘Such an association is very loose and in a sense hardly deserves the title. There are no fees, no periodic meetings, no
appointed leaders. It operates on the assumption that the people ... who dwell in Bamako are still citizens of their home town. It is the prolongation into the city of village life and loyalties; it carries into town the concerns and problems of the village (Meillassoux, 1968: 78).
Migrant Associations

Networks, hostels and associations form the institutional framework which migrants enter on arrival in the city. The term migrant association refers to a form of community-based organisation established by urban migrant groups who share a common rural identity. Associations perform many of the adaptive functions of networks and hostels but also serve as representatives of the community and raise funds for investment in development activities at home. In Francophone West Africa they have been known as associations d’originaires or associations des ressortissants. Elsewhere in Africa associations are known as home town improvement unions (Nigeria) or rabitas (‘the tie that binds us together’) in Sudan.

The formation of migrant associations in sub-Saharan Africa dates back to the 1920s. Since that time opinions have been divided on the roles they have played and the interests they have served. Indeed, the position of migrant associations in Africa’s social, political and economic development has been subject to an array of contrasting and apparently contradictory interpretations. These groups have been described as both welfare systems for poor migrants and vehicles for a politically ambitious elite. They capture the youth’s dynamism and yet institutionalise the position of traditional hierarchies. They represent a model of innovative community-managed development but invest in conspicuous social infrastructure. They are participatory and accountable institutions but neglect women and are subject to individualism, clientelism and inter-community competition. They are structures of ethnic particularism but also pluralising agents within civil society.

Migrant associations are often claimed to represent the transfer of rural institutions to recreate and reinforce traditional identities and systems in the urban milieu. Indeed, it has been argued that these types of social organisation are associated with ethnic groups based on segmentary lineage structures such as the Igbo in Nigeria, the Luo and Luhya in Kenya, and the Gurage in Ethiopia, and that they compensate for the absence of specialised authority roles (Parkin, 1966; Southall, 1975; Fecadu, 1970). This substitution of roles is identified in the lineage functions, such as burial, which migrant associations perform. At the same time, however, as we are reminded, ‘... people do not come to town merely to reconstruct village institutions’ (Meillassoux, 1968: 75). While these cultural forms are persistent, they assume new meanings and functions in the reorientation of rural identities to town life. Commentators have therefore highlighted the role of migrant associations as, ‘... the newly arrived migrants’ response to urban conditions,’ (Little, 1965: 24), and as adaptive institutions in which, ‘... migrants from egalitarian tribes adapt to the urban ‘class’ system by using traditional social units and arranging them in some hierarchy by formalising certain of their activities through associations’ (Parkin, 1966: 92-93).

Representing migrant associations as either conservative or innovative adaptations to urban life, however, obscures the multiplicity of roles they perform. Indeed, it is precisely their fusion of seemingly contradictory strategies of social organisation, the ‘... creative cultural combinations of old and new’ (Jules-Rosette, 1979: 20), which provides the dynamic for communities to negotiate urban life and rural development.

This dialectical process is apparent, for example, in an examination of certain features such as leadership roles. Elders retain status in migrant associations, often acting as patrons. For example, the first associations established in Paris by migrants from the Senegal River Valley, the keesin lemne, a small grouping of people from the same village, and keesin xoore, a larger group based on lineage relationship, were both based on a gerontocratic model (Daum, 1992: 73). Yet while traditional leadership plays its part, so migrant associations are also dominated by a multitude of offices and positions uncommon to rural social structure. Office holding in the Temne ‘companies’ in Sierra Leone, for example, indicated that migrant associations were, ‘... resocialising agencies in which aspiring young people taught themselves the principles of conduct in an achievement-oriented society’ (Banton, 1965: 143).
Similarly, migrant associations act as agents of cultural defence in urban environments. Community boundaries are most sharply defined in the city and migrant associations help both to preserve rural traditions and to reconstruct ethnic identities. Indeed, it has often been argued that ethnicity itself is constructed by competition for resources in the urban political environment. The importance of migrant associations in reinforcing and re-configuring migrant identities, however, is most pertinent in the Malian context for minority ethnic groups such as the Bobo and Dogon whose associations have the purposes of retaining cultural integrity and enhancing national bargaining power. The dichotomy often drawn between culture and development planning, however, is false and misleading since it is predicated upon the assumption that culture is inimical to change (Robertson, 1984). The case studies illustrate that these cultural organisations are also agents of continuity and change. Migrant associations generate and channel home significant resources for development initiatives and translate national and international development agendas into local terms.

Meillassoux suggested that since 1960, when the single-party mobilised the population into a comprehensive network of official organisations, voluntary associations in Mali have been losing ground. A high proportion of Malian associations were not registered during this time but continued to operate, however. In each of the regional case studies many associations were established or re-formed in the late 1980s but were linked to previous groups dating to at least the early 1950s and often based on ethnic identities. By the late 1980s registration had become easier and since 1991 and the advent of multi-party democracy associational life has flourished.

Migrant associations in Mali are formed and managed as cultural responses to both rural and urban change, and are therefore characterised by broad variations of organisational strategy in the support they provide for urban and rural groups. Associations at the level of the region or ethnic group, dominated by the intellectual and commercial elite, often act exclusively as financiers for rural projects and provide few services to urban migrants. Instead this role is left to the myriad of groups and networks representing villages and neighbourhoods. Such associations, based on villages or village-groups, ‘... value solidarity based on common origin and social distinction founded on birth’ (Meillassoux, 1968: 145), and therefore generally display a highly inclusive membership composition, placing few financial barriers on recruiting migrants who are often poorly educated and in low-paid jobs. For these migrants social solidarity and welfare are central to their urban arrival. Indeed, the majority of the associations they join combine urban support with rural transfers, link poor and elite, and incorporate social integration with community cohesion.

The urban functions of Malian associations illustrate their role in supporting migrants’ integration into urban life. For resource poor, economically marginalised urban groups unable to generate or attract rural investment such as the Bobo groups from Ségou Region, activities are often confined to the provision of urban services. A survey of the members of the L’Association pour le Développement Economique et Social des Cercles de San et Tominian (ADESAT), for example, showed that 33 per cent of male members and 78 per cent of women had received no formal schooling, while 29 per cent of men and 81 per cent of women were in domestic service, as child-minders, cooks, and guards. With a large and residentially dispersed membership, ADESAT has formed sub-committees in each of Bamako’s quartiers in which members are entitled to receive CFA 15,000 for family bereavements or social events.

It is common to find emergency funds for marriages, burials and naming ceremonies at the centre of migrant association activities. Indeed, as Meillassoux noted of a range of voluntary organisations in Bamako in the late 1960s, ‘... practically no association, whatever its main purpose, fails to function as a société de mariage’ (1968: 75). The associations therefore provide an important source of credit and support in urban social life while also facilitating the job-finding process. One village association hires carts to newly-arrived migrants so that they can work as porters in the market, for example, and Ginnadogon (an association representing the Dogon ethnic group from Mopti Region) is constructing a training centre to prepare new migrants to take up employment in Bamako.20
Migrant associations are also engaged in the transfer of resources for community development at home, though the variations in capital distribution are often glossed as status or ethnic differences (Lewis, 1978: 31). It is evident, however, that one of the key functions of the social networks which migrants enter in the city is that they perpetuate the group’s economic niche. The level of resources generated by Bobo associations from the Tominian district, for example, whose members generally occupy marginal urban positions, is therefore extremely modest. The rural functions of associations such as the Youth Association of Kouana and the Bureau pour le Développement des Paysans du Cercle de Tominian (representing three villages), are confined to making annual contributions towards village cereal banks. These are community managed cereal stores which act as insurance mechanisms against poor harvests. In 1992 the village association in Kouana asked the migrants for money to help re-stock the cereal bank and 32 members in Bamako raised CFA 18,000.

By contrast, a breakdown of the projects undertaken in the Arrondissement of Touba in Koulikoro Region since the early 1980s reveals a very different pattern and scale of rural investment. The youth association representing Touba is sponsored by a prominent network of Sarakolé commercial interests in Bamako including the Sylla family, identified by Meiillassoux as important pre-colonial traders (1971: 186). Between 1981 and 1992 the projects implemented in the small market centre of Touba and surrounding villages, a population of 22,832, included the construction of additional classrooms for 5 schools, a health centre with dispensary, maternity ward and laboratory, an electrification program, a post office, 4 wells, 2 water towers, and 2 irrigation dams. Together these projects represented a total investment of CFA 1,730,599,407 or a pre-devaluation figure of 6.9 million US Dollars. Of this total, 91 per cent was generated by the migrant community.

Migrant associations based in international destinations, notably France and Côte d’Ivoire also provide support for new arrivals and finance rural development initiatives. Associations in France, based on the early networks which maintained community funds, have expanded since 1981, when the 1939 legislation restricting association membership to foreigners was repealed (Brosse,1994). Representing predominantly Sarakolé networks these associations have engaged in regular dialogue with home communities on rural development issues and have mobilised similarly significant resource transfers. In a survey of 39 migrant associations from communities in the Senegal River Valley (Kayes Region), 96 projects implemented between 1970 and 1991 were assessed. These projects, 26 per cent of which were in the agricultural sector (mainly irrigated rice cultivation), amounted to a capital resource flow of over 7 million French Francs or 1.47 million US Dollars (Daum 1992: 78). These resource transfers, however, are often subject to criticism. In the case of Muslim institutions in particular, secularists in Mali refuse to recognise community-based contributions towards medersas, clinics and pharmacies, since they assume that the proliferation of mosques, the more visible achievements, prevents the associations from meeting pressing social needs (Brenner, 1993: 71).

Côte d’Ivoire has a long history of associational life. Regional associations were led from the 1930s onwards by graduates of William Ponty and Bringeville colleges who were recruited into civil service or as employees on commercial farms and inhabited sectors of town known as ‘komikro’ (village of clerks). These were new men who identified with the population at large as they shared opposition to forced labour and the Vichy’s attempts to reinforce the power of the chiefs. In 1959, 200 such associations were based in Treichville and Amon d’Aby noted that after independence associations formed by local elites began to represent all the inhabitants of a cercle or many cercles to pursue territorial development (1952: 36).

The range of voluntary associations in Abidjan served as a communication network for urban residents of common ethnic, regional or even village origin. A survey of the quartiers of Marory and Nouveau Koumani, for example, found that 60 per cent of residents were members of voluntary associations (Gibal, 1968 quoted in Cohen, 1974: 97). These associations were later co-opted by the Partie Democratique de Côte d’Ivoire (PDCI) as mobilising agents:
We transformed the ethnic associations into party sub-committees. Where they did not exist, we helped the tribes to organize original ones. Only in this way could we communicate with the members, collect dues, and pass down party directives in the various local languages (Mathieu Ekra quoted in Cohen, 1974: 98).

By 1970 the decision was announced at the PDCI congress to replace the comités ethniques by comités de quartier (Campbell, 1978).

Associations among immigrant groups in Côte d’Ivoire have provided significant social welfare support. Created at the initiative of community elders, youth associations among Burkinabe migrants, for example, aimed to defend and preserve cultural origins. Many Burkinabe members, from the Mossi, Lobi, Bobo and Gourounsi groups, were born in Côte d’Ivoire or had arrived in the country with their parents at a young age (Blion, 1995). Though the Association of Malians in Côte d’Ivoire is represented in most towns in Côte d’Ivoire and is recognised by the Ivorian government most Malian groups are informal. Abidjan is not the destination for educated elites and professionals and the large seasonal element of migration to the coast further mitigates against the formation of durable well-financed associations. Those associations which are represented in Côte d’Ivoire generally represent larger constituencies since there may not be sufficient numbers of migrants from individual villages to form organisations. However, Malian associations in Côte d’Ivoire play important mutual aid roles; their contributions are particularly valuable for repatriation. Founded in 1992 in Abidjan, for example, the Association des Jeunes Ressortissants de Niéna collects CFA 500 each month from its 41 members. Though they have undertaken no development programme in Niéna their support for migrants’ urban needs, for example contributions to a burial in 1992 and an illness in 1993 for which the association distributed a total of CFA 146,250, highlights the role of such institutions as collective insurance mechanisms. The association also provides trading opportunities for new arrivals:

I raised the money for my adventure when I was 15 years old by selling goods on the main road. I left for Côte d’Ivoire where I spent a month with my cousins before travelling to Burkina Faso and Niger where I was able to earn enough money to go to Libya. I had to go back home to make up with my father and then left for Côte d’Ivoire again working in Bouaké, Man, Yamoussokro, San Pedro and Divo Gagnoa on my way to Abidjan. There I contacted the migrant association from my village (l’Association des Jeunes Ressortissants de Niéna) and they helped to set me up in the city selling kola nuts. Now I personally finance problems that other migrants encounter. I have already begun putting things in place (a house and a shop) for my return to Niéna.

Sibiri Togola, Niéna

Associations in Côte d’Ivoire are therefore not engaged in a dialogue with rural communities on rural development priorities. Rather, many act as ‘passive financiers’ and depend on individual contributions to rural development made by established Malians in Côte d’Ivoire:

I come from Bandiagara. I have been in Abidjan for 45 years after several years in Bamako where I was a mechanic. I repaired motorbikes and then cars. I bought a taxi, then two and then I opened a garage. Today I still live frugally but I don’t have to work anymore because I have accumulated a modest fortune. Before I only had time to make my living but now I have begun to think of my village. I have financed the construction of a school and every year I send money home for the village. This has helped them pay taxes and build an irrigation dam to provide a water supply for market gardening.

A. Toto, Bandiagara
Malian migrant associations enable communities to negotiate both rural-urban and state-society relations. The regional case studies focus primarily on the role of migrant associations, but also highlight the roles of a broad range of local institutional processes with which they interact. Indeed, to categorise migrant associations as a particular type of institution with the rational, bureaucratic and legal framework that this implies can be misleading. Instead, emphasis should be placed on how issues are arranged and how activities are managed between people and groups (see Nuijten, 1992). This analysis of the processes rather than the structures of local institutional development reveals that the dynamics of migrant association operations in Mali draw on a range of other, often traditional, community practices. Migrant associations should therefore be situated within the Malian institutional landscape, and the relationship between the state and civil society.

Civil society is being re-introduced as a concept into the political analysis of Africa because of the perceived over-emphasis on the role of the state. In many African states at independence civil society possessed formal power through systems of representation such as trade unions and political parties established by decolonisation. This formal power was quickly eroded and thereafter its informal strength was often obscured by state hegemony. Civil society itself is now regularly defined as, ‘...a vast ensemble of constantly changing groups and individuals whose only common ground is their exclusion from the state, their consciousness of their externality and their potential opposition to the state’ (Chabal, 1994: 84).

The central aspect of state-society relations for most recent analyses has been to examine the effectiveness of strategies through which local organisations compete and lobby for access to governmental resources on behalf of their community of origin. In particular, they focus on the brokerage and linkage functions which local organisations perform in holding the state accountable to local concerns. Indeed, some question whether, as agents of community representation, ‘...the destruction of ethnic associations, among Africa’s most vital social institutions, will not also destroy some of the main guarantors of the popular right to argue about political accountability’ (Lonsdale, 1986: 141).

This oppositional model of state and civil society, however, is unhelpful in analysing the external linkages maintained by the African associative movement. State-society relations are a ‘precarious balance’ and arguing this relationship in Africa as one of subjection and resistance obscures the spheres of negotiation, of congruence, competition and compromise; as Bayart argues, ‘The notion of civil society is thus an ambivalent (and not just conflictive), complex and dynamic relation between state and society’ (1986: 112). It is therefore necessary to account for both the practices of power and ideologies of development exercised by the state, and the options of ‘voice and exit’ held by civil societies (Lemarchand, 1992). In the Malian context the domination of state institutions has left community-based organisations little option but to exit from the state. Even since 1991, the associations have operated almost entirely outside the state’s sphere.

State Administration

At Independence in 1960 Mali inherited a highly centralised organisational system. Colonial rule was based on arrondissements as the basic level of administration: these were grouped into cantons, cercles and then into regions (six regions in total in Mali). The cantons reproduced the socio-political reality of pre-colonial small fiefdoms or provinces extant at the time of the conquest. After Independence, the Keita regime sought to crush local traditional institutions. It suppressed canton chieftaincies, degrading them to the status of village chiefs, and tried to centralise all governance within the state’s administrative structure (Dennison and Thomson, 1992).

Since 1960, Malian civil society was limited and channelled through the structures of the single party and various corporatist groups. In addition to the single party, Union...
Democratique du Peuple Malien (UDPM), Malian society was therefore officially organised into a single union (the Union Nationale des Travailleurs de Mali, or UNTM), a business organisation (the Chambre de Commerce), a youth organisation (the Union Nationale des Jeunes du Mali, or UNJM), and a woman’s organisation (the Union Nationale des Femines du Mali, or UNFM), all affiliated to the party.

At the local level the chef administratif and the village council, were both elected structures carried over from the French, though in practice, the ‘elders’ of founding families of the village and of their allies largely benefitted from these positions. In addition to the administrative hierarchy, Comités Locale pour le Développement (CLDs) were established in 1982. CLDs, at arrondissement, cercle and regional levels are responsible for instituting development programmes issued under national directive and for representing the proposals for their constituency. They are also responsible for managing the poll tax, renamed ‘local development tax’ in 1991. The influence of the committees is limited, however, since they do not have their own resources nor the right to influence the disbursement of funds for programs they approve (Thomson and Tall, 1991: 54).

**Rural Co-operatives**

Under colonial administration co-operatives, such as the first village granaries established by the French in 1910, were concerned with food security. From 1952, village granaries were replaced by the Sociétés Indigènes de Prévoyance and then by a succession of colonially introduced and controlled organisations such as the Sociétés Mutuelles de Développement Rurale which formed the foundation of the co-operative movement.

In rural areas from the mid-1970s, however, a number of farming communities producing crops marketed through the various para-statals were organised into co-operatives known as Associations Villageois (AVs) and Ton Villageois. These were to differ significantly from previous colonial and state co-operatives in the way they attempted to graft modern financial management onto traditional group solidarities found in the traditional ton. These developments therefore drew heavily on the concepts and mechanisms of community level self-help and self-sufficiency, a move relating to a familiar practice through which, ‘Grassroots institutions have been promoted by independent African governments not only to build upon traditions of community self-help, but in order to mobilize development activities, given their lack of resources’ (Lee-Smith and Stren, 1991: 35).

Following the nationalisation of the cotton para-statal, Compagnie Malienne pour le Développement du Textiles (CMDT) in 1974, the AV was formed from villagers who managed the weighing and grading of cotton as well as the management of credit for producer inputs. With the decision in the early 1980s to abandon the overly centralised Operations de Développement Rurale and to vest more responsibility in local actors, AVs were promoted by the Office du Niger in the rice area as well as the CMDT in the cotton producing areas and in the Haute Vallée. These associations had little real autonomy from the para-statals, however, and were assigned tasks according to externally determined criteria; AVs had no legal status and could not formally negotiate with the crop authorities.24

In the wake of a failed officially mandated ‘co-operative movement’ and the drought emergencies, however, UDPM sought alternative models to encourage production and marketing of cash crops. In 1982 a new co-operative structure named after the traditional Bambara mutual aid society, the ton villageois, was defined by decree.25 This structure was designed to promote national policy priorities of food self-sufficiency, improved irrigation and environmental protection. The ton villageois, however, became little more than a state management structure as the social functions which had been attributed to it were overshadowed by a range of new economic tasks. These associations had no real autonomy from the state: their internal rules and structures were the purview of the National Co-operative Agency (DNA-COOP), and by crop authorities like CMDT.

The technical benefits generated by the ton villageois varied considerably and were most effective in the CMDT regions where cotton marketing enabled local capital formation. The ton villageois was therefore no more successful than its predecessors in promoting local
responsibility and self-governance and in general was dominated by old and new local elites which compounded rural inequality and restricted participation. While attempting to incorporate forms of spontaneous local organisation, the ton villageois was highly bureaucratised and its operation required registration and legal recognition. Hence very few AVs, which were considered as ‘pre-tons’, made it beyond AV status except in the cotton zone. The contrast between the ton villageois and the traditional tons could not be clearer. The traditional ton redistributed labour between households and lineages while the modern bureaucratised structure served to accumulate in favour of elite interests.

Changes in institutional arrangements since 1991, however, have also fed into the state-sponsored co-operatives. At present there are some 1,500 AVs in which new institutional development approaches are being tested, such as the establishment of cereal banks and savings and credit systems to link cash crop marketing with food security mechanisms (Guindo and van Campen, 1994). As evidence from Sikasso Region illustrates, one such innovation is the Kafo Jigne, a credit institution and proto-rural banking service (see p. 48). The service takes its name from the ‘Kafo’, which among the Bambara represents a grouping of villages for mutual defence and means ‘to come together’. (Kunafoni, 1993: B8)

**Community-Based Organisations**

The pattern of state hegemony with regard to the associative movement is reflected in the processes through which state-sponsored co-operatives were structured to operate on the basis of a narrow set of economic activities. They took no account of local variations in governance skills and economic capacity, and ignored or conditioned the more general patterns of local association. Prior to the political revolution of 1991, the right to associate in Mali was governed by the law of March 1959, adapted from French law.

The institutions of indigenous Malian civil society have been weakened by years of centralised control, the absence of enabling legislation and manipulation. Nevertheless, from an institutional landscape dominated by government attempts to impose uniform co-operative models and in a context of severe resource scarcity, local institutions display remarkable resilience as structures for focusing, negotiating and mediating issues and conflict. Households and communities in Mali negotiate both crisis and routine through a broad range of active local institutions. These social structures illustrate the various ways in which communities organise and manage scarce resources according to local knowledge and culturally specific practices. To employ definitions which distinguish ‘social’ from ‘economic’ institutions would therefore ignore the combination of functions and factors which make local groups dynamic, popular and significant features of rural and urban livelihoods.

As community-based organisations, migrant associations are central to this study, though the regional case studies also illustrate the important role of rural based organisations, such as tons, with which migrant communities engage. The ton is a collective work-group based on lineage, age and gender which engages in agricultural tasks and as such has been instrumental as a mechanism of co-operation, production and distribution. Members of the association work on a collective field (a colonial introduction) and on the fields of neighbours and the elderly or ill. In Kouana, a village in Tominian Cercle, for example, spontaneous tons organised work in parties on the basis of the quarters of the village which were formed by the three main (exogamous) family groups. If a villager is unable to tend to their land alone they can arrange for assistance from the ton. The association is paid CFA 2,500 for half a day’s work, which is invested in the village cereal bank, and food is provided for the work party of 45 people. Since the formation of a village-based youth association the three ton groups have been divided into two, with members from the same family discouraged from joining the same group because of the need to maintain labour on the family’s own land. Work parties are also formed in this way for house building during collective brick-making sessions.

Use of ton labour often depends on households’ access to family or hired labour. Lewis (1978) reports, for example, that the mandatory village or quartier level tons formed by age-sets
were mobilised twice each week among Bambara villages during periods of labour bottlenecks such as weeding. Neighbouring Soninké villages, by contrast, were able to hire Bambara labourers for threshing and therefore rarely used the ton which is based on strict patrilineal lines. Village tons are also often available to hire for neighbouring villages as in the case of Sadien, Tominian, where the whole group, of 76, can be hired for CFA 20,000 by villagers and by neighbouring villages for CFA 25,000.

The principle of the ton lies at the heart of most rural youth groups and women’s groups and similar arrangements are recorded elsewhere in the case studies. The Benkady Women’s Association from Bringan, near Niéna, for example, has 36 members. The women are originally from different villages but have all moved to Bringan to marry. Women started paying small amounts of money, between CFA 25 and 50, to help each other afford the costs of wedding ceremonies, christenings and burials. Some women were not able to afford these contributions, however, and to raise funds the group decided to hire out their labour and later purchased collective fields. Women raise money by working on the collective fields and hoe and harvest in men’s cotton fields in the village for which they receive CFA 3,500 per session paid when the crops have been sold. Work in neighbouring villages is remunerated at a rate of CFA 5,100 and the growth of the association’s funds led its members to deposit its fund in an account opened with a national bank in 1986.

A customary practise among tons and the various village associations was to save money from labour or the harvests of collective fields and to spend this fund on festivals such as Christmas among the Bobo and Tabaski for Muslim groups. Several factors, including the influence of non-governmental organisations and returning migrants, who have witnessed associations elsewhere such as Burkina Faso and Côte d’Ivoire, however, have contributed to a re-orientation of these investments into food security initiatives such as cereal banks. This echoes the shift in investments witnessed among the kombi naam among the Mossi of Burkina Faso (Pradervand, 1990).

Financial support for urban migrants and rural producers, especially among women, is often organised on the basis of tontine. The tontine is a rotating savings and credit association and involves regular contributions in cash or in kind which are pooled and distributed to a single member of the group in turn every week or month. Those members who benefit early in the cycle receive credit while those whose turn is towards the end are saving. The combined resort to the tontines and to formal thrift and credit co-operatives, particularly among migrant women in Bamako and Abidjan, has been described as a strategy enabling the farmer to improve their investments in cash crops and at the same time meet current consumption needs. Indeed, the capacity of rotating savings and credit associations, elsewhere known as esusu (Nigeria), ekub (Ethiopia) and sandoug (Sudan), has long been recognised as a potential ‘middle-rung’ in development (Geertz, 1962) and a significant community-based adaptation to poverty (Kurtz, 1973).

Democratisation and Decentralisation

Since the fall of Moussa Traoré’s regime on 26 March 1991, a first transition government established the tools for democratisation. A national convention (July 1991) was organised which led to the drafting of the constitution of the Third Republic, municipal elections were held in late 1991 and presidential elections were held in April 1992. The speed with which these events occurred, however, has led Mali to a phase in which the institutions and processes associated with democratic governance require legitimisation.

After March 1991, 47 political parties were registered, though the three central parties, the Alliance pour la Démocratie au Mali-Parti Africain pour la Solidarité et la Justice (Adema), the Union Soudanaise-Rassemblement Démocratique Africain (US-RDA) and the Congrès National d’Initiative Démocratique (CNID) dominate the political landscape. Vengroff identifies a lower level in Malian political parties, however, which operate in limited regional, ethnic or local enclaves (1993: 549). The small and highly localised Rassemblement pour la Démocratie et le Travail (RDT), which competed in the 1992 elections, for example, initially existed as the Association de Ressortissants de Mopti, based in Bamako (1993: 548). The
The downfall of the Traoré regime enabled free speech and freedom of the press in Mali. There are now over 80 daily or weekly newspapers and magazines in Bamako and a few in other cities. Several are published in vernacular languages such as Jekabaara, Kibaru and Kabaru, with a circulation of about 16,000 each. Shortly after the events of 1991 a relatively large number of independent radio stations also developed in Bamako and in several provincial towns such as Radio Liberté and Bamakan. According to the president of the national union of independent radio stations (Union des Radios et Télévisions Libres):

> The radio phenomenon in Mali is not an outgrowth of the national media, it is a direct result of the democratic dynamics set in motion on March 26, 1991 ... We are a young democracy, many associations were created, including cooperative radio, in Mali to facilitate relations between population groups and the government and state institutions (quoted in Josserand et. al. 1995: 34).

The March 1991 revolution also transformed the local institutional landscape asserting the right of free association as an organic constitutional guarantee. The transition to freer associational life had begun in 1988, following the intervention of international development agencies in the drought emergencies of 1973 and 1983, when the co-operative law was rewritten to recognise certain categories of voluntary co-operatives outside their relationship with official producer and marketing organisations.

The new constitution assured the rights of trade unions and other associations, and as a result, over 2,100 non-governmental organisations were registered by 1993, of which 408 were international and Malian NGOs (Kunafoni, 1993: 13). The explosion in the growth of the Malian non-governmental sector has led to suggestions that over 7,000 associations, including unregistered groups, had been formed by the end of 1993 [ARD, 1994]. The rapid growth of non-governmental and community-based organisations sprung from the desire to seize the opportunity to undertake solutions to local problems through self-governance, by the possibilities of international donor funding and by the search for work among the urban unemployed, including former civil servants. The 1959 law, however, has not evolved as new institutions enter the arena and although the non-governmental sector operates with minimal state intervention, issues of legal status remain unresolved. Indeed, no implementing legislation has been passed promoting the constitutional intent and in consequence, local communities have little legal authority to tailor governance arrangements to local conditions (Thomson and Tall, 1991: 9).

The law on decentralisation was passed in January 1993 establishing the Decentralisation Commission in Mali, which was charged with elaborating a new framework for local government. With the current formation of new jurisdictional authorities, notably the Commune Rurale, the commission is mandated to build on appropriate local solidarities and collectivities. The special task force, La Mission de Décentralisation, has initiated the devolution of regional authorities through the formation of Groupes Régionaux d’Etude et de Mobilisation (GREMs) which explain their work at open meetings in local languages and through dramatisations.

The formation of Commune Rurales is a process through which the current arrondissement will be dissolved and requires villages and towns to re-group on the basis of preference and partnership. The creation of the Commune Rurale, however, reveals long-standing inter-village tensions which are styled in terms of ethnic and religious differences or contested myths of origin and positions of local political status. As it is a potentially politicised issue, migrant associations are generally not involved in the formation of the Commune Rurale. The role of the migrant community in decision-making, however, is important in certain cases of contested alliances. In the Cercle of Banamba, for instance, the council of the predominantly Muslim and Sarakolé village of Oulyeny met with the largely animist Bambara neighbouring village of Kondo to discuss the possibilities of forming a Commune Rurale in 1995. The migrant community from Oulyeny, organised in an association formed in 1985 called ‘Benkadi’ meaning solidarity, however, rejected this proposal because of the religious differences and because the alliance with a village lying further away from the centres of
power in the Cercle would serve to marginalise the community. Responses from the migrants recalled ancestral links (sharing the Sholla lineage) with the relatively prosperous intermediate urban centres of Kiban and Banamba and recommended that negotiations be held with them instead. Where communities are highly dependent on migrants’ remittances and infrastructural support, as they are in the Banamban case, such advice is invariably heeded.

While distancing themselves from the Commune Rurale debates, rural community-based organisations have responded to the opportunity of assuming new local responsibilities. In Tominian, Niéna and Banamba new groups have been formed with the specific intention of benefiting from the political changes and the prospects of decentralised governance. This was expressed by a member of the Association pour le Développement de l’Arrondissement de Niéna, who said that:

> With the decentralisation that is coming, all of the populations will be free to take charge of their own development. And because of this we have to get together and work as the ‘lights’ of the community.

Similar groups in Tominian and Banamba represent rural committees linked to existing urban migrant associations, and were formed by rural elites, often current government employees.

Most attention on the local institutional aspects of the decentralisation process, however, has been focused on the role which local communities will assume over the management of natural resources. This has led, in particular, to a greater emphasis on the legitimacy and accountability of traditional community structures involved in activities such as forest management and the governance of woodstocks. In advance of the implementation of decentralisation policies, however, local institutions have demonstrated the capacity to facilitate community-managed development in a wide variety of initiatives, as confirmed by the Chef d’Arrondissement of Niéna who stated that, ‘The populations are more advanced than the administration. Within the context of decentralisation, they have taken their own development in hand with the building of village maternity clinics and roads.’

While the state has not been a significant partner in these local development activities, other agencies have been involved. Town-twinning groups in France, for example, have provided support for a community clinic in the Arrondissement of Niéna near Sikasso in south-eastern Mali. International NGOs have also provided support for migrants living in France by offering training in dry-season irrigated farming, while others have adopted co-funding policies for local projects which require the community to raise a proportion of the capital, and in effect to plan such initiatives with migrant groups who act as financiers.

While local associations from Niéna have benefited from a long-standing integration with CMDT and recent credit initiatives, Malian associations have generally pursued strategies of disengagement or exit from the state. Communities have rather depended on the resources, however limited, of migrant groups. The levels of independent finance mobilised by migrant associations testifies to the fact that in many cases local associations have substituted for the state. In education, for instance, communities have responded to the limited contribution by the state to basic level education by embarking on their own construction enterprises. Community-based associations have therefore been responsible for establishing and managing the range of écoles du village, écoles de base, écoles communautaire and écoles coopérative throughout the country. As Dembélé (1995) has shown, however, these local initiatives also pose long-term running cost and staffing problems for the state. Indeed, despite their investments, the greatest challenge for community-based organisations in providing public services is ensuring ‘routine resource mobilization’ (Thomson and Tall, 1991: 7).

Nevertheless, it is argued that while civic organisations absorb popular demands for services that would otherwise have been directed at state agencies, they thereby help the state to avert a crisis of political legitimacy (Tripp, 1992). Indeed, since the post-1991 political re-orientations the apparatus of the Malian state is itself undergoing a legitimising processes and continues to be unable to offer support for community-based organisations. The growing NGO interest in local partnerships and the fallout of the decentralisation exercise provide
potential sources from which the aims of the new Malian associative movement may be realised, but resources generated by the migrant community will continue to be the first, if not the last, resort for locally conceived rural development initiatives.

Notes

1 These associations are generically known as *tons* though the name is derived from the Bambara collective work-group. Lewis (1978) describes how the agricultural activities of village youth associations (*tonw*) along the Niger River were superseded by involvement in slave-raiding in the late 1600s and became the nucleus of the political organisation of the Ségu state.

2 Defining a community-based organisation is complicated by the diversity of groups operating in the South and by contemporary rhetoric which tends to equate two categories (NGOs and CBOs). A broad distinction is drawn between self-help community groups which operate at a local level (CBOs) and intermediary or service NGOs which serve to promote their cause. Community-based organisations refer to a broad range of self-help processes and institutions with different structures and varying capacities and are characterised by voluntary participation, mutual benefit, and accountable leadership. A useful definition is offered by Verhagen who identifies a CBO as, ‘... a membership organization which implies that its risks, costs and benefits are shared among its members on an equitable basis and that its leadership and/or manager are liable to be called to account by membership for their deeds’ (1987: 22).

3 See Bratton (1988).

4 In the context of what Painter terms the ‘peasant connection’, the link between local institutions and development agencies, he states that, ‘There has been a remarkable lack of attention to indigenous forms of co-operation, their internal dynamics and relationships between locally significant social units of production and distribution ...’ (1990b: 61).

5 In 1948 the Dioula constituted 13.5 per cent of Bamako’s population; the Malinké 8.2 per cent; the Moors 6.8 per cent; the Fula 4.2 per cent and the Sarakolé 3.1 per cent. In 1960 the Malinké population rose to 18.4 per cent, the Fula to 12.5, and the Sarakolé to 10.6 per cent (Meillassoux, 1965: 127-28).

6 The forestry code authorised severe penalties for infractions such as starting forest fires or illegal wood collection. The system invited abuses of power since the forestry code was never translated into national languages and it offered commissions on fines for informers. Malian foresters therefore routinely levied collective fines on communities when they could not rapidly identify the guilty parties (Dennison and Thomson, 1992).

7 In a survey of out-migration strategies conducted north of Bamako on the Mauritanian border, Cekan (1992) reported that during the ‘soudure’ of the 1990-91 season four villages (of Bambara and Sarakolé origin) sent approximately 80 per cent of their ‘bras valides’ (able-bodied workers aged between 14-40) in search of work. Less than 5 per cent of these villagers migrated for more than one year.

8 One of the most significant consequences of the growth of the plantation economy has been the north-south divide within Côte d’Ivoire. As Stryker (1971) has shown in the early 1970s, regional disparities were illustrated by differences in per capita income (CFA 1,100 in the north compared to CFA 7,100 in the south) and school attendance (10 per cent in the north and 50 per cent in the south). Indeed, as Berg (1960) has argued, ‘The productive coastal regions have been tied to the world market rather than to their own hinterlands or to each other.’

9 The Inter-professional Association for Labour Transport (SIAMO) recruited and transported 52,000 labourers in 1952 (Touré, Quattara and Annan-Yao 1992: 17).

10 The Ghanaian cocoa economy declined from the mid-1960s. In large part, this resulted from state interventions in cocoa marketing which aimed to maximise state accumulation for the purpose of reinvestment in state-owned industrial and agro-industrial enterprises. State marketing boards were the principal accumulation mechanism. These kept producer prices for cocoa low, despite increasing prices on world markets. As a result cocoa exports fell from 502,000 metric tons in 1965 to 217,000 tons in 1982. This economic collapse led the Ghanaian government to implement the Alien Compliance Order in November 1969 which in turn led to the expulsion of 300,000 foreign workers from the country (Painter, 1990b: 6).

11 In the commercial agricultural sector, an employment policy giving priority to nationals has already been implemented. The policy is intended to help reduce both the numbers and cost of technical expatriate personnel and in 1983, 2,000 expatriate contracts were allowed to lapse (Touré, Quattara and Annan-Yao 1992: 36).
The provisions of Article 59 of Public Law No. 88-62/AN-Rm of June 10, 1988, state that ‘The village
From 15 in 1976, the number of AVs grew to 109 in 1979. As voluntary associations they had relatively
Mali’s regions now number eight, with the last, Kidal, created to address the demands of the Tuareg
See Barkan, McNulty and Ayeni (1992).
Zolberg (1964) has shown that alliances of such groups organised around culture or trade formed the
Meillassoux (1968) records that in the 1960 census 50 per cent of spouses were born in Bamako. Since
urban marriage costs were higher than those in rural areas, sociétés de mariage offered an important mutual savings device and were also formed on a non-regional basis. The Société d’Aide et de Coopération, for example, was a non-regional association for young people born in Bamako which paid CFA 2,000 for a baptism and CFA 7,500 for first and second marriages, funded by monthly dues and public dances.
Ginnadogon, or L’Association Malienne pour la Protection et la Promotion de la Culture Dogon, was formed in 1990 and has branches in each of the Dogon cercles, Bandiagara, Bankass, Koro and Douentza, within Mopti Region, and satellite branches in Ghana, Gabon and France. Concerned for the decline of traditional cultural practices, Ginnadogon has established several programmes to preserve Dogon identity. These include the production of monographs on different villages and their customs, the formation of a dance troupe, a campaign against alcoholism, and the creation of an arboretum of traditional medicinal plants. Unconfirmed information suggests that the organisation has also devised a programme to restrict female out-migration. A fine of CFA 50,000 has to be deposited by the migrant’s parents in a village fund in the event of their daughter leaving home unmarried. External partners in Ginnadogon’s various activities include the Malian Ministry of Culture, the Marcel Griaule Foundation in France and UNESCO.
Zolberg (1964) has shown that alliances of such groups organised around culture or trade formed the building blocks of post-war electoral coalitions.
See Barkan, McNulty and Ayeni (1992).
Mali’s regions now number eight, with the last, Kidal, created to address the demands of the Tuareg along the Niger border in the extreme north of the country.
From 15 in 1976, the number of AVs grew to 109 in 1979. As voluntary associations they had relatively inclusive membership compositions, including women but rarely allowing them to serve as officers. Despite the degree of control exercised over the AVs many were able to develop a capacity to support literacy and numeracy training and mechanisms for financing village infrastructure. In certain cases self-management enabled the sale of surpluses for such community projects as well-digging, grain mills, health services, road and bridge repair, literacy centres and loans to less advantaged producers (Levi, 1988: 49).
The provisions of Article 59 of Public Law No. 88-62/AN-Rm of June 10, 1988, state that, ‘The village associations are organisations of a pre-co-operative and transitory nature; their ultimate goal is to be transformed into village fons. They form the primary nucleus of the co-operative movement in rural environments; they are designed to make local people aware of the economic aspects of
their problems, to train them in the principles and methods of co-operation, and to develop their self confidence by undertaking one or several concrete tasks’ (Thomson and Tall, 1991: A4).

27 The law which governs non-profit institutions in Mali, derived from the French law of associations of 1901, is ordinance No. 41, of 28 March 1959.

28 The UNFM and UNJM, for example, sought to attach themselves to traditional women’s and youth organisations which had the internal autonomy and cohesiveness the UNFM and UNJM generally lacked because of their own failure to expand a popular base.

29 RPT formed part of the ruling pacte républicain with Adema and has therefore been given cabinet responsibility for tourism and presidency of the public works committee of the assemblée nationale (Vengroff, 1993: 549).

30 Many migrant communities were involved in fund-raising activities for the establishment of independent rural radio stations such as L’Association pour le Développement du Seno-Bankass in Mopti Region which had raised CFA 151,500 by October 1995 in an effort to help Radio Seno purchase equipment.

31 Radio stations played an important role in disseminating information on the electoral process in 1992 presidential, legislative and municipal elections.

32 Law No. 93-008.

33 For issues of forest management in the Mopti Region see CARE (1993), Konaté (1993) and CARE/SOS Sahel/NEF (1994) which detail the role of organisations such as the Ogokana in Koro, the Alamodiou in Bankass and the Walde Kelka in Douentza. See Thomson (1995) on the role of community institutions in the management of woodstocks.

34 Primary school attendance is less that 12 per cent in certain regions and less than 30 per cent for the whole of Mali.
2. Ségou Region

Case studies from the Ségou Region were conducted in the Cercle of Tominian. Tominian, and the neighbouring Cercle of San, constitute an enclave of the Bobo ethnic group who straddle the border between Mali and Burkina Faso. The Bobo, or Bwa, make up 73 per cent of the population while around 12.5 per cent are Dafin and Marka, Muslim Malinke-speaking groups, and an ever increasing number of Peulh herders move to Tominian for pasture (Kamminga, 1988). Tominian Cercle, made up of six arrondissements which group 314 villages, had an estimated total population of 150,583 in 1994. The majority of the population is rural-based; in 1987 the small town of Tominian had a population of just 2,096.

Map 2.1 Tominian and surrounding districts

Bobo society is made up of three socio-professional categories which practice a strict endogamy: farmers (between 80 to 85 per cent), blacksmiths and griots (praise-singer musicians). Each of the founding Bobo lineages has a totem derived from animals or plants. The Diarra, for example, are represented by the lion, the Dembélé by the elephant and the Koné by the palm rat. The flesh and fruit from these totemic symbols are not eaten. The Bobo are predominantly animists and Christians (as indicated in Table 2.1) and as such make up Mali’s largest non-Muslim population.

Table 2.1 Religions in Tominian Cercle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Animist</td>
<td>61.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>20.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian/Animist</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atheist</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Andreissen and Van Gorkum, 1987: 49)

Bobo resistance to French colonial penetration was manifest in an armed revolt of 1916 which ultimately failed. The legacy of political tension with colonial authorities and resistance
to missionary penetration, however, is translated into contemporary political and economic marginalisation. In terms of facilities in Tominian, there are 14 dispensaries in the Cercle, with only 2 doctors, and 27 primary schools which cater for less than 12 per cent of the school age population (Pagani, 1992: 4).

The pattern of the traditional Bobo agricultural landscape constitutes a type known as ‘concentric rings’. From the village in the centre lies a ring of small garden plots which are encircled by permanent fields used for livestock grazing and forestry. This land is divided between the oldest established village lineages. Surrounding the arable land is a bush perimeter, a zone of shifting cultivation which is open to use by all farmers. The area is subject to intense cultivation; 73 per cent of arable land is planted, mainly with millet as a staple and peanuts representing an important cash crop (SOS Sahel, 1993: 4). The climatic environment of Tominian is characterised by a sharp contrast between a rainy season of humid winds from the Gulf of Guinea and a dry season dominated by dry winds from the Sahara (harmattan).

In the past Bobo farmers practised a shifting form of hoe cultivation, with fallow periods of more than 10 years, and could expect to harvest enough to cover the family’s annual consumption needs. Today, as a result of a number of factors, including demographic pressure, the spread (and ill-adapted use) of animal traction for ploughing, the expansion of the cultivated area, the sedentarisation of livestock herding and the growth of herd sizes, the trend is towards an over exploitation of the potential of the eco-system, manifesting itself in an elimination of tree-cover and a progressive desertification of the countryside.

These ecological conditions, combined with poor dry season employment opportunities are leading factors shaping the scale and nature of out-migration from the Cercle. The low population growth rate in Tominian Cercle is attributed to the high incidence of out-migration. The population growth rate in Tominian is 1.1 per cent per annum compared to a national average of 2.5 per cent per annum (Pagani, 1992: 5).

Cases from Tominian Cercle dealing with migration and local institutions were conducted in five villages, Bénéna, Sanékuy, Kouma and Deberé in the Arrondissement of Mandiakuy, and the village of Kouana which lies 35 km north of Tominian in the Arrondissement of Fangasso. Each of these communities is predominantly Bobo including Bénéna, originally known as Kouélé, which was founded by a Bambara family. Though the descent of the Koné family is traced to Bambara ancestors they have assumed a Bobo identity and practice Bobo customs.

**MIGRATION FROM TOMINIAN CERCLE**

A profile of Bobo migrants and their families was composed from a survey of 107 migrants from Tominian, including 31 women and 76 men, conducted in 1994. Reflections on out-migration from the Cercle of Tominian after the 1916 revolt indicate that it was rare for individuals to leave the security of the village, as Gilbert Dakouo from Bénéna states, ‘During the colonial period only the bravest would move even within the village.’ Nevertheless, migration strategies are rooted in colonial policies such as forced labour for infrastructural projects and the introduction of taxes which generated the need to supplement subsistence cultivation with cash income.

Other factors, notably variable rainfall and government interventions after independence, have also contributed to migration pressures. Abuses committed by administrative officers and conscription to the militia (service civique) formed to maintain order in Mali’s cities contributed significantly to perceptions of insecurity and an increase in out-migration. As Assa Dakouo, Deberé village chief explained, ‘…people were frightened because the ‘chefs de cantons’ often ill-treated people, and migration increased considerably under the Second Republic.’ This view was confirmed by many respondents including Gilbert Dakouo who claimed that:

*Under Modiko Keita, when para-military training for guards and youth weeks were introduced, people started to migrate from the village. Successive droughts and the*
heavy increase in taxes under Moussa Traoré increased migration. At that time whole families migrated to other areas.

Assa Dakouo indicates that abuses by forest guards could load villagers with additional cash burdens; villagers were fined if found responsible for forest fires which were often started deliberately:

Under Moussa all sorts of abuses took place and there was an increase of people who migrated partly because of the way the agents of the state behaved. For instance one day one of the agents of the Forestry Department set fire to the bush and asked me to go and put it out. When I got there the fire had not spread and I found the matches he had used to start it in the grass. I understood that he was trying to get us into trouble.

Throughout these periods migration was seasonal. The general absence of off-season activity (December to May) has led to a wave of seasonal migration as the village head of Sanékuy, Abel Dembélé, for example, indicated, '..Today people live in peace and the only migrants are seasonal migrants who leave after the harvest.' Indeed, in 1994, 24 per cent of household members were not residing at home, and 31 per cent of men and 33 per cent of women worked in Bamako on a seasonal basis. Permanent migration, however, represents a high proportion of the migrant population but in villagers’ minds they are often seen to be ‘lost’ to the village and so do not figure in people’s assessments. This observation reflects the weakness of rural-urban linkages and migrants’ investment in rural communities.

Much productive effort is channelled into saving for the migration journey by both men and women. Young men will sell peanuts and millet and women sell karité nuts (from the shea butter tree) or karité oil to fund the trip. During the rainy season many will work on others’ fields to raise cash. For men revenue from migration is accumulated to be invested in motorbikes, carts and cattle on their return. For women it is often spent on the ‘trousseau de mariage’ (wedding outfit) and livestock. Further data relating to stated reasons for travelling to Bamako were collected by means of matrix ranking exercises. Each respondent was asked to rank, in order of importance, the reasons why they left Tominian. On the basis of the relative importance accorded to stated reasons for urban-bound migration, household cash shortages figured most prominently. Acute seasonal food shortages and lack of dry season employment were also accorded a high importance. The attraction of urban facilities (such as education) and trading opportunities were recorded as the least significant motives.

The principal axes of migration are from Tominian to Ségou, Sikasso and Bamako, and to Bouaké and Abidjan in Côte d’Ivoire. For men, each of these different destinations holds particular job prospects; in Bamako, for example, migrants work as labourers or in domestic service, in Ségou as traders or porters, and in Côte d’Ivoire they find employment working on the coffee or cocoa plantations. Migrants to Côte d’Ivoire can expect to earn significantly more, from CFA 7,500 per month to CFA 20,000 per month, while in Mali reported average salaries range between CFA 3,000 and CFA 5,000 per month. Despite these wage differentials with Côte d’Ivoire, the cyclical pattern of migration plays a significant role in expanding the migrant network in Bamako, the destination for over 70 per cent of migrants. Once settled in the capital, 50 per cent of migrants continue to share accommodation with family or friends from the village. The high costs and limited network options available to Bobo migrants have restricted emigration to France; less than 2 per cent of family members of Tominian migrants are working in France, as Table 2.2 indicates:
Table 2.2 Non-domestic household members by residence (Tominian Cercle)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residence</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bamako</td>
<td>70.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Malian Cities</td>
<td>17.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West African Cities</td>
<td>11.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>1.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An age profile of migrants from Tominian (outlined in Table 2.3) indicates that women are migrating at a much younger age than men (11.8 per cent of women were under 14). This is related to the high proportion of women currently migrating to Bamako where employment is dominated by domestic service; 41.2 per cent of female migrants were single without children.

Table 2.3. Age of migrants from Tominian (percentage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 14</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-18</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-25</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>35.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-35</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-45</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-60</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 60</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This pattern is similarly reflected in the length of stay in Bamako. As Table 2.3 indicates, both seasonal (for less than one year) and permanent (for over 2 years) patterns are practised among men. Women’s migration, however, is largely confined to short sojourns of less than 2 years. Only 20 per cent of women stay in Bamako for more than 5 years compared to 42.9 per cent of men.

Table 2.4. Length of first stay among migrants from Tominian in Bamako (percentage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>less than 1 month</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5 months</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-12 months</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 Years</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-5 Years</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 5 years</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Levels of education among Bobo migrants are low and illiteracy among women is particularly high, as Table 2.5 indicates. This is a reflection of the limited educational facilities available in Tominian, notably the absence of a secondary school. A survey in 1986 showed that 86.8 per cent of villagers over 12 had never been to school (Andriessen and van Gorkum 1987:46). Among migrants, 94.5 per cent of women and 32.6 per cent of men had received no formal schooling. Of those who were literate only 15.6 per cent of migrants were educated in Tominian while 71.9 per cent had migrated to Bamako or other Malian cities to pursue their education and 12.6 per cent had travelled to cities in West Africa or France.
Table 2. Levels of education among migrants from Tominian Cercle in Bamako (percentage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No education</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>77.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Level</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade/Apprentice</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Level</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Training</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rural-urban linkages, other than those maintained by circulating seasonal migrants, are limited and irregular. Of the longer-term migrants only 25.6 per cent of men and 22.2 per cent of women return home annually. The fact that women’s stays in the city are short, with 40 per cent working in Bamako for one to two years, means that a significant proportion, 27.8 per cent, do not return home at all during their time in Bamako. Almost half of the migrants from Tominian send remittances home but amounts are modest and are usually sent on the basis of parental request. For example, from seven Bamako-based migrants of the large extended family of the Kamaté from Kouana, who are employed as either drivers, guards or in domestic service, only 4 cash transfers were recorded despite the fact that they had been settled in Bamako for between 5 and 38 years. Their one-off remittance payments included CFA 15,000 for taxes, two instalments of CFA 10,000 to purchase livestock and a contribution of CFA 150,000 to re-build the family house. Among many other families, however, it is evident that migrants are hesitant to invest in capital goods or livestock in preparation for their return because of past incidents of mismanagement and conflicts of ownership. Cash and small goods are still sent but livestock and agricultural investment is postponed until the migrant has returned to the village permanently. Remittances are important in emergencies, however. In the 1984-85 drought four of six additional migrants working in Côte d’Ivoire from the Kamaté family sent home CFA 125,000 and 4 sacks of millet.

**Local Institutions in Tominian Cercle**

Administratively Tominian Cercle is governed by the Cercle Commandant and the various Chefs d’Arrondissement. With regard to development interventions, the Comité Locale pour le Développement (CLD), is responsible for approving local projects which are financed from the local and regional development tax. The Cercle of Tominian is part of the sphere of operations of the Compagnie Malienne pour le Développement du Textiles (CMDT), though in Tominian CMDT is more concerned to promote peanut production and has not established Associations Villageois in the area.

The local institutions of Bobo society are characterised by a bi-modalism of established and introduced systems, and as Winter has suggested, ‘The degree to which any one of these two sets of institutions dominates village government appears to be variable, the determining factor being the importance of Catholicism in the village concerned’ (1994: 3). On the one hand a series of institutions including the chef coutumier, the nidan (elders’ council) and a system of ages sets, built up around the main village fetish the dô, represent traditional frameworks of social organisation, and on the other, more ‘modern’ institutions are represented by the chef administratif and the Catholic Church.

The chef coutumier is generally the eldest man from the founding family of the village. The role of the chef coutumier and the nidan (the council of elders) is to control land-holdings and mediate in disputes. Each village quartier is represented in the council. The traditional chief is the highest authority in the village and is succeeded by the oldest and closest relative of the lineage. Every village institution and association is accountable to the chef coutumier from whom approval is sought for all activities. For the animist Bwa the supreme god, Debwenu is represented through the village fetish the Dô. As an integral part of the Dô belief system the chief is charged with the Dô initiation ceremony which occurs every 3 years for boys aged between 5 and 7 and which defines village age-groups. The chef administratif
acts as an intermediary between the village and the administration though his role in recent years has been confined to the collection of taxes (2,200 CFA per annum for each person).

The most significant feature of Bobo associative life is the range of groups which are formed on various bases (age, gender, religion and activity), and the degree to which they are inter-related. At the heart of each group is the principle of collective labour derived from the ton. In the village of Sanékuy, for example, associations include a group which manages the cereal bank formed in 1985, a farmers’ group which organises dry season activities, l’Association de Jeune Paysans de Sanékuy (AJPS - formed in 1988), and l’Association de Ressortissants de Sanékuy (ARESA established in 1991) which is a mutual aid organisation linked to the migrant community in Bamako. These groups, together with the age groups of Benkady and Mugnus and quartier-based women’s groups form a network of self-help associations which are linked by their contributions to the cereal bank. In Sanékuy, as in many Bobo villages, the cereal bank serves a significant food security function by acting as an insurance mechanism during the soudure. Consequently the broad range of self-help groups donate their funds to the cereal bank for re-stocking. Indeed, a survey of associations in Tominian Cercle indicated that the highest proportion of associations (24 per cent) are engaged in food security projects, collective fields, cereal banks and cattle husbandry (Documents d’Action Sociale, 1992: 32).

Cereal banks and food security initiatives therefore provide a focus for the multiplicity of village interest groups and associations. At the same time their activities are co-ordinated by the chef coutoumier and by recently formed organisations which attempt to integrate local institutional efforts. In the same way that AJPS in Sanékuy attempts to unite the efforts of the various groups so the Ton de Toubé (named after the founder of the village) in Bénéna, and the Regroupement Populaire pour le Développement de Deberé (formed in 1992) undertake activities on a village-wide basis. Indeed, the Deberé organisation, with 45 members, has formed a caisse villageois (community development fund) which in 1994 stood at CFA 20,000. This fund has enabled the group to repair wells and purchase a radio receiver. The resources of these associations are modest, but can accumulate significantly. A group of 50 members in Kouma, which works with the SOS Sahel project, manages a collective field, the product from which was sold at CFA 25,000 in 1994. Similarly, a Muslim-based ton in Bénéna (formed in 1956), which is made up of Mossi, Peulh and Marka, maintain a fund (which stood at CFA 50,000 in 1994) and have constructed a mosque and a Medersa (Koranic school) in the village.

Women’s groups, which constituted 36 per cent of all local associations within Tominian Cercle in 1992 (Documents d’Action Sociale, 1992), have often developed from informal co-operation and exchange at the household level. In Kouma, for example, the women’s association was formed to facilitate inter-household co-operation in the manufacture of karité oil. As a result, five women’s associations have been created which work together in harvesting millet fields (for which they receive CFA 2,000), peanuts (for two large baskets of peanuts) and in house repair (CFA 1,000). As with many tons in Tominian, the money raised by women’s groups in Kouma is invested in a feast and is spent on uniforms. Indeed, up to 35 per cent of all village associations consume all of their income in an annual festival, normally at Christmas (Documents d’Action Sociale, 1992: 31). With increasing monetisation within the economy, however, cash funds from collective work have enabled a reorientation towards development activities. In Deberé, for example, the women’s group maintains a collective fund with which it intends to purchase a grinding mill.

This shift in perspectives is also influenced by the presence of the Catholic mission and a training centre it established in Tominian. A self-help group in Bénéna, for example, has been in operating for over 60 years with guidance from the mission, and since 1987 has benefitted from training courses offered in Tominian. Training in cereal bank management and soil and water conservation techniques have therefore contributed to the formation of development-oriented management structures. The Catholic training centre has also been instrumental in initiating the formation of husbandry groups. The Groupe de Stabulation in Deberé, for example, offers credit services to its members though its central function is to organise work-groups to prevent cattle roaming and to protect herds.
In many cases these village tons also co-operate with neighbouring village groups. In a 1992 survey, for example, 32 of 56 groups reported that they worked with neighbouring organisations in reciprocal events (Documents d’Actions Sociale, 1992: 35). Groups in Deberé, for example, collaborate with neighbours Kuara, Onilokura and Uruza on soil conservation measures. Deberé is also linked to groups operating at the Cercle level such as the Association des Agriculteurs du Cercle de Tominian (ACT) and the Bureau pour le Développement de Tominian (BDPT). These connections have been made by a return migrant (from Burkina Faso and Côte d’Ivoire) who has been actively engaged in organising development activities, mobilising participation and representing the community.

Few associations within Tominian, however, have successfully integrated development initiatives throughout the Cercle. A rural-based organisation, formed by returned migrants and the local elite, and which aims to support development activities in the Cercle is the l’Association pour le Développement du Cercle de Tominian (AECT). This group first met in 1993 and has just 35 members including 7 women. AECT’s members are drawn from staff of each of the agencies working in and around Tominian including SOS Sahel, Zura and CMDT. AECT aims to monitor, elaborate and pursue development programmes with technical partners, to promote local organisations, and to facilitate funding and partnership negotiations. The members are particularly concerned at the delays experienced by projects which have been directed through the Comité Local de Développement (CLD), and though it has initiated no programme itself AECT seeks to ‘get ahead of decentralisation’ since it believes that with territorial and administrative reforms, local responsibilities may be devolved to this form of organisation.

Connections with the migrant community

External linkages are also maintained between the networks of local institutions in the village and the migrant community. Migrants join village-based organisations and associations which represent larger units based on the Cercle or Bobo identity. Among members from the three main associations studied, ADESAT, BDPT or AJAK, 38.7 per cent belonged to more than one association. Time and resources militate against multi-association membership though migrants have joined professional associations, religious groups, tontines, urban quartier-based tons, and pressure groups such as the Association pour la Defense des Minoritiés.

Village-based organisations

The Association des Ressortissants de Sanékuy, which operates a branch at home, along with several other village-based groups in Tominian, maintains formal links with urban based mutual-aid groups formed by migrant communities in Bamako and Abidjan. Despite these connections, the migrant community’s investment in development initiatives is extremely limited. The role of l’Association des Jeunes Actif de Kouana is outlined here to provide an extended case study of the interactions between village-based institutions who maintain connections with the migrant community. While it illustrates the effectiveness of rural-urban dialogue, it also highlights the problems of limited resource mobilisation capacities at this level.

Kouana has a vibrant associative life in which the presence of the Catholic church has led to a significant reorientation of village institutions towards development efforts:

Following the poor rains of 1984, which had such a negative effect on the Kouana’s inhabitants, an initiative was taken to conserve grain stores for the next difficult period. With the declaration protecting the freedom of association made by the Minister of the Interior in 1990, certain young people and elders who remembered previous village associations had the idea to organise themselves in the interest of the development of the village.

Minutes of AJAK Meeting, 27 August 1991

The most important organisation in the village is l’Association de Jeunes Actif de Kouana (AJAK). AJAK is a village-wide youth organisation which has united the quartier-based work groups formed by the main lineages. The original idea of the association’s foundation was
that monthly contributions of CFA 100 would fund a small loans scheme, though poor repayment rates led to the programme’s abandonment. In Kouana itself AJAK has around 170 members, each contributing CFA 100 and 1kg of millet to join. Women in the village formed a parallel organisation, l’Association Femmes Actif de Kouana, which like the youth group operates a collective field and work group. The work parties are paid CFA 2,500 for 30 members per day, or two baskets of peanuts for the peanut harvest or two tins of millet for the millet harvest.

Founded in 1991, AJAK was registered in 1994 by migrants in Bamako. Indeed, AJAK has initiated branches in Bamako, Séguéla, Dougabougou and Koutiala in Mali and in Bouaké in Côte d’Ivoire. The committee in Bamako was formed in September 1991 following the request of the village. Migrants pay their membership dues (annual fees of CFA 1,000 and monthly contributions of CFA 100) if they are resident in the city for more than 3 months. Out of the 50 all-male membership, however, only 15-20 regularly participate. This core of active members represent a mixed composition combining the education background of the new ‘elite’ with traditional authority. Many of the committee members, including the president, for instance, are from the family of the chief of the village and are Dô initiates. Several members have limited education experience and work as apprentices or guards while others have high school training, speak French and Bambara and work as teachers.

AJAK’s objectives in the village are to tackle the problems of drought, protect the environment and assure food security. The activities the association organises therefore include the construction of diguette with training assistance from the Catholic Mission’s training centre, Zura, and re-stocking of the cereal bank. The cereal bank in Kouana was established in 1991 with financial assistance from the Catholic Mission which provided millet and maize for the initial stock. The cereal bank operates on the basis of providing credit to villagers who buy millet from the bank when the prevailing price is high, sell it at the market and return the money (with 25 per cent interest) to the fund. Thus, for example, for a measure of 20kg of millet borrowed from the cereal bank (at a cost of about CFA 1,000), CFA 1,250 has to be repaid. The additional CFA 250 is then used to purchase more millet for re-stocking.

AJAK’s village committee has contributed to the cereal stock by donating the cash raised by working on farmer’s fields (the normal formula is that the association is paid CFA 2,500 for half a day’s work and that food is provided for the work party of 45 people). The migrant community also assists with re-stocking. In 1992, for example, AJAK in Bamako provided CFA 20,000 for the cereal bank while branches in Koutiala and Sikasso provided CFA 2,500 and CFA 18,000 respectively. Despite this initial enthusiasm, however, the Bamako branch raised only CFA 2,700 in 1993 and CFA 3,000 in 1994.

In Bamako the association provides limited assistance for members. Members contribute individually to the costs of baptisms though the association maintains a small fund to assist members in funeral expenses. AJAK has also sought to enable unemployed members to find temporary work in the city by hiring out carts on a daily basis for transporting goods around the market. For established members the cost is CFA 150 per day while for new arrivals it is CFA 250. The association has also attempted to generate employment opportunities and raise money from soap manufacture. From membership contributions the association purchased equipment and raw materials costing CFA 9,000, though the first three batches, which were sold in 1994 provided the association with a net profit of just CFA 2,340.

Each of these initiatives is planned through regular correspondence between rural and urban branches. The extent of this rural-urban dialogue has developed to the stage where plans made by either group of the association have to be accepted and voted on by the other branch. For instance, the Bamako branch originally vetoed a village proposal to impose a midnight curfew and to instruct a ‘brigade’ to fine those who broke the curfew CFA 250 following the theft of 20 cows from the village in 1991.

The lack of resources raised by AJAK, however, has meant that it has welcomed plans for a larger organisation with a potentially larger resource mobilisation capacity. In February 1994 representatives of AJAK met with other village groups from western Fangasso in Bamako to discuss the formation of a new association, Wacezin (‘let’s unite our efforts’). The re-grouping
represents an attempt to scale-up AJAK’s activities and to include 15 neighbouring villages. The primary aim of the association is to raise funds to sponsor market gardening activities in these villages. The 15 villages share a Bwa dialect, Dwere, a common feature not previously recognised in any activities of local institutions.

**Regional associations**

Several organisations based in Bamako and other Malian cities have also been formed to represent and support local groups covering the whole Cercle or the Bobo ethnic group. The role of the largest organisation, L’Association pour le Développement Économique et Social des Cercles de San et Tominian (ADESAT) is discussed below. The Bureau pour le Développement des Paysans du Cercle de Tominian (BDPT) attempts to operate at a similar level, the Cercle, and was formed in June 1992 for the reasons outlined in the following statement:

> The time has come to help the peasants. It is no secret that the Bobos of Mandiakuy and Tominian are subject to enormous difficulties. Each year once they have paid their taxes they will have saved nothing for their own wealth or for their food security. They are also exposed to the harassment of the agents of the state. It is apparent that we, the intellectuals and the civil servants from this region, have failed in our duty to act according to our means.

**BDPT Constitutional Assembly, 1 June 1992**

BDPT was originally established by 59 members and now claims a membership of 300. Members pay CFA 250 for membership cards and monthly subscriptions of CFA 250. Participation is extremely poor, however, and the union maintained a fund of just CFA 3,500 in 1994 and estimates that only 2-3 per cent of members pay their contributions regularly. The organisation maintains a representative in Deberé through the president of the Regroupement Populaire de Deberé but, as a result of its limited financial capacity, the association records no concrete undertakings despite plans to support village cereal banks and health facilities.

Migrants from Tominian working in Côte d’Ivoire rarely form associations. Instead they tend to belong to quartier-based tons of migrants sharing a broad community of origin, particularly in quartier of Attecoubé, and which provide mutual support of limited capacity. Migrants from the neighbouring Cercle of San, however, formed the Association des Ressortissants et Sympathisants de San (ARSS) in 1987 which now has 80 members. In addition to providing support to ill or bereaved members from San, the association has also contributed to purchasing construction materials for a mosque in the village of Dabani, a dispensary in Santoro and provided equipment for a school in the town of San.

The case of ADESAT is included to illustrate the contrasting functions of an ethnically-based organisation. It highlights the difficulties in maintaining effective rural-urban dialogue at this level and its orientation towards urban-based mutual support services:

> The functionaries, students and other workers in Bamako undertake to promote the social and economic development of the Cercles of San and Tominian. They recognise the need to organise and have created an association for the development of the two Cercles - ADESAT.

**ADESAT Statutes, 23 February 1989**

Associations representing the Bobo ethnic group in Bamako had been formed in 1958 and in 1976. ADESAT, registered in 1989, is the most recent incarnation of this organisational process. The official inspiration for the scope and activities of ADESAT is the experience of tons associations in San and Tominian which have secured solar pumps, cereal banks, collective fields, market gardening and training in villages such as Kanian, home village of one of the ADESAT’s honorary presidents. Despite the official orientation of the association, in providing social and economic support to the two Cercles of San and Tominian, however, the organisation’s central functions are in providing services to urban members and in reinforcing Bobo cultural identity. In June 1992 ADESAT’s Annual General Meeting, which included many aspects of Bobo cultural performance attracted 1,500 people.
ADESAT is predominantly a Bobo-based association, though members also include Maniankas, Dafings and Peulh. The organisation has branches in Sikasso, Ségou, Kati, Kassela and Baguinéda though it maintains no rural representation, has no rural members and has established no links to village-based associations either at home or in the city. ADESAT representatives in Bamako claimed to have formed branches following a 1991 delegation to the region in the villages of Tene, Touba and Waramata. National elections at the time made membership recruitment a sensitive issue and the branches have not taken root.

Rather, the organisation, with a large urban membership, has established a network of semi-autonomous groups in the capital’s quartiers. The first quartier-level branch in Bamako was formed in Niamakoro and by 1990 there were 31 such branches which collect membership dues at each monthly meeting. The quartier branches had an average of 38 members in 1990 (ranging from just 6 to 98) and held collective funds of around CFA 20,000. In three quartiers in Bamako, Niamakoro, T.S.F. and Yirmadio, ADESAT branches have been formed specifically for women.8

ADESAT members are firmly working-class. The 30 members of T.S.F. branch in 1994 included 15 drivers, 5 porters, 5 mechanics, 2 building-site labourers, 2 cereal traders and a carpenter. Just one member of the committee was literate. Women members pay CFA 150 per month, young members pay CFA 100 per month, adult males pay CFA 250 per month and the unemployed do not have to pay subscriptions. In 1989, a total of 705 members paid their regular dues to ADESAT which amounted to CFA 176,250, though only 104 membership cards were sold at a total of CFA 20,800. In 1990, however, only 128 paid their membership dues (CFA 32,000) and just 54 cards were sold (CFA 10,800). This decline in membership is reflected at the quartier level. In the men’s branch in T.S.F. the fifty active members in 1990 had declined to 30 by 1994.

A large proportion of the funds raised by ADESAT’s branches each year is spent on the hiring music troupes from the villages to come to Bamako to play at Christmas celebrations. The women’s branch in T.S.F., for example, paid CFA 210,00 for a troupe of Balafonists from Koussakuy in Fangasso in 1994. Nevertheless, the association is able to operate a simple system of credit, a formalisation of the **tontine** principle. The association maintains a fund within each quartier branch to support members in meeting the expenses incurred in weddings, baptisms and burial arrangements. These contributions began in 1991, two years after the association was launched. Members are entitled to CFA 15,000 in case of a family death or injury once they have been in the association for more than 2 years. For marriages each member contributes CFA 500 which is given to the bride. For baptisms CFA 250 is given from each member to the mother.

In December and January 1991 ADESAT sent a delegation to San and Tominian to identify potential project priorities though meetings with the CLDs and village associations. The recommendations were sent to the Prime Minister’s office. The delegation reported on serious infrastructural deficiencies and identified the need to equip the local dispensaries, and schools, notably in Fangasso **Arrondissement**, and proposed the building of a hospital in Tominian and the construction of a roads between Sokoura and Fangasso, Tion and Bénéna. ADESAT’s report also called for a Radio Libre to broadcast in San and Tominian at an estimated installation cost of 15-20 million CFA. The association contacted a number of agencies, including Coopération Canadienne, for assistance with the project and proposed that running costs would be met by members’ contributions and advertising.

The recommendations of the 1991 delegation were confirmed by a further mission in February 1992. Plans for a rural radio, however, were shelved when the Catholic Church operating in San and Tominian supported the creation of an independent station. By 1994 lack of progress in terms of local development interventions and a declining membership had become acute. ADESAT leaders link their lack of financial resources to the failure to effect change in the villages and their failure to attract ‘intellectuals’ and the more prosperous elements of the community. In order to re-launch the association the leadership is planning to draw on the distinctiveness of Bobo cultural identity:
‘Our main target is the village. But we don’t have the means, what shall we do? We will draw on our culture. This is why we are establishing a band.’

Frederic Dembélé (ADESAT Chairman)

ADESAT’s failure to initiate rural development projects highlights the many problems which face communities in Tominian. Migration is a drain on population and resources, rural-urban links are poorly maintained and the difficulties of urban life inhibit rural investment capacities. The resource poor environment which migrants enter in Bamako when they join a community network determines that associational life is oriented to providing for urban concerns, particularly jobs and the high costs of social events. Even at the pan-ethnic level, therefore, associations from Tominian are effective in providing services and support for livelihoods in Bamako. Where dialogue on rural development issues is effective, however, in Kouana for instance, the meagre resources generated among the migrant community frustrate genuine productive efforts. In cases where such rural-urban interaction is limited, especially in the case of ADESAT, the effects on institutional legitimacy are detrimental. Indeed, without self-financing capacity or effective representation to the government or NGOs, such organisations are forced to rely on cultural identity as a source of legitimacy.

Notes

1 Kamminga’s survey in 1988 was conducted in two of the six arrondissements in Tominian, Centrale with 64 villages and a population of 42,822, and Koula which has 62 villages and a population of 22,074.
2 The chef coutoumier is responsible for the ritual sacrifice for good rains before the rainy season during which sacrificial blood is poured on the sacred places in the village - the well, blacksmith’s workshop, the shrine of the ancestors (Dofini), the forest and the river.
3 Unlike many youth groups in Tominian, which rely on raising money internally from collective labour, the youth group in Sanékuy (AJPS) with 47 members, received funds from La Fondation France Liberté in 1993 through a migrant working in Bamako. The funds generated that year were invested in wire-netting for the market garden, two pairs of oxen, a well, a cart, a donkey and three ploughs.
4 ADECT also represents itself as having links with ADESAT though there is no formal connection.
5 The village is composed of lineage-based quarters. These main exogamous groups are the ruling Coulibaly family occupying the central Bossokny quartier, the Kamaté and Koné families in the southern Dorekny quartier, and the Sanou family in the western Douekny quartier.
6 The fifteen villages are: Togo, Konsekuy, Sokoura, Kiri, Dimana, Batjuikuy, Bankouma, Soumankuy, Tiya, Nakonfa, Tjirakuy, Matina, Kopa, Djakara and Kouana.
7 The composition of the executive committee gives an indication of the occupational basis of BDPT membership. There are 3 women in the 11 strong committee, including a high school student, a nurse and a market trader. Male committee members include a doctor, a teacher (the president), two graduates working in the civil service, an electrician and a driver.
8 The women’s branch in Niamakoro, for example has, in addition to its routine functions, proposed the sale of cereals (rice and millet) to members on a co-operative basis with operating capital generated from social events such as a concert held at Christmas 1991.
Case studies from the Sikasso Region in the south-west of Mali are taken from the Arrondissement of Niéna. The Arrondissement is made up of 67 villages with an estimated total population of 39,016 in 1994 with its centre located in the small town of Niéna which lies 72 km west of Sikasso on the main route to Bamako. The area of Niéna, originally formed part of a Canton, Ganadougou. The Canton gives its name to a composite ethno-linguistic group made up of Bambara and Peulh and which formerly covered 117 villages. Collectively, these peoples and their language are known as the Gana though within this regional identity ethnic divisions are retained.

Map 3.1 Niéna and surrounding districts

Not to scale

Migration from Niéna Arrondissement

Migration in Niéna under colonial rule was an occasional strategy prompted by the need to escape forced labour programmes and to provide cash for the payment of taxes. As a women’s group from the village of Kassoumbougou explained, those who left during the colonial period, including both men and women, defined the migration experience in terms which highlight the cultural tradition of the process:

Migration was hard, we travelled on foot to Bamako or Côte d’Ivoire. When we had collected enough money for the taxes and a sack of salt for our family we would return. The sole purpose was not to bring disgrace on the family.

Under the Traoré regime, cash needs for identity cards, the obligatory purchase of UNJM membership cards, forced participation in sporting and cultural events and harassment from the forestry service compounded monetary burdens and out-migration expanded considerably.

With over a third of all household members engaged in migration activity from the Sikasso Region in the early 1980s (Mazur, 1984), the trend continues and is confirmed in an analysis conducted in 1994. Out-migration from rural areas of Niéna Arrondissement is extremely high. The village of Karangasso, lying 10km east of Niéna, for example, had a population of 1,176 in 1994, of whom 39.9 per cent (781) had left the village either permanently or for the duration
of the dry season. The migrant population from this community was made up of 26.1 per cent single men, 11.4 per cent young single girls and 62.5 per cent families accompanied by their children. Migration from the town of Niéna itself, however, is relatively limited. Of a population of 4,600 it is estimated that 341 (8 per cent) had migrated.

These high rates of migration are also characterised by long-term departures with 37.9 per cent of migrants spending between 5 and 10 years away (Mazur, 1984: 238). This feature is explained by the capacity of households in Niéna to compensate for the absence of labour. In Sikasso Region generally relatively high incomes are derived from access to commercial agriculture since local flood plains enable farmers to produce a broad range of marketable crops such as millet, rice, citrus fruits, bananas and sweet potatoes. Evidence from Niéna therefore reflects Mazur’s analysis which indicates that, ‘...higher socio-economic class is generally supportive of long-term migration and implies that ‘better-off’ households are able to bear the cost of long-term migrants’ foregone labour’ (1984: 257). The household’s capacity to support long-term migration is dependent on effective rural-urban linkages. Evidence from members of one Bamako-based migrant association representing Niéna indicates this point. Migrants’ salaries ranged from between CFA 50,000 to CFA 150,00 per month (with an average of CFA 83,000). On a monthly basis an average of 14 per cent of salary is remitted to family members in Niéna (a range between CFA 4,000 and CFA 25,000 per month).

The primary destination for migrants from the Arrondissement of Niéna has shifted since the early 1980s, when 70.7 per cent of migrants were living abroad (Mazur, 1984: 238), to Bamako, which now accounts for 81 per cent of the migrant population. Men from Niéna are finding jobs in the city’s market gardens and in the manufacture of bamboo furniture. The numbers of migrants from Niéna in Bamako has also been swelled by autonomous female migration, evident from the 11.4 per cent of single young girls who have migrated from Karangasso. Many young women who leave the villages for Bamako are helped by established female traders who find them employment as housemaids, child minders, or in market kiosks. Côte d’Ivoire remains a significant ‘pole’ of attraction for migrants but, as the following testimony illustrates, livelihoods on the plantations are increasingly liable to government intervention and international cocoa price fluctuations:

I left to work in Côte d’Ivoire in 1957 when I was 19 years old. I asked my elder brother for permission and asked him to sell my piece of land. Each year I have sent home money to pay the taxes. First I worked in Aboisso in Côte d’Ivoire for 8 years. Then I moved to Vavoua where I worked as a tailor and I had a small cocoa plantation of 6 ha. The price of the cocoa fell dramatically, however, and 1 kg which was sold at CFA 200-250 we supplied at CFA 15-20. This is why many of the Burkinabes and Malians who owned plantations in Côte d’Ivoire abandoned them. At those prices it was impossible to employ the labourers necessary to harvest the cocoa. To carry on you had to have another source of income. I stayed because I could make money from tailoring and last year I got CFA 225 per kg of cocoa. When my elder brother died, which coincided with the Ivoirien government’s decision to sell plantations owned by Burkinabes and Malians, I decided to move home. There have always been migrants who never returned to the village but in my time migrants had more pity for their parents at home than today.

Idrissa Diallo, Niéna

LOCAL INSTITUTIONS IN NIÉNA ARRONDISSEMENT

The local institutional landscape in rural Niéna has been dominated by the presence of the cotton marketing board, CMDT. Sikasso Region lies in the heart of the CMDT zone of activities where, according to Hesseling, ‘... CMDT has been actively organizing villages for more than a decade, village associations have become strong, self-confident organizations. They have a sufficient ‘traditional’ basis, plus a local cadre with a ‘modern’ attitude’ (1994: 43). The groups linked with CMDT are the Association Villageois and the recently introduced Kafo Jigne. A further key factor in local institutional directions has been the support provided by a town-twinning agreement between Niéna and Bougeval in France. The town-twinning has provided resources for a number of associations which are therefore able to support a range
of credit and development activities. Despite these ‘modernising’ influences, in all cases village activities are undertaken with the approval of the village council (the Blon).

**Associations Linked to CMDT**

The Association Villageois (AV) has had a long presence in Niéna. In the town itself, for example, the AV was introduced in 1978. It now has 16 executive members, all of whom are literate and nominated on the basis of quartier representation, and a total membership of 150. Supervised by CMDT, the central role of the AV is cotton marketing from which its funds are raised. Niéna’s AV has therefore re-invested cotton profits in the purchase of a weighing machine (costing CFA 450,000), a threshing equipment (CFA 70,000) and a packing machine (CFA 125,000). The AV, however, has also diversified its activities by providing literacy training courses and undertaking needs’ assessments and collective work in the construction of shops to rent (at a cost of CFA 1,800,000 which was financed from a bank loan repayable over 3 years), the construction of a literacy centre (CFA 175,000), the construction of 8 small dams, (CFA 250,000) and digging a well (CFA 195,000). The AV also provides a small sum to bereaved families collected from members contributions.

The Kafo Jigne is a system of co-operative banking which was founded in 1987 by CMDT and is linked to 23 Associations Villageois within the Arrondissement. The bank provides small loans for a variety of clients, from households to village associations. Thirteen villages in Niéna initiated the scheme and built the bank together with a further ten villages who joined later. Each village contributed the sum of CFA 68,750 towards the construction of the building. Two people chosen to represent the villages were trained by CMDT to run the co-operative bank and each village has 2 delegates who sit on a committee which reviews loan applications. The bank offers different types of loans to individuals: credit given to the head of the household to meet the costs of the rainy season and a 3 year credit for purchasing assets such as carts, ploughs, oxen and construction materials. Each prospective client is required to deposit CFA 5,000 in the bank and to pay an extra CFA 800 for administrative costs. Credit is only given once people have deposited the full CFA 5,000 and additional security is taken on clients’ livestock, carts and houses. With this deposit, however, a client may obtain credit up to CFA 50,000. In order to facilitate credit for women, several women can club together to raise the necessary deposit.

The AVs and other local associations can also apply for loans from the Kafo Jigne and can receive up to CFA 5,000,000 repayable over 3 years. Every year the association has to repay one third of the capital plus interest. In 1994, for example, six village-based associations borrowed money from Kafo Jigne. The loans have funded a variety of projects including commercial stores in Sanankorotogola and Bouassa (at a cost of CFA 250,000), a pharmacy in Niéna (CFA 600,000), the purchase of corrugated roofing for a maternity ward in Chouchéna (CFA 100,000), an office and accommodation block in Karangasso (CFA 1,835,000) and a well in Djinéni (CFA 250,000).

Outside the sphere of CMDT’s operations many spontaneous forms of social organisation continue to function in the Arrondissement of Niéna though they are increasingly integrated with funding and training opportunities offered by external agents. In particular women’s tons, migrant associations and local development associations have developed as a result of an international town-twinning link.
Town-twinning

Niénà is twinned with a French town, Bougeval, through a non-profit making organisation called Teriya Amitiés Mali. Development support to Niénà was initiated in 1985 when medical supplies were sent to Niéna. Originally invested in the purchase of football shirts, the profits from the sale of the medicines were later used for a variety of development projects. The revenues were spent in paying forestry taxes, the construction of a youth centre, and assistance for well-digging. Between 1985 and 1993 it was estimated that almost CFA 15 million has been raised from the sale of Bougeval’s donations. The public health orientation of the town-twinning operation continued in 1988 when it was decided that medical supplies should be sold centrally through a dispensary which was opened in 1989. In 1995 the sale of medicines was integrated into a health centre project. Teriya Amitié Mali supported the construction of the health centre, which was built by 12 village-based work groups (tons) rotating their labour on a daily basis and who now share the centre’s amenities which include an infirmary, a maternity ward and the pharmacy. A health centre management committee was formed in 1994 following a conflict between village youth representatives, the Blon and leading intellectuals which sprang from concerns relating to the transparency of management procedures. Poor management and in particular the failure to recoup running costs, for instance, plagued the operation of an ambulance service, which was supported by Teriya in 1988.

The youth centre in Niéna has also provided a focus of investment from Teriya Amitiés Mali. The centre was built in 1988, with a donation of CFA 7 million from the French town, and houses a theatre and cinema. It offers a meeting place for the various local associations and is the location for a range of training courses. In 1992 Teriya began sponsoring literacy training for 2 hours each week during the dry season which has been taken up by over 300 people. In addition to these literacy classes, the Benkady Women’s Association have also benefited from courses in soap making, sewing and dyeing in the centre. The youth centre is also home to a radio station, installed in 1993, which transmits for several hours each day and broadcasts to villages up to 25 kms away. Radio-Teriya-Niéna is used by members of the youth centre to transmit cultural and recreational programmes, by the government services who broadcast public information, and by NGOs who air awareness raising programmes in sectors such as family planning and public health. The contracts secured from NGOs and government services means that the radio is a self-financing operation. Most recently the youth centre has also been the site for technical training. Teriya Amitiés Mali secured the placement of four trainers who, as part of their French national service, have been posted to Niéna to run training programmes in carpentry, mechanical engineering, and television and radio repair.

Teriya Amitiés Mali have also been involved in a number of other projects: a library was established in 1985, a dam was constructed at Ménako, and a kindergarten was set up in Niéna in 1994. More recently Teriya secured sponsorship for the installation of a biogas project supplying gas fuel to the town generated from specially constructed latrines. The aim of this experimental project is to substitute the use of gas for wood to prevent local deforestation. An ongoing contribution from Teriya is the provision of bales of second-hand clothes which are sent to a different quartier of the town of Niéna to fund development work. Women’s groups, such as the Musowka Ton and the Babala women’s association, for example, sell the clothes and use the money to purchase oxen, livestock and grain to be re-sold when prices are high. Funds from the sale of clothes by the women’s groups are deposited with the Kafo Jigne.

The activities of Teriya Amitiés Mali in Niéna are supervised by a Teriya committee in the town, by village councils and L’Association des Ressortissants de l’Arrondissement de Niéna (ARAN). ARAN is a Bamako-based migrant association which serves as an intermediary between the Arrondissement and Bougeval. Though it has generated no development activities of its own in the area it maintains a link to the Niéna and ARAN representatives travel to Niéna to monitor progress and advise on problems.
ARAN is an association of educated professionals. It was originally formed in 1956 as a student organisation, L’Association de Scolaires de Ganadougou. In the vacations the association organised classes in Niéna helping students proceed to secondary education. The successor to the students association was l’Association des élèves et étudiants Ressortissants de Niéna (ASERN) which was formed in 1979. Members of this group formed ARAN in 1988. It was not until 1991, however, that the association was registered.

Each of the 60 members is expected to pay annual fees of CFA 2,000 plus a membership card of CFA 250. However, it is estimated that only 15 per cent of members pay regularly and as a result the financial capacity of the group is limited. In 1994 its development fund stood at CFA 50,000. Apart from the treasurer there are no women members of the group. The members of ARAN are a mixture of Bambara and Peulh with an average age of 36. Other than students, the majority of members have received post-school professional training some undertaking studies in France. The high levels of education of the members may be seen in the fact that only a small proportion of members received help in securing their professional positions. Professions represented in the association include the law, medicine and the civil service.

Although 60 per cent of ARAN members received assistance from relatives with accommodation on arrival in Bamako, it is clear that current members have now assumed this position of patronage themselves since two-thirds of ARAN members support dependants other than immediate family. A further feature of the ARAN membership, which illustrates their status as established urbanites is the number of additional associations which they have joined. These organisations include associations representing migrants from village, cercle and regional levels within Sikasso, professional bodies and national organisations such as the Association Maliene pour Unité et le Progrés de l’Islam.

Migrants from Niéna who are not members of ARAN, invariably know nothing of its existence. Outside ARAN, migrants do not organise mutual support through formal structures. Rather, migrants insure themselves against the costs of celebrating social events on the basis of shared employment or village-based networks. These informal groups, one of which extends its membership to the ‘Ganas’ of Ganadougou, collect voluntary contributions to offer support for baptisms, deaths and repatriation. Generally the poorer membership of these groups cannot raise sufficient resources to maintain a collective fund for development activities at home though an association representing Karrangasso was able to contribute to the construction of a maternity clinic in the village.

The cases from Niéna Arrondissement in Sikasso Region highlight the effective ends to which local institutions can put limited externally generated means. Local associations in the area and in Bamako are organised around the funding opportunities offered by CMDT and Teriya Amitiés Mali. The range of local institutions, marketing groups, credit services, labour groups, women’s associations and migrant organisations have therefore been drawn into mutually supportive relationships because of the impetus, in terms of training and funding, provided by national and international organisations. The way in which external inputs are adapted to local needs and matched by local funding and cost-recovery has enhanced the legitimacy and performance of local institutions in Niéna. Indeed, the legitimacy of local organisations in the region is derived from their capacity to respond to a shifting institutional policy environment. The most recent institutional development, for example, is related to the government’s decentralisation programme. L’Association pour le Développement de l’Arrondissement de Niéna was formed in 1994 to assume local management responsibilities over development interventions. In a similar way to ADECT from Tominian it has not initiated projects and has yet to ratify its regulations. Indeed, like ADECT it has been formed on the assumption that such structures will benefit from the decentralisation process: ‘With the advent of decentralisation the population will be left to take charge of their own development; thus we need a core of people to take over.’

Notes
An additional survey was conducted in 1994 of 125 households with migrant members in Bamako. From this profile it was similarly established that among households based in the Arrondissement of Niéna 31.3 per cent of family members live or work elsewhere.

The thirteen villages were Niéna, Dorobougou, Wokorobougou, Tiola, Bouana, Karangasso, Djinéni, Sanakorotogola, Chouchéna, N’Tjila, Bougoubaba, Tiala and N’Tjibala.

In 1994 the Teriya committee had CFA 254,750 in its fund.

Parallel to the student’s associations it is reported that the Ganadougou region was also represented by l’Association des Ressortissants de Ganadougou formed in 1975 which drew membership from the arrondissements of Niéna, Bindjo and Finkolo.
4. **KOULIKORO REGION**

Case studies from the Koulikoro Region, north of Bamako are taken from the Cercle of Banamba which constitutes an important, but isolated Sarakolé centre. Around 50 per cent of the predominantly Muslim population of the Cercle is Sarakolé. The remainder of the population, estimated at 102,659 (Action Santé Développement, 1993), are Bambara (34 per cent) and Peulh herders (14 per cent). Particular cases are taken from the towns of Touba, Kiban and Banamba.

Map 4. Banamba and surrounding districts

The Muslim population of Banamba Cercle largely belong to the Wahhabi/Sunni tradition, though some elements within these communities are Tijanist. Brenner (1993) indicates that in local Malian discourse the Islam of the Wahhabi/Sunnis is often contrasted with an Islam which is described as ‘traditional’ or ‘orthodox’. It is asserted that this identity is not only defined by doctrinal positions but also by the commercial and educational activities which these groups have undertaken. The Wahhabi/Sunnis emerged as group in the 1940s and early 1950s within the networks of both young students and merchants who had either direct or indirect contacts with the Middle East. Becoming a merchant in the Malian context meant becoming Muslim, at a time when members of the new merchant class were taking on a Wahhabi/Sunni identity (Brenner, 1993: 62). Wahhabi identity was also defined by the range of institutions into which commercial profits were invested, which include mosques, modernised Muslim schools (medersas), clinics, pharmacies and cultural centres. These investments were supported by waqfs, endowments from the Gulf States. The Khaled Institute of Saudi Arabia, for example, has provided significant aid to Muslim communities in Mali, as have waqf programmes from Kuwait and Iraq (Nahr Djoliba), the United Arab Emirates and Libya (Kunafoni, 1993). These funds have been used to support Arabic teaching through the creation of Medersas, the construction of mosques, the drilling of boreholes and in providing assistance to orphans.

**MIGRATION FROM BANAMBA CERCLE**

In Banamba, unlike the previous case studies, migration is a long established cultural tradition based on trading links and as such does not reflect immediate responses to external economic and political events. Indeed, before colonisation communities from the Banamba region travelled to the south (Sikasso) to trade horses for slaves and to the border countries (Guinea and Côte d’Ivoire) to barter salt for kola nuts. Meillassoux, for example, identifies the
Sepera (Simpara) family of Banamba and the Sila (Sylla) of Touba as significant traders of slaves and karité with Koutiala in the nineteenth century. This position was retained during the conquests of El Haj Umar and Samory after the abolition of slavery in 1815 and the cessation of the Atlantic trade by the middle of the century (1971: 186).

During the colonial period migration was directed towards the ground-nut basin of Senegal where people from Banamba became agricultural workers known as ‘Navefanes’. Since Independence migrants have been attracted to the ‘CFA dugu’ (Sierra Leone) and to Ghana because of its gold mines. Under the first Republic, migration dropped significantly because of policies restricting movement such as the payments to obtain travel documents and the restricted times allowed abroad. Today, as Table 4.1 indicates from a survey of 50 migrants, primary destinations from Banamba are Bamako, the Côte d’Ivoire (in particular Bouaké), and Central Africa (notably Brazzaville in the Congo). In these cities Banamban migrants rely on their trading skills and networks; education levels are low with 46 per cent illiteracy among migrants. 1

Table 4.1 Principal destinations for migrants from Banamba Cercle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destination</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bamako</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bouaké</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazzaville</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abidjan</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other African Cities</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mopti</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The proportion of Banamba migrants working in Brazzaville is significant. A survey conducted in the Arrondissement of Touba in 1993 indicated that of those householders who had moved abroad to work, 32 per cent lived in Congo (Action Santé Développement, 1993).

These long-distance migrations are supported by family investment in the migration process. A migrant from Kiban, for example received CFA 250,000 from his father to trade in Angola. Parental investment in supporting the initial costs of migration are compensated for by high rates of remittances, on which rural communities in Banamba are increasingly dependent. The costs of long-term migration in terms of absent labour are also met by family migrants, particularly among Sarakolé communities, where hired labour expenses are paid for by migrant sons. As Néga Sylla, the Chef du Village of Touba, explained, ‘Without the migrants those who live in the village would not be able to work.’

The intensity of interaction between rural and urban communities is demonstrated by the fact that 58 per cent of migrants, whether in Mali or abroad, visit home at least once every year. Indeed, the flow of cash remittances to families in Banamba Cercle is high with 82 per cent of migrants sending money home on a regular basis. Remittances sent by migrants vary considerably in amount. In many cases remittances of between CFA 5,000 to CFA 120,000 are paid every year. In certain cases, particularly among migrants in Côte d’Ivoire, contributions may reach up to CFA 480,000 each year, paid monthly. Goods remitted by 31 per cent of migrants are generally foodstuffs and materials for house-building or cart repair; one woman working in Bamako, for example, remitted a sewing machine to her family. In general, however, female out-migration from Banamba is controlled under the strictly patriarchal Sarakolé social organisation. Female migration in this area is therefore characterised as ‘associational migration’ and in interview responses, no women migrants were reported.

LOCAL INSTITUTIONS IN BANAMBA CERCLE

Local institutions in Banamba are shaped by the intensity of rural-urban linkages. Of the range of local institutions which operate in the towns and villages in Banamba, the social and economic leverage which migrant communities possess has determined that
associations based in Bamako and other cities are among the most significant actors in locally planned and sponsored development activities. The level of rural-urban interaction in Banamba is indicated by the fact that post offices in the Cercle were funded by migrant groups residing abroad who wanted to keep in contact with their villages. Indeed, investment by migrant groups in infrastructural development has been undertaken for many decades, but with the political changes of 1991 and assistance from the non-governmental sector, development interventions have expanded considerably in recent years. In 1992, for example, an international NGO, Plan International - Banamba, developed a co-funding policy supporting independent community initiatives which has successfully activated migrant’s resources. With the submission of project proposals from a community the NGO requires substantial physical and financial contributions from the local population. Financial resources within the villages are limited, however, and such demands therefore provide a significant incentive for the investment of funds by migrant associations. The capacities demonstrated by groups in the area have attracted significant interest from the non-governmental sector, including agencies focusing on local institutional development such as the Centre Actions Co-operative.

Migrant associations in Bamako are of two main types, representing different sizes of constituency. Associations which represent villages and town quartiers generally assume urban-based support activities. In Bamako, for example, an association of 70 members representing the quartier of Santikilla in Banamba provides financial support for marriages, naming-ceremonies and funerals. Within the association contributions are payable on the basis of available income. In 1995 only 21 members contributed regularly, usually at a rate of CFA 5,000 per month, while other more prosperous members contribute ten times that amount to a collective fund. Village-based associations also provide this type of support in Bamako though their operations have extended to small-scale investment at home. Benkadi, an association representing 78 members from the village of Oulen, provides migrants with financial assistance in emergencies. The association gave one member CFA 70,000 in 1994, for example, to return to the village to bury his parents. Funds are also raised for rural development programmes such as a health centre which was built in 1985. Funding for a water pump project was initiated in 1994. Paying between CFA 2,000 and CFA 50,000 each year, members raised CFA 783,500 in 1994. In 1995 the fund stood at CFA 446,500 based on contributions from 56 members in Bamako, while branches in Ségou, Zaire, Côte d’Ivoire and Congo raised a further CFA 480,000.

At a higher level, organisations representing the whole Cercle or particular arrondissements, are informal but financially strong. These groups do not provide urban services for their members but instead act as local investment agents and financiers of rural development. One such group is l’Association pour le Développement du Cercle de Banamba which was established in 1994. Its aim is to support development activities of benefit to the whole Cercle:

> With the advent of decentralisation it is important that we take the initiative and that we ignore political and religious differences. It is also a way to get recognition from the authorities.

Mady Diabate, ABAD Secretary

ABAD’s constitutive assembly has 5 delegates taken from each village. There is a bureau in Bamako, and sections in villages in the Cercle, in the regions, and in towns abroad. Membership cards cost CFA 100 in the village and annual dues are a further 100 CFA. Migrants pay CFA 1,000 for membership card and CFA 1,000 dues per year per person. The association’s immediate priority is to open up trade in rice between Banamba and Niono further north with the construction of a road from Banamba to Niono and to repair the road from Banamba to Koulikoro. ABAD members received an audience with the Malian president to discuss these options in 1995.

Three further associations, operating at the town and arrondissement levels, are outlined here and represent those groups in Banamba with the highest capacities to support rural development.
development projects. Other arrondissements in Banamba Cercle are also represented in Bamako, by the Association des Ressortissants de Boron, for example.³

**Touba**

Touba is a small town with a population of 7,143, made up of Tijanist and Wahhabit Muslims. The town itself is predominantly Sarakolé though Touba Arrondissement is made up of both Sarakolé and Bambara. The Mouvement de la Jeunesse de Touba pour le Développement (MJTD) was founded in 1986 and represents the Arrondissement, made up of 26 villages each of which has formed sub-committees affiliated to MJTD. MJTD’s registration was obstructed in 1986 because of political pressure from the national youth association (UNJM) which sought to co-opt the new initiative and to secure the movement’s presidency. MJTD was finally registered in 1990. The new association also faced conflict with the village elders since it was perceived to represent an attempt by the village youth to usurp traditional authority. This generational dispute was settled by the nomination of the sons of the major lineages to positions within MJTD and its activities are undertaken with full consultation and approval from the council of the chef du village.

Of the 30 members of the executive committee of MJTD in Bamako in 1989, almost 75 per cent were merchants in the capital. It is not known exactly how many ordinary members belong to MJTD in Bamako since the organisation is largely organised around fund-raising activities rather than mutual support, and because of the fluidity of rural-urban re-locations. Women are poorly represented; they are not members of the executive and are only informed of decisions taken in meetings through the distribution of minutes, relayed by a women’s delegate. In fact, women who had originally joined MJTD in Touba became frustrated by the group’s lack of attention to women’s priorities and formed a separate organisation, a women’s co-operative. This group, initiated in 1988, with 26 members, raises money through cloth dyeing and soap manufacture for which UNDP provided training.⁴ Unlike a ton, the group’s funds represent personal profits and are not used for wider development activities, although collective investment has been made in a plot of land and a cloth dyeing workshop. New members of the group are therefore required to invest CFA 10,000 to join. MJTD, however, serves as a potential funder for women’s groups in Touba and has provided a loan to an association from Sarantebougou to purchase a grinding mill.

As Table 4.2 indicates, the role of community funding for development initiatives in Touba since 1981 has been substantial. Over 90 per cent of funding for the various projects was raised locally. Projects are proposed and planned in Touba through the local branches of MJTD with the approval of the respective village councils before being submitted to Bamako for sponsorship. Additional funds have been derived from religious links to groups in the Gulf states, particularly where these contacts were established by previous local institutions, and from NGOs such as Plan International and Projet Eau Vivre.
Table 4. Projects sponsored by MJTD and its predecessors since 1981 in Touba

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Local Funding</th>
<th>Sponsors</th>
<th>Funding</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1981-82</td>
<td>Secondary School (40 classrooms, 1,700 students and salaries for 56 teachers)</td>
<td>481,495,280</td>
<td>Libya-Kuwait-Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>41,400,000</td>
<td>522,895,280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981-82</td>
<td>Electricity supply (2 generators)</td>
<td>25,000,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>25,000,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981-84</td>
<td>Health Centre</td>
<td>189,910,000</td>
<td>Kuwaiti government</td>
<td>11,000,000</td>
<td>200,910,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981-86</td>
<td>2 Water towers</td>
<td>92,100,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>92,100,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982-89</td>
<td>Mosque</td>
<td>280,197,690</td>
<td>Plan International</td>
<td>5,000,000</td>
<td>325,197,690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Irrigation Dam</td>
<td>37,600,000</td>
<td>Plan International</td>
<td>5,000,000</td>
<td>32,600,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Pharmacy</td>
<td>26,475,450</td>
<td></td>
<td>26,475,450</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1985-87</td>
<td>Maternity Ward (30 Beds)</td>
<td>80,000,000</td>
<td>Eau Vivre</td>
<td></td>
<td>80,000,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1986-87</td>
<td>Post office</td>
<td>50,660,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>50,660,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987-89</td>
<td>4 Wells</td>
<td>1,100,000</td>
<td>Eau Vivre</td>
<td>2,500,000</td>
<td>3,600,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987-89</td>
<td>Agricultural Training (12 trainees)</td>
<td>2,860,000</td>
<td>Eau Vivre</td>
<td>10,600,000</td>
<td>13,460,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987-89</td>
<td>Irrigation Dam</td>
<td>250,236,000</td>
<td>Territorial Administration</td>
<td>30,000,000</td>
<td>280,236,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Plan International</td>
<td>10,000,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Eau Vivre</td>
<td>10,000,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989-90</td>
<td>Operation room Laboratory Ambulance</td>
<td>13,417,295</td>
<td>UTAH Alliance</td>
<td>30,000,000</td>
<td>43,417,295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>N’Tiélé School (3 Classrooms)</td>
<td>7,079,645</td>
<td></td>
<td>7,079,645</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Touba School (10 Classrooms)</td>
<td>16,378,680</td>
<td>Fonds d’Aide pour les Ecoles Fondamentales</td>
<td>13,621,320</td>
<td>30,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Kolobo School (3 Classrooms)</td>
<td>492,000</td>
<td>Fonds d’Aide pour les Ecoles Fondamentales</td>
<td>1,476,047</td>
<td>1,968,047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,555,002,040</td>
<td></td>
<td>165,597,367</td>
<td>1,720,599,407</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: MJTD Activity List, 1981-1992)

The trend in NGO co-funding has continued since 1992, for example in the construction of three classrooms for the school for the village of Bougouba in Touba Arrondissement for which Plan International provided technical supervision and MJTD contributed CFA 600,000. Funds are raised from MJTD groups in many important migrant destinations. For the construction of the 10 classrooms for Touba school in 1992, for example, migrants from Brazzaville alone contributed CFA 3,000,000 which was supplemented by contributions from branches in Bamako, Brussels and Paris. As with most infrastructural projects, the construction effort was organised by the chefs of each quartier in Touba who requested two young men from each family to work on the project.

The projects, however, have not been without their problems. The first irrigation dam built in the town from 1987-89 by Groupement d’Ingénieurs Conseils pour le Développement, for example, successfully raised the local water table from 25m to 7m but was seriously damaged by floods. The most prominent achievement of MJTD to date has been the construction of a second, larger dam which is 350m long and 7m high. The total cost of the project was over CFA 300,000,000 of which only 50,000,000 was raised from partner agencies such as Projet Eau Vivre, Plan International, the Territorial Administration and Projet Alimentaire Malien which provided food for work. The dam was designed to create a lake which would irrigate small-holdings for rice cultivation on its banks. By 1995, however, the take-up was poor.

One of the most recent interventions sponsored by MJTD has been a community workshop. The construction of the workshop and equipment including a forge and carpentry tools cost
The workshop also houses a shop. Training in carpentry, blacksmithing and masonry is still to be secured. In funding the workshop MJTD have made contact with several international organisations including UNDP and USAID.

**Kiban**

The town of Kiban, with a population of around 5,520, is predominantly Sarakolé and Peulh. Sarakolé villagers hire labour from neighbouring Bambara villages for weeding and harvesting. Wahhabit influences are particularly strong.

Projects initiated by Kiban and its migrant community have focused on the fields of education, health and communications. The first collaboration between rural and urban groups in Kiban was in 1954 with the construction of a school which was upgraded in 1970. In 1995, with assistance from Plan International, a 6 classroom medersa was built in Kiban to which migrants contributed CFA 1,200,000. Interventions in the health sector began in 1956 when a health centre was built through collaboration between migrants, villagers and government agencies. A maternity ward was built with help from the Dutch Embassy in Bamako in 1984. Communications have also figured prominently in locally prioritised projects. In 1958 a telephone line was installed, which was automated in 1974, and the road from Kiban to Banamba was re-surfaced in 1984 costing CFA 10,000,000. Like Touba, Kiban has also invested in irrigation dams to increase water levels and promote irrigated agriculture. Three dams were constructed in 1983 at a cost of approximately CFA 20,000,000.

Kiban is currently represented by two associations in Bamako, l’Association des Ressortissants de Kiban (ARK) and Sarné. ARK retains the most important link to the town through the council of elders and is responsible for the major developments in the town. Sarné is a recent formation taking its name from the original home of Kiban’s main families in the Cercle of Nioro du Sahel during the Gana empire. Sarné was established by a new set of well educated migrants who identified shortcomings in previous development intervention, such as bias towards religion over education, technical failure of large infrastructural programmes, lack of productive initiatives and the limited focus on sponsoring women’s groups or activities. One of the main forces behind the creation of the association, an engineer trained in France, was not able to lead the group because he was born to a griot family (griots, praisesingers, have low caste status). Instead, representatives were nominated to the committee on the basis of lineage, with the chief’s family and each major lineage represented by a son. The president of Sarné, for example, is the son of the chef du village. Sarné has two bodies in Kiban, a management committee made up of young men and a supervisory committee formed by the chef du village and representatives from his council. In addition Sarné has branches in Gabon, Congo, Angola and France.

Sarné has established an informal system of voluntary contributions of CFA 50,000, CFA 25,000 CFA 12,500 or CFA 2,000, depending on members’ incomes, for project fund-raising among migrants, though the membership itself is not recorded and membership cards have not been distributed. It is understood, however, that no women have become members of the group. Sarné’s first intervention, in 1993, was to support a community slaughter-house. Local meat prices were high (up to CFA 900 per kg) and migrants were having to pay monthly to cover their family’s meat bill. The project was also designed to provide employment to local youths. Migrant members of ARK provided Sarné with a loan of CFA 150,000 to purchase two cows which were slaughtered and sold at prices much lower than those charged by local butchers. However, in undertaking this initiative without involving established meat traders and butchers (traditionally the lowest caste group), Sarné created considerable tension. Those managing the scheme in the village were not accountable, and the project went into debt. Migrants from Brazzaville sent CFA 700,000 to purchase a refrigerator to conserve the meat since this was identified as a key weakness in the arrangement. However, the branch of the association in Bamako blocked this transfer of funds on the grounds that the project was flawed and retained the money to invest in further beds for the health centre instead.
The town of Banamba itself has a population of 9,398. Each of the town’s six quartiers is represented by a ton and a council of elders. It is these councils, in association with the Commandant du Cercle and the CLD who define development priorities for the town. A number of co-operatives have also been formed within the town for animal husbandry, agriculture, fishing, soap manufacture and cloth dyeing with support from Plan International.

The Association pour le Développement Intégré de Banamba (ADIBA) was formed in 1991 by migrants from the town of Banamba in Bamako. As a representative from the executive committee explained, the members of ADIBA took the opportunity of the political changes to reform the organisation from a, ‘société de mariage to a development agency’. However, opportunities for establishing partnerships with non-governmental agencies provided a potentially more immediate incentive. Indeed, others observers suggested that the main incentive to ‘getting organised’ was the prospect of donor support once Plan International re-oriented its policy towards co-financing projects initiated by community-based organisations. ADIBA has not formed a branch in Banamba itself but instead maintains close links to the chief’s council.

Before ADIBA was constituted, however, Banamba had benefited from migrant’s investments through informally organised groups established before independence. The more recent initiatives promoted through migrants’ resources were the construction of a school in Banamba in 1979 with assistance from the Saudi Arabian government and the building of the imposing central mosque in 1984. Developments attributed to ADIBA have included the rehabilitation of Fofana, one of the quartiers in the town, costing CFA 11 million. For this project seven influential benefactors contributed CFA 1 million each. In 1994 ADIBA co-funded a water supply project with Plan International and contributed CFA 3,000,000 for the installation of twelve water pumps, each constructed on the basis that labour and additional materials would be provided by the households themselves. The respective quartier tons are responsible for their maintenance and repair.

In September 1994 ADIBA responded to a call from the Commandant du Cercle and sent a delegation to meet with the various chefs du village to request that the community pay its taxes (which it had not been paid since 1991) as the school and health centre were about to close because the staff had not been paid. This incident highlights the difficulties incurred with the maintenance of social infrastructure and the provision of running costs, repairs and salaries.

The development projects undertaken in Touba, Kiban and Banamba represent a high profile infrastructural investment programme which is supported by extensive merchant networks in Bamako and elsewhere. Competition, between local lineages to act as project patrons and between the various communities themselves, has provided an additional incentive in the expansion of project portfolios. Project impact and regional benefits, however, are questionable. The rate of successive investments has mitigated against effective monitoring and evaluation. Furthermore, a bias towards infrastructural construction projects, as opposed to employment generation schemes has led to problems in routine resource mobilisation in Banamba for instance, and this has only recently received attention in the formation of Sarné and MJTD’s skills’ training programme. Equally, Touba, Kiban and Banamba have become intermediate urban centres of innovation and progress and their local institutions have attracted high levels of non-governmental support. Limited investment in other areas in Banamba Cercle, however, particularly in non-Sarakolé villages, highlights the socio-economic disparities generated by local institutions which represent the interests of particular communities.

Notes

1 In a survey conducted among Banamban migrants in Bamako in 1995, it was estimated that 44 per cent of migrants had received a medersa education, 8 per cent attended primary school and just 2 per cent had passed on to secondary level.
Recent interventions in the region also include a solar powered water pump programme sponsored by the Projet Régional d’Energie Solaire which also operates on a co-funded basis.

L’Association des Ressortissants de Boron was founded and registered in 1993. The association has members from all the 48 villages in the Arrondissement of Boron which has a total population of 27,320. Membership also include migrants in Gabon, Congo, Zaire and Côte d’Ivoire. The association has not undertaken projects through collective funds but acts vehicle for individuals to sponsor initiatives such as a recent example where a prominent migrant installed a solar powered pump in his village.

After devaluation costs of cloth production rose, however, and the group traded rice and grain to raise funds. The group intends to raise sufficient capital from these activities to embark on trade between Bamako and Touba.

The nearly unanimous refusal to pay the poll-tax after 1991 was attributed, by the country’s president, to years of corruption.

The development of Touba, Kiban and Banamba, for example, which has made them preferred partners in the creation of commune rurales (see p. 30).
Kayes Region is located in the extreme west of Mali, bordering Mauritania to the north, Guinea to the south and Senegal to the west. Kayes is crossed from east to west by the Senegal river. The city of Kayes, the administrative centre and former national capital, is located on the river, 758 km from Dakar and 575 km from Bamako. Despite the construction of the Manantali dam transport opportunities afforded by the river itself have never been exploited. Kayes is therefore a physically isolated area since the Dakar-Niger railway built in 1924 has fallen into disrepair and the rail link discouraged the building of a road connection with the capital. The total population of Kayes Region in 1992 was estimated at 1.07 million. The area is predominantly composed of Soninké (Sarakolé) and Halpulaar (Toucouleur). The Sarakolé are a people of the Manding group and are organised in classes (based on descent from free men or slaves), castes and segmentary lineages. According to tradition the Sarakolé emerged from the Wagadu kingdom and adopted Islam as early as the end of the twelfth century which, after a return to animism, was re-established by El Hadj Omar, the Toucouleur conqueror, in the middle of the nineteenth century.

Map 5.1 Detail of Kayes Region
Livelihoods in the region are based on a subsistence agro-pastoral economy and it is argued that the lack of economic alternatives in the region have made the Senegal River Valley a significant source of African labour migrations. Like the Banamban Sarakolé groups, communities from Kayes, ‘... have taken advantage of their dispersal to create wide networks of commercial relationships covering several states and usually built on kinship or clientship links’ (Meillassoux, 1965: 135).

Migration from Kayes Region

Migration and trade have dominated livelihoods in present day Kayes Region. The trading reputation of the Sarakolé in particular dates to before the Empire of Ghana. Located between desert and savannah, the Sarakolé acted as intermediaries between nomads and agriculturalists. Exchange between northern and southern regions involved trade in slaves for horses and cola for livestock. Many Sarakolé fortunes were later based on the mining of gold and diamonds in Guinea, Côte d’Ivoire, Sierra Leone and Congo. By the 1920s, migration patterns shifted towards ‘salaried emigration’. The poll tax system imposed by the French, which was enforced by the threat of forced labour on the construction of the Dakar-Niger railway and other colonial public works projects, drove many men out of the Senegal River Valley and towards the newly established ground-nut plantations in Senegal where migrants worked as ‘navetanes’ for four months each year (Abela de la Riviere, 1973).

Households continued to face difficulties in meeting colonial cash requirements, however, and this pattern of seasonal or circular strategies was constantly threatened by the fall in international ground-nut prices and rapid declines in the demand for labour, such as occurred in 1932. As an alternative, Sarakolé veterans who had served in the French army during the Second World War sought to take advantage of the employment opportunities in post-war France. Initial reports of favourable wage and employment conditions in the late 1950s prompted massive migration to French industrial destinations such the north-east belt of the Parisian suburbs, the Seine valley, and the towns surrounding Boulogne, Blancourt, Mantes-la-Jolie and Rouen where many migrants worked in the vehicle manufacturing industry.

By the early 1970s it was estimated that around 35,000 Malians were working in France and that a high proportion of these were Sarakolé from the Cercles of Kayes, Bafoulabé Kita and Nioro. By 1985 the data of the French Ministry of the Interior indicated that 73,588 citizens from the three Senegal River countries were residing in France, of whom 29,531 were Malians (Daum, 1992: 23). The continued high proportion of migrants from Kayes Region in France is explained by the functioning of the migrant network. Migration to France is organised on a rotational basis: elders and youngers circulate to secure the family’s place in the remittance economy.

Migration to France, either directly or in stages, with a stop of several years in Bamako, Dakar or Côte d’Ivoire to earn money for the passage, may also be classed as ‘career migration’. Sojourns in France, which had been relatively short prior to 1974, from two to three years, have become longer since the progressive tightening of French immigration law. A survey in 1982 (Findley, 1990) showed that the average length of stay in France was 7.7 years, though this is regularly punctuated by returns to the village. After the migrant has secured employment, paid off the costs of the trip, and saved sufficient to return with a substantial sum, which on average may take up to five years, the migrant returns. At home the migrant may stay for several months using up accrued vacation before returning. Subsequent visits occur on average every three years. In this way, migration to France for many becomes a working-life migration, with definitive return only when the migrant retires (Condé et al, 1986: 87–92).

A further consequence of French policies aimed to restrict immigration has been a re-orientation of migration strategies. Migrant careers are now designed so as to invest as much as possible either individually or collectively to secure economic futures at home. The president of the Kabaté branch of one of the largest federations of associations linked to the migrant community in France, for example, experienced this himself:
At 36 years old, with 20 years spent on migration, I decided to return permanently to the village and take part in the development of my region. ... I realised that another life was possible in the village ... the migrants had undertaken the construction of a mosque, a school, a maternity ward and had dug wells. Since the drought of 1973 and the reduction in migration more migrants have returned and reflected on their permanent stay at home (quoted in Sow, 1993: 4).

Choosing Destinations

Contemporary migration trajectories among communities from Kayes Cercle within the region have been dominated by this movement to France, more so even than from neighbouring Cercles such as Nioro, for example, where migration has traditionally been oriented towards Côte d’Ivoire. Studies of migration from the Senegal River Valley have highlighted the ethnic dimension of migration trajectories and observe that Sarakolé migrants travel to France, while Peul or Toucouleur work in African destinations (Traore, 1994). These ethnically styled variations however, fail adequately to reveal the way in which migration strategies, and in particular the choice of destination are socially organised within the household and community.

Migration to France is an expensive exercise, and since the process offers the highest potential pay-off for the family and a source of re-investment in trade or agricultural development, it is carefully orchestrated (Findley, 1990: 12). Few recent migrants either to France or Africa are heads of household, a strong indication of the subordinate role played by migrants in the family’s overall migration strategy. At the household level, however, the family’s economic capacity to fund and support migration to France is the most significant factor. Households with greater village authority, access to land, and with higher available cash incomes, whether from remittances, local commerce or diversified crop production, are able to apply these resources to the cost of sending a migrant to France. Migrants to France therefore originate from villages with both a higher level of food self-sufficiency and irrigation facilities. Equally, households with access to an extended kinship network in France who can obtain visas, purchase airline tickets, and support the new immigrant in securing employment, are more likely to choose France. A household’s capacity to compensate for the migrant’s absence, both in releasing land and providing labour in the compound work group, is also a central factor and families which are able to command a greater labour force are better able to support long-term migration.

In contrast, migration to African destinations involves less planning and financial risk. Immediate, short-term cash imperatives are more salient for families engaged in migration to African destinations than for those considering the long-term strategy of sending men to France (Findley, 1990: 12). Migration to African destinations is therefore often undertaken as a seasonal strategy when a poor harvest reveals the need to supplement the family’s income. These families cannot support the costs of long-distance and long-term migration and are often solely dependent on rainfed farming options.

For migrants from Kayes Region, Bamako, however, assumes an intermediary status. The city is rarely a final destination unlike Paris, Dakar or Bouaké. Primarily it is seen as a ‘departure lounge’, a centre for the procurement of travel papers and funds. On arrival in Bamako, potential migrants bound for Paris request the cost of their tickets, on a loan basis, from their family already working in France. Moussa Coulibaly, for example, on his way back to France explained, ‘It is our capital city. When we leave the village we come to Bamako first of all. We wait for our plane ticket here. In our village there is no telephone, no electricity, nothing to keep in touch with people who have migrated.’ It can take several months, even up to one year, however, for migrants to be fully prepared for the trip to France, particularly as a result of the increased documentation required by the French authorities. This has provided a role for agents, or ‘coxeurs’, who obtain visas for France and other European destinations at a fee. Djaguely Sacko, for example, an unmarried 21 year old, arrived in Bamako to find a ‘coxeur’ in 1995; his brother in France paid for the the fee which cost around CFA 1,500,000. Many migrants from Kayes, like Djaguely prefer not to find work in Bamako, ‘I do not need to work here, because the pay is next to nothing. I prefer to go where my labour is better
Others, however, are forced to find temporary work, though difficulties in finding employment in Bamako reinforces the impression that migrants from Kayes have no alternative but to travel to Europe.

For merchants operating within West Africa, Bamako is similarly viewed with ambivalence. Meillassoux observed among the Sarakolé traders, for example, that most, ‘... learn their trade in Ivory Coast with kinsmen or men from their village. After this apprenticeship they return to Bamako, where they work with another merchant who entrusts them with goods to peddle from house to house until sufficient profits enable the young man to enter into partnership with his elder (1965:135). Today Bamako continues to function as a node within the trading network and serves as a haven for investments and retirement. Merchants’ strategies are to start abroad, in Côte d’Ivoire or the Congo, for example, from where their profits are invested in building or buying houses in Bamako. For many, these investments represent the beginning of a cautious return, as Hamedy Drame said, ‘Our compatriots put one foot in Bamako and the other elsewhere so as not to lose everything in one go’.

Gender is a frequently overlooked factor in migration from Kayes Region where the predominant Sarakolé retain a strict patrilineal social organisation. Among Malian communities in the Senegal River Valley between 1982 and 1989, however, 28 per cent of women over 14 (compared to 46 per cent of men) had migrated at least once. During this period women therefore comprised 41 per cent of the total migrant population (Findley and Diallo, 1991). Female migrants are economically motivated, even though these reasons for migrating are generally unacknowledged; only 17 per cent of female migrations were attributed to marriage. Most female migrants move over short distances, and many stay in the same cercle; the cities of Bamako and Kayes accounted for only 22.2 per cent of migrants within this period (Findley and Diallo, 1991). Women migrants are more likely to have characteristics associated with lower social status, such as never having married, being divorced or belonging to polygamous unions.

The Remittance Economy

The remittance-based economy of the Kayes Region dictates that immediate individual level connections maintained with the family concern the transfer of cash. In the early 1980s, for example, a study of Malian, Mauritanian and Senegalese migrants from the Senegal River Valley working in Paris (Condé et al, 1986) showed that remittances constituted a significant proportion of migrant’s incomes, on average almost 20 per cent of monthly salaries. Those planning to return home, and who are keen to secure their village livelihoods send home more than new arrivals. In the Cercles of Kayes and Yelimane within the region, the remittance of funds in 1982 totalled almost CFA 700 million, of which 48 per cent was sent from abroad, with 10 per cent sent from West African Economic Community countries and 38 per cent from France (Condé et al, 1986: 117). Today, in villages experiencing high out-migration rates, between 60 and 80 per cent of family income is derived from the wages of sons working in France. For the region as a whole these monetary flows are substantial with the two main banks in Kayes recording deposits by migrants of FF 15 million in 1993 (Daum, 1994a).

Since the early 1970s, the use of remittances by families in Kayes Region has followed a consistent pattern. The costs of taxes, foodstuffs, livestock, dowries, and mosque construction have all been supplemented by remittances. In 1982 food expenses accounted for 42.2 per cent of remittances, followed by expenses on clothing and domestic equipment which represented 36.3 per cent and tax payments with 10.2 per cent (Condé et al, 1986). A significant consequence of these large transfers is an increasing dependency on the remittance system while Garnier (1988) has also indicated that remittances further inequality between households with or without migrants. These household differentials can only be partly offset by the forms of capital re-distribution within Sarakolé communities which include loans (lubal), alms (sakal) and labour co-operation (balotéral).
LOCAL INSTITUTIONS IN KAYES REGION

In addition to individual remittances, two distinct models of organisation have evolved which link migrants in France with rural communities in Kayes. Agricultural and retail co-operatives were formed by returned-migrants and continue to represent a significant target for migrants’ investments while development associations have grown out of mutual support networks in France and now generate funds and lobby for socio-economic projects in communities at home. Both co-operatives and development associations are organised on the basis of extensive communication between migrants and villagers through various media, including cassette tapes and local radio, and which testify to an elaborate dialogue on rural development priorities.

Co-operatives

Retail co-operatives are supported from collective funds held in France. Established in response to difficulties in securing local supplies and speculation in foodstuffs, village co-operatives enable migrants’ families (and only migrants’ families) to buy goods at subsidised rates. These co-operatives were registered under UDPM legislation dealing with village tons. Kayes Region was particularly active in requesting co-operative registration and accounted for 19 of 33 requests in 1984 and 44 of 198 in 1985 (Daum, 1992: 62).

Agricultural co-operatives, particularly those organised to manage irrigated rice cultivation, are an equally familiar aspect of the institutional landscape in Kayes Region and also benefit from migrants’ support. Although 82 per cent of irrigation projects on the Senegal River are located in Senegal itself, 22 schemes, covering 515,05 hectares, were recorded in the Cercle of Kayes in 1990 (Sow, 1993). Of these schemes 39.1 per cent were operated privately or individually, and are subject to family control, while 60.9 per cent were run by co-operatives in which volunteers, numbering up to 300, take part in financing, managing and running the project. In contrast to traditional Sarakolé hierarchical systems based on land ownership, the co-operative schemes have therefore introduced concepts of equal ownership and fixed working hours which potentially serve as a social levelling forces.

The potential food security and production benefits which co-operative initiatives offer have therefore attracted international sponsorship. Investments for irrigated farming in the Kayes Region are often preceded by co-operative training courses offered by NGOs in France. The Groupe de Recherché et de Realisations pour le Developpement Rural dans le Tiers Monde, for example, provides migrants with training in dry-season irrigated farming on French farms, and Fond Canadien d’Aide pour le Développement gives financial assistance for establishing collective fields.

The performance of these co-operative arrangements, however, is variable. In certain cases the capacity to achieve self-sufficiency in rice production can be high. However, this form of intensive agriculture has encountered severe technical problems in water harnessing and incurs high costs, particularly in fuel, repairs and salaries paid to pump operators. In many cases, therefore, families are supported by migrants who cover both operating costs and production shortfalls. In some examples up to 60 per cent of production costs are subsidised by migrants’ transfers while other families have become almost entirely dependent on remittances to purchase food during the soudure. In a co-operative in Fegui, for example, each migrant in France has contributed CFA 150,000 every year to achieve a revenue of 5 sacks of maize per family worth only CFA 37,500 (Sow, 1993).

Furthermore, it is often assumed that the schemes provide local employment opportunities and therefore distribute benefits outside the migrants’ immediate families. Recent material, however, indicates that seasonal labour is not drawn from within the Cercle of Kayes but rather from the Cercle of Kita and from the Region of Koulikoro (Sow, 1993: 21). The ability of co-operatives to employ local labour is further limited in poor seasons when low yields force farmers to abandon rainfed plots in favour of irrigated fields which are less labour intensive. In this way co-operatives do not generate local employment opportunities and the new techniques employed in this form of agricultural production are not widely disseminated. As
with the structure of remittance sending, therefore, investments in co-operative agriculture in Kayes are seen to extend income disparities between families with and without revenues from migration.

Development Associations

Migrant communities in Paris were first organised in welfare societies on the basis of age and lineage. Two main forms of associations served to replicate village society and its hierarchies; the ‘keesin lenme’ or small fund, grouped people from a single village, and the ‘keesin xoore’ or large fund was based on lineage relationships (Daum, 1992: 73). In these early organisations it was accepted that the chef du village (or his representative) had the function of president, while the imam was entrusted with the treasurer’s position. Over time, however, shifts in the leadership positions reflected a wider re-orientation towards developmental support for home communities. A village fund to finance investment in the village was often grafted on to the solidarity funds which had been in place to provide for the costs of settlement and integration into life in France.7

The shift in association leadership from age and lineage to literacy and management capacity is illustrated by the fact that only 7.6 per cent of lineage heads, 2 per cent of imams and 2 per cent of counsellors were represented on the associations’ committees by 1992 (Daum, 1992: 77). Literacy has now become a key factor in the selection of committee members with 39.7 per cent literacy in French. Furthermore, committee members are now relatively young, the average age being 43.

Women’s membership in the associations represents around 6 per cent of the total. Growing female representation, however, is attributed to the recent trend of family unification, as 17.45 per cent of male members had been joined by their wives by 1992 (Daum, 1992: 67). Few of the associations target women’s priorities, however, and only one association, representing Guidimakha Djikké in Aourou Arrondissement, Kayes Cercle, had formed a women’s section by 1993.

At the same time as the associations were undergoing internal change, there was also a shift in their external relations. Malian development associations in France were registered as early as 1973 though the phenomenon was accelerated by the abolition in 1981 of the 1939 decree restricting the conditions of access for foreigners to associations. The legal status of migrant associations in France is significant as registration often represents a stage in the evolution of the group from a village fund to a development association and further enables negotiation with external partners such as NGOs and town-twinning agencies. Of 39 Malian associations included in a 1992 survey, 34 were registered in the Journal Officiel. By 1994 143 immigrant development associations from the Kayes Region were registered with the Malian Consulate.

These changes in membership composition and moves to place the associations on a legal footing have given rise to a re-orientation towards funding development projects at home. Daum (1992) has identified three phases of intervention sponsored by Malian associations. Early initiatives in the late 1970s were dominated by the construction of mosques. As a symbol of cultural unity mosques were a significant strategy in gaining local recognition for youth associations whose members were often from caste groups. Bredeloup (1995), for example suggested that the investment of CFA 80 million in a new mosque by a Senegalese association in the early 1980s, was motivated by the desire to prove the capacity of the noble and non-noble group, and indicated that the migrants had become creditable actors in local development.

A second phase in the mid-1980s was characterised by support for food security initiatives and investment in social infrastructure such as schools and health services. Priorities and capacities differ for village-based and federal associations which represent regions or a number of villages but water and health are vital concerns for all communities. Many federal associations, for example, have been formed to unite efforts to build a community clinic at the arrondissement level and to invest in intensive well drilling programmes and drinking
water networks in their area. Education is specifically a concern for villages and town-based associations rather than federal groups.

More recently focus has shifted away from infrastructure to agricultural employment and income generation. Agriculture is the most problematic sector of intervention and is also the area in which associations have sought most external assistance. Since 1986, and the completion of the two dams of Diama and Manantali, which regulate the flow of the Senegal river and were designed for electricity generation, expectations for the development of irrigated agriculture along the length of the valley were high. Development associations have therefore initiated water harnessing schemes, though as the discussion of co-operatives illustrates, these efforts have been fraught with difficulties.

Migrant association strategies have also begun to move away from operational activities, of planning, fund-raising and project implementation, and have assumed lobbying and intermediary roles for communities in Kayes Region. A consequence of this intermediary role has been an observed increase of investment in the commissioning of technical feasibility studies and the submission of funding proposals. Hence additional importance has been placed on funding visits from representatives of NGOs and twinned towns since 1988, and local associations have supported dissemination services to raise awareness of development issues. Kayes Rural Radio, for example, broadcasting mainly in local languages, promotes the sharing of experience and training in rural areas.

The scale of investments supported by migrant associations from the Senegal River Valley is high. By 1991, 330 development projects had been completed with sponsorship from 100 migrant associations amounting to an investment of FF 45 million. From 39 Malian villages migrant associations were responsible for a transfer of FF 7,329,512 invested in 96 projects (Daum, 1992: 80). In a later study of federated regional associations from Kayes Region 12 groups invested a total of FF 12,316,000 in 25 projects almost half of which were in the health sector.

It has been claimed that the impact of these projects has shifted dependency relations between migrants and villages in Kayes Region. 'The immigrant community, which formerly increased the dependent condition of the villagers, by providing for all their needs, tends to revitalise the village context’ (Daum, 199: 55). Many factors, however, suggest that this is not always the case. At the individual level village elders have been known to refuse land to migrants for use on irrigation schemes since they consider that migrants should be continuing to send them money rather than returning home. Migrants’ collective interventions have also been subject to criticism for failing to address local needs appropriately. At the inauguration of the Tambakara dispensary in Kayes Region in 1994, for example, press reports pointed to the failure of migrant associations to confront primary health care needs such as drinking water and immunisation. Ambitious projects designed by associations may also place unrealistic burdens on local management capacities. Migrants’ plans to extend facilities at the only hospital in Yélimané Cercle, located in Guidimé, with the construction of an operating theatre, for example, was criticised since the lack of staff training would render the new facility useless.

In addition to problems faced regarding conflicting rural and urban project priorities, migrant associations have also continued to be a forum for inter-community dispute drawn along ethnic, caste, class and age lines. The physical location of projects is often a sensitive issue and in a Senegalese example reported by Bredeloup (1994), for example, the proposed site a school provoked ethnic dispute as the Haalpulaar chef du canton sought to build the school on Haalpulaar land. Rural caste group tensions have also been manifest in the urban environment. Caste group disputes arose in Paris as a result of rules of cohabitation in the foyers which were defined by noble families. With experience of union membership and protests against rent increases gained in the 1970s, non-noble family members challenged the established social hierarchy by opposing the demeaning tasks they were given in the foyer.
Partnership

Despite technical difficulties and isolated cases of community level dispute regarding development interventions, the growth of migrant associations from Kayes Regions and the scale of the investments they make has led to a range of institutional developments including federation, partnerships with governmental and non-governmental organisations, and town-twinning agreements. A number of federal structures have been established by former migrants, such as the Union Régionale des Cooperatives Agricoles de la Région de Kayes, which since 1985 has supported agricultural co-operatives in the Region. Similarly, the Organisation Régionale de Développement Intégré de Kolominé et de la Falao was created in 1988 and supports 9 village associations through investment in wells, micro dams and by the operation of credit schemes for the purchase of agricultural equipment.

Institutional sophistication has also led to partnership arrangements with governmental and non-governmental organisations. The public authorities in Mali with whom associations have had links include Centres d’Animation Coopératifs, Institut National de Prévoyance Social, ‘Opération puits’, the Institut National de Public Santé, and local authorities for particular social service projects. In France, associations act as intermediaries with numerous governmental and non-governmental organisations including the French Ministry of Co-operation, the Ile-de-France regional council and NGOs including the Groupe de Recherche et Développement Rural dans le Tiers Monde (GRDR), Secours Populaire Français, Ingénieurs sans Frontières, the Association Française des Volontaires du Progrès, and the Panos Institute.

A expanding area of non-governmental partnership is through town-twinning, which dates back to 1980. By 1994, 99 French towns had some form of twinning arrangement within Mali, either formally through a convention between the authorities of the two communities or through independent associations. Kayes Region enjoys a closerelationship with central Paris where there are 13 reported examples of town-twinning (Daum, 1994a). There are 13 cases of links between communities in central Paris and Kayes Region (Daum, 1994a). Twinning committees act as pressure groups endeavouring to obtain active support from the city councils from whom they receive annual subsidies varying from between FF 2,000 to nearly FF 500,000 in the case of large communities such as Montreuil and Evry. Development education activities and support for migrants’ integration into French society are limited as a result of economic conditions in Europe and the sensitivity of the immigration issue. Most of the interventions sponsored by twinning committees therefore concern infrastructural investments in education and health care.

A brief outline of one association from Kayes Region, the Association des Ressortissants de l’Arrondissement de Sadiola, indicates many features characteristic of migrant organisations operating on behalf of communities in the region. Sadiola is located 85 km South-West of the city of Kayes and the Arrondissement covers 46 villages with a total population of 16,605 in 1986. It is a predominantly Malinké area within Kayes Cercle, constituting one of the few centres of high out-migration to France from south of the Senegal River. The current elders of the village formed an organisation over 70 years ago though it was not revived until 1989. The central motive behind the creation of the association was to improve the Arrondissement’s poor education facilities. The secondary school in Sadiola is classed at the most basic level which has led to truancy among pupils and disinterest among parents. In 1989 the migrants therefore contacted the administrative authorities and the Sadiola community living in France who, in response, formed the Association des Ressortissants de l’Arrondissement de Sadiola en France. In 1990 a over 100 members joined a Bamako branch which was established to provide mutual aid for migrants and development assistance for Sadiola. The branches of the association embarked on its education plan for the Arrondissement by contacting numerous authorities including the school governors, the Inspector of Schools in Kayes, the Chef d’Arrondissement and the Governor of the Region. They also telegrammed the secretary general of the association in Sadiola to make pupils’ parents aware of the need for their regular attendance at school. As a result of the successful campaign the association is now proposing to assist in classroom construction.
The association in Bamako records that 45 per cent of members are civil servants (teachers, agronomists, chemists, bankers and engineers), 30 per cent are business people, 4 per cent are caretakers and the rest are casual labourers and manual workers. Many migrants from Sadiola are in transit and intend to work to earn enough for the ticket and travel documents to migrate to France. Women migrants are members of their own wing of the association though a female representative sits on the executive committee in Bamako. Monthly meetings of the executive committee provide the opportunity to maintaining contact with village representatives and migrants in France by sending videos, audio cassettes and letters.

Sadiola, like other associations in the Senegal River Valley, was assisted in its development efforts by French NGOs, GRDR and the Panos Institute. These relations enabled Sadiola to secure a donation of FF 231,000 from the Regional Council of the Ile de France towards the construction of a health centre in the town in 1994 which was built and managed with GRDR as project partners. Further NGO support saw the association commission a report from La Direction Régionale du Génie Rural in January 1994, to identify 11 potential village sites for irrigated agriculture. Later in the year they received approval for 30 well sites throughout the Arrondissement to be surveyed and dug by government authorities based in Kayes.

The shift to an intermediary role and greater dependence on external partners illustrated in the Sadiola case, as elsewhere in Kayes Region, represents a potential threat to the legitimacy of interventions initiated by migrant communities. Migrants may lose the incentive to initiate and manage projects, for example, when NGO and town-twinning sponsorship requires a technical presence in the community. Furthermore, it appears that the growing influence of the associations and their international partners may overshadow villagers’ concerns and detrimentally affect the dialogue on rural development issues between rural and migrant communities which has been at the centre of the self-help programme in Kayes Region.

Notes

1 The 1987 census figure was 963.90. Estimates by the Regional Health Department, however, put the population of Kayes region at 1,058,875 in 1985 and 1,067,007 in 1993 (Daum, 1994a).
2 During the pre-colonial period agricultural labour in the Sarakolé economy was largely based on slave-ownership as the following extract indicates, ‘The Sarakolles who are the wealthiest blacks in the Kayes district and maybe in the Sudan are those who own slaves.’ Capt. Mazillier (1894) Rapport sur la Captivité, Arch. du Sénégal, Dakar E14 (quoted in Pollet and Winter, 1978: 334).
3 ‘Navetane’ migrants harvested for their employer for four days each week and were remunerated with the produce of the other three days which they transported home and sold in the village (Abela de la Riviere, 1973: 7).
4 Illegal migrants without papers, estimated at 6,750 in 1992, should be added to this figure (Daum, 1992: 23).
5 L’Organisation Régionale de Développement Intégré de Koliminé et de la Falao, see p. 67.
6 These figures are based on official channels. The questionable reliability of the banking and postal systems, however, has given rise to an increase in unofficial transfers. In 1982, for example, Condé et al (1986) calculated that 36.3 per cent of remittances were sent through personal sources; 33.3 per cent were sent via the post office; 12.9 per cent via personal and post office; 6 per cent via banks and 9.1 per cent were unspecified.
7 Since these forms of organisations have evolved to support single men, an important, and as yet unresolved issue, is what would happen if the balance between married and single men changes in France with the rise of family re-unification.
8 It is recorded that 64.3 per cent of the projects were initiated by the migrants while 36.7 per cent were based on requests from the villagers (Daum, 1992).
9 Féliou Express, 3 March 1994
10 Bredeloup’s research is based on villages in the Matam département of Senegal among both Haalpulaar (Toucouleur) and Soninké (Sarakolé) inhabitants.
11 Bredeloup (1994) also shows how competition between rural social hierarchies was translated into the urban environment in Dakar. The collapse of an association in Dakar, Diental, formed in 1978 to complement the role of the suudu, was attributed to caste group oppositions. As a result various groups were formed each representing a village sub-group. In 1983 a group was formed representing the sebbe (the warrior class), in 1984 a group was formed by the descendants of
former slaves and subsequently an association from the same village was formed by the blacksmiths. Each had the same objectives, to contribute financially to the costs of ceremonies such as baptism, marriage and death.

12 The highest incidence of out-migration and migrant association representation in Paris is found among communities from the Cercles of Bafoulabé, Kayes, Yélimané, Diéma and Niara, all of which lie to the north of the Senegal River (Daum, 1994a).
6. CONCLUSION

The formation and contemporary role of migrant associations in Mali are set against complex patterns of migration routes and motives and various regional models of rural-urban interaction. This study has attempted to highlight the capacity of migrant communities and associations to undertake participatory and locally managed development activities but also illustrates the multitude of roles they perform and the range of interests they serve.

The review of regional case studies outlines processes through which migrants, and the local institutions they support, have the potential to draw rural households and communities into national political and economic arenas. Colonial and post-colonial government policies, changing patterns of domestic agricultural production, and environmental and physical insecurity are cumulative and reinforcing factors which have shaped household coping mechanisms. The impact of these factors has led to a range of out-migration strategies, seasonal and permanent, and on rural and urban routes, which have led to differential degrees of incorporation into the national economy. Thus while groups from Koulikoro have enjoyed a well-established urban position, based on trading interests, communities from Ségou have experienced more transitory engagements with capitalism and the capital. Similarly, while institutions in Sikasso have been closely integrated into state development policies, associations in Kayes have sought support from outside the country, both through migration and international sponsorship. These degrees of engagement with national and international destinations, and governmental and non-governmental agencies have influenced the relationship between migration and rural development.

MIGRATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The link between migration and rural development is a constant point of debate in the analysis of African society. On the one hand, it is argued that rural out-migration is an effective strategy by which households may simultaneously release pressure on domestic resources in times of stress and also supplement income through remittances. In this way it is seen to constitute a ‘double dividend’. On the other, it is suggested that declining urban wages and multiple demands on migrants’ incomes mean that migration undermines domestic production since migrants may not be able to compensate for their absence from the agricultural labour force. The linkage between migrants’ households and areas of destination, and between rural and urban communities is therefore seen as an ‘uneven exchange’ or even as a subsidy by sending areas to urban destinations (Painter, 1987b).

The regional case studies, however, illustrate a variety of models of rural-urban interaction which corroborate both interpretations, of ‘double dividend’ and ‘uneven exchange’. The socio-economic status of urban arrivals, often shaped by the social networks they join in the city, is a key determining factor in enabling migrants to compensate for their absence. In Ségou, for example, migration is a drain on the population and on socio-economic resources. The Tominian migrant network in Bamako is characterised by members’ limited education and marginal employment and these features restrict migrants’ capacities to invest in rural production, either individually or collectively. The capacity of migrant communities in Koulikoro and Sikasso to supplement rural incomes, and even to finance the costs of hired seasonal labour, represent further constrasting models. Migrant networks from Niéna operate on distinct class bases; while educated professionals have assumed an intermediary function in relations with international funding partners, the migrant community does not play an important rural investment role. Rather, the costs of long-term migration are supported by cash crop production, and profits from co-operative cotton marketing in particular have enabled significant community development activities. Networks of traders from Banamba help integrate new migrants into urban positions from which they are able to sustain rural relatives and confirm their own social status by contributing to development programmes. The case of Kayes Region offers an extreme example of the ‘double dividend’ scenario in which the link between migration and rural development has become one of
rural dependence on the remittance economy, most recently characterised by a shift in power relations between rural social hierarchies and the migrant community.

These varying economic interpretations underpin local perceptions of the social consequences of the migration process. Among older generations in Tominian and Niéna, migration is seen as the cause of the breakdown of traditional morality and production systems. In their view migration drains people from the land who in turn fail to re-invest their urban earnings in rural initiatives. The comment of a group of elders in Tominian is typical, ‘When migrants return they have picked up bad habits: alcohol, drugs, delinquency, prostitution, or they have been influenced by films or by keeping bad company with people in the towns. They bring more ill than good.’ This point is echoed in a testimony from Niéna:

Previously people used to migrate after the rainy season. They used to go in search of money to pay the taxes. Even when they did not earn enough to pay taxes they used to send the money back home. Today migrants leave to buy clothes and gadgets rather than to help their family. Previously, when a migrant returned, he gave all his money to his parents. Today if a migrant gives CFA 25,000 to his family it means he has kept at least CFA 150,000 for himself.

Moussa Diallo, Niéna

While elders reflect upon the general ills of contemporary migration, personal experiences of young migrants themselves speak of the precariousness and dangers of migrancy:

When my husband and I decided to leave we said nothing to anyone. On the market day in Yasso we got up very early to go. There was hunger here at that time and we had no money for transport. In Yasso we got a car going to Sikasso. We went on ‘payment on arrival’; we had to work for the driver to pay for the trip. My husband worked in the fields with four other men. I worked in the kitchen. One day my husband fell ill and he was taken to the hospital in Sikasso. That night the other men tried to rape me and I began to regret leaving the village. We left on foot for Sikasso when my husband returned. I worked as a maid and my husband found a job as a mason. I quit soon after because I had a wicked boss; she wouldn’t let me see my husband. My last chance was a laundry job. I worked with another migrant woman and we shared the income. Many customers wouldn’t pay-up and this led me to urge my husband to return home. We’d earned nothing but bad experiences in the nine years we were away. When we arrived in the village we were viewed with suspicion and we felt ashamed.

Néma Coulibaly, Sanékuy, Tominian

By contrast, in Banamba and Kayes, where migrants’ remittances and investments are substantial, the process of migration is viewed more favourably. The apparent rural dependency on the remittance economy, that taxes, labour and food shortfalls are subsidised by migrant populations, is not highlighted in local perceptions, though incidents in Kayes Region where returning migrants are seen to have abandoned their useful community function reveal another side of contemporary attitudes:

We live thanks to those who have migrated. For instance when we are hungry, it is the children who send us everything: sugar, meat, and money. All those who are here are poor and get help from migrants. We don’t see anything wrong with migration.

Quartier council of Manarila, Banamba

There are lots of benefits from migration. Since the 1973 drought, it is migrants who solve our problems with their remittances. However high inflation or food prices get, they send money to keep the family. It is the migrants who find the money to pay taxes.

Mamadou Sanogo, Touba, Banamba

The issue of the link between migration and rural development, while being assigned varying meanings at the local level, has assumed a wider policy significance, particularly with regard to cross-border and international migrations. Since the signing of the Schengen Treaty in 1992 there has been considerable debate among European Union member states concerning an effective immigration policy which would facilitate the social integration of lawfully residing migrants and the management and control of immigration. The observations and
recommendations which were made at subsequent international political meetings illustrate
the nature of the debate. The conclusions of the Fifth Conference of European Ministers
responsible for Migration Affairs (Athens, 18-19 October 1993), for example, outlined an
approach towards migration based on, ‘... protection for refugees and assistance to forcibly
displaced persons; immigration management and control policies; integration and anti-
racism policies; and comprehensive prevention measures, including development co-
operation, designed to address root causes of irregular movements.’

Development co-operation is generally considered in terms of economic measures
employed by both sending and receiving countries to reduce emigration pressures at source.
Policies are designed on the assumption that migration is the result of international income
differentials, and that ‘push’ factors will be reduced by increasing incomes in sending areas.
Receiving nations therefore implement short-term measures such as bilateral development
aid, direct employment creation, and strategies to increase foreign investment which are
designed to lead to economic improvements in sending countries. Countries of origin,
meanwhile, are encouraged to introduce sound economic management, to apply an
export-oriented development strategy, and to engage in regional economic integration
policies.

There is limited evidence, however, to support the assumptions upon which either current or
recommended policies are based. Macro-economic analysis fails to reveal local realities
which themselves indicate that income differences do not propel labour movements, that
poor regions do not generally create international migrants, and that unskilled labour
demands remain unsatisfied despite falling wages and long-term unskilled unemployment.
Indeed, several observers suggest that in the current economic climate, policies to control
and restrict migration are unrealistic. Harris indicates, for example, that with increasing
economic integration it follows that as the movement of goods and capital is expanding so,
equally, labour movements should also increase (1995, p.87).

An emerging theory, however, is the use of aid as a mechanism to reduce migration
(Böhning and Schloeter-Paredes eds., 1994). It is unrealistic, however, to expect that re-
directed aid flows, already loaded with a complex set of objectives, will be able to alleviate
migration pressures, because the amounts involved would be so small that they would not
significantly affect emigration decisions. Nevertheless, an aspect of development co-
operation, often debated and occasionally applied, is to activate the savings of emigrants in
receiving countries and organise the flow of remittances to invest in the country of origin’s
economic future. The effects of such strategies are subject to ongoing research though
studies in Turkey and Morocco suggest that, rather than supporting infrastructural investment,
remittances instead fuel individual household consumption (see European Commission,
1994).

There are significant alternatives to the remittance-based approach, however, and
evidence suggests that migrants’ international resource flows can be organised at a level
which facilitates effective investment in social infrastructure. Community-level decision-
making and funding organised by voluntary associations in this regard has received limited
recognition. On this international stage, however, the situation in Kayes, where investments in
agriculture, health and education have been generated by community development funds
held by migrant groups in Paris and supported by NGOs and twinned towns, offers an
important model of international development co-operation (see also Daum 1994b). Indeed,
the case studies also illustrate that rural development initiatives undertaken by urban
voluntary associations can represent a significant potential application for national policy
planning. Governmental policies, including the decentralisation programme, and
development projects run by NGOs, however, rarely consider the spatial dimensions, or
‘action-space’ of rural livelihoods and consequently ignore the contributions made by urban
migrant communities.
MIGRANT ASSOCIATIONS AND LOCAL INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT STRATEGIES

Conceptual understandings of the rural community in West Africa have significantly influenced the unit of intervention for rural development project planning. The poor performance of integrated rural development projects and the impact of the 1983-84 drought forced government planners and international donors to rethink their strategies for agricultural development. Since then, geographical features such as the watershed, and social environments such as the terroir villageois (a development zone defined and organised through collaboration with rural communities) have been popular units of intervention. The limitations of the territorial management approach (known as aménagement or gestion de terroir), however, are that it assumes a relatively static and homogenous community where livelihoods are derived from cultivated land, thus neglecting migration and pastoralist based socio-economic strategies. Indeed, the significance of regional mobility and rural-urban migration to Malian livelihoods potentially represents, ‘... the most significant threat to the conceptual underpinnings - and the practical application - of the aménagement/gestion de terroir approach’ (Painter, Sumberg and Price, 1993: 17).

At the same time as migration strategies have failed to feature in community development planning so the local institutions formed by migrants often operate in parallel but largely unconnected to governmental sponsored programmes. Other than cases in rural Niéna, where community organisations have developed in association with state programmes and para-statal institutions, the case studies illustrate an institutional landscape which operates outside the state. Indeed, lobbying for state sponsorship is confined to isolated examples such as the recent water projects in Sadiola, Kayes Region, and ABAD’s presidential delegation requesting support for road construction in Banamba. From the first schools in Banamba built in the 1950s from migrants’ contributions, however, through to sponsorship of hospitals in Kayes and support for cereal banks in Tominian, migrant associations have demonstrated significant though varying capacities to generate funds and undertake community level projects. Migrant association sponsored initiatives are therefore increasingly supplementing and substituting for the state in many aspects of public service delivery. That Malian civil society has been restricted to the structures of the single party since 1968, that government services are mistrusted as a result, and that there is a realisation that state resources are severely limited have all contributed to this situation.

Indeed, these factors have led communities to pursue independent directions, advancing narrow interests and causing a fissioning and multiplication of relevant actors which has been exacerbated by political liberalisation since 1991 (ARD, 1994). Contemporary indications suggest, however, that associations from Niéna, Banamba and Kayes in particular, have also responded to declines in state budgets by assuming intermediary roles to support local amenities and to facilitate access to alternative sources of funding. Engagement with the non-governmental sector, through international NGOs and town-twinning agreements, has illustrated how local institutions can effectively channel externally generated means to address appropriate rural concerns.

Indeed, one of the many reasons why local institutional development is a contemporary imperative for NGOs seeking to scale-up their impact is the process through which CBOs represent local concerns and can hold NGOs accountable to their beneficiaries. NGOs have generally introduced representative structures of collaboration to guarantee broad-based participation and the equitable distribution of benefits. The objectives for promoting new groups are often undermined, however, by the tendency of newly established committees to serve as ‘shells’, within which existing hierarchies are able to assume positions of responsibility and other gender or class relationships are able to reproduce themselves. Furthermore, it is often assumed that once a committee is formed around the provision of material resources other co-operative social functions will emerge spontaneously. Yet, without a better understanding of local social structures, particularly of internal group dynamics, local institutional development may serve simply as superficial legitimation for the projects and programmes of aid agencies.
The issue of engaging with spontaneous or ‘traditional’ organisations has often received academic recommendation, and recent reviews of NGO performance suggest that successful interventions are strongly dependent on careful reconnaissance of the project context and analysis of existing processes of intra-community of collaboration or ‘social capital’ (Howes, forthcoming: 4). Further analysis of this issue suggests, however, that the devolution of responsibility to local structures will not produce equitable representation or distribution of inputs without internal legitimacy and accountability, and thus Uphoff suggests that, ‘The debate with and within Northern NGOs about accountability should ... be especially concerned with issues of intra-organisational accountability for the GROs [Grassroots Organisations] they work with’ (1995: 23).

In terms of the strategies employed by NGOs to support CBO development recent experiences of projects working with both existing and introduced organisations have highlighted several broad issues and potential lessons for future intervention. Where CBOs have taken a simple technology transfer activity, for instance, their capacity to subsequently assume wider, more diffuse roles is limited. Committees may provide more or less efficient foci of collaboration between project and community, but unless they are endowed with a commitment to resource ownership and the capacity to solve problems other than those directly related to the project activity, their ability to assume control of operations in the longer term is questionable. A significant additional strategy option is the process of federation in which CBOs join forces to form higher level federal bodies or ‘second-tier’ organisations. The federative process enhances local institutions’ capacity to represent members’ interests by providing access to official and other external resources. Federation, which has occurred in several areas of the Kayes Region, for example, is identified as a particularly successful local institutional development strategy since, ‘... isolated instances of local institutional development can be impressive [but] their cumulative effect is negligible ... what counts are systems of networks of organisations, both vertically and horizontally’ (Uphoff, 1986: 213).²

The practice of such local institutional development in Mali, however, is problematic. In terms of membership and representation the case studies reveal contradictions which have a particular relevance for national and international agencies engaged in local institutional support. Migrant associations and other local institutions retain specific features seemingly incompatible with democratic and participatory development. Many of these organisations are informal and ‘invisible’ making them difficult to negotiate with; they dissolve and reform frequently, often re-emerging as a response to rural emergencies. Moreover, these groups are not democratic in a Western sense; internal democracy is maintained through consensus rather than elections, leaders are often drawn from traditional hierarchies, and in some cases the views of rural and urban constituencies are poorly articulated because of the distances or personalities involved. Record keeping and accounting are also limited, but most significant is the fact that Malian migrant associations are neither gender neutral nor gender balanced. Urban and rural women’s labour and fund-raising contributions for association-sponsored activities fail to compensate for their under-representation in membership and decision-making.

The apparent bias towards investment in infrastructural projects and consequent neglect of productive activities, with the exception of co-operative initiatives in Kayes Region, represents a further operational shortcoming. Elsewhere in Africa, migrant associations are also subject to criticism for supporting infrastructural projects with correspondingly little investment made in rural employment generation. A comparison with associations in Nigeria is illuminating. Home-town improvement unions, for example, are accused of failing to consider the sustainability of their investments, of concentrating resources in the home community to the exclusion of wider regional considerations, and of burdening rural populations by demanding labour or cash, sometimes under duress (Adejunmobi, 1990: 230). Indeed, it is suggested that other African organisations manipulate an ideology of kinship and ethnicity as a cloak for the interests of their educated élite leadership. In this light, Nigerian home-town unions are seen to neglect poor newly arrived migrants and serve as
platforms for rival urban businessmen who propose inappropriate agendas of prestige projects and geo-political intrigue (Trager, 1994).

In Mali, however, various ‘checks and balances’ facilitate a highly inclusive membership composition. The majority of associations which migrants join combine urban support with rural transfers, link poor and élite, and incorporate social differentiation with social security (Pratten and Baldo, 1995: 123). Indeed, by mediating the complexities thrown up by urban migrations and the responsibilities retained by communities in their rural birthplace, associations perform a multitude of roles and contain broad contradictions. It is because of these various roles, however, that migrant associations are able to retain their legitimacy and dynamism, since they function as social, funeral and savings clubs and can in addition become job-finders, urban homes, substitute families, forums for discussion, springboards for political careers, and vanguards of rural development. Indeed, as Lentz has argued, ‘... it is precisely this multiplicity of official and unofficial roles that makes their continuation possible, despite all the contradictions...’ (1995: 422).

Highlighting the capacity for local self-help and ways in which the non-governmental sector may support community management systems may risk underestimating the extent to which social reform and public intervention remain urgent priorities. The current climate of state retrenchment in Mali, as elsewhere in Africa, however, has focused attention on the development roles of alternative, non-governmental forms of social organisation. Participatory approaches to development in needs assessment, decision making, implementation, monitoring and cost-effectiveness suggest that, ‘... there is enormous potential in applying the mobilization capacity of ... traditional, informal, soft, sometimes amorphous, but still working organizations, to the task of purposively pursued development ... Many can be strengthened and connected to development programmes’ (Cernea, 1987: 13).

It is the complexity of functions and interests which migrant associations undertake, however, which challenges the international development community to rethink its criteria for institutional capacity building. And it is precisely because of the contradictions which migrant associations contain that, ‘Engaging with traditional CBOs is probably the most difficult but potentially important institutional development issue’ (Fowler, 1992: 40). While the policy environment in Mali demands that alternative funding sources and partnerships emerge, however, the concepts of solidarity and self-help, and the independence of local institutions are perhaps the most important factors in local governance and appropriate development intervention:

As long as the projects carried out by the migrants or even by village communities in general are autonomous and therefore run by the villagers themselves, they may provide what appears to be the best approach to raising living standards and improving well being on the basis of ... economic and social justice (Condé et al, 1986)

Notes

1 As Painter et al have observed, ‘The poor fit between the concept of terroir and pastoral/mobile modes of managing productive resources contributes to the recurrent awkwardness and uncertainty among AT/GT planners and development practitioners about ‘what to do’ with pastoralists’ (1993: 22).

2 Strategies of NGO disengagement are also influenced by approaches to local institutional development. Recent evidence questions the standard NGO withdrawal strategy at the end of a project and suggests that rather than becoming entirely self-sufficient it is likely that local institutions will continue to require support and professional inputs during the organisation’s life-span (Howes, forthcoming). The key issue is how the nature of this support changes over time, from group formation to technical advice or from material input to advocacy support, for instance.
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My name is Amadou Guindo. I left my village 31 years ago. I am 52.

My real name is Ingéré Dougou. I am from the Cercle of Koro in Mali. Whenever I found myself outside Mali I gave my name as Amadou Guindo. Guindo means Dogon. If you look for me under my real name nobody can tell you who I am. If you ask for Amadou Guindo in my village everybody will laugh at you because Guindo is not a surname in Dogon country. When I arrived in town, over thirty years ago, it was the rule never to give your real name; we did this to be careful. Today I have got problems because of this. I married a woman from my village. We have got children whose surname is Guindo, since on all my identity papers my surname is Guindo. Today this seems so silly that two years ago I started the procedure to give my children their real name. It is complicated by I will succeed for the children’s sake since I am sure they will settle in Mali.

I had lived through 21 wet seasons when I left Mali. I come from a very large family. My father was the head of the family but in the compound there were also my uncles and aunts and all the children. We were more than fifty. You should have seen this human mass when we worked in the fields. Nothing could resist us. We had a lot of animals and we were a wealthy family, according to what people said. It was my father who managed everything and looked after everything. I did not marry the girl he had chosen for me. In spite of our wealth we did not eat any better than the others, we weren’t better dressed, we did not have any more money than the others, especially us the younger generation. Quite the opposite. We had to behave like the sons of important families: we could never get into trouble lest we tarnished the family reputation, we had to be obedient and show solidarity come what may. Young people in our family were pretty well the only ones who were not allowed to go to the town, despite our wealth. I envied the young men who came back from Côte d’Ivoire and were so successful with girls because of their clothes, their umbrellas (the term is now used in Dogon) and most of all their brightly coloured and decorated bicycles. I still remember the bicycle makes Deschamps and Peugeot as if it was today.

I decided to leave because I did not want to stay in that god-forsaken place and I wanted to do the same as the others. Still I thought about it for a long time. If I blackmailed my father he might have bought me some nice clothes and even a bike. But where would I learn dioula and the way of life of the towns (wearing shoes, a watch, a handkerchief? I decided that I must leave and that I would be more successful than the others. I knew where my father kept the money. I took 25,000 francs (I can’t remember if it was CFA of Malian francs). I did not discuss my trip with anybody. One morning I left early and started walking on the road towards Ouahigouya in Upper Volta. There, I caught a lorry for Ouagadougou. From Ouagadougou I got a lift for Kumasi. I had decided to go to the Gold Coast because it was more prestigious than going to Côte d’Ivoire at the time. It was more civilised and above all people spoke ‘English’, the language of magic. I was spellbound by magic which enables to dominate others and to protect oneself.

I had nobody’s address when I arrived in Kumasi. I must admit I was scared and I regretted having left my village. I slept in the bus station for several nights and then somebody gave me a job in their plantation. I had a roof over my head and I was fed. My first pay packet was the amount I had taken from my father, so I sent him the lot with a letter of apology. I stayed ten years in the Gold Coast. I learned to speak English and I got by but I did not become rich or learn magic. On the contrary I learnt about Islam and I became very deeply religious. During the 10 years I was in the Gold Coast I did not keep in touch with my family. I did not feel I should keep in touch since I was not even capable of sending any money. I really liked clothes and it was an expensive business. All the clothes which I bought with my salary were stolen from my room one night. This was where I had invested all my money over ten years. My life was falling apart and I decided to go to Côte d’Ivoire and see what it was like. That was 21 years ago. I have always been in Abidjan. I did all sorts of jobs. It was easier for me because I knew the Gold Coast. I learned to drive and became a taxi driver. I only got married ten years ago, which is late for a Dogon, but that’s one of the risks when you go off on an adventure.
When my car is working I earn enough to feed my family here in Abidjan. Nowadays I keep in touch with my family in the village on a regular basis as well as with my brothers in Bamako and Segou. I never have time to go back but my wife goes back regularly to the village with the children so they can learn to speak our language and when I am no longer around they will know where their roots are.

When I came to Abidjan the Malians were not in touch with each other as they are today. For instance now if a Malian is in trouble in the port, I know about it within a few hours and a whole solidarity network comes into play to help him. Things are different now: before you could die like a dog without anybody even taking any notice of your corpse. Malians are well organised but they haven’t got enough money to do what they would like (helping their family back home, increase mutual aid here in Côte d’Ivoire).

The politics in Côte d’Ivoire have made things worse. No foreigner feels safe here. For myself, I haven’t got any problems because since I have been a cab driver for nearly 20 years I know the ropes and above all I know everyone in the police force. But for my wife and my younger brother it’s different, and possibly for my children in the near future. I keep telling myself that soon I’ll have to return to my village with all the family. I must be frank and tell you this idea haunts me night and day since I can’t do anything other than drive. I do not think that today I could work the land, I have no savings to become a trader and after thirty years away I am no longer used to depending on anyone to feed me or my family. Today I am back to my point of departure of 31 years ago but I am no longer on my own. I have involved other people in this adventure and this keeps me awake at night.