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Evidence from Ugandan Marriage Registers, 1895-2011*

Felix P. Meier zu Selhausen†; Marco H.D. van Leeuwen‡; and Jacob L. Weisdorf§

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Abstract: We use marriage registers from colonial and post-colonial Uganda to investigate long-term trends in social mobility among Christian Africans, finding a stark contrast to the pessimistic view that colonialism retarded Africa. Colonial influences in Uganda brought much greater and more equal opportunities for social advancement than in pre-colonial times. The colonial labour market was the main ladder for upward mobility, and the mission society helped provide the education and social reference needed to climb it. We find no "buffer zone" preventing sons of blue-collar descent from entering into white-collar work. The patterns continued throughout the post-colonial era despite political turmoil.

JEL Classification: J62, N27, O15

Keywords: Africa, Colonialism, Labour History, HISCO, Missionaries, Uganda, Social Mobility

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1. Introduction

The colonial legacy of African development remains subject to intense debate. Empirical evidence increasingly points to a long-term impact of colonialism on sub-Saharan Africa (henthforth Africa) in terms of religious influences (Nunn 2010); welfare development (Bolt and Bezemer 2009; Moradi 2009; Frankema and Van Waijenburg 2012; De Haas 2014); gender relations (Meier zu Selhausen 2014; Meier zu Selhausen and Weisdorf 2015); and educational attainment (Gallego and Woodberry 2010; Frankema 2012; Cogneau and Moradi 2014; Nunn 2014). A largely unexplored, but still central question, inherently tied to these development outcomes, is the effect of colonialism on social mobility. Did the new European institutions of mission schools and formal colonial labour markets increase the possibilities for social advancement among the wider African population? Or did they merely strengthen the power of a minority of pre-colonial elites while suppressing the rest? The answer will help shed light on the driving forces of long-term African educational and occupational development. To date, however, the absence of intergenerational micro-data dating back beyond the 1980s, when census and survey statistics began to emerge, has confined empirical investigations of social mobility in Africa to the post-colonial era (Louw et al. 2007; Dumas and Lambert 2010; Bossuroy and Cogneau 2013; Lambert et al. 2014).[1]

The existing, but mostly qualitative, literature on African social mobility under colonial rule conveys two opposing views: one of optimism and one of pessimism. The optimistic view points out that the colonial era created windows of opportunity for those Africans who acquired the skills needed in order to obtain social advancement. This mostly concerned work for the colonial administration, in railway and trading companies, and for the missionary societies (Iliffe 2007; Frankema 2012; Reid 2012). The optimistic view also holds that Africans "welcomed" mission schools as a means to adjust to the new labour market conditions, finding that mission education helped facilitate social improvement (Horton 1971; Porter 2004, p. 317; Iliffe 2007, pp. 219-229; Frankema 2012). In particular, it has been pointed out that African parents sent their children to mission schools not just for spiritual enlightenment but for strategic reasons related to social advancement (Foster 1965, p. 66; Berman 1975, p. xi). For a new generation of young Africans, mission schools are said to have opened up "worlds very different from those of their parents" (Reid 2012, p. 210) and that mission schools, therefore, became "colonial Africa's chief generator of social mobility and stratification" (Iliffe 2007, p. 229).

[1] Two exceptions include a study of social mobility among the 289 earliest students of mission schools in colonial Benin and that of their descendants (Wantchekon et al. 2015) and a study of intergenerational longevity among 18-19th century white settlers in the Cape Colony (Piraino et al. 2014).

The pessimistic view conversely questions the extent to which colonial labour markets and mission education benefitted Africans. Evidence from colonial censuses in British Africa have suggested that skilled Indian and European migrants dominated the colonial labour markets, whereas Africans themselves were relegated to unskilled work at the bottom of the society (Ehrlich 1973; Jamal 1976). For British East Africa, this view is supported by evidence of insufficient urban job opportunities for Africans and wages of unskilled urban work near subsistence (Frankema and Van Waijenburg 2012). The lucrative earning possibilities of unskilled workers in rural areas, notably in cash crop cultivation, are held to have discouraged Africans from migrating to urban centres and, hence, restricted their prospects for social mobility (Elkan 1960; De Haas 2014). A further issue is connected to *indirect colonial rule*, a British system of governance used to maintain law and order at low costs by ruling through local African elites (Lugard 1965). It has been argued that indirect rule perpetuated pre-colonial power structures by placing authority in the hands of a small group of pre-colonial chiefs (Mamdani 1996, pp. 52-61), a view that chimes with evidence that the sons of chiefs were disproportionally favoured in terms of education (Cartey and Kilson 1977), which not only left the average African with limited possibilities for upward mobility, but also led to despotism following independence (Acemoglu et al. 2014).

This article opens up a new avenue for the study of African social mobility during the colonial era using a hitherto unexplored source of data to shed further light on the debate described above. Our data originate from Anglican marriage registers collected in four parishes located in rural and urban Uganda. What makes these marriage registers unique is that the Anglican Church was the only institution in Uganda to systematically record the occupations of Ugandan fathers, as well as their sons, during the colonial (i.e. 1894-1962) and post-colonial (i.e. 1962-present) periods. Our sampled records include information on occupations of over 14,000 grooms, as well as their fathers. We code the occupations in a standardized way (HISCO) and then translate them into measures of social class (HISCLASS). In addition to class-based analyses of social mobility among the sampled population, we employ regression analysis to investigate the particular roles of mission school training of sons and colonial labour market employment of fathers for social advancement.

We find that the colonial era in Uganda brought greater and considerably more equal opportunities for social mobility among the sampled Ugandans. Our data show that the socially static pre-colonial society rapidly changed into one of high social mobility during the colonial era, and that large, intergenerational jumps up the social ladder were far from uncommon. Indeed, even sons of unskilled manual workers were capable of advancing to the

highest social classes in colonial Uganda. Our data also establish that the comparatively rigid pre-colonial power structures withered during the colonial era. We find that sons of chiefs in the early colonial period were far more likely than sons of peasants to enter into the highest social classes. However, towards the end of the colonial period, sons of both social groups were (statistically) equally likely to find employment in a high-status job, indicating that aptitude and ascription had an even weight in explaining social status. Our findings thus do not support previous notions that mission education and colonial occupational possibilities were enjoyed exclusively by pre-colonial elites. We also find no evidence of labour market discriminations against Africans entering the white-collar economy regardless of their social background. In particular, we do not observe a "buffer zone" preventing sons of blue-collar fathers from entering into white-collar work. Interestingly, the economically-devastating presidential-regimes of Idi Amin (1971-79) and Milton Obote (1980-1985) in the post-colonial period had very little impact on the long-run trends in social mobility, notably in urban areas.

Our findings also highlight the crucial role played by the missionaries in *Africanizing* formal work and thus facilitating social mobility. Mission education of the son, captured in the data by his signature literacy, significantly helped attaining high-status positions, and close occupational ties of the father with the colonial economy, and even more so with the missionary society, decidedly aided his son's likelihood of social advancement. Social mobility was somewhat confined to urban settings, with the colonial and commercial capital of Kampala offering greater opportunities for social advancement than was the case in the rural areas. But upward social mobility also took place in rural parts, mainly driven by the formal labour market created by the mission society via its demand for labour in mission schools and hospitals.

The sampled population makes up only a tiny and possibly biased fraction of Ugandan society. Although today's Uganda is predominantly Christian, this was of course not always the case. Estimates from the British Blue Books suggest that one in four adult residents of Buganda were Christians in 1910 and three in four in 1960 (Meier zu Selhausen and Weisdorf 2015). It is not unlikely that this process of conversion to Christianity began as an elite movement before rapidly developing into a mass-movement (Wrigley 1959; Ofcansky 1996; Ward 1999). Although chiefs may, therefore, be over-represented in our early colonial-period data, the wide presence of other social groups in this period provides ample scope to assess the possibilities for social mobility among any social segment of society. Also, since chiefs belonged to the highest social strata by construction, our early-period social mobility rates

may be downward biased. This helps explain a great deal of the downward mobility we observe during the early colonial period, which was mainly driven by sons of chiefs descending the social ladder. It is also not unlikely that our Christian converts in many ways do not represent the broader Ugandan population. Christian Africans may have self-selected into the new European institutions, notably mission schools and colonial labour markets. As a result, they may have faced better prospects for social mobility than non-converts, who were more likely to remain in the traditional economy where the prospects for social mobility were more modest. It is probable, therefore, that social mobility among the broader Ugandan population gradually came to match our observed rates as Ugandans progressively converted to Christianity.

Our article proceeds as follows. Section 2 describes the historical setting against which the institutional changes emerging in Uganda over the colonial era are to be vetted. Section 3 presents the data and discusses in more detail the direction of possible selection biases. Section 4 describes long-run trends in social mobility among the sampled population. Section 5 establishes some key factors affecting social status using a regression analysis framework. Section 6 concludes.

2. Historical context

Pre-colonial Uganda

By the time of the Scramble for Africa, in the 1880s, the kingdom of Buganda, situated along the northern shore of Lake Victoria, was the most advanced area of four co-existing monarchical systems (Ankole, Bunyoro, Busoga, and Toro) in the region of today's Uganda. The kingdom owed its affluence to its well-drained and fertile lands, which supported a densely populated society (Ofcansky 1996). Buganda's feudal economy was ruled by the *kabaka* (king), who administered the kingdom through a *katikkiro* (prime minister) and a hierarchy of a mix of appointed and hereditary chiefs at various levels, who commanded and taxed the local *bakopi* (peasants) on behalf of the king (Wrigley 1964, p. 19; Reid 2002, pp. 3-5). Indigenous slavery (*obuddu*) was common in Buganda in earlier times, but had virtually disappeared by the onset of British colonial rule in 1894 (Twaddle 1988, pp. 118-128). The Baganda population, most of which were peasants at this time, possessed a variety of working skills, mainly in the production of barkcloth, leather, pottery, canoe-making, and iron-working crafts (Roscoe 1911, p. 365; Reid 2002, p. 97).

Political office and territorial chieftainship were neither exclusively based on inheritance, nor on kinship. Appointment as chief depended on winning the king's favour. This system of meritocracy created acquisitive and competitive social structures, where men competed for advancement at the royal court (Fallers 1959; Wrigley 1959, p. 73; Kiwanuka 1971; Twaddle 1974; Berman 1974). Social status was thus an outcome of close ties with the royal court, and one of the most efficient ways to secure this was through one's children. Hence, peasants and chiefs alike sent their young sons to the palace to serve as *mugalagala* (pages) in the hope of establishing a path for their children's social advancement (Fallers 1964, p. 10; Sundkler and Steed 2000, p. 565). The result was that pre-colonial social mobility in Uganda was determined by "an extraordinary rat-race of rivalry" (Taylor 1958, p. 22) with "strongly marked differentiation of wealth and status, but at the same time something like equality of opportunity" (Wrigley 1957, p. 20).

Colonial change

Uganda became a British Protectorate in 1894. The British governed its Protectorate through *indirect rule* as constituted in the *Uganda Agreement* of 1900. This meant that Britain recognised the *kabaka* (king) as a "native ruler … under Her Majesty's protection and over-rule" (Uganda Protectorate 1935, p. 1374). Under the same agreement, Buganda chiefs became salaried colonial-state officials, whose jobs were to collect taxes, administer local justice, and allocate land (Fallers 1959; Twaddle 1969). This positioned them to be able to extract substantial rents from the peasantry, who became their tenants and over the course of the colonial era cultivated increasing quantities of cash crops (mainly cotton and coffee). Fallers (1959) also contended that Ugandan chiefs enjoyed privileged access to mission schooling for their children, and that this placed their offspring in an advantageous position for their future recruitment as chiefs.

The city of Kampala, by the onset of colonial rule a hamlet-sized settlement and yet the capital of the Buganda kingdom, became the principal *node* of the British Protectorate's administration. Over the colonial era, greater Kampala became not only the most densely populated site but also the only actual urban location in the whole of Uganda. Home to the Buganda parliament and the royal enclosure, Kampala always held the country's largest concentration of transport infrastructure (roads and rails) and commercial enterprises. If ever there was a place to climb the social ladder in Uganda, this was it.[2]

[2] For a more elaborate historical background of Kampala's development over the twentieth century, see Meier zu Selhausen and Weisdorf (2015).

In the late 1870s, two decades prior to the arrival of the British colonial administration, Christian missions were established in the kingdom of Buganda. Kampala formed the heart of the first missionary efforts and had, therefore, more mission churches and hospitals per capita than anywhere else in Uganda. According to Low (1957, 1971) and Fallers (1964), the relatively fluid pre-colonial social structures made the indigenous population of Buganda particularly receptive to Christianity. The Buganda court adopted Christianity as state religion in 1894, the same year that Britain made Uganda its Protectorate. More than anywhere else in British Africa, mass-conversion to Christianity in Buganda soon occurred at all echelons of society, accompanied by considerable demand for mission education (Oliver 1952, p. 184; Berman 1975, p. 13, 26; Hastings 1994, pp. 464-78; Frankema 2012).[3]

The colonial state left the provision of primary education in the hands of the missionaries during most of the colonial period (Frankema 2012). Missionaries offered low-cost teaching, with education being central to their conversion efforts. The growing demand for skilled administrative workers, especially from the 1920s on, led to the foundation of the colonial state's technical training college, *Makerere*, in 1922. Yet, mission schools remained the driving force behind cultural change and social aspirations. According to Berman (1975), the fact that Christian missionaries "established schools based on achievement criteria" meant that "status achievement and social mobility quickly became associated with schools" and, therefore, that "schooling and mobility soon became synonymous" (*ibid*., p. 26). As a result, mission schools gradually came to replace the pre-colonial royal service as training and recruiting ground.

An earlier qualitative literature already emphasised the role of mission education in setting the foundation for social mobility among Africans born under colonial rule. Anecdotal sources, provided by Isichei (1995, p. 240), have suggested that many Africans invested their limited resources in the education of their sons after observing the large skill-premium that clerical and administrative work paid (Apter 1961, p. 74; Frankema and Van Waijenburg 2012). This, according to Iliffe (2007, p. 252), facilitated "significant changes in Ugandan society and enabled successful students to enjoy a degree of social mobility unknown to their parents". Kelley and Perlman (1971) have also pointed out that mission school attendance was central to social attainment based on evidence from Western Uganda around 1960. As literacy was achieved early in life, sons thus gained life-long advantages independent of their father's (lack of) wealth (i.e. land or livestock) or social status.

[3] See Meier zu Selhausen (2014) for specific statistics regarding trends of Christian conversion in Buganda, Toro and total Uganda between 1901 and 1959 (based on British colonial blue books).

The rosy picture sketched above concerning the role of mission education for social mobility has, however, been contested by the view that Africans were largely prevented from entering into the colonial economy. Evidence provided by Van Zwanenberg and King (1975, pp. 261-262) has suggests that few attempts were made to accommodate Africans as urban dwellers in the city of Kampala. Furthermore, Ehrlich (1963) has argued that British colonial policies in Uganda made African commercial enterprise activities virtually impossible. While Africans were not officially restricted from holding private or public positions, Jamal (1976) has argued that a growing community of Asian migrants in Uganda dominated the administrative and clerical sectors of the colonial economy. This is held to have culminated in an ethnically-divided labour market, in which Africans operated at the bottom, typically as peasants and porters (Ehrlich 1963; Jamal 1976) while skilled clerical positions and privileged retail licenses were granted instead to Indian migrants (Uganda Protectorate 1906, Kabwegyere 1976; Kyomuhendo and McIntosh 2006, p. 13, 51).

Previous works have also pointed to poor incentives for urban migration among Africans. The limited prospects of the rural peasantry and unskilled farm workers of finding urban jobs, along with comparatively low urban real wages, are the main reasons why rural-to-urban migration is said to have been discouraged (Elkan 1960). Indeed, more lucrative income possibilities from export-crop cultivation in rural areas are held to have pulled unskilled labourers in the opposite direction (De Haas 2014). This paints an altogether pessimistic picture concerning the prospects of social advancement, at least in colonial Kampala, and collides with the views presented above that the colonial economy in urban Africa opened new windows of opportunity for African social mobility (Iliffe 2007; Reid 2012; Platteau 2014). Many of these notions rest, however, on narrative evidence. What we bring to the table is a novel source of data enabling us to undertake a numerical investigation of social mobility among Christian Africans during Uganda's colonial and post-colonial eras.

3. Data

The data used for our empirical analysis of social mobility originate from the Anglican Church in Uganda and include the marriage registers from four selected parishes, i.e. the Namirembe Cathedral in Kampala, as well as three parishes from the Rwenzori Diocese in Western Uganda: St. Barnabas' Church in Bundibugyo, St. Peter's Church in Butiti, and St. John's Cathedral in Fort Portal. Figure 1 maps the locations of the four parishes (marked by white crosses). While Kampala represents the commercial and political centre of Uganda, the

three selected parishes of Western Uganda, all located in the Toro Kingdom, are positioned in an agricultural zone that stretches along the Rwenzori Mountains about 300 km west of Kampala. Among the three rural parishes, Fort Portal is the least rural location, hosting the seat of the *omukama* (king) of Toro as well as one of the regional headquarters of the British colonial administration. It was also the main settlement of the Christian missionaries in Western Uganda. Butiti, which is somewhat more rural, is located 35 km east of Fort Portal, along the current highway to Kampala. Finally, Bundibugyo is situated to the west of Fort Portal, near the Congo border, and represents the most remote and rural parish location in our parish sample.

Figure 1: Map of Uganda with the geographical locations of sampled Anglican parishes

Source: Kingdom boundaries adapted from Steinhart (1977, p. 2). White crosses indicate the location of our sampled parishes.

Anglican marriage registers furnish the earliest individual-level data available for the study of intergenerational social mobility in colonial Uganda. The forms used to record the marriages, filled out by Anglican priests, were pre-printed in London. This ensures a systematic and consistent recording of ecclesiastical information across time, exactly as was and had been the case in Britain. Importantly, the Church of England, in its *1836 Registration of Births, Deaths, and Marriages Act*, stipulated that the Anglican Church Missionary Society record the occupations of both the groom and the bride, as well as those of their fathers. Indeed, with very few exceptions, all occupational titles in our occupations are recorded in English. The earliest marriage registers of Kampala (1895-1898) included some occupations recorded in *Luganda*, which was the language originally spoken in Buganda. Ugandan labour historians have translated these occupations into English for us.[4] The registers also contain the date of marriage; the names and ages of the spouses; the marital status before the marriage (i.e. bachelor, spinster, widow, or widower); and the places of residence of the spouses at the time of the marriage. In order to concede their approval of the marriage, spouses left either a signature on the marriage certificate or an "X" mark in the case of illiteracy. This form of *signature literacy* is widely-used among historians to approximate a person's ability to read and write and provides a strong signal of primary school attendance (Schofield 1973; Rachal 1987). Hence, it is used by us to infer information among the sampled population about mission school attendance.

The coding of occupations

The study of social mobility requires an occupational coding scheme. Here, we use the *Historical International Classification of Occupations*, known as HISCO (Van Leeuwen and Maas 2011). Once the occupations have been classified in HISCO (see below) they can be recoded into multiple social classes (HISCLASS). This social classification scheme (i.e. HISCLASS) have been widely used in cases of historical European populations (e.g. Dribe and Lundh 2009; Fonseca and Guimaraes 2009; Zijdeman 2009; Lippényi et al. 2013; De Pleijt and Weisdorf 2014; Knigge et al. 2014), as well as for populations in Latin American (e.g. Holt 2005; Botelho and Van Leeuwen 2009), Asia (e.g. Vladimirov and Van Leeuwen 2009; XingChen et al. 2014), and North Africa (Saleh 2015).

Some of the Ugandan occupational titles were specifically accommodated into HISCO. The titles "Chief", because of the nature of job functions in colonial Uganda, were

[4] See footnote 6.

coded as "legislative officials". "Sub-chiefs" received the auxiliary status code for being subordinate.[5] Furthermore, the title "Barkclothmaker" was coded into HISCO-category 7-54.32 ("Cloth weaver") and the title "Farmer" into HISCO-category 6-11.10 ("Peasant"). The reasoning behind the latter coding is that Buganda farmers were tenants on chiefs' lands, with no advanced agricultural technology (e.g. ox-plough) employed. Farming tools were limited to iron hoes, and fertilizers and pesticides were rarely used. While Buganda farmers often supplemented their income during the colonial period by cultivating cash crops, it has been estimated that 80% of them grew less than six acres of land and the great majority of them cultivated crops mainly for subsistence (De Haas 2014).[6]

Table 1: Occupational groups according to the original and our adapted HISCLASS scheme

HISCLASS 12	HISCLASS 6	HISCLASS label	Examples	Manual/ non-manual
1	**I**	Higher managers	Accountant, Chief,	non-manual
2		Higher professionals	Interpreter, Lawyer, Medical doctor, Teacher	
3	**II**	Lower managers	Banker, Businessman,	non-manual
4		Lower professionals	Clerk, Medical assistant,	
5		Lower clerical/sales	Shop owner, Sub-chief, Trader	
6	**III**	Foremen	Carpenter, Electrician,	manual
7		Semi-skilled workers	Mechanic, Tailor, Printer	
8	**IV**	Farmers and fishermen	Cultivator, Peasant, Fisherman	manual
9	**V**	Lower skilled workers	Barkclothmaker, Builder, Domestic servant, Matmaker, Soldier	manual
10	**VI**	Lower skilled farm workers	Cowherd, Fisherman,	manual
11		Unskilled workers	Gardener, Houseboy,	
12		Unskilled farm workers	Shepherd	

The HISCLASS scheme was originally designed to map occupational titles into 12 social classes using four dimensions, which distinguish the work in terms of manual versus non-manual labour; supervisory versus non-supervisory labour; primary versus non-primary

[5] Three ranks of chiefs existed in Uganda (Apter 1961; Twaddle 1969): county chief (*saza*), sub-county chief (*ggombolola*), and parish chief (*muluka*). The marriage registers, however, only report either "Chief" or "Sub-chief".

[6] Our coding and re-coding was done with the help of historical sources explaining the exact functions of the professions in question (Lawrance 1956; Richards 1960; Apter 1961; Gartrell 1983) and in consolidation with Ugandan labour historians. We are especially grateful to Prof Edward Rugumayo, the Chancellor of Kampala University and Mountains of the Moon University and former Minister of Education in Uganda, for help in this regard.

sector labour; and finally higher-, medium-, lower- or unskilled labour (Van Leeuwen and Maas 2011). The 12 social groups are, however, sometimes condensed for a particular research question, or because the data are too thin for some classes. Due to the latter reason, we have collapsed the 12 groups into six, as reported in Table 1.[7] Tables A1 and A2 in the Appendix report the top five most common occupations in each class.

Sample limitations

We have collected and digitized a total of 16,783 marriage certificates from the parish of Kampala and another 3,069 certificates from the three rural parishes. The Kampala records cover the years 1895 to 2011, except for the period 1899-1907 where the registers are said to have been lost after lightening set fire to the thatched roof of the cathedral in 1910. Among the rural parishes, the records of Fort Portal cover the period 1910-2012, Butiti the years 1920-69, and Bundibugyo the years 1940-79.

Some of the recorded certificates were unsuited for social mobility analysis. First, in order to avoid repeated entry of the same individuals, we have included only those certificates where the husband was a bachelor (99% in Kampala and 96% in the rural parishes).[8] Second, we were able to assign HISCO codes to 16,175 grooms' occupational titles in the source of Kampala and to 2,922 from the three rural parishes. Among the sampled fathers, we were able to allocate HISCO codes in 12,337 cases from Kampala and 2,762 cases in the three rural parishes. Finally, the cases for which we had the occupational information of both the groom and his father and were able to assign HISCO codes are 11,419 for Kampala (68%) and 2,610 (85%) for the three rural parishes. The lower percentage in Kampala was due to two main factors: Kampala grooms were older on average and hence more likely to have a deceased father than their rural counterparts, and the Kampala sample consists of more rural-to-urban migrants and thus more fathers who were unable to attend their son's wedding. The frequencies of father-son pairs are displayed in Figures A1 and A2 in the Appendix. Table 2 reports the summary statistics.

[7] A detailed breakdown of our sampled occupations of fathers and sons by class is provided in Tables A3 and A4 in the Appendix.

[8] The Church Mission Society banned polygamy which meant that men could only marry once in the Anglican Church unless they were widowers (Hastings 1973).

Table 2: Descriptive statistics

	Kampala (*N*=11,419)			Rural parishes (*N*=2,610)		
	Min.	**Max.**	**Mean**	**Min.**	**Max.**	**Mean**
Year of marriage	1895	2011	1968	1912	2011	1952
Age at first marriage groom	16	78	29.33	15	98	29.43
Literacy groom	0	1	0.97	0	1	0.70
Literacy bride	0	1	0.92	0	1	0.44
Working bride	0	1	0.82	0	1	0.96
Father of groom deceased	0	1	0.07	0	1	0.05
Parish of marriage						
Kampala			0.81			.
Fort Portal			.			0.10
Butiti			.			0.06
Bundibugyo			.			0.03
Social class groom (HISCLASS)						
I: Higher managers/professionals			23.15			17.85
II: Lower managers/professionals			42.45			21.39
III: Semi-skilled			14.32			11.80
IV: Peasants			9.22			30.13
V: Lower skilled			9.10			12.57
VI: Unskilled			1.77			6.27

Possible selection biases

Marriage registers, although they are an often-used source to re-create occupational structures of the past, are not without limitation when it comes to the question of representativeness of the broader population. While our dataset comprises both urban and rural parishes, the sampled population may still be subject to selection biases. The direction of three major possible biases is discussed in the following.

First, the absence of non-Christian families in the sample raises the issue of representation of the wider population. The issue does not present a large problem in today's Uganda, where 9 in 10 Ugandans are declared Christians (UBOS 2002). Moreover, Christianity in Uganda probably spread faster than anywhere else in sub-Saharan Africa (Oliver 1952, Hastings 1994). Christian conversion in Uganda turned into a mass-movement, with half of Buganda's population following the gospel by the mid-1930s (Meier zu Selhausen 2014). This, however, does not defy the question of whether or not social mobility among non-converts was different from those who converted. There is good reason to believe that there was *less* social mobility among non-converts than among our sampled population. Non-converts were more likely to remain in the traditional (pre-colonial) economy, where the prospects for social mobility, as we shall see, were more limited than in the colonial economy

set up by the Europeans. If social mobility was more common among Christian converts, and if more and more people converted, then this may imply that the rate of social mobility for Uganda as a whole increased in tandem with the country's conversion to Christianity. It is also not unlikely, as mentioned in the introduction section, that the process of conversion to Christianity began as an elite movement before rapidly developing into a mass-movement (Wrigley 1959; Ofcansky 1996; Ward 1999). While chiefs may be over-represented in our early colonial-period data, the wide presence of other social groups in this period provides ample scope to assess the possibilities for social mobility among any social segment of society, as we will demonstrate further below.

The second potential issue of sample selection pertains to the exclusion of records with missing occupation of the father due to his death prior to his son's wedding. If early death is correlated with low social status, then this may lead to a systematic exclusion of lower-class families (Delger and Kok 1998). Although previous empirical studies have not found much support for this (Zijdeman 2009; Knigge et al. 2014; Schulz et al. 2015), it might still have been the case for Uganda. Early death of the father may also have advanced the social position of the son through inheritance of the father's land, workshop or livestock, introducing yet further biases. In order to assess whether or not our sample suffers from either of these biases, we have compared the social-class distribution of grooms with a deceased father with those grooms with a living father at the time of the marriage. Figures A3 and A4 in the Appendix show no apparent differences in the social-class distribution between the two sub-samples. This inspires confidence that our restricted sample does not suffer from biases caused by the exclusion of records of missing occupation of the father.

The third issue concerns the fact that marriage registers typically report fathers' and sons' occupations simultaneously (i.e. at the time of the son's marriage) and therefore at different stages during their life-cycles. This implies that the father's career may be more advanced than when he was the same age as his son. This sort of life-cycle mobility may appear in the form of job promotion, for example if low- or unskilled workers advance to medium- or higher skilled ones (e.g. servants to butlers, clothmakers to tailors). Downward mobility may also appear due to a loss of physical strength, for example if skilled manual labourers, such as builders or brickmakers, drop to unskilled workmen. As long as life-cycle mobility remains roughly constant, the study of social mobility *trends* is unaffected by this (Long 2013). In any case, social mobility rates inferred from marriage registers always face the life-cycle mobility problem.

It is nevertheless possible to try to estimate life-cycle mobility in the current data by comparing the social structure among our sampled fathers with the social structure back when we expect that they were grooms themselves. While this is perhaps not ideal, it at least presents us with an estimate of the direction of the bias caused by life-cycle mobility. To this end, Table 3 compares the distribution of fathers by social class to that of grooms 30 years prior to when we observe the fathers. The reasoning behind the 30-year back-cast is the following. We know the median age at marriage of the sampled men was 25 years, and we expect them to have their sons between the ages of 25 and 35. Therefore, on average we would observe the fathers at their sons' weddings roughly three decades after their own wedding. While we can of course not be certain that we capture the exact same individuals this way, we trust this provides a reasonable estimate of life-cycle mobility among the sampled population.[9]

Table 3: Estimates of social mobility across the life-cycle, Kampala

			Grooms	Fathers	Grooms	Fathers	Grooms	Fathers
Work	**Class I**	**Skills**	**1910-29**	**1940-59**	**1930-49**	**1960-79**	**1950-69**	**1980-99**
Non-manual	I	Higher skilled	25%	37%	15%	40%	29%	42%
	II	Lower skilled	75%	63%	85%	60%	71%	58%
Manual	III	Higher skilled	56%	66%	64%	66%	60%	55%
	IV	Lower skilled	44%	34%	36%	34%	40%	45%

Notes: "Grooms" include those grooms that are 20-40 years of age at the time of their marriage and resident in Kampala. "Fathers" include the fathers of those grooms that are 20-40 years of age at the time of their marriage and resident in Kampala. "Chiefs" and "Sub-Chiefs" are not included due to their extraordinary societal positions, but our conclusions are robust to their inclusion. *Source*: see Section 3.

The first two rows of Table 3 illustrate the estimated life-cycle mobility of non-manual workers. Among grooms marrying in 1910-29 there were 25% higher-skilled professionals and 75% lower-skilled professionals. Thirty years later, in 1940-59, when we supposedly capture those grooms as fathers, we observe more higher-skilled professionals (37%) and fewer lower-skilled professionals (63%). This pattern of upward mobility also features among later generations of non-manual workers, especially during the late colonial and early post-colonial periods. Turning to manual workers (last two rows of Table 3), there was a modest degree of downward mobility among those who married on the verge of independence,

[9] The conclusions drawn below are robust to using different lengths of the back-cast period, including 25 and 35 years instead of 30 years.

possibly caused by post-colonial political turmoil. Apart from that, upward life-cycle mobility seemed to have been the norm, not least among manual workers and especially in the early colonial period. The predominance of upward mobility across the life-cycle means that our fathers do better, on average, when we observe them at their son's wedding than when we (supposedly) catch them at the time of their own wedding. In particular, this means our later estimates of intergenerational social mobility tend (if anything) to *underestimate* the degree of upward mobility of sampled grooms.[10]

4. Social Mobility

In this section we first describe the occupational structure of the sampled population and how it evolves over time. Next, we investigate social mobility during the colonial and post-colonial periods. We look at the broad patterns using social mobility tables, and then turn to study certain social groups in more detail. For analytical purposes we split the sample into an urban part (Kampala) and a rural part (Fort Portal, Butiti, and Bundibugyo)

Social mobility in Kampala

Figure 3 shows the evolution in the occupational structure of the sampled Kampala grooms. It illustrates how the sampled grooms distribute across the six HISCLASS groups described in Table 1. The graph illustrates two main waves of occupational change across the long 20th century: an initial and rather abrupt shift from traditional to modern jobs, and a subsequent and more gradual change from low-skilled, often manual, work to more skill-demanding, non-manual jobs. Among the earliest generations of grooms, i.e. those marrying before 1900, some 87% were engaged in agriculture, working as peasants, cowherds, and hunters, or in traditional crafts, as barkcloth- or matmakers. Three decades or roughly one generation later, this pattern had changed considerable: by 1930, less than one in five grooms were employed in traditional crafts. New formal-sector jobs had emerged, including school teachers, medical assistants, interpreters, clerks, carpenters, tailors etc. These occupational titles demonstrate the new windows of opportunity that had opened with the arrival of missionaries and colonizers, and into which some of our sampled population had managed to enter.

[10] Another way to investigate the prevalence of upward or downward mobility over the life-cycle is to link the father's occupation listed in his son's marriage certificate with that at the time of his own church marriage when they were grooms themselves. Unfortunately, Ugandan males often carried identical names (and even sometimes changed names over the life-cycle) which makes it effectively impossible to undertake such record linkage.

The skills necessary to hold these new formal-sector positions were largely attained through mission schooling, facilitating both the ability to read and write as well as technical training in language, hygiene, carpentry and sewing (Hattersley 1908, pp. 198-199; Mullins 1908, p. 18; Taylor 1958, p. 85). Mission schools were the main suppliers of primary education during the entire colonial era, and their training of African teachers and medical workers was crucial, not just for the spread of the gospel, but also for the recruitment of mission school and hospital personnel (Kaplan 1995; Frankema 2012).

Figure 3: Class structure of Kampala grooms, 1895-2011

The second wave of occupational change in Kampala involved a further modernization of the urban economy and took place during the mid-colonial and post-colonial eras. From the 1920s on, every second Christian groom in Kampala held a non-manual occupation. This meant they had entered into the higher layers of Ugandan society, working as clerks, traders, policemen, teachers, doctors, or salaried chiefs. Up until the end of the colonial period, a quarter of these jobs were linked to mission work (i.e. clergy, dispenser, medical assistant, and teacher), suggesting that the mission society played a vital role in *Africanizing* formal work and in opening windows of opportunity for upward mobility, which we discuss further below.[11]

[11] The mission movement also played an important and exclusive role for women's initial entry into formal work in colonial Uganda (Meier zu Selhausen 2014).

Intergenerational social mobility flows in Kampala

How did the changes observed in the occupational structures translate into social mobility? To find out, we begin by illustrating the shares of sons that were subject to up- and downward mobility, as opposed to those that remained immobile. The HISCLASS scheme (Table 1) makes this easy to illustrate: the lower the HISCLASS number, the higher the social status. For example, a son employed in a class-I job (higher professionals), who was born to a father employed in a class-II job (lower professionals), was subject to upward mobility. Similarly, a son employed in class-VI job (unskilled workers), born to a father employed in a class-IV job (peasants), was subject to downward mobility.

Figure 4 illustrates the long-run social mobility rates in Kampala by the grooms' year of marriage. It clearly shows that *pre*-colonial Uganda was a highly *immobile* society: at the dawn of colonialism, three out of four sons remained in their class of origin. But this high probability of "social reproduction" quickly changed after colonialism. Already by 1910, some 15 years after Uganda was declared British, more than two in three sons would move to a different class from that of their father. From then on, social mobility continued to increase up until today where only one in five sons remain in their class of origin.

Until the 1930s, both upward and downward mobility increased in Kampala, while immobility declined. Not surprisingly, the increase in downward mobility during the early colonial period was primarily caused by the sons of "Chiefs" (class I) moving down the social ladder. After the 1930s, upward mobility continued to grow, while downward mobility gradually declined in importance. The remarkable upward trend in social mobility, clearly ignited and sustained by colonialism, continued to increase until today where three out of five sampled sons move up the social ladder. Uganda's independence, in 1962, and its subsequent post-colonial political regimes, such as Idi Amin's presidency in the 1970s and Milton Obote's in the 1980s, hardly had any effects on the urban social mobility trends, which began during the colonial era.

Figure 4: Intergenerational social mobility in Kampala (% of total grooms), 1895-2011

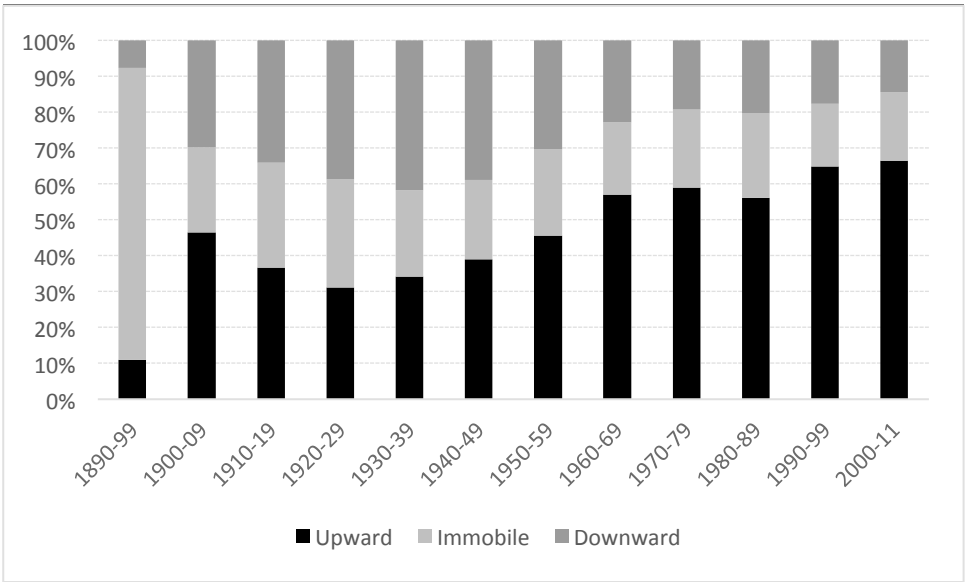


Table 4 takes a closer look at social mobility in Kampala using outflow mobility rates. Outflow rates inform us about the social class destination of the sampled sons, conditional of their social-class origin, i.e. the social class of their fathers. The Kampala sample was divided into a colonial sample (Table 4) and a post-colonial sample (Table 6). The percentages reported in the diagonal of Table 4 represent the shares of sons who remained in their class of origin. Sons who move up appear to the left of the diagonal, and sons who move down to the right. Sons coming from the highest social class (class I) cannot move up by construction. Equally, sons coming from the lowest social class (class VI) cannot move down.

Table 4: Outflow mobility rates in Kampala, 1895-1962

	Groom's class						Total	N
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI		
Father's class								
I: Higher professional	20.8	47.2	14.4	6.2	10.1	1.2	100	1,204
II: Lower professional	12.2	51.3	17.8	5.7	12.0	1.1	100	753
III: Semi-skilled	9.8	26.3	42.7	5.7	13.6	1.9	100	316
IV: Farmer	12.2	33.9	17.7	24.2	10.9	1.2	100	1,896
V: Lower-skilled	12.6	27.4	32.9	5.0	20.0	2.1	100	420
VI: Unskilled	4.1	30.6	38.8	10.2	8.2	8.2	100	49
Total	14.3	39.0	20.1	13.4	11.8	1.4	100.0	
N	661	1,809	934	620	549	65		4,638

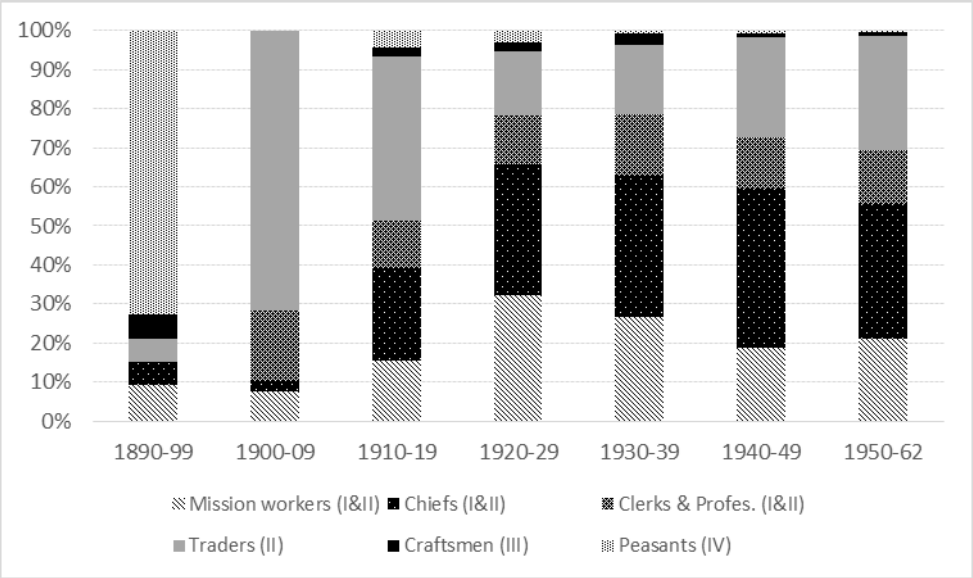
Table 4 conveys several messages about social mobility in colonial Kampala. It confirms what we learned from Figure 4 above that social mobility during the colonial era was remarkably common among sampled grooms. The sons of class II fathers (the most immobile group at the time) had one in two sons staying in their class of origin. Among the remaining classes, no more than one in four remained. This witnesses an extraordinary degree of social mobility among Christian Africans regardless of their social background. Moreover, the movers did not simply go to the neighbouring classes; they went everywhere, even if to a varying degree. Table 4 also portrays a society in which sons of blue-collar workers (classes III-VI) were able to enter into white-collar work (classes I-II). Indeed, more than one in three made this move. This contradicts the "buffer zone thesis" (as proposed for England by Goldthorpe 1987) holding that sons of blue-collar fathers were prevented from entering into white-collar work. Our findings from Uganda this way align with evidence on colonial Ghana (Foster 1963) and Senegal (Iliffe 2007, p. 231) showing that secondary education was rather common among sons of farmers, herders, and fishermen as a means to enter into white-collar work.

Another central conclusion from Table 4 relates to the extraordinary degree of upward mobility among lower-class sons. Less than 8% of sons born at the bottom of society (class VI) remained in their class of origin, and nearly one in three made it all the way to the top of the social ladder (classes I and II).[12] This begs the question: how were these great leaps of social mobility achieved? That is, what sort of work did the grooms who moved up the social ladder engage in? To find out, Figure 5 shows six different categories of work that upward-moving sons went into. The six categories include *missionary work* (e.g. teachers, clergymen, medical assistants); *professionals and managers* (e.g. clerks, interpreters, policemen); *trade and business* (e.g. shop-owners, traders, businessmen); *farming* (e.g. peasants, gardeners), *traditional craftsmenship* (e.g. barkclothmakers, basketmakers); and *traditional elites* (chiefs and sub-chiefs). As expected, Figure 5 shows that upward mobility in the early colonial period was mainly linked to chieftain and (though less so) traditional craftsmanship. Further into the colonial era, this pattern changed. Formal-sector employment – both in the colonial economy, as clerks and interpreters, and for the mission society, as teachers and clergymen – grew in importance. After 1920, employment in the colonial economy, including work for the mission society, overtook traditional craftsmanship as the most frequent employment-category for upward mobility. This pattern stabilised after the 1940s: relative upward mobility

[12] It is also interesting to observe that sons coming from the social segments *above* the lowest social class (class VI) very rarely dropped to the bottom of society (less than 3% of each group).

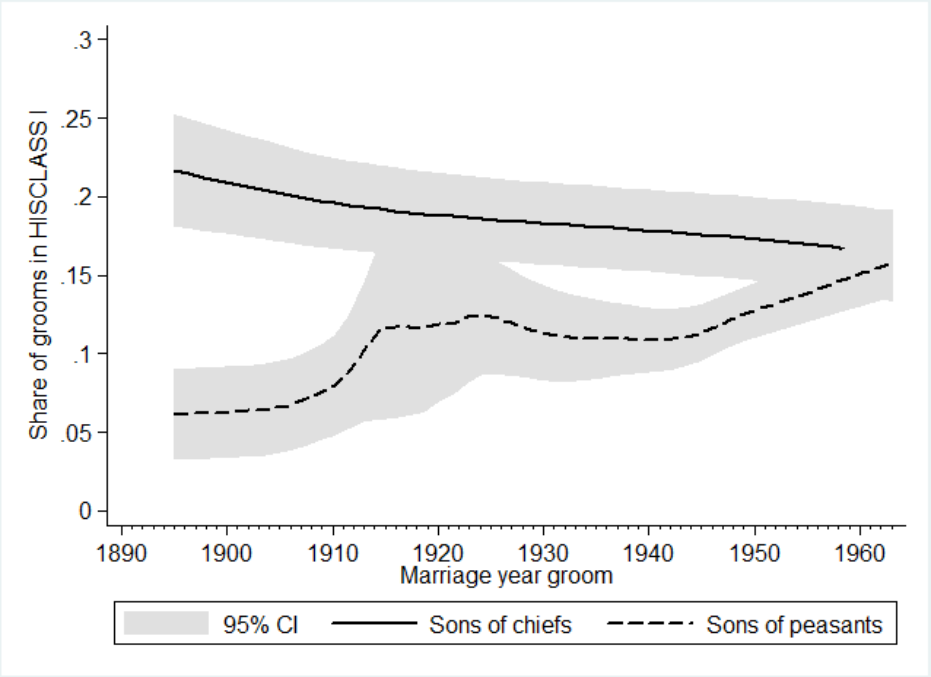
in 40% of the cases was linked to formal work, and in 20% of the cases to mission work. Traditional craftsmanship continued as a path to upward mobility, whereas the conventional, pre-colonial road to high status, chieftaincy, completely lost its former importance.

Figure 5: The types of work of sons subject to upward mobility, Kampala 1895-1962



The relative decline of the importance of chieftaincy for social mobility raises questions about the persistence of pre-colonial power structures. Pre-colonial power resided with the king and, therefore, with the local chiefs, who commanded over the local peasantry. Under indirect colonial rule local chiefs became salaried officials of the British colonial state, whose job was to collect taxes, administer local justice, and allocate land (Twaddle 1969; Reid 2012, p. 185; Mamdani 1996, pp. 141-142). These capacities, especially the possibility to extract large profits from cash-cropping peasants (Wrigley 1959), placed chiefs in what was possibly the highest position available to Africans during the colonial era – a position that enabled them to use their colonial liaisons to increase their family power and influence. These circumstances have led to claims that indirect colonial rule perpetuated pre-colonial power structures in Nigeria and Uganda (Mamdani 1996) as well as in Sierra Leone (Acemoglu et al. 2014).

Figure 6: The probability of sons of chiefs and peasants entering class I, Kampala 1895-1962



Note: Polynomial smoothed lines.

The fact that chieftaincy lost importance as a path to upward mobility suggests that colonialism eroded rather than cemented pre-colonial power structures, at least in urban Uganda. This conclusion is confirmed by Figure 6. The graph compares the conditional probability of sons of chiefs (the elite) and sons of peasants of entering into social class I (higher professionals). It is evident that sons of chiefs had a clear advantage to begin with, in the form of a significantly higher probability of reaching class I. However, towards the end of the colonial period, there was no significant difference between the two groups. This implies that aptitude in Kampala gradually came to match ascription during the colonial era, and it rejects the view that indirect colonial rule perpetuated pre-colonial power structures in the case of urban Uganda. Among the possible reasons for the decline of traditional power structures is that chieftaincy in Buganda was not obtained only by lineal descent (Fallers 1964, p. 10). Also, the introduction of colonial laws in the 1920s, which fixed rents and levies on cash crop production, lowered the burden on smallholders and curtailed the power of the chiefly elite relative to their tenants (Powesland 1957; Richards 1973). The chiefs' relative decline in power also concurs with the fragmentation of their larger estates through both inheritance and sale after 1930, which eroded part of their economic basis (Southall 1966, p. 335). Conversely, the increasing success of the sons of peasants in achieving high-status

positions demonstrate that mission school training and the colonial labour market was not a pre-requisite of the pre-colonial elites.[13]

Table 5: Class I occupations of sons by fathers' social background, Kampala 1895-1962

	Father chief		Father peasant	
Grooms' occupation	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
Teacher*	75	47.8%	154	65.8%
Chief	52	33.1%	18	7.7%
Medical doctor*	10	6.4%	15	6.4%
Dispenser/Chemist*	6	3.8%	9	3.8%
Interpreter	6	3.8%	2	0.9%
Clergyman*	3	1.9%	6	2.6%
Accountant	2	1.3%	16	6.8%
Other higher professional	3	1.9%	14	6.0%
Total	157	100.0%	234	100.0%

Note: * Occupations typically related to the missionary society.

Table 5 sheds further light on how mobility into the top-layer of Kampala society was achieved, comparing the most frequent occupations attained by the sons of chiefs and peasants, respectively, making it into class I during the colonial era. It stands out that chieftaincy in the colonial period was very much still for the sons of chiefs. However, the colonial economy and, especially, the mission society presented the sons of peasants with other options for entering the high classes. For example, sons of peasants were 30% more likely to pursue a mission career (as teachers, medical doctors, dispenser, or clergymen) than sons of chiefs. This stresses the role played by the mission society in re-stratifying pre-colonial power structures in Africa and in undermining the persisting role of "chiefs as despots" (Mamdani 1996, pp. 52-61) under indirect colonial rule.

Table 6: Outflow mobility rates (row percentages), Kampala, 1963-2011

	Groom's class						Total	N
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI		
Father's class								
I: Higher professional	39.9	39.1	9.4	3.6	5.5	2.4	100	943
II: Lower professional	24.9	53.4	9.1	4.6	5.9	2.0	100	1,083
III: Semi-skilled	20.7	39.5	24.5	5.4	7.7	2.3	100	261
IV: Farmer	28.7	44.5	9.7	7.8	7.7	1.6	100	4,076
V: Lower-skilled	22.4	39.7	15.9	5.1	15.0	1.9	100	214
VI: Unskilled	24.5	45.9	11.7	2.6	6.6	8.7	100	196
Total	29.0	44.9	10.4	6.3	7.3	2.0	100	
N	1,967	3,040	704	430	494	138		6,773

[13] Too few sons of chiefs in the post-colonial sample prevent the continuation of Figure 6 into the post-independence period.

Table 6 shows that the social mobility trends, which began in the colonial period (see Tabl4 4), continued also after independence, with a remarkable degree of upward mobility among sons born to the lowest social classes and a transfer of sons from blue-collar backgrounds into white-collar work. Indeed, among grooms coming from a peasant or farm-worker background (classes IV, V and VI) nearly two in three made it into the highest layers of society (classes I and II), which is not far from the four in five who originated from those classes. In a similar vein, Bossuroy and Cogneau (2013), in their study of intergenerational mobility between the farm and non-farm sectors in five African countries, find that Uganda historically stands out as a more "fluid" post-colonial society relative to the other African countries.

Social mobility in the rural parishes

While our urban sample is substantially larger than the three rural samples put together, the rural data still provide some relevant insights from Uganda's countryside. Table 7 displays the distribution of occupations by social class in each of the three rural parishes. As in Kampala, we observe an initial shift towards non-agricultural activities in the parishes of Fort Portal and Butiti by the mid-colonial era. Unlike Kampala, however, the majority of grooms still remained in agriculture or in traditional craftsmanship throughout the colonial era. The remote parish of Bundibugyo remained entirely agricultural during the period of observation. The absence of any significant non-manual labour opportunities clearly stands out in the class structure of the rural parishes.

Table 7 also suggests that the rural occupational structures were more sensitive to post-independence political regimes than urban ones: Fort Portal and Bundibugyo saw a rising share of men working in agriculture (class IV) between 1970 and 1989, which coincides with large cuts in public expenditures on education and administrative posts, first under Idi Amin, 1971-1979, and later under Milton Obote, 1980-1985 (Ofcansky 1996, pp. 42-47; Meredith 2011, pp. 231-238). One reason why the urban occupational structure was less influenced by those cuts, despite the fact that most such administrative posts were found in Kampala, could be that the cuts prompted Kampala migrant labourers to move back to their rural areas during this period.

Table 7: Class distribution of grooms from rural parishes, 1920-2011

Fort Portal	**I**	**II**	**III**	**IV**	**V**	**VI**	**N**
1910-19	13.9	15.1	31.8	10.2	22.9	6.1	245
1920-29	18.2	33.2	19.9	8.8	15.5	4.4	181
1930-39	8.3	28.3	15.0	22.5	23.3	2.5	120
1940-49	16.5	17.4	8.7	18.3	25.2	13.9	115
1950-59	20.1	27.5	10.7	18.8	14.8	8.1	149
1960-69	20.2	38.2	11.2	15.7	9.0	5.6	89
1970-79	18.3	29.4	3.3	37.9	6.5	4.6	153
1980-89	20.8	15.3	4.7	46.2	2.5	10.6	236
1990-99	31.4	48.6	4.3	10.0	2.9	2.9	70
2000-11	42.6	31.9	12.8	5.3	7.5	0.0	94
Butiti	**I**	**II**	**III**	**IV**	**V**	**VI**	**N**
1920-29	8.0	22.0	14.0	8.0	28.0	20.0	50
1930-39	9.5	16.9	13.6	30.4	16.5	13.2	273
1940-49	20.5	24.4	7.1	29.1	15.8	3.2	127
1950-59	8.0	32.4	17.1	15.9	23.3	3.4	176
1960-69	18.4	18.4	14.9	26.4	8.1	13.8	87
Bundibugyo	**I**	**II**	**III**	**IV**	**V**	**VI**	**N**
1940-49	19.7	1.3	2.6	65.8	6.6	4.0	76
1950-59	21.3	7.5	2.7	67.0	1.1	0.5	188
1960-69	17.3	0.8	3.0	79.0	0.0	0.0	133
1970-79 [f]	9.5	0.0	0.0	85.7	4.8	0.0	21

Intergenerational social mobility flows in the rural parishes

Except for the 1970-80s, where around half of the grooms remained in their class of origin, usually no more than one in four stayed in their father's social group (Table 8). Upward mobility in Fort Portal and Butiti normally outperformed downward mobility, with as much as two out of three grooms moving up the social ladder. The trends (though not the magnitudes) of social mobility in Fort Portal and Butiti largely followed those of Kampala. This is probably related to the main transport road connecting Fort Portal and Butiti to Kampala, and the fact that Uganda's tea industry emerged in this area in the 1940s. These patterns contrast with the socially-static parish of Bundibugyo, remotely located on the Congo border, where two in three grooms or more remained in the social class of their father (i.e. peasant) over the course of the colonial era. The absence of any non-agricultural market activities or significant colonial influences put a firm lid on the prospects of social mobility, and hence social immobility was the common individual trajectory in Bundibugyo. Nevertheless, upward mobility was more common than downward mobility and was typically linked to mission activities (see Table 8).

Table 8: Intergenerational mobility in the three rural parishes (% of total grooms), 1911-2011

	Fort Portal				Butiti				Bundibugyo			
	Up	Down	Imm	N	Up	Down	Imm	N	Up	Down	Imm	N
1910-19	62.9	24.5	12.7	236								
1920-29	62.4	21.0	16.6	181	48.0	24.0	28.0	50				
1930-39	41.7	33.3	25.0	120	38.1	24.9	37.0	273				
1940-49	33.0	43.5	23.5	115	52.0	22.0	26.0	127	23.7	13.2	63.2	76
1950-59	43.6	31.5	24.8	149	47.2	34.7	18.2	176	29.3	5.9	64.9	188
1960-69	57.3	22.5	20.2	89	52.9	23.0	24.1	87	19.5	0.8	79.7	133
1970-79	41.8	13.7	44.4	153					9.5	4.8	85.7	21
1980-89	35.2	13.6	51.3	236								
1990-99	65.7	11.4	22.9	70								
2000-11	55.3	21.3	23.4	94								
Total	716	336	400	1,452	323	189	201	713	101	23	294	418

As in Kampala, those sons who moved classes in the rural parishes literally moved into any social layer (Table 9). At the one extreme, while half the sons of higher professionals (class I) stayed in white-collar work (classes I and II), the remaining half went into blue-collar work with almost one in five dropping to the bottom of society (classes V and VI). At the other extreme, the sons of unskilled workers (class VI) distributed almost equally across the social ladder, with nearly one in three reaching the top end of the social ladder (classes I and II). Again, these leaps in social status describe a society in which aptitude eventually dominated ascription and social barriers were permeable. The post-colonial period displayed similar trends (Table 10), but with the important exception that more sons of unskilled fathers remained at the bottom of society than during the colonial area (two in five post-1962 against one in five pre-1962). Middle-class sons dropping to the bottom of the social ladder also became much less pronounced after independence.

Table 9: Outflow mobility rates (row percentages) in the rural parishes, 1911-1962

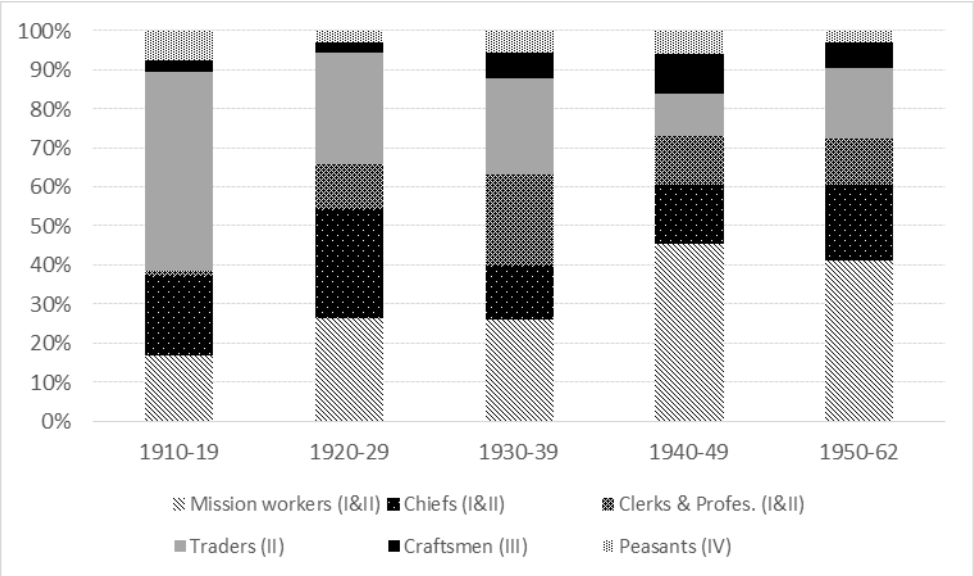
	Groom's class						Total	N
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI		
Father's class								
I: Higher professional	22.4	29.6	16.0	15.2	11.2	5.6	100	125
II: Lower professional	14.0	31.8	12.1	17.2	19.1	5.7	100	157
III: Semi-skilled	6.3	11.4	27.8	31.6	19.0	3.8	100	79
IV: Farmer	16.8	17.6	12.8	33.2	15.0	4.6	100	1,098
V: Lower-skilled	12.2	16.7	22.2	11.1	32.2	5.6	100	90
VI: Unskilled	9.6	24.7	15.9	13.9	16.7	19.1	100	251
Total	15.2	20.3	14.6	26.7	16.4	6.8	100	
N	274	366	262	480	295	123		1,800

Table 10: Outflow mobility rates (row percentages), rural parishes, 1963-2011

	Groom's class						Total	N
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI		
Father's class								
I: Higher professional	39.5	28.4	9.9	9.9	8.6	3.7	100	81
II: Lower professional	23.7	44.1	6.8	8.5	13.6	3.4	100	59
III: Semi-skilled	27.3	45.5	18.2	9.1	0.0	0.0	100	11
IV: Farmer	20.7	19.2	5.1	48.5	2.7	3.9	100	594
V: Lower-skilled	23.1	46.2	7.7	15.4	7.7	0.0	100	13
VI: Unskilled	21.9	6.3	3.1	12.5	6.3	50.0	100	32
Total	23.0	22.3	5.8	39.0	4.3	5.6	100	
N	182	176	46	308	34	44		790

The absence of extensive colonial activities in the rural parishes raises the question of what type of employment upward mobility involved. As observed for Kampala (Figure 5), rural social advancement was initially linked to traditional craftsmanship (Figure 7). Formal-sector employment came to dominate from the 1930s onwards, although with the important difference that mission employment was the main means to climb the social ladder in the absence of a large colonial labour market. This again highlights the role of the missionaries in facilitating social mobility among Christian Africans.

Figure 7: The types of work of sons subject to upward mobility, the rural parishes, 1911-1962



Regression Analysis

Social advancement before colonial times was an outcome of having close ties with the Buganda king. Was social advancement in the colonial era an outcome of close ties with the Europeans? To find out, we have divided the sampled fathers into the earlier-applied six

occupational groups: peasants, craftsmen, traders, chiefs, missionary workers, and other waged workers. There is good reason to believe that traders, chiefs, mission employees and other waged workers arguably had closer relations with the Europeans than peasants and traditional craftsmen. Did this play a role for the probability of sons of entering the highest social classes (classes I and II)? Also, did mission education, as inferred from signature literacy, help achieve this outcome?

Table 11: The marginal effects of grooms entering social classes I and II

Probit model	Kampala		Rural parishes	
Class I or II groom	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Father's occupation				
Peasant	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Chief	0.16***	0.14****	0.05	0.07
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Mission worker	0.17***	0.16***	0.29***	0.33***
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.10)	(0.10)
Other waged work	0.06**	0.04	0.04	0.04
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Trader	0.15***	0.14***	0.01	0.02
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.07)	(0.07)
Craftsman	-0.065**	-0.11***	-0.14***	-0.15***
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Groom literate	0.14***	0.05	0.23***	0.22***
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Marriage age groom	0.003	0.00	-0.00	-0.00
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Bride literate	0.15***	0.13***	0.06**	0.06**
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Bride working	0.06*	-0.05	-0.44***	-0.48***
	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.10)	(0.08)
Father deceased	0.06	0.06	0.13	0.15
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.10)	(0.10)
Groom non- residence	-0.07***	-0.06***	0.05**	0.05**
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Parish fixed effects				
Fort Portal			ref.	ref.
Butiti			-0.08***	-0.07**
			(0.03)	(0.03)
Bundibugyo			-0.08**	-0.07
			(0.04)	(0.04)
Time period				
Early colonial (1895-1919)	ref.		ref.	
Mid-colonial (1920-39)	0.16***		0.15***	
	(0.03)		(0.04)	
Late-colonial (1940-62)	0.04		0.17***	
	(0.04)		(0.04)	
Marriage year fixed effects	No	Yes	No	Yes
Pseudo R^2	**0.08**	**0.10**	**0.09**	**0.12**
Log-pseudo-likelihood	**-2,937.69**	**-2,859.98**	**-1,059.90**	**-1,028,48**
N	**4,616**	**4,616**	**1,788**	**1,788**

Notes: * p < .10; ** p < .05; *** p < .01. The reported marginal effects are estimated using a probit regression. Robust standard errors (in parentheses) are clustered at the parish level. The marginal effects are the differences in the predicted probability that grooms hold a class I or II occupation.

Table 11 shows that the probability of reaching the highest layers of society in Kampala (Column 1) was significantly higher for the sons of employees of Europeans (i.e. chiefs, mission workers, and workers engaged in other waged work) than for the sons of peasants (the reference group). The sons of fathers engaged in traditional craftsmanship (mainly basket-, barkcloth-, and matmakers) were even less likely than sons of peasants to reach the top of society. In the rural parishes (Column 2), where high-status formal-sector jobs were rare, only the sons of mission workers were statistically more likely than sons of peasants to reach the top. This, combined with the fact that mission education (proxied by signature literacy) significantly raised the chances of entering into classes I and II, supports the notion (e.g. Iliffe 2007) that Africans who "welcomed" the new labour opportunities offered by the European institutions and engaged with the Christian values, significantly helped their sons reach the highest social positions in Ugandan society.

6. Conclusion

This article offers a first attempt to measure and analyse social mobility in colonial Africa. Our empirical investigation, using Anglican marriage registers from colonial Uganda, provides a stark contrast to the pessimistic view that colonialism limited social advancement in Africa to a privileged class of pre-colonial elites. Conversely, our study show that the colonial labour market opened up a variety of new forms of socio-economic possibilities which expanded the scope for social mobility, especially among those Africans who converted to Christianity, attended mission schools, and whose fathers had close ties with the mission society or the colonial state. In rural Uganda, where colonial labour market opportunities were less common compared to urban Kampala, the mission society became the key window for upward mobility. The positive trends of social mobility in Uganda largely persisted after independence despite episodes of political turmoil.

Our conclusions above thus give numerical expression to earlier narratives about the rapid expansion of mission education in Uganda and its role in creating a new and well-educated African elite. Richard Reid has described how mission education "would increasingly challenge the old system, feeling itself excluded from social status and political authority" (Reid 2012, p. 185). John Iliffe has argued along a similar vein, maintaining that "African education did more to foster social mobility than to entrench old privileged classes, largely because tropical Africa has no long-established literate elites" (Iliffe 2007, p. 230). Hence, while Ugandan chiefs may have exercised both political and economic power over the

local population, our data clearly demonstrate the concurrent replacement of ascription for aptitude among the sampled sons in their endeavour to rise to the top of society.

Going back to our previous discussion about a sample selection bias caused by the absence of non-Christian families, there is good reason to believe that a precondition for becoming part of the new and well-educated African elite was indeed conversion to Christianity. Perhaps the windows of opportunities for social mobility that we observe among the sampled Africans illustrate one of the key gains from converting to Christianity, which in turn help explain why Christianity is the common religion in today's Uganda. Furthermore, British Africa may in various ways be different from other parts of colonial Africa regarding social mobility patterns. Indirect colonial rule in Uganda may have created different incentive structures and labour dynamics, and hence different opportunities for African social advancement, than in those colonies that were subject to direct rule; to different intensities of European settlement; and to different degrees of African receptivity to Christian missionaries.

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Appendix

Figure A1: Class distribution of son, valid and non-valid samples, Kampala, 1895-2011

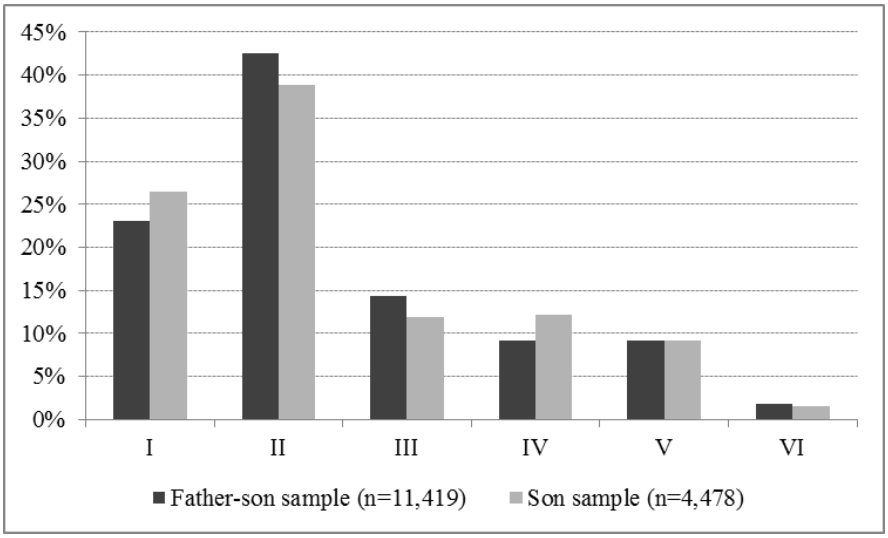


Figure A2: Class distribution of sons, valid and non-valid samples, rural parishes, 1911-2011

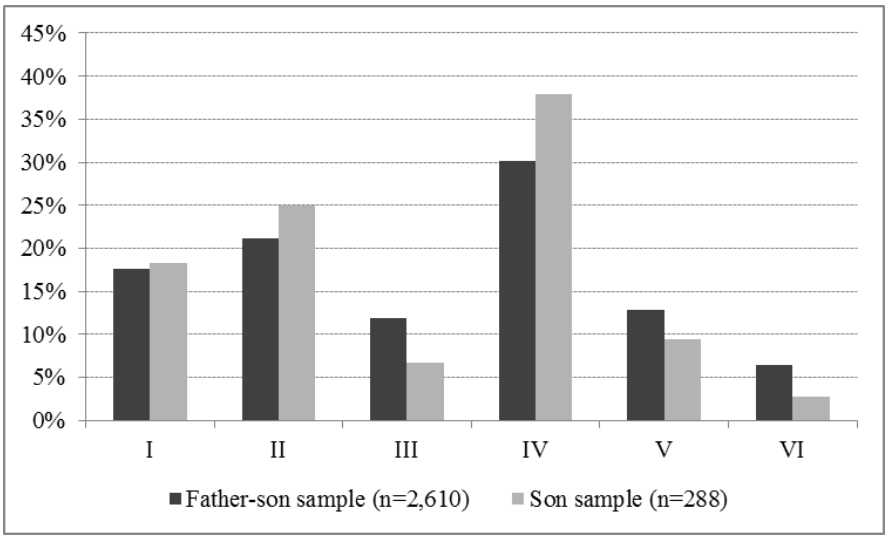


Figure A3: Frequency of linkage between sons and fathers in Kampala, 1895-2011

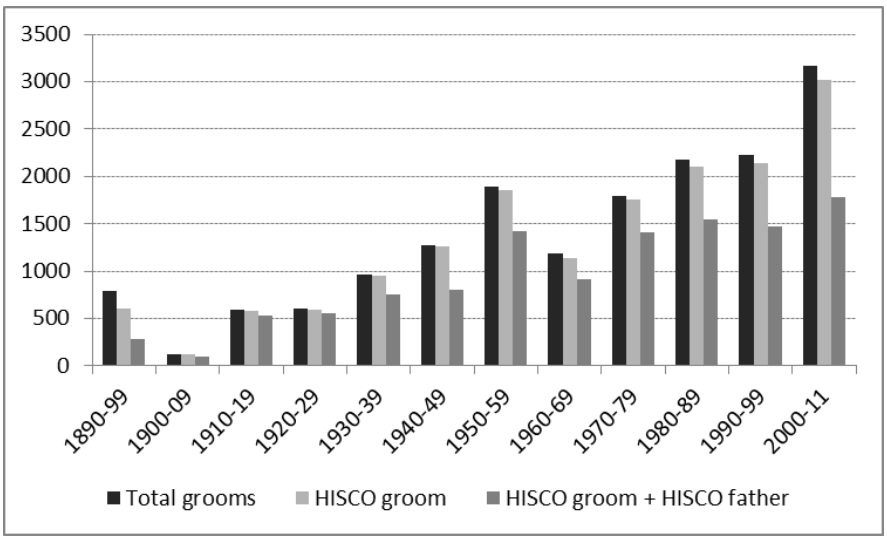
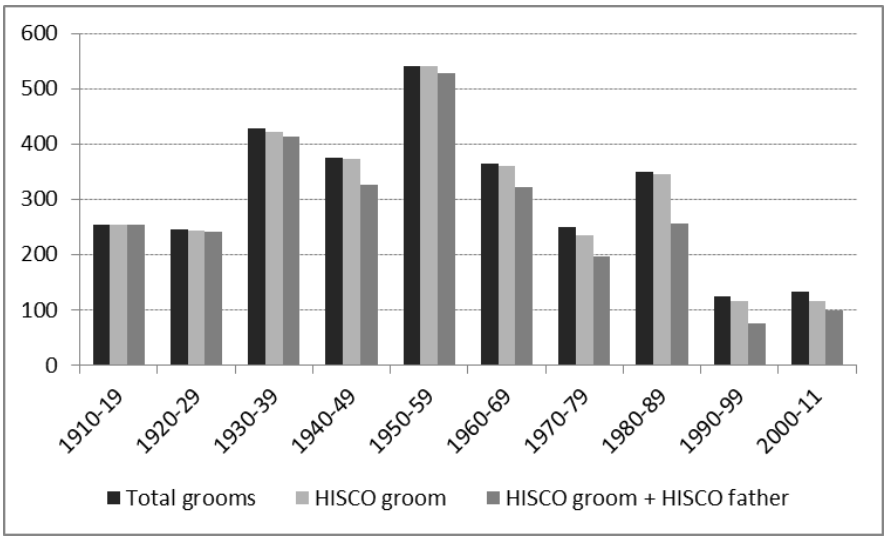


Figure A4: Frequency of linkage between sons and fathers in the rural parishes, 1910-2011



Notes: Includes the following parishes: Butiti (1928-2001; N = 736), Bundibugyo (1936-1974; N = 422), Fort Portal (1911-2011; N = 1,452). Total: N = 2,610

Table A1: Top 5 occupational titles of grooms and their fathers in Kampala by HISCLASS

Father				Groom		
I. Higher managers & professionals	N	%		**I. Higher managers & professionals**	N	%
Chief	911	42.37		Teacher	988	37.58
Teacher	491	22.84		Accountant	457	17.38
Clergy	167	7.77		Medical doctor	169	6.43
Accountant	72	3.35		Chief	97	3.69
Medical doctor	59	2.74		University lecturer	63	2.40
Others	450	20.93		Others	855	32.52
Total	*2,150*	100.00		*Total*	*2,629*	*100.00*
II. Lower managers, professionals	N	%		**II. Lower managers & professionals**	N	%
Businessman	476	25.91		Clerk	1,064	21.94
Trader	369	20.09		Businessman	891	18.37
Sub-chief	224	12.19		Trader	535	11.03
Clerk	143	7.78		Salesman	178	3.67
Medical assistant	82	4.46		Banker	167	3.44
Others	543	29.56		Others	2,015	41.55
Total	*1,837*	*100.00*		*Total*	*4,850*	*100.00*
III. Skilled workers & foremen	N	%		**III. Skilled workers & foremen**	N	%
Carpenter	190	32.93		Carpenter	341	20.81
Tailor	120	20.80		Engineer	279	17.02
Engineer	55	9.53		Tailor	272	16.60
Mechanic	50	8.67		Mechanic	259	15.80
Blacksmith	30	5.20		Electrician	94	5.74
Others	132	22.88		Others	394	24.04
Total	*577*	*100.00*		*Total*	*1,639*	*100.00*
IV. Farmers	N	%		**IV. Farmers**	N	%
Farmer	4,903	82.04		Farmer	741	70.50
Cultivator	753	12.60		Peasant	253	24.07
Peasant	297	4.97		Cultivator	53	5.04
Hunter	21	0.35		Game assistant	2	0.19
Cotton grower	1	0.02		Hunter	1	0.10
Others	1	0.02		Others	1	0.10
Total	*5,976*	*100.00*		*Total*	*1,051*	*100.00*
V. Lower skilled workers	N	%		**V. Lower skilled workers**	N	%
Bark-cloth maker	319	50.32		Driver	396	37.93
Driver	107	16.88		Builder	223	21.36
Builder	95	14.98		Domestic servant	168	16.09
Domestic servant	66	10.41		Soldier	55	5.27
Soldier	11	1.74		Bark cloth maker	23	2.20
Others	36	5.68		Others	179	17.15
Total	*634*	100.00		*Total*	*1,044*	*100.00*
VI. Unskilled workers & lower skilled farm workers	N	%		**VI. Unskilled workers & lower skilled farm workers**	N	%
Gardener	163	66.53		Gardener	57	28.08
Fisherman	21	8.57		Farm worker	53	26.11
Farm worker	16	6.53		Fisherman	17	8.37
Shepherd	14	5.71		Houseboy	15	7.39
Cowherd	8	3.27		Cowherd	7	3.45
Others	23	9.39		Others	54	26.60
Total	*245*	100.00		*Total*	*203*	100.00

Table A2: Top 5 occupational titles of grooms and their fathers in rural parishes by HISCLASS

Father				**Groom**		
I. Higher managers & professionals	N	%		I. Higher managers & professionals	N	%
Chief	120	58.25		Teacher	343	74.73
Teacher	59	28.64		Chief	39	8.50
Lay reader	6	2.91		Accountant	23	5.01
Accountant	3	1.46		Doctor	6	1.31
Bishop	3	1.46		Lawyer	4	0.87
Others	15	7.28		Others	44	9.59
Total	*206*	100.00		*Total*	*459*	100.00
II. Lower managers, professionals	N	%		II. Lower managers & professionals	N	%
Sub-chief	85	39.35		Clerk	155	28.03
Trader	70	32.41		Trader	155	28.03
Clerk	15	6.94		Medical assistant	46	8.32
Businessman	9	4.17		Businessman	31	5.61
Medical assistant	5	2.31		Sub-chief	22	3.98
Others	32	14.81		Others	144	26.04
Total	*216*	100.00		*Total*	*553*	100.00
III. Skilled workers & foremen	N	%		III. Skilled workers & foremen	N	%
Blacksmith	27	30.00		Tailor	105	33.98
Carpenter	20	22.22		Cook	56	18.12
Tailor	12	13.33		Carpenter	53	17.15
Bricklayer	8	8.89		Bricklayer	32	10.36
Drum maker	8	8.89		Mechanic	26	8.41
Others	15	16.67		Others	37	11.97
Total	*90*	100.00		*Total*	*309*	100.00
IV. Farmers	N	%		IV. Farmers	N	%
Farmer	1,628	96.22		Farmer	781	98.99
Peasant	58	3.43		Peasant	2	0.25
Hunter	6	0.35		Game ranger	6	0.76
Total	*1,692*	*100.00*		*Total*	*789*	100.00
V. Lower skilled workers	N	%		V. Lower skilled workers	N	%
Domestic servant	29	28.16		Domestic servant	134	40.24
Matmaker	27	26.21		Matmaker	99	29.73
Barkclothmaker	21	20.39		Soldier	30	9.01
Basketmaker	7	6.80		Driver	22	6.61
Soldier	6	5.83		Builder	19	5.71
Others	13	12.62		Others	29	8.71
Total	*103*	100.00		*Total*	*333*	100.00
VI. Unskilled workers & lower skilled farm workers	N	%		VI. Unskilled workers & lower skilled farm workers	N	%
Cowherd	251	88.69		Cowherd	111	54.68
Shepherd	25	8.83		Houseboy	37	18.23
Fisherman	2	0.71		Fisherman	6	2.96
Labourer	2	0.71		Shepherd	2	0.99
Shoeshiner	1	0.35		Shoeshiner	2	0.99
Others	2	0.71		Others	45	22.17
Total	*283*	100.00		*Total*	*203*	100.00