

# Varied Forms of Rural Cooperation: Incipient Cooperative Groups among Bachiga Farmers in Uganda

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## Issues Relating to Cooperative Groups

Some eminent scholars have paid attention to collaborative work systems in tribal societies, noting areas of cooperation, reciprocity, and division of labor. Murdock (1949: 7–9) has shown that a nuclear family fully relies on mutual help and a division of labor among its members. Fortes (1953: 35) maintained that cooperation between component kin group members is indispensable for the operation of any lineage. As such, the division of labor, cooperation and reciprocity serve to strengthen the solidarity of a group. On the other hand, Ekeh (1974: 62, 75) has devoted much effort in an attempt to merge Durkheim's understanding of division of labor with Levi-Strauss's theory of exchange. Durkheim demonstrated the diversified roles and mutual dependence between constituting parts of a society. Levi-Strauss, on the other hand, studied the effect of united different groups through complementary exchange: he looked at the ways (both "general" and "restricted") in which women were exchanged. Ekeh contended that an intersection of these processes of division and integration is instrumental in bringing about cohesion in societies.

Ekeh's theoretical arguments need to be supplemented, however, to take into account diversification in roles which are static and the movement which conducts exchange. Certain needs and motives stimulate members of a society to collaborate by working in accordance with established roles and patterns of conduct. Consequently, it becomes necessary to develop a network in order to recruit participants in the formation of an action group.<sup>1)</sup> Descent, filiation, marriage and residence regulations normally create incentives to form networks in societies which are bound to conventional norms and values. However, in developing countries, trends toward Westernization have, in many cases, influenced these variables of network formation which eventually have been superseded by links involving friendship, vocational fellowship and/or association among business firms. An action group operates effectively in executing a concrete mission. It also quickly dissolves upon the completion of its initial goal. This pattern of behavior subsequently differs from groups which maintain themselves on a continuing basis through associations, labor unions, or business organizations. An action group is normally formed with existing ties relating to an existing permanent group.<sup>2)</sup>

One effective means to distinguish actions groups from permanent groups is investigating issues relating to rural collaboration in developing countries. Comparisons

can be made between large-scale government-run cooperatives and minor groups such as spontaneously-formed local cooperatives. The national government often endeavors to improve the large-scale cooperatives under a projected scheme of economic expansion, appropriating funds, providing facilities, helping with access to new technology, and insuring wide distribution of commodities produced. Marked preference is normally given to those cash crops which will help to improve state finances through international trade. As a result, it is often the case that such large-scale cooperatives causes much economic dislocations, especially among small indigenous farmers in remote areas who rely upon a subsistence economy.<sup>3)</sup> It is possible, of course, that links may develop between these two structures as the benefits of a cash economy spread throughout a country. This was not, however, the case in 1970 in Buhara or in its vicinity in the isolated southwestern corner of Uganda.<sup>4)</sup>

The Bantu settlers in the Kigezi highlands practices slash and burn cultivation with simple hoes. The Bachiga people grew sorghum, beans, sweet potatoes and other minor crops such as peas and maize. They did not practice any traditional pattern of collaboration locally except for the mutual help between close kin.<sup>5)</sup> The chilly climate did not allow them to raise cash crops such as coffee, tea, sugar cane, cotton or plantains. The closeness to the equator was nullified by the high altitude, being some 2,000 meters or more above sea level. These environmental factors impeded the government's 1961 scheme to develop large-scale cooperatives at Kigezi. (Scherer 1969: 70–71) The Kigezi Vegetable District Growers Cooperative Society (KDV-GCS) attempted to encourage farmers to grow commercial crops such as Irish potatoes, onions, cabbages, and cauliflower in response to consumer demand at Kampala, the state capital.

According to this scheme, the Society was to supply seed, fertilizer, specialized information and technology and render essential services to deal with the collection and distribution of agricultural products on a wider market. Initially membership in the KDV-GCS increased from 695 in 1965 to 2,493 in 1968. (Scherer 1967: 98, 138; Okereke 1974: 72) The society recruited most of its active members from the nearby residents of Kabale, but it extended little membership benefits to more remote dwellers as the Buhara inhabitants.<sup>6)</sup> In consequence, the Buhara inhabitants established and managed a number of smaller, but totally self-reliant groups on the basis of spontaneously-organized collaboration among themselves to pursue higher income.

### **Activities of Incipient Cooperative Groups**

Certain differences and similarities can be seen in the workings for four small groups: the Rwakihirwa Growers Company, the Buhara Store Company, the Buhara Growers Cooperative and the Buhara Brewers Union Society. Each group is small in terms of its size, funds, and activities. Members of each group were similarly recruited from within a limited network.<sup>7)</sup>

Rwakihirwa is located almost in the middle of the Buhara village (*gombolola*) which extends over ten kilometers from north to south. The Rwakihirwa Growers

Company (RGC) was founded by Muzinga, a keeper of a local shop in the area. The RGC hired some people to grow Irish potatoes and sweet potatoes in the corner of a large swamp. The land was leased by the government to the RGC to be drained. In 1975, some nine men were employed as farmers at the RGC around the Buhara Trading Centre. Of the nine farmers, three were married and were in their forties, six were unmarried young men around the age of twenty. All of these employees lived in hamlets near the Buhara Trading Centre: four employees lived in Kijonjo, three lived in Kashaki, one lived in Ruhita and the others lived in Makanga. They also differed in terms of their clan affiliation: one was of Gala and others were Hundues. One man (Keiru) was Catholic, while the remaining men were Protestants. More importantly, these employees, even those from the same hamlet, did not share any close kinship ties with each other.

The RGC paid each employee Shs. 10/= per day in wages. In 1975, manual laborers around Buhara received around the same daily wage. Permanent employees normally earned a wage of between Shs. 120/= or Shs. 150/= per month. The Uganda government imposed graduated taxes on males between eighteen and fifty-nine years of age. Masero and Keiru were both found in the Village Taxation Register and listed as paying Shs. 65/= for their graduated tax for the year of 1974. As such, they paid no more tax than that paid by ordinary farmers earning no additional income from non-agricultural sources. Even though Masero and Keiru earned some income from the RGC, they were not taxed for any additional income in 1974, which implies that the wages they received from the RGC were diminutive.

One distinctive features concerns the ages of RGC employees. They were either young under the age of twenty-two or older over the age of forty-seven. They were either too young or too old to be engaged in manual labor in places somewhat distant from Buhara. Those with certain skills often found it advantageous to work in places distance from home in order to obtain higher rewards.<sup>8)</sup> Farming was routine work which anyone, young or old, could pursue. Such routine work, however, could scarcely yield any great monetary rewards to RGC employees. Subsequently, no specific network was either deemed operative between those works. Their recruitment was probably not the result of competition, nor with the occasional result of nepotism bound with a definite descent, original habitat or affinal link. It can be assumed that recruitment by the RGC failed to enlist major public interest. Such failure was due to the monotonous nature of the work, the low wages involved, and the limited periods of engagement in the farmwork.

The Buhara Store Company operated shops in the Buhara Trading Centre and on the main street of Kabale, the district capital. The BSC dealt with agricultural products, clothes and hardware. In 1975, the company owned a pickup truck. Birakwate, a resident of Kijonjo, was in charge of running the BSC business operations. He was, at that time, forty years old and married to a wife who cultivated forty plots of farmland. Birakwate attended primary school for three years. He had no experience in migrating to work outside the village. In 1967, he set up, under lieu, a shop in Kisemite village

(*gombolola*) some six years before the establishment of the BSC in 1973. The BSC was a private firm founded by thirteen local investors, including Birakwate. Despite his full-time involvement in the management and operation of the BSC, Birakwate was listed in the 1975 Village Tax Registers as an employee of BSC receiving wages of Shs. 150/= per month. An annual tax of Shs. 100/= was levied on him.

Ndyiyabanoha, another employee of BSC, drove the pickup truck for the company. He was thirty-five years old, and was married to two wives who farmed his twenty plots of land. He originally worked as a miner in a copper mine at the Toro District for thirteen years. He saved enough money to obtain a driver's license and buy into shares of the BSC. He continued to work for the BSC as the truck driver. Birakwate and Ndyiyabanoha resided together in Kijonjo hamlet. They took part in a single clan affiliation and participated in the same church fellowship. Despite these common affiliations, they were not linked to each other by any close kin ties. Moreover, their wives came from different clans and derived from different hamlets.

Litigation records from the village court gives evidence of another incipient cooperative group and its activities.<sup>9)</sup> The Buhara Growers Cooperative (BGC) had accepted members exclusively from the southern part of the village, *Miruka* Buhara and Rwene. In 1969, BGC had two officers. Katarwobwa served as cashier and Bakeihawenki as clerk. Concurrently, Katarwobwa worked at Buhara Trading Centre as a carpenter and Bakeihawenki ran a shop at Rwene. Meetings were convened for BGC members and minutes were prepared for their approval. The by-laws allowed individual member to obtain black sorghum grain from the cooperative warehouse and pay the bill after they had sold the beer brewed from the grain. Bakeihawenki had offered his shop for the convenience of the cooperative members. The BGC officers stored sorghum in this shop and recorded all debts of the members who borrowed grain for brewing.

Failure to repay such debts meant then some of the members were taken to the village court. Twelve debtors had borrowed as much as the following sums: Shs. 20/= by seven debtors, Shs. 21/= or Shs. 50/= by three debtors, and Shs. 140/= by one debtor, respectively. Katarwobwa and Bakeihawenki sued the debtors on behalf of the BGC.

Katarwobwa was thirty-nine years old in 1969. He had attended primary school up to the fourth grade. He had never traveled far from his birthplace in search of work, and had been engaged in the manufacture of furniture at his home since 1949. In 1974 his income reached as high as twelve times Shs. 60/=, for which he was assessed some Shs. 80/= for the annual tax. In contrast, there was no record in the tax register either of Bakeihawenki's income nor his assessed tax. Other litigation cases involving Bakeihawenki noted that he was also running a shop and was married to one wife.<sup>10)</sup>

These two BGC officers kept their own shops and may well have not been engaged full-time in the business of the cooperative. The tax register showed no record of income from the BGC for either of the men. This may indicate that the wages they received from the BGC were meager.

The organization of the BGC satisfied the model of an incipient cooperative group in that it was equipped with by-laws governing the organization, held regular meetings in which minutes were taken, elected officers and engaged in collective activities. Despite these features, the BGC lacked collaborative links with networks for marketing its major product, sorghum beer. This subsequently resulted in the cooperative being incapable of increasing its membership. The membership solely benefited the few farmers who earned a small cash income by selling beer. The small sums owed in debt in the various suits reveal the minute scale of the business of the BGC.<sup>11)</sup>

In contrast to the BGC, which provided raw materials for brewing, another group was organized around the opportunity to sell beer by its members at a local bar. Every member of the Buhara Brewers Union Society (BBUS) had to choose a partner so that they would be allotted a fixed span of time to sell beer at the bar rented by the BBUS at the Buhara Trading Centre. Such selling teams could not exceed their individually allotted time spans. Any breach of this regulation would result in a law suit. Again, it is from these legal disputes that we can discover the essential features of the cooperative.<sup>12)</sup>

Mwebessa and Mabare sued Bwesikurire and Buhazi for damages relating to beer. The complainants had bought beer from Kabarira and sold it at Bwesikurire's bar. In 1970, the BBUS had allotted two consecutive days, September 15 and 16, at the period in which they were allowed to sell beer. Nonetheless, they continued to sell beer on the 17th. Because of this breach, Bwesikurire interfered with their dealings. Mwebessa and Mabare called on the village chief to order the door unlocked. When the door was opened, they found that the beer had been taken away. The two men subsequently demanded compensation from Bwesikurire and Buhazi for the loss of beer. Buhazi had remained in the bar while the door had been locked. The judge rejected their complaint. Instead, he reproached Mwebessa and Mabare for their breach of BBUS regulations, for the complainants had encroached on the allotted time of another team by selling beer on the 17th.

Everyone involved in this dispute was an adult male. Bwesikurire was at that time thirty-one years old and had managed the bar in the area since 1967. He had earlier migrated to work at the Toro District. After three years he managed to save up enough money to open the bar. The Village Tax Registers recorded his income to an equivalent of twelve times Shs. 120/= and assessed his annual tax at Shs. 80/=. Bwesikurire was not a member of the BBUS, but retained power of control over the customers at his bar. Consequently, he rejected the complainants' attempt to sell beer in the bar after their allotted time had expired. He locked the door as Buhazi had requested.<sup>13)</sup>

Buhazi, one of the defendants, had brought his beer on the 17th and was about to sell it at the bar that afternoon. However, interrupted by the complainants, he asked the owner of the bar, Bwesikurire, for help. Buhazi was, at that time, forty-five years old and an inhabitant of Kijonjo hamlet. He was married and his wife farmed his twelve plots of farmland. He was employed for the past twelve years by the District

Office as a sprayer of insecticide on a coffee farm. Buhazi brewed beer himself and sold it as a member of the BBUS. He collaborated with Kahizimo for the sale of beer on his allotted days.<sup>14)</sup>

The complainants, Mwebessa and Mabare, bought two and a half drums of beer from Kabarira for Shs. 175/= on September 16. They managed to sell only one drum-full of beer on that day. Worried that their unsold beer would spoil soon, the complainants attempted to sell it on the following day. They were forced to recognize Buhazi's protest and eventually halted their sale. Mwebessa subsequently deposited the remaining beer temporarily in Bakamwanga's custody. While Mwebessa was away from the bar, the building was locked and the beer, worth around Shs. 120/=, somehow disappeared.

Mwebessa lived in Kigugo hamlet. Mabare, who later emigrated to the Toro District permanently in 1974, and Bakamwanga both lived in Kashaki hamlet. Bakamwanga was, at the time, forty-two years old and was married to a wife who farmed sixteen plots of farmland. He had worked as a carpenter manufacturing furniture at the Buhara Trading Centre for seventeen years.

Bakamwanga was not affiliated with the BBUS, but he was Kabarira's real brother. Kabarira was a member of the BBUS as a brewer of beer and as an inhabitant of Kashaki hamlet. Kabarira had a wife who farmed his thirteen plots of farmland. He had migrated repeatedly in search of work in the past, but eventually settled down at his homeland, having gained employment in the District Office as an insecticide sprayer for two years. He concurrently brewed beer for sale.

Kinship or residential links cannot be sought at work in the choice of one's selling partner in the BBUS. No filiation can be found between the complainants, Mwebessa and Mabare: they were not related in any agnatic descent line as far as three generations and besides, they lived in different hamlets. On the other hand, neither Buhazi nor Kahizimo, the defendants, showed any signs of filiation. Their hamlets of domicile also differed. No agnatic filiation, at least for three generations, could be traced between Bwesikurire, who was the owner of the bar, and any of the litigants in this dispute.

Specific variables, which might have controlled partnership, were not to be found in kinship. No positive role of filiation or residence seemed to be at work in the actual assignment of BBUS members or in the formation of individual teams. For example, Mabare's real brother was, at the time, forty-fives years old and living in the same domicile in Kashaki. Kabarira also had another real brother, Bakamwanga, who was living in the vicinity. Both Mabare and Kabarira lived nearby their real cousins, who were the sons of their father's real brothers. Despite these close links through agnatic filiation or residence, these kinsmen did not collaborate in the BBUS activities for the selling of beer. This may imply that closeness in kinship or residence no longer took a leading role in enhancing collaboration, even in this remote corner of the country. On the other hand, tension and conflict between people linked with close ties may have been amplified.<sup>15)</sup> This view may lead one to the following interpretation.

One may demarcate two distinct sorts of networks: a short-lived and a more extensive, longer-lasting type. Local inhabitants achieve their specific aims through the former sorts of networks: in contrast, they maintain social integration through the latter. Any action group which develops has its origins in an individualistic network. The group becomes active in working for a short time and then breaks up. The activities of the group readily cause discord and stir up antagonism within the group. The potential to move from short-lived collaboration to a longer-lasting type depends much on the process of group formation. Its members should exclude those who bring with them the possibility of dissension or fission which would undermine group cohesion. In consequence, groups aiming at stability sought to avoid members with close ties of filiation or residential links. People with only rudimentary social relations are most likely to form extensive and abiding networks.

Despite the marked contrast, these two distinct networks often act in concert with each other. The short-lived network operated adequately to meet the daily needs of individuals. A variety of action groups may arise and operate simultaneously and they may, in fact, breed various strains and antagonisms. As close collaboration develops, it is invariably accompanied by conflicts and fission between members of the groups. The extensive and durable networks play an essential role in mitigating this sort of social tension and serve to undo some of the strain shared among the member of a group.<sup>16)</sup>

The BBUS was a small mutual self-help group of farmers. Those who were involved in the dispute owned less than sixteen plots of land, which is less than the average land holding of farmers living close to the Buhara Trading Centre.<sup>17)</sup> The men who worked as insecticide sprayers worked part-time annually in March, April, September, and December. Spraying insecticide on coffee bushes was hard work. One had to walk over eleven kilometers a day, carrying a heavy container of chemicals. Sprayers were paid less than Shs. 6/= per day. Moreover, constant shortages in the government's budget meant that there was normally a decrease in the number of work days for the sprayers. Their meager income could hardly be expected to be supplemented with much income from the BBUS activities due to the restrictions regarding the time span for selling beer.

The customers of the BBUS were mostly ordinary farmers, small in number and often short of enough money to purchase beer at the bar. One could scarcely count on any large demand for the commodity of the cooperative under the circumstances. Mwebessa and Mabare took a risk to sell more beer than that which would be sold during their allotted time. Other members of the BBUS might have avoided such risk taking and more carefully taken care of their money, labor and time by selling beer only in their allotted time span. But the risky venture also implies a widespread craving for cash, urging farmers to make careless investments in their commercial activities. Any failure would be punished and stop, if only temporarily, local inhabitants from entering recklessly upon such conduct.<sup>18)</sup>

## A Comparison of Cooperative Groups

The collaborative activities of Buhara farmers show much variety with regard both to the founding goals of their organizations and the personal backgrounds of individual members. One may examine these groups in comparative perspective, focusing on features such as the contribution of funds, shares and labor, placement of trust in fellow member, profit expectation, risk sharing, and restrictions on network expansion.

People joined the Rwakihirwa Growers Company as paid farmers. Members of the RGC were not required to contribute any money to RGC funds. Each member was obviously motivated to earn hard cash. Market demands for Irish potatoes and sweet potatoes were consistently high and such crops were strong enough to grow under unfavorable weather conditions. Consequently, there was little worry about insolvency or potential delay in payment of wages. The employees lived in within the administrative boundaries of Buhara village (*gombolola*). This implies a widespread network among RGC members, but also denote the fact that they lack tight bonds of companionship.

In contrast, the members of the Buhara Store Company were supposed to contribute a large sum of money as one's share in the organization. The BSC dealt with comparatively expensive commodities such as clothing as well as less expensive items. The BSC rented a store at the Buhara Trading Centre and another one on the main street of Kabale. It also owned a pickup truck and paid wages to at least two employees. Out of the fourteen investors in the BSC, these two were full-time employees, one engaged in the area of management and the other in driving the vehicle. The other twelve members were not likely to be involved in any of the commercial activities of the BSC. Nonetheless, strong trust was required of the remaining members because they had advanced large sums of cash as their share in the organization. All BSC members were fully acquainted with one another, knowing in detail about their partners' personality, career, and wealth.<sup>19)</sup> Expectation of profits and the sharing of risks were high. Members had to be aware of the dangers of business depression, breach of trust or bad debts. These features of the BSC inevitably narrowed the network of members so that, in the end, it might comprise exclusively of fellow members who maintained complete trust in each other.

The Buhara Growers Cooperative could afford to distribute the raw materials needed for brewing beer on a loan basis. The cooperative had to collect funds to make essential purchases of raw materials: every member was required to pay a certain amount in initial membership dues. However, any additional expenses were not necessary because individual members settled the bills after they had sold their beer. Each member was thereby involved in the entire process, from brewing the beer to its distribution and sale, even those some were forced to rely upon hired specialists to brew the beer. Settlement of individual debts was vital for the BGC to assure full and efficient operation of its activities. In consequence, any default in the payment of debts necessarily resulted in a counteraction or lawsuit. This severely threatened the

essential mutual trust on which the cooperative was based. Defaulters individually failed in paying their debts, even though they were small in size. If measures were not taken to collect the debts, the BGC would soon suffer from financial embarrassment. In order to minimize the risk, members would consciously narrow their network by limiting membership only to those who were well known and trusted. This practice differed markedly from the Rwakihirwa Growers Company.

The Buhara Brewers Union Society embodied a slightly different feature. Members of the BBUS were not required to contribute shares at the outside of membership. Every member nonetheless had to be able to personally afford to pay for each activity, such as the sale of beer at a rented bar. Thus, the BBUS's major activity was to extend opportunities to its members to sell their beer at the local bar. Collaboration between teammates was essential, so that they could pour out the beer in correct amounts and take care of cash transactions at the same time. Profits derived largely on scrupulous and assiduous fulfillment of assigned roles, for which trustworthy partners were at a premium. Beer sold in large quantities was a potential source of great profit and naturally required careful business sense. Risks were high, as seen in a dispute case. Except for one's teammate, BBUS members did not necessarily derive from a closed network, but in reality the network was somewhat circumscribed on account of geographical proximity to the rented bar.<sup>20)</sup>

One may distinguish the features of this incipient cooperative by their economic roles: labor force (RGC), capital formation (BSC), loan giving (BGC), and control over distribution (BBUS).<sup>21)</sup> Such distinctions emerge by focusing solely on the specific functions inherent in the different roles actually performed by each of the cooperatives. Worsley (1971: 19) has enumerated these functions earlier. It is more urgent for a researcher to reveal those dominant factors or variables that may serve to influence each function in a particular socio-economic circumstance. One must discern relevant activities, influenced by these variables, in the changing socio-economic and socio-political contexts in local society.<sup>22)</sup>

Features in the constitution of each cooperative group need to be clarified. The by-laws must be examined carefully. Rules governing organizations, the rights and duties of members, the regulations concerning areas of supervision and leadership exercised by officers, the form of meetings and the nature of minutes taken, etc., all must be thoroughly researched. It is also necessary to attempt to find out if the actual implementation of the by-laws is consistent with the by-laws themselves. The implementation as such is vital to the effective operation of the cooperatives. Moreover, hidden activities, such as factional infighting, should be scrutinized to divulge possible links relating the activities of the cooperative with local politics. It is common, for example, for collision to exist between cooperative groups and campaigns for local election. Some skilled traders, mentioned earlier in this article, may assume dominant roles within their group and in this way may expand their predominant influence not only to the economic, but also into the political sphere of community life. This tendency could also bring serve to accelerate areas of status differentiation, influenced

by the parallel trends of encroaching Westernization and the infiltration of a cash economy.<sup>23)</sup>

Finally, keen attention must be drawn to the effects of legal and administrative reforms introduced by local and central governments, especially with regard to laws pertaining to cooperative movements. For instance, what was the effect of the activities of the large-scale KDVGCS upon the operations of the incipient small-scale cooperatives located in the same area? One would expect that large-scale cooperatives would have taken the initiative to enlarge and advance local collaboration with the government for financial and technical assistance and supervision.

In the course of successful operation, one may assume that the large-scale cooperatives would steadily incorporate smaller groups as it expanded its control over the production and circulation of local products. Small-scale cooperatives would thus become terminal groups of the large-scale cooperative. How, in fact, have the smaller groups reacted to such encroachment? Further research is needed to show how small-scale cooperatives have attempted to improve their organizational structure and functions in order to cope with the threat of centralized control. Inevitably this has led to the establishment of radical rearrangements of peripheral networks and actions groups at work.<sup>24)</sup>

#### Notes

- 1) No one has yet formulated a complete definition of the term "network." Whitten and Wolfe (1972: 722–725) noted earlier usages of the term were equivalent to an informal social relation, which often meant a strict division from formal social relationships. However, networks refer currently to both informal and formal social links. Mitchell (1973: 22) advanced the view of a network as a set consisting of the totality of ties connecting individual. In consequence, those links connecting kin, friends or neighbors, delineate specific dimensions of an existing network. Individual networks are exchanged for those operational links focusing on certain issues and activities. In this sense, two distinct networks can be discerned: a total set of social relationships and multiple, partial links that shape an action group. Boissevain (1974: 28) remarked that for the most suitable relation a specific network would be chosen for the action group.
- 2) Whitten and Wolfe (1973: 724) set aside a part of a total network by denoting the term "an action set" which was fully engaged in the achievement of a particularistic goal. Boissevain (1974) has made use of this term widely.
- 3) Davis (1973: 178) shares the same view. He investigated cases of rotating credit associations in a Philippine village. He thought that this type of association was, in principle, equal to a cooperative group in a narrower sense. The difference could be seen in the availability of approval or protection offered by the government. Despite such government sponsorship, however, a rotating credit association, he asserted, shared the following features with a cooperative group: mutual trust, investment and profit seeking. He argued that the common emergence of such incipient collaborative groups would stimulate the formation of cooperative groups in a narrower sense. Davis insisted on the need for investigation of these two similar sorts of groups-in-continuum.
- 4) Criticism may arise by thinking that a spontaneously-formed collaborative group is equal to an action group. The former closely resembles the latter, especially as a faction group in the process of formation or dissolution. Concrete cases reveal unsteady, discontinuous compositions and functions. A collaborative group of farmers is formed quickly in response to urgent demands. The group readily splits if it cannot accomplish its primary goal or upon charges of mismanagement. Whitten and Wolfe (1973: 733) put emphasis on studying faction groups and stem kindred

- as major network analysis. Further we should examine both collaborative groups of farmers and urban voluntary associations for mutual help.
- 5) The term *Bachiga* implies “the mountain dwellers” by Rwandan speakers. In the Kigezi District, the *Chiga* amounted to approximately 450,000 individuals which made up almost 70 percent of the 650,000 residents of the district. (1968 Census). The *Chiga* had not been ruled by any permanent centralized government earlier than that of British colonial rule. (Edel 1957: 3) They lived in compact hamlets composed of agnatic sub-clan members and their dependents. The *Chiga* farmers used to work together to clear fallowed land, construct houses and hunt animals. Participants of these works were limited to a few close kin. They did not shape any long-standing groups to pursue reiterative work. (Edel 1961: 136, 152).
  - 6) The KDVGCS (Kigezi District Vegetable Grower’s Cooperative Society) originated from the Kigezi Industries Ltd., which was established in 1951 to convey vegetables to Kampala. Both of these business organizations suffered heavy losses due to their failure to meet competition with Kenyan producers. The KDVGCS was later re-organized into the KDVCU (Kigezi District Vegetable Grower’s Cooperative Union) in 1965. The latter endeavored to reduce its purchase of vegetables and to re-arrange their marketing. (Okereke 1974: 72–76) The large scale cooperative group recruited fifty members among the Buhara inhabitants in 1961, but lost all of them in the following year. The reason for their withdrawal was not specified. No one from Buhara had joined the KDVCU until 1968, three years after its establishment. (Scherer 1967: 79, 88)
  - 7) I undertook fieldwork at the Buhara Trading Centre and in Kabale town between 1967 and 1968 for five months, 1974 and 1975 for seven months, and in 1984 for one month. I also paid a short visit to Kabale in 1991 for three weeks.
  - 8) In nearby Buhara Trading Centre, 59 men out of 80 household heads, all of whom were male, had been engaged in labor migration by March 1975. These 59 men were categorized by their ages: 17 men between the ages of 18 and 29; 32 men were between 30 and 49; and 10 men were 50 or over. Of the 59 men, 17 men had migrated only once while 26 men had experienced labor migration two or four times and 15 men had sought work outside Buhara between five and seven times. One person had migrated in search of profitable work more than eight times.
  - 9) The Buhara Village Court 1969 Civil Suit, No. 12, filed on 1/24/1969. The treasurer and the clerk of the BGC made a claim to collect debts owed by eight members residing in Rwene. The plaintiff filed another suit in 1969, Civil Suit No. 13, against five other members living in Buhara (*muruka*), making the same claim. Sorghum was fermented to increase sweetness and color, eventually becoming black. Sorghum grain was soaked in swamps and then dried in the sun. A 90 kg bag of black sorghum in 1966 was sold for Shs. 70/=.
  - 10) These cases were the 1971 Civil Suit, No. 71 for theft of kerosene and the 1973 Civil Suit, No. 3, for trespassing boundaries of farmland. Bakeihawenki sued these Rwene inhabitants.
  - 11) Demands for sorghum were high among the *Chiga* farmers because of its widespread use in daily food preparation and for brewing beer. Maize and peas were the more important produce for export out of the *Chiga* land. The District government categorized maize and peas as cash crops in 1958 and again in 1968, urging local farmers to increase their yields. However, a large gap between demand and supply appeared in 1968; a demand for 4,000 tons of maize was unable to be fulfilled by the total accumulated supply of 1,285 tons, and the demand for 20,000 tons of peas was unable to be met with the total accumulation of 3,925 tons. (Scherer 1969: 61, 65, 115, 194) Local shops were supportive in their response to the government’s encouragement to purchase these crops. Despite such efforts, ordinary farmers preferred to raise sorghum because of its higher price at sale, being almost twice as expensive as an equal amount of maize or peas. (1968 Civil Suit, Nos. 4 and 49, and 1968 Criminal Suit, No. 22)
  - 12) 1970 Civil Suit, No. 51, filed on September 22, 1970 and heard on May 1, 1971.
  - 13) Bwesikurire lived in Kashaki hamlet close to the bar. The District government for fourteen years had employed him, working as a sprayer of insecticide on coffee farms. It is not known whether he brewed or sold beer himself, but he owned a bar which might have yielded at least a monthly rent of Shs. 50/= in 1968.
  - 14) I have discussed the process of beer brewing and its use among the *Chiga* in another article

(Omori 1978). They mixed black sorghum flour with water and a small quantity of sorghum beer, *omuramba*. The liquid turned into beer after ten or twelve days. Two drums of beer might bring the brewer a net profit as much as Shs. 40/= . Those who helped with the brewing were paid Shs. 10/= each.

- 15) Customs in marriage and inheritance have caused much tension and havoc between close kin: sons against parents, real or half brothers/sisters, and, nephews against paternal uncles. The collaboration in these groups appears to have been surpassed by such competition among blood relations. See Omori 1971, 1972.
- 16) Swartz contends that a small scale, simple society and a larger-scale, complex society were both equipped with specific mechanisms that served to prevent the society from tending to break up (Swartz et. al., eds., 1965: 34). However, I have some reservation about this point. First, it is common for antagonism and collision to arise among relations in which kin, affine or neighbors are involved, but this does not necessarily sever links between them. Antagonism and collision normally do not evolve to the extent to dissolve the entire functioning of the action group. Secondly, Gluckman asserts that any fission or collision might actually enhance or revitalize a society.
- 17) Scherer (1969: 38) referred to the *Uganda Agricultural Census* (1963, 1964) as denoting farmland holdings of 85,671 Kigezi District farmers, for an average of 4.51 acres (approximately 1.81 hectares) per farmer. On the other hand, the average holding of farmland among 71 married men around the Buhara Trading Centre was 17.5 plots (total 1,333 plots) in 1975. Each plot, however, varied in size. One is unable to determine the actual size of individual farms due to the lack of land registers in this region.
- 18) As shown in the actual cases, local power holders commonly assumed the major role in establishing and managing incipient cooperative groups. They were fully engaged in cooperative activities, to which much time, labor, and money were appropriated by the local elite. In contrast, the subordinate participants normally contributed less to cooperative activities. Success or failure in their undertakings would, consequently, effect the economic and political power of the leaders who took on the institution and operation of the cooperative as a venture. Total reliance and larger investment in cooperative undertakings also caused ordinary members to take risks. In these circumstances, the effects of the money economy increasingly influenced their activities.
- 19) A litigation record (Note 10) illustrates the amount of fund necessary to set up a local shop. When a general shop was opened at the Rwene Trading Centre in 1964, it amounted to Shs. 2,800/=. The sum did not include the costs of constructing the building (some Shs. 2,264/=) nor the expenses of the pickup truck. The BSC owned a shop at the Buhara Trading Centre and rented another shop in Kabale.
- 20) BBUS furnished the opportunity to its members to sell beer. There was a fixed sale for beer as members were assigned a specific space and time in which they could occupy the bar. In this sense, BBUS developed into an organization that not only control production but also the distribution of local beer in the region.
- 21) Dore (1971: 49–51, 54) distinguished three variables in the development of cooperatives: competition, authority patterns and formal constitution. Authority patterns refer to the form of power distribution such as authoritarianism or egalitarianism. The formal constitution implies the extent to which rules operate for the functioning of a general meeting, the election of officers and auditors, etc.
- 22) Mitchell (1973: 26, 29) clarified that a network implied a cluster of norms. A network originated from “expectation” of mutual interactions necessary to form and activate the network. One should behave properly in response to such expectations. Mitchell argued that an “institution” was also a set of clustering norms and values interrelated under a “pivotal theme” so that a present system of norms and values might be framed. In this view any deviant conduct threatens the integration of the whole. The conduct will not only demolish existing networks but subversively affects the institution that has abided on the network. As Firth (1964: 35) contemplated, there should be a coherence of such concepts as network, deviation/dispute, and social change. Kurtz (1979: 51), moreover, established a link between networks and social institutions. He

- argued that “unstructured and unbounded” networks would develop into social mechanisms of pivotal importance. Kurtz denoted such groups as “quasigroups.” These quasigroups will, he asserted, be “formalized” in the developmental process of social and economic change.
- 23) On another occasion I have investigated the process of status differentiation at Buhara and Kabale (Omori 1980). Local traders accomplished remarkable status elevation in accordance to political and economic reform brought about by the Amin Regime.
  - 24) Okereke (1974: 74) earlier demonstrated the impact of irresistible economic competition between the Kigezi and the Kenyan farmers, largely to the detriment of the Kigezi on account of unfavorable transportation in Kigezi. Social unrest and disorder following Amin’s rule has brought the operation of any large-scale cooperative operation to a standstill throughout the 1980s. Moreover, the Chiga farmers were forced to overcome increasingly urgent hardships such as deteriorating road conditions, insecurity on route, and the lack of lorries in their attempt to become competitive and attain uninterrupted prosperity. After Museveni’s regime the economic and security conditions at Kigezi have much improved. Even though Buhara was a restricted area during the Rwandan civil war in the early 1990s, the rural infrastructure of the area has been much improved after the pacification of Uganda.

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