

Renovation of the Social Ladder: The Reshuffle of Urban Elites in Kabale in the Early 1970s

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Introduction

The mere clustering of people and their houses does not in itself imply the growth of an urban center. Such clustering must be accompanied by a multiplication of socio-economic functions and the diversification of social composition in order to transform these people into an urban population. Moreover, one must, subsequently, explore how far a town can satisfy the needs of its residents and visitors. Secondly, one should investigate the ethnic composition, occupational, educational and religious background of the inhabitants both within and nearby the town. In pursuance of these themes, one can focus on the facilities of a town and on social and political performances such as judio-administrative, educational, financial, commercial, traffic, religious, athletic and recreational constructions. An investigator should specifically pay close attention to the exclusive use of one of these premises among a particular group of people in a town.

A short span of time does not allow such inquires on a large scale urban center. Instead, this paper proposes to investigate a small, local town such as Kabale, the capital of a district, which meets the requirements mentioned above, but which had not yet merged with clusters of small houses built and occupied by migrants or squatters from the countryside.

Kabale is an appropriate case to investigate the problem of urban development. The population was slightly over 10,000 in 1969. Less than one fifth of the people lived in the center of the town. The rest were scattered at a distance from the center. Kabale used to be the capital of the former Kigezi District for almost sixty years. The Kigezi District was eventually divided into two districts, the North and the South. In 1974 Kabale became the capital of the South Kigezi District. Despite the partition, Kabale retained importance in local trading and transportation as well as in medical treatment on account of the establishment there of urban facilities and their socio-economic functions. Included in Kabale were numerous wholesale and retail shops, bus depots, a national hospital, local administration offices and public services such as the District headquarters, the Magistrate courts, a police station, a soccer stadium, churches and schools. People clustered at Kabale for shopping or participation in public life. People got off from buses to transfer on other buses.

The town was consequently open to all the people living in the area including sur-

rounding nearby villages. This resulted in increasing interaction with these encircling local communities. Kabale, then, shared the features of developmental processes with other emerging local centers of urbanity which can often be seen in developing states. Inquiries on problems which resulted from development in Kabale will lead us to a better understanding of the process of urbanization in these areas.

In this article, I wish to focus mainly on the strata demarcating the town dwellers and those earning their livelihood within the town. Close attention is directed on the unusually swift reshuffle of those occupants in the upper parts of the strata: the Westerners and the Asians accompanying with the expulsion of the latter group by Idi Amin. I conducted fieldwork at Kabale for five months between 1967 and 1968, and again for seven months between 1974 and 1975. My research has been supplemented by short stays in the town: one month in 1984 and three weeks in 1991, respectively.

Kabale is located at 30°E and 1°S, close to the Uganda-Rwanda border. The land, at 2,000 meters above sea level, is mountainous. A narrowly stretched basin is covered with papyrus and rimmed with extensive peaks which surround the bottom land. The colonial government set up an administrative headquarters on a slope of these hills. The town had steadily developed along the edge where the slope meets with the basin.

The town had been the capital of a district since 1914. Even though the area of a district was repeatedly circumscribed by the central government, Kabale maintained its importance as a local center among other older major towns in Western Uganda, such as Fort Portal and Mbarara. A bus route connects Kabale to Mbarara, Masaka and Kampala. Kampala is the state capital, and is located about 700 kilometers away to the east. It takes about four hours by bus to reach Fort Portal to the north, and Mbarara eastwards. There is a smaller town, Kisoro, between Kabale and the Uganda-Zaire border. It takes around three hours to Kisoro because of a detouring, rough road.

The Chiga habitat was encircled by former tribal kingdoms such as Toro of the north, Ankore of the east and Rwanda to the south. Despite repeated invasions and intermittent occupations by these tribal powers, the Chiga were able to maintain their autonomy and decentralized system until the Western conquest.

The remoteness from any coast and inaccessible features of geography of the southern Kigezi meant that the territory remained for a long time beyond the reaches of Western colonial power. The territory used to be an intact corner located at the fringes of the respective colonies of Belgium, Britain and Germany, which concurred in the final demarcation of their borders in 1910. (Coote 1956: 108–109) The British government subsequently incorporated the whole territory into its Uganda Protectorate and established a headquarters for ruling the new district, named Kigezi in 1914. (Bisamumyu 1974: 201)

Intermittent rebellious movements meant that Kigezi, in particular the new town, Kabale, remained unsettled for nearly twenty years. (Brazier 1968: 7–13) The settlement was able to improve itself into an urban center early in the 1920s. Asians, particularly immigrants from India and Pakistan, began to operate shops at Kabale in 1921.

(Ngologoza 1969: 21)¹⁾ The Anglican Mission founded a hospital in the outskirts of the town in the same year. A Catholic and an Anglican church were also established in the suburbs of Kabale, to the south and to the west, the former in 1923 and the latter in 1927. Both churches established a school for local people. (Nicolet 1974: 233–234, John 1971: 40)

Uganda formed its borderline in a fan shape facing the northwest rim of Lake Victoria. The state, around 236,036 square kilometers, was administered by a various levels of the administrative divisions such as provinces, districts, counties, sub-counties and parishes. Kigezi used to be the counterpart of Ankore, both of which had made up the Southern Province, which was later divided into three districts in 1974. Kabale modified itself from being the capital of the former Kigezi District to that of the newly established South Kigezi District. The partition did not lessen either the importance or the functions of Kabale as the urban center not only of the South but of the North Kigezi District as well, for Kabale town had established facilities and provision of services as a major urban center. All inhabitants in these districts sought to visit Kabale in order to take advantage of the new urban benefits.

Kabale was also a major crossroads for local traffic. Highways ran through Kabale connecting the town with major urban centers in Uganda to the east and to the north. Trucks, buses and shared taxis provided services along the highways. Two bus companies were established along the other two routes that reach international borders. Long distance bus services used to depart in the evening with passengers for Fort Portal, Masaka or Kampala. Local buses in contrast ran during the day. A large crowd usually assembled at bus depots all the day.

Stratification and Change

Formation of a Multi-ethnic Society

Colonial rule resulted in the creation of a stratified, multi-ethnic society in Kabale. Westerners managed to hold positions of supremacy from the establishment of British control through Uganda's achievement of political independence in 1962. During the initial period, Gandan officials monopolized the posts of chief and occupied, together with the Asian traders, an intermediate rank in the social strata between the Westerners and local Africans. The Gandan chiefs were eventually replaced by Chiga officials in late 1920s. (Denoon 1974: 222–223, Ngologaza 1969: 70) The Asians had in the meantime multiplied their number and elevated their standard of living by means of their trading skills. As a result, three distinct ethnic strata emerged in Kabale, and the town became shaped in accordance with the stratification of the Westerners, the Asians and the Africans.

Kabale was composed of three discrete parts: the upper, the lower, and the surrounding suburbs. The upper part was located on the slope of a range of hills lying at the eastern rim of the basin, which stretched as long as 20 kilometers roughly from north to south. An eminence, itself being a part of the slope, was chosen as the site of administrative headquarters and included offices, courts, a hospital and a lodging pre-

mises. These buildings were encircled by residences of high ranked officers, being dispersed on a smooth lawn covering the eminence. A golf course and an attached club house, the Kabale Club, were also located in the upper part of the town. The residential and recreational facilities on top of the eminence had been used for the enjoyment of the Westerners.

The lower part was on the foot of the eminence. It developed along a highway reaching the Uganda-Zaire border to the west. A soccer stadium demarcated the northern and the southern quarters of the lower part. The Asians lived and ran business in the northern quarters, the location of a commercial bank, a bus terminal, garages for repairing vehicles and several dozens of wholesale and retail shops. Those residential and commercial buildings often adopted an oriental architecture, especially the Indian / Pakistani shops. Thus there was a clear contrast with the residential and administrative buildings on the top of the eminence. European architecture prevailed on the hill.

Almost a dozen Asian shops were in operation in the southern quarters, in which a police station was also located. Yet the majority of the residents of this area were Africans who sold their farm products at an open market along the side of a slaughter house. There were less than two dozen retail shops run by Africans, even though their premises were about a quarter as large as those run by the Asians. Small restaurants and bars were evenly allotted to the both quarters. There was a Catholic church in the northern quarter and a Protestant church in the southern quarter. A public primary school and a Hindu temple stood at a distance from the bus terminal. A mosque was on another site further north. A Muslim primary school was in contrast built in the southern quarters. The African families also lived in their shops. These buildings looked similar in their oriental features to the Asian shops, but were of smaller scale. Most African traders or workers, including government employees at the upper quarters, lived at the outskirts of Kabale and spent their daytime in the town. A large number of visitors normally passed through Kabale during the day. Much of the town's improvement was caused by transient urban visitors, mostly local Africans.

In 1959 the census disclosed an ethnic composition of the Kabale township (EASD 1960). It enumerated a total of 10,919 residents, noting that there were 10,186 Africans and 733 Non-Africans. It further divided the Africans into the Chiga (7,073), the Rwandese (mainly the Hutu, 2,539), the other Bantues (eight tribes, 369), the Nilotes (ten tribes, 69), the neighboring nationals (such as Kenyans, 133) and those unidentified (3). It did not refer to the nationalities of the Non-Africans.

The 1969 Census did not specify any Non-African residents in Kabale (USD 1971). It denoted solely the whole population of the Non-Africans living in the Kigezi District as follows: Westerners (209), Asians (682) and Arabs (147). Despite this lack of precise statistics, the non-African population of Kabale may well have remained unchanged through the 1960s until Amin came to power in 1971. There were about 140 Westerners and 600 Asians/Arabs in 1959.

The ethnic traits of the social strata lingered in my mind after my first visit to Ka-

bale in 1967, five years after Uganda's political independence. Africans had taken most of the pivotal posts in the government: such posts as District Commissioner or the various Directors of Departments in the district level. Yet an Asian took the Chief Magistrate post at Kabale and Westerners occupied senior posts at some governmental departments and schools of higher education. These were secondary schools at Kigezi. The Westerners were paid by their own national governments and were assured a standard of living as high as during the colonial days. They continued to live in Western style homes built on the eminence where a continual breeze kept away harmful insects such as flies, mosquitoes and black flies. Their homes were equipped with piped water and electric appliances. They could freely travel in the country with their own vehicles as far as Kampala or to wherever they wished.

A District Medical Officer was a middle-aged British man, who had extended his hospitality to accompany me on several occasions to special social events, which were held solely for the Western residents in and around Kabale. They showed Western movies at the club house twice a month. The Westerners organized an excursion every month to call at sites and scenes in the vicinity. They often held home parties to enjoy fellowship by dining and talking together. A costly resort hotel, the White Horse Inn, was one of the places where they entertained their guests. In these events, one could scarcely see any participation by either Asians or Africans.

Piped water and electricity were also available at the lower part of the town, but sanitary conditions were poor due to the swarming of harmful insects. The houses were built with cement blocks and roofed with iron sheets. Floors were made of cement. Ventilation and the sweep inside were done well. Asian and Arab traders enjoyed their life with their families there. An affluent monetary income enabled them to own vehicles and occasionally to dine at the costly resort hotel. They were able to enjoy leisure on a much higher scale than that of ordinary African families.

The Asians, including Indians or Pakistani, detached themselves from other ethnic groups. They did not marry with the Westerners or with the Africans. They did not merge themselves with the other ethnic peoples in private events such as family dining at the resort hotel or attending home parties. They rarely took advantage of local means of transportation, such as a bus or a shared taxi when they traveled far.

The Arabs, in contrast, were closer in contact with the Africans. They ran a few lodgings and restaurants in the town. Asian families and some well-off Africans such as local traders or school teachers spent their nights there and dropped in to eat local dishes. Arab residents earned slightly a lower income than the Asians, but they still maintained a higher standard of living in comparison with ordinary Africans. The Arabs sometimes married with African women.

The Asians, despite their casual dining at the resort hotel, did not mingle with the Westerners or the Africans in their private life. They rarely came the club house nearby the golf course. The Asians assembled at the Hindu temple almost every evening while the Arabs went to their mosque. There were a number of African Muslims in the mosque.

Most African residents recorded in the census lived neither in the upper or the lower parts of the town. They remained outside of these areas, mostly at the foot or on the slope of another hill range lying opposite to the center of the town. A substantial number of people also dwelled in the northern and the southern outskirts from the lower part of the town. Most of these people lived with their families and cultivated their own fields. They lived off their own agricultural products. At the same time they often gained income through wage labor or by selling their products or taking on temporary jobs in the town.

Life in these areas normally maintained their conventional ways of living including architecture, food and farm work. Mud-walled, thatched huts prevailed. Women and children fetched water from a stream or a well. They collected firewood from the bush, and ate sorghum bread as a staple food. Men and women worked hard to grow sorghum and beans, and kept chickens and livestock. People were, of course, in need of currency so that they might be able to cope with inevitable expenses such as school fees, taxes and the purchase of necessary commodities such as utensils and clothing.

Kabale was also a center of local entertainment. Occasional movies and athletic competitions such as soccer games attracted the suburban inhabitants into the town. They enjoyed drinking “soda” or eating inexpensive dishes at the small restaurants. These rural residents normally had the pleasure of drinking sorghum beer and soda at a local bar or shop in the local trading centers.

Ordinary Africans could not expect to have access to the resort hotel on the eminence. One was also required, in addition to the high prices of the menu, to put on clothes considered proper to dine with the wealthy people. At the Asian/Arab restaurants, casual visitors ordered mostly snacks or soft drinks so that they might save money. People, in contrast, spent a great deal at the local bars located off the town to buy sorghum beer and goat meat.

In summary, a clear distinction among the people in life styles in Kabale was seen in 1967 shortly after the political independence of Uganda. One could identify three categories of Kabale residents, those characterized by their ethnic background, occupation or income, and by the resultant cleavages in their standard of living. Social interactions rarely took place in their private as well as in their marital lives. The three categories of people lived in parallel but separate sections of this small, local town.²⁾

Expulsion of Non-Africans and Reshuffle of Elites

Idi Amin came to power in 1971 and began to forcibly expel Asian residents from Uganda. Westerners spontaneously, though reluctantly, withdrew from the country, owing to strained diplomatic relations between their country and Amin’s government. Asians moved out of Uganda in 1972, leaving all their business and housing premises without compensation. The government took over the properties and let them to Africans. The Arabs were not driven out. They remained and continued to conduct business. At the same time, this drastic change led to a radical upheaval of the social strata in major towns. During my visit to Kabale in late 1974, there were only two Western-

ers who continued to work, a British teacher at a secondary school and a Russian doctor at a government hospital. There were no Asians, as they had all been replaced by African local traders.³⁾

No scrutinization could be done of the actual process of removal of Asians from Kabale. It was clear that they were subject to hasty transactions and eventual takeover of their commercial activities, their shops, and their houses. These deserted assets were taken over by the government which set up the Departed Asians' Properties Custodian Board which leased the property to local Africans.

This radically changed mercantile undertakings in the town, especially as at least twenty-seven Asians firms were replaced. These firms dealt with general goods (9), clothes (6), vehicle parts (4), gasoline (3), hardware (2) and others (4). The new owners of these firms had been engaged in smaller businesses at Kabale (5), or at other nearby villages (14), or had been employed in the government offices, primary schools or in Asian shops (6).⁴⁾ In addition to these replaced firms, forty-one other business undertakings were operating in Kabale in late 1974; of these 14 were local branches of national enterprises with their headquarters in Kampala, and the rest were established irrespective of the withdrawal of the Asians.

Amin's reactionary diplomacy and military autocracy impeded Western trade with Uganda and brought an end to financial assistance. The resultant lack of foreign currency and advanced technology, along with mismanagement of the economy, led to serious shortages of essential daily goods such as sugar, oil, wheat flour, clothing, soap, paper and other items. In such circumstances of rising inflation, petty traders made profits by selling these scarce items at high prices. They eventually amassed wealth which swiftly elevated them up the social ladder. One could easily notice the change by examining the membership list of the members of the Kabale Club. In 1974, out of eighty members, shop keepers (34) surpassed the number of high ranking government officers (25). The Board of Trustees screened applicants for the membership very strictly. Members were recruited mostly from high ranking civil servants such as magistrates, principals of national secondary schools, commissioners and officers of the District government, a branch manager of the national bank and medical doctors of a national hospital. Lawyers were also affiliated with the club. Members had benefits such as use of club facilities including its golf course. The club served beverages and snacks. The annual fee and costs for entertaining at the club house were not great. Nonetheless, one had to put on clothes appropriate to the place and to the attendants of high prestige.

Lower ranking government officials could scarcely bear such casual expenses owing to their meager wage. In Uganda, any post or salary was strictly commensurate to one's educational or professional qualifications. One could hardly be promoted to an upper rank without higher qualification, even though one had served for many years in the public or private sector. A curtailed government budget for higher education or vocational training severely circumscribed opportunities for anyone desiring a favorable post and salary.

A pass on an Advanced Level Qualification Exam or a diploma received from a senior college was the prerequisite for appointment to any high ranking office. Appointed officers were paid a minimum Shs. 2,000/= per month. Completion of an Ordinary Level Qualification Exam or a Certificate from a junior college sufficed for employment to lower ranking office. These officers earned monthly wages between Shs. 500/= and Shs. 800/=. The salary scale adopted both by the public and private sectors was not revised for at least ten years due to Uganda's economic affairs. During the same time, prices of the commodities of daily consumption increased twofold.

Lower ranking officials, many of whom were recruited locally, often found ways to mitigate the worsening economic conditions. Many of them were also extensively engaged in farm work, which allowed them to supplement their income derived from their official duties. Moreover, their kin or wives grew food which allowed these officials to use part of their wages for casual entertainment expenses in town. This set them above other ordinary farmers because they had more disposable income. A farmer's incidental, part-time employment or labor migration could scarcely give him an extra cash income equal to that of the wages earned by a permanent employee. We should consequently demarcate Africans on the basis of their monetary income into two categories: local elites and ordinary farmers. These local elites differed markedly from the upper or urban elites.⁵⁾ The distinction between these categories derived not only from the amount of their income, but by their modes of thinking and behavior. As mentioned earlier, elites included the new and old influential political or religious authorities and those with certain personal abilities to sway the thinking and conduct of the majority.⁶⁾

Members of elite society living in and around Kabale drew their prestige not from conventional but from Western values. To empower an individual to become a member of the elite, years of schooling and a pass on high level of a qualification exams were more important than descent from a certain clan, to a genealogy of a prominent elder, or proficiency in controlling supernatural beings.

Achievement of formal education and qualifications were the shortest way to secure a good and stable monetary income. This bestowed on the individual Western ways of living as well as access to costly but convenient industrial commodities. High ranking officers normally sent their children either to senior colleges or to the university. Their school and boarding fees were highly priced. Despite these fees, high ranking officers could still afford to entertain themselves with beverages at the Club House and occasionally dine at the resort hotel with their families. Common civil servants, on the other hand, could not visit such places because of the high costs involved. A set lunch there usually equaled the equivalent of several days of wages of a low ranking officer. They preferred to enjoy local dishes at eating houses down the hill. In consequence three discrete categories were distinguished around Kabale in late 1974: urban elites, local elites and ordinary farmers.

Qualifications of Elites

Education and Qualifying Examinations

As in Japan before World War II, Uganda employed a plural pattern of schooling: seven years of primary, four years of junior secondary, two years of senior secondary and three years of university education. The secondary education was supplemented in Uganda with a number of junior and senior colleges which provided vocational training as well as training for teachers in the primary and the secondary level. In the mid-1970s, only a few, namely one thousand and several hundred youths, completed all the sixteen years education, thus completing their studies for an undergraduate degree.

These students were screened for admission with a series of three tough academic examinations at different levels: the Primary, the Ordinary and the Advanced Level of Examination. One had to sit for the first exam to collect P-Seven at the seventh year of primary education. An applicant would study three subjects such as English, mathematics and general knowledge, each of which was marked at one hundred points.

Scores with 70% or above of all 300 points would normally allow an applicant to advance to secondary schools, teachers' training colleges or a junior vocational college. A government secondary school or a teachers' training college required more than 220 and 230 points, respectively. Having studied three years at a teachers' training college, one would be qualified as a primary school teacher.

All the students of the fourth year at a junior secondary school sat for the O Level Exam. This used to be called a Cambridge Certificate of Education, but was later renamed the East African Education Certificate. In 1974, the exam included required and optional subjects. One was required to choose from humanities subjects such as English grammar, geography and history. Some natural sciences were also included as compulsory subjects such as physics, chemistry, biology and mathematics. One also chose two out of four subjects such as English literature, Bible study, home economics and mathematics. Correct answers for 30% of questions from each of eight subjects passed an applicant sitting for the examination. The government sent successful applicants either to a senior secondary school, a senior vocational college or admitted them to the fourth year of a teachers training college in accordance with the individual's accumulated points on the exam.

One was ordered to leave a school when all the seats were taken by new students who had passed with higher marks. However, one could be recruited for stable employment with an O Level Certificate. This occurred in the 1970s.

Those enrolled in senior secondary level schools took an Advanced Level Examination during their second year of school. An applicant selected general knowledge and three subjects in the humanities and the natural sciences as listed above. The requirement was to get correct answers as high as 75% of 100 points given to each subject.

The most successful applicants enrolled either in national universities such as Mak-

erere, Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam, or government colleges of advanced technology or commerce. These students pursued a three year course of study at these high level educational institutions and completed either an undergraduate degree or a diploma in a special field. Makerere University in 1974 accepted only those who passed at least three out of four selected subjects on the Exam.

Actually a limited number of students could strive to complete in the various strata of formal education. In 1974, for example, almost 890,000 pupils were enrolled in primary schools in Uganda (*The Voice of Uganda*, August 1, 1974). The earlier Census in 1969 recorded that the number of children between 6 and 13 years old was 2.5 million. These two figures meant that one out of three (less than 28%) of the youth were enrolled in primary schools. More than a half of these pupils withdrew from primary school before completing their last year. Many left school during their fourth or fifth year. The Buhara Primary School, for example, started with two first year classes of 50 pupils each every year. These two classes eventually decreased to a single class. The school normally sent about 12% of its graduates to secondary schools.

The Minister of Education (*The Voice of Uganda*, op.cit.) recorded the number of secondary schools in 1974: 80 government-run secondary schools and 93 vocational colleges. The latter also included 43 technology, 32 commerce and 18 agriculture colleges. Of the 80 secondary schools, 28 offered students a five or six year academic program. Besides that, a few national colleges conferred high level diplomas in vocational training.⁷⁾ A rough estimate would be that 18,000 out of 150,000 primary school graduates pursued a secondary level education at either a junior secondary school or a vocational college, thus making the outcome half and half. In the secondary school, students could take the O Level Exams in their fourth year. The high cost of tuition and boarding had compelled a number of students to drop out from secondary school earlier.

The number of applicants for a higher level qualification exam substantially dwindled to only 2,000 students. About half of these applicants would be admitted into Makerere University. In 1974, the university enrolled 1,235 students: 945 Ugandans and 290 Non-Ugandan nationals. One could be exempted of all cost of tuition, boarding and even miscellaneous expenses, if the one had enrolled a senior course of a secondary school, or of an academic institution equivalent to that of the university. Anyone competent to pursue education of this high level was assured of eligibility to associate with members of the urban elite.

In brief, eight students out of one hundred primary school graduates advanced to secondary schools or vocational colleges. Two out of eight students who enrolled in a secondary school could take the A Level Exam, which passed only half of its applicants to pursue studies at East African universities. One could hardly obtain special permission from a principal of a secondary school to sit again for either the O Level or the A Level Exam. A Mature Scheme at Makerere was of tremendous hardship.

Ranking, Wages and Inter-ethnicity

The Ministry of Education in 1965 issued guidelines for the recruitment of civil servants. The booklet depicted the duties, qualifications and remunerations for various offices of the government. Top Senior Administrators required a bachelor's degree and were rewarded with a salary of Shs. 30,000/= ~ Shs. 56,000/= per year. They were either a Permanent Secretary, a Provincial or a District Commissioner. A Chief Magistrate or a Judge in a High Court was also in this category. They were followed by high-ranking officers, who passed the A Level Exam and earned a diploma from an advanced level school. These senior officers were paid annually a salary between Shs. 14,000/= ~ Shs. 30,000/=. This second group included Magistrates (the Second Grade), District Agricultural, Medical, and Probation Officers.

The third group included a majority of civil servants who held the status of passing the O Level Exam or of an equivalent qualification at their vocational institution. They earned a salary between Shs. 4,140/= ~ Shs. 13,140/= per year.

The qualification and remuneration scale accorded with inquiries I made in 1974 of 21 employees in Kabale. The Commissioner and the Assistant District Commissioner of South Kigezi District and the Chief Magistrate were holders of the bachelor's degree from Makerere. Those classified as the second class employees including an Agricultural, a Medical and a Probation Officer and a Manager of a government bank at Kabale all of whom had passed the A Level Exam and received a diploma in their profession. These high ranking officers earned between Shs. 20,000/= and Shs. 30,000/= annually. The sole exception was a newly appointed Third Grade Magistrate who earned around Shs. 10,000/= for the first year.⁸⁾

Four other people were also included in the second cluster: two Principals of primary schools, a Health Assistant to the Town Council and the Gombolola Chief of Buhara. One of the Principals and the Health Assistant had passed the O Level Exams. They earned between Shs. 8,000/= and Shs. 9,000/= annually. They could hardly expect any raise in their wages over Shs. 10,000/=: which should be the maximum of their salary scales. There was another primary school teacher who earned Shs. 6,000/= per year. He could also collect as much as the wages indicated above after having been promoted to the Principal status.

Seven other officials were less qualified and earned less income. They were engaged in clerical work either at the Magistrate courts, the District or the Gombolola headquarters. Each of these clerks had completed primary school courses and some of them had dropped out from secondary level education during their first or second year. Most of them were not eligible to sit for the O Level Exam. They had no hope of being promoted to a higher ranking employment status within the government job hierarchy.

Inter-ethnicity was one of the manifest features of members of the Ugandan elite. In Kabale, members of the elite included three Nilotic and three Bantu tribes. The Chiga people were in the majority, and included three Magistrates. Seven members of the elite participated in social activities and functions of the prestigious association,

the Kabale Club.

The ethnic composition of the twenty-five members of the Kabale Club, all of whom were high-ranking officers, can be summed up as follows: Chiga 15, Rwanda 2, Toro 2, Ganda 1, Nyoro 1, Acholi 1, Arua 1, and 2 unknown. Their multi-ethnic background compelled these officers to communicate with one the other through a common tongue, i.e. English. Bantu speakers could not comprehend any speech in Nilotic languages, and vice versa. Even a Bantu speaker had difficulties in following different dialects of the Bantu language, some of which were individually discrete tongues such as Ruchiga, Luganda and Kyinyarwanda.

Social communication was accomplished not only by means of a common medium of verbal interactions, but by a shared knowledge and interest in topics covering a wide range of events in space and time. The parties had to observe specific manners on both sides. These requirements, in consequence, were similar to those necessary for international understanding and cooperation. The top elites made use of their skills in English, topics and manners which could not be circumscribed to a mono-linguistic group.

The majority of club members, who were mostly local shop owners, were lacking in ability of social communication of this sort. Most of them were not fluent in English due to low levels of education. Their knowledge and interests were not to the level of the high-ranking officers. The abrupt expulsion of the Asians and a scarcity in essential commodities had allowed local shop owners to prosper and join the top cluster of the town elite. Meanwhile, as the government attempted to deal with the economic chaos, some shop keepers were forced to relinquish their membership in the highest category, owing to their inability to communicate in English, their low level of education and their poor knowledge of inter-cultural affairs. High-ranking officers rarely had close contact, even a chat, with the petty merchants at the club house. Officers often criticized these traders on account of their ignorance and indifference to national and international political, cultural, and economic affairs.

One might, then, foresee a possible exclusion by some members of the club. One could maintain social status by improving English ability and worldly knowledge. This would positively expand opportunities for social interaction with fellow members, especially among the high-ranking officers who were affiliated with the club. High-ranking officers became well attuned to issues of inter-ethnicity as they were frequently transferred to different districts with distinct ethnic groups. In such cases, the officers modified their thinking and behavior in accordance with their official duties.⁹⁾

Effects of the Reshuffle

Urban Life and Migrant Labor

During the period before political independence, the urban life enjoyed by Westerners and Asians was seen as something unrealistic to the rural inhabitants nearby Kabale. The level of income and expenditure of urban residents differed greatly from

the rural. The colonial government had prevented local Africans from climbing in the social and economic ladder. In the end, however, the barriers were removed and governmental offices were taken away from the foreigners.

The expulsion of Asians caused local inhabitants to engage in business in the town. Some prosperous Africans exalted themselves to become members of the urban elite. Despite their swift rise in the town, these successful business operators were often embedded in the rural area during the period of transition. Their kin and relatives in general remained behind in the countryside and continued to engage in farm work. Some of them thought to move and settle down in town and their close contact with nearby farmers was a major stimulus to village society.

A member of the elite and his family often flaunted to their neighbors an affluent lifestyle, which was solely available through purchases with hard currency. Rural inhabitants were stirred with a desire for these items. Ordinary farmers felt compelled to earn the necessary cash to obtain the commodities. Owing to a scarcity of either waged work or cash crops, the farmers had to migrate to work at a distance. They had at least to raise extra money for essential expenses such as for school fees, clothes, government taxes, court fees, fines and bridewealth (Omori 1969a: 65–66).

Farmers frequently were engaged in labor migration. Men at or nearby the Buhara Trading Centre established a clear pattern of undertaking labor migration. Fifty-nine out of eighty household heads, all of whom were men, had migrated for work as of March, 1975. The migrating workers included seventeen youths (aged 18–29), thirty-one middle aged (30–49) and ten senior men (aged over 50). Most of the men had traveled for work several times: seventeen men (1 time), twenty-six farmers (2–4 times), fifteen inhabitants (5–7 times) and remaining men more than 8 times. Age did not correspond with the frequency of migrating for work. Those who were over 40 years old had engaged in labor migration over five times.

All of the fifty-nine men owned farmlands. Besides that, each was employed in permanent or temporary waged work nearby their compound at Buhara. They were engaged in work such as farm labor, repairing public roads, selling used clothes, brewing sorghum beer, carpentry or dress-making.¹⁰⁾

Three men out of the fifty-nine household heads had not as yet worked outside of the village. The rest had earlier migrated for work: forty men between 1970 and 1975, twenty-three men in the 1960s, nineteen men in the 1950s and three men earlier than 1950. The employment sites were located mostly in rural areas: only five cases were in Kampala or in Jinja, the two major towns in Uganda¹¹⁾; twenty-nine cases were in various parts of Eastern Uganda such as the Busoga, the East Buganda and the Masaka Districts; seventeen cases in the Toro District; three cases in the other three districts; and four cases within the Kigezi District (except for Kabale).

The farmers could perform unskilled, manual labor during their migration: porterage or washing clothes (Jinja and Kampala), plucking tea, coffee, or cotton (Eastern Uganda and Toro), cultivating farmlands, or mining (Toro). They pursued their labor over a considerable period of time. At the latest migration, these men had continued to

work: less than a year (23 men), over one year but less than three years (17 men), over three years but less than six years (12 men).

These migrant workers could scarcely earn more than a meager wage. A plucker earned in accordance with what he had actually accumulated during the picking which was a little more than Sh. 1/= per 4 kilograms of coffee beans or tea leaves. Washing clothes and linens for a tourist hotel in Kampala rewarded one with Shs. 7/= per day. Spraying insecticide on coffee trees nearby Buhara was paid Shs. 5/80 a day. Yet one had to walk more than 10 kilometers a day, bearing a heavy container on one's back. Besides the local government's budget was limited and this circumscribed the total work days for sprayers. On the other hand, a miner at Kilembe Copper Mine in the Toro District received a higher wage: Shs. 10/60 a day. He was also given room and board at subsidized rates. The mining work was extremely tough: men had to work deep in mines at three different shifts over a 24 hour period. A miner was allowed to return home only once a year during Christmas time. One's age, health and physical strength at the best condition limited the number of people who could bear the hard work in the copper mines.

Such circumstances involving hard labor and low income could scarcely allow a migrant laborer to earn as much money as that earned by permanent wage employees such as civil servants or school teachers. It was unimaginable that an ordinary farmer would be able to save money to build his assets to elevate himself into the upper social stratum.

The small profit derived from migrant laboring did not hamper Buhara inhabitants to pursue their dream traveling further afield in search of good work and wages, even in those days after 1972 when economic trends in Uganda were deteriorating. Amin's repugnance toward the Western Powers and his leaning to the Soviet Union quickly threw the national economy into a crisis. The halt in exports of major cash crops such as tea, coffee and cotton harmed the economy. Western states eventually withdrew not only their economic and technological experts but investment capital as well. The denial of Western assistance led to a swift downfall in the agricultural as well as in the industrial sectors. The downfall included closures of large plantations and huge firms and subsequent dismissal of employees on a large number. For instance, the Kilembe Mine was severely affected by the economic troubles. Earlier in 1969 it had about 6,500 workers and produced roughly 170,000 tons of unrefined copper a year. Five years after, in contrast, only 1,500 miners were engaged in digging ore to produce unrefined copper no more than one quarter of the earlier figure. Declining prices of copper in the international market had made matters worse. Depreciated facilities and equipment, the resignations of Western experts in the field of management and a lack of new technology led the mine near to collapse.

The nationwide economic disarray actually worked to the advantage of people in Buhara, where the community did not yet depend on raising cash crops. Besides, a general scarcity of industrial commodities nationwide gave birth to smuggling operations in essential items from Rwanda. Some of the Buhara inhabitants were actively

bartering for items such as coffee, sugar, detergent, oil or clothes. The Uganda government built military check points at the borders at Katuna and other key stations along the highways. The stations could scarcely bring a halt to smuggling on the narrow paths located in nearly every part of the border.

At least four household heads out of fifty-nine in 1975 were engaged in selling used clothes. These were apparently smuggled in from Rwanda. Profits from this trade enriched not only their families but nearby inhabitants, including kin and relatives. This multiplied monetary income served to stimulate local trading, consumption of items for daily use, beer brewing and even employment of laborers for farming or house building.

The downfall of the national economy and a flourishing local trade did not stop Buhara inhabitants from labor migration. For the four years since 1970, fourteen out of the fifty-nine household heads engaged in labor migration. These included three young men (aged below 19), ten men (aged between 20 and 29) and one man over 30 years old. We may assume these young men were motivated not only for monetary income, but also by a craving for broad knowledge and experience which was believed achievable only at a distance. Civil servants, school teachers and returnees from labor migration provided continual incentives to local youths by their unconventional life styles which appeared to be derived from Western ways.

Moreover, occasional visits to the local urban center at Kabale also invigorated the longing of young people for the novelty of a urban lifestyle. The reshuffle and recruitment of members of the elite from former local traders may have also encouraged some local elites to become more ambitious to improve their social statuses by creating career opportunities and amassing capital for new business success.¹²⁾ Tragically the cleavage between their desire and scarce opportunities for success often led to extensive crimes committed by both rural and urban inhabitants.

Urban Life and Crime

Cleavages between urban elites and rural farmers expanded in the course of the reshuffle. Local inhabitants naturally became jealous of the affluent wages or profits gained by members of the elite and of their free spending habits. Ways of increasing monetary income was beyond the reach of ordinary farmers, due to their poor qualification and inadequate schooling, and especially to their lack of English speaking abilities. Even though a very few were able to get a post as a low-ranking civil servant, it was lucky if any of these ordinary people could find employment as a watchman or as a servant in town, either in the private or public sector.

Despite scarce opportunities to earn a livelihood from this sort of permanent employment, the number of transient residents steadily increased in Kabale. They often stayed in houses belonging to relatives in town or in the nearby suburbs. They sometimes were able to take up manual labor such as carrying goods or removing impediments. Some of them had begun to cluster and form a shanty town (temporary residential area) at the outskirts of the town. The town council endeavored to pursue a

neatly-organized plan of town development which would allow the new settlers to build small but well maintained zinc-roofed, mud-walled houses. The council was concerned that these transient residents not litter or disfigure their quarters or cause similar problems in the township. Local bars had north of Kabale multiplied gradually within and at a distance of the new residential section. Bars and the drinking of alcohol quickly caused an increase in disturbances and had a negative impact in areas of security and hygiene.

In an earlier study, I examined the nature of crimes and punishments by Magistrate courts in Kabale (Omori 1976). The findings revealed a certain correspondence between crimes and penalties and trends in urban change. The courts inflicted harsh punishments on specific conduct such as violence and disobedience to the government orders. Despite variation in the personal backgrounds of the individual culprits and their crimes, one may discern a trend caused by progress in urban development. A brief comparison of the crimes and penalties imposed by courts at Kabale and Buhara depict these features more clearly.

Crimes involving violence and assault were common not only at Kabale but also at Buhara. This makes it difficult to see such crimes resulting from increased urbanization. One might rather explain the prevalence of violence as due to the Chiga custom of self help in dispute solution. Men and women used to retaliate immediately on their opponents, having been injured physically or even mentally (Omori 1977b). Rural inhabitants, both male and female, were hardly patient or prudent enough to complain about their problem to the nearby Magistrate court. The government, however, banned conventional "self help" as a way of dealing with disputes.

Drunkards and vagabonds were taken to the courts more frequently at Kabale. The expansion of an urban population normally occurred due to an influx of temporary settlers and accompanied by an increase in the number of local bars. Such criminal conduct may be said to be more prevalent in urban areas. Members of the urban elite or the Asians at Kabale were rarely involved in any scuffling with the Africans, as they had avoided close contact in their private life. Quarrels and brawls often ended in scuffles. Those engaged in such affairs were charged as a rogue and vagabond, for idle and disorderly conduct, or as drunk and incapable. Any transient resident, if convicted, would be ousted from the town back to his place of origin.

Theft was also characteristic as to town or village. Not only by the number of thefts but by the type of stolen property: farm products at Buhara and industrial goods as well as money at Kabale. The judges inflicted harsh punishments on thieves who took money or commercial items.

Accusations of illegal trading was also common in Kabale, where people often engaged in business without legal license such as a permit for selling liquor or cooked foods. In contrast, there were only two charges at Buhara in connection with the transferring of cattle without the required veterinary checks. Asian traders used to file claims for credit reimbursement at the Magistrate courts in Kabale, but they were rarely entangled in cases of violence at the courts. They may have been sensitive to

Table 1 Criminal Lawsuits (Kabale)

| Year Crimes | 1965 | 1966 | 1967 | 1968 | 1969 | 1970 | Total |
|----------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| I-a | 88 | 44 | 150 | 233 | 227 | 204 | 946 |
| I-c | 4 | 12 | 58 | 70 | 38 | 39 | 221 |
| II-a | 0 | 0 | 38 | 50 | 33 | 35 | 156 |
| III-a | 22 | 19 | 55 | 55 | 35 | 23 | 209 |
| IV-a | 6 | 7 | 22 | 57 | 28 | 36 | 156 |
| V-c | 17 | 29 | 32 | 51 | 57 | 44 | 230 |
| Total | 137 | 111 | 355 | 516 | 418 | 381 | 1918 |

Table 2 Criminal Lawsuits (Buhara)

| Year Crimes | 1965 | 1966 | 1967 | 1968 | 1969 | 1970 | Total |
|----------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| I-a | 57 | 47 | 34 | 26 | 31 | 33 | 228 |
| I-c | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 12 |
| II-a | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| III-a | 6 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 19 |
| IV-a | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| V-c | 0 | 6 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 6 | 22 |
| Total | 64 | 63 | 40 | 35 | 34 | 47 | 283 |

Note:

Offences against the safety of a person consisted in: common assaults or assaults causing actual bodily harm (I-a); threatening violence (I-c).

Offences against public health and welfare involved being a rogue and vagabond, idle and disorderly, drunk and incapable (II-a).

Offences against the right of property were theft, stealing from a person, burglary, possession of stolen articles (III-a).

Offences against normal trading comprised trading food, liquor, milk etc. without license (IV-a).

Offences against the Government authority were disobedience of lawful order or contempt of court (V-c).

the largely submerged repugnance of local Africans towards them and heedfully eschewed direct encounters with the Africans.

The two figures (Tables 1 & 2) demonstrate a comparison between lawsuits filed at Buhara and those in Kabale between 1965 and 1970. In Buhara, one can discern almost no change in the lawsuits between 1965 and 1971. They differed, however, markedly in the courts of Kabale, especially in categories (I), (II), and (III). The number of prosecutions had sharply multiplied during the period in areas involving violence, negligence of health or hygienic regulations and involvement in illegal trading, assaulting, being rogue and vagabond, idle and disorderly, drunk and incapable, selling commodities without license, illicitly brewing or consuming distilled liquor, or

smuggling controlled items such as game trophies. The actual number of the suits in individual years denotes continual increase in these illegal activities. (Tables 1 & 2) Such crimes, moreover, correspond to trends in the urban development of Kabale such as increases in the population of transient residents, increases in commercial activity, expansion of consumption of distilled liquor *enguli*, and deterioration of health or hygienic conditions in the town. New developments in the urban areas, specifically the diversification of social strata and cleavages in living standards, often resulted in an increasing number of crimes involving violence, theft and the other disorderly conduct. Lawsuits are a good way to show some of the negative consequences of urban development in a local town.

Conclusion

Kabale is a small town located far from the state capital, Kampala. Its smallness and detachment gave the town some features which were commonly shared by other local towns in developing countries. Kabale was founded for the sake of British colonial rule. It had subsequently faced radical changes as Uganda achieved political independence and carried out reforms thereafter. The rapid shift of political power from the Westerners to the indigenous people was a major shock to the existing social framework of society. Even though such changes are common in the process of decolonization, an even more abrupt reshuffle was the cause of major structural changes in Kabale after the onset of Amin's dictatorial regime in 1972.

The swift removal of the Asians from Uganda eventually led to economic problems which continued for some decades. A series of rash policies tried to radically reconstruct Ugandan local society. A movement occurred in a sort of vacuum situation among the upper reaches of the social strata. These extraordinary circumstances caused some urban inhabitants to use their intelligent and/or material resources to seek status as members of a new elite in an urban milieu.

Two distinct categories formed the new status of elites: an upper and a lower. The elimination of racial impediments caused indigenous people to seek upward mobility by pursuing a higher standard of living which could be achieved through schooling and professional training.

One would naturally strive to raise to a level immediately above one. Nonetheless, one could scarcely hope to pass over the divide between the upper and lower elite for lack of education and other qualification requirements. Eligibility to the lower elite was not far from the reach of a rural inhabitant. Rural youths, in particular, were readily impressed and motivated to join the local elite which included officials, chiefs, primary school teachers and petty shop keepers and retained close links to relatives or neighbors of ordinary farmers. Western modes of living and new values increasingly infiltrated rural inhabitants under the influence of these local elites living in the villages.

Some members of the local elite and their families were able to attain an affluent cash income, but lacking proper qualifications or permanent employment in the vicin-

ity, the majority of rural inhabitants had to migrate for labor at a distance. Their work and life experiences nonetheless also served to expedite innovations in a detached rural society.

Notes

- 1) Morris (1968: 18) referred to the earliest Asian settlement in Uganda in 1921 when they amounted to 5,130.
- 2) Caste hierarchy was not effectively formed or maintained among the Hindu in Uganda. (Morris 1968: 60–61) Hindu people were consistently too few in comparison with indigenous Africans to undertake a variety of occupations, for which they employed Africans to work.
 These overseas Hindu had insistently retained their caste identities so that they might have contacts with their fellow caste members back home.
- 3) After independence, the Uganda government appointed Africans to high-ranking offices as early as in 1964. (Southall 1966: 350)
- 4) There were 16,980 licensed merchants in Uganda in 1952. It included 11,634 Africans and 4,809 Asians. The Ministry of Commerce postulated that individual Asians ran business three times as large scale as those shops run by Africans. (Morris 1968: 134)
- 5) Lloyd (1966: 13) propounded demarcating subelites from city elites. The subelites embodied urban residents such as clerks, primary school teachers and merchants. The majority of subelites had completed the courses at primary schools or were enrolled before withdrawing from secondary school courses. Some of them might have endeavored to complete a higher school certificate or to attempt to gain political access to the upper category: city elites. Any failure in these attempts might assertedly lead them to be dissatisfied and antagonistic against those in current power.
 Plotnicov (1970: 275) partook a view of the same. He made a distinction between the upper and the lower elites in a local town, Jos in Nigeria. Its population was around 60,000 in 1962. He listed up upper elites from those such as the government officers, principals of schools, and managers of giant firms in addition to the well-off people including lawyers, contractors, hotel runners and brokers. The upper elites numbered around 1 percent of the whole of the Jos residents. Lower elites on the other comprised the majority of wage earners, skilled laborers, school teachers, pastors and local politicians.
- 6) Southall (1966: 345–347) felt it difficult to be involved deeply in any discussion about defining the term “elites.” Elites implied to him not any grouping but a social category. He focused his attention on diversified networks of their roles. He subsequently called for a comprehensive survey not only of the core elites, but of local subordinating and sectional elites.
- 7) There were 73 public secondary schools in Uganda in 1970. Around 40,000 students were enrolled in these schools, which admitted 14,000 youth annually. Private secondary schools, in contrast, numbered as many as 300, but were clustered nearby the state capital, Kampala. These private secondary schools largely depended on financial assistances given by private firms. They charged high amount of school fees. Pupils in general were yet suffered from deteriorated facilities, equipments, or low standard of education in these private secondary schools. (Gould 1975: 251–253)
- 8) Plotnicov (1970: 288–291) denoted influences by modern elites upon local politics. Upper elites also appeared to play vital roles in local administration at Kabale, where the District Council had been kept inactive in 1975. Individual elites were affiliated in a variety of administrative committees, assisting the government. One of the Magistrates manifested his full occupancy in such committees as many as twenty in addition to his duty at the court.
- 9) Modern elites at Jos had reinforced their inter-ethnic bonds in active interactions between friends and between colleagues at working places, making use of social clubs. (Plotnicov 1970: 281) They endeavored respectively to improve links connecting elites in different towns including these in the state capital, taking full advantage of existing ties such as in tribal backgrounds, occupations, affiliation in a variety of associations or earlier enrollment in specific schools. They

also ardently pursued an access to the policy making processes of the government. They consequently attempted to establish closer relation with high ranking officers and influential politicians.

- 10) Mushanga (1975: 163) remarked predominant contribution by Chiga women to their men's labor migration, putting an emphasis on women's dominant role in farm works and on their self-reliance in supplying staple food.
- 11) The Chiga laborers at Kampala had been suffered from hard life at humble houses at the outskirts of the city. They were ranked lowest both economically and socially in the urban strata. The Chiga migrants were willing to return homeland soon after their accomplishment of the initial purpose: raising a sum of saved money. (Southall 1966: 357) Some Buhara inhabitants might have shunned such urban circumstances and prefer to work in countryside.
- 12) Lloyd (1966: 53) also took heed to the route through which those non-elite/masses would take over the value judgement of the upper elites. He referred to its transmission by elite's kin and universal participation by those of the same ethnic origin to ethnic associations which were prevalent in the city.

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