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## A STUDY

COOPERATION IN HAUSA SOCIETY <sup>1/</sup>

by

M.G. SMITH.

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In this paper I wish to consider the prospects for the development of co-operative associations among the Hausa. I shall therefore begin by considering the forms and development of cooperative associations fostered by Government in this region, and shall review the more important forms of cooperation indigenous to Hausa society, after discussing the nature of cooperative relations briefly. I shall conclude my description of the Hausa context with a short summary of its basic economic conditions, and shall then seek to determine the Hausa capacity for cooperative enterprise in the light of the data presented.

"COOPERATION IN THE COLONIES" <sup>2/</sup>

In 1945, the Fabian Colonial Bureau published a report by one of its Special Committees on Cooperation in the Colonies. This report set out to define the principles and forms of cooperation appropriate to colonial areas, summarises the development of cooperative enterprises in the British colonial territories, and concludes with a discussion of the conditions and prospects of cooperation, to which a list of recommendations is attached. Following on this volume and the accession of the Labour Party to power in the General Election of 1945, there has been a marked revival of the interest shown by colonial administrations in the development of cooperative enterprises, and to a considerable degree this renewed emphasis has tended to flow along the "lines of progress" marked out in the Fabian report. I shall therefore treat this report as a document which illustrates certain decisive features of the thinking behind recent colonial policies in regard to cooperation, and shall quote it to that end. While the degree and nature of its influence on colonial policy in this field must remain indeterminate

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<sup>1/</sup> Fieldwork among the Hausa referred to in this paper was financed by a grant from the Colonial Social Science Research Council, for which I am grateful, and lasted from May 1949-December 1950.

<sup>2/</sup> Cooperation in the Colonies: A report from a Special Committee of the Fabian Colonial Bureau; Preface by Maurice Strickland. London, 1945. Allen & Unwin.

to the non-administrator, there can be little doubt that it represented the policy of an important element in the party which formed the British Government from 1945-51.

*concept of self help*

The volume opens with a critical observation. "The continuing poverty of the common people throughout the British Colonial Empire is at once a problem and a challenge" (op. cit., p. 17). In taking up the challenge it raises a big question, and proposes cooperation as the answer. "How can essential improvements be brought within the capacity of colonial peoples? The cooperative organization offers the most acceptable means" (op. cit., p. 26). In considering other means of improving colonial conditions, it is noted that "There is no future for a world organized by the wealthier industrial countries on the basis of relief or charity for their poorer agricultural neighbours. The colonial peoples will themselves wish to play an increasing role in the conduct of their own affairs and in the banishment of poverty from their own lives. To this end the development of the cooperative movements is of fundamental importance". (ibid., p. 22).

The writers then list four misconceptions which are held to have impeded the development of cooperative enterprises in the colonies. (1) "The misconception that cooperative effort is entirely new to the minds of colonials". (2) "The belief that the cooperative methods and technology of highly prosperous agricultural countries, such as Denmark, are unsuited to colonial conditions". (3) "Another misconception is that certain colonial peoples are incapable of cooperating owing to innate defects of character, or because they are too backward and primitive to imbibe 'cooperation'." (4) "The attitude adopted by many colonial administrators that 'Cooperation' is some form of charitable or benevolent activity for the uplift of poor colonial peoples" (ibid., pp. 26-28). These misconceptions are duly exposed, and the problem of defining 'cooperative enterprise in the colonial sphere' (ibid., p. 31) is taken up after a summary of the various types of cooperative organization current in colonial territories at the time.

The following simple definition is submitted :

*def. essentially a multi-purpose one*

"A cooperative society is a corporate body which acquires legal status by registration under the Cooperative Societies Ordinance or equivalent statute, and which is formed voluntarily by groups of producers and/or consumers for the carrying on of any activity aiming at their mutual welfare on the basis of democratic responsibility" (op. cit., pp. 31-32). "Voluntary associations whose activities aim at mutual welfare in the shape of dividends on invested capital" are specifically excluded from this field (ibid., p. 32).

In a classification of cooperative societies by function, the following twelve types of cooperative enterprise are listed as the most important in colonial conditions: credit and thrift societies; marketing and producing societies; agricultural societies; craftsmen's societies; agricultural purchasing societies; agricultural settlements; consumers' societies; irrigation societies; health, sanitation, housing, transport and general purpose societies; wage-earners' thrift societies; cooperative farming; cooperative stock-breeding and livestock societies (op. cit., pp. 29-31). These can be grouped into the

following classes: credit; thrift; consumer societies; producer societies; produce marketing societies; general purpose societies. Of these classes only the last, the general purpose society, is not specifically devoted to economic ends. We can therefore regard the definition and types of cooperative society regarded as suitable for colonial societies as being governed by economic considerations and concepts of well-being. The extent to which this is the case can be illustrated by the following quotation from the volume published by the Fabian Colonial Bureau.

"Even under present conditions, however, there is no reason why a typical colonial village, carefully educated in cooperation, should not in time develop all, or the majority, of the following activities: cooperative marketing societies (each crop to have its separate society), agricultural society, credit and thrift society, and possibly a house-building society. Such a village would not fall far short of the progressive standards of the typical rural village in Denmark, or in some part of the Dominions" (ibid, p. 31).

The ethnocentrism of this approach becomes clear when attempts are made later on in the volume to review the variety of cooperative enterprises already set up in the colonies. One illustration referring to the Ibo of Southern Nigeria will suffice. "Ten experimental societies owning palm(-oil) presses started with every prospect of success...(But) the societies cut across the time-honoured custom whereby the women received the palm kernels for their work.... Without them (the kernels) a woman would find it difficult, if not impossible, to keep house and produce meals. The societies failed. Further development and alternative occupations for women are therefore essential before cooperative processing societies can succeed in this field". (op. cit., p. 66). The writers then slip into precisely those comforting moralizations which they themselves had earlier condemned (pp. 28-9 supra) among colonial officials. "The greatest obstacle is the backwardness of the people and the lack of that indomitable spirit of self-help and will to overcome all the difficulties. The peasant farmers will need a lot of education (an education which cooperation in its simpler forms would provide) before they will be able to manage consumers' societies successfully... Until there is a better spirit, and until the African realises that he cannot develop his country without a real effort on his part, the more difficult forms of cooperative society must be introduced with caution, and then only after thorough preparation" (op. cit. pp. 67-68).

#### COOPERATION IN NORTHERN NIGERIA.

Administrative interest in cooperative associations in Nigeria found expression in 1936 with the appointment of a Registrar of Cooperative Societies. In 1943 the Cooperative Department was granted formal status, but it has only been since the end of World War 2 that sustained attempts to establish cooperative societies have been made in Northern Nigeria. On the record, the response has not been exciting. "In 1952-3 the number of societies registered and supervised increased from 128 to 151 and the total membership from 4,390 to 5,347". 1/ According to

1/ Colonial Report. Nigeria, 1953, p. 59. Colonial Office, London.

the Nigerian Census of 1951, this region contains some 16.8 million persons, of whom 5.5 millions are classified as Hausa, and 3 millions are Fulani, most of these latter being settled as the ruling classes in the Hausa emirates. <sup>1/</sup> Of the Cooperative societies registered in the Northern region as a whole in 1953, 32 were Credit and Thrift societies, 88 were Thrift and Loan societies, 20 were Consumers' cooperatives, 4 were Marketing societies, 2 were group farming societies, and five were secondary societies or unions, the majority of these being unions of thrift societies. Average membership was roughly 36 persons per society. Paid up share capital amounted to £3,161, or approximately 11/- per person.

These figures are not impressive. Interested Westerners may well ask what they imply; but perhaps without further information only guesses are possible. Perhaps they indicate those 'innate defects of character' against assuming which we have been well warned. Perhaps, Northern Nigerians are 'too backward and primitive to imbibe "cooperation"'. Alternatively, since 'there is no reason why a typical colonial village, carefully educated in cooperation, should not develop a wide variety of cooperative enterprises', it may be that something is wrong with the type of education offered to promote interest in and understanding of cooperative methods and goals.

The Nigerian Colonial Report for 1953 discusses the efforts made to link up the establishment of cooperative associations with an adult education campaign. "A link was established with the adult education campaign conducted by the Native Authorities. Adult education organizers and teachers have received lectures on cooperation; cooperative propaganda has been carried out and the number of literates in societies has increased." <sup>2/</sup> In 1953 the total enrolled membership of adult literacy classes in Northern Nigeria was 78,732 persons, and some 18,600 literacy certificates were issued in that year. At that date there were also some 125,000 pupils in the 1,705 schools of the Northern region. Given the ratios between these figures and the regional population, and assuming an annual rate of population growth of some 2.0%, <sup>3/</sup> there does not seem to be much chance that present educational programmes will promote cooperative societies organized along the present lines at a rate sufficient to keep up with population growth, let alone overtake it.

Granted that the Northern Nigerian administration has conceived of cooperative organization and development in terms similar to those of the Fabian Colonial Bureau, the data just quoted from the Colonial Report for 1953 suggest that some re-examination of official concepts and policy with regard to the establishment of cooperatives may be necessary, and also that this must be prefaced by careful examination of the different societies and cultures of the area to determine their variable capacities for the adoption of cooperative enterprises of

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<sup>1/</sup> Ibid, pp. 9-10.

<sup>2/</sup> Colonial Reports, Nigeria, 1953, p. 59.

<sup>3/</sup> Smith, M.G., 1955. The Economy of Hausa Communities of Zaria. Colonial Research Publications, No. 16, London, H.M.S.O., pp. 170-171.

different types. In this paper, I wish to show firstly, how the cooperative capacities of native societies may be determined by examining the Hausa-Fulani Emirates of Northern Nigeria from this particular point of view. I shall then refer the conclusions of this analysis back to the conceptions of cooperation already discussed, with a view to ascertaining their correspondence or discordance. In doing so, I wish to demonstrate how applied social anthropology can contribute to the economic development of colonial societies, generally, although the development under discussion is limited to cooperation. Before proceeding however, it is necessary to define cooperation more precisely.

### THE NATURE OF COOPERATION.

Cooperation is synonymous with mutual aid in much of the social science literature. Kimball Young for instance defines it as "joint action, or working or playing together for a common object or end which may be shared". <sup>1/</sup> The point to note in this definition is that the object of cooperation need not be shared by the cooperators, but must be common to them all. Margaret Mead, discussing the forms which cooperation and competition may take in her book on that subject, gives a careful attention to the different aspects of either. <sup>2/</sup> Mead begins by defining cooperation as the act of working together to one end, and then notes that regularity and habit is the most important form of such activity, thereby redefining cooperation as regular or customary modes of action by two or more persons to one end. She goes on to distinguish collective and individualistic behaviour as well as cooperation and competition in terms of their goals and 'modes of overt behaviour'. Thus, individualistic behaviour is that in which an individual strives toward his goal without reference to others (Op. cit., p. 16). "In Cooperation, the goal is shared, and it is the relationship to the goal which holds the cooperating individuals together". (op. cit., p. 17). Collective behaviour is cooperation without this characteristic of shared goals. Likewise, rivalry and helpfulness are distinguished from competition and cooperation respectively by reference to the primacy of the shared goals in the relationships concerned. Thus, where behaviour is oriented toward another human being rather than toward a non-human goal, it is classified by Mead as rivalry if competitive elements are present, and as helpfulness if cooperation results. "In helpfulness, the goal is shared only through the relationship of the helpers to the individual whose goal it actually is. The emphasis is on the relationship to the individual, not upon the goal itself". (Mead, op. cit., p. 17).

These distinctions are interesting but often impossible to apply objectively. They derive from psychology, and reflect certain types of psychological presuppositions about and interest in motivations. They presuppose a level of discrimination and differentiation of motivations hardly characteristic of social relations

<sup>1/</sup> Kimball Young, 1946, A Handbook of Social Psychology. London, Kegan Paul, P. 560.

<sup>2/</sup> Margaret Mead, 1937. Cooperation and Competition among Primitive Peoples, New York, McGraw-Hill.

in non-industrialized societies on the one hand, and enjoin a good deal of subjective interpretation on the part of the student on the other, especially where such factors as the cultural ideology of work, or the concepts of proper behaviour in various conventional situations or relations, are involved. Raymond Firth's discussion of group work in Tikopia illustrates the importance of these variables very well. 1/ In his Josiah Mason Lectures, Firth distinguishes four basic principles or elements of social organization which appear together in all cooperative or group activity: coordination, responsibility, foresight, and basic compensation or reciprocity. 2/ Where the reciprocity or basic compensation involves goals of common interest to the actors, we can speak of cooperation, whether the primary emphasis is on the social relationships and obligations of the actors, or on the goals themselves; and whether the object of action is shared or not. In terms of this definition cooperative relations are objectively definable in terms of behavioural modes and their consequences, rather than real or supposed mental states. Moreover, it is precisely this distinction between the modes and goals of action which forms one of the principal foci of analysis in studies of cooperation; and this distinction forms a preliminary to the analysis of relations between goals and modes of action, especially with reference to the prevailing system of economic values and processes.

In trying to define the cooperative potential of Hausa society, it is therefore necessary first to discuss the principal situations within which cooperation occurs regularly, paying special attention to the social relations involved, and then to consider the principal features of the Hausa economy. In the summary which follows, I shall mention the relevant patterns as briefly as possible, referring to fuller accounts published elsewhere.

#### HAUSA COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATIONS.

The Hausa of Northern Nigeria live in centralised states of fairly large average population and area. The ruling class is mainly of Fulani origin, and the people are Muhammadans by faith. Administration proceeds through a hierarchy of titled officials from the Emir down to the chiefs of villages and local communities. The Hausa and Fulani of these kingdoms practise wife-seclusion or purdah marriages in varying degrees. Women are legal and political minors, polygyny is esteemed and normal, marriage is brittle, divorce is easy and frequent under Muhammadan law, and kinship is bilateral as a norm.

Hausa economy is complex and varied, and permits a wide range of occupational differentiation and specialization among both sexes. Currency antedated the British occupation, and there is a well developed system of markets throughout the

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1/ Raymond Firth, 1939. Primitive Polynesian Economy. London, Routledge & Kegan Paul. pp. 115-116, 134 ff.

2/ Raymond Firth, 1951. Elements of Social Organization. The Josiah Mason Lectures in the University of Birmingham, London, Watts & Co., pp. 75-79.



country, the primary centres of distribution being found at the larger cities which are also centres of the communications network. Craft and trade activities are primarily in native hands, and are oriented to the satisfaction of traditional needs as well as recently acquired tastes. Grain crops form the staple food, and are locally grown. Cotton, ground-nuts, hides and skins, shea-nut butter, and tobacco are the primary articles of export.

Under the prevailing patterns of subdivision on inheritance, cooperative activities with a kinship basis tend to concentrate at the level of household organization. The customary code of relations and obligations between husband and wife, combined with the high frequency of divorce and polygyny, reduces the field of common or cooperative activities between spouses alone to a minimum. A husband provides his wife or wives with shelter, certain of the daily meals, and cloths at certain periods of the year. Wives provide themselves with such other clothes as they need, such other food as they require, and by their own-account craft or trading activities, obtain the necessary income for occasional expenditures on ceremonial, magical or other purposes on their own behalf.

Men normally attempt to provide for the needs of their households by individual efforts on the farm, in the market or at their crafts, but frequently one finds household units containing two or more males and their families. Within such complex units production and consumption is shared in varying degree. These extended household groups have kinship bases of two principal types, but are all described by Hausa as ganduna (s. gandu) or joint families. Ganduna may consist of a man, his adult sons, and their dependents, or of two brothers or cousins and their families. A third type, composed of an aristocrat or official and his clients or ex-slaves, is rather less common, and represents a survival of older forms of household organization.

Cooperative activities in ganduna which are based on kinship frequently extend to the production of the total staple crops required by the composite household, together with sufficient cash crops to meet the unit's tax payments, farm expenditures, and certain other necessary outlays, such as marriage payments for the male members of the group. Besides working on the gandu farm, its menfolk also farm separate plots for their individual benefits. As a rule also, they carry out their craft or trade activities independently, but the primary resources of the unit, the farmland, fallow, and home, is common property controlled by the gandu-head, until subdivision occurs through inheritance on his death. Private purses depend on individual effort and meet individual requirements. The common pool of resources and labour supplies the needs of the group as a whole. Variations occur between ganduna with respect to the range and type of cooperative or common activities, resources, and outlays. Sometimes, when a gandu is in process of splitting up, a group of agnatically related males sharing a common compound, which is partitioned into family divisions (sassa), may simply circulate the food prepared separately by their wives to one another in the evenings. Normally, however, gandu organization connotes a common farm, home, pot, and sources for essential expenditures. Since retention of gandu organization is voluntary, and since the cooperative activities within these units are regular and recurrent, the gandu conforms to the objective definition of cooperative associations given above. The frequency of this household type varied from 18%

to 25% of the households of two communities of Northern Zaria studied in 1949-1950. 1/

Households are the basic units, the ultimate cells or elements, of Hausa society, and their divisions are extremely important socially as well as economically. Their distinctness is most obvious when households are settled in separate compounds, but even where separate domestic units share a common compound the division is equally significant. Both in custom and law, the husband's obligation to feed and care for his family living with him is basic to this differentiation of households as separate units of domestic economy, and has far-reaching implications for cooperation among adults. The obligation which rests on males to provide for their households by their own efforts determines that their economic endeavours, ganduna and certain other forms of associations excepted, should be carried out separately as a rule, and be primarily individualistic in character. This considerably restricts the scope for cooperative economic activities among Hausa males, and is matched by the parallel restriction which wife-seclusion imposes on cooperative activities among females. However, there are certain institutionalized contexts and relations of cooperative character involving members of each sex, separately or together, and it is to these that we must now turn.

Within the ceremonial contexts of marriage, birth, death, naming, and the like, kinsfolk cooperate by contributions scaled in terms of their kinship positions on the one hand, and their economic capacities on the other. On the occasion of wedding feasts, distribution of largesse follows on similar lines; and also in the greeting by gifts which marks the annual Muhammadan festivals of Id-el-Fitr, Id-el-Kabir, the start of the New Year, and the Prophet's birthday. Apart from these ceremonial contexts, kinsfolk, including affines, may also cooperate more frequently than non-kin in farmwork, house-building, and on certain other occasions. At the political level of action, cooperation between kin is often found together with segmentary contraposition and competition, since rivalry tends to occur between kinsfolk in various circumstances.

The clearing of land for farming, the turning of the ridges in August after the millet has been reaped, and certain other farm tasks requiring numerous hands are frequently discharged by the institution of gayya, at which a man's friends, neighbours, kinsfolk, affines and clients go to his assistance, giving him one or more free day's work, and receiving the meal which he provides for them. Gayya is also used sometimes for house-building purposes, and was the traditional form of compulsory labour required by chiefs to clear paths, to repair the mosques and town walls, and to carry out certain other essential community obligations in older days. Since women have now withdrawn from participation in farmwork, they do not take part in the farm activities of either the gayya or the gandu. For certain harvesting tasks, however, such as the reaping of cotton, groundnuts, or cow-peas, a man may call on his wives and female kin to assist him, normally rewarding them with a portion of the crops which they reap.

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1/ Smith, M.G., 1955. Economy of Hausa Communities of Zaria. London, H.M.S.O., pp. 20 ff. For gandu economies and farming, see Appendices, and for household organization, see Chapters 2 and 3. Also cf. Daryll Forde & R. Scott, 1946, The Native Economies of Nigeria, pp. 122-123, and passim. For relations between spouses and family members, see Smith, Mary F., 1954, Baba of Karo. A Woman of the Moslem Hausa, London, Faber & Faber, pp. 102-137, and passim.

Credit and thrift societies, called adashi, similar to those described by Nadel for the Nupe and Bascomb for the Yoruba are common among salaried workers of the Native Authority in the larger settlements, and among other persons with regular but low weekly cash incomes. <sup>1/</sup> They are rarely found in rural districts, for precisely this reason, that membership presupposes a regularity of cash income which peasants rarely enjoy. Adashi associations combine thrift with credit, by collecting standard weekly payments from all members and by turning the total over to one subscriber each week. The group leader, uwar adashi, is usually a woman, and knows all the members individually, while they may not be known to one another. The group leader receives a small weekly reward for her services in organizing and collecting subscriptions, and is free to discontinue the association after one round has been completed.

Such other institutions as bond-friendship and clientage also involve co-operative action with regard to thrift and credit. Every Hausaman has one or two bondfriends called Babban abokai (s. aboki) who assist him when needed, both by labour, help and contributions in cash or kind at secular or ceremonial events. These gifts between male bond-friends are known as gudummuwa (reinforcements), and are discharged reciprocally over time according to the economic capacities of the partners.

Female bond-friendship is more elaborate and systematic in its development, these relations among women being of several different types, with associated differences of behaviour. Between female bond-friends of equal status (kawaye, s. kawa) certain gifts are exchanged on ceremonial occasions in a set pattern. These gifts and relations are called biki (feast, affairs). The gifts double with each transfer. Thus, if A and B initiate their biki by a gift to B of sixpence, when the occasion of a ceremony involving B A requires a return gift from B - this will be a shilling. This pattern of doubling the value of the gift at each exchange continues until the amounts involved are so large that the partners have to start again at the initial amount. Biki gifts are almost always in cash when women are concerned. Every Hausa woman conducts biki with several others. Thus, the outlays of any woman in these biki exchanges will be scattered in time as the ceremonial commitments of her partners develop. Similarly her receipts from these partners will normally occur at wide and irregular intervals. This system allows women to mobilise rapidly the relatively large sums which they require in order to discharge their obligations when their kin or daughters marry, or on certain other occasions, including their own marriages. Without such a system of flexible multiplying gifts it would be difficult for the women to meet the different ceremonial outlays traditionally expected of them. <sup>2/</sup>

<sup>1/</sup> S.F. Nadel, 1941. A Black Byzantium. London, Oxford University Press for the International African Institute, pp. 371-373. See also: Bascom, W.R., 1952. "The Esusu: A Credit Institution of the Yoruba", Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, vol. 82, part 1, pp. 62-70.

<sup>2/</sup> For a detailed account of these bond-friend relations between women, see Mary Smith, 1954, op. cit., pp. 191-206.

Women also participate in a cooperative association by which strangers (baki) are housed and accommodated at the larger settlements to which they move after breaking away from their husbands, families and communities. Such unattached adult women are known as karuwai (s. karuwa). Karuwai normally pass the time between their marriages in the practise of prostitution, combined with craft and trade. The head of the guild of prostitutes in any community is known as Magajiya, and is a female official appointed by the local chief to supervise these immigrant unattached women, and to organize their accommodation. The clients of prostitutes settled at prosperous towns are often of aristocratic lineage, but their future husbands will be people of low status. During her period of prostitution, a woman repays the Magajiya moneys advanced to her on arrival, and contributes to the expenses of the group organization. On re-marriage she ceases to be a member, and no longer contributes.

Among the Hausa craftsmen of Zaria there was very little group work. This lack of cooperation in craft production is partly a function of the Hausa technology, but is perhaps even more directly implicit in the individuation of males by criteria of their separate household commitments. Unless two or more members of a single gandu practise a common craft, the differentiation of individual household obligations and responsibilities, which operates to govern the disposal of labour-time on and off the farm, renders the chance of cooperative craft production and profit-sharing highly marginal. An experiment at Minjibir in Kano province in 1950 illustrates this point neatly. Handlooms of a type requiring two operators to work them were introduced. These looms were simple in design and easy to operate. Local weavers who were familiar with the less productive but more complex Hausa hand looms were trained to use them. The project was nonetheless a failure, due to irregularities in the attendance of the necessary number of operators, even though these men received the full benefit of their work on these looms.

Irregular attendance was not due to lack of interest among the weavers; nor to failure to appreciate the increased profits which the more efficient loom made possible. Pressure of individual household commitments, particularly with regard to the provision of food supply for the following year, compelled the weavers to concentrate on their farms at different times, and in different degrees, as their differential cultivation schedules required, at the same time the uncertainties about the marketing of the cloth, and the distribution of profits as well as the provision of costs, made the group-loom a more risky venture than separate weaving.

Similar considerations apply to other craft operations such as dyeing cloth in indigo. The cost of preparing a pit of dye, as well as the mode of preparation, the tenure of dyepits, and the risks of the dye spoiling early or of insufficient demand to show a profit, are not encouraging to group operations on the one hand, while the differential household obligations of individuals serve to distribute their labour-time in a manner contrary to the regularities presupposed by recurrent group-work on the other. Tanning, pottery, leatherwork, and fine metal work are also carried on individually, in response to these conditions.

It is of special interest therefore to find cooperation institutionalised among certain Hausa eulogists (maroka, s. maroki). Such groups of praise-singers are normally attached to prominent titles and their holders, or are to be found

*Substantive  
learning  
of the  
Hausa  
craftsmen*

in the capital cities of Hausa states, where a sufficient number of important and wealthy people, including the leading prostitutes, offer a market capable of supporting them. Customary occasions such as the eve of the Muhammadan Sabbath, the fast of Ramadan, weddings and their recent preliminary collections, known as ajo, dance-meetings of the young people, and spirit-possession (bori) seances provide the contexts of this group entertainment. Such groups usually consist of a nucleus of drummers, together with praise-singers, and a piper or so. More commonly maroka practise their craft individually and this is the norm in rural areas. Where a group of maroka work together under the patronage of some noble or lord, their organization is stable, and copies the titular model current in the state, positions of relative seniority being linked with high-sounding titles. 1/ Maroka are however of low repute among the Hausa, the majority of whom will point to the negligible farms and unkempt compounds typical of this group as evidence of their 'lack of shame' (rashin kunya). They are in effect an institutionalized group of deviants from male Hausa culture, in much the same way, and with much the same status as prostitutes among the females. Perhaps this condition explains the use of rank in the cooperative organization of both these groups.

In Zaria, I only observed cooperative craft production among butchers, blacksmiths and thatchers, the last two cases being of seasonal character. For example, in certain rural areas there is a heavy demand for the production of new tools and the repair of old ones at the opening of the farming season; and in some other districts these products may be traded in considerable quantities by speculators and commission agents to neighbouring or distant 'pagan' tribes, which lack the techniques of metalwork. At such times, there sometimes develops a time-limited cooperative arrangement between independent blacksmiths. Normally, however, the group working at one forge has a household basis, and consists of a man and his sons or related male dependents. Younger members work the bellows, and carry out the simpler operations, while learning the craft by practise under the group head. Even when blacksmiths or silversmiths share a common work-room or furnace so as to reduce costs, each normally handles his own trade and production independently, and while costs of charcoal may be shared, the profits of smithing are not. Likewise, fishing (su) is primarily an individual pursuit, although the small nets give inadequate returns. Potmaking, matmaking, building, embroidery and other forms of sewing, the manufacture of snuff or sweetmeats such as allewa, and even hunting, are also individual pursuits.

House-repairs are carried out at the start of the dry season during the slack period away from the farms. Most Hausa men know how to thatch the fences of their compounds, and a good many can thatch their dwelling-huts also. But cooperation in this work occurs when friends or kin provide some bundles of the grass favoured for thatch. Sometimes also, the thatching is carried out with free help, and the roof-frame is normally placed on the hut by cooperative effort.

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1/ Smith, M.G. 1957, "The Meaning and Function of Hausa Praise-singing", Africa, vol. 27, no. 1.

Butchers are sometimes found to cooperate in certain villages in the selling of meat. The reason for this is simple. Unless disposed of quickly, meat spoils in the tropical heat. The sale and slaughter take place on the same day, when the village market meets. Thus there is a set and limited period during which the co-operation occurs. Moreover, the sums required to buy a bullock for slaughter are frequently beyond the capacity of individual butchers in remote villages, and may also be beyond the limits of credit which the Fulani cattle nomads are prepared to extend. Consequently, butchers also cooperate by lending one another money for the purchase, by selling the meat on commission for the slaughterer, and by rotating among themselves the occasions for slaughtering large stock.

Cooperation in trade occurs mainly in the form of advancing goods on interest-free credit for somewhat indefinite periods. Such loans involve a high degree of mutual confidence (amana) between the principals as they normally extend over long distances, variable periods, and normally they involve a two-way traffic in goods, which is often unrecorded. For example, cloth and salt may be taken on credit for sale, and local products such as locust-beans, hides, grain or cotton may be returned to balance the account. Trade relations involving amana (trust) are usually based on clientage or kinship, especially on kinship traced through women. In the context of clientage, the wealthy principal, referred to as ubandaki (father of the house), extends trade facilities and credit to a junior called the dan-arziki (son of fortune). These relations are limited to males, the feminine parallels emphasizing status-differences and obligations rather than trade. 1/

Young boys and girls take part in separately organized play associations, the leadership positions of which are linked with titles, and control certain sanctions. In the old days these associations were sometimes used as a communal labour force for clearing sites, roads, and the like. Even today young people's associations in one ward or village indulge in play battles with their neighbours at the feast of the Muhammadan New Year, and may stage mock ceremonies of their own called kallankuwa, at which titles are redistributed and the internal organization of the society is revised in a straw township built outside the village precincts after the guinea-corn harvest.

Formal education or schooling has been traditionally carried out among the Hausa by a group of scholars of Arabic and Koranic lore known as mallams. Mallams are not priests, although they form a priestly class from which judges, legal assessors and priests (limamai, s. limam) are drawn. The mallam's school is open to all children from a very early age until they are married, which takes place for girls at the age of fourteen, for boys at about twenty years of age. Often one finds that men living at some distance from a mallam of high repute have sent their children to live in the mallam's compound and study under him, and contribute as best they can at irregular intervals toward the expenses of the school by gifts of grain, shea-nut butter for lamp-oil, money, and the like. Money receipts by mallams from the parents of their pupils are rarely more than a fraction of the cost of the school. But the community within which mallams live rewards them by

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1/ Smith, Mary F., 1954, op. cit., pp. 191-206 and notes.



distributions of tithes of grain at the Sallah ceremonies, and by gifts at naming or funeral ceremonies also. Thus the mallam receives substantial assistance from the community to which he belongs, and this allows him to concentrate his labour-time in the school which he keeps at home, and from which he does not expect economic benefit.

Clientage is an association which ramifies throughout male Hausa relations and has marked cooperative functions. Clientage is a relation between two persons and their dependents, which presupposes status inequality of the principals, and consists in ties of mutual loyalty, interest and assistance. 1/ The inferior or client frequently performs political or domestic services for his superior or patron, while the latter takes care of him politically, by protecting him from interference by other officials or aristocrats, and also assists him economically. In many instances the relation of clientage proves sufficiently valuable and enduring to both parties for marriage linkages to be attached to it, with the result that the substitute kinship which it permits gives way to kinship by affinity. The type of service which a client performs for his patron varies from political agency or spying to billing the fallow-land, 'bringing in grass for the horse' and the like. Within the hierarchic structure of state administration, subordinate offices are conceptually related to their immediate superiors in terms of clientage. But the client is not to be regarded as his patron's servant. He is a retainer if he depends economically on his patron, and lives or eats with the latter's household; but often he is economically independent, and lives in his own household some distance away. Ganduna based on clientage presuppose co-residence of client and lord, and are mainly found today in the households of aristocrats, prominent officials, or wealthy merchants (attajirai).

This brief account describes the principal social contexts and relations which entail cooperation among the Hausa. To consider the capacity of Hausa society for cooperative enterprise, this account of social relations needs to be supplemented by a brief discussion of the Hausa economy.

#### THE HAUSA ECONOMIC SYSTEM.

Professor Daryll Forde has already distinguished the principal components of Hausa economy, and has traced their interrelations. These components consist in the system of subsistence production, the system of internal exchange, and the system of external exchange. 2/ This external system of exchange breaks down into two principal divisions, the intra-African exchange system, and the overseas trade with the West, primarily Britain. Intra-African exchanges are also classifiable as intra-Sudanic, or trade with the Southern regions of Nigeria. 3/

1/ Smith, M.G., 1954. "Introduction" in Smith, Mary F., 1954, Baba of Karo, pp. 31-33; also, Smith, M.G., 1955 op. cit., pp. 11-12, 70-76, etc..

2/ Daryll Forde, 1946, in Daryll Forde, and R. Scott, Op. cit., pp. 32 ff, 119-179.

3/ Smith, M.G., 1955, op. cit., pp. 142-155.

Combination of production for subsistence and exchange is the keynote of the Hausa economic system. Granted this, and the separateness of households as units of domestic economy, then, in view of the multiplicity of occupations and their possible combinations, it follows that wide variation and choice in the degree to which different households depend on production for subsistence, or for exchange in the internal or external market will obtain; and also that these variations will be found irrespective of occupational categories or locations. Moreover, since households depend mainly on certain grain staples which form the major focus of effort on the farms, the internal trade in these staples such as guinea-corn, maize, or millet, will be functionally related to the volume of non-agricultural production, assuming constant seasons and farm conditions. In order to secure those commodities and services which the household is unable to provide for itself, some degree of participation in the exchange sectors of the economy is obligatory on the part of the household providers, simply to obtain the necessary cash; and this level of participation in the exchange sector increases with the increased dependence of the household on supplies obtained from or through the market organization, whether the types of these services and goods purchased remain constant, or expand to include new items. Furthermore, expenditures in the market follow the scale of values and priorities placed on goods and services of different kinds. A study of Hausa budgets reveals that, in these terms, traditional products still stand in higher demand than modern articles. But this may be a function of the level of per capita incomes. 1/

The external exchange sector affects the domestic unit in two ways: namely, as sources of supply for certain necessary goods such as cheap cloth, pots and pans and the like, and as markets for certain Hausa products, particularly, ground-nuts, cotton, shea-nuts, benniseed, gutta-percha, hides and skins, or tobacco. The distribution of these commodities distinguishes the intra-Nigerian and overseas traffic. For example, locally grown tobacco is not exported from Nigeria, but is railed to the South for local processing, the cigarettes being sold throughout the Federation. Certain other commodities are traded in bulk between the different regions of Nigeria, and this trade permits relatively large native investment and capital accumulations. 2/ These intra-Nigerian exchanges follow regional differences of habitat which produce regional surpluses and shortages of articles in heavy demand. Furthermore, these articles in heavy demand are either necessities, such as meat, foodstuffs, and the like, or are of traditional character, where luxury items, such as embroidered gowns, silverware, or decorative native cloth, are involved. Thus cattle, locust-bean, cotton, ground-nuts and certain other commodities go southwards from the North, while kola-nuts, palm-oil, and certain other Southern products come North. This intra-Nigerian commerce is almost entirely in Nigerian hands, although recently certain Syrian traders are beginning to penetrate it.

Intra-Sudanic trade on the other hand remains firmly under Muhammadan control. Cloth is exported from Zaria north-east to Bornu and the Tchad area, while leather products and other surpluses, such as raw cotton, grain, and some fine metalwork

1/ Smith, M.G. 1955. op. cit., pp. 155-168, and 178-219.

2/ Smith, M.G. 1955. op. cit., pp. 134-5, 144-5, 152-5, 222-5.



go northwesterly to Sokoto and beyond. Heavy movements of grain over varying distances mark local and seasonal shortages in this region, and natron moves southwards from Kano towards heavy concentrations of Fulani herds. The items of these bulk transfers are always household essentials in short supply locally in the areas to which they move, and consist mainly in raw materials. Craft products and services have local distribution primarily, and limited turnover rates. But where Hausa villages are sited on the borders of tribes having lower technologies, craft-products, such as farm tools, cheap clothes, leather loin-cloths, and the like, are processed and traded in bulk, and sometimes over considerable distances.

Thus cloth is processed in various Hausa enclaves or border regions for sale to the nearby tribesmen who are unable to produce it themselves, grain and other pagan staples being purchased in return. Sugar, grown and processed in Northern Zaria, is marketed in substantial quantities as far afield as Bauchi and Bornu. So is fine metalwork, both that of Zaria and Nupe. Where large local markets exist, such as those with which considerable local populations of pagan tribesmen provide Hausa enclaves, specialized production of tanned leather goods or blacksmith products has wide and steady distribution. Where the local market is limited, these levels of occupational specialization and craft output are lacking. The capacities for expansion thus depend on the range and character of the markets.

Hausa economy also involves the operations of such Produce Marketing Boards as the Groundnuts or Cotton Marketing Boards, which operate on a statutory basis to handle the bulk of the major commodities exported oversea, price levels being fixed and reserves established against possible future unfavourable conditions in these markets. To a certain extent, and from one point of view, these statutory organizations have cooperative aspects. They are cooperative in their intention, and involve the cooperation of producers who grow their articles for sale in these statutory markets. But being statutory in character and undemocratic in operation, they are clearly dissimilar to the type of voluntary, spontaneous cooperative association in which we are at present interested.

#### HAUSA CAPACITIES FOR COOPERATION.

We have now reviewed the principal forms which cooperation takes among the Hausa, and the basic conditions of the local economy. The types of cooperation currently advocated as a method of increasing economic development and of lifting African standards of living have also been discussed, and their development in Northern Nigeria until 1953 has been summarized. It remains to relate the data on Hausa society and economy to the problem of organizing increased cooperative enterprises.

In this task, it is important to distinguish the goals, methods, and forms of cooperative association. Moreover, within each of these dimensions, further distinctions may be necessary. Thus, for instance, the characteristic focus of cooperative associations among the Hausa is social rather than economic. The types of satisfaction which Hausa seek to maximize by cooperative association are clearly social rather than economic. The basis and often the activity of these Hausa associations is also social rather than economic. These observations are borne out by

*Social  
basis  
of  
Hausa  
Co-operation*

the lack of cooperative work among craftsmen other than praise-singers, by the peculiar form which cooperation takes in trade, by the cooperative emphasis and form of bond-friendship and clientage, and by cooperation in the contexts of prostitution, or in the play associations of youth, or in the free work of gayya. The exchanges of gifts which take place in biki and gudummuwa are made in order to enable the partners to discharge their ceremonial obligations fitly. The indirect form in which mallams are rewarded for the schools which they keep provides further evidence of non-economic orientations and methods in Hausa cooperative relationships. Even the gandu is primarily a social unit, growing and dissolving in accordance with social rather than economic processes. Similarly, bond-friendship, clientage, gayya, youth associations, and cooperation among praise-singers, prostitutes, blacksmiths or butchers, all develop on the basis of certain social conditions or relations, such as friendship, neighbourhood, occupational class, status differentiation, or kinship.

Associations with a primarily economic orientation are limited to the adashi, and to groups of butchers and blacksmiths who assist one another for limited periods in certain areas. Among the Hausa, relations having cooperative functions develop in the contexts of kinship, neighbourhood, occupation class, clientage or bond-friendship, or in terms of the ritual order which mallams teach and represent. Even among the primarily economic associations such as adashi, these observations are borne out, since memberships in adashi tend to be confined to particular classes, such as wage-earners or prostitutes, while cooperation among butchers is based on locality and occupational class. The absence of guild organization among Hausa craftsmen, and its rudimentary development among the prostitutes alike indicate the greater degree to which the men are differentiated by their individual household commitments and by their variable levels of participation in the subsistence or exchange economies. In effect, the combination of separate household responsibilities and variable levels of production for subsistence or exchange really rules out the chances of recurrent cooperation in production developing among men, except where the cooperators are members of a single household, and the activity is common to all. These exceptional conditions are only to be found in the gandu.

The form which cooperation takes among the Hausa differs from the current European models in much the same way that the goals and methods of Hausa cooperative relations depart from current Western norms. Typically, cooperative relations among the Hausa are dyadic relations, as in clientage, bond-friendship, kinship, and adashi, the members of which are directly associated only with the adashi leader; but in certain cases, such as the cooperation of butchers, blacksmiths, gandu, or gayya, group organization is the basis of cooperation. Some group and dyadic cooperative relations are short-lived and ad hoc; others are durable, recurrent and patterned. Durable cooperative relations are found in gandu, praise-singing teams, the mallam's school, kinship, bond-friendship, and clientage. Ephemeral cooperation occurs at gayya, in young people's groups, and in the contexts of prostitution, group work among blacksmiths, or cooperation between butchers. Enduring cooperation develops around the basic principles of Hausa society, namely, kinship, religion, political organization, community, and occupational class. In every case, with the exception of adashi, cooperation develops within an institutionalized context of multi-functional character. Thus even the gayya, or the cooperation of blacksmiths and butchers, presuppose membership in the same locality,

apart from other principles, such as clientage, occupational class, kinship, and the like, which are brought into play.

This informality of Hausa cooperation, that is, its occurrence as an aspect of many different institutionalized social relations, and within the contexts of these, also accounts for the important differences of method between Hausa and Western cooperative forms. Typically, among Western peoples, cooperative associations are specially organized for the pursuit of particular functions. Among the Hausa, the cooperation which develops in wider institutional matrices is typically indirect in its method, irregular in its occurrence, and inconsequential in its assessment. It is nonetheless, clearly cooperative.

The notion of reciprocity, for example, is not directly applicable to many Hausa cooperative forms, such as the mallam's school, the prostitute's guild, the praise-singing team, or clientage. Biki exchanges avoid direct equivalence in reciprocity by multiplying the value of gifts. In the gandu reciprocity is clearly of less importance than the basic compensation of the members. Gayya also does not presume or permit direct reciprocity.

It is thus clear that cooperative action among the Hausa develops on quite different lines from that characteristic of cooperative organizations in the Western world. These differences are of such an order that it is hardly surprising that the Hausa response to the introduction of Western-type cooperative associations with their unfamiliar goals, functions, methods, and forms, should have been rather negative. To stimulate interest and participation in cooperatives directed along Western lines, it may therefore be necessary to redesign these Western models so as to fit the conditions of Hausa culture.

The Hausa economy described above seems to offer the greatest scope for local enterprise in the intra-Nigerian system of exchange. These exchanges involve bulk transfers of commodities and are not seriously influenced by overseas competition, due to lack of overseas interest in the articles which are traded. Kolanuts, native potash, cattle, locust-bean, local cloth, and to a lesser extent, leather and metal goods form the principal items of this trade. Raw materials such as cotton, grain, and groundnuts, in which the West is interested, are mainly controlled by Western demands, but also figure in this intra-Nigerian traffic.

The characteristic social basis and focus of Hausa cooperative associations does not mean that Hausa do not appreciate the importance of cooperation for the satisfaction of their economic wants. The gandu as a cooperative unit, though one with a primary basis in kinship, is clear evidence on this point. The truth is simply that at present only those social relations already established in one or other of the basic institutional systems of Hausa culture can provide the ground for cooperative action, and that, consequently, in the primacy of their social functions and orientations, Hausa cooperative associations reflect this fact. But the relatively large numbers of consumer, thrift and loan societies to be found among the registered cooperative associations of Northern Nigeria in 1953 indicate the interest which such types of cooperative enterprise may be capable of evoking, if organized in terms of traditional Hausa patterns, and values.

This really brings us to the root of the matter. There is of course no

'typical colonial village', any more than there is any typical or universal standard scale of wants, or any single universal form of social organization. To make such presuppositions simplifies the design of development programmes to the same degree that it renders their fulfilment difficult. But to avoid such presuppositions about the Hausa we must ask such questions as the following : by what standard is Hausa social and economic organization to be judged ? By what standard is its improvement to be measured or assessed ? Is it likely that improvement in the standard of living, for example, consists entirely in an increased approximation to Western norms, or an increased adherence to Western goals, forms, and practices ? If such an approximation is not intended to be complete, to what degree, and by whom, and in what fields of activity, is it regarded as necessary or desirable ? And on what grounds ?

Detailed study of the budgets of 90 Hausa households of Zaria in 1950 shows that where income increases, expenditures on certain commodities and services also increase; and that this scale of increasing expenditures reflects the differential priorities which Hausa attach to the commodities and services, and to the goals or conditions which these represent, at different income levels. <sup>1/</sup> The chief or district-head likes chicken daily. The poor man cannot afford this, but tries to eat meat once a week, while salt, peppers, and locust-bean are essentials he cannot easily do without. The fact that native Nigerian entrepreneurs have developed a considerable local trade in regional surpluses such as locust-bean, kola-nuts, peppers and meat, decisively indicates the field within which cooperative enterprise may be established widely. But in the same way that a higher standard of living means different things to the Hausa and to the European, it is important to realize that the types of cooperative trade associations appropriate to the two cultures may also differ in form and focus. Exclusion of "voluntary associations whose activities aim at mutual welfare in the shape of dividends on invested capital" <sup>2/</sup> from the type of cooperative which should be fostered by governmental action is especially important in this context. In much the same way that the Hausa define a higher standard of living differently from the European, and in terms of more wives, cloth, meat, guinea-corn, kola-nuts, palm-oil, salt, peppers and children, they also define the objects and methods of cooperative association differently from the European. It therefore follows that if there is a definite intention to raise the Hausa standard of living by the establishment and operation of cooperative associations, the purposes, forms, and methods of these organizations must be reconsidered in the light of Hausa cultural conditions, and the experience of previous promotional efforts.

To begin with, if we accept the prevailing values of Hausa economy and the indigenous forms of social organization, and if the restriction on profit-making cooperative enterprise is abandoned, it becomes possible to establish cooperative units which will engage in this intra-Nigerian trade, handling regional surpluses

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<sup>1/</sup> Smith, M.G., 1955, op. cit.

<sup>2/</sup> Fabian Colonial Bureau, 1945, op. cit., p. 32.

regarded as essentials in other areas. The following commodities are clearly worth experiment among the Hausa: kola-nuts, potash, cattle, locust-bean, palm-oil, locally processed sugar, cotton, cloth, leather goods, and grain. Rice and tobacco may also be added to this list, and poultry cooperatives which involve little outlay might also be developed through ganduna or neighbourhood units in the villages to increase local meat supplies. Moreover; craft production and marketing cooperatives can be organized where substantial markets are available. Thus, blacksmiths, weavers, dyers, tanners, and the like, who presently export their products to pagan tribes through commission agents, can be organized to market their products together, the cooperative acting as a common agent, and handling both the local and long distance trade (fatauci) along the usual Hausa lines in return for normal profits, thereby pressing forward with the accumulation of sufficient capital for investment in the intra-Nigerian trade.

The prevailing social bases and contexts of Hausa cooperation likewise lend themselves to the organization of joint action with primarily economic orientation, once certain presuppositions about the typical form and way of organizing cooperative associations have been abandoned. Thus, among women spinners and weavers, whose products are at present handled separately by commission agents, often over long distances, and for inadequate returns, relations of kinship and bond-friendship can be used to provide the framework of a wider cooperative association through which these products may be marketed and supplies of cotton and thread may be bought. If protection ever becomes necessary for such commodities against cheap foreign lines in the local markets, tariffs can be fixed on a regional or federal basis by legislative action. But sugar processing, local cloth manufacture, and leather or metalwork are hardly likely to require such protection. Finally, to give cooperative associations organized along these lines the multi-functional character typical of Hausa social units, and to multiply the ties which bind their members, the credit and thrift functions of cooperative enterprise may be attached to certain of these producer, consumer, and marketing organizations. The investment of capital accumulated through profitable marketing operations should clearly be carried out on a group basis, under the guidance of the Cooperative Department and with the support of Native authorities. For example, purchase of a small mill to grind grain may be a useful and profitable investment of cooperative funds, which could increase cloth production by women at present overburdened with this tedious task. The point here is that investment by the group rather than individual profit-sharing involves expansion of the association's functions, with consequent extension of members' interests in its operations.

It is of course necessary to take special care not to establish cooperative associations on the basis of relationships which, among the Hausa, do not lend themselves formally to this end. Thus, although clientage has marked cooperative aspects, the status gaps which it presupposes makes it unsuitable for use in the establishment of democratic cooperative associations. Similarly, the divisive character of Hausa marriage relations rules out the simple extension of membership in cooperative enterprises between spouses. This means that the organization of cooperatives among women requires a different approach and focus from that applicable to men. The institution of bond-friendship among females might well provide the most effective basis for these developments.

CONCLUSION.

We can summarize the discussion as follows : Cooperative associations with impersonal economic goals and methods are unlikely to be popular among the Hausa unless based on prevailing social and economic patterns and conforming to Hausa values. Amongst the Hausa, durable associations to which cooperative functions can be attached all have an institutional basis, are multi-functional in character, and presently have informal cooperative aspects. It is suggested that the accumulation of capital by local folk which is the pre-requisite of investments aimed at improving the local standard of living, however this may be conceived, can be most effectively achieved along cooperative lines, if concepts and policies about the organization of cooperative associations are redesigned to increase their consonance and congruity with prevailing Hausa patterns. The same general point will of course hold true wherever the promotion of cooperative enterprise is attempted.

It has been the primary aim of this paper to show how the cooperative capacities of native societies can be assessed by considering the Hausa as an instance. In making such assessments of capacity, it is of special importance to analyze the prevailing systems of relations within which cooperation takes place, and to understand the forms, goals, and methods which such cooperative action exhibits. When these social patterns are referred back to the current economic context and operation of the unit, it then becomes possible to plan cooperative development which is consistent with indigenous and Western social organizations and systems of value alike. Contributing to such developments forms an important obligation of applied social anthropology, and in these developments anthropology has an important part to play.

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