

Stevens's procedure limiting national financial profitability is the most effective operational tool.

Overall, Stevens leaves us with the overriding task of measuring absorptive capacity more successfully than he has elucidated in this book.

Finally, but not the least important is the existence of more than two dozen printing errors. Most of them should have been corrected before the book left the printer for circulation.

(Noboru Tabe)

*Rural Hausa: A Village and a Setting* by Polly Hill, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1972, xvi+368pp.

This is the third major book written by Polly Hill as a case study of African rural societies. (If her general survey of Gold Coast cocoa farmers is included, it is her fourth book.) It presents a clear picture of what is actually happening at the micro-level as opposed to macro-level, and questions some conventional notions and theoretical frameworks of African rural development which prevail among social scientists and officials who are concerned about Africa. Like her previous books this one is also filled with new informations which she presents with the clear intention of demolishing some misconceptions about the behavior of farmers in Africa and more specifically about the way of life of the particular but important group of people in West Africa called Hausa.

The book is unique in that the second half of the volume is devoted to commentary which includes a Hausa glossary. Here the author explains the Hausa terms and concepts employed in her survey presented in the fourteen chapters which constitute the first part of this book. As the author explains in the preface, the commentary is "partly intended as a separate browsing ground," and "one reason for splitting the book into two sections is to enhance readability; the development economist may ignore the commentary, while the reader in search of 'background' may leave most of the chapters unread." In doing this the author succeeds in making the analytic part of the book fairly concise and the argument clear and she is able to include many general reference materials on Hausaland in the commentary section.

The village chosen by the author for the case study is Batagarawa, situated about six miles south of Katsina city in the Northern part of Nigeria and very close to the border with Niger. The population of 1,395 is composed of some 171 farming-units. The crucial household characteristic here is the paternal *gandu* which is "a voluntary, mutually advantageous, agreement between father and married son, under which the son works in a subordinate capacity on his father's farms in return for a great variety of benefits including a share of the food supplies." (p. 38) Many of the farming-units are composed of paternal *gandaye* (plural of *gandu*), and this institution enables a father to secure enough family labor for farming while giving security to his sons and enables them to obtain their own private land, etc. *Gandu* relationships usually break up soon after the death of the father. Here the reader is warned that an understanding of the Hausa farming system and its economic position cannot be obtained without an understanding of this particular Hausa institution.

After a detailed study of these 171 farming-units in Batagarawa conducted in 1967 and supplemented with data collected in the next two years, the author sets out to demonstrate the possibility of arguing from the particular to the general in the unexplored field of socio-economic affairs in the Hausaland. The main theme of her analysis is economic inequality among the farmers. This is a rather common theme being pursued in recent years by an increasing number of field researchers in rural Africa and is, of course, a welcome departure from the existing unexamined presumption that economic differentiation has not yet occurred in most of the farming communities in Africa.

However, the author herself is cautious in presenting this theme of economic inequality, as she says that the choice of the theme is rather accidental, and she is "not in the least obsessed by the topic of economic inequality as such" in a society where neither land nor labor are scarce factors. (p. 5) Here she seems to have adopted this theme as a tool to expose the economic behavior of individual farmers and the relationships between them so as to understand the workings of the economy of the village as a whole.

In the chapter called "The Evidence for Economic Inequality," the author explains her method of classification into four economic groups. She gives her attention first to the idea that "one of the most important elements in a farming-unit's 'standard of living' was its ability to withstand the shock of a very late, or very poor, harvest." (p. 58) From this idea she devises an ingenious system of classifying farming-units into four economic groups. Thus, Group 1 consists of those who are actively helping others in times of poor harvest, Group 2 consists of those who are neither suffering nor helping, Group 3 consists of those who are suffering, and Group 4 consists of those who are desperately poverty-stricken at all times. The farming-units were classified into these groups by the subjective judgments of three informant farmers, and according to the author, "in almost all cases of disagreement on the first round [of examination] unanimity was secured without much difficulty on the second round." (p. 59)

This kind of classification based on subjective judgment has the advantage of not stressing one factor of production unduly. The most common method of classification, namely the one according to the farm size, is particularly questionable where bush-fallow farming is practiced and where land is plentiful and there exists no landless class. The classification according to the size of the family labor force seems less objectionable in most areas in Africa, but it ignores differences in aspirations, managerial ability and other forms of qualitative differences between individuals, and tends, in many cases, not to correspond to other indicators of living standards. The new classification devised by the author seems able to avoid these pitfalls, and thus can be utilized in many future farm economic surveys in Africa.

In Batagarawa two types of farm land are clearly distinguished, one being manured farmland and the other bush-farm. Land is not the scarce factor because there is plenty of bushland available near the village to any of those who care to open it up. However, the farmers prefer to concentrate their farming in the permanently cultivated manured zone. The crucial importance here is the availability of the main type of manure, namely the compound sweepings which include the droppings of small livestock such as sheep, goats, and donkeys. In Hausaland there is no lineage or family land over which lineage members have permanent rights, and "for practical purposes,

all the manured farmland may be regarded as effectively owned by individuals." (p. 21)

It was found that the distribution of manured farmland among economic groups is most unequal. The average acreage per farming-unit progressively falls as it moves from Group 1 to Group 4. The farm purchases and sales also seem to correspond to the level of the economic groupings. Other indicators such as the number of working-men per farming-unit, the number of wives, the proportion of farming-units organized as *gandaye*, production of millet, acreage of groundnuts, number of granaries per farming-unit, are all found to fall progressively so as to correspond to the upper and lower status arrangement of the economic groupings.

There are two other interesting aspects of inequality which are given special attention by the author. The first of these is the possibility that the inequalities thus exposed may be the function of the age of the head of the farming-units. The older a farmer becomes, the richer he may become. The analysis shows that "the association between age and economic-group is generally not close, there are two sets of men whose situation is apt to be particularly precarious: they are those whose fathers died when they were young, and those older men who are not *gandu* heads." (p. 80)

The other aspect of inequality is in relation to the non-farming occupations pursued by nearly all Batagarawa farmers. These include traders, craftsmen (tailors, blacksmiths, builders, etc.), butchers, collectors of free goods such as firewoods, servants, Koranic teachers, drummers, and so on. Many traders, craftsmen, and Koranic teachers are found to belong to Groups 1 and 2, while within Group 3 no particular occupation is predominant, but some traders of local foodstuffs, collectors of free goods, servants and craftsmen are found. Group 4 has many freegoods collectors, non-farming laborers, butchers and drummers.

The subject of farm laboring is given a full chapter, and the special type of hired-labor system called *kwadago* is explained. It seems that "*kwadago* is seldom undertaken at the expense of 'own-farming'; the system increases the effective labour force of richer farmers as a group, without leading to a corresponding reduction in the number of man-days worked on the farms of the poorer farmers." (p. 106) Here again, it was found that Groups 1 and 2 farmers provided the bulk of employment and in Groups 3 and 4 heads of farming-units provided the majority of the regular farm laborers. However, a significant fact established was that many of the dependents of heads of farming-units in Groups 1 and 2 as well as those of the Groups 3 and 4 worked as occasional laborers. On the other hand, most poorer heads of farming-units did not work to any significant extent as laborers.

There are many other interesting points made in the chapters on "The Sale of Manured Farmland," "Migration," and "Local Trade in Grains and Groundnuts." For instance, seasonal migration was found to be quite uncommon in Batagarawa. In comparison with the case in Southern Ghana where the author found in her early work that many elderly farmer migrated, she found that in Batagarawa very few old men have migrated. The importance of women house-traders is explained convincingly in the chapter on local trade.

Having examined these various aspects, the author then proceeds to the problem of whether or not there is short-term stability in the economic groupings and if so why. Her finding is that there is considerable stability in the pattern of economic-groupings. The evidence in relation to the sale of farmland shows that, over a short period of three years, most of the farm-sellers belonged to Groups 3 or 4, while most

of the farm-buyers belonged to Groups 1 and 2. The question then becomes: What is the basic mechanism of the Batagarawa economy which promotes the affairs of the rich and inhibits those of the poor? The author finds an answer in the mechanism of grain price fluctuation and that of crop storage. "Most long-term storage of grains and groundnuts for sale to other farmers is undertaken by richer men; most of the poorer farmers subsist on bought grains for most of the year, many of them having been obliged to sell grains when prices are lowest." (p. 162) Another factor of importance in strengthening this tendency is the availability of manure. "Despite the fact that their farming techniques are similar, the poor get lower returns per unit of effort than the rich, owing to their inability to manure their farms adequately. The poorer a farmer gets, the greater the likelihood that he will sell his compound sweepings, thus increasing the supplies available to richer farmers." (p. 163) Thus the poor seems trapped in a vicious circle.

Farm-laboring cannot insulate poor farmers from the worst effects of fluctuating grain prices since the practice of fixed daily wages gives them no compensation for the soaring price of grain they must purchase. Selling goats or butchering undertaken by poor farmers at the time of maximum seasonal hunger is also an unattractive solution since the effective demand for meat is lowest at that time.

After establishing that a farmer's short-term prospects are greatly dependent on his relative economic position, the author moves on to examine the long-term prospects of his position. In the chapter called "The Absence of Class" she expounds the view that there is sufficient mobility between economic groups in the long-term so that no farmer in Batagarawa belongs to a fixed class.

The author uses the term "class" here to denote economic groupings, and not "production relations" as in Marxist terminology. She takes the stand that class is formed only when the position of economic groupings is stabilized for a long term. From this viewpoint, she examines whether there is any inter-generational correspondence in economic groupings. The analysis of the data shows that the average acreage of manured farmland per working son varies little between Group 1, 2, and 3, though it is lower for Group 4. "It is certainly clear from these figures that many sons of richer farmers are bound to inherit small acreages." (p. 181) Also a paternal *gandu* which helped keep its head in a higher economic group would dissolve as soon as the head dies, and because the inheritance system of the Hausa community seems to lack any precision, the succeeding generation may not necessarily attain any favorable position. Death brings an equalizing force in such a society. On the other side of the scale the position of poorer farmers could improve as their sons reach adulthood. Farm-labor employment is essentially casual, and the emergence of a laboring class is quite unlikely.

The author thus concludes with an optimistic note that there is ample room for individual viability and upward mobility in present day Batagarawa. Even the poor can put intelligence to good effect in the long run and raise their own status.

There are two points which for the reviewer of this book were left unclarified. The first is the position of *masu-sarauta*, namely the members of the ruling-class, within the farming economy of Batagarawa. Four men were classified as *masu-sarauta*, but their households have been excluded from the scope of this study. An analysis of economic groups and of class stratification that excludes these members of the ruling class seems to be quite inadequate. Were they excluded because it was felt necessary

to hide their identity in the presentation of data? Are they important only as administrators? The lack of explanation about the economic roles of *masu-sarauta* is especially regrettable since M. G. Smith earlier placed them at the top of his social class ranking of the Hausa society in his article "The Hausa System of Social Status."

The second point concerns the bush-farm. Readers were told that farmers tend to concentrate their efforts on the manured farmland. However, the bush-farm must also be important as potential manured farmland in future days. The expansion of the acreage of the village as a whole is possible only by opening up the bush-farm, and it is the only safety valve in the case where the concentration of farmland into the hands of a few should occur. For these reasons, an analysis of the bush-farm could well be included in the present study.

The reviewer is, however, impressed with the author's effort in producing this valuable book. Certainly more studies of this type are necessary in order to clarify the workings of various economic and social forces in rural societies of Africa.

(Masao Yoshida)