

CHAPTER IV PROFILES OF SOME PEASANTS

Introduction

Understanding the inter-relations in a peasant's life through the dynamics of agricultural exploitation, the income level and living standards is possible only by a participatory research. It was with this perspective that we followed up five families each in Mubumbano and Ryamanyoni sectors during April and October 1999.

After making contact during the preliminary survey, we selected ten families to follow their daily activities. Each family head was asked to fill in a questionnaire every day, and we visited them to ask additional questions about their daily life on the basis of answers in the questionnaire with regard to agricultural work, the number of employed workers, the composition of meals and drinks, the daily income and expenses, etc.

In this chapter, we present profiles of interviewed families based on information from these inquiries and interviews. We believe that this information will supplement the data presented in the previous chapter.

1. G1 Family

This family lived in the Kizenga cell of Mubumbano sector. The family head (NC) was born in 1943 in the same sector. His wife was born in 1947 in the neighboring sector, Sholi. They got married in 1996. There are six children in their family: girls of 25 and of 21 years old, boys of 23, 18, 16 and 10 years old. They have also two grandchildren (a girl and a boy).

NC did not leave his land except during the period 1994-1995. NC's family has 15 scattered fields listed in Table 4.1. The total area of these fields is 1.21 ha, of which 1.10 ha is on hills and 0.11 ha in wetlands.

The education levels of NC and his wife are respectively five years and four years of primary schooling. As its occupation, this family practices agriculture and, exceptionally, livestock raising. They have their own house covered with tiles, the walls being made of bricks. The clan of NC is *umusinga*, while that of his wife is *umushambo*. NC has three brothers and three sisters, whereas his wife has one brother and three sisters. As shown in Table 4.1, the family has several areas of land. Land in the swamp were

given by the government. The family bought some land in 1971 at a price of 3,000Frw. The area of land inherited from parents is not very large.

Table 4.1
Land Owned by the G1 Family

Area (m ²)	Location	Acquisition	Principal cultivation
2,562	H	P	Sunflower, haricot, sorghum, banana, cassava
7,097	H	P	Sorghum, banana, afforestation
560	H	P	Afforestation
370	H	S	Sunflower
430	H	S	Banana, sorghum
272	W	D	Sweet potato
60	W	D	Sweet potato
54	W	D	Fallow
245	W	D	Fallow
167	W	D	Taro
261	W	D	Sweet potato, aubergine, taro

Source: Survey data.

Legend H: hill land, W: wetland, P: purchased, D: donated, S: inherited.

Compared with their neighbors, the NC family was relatively at ease, because they rented out some fields and got a certain income from this (1,200Frw/year).

NC raises one pig and five goats. This livestock raising gives him a certain income. For instance, in July 1999, he sold two piglets at 6,000Frw. In addition to this cash income, animal husbandry provides him with manure for the fields near his house.

He has some farming tools, (four hoes, one pruning-knife, one axe). He does not use casual labor, family labor being sufficient for him. Problems that he encounters in his agricultural work are the lack of money to buy seeds, and particularly disease (malaria) that sometimes prevents the family from working during the active seasons. Their living standard is low. Meals were composed mainly of beans and sweet potatoes, and drinks were composed of water and porridge. They consume no milk (see Table 3.35).

2. G2 Family

The G2 family lives in Mubumbano (Bweramana cell). The household head, SP,

was born in 1961 in the same sector. His wife was born in 1963 in the neighboring sector of Sholi. The G2 family has 2 children: one daughter 14 years old and one son of 8 months (born in July 1999). This family has never left its homeland. SP resides very near to his parents. The family has many fields, scattered on hills and in wetlands. The total area of land amounts to 1.00 ha. Table 4.2 shows their land holding in detail.

Table 4.2
Land Owned by the G2 Family

Area (m ²)	Location	Acquisition	Principal cultivation
1,638	H	S	Afforestation
1,339	H	S	Afforestation
1,742	H	S	Fallow
1,488	H	S	Banana
1,016	H	S	Haricot, sunflower
600	H	R (2000/Y)	Sorghum
287	H	S	Sorghum
414	H	S	Sorghum
391	W	D	Sweet potato
67	W	D	Aubergine
61	W	D	Aubergine, taro
123	W	D	Aubergine, taro, haricot, gourd
47	W	D	Aubergine
29	W	D	Sweet potato
122	W	D	Aubergine
42	W	D	Sweet potato
95	W	D	Sweet potato
207	W	D	Fallow
249	W	D	Sweet potato

Source: Survey data.

Legend. H: hill land, W: wetland, P: purchased, D: donated, S: inherited, R(2000/Y): rent of 2000Frw per year.

As SP and his wife have completed six years of primary school, they know how to read and write. Although SP's principal job is agriculture, he also often works as a builder. This provides him with a cash income of about 10,000 Frw per month. The activity of livestock raising is not important to him. SP has his own house built of wood with plastered wall and a tiled roof.

SP's clan is "umusinga" and that of his wife is "umuzigaba." SP had one

brother but he died during the events of 1994. His wife has one brother and two sisters.

SP farmed a good number of scattered fields which had been acquired by inheritance from his parents, donation from the “commune” and rent from other peasants.

The life of SP’s family was relatively comfortable, as besides agriculture, SP earns a supplementary income of 10,000 Frw/month as a bricklayer, and his small number of animals (poultry and rabbits) provide him with a cash income. For instance, he sold some hens and small rabbits at 2400 Frw in June 1999. This income enabled him to buy chemical fertilizer (N.P.K.) and manure for his vegetable plantation in the swamp. He employs a worker during the growing seasons and has worked himself as a casual laborer to earn money.

He declared the following two principal obstacles to his agricultural activities:

- the lack of manure and fertilizer
- the lack of selected seeds (especially Irish potatoes)

Their living standard is low if one considers the composition of their meals during the six months: each meal was mainly composed of sweet potatoes and beans. In 90 days, the family ate meat only six times. They generally drank water and sometimes beer. No milk was consumed.

3. G3 Family

This family lives in the Nshingangabo cell of Mubumbano sector. The family head, TH, was born in 1970 in the same sector. His wife was also born in 1970 in the same sector. TH has two daughters, one just one and half year old and the other 9 months old. This family lives with TH’s sister who is about 27 years old.

The TH family had always lived in the sector. Exceptionally, they took refuge in Burundi in April 1994 and came back in December 1994.

This family has sufficiently large fields (2.03 ha) in total. TH acquired the land from the members of his extended family who were killed during the period of genocide. All the fields are scattered on hills, except for two small fields in the swamp. Table 4.3 indicates them in detail.

The educational level of TH and his wife is respectively five years and four years of the primary schooling. This family has its own house in rough-hewn wood and the roof is covered with tiles. TH’s clan is *umusinga*, the same as that of his wife. TH’s wife has only one brother, whereas TH has one sister. The other family members were

killed during the period of genocide in 1994.

Table 4.3
Land Owned by the G3 Family

Area (m ²)	Location	Acquisition	Principal cultivation
3,548	H	S	Banana, taro
296	H	S	Coffee, taro
12,795	H	S	Sweet potato, cassava, afforestation, fallow
796	H	S	Sorghum
192	H	S	Sorghum
586	H	S	Sweet potato
495	H	R (0)	Cassava
1,402	H	S	Haricot, sunflower
80	W	D	Sweet potato
80	W	D	Sweet potato

Source: Survey data.

Legend. H: hill land, W: wetland, P: purchased, D: donated,
S: inherited, R(0): use other's field for free.

The main activity for this family is agriculture, but TH also practices the animal husbandry. He has two cows, three goats, one sheep and two hens.

This family was relatively at ease. In addition to agriculture, TH served as a sector administrator (Conseiller), permitting him to earn 5,000 Frw every month. The family has sufficient traditional tools: two hoes, one machete, one axe and one shovel, and cattle provided manure. TH employs some permanent workers taking care of the cows and some occasional workers.

The main problems for TH are:

- the unfertile land (shortage of manure)
- the lack of sufficient means for rational exploitation

Their living standard is not very high. Their meals are mainly composed of haricot and sweet potato, and the family does not eat any meat.

4. G4 Family

They live in Mubumbano sector (Rwinkuba cell). The household head, SM, was born in 1974 in the same sector. His wife was born in 1976 also in the same sector.

The family of SM has only one child of 9 months (born in June 1999). The activity of this family is principally limited to agriculture, but SM often works as a casual laborer. SM's family had always lived in the sector. It was only during the events in 1994 that the family fled to Burundi and did not come back until September 1996.

All land possessed by this family is scattered on hills. These fields amount to 0.35 ha, as indicated in Table 4.4.

SM and his wife had an educational level of primary school (7 years). They had their own house built in adobe bricks and covered with tiles. The clan of SM is "umuwega", whereas that of his wife is "umunyiginya". SM has three sisters, and his wife has seven sisters. Both of them have no brothers.

Table 4.4
Land Owned by the G4 Family

Area (m ²)	Location	Acquisition	Principal cultivation
1,296	H	S	Sorghum, haricot, cassava
528	H	S	Sunflower, sweet potato, banana
282	H	S	Haricot, taro, banana, cassava
350	H	S	Afforestation
335	H	S	Haricot, cassava
329	H	S	Sweet potato, fallow
420	H	S	Haricot, banana

Source: Survey data.

Legend. H: hill land, W: wetland, P: purchased, D: donated, S: inherited.

SM's family farm seven fields that were inherited from his parents. SM did not have any activity other than agriculture. As for farming tools, he had only three hoes and one pruning knife. He did not employ casual labor, but if necessary, he depended on mutual help (*kuguzanya*).

Principal problems for SM's family are:

- the lack of means (money), tools, manure and fertilizer
- his child's chronic disease handicapping his work

He has spent a lot of time and money caring for his baby. In short, this young couple is relatively poor.

5. R1 Family

The R1 family resides in Ryamanyoni cell of Ryamanyoni sector. The household head, MA, was born in 1969 in Uganda. His wife was born in 1977 in Uganda too. MA and his wife are from the same clan and lineage of *aganyiginya n'abashambo*. The parents of the wife were natives of Ryamanyoni sector. However, the couple arrived in Ryamanyoni sector in October 1994 from Uganda. MA has three children born in 1987, 1988 and 1998.

This family carries out three activities: agriculture, livestock raising and commerce (small shop).

MA has only one big field (0.534 ha) that was received from the state. The field is divided into three plots: for bananas, for seasonal crops such as haricots, and finally for fallow, where he intends to plant crops such as sweet potato and cassava. MA possesses a dozen cows. His grocery store provides the family with a monthly income of around 20,000 Frw.

MA had his own house in an "*umudugudu*" of Ryamanyoni. As for the educational level, MA's wife went for some years to primary school, while MA went for one year of secondary school. The family is relatively well off because, in addition to the agriculture and the livestock raising, they earn some money from commerce. MA moreover has a motorcycle.

The nutritional balance of the family is relatively good because of their milk consumption. However, this family was subjected to constraints like other people: potable water was far from his residence (about 1 of hours on foot). The family possesses the necessary farming tools: four hoes and one machete. MA employs two permanent workers to cultivate and to look after the cows. The family sometimes uses casual workers especially during the beginning of the cultivation period (October or March). The couple sometimes helps neighbors and its extended family in cultivating (*Kuguzanya*).

MA pointed out four difficulties for their agriculture and livestock raising:

- the land shortage
- the lack of capital
- the lack of water and medicines for the cattle
- the theft aimed at their cows.

6. R2 Family

This family lives in Gacaca cell of Ryamanyoni sector. The household head, NC, was born in 1954. His wife was born in 1964. NC's clan is *umwega w'umwakagara*, whereas his wife's is *umusindi*. Only the parents of his wife were natives of Ryamanyoni sector. This couple spent many years in Uganda as refugees and came back to the country in 1994 after the period of genocide.

In fact, the wife of NC was the widow of NC's brother who died during the genocide. She remarried after the war. This is why the family has 6 children: the eldest is 17 years old and the youngest 5 years old. NC has only one brother, but he was killed during the genocide. His wife has two brothers and one sister.

NC's land is sufficiently large at 1.39 ha. It comprises fields on hills and in wetland. Table 4.5 shows the composition of the land in detail. NC's family practices mainly agriculture, with livestock raising as a second activity. They raise two cows and some hens.

Table 4.5
Land Owned by the R2 Family

Area (m ²)	Location	Acquisition	Principal cultivation
7,400	H	D	Sorghum, green pea, sunflower, Irish potato
1,736	H	D	Banana
4,400	H	D	Fallow
25	W	D	Sweet potato
54	W	D	Sweet potato
176	W	D	Fallow

Source: Survey data.

Legend. H: hill land, W: wetland, D: donated.

As for farming tools, the family has three hoes and one machete. They sometimes employ casual workers. Although the living conditions of the family are not particularly severe, they are confronted with such constraints as:

- the lack of water
- the lack of financial means
- the lack of appropriate tools (they want to have a mill.)
- the lack of a market (NC complained that the market was so far from his residence that he could not sell his products.)

7. R3 Family

This family lives in Ryakizenzi cell of Ryamanyoni sector. The household head, ND, was born in 1955, while his wife was born in 1968. They have eight children, of which three were orphans. The eldest child is 17 years old and the youngest one is 8 years old. The family also take care of two aged people, members of the extended family (a half-grand father and his wife, about 80 years old).

This family is not native to Ryamanyoni. ND's parents were natives of Gitarama. They had fled to Uganda and came back to live in Ryamanyoni sector in 1995: after the period of genocide. Their education level was primary schooling: 6 years for ND and 2 years for his wife.

ND's clan is *umusinga*, while that of his wife is *umwega*. ND has two brothers and two sisters. The family resides in an "*umudugudu*" in Ryamanyoni, the house being their own property. They practice agriculture and livestock raising with five cattle and six goats. In addition, ND has served as head of the sector (Conseiller) for one year.

Table 4.6
Land Owned by the R3 Family

Area (m ²)	Location	Acquisition	Principal cultivation
887	H	R(6000/Y)	Haricot
875	H	D	Sorghum, cassava, sweet potato
459	H	R(0)	Irish potato, maize
10,934	H	D	Fallow

Source: Survey data.

Legend. H: hill land, R: rent, D: donated.

The total area of his land amounts to 1.32 ha. Table 4.6 indicates their land in detail. ND rents two fields. While he pays 6,000 Frw in annual rent for one of these two fields, he does not pay any rent for the other. He received the other fields from the state.

The living standard of ND's family is relatively comfortable, as he has some livestock and serves as head of the sector. The family has three hoes. Living relatively near to a public well (20 minutes on foot), it is not difficult for the family to get potable water.

The family employs a permanent worker to take care of the cattle. It is sometimes necessary for them to employ casual workers for agricultural work (especially with sowing and harvesting). The couple occasionally helps neighbors with their

agricultural work.

The difficulties for ND are:

- the lack of seeds
- the lack of phytosanitary and veterinary products
- the lack of farming tools and equipment
- bad weather, especially drought.