Forms of Peasant Agricultural Co-operatives in Uganda: A Case Study in Lango

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1. INTRODUCTION

Understanding how the state-regulated and non-state regulated forms of peasant co-operatives are part and parcel of a single historical process forms the central subject of this study. At a broader level, the need to understand the relationships between forms of peasant co-operative institutions and social formations is necessary if at all we are to identify the socio-economic and political conditions that affect the evolution, organization, operations and development of such institutions. These relationships shall be examined both under conditions of stateless-based social formation during pre-colonial Lango society, and during the period of the transition to, and the establishment of class-based social formation (including the mechanisms by the colonial and neo-colonial states in achieving it). Hence, underlying this study is the view, that to understand the interaction between state-regulated and non-state regulated forms of peasant co-operatives is indeed to understand how non-capitalist and capitalist forms of co-operatives co-exist and affect each other. This is important if we are to explain how capital penetrates the countryside. It is also important if we are to explain how capitalist relations and forms of production interact with and/or tries to subjugate non-capitalist forms of production, and how this in turn resists and continue to remain resilient in the face of heightened social, political, economic, and environmental crises confronting them.

For Lango in particular the objective conditions in the pre-colonial period were such that population was sparse, the general environment harsh and the productive forces underdeveloped. Land was owned on a communal basis. A non-commodity form of production based on gathering, fishing and hunting as well as gardening and shifting cultivation of grain crops (millet) dominated. Production, therefore, was mainly for subsistence: trade affected only surpluses or specific jobs, often complementary. Most income was from agriculture, millet being the major product. Hunting and gathering formed an integral part of the productive cycle. Given the primitive level of development of the productive forces, the dominant form of labour organization was in the form of co-operative labour teams called Wang tic which was a direct response to the objective conditions at the time. For clearly co-operation in labour paid greater dividends for peasants more than individual labour.
We will argue in this study that, in the same way that it adopted kinship structures, the capitalist economy did make this form of peasant co-operation its own. Although the form, in terms of organization and operations continued to be the same, the degree that the requesting household.party occupied a socially dominant position in society (as a result of social differentiation) meant that overtime the content or the underlying socio-economic relations among the members was no longer quite the same. The content of this form of peasant co-operation had changed. And having changed, the principal idea of reciprocity became undermined and excluded. So that rich peasants and capitalist farmers soon used Wang tic as wage-labour teams. While simultaneously the colonial as well as the neo-colonial state utilized them as forced-labour teams.

Specifically, in the colonial era, a blend of this "non-capitalist" (here-in-after: non-state-regulated) and the colonial/capitalist "modern" or "official" (here-in-after: state-regulated) peasant co-operatives evolved. Central to the evolution of the state-regulated peasant co-operative was the introduction of cotton as a commodity (cash) crop. The introduction of cotton brought about changes in the traditional land tenure system and seasonal labour shortages as an outcome of the conflicting labour demands for food-crop production. But also due to the region's incorporation into the wider colonial economy as a labour reserve providing migrant labour for the raw material producing region of the south. More significant the introduction of cotton and the state-regulated co-operatives also saw the emergence of a non-producing class of merchants and state-regulated co-operative bureaucrats - under whom the peasants increasingly became marginalised, as the co-operative institution became more and more an arena where different political and economic interests came at play.

With these developments the non-state-regulated form of peasant co-operation became reorganized or transformed to serve the export production interest. It became a form of disguised wage-labour teams. Importantly, there emerged marked altered socio-economic (especially property ownership) relations as a result of class differentiations among peasant families. And this when confronted by the market took on different forms, generating conflicts between the different classes but specifically in the form of peasant struggles for viability and autonomy. To this extent we see also that an examination of the dynamics of forms of peasant co-operative organizations, their potentials and/or limitations in
the process of social transformation and democratization is a significant aspect in this study.

1.1 Conceptual Issues

We use the term "non-state regulated" co-operatives to refer to those "informal" forms of peasant co-operative organizations in agricultural production commonly found in Lango society and called "Wang tic." They are not legally registered or recognized (i.e. existing outside the framework of state laws). Under this form of co-operative arrangement some or all members of different peasant households in Lango help one another by labouring together during agricultural production, while maintaining their separate existence as economic entities. It is a form of peasant co-operative organization that is indigenous to rural Africa. It involves both peasant men and women. But the term is also class-specific as we shall see later. Such organizations appear fragile and impermanent. Their structures are often voluntary, self-managed and participatory in traditionally accepted ways. Nonetheless, they play a critical role not only in the labour process in agricultural production but also in peasant struggles for ability and help create the enabling conditions for the discreet pursuit of peasant autonomy.

The above conceptual clarification, we hope, clearly distinguishes the state-regulated ones, which are founded upon the Rochedalian-conventional co-operative principles as joint undertakings formed for the explicit purpose of running a modern business and are legally registered under state laws. Such organizations have hierarchical forms of leadership structures, and may not be voluntary and/or participatory.

1.2 The Study Problem

The broad problem investigated in this study is the extent to which the character of capital that penetrated the Uganda economy (Lango inclusive) and the underdeveloped character of the colonial economy did contribute to the persistence of pre-capitalist (non-capitalist) modes of production and reproduction on the one hand, and the process and mechanisms of preservation of non-state regulated co-operatives within the context of the development of the state-regulated co-operatives, on the other hand: and how this in turn led to contradictions within the Lango society i.e. contradictions resulting from the
development of classes among the Langi. Hence, the need to understand what identifiable social classes has arisen with the development of the colonial and post-colonial economy, and the conflicts and struggles that accompanies it.

The study, therefore, is an inquiry into the process(es) of the integration of the non-state regulated peasant co-operatives of Wang tic into the capitalist system; the extent of its penetration by capital and the major transformations that have taken and are taking place in the features of these forms of peasant co-operatives, now serving the interest of capitalism. It is, thus, an inquiry into the mechanisms of transition from stateless-based social formation to capitalist social formation which accounts for the process of social differentiation that took place and is taking place in Lango society as a whole. This involved investigating into the character of the production relations and the ownership relations of the means of production such as land that has evolved, its changing character and the impact and implications they have had and is having for the organization of labour as a whole, and the division of labour/roles in the society between men, women, and the youth.

Linked with these is the question of the role of the state and its functionaries in the whole process of capital penetration, capital accumulation and specifically in the sphere of co-operative institutional development. That is, looking at the changing character of the state and state ideology on development as it affects both forms of peasant co-operatives. The problem is to address the specific question of the mechanism of transition or changes in the form, class and gender contents of both forms of peasant co-operative institutions resulting from the establishment of the capitalist market and capitalist institutions. That is, in-depthly studying the nature of the interaction between the two forms of peasant co-operatives, and the resistance (s) and/or organized struggles engaged in by the peasants as they get confronted by the capitalist market.

Some of the additional specific questions the study deals with include, for example, how the application of Wang tic and state-regulated co-operatives varied over time with the social differentiation taking place; the changing gender and class content of these peasant co-operatives particularly the extent to which the women are participating in their formation, running and control. Which classes are organizing each form of co-operative and in whose interest. In other words, what have been the consequences of the establishment of the capitalist market on
the form and content of these peasant co-operative organizations in terms of membership, leadership, internal democracy, participation and the class interest it serves. And to what extent do these forms of peasant co-operation assist and influence production, processing and marketing of agricultural products. Basically, how have (do) these peasant co-operatives related (relate) to the capitalist market or the merchant capitalist class in Lango and Uganda as a whole.

This means that at a more specific level, the study is seeking the explanation for the apparent exploitative character of the state regulated co-operatives and the ideology that legitimises it. Particularly, how the various social forces (economic or political) relate to and use peasant co-operative organizations to serve their interests, and the different forms of resistance adopted by the peasants in response to the changing character of the state and the forms of capital development in the rural Loci.

The main thesis we advance in the study is that the character of the colonial economy which developed in Lango did lead to social differentiation in that society and to the transformation/subjugation of the then existing forms of peasant co-operative organizations that it found on the ground, so that the autonomy of those forms of peasant organizations have largely been subordinated in the interest of capital; and that the character of the colonial and neo-colonial state in Uganda has had a direct bearing on the trends of the development of the different forms of peasant agricultural co-operatives we find in rural areas today.

1.3 Research Methodology

This study is a focused in-depth case study based on a four months field research in two villages, Otwon village and Alenga village in West Lango (Apach district), the findings in which provide the bulk of our empirical data. Alenga village is located east of the district, in Maruzi County, Ibuje sub-county and along Apac-Masindi Port-Kampala road. The village is 23 miles from Apach town, the district headquarters. Gtwon is located West in Akalo Sub-county of Kole County and is 3 miles off Lira-Aduku-Apac road. The village is 11 miles from the major town of Lango, Lira.

In our sampling of the two villages, purposive sampling was employed to obtain two villages located within what formerly used to be Lango district. Otwon
village was judgementaly selected on the criteria of its being a cotton producing area and having a primary co-operative (cotton) society located in it. In the same manner the second village, Alenga, which is also a cotton producing area, was selected. We expected to find in the selected villages the non-state regulated forms of peasant co-operative organizations. In each village two of such non-state regulated forms of peasant co-operatives were selected for a more thorough and detailed study. These were 'Te got' and 'Pe puru centre' in Alenga and 'Acan Kwo Ilwete' and 'Otwon Ipiny' in Otwon village. In selecting these non-state regulated co-operative groups, we were guided by considerations of the social and gender composition of the members.

In each village our ultimate sampling unit was the household. Household listing/register for each village was obtained from the Resistance Council 1 (RCI) Chairperson/Secretary, and a simple random selection technique was used to obtain a sample of 78 households in Otwon village and 81 households in Alenga village. This was done by assigning sequential numbers to the households listed in the village RCI register, and then using random tables we selected the households. Within the households, one member of the household viz. the head of the household, (i.e. a total of 159 respondents) constituted the first cohort of our interviewees/respondents.

The second cohort consisted of the following:

(1) leaders/officials of the non-state regulated co-operatives namely the chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, treasurer, "askari" and three committee members eight members.
(2) Officials/leaders of the state-regulated co-operatives at the primary society level (9 members).
(3) The co-operative union officials at the Union head-office in Lira; the district co-operative officials; and the officials in the Ministry of commerce, Cooperatives and Marketing; former veteran politicians (elders) both women and men, particularly those whose names were mentioned as associated with the nationalist movement founding of the co-operative movement. Four of these were located and interviewed. Current local political leaders, at village and district levels were also contacted and interviewed. Particularly the local village chiefs and the RC executive members - specifically, the secretaries for youth, women affairs, mass mobilization for development, the chairman and
treasurer. While in the field we learnt that there was an on-going World Bank/Swedish/Uganda Government Co-operative Rehabilitation Project covering 1990-5, under the Uganda Co-operative Alliance (UCA). We interviewed two of the project implementors.

Four methods were used simultaneously in the collection of data for this study. First, by methods of oral history or popular memories which provided data for most of our descriptive analysis in this study. Identified village elders/veteran political activists (both men and women) were asked to recount their knowledge of the various forms of co-operative organizations in Lango society from pre-colonial through colonialism to the present day, dealing with the changes in their organization, operations, membership and leadership. The aim here was to obtain data that could help us achieve a reconstruction of the history of the various forms of peasant co-operative organizations and to elicit the mechanisms of their interaction.

For that matter, we also asked the identified elders to recount their experiences of, and involvement in, the introduction/initiation and propagation of state and non-state regulated co-operatives. The accounts by the elders also encompassed their knowledge of the link between the co-operative movement and nationalist/post independence politics and the question of political leadership and leadership of the co-operative movement, including the major issues of concern for the co-operative movement then. They were also asked to describe the organization of production, processing and marketing of crops, particularly the role of co-operatives in these and the question of merchant capitalist (Indians/Africans). Our aim here was to capture the historical developments and the major conjectures (and trajectories) in the development of both forms of peasant co-operative organizations. However, aware of the complexity and intricacy of the history of the development of these co-operatives, we thought that the narratives by the elders could likely not be totally complete. Therefore, during the period of field research we resided in the villages. At the end of every day we joined the village members at their various "Akiba" group meetings and opened discussions/debate with them over these issues, with the purpose of corroborating the narrative facts. The group discussions were useful in enabling us cross-check for memory failures by individual respondents in their narration.
Our second method of data collection was by use of a combination of structured and unstructured questionnaire. This was administered to the heads of the sampled households and the leaders of co-operatives. With it we obtained household level data covering the socio-demographic information on households - the name of the household heads, their occupation, sex and age of the family members, education level, and settlement pattern. The questionnaire also asked specific information on the means and forces of production (e.g. land ownership, labour arrangement for farm work and nature of technology), major sources of household income/expenditure patterns and indebtedness and money lending. Information on crop production by area cultivated and output, utilization of surplus and access to market and credits were also sought. This set of data was tabulated to discern among other things the levels of social differentiation in the study villages, labour organization at household and village levels and economic activities engaged in by households as sources of household income and property relations.

Through the same instrument another set of data enabled us to determine the degree of peasant participation in either forms of co-operation and the linkage factors between them including their limitations and potentials. Questions here sought to reveal the levels, duration and flexibility of participation in both state-regulated and non-state regulated co-operatives by household members. Questions were also asked frame work and the local power structure in the villages in relation to each form of co-operative organization including election of leaders and intervention of the state. These sets of data did allow us to determine the exploitative character of each form of co-operative organization, their interaction with capital form of co-operative organization, their interaction with capital and the state, the changing trends in their organization/management, and the forms of accountability and internal democracy in each.

Secondary data constituted one of the sources of data we collected. The method of data collection used here was the analysis of written documents, such as reports, unpublished theses and dissertations, newspapers and other relevant documents obtained from the authority and other institutions. Specifically, a re-reading of monographic accounts of co-operative labour studies appearing in anthropological studies was done. This was used to reconstruct the past particularly the aspects dealing with the pre-colonial social formations and its history and the labour organization/production relations then. The official records
(files and reports) at all levels of the relevant Government departments at the
district headquarters, especially the departments of Agriculture, Lands, and Co­
operatives, were consulted. We also looked at the records (files, minutes and
reports) at the Co-operative Union Office, primary societies and those with the
leaders of non-state regulated co-operative organizations. Archival records at the
Entebbe Government archive was used to obtain secondary data too. The
Makerere University Africana section and the East Africana section of the
University of Dar es Salaam main library, Centre for Basic Research Library in
Kampala provided most of the secondary data we analyze in respect of the state
and co-operatives during the colonial and post-colonial periods. Especially we
were able to obtain vital statistics on agricultural production, the history of
participation by peasants and merchants in state-regulated co-operatives and
generally the relationship between politics and co-operatives.

The basic material for this study is presented as follows: Part one is concerned
with the introductory aspects of the study. It provides the theoretical context of
the study and examines the basic theoretical propositions on the subject of
capitalism in the agricultural sector of the underdeveloped economies. The
discussion focuses mainly on the broad survey of the literature/debates on the
incorporation of the "traditional" or pre-capitalist sector into the "modern"
capitalist sector.

In Part two, we examine the historical context in the development of the forms of
peasant agricultural co-operative organizations from the pre-colonial to the
colonial periods together with the impact of each era on them. Part three deals
with the question of the post-colonial state and peasant agricultural co-operatives.
It deals specifically with the question of social differentiation of the peasantry and
forms of labour, popular participation and democratic control, the relevance,
limitations and potentials of peasant co-operatives and the issue of peasant
struggles. Part four is the conclusion. It is made up of the general summary, the
major findings of the study and offers some general recommendations.

2. THEORETICAL CONTEXT

For many years the promotion of peasant co-operative institutions in the
developing countries has generally been influenced and shaped by the
modernization/developmentalist dichotomy between "traditional" and "modern" forms of co-operation. Academic studies have been victims of this dichotomy and for long remained structured along it (Worsely, P. (ed.), 1971). These see peasant co-operatives as based on the ratio-legal character of the co-operative organization i.e. membership being an outcome of criteria and values formalised and legalised. This organizational mode is usually contrasted with one believed to prevail in Africa in which membership is determined by customs, absence of ratio-legal management procedures, and with organizational objectives and functions which are diffusely defined (Hyden, G., 1988).

But this dichotomization between "modern" and "traditional" is both theoretically and analytically inadequate in any explanation of the different forms of peasant co-operative institutions in African societies. The tendency to structure analysis of peasant co-operative institutions in this manner has led to an exclusive emphasis on the state-regulated forms of peasant co-operatives at the expense of other forms (Okereke, O. 1970). In addition, because nearly all current studies on co-operatives in Uganda are based mainly on official government and union records and reports, they fail to capture those other forms of peasant co-operation lying outside the state-regulated co-operative framework. This constitutes a methodological limitation. The limitation derives from the methodological and theoretical problems inherent in the modernization approach which most of these studies deploy in their analysis of co-operative institutions.

2.1 Modernization Approach

Fundamental to theories of modernization is a perceived dichotomy between two parallel, qualitatively unequal sets of values, and a notion of social evolution. Here, traditional value systems are viewed as the opposite of modern value systems (Valenzuela, I.S. and Valenzuela, A., 1981). On the one hand, the industrialized countries are seen as having attained the status of modernity after a long transition to contractual, individualistic, achievement-oriented, economizing and scientific-rational values. The non-industrialized world, on the other hand, is said to be dominated by values lumped together as traditional: predominance of kinship relations, communal loyalty, ascriptive status and maximizing economic behaviour where social ends take precedence over accumulation (Valenzuela, I.S. and Valenzuela, A., 1981). The theory assumes that the alleged attributes of traditional societies "are both an expression and cause of underdevelopment"
Valenzuela, I.S. and Valenzuela, A., 1981) and view their persistence as a serious obstacle to development. The prescription contained in these arguments is for non-industrial societies to abandon their traditional values in order to develop. Development, thus, equals Westernization a strikingly ethnocentric perspective.

Modernization as a concept also carries with it an evolutionary connotation, since it assumes that all societies necessarily pass through a determined number of stages "from a state of relatively indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a state of relatively definite, coherent homogeneity" (Roxbourough, I., 1979). A common starting point is assumed for all societies, and western societies are regarded to have passed through the traditional stage which the underdeveloped societies are yet to overcome (Apter, D., 1965). According to the modernization theorists even after the underdeveloped economies have been absorbed into the capitalist relations, they must still pass through a period of "dualism," characterized by parallel sectors which are not yet integrated, and characterized by different operations. The dual sector, it is argued, varies between rural/urban, agricultural/industrial or traditional/modern. This dual structure is seen by Rostow as inhibiting saving by elites, who are subject to a "demonstration effect," and only a "big push" by all sectors can bring about a fundamental change (Rostow, D.A. 1960: 126). This big push is to be achieved through a combination of capital accumulation and western technology, which in Africa means export trade and capital importation. Thus, neo-colonial states have to specialize in primary commodity production for export. Given the unquestioned laissez-faire basis of this model, the neo-colonial state is assigned the role of mobilizing savings, giving directions for investments, negotiating loans and guiding expenditures, all on behalf of the inexperienced natives. A comparatively recent reassertion of modernization ideas is the "Berg Report" of the I.B.R.D. which sees Africa's economic crisis as due mainly to internal constraints with external factors held to be marginal (The World Bank, 1981).

But modernization as a theory of development has had extremely limited success in explaining the economic problems of Africa, and even less at prescribing solutions. The crux of the matter is empirical. First both the conceptual validity and selectivity of terms employed by the school are disputable. Characterization in terms of "traditional" and "modernity" are superficial. And the assumption of a dichotomy between them as mutually exclusive possibilities is wrong. For the interaction between capital and pre-capitalism gives rise to new social relations in
the countryside which, despite their appearance as pre-capitalist patriarchal relations, are in fact very much part and parcel of the process of capital accumulation. And so to treat them exclusively as pre-capitalist is to mistake form for content. On this score we find Hyden's *Uncaptured Peasantry* (1980) and *No Shortcuts to Progress* (1983) interesting (Hyden, G., 1980). Hyden argues that in much of Sub-saharan Africa there exist a district peasant mode of production and that the peasantry remains "uncaptured" by the market and the state. He persists that development can only take place if the autonomy of the peasants is removed by coercion. This leads him to argue that democratic participation in the co-operatives will only be possible in Africa after a change in the "mode" of production and consequently in the "mentality" of the people has taken place. In other words, after the supposedly "economy of affection" has been replaced by capitalist economic social relations. Hyden falsely assumes here that a mentality developed through a capitalist discipline of labour is necessary for cooperation and democratic participation to take place.

Obviously it is clear that "inappropriate attitudes" or "non-capitalist values" are no explanations for underdevelopment. To be sure, every society, be it in Africa, North America or Europe, has its own share of inappropriate attitudes as far as development is concerned. The paradox which has yet to be explained however, is why such values should block development in some societies while not in others. After nearly a century of experiments with capitalist development theory, which is what modernization is all about, underdevelopment and poverty in Africa has not decreased. This fact requires that, on the whole, modernization theory be rejected as an explanation of Africa's post-colonial development experience.

The evident failure of the modernization theory ushered in the dependency discourse. But perhaps before we deal with the dependency discourse. But perhaps before we deal with the dependency discourse let us briefly turn to the contribution of the classical Marxists on the debate on the relationship between pre-capitalism and capitalism.

### 2.2 Marxist Theories: Classical Marxist Theories

Marx and many of his influential followers such as K. Kautsky and V.I. Lenin had the tendency to forecast the imminent eradication of those forms or relations of production that were alien to the logic of production founded on capital and wage-
labour (Lenin, V.I., 1967). That is, they expected the peasantry to be eradicated by expanding capitalism. According to them a process of social differentiation was expected to split the peasantry into a class of capitalist farmers and rural proletariat - Lenin and Mao Ze Dong particularly emphasize class differential of the peasantry and its dynamics (Mao-Tse-Tung, 1965). It would seem that the perception of the peasantry by the orthodox Marxist was premised on the "orthodoxies of evolutionary stage theory" (Chavalier, J.M., 1982) or conceptualization of modes of production which presupposes that all societies in the world have to pass through five modes of production namely, from primitive communalism, through slave mode, feudal mode, capitalist mode to the most advanced stage of socialism.

Historical evidence, however, has proved that such a unidirectional process has not occurred; (Mpangala, G.P., 1992) not even in the case of Russia or China. This has subjected classical Marxist theories to criticism which basically points out that although the peasantry was not an integral part of capitalism, it has nevertheless been able to resist direct capitalism's penetration, and essentially because of their characteristic of self-exploitation. In a much similar way as classical Marxists, the dependentistas have insisted upon the historically determining role of capitalism as the main path of the 'modern wheel of history.' This led scholars such as G. Frank, Wallerstein and many others to a broad reformation of the Marxian discourse, or to a redefinition of under-development, from being a direct effect of the economic backwardness of poorer countries to being an immediate consequence of capitalist growth (Frank, A.G., 1969).

### 2.3 Dependency Approach

Theories that have arisen in antithesis to the modernization theory such as the dependency theory which explain development in terms of the development of the capitalist system on an integrated world scale (Frank, A. G., 1969; Amin, S., 1972) also suffer from inadequacies. Hopkins succinctly put it that:

> Whereas modernization attributed economic backwardness to internal constraints of 'traditional' societies and presumed that external contacts would be instrumental in removing them, the dependency thesis argues that it is the external links which have created economic backwardness by forgoing chains of dependency and inequality between the privileged core and an unexploited periphery (Hopkins, A.G., 1979).
This formulations point out that what had been regarded as a constant in the modernization theory, namely the external context of the society in question, is taken as the crucial explanatory variable in the dependency approach. This argument runs throughout all the various stands of the dependency school that have specifically studied Africa (For example see Rodney, W., 1972; Amin, S. 1976; Wallerstein also, 1973; Leys, C., 1975 Brett, E.A., 1972). Yet it is this focal assumption which, constitutes dependency school's major draw-back, since while the external factor is obviously crucial, it is by no means the only important variable.

Dependency theory takes national development as involving such elements as: the autonomous accumulation of national capital, the complete elimination of pre-capitalist modes of production and the freeing of labour from the means of production. Implicit in this is the idea that there exist one path along which productive forces will become developed. This is for the pre-capitalist modes either to be destroyed completely or entirely transformed; for national capital to be freed from its dependence on metropolitan capital, and the national bourgeoisie from its allegiance to the imperialist bourgeoisie (Vercruijasses, Emile, 1984). This view, thus obscures the forms or character and function of the state. It artificially restricts the existence of relationships which reach beyond the national framework to relations among national states. Thus, giving an impression that within each 'nation society' capitalism will develop along the same lines as previously within some of the core states.

However, in seeking an explanation of the differences in development between core states and periphery states, we should certainly consider the relative strength or weakness of their capitalist classes. And the relative power of the capitalist class should in turn be studied in terms of the existing class structure and the conflicts inherent within each, that is as the outcome of the continuing class struggle. Since, therefore, the main internal dynamics is located at the level of class structure and class conflict, our analysis should then proceed in terms of forms of production or co-operation, or rather of the social relations within a given specific articulation of a number of co-existent forms of (peasant) cooperation/production, within which a definite class structure is defined, specifically focusing on the articulation of capitalism or capitalist forms of co-operation with non-capitalist forms of co-operation.
2.4 Class Analysis in the Context of Articulation and the Theory of the Neo-Colonial State

It is a well recited fact that capital confronts pre-capitalist institutions and bends them to suit the requirements of capital accumulation, thereby formally subsuming labour under capital, and at that without altering the institution's internal formal relations. Hence, today after a century since formal colonialism began we still find in Africa rural communities where activities are still organized within "traditional" or pre-capitalist forms of arrangements. Evidently, there is need to inquire why and how these pre-capitalist forms of peasant co-operatives still persist in the face relations, with its labour activities subordinated to the demands of capital accumulation.

Ray has argued that once the domestic communities have been integrated into the capitalist system, capitalism will ultimately transform all pre-capitalist modes of production (co-operation) completely (Ray P.P., 1979). This argument seem to us to come dangerously very close to the central thesis of the modernization thesis which assumes that the failure for development to take place lies with the pre-capitalist society itself. In fact both Wallerstein and Wolpe have argued that it may precisely be capitalism rather than the pre-capitalist mode of production that is obstructing a radical transformation of the pre-capitalist production relations (Wallerstein, I. (1973) and Wolpe, H. (ed.), 1980). Their argument is that under certain circumstance and/or during a specific period, it may very well be in the interest of capitalism to preserve (articulate) rather than destroy completely the pre-capitalist mode of production or social relations. Hence their conclusion that it was also in the interest of capital to preserve the pre-capitalist peasant institutions.

One of the explanations for the tendency of capitalism to articulate and not destroy the pre-capitalist forms of peasant co-operative institutions is that the traditional institutions found in many pre-colonial African societies proved to be extremely resistant to external influence. Consequently, the capitalist mode of production/co-operation was unable to penetrate fully to the core of the old order and establish its hegemony except in certain white settler enclaves and a few modern "growth-poles" (Kennedy, P., 1977).
As an analytical tool, the "theory of the articulation of modes of production has been useful in as far as it emphasized the continuing existence and importance of the (partially transformed) pre-capitalist modes of production within the under-developed social formations, and the necessity of studying the development of class power structures in relation to the various modes of production (and their articulation). Both emphasis presuppose a historical perspective (Hindess, B. and P.Q. Hirst, 1975) or their complex articulation and interaction in the context of capitalism's own historical development.

Taken a step further and integrated with the theory of class analysis or the theory of social formation (Rodney, W. (1972); Amin, S. (1976); Mamdani, M., 1976; Heinemann; Mpangala, G.P., 1992; Crummey, D. and Stewart C.C. (eds.), 1981) the contribution of the "articulationist" school is an important one since it permits us to go beyond the treatment of non-capitalist modes of production as passive 'horizons' of capitalism, that is, as historically given 'environments' that simply furnish some of the elements needed for the growth of capital accumulation, such as raw materials, labour and markets. The theory of social formations in particular attempts to relate systematically the intense neo-colonial states' exploitation of the domestic communities to the "class character" of the neo-colonial state, thereby providing us with useful insights in the analysis of social formations (Mamdani, M., 1976; Shivji, I., 1976; Saul, J.S., 1974a; Alavi, H., 1972; Leys, C., 1976; Freyhold, M. Von, 1979).

"Theory of the Neo-Colonial State"

The main thesis of the "theory of the neo-colonial state" is that the post-colonial state has been taken over by a class without any economic power base in society, namely, the petty bourgeoisie. They argue that, lacking any economic base in society, the ruling class in order to reproduce itself seeks to accumulate either through the promotion of state or private property or through the exploitation of labour and the extraction of surplus from the pre-capitalist forms of production. To them this constitutes the reason why the neo-colonial state has generally been disinterested in the total transformation of the pre-capitalist mode of production, but is, on the contrary, profiting from its continuous existence.

However, up to now the "theory of the neo-colonial state" has failed to take into consideration the continuing existence and perhaps the significance of the
(partially transformed) pre-capitalist mode of production, and to study class and power structures within the under-developed social formations in African societies in relation to the various modes of production (and their articulation). Instead it has tended to study the class of petty bourgeoisie in isolation from other classes and social forces in society whose formations must have definitely also resulted from the historical processes of the articulation of modes of production.

It is, therefore, our central thesis in this study that both the "theory of the articulation of modes of production" and "the theory of the neo-colonial state" should go along the way in explaining why and how the colonial and post-colonial state suppressed independent farmers' organizations, and specifically the cooperatives, and in the main succeeded in ousting the class of capitalist farmer-traders (Kulaks) from cotton trade, thus blocking their sources of accumulation. And secondly, how the partial preservation of the pre-capitalist forms of peasant co-operation and production/reproduction has guaranteed a continuing supply of cheap commodities to the state while at the same time making the producers withdraw from production of commodity crops for the capitalist market and revert to food production. We shall particularly have recourse to the historical materialist framework within which we shall locate and integrate class analysis in the context of the articulation of forms of co-operation-production and the theory of the neo-colonial state in our analysis. The critical theoretical concepts in the study include 'relations of production,' 'forms of cooperation in production' and 'means of production', which are theoretical constructs as well as real categories. The central concept for our analysis is the 'form of cooperation', conceived through a double specification of the unit of cooperation in production and the social formation.

The unit is the 'cell' or locus of petty production while the social formation provides the context for reproduction of units of production and in combination with the internal structure of the unit, determines its conditions of reproduction, decomposition or change. The concept Mode of Production (MOP) is an articulated combination of relations and forces of production structured by the dominance of the relations of production. In a sense, then, it means that under any given level of social formation there is one or more than one MOP. Where more than one MOP is existent, then one of them is a dominant MOP articulating on the subordinate modes. Depending on the levels of existence in the given social formation, the MOP i.e. the economic base of the society will determine the
nature and the character of the superstructure (the political and ideological structural levels), while the superstructure in turn providing the conditions of the existence of that MOP. This means, as we observed already, that the concept of a MOP is the concept of a determinate articulated combination of relations and forces of production. And by extension it also means, therefore, that there can be no definition of a social formation (of relations and forces of production) independently of the MOP in which they are combined.

On the basis of the above theoretical considerations we now briefly provide below our application of these theories to the studying of the complex social relations (social formation) during the various levels/stages in the development of Lango society, constituted by the articulated combination of both capitalist and non-capitalist forms of production (co-operation). This articulation is a complex, conflict ridden process characterised by the dialectic of subjugation and preservation of pre-capitalist forms of peasant co-operatives or production due to the 'weakly' penetrating capital. By placing our analysis of the peasant co-operatives in Lango within the articulation of MOP problematique we should be enabled to grasp the processes by which the capitalist MOP penetrated the agrarian sector in Lango leading to the subjugation of the pre-capitalist modes of production, but preserving the forms (the household, the co-operative units of production or the so-called 'subsistence sector').

Understandably, therefore, because a 'form of production' can be articulated with the complexes of relations and processes which constitute another form of production, and, because a 'mode of production' is merely a description and a classification of those 'forms of production', a 'form of production' cannot, therefore, be articulated with 'a mode of production'. For to think otherwise, would mean that the term 'mode of production' becomes a real category which ipso facto, ought to be dismissed, as a fallacy of misplaced concreteness.

2.5 Analyzing Forms of Peasant Co-operatives

The spread of capitalism to other parts of the world other than those social formations where it originally developed, has usually taken the form of developing new social formations dominated by capitalist relations, but where the capitalist MOP is articulated with pre-capitalist modes to a higher degree than in its countries of origin. This is attributed to the fact that it did not grow out of
internal contradictions within the existing pre-capitalist MOP, but was imposed through capital penetration from outside. In Uganda, as in the rest of Africa, the initial break in the self-sufficiency of pre-capitalist MOP was achieved in two ways: either peacefully through the activities of merchant capital or through the colonial state using extra-economic coercion in the form of taxes, forced labour, or the compulsory production of cash crops. Specifically in the case of Lango, through the penetration and dissolution by the capitalist MOP of pre-capitalist social formation, the communal MOP in Lango was transformed into the form of petty commodity production. Through a variety of colonial economic, political and administrative methods the peasants have been forced to obtain items of necessary consumption in the market, resulting also in the atomization of the household as an economic unit and in the destruction of the original function that the earlier communal forms of surplus absorption may have had.

Within this context we find that Wang tic is a distinct form of peasant co-operation/production found in Lango which is in articulation with forms of cooperation or production in a different MOP - the capitalist mode. The contradictions emerging out of this articulation are not objectively only class contradictions because of the persistence of non-capitalist relations and form of production. It gives forth a complex structure of class and non-class (or pre-capitalist) relations, with the latter not only being fettered by the former but is dependent and complementary to it. Hence, Wang tic is both subordinated and yet preserved by capital penetration leading to the partial and uneven changes in some of its elements. This is so because while pre-capitalist MOP may seemingly appear to continue to survive, they have been subordinated to capital through a process of preservation/subjugation whereby they are articulated in their diverse relations with capital, particularly through (unequal) exchange relations. As such they remain outside the extended reproduction of the capitalist MOP, but are forced to contribute to it through a kind of primitive accumulation process.

Our point of argument in this analysis then is that although pre-capitalist forms of peasant co-operation/production is maintained, in reality the peasant sells and is compelled to sell his labour power to, and produce surplus value for capital. And if we accept that in essence the income the peasant gets from the sales of commodities is in fact "a wage in disguise" then it means that the pre-capitalist MOP is "emptied of its content." But in accepting this position we necessarily have to accept also that the actual labour process takes place in a petty-commodity
form in which the appropriation of surplus value takes the form of unequal exchange.

In short, the petty-commodity producers in Lango have been subordinated to capital through the market both in regard to their backward and forward linkages, and also by the dominant objective of production becoming directed towards the cycle of capital accumulation and the domination of the labour process by the non-producers. This commoditization of petty-commodity producers succeeds only to the extent that non-commodity relations or reciprocal ties have been largely undermined. This partial subordination has not only depended on the existence of specifically new material base, but has also been wielded by those classes supportive of the penetration of capital. For the process of the articulation of MOP necessarily leads to a complicated process of class formation as we shall demonstrate. The classes so formed are weak in a sense since they do emerge out of a dominant contradiction. Above all the political and ideological relations that emerge are also limited by the continued reproduction of non-capitalist relations and forms of production.

More importantly, in all these processes entailed in the subjugation/preservation dialectic of articulation, the state has continually assumed a central role in managing the struggles between classes and agents of different forms of production. But, since the state itself is a result of these contradictions, it remains locked in the very struggles it sets out to neutralize, thereby turning into an arena for accumulation by a minority and a target of political action for the majority. In sum, from the contradictions between capital's interest in keeping peasant producer prices as low as possible while at the same time trying to keep the goose that lays the golden eggs alive, stems the peculiar role of the state and merchant capital in that social formation which is the result of the processes entailed in the subjugation-preservation dialectic of articulation. For that matter we witness in the countryside the intensified combined function of the state and capital to draw the peasants into the capitalist market and keep them there by using a blend of economic and compulsory measures. The end result of which is the state's and merchant capital's free-hand in surplus appropriation from the peasant - the size of surplus appropriated being determined by market prices and the degree of monopolistic tendencies. For the peasants, being confronted by the barrage of mechanisms of exploitation, they individualistically try to escape into either petty
commodity production with internal market, or into the sphere of the so-called "informal sector".

3. HISTORICAL SITUATION

3.1 Pre-colonial Economic and Socio-Political Organization.

3.1.1 Systems of Production.

The climate of Lango, Northern Uganda, is such that annual rainfall is lower than in the South of Uganda, and the dry season a little longer. As a result the vegetation is more characteristic of well-drained Savannah: shorter and more scattered trees, thinner soils and higher grass cover. The natural vegetation of the region is deciduous woodland (Langdale-Brown, et al., 1964). Right from pre-colonial days the economy of Lango has been very much dependent on these geographical factors. Lango at the time conformed to the pattern of seed agriculture so prevalent in Northern Uganda as a whole. Prior to contact with British imperialism, Lango agriculture, based on communal tenure, was basically a subsistence economy, producing finger millet, sorghum, simsim, pigeon peas and sweet potatoes. There are effectively two seasons, and rainfall comes to a single peak, instead of two. The Langi recognized this by dividing the year into one dry season (oro) - December to March, and one rainy season (cwir) - April to November. The agricultural year begins at the end of the dry season, with the clearing and digging of the ground in preparation for sowing at the start of the rains. There might be a second sowing in June/July for the second crop season which is shorter. Harvesting could begin as early as June and continue to November. By the time the dry season begins in December no crops could be expected for six months. It is, therefore, essential to cultivate the largest possible area, and to store the surplus in granaries; millet is well suited for this, since after careful preparation it can be kept for up to three or more years (McMaster, D.N. 1962).

In pre-colonial times hunting could be organized at any time - for example to protect crops - but it was mainly concentrated in the dry season. Those Langi who lived on the shore of Lake Kyoga or along the principal rivers supplemented hunting with fishing. At the village level, the work-group (Wang tic) provided co-