REGIONAL AND VILLAGE ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES:
PROSPERITY AND STAGNATION
IN LUAPULA, ZAMBIA

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INTRODUCTION

In this paper three interrelated topics are examined: First, the conflicts and strains prevalent in a matrilineal society are described. It is argued that these conflicts are the result of a central structural contradiction inherent in matriliny, namely, that between relations of production, which are individualistic in nature, and distribution processes, which involve social relationships that are communistic in character. The contradiction results primarily from matrilineal inheritance practices which ensure that all wealth accrues to the matrilineage. Since spouses belong to different lineages and since the fruit of their labor cannot be inherited by affines, nuclear and bilateral extended family members do not cooperate nor invest in family or larger cooperative enterprises. As a result, Luapulans have become individual producers.

Second, the impact of the industrial-market system on the preexisting tensions is described. Specifically, it is argued that the contradiction in matriliny fosters a rural class structure and a capitalist route to rural development. The wealthy, who find the matrilineal distributive justice (Poewe, 1978) in conflict with their desire to accumulate capital for purposes of reinvestment, have disengaged from matriliny and adopted Protestant ideologies to justify and further their business interests. By contrast, the poor, who find that matrilineal inheritance holds out the hope of receiving initial endowments, continue to support matriliny because they see in it the means to propel them along the path of private enterprise.

Third, the bulk of the paper describes regional and village economic activities in Luapula Province, Zambia. Processes of “involution” (Geertz, 1963: 80-82) and growth within the context of a river and lake village, respectively, will be portrayed in order to examine the possibility that productive individualism in conjunction with state intervention in the Luapula fishing economy act as impediments to increased earnings and, hence, to increased productivity. The argument is not that state intervention per se is the cause of Luapula involution. Rather, the thesis is that state intervention which ignores, dismisses, or opposes independently powered rural development processes hinders increased economic productivity.
THE BEGINNING:

STRUCTURAL CONTRADICTION OF LUAPULA MATRILINY

Virtually all matrilineal societies are riddled with predictable interpersonal conflicts. These conflicts result directly from the central structural contradiction inherent in matriliny, namely, the contradiction between generalized exchange and, the presence of its counterpoint (Wertheim, 1974: 108), direct exchange (Poewe, 1978).

Matrilineal distributive justice constrains Ego to contribute material wealth continually to a matrilineage, especially when it is his father's, from which he cannot expect a return in kind; at most, his contributions seem merely to validate his claim to membership in the matrilineage of his mother and, depending on his economic circumstances, that of his father or father-in-law. By contrast, patrilateral distributive justice constrains Ego to contribute to a specific individual within a patri-group from whom he expects and receives commensurate returns.

From the perspective of the individual contributor, the simultaneous presence of generalized and direct exchange in matriliny is observed primarily when attention is focused on the exchange of labor and material wealth. For example, in matriliny the surplus labor provided by Ego increases the patrimony of the household, but by virtue of matrilineal inheritance, this patrimony in fact belongs to Ego's father's matrilineage. "On the death of Ego's father, it will therefore pass to Ego's patrilateral cross-cousin" (Terray, 1975: 110).

An important point follows from this analysis. Among the matrilineal peoples of Luapula (Poewe, 1978), as among other matrilineal peoples (for example, the Abron described by Tarrey, 1975), generalized exchange generates conflict and dissension. Importantly, as Luapulans have come in contact with the industrial-market system, the temptation to engage in direct exchange is virtually irresistible. The result is an increasing productive individualism, intended to avoid the pressure to conform to generalized exchange practices, with the option that the producer determine how much of his income or wealth should be shared with kin. Since direct exchange and productive individualism run contrary to traditional matrilineal rules of distribution, big businessmen, successful fishermen, and traders look to an alternative ideology that may be used to justify their exceptional behavior, to form discrete interest groups, and to negotiate new accommodations with society at large. Conveniently, this process of class differentiation is furthered because capitalists can draw on the already free and mobile labor force produced by matriliny.

THE RESULT:

PRODUCTIVE INDIVIDUALISM WITHIN ONE INVESTMENT BLOCK

Even though some people and some villages in the Luapula Valley occasionally and temporarily prosper, the local population as a whole is unable to harness their resources sufficiently to extricate themselves from a situation that results in economic involution.

One of the reasons why Luapulans are unable to escape "circular causation" (Myrdal, 1968: 1843) is an increasingly radical productive individualism. This factor influences those who are able to invest in similar small-scale enterprises within one and the same development block.³ The resulting circularity may be summarized as follows:

1. Basically, men in the valley fish and women grow cassava. These economic
activities require only minimal productive cooperation and this was formerly provided through matrilineal kin ties.

2. With the recent monetization and capitalization of the fish trade and most other economic activities, productive individualism has become even more pronounced. Youths who might be expected to work for their seniors, or wives who might be expected to invest in a joint venture with their husbands, fail to do so since they realize that despite their individual efforts, the products of labor will not be inherited by them.

Matrilineal inheritance leads to the dispersal of wealth among matrilineages independently of individual productive contributions and, by way of reaction, furthers the development of productive individualism. In the context of a monetized economy, this mode of fixed capital distribution encourages a preference for independent work whereby kinship obligations continue to be met through wide consumer sharing rather than by productive cooperation.

Productive individualism inclines people to search for short-term urban or mining jobs. This way of avoiding work-based long-term involvements with kinsmen, however, is increasingly closed because (a) jobs in cities are now virtually non-existent and (b) the present government prefers people to remain in rural areas where jobs are in fact few. Large businessmen, who have shown an interest in investing in manufacture that would generate jobs, have been discouraged because the government set an upper limit of K500,000 on the ownership of private assets. In consequence people continue to invest their effort and/or capital in multiple local enterprises that require a minimum number of workers, a minimum amount of coordination, and short-term contracts.

3. A villager tends either to remain in the fish trade or to invest in a small store. Indeed, ownership of stores that carry similar consumer goods in varying quantities, is the final goal for most fishermen and female cultivators. This was the case even in the late 1940s when Ian Cunnison conducted research in the Luapula Valley. Increasing numbers of stores are started in the same village. These, however, survive only because of commodity shortages and transportation or inventory inefficiencies; thus as one business runs out of a product, buyers go to other stores which may still carry that product. Gradually, some villagers come to recognize the overabundance of stores and diminishing sales. In some cases disinvestment sets in as equipment breaks down, stocks decline, and funds put aside to replace equipment and commodities are used up in private consumption. At this point other villagers begin to migrate, temporarily or permanently, to another part of the valley where reports relate the existence of plentiful fish and few stores. Growth in scale occurs, not so much for an individual venture, but the addition of similar ventures across larger geographical spaces involving more people and more communities. Fishing-trading-storeowning activities are constantly reproduced along the valley.

Over the last 20 to 30 years the prosperity of a number of villages has ebbed. Even in prosperous settlements, however, people are incapable of harnessing human and financial resources to develop a new investment block that is not based solely on fish export.

STAGNATION:
RIVER FISHING AND GENERAL ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES IN LUKWESA

It is difficult to compare fishing activities in the river villages studied by Cunnison with those adjacent to Lake Mweru because comparable quantitative data are not
available. Therefore, to support the claim that stagnation has developed in river villages, while prosperity continues in the lake villages, Cunnison's general descriptions of conditions during the period of his research must be used.

In general, it can be said that the sense of optimism that Cunnison described for the Kazembe-Lukwesa area has since been superseded by feelings of disappointment, malaise, and complaints about being forgotten by those in power. For the end of the 1940s, Cunnison (1959: 25) was still able to write:

There is a feeling that Luapula life is not rural, backwoods life. Commonly one hears: "It is the Copperbelt here" (Kuno ni ku migote). There is much in this...
The town of Kazembe with its hotels, dancehalls, beerhouses and prostitutes is cosmopolitan; it is a Paris of pleasure to which playboys from other tribes come to drink and dance at Christmas and New Year.

The decline of prosperity in Lukwesa and Kazembe and the concomitant decline in optimism is due to the fact that some species of fish no longer frequent the river and that the trade with Greeks in what was then the Belgian Congo has not been replaced in equal scale by trade that would involve Lukwesa with the Copperbelt.

To enable comparison of the river with the lake fish trade, it is necessary to consider the division of labor and the general organization of production in Lukwesa. The following is, therefore, a description of what appears to be an involuted economic activities for villages of limited economic growth.

As is characteristic of villages which are experiencing stagnation, Lukwesa has a growing population of men and women who engage in petty trade. This lengthens the chain of transactions between the production and consumption of a product. These petty middlemen buy various commodities for resale. The goods include eggs, bananas, pawpaws, oranges, and illegally imported Zairean Simba beer.

The growth of small-scale and petty trading creates ever more involuted economic ties within and between villages. By increasing the division of such activities, this process complicates and elaborates such simple procedures as the production and selling of brew and the catching, drying, and selling of fish. Concomitantly, limited profits are divided among an increasing number of people.

In Lukwesa this elaboration is best seen in the preparation and distribution of beer within the village. For example, in Kashikishi women usually grow maize and millet and brew the beer which they sell directly to customers. By contrast, in Lukwesa, the process is further divided. Having registered the complaints of Lukwesa people that there are no opportunities to make money, and unable to persuade Lukwesans to become peasant agriculturalists, local UNIP officials have fostered the reorganization and regulation of beer brewing activities. Thus, at the present time, some women grow maize and millet and sell it to other women who brew the beer. The brewers are allotted different days during which various numbers of them brew beer. Once brewed, the beer is sold to men who are bar owners. They increase the potency of the beer by adding sugar and then raise the price. Bar owners are assigned one day of the week during which they may sell their beer, though leftovers are sometimes sold the next day. A bar owner pays Kwacha 6.25 (Kwacha, hereafter cited as K, equals $1.63) per annum for a license to sell the brew. Formerly some sold Zairean beer publicly at a higher profit. They decorated their bars, persuaded youths to play music on native instruments, and often hired a young waitress. In short, they were competitive and profit oriented. Since regulation of this trade, the number of people involved in village beer selling has increased so that more persons are earning a little less from a relative stable number of customers.
The river fish trade involves three major kinds of economic roles: petty bicycle traders, island fishermen, and a recently evolved role, fishermen-traders. The combined role, fisherman-trader, is a response to government elimination of big lorry-traders from the network.

Petty bicycle traders buy between K3 and K5 worth of fresh fish which they sell within a radius of 25 kilometers (kilometers, hereafter cited as km) at double the price. Monthly earnings vary between K60 to K120. Incomes are unpredictable and virtually non-existent during the dry season. While the majority of these traders have never left the rural area, 20 to 30 percent are men past their middle years, who formerly held jobs at the Copperbelt. Income from this trade supplements their small pensions and/or remittances.

Island fishermen regard fishing as their lifework. They live on islands in the river where they build about three grass huts, one for smoking and storing fish, two for sleeping and accommodating visiting traders or kin. They own or share a canoe and own three to five nets. Career fishermen, and recently fishermen-traders, accumulate between two hundred to four hundred kilos of dried fish per month. Depending where they are sold, 50 to 100 kilo bundles fetch prices ranging between K13 to K60. Monthly incomes vary between K50 to K240. Taking into account a slack dry season, the yearly incomes of river fishermen and fishermen-traders range between K400 to K1000.

Although some of Lukwesa's men are still able to earn considerable amounts of money from commercial fishing activities, the river fish trade has also become ever more involved through the process of including a growing number of men and women in the distribution process. Here, as with beer brewing, UNIP officials have reorganized and regulated activities.

For example, in Lukwesa as in Kashikishi, fishermen prefer to sell directly to big fish traders. Indeed, in the past such direct sales between fisherman and big traders were the rule. This continued to be true following the decline in the early 1960s of the fish population, especially Tilapia Macrochir. In response to villagers' complaints about the absence of opportunities to earn cash, direct transactions between commercial river fishermen and lorry-traders were expanded to include an increasing number of small and petty traders as middlemen. The government forbade traders to buy directly from fishermen on the islands, and instructed island fishermen to bring fresh fish ashore and sell it to villagers at local, controlled prices. In fact, however, fishermen compromised and the following distribution patterns developed: on the one hand, most of the fish caught by island fishermen are smoked and accumulated on the islands, and small-scale traders row out to the islands and buy one or two bundles. These they resell to local lorry owners, or transport by bus or bicycle for resale to the provincial capital or to the Copperbelt. Whereas lorry-traders were invariably men, many of the smaller-scale traders are women. On the other hand, some small fresh fish are brought ashore and are sold to petty bicycle-traders. Finally, fishermen themselves may sell dried fish on the Copperbelt.

It is not the case that the decrease in the Tilapia population was the sole reason why lorry-traders abandoned this area. Rather, lorry-traders were discouraged, on threat of payment of penalty if caught, from buying fish directly from fishers in the river valley. In response, a large number of newcomers, small and petty traders, now share the profits among themselves.

In brief, Lukwesa is undergoing stagnation or what amounts to the same thing in this context, convolution. Total output in terms of wealth has ceased to grow
and is perhaps even declining at the moment. On the other hand, a large population of poorer middlemen has squeezed itself into the productive and distributive process by offering substitute services for lorry-trading and Simba beer selling. Village UNIP leaders are pressured into thinking of innovative ways to participate in economic development, which locally means to create earning situations. Unable to create new jobs, however, they have decided instead to regulate the fragmentation of production and distribution in order to allow a large number of people to earn at least a little and to stifle protest. Rather than increase production and, hence, regional wealth, this kind of rural socialism creates equal impoverishment by forcing the redistribution of existing wealth.

**PROSPERITY: ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES OF GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS IN KASHIKISHI**

Kashikishi is still prosperous, and there is a noticeable differentiation into "economic groups."\(^5\) The ratio of wealthy, to less prosperous, and poor is approximately 1:1:3.

This concept of "economic groups" is taken from Hill (1972), but each group is characterized in somewhat different terms. Economic Group I includes capitalists who control large businesses. There are only five big businessmen in Kashikishi, three of whom live permanently in the Copperbelt. Group II consists primarily of small capitalists whose activities and earnings, especially as fishermen, will be discussed in some detail. Economic Group III comprises the less prosperous population, including canoe fishermen like those in Lukwesa, and semi-skilled independent workers and middlemen. These people will be called petty capitalists. Finally, Group IV is composed of intermittently employed or casual workers. These people are named rural proletarians. They form an unstable group. On the one hand, inheritance of a canoe, boat, or net may turn them into petty capitalists. On the other hand, accidental destruction of any tool of production may propel them back into the casual work force. Since matrilineal inheritance and matrikin aid is considered a real means to advancement, these people, as well as petty capitalists, remain staunch matrilinealists.

Groups III and IV, especially when they are petty middlemen, constitute a redundant work force "that could be eliminated without any loss of efficiency" (Prebisch, 1971: 30). In fact, their elimination would enhance efficiency.

The two businessmen of Group I who live in Kashikishi are "in but not of the village." Most of their contacts, outside immediate business affairs, are with boma personnel and provincial or national government people. They serve as chairmen of various committees at the district and provincial level.

For example, Katoka owns a wholesale business at the Copperbelt, three large stores, four licensed bars, two petrol pump stations in the valley, and three Mercedes trucks. He is also a building contractor for the government. He and the other big businessman have monthly credits of K1,000 with the Zambia Wholesale Company in Mansa, even though they bring in the bulk of their stock from the Copperbelt. Both are distributors, one for soft drinks and flour, and the other for housing materials and sugar. Both live in large modern bungalow-type houses which have electricity, refrigerators, and freezers.

Businessmen find kin obligations an obstacle to economic growth. They attempt to contain expansive and excessive kin obligations by removing themselves spatially from close kin. Importantly, as Seventh-Day Adventists, capitalists use religion to
temper the demands of kinsmen, not to change or eliminate kin relations.

Although these businessmen have assets of about K400,000, they are committed entirely to the fishing-trading development block; for example, neither has ventured to invest in manufacturing. They continue to invest in multiple shallow distributive trading enterprises along the valley.

Under Group II are classified people who are combined small store-owners-traders, traders-fishermen, boat builders or grinding machine owners-fishermen, and simply big fishermen. They are primarily owners of the means of production and, hence, small capitalists. Their range of income varies between K1,500 and K6,500 per annum. All of these people have excellent fishing equipment including plank or fiberglass boats, more than 20 nets and, perhaps, a motor. They hire help to fish and to cultivate gardens. Three-quarters of this population are Jehovah’s Witnesses. By contrast with Seventh-Day Adventists, who look to reform as a way to ease their presently chaotic economic conditions, Jehovah’s Witnesses separate themselves socially by forming a tightly organized and exclusive group in the Luapula Valley. Jehovah’s Witnesses experience noticeably greater success than members of other denominations in maintaining lengthy stable marriages because in exchange for trust, which is so risky for a woman to grant a man other than her brother in a matrilineal setting, the Jehovah’s Witness husband behaves responsibly toward his wife and her offspring. According to Luapula women, husbands, especially impoverished ones, are a luxury. Women feel that easy divorces are vital under conditions in which men are not trained to be primary providers for wife and offspring. Consequently, only under the umbrella of a strong organization like that of the Witnesses, which effectively constrains male behavior, are women willing to increase their loyalties toward their husbands (Poewe, 1978). While women in all other economic groups remain resolute matrilinealists, Group II women and Group I and II men tend to favor a patrilineal distributive justice and the creation of patrincentric households justified and sanctioned by a Protestant ethic.

Group III includes beer brewers and some canoe fishermen who also own between five and ten nets. These fishermen share or combine the means of production (equipment and labor) because they do not have all the equipment needed and cannot afford to hire men. Carpenters and bricklayers who consider this activity their lifework must also be included in this group. They come to be known for their work and trustworthiness. Because the economic conditions of Group III people are subject to windfalls, accidents, and uncertainty, life histories of some individuals reveal that they fluctuate between being hired and being self-employed. They alternate between belonging to Groups III and IV.

The range of income of petty capitalists is somewhere between K400 and K900. While all are practicing matrilinealists, they also try various denominations, such as United, Christian Missions in Many Lands, African Methodist Episcopal, and Catholic.

The majority of these poorer people live in and own sun-dried brick houses with grass roofs. Nearly half the people have gardens in formerly forested areas, while most of the others received gardens from the wife’s mother or mother’s brother. Kinsmen in Kashikishi, linked to these householders, tend to be the woman’s relatives.

Group IV consists of underpaid intermittent workers who scrape together an even smaller income than members of Group III. They work for big fishermen, garden for others off and on, help in the illegal Simba trade, engage in prostitution, and make and sell charcoal.
A man may be paid between K10 and K100 for making bricks. If he is lucky and finds several people for whom he can make bricks, he can earn a small sum. While this work is hard, people prefer to do the job themselves because occasional workers are unpredictable and have a tendency to take money and leave the job unfinished. A man who knows how to lay bricks can earn between K16 for the construction of a small house with unburned brick to K100 for a large house with burned brick. The bricklayer pays a helper to hand him bricks and mix sand or cement with water to set the bricks. Carpenters are paid up to K60 for building the roof frame for an iron sheet roof, and can earn money by making doors and window frames (K10.00 to K15.00 for doors, K3.00 to K4.50 for window or door frames).

People with the lowest income resemble Lukwesa middlemen. They may buy a sack of flour retail and sell it in Zairean villages in small quantities at a somewhat higher price. They watch for local shortages, try to find the product in Zaire and resell it in the village (for example, flashlight and radio batteries). If they inherit a net or canoe, they attempt to become petty capitalists. Not unexpectedly, all rural proletarians are staunch matrilinealists.

Group IV people live in grass huts or small unburned brick houses. Often they do not have cassava gardens because they have no relatives in the village to grant them a plot, and their high mobility may prevent them from cultivating in the forest a great distance away. Usually they grow maize, groundnuts, and pumpkins in small gardens around their houses. They lack furniture such as chairs, beds, or mattresses. They are poor in comparison with other villagers, and they know it.

**EARNINGS OF FISHERMEN**

The prosperity of the community is dependent upon the fish trade, as the amount of money circulated in the Kashikishi area is directly related to the profits of fishermen and fish traders. Although it was not possible to secure precise figures, the following is an estimate of the contribution of the fisheries to the circulation of cash.

Lakes Fisheries pays fishermen who live along the shore from Kashikishi to Ntoto K60,000 to K80,000 per annum, buying between 50 to 60 tons of fish per month. This partly government-owned company is now under pressure to raise its production to one hundred tons per month. Provided this goal is reached, approximately K140,000 will be brought into circulation. Many fishermen are unwilling to sell to Lakes Fisheries because the government controlled prices were too low. In order to meet the quota, Kashikishi’s LF manager was forced to extend the area from which the company buys fish to include additional fishing camps to the north.

Since several fishermen do not sell to Lakes Fisheries, the total amount of money in circulation from the fish trade alone may approximate K170,000. Most of this sum is earned by Kashikishi residents.

The annual gross income of fishermen is affected by a number of variables, including:

1. The size of catch per outing. This varies with (a) seasonality, (b) the kind of boat used, (c) whether or not a motor is used, (d) number of nets mounted in the lake, and (e) whether a set of nets remains in the water continuously. (The effects of seasonality are not pronounced because fishermen catch different species at different seasons.)
2. The number of days actually spent fishing per annum. (Fishermen make one outing on the days they go fishing.)
3. Age of the fishermen. (This affects the effort put into fishing and expenditures for wages.)

4. Involvement in other businesses, such as stores, grinding machines, or carpentry. (This factor affects the fisherman's earnings because these men are able to make arrangements to sell their fish at a distance and receive a higher price because they own a lorry themselves, or have friends who do.)

The gross incomes of individual fishermen vary from about K100 to K10,000 per annum. The highest gross incomes computed for the year from the beginning of September 1972, to the end of August 1973, were K1,540 for those selling to INDECO, and about K7,000 for those who sell privately at a distance.

Table I presents examples of the wide differences in income of fishermen as affected by the following factors: (a) net yardage, (b) number of days spent fishing, (c) ownership of a boat or canoe, and (d) ownership of a motor.

Table I demonstrates that (1) if a fisherman owns a boat and motor, (2) the more nets he keeps continuously in the water, and (3) the more days of the year he goes fishing, the higher his gross income.

### Table I

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<td>Fishermen</td>
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<td>Q</td>
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* Not always used.
† He has a canoe.
‡ He owns a store and also sells at a distance.
§ He owns grinding machines and also sells at a distance.
‖ He owns a store. Most earnings from fishing activity accrue to son under a separate name.
# He builds plank boats and also sells at a distance.
Lake Mweru fishermen owning in excess of 4000 yards of net, a plank or fiber-glass boat and engine, making in excess of 240 outings (i.e., they work at least 240 days per year, the equivalent of a five-day work week), can earn about K2,000 by selling to LF and disposing of some fish privately. Whether they earn much more or less would depend (a) on natural factors—fluctuations in total fish population and in different species of fish, and (b) their ability to sell at a distance. Production presumably could be increased if fishermen owned bigger boats or more than one boat and more nets, provided that the fish population does not decrease.

PROBLEMS OF PRICE

Fishermen by law are supposed to record and sell their catch at the Lakes Fisheries stations where the amounts and species caught are noted for government records. This procedure is intended to rationalize the whole process of fish production and distribution in the future. INDECO buys at government controlled prices and sells in cities at four times the price.

Fishermen are familiar with city prices and are dissatisfied with the prices they receive from INDECO, even though the compensation is better than if they were to sell to private lorry-traders. Lorry-traders prefer to buy only Bream from lake fishermen. Bream has the best market due to its few and easily extractable bones. This type of fish, however, is caught primarily during three months of the year, whereas other species are available throughout the year. Unless local fishermen can make better arrangements, they must sell to Lakes Fisheries though all of them have at least one private customer in addition to INDECO.

More profitable arrangements are made by some of the wealthy and more innovative, especially those who have relationships with lorry owners. Some fishermen build their own ice storage bin, accumulate fresh fish, and make arrangements with a friend who owns an appropriate vehicle to transport and sell the fish in district capitals or the Copperbelt. A few fishermen dry their fish first and then sell at a distance. A group of smaller-scale fishermen sell directly to local customers such as primary and secondary school teachers, hospital staff, wealthy villagers, and boma employees.

Because private sales are largely secret, quantitative data on the income and expenditures of fishermen who employ alternatives to INDECO was difficult to obtain. The character of the arrangement is, therefore, illustrated by reference to several case studies. It will be noted that the income of two men who sell at a distance is considerably higher than that of three others who sell to INDECO.

Sosala (N) and Chama (R)

For the period from November 1972 to October 1973, Sosala is estimated to have received K912.28 from INDECO. He has, however, invested heavily in a boat, an eight horsepower motor, and twenty-five nets. His capital expenditures for the year on petrol and oil, new nets, net repairs, and wages to employees, totalled about K1,260. This figure was considerably in excess of the income from INDECO. Intensive inquiry provided a more realistic approximation of the real income obtained from 250 days of fishing during the year.

Sosala has developed an arrangement for selling fish at Kawamba (80 km from Kashikishi), where he secures twice the local government price per kilo. Sales at Kawambwba grossed between K400 and K580 per month for a 10 month period. Using the power figure as the basis for estimation, Sosala's gross income for the year, including INDECO earnings, totalled approximately K4,912.98. His expenses
included K150 for new nets and net repair, K360 for wages to three helpers, and K750 for petrol and oil. The net profit for the year, then amounted to K3,652. It can be estimated that Sosala is capable of earning up to K10,000 per annum provided that his arrangements for the sale of fish in Kawamba continue to run smoothly. On the average, he catches about one hundred kilos of fish per day, although he has brought in as much as three hundred and fifty kilos. Variation in the size of the catch, however, is great in this region.

Similarly, Chama grossed K875.94 from INDECO and earned a minimum of about K6,000 within a year from sales to the provincial capital and the Copperbelt. His outlays for the year included K150 for nets and net repair, K525 for petrol and oil, and K360 for wages to 3 workers. His net profit, then, approximated K5,840. He earned an additional K318 for the construction and sale of two boats.

Both men earn money much more readily by having others fish for them and by being able to arrange with a lorry driver to buy additional fish and sell it in city markets than by, for example, building boats. The latter activity requires more labor and time with fewer financial rewards.

Cilolo (X), Kateta (Y) and Muna (Z)

These three examples of men who sell only, or mainly, to INDECO are summarized in Table II, in order to show how much less their earnings, especially net profits, are by comparison with those who sell elsewhere.

Tables III, IV, and V show the gross incomes for these men for each of the 12 months, as well as the number of outings.

It is instructive to compare the earnings of fishermen who sell primarily to INDECO with the income of fishermen who sell at a distance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Earnings of fishermen selling at a distance</th>
<th>Earnings of fishermen selling to INDECO and locally</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. N</td>
<td>Mr. R</td>
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<tr>
<td>K3,652</td>
<td>K5,840</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fishers who sell at a distance earn approximately five times as much as those who sell to INDECO.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Earnings (K)</th>
<th>Number of Days fishing</th>
<th>Cost of Petrol/oil</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>272.72</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>30.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>71.30</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19.80</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>94.14</td>
<td>12</td>
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CONSUMPTION OF FISHERMEN

The data illustrate the money-tight situation of big fishermen who sell at local prices. Little money remains for consumption, reinvestment, or saving. For example, on the average a big fisherman brings in 50 kilos of fish for sale per day. In order to meet his production costs of approximately K1,000, he must fish 144 days of the year.

Big fishermen, and other villagers, spend on the average K8 per week on consumer goods, such as sugar, cooking oil, paraffin, candles, soap, bread, salt, matches, an occasional soft drink, and patent medicines. Therefore, over a period of a year, a household with four children spends about K416 on these items. Let us assume that a person, especially a big fisherman, also buys two pairs of shoes, two shirts, two pairs of slacks (which locally sell for K16.00, K6.50, K20.55, respectively), as well as a blanket (K5.00), underclothes (K5.00), two dresses (K14.00), and a *kitenge* cloth (K2.50) for his wife. This would bring the total to K486 for which he would have to fish another 69 days. Assuming the man fished 240 days a year, he now has 27 days left or about K189 to spend on other things. Usually he pays up to K100 to have a new garden cultivated. There are additional payments for house repairs and some money for helping matrikin, especially sisters’ children.

He must also meet the cost of school uniforms for his children (otherwise schooling is free). Costs of children’s and teenagers’ clothes are also substantial. The latter especially wish to be well dressed, and parents comply in order to appear generous, so that children will repay them in future years. Moreover, there is competition between father and mother’s brother, or mother’s kinsmen generally, over the loyalty of offspring (Poewe, 1976). Generally, the competition takes the form of buying clothes for offspring, giving them pocket money, radios, bicycles, their own village house, and anything else they demand and the elders can manage to produce. Big fishermen may spend between K200 and K500 on 3 to 4 teenagers per annum. In fact, this form of social investment is sometimes the only kind that occurs. If a man has, as is not unusual, two teenagers and one youngster still at
home, by selling only to INDECO he runs the risk of accumulating debt. As it is, the wife usually contributes some of her income from brewing beer and selling cassava to meet the cost of clothing her children. A fisherman may also receive remittances from urban kinsmen on occasion.

Usually fishermen who own a boat, motor, and a good number of nets prefer to drink bottled beer rather than village beer. Men who are light drinkers will drink perhaps three bottles of Zambian Castle a day at a cost of 28 ngwee (100 ngwee equal K1) per bottle. This would mean that a person would spend K306 a year on drink. Indeed, except for Jehovah’s Witnesses and Seventh-Day Adventists, this is a conservative estimate.

In short, during the period of a year, one of the best and busiest big fishermen, who sells at the local price, will save very little if anything. In fact, his wife’s earnings from commercial activities are needed to dress the children. In addition remittances from his own and his sisters’ employed children are needed to keep him out of debt.

CONCLUSION:
THE NEGATIVE CORRELATION BETWEEN WORK AND WEALTH

There is a general complaint on the part of government and extension workers that Luapulans are lazy and neither willing nor good workers. The data indicate that these poor work habits reflect the nature of local wealth acquisition and the relative impossibility for a Luapulan to change his level of living except through inheritance. Indeed, people in Luapula are highly motivated to earn money and improve their standard of living. The problem lies, however, in the fact that Luapulans pin their expectations for economic advancement exclusively on trade and inheritance. It is ironic, however, that reliance on these expectations masks the exploitation of an already anonymous work force; since neither workers nor their employers conceive the work force to be a permanent institution, labor problems are recognized by neither. People remain precariously dependent on a diminishing one-resource export economy (fishing) which still provides enough income to some to divert attention from the need of an economic transformation which would absorb the increasingly redundant manpower.

Locally, it is said that an individual can only prosper by engaging in trade. Attention is concentrated on the development of profitable trade relationships, and productive labor is relegated to a peripheral status. Laborers are grossly underpaid and this ensures that they will continue to be casual workers, or rotate between petty capitalists and rural proletarians, rather than attempt full-time employment. Further, the potential polarization of interests between casual employees and employers is diluted by the airy hopes of the former that they will be transformed into the latter. Locals, then, are of one mind over what is perceived to be the real conflict: namely, that between the government, represented by Lakes Fisheries, and fishermen with capital. It is a quarrel between state and private capitalists over profit, rather than between capitalists and labor over wages.

Although local fish prices are government controlled, the cost of production (excluding wages) for commercial fishermen is so high that if they sell at official prices their profits are too small to meet both consumption expenses and reinvestment costs. Consequently, fishermen prefer to sell privately and unofficially at a distance at double or four times the local price. This practice conflicts with the interests of Lakes Fisheries, which is under pressure to increase production without
raising prices in order to export more fish to urban centers where it is the primary source of cheap protein for poorly paid workers.

Fishermen have boycotted INDECO, but the latter, instead of raising the price of fish, have foraged for additional supplies at fishing camps to the north. In the meantime local fishermen use all of their ingenuity to export fish privately. In other words, fishermen are fully aware of price as exchange value and take advantage of upward fluctuations, but they ignore the value of fish as determined by the cost of production, especially in terms of labor time contributed by local workers. They prefer to view their payments to workers in the light of a patron-like generosity which provides for workers' needs and prevents them from living in subhuman conditions; they do not consider payment a just return for labor rendered.

In the end, everyone, including underpaid workers, sympathizes with the fishermen's problems resulting from price controls. People, therefore, discover where goods can be sold at the highest price, or at least at a higher price than locally, and then try to make arrangements to transport their products there. They pay workers as little as possible both to catch fish and transport it to profitable markets. Needless to say, while the poorest agree to work, they frequently break their contract, abscond and are careless about the equipment they use. In other words, while the government competes with local small-scale capitalists, both ignore the plight of rural proletarians who are virtually forced to adjust their unfairly low wages by a bit of "cheating."

Matrilineal inheritance also contributes to the myopic perception of long-range interests among both local capitalists and have-nots. Rural proletarians fail to improve their skills not only because they feel that they cannot better their fortunes themselves, but because matrilineal inheritance holds the hope of receiving initial endowments which could impel them to become petty capitalists. Moreover, the need for labor organization is further obscured by the contradiction between direct exchange and matrilineal redistribution. In the market-industrial context based on the principle of private property, continued matrilineal redistribution stimulates the further radicalization of an already productive individualism. Consequently, the need to create coordinated relations of production are not merely masked, but actively discouraged, leaving the labor force and local economy unskilled, unspecialized, and untransformed.

Yet there can be no doubt that wealth will fail to grow unless the labor problem is solved, because all generated wealth, rather than being accumulated and reinvested, will be redistributed to ever growing numbers of casual, unskilled, and underpaid workers, thus increasing manpower redundancy and decreasing productivity.

As far back as the eighteenth century Adam Smith recognized, in not totally dissimilar circumstances, a still useful distinction between two kinds of employment: productive, i.e., where a contribution is made to an increase in the wealth of society through accumulation and reinvestment, and unproductive, i.e., where there is forced redistribution of the existing wealth to a growing number of casual workers so that accumulation and reinvestment cannot take place (Barber, 1967: 28). It may be similarly noted that a large proportion of Luapula's population is unproductive or, in today's language, is subject to "disguised unemployment" of a sort which limits economic development.

While they do not display consciousness as a work force, the workers' groans are already audible. Contrary to government belief, their complaints are not directed against local capitalists; after all, to become petty capitalists is their own and only channel for advancement. Rather, their frustration is directed against state
capitalism which provides competition when it should bring jobs.

To summarize: Two distracting conflicts divert Luapulans' attention from the serious problem of the need for systematizing labor relations: (1) trade activities center their interests on the quarrel between state and private capitalists over profit; (2) inheritance and descent practices engage them in the quarrel between productive individualists, who want reward proportionate to work rendered or capital owned, and matrilineal redistributionists, who want reward by virtue of their positions in the lineage structure, irrespective of contribution.

NOTES

I am grateful to the International Development Research Centre, Ottawa, Canada for financial support of my research in the Luapula Province, Zambia. Special thanks go to Professors Harry Baseheart of the University of New Mexico and William T. Stuart of the University of Maryland for their intellectual support throughout this period of research. I am grateful to Carla Reid for typing this manuscript.

1. The paper is based upon research which was carried out in the Luapula Valley over a period of about 18 months from January 1973 through June 1974 and from June to September 1975. The first month was spent in Ntoto fishing camp, which is located about 15 km north of Kashikishi village on the slopes of Lake Mweru. For a year after that research was conducted in Kashikishi, a large village (about 1,500 population) adjacent to the southeastern shore of Lake Mweru. Subsequently 4 months were spent in Lukwesa, which is situated about 130 km south of Kashikishi on the Luapula River, which flows into the lake. Finally, an additional month of research was conducted in other smaller villages along the river. These changes of locale were made to cover the area researched by Cunnison in 1949, and to record some of the variability in economic, kinship, and religious activities within the river and lake region.

Research methods included the usual use of participant observation, questionnaires, extensive interviews and life histories, and assistants. Questionnaires had to be treated with extreme caution in order to weed out the distortions or other healthy human attempts to protect vested interests with distortion. Consequently, what might be called detective work and surprise discoveries contributed enormous amounts of valuable information. These surprise discoveries, however, could not have been made without constant checking of, and participation in, the economic activities of men and women. Those involved in serious grass roots research can simply not escape the fact that research is a craft as well as a science.

The serious researcher is almost totally preoccupied with the development of strategies and tactics to gather data to crack, dismiss, or pursue numerous working hypotheses. Finally, any written records and sales slips of companies and stores in the area were carefully examined. Assistants were trained and stationed at strategic points to record buying and selling transactions.

It must be mentioned that the most difficult people to study were the very poor. This segment of the population is extremely mobile; they are subject to sudden shifts in economic fate, and their work habits are irregular. They must be searched out in village bars, on sudden missions to complete a small contract, or on flights from witchcraft and poor health. If the poor, however, were difficult to study systematically, they, unlike the Asians, were cooperative. Fortunately for Luapulans, Asians are restricted to businesses in the provincial capitals. Unfortunately for Luapulans, some businessmen became indebted to the Asians.

In short, this research of the Luapula rural economy is but a beginning, although a serious one.

2. Productive individualism is defined as the process whereby a person tries to acquire individual control over the means of production or individual control of a work contract that is usually small and where additional labor cooperation is contracted by hiring stranger labor rather than kinsmen. Those able to earn a good profit let other workers do the actual labor for as little pay as possible. The poor casual worker also hires further labor at smaller and smaller shares of the pay for which he contracted. The contracting of workers who contract other workers is precisely the condition that gives rise to unpredictable work habits, and, importantly, unruly workers. Although it is true that this excessive productive individualism contributes to economic expansion in the geographical sense, it also inhibits innovative investments which would demand a coordinated labor force.
3. The concept “development block” or “investment block” is taken from Hirschman (1958: 42) and refers to the process whereby “investments of one period call forth complementary investments in the next period.”

4. The distinction between big, small, and petty trader is made on the basis of amounts of cash available to them to invest in buying fish. Big lorry traders buy fish in amounts exceeding K60; small traders buy bundles of fish costing between K10 and K60; petty traders buy fresh fish for amounts varying between K2 and K10.

5. Polly Hill's (1972: 59) idea of distinguishing people on the basis of “economic groups” is followed, but these groups are defined somewhat differently. Polly Hill distinguishes four such groups: Group I, “those able to assist others by means of gifts or loans”; Group II, “those who are neither suffering nor helping”; Group III, “those who are suffering somewhat”; Group IV, “those who are suffering severely.”

6. Prices have since increased from 12, 14, and 16 ngwee per kilo to 36 ngwee per kilo (letter 28.2.1975).

7. By gross income is meant earnings without deductions of the cost of petrol and oil, expenditures for repairs of nets, boat, motor, and the purchase of new nets, wages for hired youths, and deduction of taxes.

REFERENCES


