Accounting for Modernity: an essay on political agency, normativity and transformative process in Zambia

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I have not called for rethinking but for unthinking, because I am increasingly convinced that we are prisoners of dubious assumptions that are little discussed and deeply held and which disappear and reappear in a thousand avatars each time the light of social reality reveals their inadequacy.1

In terms of this analysis, it can easily be seen why the radicalising of modernity is so unsettling, and so significant. Its most conspicuous features -- the dissolution of evolutionism, the disappearance of historical teleology, the recognition of thoroughgoing, constitutive reflexivity, together with the evaporating privileged position of the West -- move us into a new and disturbing universe of experience. If the 'us' here still refers to those living in the West itself -- or, more accurately, the industrialised sectors of the world -- it is something whose implications are felt everywhere.2

I.

Political Prelude

In October, 1991 Zambians went to the polls in their first multiparty elections since president Kenneth Kaunda and his United National Independence Party (UNIP) declared a one-party Second Republic in 1973. While several parties fielded candidates for parliamentary and presidential positions, the real contest was between Kaunda's UNIP and the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD), backing the candidacy of labor leader Frederick Chiluba. MMD mobilized support for its

1. Immanuel Wallerstein, "Should we unthink nineteenth-century social science?", International Social Science Journal 118/November 1988, p. 531.
2. Anthony Giddens, The Consequences of Modernity. Cambridge: Polity Press 1990, p. 53.

candidates with a scathing critique of Kaunda's regime as corrupt, self-serving, wasteful and inefficient. UNIP leaders were portrayed as substantively incompetent, ensconced in a machiavellian network of patronage and deceit. Despite the biting explicitness of the oppositions attack, UNIP was unable to rouse a convincing counter-offensive. The incumbents' campaign was based on eliciting loyalty to UNIP as the sole purveyor of national unity. An MMD victory, Kaunda forebode, would unleash latent ethnic rivalries and cast the nation into chaos.

While polling activity appeared only moderate,[3] four-fifths of the vote rejected the ruling government. MMD won 125 of the Parliament seats to UNIPs 25, with 19 of these from one of Zambia's 9 provinces.[4] Most decisively, MMD hit the executive jackpot, and Chiluba abrogated KK's 27 year monopoly on Zambia's presidency.

Zambia is considered the most urbanized nation in sub-Saharan Africa largely thanks to the industrial exploitation of a rich concentrations of copper ore and other minerals along her northern border with Zaire. Copper has been mined in Zambia for nearly 60 years. Beyond the administrative/commercial townships along the geographically central line-of-rail, Zambia is predominantly a nation of small-scale, often semi-subsistence peasant farmers. Indeed on first inspection Zambia would appear to conform to the textbook model of a "dual economy". Yet several generations of intense cyclical labor migration has intertwined the rural and the urban in Zambia to an extent that belies facile spatial description.

MMD's support was nearly hegemonic among the large urban population along the line-of-rail. But with the sole exception of the agriculturally advanced Eastern Province, rural voters also underwrote Chiluba's mandate en masse. Hence, in most of the country, small-scale peasant producers allied themselves with

3. At about 50%. This may be an artificially low estimate due to inaccuracies in the register of eligible voters.
4. G. Mudenda, "MMD: Two Years Later", Southern Africa Political and Economic Monthly (August 1992), p. 5.

an urban elite to elect the leader of the mineworkers to the Presidency.

There is much political irony here. It is generally agreed that the crucial tension in the Zambian political economy is a structural confrontation of rural and urban interests, generally to the detriment of the countryside. Rather crudely, Zambia's economic policy has been based on the following equation: the lower the price of food for the workers in Zambia's parastatally owned copper mines, the lower the state's wage bill. The lower the wage bill, the lower the production costs in the copper industry and the higher the profits accruing to the state from its copper export monopoly. Low food prices for the consumer naturally compete with high rewards for the producer. Kaunda and UNIP attempted to side-step the political contradictions lurking in this structural dilemma by maintaining high producer prices while subsidizing food costs at the same time.[5] This could only be accomplished through extensive international borrowing. As a result, MMD inherited an economy with the highest external debt per capita in the world.

The 1991 elections, then, express a double irony. Peasants and workers transcend their structural opposition on the one hand, while a regime whose political base is rooted in patronage is stabbed in the back by both of its main client groups. The main anomaly would appear to be the political behavior of the rural constituencies. Was their support for MMD irrational in terms of their collective interests as agricultural producers? What led them to ally themselves with an urban-based political movement?

It is tempting to see rural peasants as the ideological and political pawns of a more powerful, better educated and better

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5. See P.-Å Andersson & S. Kayizzi-Mugerwa, External Shocks and the search for diversification in Zambia. Dept. of Economics, University of Gothenburg 1991, p. 10. On Zambian food policy more generally, see e.g., A.P. Wood and E.C.W. Shula, "The State and Agriculture in Zambia. A review of the evolution and consequences of food and agricultural policies in a mining economy" in T. Mkandiwire and N. Boorenane (eds.), The State and Agriculture in Africa. Dakar: Codesria 1987; Hans-Otto Sano, Big state, small farmers. The search for an agricultural strategy in crisis-ridden Zambia. Copenhagen: Centre for Development Research, April 1990; Kjell Havnevik, Zambia Structural Adjustment and Agriculture, Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, February 1991 (mimeo)

organized urban class. Such an interpretation would share the credence of somewhat antiquated views which depict rural populations as credulous subjects to the ideological hegemony promoted by political elites adept at evoking primordial sentiments of ethnicity, locality, or kinship.[6]

If such a reading is valid, the Zambian case would seemingly weaken the more recent mainstream view of peasant politics, epitomized by the work of Robert Bates as motivated by the rational assessment of economic goals.[7] Similarly, the Zambian experience would seem to question Hydén's portrayal of peasant producers as captives of localized loyalties or Scott's conception of the poor as intransigent defenders of their political autonomy against all forms of political domination.[8] Has the peasantry voluntarily surrendered its self-interest and allowed itself to be swept up in a political drama machinated by its structural opponents?

II.

Theoretical Interlude

The dilemma of peasant support for urban interests begs the question of the relative autonomy of local rural communities and their relationship with national political process and structure. More fundamentally, thus posed, this problematique invokes the theoretical spectre of neo-classical modernization theory,[9] in two ways.

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6. For an attempt to revive this problematique, see Allan Hoben and Robert Hefner, "The Integrative Revolution Revisited", World Development, vol. 19, no 1 (1991), pp. 17-30.
7. Eg, R. Bates, Markets and state in Tropical Africa. Berkeley: University of California Press 1981.
8. G. Hyden, Beyond Ujamaa in Tanzania. Underdevelopment and an uncaptured peasantry. London: Heinemann 1980; J. C Scott, Weapons of the weak. everyday forms of peasant resistance. New Haven: Yale University Press.
9. By neo-classical modernization theory I mean the school of modernization sociology which adapted Parsons' reading of classical modernization sociology (e.g., Durkheim, Marx, Tönnies and Weber) to the study of the new nations of the decolonializing world (Almond, Apter, Coleman, Eisenstadt, the young Geertz, Hoselitz, W. Moore, Rostow, Shils, M. Weiner, etc.)

First of all, as I will argue, neo-classical modernization theory is largely responsible for imposing the dualistic grid upon our conceptualization African society which opposes, a priori, urban to rural, local to national, traditional to modern forms of social agency and consciousness. True, the modernization model has been heavily criticized -- for its imperialist apologetics, its teleological bias, its economism, its eurocentric moralism. Yet the basic categorical mindset seems to live on; is it not a survival of the modernization framework that the Zambian alliance of town and countryside strikes us as counterintuitive?

Second, in more general terms, the recent victory of "multiparty democracy" in Zambian (and elsewhere) would seem to exonerate proponents of the modernization thesis from much of the slack they have swallowed over the years. The "new democratic movements" of Africa seem to be fulfilling the prophecy of "political development", albeit a generation late![10]

Thus it would appear that the simple dilemma of rural political agency in Zambia raises complex methodological issues. With modernity once again at the top of the social theoretical agenda, and with modernization chalking up ideological capital it is timely to ask, to what extent has critical Africanist social analysis genuinely come to terms with the domain assumptions of the neo-classical theory of modernization?

Dilemmas of modernization theory

Neo-classical modernization theory has made a double imprint on the way we look at contemporary social processes in Africa. First, the modernization model insinuates that we approach social dynamics as a struggle between nascent and reticent historical forms, generally articulated in terms of the modern and the traditional. Implicit here is an essentialism suggests that we view development as the process by which a social

10. See Goran Hyden's rather explicit attempt to resurrect an evolutionist "political development" in his "Governance and the study of politics" in G.Hyden and M. Bratton (eds.), Governance and Politics in Africa. Boulder & London: Lynne Rienner 1992, pp. 1-26.

entity gradually exhibits more and more characteristics of a pre-designated state of "modernity".[11] Hence, the neo-classical modernization model embodies a strangely static teleology. It is actually not a theory of modern*ization* at all since it lacks a conception of transformative process.[12] On close inspection the modernization model reveals itself as a functionalist vision of modernity as an end-state with transformative process smuggled into the model via a general set evolutionist assumptions. Despite the gradual atrophy of evolutionism in development thinking we continue to struggle with the teleological dilemma. And with the general demise of marxist precepts, we seem to have less and less to say about transformative process.

Secondly, the neo-classical modernization model canonized the a priori opposition of localized social relations based on primordial bonds and sentiments to voluntaristic forms of sociality associated with market exchange and the institutions of the nation-state. One could say that the neo-classical perspective thus (mis-)- appropriated Weber's ideal-typical conception of the *vergemeinschaftung* ("communal") and *vergesselleschaftung* ("associative") dimensions to modern social intercourse (adapted from Tönnies) into a dualistic opposition of empirically discrete forms of sociality.[13] As the genesis of this "dualistic fallacy" reveals a key methodological weakness in contemporary development discourse, a brief elaboration is in order.

I think it is fair to say that Talcott Parsons' reading of Weber is largely responsible for the unfortunate translation of classical modernization sociology into neo-classical modernization theory. Weber took great pains to establish the premise that his ideal-typical categories (above all his concept of "rationality")

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11. In its original formulation (Parsonsian pattern variables) the generic modern condition resembled post-war American society to no small extent. Today, I sense, northern European welfare states of the 1960s seem to constitute the ideal.
12. In one sense, the modernization model does entail a conception of transformative process in the form of external intervention (foreign investment, technology transfer, diffusion of modern cultural values via education). But as has often been noted, this intervention does not imply the transformation of traditional social structures so much as their eradication and replacement by modern institutions.
13. See M. Weber, Economy and Society. An Outline of Interpretive Sociology (G. Roth & C. Wittich, eds.), Berkeley; University of California Press 1978 (1968), pp. 40-43.

represent "methodological parameters" with which sociology interrogates empirical processes.[14] To construct a hypothesis on the basis of a methodological distinction between the "pure forms" of communal and associative sociality should not imply the assumption that *empirical* social relations will demonstrate an innate opposition of such forms. The role of the methodological parameters, in Weber's scheme, is to provide a logical framework for the assessment of deviations from an ideal construct. And even this is only a preliminary phase of the sociologist's task. The main challenge lies in *understanding* of the observed patterns of behavior revealed by the application of the logical framework.

Mingione's observation is to the point: "the difficulty and depth of Weber's methodology lies...in the fact that his approach, as a crucial operation of interpretation, imposes the need to trace the complex ideal combinations among a plurality of actions."[15] Weberian causality is complex.

Parsons' zeal to subsume Weberian insights within an evolutionist and functionalist paradigm undermined the interpretative dimension of his sociology by conflating ideal categories with concrete social forms. Weber's non-evolutionary, anti-functionalist distinction between an associative form of sociality -- for which the "probability" of a more rational action-orientation was greater -- and a communal form, demonstrating a predisposition to affective value-orientation, re-emerges in the parsonsian paradigm as a crude opposition of modernity to tradition.

There is yet a further distortion in the neo-classical appropriation of modernization sociology. Weber was insistent about the moral dilemma implied in the key process of "rationalization". He maintained that rationalization lead to greater "self-consciousness and freedom from subjective scruples" and to the "substitution for the unthinking acceptance of ancient custom, of deliberate adaptation to situations in

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14. See E. Mingione, Fragmented Societies. A Sociology of Economic Life beyond the Market Paradigm (trans. P. Goodrick), Oxford: Basil Blackwell 1991. The notion of "methodological parameters" is his.
15. Fragmented Societies, p. 15.

terms of self-interest". In allowing for greater reflexivity, rationalization could thus have a positive moral impact in the form of the "deliberate formulation of ultimate values" (*Wertrationalisierung*); but it could also erode emotional values and promote "a morally sceptical type of rationality, at the expense of any belief in absolute values".[16]

The crucial point, of course, is not whether Parsons and his cronies got their Weber right -- Weber is notoriously ambiguous on many issues. More importantly, we should interrogate the methodological implications of their distortions. Anthony D. Smith is to the point, "Parsons' interpretation of Weber, and his application of the scheme of pattern variables to historical societies, leads him to emphasize the uniqueness of Western development and to treat is as normative for other civilizations".[17] In the hands of neo-classical modernization theory, then, Weber's normative ambivalence disappears and in its place emerges an occidentalist moralism. This is particularly evident in the direct attempts to extend the parsonsian scheme to the "underdeveloped" countries where it formed part of the theoretical basis of the emergent discipline of "development studies".[18]

As a result of this systematic mistranslation, the neo-classical approach to modernization winds up guilty of two exaggerations. It tends to label all resistance to "development" as emanating from archaic and corrupting tradition; or, it perceives of all mobilization around the principles of modernity and development as essentially "anti-traditional". Both ways, the ideology of neo-classical modernization discourse falls prey to a banal orientalism which insists that the politics of social change implies a battle of "our" ideas against "theirs".

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16. Economy and Society, p. 30.
17. A. D. Smith, The concept of social change, 1973, p. 34
18. Paradigmatically, Bert Hoselitz, "Social structure and economic growth" in Sociological aspects of economic growth, Glencoe: Free Press 1960, pp. 23-51. Hoselitz' article was originally published in 1953, two years after Parsons' elaboration of his "pattern variables" in The Social System, (Glencoe: Free Press 1951, pp. 58-67)

Duelling dualisms: localism vs globalism

That the analytical burden of neo-classical modernization is still with us is evident in the animated debate within development studies between 'globalists' and 'localists'.[19] Localism is manifest in the growing trend of anti-developmentalism in social theory.[20] The basis of the argumentation is the position that indigenous cultural norms provide the only sustainable, hence valid basis for social change. In this sense, the localist stance constitutes an implicit defence of the communal, against the eroding influence of associative sociality and market rationality. Localist discourse exhibits a somewhat confounding combination of political manifesto and methodological critique, and it is not always clear whether its apologists are arguing for the substantive autonomy of local processes, or merely defending the moral right of local communities to their cultural heritage.[21]

Globalists insist on the determinacy of inter- or transnational structures vis-à-vis local processes. Philip McMichael equates globalism with wallersteinian world-systems analysis. World-systems theory is certainly global in its perspective, but there have recently been clear attempts at a rapprochement with more localist perspectives.[22] In terms of discursive opposition to the localist position, I think it is more accurate to link the recent resurgence of modernization ideology -- its moralizing dualism in tact -- with the globalist stance.

The growing predominance of modernization theory is linked to the heavily empowered discourse of developmentalism (emanating from international financial institutions such as the

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19. The terms are Philip McMichael's. See his "Rethinking comparative analysis in a post-developmentalist context" International Social Science Journal (133/August 1992), p. 352.
20. The development dictionary. A Guide to Knowledge as Power (W. Sachs, ed., London: Zed Books 1992) provides an articulate cross-section of the discourse.
21. E.g. T. Verhelst, No Life without Roots. Culture and Development (trans. B. Cumming), London: Zed Books 1990; G. Estevez, "Development" in the Sachs volume (op.cit.).
22. I.e., W.G. Martin & M. Beittel, "The Hidden abode of reproduction: conceptualizing households in Southern Africa" Development and Change, vol. 18, no 2 (April 1987), pp. 215-34; E. Wolf, Europe and the People without History; even U. Hannerz' trope of "creolization" could be seen in this light (see below).

World Bank Group, donor agencies and their client governments), as is its resurgence within academia.[23] I find its rapid upsurge both intellectually and politically distressing. The teleological definition of "modernization" as the implantation of occidental institutions and forms of sociality subverts any attempt at a critical discussion of development alternatives. At the same time, its insistence on the opposition of the local and the global threatens to dilute and corrupt the analysis of the true nature and dynamics of modernity in these societies.

The critique of the globalist position is thus timely. Unfortunately, the thrust of the localist critique is too easily drawn into intellectual shadow-boxing with the developmentalists. The crux of the problem, I think is that the localist critique has appropriated a concept of the "local" which reflects the neo-classical misappropriation of the "traditional". Thus indigenous culture is represented in localist discourse as based on "primordial sentiments" of reciprocity and redistribution, affective values, particularism, etc.[24] As an analytical tool this concept of the local is both ahistorical and romantic; politically, its particular brand of populism suffers from these same analytical weaknesses.

Can we transcend this impasse? The path I propose to follow is anchored in the critique of neo-classical modernization ideology, yet without jettisoning the notion of modernization altogether. Naturally, this cannot mean invoking a static teleology of modernity as end-state; it is essential to address **transformative process**.

The emphasis on modernization as transformative process has clear methodological implications. It commits us to the notion that modernity only exists in specific historical and cultural forms. This is not to deny the reality of global structures of

23. Hyden 1992, op cit.
24. Cf. Hoben and Hefner (op.cit.) have recently defended the primacy of "primordial ties and sentiments". For an attempt at theoretical exposition see T. Banuri, "Modernization and its discontents: a cultural perspective on the theories of development" in F.A. and S.A. Marglin (eds.), Dominating Knowledge. Development, Culture and Resistance. Oxford: Clarendon Press 1990, pp. 29-101. The discourse is hardly hegemonic, however. The work of Ashis Nandy, for example, seldom falls prey to Banuri's reductionism.

modernity; yet these must not be conflated with an abstract category of modernity-in-general. Even global manifestations of modernity -- for instance, the erosion of a clear distinction between absence and presence in social interaction[25] -- have discrete empirical limits corresponding to the time-space extension of given technologies or institutions. It is thus necessary to approach modernization through its embeddedness in empirical forms of sociality. This requires a methodology which can cater simultaneously to social, economic, cultural and political dimensions of social process. What is needed, then, is not so much an abstract model of modernity (though some "methodological parameters" are doubtless helpful[26]) as a more refined theoretical grasp of the transformations of sociality and social consciousness that "modernization" implies.

Modernization, then, is the transformative process that engenders modern forms of sociality and awareness. And what imbues sociality with modernity? Following Weber we might hypothesize that enhanced reflexivity and the rationalization of agency would be critical features. Thus said, it is obvious that the key issue is of how to employ methodological parameters such as these without falling prey to the eurocentric assumptions of the neo-classical model. I think this boils down to the question of how to deal with the normative dimension of transformative process. All transformation is not modernization and not all forms of modernization will be positively assessed by all actors. Yet cases of modernization as a form of general social progress within a specific historical and cultural context can and do arise. Is it possible for us to understand when and why this is (or is not) happening?

To arrive at such a perspective promises to be a long-term goal. With his revival and extension of Polanyi's critique of the "market paradigm" Enzo Mingione seems to have taken an important step in the right direction. Mingione seems intent on

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25. A. Giddens, Modernity and Self-Identity, Cambridge: Polity press 1991, p. 21; D. Harvey, The Condition of Postmodernity, Oxford: Basil Blackwell 1989, p. 261.
26. Giddens provides one possible scheme via his four "institutions of modernity", i.e., capitalism, industrialization, administrative power, and military might. While this particular list is open to debate, I accept his canon that modernity be linked to globalization.

coming to terms with eurocentric economism by vanquishing the illusion that the market in industrial society is an autonomous, self-regulating institution which is unconstrained by the affective dimensions of reciprocal (i.e., communal) sociality. Mingione insists that the market is, as Polanyi insisted, "embedded" in social relations. Thus, "processes of industrialization [one might read: modernization] should be understood in terms of the transformation of socialization mixes, always made up of associative and reciprocal factors".[27] A primary concern of Mingione's is to explain how particular kinds of socialization mix articulate in the "strategies" of various actors. He succeeds admirably in integrating the "social" with the "economic". But in tying his concept of strategy to the spheres of production (provisioning) and reproduction he reverts to the very economism he sets out to eradicate. Regrettably, Mingione's concept of agency is curiously devoid of cultural and, above all, political elements.

This is a serious omission. To understand the nature (and limits) of human agency in the transformation of society it is not sufficient to isolate the immediate activities of individual actors in the production and reproduction of their material conditions of survival. This is what the post-structural critique of "historical materialism" was all about. We must be able to interrogate the constitution of individual and collective motivation in all of its manifestations. My own data call attention to the inseparability of the **political** from the social, economic and cultural aspects of motivation. Here I understand politics in a very broad way, subsuming all forms of competition over the control of resources, including competition over the means of the control of resources (i.e., over positions of indirect access to power).

In Zambia, a prolonged history of external interventions into rural localities by the state and other institutions of modernization has made politics central to transformative process. The accentuation of politics in the interventionist context is manifest in three main arenas of agency: those organized around direct access to resource flows; the access to

27. Fragmented societies, p. 61.

distributive mechanisms; and what might be called enunciative privilege (control over meaning).

As an aspect of concrete social action political agency is naturally embodied in specific forms of sociality. The political is inscribed upon enacted forms of solidarity (associative, reciprocal, distributive) and becomes manifest in diverse kinds of action-orientation -- resistance, coalescence, alliance, domination. It follows then, that the political constitutes a major vehicle for the crystallization of social reflexivity. The ensuing analysis presumes to elaborate a concrete example of such a transformative process of social reflexivity and the "rationalization" of action in a specific cultural context. The case in point is the collective working over of normative categories concerning the legitimacy of the modern order (in the form of a marketing cooperative on the one hand, and the national government on the other) via political processes on the local and national levels.

The subsequent empirical analysis of the normative bases of political agency in one corner of rural Zambia is a modest attempt to "trace the complex ideal combinations among a plurality of actions". I attempt to reveal some of the specific characteristics of modern sociality in this specific cultural context. If successful, this should open up fruitful avenues for interrogating the interaction of local, national and global forms of modernity.

III

I approach the dilemma of Zambian political agency on the basis of a study I did in a rural community in the mid-eighties, several years before the 1991 elections. My data suggests that neo-classical modernization assumptions can blind analysis to transformative processes which transcend the duel of the modern and the traditional. I hope to establish that such transcendent processes exist and constitute a tangible force in Zambian society. An interrogation of such social processes poses a number of challenges for rethinking the interaction of locality and nationality in the Zambian political economy and

points to the realm of political normativity as a window onto the constitution of specific African forms of modernity.

With this goal in mind, this section offers a somewhat revisionist account of the constitution of the popular political consciousness in Zambia. The master narrative revolves around how the ideology of modernity came to be identified with "Zambian Humanism" as proselytized by its author, president Kaunda and his ruling UNIP government.[28] I then trace how this modernist vision was corrupted as "Humanism" degenerated into a regime of predatory rent-seeking, thus laying the foundations for the emergence of the countervailing modernism embodied in the program of the Movement for Multiparty Democracy.

The narrative culminates in the rendition of a political process in the life of one rural marketing cooperative. This illustration suggests that the normative tensions engaging political consciousness in the rural community in the mid-1980s were identical to those at stake in the 1991 elections several years later. I try to come to terms with this observation by speculating on some ways we might generalize about the internal dynamics of political normativity at different points on the time-space continuum of a entity like Zambia.

Humanism and the corruption of modernity

My empirical point of reference is Zambia's Luapula Province, in particular the Aushi chiefdom of Senior Chief Milambo in the center of Mansa District. Links between Luapula and the

28. I am taking some terminological liberties here. "Humanism", Zambia's official philosophy during Kaunda's reign, was adopted by the government in 1967. Strictly speaking, "Humanism" is a finite set of precepts concerning the nature of a "man-centered society" bereft of the "exploitation of man by man". For convenience's sake, I am using the concept of Zambian Humanism to refer to the ideological legitimation of UNIP's rule as a whole. I feel justified in adopting this shorthand since, in Kaunda's day, Humanism was universally understood as "the official ideology" and, as Stephen Chan has noted, Humanism "is not a rigorous formulation.... Humanism exists to inform the actions of the party; the party exists to manage society, so that the font of Humanism, and the state apparatus that emanates from [the presidency] may be protected". S. Chan, "Humans, intellectuals and the left in Zambia", in K. Osei-Hwedie & M. Ndulo (eds.), Issues in Zambian Development. Nyangwe & Roxbury: Omenana 1985, pp. 287-8.

region which consolidated over time into the colonial territory of Northern Rhodesia emerging, in 1964, the nation-state of Zambia go back several hundreds of years.[29]

Luapula was a major source of labor and foodstuffs for the mining industries of the Belgian Congo (Zaire) and Northern Rhodesia up until, and beyond Independence.[30] The extraction of labor and other commodities was organized by private companies with little direct governmental participation. Luapulan society was not subjected to major interventions by state institutions until around the 1950s. At this time, Luapula fell under the auspices of the Northern Rhodesian 10-year Development Plan which introduced the ideology of state-instigated rural development to the region for the first time.[31] Years of work on the mines had taught migrants the value of cash income, and many ex-mineworkers were keenly interested in the material benefits promised those undertaking to modernize their agricultural skills through the Peasant Farming Scheme. Yet fears among Africans concerning the social consequences of Northern Rhodesia's amalgamation with racist Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and Nyasaland (Malawi) aggravated the innate friction between the colonial government and its subjects.[32] Throughout the 1950s, the political atmosphere in Luapula, as elsewhere, was tense.[33] This translated into a marked ambivalence among rural residents toward the colonial rural development program. Despite a distinct will among many to adopt the "modern" cultivation of maize, the scheme was a total flop.

Thus, the first developmentalist intervention in the region was marked by a competition for loyalties between two adversarial

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29. See J. Gould, Luapula -- Development or Dependence? (Lusaka: Geographical Association of Zambia 1989) for an overview and further references.

30. M. Musambachime, Development and growth of the fishing industry in Mweru-Luapula 1920-1964. Ph.D. thesis (History), University of Wisconsin-Madison 1981

31. Gould 1989.

32. Under the auspices of the Central African Federation which operated from 1953 to 1960; see R. Rotberg, The rise of nationalism in Central Africa. The making of Malawi and Zambia 1873-1964. Oxford: OUP 1965

33. M. Musambachime, "Rural political protest: the 1953 disturbances in Mweru-Luapula", International Journal of African Historical Studies 20/3 (1987), pp. 437-53; K. Datta, "The political economy of rural development in colonial Zambia: the case of the Ushi-Kabende", ibid., 21/2 (1988), pp. 249-53; B.S. Chisala, Lt. Luchembe coup attempt, Lusaka 1991, p. 16.

agents of modernist ideology. The colonial state was fishing for converts to the persuasion of maize, money and peasant cooperatives; on the other hand, the African National Congress (ANC) canvassed the countryside by bicycle sewing seeds of rebellion and resistance to colonial domination in the name of a Zambian nation-state.

During the fifties, the ANC metamorphosed into the United National Independence Party (UNIP) which emerged victorious in 1964 with the birth of independent Zambia. UNIP and its young president Kenneth Kaunda inherited the administrative and ideological apparati of the colonial state and, thus endowed set off to consolidate the diverse array of relatively autonomous localities with discrete languages, histories and political structures into a nation-state under the slogan of "One Zambia, One Nation".

UNIP rose into power on the crest of a massive popular movement. Colonial Rhodesia had profited substantially from the copper industry but the lion's-share of the proceeds had benefited foreign investors and the European settler community. Kaunda's supporters were eager to see the national wealth distributed among themselves as UNIP had promised and the new president was true to his word.

Kaunda's original Humanist vision might be seen as an expression of what Weber referred to as *Wertrationalisierung*, "the deliberate formulation of absolute values". Not unlike Nyerere's doctrine of Ujamaa, Kaunda's philosophy "owes much to the rationalist and humanist movements of post-was Europe".[34] Again not unlike developments in neighboring Tanzania, Kaunda's quasi-socialist rhetoric was difficult to reconcile with the imperatives of a post-colonial economy.

A central tension in Humanist ideology and policy existed between socialist promulgations about the desirability of a classless society and concrete efforts at fomenting social

34. Chan, op. cit., p. 287.

differentiation, especially in rural Zambia.[35] One of Kaunda's first acts of government was to declare massive state support for the formation of rural cooperatives as instruments of prosperity and social justice. All over the country, veterans of the anti-colonial struggle were encouraged to form cooperative societies to which the Government channelled a vast amount of resources in the form of "stumping" allowances, tractor loans, grants, price subsidies, and so on.

In most cases there was virtually no supervision of the public expenditure and before ten years had elapsed all but a few of the cooperative societies were stricken from the books by the Registrar of Cooperatives as bankrupt or dormant.

Through its cooperative policy and other kindred measures, the UNIP government sought to woo the loyalty of the rural masses away from what was perceived as the countervailing authority of ethnic interests allied with local political structures. Throughout the period from independence in 1964 up until the declaration of a one-party state in 1973, Kaunda and UNIP waged an often violent war with political opponents seeking to consolidate an anti-UNIP coalition. In contemporary political discourse these threats to UNIP hegemony were portrayed in regionalist and ethnic terms.[36] The regionalist dimension should not be ignored completely, but it is also evident that Kaunda intervened most violently and eventually abolished political pluralism altogether when it became clear that the main opposition forces were capable of uniting across ethnic boundaries.[37]

Justified or not, the UNIP regime was clearly motivated in both policy and pronouncement by a paranoiac concern with the threat of countervailing loyalties undermining its authority in

35. On this theme see S. M. Chipungu, The state, technology and peasant differentiation in Zambia. A case study of the Southern Province 1930-1986. Lusaka: Historical Association of Zambia 1988, pp. 161-2, 217.
36. Most importantly, the United Progress Party lead by Simon Kapwepwe was identified with the Bemba-speaking north and the African National Congress and Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula, with the southern Tonga-Ila group.
37. Chisala, op.cit., pp. 25-6.

the countryside.[38] This paranoia lead to the establishment of the one-party state and thus indirectly engendered the structures of state-client patronage that would eventually come to dominate the Zambian political economy.

The rent-seeking society comes to Africa

What began as system of spoils for political supporters evolved gradually into a pervasive system of rent-seeking based on political monopoly under the one-party state. Political patronage could co-exist with a general respect for legal procedures as long as the mineral export economy was generating a sizable surplus. Recall that up until the 1975 crash in copper prices, Zambia was classified as a "middle-income nation". During this same period of relative growth and stability the political leadership was consolidating its political monopoly through the "socialist" canons of Zambian Humanism. The watershed of this development were the Mulungushi reforms of 1968 which paved the way for the nationalization of the copper industry, and the gradual build-up of the megalithic Zimco parastatal structure.[39]

With the rapid deterioration of the international economic environment, however, the Zambian economy nose-dived. As the recession drastically limited the scope for more legitimate enterprise, members of the "political class" opted to maximize their monopoly position as political commissars, heads of parastatal enterprises and strategically placed civil servants. Alliances of convenience between the political elite and the business community for the exploitation of monopoly rents in such diverse fields as forex allocation, import and export licences, including systematic drug trafficking via diplomatic pouch on the parastatal national airlines became, in Peter Gibbon's phrasing, the dominant form of accumulation:

38.I note with interest that in all the pre- and post-election analyses I have come across, the "rural issue" is interpreted exclusively in terms of ethnic loyalties, never as a reflection of structural, class or ideological factors. This applies just as well to the leftist Southern African Economic and Political Monthly (Nov. 1991, Dec/Jan 1991-92 & August 1992 issues); as to the more conservative Africa Events (Nov 1991).

39. E.g., Marcia Burdette, Zambia. Between two worlds, Boulder: Westview 1988

> "State and parastatal agents and different strata of private entrepreneurs and enterprises formed new joint economic networks, normally of monopolistic kinds, utilising combinations of state and private resources and combining multiple and shifting forms of legal and illegal activity."[40]

The economic recession undermined the standard of living of most social groups. The proliferation of monopoly rent as a fulcrum of the economy did little or nothing to stimulate new avenues for growth. On the contrary, the lion's share of new public sector investment, including most foreign aid, went to feed the insatiable predators of monopoly rent. This was especially visible in resource-deprived rural settings where "rural development" projects spawned .fleets of shiny trucks and vans; endless processions of planning, monitoring and evaluation tours by Zambian and expat project officers (religiously logging their daily allowances), training stipends and housing projects for civil servants, but precious little for the common (wo)man.

In the process, normative dissonance between the rhetoric of Humanism and the visible behavior of the political class grew to inflammable proportions. Food riots in 1986 and 1988 and an attempted coup in 1990 were audible overtures to political transformation. Eventually, with triple-figure inflation and the economy out of control anti-Humanist sentiments began to converge around an opposition platform. The cornerstone of the opposition platform was a modernist normativity of merit and accountability. As Owen Sichone has noted, "the MMD has convinced most Zambians that it is the Party of Merit and Professionalism, Democracy and Accountability and the party that will make Zambians proud and prosperous again."[41]

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40. Peter Gibbon, "Understanding Social Change in Contemporary Africa". Paper to a workshop on Social Dimensions of Structural Adjustment in Africa, Uppsala: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, May 1992 (mimeo), p. 21. On the application of neo-classical rent-seeking theory to Africa see Mark Gallagher, Rent-seeking & economic growth in Africa, Boulder: Westview Press 1991; E. Ampofo-Tuffuor, C. DeLorme Jr, & D.R. Kamerschen, "The Nature, Significance and Cost of Rent Seeking in Ghana", Kyklos, vol. 44, Fasc 4, pp. 537-59.

41. O.B. Sichone, "Zambian elections -- an example for Africa to emulate?" Southern African Economic and Political Monthly, December/January 1991-92, p. 4. Sichone is chairman of the Social Democratic Party, a competing opposition group.

Why these themes, how did they emerge? I have only fairly speculative thoughts on the implied causalities. But before revealing them, allow me to indicate their depth by recounting the performance of a real-life political drama in Milambo Multipurpose Cooperative Society during 1986-91.

IV.

Accounting for modernity: an excursus

After Michael failed his form/five exams he joined the Christian Missions to Many Lands (aka Plymouth Brethren -- henceforth CMML) congregation at Lwela as a lay preacher. An enthusiastic speaker, Michael proved hardworking and found widespread popularity among his parishers. Eventually, he was approached by some elders of his fellow *benambushi* (Goat clan) who were influential in Milambo Primary Cooperative Society, and asked to join society staff as a salesman. Not long afterward, his boss, the society Manager was called to join the Provincial Cooperative Union. On his departure, Michael was promoted to the post of acting Manager with the blessing of the *benambushi* and other influential members, most of whom were from the southern part of the society's marketing area. The year was 1987.

Modern accounting techniques constitute one of the foundation stones of cooperative management and Michael's predecessor had initiated him into the fundaments of book-keeping. Like most rural marketing societies MMCS suffered chronic cash flow problems, and the society management had devised a number of ploys to alleviate liquidity shortages. Among these was the practice of meeting outstanding debts by issuing fictional sales vouchers. Instead of paying a debtor, say, K400 (four hundred kwacha), the manager would filled out a sales receipt in the debtor's name for 5 bags of maize valued (in 1988) at K80 each. In time the debtor would be issued by the cooperative union with a K400 cheque for his or her "virtual" maize. The eventual shortfall could be balanced out of the society's handling fees or through the membership's periodic contributions to the society development fund.

Michael caught on to this technique immediately and began to expand its field of application. Over his first six months as acting society Manager, Michael issued more than K6,000 worth of fictional sales vouchers (the equivalent of almost three years' salary) to friends and kinsfolk. Through this and other innovations in cooperative accounting (one of which involved the direct cooperation of an accountant at the Provincial Cooperative Union) Michael embezzled at least K8,000 from his employers (member farmers) before being discovered.

Initially, Michael's case was dealt with as a family affair by a series of meetings among *benambushi* elders. The money had all been spent by the time Michael was apprehended. This being so, the clan elders saw no point in referring the case to the courts. Michael was relieved of his position in the cooperative and given a public dressing down by the clan. *Alisebana,* they said: he was "shamed" in the eyes of his community. This was considered punishment enough for their matrilineal clan uncle/brother/nephew.

However, some of Michael's victims still had valid sales receipts and they claimed retribution from the donor-supported Provincial cooperative union. Legally obliged to pay them, the Union naturally tried to cover its losses by debiting the primary society. Since the society's accounts were already in the red, the lawyers advised the Union to take Michael to court. In this way, Michael's behavior became a police case and thus entered the realm of Zambian state authority. In the course of the investigation, however, the society marketed a bumper maize crop and with the profits, paid off the Union's (but not the individual members') losses. With the Union nor longer a claimant, the charges against Michael were officially dropped.

In the meantime, society members -- who are not by any means predominantly *benambushi* -- decided that the elected leadership of the cooperative was remiss in its supervision of the manager and society finances. The Annual General Meeting dismissed the Society Chairman, Kalonge, who had hired Michael. In addition to being a respected village headman from another prominent clan in the southern part of the society area, Kalonge was also a leading figure in the local Catholic Church.

In his stead, the farmers chose Kalaba from the northern part of the society area.
Kalaba had little experience with farming -- cash-crop or otherwise -- but had been in formal employ as a social worker for an Irish community development organization on the urban Copperbelt. His command of spoken English was impressive and he often reverted to English even when addressing an audience comprised solely of local *ch'Aushi* (a dialect of ciBemba) speakers. Kalaba had reputedly been to Ireland for professional training and thus may well have been the only member of the local community of some 10,000 to have ever travelled beyond the southern African sub region. To round out his qualifications, Kalaba was very chummy with the local UNIP heavyweight, the Ward Chairman.

Around this same time, Michael's successor to the post of Society manager was also being chosen. This time the Board of Directors selected Stephen, a "foreigner" from another part of Zambia. Stephen was a devout member of the Watchtower movement (Jehovah's Witnesses) who had married a daughter of the Chief Milambo, and settled in the southern part of the society's marketing area. Although Stephen had been passed over by the Board of Directors in favor of Michael the previous time around, he was without a doubt formally the most qualified candidate for society Manager in the community. He had an accountancy diploma from a Copperbelt trade college and several years of experience working in the mines and for a carpet company in Lusaka. He was also among the first local farmers trained by the donor-supported Government extension program in cash crop (maize) production, and was now among the top 10 producers in the area.

It is naturally very important that the Board and management of a cooperative organization work well together. Unfortunately, under Kalaba's Chairmanship this proved impossible. Kalaba resided some 15 km north of the society headquarters and seldom managed to visit the manager's offices. He accused the manager and other "southerners" of colluding against him and his northern constituency. Kalaba retaliated by conspiring himself with the Ward Chairman (his next-door neighbor) to have the society headquarters

transferred to their home village in the northern part of the society's marketing area.
The tug-of-war between the northerners and the southerners over the location of the main depot escalated to the point that Society Chairman Kalaba collaborated with the Party Chairman to incite the northern farmers to boycott the society's marketing facilities. This self-defeating act of "resistance" proved too much for the members and Kalaba was sacked at the subsequent Annual General Meeting.

Stephen was instrumental in ensuring the election of the new Board Chairman, Ackim, who is, among other things, a local businessman (transporter/trader) and the mechanic at the CMML mission some 500 meters from society HQ. Ackim speaks scarcely a word of English. Despite having a severely crippling congenital disability of the legs he has become one of the leading maize producers in the District and the Province. Ackim uses no formal system of accounting in his business (farm or transport), though as a veteran member of the Board he can read the society's ledger.

Postscript to the excursus: When MMD was legally constituted in 1991, its Chembe Constituency headquarters were established at Lwela, the seat of the cooperative society and the CMML mission. This was an unorthodox choice. The conventional location would have been at Chembe, a major trading outpost along the main road leading from Mansa, the Provincial capital, across the Zairean Pedicle to the Copperbelt. Lwela lies 80 km by gravel road into the bush away from telephones, electricity and newspapers. There is no public transport and while Chembe is not terribly far as the crow files, the distance is 160 km by motor vehicle.

I can offer no clear explanation for this anomaly. Perhaps the MMD leadership simply wanted to make a clean break with UNIP spatial politics. For me, the elevation of Lwela from a sleepy backwater to a hub of political influence expresses a recognition that something had been going on there that presaged the political transformations of 1991. What this something was can be read, I believe, from the foregoing drama.

V.

I want to use the ideas and images presented thus far to address two themes: (1) to what extent can we understand certain aspects of recent Zambian political life as expressing a process of "modernization"; and (2) how might we account for the emergence of the specifically modernist normativities of Merit and Accountability in the exercise of political agency.

The case for "modernization"

What does the cooperative story reveal about the transformative processes underlying the political drama of Milambo Multipurpose Cooperative Society during the mid-1980s? In this case the political issues involved relate specifically to the **quality of leadership** society members require, and to what constitutes acceptable rules of leadership and management within the society. These issues were clearly being worked over by the local community in the course of the events described. I want to suggest that the competition between two modernist normativities -- one Humanist and another I will call. "liberalism" -- was instrumental to the way in which these issues were formulated and dealt with via the exercise of political agency.

I approach the question of transformative process by interrogating the overlapping meanings of **accounting** in the cooperative narrative in order to clarify inter-relations between different strains of "modern" and "traditional" awareness. Accounting has a key position in classical schemes of modernity. Accounting is central to Weber's notion of "rationality", for example. Indeed Weber's pivotal concept of "formal rationality" -- action based on the quantitative calculation of profitability -- hinges upon it. In a more general sense, accounting can be understood as a cornerstone of both bureaucracy (surveillance) and the market (economic calculus).

Here we are dealing with a rather specific form of accounting, the new Cooperative Accounting Scheme (CAS), according to

which a Cooperative Society accountant registers flows of cash and goods in and out of the enterprise. As a routine aspect of the process, the accountant manipulates an impressive array of receipts and vouchers documenting the coop's transactions with its members and other economic actors.

From the liberal perspective, accounting entails a normative bias towards accountability. Any formal accounting system utilizes specifically designed mechanisms -- unique books of serially number receipts, for example -- to expose embezzlement immediately upon inspection.

However, few members of the cooperative society or of the community at large can comprehend an accounts ledger. Despite much effort to simplify the technique, reading a CAS balance sheet remains a tedious travail, requiring substantial training and advanced numeracy skills. Consequently, within the framework of prevalent Humanist rent-seeking, accountancy skills represented a monopoly empowering the accountant to exploit poorly supervised collective resources.

For the general public, accounting was simply one aspect of the cooperative society which they associated with the modernizing UNIP state. Given the prolonged recession, by 1987, when Michael became society manager, villagers viewed the state with great ambivalence. All acknowledged that UNIP had delivered them from the humiliations of colonial rule. On the other hand, it had already become abundantly clear that UNIP politicians were primarily interested in maintaining their hegemony of power as a means to self-enrichment.

That Michael harnessed accounting to embezzle his neighbors' money thus had a dual meaning, reflecting the community's ambivalence (in 1987) toward Humanism and the state. That he managed to steal so much without detection reaffirmed the power of modern professionality as well as that of the institution housing it -- the cooperative society -- as an agent of the modernizing state. At the same time, the mode of theft -- accounting techniques -- also tended to decenter Michael's agency, that is to say his personal responsibility for the lapse of integrity. In a sense, it was "Humanism" embodied in the

cooperative institution that cheated the farmers; Michael was simply a vehicle too weak to resist.

This ambivalence explains the local cooperative leadership's initial acquiescence to the "communal" tribunal of the mbushi elders for Michael's sanctioning. Recourse to the Humanist state's legal apparatus made little sense given the complicity of Humanism in the theft itself. That the state eventually intervened on its own behalf (to ensure the reimbursement of the Provincial Cooperative Union) merely reinforced the cognitive pattern already established.

This cycle of events seems nevertheless to have culminated a process of sensitization within the community. The expulsion of the Chairman Kalonge (for his unprofessional lack of supervision) and the election of Kalaba, who at first assessment exuded cosmopolitan modernity (his English, his formal work experience and overseas training) and Stephen (a certified accountant) announce a normative shift in the popular consciousness. The legitimacy of an order based on structures of patronage and the Humanist ideology of "one-party participatory democracy" is challenged by a countervailing modernity, that of Merit and Professionality.

Since the process involves complex human agents, not ideal types, the choices are naturally not totally "pure". Kalaba is still aligned with UNIP, though I'm not sure how evident this was to the electorate at the time. His micro-regional base in northern Milambo also contributes significantly to his political profile. Stephen's southern residence and above all his alliance with the royal family is also cogent; at least it helps in balancing out his "foreign" stigma.[42]

That Kalaba's self-destruction was abetted by the Ward Chairman further discredited Humanism. His replacement by Ackim, the personification of competence (as mechanic, farmer and businessman) secured the status of Merit as a central

42. Most aesthetically damaging to my thesis is the fact that, in 1991, as Milambo farmers flock to MMD as "the Party of Merit and Professionality", Ackim steps forward to assume leadership of the minority UNIP branch.

normativity underlying political agency. Ackim's alliance with Stephen's professionalism further fortifies this normative shift.

If I have been successful, my reconstruction of this political drama provides a plausible hypothesis of *how* the shift from normativities of Humanism to those of liberalism cane about in this small rural community. In order to convincingly link this process with the isomorphic political movement within the national political form I should be able to say something about *why* these particular liberal themes of merit, competence and accountability emerged in the first place.

Whence liberal normativity?

Any discussion of modernity tends to invoke a structuralist, one might even say a hegelian, tendency to imbue modernization with a historical agency of its own. Clearly this is never far from Weber's vision of rationalization which seems to assume a developmental momentum of its own once the conditions for its emergence are fulfilled. To merely call this position metaphysical is perhaps not a sufficient critique, but it will have to do for the time being. To simply *assume* an historical imperative engendering a process of modernization is in any event tautological. Needless to say, the inverse position is equally unhelpful. If modernity is found in a diverse range of institutional contexts and can be linked to global processes, it does not seem reasonable to suppose that modernization is a simple result of haphazard and capricious acts of human agency.
A more alluring approach would be to seek modernization in the interface of arbitrary and the structurally determined social processes. Certainly, if we are to give Giddens his due, transformative process must be seen as a form of "structuration", involving both historical imperative and the voluntary choice of human actors.

Along these lines, and in a very speculative mode I wonder if the emergence of the liberal normativities of merit, competence and accountability do not reflect a kind of ideological fundamentalism in reaction to the predatory excesses of the

2nd Republic. This fundamentalism might be seen as a reversion to the pre-patronage modernity of late colonialism. Merit and accountability are the key normative foundations of colonial civil service rhetoric. Thus, they constitute the very core of the discourse which sought to secure a degree of moral legitimacy for the order which epitomized the earliest forms of modernity in Zambia. In other words, the colonial order justified its exercise of power in reference to its moral superiority, embodied in Christian ideals and professional ethics. While rejecting the political justification of colonial domination, African subjects nonetheless learned to associate this rhetoric with the unquestionable power and technological advantages of the colonial order. This would imply a translation of the more enticing elements of the colonial rhetoric into local cultural parlance. Thus we might take Hannerz' cue and hypothesize a process of normative "creolisation".[43]

Three institutional mechanisms facilitated this process. Most obviously, the imposition of **Indirect Rule** and the associated co-option of indigenous political structures transposed a colonial framework upon many local political processes. The impact of the colonial manipulation was substantial, but should not be overestimated. In Milambo, for example, the incumbent chief dating from the colonial fifties is widely considered illegitimate. This is because his installment was orchestrated by the British for political purposes subverting local protocol.[44]

It is also plausible that **mission stations** played an active and important role in promoting the colonial creolisation of normative conceptions. The little I know of it has convinced me that the political agency of missionaries during the colonial period is an item of endless complexity. Many, though certainly not all shepherds felt their prime loyalty was to their flock when the inevitable confrontations between colonial authority and subjects arose. Yet, there was also an undeniable normative consonance between the secular and sacred strains

43. U. Hannerz, "The world in creolization", Africa 57 (1987) pp. 546-59.
44. See J.Gould, "We are farmers and progressive." Milambo Multipurpose Cooperative Society between State and Community. Helsinki: Institute of Development Studies, June 1990 (mimeo), p. 11

of British moral thought. As professional purveyors of moral merchandise in the sphere of everyday social interaction, missionaries might well be seen as having catalyzed the interpretation of colonial normativities of fair play in ways complementary to local political discourse.

These new, creole, forms of social normativity would also combine influences from **labor organizations** in the copper mining industry. Issues of political leadership were under heated ferment in the trade unions and welfare societies which spawned Zambia's first nationalist political organizations. Labor issues were most meticulously monitored by owning interests, by the territorial administration as well as by Colonial Office in London. Self-styled internationalist organizations like the Fabian Society also maintained close contacts with the Zambian labor movement, both as an opposition movement in Britain and from within the Colonial Office while the Labour party held power.

Of course, it is well-known that in practice, representatives of the colonial order generally failed to live up to their own ideals. As was to pass with the subsequent UNIP regime, the blatant the contravention of the modernist rhetoric undermined whatever moral legitimacy the colonial order might have had as a "civilizing agent" or a "developer".[45] Still, in my discussions with Zambians of that generation today, I am continuously confronted with a marked nostalgia for the "golden age" of fifties and early sixties. On the discursive surface, such nostalgic recollections equate economic prosperity (the availability of affordable things) with the colonial order. Perhaps, then, there is also an associated nostalgia for the normative rhetoric of that period as well.

If this is true, one could surmise that a rather specific political utopian would have a strong purchase on the Zambian social consciousness. This utopia is based on simple arithmetic: the material benefits plus the political normativity (in uncorrupted form) of the colonial order minus governmental constraints on the economic and political opportunities of anyone regardless

45. See Datta, op.cit.; Gould 1989 (Chapter 5), 1990, for illustrations of these failures from Luapula in the 1950s.

of class, race or region, in other words, "democratization" and "liberalization".

This, in a nutshell, was the MMD platform in 1991. In this light, rural support for MMD is not an anomaly at all. It is the "rational" application of principles worked out collectively in political struggle in the shadow of an interventionist state and its hallow normative precepts during the 1980s.

There is no guarantee, of course, that the MMD government will reward its rural constituency with economic and social policies corresponding to their needs and aspirations. In this respect the farmers' value-rationality may not correspond to what would have been instrumentally rational for them in the long term. Time will tell.

VI.

In lieu of conclusion, allow me a summary assessment of the hypotheses I have tried to articulate over the admittedly bumpy course of the above narration.

a) The notion of modernization still constitutes a useful methodological parameter for the analysis of transformative process in a social entity like Zambia.

b) The methodological and ideological distortions of neo-classical modernization theory nevertheless disqualify it from constructive application to empirical situations. A systematic critique of the neo-classical model still awaits it author, however. For the time being, many of its "dubious assumptions" linger in the practical consciousness of Africanist social theory. Still, the critique of the neo-classical model is not an end in itself. Its main goal is to assess the basis for a critical "rehabilitation" the notion of modernization.

c) One lingering assumption which proves singularly unhelpful in the analysis of social change is the dualist representation of transformative process which highlights conflicts between

"modernity" and "tradition", and which identifies the modern with urban and the traditional with rural localities.

d) One methodological strategy for "rehabilitating" the notion of modernization, entertained here in an experimental spirit, is to return to classical modernization sociology, for example in its anti-functionalist, non-evolutionist Weberian form. Unavoidably, this strategy involves its own problems. Most obviously, utilizing insights from classical modernization sociology makes imperative the parallel critique of the economism, eurocentricism and individualism in the key Weberian category of rationalization.

e) The analysis "modernization" as a transformative process in Zambia leads us to a meditation on the nature of political agency. Competing strains of modernist ideology constitute a tangible social force in the conceptualization of political ideals. This is quite evident with respect to the evaluative criteria of organizational management and leadership, on both local and national levels. Within this domain a marked degree of reflexivity in social and political awareness is evident. It is not, perhaps, far-fetched to detect in the modulations of normativity (e.g., between "Humanism" and "liberalism") over the course of political competition, a kind of Wertrationalisierung -- assuming, of course, that we can resolve the methodological problems, noted above, associated with the classical notion of rationality.

f) We need further methodological work on conceptualizing modernization as the transformative process producing culturally constituted forms of modern sociality and consciousness within specific time-space continua like Zambia/Southern Africa, etc. Hannerz' scheme of "creolisation" provides a stimulating metaphor which is stronger on analyzing the form of transformation than its content. The problem looms ahead of how to integrate the possibility of tendentious processes (such as culturally embedded forms of normative "rationalization") into the model without reverting to a universalizing teleology and thus undermining the sociological interpretation of complex causal relations.

g) It may well be better to simply reject the sociological infatuation with "modernity" and speak of transcendental, transformative social processes using some other vocabulary. Eventually, I expect we shall. For the time being, I think there is a case to be made for not yet turning our backs on the classical tradition in social theory which still seems to be able to provide critical guidelines for understanding social change.