Systems, Institutions and Strategic Choices in the Explanation of Economic, Political and Social Change and Continuity

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This paper presents an unfinished version of the theoretical framework for analyzing change and continuity in societies over long periods of time that I am in the process of developing in order to explain some puzzles about how interactions among Zambian political leaders and between them and other actors have affected change and continuity in the political party system, governmental institutions, and economic policies in Zambia from independence in 1964 to the present. From the 1960s through the 1980s I analyzed these interactions and their broader political and social consequences in terms of a framework that focused on societal and political systems and attempted to integrate aspects of Parsonian and neo-Marxist approaches (Scarritt 1971, 1979, 1983, 1986, 1996). Through my more recent work with Shaheen Mozaffar on comparative African ethnopolitical cleavages, electoral politics, and party systems (Scarritt and Mozaffar 1999; Mozaffar, Scarritt and Galaich 2003; Mozaffar and Scarritt 2005, forthcoming), as well as through exchanges with Daniel N. Posner about our recent manuscripts on Zambia (Posner 2005; Scarritt 2006), I came to realize that I had been studying institutions and the outcomes of leaders' strategic choices in Zambia for more than forty years, although I had not employed those theoretical terms and had not explicitly anchored my macro-level analysis in micro-level theory. But in comparison to many analyses of strategic choice, which are based on assumptions about actors' preferences, I have data on leaders' specific values and preferences that are based on interviews with

them, although space limitations prohibit a defense of my measurement techniques against critics (Hechter 1992: 220-223).

I first cite prominent scholars of strategic choice in long-term and societal contexts who employ game theory but recognize that aspects of systems as well as institutions need to be incorporated into their analyses. Next I briefly summarize the extensive literature on the relations between institutions/organizations and strategic choice, arguing that similarities among types of institutionalism are more significant than differences for the analysis of these relations. I then argue that a specific systems framework focusing on a reconstruction of Talcott Parsons' hierarchies of informational control and energetic facilitation or conditions is most useful for truly integrating institutions and strategic choice based on specific preferences with system properties and relationships. Finally I present three examples to show that this integrated framework provides explanations of interesting puzzles about Zambia that are more complete than explanations based on any one of those approaches.

These three approaches are by no means mutually exclusive: systems include institutions and organizations in which they have their primary effects (Scott 2001: xx), and--at least potentially—strategic choice, but also include relationships and properties that are not included in either of these levels of analysis. In addition, there is debate about whether relations between institutions and strategic choice are causal or constitutive. Although the approaches emphasize different level of analysis and have different conceptions of the relationship between energy and information, linkages to other levels and to other conceptions are found with varying degrees of explicitness and completeness in much of the best work in all three approaches (Sil 2000: 370-372). My

framework analyzes these linkages systematically, combining the strengths of all three approaches at the level of analysis that each emphasizes. It requires ontological pluralism (Fearon and Wendt 2002: 53) as well as openness to aspects of both empiricist and realist epistemologies and to combining the cores of different research programs, to all of which some scholars (Blyth 2003: 697, Johnson 2002, 2003) may object.

Theoretical Framework

Strategic Choice and Games

Strategic choice is commonly studied through game theory. Petersen (1999: 65-66) effectively summarizes what is involved in this type of theory:

> Game theory requires specification of actors, choices and constraints/incentives. The set of constraints/incentives can be discussed as the decision structure. The method further requires the specification of a mechanism explaining how a decision results. As a form of rational choice theory, game theory mechanisms must entail rational beliefs and rational evaluations of outcomes rather than social norms and/or irrational psychological mechanisms. Crucially, game theory is strategic, that is, it involves and highlights interdependent decision-making. Game theory's foundational concept is the equilibrium: the set of conditions under which no actor would chose independently to alter its behavior.
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> Importantly, the method develops deductive and formal models that specify decisions structures under which regularities in behavior should hold. Similar structures should trigger the same mechanisms and thus the same outcomes. … Secondly, the decision structures may connect individual action to aggregate level phenomena. Through the specification of causal linkages across levels of analysis,

> game theory can provide individual level prediction from existing aggregate level theory. … In short, game theory can combine the benefits of a fine-grained causal mechanism approach with the predictive powers of an aggregate-level structural approach.

Peterson (66) goes on to argue that game theory can be useful even when constraints/ incentives are murky or irrational forces such as norms are too important to be ignored if "the action that needs explanation appears to be related to observable social structures" (see Morrow 1994 for a much more detailed presentation).

Peterson's discussion nicely highlights the issues concerning the application of game theory to macro level contexts and long-term analyses that have lead a number of scholars to modify their approach to strategic choice: how preferences are established (see Clark 1998: 249-250), how structure is most usefully conceived so that it is minimally murky and the hypothesis that the same structure leads to the same mechanisms and outcomes can be tested, whether norms can and usually do form parts of rational mechanisms, how to specify the nature of linkages across levels, and how to deal with multiple games, each potentially having multiple equilibria or none. In varying degrees these scholars advocate a "wide" version of "thick" rational choice theory (Opp 1999) that Lichbach (2003: 29-32, 115-25) calls "social situation rationalism." This version accepts the core assumptions of rational choice, but "thick" rational choice theory "posits … some additional description of agent preferences and beliefs (Ferejohn 1991: 282), while "wide" rational choice theory posits that these preferences may be non egoistic, that actors may not be fully informed, and that intangible and perceived as well as tangible and objective constraints affect behavior.

Douglass North and his collaborators (North 1990: 22-3, 42-3, 1998; Mantzavinos, North, and Shariq 2004; Denzau and North, 1994; Knight and North 1997) refer to values or underlying preferences as conventions, moral rules, norms, ideologies, mental models, and culture, and recognize their importance for a theory of strategic choice that combines thick and wide social-situation rationalism with theories of collective learning from cognitive science (although Blyth 2003: 696-697, Fine and Milonakis 2003, and Vandenberg 2002 questionably suggest that this theory is not fully coherent). Knight and North (1997: 211-213) assert that:

> There is often very little relationship between the assumptions that rational choice theorists make and the way that humans actually act and learn in everyday life. …we suggest that the necessary focus on the cultural and institutional determinants of cognition and rationality will entail substantial revisions in the basic logic of traditional rational choice analyses. …what has been missing in most game theoretic models is a "description of the players' reasoning processes and capacities as well as a specification of the game situation." What is missing is a theory of how human beings learn.

The emerging tradition of "analytic narratives" within rational choice theory utilizes game theory to analyze strategic choice in terms of a single equilibrium in an extensive form or iterated game (including two or multi-level games) with fixed parameters. This approach is "more micro than micro in orientation," focusing on the mechanisms that translate macrohistorical forces into specific political outcomes," and presumes "that some variables are constrained, whereas the values of others can be chosen" and that "alternatives have been defined, as well as linkages between actions and outcomes"

(Bates *et. al.*, 1998: 13). Bates *et. al.* (2000: 697) state that, in analytic narratives, "the process of deciding the appropriate individuals, their preferences, and the structure of the environment—that is, the right game to use—is an inductive process much like that used in modern comparative politics …" They (2000: 698) also state that "intimacy with detail, we argue, *must* inform the selection and specification of the model to be tested and *should* give us a grasp of the intentions and beliefs of the actors," although they deny the need for independent evidence of for these beliefs and intentions. In his contribution to Bates *et. al.* (1998: 23-63) Grief explains the rise and fall an of self-enforcing political institutions in late medieval Genoa in terms of an extended-form game involving the two dominant clans and a power-wielder brought in from outside to coerce them into cooperation that resulted in a relatively long-lasting cooperative equilibrium. But Grief also analyzes economic development and external threat as causes of the establishment and breakdown of this game, thus bringing in polity-economy and society-external environment interchanges. Levi (1999: 152-72; in Bates *et. al.* 1998: 109-47) explains popular responses to conscription in various settings by combining extensive-form games with power, ideas, norms, and technologies.

In the same vein, Peterson (1999: 65-75) describes how he and Laitin (1996, 1998) embed the "tipping game" in social systems analysis in different contexts by including reference groups, status, honor, and norms. Posner (2005) explanation of the development of the structure of ethnic cleavages in Zambia through the administrative, educational, and labor recruitment policies of the government, missionaries and mining companies in colonial Northern Rhodesia and African responses to them. This process of identity construction "operates over the long term and involves a mix of subconscious

social learning and conscious investments by individuals in particular group memberships"; it is analyzed in the "sociological institutionalist" tradition (7). Posner's analysis then turns to an explanation of ethnic-coalition-building choices framed in the "rational choice institutionalist" tradition. He shows that Zambians desire patronage as the crucial political good, view ethnicity as instrumentally important for obtaining it, and perceive of political parties as vehicles for dispensing it to members of the group to which their leaders belong. Boix (2003) explains how relatively low levels of income inequality and asset specificity facilitate democratization, especially when the poor are mobilized and a middle class exists; these system properties and organizational factors determine whether a democratization or a repression/revolution game is played. Acemoglu and Robinson (2006) model repression/revolution, democratization, and democratic consolidation or anti-democratic coups as a conflictual game between citizens who want democracy to give themselves more power and elites who oppose democracy in order to protect their power, with a middle class perhaps playing a mediating role. In response to credible threats of revolution by citizens, elites can adopt a short-run strategy of repression and/or granting non-institutional redistribution or a long-run strategy of making credible commitments to redistribution through establishing democratic institutions. The degree of inequality and resource abundance and the nature of identities are crucial in determining which path will be followed. Although they employ game theory, they recognize (86) that "… individuals function within social and economic systems that both constrain their actions and condition incentives. In fact, there is no dichotomy at all between structural and strategic approaches – they are one and the same."

Chai (2001) develops a coherence model of preference and belief formation that integrates culture as an alternative to conventional rational choice, and employs it to explain the importance of ideology in economic policies in developing countries (see also Johnson 1965) and group altruism in ethnic collective action. Ferejohn (1991: 285)) states that:

> The culturalist can narrow the range of plausible interpretations of an event or practice by appealing to (universal or at least broadly shared) principles of consistent purposive action implied by the possibility of intersubjective comprehensibility. The rational choice theorist may be able to select among equilibria by appealing to culturally shared understandings and meanings necessary to select among strategic equilibria. … In social action, human agents make strategic or allocative choices while simultaneously enacting (ontologically) prior understandings about the nature of the strategic situation in which they find themselves, the characteristics or identities of the players (including themselves), and the common understandings or expectations as to how the game will be played.

The framework proposed here attempts to enrich social situation rationalism by systematic specification of the more macro-level contexts in which these games are acknowledged by their authors to be embedded. This is especially important for my analysis of Zambian leaders because they are involved in a messy "ecology of games" (Long 1962: 139-55; Tsebelis 1990: 32-3, 38) rather than strategically interrelated nested or two-level games (Tsebelis 1990; Putnam 1988). Examples of party politics games, political institutions games, and economic policy games are given in the concluding section of this paper; these and others are played simultaneously. Leaders may attempt to

prioritize the conflicting preferences they hold in different games based on a combination of their relative intensity and the strength of the constraints on their implementation, but this will be difficult to do given the absence of perfect information and the potential incommensurability of preferences. Thus games are especially likely to have multiple or no equilibria.

As James Johnson indicates (1991: 117):

> A presumption of rationality is a principal of charity. It mandates that when confronted with seemingly irrational action, the social theorist investigate the broader patterns of action, explore the social or political contexts, within which the perplexing action might be interpreted as rational.

He further indicates (1991: 117, n. 18) that finding irrationality "should be the conclusion of inquiry, not its point of departure." This is a reasonable strategy for the analysis of the strategic interactions Zambian leaders if one assumes that their desire for status is a rational rather than an irrational preference, and that the "ecology of games" accounts for apparent irrationality.

Institutions and Organizations

There is a substantial literature on the relationship between institutions and strategic choice/games, and my framework borrows from but does not make a significant original contribution to that literature. Campbell's very useful summary of the literature on institutions defines them as " formal and informal rules, monitoring and enforcement mechanisms, and systems of meaning that define the context within which individuals, corporations, labor unions, nation-states, and other organizations operate and interact with each other" (2004: 1). This context both enables and constrains individuals and

organizations (2004: 72; Hays 1994: 61; Scott 2001: 50; Sewell 1992: 4). Although my framework includes institutions at the (political and social) system level, it accepts Campbell's and others' (Clark 1998: 248; Grief and Laitin 2004: 635; North 1990) view that institutions operate primarily at the organizational level. While he describes the differences as well as the similarities among rational choice, organizational, and historical institutionalism, Campbell (2004: 69-89, 172-90; see also Clemens and Cook 1999: 446) thinks the latter are more important. He proposes a theory of institutional change that unites the three types of institutionalism and is remarkably similar to a theory that I developed within a systems framework many years ago (Scarritt 1972, 1980), demonstrating the close connection between these two approaches.

In my current framework, institutions and organizations provide the link between systems and strategic choice. This notion is found in the literature. Contrary to the common perception that they adopt only the logic of appropriateness, March and Olsen say (1989: 159) that political actors may be driven by institutional duties and roles as well as by calculated self-interest and that politics may be organized around the construction and interpretation of meaning as well as the making of choices. They also say:

> It is possible to see an institution as the intermeshing of three systems: the individual, the institution, and the collection of institutions that can be called the environment. Many of the complications in the study of change are related to the ways in which those three systems intermesh. … In particular, it seems very likely that both the individuals involved in institutions and systems of institutions have different requirements for change than do the institutions themselves (57-8).

They further indicate (65-6) that:

> Understanding the transformation of political institutions requires recognizing that there are frequently multiple, not necessarily consistent, intentions, that intentions are often ambiguous, that intentions are part of a system of values, goals, and attitudes that imbeds intentions in a structure of other beliefs and aspirations, and that this structure of values and intentions is shaped, interpreted, and created during the course of the change in the institution. … Institutions develop and redefine goals while making decisions and adapting to environmental pressures, and the initial intent can be lost.

DiMaggio (1991: 77-83) calls systems explanations the most sophisticated form of micro-macro bridge, and says that institutions, organizations, and roles are the central meso-level elements of this bridge, analyzing both cultural and relational aspects of behavior (see also Hannan 1992: Sil 2000: 371-372). The nature of these linkages and the importance of adding systems to institutions and strategic choice are explored in the next section. Grief and Laitin suggest (2004: 639-40) that when institutions are not self-reinforcing in response to exogenous change, they are most usefully viewed as quasi-parameters, while system properties remain parameters. They recognize (634) that games are influenced by both.

Many of Zambia's political institutions were inherited from the colonial period, although some of them have been modifies since independence. System persistence in Zambia was not assured at several points in post-independence history, while development and democratic consolidation have been elusive throughout that history. Therefore, in contrast to Knight's (1992) argument that institutions emerge and change

through bargaining among more and less powerful actors over conflicting preferences rather than through attempting to assure system persistence, I argue that Zambian institutional continuity and change is best explained by the merger of these two arguments and diffusion.

Macro-Micro and Information-Energy Linkages

Several twentieth century general theorists have developed theories of information-energy exchange to explain relationships between: 1) individual preferences and behavior (micro level), 2) social structure and culture variously conceived (macro level), and 3) individual, institutional/organizational, and societal levels of analysis (micro-meso-macro). Taylor (1989), Fligstein 2001: 110; Chong 1996; Handel 1979; Scott 2001: 187-203; and Sil (2000: 376-381) present strong arguments for this type of theory, but the first two reject one prominent version--structuration theory (Giddens 1984)—because it pictures structure and action as constituting one another. The framework presented here focuses on a reconstruction of Talcott Parsons' hierarchies of informational control and energetic facilitation or conditions (cited below) based in part on the work of Jeffrey Alexander (1998), reinforced by the related work of Sharon Hays (1994) and William H. Sewell, Jr. (1992). I am well aware that Parsons and functionalism are the favorite target of a variety of critics (Johnson 2003: 92-103; Swidler 1986; Wedeen 2002), so I will quickly point out that: 1) I am employing only a part of the third and last version of Parsons' framework, and I am interpreting it in my own way, following Alexander and other scholars (Holton 2001; Sciulli 1986: 751) rather than the prevailing view, which is based primarily on Parsons' earlier work and elements of it that carry over into his later work (Alexander 1983). 2) I am avoiding functional explanation, following Tilly's

distinction (2001:23-24) between interactions within a larger set of elements (systems) and positive consequences for the maintenance of these interactions (functions).

Parsons' hierarchies of control and facilitation or conditions are found within societies, formal organizations, and more informal groups, as well as in patterns of strategic interaction among individuals (Ackerman and Parsons 1966: 30-40; Parsons 1961 37-8, 1966: 105-6). In this theory regulative information flows in one direction (from culture to stratification to the polity to the economy within societies, from general values to more specific norms and institutional rules to group structure to role behavior within societies, organizations, and groups, and from preferences to energized, resource-based behavior among individuals engaged in strategic interaction) and facilitative energy or conditioning flows in the opposite direction in each case. Parsons' original formulation was at the macro and meso levels and not explicit about the micro aspect of these hierarchies, but Alexander's reconstruction (Alexander and Colomy 1985; Alexander and Giesen 1987: 14, 37; Alexander 1998: 163-228) adds this aspect, relating action by individuals who are rational, interpretive, and socialized in some degree to order involving social structures that allow contingent freedom, exercise coercive control, and are in some degree reproduced at the individual level. Ideas (information) need to be translated into institutional rules and tied to economic and other resources (energy) and the effort of many individuals to be effective, while the energy of effort, resources and power needs to be guided by ideas and institutional rules to be effective (see also Campbell 2004: 110-19, 123; Parsons 1960: 174; Sewell 1992: 13).

For Hays, culture is the informational part of social structure, a system of meaning. Systems of social relations or interaction, "patterns of social life that are not

reducible to individuals and are durable enough to withstand the whims of individuals who would change them," and including "roles, relationships and forms of domination," are the energetic part of social structure. Both aspects of structure are created by human beings, and both are enabling as well as constraining:

> Agency explains the creation, recreation, and transformation of social structures; agency is made possible by the enabling features of social structures at the same time as it is limited within the bounds of structural constraint; and the capacity of agents to affect social structures varies with the accessibility, power, and durability of the structure in question (1994:62).

Agency occurs on a continuum from structural reproduction to structural transformation. All along this continuum, agents make choices, intentionally or not: these "choices are *always socially shaped* and are also quite regularly *collective* choices" (1994: 64). "Human agency and social structure, then, have a simultaneously antagonistic and mutually dependent relationship" (65). Agency can be collective as well as individual (Sewell 1992: 21). The multiple and intersecting nature of social structures and cultural schemas (Sewell, 1992: 18-20; Alexander 1998: 213-21) increases the potential for transformational agency.

> To be an agent means to be capable of exerting some degree of control over the social relations in which one is enmeshed, which in turn implies the ability to transform those social relations to some degree. … agents are empowered to act with and against others by structures; they have knowledge of the schemas that inform social life and have access to some measure of human and nonhuman resources. Agency arises from the actor's knowledge of schemas, which means

> the ability to apply them to new contexts. Or, to put the same thing the other way around, agency arises from the actor's control of resources, which implies a capacity to reinterpret or mobilize an array of resources in terms of schemas other than those that constituted the array. Agency is implied by the existence of structures (Sewell 1992:20).

Individuals acting as agents in strategic interaction are preference maximizers and rule followers simultaneously. This is possible because rules are always flexible and preferences are always in part socially determined. Preferences are individually held but tend to be shared by those in similar positions in political and social systems because of both rational calculation and common socialization. In strategic choice terms, values are general, relatively stable, widely shared, and intensely held endogenous, higher order preferences (Clark 1998: 252-254, 260; Scott 2001: 54-55; Tsebelis 1990: 94) that have been developed through socialization and learning in the process of interaction with others. Norms include more specific and means-related rules that are shared by members of groups, organizations, and social categories, and are the basic units of institutions. The modal forms of values and norms can be treated as ideational structure if they have significant effects (Inglehart and Welzel 2005: 231-239). They are effective on behaviour because they are known to be relatively widely shared and relatively intensely held, and going against them is often sanctioned. Thus conforming to them is usually rational. This explanation of their role is very different from the value determinism that characterized some of Parsons' early work, and responds effectively to much of the theoretical criticism of values or culture as explanatory concepts (Hechter 1992: 215-220; Reisinger 1995).

Information-energy exchanges are thus causal mechanisms (Johnson 2002: 227-237; Hedstrom and Sewdberg 1998) that operate at the individual, institutional/ organizational, and system levels of analysis and link them together. This conceptualization of linkages goes well beyond that presented in the analytic narratives tradition (Johnson 2002: 237-244; Bendor and Swistak 2004). Specifying the nature of micro-macro and information-energy linkages avoids the possibility, pointed out by Barry (1978: 182) and Opp (1999: 180-188), that incorporating values and norms into an economic analysis will explain everything, but only trivially or by circularity. Cognition plays a major role in culture (North and associates as cited above; DiMaggio 1997), as do symbols (Johnson 2003: 93, 98-99; Swidler 1986, Wedeen 2002: 720), but in addition to rather than instead of values and norms.

Power has been defined in a number of ways (Knight 1992; Hayward 2000; Moe 2005) but under most definitions it emerges from information-energy exchanges at and between the institutional-organizational and system levels. Institutional rules convey power, but if—as Knight proposes—these rules emerge from bargaining among those with unequal power, this inequality must come from system relationships and properties as Parsons' analysis (1966) suggests.

System Relationships and Properties

Politics can be analyzed as an analytical subsystem of society, which is also a system. Both of these systems exist within the world-system, comprised of the predominantly capitalist world-economy and the system of sovereign states and international organizations. The economic, stratification, and cultural systems constitute the societal environment of the political system. Interaction among societal subsystems involves

information-energy exchanges in which the economy is the main source of energy, the culture is the main source of information, and the other two subsystems are more equal in the production and consumption of both energy and information. These interactions vary widely among systems, depending on their properties. It will be useful to exemplify these variations by discussing the Zambian systems context, which includes at least seven system properties described in the following numbered paragraphs that create opportunities for and constraints on the formation, maintenance and change of institutions and organizations and strategic interactions among individuals. Each of these system properties contains very large numbers of institutional rules and organizations, and an even larger number of games that are played within those rules, but each also contains non-institutionalized structural properties. It is far more parsimonious and clearly more useful for an integrated multi-level analysis to describe them as system properties.

1) Zambian society exists within the world-system, comprised of the predominantly capitalist globalized world-economy and the system of sovereign states and international organizations. The dependent Zambian economy is constrained by the world-economy to produce primary products for export to the developed capitalist economies, accept investment and aid on terms determined by organizations based in those economies, and participate in cycles of international inflation and recession, and is hindered in any attempt it might make to create a balanced, integrated and self-reliant economy having the capacity for self-sustained development. The world economy, however, also provides Zambia with markets for its exports, goods to import, investment capital, and various types of aid.

2) The international recognition given to Zambia as a member of the global state system and international organizations in spite of its relative weakness enhances its chances of survival (Jackson and Rosberg 1982). Western pressure selectively encourages consolidation of democracy and greater implementation of structural adjustment policies, but also constrains any attempts that Zambia might make to bring about fundamental societal transformation. No great power strongly encourages both democracy and social equality--to say nothing of socialism.

3) The Zambian economy primarily exemplifies the capitalist mode of production, involving extensive private ownership or control of capital, heavy reliance on market mechanisms, and the production of commodities for profit. Since the late 1970s Zambia has experienced a serious crisis of declining production and/or declining demand in the world-economy for the goods that it produces, combined with unfavorable terms of trade and rapidly increasing debt, and has been unable to resolve this crisis or—until very recently--even to prevent it from deepening.

4) The stratification system distributes wealth and power among classes, ethnopolitical groups, organized groups, and individual actors, and more or less successfully integrates the activities of these categories of the society's population. A fully formed social class structure, produced by the interaction of the economy and stratification, consists of two or more sets of group and individual actors, each sharing the same range of positions with regard to the distribution of wealth and power, combined with some organized groups and widely held values, established institutions, and beliefs supportive of the existing distribution. The class structure in Zambia is not fully formed, however, and thus fractions (types of roles within a class) and/or organized groups are

often more significant determinants of behavior than classes. Power and political interactions are the primary basis of the emerging dominant class in Zambia. Political leaders are all members of this class. Extensive economic dependency means that foreign businessmen constitute an important segment of the most powerful and wealthy class; political independence gave indigenous members of this class the opportunity to limit the control of wealth exercised by these foreigners, but structural adjustment programs have reduced their ability to do so. Members of the least privileged segments of the population are difficult to mobilize politically along class lines because they do not believe that it is possible to attain class goals through participation, which makes mobilization by groups representing fractions of the emerging dominant class more effective in furthering class or fractional interests.

5) Ethnic group markers include, but are not limited to, perceived common descent and shared history, "tribal" membership, shared culture, language, race, religion, and common territory associated with one or more of the other markers. Their formation is part of the stratification-cultural interchange in societies. But ethnic groups are relevant to politics only when they have been politicized, that is, when they have become ethnopolitical groups (Scarritt and Mozaffar 1999, forthcoming; Mozaffar, Scarritt, and Galaich 2003). Posner (2003, 2005) has analyzed how five more inclusive ethnopolitical groups—four of which are based on language--and a number of less inclusive "tribal" groups nested within them were initially politicized through socioeconomic change and government administrative, economic and educational policies in colonial Northern Rhodesia. Politicization of these groups has continued through competition within the nationalist movement and among or within political parties since independence. Zambia

has had a stable pattern of ethnopolitical groups and cleavages since the colonial period. Grief and Laitin (2004: 645) discuss cleavage structures as institutions, but I believe that the rules, norms and beliefs comprising them are sufficiently loosely related that they are more usefully viewed as system properties.

6) The cultural system perpetuates and changes, by means of life-long socialization and learning through strategic interaction, the values, institutional rules, other norms, identities, beliefs, and ideologies that constitute the society's culture. The family, education, mass media, and religion are the institutions and organizations through which socialization is usually accomplished. Conflicting values are present in every society, and additional conflicts may arise over the specification of a commonly accepted value in institutional rules or other norms, as well as over conflicting beliefs. Culture can be an important source of societal change because it can include innovative values and beliefs, as well as because the conflicts discussed above provide a variety of cultural alternatives. It can also be an important source of resistance to change because it can include anti-innovative values and beliefs, because--except in conditions of extreme societal breakdown--a society is more likely to accept changes which are more compatible with the pre-existing culture than those which are less compatible, and because both internal innovations and changes borrowed from other societies are likely to be reinterpreted to make them more compatible with pre-existing culture. I illustrate below how the values of nationalism, status, and democracy, widely held by Zambian leaders, although interpreted in different ways by different sides, are influential in various types of strategic interaction.

7) Politics involves making and assuring compliance with decisions and policies (binding rules affecting many combinations of elements of societal structure) which are applicable to the whole society, but usually result in the attainment of goals desired by only some of its members. Thus political interactions allocate the rewards and costs flowing from decisions and policies among classes, ethnopolitical groups, and other categories of groups and citizens, and attempt to resolve the conflicts generated in the process. Like the stratification system, politics is the source of both energy and information. Politics consists not only of these policy-making and benefit-allocating activities, but also involves their relationships with the other societal subsystems. The cultural system provides the polity with definitions of reality and some degree of legitimacy in return for organizational power exercised for the maintenance or change of culture. The polity gains support from some classes, ethnopolitical groups, and organized groups in the stratification system by meeting demands and, in the long run, contributing to class and group formation through the formulation and full or partial implementation of binding policies and the issuance of ideological statements. Control over the economy constitutes a vitally important facility which is to some degree available to the polity for attaining goals and resolving conflicts. In exchange, the polity more or less effectively provides the economy with regulations which are crucial for sustaining and increasing production and maintaining or changing the mode of production.

Political decision-makers generally attempt to maximize their effectiveness by obtaining as much legitimacy, productivity, and support as possible from these interactions. Support from those classes, ethnopolitical groups, and organized groups which control the greatest amounts of wealth and power, and with which the decision--

makers identify, is almost always more important to political decision-makers than support from other classes and groups. Mobilization of individuals and groups for political participation is the most important technique for gaining and demonstrating control of power, especially when class formation is incomplete. It should be noted, however, that not all class and group influence on the polity results from such explicit activity; some of it is exercised by placing implicit limits on the range of policy alternatives considered. Mobilization involves the articulation of demands and support, various types of protest activities, and the effort to organize and strengthen the organization of political groups and--in civilian regimes such as Zambia--political parties and other participatory state agencies.

Explaining Zambian Puzzles

The explanatory utility of discussing information-energy and micro-macro relations among strategic choice, organizations, institutions, and system properties and relationships is illustrated by the following three examples of puzzles about Zambia.

Why Political Parties Are Multiethnic but Opposition Coordination Is Difficult

Ethnopolitical cleavages have been predominant in competitive electoral politics in Zambia since before independence, but most political parties have been multiethnic. In the name of national unity, they have sought inclusive or oversized rather than minimum winning coalitions, with varying degrees of success. Not only has the dominant party always been highly multiethnic, but more unexpectedly, most opposition parties—which tend to be small and based on personal and often ethnopolitical ties to their leaders—have also sought and had some multiethnic support. Since the early 1990s there has been more

than one opposition party. In spite of being multiethnic, opposition parties have had severe coordination problems.

The theory presented above explains these puzzles in terms of the interaction of past ethnopolitical mobilization focused on national leadership and guided by the nationalist and power and status-seeking values of political leaders (and many followers) with ethnopolitical group morphology and presidential and plurality institutions. A key rule of the electoral game (and a normative specification of nationalist values) that is reinforced by the politics-culture interchange is that mobilization of one's own group is accepted, but mobilization that explicitly excludes other groups is not. Governing parties have usually attained dominance through the support of oversized coalitions, while all opposition parties have been founded by losers in the competition for national leadership who desired to gain such leadership through multiethnic coalitions. This history has included the political downfall of the one leader who assembled an initially successful minimum winning coalition within the ruling party in 1967 (Scarritt 2006) and probably will include the downfall of an opposition leader who recently became leader of his party through a mobilization that excluded members of other groups from the top leadership position in the party.

The combination of nationalism, acceptance of the utility of strong leadership by the right people, need for status, and the feeling of status deprivation reinforced leaders' focus on the competition for the presidency and on leadership of opposition parties seeking broad support as the best alternative for the losers in this competition. These values led them to engage in ethnopolitical mobilization as a tool in this competition, but at the same time focused them on gaining multiethnic support for their parties. Zambia

has five culturally similar ethnopolitical groups, with twelve less inclusive groups found within four of them (Scarritt and Mozaffar, 1999:86-91), but there is no majority group (although the Bemba account for approximately 43% of the population).

All Zambian legislative elections have been conducted with a single member district plurality (first past the post) system. In multiparty elections, this system tends to over-represent larger parties and territorially concentrated parties, so that in the Zambian context it may over-represent both highly multiethnic and ethnic parties. More significantly, power within the government has been highly concentrated in the president since independence, following the common African pattern (Rakner, 2003: 128-31), and the use of this power by incumbents has favoured their own parties, which have always been multiethnic, and have weakened opposition parties, especially ethnic ones. The president's influence over the party system is especially strong because: 1) presidential and parliamentary elections have always been held at the same time, and 2) in 1996 the Zambian constitution was changed to convert the minimum number of votes necessary to win the presidency from a majority to a plurality. In the absence of a Bemba ethnic party seeking a coalition partner, winning the presidency provides a powerful incentive for all parties to be broadly multiethnic.

The same combination of factors that explains multiethnic parties also makes opposition coordination difficult. Conventional strategic choice theory assumes that this difficulty stems from information deficit; all leaders believe that they can win on their own. But this assumption is not credible in Zambia where most opposition parties get relatively few votes. Since every party leader derives status from his or her position, they all tend to be enthusiastic about a unified opposition under their leadership but unwilling

to unify under anyone else. In anticipation of an election being called in the near future, a tentative electoral alliance was recently formed by three parties that finished second through fourth in the last presidential election in 1991, and together polled about 350,000 votes more than the ruling party. Although all three parties had been weakened by splits or defections, there was hope that they could mount a serious challenge because the leaders of the smaller parties appeared to accept the leader of the largest as the presidential candidate of the alliance because he attained superior status by almost defeating the ruling party's presidential candidate in 2001. But that leader has now died, and without his superior status a fierce leadership struggle split his party along ethnopolitical lines. Although the alliance is formally supporting the winner of this struggle, his own party is no longer multiethnic, and he is likely to finish a very distant second, in part because the man he defeated is supporting another opposition candidate.

Why Leaders Oppose Presidents but Support Presidentialism

Calvert (1992: 18) discusses leadership as a coordination game, acknowledging that it is not merely "transactional," but also "moral":

> Inasmuch as widespread agreement on social goals and political values helps a political system provide for the general welfare, one role of a political leader is to foster such agreement. This is done by stating goals and values that address contemporary social situations and that are consistent with other widely accepted values that already exist.

This quote accurately describes what Zambian leaders were hoping first president Kenneth Kaunda would do shortly after independence in 1966, that second president Frederick Chiluba would do after "democratization" in 1991, and that third (and current)

president Levi Mwanawasa would do under his "new deal" after 2001. All three presidents disappointed them, although Mwanawasa probably has done so the least.

Kaunda articulated the ideology of Zambian Humanism, which corresponded to leaders' values in many ways, but contradicted them in placing limits on wealth accumulation. In 1973 he established a one-party state and placed tight political controls on other leaders of this party, allegedly to reduce conflicts among them, but violating their commitment to democracy. In 1991 Chiluba wrote a book advocating unlimited capitalism and democracy, but his policies and the state of the economy did not provide a basis for significant wealth accumulation by most leaders, and he too placed tight political controls on other leaders in all parties. He was also very corrupt. Leaders recognized that system properties such as Zambia's underdeveloped and dependent, IMF regulated economy and partially formed class structure placed constraints on the effectiveness of these Presidents' policies, but they viewed presidential actions as more significant causes of their deprivation. Mwanawasa has returned to a cautious economic nationalism in the face of IMF skepticism and the economy has improved somewhat during his years in power. He has offered opposition leaders (although not former presidential candidates) positions in his cabinet without changing parties, which would have forced them to stand for by-elections. He has also let up on the tight political controls imposed by his predecessors and has been more tolerant of opposition parties while working to reduce their support. He will easily win re-election on September 28.

Even before 2001, leaders' preferences were to switch presidents rather than to reduce their extensive powers. They valued power, even though they were critical of the

way it was used, and their nationalism and recognition of Zambia's vulnerability led them to agree to the need for a strong presidency for system persistence.

Why Privatization Has Increased Economic Nationalism

Rakner (2003: 174-84) analyzes economic reform implementation in Zambia as a two-level game played by leaders and domestic interest groups on the one hand and leaders and foreign donors on the other. But there is also game among leaders that has changed significantly since 1991. The nationalist policies of the Kaunda government put large scale enterprises under parastatal corporations and limited the types of small businesses that non-citizens could own. But the leadership code enacted under Humanism limited (somewhat ineffectively) business ownership by politicians and civil servants. Those leaders who were not high-salaried parastatal executives felt their wealth accumulation was blocked, especially after the economy began to shrink in the mid-1970s, and they initially welcomed privatization and the return to free market principles under Chiluba.

Under the leadership of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), donors insisted that privatization occur on a free market basis, which involved selling companies to the highest bidders, whatever their nationalities, and removing subsidies and other regulations that benefited the emerging dominant class to which leaders belong. The Chiluba government's efforts to limit these negative effects on leaders were limited by the desperate state of the economy and the high level of dependence on donors. Thus privatization resulted in large companies being sold to former multinational owners or other multinationals at prices far below those expected by Zambian leaders, and a number of smaller companies being sold to white South African businessmen, who had more capital than Zambian businessmen.

As indicated above, Mwanawasa's "new deal" has involved a cautious economic nationalism since 2001, which appeals to leaders' values and has been successful in halting the decline of the economy. It has been accepted by donors because it is cautious and has been combined with reduction in corruption, as well as because they recognize their failure to implement reform through confrontation with the Chiluba government. Although leaders continue to express dissatisfaction with the state of the Zambian economy, it is directed less toward Mwanawasa than previous criticism was directed at Kaunda and Chiluba. Stronger appeals to economic nationalism are being made by the three major presidential candidates in the current electoral campaign, although only the one likely to finish third has articulated specific policies and these have been unrealistic. There may be a renewal of conflict with donors and foreign investors over these issues.

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