

# Aspects of Lowland Philippine Social Structure\*

## Social Structure and the Economic System

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The community development program in underdeveloped countries has two major objectives, namely: a widely-shared increasing economic productivity, and a widely-participated process of decision-making. The strategic introduction of innovations which will start chain-reactions towards the accomplishments of these objectives has attracted students of social sciences to the study of social structure. Research has been done on the channels of communication and innovation, the relationship between position of authority and receptivity to innovations, economic security and acceptance of recommended practices, social class and attitudes towards the acquisition and use of wealth.<sup>1</sup>

\* Presented at the Tenth Pacific Science Congress of the Pacific Science Association, held at the University of Hawaii, Honolulu, U.S.A., 21 August to 6 September, 1961, and sponsored by the National Academy of Sciences, Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum, and the University of Hawaii.

<sup>1</sup> There are many studies on social structure and the introduction of change. Among the empirical studies are: Charles P. Loomis, *Studies in Applied and Theoretical Social Science*; East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State College Press, 1950; Loomis, et al, *Turrialba: Social Systems and Introduction of Change*; Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1953; Allan R. Holmberg, "Experimental Intervention in a Field Situation," *Human Organization*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 1955 and other articles about the Vicos Project of Cornell University; Glen Fisher-*Directed Culture Change in Nayarit, Mexico*; New Orleans, Middle American Research Institute, The Tulane University of Louisiana, 1953; Willis E. Sibley, "Leadership in a Philippine Barrio," and Agaton P. Pal, "Channels of Communication with the Barrio People," both articles in the *Philippine Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. 1, No. 2, (April, 1957); Frank Lynch, S. J., *Social Class in a Bikol Town*; University of Chicago, Philippines Studies Program,

The present paper is an attempt to examine the social structure in relation to the objectives of community development as frames of reference. Specifically, it will report the findings of a study which deals with (1) inter-social class and (2) intra-social class cooperative economic relationships, and then evaluate them in terms of their congeniality to wide-sharing of economic prosperity and wide-participation in the process of decision-making.

The field work was done in September, 1960, in the Province of Negros Oriental, Philippines. A two-page schedule was administered to 162 informants in the barrios, and to 156 college students. The barrio informants supplied information about themselves while the student informants gave information about their parents. The former informants are all from the barrios of Negros Oriental while the latter informants come from the different provinces of the Visayas and Mindanao, with a few from the provinces of Luzon. The informants were asked to estimate the socio-economic status of their families in their respective communities, whether in the 1st 25, 2nd 25, 3rd 25, or 4th 25. In Table 1 the socio-economic status distribution of the informants' families is shown.

1959; The Unesco has a forthcoming volume on *The Attitudes of Asians Towards the Use and Acquisition of Wealth*. Writers from several countries in Asia have viewed the subject, among other aspects, in relation to the social structure of their respective societies.

Table 1. *Socio-economic Status Distribution of Informants' Families*

Residence of Informant	1st 25	2nd 25	3rd 25	4th 25	Total
Rural .....	27	71	52	12	162
College .....	65	49	39	3	156
Total ....	92	120	91	15	318

The figures for the 1st 25 reflect the social structures of rural and urban communities, as almost all families who are able to send their sons and daughters to college live in urban communities. Only 16.6% of the rural families are classified by the informants in the 1st 25 while 46.6% of the college-represented families are in the 1st 25. Undoubtedly, the urban social structure which is inferred from the college-represented families is overweighted towards the top.

#### *Two-Class Social Structure:*

In addition to indicating the socio-economic status of their families, the informants were also asked whether their families or their parents have undertaken or invested money in some economic activities jointly with others as equal econers or members, the type of joint economic activity, and the amount of capital investment. Forty-two and seven tenths per cent of the informants' families are equal partners or members in some joint economic activities, 40.8% are not members of joint economic activities, and 16.5% "don't know." Table 2 shows the average amount of capital investment per person classified by socio-economic status group.

Table 2. *Capital Investment in Joint Economic Activities*

Socio-economic Status Group	Number of Investors	Average Investment
1st 25 .....	44	₱668.00
2nd 25 .....	37	₱147.00
3rd 25 .....	51	₱ 87.00
4th 25 .....	4	₱ 35.00
Total ...	136	

The biggest break in the averages of the investment is between the 1st 25 and the 2nd 25: the difference between the 1st and 2nd averages is seven and eight times the difference between the 2nd and 3rd, and the 3rd and 4th averages, respectively. The size of the differences indicates that the 1st 25 group is a class apart from the rest while the 2nd 25, 3rd 25, and 4th 25 belong to the same class. On the basis of this economic criterion, the informants' families reflect communities of two-class social structure.

Is the economic criterion of social stratification valid? The available evidences point to its validity and the existence of a two-class social structure in Philippine communities. In a province-wide study of rural Negros Oriental, it was found out that the families whom the informants consider as *datu* (chiefly) are possessors of productive property, and live in big and beautiful houses; the families who do not have enough foods and clothes and are working as tenants are considered *kabus* (poor).<sup>2</sup> In the Bikol community study by Lynch, steady and sufficient income distinguishes the *dakulang tao* (big people) from the *sadit na tao* (little people).<sup>3</sup> Reports of a barrio study in Leyte and another in Negros Occidental were examined by Lynch, and

<sup>2</sup> Agaton P. Pal, *The Resources, Levels of Living, and Aspirations of Rural Households in Negros Oriental*, 1958. (A report submitted to the Community Development Research Council of the University of the Philippines). See Chapter VIII, "Nature and Measurement of Levels of Living."

<sup>3</sup> Frank Lynch, S. J., (cited in No. 1). See Chapters IV and V.

his findings show that economic surplus is the common characteristic of the upper social class.<sup>4</sup> The Bikol, Leyte, Negros Oriental and Negros Occidental studies (referred to above) all show a community of two-class social structure.

What are the relative sizes of the two social classes? The size of the lower class is relatively much bigger than the upper class. In the province-wide rural Negros Oriental study previously mentioned, the proportions of the two classes were sought as bases for the proportional allocations of the sample households. Only 12% of the households belong to the upper class. In the Bikol community study of Lynch, 32% of the families belong to the upper class. The difference in the sizes of the upper class in these two studies may be explained by the latter's being a *poblacion* (seat of the municipal government) which is a small-urbanized community. In fact, the Philippine Census classifies a *poblacion* as an urban community; and the upper class families in the rural communities of the Philippines have a tendency to move to the *poblacion* or urban centers.

By size of income, the proportion of high-income families is much smaller in the rural than in the urban communities. Data for the year 1957 show that in the rural areas only 1.2% of the families had an income of ₱4,000 or more, whereas in

the urban centers 30.9% of the families belong to this income group. Since three-fourths of the Philippine families live in the rural areas and only one-fourth live in the urban centers, for all the Philippine families only 9% had an income of ₱4,000 or more while 91% had an income of less than ₱4,000.<sup>5</sup> The sizes of these two income groups are comparable with the sizes of the two social classes.

### Inter-Social Class Economic Relationships

The two components of the social structure will be referred to as the upper and the lower social classes. Each member of a social class has three co-operative economic roles, namely: facilitator, facilitatee, and equal member. Each person may be a facilitator of some persons but at the same time he may be a facilitatee of others. As a facilitator, he is in a super-ordinate role in relation to the object of his action; as a facilitatee, he is in a subordinate role because he is the object of the action of his facilitators. In an equal member role he is on an equality basis with his cooperators. In each of these economic roles, a person may inter-act with members of his own social class or with members of the other social class. Table 3 shows the number of inter-actions involved in these economic roles of the informants.

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<sup>4</sup> "Significance of the Nature of the Philippine Community in Community Development Programs," in Asia: *Community Development Program in the Philippines*. (Mimeographed).

<sup>5</sup> Candido Ordinario, "Income Distribution and Expenditure Patterns Among Families in the Philippines," *The Statistical Reporter*; Office of the Statistical Coordination and Standards, National Economic Council, Manila: Vol. 3, No. 4 (October, 1959).

Table 3. *The Cooperative Economic Roles  
of the Informants*

Social Classes	Facilitator	Facilitatee	Equal <sup>a</sup> Member	Total	Percentage
Same Upper Class .....	17	192	36	245	15.7
Same Lower Class .....	407	305	90	802	51.3
Different Class .....	311	194	10	515	33.0
Total .....	735	691	136	1562	100.0

No. of informants

involved in each role<sup>\*\*</sup> .. 245 229 136

<sup>a</sup> Each group in which an informant is an equal member is considered only one unit of inter-action with the informant.

<sup>\*\*</sup> Not all of the 318 informants functioned in all the three roles.

The total of the economic relationships of the informants in the three roles is 1562, but only one-third of these are inter-class relationships. Of the 515 inter-class economic relationships, 98% are of the facilitator-facilitatee roles and only 2% are of the equal member role. As a facilitator in these inter-class relationships, the facilitatees (objects of facilitator's action) may be members of the upper or lower class; as a facilitatee, the facilitators may be members of the upper or lower class; and as an equal member, majority of the members of the group may belong to the upper or lower class. In the informants' facilitator role, 298 (96%) are downward (from upper class to lower class) and only 13 (4%) are upward. In the facilitatee role, 169 (87%) are downward and only 25 are upward. The same pattern is found in the equal member role, 8 are downward and only 2 are upward. In general, the direction of the inter-class economic relationships (92%) is downward: the upper class is the facilitator while the lower class is the facilitatee.

The subjects of the inter-class economic facilitator-facilitatee relationships fall into four categories, namely: in descending order of frequency, recommendation for employment, loan of food stuffs, loan of money, and employment by the facilitators. These subjects and their order of frequency are reflections of the Philip-

pine situation where in majority of the employment opportunities the applicant has to be recommended by a political leader. It is jokingly said, with some truth, that "who" one knows is more important than "what" one knows in getting a job. It is more difficult to get a loan of money than to get a loan of food stuff because money is scarce, and the possession of food stuffs is impossible to hide from the knowledge of other persons.

Who are the facilitators and the facilitatees or what is the relationship of the facilitatee with the facilitator? In the descending order, they are the facilitators' relatives, political followers, employees and laborers, tenants, and friends. Many of those who get a loan of money are relatives; the loan of money which employees and laborers get are, in most cases, cash advances. Most of the tenants get a loan of food stuffs because their crop shares are very rarely sufficient to supply their family for a period of eight months. It is difficult to ascertain whether interest is charged by the facilitators in loans of money and food stuffs. However, among non-relatives usurious rates of interest are not unusual. The political followers are the ones who are recommended for employment in government jobs, especially during an election year when many public works projects are undertaken with the politicians' "pork barrel" fund. It seems that a person who

dispenses jobs, loans money or food stuffs de-emphasize the contractual aspect and emphasizes his personal consideration in these economic transactions. It is a difficult situation if in the economic relation-

ship the dispenser of jobs, money, or food stuff is a member of the lower social class while the other person in the transaction is a member of the upper social class.

Table 4. *Subjects of Inter-Class Economic Relationships Between Facilitator and Facilitatee\**

Relation of Facilitatee to Facilitator	Employment	Loan of Money	Loan of Food Stuffs	Recommendation for Employment	Total	Percentage
Friend	4	12 + 12**	12 + 5**	23	68	13.4
Tenant	5	14	46	17	82	16.2
Employee and Laborer	39	35	28	9	111	22.1
Political Follower	11	6	9	90	116	23.0
Relative	8	24 + 15**	21 + 6**	54	128	25.3
Total	67	118	127	193	505	
Percentage	13.3	23.4	25.1	38.2		100.0

\* All relationships are from Upper Class to Lower Class, except the figures with \*\* which are from Lower to Upper Class.

As shown in the double asterisked figures in Table 4, only 7% of the inter-class facilitator-facilitatee economic relationships are upward (Lower Class to Upper Class). The subjects of these upward economic relationships are loans of money and food stuffs only and these are carried on among friends and relatives only.

The inter-class equal member economic relationships are very negligible; these are 2% only of all inter-class economic relationships, and 0.6% only of all relationships in the three economic roles. Eight of the ten equal member relationships are downward and only two are upward. The subjects of these relationships are: four in fishing, three in cooperative or FACOMA (Farmers' Cooperative Marketing Association), two in business partnership, and one in livestock. The average capital investment per member in these inter-class equal member joint economic activities is ₦105.00. This figure is less than the average capital

investment of all the lower class which is ₦121.44. This difference indicates that the proportion of those engaged in inter-class equal member economic role is overweighted towards the bottom of the social structure.

### Intra-Social Class Economic Relations

In Table 3 the cooperative economic relationships of the informants are shown: 15.7% (245 out of 1562) are among the members of the upper class, and 51.3% (802 out of 1562) are among the members of the lower class. Of the 1047 intra-class economic relationships, 88% are of the facilitator-facilitatee roles. There are 209 and 712 intra-class economic relationships of the facilitator and facilitatee roles in the upper class and lower class, respectively. The average number of intra-class economic relationships of the upper class informants is 2.8, while that of the lower class informants is four.

The bigger figure for the latter is explained by the orientation of their eco-

nomic facilitator role which is rarely towards the upper class.

Table 5: Intra-Class Economic Relationships Between Facilitator and Facilitatee  
A. Subjects of Economic Relationships

Upper Class	Fre-quency	Per-cent-age	Lower Class	Fre-quency	Per-cent-age
Recommendation for work	81	38.7	Loan of food stuff	342	48.0
Loan of food stuffs	54	25.8	Loan of money	207	29.0
Loan of money	48	22.9	Recommnedation for work	149	20.9
Employment	26	12.6	Employment	14	2.1
Total	209	100.0	Total	712	100.0

B. Facilitatee's Relationships to Facilitator

Upper Class	Fre-quency	Per-cent-age	Lower Class	Fre-quency	Per-cent-age
Relative	64	30.6	Relative	233	32.7
Political Followers	46	22.0	Tenant	185	25.9
Friend	43	20.5	Friend	138	19.3
Tenant	33	15.7	Political Followers	119	16.7
Employee	23	11.2	Employee	37	5.4
Total	209	100.0	Total	712	100.0

The two social classes differ in the frequency of their subjects of cooperative economic intra-class relationships. Among the upper class, recommendation for work ranks first while in the lower class it is the loan of food stuffs. In the upper intra-class relationships, 12.6% concern employment while in the lower intra-class relationships only 2.1% concern employment. These differences reflect that employment is considered a serious problem by the members of the upper class although there is more employment relationships among them than among the members of the lower class. On the other hand, food stuff is considered a serious problem by the members of the lower class. These differences indicate also the upper class's greater degree of involvement than the lower class in the monetized economy.

The two social classes differ also in the nature of the relationships between the facilitator and the facilitatee. In both classes, however, intra-class economic inter-actions with relatives constitute the highest frequency. Relatives are one's reliable allies and in a bilateral kinship system, as found in the Philippines, they constitute a big number. But in the upper class, inter-actions with political followers have the second highest frequency while in the lower class the second highest frequency are the inter-actions with tenants. Again, this difference points to the greater interest of the upper class than the lower class in political affairs. The former see in politics an opportunity to rise economically and socially but the latter do not see such opportunity or are not able to take advantage of it.

A correlation of the subjects of intra-class economic relationships with the relationship of the facilitatee to the facilitator shows that relatives have the highest frequency in employment and loan of money, and they have also the second highest frequency in loan of food stuffs and recommendation for work in both upper and lower social classes. Political followers, however, have the highest frequency in recommendation for work in both classes, and it is also the second highest frequency in employment among the lower class.

The reward of government jobs to political followers is usual in a society where the government is the biggest employer. Friends have the second highest

frequency in loan of money in both social classes and they have the second highest frequency in employment among the upper class. But the tenants are the ones who have the highest frequency in loan of food stuffs in both social classes. This is unbelievable, but it is a fact that the tenants who raise food crops are the ones who do not have enough food stuffs.

In the group of 318 informants, 136 functioned in the role of equal member in some joint economic activities. In this role 10 are inter-class relationships, 36 (28%) are in the upper class and 90 (72%) are in the lower class.

Table 6 shows the intra-class equal member joint economic activities.

Table 6. *Equal Member Intra-Class Joint Economic Activities*

Activities	Average Capital Per Member	No. of Upper Class Members	Total Capital Investment	No. of Lower Class Members	Total Capital Investment
Fishing	P 35.00	(2)*		20 (2)*	P 700.00
Livestock	P 250.00	(1)*		7	P1750.00
Lumber	P 200.00			3	P 600.00
Cooperative or FACOMA	P 20.00	(3)*		39	P 780.00
Business partnership	P 300.00	14 (2)*	P 4,200	20	P6000.00
Corporate business	P1000.00	22	P24,200	1	P1100.00
T O T A L		36	P28,400	90	P10,930
Average Capital investment per member:				P788.88	P121.44

\* Equal members in inter-class joint economic activities. These figures are not included in the computations in Table 6.

The upper intra-class equal member economic relationships are concentrated in two joint economic activities which have the highest average capital investment per member. The big capital requirement seems to automatically exclude the lower class from membership in such joint economic ventures. As a matter of fact, these economic ventures appear to be familialistic economic enterprises. One has only to look over the

names of the Board of Directors and officers of the more than 160 rural banks in the Philippines to believe that each economic enterprise which requires a capital of not less than P50,000 is usually put up by upper class members of an extended family. More than 80% of the directors and officers of most big corporations are kinsmen by consanguinity, affinity or ritual. This pattern of familialistic economic enterprises appears to in-

dicate that if a Filipino invests his money jointly with others, the "others" have to be his relatives. He feels that the security of his money is greater in the hands of relatives than in non-relatives.

On the other hand, the lower intra-class equal member economic relationships are spread over several joint economic activities. The joint economic activity with the biggest proportion of members has the smallest average capital per member. This is the main problem of equal member joint economic activities among the lower class: it is desirable to limit the membership to kinsmen, as in the big enterprises among the upper class, but this will mean a very limited amount of capital. The membership has to be open to non-relatives in order to enlarge the group and the capital. But a large group whose members are not bound together by a common bond, other than economic interest, is usually unwieldy.

### Evaluations of Findings

The facilitator and facilitatee roles in economic relationships are features of an under-developed economy. Many people go to bed hungry because they do not have enough foods; even if there are food stuffs for sale, many of them cannot buy because they do not have money; and they do not have money because they have no jobs. Food stuffs, jobs, and money are much less than the demand. Oftentimes, getting into a job, securing a loan of money or food stuff is not a matter of right; it is more a matter of personal relationships.

Most persons who are in a position to dispense jobs, loan money or food stuffs, put personal consideration over and in addition to the contractual terms of the economic transactions. The many competitors for these limited economic op-

portunities who are receptive to the personal element of the economic transaction are the ones who win out over the others. Loans of money or food stuffs, or the employment of a person, is an economic transaction but in an under-developed economy it is equally a personal relationship. Even in the big credit institutions, the clients always seek the help of other persons who have personal relationships with those who manage them. In these personal-economic relationships, the debt is not only money or food stuffs but also gratitude.

When a loan of money or food stuffs, a job, or help to secure a job is extended, the borrower subordinates himself in relation with the creditor or recommender. He perceives and acknowledges the other person not only as a creditor but also as a facilitator. Usually, the former initiates the personal element in his economic relationship with the latter by behaving as one who receives valuable personal favors. His behaviors are satisfying to the creditor or recommender. This satisfaction on the part of the creditor makes him assume the role of a facilitator. When the creditor assumes the role of a facilitator, the facilitatee achieves a greater sense of security.

The facilitator and the facilitatee are not equal parties in economic transactions. This inequality, however, is carried over into other phases of community interactions. In groups where facilitators and facilitatees are together, the former are the ones who make the decisions. In political elections, the facilitatees vote for the choice of the facilitators. To the facilitatees, it is not the candidates who are important in their day-to-day living,

neither are the election issues nor the welfare of the community. It is their relationship with their facilitators which matters. Their debt of gratitude to the former is further strengthened by other personal bonds, as more than 80% of the facilitatees are relatives, political followers, tenants, and employees of the facilitators; and less than 20% perceive themselves as friends (or equal) of the facilitators. This facilitator-facilitatee economic relationship is not congenial with the community development objective of wide-participation in the process of decision-making.

This type of economic relationship tends to distribute to the facilitatees the economic prosperity of the facilitators, but it does not promote increasing productivity. The decision to extend a loan, to employ or to recommend a person for employment is judged more heavily on personal consideration than on the merit of the loan or of the recommendee. The loan is made on the basis of the loyalty and gratitude of the facilitatee, not on whether the loan will be used for productive purposes. Inability to comply with the economic contractual terms of the loan is usually compensated by the facilitatee with greater subservience and loyalty to the facilitator. In the case of loans from government credit agencies, delay in payment or non-payment will not worry the debtor as long as he is in the good graces of his facilitator. It has been said by many observers that the lack of credit hinders community development. This is only partially true; it is more in the consumptive use of credit in an under-developed economy which blocks the community development objective of increasing economic productivity.

Equal member joint economic relationship is congenial to the objectives of community development. In the Philippines, however, this type of economic role is still limited. It is still confined within a few members of an extended family. Only 9% of all the economic relationships of the informants are of the equal member role. Most of these equal member role relationships are within the same class. These characteristics are congenial to a wide-spread participation in the processes of decision-making. The pooling together of the resources of the members makes it possible for a group to undertake sizeable economic ventures with a more efficient management and less overhead expenses.

However, the intra-class aggregation of the equal member joint economic relationships has a number of disadvantages. Membership in big enterprises is limited to the upper class; the joint economic ventures of the members of the lower class are confined to small scale enterprises, and these do not profit from the better management skills of the upper class. This intra-class pattern of equal member relationships in joint economic activities will not facilitate the transfer of economic loyalty from the family to a corporate entity.

### Summary

This paper has attempted to relate together the social structure and the co-operative aspect of the economic system in the Philippines. The summary of the findings are as follow:

1. The two-class social structure is the prevailing pattern in the Philippine communities. The size of the lower class is nine times bigger than the upper class.

2. The common economic relationships are the facilitator and facilitatee roles. Ninety-one per cent of the economic relationships of the informants are of these types. Facilitator and facilitatee are unequal not only in economic relationships, but also in other phases of community inter-actions.

3. The equal member joint economic relationship constitutes only 9% of all the informants' economic relationships.

4. The equal member joint economic ventures aggregate within the same class. Those in the upper class concentrate in big scale enterprises, while those in the lower class are spread over several small scale economic projects.

## Cultural Context of Folk Medicine: Some Philippine Cases

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### Introduction

The problem of etiology and treatment of disease in its aboriginal setting has sustained the critical interest of social scientists all over the world. Outstanding among the early works are W. H. Rivers' *Medicine, Magic, and Religion* (1924), and Forrest E. Clements' "Primitive Concept of Disease" (1932). Over the last twenty-years, considerable number of ethnographic materials on the concept of disease and therapeutic practices have become available. The modern anthropological views on folk medicine are best summarized in the scholarly works of Erwin Akerknecht (1942-1947). The pharmacology of native curers and shamans has also been studied by a number of fieldworkers (cf. Hsu 1952; Steggerda and Korsch 1943; Fox 1963; Rubel 1960) and so has been the interrelationships between magic and science in man's understanding of sickness and disease (cf. Nurge 1958; Erasmus 1952; Hsu 1952; Lieban 1960; 1962; Simmons 1955; Gould 1957; Frake 1961; Nydeggers 1963).

However, we still know less about the relationships obtaining between sci-

entific and folk medical practices. In fact, there is a dearth of materials on what makes possible the existence and operation of these seemingly divergent methods of healing side by side the same locality without conflicts. Harold A. Gould, in appraising this problem, pointed out

We know even less about the reasons for the persistence of folk medical practices in the most sophisticated urban cultures, or about the structural accommodations which must be made in the primitive environment with the advent of modern medical practices (1957-507).

This paper is an attempt to show how culture functions in the area of health and illness. To our knowledge there have been very few studies made in this area of research. Our primary aim in undertaking this study is to indicate, from the academic standpoint, the social and cultural elements of folk medicine and how these elements structure the practice in the community where it exists; and, from the extension-service standpoint, to suggest the significance of cultural and social variables in introducing scientific medical practices in many rural areas.