

DV435 Economic and Political Geography of Zambia

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This poster seeks to explain the geographical dynamics, economic change over time, impact of colonial history on modern-day Zambia and the distribution of political power & government policies adopted in Zambia. It is divided into four sections which focus on different aspects of the region.

I.1 Location



Maps credit: UNEP topographic map

Zambia is a landlocked country in Southern Africa. It covers an area of 752 615 km² and shares borders with Zimbabwe, Botswana, Angola, the DRC, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania and Namibia (GRIND-Arendal, 2013; Phiri, et al., 2019). The country is a combination of flat and mountainous areas. The fact that it is land-locked means that the costs associated with transporting goods outside the country are high (Bloom, et al., 1998).

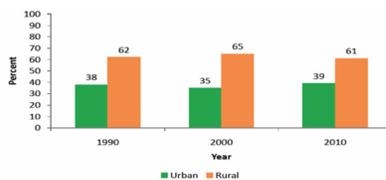
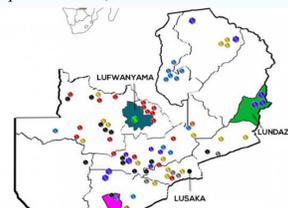
I.2 Agro-Ecological Zones

Zambia has a mean annual rainfall ranging from 800 to 1500 mm and a mean annual temperature ranging from 5 to 35 degrees Celsius (Phiri, et al., 2019). The country is divided into three ecological regions (I, II and III) based on the amount of rainfall (Jain, 2007). Semi-arid region I includes area in southern, eastern and western Zambia where the annual rainfall ranges less than 800mm. The low average rainfall and the soil type in this region causes significant constraints and risks for crop production. Region II contains the most fertile soil and most of the country's commercial farming activity with an annual rainfall of 800-1000mm. Region III receives over 1000 mm each year. The soil is characterized by extreme acidity which makes it toxic for most crops.

I.3 Mineral Resource Endowment

Zambia is a major copper and cobalt producer (Ministry of Mines and Mineral Development, 2018). In 2013, the country was ranked the sixth largest copper producer in the world. Other minerals mined in Zambia include silver, uranium, lead, coal, zinc, gold and emerald.

Distribution of gemstones and selected minerals in Zambia
Maps credit: Siwale, 2019



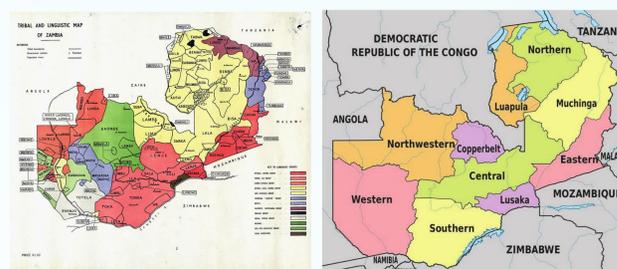
Percent distribution of population by residence 1990-2010
Maps credit: Ministry of Mines and Mineral Development, 2018

II.1 Colonial Impact on Agriculture, Taxation, Labor Migration, and Social Impacts

Established in Northern Rhodesia in 1911 alongside the BSA, the colony was handed over to the British Colonial Office in 1923. In the 1950s there was a need to mobilize labor to ensure that the mines were not closed. The colonial government used taxation. BSAs emenshment with the colonial government consciously set the rate of tax at a level that would successfully attract African migrants away from their homes to the usually distant centres of white mining towns (Roberts, 1976). This policy resulted in approximately 50% of able-bodied men working for wages away from home by 1938 (Roberts, 1976). Migration to the mining industry in the northern copper belt resulted in one of the largest urban centers in Africa. Kusum Datta (1988) writes that Northern Rhodesia faced a conflict between competing agrarian interests of white settlers and its own interests (and that of the British and Southern African economic block) in mining. This resulted in dashes of power over the share of scarce labor capital. However, white settlers (who had been given the most productive land in the 1920s) still had considerable sway in colonial politics and they were able to ensure government protection in the 1930s. The construction of the railway from the Copperbelt to Katanga led to policies that focused on fostering white settlement and the railway perimeter (Honig, & Mulenga, 2015, pg 2). Current labor relations of modern commercial farms is still along these colonial lines in Southern Rhodesia (ibid). Additionally, colonial BSAs mining interests and the interests of white settlers influenced policies mostly to the detriment of pre-capitalist African producers (Datta, 1988). For example, land policies that made a distinction between Native and white reserves land that were used to facilitate the governance of small-scale farmers to the benefit of colonial elites has remained as legal status quo until today despite changing circumstances (ibid, pg 12).

II.2 Colonial Impact of Ethnic and Linguistic Cleavages and The Ongoing Impact Today

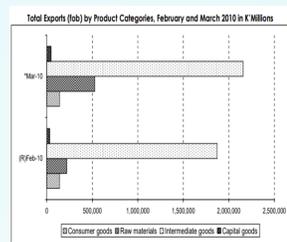
Daniel Posner (2003) highlights that in modern Zambia party formation, coalition building, and voting behaviors follow language group lines. These relationships are strongly affected by colonial policies aligned originally with missionaries' and mining interests. Whilst pre-colonialism over 50 languages were widely spoken, by independence language groups had consolidated considerably. At independence Bemba, Nyanja, Tonga, and Lozi had become the dominant languages (Posner, 2003). Missionaries located themselves in areas where large numbers of people spoke the same language in order to save resources on translating the bible. This then was exported across the country via mission sponsored African education. This was further pushed by colonial education policies that took over education responsibilities in 1925 when they adopted Bemba, Nyanja, Tonga, and Lozi as African educational languages.



Old Colonial Maps show the division of Northern Rhodesia by ethnic and linguistic groups. This clearly corresponds with modern provincial setups. This led to ethnicity becoming politicized in post-colonial Zambia (Sources: Image 1: unknown, Image 2: Silitongo, et al 2019)

III.1 Economic Activities, Growth and Diversification

Zambia's economy is mainly driven by the mining, agricultural, construction, transport and communication sectors (LFS Report, 2014). As of 2010, 75% of Zambia's total export were intermediate goods—majorly copper products, exportation of consumer goods made up 6.6% and raw materials 18%. The agricultural sector has been gaining some traction since the early 2000s with products like sugar, vegetables, maize, tobacco, cotton and flowers being exported (Cardozo et al., 2014); this was as a result of the Zambian government's attempt to diversify the economy. Copper being the main source of export has posed a threat to Zambia's economic growth as it exposes the country to vulnerable situations given the constant unpredictability of the change in copper prices in the international market (CIA, 2020). The construction industry grew as a result of the government's goal to achieve long-term development. The Zambian government began its quest by investing in roads (Link Zambia 8000 Project) railway system and national airline to improve the inadequate infrastructure and ease the constraints in the transportation of imports and exports.



Map Credit: Central Statistical Office

In the formal sector, the central region of Zambia has the largest number of agricultural activities with 36.1%. The northwest of Zambia has a low percentage share of agriculture in the formal sector with 3.2%. However, most of its formal non-agricultural activities take place in the northern part of the country (LFS Report, 2014).

III.2 Employment Distribution

The high economic growth in Zambia has had little to no impact on the living standard in the region, neither has it affected formal employment. Based on 2014 stats, both the urban and rural regions of Zambia had higher percentages of its employed population in the informal sector. 92.2% of the employed population in rural areas were in the informal sector whereas the remaining 7.8% were in the formal sector. Interestingly, urban regions had 72.4% of the employed population in the informal sector leaving the 27.6% in the formal sector (LFS Report, 2014). 3.7% of the employed in the agricultural, fishing and forestry industry were formal while the informal accounted for 96.3%. In the mining industry the formal sector was more dominant with 81% and the informal 19%. In industries where the formal sector is expected to operate more dominantly was surprisingly led by the informal sector. The construction, manufacturing and transportation industries had a percentage of 67.7%, 65.8% and 61.7% informal sectors operating in them (LFS Report, 2014).

Zambia has been experiencing a continuous decline in the rate of unemployment. However, the Central and Copperbelt provinces have the highest unemployment with 10% and 12.7% respectively. From the population analysis on the first column, we can see the link between the movement of the population to urban areas and unemployment. Due to the rise in urbanization, a limitation to job opportunities caused a rise in unemployment. The eastern region has a relatively low level of unemployment with 3%. The capital city, comes in 3rd with 9.8% and the southern, western and northern provinces with 5.4%, 3.3% and 5.8% respectively (LFS Report, 2014).



Map Credit: Labour Force Survey CSO, 2014

IV.1 Spatial Organization and Colonial Legacy

Zambia can be characterized as having a neutral geography when it comes to state consolidation despite its dispersed populations. Its hinterlands do not present challenges as intensive as some other African states, given the central position of the capital (Herbst, 2000, p. 159). Colonial legacy is most salient in the administrative organization of the country, with migrations and colonial labor imperatives having the most impact on population concentrations and the political map of the country: post-1930s labor demand in the Copperbelt resulted in significant population movement from Bemba peoples in the Northern Province, resulting in Bemba becoming an influential regional language, but also causing the formation of a substantial labor movement and rising rates of urbanization (Kula & Lutz, 2007, p. 303). In addition, there is minor deviation from colonial political organization, with the current provinces map greatly overlapping.

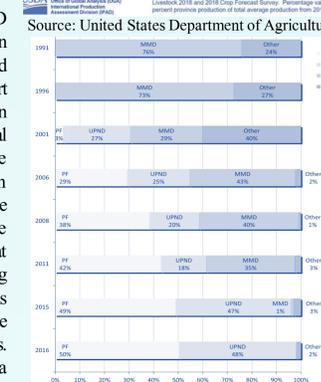
IV.2 Domestic Political and Electoral Dynamics

Post 1991, Zambian politics have seen three major political parties vying for power: the MMD (Movement for Multiparty Democracy), the PF (Patriotic Front) and UPND (United Party for National Development). While the MMD rose to prominence as an alternative to pre-1991 uniparty politics, the PF—spearheaded by Sata in 2001—was an offshoot of the MMD due to internal MMD party conflicts stemming from Chiluba's pursuit of an unconstitutional third term. (Fraser, 2017). It should be noted that, initially, the MMD garnered support from a vast electoral coalition made up of the urban centers, and the Copperbelt but also from the rural and strong corn producing regions, especially in the Central, Southern and Eastern provinces, as seen in 1996 results. Both parties have roots in strong trade unionism as Chiluba (MMD) and Sata (PF) were trade union leaders. Since 2006, the rise of the PF at the expense of the MMD materialized by appealing to urban populations: Sata's campaign emphasis hinged greatly on economic inequality and the public disorder that had taken hold in recent years. But Sata's campaign was also about fighting a campaign against Chinese interests and precarious conditions in the al-important mining sector—securing the Copperbelt constituencies both times, in addition to winning the vital constituency of the urban voters. However, it was not until the PF made significant inroads with rural voters in agricultural areas in the com-producing Central and Eastern provinces that the PF achieved electoral victory in 2011 and finally won those regions outright in 2016. Interestingly, it is equality important to consider the convergence between regional party strongholds and the ethno-linguistic composition of each region. Results point to a political alliance between Bemba and Nyanja for PR and Tonga and Lozi for the UPND, seen in election results from 2016, although the extent to which political parties have exploited ethno-populism can be questioned (Fraser, 2017). However, it should be noted that this regional incidence between ethno-linguistic composition and voting has not been as intense in previous tripartite races and seems to be a result of the realignment toward two parties with the disappearance of the MMD.

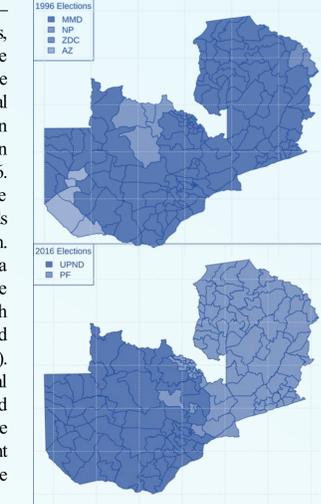
Zambia Corn Production (2017-2018)



Source: United States Department of Agriculture



Source: Fraser, 2017, p. 459



Source: Lighton Phiri – Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0

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