

(though supervised by a local chief for ritual purposes), the salt deposits were immediately turned into the possession of the King of Toro following Kasamaga's 'rehabilitation' by British colonialists. This was made possible without significant resistance for the following reasons: the dispossession process had begun in the 1870s when control of Katwe town passed from the local people of Busongora to Nkore as alliances and concessions were made by the local people to forestall the spread of the political turmoil in Toro Kingdom to the area. Nkore control of Katwe had been terminated in the process that made Kakuli the dominant local chief and a powerful salt trader. However, through the campaigns of his Abarusura (the warriors/army of Bunyoro under the rule of Kabalega) the salt deposits were passed to Kabalega by 1890.⁵¹

During the beginning of this century and until 1923, the Omukama (king) of Toro retained personal ownership of the Katwe salt, as well as salt from the lake deposits located near Kasenyi some 20 miles to the northeast.⁵² After this date, control of the lakes was given over to the Toro Local Administration so that it could acquire the additional revenues in support of public services.⁵³

This privatisation process, with colonial blessings, had several consequences. The first was the struggle for private ownership of the salt deposits. Over time this struggle existed between Indians and Swahili people who came to live at Lake Katwe, particularly beginning in the 1920s. They were the people who had already developed property consciousness. Although the Indians unsuccessfully bid for private ownership of the salt deposits, in time they enjoyed a monopoly in salt trade until the "economic war" of 1972.⁵⁴ The second consequence was indeed the impact of privatisation of the salt deposits, which also had feudal character, on salt production itself.

When the salt lake and the salt deposits at Katwe and Kasenyi became a private possession of the King of Toro it meant that production and accumulation were carried out for the King and his chiefs. This became the first instance of outright alienation of labour as salt was now produced by forced or corvee labour, not the willing labour of the pre-colonial period. This affected not only the amount of salt produced but also the quality. Forced labour introduced an element of inexperience in salt-production skills.

As the salt trade was thrust into the arena of international diplomacy, and as it figured prominently in the changing economic fortunes and epidemiological patterns of the societies concerned, women's participation in salt-production was largely undermined. Institutionally, women were not included among those who provided forced/corvee labour for the purpose of producing salt for the King of Toro. This was the first official mechanism by which women were removed from salt-production in large numbers. Subsequent economic developments had the tendency of limiting further women's involvement in salt-production at Lake Katwe - particularly if we refer to the women who lived outside Lake Katwe township.⁵⁵

H. M. Stanley noted that people from many different ethnic groups and nationalities were involved in pre-colonial salt trade and related activities - Bakonzo, Banyampaka, Banykole, Rwandese, Basongora, Bahyana, etc. They traded millet, backcloth, beans, tullabun or elcusine, sesame, iron tools, weapons, et cetera for salt. The islanders of lakes Albert and Edward freighted their little vessels with the commodity and with dried fish, made voyages to the eastern and southern shores, and found it profitable to carry on this exchange of produce.⁵⁶

With the emergence of the colonial economy, a complex of economic processes increasingly supplanted women from pre-colonial mining activities as they became redeployed in subsistence agricultural production.⁵⁷

Colonial processes had the initial consequence of limiting women's mobility, hence curtailing the flow of women to Lake Katwe and Kasenyi salt mining centres. Thus only a small number of women domiciled in these centres could be expected to carry on salt production activities.

However, even the women of Lake Katwe and Kasenyi salt production centres were affected by these new socio-economic developments. This took place in the context of colonial economic trends and the overall impact of the colonial situation. Beginning with the alienation of the salt deposits, struggles for the control of the salt resources between the King of Toro and the Asian and Swahili community at Lake Katwe further created uncertainties in salt-production between 1910s and the 1930s, until the issue of the control of the salt deposits was resolved in favour of Toro District Local Administration in the 1940s.

Ensuing from the politico-economic struggles between the Asian and Swahili communities at Lake Katwe on one hand, and the King of Toro on the other and subsequently the Toro Local Administration the Asians, particularly Indians, were banished from Lake Katwe to found a new settlement at Kabatoro, several kilometres from Lake Katwe, where the Indian community established a new trading centre and engaged in wholesale and retail trade until their expulsion by the military regime in 1972. It was the end-result of the process by which the control of the salt deposits was resolved in favour of Toro Local Administration that created the opportunity for women to return to salt production activities, largely beginning in the 1950s.

Two developments inform our understanding of the reversion to salt-production by the women of Lake Katwe and Kasenyi rural townships. The first was the introduction of export crop production, mainly cotton, in the late 1940s. The second was the establishment of Queen Elizabeth National Park in the area in 1952, Kilembe mines around the same time, and the Tanganyika-Uganda Fisheries Marketing Company (TUFMAC) at Kasenyi in the 1960s. With the introduction of cotton, men in the region under review reverted to cotton production as their main economic activity while fishing on Lakes George and Edward became their alternative occupation. Meanwhile, women were turned into the main food producers and suppliers. Cultivation of food crops took place along the banks of the salt lake and around the shores of Lake Edward. Women not only cultivated food crops, but also produced palm oil from the palm trees growing around the salt lake.

With the establishment of the Queen Elizabeth National Park in 1952, women's economic activities at Lake Katwe and Kasenyi became further restricted. Not only cultivation of crops was prohibited, but women were also curtailed from collecting fuel-wood from the national park. Men were also not allowed to gather building materials from the national park. The immediate result was, first, ever-increasing ecological degradation around the shores of both the salt lake and Lake Edward. Plantain production which had taken place on the northern shores of Lake Edward collapsed. The palm trees around the salt lake were felled to provide timber for building houses and to provide wood-fuel such that by 1990 only a couple of palm trees on the banks of the salt lake survived.

Following the resolution of the crisis of the ownership of the salt deposits, and the appointment of a Mr. Winyi to administer a salt trust in 1933, a new trend emerged to reflect the local politics of the day. With the establishment of a salt trust, forced labour, which previously was used to produce salt for the King of Toro, was replaced by hired labour.

However, the appointment of an ethnic Mutoro salt Manager (Winyi) did not escape the dangers of ethnic politics. The period following Mr. Winyi's appointment saw increased exodus of men of Batoro nationality to Lake Katwe as the main hired salt labourers. The men of Bakonzo nationality, especially from the mountainous parts, subsequently became the main cotton and coffee cultivators, while the local men of Lake Katwe concentrated on fishing as their main source of income. In other words, a division of labour occurred in colonial economic production that at the same time reflected both ethnic and gender biases.

However, the new hired labour under the new production arrangement was mainly concerned with mining salt grade III (Muhonde) which is used as cattle-lick. This became so because the production of salts for human consumption had been undermined by importation of salt from Eden and Pakistan, a trade which was dominated by the Asians, specifically Indians. Hence the importation and circulation of salt locally known as "Hindia", to mean that it was being distributed by merchants of Indian origin.⁵⁸

However, the supplementation of local by imported salt did not radically or fundamentally undermine the market for the product. Peasants still preferred Lake Katwe salt to imported salt, especially in the cooking of legumes, greens, yams and root-tuber foods, the common foods of the larger part of the people of the region (i.e., the pre-colonial hinterland of Lake Katwe).⁵⁹ Besides, while it is generally true that the circulation of imported salt became widespread, there remained areas where this salt remained unknown for a long period, either because merchant activities were minimal in such areas or because of the reluctance on the part of the inhabitants to embrace consumption of such salt. A case in point were the remoter eastern areas of Zaire (the areas of the Rwenzori Mountains, areas which overhang the Lake Katwe salt resources on the northwestern, west and south of Rwenzori ranges, which are also highly underdeveloped in communication facilities.

In effect these areas and the traditional consumers of Lake Katwe salt still provided a substantial market for the Katwe and Kasenyi salts. It was the availability of this market that ensured continued production of Katwe-Kasenyi salt.

Lake Katwe salt regained importance during the famine which broke out in Busongora and Bukonzo following the locust plague in the 1930s and early 1940s.⁶⁰

Men sought Lake Katwe salt which they carried to eastern Zaire, exchanged it with food supplies from there. Trade in salt during this period became the basis for social differentiation prior to export crop production. This re-animated the predominance of male labour in salt production and distribution; the latter often in competition with the Asian and Swahili salt distributions. This was partly the reason for an increase in output by traditional methods in the 1940s.

Fawcett was also quite correct when he attributed the increase in output in time to the improvement in communication, especially as Katwe was linked to the Mbarara-Kasese road. Relying on official colonial administration sources, Fawcett observed that the political solution to the ownership of the Katwe and Kasenyi salt deposits, the setting-up of permanent buildings for offices and personnel accommodation and linking Katwe to the main road which passes through Katunguru - these developments led to an increase in output by traditional methods from about 150 tons per annum to 5,000 tons per annum and a value of pounds 20,000 in the early 1950s.⁶¹

3.2 Post-colonial Economic Changes, the Crisis of Basic Needs Reproduction and the Relocation of Women's Labour

The redrawing of women's labour in the artisanal production of salt in Lake Katwe can be linked to the crisis in post-colonial development strategies and basic needs (re)production. The excessive emphasis on export-promotion activities, the overemphasis on the production of export commodities in agriculture and mining, and the crisis in the manufacturing sector of the Ugandan economy, have invariably affected the social and economic status of women.

Economic practices in the post colonial period, which have in a large measure been the continuation of developments that were shaped during the colonial period, have reproduced not only the crisis of accumulation, but also spelt out the mechanism through which large sections of society have become further impoverished, the biggest burden falling on the shoulders of rural women and other underprivileged categories in Ugandan society.

The pivotal point in this process, but also as a result of uncritical formulation and enactment of development strategies in the post-colonial period, has been the unchecked decline in agricultural and industrial production in Uganda.

As noted earlier, the dominant limitation in the development strategies of the neo-colonial state has been the tendency to ignore the needs of the rural population. While emphasis in the earlier development programmes was laid on the promotion of export crops, very little attempt was made to introduce and promote structural changes which would ensure the sustenance of production for healthy living by the majority of rural producers. The development strategies of the post-colonial states did not heed the need to plan for the food and energy resource development of such countries. While rural populations remained the export crop producers, this was done at the expense of basic needs production - food, fuel and water.

Within the division of labour that has long existed among the rural agricultural producers, women remained the main producers of food supplies while men concentrated on the production of export crops - mainly coffee and cotton. However, of greater consequence to the conditions of rural women in Uganda has been the dramatic collapse of both the export and public sectors of the economy.

Especially beginning in the 1970s, and as a result of gross economic mismanagement by the military regime, notwithstanding the international economic situation, a dominant trend emerged in the economic life of the country which was marked by a rapid and unchecked decline in manufacturing as well as agricultural output. In his study of the Amin Regime, Mamdani summarises the situation in tabular form as follows:⁶²

Table 1: Output of selected manufactures 1970, 1975, 1977-78

Manufactures	Unit	'70	'75	'77-78	'77-78 as % of 1970
Cotton linear other fabrics	Metres	54.6	39.1	30.3	55
Blankets	'000	1164	322	165	14
Soap	'000tns	12.9	3.6	1.2	9
Cooking oil	'000tns	13.0	6.6	1.5	11
Paints	'000tns	1660	858	886	35
Matches	'000tns	49.3	31.4	8.1	16
Cement	'000tns	191	98	73	38
Super-phosphates	'000tns	24.8	4.0	0	0
Corrug. iron sheets	'000tns	11.9	1.4	0.8	7

Table 2: Distribution of coffee crop value (%) 1972-77/78

Year	Farmer	Miller	CMB	Surplus Taken
1972/73	39	10	11	40
1973/74	27	7	8	58
1974/75	32	8	10	50
1975/76	19	5	7	69
1976/77	15	4	6	75
1977/78	28	6	6	

Table 3: Production of major export crops 1970, 1975, 1978 ('000 Tonnes)

	1970	1975	1978
Tobacco	5.0*	3.6	1.5
Tea	18.2	18.3	10.9
Cotton	76.3	13.8**	11.1
Coffee Arabica	16.2	14.0	5.0
Coffee Robusta	157.3	123.1	75.0**

Note: * 1972

** 1977/78

*** excluding output not sold through African channels.

The complexity of the overall decline in the economy of the country underlies the formation of new economic attitudes in the society and also the mentality behind devised methods of economic survival and accumulation mechanisms by various social classes and categories of people in Uganda. These processes have occurred in the context of emergent mercantilist ideologies and the re-directing of productive energies into immediate money-making activities. Hence the *magendo* economy.⁶³

While the *magendo* activities are largely distributive, the phenomenal emergence of the "informal sector" became the most intriguing. The "informal sector" in Uganda is also oriented to the market. But its characteristic is two fold: sections of the "informal sector" represent the essential mechanism of the local people to sustain a minimum of economic survival. On the other hand, even if the development of the "informal sector" be linked to the collapse of the economy, in its 'manufacturing' endeavour it represents not only a kind of stop-gap mechanism in the national economy but in its various forms and manifestations it also articulates the need to reformulate the country's development strategies with an interest in tapping the artisanal skills and creative potential of the local people for future development - commercial and industrial. In this sense, the informal sector in Uganda is a practical critique of the development strategies and plans of the past. The current level of women's involvement in artisanal salt production is thus to be understood in the broad context of Uganda's post-colonial socio-economic degradation and (rural) women's response to the challenges of such a situation.

4. WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN SALT PRODUCTION 1970-1990

This is the core of our study. In this section we intend to address a wide range of issues within the context of their impact on rural and peri-urban women. Broadly, in an integrated and coherent manner, this section will deal with issues of historical nature; the organization of salt-production; the labour process and women's roles; socio-economic as well as the social implications of enhanced women's participation in salt production.

4.1 Recent Changes in Women's Socio-economic Situation

In the previous sections I tried to present a broad outline of the historical development of the social confluence in which the socio-economic conditions of the women of the region grew. Much of women's economic and social hardships have largely emanated from the historical process of colonial state formation and the crisis of colonial and neo-colonial economic development. While the process of colonial state formation had the overall effect of disorganising pre-colonial social systems, the colonial economic process was the more consequential to the interests of women. This process did not only exacerbate the process of women's social disinheritance but also had the tendency to increase their social responsibilities in household upkeep. This was done through the introduction and promotion of the export-oriented peasant agricultural economy, in turn, reshaping household division of labour and gender roles therein.

During the colonial period export crop-production combined with occasional male labour migration mainly to Buganda, largely before the 1950s. Buganda was the main export crop-producing area during that period and it became the main economic domain for migrant male labour.

The social impact of the colonial economy was twofold: increasingly male labour was withdrawn from food cultivation, leaving this task to women and children. Secondly, and in a more generalised manner, land available to households became disproportionately re-allocated to crops, with the 'male crops', i.e., export crops - coffee and cotton - taking the best of plots of land.

With specific reference to the Rwenzori region of western Uganda the introduction of cotton and coffee in the 1940s and 1950s respectively led to the acquisition of additional farm plots by households. Several factors dictated this development. Besides cotton and coffee being the main income generating crops, they are also susceptible to climatic and ecological conditions. Cotton and Coffee Rubosta are strictly lowland crops and grow well on the warmer plains while coffee Arabica is mostly a highland crop with better yields on the slopes of the Rwenzori and Elgon Mountains in the west and east of the country respectively.

In response to the demand for the production of cotton and coffee, acquisition of additional farm plots occurred at two levels, and with two contradictory results. In order to produce cotton men had to migrate from the cooler areas of the Rwenzori to the lowlands of Busongora where cotton was grown. But cotton is a seasonal crop. In effect, therefore, although men acquired plots on the lowlands for purposes of cultivating cotton, no permanent homesteads were established. In the absence of permanent homesteads, such seasonal migration had the least involvement of women. In this case women (and children) continued to farm previously held household land.

Whereas cotton production did not prompt shifting of entire families or homesteads, coffee production actually did. Especially in Bukonzo area, the late 1950s saw a remarkable increase in shifting movements from cooler or higher altitudes to the warmer lower slopes in order to grow coffee. The migrating families continued to farm the plots they had previously occupied. Practically such lands were and continue to be worked by women and children for the production of montane food crops. Besides having to travel long distances - in some cases up to 10 kilometres - the burden on women has historically increased with the introduction and spread of the elementary school system as this also periodically withdraws child labour from active farm work during school sessions. The above means that in the very minimum, and on average, mothers have to work on at least three farm plots including giving hand in coffee or cotton production. They work to produce food where they stay and also move long distances to go and work that the family previously migrated from.

In addition to actual farm labour activities and the attendant problems, women have to perform a wide range of household activities. Amongst the many other tasks rural women have to perform are water and fuel collection, food processing, and management of intra-household food distribution.⁶⁴ In addition it is women who go to markets either to sell foods, fuel wood, and to purchase urgent necessities such as salt, soap, paraffin, matches, etc.

Collecting water and fuel wood is indeed an arduous task. While in the more mountainous areas there are numerous streams/springs and rivers, and women living there have relatively easy access to water (whatever its hygiene status), and save for the difficult mountainous terrain, women in the lowlands have to travel long distances in search of water.

Overall the condition of women in general, and of the Rwenzori region in particular, have continued to deteriorate. As indicated earlier in this paper some of the factors which have exacerbated the situation are multifarious. They include the ever declining family labour supply resulting from continuous 'flight' of male and children's labour from active agricultural activities. In addition to declining family labour there has been unchecked and ever declining soil fertility through soil exhaustion and the ever diminishing chances of acquiring new land. The latter, partly due to demographic pressure and partly the increasing pace of privatisation of land, especially in the lowlands. This point has been underscored by Sen and Grown as follows:

The privatisation of previously waste and common lands reduces the availability of woody biomass (twinges, small branches, deadfall, and crop residue) that is the dominant form of domestic energy, especially among poor households in Africa. This leads to severe rural energy shortages, which are worsened by rapid rates of population increase. In addition the poor and landless lose access to forest produce as food and as sources of income.⁶⁵

With a generalised collapse of the economy which began in the 1970s came the crisis of income generation and the deplorable decline in household purchases of manufactured goods. This, as a result of declining incomes from export crops, the collapse of the private, parastatals and public sectors, which although favoured men, and therefore reinforced customary traditions of women's oppression and exclusion, was never the less an important factor in bringing income, however, limited, for the families of the employed men.

Previously, using money earned through sales of export crop commodities and money earned as salaries and wages for a section of the affected population, men would supply their families with necessities such as salt, soap, matches, paraffin, clothes, farm implements, and occasionally, meat, fish, the most commonly known sources of animal protein in contemporary rural areas. We observe, therefore, that through such services men's efforts were indeed recognised in most of rural families and households.

However, the economic situation that obtained as a result of the mismanagement of the country's economy by the first military regime (the Amin Regime) in the 1970s, particularly the impact of the so-called "economic war" and the

"magendo" economy that ensued from the generalised collapse of the formal economy grossly undermined economic competence of nearly each and every family, perhaps excluding the emergent "mafutamingi" class. Indeed, the rise of the "mafutamingi" class was the baptism of a collapsed economy. This has been coupled with incessant political instability in the post-Amin era and the vagaries of the World Bank and IMF programmes, since 1981.⁶⁶

In other words, while systematic crises abound, a combination of these and political and economic crises in the post-colonial period have been the most consequential on the Ugandan society in general. It is apt to submit that it is the complex of the aforementioned that have bred additional socio-economic problems for rural and peri-urban women, in turn resulting into the flight of women's labour from agricultural production to "informal sector" activities. It is in this light that contemporary women involvement in artisanal salt-production at Lake Katwe is to be understood.

4.2 Methodological Issues

The period between 1970 and 1990 has witnessed intriguing trends in women's involvement in artisanal salt production. The analysis of salt-production and women's involvement in this period is one of a complex situation. It is a situation which calls for both an analysis of different levels of women's involvement (provision of labour as well as proprietorship) and the dramatic influx of women to Lake Katwe in the context of a compounded crisis of resources and resource accessibility to the rural poor and peri-urban women.

While the former is relatively easier to handle, it being basically empirical in nature, the latter poses issues of practical and theoretical implications. These are the issues of rural-urban continuum theory and the significance of mineral resource development, and urban development in a rural context in Uganda.

In the dialectic and impact of small towns on rural change and development, urban and rural have hitherto been perceived and treated as dichotomous components by researchers, policy makers and aid agencies. The conceptual limitation of such treatment results into the failure to grasp concretely the problems and the conditions of the poor and the nature of the rural and urban

poverty within a complex of relations - i.e., people-state, administrative-economic, voluntary and involuntary migrations (of groups - refugees and victims of hunger and other society-born problems), socio-politico-economic and cultural and gender relationships.

In the absence of concrete grasp of the social situation, the inability of change agents to appreciate the affected people's own perception of their socio-economic plight, the tendency is to impose or even cultivate disharmonious solutions, reinforcing the moralism of statism within the mould of neo-colonialism. For example, it is all too common that state functionaries in a country like Uganda appear to consider manifestations of rural people's problems - presented in the form of rural-urban migrations and associated hazardous living conditions in urban slums - largely in moralistic and statist terms by which the suffering people is presented in official jargon as indomitable and recalcitrant. The urban poor are often advised to "return to the land" (sic!) and their slum dwellings sometimes bulldozed by urban authorities, without the state attempting to solve even the minimum of the rural poor complexities - the very issue of basic requirements crisis in rural areas, including the land question. That is to say the least about state brutalization of the urban poor, and most especially women.⁶⁷

With the above in mind, I argue that the task of understanding the dramatic influx of women to Lake Katwe in recent years and that of comprehending the phenomenal picture of the rise in incidents and instances of women's engagement in salt-making and productive activities, cannot be achieved without in-depth understanding of the wider implications of a collapsed economy and the specific forms of response (resistance and innovation) by the affected people. We have already noted that the colonial economy had been developed in Uganda largely as a peasant (subsistence) economy. We, however, wish to make the following further notes before we turn to the concrete point of our study.

The first observation is that apart from the implications of the transformational process in the pre-World War II colonial state formation, the penetration of colonial capital does not seem to have generated distinct sociological characteristics in the peasantry. Precisely because the indirect method of colonialism that was adopted for Uganda had a large measure of preservative accommodation of local socio-cultural values in so far as these did not adversely

jeopardise the 'safe' transfer of the surplus to the metropolitan manufacturing and distributive concerns.

Secondly, though largely a subsistence peasant economy emerged, significant levels of commodity exchange were also attained which formed the basis for the rise of post-World War II rural markets and trading centres in Busongora.⁶⁸

The third, and which makes sense of the previous two, is that not only did the penetration of colonial capital into the countryside de-emphasise local technological innovations and culture and thereby laying the basis for technological dependence on the Europe, but also the process of transforming the colonised peoples into dependents permeated all aspects of social life, with levels of impact varying across generations and between gender. These have in turn been passed into the neo-colonial phase with further implications.

Consequently in the study of women in artisanal production at Lake Katwe we keep in regard the relevant aspects of the underdevelopment theory which demonstrates in broad terms that the present structure of the African societies is a result of the expansion of capitalism on a global scale. But quite prominently we attune our study invariably to the "social formations theory". This as an all embracing concept which encompasses "all the aspects of the life of the society at a particular historical stage - from the material and technical base that characterises it to its inherent way of thinking."⁶⁹ Kaire Mbuende has correctly argued that the multitude of social relations within the social formation are organised through mutually articulated political, ideological, and economic instances or systems.⁷⁰ However, there is the problem of ascertaining determinant instances.

Whereas in the classical Marxian perspective economy is the dominant instance of the social formation within the complexity of the articulation of instances, of further significance to this study, and as a critique of the classical Marxist formulation is that while economic determinism is important in determining form in a given social formation, the essence of the character of the very form may not necessarily be reducible from the very economic system. This becomes so especially if we consider ideas which survived the dissolution of the economic system to which they once corresponded as well as the non-corresponding ideas

which result from the contradictions within the peasant economic system and thus point towards the future.

In other words, in their dialectical relationship instances and incidents may still exhibit relative autonomy from the economic system, but instead characterise a given economic formation. Hence the concept of relative instances of the social formation.

But Marx had recognised that:

in the production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The ability of these relations of production constitute the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life.⁷¹

For the current study the concept of relative autonomy of instances is important since it allows us to conjoin gendered instances without the danger of appearing to moralise feminism. Particularly so as the social formation is subject to a process of transformation, among other things through a complex of class and gender struggles. Also to recognise further that the relationship between the instances of social formation is characterised by correspondence (the effect of specificity).

4.3 The Nature, Process and Character of Women's Involvement in Artisanal Salt Production 1970-1990

There are some who argue that women move into certain economic activities because men have exited from them. This is an unilineal evolutionist perspective on gender relations and roles. It is largely a generalisation derived from transposing the results of studies in European/western societies also cast in the historical theory of patriarchy.

While women have been seen to move into certain economic activities following men's exit from them, it cannot be taken for granted that women will ever wait for men to leave in order for them to enter a certain field. This study demonstrates the need to integrate the analysis of gender situations in a broader framework of historical developments of social change, i.e., struggles, both internal and external to society and the interpretation of societal forces within the context of their determinant characteristics.

In the case of artisanal production of salt in Lake Katwe, we have already underlined the role of external forces in shaping the nature of recruitment of salt producers. Colonial economic policies and colonial capital interests relocated male labour from their pre-colonial socio-economic domains into export crop and wage labour production. We argue that the colonial, and indeed the neo-colonial economy of Uganda could maintain a steady balance in the relationship of women to men in the rural countryside only as long as the economy itself provided a steady mechanism for the domination of women. The collapse of the economy in the 1970s thus meant a collapse of the gender relational balance as it undermined the basis of customary regulation of domestic relationships even in a male dominated society. As a result of the rapid decline in the economy many a woman began to undertake remedial economic activities outside the home. The 1970s saw two contradictory trends in this direction.

Beginning mainly after 1975 there was a marked level of dissatisfaction among women from the middle class section of salaried families. It no longer became fashionable for women to marry salaried men, especially teachers. Divorce or separation became a common feature in such families. The impact of the collapse of the economy was thus first felt in the middle class families. The tendency was for women to separate from their husbands and to engage in economic activities which were presumed to enhance their economic independence, i.e., trade.

From the predominantly peasant families the impact of the collapse of the economy revealed itself in the response of young girls who responded to the situation by marrying into the families of *magendoists* and the militarist. But by the time of the so-called "liberation war" which began in October 1978, and as the process of primitive accumulation - the *magendo* domain - became ferociously precarious, even taking refuge into these families became less of any better option.

The tendency among *magendoist* men was to have or marry many women. But since many of such families lacked an organised economic base in which women could perform to enhance group opportunities for accumulation - no viable economic investments - the tendency was for women to be locked up in competition for favours from their husbands. The resulting situation became one of intra-familial feuds involving women which caused forced or voluntary separation.

Noteworthy is that with the collapse of the economy and the emergence of the *magendo* phenomenon women had been married not really following the customary system of bride price. The following illustration will throw much light on this point.

For example, among the Bakonzo bride-price had always been determined by the status of the woman and was categorised thus: those marrying for the first time, those re-marrying and those marrying as a result of pre-marital pregnancy.

Customarily the bride-price on a woman marrying for the first time did not exceed 12 live goats or the equivalent in money. A standard goat was valued at Uganda shillings 50 (then about US\$ 7.14 at 1970). That is, the maximum bride-price one was expected to pay for a spinster was Uganda shillings 600. To this was to be added a hoe (not in kind), plus occasionally one would be asked to supply a blanket to the parents of the girl.

Marriage customs among the Bakonzo allow for re-imburement to the family of the man whose wife leaves him under any circumstances. But this was also on condition that the woman re-marries. So, when a man married a woman who had divorced another man, he was responsible for returning the property of the former husband payable through the family of the woman. In that case the husband-to-be paid back the total of goats demanded by the former husband. This included the bride-price paid by the former husband plus classified donations and gifts paid to the family of the woman by him.

Among the Bakonzo of Rwenzori, such donations include for example, if the family of one's wife loses a person through death or a brother-in-law marries, the son-in-law is expected to contribute a goat. But this is added to the value of the

initial bride-price paid earlier. Similarly, if an adult woman from the family of his wife visits, he is customarily obliged to entertain her with a good meal - a goat is slaughtered for her. She can be a wife of a close relative of the wife, say a wife of a brother of your wife, or a paternal aunt of your wife or your mother-in-law. Any such services rendered by you or your family to the relatives of your wife were to be paid back in the event that "their daughter" left him.

On the other hand, if a daughter became pregnant before she married (pre-marital pregnancy), the man responsible was required customarily to pay either of the following types of fines plus the normal bride-price. He could pay three live goats or their equivalent in money. But payment of the three goats in fines did not entitle one to marry the woman. Neither did it entitle a father to the child to be born. Entitlement to the child was sanctioned by a payment of an additional two live goats (not in kind). That added up to five live goats. He could then add bride-price to entitle him to both the woman as his wife and the child as his. But by just making an indication that he was interested in both the mother and the child, he actually took away the woman and you could pay the bride-price in installments.

Two issues are significant. In the majority of cases the family may not press hard for the payment of the mandatory two goats which entitle the man to the child if it is a girl. This is because they expect to derive income from her marriage later. On the other hand, the family of the 'defaulting' man tends to press for the procurement of the male child. Our interpretation of this is that he is expected to add to the labour force by marrying. In other words, the interest in the female children, in this case, is indeed one of the value of their labour or the income they could bring in upon marriage.

We have used the example of marriage among the Bakonzo (in part) to throw light on the importance of female labour, but largely as it occurs in the peasantry. This study has, however, not investigated into the situation in other nationalities. We know for sure that it is the same in many Ugandan patriarchal peasant families.

The point we want to make is that the instance of the rise of *magendo* economy enhanced the commercialisation of women. This, to the extent their relatives exhorted wealth from suitors beyond their own capacity to re-imbrues them in

the event of divorce. In the face of *magendo* parents saw the futility of bride-price because of the obligation to return the bride-price. As a result, and in the interest of accumulation, a new system was devised which defies the logic of bride-price. Instead of bride-price, fines were imposed precisely because property paid as fine is non-refundable, and therefore, stimulates the process of accumulation based on the expropriation of women. Its theoretical importance is that while merchant capitalism - occurring in form of *magendo* - does not necessarily affect the dominant mode of the peasant economy, it nonetheless breaks the moral system of society. Indeed, capitalism has the peculiar tendency of breaking any form of non-capitalist barriers to itself, no matter the different levels.

In any case the framework of the *magendo* economy, even if as perverse capitalism, provided the opportunity for the exhortation of wealth (primitive accumulation) based on manipulation quasi customary laws. While the exhortation of fines could be legitimated as a deterrent measure to protect girls against rampant gender abuse, on the contrary it stimulated it since its economic implication was accumulation.

With the ever deteriorating household material security, coupled with the inability of many peasant and working class families to cater for the education needs of their children, girls became the very first victims. The historically (culturally?) determined social disadvantage of women was, in part, the explanation. Quite often the girls became easy prey for the money-rich *magendoists*. School girls became the most vulnerable to various gender abuse as they tend to be more attractive to men for the simple reason that they are considered to be more modern than their illiterate fellow female folk. Many of them were forced out of school and they married at an early age - as young as 14-year-old found themselves undertaking responsibilities of housewives.

With a mixture of pretence and actual concern, male parents used this pretext to demand large sums of money in the form of fines from the defaulting men. The following illustrates our point. As we have said earlier in the paper, customary fines would have ranged from between Uganda shillings 150 and 250 among the Bakonzo. But by 1978, or at the height of *magendo*, many categories of fines had been introduced which could sometimes add up to between Uganda shillings 100,000 and 300,000, mainly in the border county of Bukonzo. By 1978 society

in Bukonzo county, and indeed in most parts of the rural Uganda where peasants are an overwhelming majority had been fully engulfed by the *magendo* economy, with both industrial and agricultural produce being smuggled out of the country by *magendoists*. The list of smuggled commodities included coffee, kerosene, petrol, beans, goats, sheep, pigs, chicken, weighing machines, cattle, sugar, and salt. From Zaire came industrial and artisanal products: textiles, plastic and leather footwear, soap and palm oil.

Initially smuggling activities were undertaken by men (ranging from the age of 15 to about 40 years). However, in time women joined and participated in the illicit trade which some have characterised as the "second economy".⁷² Initially, women - girls and mothers up to the age of about 40 years - participated as labourers, carrying coffee and other commodities for a wage. But by 1985 women had completely replaced men as the main 'exporters' of food stuffs and fish and 'importers' of ladies' wear - shoes, textiles, necklaces, body lotions, and some had accumulated enough to venture into the illicit gold trade. Social differentiation among the rural women of Bukonzo county thus occurred on the basis of commercial activities most especially during the 1980s. By 1985, some women (though a limited number) had purchased commercial vehicles such as pick-up trucks and mini-buses. Many young women operated *dukas* (small stores) in the rural towns of Karambi, Mpondwe and Lake Katwe.

In the context of the evolving the *magendo* economy two trends emerged. The first was that the women already engaged in *magendo* activities increasingly disengaged from the customary marriage bondage, giving preference to concubinage. Others still married but being restrained from participating in smuggling and other trade activities by their husbands also increasingly disengaged from marriage to relocate themselves in trading centres with a view to gaining from the rather competitive peri-urban commercial activities - the "informal sector" sphere.

In other words, the *magendo* economy produced contradictory results for the rural women. On the one hand it loosened the chains of traditional marriage and set women free into a sort of economic independence (from men). But because of the problem of how to raise initial capital for investing in merchant activities, women often fell back on men as concubines. On the other hand (male) parents could not let go free their daughters. So, they too utilised every available chance

to earn large incomes from men who took away their daughters in controversial marriage forms. Whether or not a prospective husband to a daughter formally presented himself to the family of his wife-to-be, he had to pay a wide range of levies.⁷³ By 1986, such fines could add up to five million shillings, but on average two Uganda million shillings. With change of currency in 1987, the figure fell to about Uganda shillings 100,000/= but rose to over one million shillings by 1990.

Over time, the situation as it has evolved had serious implications, not only on marriage, but also on the social status of women. Women have been further debased but not without resistance. It is in the context of women's resistance to customary oppression and their aspiration for economic emancipation, the harsh economic situation notwithstanding, that an examination of their participation in artisanal salt production as one of their newly found economic refuge enclaves among other activities becomes necessary. The complex economic situation fueled by the World Bank and IMF programmes in the country, especially since 1981, has pushed large numbers of women from the customary/traditional household labour cores into the relatively freer "informal sector" economic sphere and, in this view, partly explains the increase in the number of women seeking participation in artisanal salt production at Lake Katwe, mainly beginning from 1981.

4.3.1 The Experience of 1970-1988

The period between 1970 and 1988 presents a variegated picture of women's increased role in artisanal salt production. The picture is shrouded in a complex of socio-economic processes and social differentiation among women salt producers. Whereas this paper aims at establishing the cause and form of women's involvement in artisanal salt production, especially beginning in the 1970s, and in the context of an eclipsed economy, a further interest is to determine whether or not participation in salt production has in any way improved the socio-economic situation of the affected people. To the latter issue, therefore, a primary concern is to examine the character of female labour deployment in salt production with a view to examining the mechanism of social change and social differentiation among them.

The experience of the period after 1980 renders the view that women enter certain economic fields following men's exit from them analytically inviable. However, it holds if one looks at the colonial situation. It is true that during the colonial period women performed certain roles following men's exit from them. But this was so precisely because the tendency under colonialism was that men's efforts/labour were channeled into economic activities associated with the rapid formation and development of colonial capital. It is also true that during the early days of independence the industrialization, Africanisation and public sector expansion process favoured male labour. Women were thus compelled by necessity to undertake remedial activities previously performed by men. But even to take the latter observation as given is to falsify history.

Indeed, the situation was not the same in every colonized society or even pre-colonial society, a point which Ifi Amadiume's study of Nigerian women largely demonstrates. Amadiume's study, which focuses on Igbo, reveals that pre-colonial Igbo women were economically versatile but that the colonial economy, politics and administration tended to immobilize them.⁷⁴

It is here argued that in crisis periods when neither men nor women know exactly what to do about an ailing economy, it would be erroneous to expect women to be docile, waiting for men to find immediate economic solution when the women are the ones who are faced with the immediate challenge of household up-keep in terms of organising food resources. In fact, while crisis situations do smudge society, often acting as some kind of social brake, it is also within them that socio-cultural traditions and practices tend to be broken through and the imperatives placed upon women during crisis periods appeal upon their innovative inertia. While the older generation, the "cultural women", many trot behind men in economic endeavour - in our case, "informal sector" participation - a combination of economic crisis, evolved systems of survival strategies and new socio-economic attitudes (including cultural ideologies) make it possible for younger women to indulge in certain economic (and often political) practices that defy tradition. The experience of the *magendo* economy - smuggling - in western Uganda has revealed that ("modern") women (both rural and urban) are equally versatile. Although women are more vulnerable to institutionalized harassment from organs of the state (they are sometimes raped by security personnel), the young generation of women are quite manipulative and quite innovative, even if such innovation be found in non-productive activities. Hence the significance of

the informal process of change. To put it another way, every social crisis generates its own politics, responses and logic. Both gender roles and attitudes (including economic attitudes) change as the environment and logic of social action changes. In this respect only a concrete analysis of any given socio-economic situation can reveal the real nature of survival mechanisms.

In the case of salt production at Lake Katwe, a dichotomy exists between women's involvement before 1980 and after. In the pre-1980 period the majority of women engaged in salt production came from the township of Lake Katwe itself. There were also women domiciled at Kasenyi who equally exploited the salt deposits on the shores of Lake George. Any other women engaged in salt production, especially during the 1960s, were refugee women from eastern Zaire.

At this stage analysis draws on three aspects which will recur in this paper: labour, proprietorship, and trade. In the pre-1980 period 80 per cent of the women who owned salt pans were indigenous residents of Lake Katwe. The Zairian (then Congolese) refugee women worked largely as salt-winning labourers.⁷⁵ The period beginning with the year 1980 shows an upsurge not only in the number of women owning salt pans, but also in the number of women labourers and traders. According to the records of the Lake Katwe/Kasenyi Salt Industry, in 1988 there were 2,050 salt pans in the Salt Lake out of which 1,243 were registered salt pans. Between 1980 and 1988, 274 women owned 357 pans; as can be seen on the table below.

Table 4: Women's acquisition of salt pans (registered and unregistered) by location in the Salt Lake 1980-1988

Year	Harusonga	Kisiinga	Kabamba	Kakindo	Kasabuni	Total
1980	27	12	5	2	4	50
1981	16	62	17	22	14	131
1982	4	8	4	7	2	25
1983	2	8	6	8	2	26
1984	3	3	3	6	4	19
1985	5	23	12	13	7	60
1986	3	12	9	14	6	44
1987	-	-	-	1	-	1
1988	1	-	-	-	-	1
Total	61	128	56	73	39	357

Out of the 274 women holding registered pans in 1988 (i.e., between 1980 and 1988), 51.5% came from outside Lake Katwe, leaving 48.5% for Lake Katwe. Between 1970 and 1979, 61 women owned salt pans which were registered. Among them they owned 75 pans.

The numbers of women holding registered pans were 1980, 1, 1981, 92; 1982, (figure for this year not available); 1983, 19; 1984, 18; 1985, 48; 1986, 42; 1987, 2 and 1988, 1.

Social differentiation among salt-winners is normally based on the number of salt pans owned by an individual and accumulation takes place through a combination of direct exploitation of labour and merchant activities. I have already discussed the issue of accumulation in a previous paper and do not intend to repeat the discussion here.⁷⁶ In that paper I observed that only those salt-winners (pan-owners) holding a minimum of 4 pans were able to accumulate above subsistence level. With specific reference to women, despite the upsurge in their participation in salt production, it is clear that at the current level of pan-ownership only a small number of women can be characterized as rich salt-winners.

Between 1980 and 1988, 152 women were able to acquire a single pan in any one year but could not acquire another by the time of our research. Their distribution over the eight year period was 11 in 1980; 50 in 1981; 11 in 1982; 15 in 1983; 12 in 1984; 30 in 1985; 21 in 1986; and 1 in 1987. Twenty-three women who began with 1 pan in any one year were able to acquire an additional one i.e., by 1988 owned 2 pans. Of these, 61.1% were drawn from outside as only 38.9% were previously resident at Lake Katwe.

Another category of women are those who began with two pans in any one year and by 1988 still had not acquired more. Out of the 24 women belonging to this category, 51.1% came from outside while 48.9% came from Lake Katwe.

In 1980 two women and in 1981 three women acquired three pans. They did not acquire more. Three of the five women who began with three pans came from outside Lake Katwe. Throughout the 1980s (up to 1988) only four women who

began with one pan were able to increase their pan-holding to three. Seventy-five per cent of these came from outside Lake Katwe. Only 11 women who began with two pans in any one year were able to increase their pan-holding to three; 90.9% of these came from outside Lake Katwe. Only three women ever acquired four or more pans in the 1980s. Of these, one began with three pans and was able to acquire a fourth one. This means that only two women could afford to acquire a minimum of four pans in a single year.

The above statistical presentation does not tell us much unless we establish economic factors influencing the acquisition and retention of salt pans. Three issues are pertinent if we are to explain the above statistics. These are capital, labour and the mediation of the salt industry management. Of the three factors influencing proprietorship, capital is the most consequential.

As in any economic venture, setting up a salt pan requires initial capital. A prospective pan-owner requires money to purchase inputs (materials and labour). In order to construct a salt pan, the following items are required; dry grass, pegs, spades, hoes and *Karayas* (plastic basins). Almost without exception these inputs have to be purchased. In the majority of cases, the salt-winner, i.e., the owner of the pan under construction, supplies spades, pangas, hoes and *Karayas*. But some contractors supply these. A few people manage to construct salt pans using personal or family labour. The bulk of construction work is done almost exclusively by contract or hired labour and the work is undertaken almost exclusively by men. In 1988 the minimum paid to a contractor was shillings 20,000/=.

While a possibility exists whereby a given women could depend on family male labour (son, brother or husband) to construct a salt pan, this is offset in part by the fact that the majority of women who resort to salt-winning either come from broken relationships in which male-female or husband-wife relationship have been previously strained and therefore familial collaboration could be minimal; or have come from far and therefore lack immediate contact with their relatives at home. Such have to depend on hired/contract labour. The situation becomes even more difficult for arrivals who may lack immediate local male contacts. Given that the majority of such women come from the peasantry and have been flushed from it as a result of economic hardships and are therefore unlikely to possess the required sums of money to undertake pan proprietorship, the tendency is for