

# FISHING AND PERFORMING FAIR SHARES <sup>1</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

*The paper explores the meaning of a 'share' and 'sharing-out' as concepts (relatively underdiscussed in Economic Anthropology), and as themes particularly salient and central to Ivatan social life and economy.*

*What are shares? The evolution of the mataw shares system in Mahatao exposes changing and conflicting principles for contemporary shares distribution. As practiced by matawfishers in Batanes today, formal sharepartners, close associates, and persons sent by chance all have a place in the economy of **arayu**, the matawfisher's product, which moves in spheres of exchange and sharing in which money does not have a similar value. The value of **arayu** (dried fillets of dorado) lies both in creating community and participating in the market. The paper explores the cultural logic of **arayu** production and circulation and extracts a model of 'shares' where relations of hunting and gathering 'procurement' and of capitalist 'production' are linked.*

## Introduction

This paper is taken from a chapter in my dissertation, which tried to appreciate why concepts of change, 'luck', and sharing naturally go together in small-scale fishing. This paper is about the nature of 'shares' as seen in the distribution of a particular product from the sea that has a high exchange value as well as 'sharing value'.

A distinction between 'shares' and 'sharing' of hunted or gathered food, has been drawn by Bodenhorn (2000). As she puts it, "shares are non-negotiable" and "earned by participation in procurement", while 'sharing' has "high moral content" and is about "help". 'Shares' are "non-loadbearing": in giving and receiving 'shares', people are quits after the transaction. But 'sharing' is about "mutual reciprocity". This position is at variance with the contention that among hunter-gatherers "*sharing is not a mode of exchange*" (Woodburn 1998) where the notion of 'shares' is conflated with 'sharing'.

I find Bodenhorn's distinction between these two modes of redistribution useful for my own material, but also find that sharing-out and sharing are closely related and implicated in each other. I attempt to show below how in essence, sharing-out is about production relationships, and is in the nature of formal contracts that must be objectively fulfilled, but in doing so 'sharing' may also be encoded as a formal component of production. This is because of the nature of the resource that also 'gives' of itself (as in 'generalized reciprocity' and in line with Bird-David 1990).

I use the verb '*sharing-out*' to refer to formal moments of distribution

by dividing-into-shares. Fishermen all over the world have systems of sharing-out, and as their ethnographers note (e.g. Firth 1966:256-7, Russell and Alexander n.d.), in actual performance these are usually improvisational. The number of shares and the size of each share varies greatly and is determined in relation to the size of the catch as well as the number of people who are physically present during the distribution of shares.

Shares arrangements have been seen as flexible and efficient ways of organizing production, especially in sharecropping (Robertson 1987). The difference between shares arrangements for agriculture and for fishing is that the latter are always far more variable. Although there are pre-set agreements, the outcome is hard to predict and moreover the value of some contributions to production could not be determined and incorporated into the shares before the time of sharing-out. Dividing-into-shares is therefore all about value being made up (in relation to a 'whole'), it is about equity and just distribution, and every division of shares is an improvisational moment. Any public performance of shares is thus especially interesting when viewed as a representation of productive factors that the shares system acknowledges. Principles established by tradition or contracts and ideas about contemporary equivalencies are enacted during the performance of 'sharing-out. Determining what is proper, establishing values, apportioning wholes, is settled at the end of the season. An audience ensures consensus on the fairness in the shares.

After receiving one's share, a separate set of allocation decisions may follow, as each person decides what to do with his or her share—whether to give away (to 'share'), to sell or use as payment, gift, consume, or hoard certain portions of it. This next round of allocation and distribution decisions by contrast is subjective and not public. Many decisions esteem the household and the persons and relationships that are relevant to it as a social unit, many may also be felt to be obligatory, some may be in payment of debts or given as gifts, for example to send to close relatives and friends. These two distinct moments of distribution comprise actions that are both planned and spontaneous.

Sharing-out and sharing comprise the traditional manner by which arayu is distributed, and this is what makes matawifishing a 'traditional livelihood', still practiced and also esteemed as such in Mahatao. Contemporary practice of sharing-out and sharing in Mahatao however raises some conundrums or ambiguities with regard to categories of exchange and distribution in economic anthropology. For one thing the entire range of what has been most prominently modeled by Sahlins (1965) in terms of a continuum of 'reciprocities' from the solidary to the unsocial ('generalized', 'balanced' and 'negative' reciprocity) is present here between the same parties. And mataw fishers 'work hard' in order to produce as much fish as they can, for exchange, to fulfill obligations, for the satisfaction of sharing, and for still another purpose: hoarding.

Moreover, evolving relations of production which began with the particularly successful mataw fishers' innovations in share arrangements for the 'surplus' catch today enmesh them in competing kinds of obligations and interests to exchange, distribute, reciprocate, 'give', sell, and, to withhold arayu from circulation as stored wealth. Contemporary practice of distribution among the mataws in Mahatao bears within it a dialectical tension between two different types of 'economy'. That is to say, it contains a contradiction between production that is oriented principally for exchange and entrepreneurial self-gain, and production intended for sharing and subsistence.

*Arayu* is the local term for the fish that the mataws produce, which takes the form of dried fillets. *Arayu* has high value in reciprocity and 'countergifting' and in all sorts of balanced exchanges, including payments. In particular it is a customary form of payment for specific kinds of labor on fields. In Mahatao, the shares of *arayu* are also contracted for specific kinds of exchanges. Altogether we could speak of an '*arayu* economy' in Mahatao that is parallel to the use of money and interacting with the market in particular ways.

We will now step into this case, but to do so we should first gain some intimation of the practical logic of seasonality in Mahatao, and of the extent of monetization of the economy.

#### *Between seasons in Mahatao*

Summer has ended. 1stfisher's son came to me with the message that he would be 'dividing up the shares' (payatay) on May 24. [fieldnotes, May 1997]

With the rains, the time comes for calling a halt to the daily routine of going out to sea. The fillets of *arayu* or dorado—*Coryphaena hippurus*—can no longer be dried in the sun. It is time for allocation of all the fish that were accumulated over the three months of summer fishing<sup>3</sup> between a matawfisher and his share partners.

After their sharing-out sessions, the intense season of setting out to sea daily by matawfishers, and more or less also a period of summer residence in the *Tukon*, the hillsides where they stayed, near their landing place, will come to an end. By the end of the summer the *uvi* (yam) vines planted in February are in full leaf; as they sprouted they had been weeded and helped by hand 'to embrace' reed trellises lined in orderly rows on the small fields. Summer was also the time for harvesting, then drying, and selling, garlic, either to the dealers that came by, or by loading it oneself on the boat in Basco and sending it to contacts in Manila. Sometimes they even sent garlic by plane. The other major export from Batanes to the mainland is cattle, which would also be dispatched during the summer. Summer is the best time of year for traveling and for shipping cargo: the flights on the small Fokker planes to and from the mainland are not liable to be cancelled due to contrary winds, seas are relatively calm, and boats—the Navy LST as well as privately chartered boats— would come with regularity, bearing supplies and taking away cargo. The ferries too, from the main island of Batan to the two other populated Batanes islands,

Sabtang and Itbayat, ply their routes frequently during the summer. Many visitors also come to Batanes: Ivatans working and living in Manila or elsewhere returning for a vacation, and tourists trekking the islands. The end of the summer could be a time when a household has cash in hand from sale of garlic or from day-wage laboring. In June, school will reopen after summer vacation and cash outlays will have to be made. From June to October intermittent rains and the possibility of typhoons would succeed the hot and sunny summer, and then, by late November it will be "*winter*".

An image of adaptability and self-sufficiency has frequently been drawn for Batanes as a province by ethnographers and historians (e.g. Blolong 1994, Hornedo 1991). Lying in the routine path of typhoons which blow in between the months of June to October, the small group of islands is at times isolated from the mainland. This also happens during "*winter*" (or *amian*) in November to February when strong winds blowing from the north make it difficult for the plane to land. In contrast to other regions of the Philippines, Batanes is not regularly a calamity or disaster area each time a typhoon passes through; by being culturally prepared, typhoons and inclement weather in Batanes are experienced as given 'natural hazards' according to Blolong (1994).

Locals in Mahatao have mentioned to me that potential food shortages are offset by energetic local food production (in planting 'more than enough'), and by sharing. Storage serves as buffer for the household in periods of scant supply (Mangahas 1994:34). Aided by fertile soils, accumulation is possible and desirable, and from being industrious and prudent there are some individuals in Mahatao who are cited for having worked the land well and become wealthy.

"When there was a food crisis in Batanes because the NFA (National Food Authority) did not have enough supplies (of rice) we were not affected here in Mahatao because many had planted sweet potatoes, *uvi*, and rice. Those from other municipalities were coming to Mahatao to ask for food. And we didn't sell food to them but only gave it away. So we never experienced hunger in Mahatao.

"And besides this, the soil in Mahatao is very good for planting crops and vegetables, so the old people who were very industrious and who had much land to plant on became those with a lot of money. Will you believe it?, the *commerciantes* in Basco and other places in Batanes, all of them except for the 3 big-time traders, go to Mahatao to borrow money whenever they have a load that they would want to send on the boat. Even those who have government employment are borrowing from the farmers. And of course with interest... 10-20%, though for others 5% only..."

The quoted excerpt above also serves to make the point that Ivatan economy is significantly monetized. Though seemingly remote from the mainland, there is neither lack of information nor inexperience

with using money in Batanes. Among the commercial goods that were important in Mahatao in 1997 were rice, gin, sugar, soap, and LPG (liquefied petroleum gas) fuel. Among other things, people stressed that money is particularly required for the schooling of children.<sup>4</sup>

The cash crop garlic and cows raised for export have tied the local economy into the world outside for some time. Both these products were introduced to Batanes since Spanish times<sup>5</sup> and are already part of 'traditional Ivatan life'. During the period of fieldwork there was much discussion among the people of the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade), which would take down import duties, allowing garlic from other parts of the world to compete in the local market.

A third typical source of cash in Batanes is employment in day-wage labor, or "*burnal*"<sup>6</sup>. Government or private construction projects such as roadworks or houses often provide seasonal employment during the summer. *Hurnal* is the 'opportunity cost' of matawifishing. For many of the mataws in 1997, *burnal* was the tempting 'sure cash' alternative they had chosen not to take in favor of the risky production of arayu.<sup>7</sup>

The household supply of money is felt to be limited and other kinds of exchanges afford greater convenience than using money in Batanes. Barter is a good way to not spend money, and it is also a way to gain money indirectly. Thus arayu exchanges may be expedient because a mataw will possess a surfeit of fish and insufficient cash to pay wages or rentals with. In particular, many matawfishers are motivated to fish for arayu because they can exchange shares of arayu for land. However arayu is also a competing value with money. In some exchanges arayu has greater currency even than money. We would also see that ultimately its economic value stems from its high social value as a thing to share.

### *The value of arayu*

The value of an average-sized dried fillet of arayu is customarily equivalent to one day's work in a field. For a day's labor weeding, a fillet of arayu can be paid out as a 'wage' (*tangdan*) just as money. Payday is on the occasion of the share-out session, which the weeders attend in order to claim their wages as well as to serve as 'audience'.

In the 1930s, according to an old man I interviewed, a weeder was paid 35 centavos, or one dried fillet of arayu, or 3-5 dried flying fishes per day.<sup>8</sup> As of 1997, the money pay for a day's work in the field was P80-100. This price approximates the price of a regular or 'medium-sized' fillet of arayu (see Figure 1). (Local government regulates the market prices of locally-produced commodities—including arayu—and also sets standards for wages of day-laborers.)

It would seem that people are used to thinking in equivalencies and that the barter exchange values are linked with their market values. However the values are also qualitatively different. Arayu is a precious good and actually more difficult to obtain than money. The weeders that contracted for wages in arayu told me they preferred arayu over money.

Another kind of field labor that arayu was customarily used as payment for was plowing of the soil. In this case, payment could be a fixed wage<sup>9</sup>, or, a 'share' of arayu, which would be allocated during the share-out session. It attests to the value of arayu that compensation for farmwork could submit to variability in the fishing endeavor and to the mataw's discretion in shares allocation.

*FIGURE 1: Some Price Standards in Mahatao, Batanes. 1997*

ARAYU:

*bathbat* (taken from the fillet)-- P60/kilo  
*sindang* (middle strip)-- P60/kilo (fresh), P100/kilo (dried)  
*pinpin* (fillet)-- P60/kilo (fresh)  
*pinpin* Dried: large – P100 ea  
 medium – P75 ea  
 small – P50 ea  
*pya'* (eggs) – P60/kilo  
*vuko* (bones) and *lupolupo* (assorted parts) – P45/kilo  
*vitnel* (stomach) and *atay* (liver) – P45/kilo

FLYING FISH (dried) – P5 each

WAGE RATES:

*mayayit* (weeder) – P85-100/day  
*jurnal* (construction work) – P120-150/day (private)

Arayu was 'the best deal' compared to other options according one man I interviewed:

"You could have a better deal (than money), with this arayu but it is not fixed because it depends on their catch. They call those persons which are to receive shares in their catch, and then witnessed by all they divide their catch into 10. And then in those ten shares the mataw will put aside some *pinpin* (fillets of arayu) for the *mangararo* (person who plowed the field)... But it is not fixed."

The most important exchange-use of a share of arayu in Mahatao in 1997 was for leasing land. As mataws repeatedly explained, the reason it is a good idea to be mataw for the summer is that

"If you have arayu, you can borrow fields."

In exchange for shares of arayu, mataws in Mahatao negotiated for access to fields for planting garlic and *uvi* and for pasturing their

cows. Garlic and cows are products from which they could potentially gain cash. Thus, in a roundabout way, contemporary arayu share contracts for land also have the market in mind.

Many of the most dedicated mataws had no land or little land of their own. When 1998 turned out to be a very lean season for arayu, a mataw's wife wrote to me that "if only we had land of our own we would not have been mataw this year." Mataw fishing complements the farming ventures of the domestic unit (all matawfishers are also farmers). Contracting to exchange shares of arayu resolves the problem of lack of access to the means of production and lack of accumulated capital.

For their part, owners of land and capital in Mahatao were interested in forming exchange contracts with mataws so that they would be able to obtain precious arayu. As one explained:

"If it is not cash, you give them a parcel of land that they could use for pasturing their cow, you give an equivalent of that area, a grassland. Or you give them a place to get firewood."

Mataws in Mahatao had preferential treatment for borrowing pastureland, which are difficult to borrow otherwise. Uvi or garlic fields were lent in exchange for a share of arayu instead of the usual 1/3 of the harvest. As one mataw said,

"They want fish, they don't want uvi".

Shares of arayu could also be exchanged in the beginning of the season for money sums called *piskeria*, which represent capital investments in the mataw's fishing enterprise, I discuss this further below.

Share contracts for arayu can thus be seen as a highly elaborate 'intra-group' form of barter between specialist producers and others in the community.<sup>10</sup> The contemporary mataw fishing venture in Mahatao resembles today a capitalist enterprise with the mataw as entrepreneur: producing arayu for exchange, and converting values from one sphere to another. He embarks on a risky but potentially profitable (in arayu) enterprise. And as will be made clearer further on, this system is closely bounded by and influenced by the economic relations of both subsistence and market.

Shares contracts and tradition enforce restrictions against selling arayu until the fishing season is over and will influence how the catch of the season will be distributed, while the market and money economy have an input in determining equivalencies for arayu. On its own terms, 'arayu economy' articulates very closely with cash economy, both complementing and competing with it.

As this unique and parallel system of arayu exchanges has evolved (and continues to evolve), shares of the mataw's product can now be conveniently exchanged for money, for labor, and for use of land. I found out that exchange of fish for land in Mahatao is a relatively new practice that became established within just the last two generations of fishers. The grandfather of one of the mataws recalled that he had never traded shares of arayu for land during his fishing career. He thought that this innovation had been initiated by a mataw

in the generation after him. That innovative mataw leader was in his prime one of the well-known 'lucky' (*masagal*) mataws of Mahatao; his sons had also followed in his footsteps and were now serving as lead matawfishers.

Entering into shares agreements is a typical way of organizing production in Mahatao. A person's 'share' or *natay* can stem from an entitlement or a voluntary agreement or contract. There is a nuanced vocabulary for contracting shares<sup>11</sup>, for giving out shares<sup>12</sup>, and for referring to shares partners<sup>13</sup>. Modifying the tradition of shares, and keeping tune with changing conditions, contemporary mataws in Mahatao have managed to maintain and negotiate a highly dynamic system of production and exchange through the medium of shares, which we now turn to examine more closely.

### *Performing fair shares Batanes-style*

The principle of 'thirds' for example, is one common scheme for sharecrop arrangements: a piece of land is 'borrowed' and the eventual harvest is shared-out with 1/3 of the harvest going to the landowner and 2/3 to the cultivator of the land. For a field planted to garlic, division of the shares is typically achieved simply by expedient of leaving every third row of garlic for the owner to harvest himself. No special share-out session is held because there is an objective means for demarcating the shares, but at the same there is also less flexibility for unforeseen developments in the labor requirements during the season.

We can appreciate the mataw shares distribution pattern better by first seeing how pigs that were 'borrowed' (*nibaya*) are typically shared-out in Mahatao. The division-into-shares takes place when the pig is butchered. One-third (1/3) share of the meat was the standard share belonging to the owner of the pig and 2/3 was for the person that raised it in 1997. As this is made up however, shares would also be allocated to compensate the persons who helped to butcher the pig, and other people that rendered services would also be allocated a share, e.g. the person who built the pigsty.

On one such occasion I witnessed, the three main shares and the additional shares were being set into neat piles and weighed. Each portion received equal proportions of fat, bone and meat, and of different sections of the animal. Besides these, similar smaller shares with equal proportions of meat, fat and bone, and weighing 1 kilo each were given to the owner of the pig and to the four people that were helping to butcher the pig and apportion it. From one share, some of the pork was to be sold to some buyers who had made reservations; this was weighed (each portion also containing equal parts of meat, fat and bones) and set aside.

Meanwhile, one or two people who happened by<sup>14</sup> were discretely called in and could then participate in the drinking (of gin) and eating of what they call "*first name*"—a bit of cooked pork (also from the butchered pig) that was immediately cooked to accompany the



drinking—and were also each made up small bundles of the raw meat to take home, token shares that were not weighed.

There are several elements in the performance of the pig share-out described above that also recur in arayu share-outs. One is the concern with exact and objective measurement of shares. A second interesting observation is that random arrivals have a formal part to play in the share-out, as their presence entitles them to a token share. I will be arguing that this should be seen as a share 'for sharing'. A third point is that the distribution event is accompanied by commensality, the sharing of food and alcohol; eating and drinking attends the share-out sessions, turning it into a social and communal event.

### *The Mabatao mataws' sharing system*

The shares system for arayu however is far more complex than that for a pig. In mataw fishing there are actually two significant times for sharing-out: 1- the sharing-out of 'fresh parts of the fish (parts other than fillets); these are distributed every day during the fishing season (provided the mataw was able to land a catch) and 2- the distribution of dried fillets of arayu at the end of the season.

#### *I: Allocating fresh arayu shares during the fishing season*

The daily routine of the matawfisher after bringing the catch home is to prepare the arayu for drying in the sun. Every mataw's fieldhouse is equipped with a special table (called the *ralawan*) and a high drying rack (*rakayan*) for this purpose.

The fillet (*pinpin*) is sliced out first. It is then thinned, removing some of the white flesh (called *bathat*), which is good to make into *lataven*, a 'raw fish salad' (that goes with alcohol/gin). The fillets are trimmed of a few other parts, and incised with square cuts in traditional fashion for efficient drying (see Figure 2)<sup>15</sup>.

Fresh shares are then made up out of an assortment of trimmings of arayu: the 'bones' (*vuko*), 'eggs' (*pya*), 'liver' (*atay*), 'stomach' (*vitnel*), 'ears' (*tadiña*), 'fin' (*pañid*), 'mouth' (*sañi*), and *sindang* (the long vertical strip of dark meat taken from the middle of the fillet). These shares are for the subsistence of his most important sharepartners. They also signal to the sharepartners a productive fishing season, as 'dividends' in kind. A fresh share represents a substantial amount of food, enough for at least one family meal.

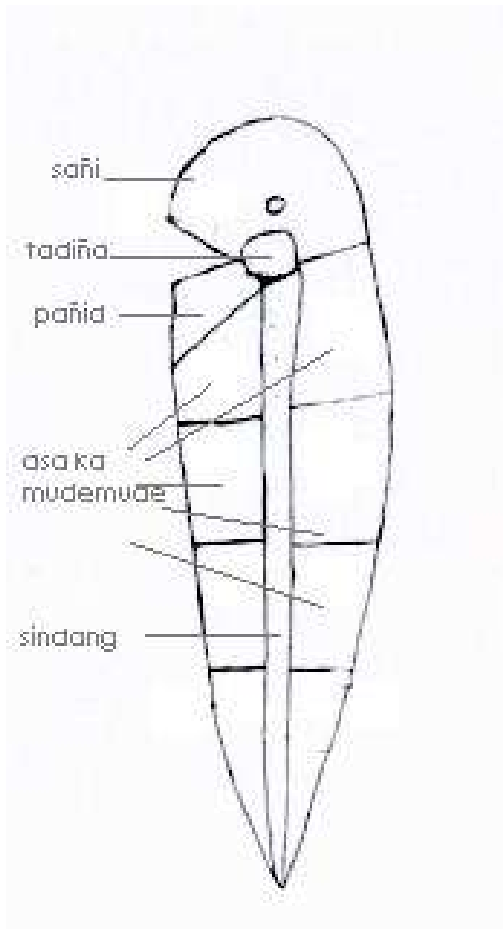


Figure 2.  
Traditional preparation of an arayu fillet

Allocation of fresh arayu reflects the priority or rank of each share partner's contribution to the mataw enterprise. The first priority is the share for the mataw household. After them, the next in line for a fresh share during the season of 1997 was the mataw's baitsupplier. As one matawfisher's wife explained to me, their agreement is that if the mataw catches two arayu, then there will be a share for the mataw and another share for the baitsupplier. If only one fish was caught however, then the mataw would keep the share. However if next day only one arayu was caught then the share would be given to the baitsupplier.

Traditionally, another important share recipient is the boat-owner. If the mataw has his own boat<sup>16</sup>, then this share is skipped and fresh shares can be allocated to other share partners in rotation, depending on the catch. Other important share partners to receive fresh shares could include the owner of the fieldhouse, those that gave *piskeria* (money), or, in traditional time, those that gave the salt (needed for drying the fillets of arayu). These take priority over those who lent land, who are seen more as a share partner only for the 'surplus catch', and which is, as mentioned earlier, a recent evolution in the shares system and will be discussed further below.

The mataws that had a successful day and caught several fish also have the option to sell arayu trimmings. The value of fresh arayu is actually quite high (refer to price list in Figure 1). In particular, arayu

eggs (*pya'*) and *batbat* have high market value. However one of the particularly 'lucky' (or *masagal*) matawfishers told me that he would be embarrassed to sell any of his personal share, which is properly for sharing and consuming as *lataven* during the drinking session that usually follows any fishing trip. Moreover, by tradition, taboos forbade the selling of arayu until after the fishing season.

Additional bundles of fresh arayu parts would also be made up for people that came to visit the mataw. During the summer, mataws often receive visitors that came craving to "*manlatab*" or eat *lataven* and drink gin with the mataw, and to "*manalped*" or eat *salperen*—arayu trimmings prepared as a soup called *salperen* (in a clear broth, spiced with onions, garlic and ginger)—which goes well with boiled *uvi*. All of these dishes are very traditional Ivatan fare, and it was said that if mataws were to follow traditional taboos, these are the only ways to prepare and consume arayu during the sensitive fishing season.

The remainder of the arayu — the prepared fillets and any extra trimmings such as 'bones', '*sindang*' and '*vitnel*'—are dried and stored. No part is wasted. The eyes of the fish have usually already been eaten (raw, and loved by kids). Even the water where the arayu was washed (called *pinamyu*) is collected in a pail, and along with the arayu's gills (*arang*) is fed to the pigs of the mataw, or given away if the mataw has no pig. Sometimes the gills are even made part of a share bundle.

The daily fresh shares are delivered to the various 'share partners' (*kahap*) of the mataw by a runner called the *tumalalwa*. This job entails a long hike from fieldhouse to town and such work is traditionally to be rewarded by a share of arayu fillets during share-out time. At the end of the season, share allocations of dried arayu fillets will compensate all the other essential inputs that made the season's catch possible: the boat, the supply of bait (live shrimps, crabs, or coconut crabs that were consistently supplied during the course of the season), the work of carrying the boat to the 'port' from town on the other side of the island at the beginning of the season<sup>17</sup>, of helping the mataw carry the heavy fish home, of tending to the drying fillets of arayu, the preparation of the fieldhouse with a dry hearth and space above it to store the arayu safely, are some of these requisites of arayu production.

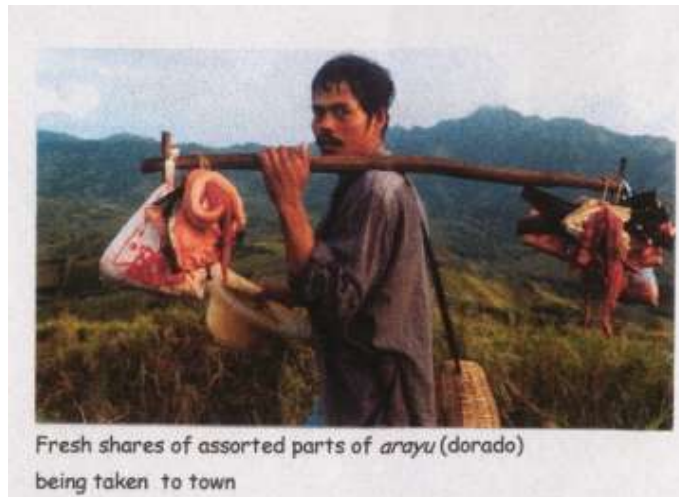


FIGURE 3

*II: Sharing-out the total catch at the end of the season*

An actual performance of sharing-out in summer 1997:

Matawfisher3 caught the most number of arayu in the summer of 1997. On May 26 he went out to fish for arayu for the last time this season. He came back however without a catch. Matawfisher2 who had also scheduled his share-out for today had caught one arayu. He gave Matawfisher3 one fresh fillet (it was said that he probably swapped it for a dried fillet).

At Matawfisher3's fieldhouse the atmosphere was festive and relaxed. The share partners arrived by lunchtime with bottles of gin. Some had brought sugarcane wine. Matawfisher3's friend Atong prepared lataven out of the fresh arayu fillet. The men set up a small makeshift table out of a styrofoam box and a piece of plywood. As the gin and lataven were passed around stories were being shared punctuated by witty commentary and uproarious laughter.

Atong went into the fieldhouse and started taking the dried fillets (pinpin) of arayu down from their storage place above the hearth. He threw them down on the raised wooden floorboards (tapi), sorting them according to size as he did so: extra-large, regular-sized, small, ones in-between. Each piece landed with a crack as they were hard, dry and toasted from being stored over the hearth. 'They're like stone', commented Matawfisher3, who supervised from the doorway.

Some of the fillets had marks from having been bitten by rats. Matawfisher3 selected these 'less desirable' looking ones as well as the smallest ones and took them to his mother-in-law and her sister. The two women cut them up into the pre-marked squares (mudemude, see Figure 2) and filled a pot with them and a little water. When they were

cooked, 2-3 pieces were wrapped in large leaves and given to each person present. These shares (*vanung*) were to be eaten or taken home. Matawfisher3's mother-in-law went around counting heads. There were 25 people including children.

The first shares to be awarded were the two extra-large fillets. These had come from the largest arayu of all that Matawfisher3 had caught. One fillet was for Matawfisher3 and the other for his Baitsupplier, for their 'effort' or 'tiredness' (*chinavanaban*), Matawfisher3 announced. Each of Matawfisher3's children (aged 14, 11 and 9) were then allotted one large fillet each, their 'share'. Then each of those present received a small-sized fillet. Matawfisher3's wife distributed these, 'for the gin', she said (and it didn't matter whether they had brought 3 bottles or just one, each received one pinpin).

Meanwhile Matawfisher3's friend Atong had already started laying out the "*natay*"—'the shares'—on the dry bare ground along the path. The arayu fillets were laid side by side with their head pointed alternately in opposite directions so as not to mix up the piles. The biggest, choicest fillets were laid out first followed by the smaller ones. Some fillets that were of the same size were sliced down the middle in order to make each share exactly the same, with the same proportions of 'large', 'medium' and 'small' fillets. There were 12 shares, each with 16 1/2 fillets.

Matawfisher3 then went before everyone and gave a short speech before inviting the *kabap* (share partners) to claim their shares, he sounded apologetic: unfortunately the fish were few this season, and sometimes he was sick and not able to go to sea. 'Hangover,' the onlookers jibed.

The Baitsupplier said that he didn't want to be the first one to claim his share. Seniority then went to a woman who claimed 2 shares for the fields that she had lent Matawfisher3.

Then things happened very fast. The Baitsupplier took his 2 shares. It was commented that this was a "mutual understanding" between him and Matawfisher3. (A precedent-setting agreement. Among other mataws the highest current rate for supplying bait was '1-1/2 share'). There was another share for someone who had lent a field, and 1/2 share claimed by one who had given '*piskeria*' or money. Some sharepartners were not present to get their shares, so these were tied up and affixed with labels. There were shares that remained on the ground, these turned out to belong to Matawfisher3.

When Matawfisher3's mother-in-law claimed her share for a field, she immediately held out one fillet to me, singing a Spanish carol for 3 King's Day as she gave it to me.

All around us the shares were being packed into sacks. The two short split reed sticks that had been inserted in the

back of the fillets so that they would dry flat were being snapped off.

The only person that didn't have a share was Matawfisher3's wife. 'Where's my share for taking the cows to pasture everyday?', she joked, half-seriously it seemed.

The mataw's portion: Matawfisher3 sifted through his arayu looking for a number of medium-sized ones to pay to their 'mayayit' or weeders. His wife took out her notebook and pen to look up the number of days each of the women had weeded their fields. The rate was 1 'pinpin' (fillet) of arayu per day. They had hired four weeders which included Matawfisher3's mother-in-law and her sister.

Then they chose 2 pinpin to give to 'Nana' in exchange for her having repaired his trousers on her sewing machine, and according to their agreement.

They also chose a pinpin to give to a woman visiting from Manila, who'd come to attend the share-out on purpose because she wanted to bring some arayu back to Manila with her. Later on they gave her another pinpin, 'she can not say of us that we are stingy,' remarked Matawfisher3's wife.

'There will not be any arayu left this year', I heard Matawfisher3's children matter-of-factly comment as they watched from the sideline.

Matawfisher3 looked up at me and asked if I want one. 'Don't say you don't want one', said his wife. So we looked for a small one that was 'good-looking', but she refused to give me one that was 'too small' as 'it would be a shame'. When later someone arrived looking for me, they also gave him one pinpin.



FIGURE 4

*The principles behind arayu shares*

The person who shares-out the arayu is the matawfisher, who organized the fishing venture and who I think is also the holder of largest 'capital', which is: his own self. Much is left to the mataw's discretion, contemporary division of arayu adjusts to the size of the catch, to share contracts and payments that were negotiated beforehand, to how the season's work unfolded. The mataw determines the size of the portions and the recognition of all those who have rights or claims to it, which includes the customary entitlements of the 'people watching'.

Dividing into shares is a public performance of fair shares. This seems a particularly apt way of describing it because, in talking about this occasion, the necessary participation of the share partners as "*audience*" was often cited (they often used the English word or the Ivatan *manalamað* – 'people watching'). The metaphor of performance stresses both the uncertainty of the outcome, and the 'performativity' of the event – proper allocation and the ascertainment of value –; these ends being established with the implicit consensus and ratification by the 'audience'.

At the same time, the affair is a celebration of human achievement and contribution to community (deserving of applause). It is also an occasion for conviviality and sharing, which in some way redound back to future success in fishing.

If we were to attend, we would bear witness to the process and be a participant along with the other principals, seeing to it that everyone's rights to shares are fulfilled and particular efforts would be

formally recognized and awarded with *arrayu*. The sharing-out classifies and ranks shares, and makes explicit the principles of allocation to all.

There are least two ways of thinking about 'dividing-into-shares'. One is in terms of a set of component inputs to production, or **total production requirements**. A second way of thinking about shares is as a set that is an arbitrary number of exchange units with equivalent value, that is, like 'equity' (in corporate parlance) or like 'stocks' to be bought and invested in, in speculation on returns on investment. These values relate to the **potential total outcome** of the season and thus the total exchange value (or barter value) of share units (based on supply and demand). These are two separate and even conflicting sets of principles for a shares system, but both of them are involved in current practice among the *mataws* in Mahatao.

Any systematic inquiry would elicit named shares in the *mataw* shares system (Figure 3). Not all of these named shares are necessarily represented in a contemporary performance of shares, we can note that the shares system has been evolving. Significantly, many of the traditional shares serve to acknowledge the human effort embodied in the factors of production. Modern-day innovations such as the shares for borrowed fields, on the other hand, incorporate an idea of 'surplus production'.

These 'new shares' had been negotiated and established by the most successful *mataws* that were able to increase fishing output. According to the grandfather of one of the contemporary *mataws*, in his time a total season's accumulation of 80 *arrayu* was already considered to be good ('*masagal*'), whereas today the best *mataws* aim for 'at least 100'. An old retired *mataw* narrated:

"I know that the first to start this practice of dividing to as many as 12 shares were (*Matawfisher1*) and (*Matawfisher3*) because they were very *masagal* ('lucky'). But if you ask the old *mataws* like (Z) and (G), they would only divide up 10 shares at the most...

FIGURE 5. NAMES OF SHARES OF ARAYU

*Karakoban* – The Share of the 'Body'/ *Ninangayan* – The Share of the *Mataw* 'Who Was Gone To' (by *Arrayu*)

*Chinangalan* – Share For the 'Hard Work' of the *Mataw* (his labor, sweat, the effort of rowing)/*Chinagaga-n* – Share For 'Getting Tired'/*Chinavanaban* – Share For 'Exhaustion'

(*Natay nu*) *Bedberen* – 'Bait'



*Natay nu Tataya* – 'The Share of the Boat'

*Pinamabetan* – Share For ('the work of boring holes in the planks of the boat for the) *Pabet*' (dowels, when the boat was constructed)

*Pinayrakayan du araw* – Share For 'The Work Of Hanging Arayu Out To Dry'

*Pinasdesdepan* – Share For 'The Work Of Taking Arayu That Were Hanging Out To Dry Into The House' (when the sun goes down)

*Tumalalwa* – Share For The 'Person That Delivered Fresh Shares Of Arayu To The Mataw's Share partners'

*Manala*' – Share For A 'Person That Met The Mataw And Helped To Carry The Catch Home'

*Pinayranuman* – Share 'For Fetching Water'

*Pinanutungan nu mavaw* – Share 'For Cooking Food For The Mataw To Take With Him To Sea'

*Pinayvabayan* – Share 'For Having The House Made'

*Pinanpuan* – Share For 'The Work (at the beginning of the season) Of Transporting The Boat (over land from Mahatao Town on one side of the island) To The Valugan Side of Batan Island (where mataws fish)'

*Pinaywarawaran* – Share For 'The Fishing Paraphernalia'

*Natay nu Tuyungan* – 'The Share Of The Fishing Line'

*Natay nu Sayrin* – 'The Share Of The Hook'

*Natay nu Vidað* – 'The Share Of The Sail'

*Hana*' – Share For 'Salt'

*Piskeria* – A Share For Money/Capital

*Pinalamaran* -- The Share Of The 'Audience'

"...In the old time, there was no share for land or for '*piskeria*'. Before, they divided into 7 shares only: 2 shares for the *tataya* (boat), 1 share for the *mamedberen* (the baitsupplier), 1 share for salt, and 3 shares for the mataw. From the portion of the mataw was where they would get the shares for exchange for fields if they had borrowed some, and all the other things that they have to pay like the *piskeria* ('fishing licence'), the *mayayit* (weeders)... But today the mataws do it differently so there are more shares. But even so nobody quarrels over his or her share. There are some that complain, 'why are there so many shares (*kavidangan* or *kanatayan*)?' But if those are the rules of the mataws there is nothing you can do, you follow if you want to be able to have some arayu. "

As mataws improved their technology and skills<sup>18</sup> they achieved an expansion in production. I think that these were considered surplus fish returning to the share of the mataw, and that could be contracted out as 'extra' shares.

Thus a very relevant question to ask any mataw today is 'into how many shares is the catch going to be divided at the end of the season?' The 'number of shares' referred to are those for the 'major share partners' or *kabap*. Such shares are even divisible; arrangements for half-shares or thirds of a share may also be made. (In practice however, we saw that many other kinds of shares were allocated as well. These will be discussed further below)

In 1997, the rule in share arrangements was as follows:

"As long as more than 100 arayu are caught, then you can divide into as many as 12 shares. If less than 100 fish were caught, then the maximum is 10 shares."

This makes the contracting of shares a preliminary valuation process wherein the number of shares arrangements a mataw can enter into rests on his personal reputation. The number of shares contracts of a mataw reflects his own as well as others' confidence in his catching at least 100 fish for the coming season.<sup>19</sup> Fishers that are called *masagal* have proven their 'ability to catch many fish'. But, as the traditional shares would show, this was also not something that they achieved all by themselves. The traditional shares embrace a local theory of value based on particular kinds of labor and of 'personal' values which I will discuss further below and which influence the overall fortune of the fisher's summer endeavors.

#### *Valuing labor and valuing persons*

In fact, traditionally, the shares would seem to value two contrasting factors of '*sagal*', an Ivatan concept that specifically denotes fishing success and that relates to innate ability, talent, power<sup>20</sup>, attractiveness, as well as skill and effort. The traditional shares of the mataw make up a unique sum of use- and labor values and what I will describe as 'person values'. Thus the mataw's share is traditionally in two: the share for 'working hard', and the share 'of the body' (of the mataw).

These two shares represent divergent approaches to fishing: on the one hand as an economic process of **production** wherein human labor is dialectically 'opposed to nature' (Marx 1974:173). On the other hand, as a process of '**procurement**', in which the fisher wields his body to negotiate with or 'persuade' a 'giving environment', and which is found in a hunter-gatherer mode of subsistence (Bird-David 1992: 40).

'Working hard' to accumulate arayu, an ideal matawfisher demonstrates a clear work ethic, commitment to the job, and discipline. Matawfishers have no "*day off*" and fish every day of the week. Records of the catch and the running total are often marked on

a calendar by the wife or children of a mataw, in which a day when their mataw did not go to sea may be specifically marked "absent".<sup>21</sup> From calendar records kept by four mataws one can see that the number of days spent fishing for arayu in a season (especially by the 'masagal') is 77-79 days (from early March to late May).<sup>22</sup> We could see the traditional share for 'exertion' (*chinangalan*) as literally, following Marx, "the socially recognized incarnation of human labor".

On the other hand, the share of the 'body' (*karakohan*) recognizes the aspect of the matawfisher being the person that he is; a worthy or deserving and attractive 'body' that 'was gone to' by the fish. His person is part of his technology. As was pointed out, some fishers, no matter how much effort they exert, are still not able to catch many fish. Each person is different. A notion of the agency of fish themselves, that select or prefer a fisher 'to go to' is involved in this idea.<sup>23</sup>

In parallel fashion, there are two shares for the boat: the *pinamabetan* is so named because it refers to the most labor-intensive part of boat-construction, and the other share, "*natay nu tataya*", is 'for the boat' itself. Just as the 'body' or person of the mataw is abstracted and valued separately from his 'hard work', in a similar sense, the distinct 'share of the boat' could be seen as the share for the 'person' of the boat. As useful things the boat or gear (e.g. the sail, the hook, the fishing line) each also have their own innate relative 'quality-of-being-able-to-catch-fish' or *sagal*; some boats, some gear, are better than others, no matter who uses them. These shares belonging to the gear and to the fisher can be seen as the socially recognized incarnation of 'personal' qualities responsible for procurement.

#### *Allocating for 'sharing'*

One traditional share that is very much to be observed in contemporary shares allocation is the share for 'everybody'. In mataw-fishing, the share that is always allocated for those who are present in a division-of-shares is called the share 'for the audience' (*pinalamaran*).

It is interesting to appreciate who attends the event, as everyone present becomes a partaker. Only people who have a claim to arayu and a part to play in sharing-out are supposed to go to share-outs. To this affair are invited the mataw's sharepartners or *kahap* ('co-getters'). Discrete messages are sent out to let them know of the date for *payatay* or division-of-shares. These include the persons who contracted to be repaid with arayu for various tasks rendered for the mataw, like weeding his fields. Many of these individuals also form part of the daily social network of the mataw and are close friends or relations. Share-out occasions however, are not attended by *all* his close friends and relations, but only by those with legitimate claims to the mataw's arayu. This underscores the value of formality among Ivatan and brings us to a third category of participant in the share-out, that of individuals who have unexpectedly shown up. (No one who shows up during this occasion would be left out of distribution, even if they arrive late on the scene.)

Incidentally, in Batanes fishing fits into a frame where an

unexpected arrival, especially if the arrival has come upon a fisher while he was working on the preparation of fishing gear, is seen as a good sign, a sign that the fishing will be *masagal* or 'lucky'. Sharing with unexpected visitors is ultimately a kind of reciprocity ('in thanks') with an environment that gives, but gives unexpectedly.

In this sense, sharing, formally incorporated in the shares as the customary entitlement of 'everybody present' regardless of their contribution to the productive effort, should also be seen as exchanged for an input in production. The 'logic of sharing' is to divest in order to receive. As seen in other ethnographies of fishing, sharing is the proper thing to do with something acquired by 'luck'. Such token shares given to members of the community are seen as subsistence entitlements and tokens of 'generosity'; ideologically, these shares maintain continuing success or luck for the fishing enterprise (e.g. Russell 1994:91-94).

The obligation of 'sharing' for the mataws as a factor in procurement can be seen in how this 'share of the audience' comprises quite a significant portion of the mataw's catch. It is also first to be distributed. During the share-out however, this share would be formally expressed as a payment or reciprocation, 'for watching', and for the gin that they brought. Thus the shares are said to be formally about exchange. Usually the participants, including the sharepartners, bring 'gifts'. The standard item to bring today is gin, but in the past they would bring things like coffee, sugar or clothes for the mataw. (Though not everyone must bring gifts, even children for example, were included in the distribution of arayu during Matawfisher3's share-out.)

Given these conventions it is possible for a person with no previous agreements with the mataw, if they are aware of a share-out being held, to intentionally go bringing gin, as the visitor from Manila did, so as to be given in exchange a fillet of arayu. Intentional participation by those who are not shares partners could be seen as a form of 'demand sharing' (Peterson 1993). But most local residents who know a *payatay* is going to be held and have not contracted for a share or been expressly invited would be inhibited by 'shame' and would not be presenting themselves there. Visitors on the other hand, may be told that they should go to a share-out.

Though these are the smallest fillets, in total they comprise a very large chunk of the catch. I sensed that mataws felt this to be a 'heavy' share. They often said in 1997, which was a poor season:

"There is not going to be enough arayu, because you still have to give to the audience."

The share for an audience could easily take up the largest portion of a mataw's arayu. MatawfisherA for example, consumed and gave away more than half of all his arayu to the audience during his share-out:

*MatawfisherA*: had nearly 100 fillets (he caught 50 arayu). After taking out about 44 fillets for eating and giving away to all those present during his share-out, he divided up the

remaining 50 fillets into 10 shares of 5 fillets each, of which: 3 shares were for a field for grazing animals, 1 share for another field of grass, 1 share for piskeria of P1,000, and 5 shares for himself.

*Share units as commodities—the modern text*

As practiced today, most of the shares allocated are for miscellaneous exchange agreements. Land is the most significant share contracted for arayu today. And the other recurring share is for money, or *piskeria*.

*Piskeria* is in theory capital that could be used to purchase inputs to production. Mataws these days rarely get a share partner to provide them with salt for example. Instead they buy salt and contract for *piskeria*. As one fisher said,

"Before, I would get one jug of diesel (for light), which was equal to 1/2 share (of arayu), and salt, also 1/2 share. Now I prefer to get *piskeria* and buy my own."

*Piskeria* originally referred to the fishing license fee charged by the municipal government, and it is here that we could look to find the source of the idea for assessing or 'pricing' shares in terms of their potential value. The Mahatao ordinance had specified that matawfishers must pay a fishery license fee based on the previous year's catch.<sup>24</sup>

Shares of arayu can actually be contracted for anything at all. One mataw who was fixing his house had been given some of the construction materials he needed in exchange for a share. He later said that his friend had incurred a loss in his investment (*lugi*) due to the poor season in 1997. Although most people expect to get a good deal from contracting for arayu, this is investment in kind and with a risk involved.

The following are further examples of how mataws contracted for shares in 1997:

*MatawfisherB*: made up 11 shares of 10 fillets each—1 share for bait, 1 share for a field, 1-1/2 shares + the labor of planting for a field, 1/2 share for another field, 1 share for another field, 1 share for piskeria of P1,000, 1/2 share for piskeria of P500, and 4 1/2 shares for the mataw.

*MatawfisherC*: divided up 9 shares with 5 fillets each, of which—3 shares were for his father-in-law for the use of his boat (2 shares) and for a field (1 share), 1 share was for piskeria worth P1,000, 1 share was for his sister in payment for a Seiko watch, and 3-1/2 shares were for the mataw.

*MatawfisherD*: had 12 shares of 16-1/2 fillets each—2 shares for bait, 1/3 to his mother-in-law for a pastureland and half of a field of garlic +labor of planting the other half of the field to garlic for his mother-in-law as part of the agreement, 1/2 share for piskeria of P750, 2-1/3 shares for use of 5 fields of which 4 were for grazing animals and 1 for planting uvi, 1/3 share for a

pastureland, 1/3 share for another pastureland, 1/2 share + the job of taking care of the owner's cow for another pastureland, 1/3 share for another pastureland, 1/2 share for a table, 1/2 share for a jug of diesel, and 4-1/3 shares for the mataw.

Shares exchanged for '*piskeria*' (money) are usually negotiated for using the standards set by the most masagal of the mataws. The three lead fishers of Maratay (a mataw 'port') would confer among themselves about the proper price to set. During the summer of 1997, they agreed that *piskeria* should be P1,500 for a full share and P750 for 1/2, provided the mataw caught at least 100 fish. If the mataw did not reach 100 fish, then P500 would be returned.

We can see high inflation in the value of a share in money terms: the year before, a full share for *piskeria* among these top three mataws had been valued at P1,000. Considering market value for a big fillet is P100, and if each share has at least 10 fillets of arayu, this would be a profitable deal for the *piskeria* provider. The less masagal mataws who have smaller expected output negotiate for lower values of *piskeria*.

Bait as production input can now be thought about as an exchange-value. The value of the baitsupplier's product was markedly increasing in 1997. In Matawfisher3's precedent-setting case, it was worth 2 shares. This was because the live shrimps and crabs needed by the mataws as bait were getting rare in the streams and harder to catch. Most of the other matawfishers contracted with their baitsuppliers for 1-1/2 shares. There were others that negotiated for only 1 share, because the mataws explained that they are 'more thrifty' with bait compared with other mataws.

#### *After share-out*

Arayu by itself is a thing good to share, good to hoard, as well as a valuable commodity. After the share-out there is a further distribution of the portions as each person shares and gives further from his arayu, or uses it as payment and to settle 'gift-debts', or sells some arayu. Many arayu that are bought as commodities are intended to be sent to relatives in Manila. 'They don't ask for anything but only arayu', noted one mataw's wife. Waves of sharing will take into account the much wider relevant community, as the mataws and their sharepartners often said, 'So that others can also taste arayu.'

After Matawfisher3's share-out: The sacks of arayu were being loaded on to sleds pulled by carabaos or hoisted up and shouldered by the men. I had gathered up my things from my fieldhouse next door because I was moving back to town as well. We met 'Auntie Di' who had come from Matawfisher2's share-out where she'd claimed her share for *piskeria*. She told me I should by Matawfisher2's place to 'let him know I was leaving' first.

When I got there Matawfisher2 was already all packed and ready to go. He told me 'he'll give me what was for me

in town'.

Our other mataw neighbors were also leaving their fieldhouses, carrying their arayu with them. They said it was not practical to hold their sharing-out in the hills, the weather had turned unpredictable and besides, they had caught few arayu this season (only 30 arayu in the case of one mataw). On the way we met other people from Matawfisher3's share-out and together we formed a small procession bearing our loads down the steep path to the town below.

When we got to Mahatao, the baitsupplier of Matawfisher3 came up to me with a fillet of arayu which he wanted to give me. Auntie Di told me that things that had been carried for me would be brought over to my lodging place later. Her daughter and their visiting relative from Manila arrived in the evening with my bag and one fillet of arayu, a gift from Auntie Di.

Once the shares have been divided up, arayu rapidly circulate. It becomes opportune to reciprocate or pay back 'gift-debts' at this time with 'counter-gifts' or gifts 'in thanks' (*pamajes*). As one person had told me in 1992, if someone gives you something today, 'you will have to think, what will you give that person at the end of the season?' The end of the season is like Christmas postponed—some arayu may in fact be given in reciprocation to certain people that gave the family Christmas gifts (and who probably also did so in anticipation of receiving arayu in the summer).

Maintaining balance in reciprocal exchanges is important in Batanes. Highly independent nuclear families engage in balanced exchanges with close relatives for work in the fields and other productive activities. They try to borrow a number of fields from both kin and non-kin. They hire their relatives, exchange labor with them, and enter into shares agreements. Even very close kin can be contracted by the household for labor using money. I recall a conversation with a young widow who was left with three small children. Since her husband died her parents have been helping out in planting and preparing her fields; 'but I pay them', she said, 'it would be shameful not to.' Some families enter into a kind of adoption exchange, sending one of their children to live with a close relative especially if the relative has no young children. This is also because children do make a significant labor contribution in return for their keep. Among siblings, and between parents and children, relations must also be balanced. The independent household is well represented by the kitchen. A mataw needs to set up a kitchen (what the fieldhouse is essentially), important for the storage of arayu during the fishing season. If still unmarried he becomes an independent householder and he may hire an assistant to take care of the arayu and perform other chores. If a father and unmarried sons are all full-time mataws, they each have their separate kitchens.

The giving of arayu also depends on who is to hand; those who conveniently present themselves will often receive arayu. The day after Matawfisher3's share-out, municipal officials visited the tukon to inspect the water tank and Matawfisher3 gave away 5 large fillets to

them.

Visitors are a special category for sharing. I amassed so many arayu in spite of the fact that I only went to two of the mataw's share-outs, that one person commented when he saw my arayu hanging in the kitchen that it was just as if I was a landowner that had lent fields to a mataw. In fact the visiting relation from Manila amassed nearly twice as much arayu, 26 fillets in all, to bring back with her.<sup>25</sup>

The period when the share-outs are being held is also the time to make haste to buy arayu if one wants some, because shortly after, when arayu 'has already been stored over the hearth' (*pag nasapat na sa paya*) it becomes hard to obtain. Some people make 'reservations' to buy arayu from mataws, baitsuppliers, or others with arayu shares. Those with arayu who want to sell them for cash let it be known and visit the houses of people they think might be interested to offer them arayu. By June or July, fillets or arayu have already been hidden and they are said to be already 'expensive' at double the price. By December, it is said that 'lots of people are looking for arayu' but by then they are next to impossible to obtain.

Traditionally, there should still be some arayu left by the time the next season comes around again.<sup>26</sup> In a lean year such as 1997 was, it seemed that the mataws would not be able to distribute the arayu properly. Mataws repeatedly remarked that there was 'not enough arayu' in light of their many obligations to give—in-laws, neighbors, bosses, teachers, co-godparents (*kumpare*), etc. Olive explained to me what they meant by 'no arayu left' was that there would not be a surplus left to sell:

"It's not really that there is no more arayu left for the mataws but that there will be nothing left for selling. Because after the share-out, they give whoever they want to give—their friends, relatives, and of course they will retain some, which is called *kulong*. They will keep it in a sealed can and little by little take some out during the 'winter' and later when it is time to plant *uvi* in the month of February.

The recurring image of arayu as wealth is of it kept out of reach in a secure wooden trunk (*lakasan*) that sits in a storage space above the hearth 'so that no one can touch it'. Three Kings' Day (January 6) used to be a time in Mahatao to visit mataw's houses and sing carols in order to coax out some '*chinangalan*' share ('what was worked hard for') arayu from the mataw's hoard. By the time summer comes around again, some individuals will still have plenty of arayu which they can consume during the planting of *uvi*.

As Ingold notes (1986), hoarding is 'the opposite of sharing'. Commodification is also opposed to sharing. The 'capitalist logic of accumulation' is to save, in order to invest and produce a profit, while the 'logic of sharing' is to divest in order to receive. (And some have argued to see this as a form of insurance (Cashdan 1985).) The thread running through distribution practice in arayu however is



cultural stress on the independent nature of the domestic unit in Batanes. The formal autonomy of the household is maintained by sharing, by seeking to balance reciprocity, and simultaneously by being 'self-sufficient'. All mataw households typically balance livelihood based on fishing, animals, and farming (as well as opportunities for *burnal*). These aspects of livelihood strategy can be integrated in the contemporary arayu shares system.<sup>27</sup> (I would argue that this is possible also because conceptually it is the entire domestic unit rather than simply an individual mataw that is the unit in these transactions. Good relations within the household, even between the mataw and his children, would traditionally be seen to have an effect on fishing success.)

### *The spirit of the 'share'*

As we have seen, sharing-out in practice incorporates payments, barter agreements, reciprocal exchanges and 'transfers'. Is the concept of a 'share' then a useful one? And how should it be understood in relation to other forms of distribution and exchange?

Paraphrasing Mauss we could ask: what force compels the allocation of a share? I wish to emphasize the idea that shares are 'compulsory' or obligatory, they are already owed to certain recipients and hence do not generate debt. Moreover, they are 'inevitable'.

The word for a 'share' in Ivatan is *natay*. *Natay* involves the idea of a contract to be implemented. *Machabap* or *machatay* are people with rights in something and who must be given 'their share'. *Machabap* is from the root *manghap*, which means 'to take'; thus shareholders are literally 'partakers'. 'Taking one's share' is something that in theory also happens 'inevitably'.

For the matawfishers and their network of sharepartners, arayu is a fish form of capital which gives access to the means of production. One person explained to me,

"They really have to take their share because they gave capital (*pubunan*)."

The cosmological sense of 'taking' is manifested in the forces of seemingly random events, which are actually the workings of the spirits. For example, at roadworks near an 'enchanted place' in the south of Batanes one worker died suddenly, they said he was 'taken' (*nahap*) or claimed by the place.

Hornedo says that *machatay* or 'one that demands a share' "is believed to be a place or a body of water that periodically claims people's lives." He notes that such places are associated with observance of taboo (*dagen*) and are also known as haunts of the spirits or *añitu*. *Miyan su dagen yanan* are places where certain acts are prescribed or prohibited if one is to stay or get out of the place safely (Hornedo 1980:44).

We find the model for the share in ritual sacrifice. As Hubert and Mauss (1964:100) have represented, ritual is essentially a contract, and sacrifice is the allocation of the 'share' of the deity. Any activity in the environment in Batanes is including its unseen component society

that also 'demands a share'. *Sayang* or sacrifice is customary in Batanes whenever there is significant human modification of the landscape (such as *uvi*-planting, housebuilding, and the 'making of the port' of the mataws or *mayvanuwanua*). Such rites negotiate a transaction with the spirits who were the 'original owners' or users of the place. The matawfishers' ritual *mayvanuwanua* to start the fishing season enacts a substitution of the sacrificial animal for human life (see Mangahas 2000:134-157).

Ritual turns the group of matawfishers using the same 'port' (*vanua*) into a close-knit cooperative group. They enforce prohibitions (*dagen*) so that 'luck' would favor their group and ideally would be equitably shared among all. After the rite, eating of '*first name*' and drinking on the shore takes place, in which the spirits are also included. The spirits are satisfied with token drops of gin and bits of meat. We could see *mayvanuwanua* as a share-out occasion where humans give the *añitu* 'original owners' their due in advance and formally contract for a favorable fishing season.

Another ritual that mataws traditionally practiced was *maynamunamu* or "*cleaning*". 'Cleaning' (practiced individually by mataws, or for the benefit of all by the mataw 'Firstfisher' leader, and also incorporated into *mayvanuwanua*) is about hospitality and inviting. Acknowledging the resource's own agency, in this rite during the season 'delicious' libations of sugarcane wine are given to the dried fillet of the very first arayu that was caught that year (the '*tangdab*'); it is coaxed to have sympathy for the subsistence needs of humans, to come to the welcoming mataw 'port', to be rid of any 'bad feelings' it may have, and to give or share of itself.

Overall, the act of fishing is essentially social; it encompasses interpersonal relationships with distinct agents in nature—unseen spirits that are 'capital' providers, and fish that give of themselves in communion with human need and worthiness.

## Conclusion

If in shares arrangements in general, 'adaptability derives from complexity', then the current Mahatao mataws' shares system could well be the most elaborate catch-sharing system devised for a hook-and-line technique involving only an individual fisher going out to sea. With the performance of shares, productive and procurement relations entailed in the successful outcome of a season of mataw-fishing are valued: Shares recognize particular kinds of work. They also acknowledge the 'persons' of the instruments of production. 'Sharing' is morally obligated in sharing-out in fishing, because it is constructed as a factor of procurement. Shares can become commodities exchanged for values premised on the potential success of an enterprise, and the potential value of 'surplus' share portions. Mataw rituals for fishing reiterate as well as integrate the essential distinction of 'shares' as formal contracts, and 'sharing' which is founded on moral relations between 'fellow' beings.

## Endnotes

- 1 This paper is a revised version of chapter 7 of my dissertation (Mangahas 2000) and based on fieldwork in the summer of 1997. Fieldwork was conducted chiefly among the mataws of Maratay 'port' (*vanua*) in Mahatao, Batanes. During the summer fishing season, these mataws (there were 13 of them in 1997) would set up temporary storage and living facilities in fieldhouses in the vicinity of the *vanua*. I was present to document day-to-day activities of the season and had use of a small fieldhouse made of cogon and wood and a toilet that was built (just in time for my fieldwork) by the Mahatao Fishermen-Farmers Association.
- 2 The *masagal* mataws. See Mangahas 2003 for a discussion of the concept of *sagal* or 'ability to catch many fish'.
- 3 The summer season— *rayon*— is from the end of February to early June.
- 4 After High School, most graduates try to take advantage of opportunities for further education in Basco. In Mahatao in 1997 most of the young adults had acquired college or vocational degrees or units towards courses like Commerce, Education, Agriculture, Secretarial, Electronics, Computers, etc., by part-time study at the Dominican-run St. Dominic's College or the government Polytechnic College for the Arts and Trade in Basco. There is a pattern of high out-migration in Batanes that has contributed to slow and sometimes negative population growth. As the *Mahatao Comprehensive Development, 1994-2003* observes, the population growth in Mahatao has been restrained— 1970 population: 1,475, 1980 population: 1,388 (decrease attributed to students who went to the mainland), 1990 population: 1,724. "When these students become degree-holders they won't dare come back to the province due to limited job opportunities. Instead, they rather seek job in the city and even abroad for greener pastures." (p.12)
- 5 Garlic was taken up as a serious cash crop in Mahatao in 1957. It was promoted by the Provincial Governor at that time, and as demand proved to be consistently strong or prices high, more and more land was dedicated for planting garlic. Today there are quite a few other crops that are grown for money in Mahatao such as onions, munggo beans, various vegetables, watermelons and sugarcane, either for neighborhood sale or to be sold in Basco, the capital, where government workers and visitors comprise their main market. Some stores in Basco even import vegetables from the mainland by plane (along with eggs, dressed chickens, and other goods). Before the war, only cowhides were being exported to Manila. The whole live cows were exported since about 1960 and was mediated by

merchants from Batangas until locals 'learned to do it themselves'. The large population of cows in Batanes has meant that the local price of pork has always been higher than the price of beef.

- 6 There are also individuals who make a living from year-round *hurnal*.
- 7 Many in Mahatao had also experienced working as household help (*machapo*) in Basco or Manila. Quite a few younger members of families are away working in Manila or even abroad. I am not able to assess the contribution to cash inflow of the household from these people. Some entrepreneurial families engaged in trade with retail stores in Basco and marketing garlic in Manila.
- 8 Flying fishes, which are also caught during the summer, no longer had barter value during the time of fieldwork. Perhaps this was because their market value dropped ever since these fishes started to be caught using drift nets, an innovation dating back to the late 1980s. Their price during the fieldwork period was sometimes as low as P5 per kilo.
- 9 In 1997, for a field approximately 120 sq. m. in size, hiring someone to do the work of soil preparation for planting garlic cost P1,000 to P1,500.
- 10 All of which seems to contradict general anthropological wisdom on 'barter' where transactions are one-off and the goods have values that are different to the parties transacting (Humphrey 1985, Humphrey and Hugh-Jones 1992). The literature on barter has seen such transactions as typically taking place between strangers or between exchange partners from distinct groups, exchanges that cross borders, involving 'foreign goods'.
- 11 *machinatay ako / machahap ako, pachinatayan / pachahapan*
- 12 *payatayan / pivunungan,, payatayen / kavidangan*
- 13 *pangatay / pachahap / kahap*
- 14 Such as myself. Similar treatment was accorded at least one other person who joined the party from having come on an errand to the house.
- 15 See Galindez (1996) for a detailed description of the process of preparation of arayu for drying.
- 16 As was the case for many mataws in 1997, that had been able to acquire their boats through loans from an NGO.
- 17 The boat has to be pulled by carabao on a sled designed to carry it, all the way to the 'port' from town on the other side of the island. This involves a bit of tricky maneuvering up and down narrow paths, culminating with a steep descent down the cliff to the beach.
- 18 Note: Without resorting to motorization.
- 19 For example one mataw who had hurt his neck in an accident said he did not contract for many shares that year because it seemed uncertain whether he would be able to go to sea everyday.
- 20 Including the power to negotiate with unseen agents in the environment (see Mangahas 2003).
- 21 Why perseverance is necessary is seen in the highly unpredictable variation in catch between mataws that went to sea on the same day, and in the catch from day to day of the same mataw (Mangahas 1994:58). In 1997 one mataw fisher (who was the Fisher3 for that year) went to sea 77 days and was 'absent' only 4 times. During this period there were 22 days or practically 1/3 of total fishing days when he came home without catching anything. At the end of the season he had caught 127 arayu. The Fisher1 had fished for 78 days and come home with zero catch nearly 1/2 the time. He had accumulated 109 arayu by the time of share-out. Note: 1997 was a very poor season, especially when compared with 1992, an extremely good one. That year, these same fishers had caught 247 and 215 arayu, respectively.
- 22 A mataw leader starts the fishing season by going out to sea first, after he has made a catch, the others follow. Younger mataws and the ones known to be

'masagal' or 'lucky' start the season earlier, older mataws wait for slightly calmer seas. Sometimes mataws cannot start fishing early because they still have work to attend to in their fields or in town. They hope to catch at least one fish per day, as many as four, on rare times 8 or more, but there are also days with zero catch. By the last day of fishing, the hoped for output is at least 100 fish or 200 fillets of arayu.

- 23 This is a somewhat different representation from the typical 'share of the body' for a fisher in fishing systems in other parts of the Philippines. The 'share of the body' in these systems is at least the standard minimum share (enough food for the 'viand' in a household meal) allocated for every person on the boat. Such a share has precedence over the shares that are returns to capital because it a 'subsistence share'. The fishers have to eat to live and to be able to fish some more. In the mataw's system, this sense can be appreciated in the fresh shares (wherein the mataw is prioritized and the bait-supplier's subsistence needs are also prioritized these days). As a mataw fisher justified his arrangement with his bait-supplier thus: 'He also has to think of his own family'.
- 24 This ordinance was no longer in effect in 1997. The rates were as follows in 1991:
- a) 0-50 (# of arayu caught) : 30 pesos
  - b) 51-100 : 50 pesos
  - c) 101-150 : 75 pesos
  - d) 151 and above : 100 pesos
- (Mahatao municipal resolution of June 18, 1990, amending Ordinance 17 series 1987, to take effect January 1, 1991)
- 25 They said I should also have gone and attended more mataw *payatay* so that I could have amassed as many as she had. I was sometimes asked what I would do with all my arayu. I said I would bring it all home to Manila and give away some to my mother and father and other relatives and friends and we would eat it. I said I would also save one to bring to my supervisor in England.
- 26 Blolong (1994) notes that this belief is 'so that the fish will come back'.
- 27 This may also be related to the aspect of seasonal residence among mataws in Mahatao, who move to fieldhouses close to both the sea and their fields during the summer. The fish-for-fields trade is also peculiar to the shares practice of the mataws of Mahatao. By contrast, among mataws in Basco such shares agreements never came into vogue, and in fact the shares system seems to be becoming less important there. The trend among Basco mataws is for arayu to be taken for direct market sale.

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