Moving along the roadside: A social history of Mwinilunga District, 1870s-1970s

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Introduction

Village layout and settlement patterns in Mwinilunga, a district now part of Zambia's North Western Province, changed profoundly between 1870 and 1970.[1] In the 1950s Victor Turner, a path breaking anthropologist of the Rhodes Livingstone Institute who conducted fieldwork in the area, analysed these changes and noted the appearance of 'farms'. He described the 'ribbon development along the road of small settlements, a few hundred yards away from one another, each with its own headman and each containing a small corporate grouping of kin.'[2] As a result of factors such as the *Pax Britannica*, the cash economy and labour migration, Turner predicted the replacement of large concentric villages by small roadside settlements.[3] He argued that:

> labour migration to the urban industrial areas is positively emancipating the individual from his obligations to his kinship group (…) If a man wishes to accumulate capital to set up as a petty trader or tailor, or to acquire a higher standard of living for himself and his elementary family, he must break away from his circle of village kin towards whom he has traditional obligations.[4]

Turner interpreted the appearance of 'farms' not only as a change in settlement patterns and village layout, but linked this phenomenon to changes in patterns of production (cash crop agriculture), mobility (labour migration), consumption (store-bought goods) and social relationships (individualisation and family nucleation). He saw changing settlement patterns as the outcome of a process of linear and comprehensive social change.[5] Did Turner's assumptions and his predictions about the course of social change prove true?

The situation Turner described in the 1950s differed markedly from previous settlement patterns.[6] At the close of the nineteenth century villages in Mwinilunga appeared defensive, were isolated by the deep bush and might have been surrounded by tall stockades as a reaction to slave raiding.[7] One of the first colonial officials in the area vividly described his approach to such a village:

> With my party in single file I advanced slowly along one of the paths which, owing to the dense bush and matted undergrowth, was more like a tunnel, and presently found myself confronted at a distance of some twenty yards by a stout stockade from ten feet to twelve feet in height, with a narrow gateway closed by a heavy tree trunk swung from a hinge at the top of the gate posts.[8]

Settlements would be concentrated in favourable ecological micro-environments (close to water, hunting and cultivating grounds), yet the fragile nature of resources provoked dispersed and frequently shifting residence patterns.[9] Administrators described villages as randomly spread over the landscape and attached pejorative valuations to villages and their inhabitants throughout the first half of the

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[1] For studies of changing settlement patterns in Zambia's North Western Province, see: D.S. Johnson (ed.), *Handbook to the North-Western Province* (Lusaka, 1980); D. Jaeger, *Settlement patterns and rural development: A human-geographical study of the Kaonde, Kasempa District, Zambia* (Amsterdam, 1981); G. Kay, 'Social aspects of village regrouping in Zambia' (University of Hull, 1967); M. Silberfein, *Rural settlement structure and African development* (Boulder etc., 1998).

[2] V.W. Turner, *Schism and continuity in an African society: A study of Ndembu village life* (Manchester etc., 1957), 42-3.

[3] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 220.

[4] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 43.

[5] V.W. Turner, *The drums of affliction: A study of religious processes among the Ndembu of Zambia* (Oxford and London, 1968), 24.

[6] Nineteenth century settlement patterns in this area have been described in: A. von Oppen, *Terms of trade and terms of trust: The history and contexts of pre-colonial market production around the upper Zambezi and Kasai* (Münster etc., 1994).

[7] See: Turner, *Schism and continuity*, 6-7, 41, 228; J.A. Pritchett, *The Lunda-Ndembu: Style, change, and social transformation in South Central Africa* (Madison, 2001), 32.

[8] E.A. Copeman, 'The violence of Kasanza', *The Northern Rhodesia journal* 1:5 (1952), 65; Description of events in 1906.

[9] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* 49-50, 229-30.

twentieth century.[10] Settlement patterns were linked to ideas about 'civilisation' and the colonial administration set out to change the state of affairs in Mwinilunga:

> For a century or more, they [Lunda] had been harried by slave-raiding parties (…) so only the stronger headmen had been able to form villages – others lived like animals in the bush, eating wild fruits and honey (…) Administration to them [Lunda] means: i A decent hut must be built – to take the place of the old grass shelter = "nkunka". ii Roads must be made – when a winding track thro' the bush is preferred. iii Gardens must be cultivated – whereas they prefer that nature should provide for their wants in the shape of honey & wild fruits.[11]

By concentrating scattered settlements into large orderly villages, which would be loyal to the government and economically productive by generating cash crops and labour, the colonial administration sought to transform the Lunda village.[12]

The outward appearance of villages in Mwinilunga had changed dramatically by the 1950s. Following the expansion of infrastructural facilities, officials remarked that villages had started to form 'long almost uninterrupted ribbons' along the roadside and noticed 'a universal movement to the vicinity of the roads.'[13] Colonial observers linked changing settlement patterns to a myriad of other changes – such as involvement with the cash economy, labour migration and colonial rule – all interpreted as expressions of comprehensive social change.[14] It is in this ideological context that Turner noted the increasing appearance of 'farms'. Turner assumed that not only settlement patterns were caught up in the process of 'irreversible change', but that economic relations, interpersonal association and ways of life were bound to be affected and transformed.[15] Over the period 1870-1970 village layout had changed from dispersed and defensive settlements to concentrated roadside villages, but it is the question whether this change in outward appearance also brought about change in other spheres of society. Did changes in settlement patterns necessarily lead to changes in the economic sphere or in interpersonal relationships? Was the authority of village headmen radically altered as a consequence of the appearance of farms? Or did roadside villages produce more cash crops for marketing purposes than villages located at a distance from the road? Notwithstanding change it is possible that there were long-term continuities in patterns of livelihood procurement, social conduct and modes of thought.[16] By focusing on issues of continuity and change this thesis highlights the unexpected course of historical practice, which did not always fit into linear narratives and should therefore be studied within an alternative conceptual framework.[17]

How has the process of social change (exemplified by issues of production, mobility, consumption and social relationships) been negotiated in the area of Mwinilunga between 1870 and 1970? In order to address this central research question, it is important to identify what the standard representation of the social history of Mwinilunga District has been.[18] The process of social change in

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[10] See: (NAZ) SEC2/955, R.C. Dening, Mwinilunga District Tour Report, November 1947.

[11] (NAZ) KSE4/1, Mwinilunga District Notebooks, F.V. Bruce-Miller, History of the Sub-District, 1918, Folio 29 & 30; Compare with: (BOD) Richard Cranmer Dening, Land Tenure Report No.7, North-Western Province.

[12] Compare this to other parts of Zambia: A. von Oppen, 'Bounding villages: The enclosure of locality in Central Africa, 1890s to 1990s' (Habilitationsgeschrift, Humboldt University of Berlin, 2003); Kay, 'Social aspects of village regrouping'; H.L. Moore and M. Vaughan, *Cutting down trees: Gender, nutrition, and agricultural change in the Northern Province of Zambia, 1890-1990* (Portsmouth etc., 1994).

[13] (NAZ) NWP1/2/40, K. J. Forder, Mwinilunga District Tour Report, September 1952.

[14] See: (NAZ) SEC2/963, R.S. Thompson, Mwinilunga District tour report, 31 January 1955.

[15] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 36-7; Turner, *Drums of affliction,* 24.

[16] Compare with: Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*; An interesting case study from an adjacent area is: K. Crehan, *The fractured community: Landscapes of power and gender in rural Zambia* (Berkeley etc., 1997).

[17] For a similar argument, see: J. Ferguson, *Expectations of modernity: Myths and meanings of urban life on the Zambian Copperbelt* (Berkeley etc., 1999); T.T. Spear, *Mountain farmers: Moral economies of land and agricultural development in Arusha and Meru* (Oxford etc., 1997), 238; J. Vansina, *Paths in the rainforests: Toward a history of political tradition in Equatorial Africa* (Madison, 1990).

[18] A similar approach has been adopted by: Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees*; K. Crehan, ''Tribes' and the people who read books: Managing history in colonial Zambia', *Journal of Southern African studies* 23:2 (1998),

Mwinilunga has overwhelmingly been interpreted within a metanarrative of linear, comprehensive and transformative change.[19] Ideas of transition have been adopted by colonial administrators, agricultural experts, post-colonial officials and anthropologists alike.[20] Within this line of thought an 'epochal divide' would be posited following the impact of exogenous forces, such as colonialism or capitalism.[21] This metanarrative has emphasised external over internal causes of change and has advanced ideas of rupture rather than continuity. Outward expressions of social change which such representations have highlighted are, for example, the replacement of conical grass thatched houses by square brick houses; clothing change from bark cloth and animal skins to imported mass-manufactured clothing; changes in agriculture from 'subsistence' to 'market' production; labour migration to urban areas in search of waged employment; or shifts in the importance of extended kin-based associations towards nuclear family households.[22] Yet such transitions should be questioned. It will be suggested that the process of social change in Mwinilunga District was gradual and incremental, rather than rapid or transformative. Even as numerous changes were manifested in outward appearance, inhabitants of Mwinilunga District were able to negotiate and appropriate change in accordance with long-established practices and modes of thought.[23] New influences were embedded within existing frameworks, rather than discarding or transforming these. The tension between continuity and change will be at the heart of this work.

As the example of changing settlement patterns in Mwinilunga already suggests, there was no simple accord between representations of social change and the course of historical practice.[24] Colonial officials, post-colonial experts, anthropologists and even much subsequent historiography have interpreted changing settlement patterns within a narrative of comprehensive social change, or even within a 'modernist narrative' of transition from 'tradition' to 'modernity'.[25] Yet local historical practice did not fit into such discursive constructs. Moving towards the roadside did not necessarily entail a trend towards individualisation or commercialisation, as contemporary observers had expected. Forms of extended kinship and existing practices of agricultural production could retain importance, as even when people moved towards the roadside they did so for their own reasons and with their own aims in mind.[26] It will be proposed that in the historiography of Mwinilunga District

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203-18; J. Comaroff and J. Comaroff, *Of revelation and revolution: The dialectics of modernity on a South African frontier, Volume two* (Chicago and London, 1997). These works have analysed the discourses through which social change has been represented.

[19] The 'modernisation myth' in Zambia has most eloquently been set out by James Ferguson, *Expectations of modernity*, 14-7, 33; J. Ferguson, 'Mobile workers, modernist narratives: A critique of the historiography of transition on the Zambian Copperbelt', *Journal of Southern African studies* 16:3-4 (1990), 385-412 and 603-21; See parallels in: Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees*; Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*; Crehan, *The fractured community.*

[20] See examples in: Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*; Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees*; Crehan, *The fractured community.*

[21] See the discussion on the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute below; Spear, *Mountain farmers,* 8.

[22] The metanarrative of social change will be elaborated in the chapters of this thesis, based on archival and oral evidence as explained below.

[23] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*; See parallels in: Spear, *Mountain farmers,* 238; Vansina, *Paths in the rainforests.*

[24] Issues of discourse, representation and practice have long been debated in social sciences and historical theory. For the Zambian context see: Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees*; Crehan, *The fractured community*; Ferguson, *Expectations of modernity*; More generally see: Spear, *Mountain farmers*; Comaroff and Comaroff, *Of revelation and revolution*; S.S. Berry, *No condition is permanent: The social dynamics of agrarian change in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Madison, 1993); J.I. Guyer, 'Naturalism in models of African production', *Man* 19:3 (1984), 371-88; J.I. Guyer, 'Wealth in people and self-realization in Equatorial Africa', *Man* 28:2 (1993), 243-65; C. Piot, *Remotely global: Village modernity in West Africa* (Chicago etc., 1999); V.Y. Mudimbe, *The invention of Africa: Gnosis, philosophy and the order of knowledge* (Bloomington, 1988).

[25] Kay, 'Social aspects of village regrouping'; Von Oppen, 'Bounding villages'.

[26] See examples in: Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu.*

hitherto linear narratives, which imply ideas of 'development', 'progress' or 'modernity', have been dominant and that such narratives have obfuscated the non-linear course of historical practice.[27]

The dissonance between representations of social change and local historical practice became particularly apparent when studying the agricultural history of Mwinilunga District.[28] Despite almost one century of official propaganda for maize as a 'modern' cash crop, producers in Mwinilunga overwhelmingly continued to prefer cassava. Cassava, however, was not a 'traditional' subsistence crop, but rather enabled an engagement with the market through the production of other crops or through the direct marketing of cassava. Producers could grow more than enough for their own subsistence, but would not sell crops due to the unavailability of markets, price fluctuations or for other reasons.[29] Historical transitions, from 'subsistence' to 'market' production, which colonial officials, agricultural experts and even some scholarly works proposed as necessary, did not appear clear-cut.[30] Pineapple farmers who had produced tons of pineapples in the 1970s could revert to subsistence production of cassava several years later once markets slumped.[31] Even if concepts of 'subsistence' and 'market' production did not seem to fit the historical reality of Mwinilunga District, such concepts continued to be adopted to represent practice. Representation and practice fed into one another in multiple and complex ways. Narratives stand in a dialectical relationship to historical practice, 'actions and representations are indissolubly linked.'[32] Colonial representations proved surprisingly influential, being replicated implicitly and explicitly by government ministries, foreign NGOs and even being reflected in the language of oral interviews.[33] Farmers in Mwinilunga today talk about producing cassava for 'subsistence', as a 'traditional' crop – even if nothing about this crop, introduced from America through the long-distance trade over the course of the seventeenth century, could be termed 'traditional'. The metanarrative of linear social change, expressed by Turner and propounded by colonial officials and post-colonial experts, has thus been internalised by the population of Mwinilunga District, who now apply a discourse of 'tradition' and 'modernity', as the example of cassava evidences.[34] This work aims to set out, analyse and question the metanarrative of social change in Mwinilunga District, by testing hypotheses from this narrative against the ambiguous course of historical practice.

[27] A similar argument has been made by: Ferguson, *Expectations of modernity*; Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees*; Berry, *No condition is permanent.*

[28] This research was conducted in 2008 for my Master thesis: I. Peša, 'Cinderella's cassava: A historical study of agricultural adaptation in Mwinilunga District from pre-colonial times to independence' (Mphil thesis, Leiden University, 2009).

[29] See: I. Peša, ''Cassava is our chief': Negotiating identity, markets and the state through cassava in Mwinilunga, Zambia', in: J-B. Gewald, A. Leliveld and I. Peša (eds.), *Transforming Innovations in Africa: Explorative studies on appropriation in African societies* (Leiden etc., 2012), 169-90; C.C. Fourshey, '"The remedy for hunger is bending the back": Maize and British agricultural policy in Southwestern Tanzania 1920-1960', *The international journal of African historical studies* 41:2 (2008), 223-61; A. von Oppen, 'Cassava, "The lazy man's food"? Indigenous agricultural innovation and dietary change in Northwestern Zambia (ca. 1650-1970)', in: C. Lentz (ed.), *Changing food habits: Case studies from Africa, South America and Europe* (New York, 1999), 43-72.

[30] See: G. Carswell, 'Food crops as cash crops: The case of colonial Kigezi, Uganda', *Journal of agrarian change* 3:4 (2003), 521-51; Berry, *No condition is permanent.*

[31] I. Peša, 'Buying pineapples, selling cloth: Traders and trading stores in Mwinilunga District, 1940-1970', in: R. Ross, M. Hinfelaar and I. Peša (eds.), *The objects of life in Central Africa: The history of consumption and social change, 1840-1980* (Leiden etc., 2013), 259-80.

[32] Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees,* XXIII.

[33] See parallels in: Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees,* XXI-XXII; Crehan, 'Tribes and the people who read books', 203-18.

[34] See parallels in: Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu.*

Social change in Mwinilunga District has been analysed through the seminal studies of Victor Turner in the 1950s and by James Pritchett in the 1980s.[35] These anthropologists, however, did not make full use of available historical sources, which are indispensable to an understanding of the process of social change.[36] Both Turner and Pritchett adopted assumptions about the transformative and linear nature of social change, especially brought about by colonialism and capitalism.[37] One example of this mode of thought is the alleged assertion of colonial hegemony following the introduction of taxation in Mwinilunga in 1913.[38] Archival sources as well as Turner and Pritchett's work have suggested that taxation had a profound effect on society, causing widespread flight, tax evasion, famine and consequent repressive measures.[39] The British colonial administration, in an attempt to 'demonstrate the overwhelming force at their disposal', 'burned down some Lunda villages, shot some people, and occasionally held wives and children hostage in a calculated display to show the futility of resistance.'[40] Underlining the transformative nature of colonial rule, Pritchett asserted that the British 'discouraged or destroyed most of the traditional means of subsistence, enforcing migrant labor as the only option [to earn tax money].'[41] Yet a close reading of archival sources and a pairing with oral history suggests otherwise. People might have fled into the bush on approach of the tax official, but most returned several days later once the official had passed. More attention should be paid to processes of local negotiation, agency and gradual change.[42] Colonial rule did not necessarily have transformative effects on daily life, as subsequent chapters will illustrate in detail, whereas the changes that did occur did not follow a simple linear course.[43] Existing understandings of and explanations for social change in Mwinilunga District should therefore be adjusted.

The nature, course and local specificity of social change will be studied by focusing on one particular area over a prolonged period of time.[44] The availability of detailed anthropological analyses of social change, coupled with a variety of historical sources, make Mwinilunga District a good case study to understand processes of social change. The hypotheses about the nature, course and direction of social change, proposed by colonial officials, Turner, Pritchett and post-colonial agents, will be questioned and tested against a detailed analysis of historical practice. Through an in depth case study this thesis aims to reach broader conclusions about processes of social change in twentieth century Central Africa.[45] Recent scholarship has fruitfully engaged in questioning the representations and metanarratives through which social change has hitherto been understood.[46] Anthropological and historical reconstructions have challenged the hegemony of colonial rule by asserting cross-cultural dialogue and pointing towards the co-construction of discourse.[47] Others have deconstructed the local meaning of concepts such as 'capitalism', suggesting processes of appropriation by arguing that

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[35] Monographs by Victor Witter Turner: *Schism and continuity*; *Drums of affliction*; *The forest of symbols: Aspects of Ndembu ritual* (Ithaca etc., 1970); Work by Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*; *Friends for life, friends for death: Cohorts and consciousness among the Lunda-Ndembu* (Charlottesville etc., 2007).

[36] J-B. Gewald, 'Researching and writing in the twilight of an imagined conquest: Anthropology in Northern Rhodesia 1930-1960', *History and anthropology* 18:4 (2007), 471; D.M. Gordon, 'Rites of Rebellion: Recent anthropology from Zambia', *African studies* 62:1 (2003), 131-2.

[37] Turner, *Schism and continuity*, 7-10; Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* 36-7.

[38] See also: F. Macpherson, *Anatomy of a conquest: The British occupation of Zambia, 1884-1924* (Essex, 1981).

[39] For a more detailed analysis see Chapter 1; Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 7-8; Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* 33-5.

[40] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*, 36.

[41] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*, 229.

[42] See: Gewald, 'Researching and writing', 471.

[43] See: W.T. Kalusa, 'Disease and the remaking of missionary medicine in colonial Northwestern Zambia: A case study of Mwinilunga District, 1902-1964', (PhD thesis, John Hopkins University, 2003); Spear, *Mountain farmers.*

[44] Compare with: Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees*; Crehan, *The fractured community.*

[45] See the discussion on the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute below; Crehan, *The fractured community,* 233.

[46] For example: Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees*; Piot, *Remotely global*.

[47] See for example: Comaroff and Comaroff, *Of revelation and revolution*; Spear, *Mountain farmers.*

universal concepts can be interpreted in specific ways.[48] Still others have questioned the usefulness of concepts such as 'modernity' or 'globalisation'.[49] Yet despite such nuanced work, assertions of linear transitions from 'tradition' to 'modernity', which overwhelming adopt ideas of development, continue to be made.[50] This study is an attempt to question such narratives. It argues that an effective critique of accepted terms can only be made through a particular case study of local history.[51] Although some of the processes described in this thesis do have parallels in other areas, it is only by adopting a confined spatial and temporal focus that meaningful conclusions about the nature of social change in Mwinilunga District can be reached.

Social change will be approached with a focus on the unexpected course of historical practice and the fluidity of daily life.[52] It should be critically examined to what extent the assumptions underlying standard narratives of social change accurately represent the historical reality of places such as Mwinilunga. Based on a detailed reading of archival sources, coupled with the assumptions about social change proposed by Turner and the Rhodes Livingstone Institute, four spheres of social change have been selected for analysis, namely production, mobility, consumption and social relationships. Social change in these four spheres has predominantly been represented through narratives of linearity, transition and transformative change.[53] Assumptions about the course of social change in these four spheres will be boiled down to four hypotheses, which will form the starting point of each thematic chapter. In the sphere of production the transition from 'subsistence' to 'market' production of cash crops will be questioned; in the sphere of mobility the hypothesis that increased mobility would bring about transformative change, either positively leading to 'development' or negatively to 'underdevelopment', will be examined; in the sphere of consumption the transition from 'self-sufficiency' to 'market-integration' through access to store-bought goods will be problematized; and lastly in the sphere of social relationships the hypothesis that extended kin-based affiliations would give way to the nuclear family and a process of individualisation will be scrutinised. Each chapter will test one hypothesis against historical sources, assessing whether existing narratives are indeed valid ways in which to interpret social change. In order to better understand the context within which this study is located, an overview of the historiography, in particular of the works of the Rhodes Livingstone Institute (RLI), will first be provided.[54]

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[48] Crehan, *The fractured community*; Berry, *No condition is permanent.*

[49] J. Prestholdt, *Domesticating the world: African consumerism and the genealogies of globalization* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 2008); Piot, *Remotely global.*

[50] For an overview of recent debates, see: H. Englund and J. Leach, 'Ethnography and the meta-narratives of modernity', *Current anthropology* 41:2 (2000), 225-48; Ferguson, *Expectations of modernity;* L.M. Thomas, 'Modernity's failings, political claims, and intermediate concepts', *The American historical review* 116:3 (2011), 727-40.

[51] A similar argument is made by: Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees*; Crehan, *The fractured community.*

[52] This approach has been inspired by works such as: Berry, *No condition is permanent*; Piot, *Remotely global.*

[53] Compare with: Ferguson, *Expectations of modernity*; F. Cooper, 'What is the concept of globalization good for? An African historian's perspective', *African affairs* 100:399 (2001), 189-213.

[54] The Rhodes Livingstone Institute is alternatively referred to as the Manchester School. See: T. van Teeffelen, 'The Manchester School in Africa and Israel: A critique', *Dialectical anthropology* 3:1 (1978), 67-83; J.H. van Doorne, 'Situational Analysis: It's potential and limitations for anthropological research on social change in Africa', *Cahiers d'études africaines* 21:84 (1981), 479-506; R.P. Werbner, 'The Manchester School in South-Central Africa', *Annual review of anthropology* 13 (1984), 157-85; J-K. van Donge, 'Understanding rural Zambia today: The relevance of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute', *Africa* 55:1 (1985), 60-76; H. Macmillan, 'Return to the Malungwana drift – Max Gluckman, the Zulu nation and the common society', *African affairs* 94:374 (1995), 39-65; L. Schumaker, *Africanizing anthropology: Fieldwork, networks, and the making of cultural knowledge in Central Africa* (Durham and London, 2001); Gordon, 'Rites of rebellion', 125-39; W.M.J. van Binsbergen, 'Manchester as the birth place of modern agency research: The Manchester school explained from the perspective of Evans-Pritchard's book 'The Nuer'', in: M. de Bruijn, R. van Dijk and J-B. Gewald (eds.), *Strength beyond structure: Social and historical trajectories of agency in Africa* (Leiden etc., 2007), 16-61; Gewald, 'Researching and writing', 459-87.

Conceptualising social change: The Rhodes Livingstone Institute and Victor Turner

The understanding of Zambia's history has been profoundly shaped by the pioneering and formative work of the Rhodes Livingstone Institute, a social science research institute looking at the influence of British colonial rule in Central Africa.[55] RLI researchers carried out fieldwork in urban and rural locations throughout Northern Rhodesia, especially in the period from the 1930s to the 1960s.[56] This was the heyday of colonial rule and socio-economic change brought about by capitalism, labour migration and cash crop production.[57] This context provided ideal case studies with which the RLI could develop its interest in social change.[58] Significantly, RLI researchers moved away from the conception of tribes as bounded or homogenous units, marked by isolation, cohesion or systemic equilibrium.[59] Adopting a materialist approach of diachronic analysis, the RLI set out to research social conflicts, schisms and processes of change.[60]

The RLI sought to identify processes through which large forces such as capitalism and colonialism would bring about social change. Researchers aimed to account for 'the differential effects of labor migration and urbanization on the family and kinship organization, the economic life, the political values, the religious and magical beliefs' of society.[61] RLI researchers connected issues of industrialisation, labour migration and colonialism to life histories and micro case studies.[62] They assumed that within the 'total social field' changes in one part would automatically lead to changes in society as a whole.[63] According to Max Gluckman, there were periods of relative stability and 'repetitive equilibria' when contradictions, conflict and change could be contained within the system of society. But there were equally periods in which the equilibrium was disturbed, change could not be controlled and a radical transformation of society would result.[64] In the case of Northern Rhodesia

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[55] Gewald, 'Researching and writing', 461; Crehan, *The fractured community,* 55; Schumaker, *Africanizing anthropology.*

[56] Gordon, 'Rites of rebellion', 126. A small selection of RLI works: Urban – A.L. Epstein, *Politics in an urban African community* (Manchester, 1958); J.C. Mitchell (ed.), *Social networks in urban situations* (Manchester, 1969); G. Wilson, *The economics of detribalization in Northern Rhodesia I & II,* Rhodes-Livingstone Papers, No. 5-6, (Manchester, 1942; reprinted 1968); G. Wilson and M.H. Wilson, *The analysis of social change: Based on observations in Central Africa* (Cambridge etc., 1945). Rural – E. Colson, *Social organization of the Gwembe Tonga* (Manchester, 1960); N. Long, *Social change and the individual: A study of the social and religious responses to innovation in a Zambian rural community* (Manchester, 1968); M. Gluckman, *Politics, law and ritual in tribal society* (Oxford, 1965); A.I. Richards, *Land, labour and diet in Northern Rhodesia* (London, 1939); W. Watson, *Tribal cohesion in a money economy: A study of the Mambwe people* (Manchester, 1958).

[57] Werbner, 'The Manchester School', 161-3; Macmillan, 'Return to the Malungwana drift', 50; Gordon, 'Rites of rebellion', 126; Gewald, 'Researching and writing'.

[58] Schumaker, *Africanizing anthropology,* 115; Gordon, 'Rites of rebellion', 126.

[59] A. Kuper, *Anthropology & anthropologists: The modern British school* (3rd edn., London and New York, 1996), 1-34, 136; Macmillan, 'Return to the Malungwana drift', 44-9; Binsbergen, 'Manchester as the birth place', 18-24, 37-4; Gordon, 'Rites of rebellion', 128-30.

[60] Turner, *Schism and continuity*; Werbner, 'The Manchester school', 163, 176; Gordon, 'Rites of rebellion', 131; Macmillan, 'Return to the Malungwana drift', 47-8.

[61] M. Gluckman, 'The seven year research plan of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute', *Journal of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute* 4 (1945), 9; Quoted in: Werbner, 'The Manchester School', 163.

[62] Werbner, 'The Manchester school', 159-62; Schumaker, *Africanizing anthropology*; Van Binsbergen, 'Africa as the birth place', 39-42.

[63] Werbner, 'The Manchester School', 174-5; Macmillan, 'Return to the Malungwana drift', 50; Schumaker, *Africanizing anthropology*, 77.

[64] Kuper, *Anthropology and anthropologists,* 139; Macmillan, 'Return to the Malungwana drift', 52; P.M. Cocks, 'Applied anthropology or the anthropology of modernity?: Max Gluckman's vision of Southern African society, 1939-1947', *Journal of Southern African studies* 38:3 (2012), 649-65.

capitalism and colonialism seemed to cause such a radical transformation, although it remained difficult to predict the exact timing and nature of the break that would ensue.[65]

In a review article, James Ferguson has claimed that RLI urban research was characterised by a 'modernist narrative' of progressive change through urbanisation and industrialisation, 'a metanarrative of transition in which tribal rural Africans were swiftly becoming modern, urban members of an industrial society.'[66] Permanent urban settlement, as opposed to temporary labour migration, would mark 'the emergence of Africans into the modern world.'[67] Ferguson has been denounced for misreading the nuances of RLI work and critics argue that urbanisation has never followed a linear path.[68] Nevertheless, RLI work – which was overwhelmingly concerned with questions of social change – proposed assumptions about the nature and direction of change, which Ferguson aptly connected to issues of 'modernity'. In an influential theoretical treatise, RLI researchers Godfrey and Monica Wilson indeed suggested linear processes of social change, claiming that economic, political, religious and social changes were all interlinked in a total social field: 'Within living memory men's relations in Central Africa were primitive; now they are being very rapidly civilized.'[69] The RLI applied similar assumptions to rural areas, which were studied through the prism of structural transformations brought about by colonisation, industrialisation and urbanisation.[70]

Rural RLI studies, exemplified by the influential work of Audrey Richards, have overwhelmingly described social change in negative terms of breakdown and crisis, brought about by colonialism and capitalism. Especially labour migration, which caused high levels of male absenteeism, would impair agricultural production and would strain village organisation.[71] Within this context Victor Turner published his ground-breaking monograph on the socio-economic organisation of villages in Mwinilunga, focusing on village cohesion and fission.[72] Turner developed the renowned technique of 'situational analysis' within the framework of the 'social drama', which enabled a study of change through specific case studies and manifestations of rituals.[73] He interpreted: 'performances of ritual as distinct phases in the social processes whereby groups became adjusted to internal changes and adapted to their external environment.'[74] Even if Turner provided ample evidence of individual variation, agency and the flexibility with which actors dealt with macro-level influences, he equally pointed towards the limits of creative adaptation: 'changes brought about by the growing participation of Ndembu in the Rhodesian cash economy and an increased rate of labour migration, have in some areas (…) drastically reshaped some institutions and destroyed others.'[75]

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[65] Macmillan, 'Return to the Malungwana drift', 52; Gewald, 'Researching and writing', 470, 476.

[66] Ferguson, *Expectations of modernity*, 33; Ferguson, 'Mobile workers, modernist narratives', 385-412 and 603-21.

[67] J.C. Mitchell, 'A note on the urbanization of Africans on the Copperbelt', *Human problems in British Central Africa* 12 (1951), 20; Quoted in: Ferguson, *Expectations of modernity*, 20.

[68] H. Macmillan, 'The historiography of transition on the Zambian Copperbelt: Another view', *Journal of Southern African studies* 19:4 (1993), 681-712; D. Potts, Counter-urbanisation on the Zambian Copperbelt? Interpretations and implications', *Urban studies* 42:4 (2005), 583-609.

[69] Wilson, *The analysis of social change*, 2 (3-13).

[70] Gordon, 'Rites of rebellion'; Macmillan, 'Return to the Malungwana drift'.

[71] Audrey Richards only later joined the RLI, yet her work was formative for rural RLI studies: Richards, *Land, labour, diet;* Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees.*

[72] Monographs by Victor Witter Turner: *Schism and continuity*; *Drums of affliction*; *The forest of symbols: Aspects of Ndembu ritual* (Ithaca etc., 1970); See: B. Jules-Rosette, 'Decentering ethnography: Victor Turner's vision of anthropology', *Journal of religion in Africa* 24:2 (1994), 160-81. Turner's ideas about 'liminality', symbol and ritual have proven to be particularly influential: V.W. Turner, *The ritual process: Structure and anti-structure* (Chicago and London, 1969); V.W. Turner, *Dramas, fields, and metaphors: Symbolic action in human society* (Ithaca etc., 1974). For a more comprehensive overview of Turner's work, see the sources section.

[73] Gordon, 'Rites of rebellion', 131; Kuper, *Anthropology and anthropologists*, 144-5.

[74] Turner, *Forest of symbols*, 20.

[75] Turner, *Schism and continuity*, 17; Gordon, 'Rites of rebellion', 131.

Turner described the 'breakdown of traditional villages into small units headed by younger men who participate in the encroaching cash economy', heralding crisis within the old order of society.[76] He claimed that 'the old order was doomed' and that 'to become eminent they [individuals] must commit themselves whole-heartedly to the cash economy (…) [which] was breaking down the structure of the village.'[77] Socio-economic changes led to the disintegration of villages into ever smaller units ('farms'), which in turn affected forms of interpersonal association, matrilineal kinship, relationships between generations and genders, as well as forms of political authority and agricultural production.[78] By reconciling conflicting parties and restoring social structure and custom, rituals could slow down the pace of change and temporarily solve contradictions within society, yet the direction of change was irreversible.[79] Despite a veneer of continuity through ritual redress, change was rampant:

> [People] try to slow down the rate of change by many devices, in order that they may carry on their daily lives within a framework of routine. One of the ways in which they attempt to do this is by domesticating the new, and subjectively menacing, forces in the service of the traditional order, so that for a time, for example, cash is accumulated in order to acquire traditional symbols of prestige or build up a clientele of followers to bid for long-established positions of authority. But ultimately the contradiction between the basic assumptions of the new order and those of the traditional order distorts and then disrupts the social structure. The new order smashes the old, and the traditional set of conflicts is supplanted by a different one. During the process of transition, traditional kinds of conflict that were formerly not merely controlled by customary machinery of redress, legal and ritual, but were also converted by them into social energy which sustained the system, can no longer be so controlled, for the redressive machinery is breaking down. The result is that such conflicts accelerate the destruction of the traditional order.[80]

Turner's work thus fits into the general framework of RLI thought on social change.[81] Turner assumed that influences of colonialism, labour migration and capitalism would lead to changes in patterns of belief, social relationships and economic organisation. Adhering to a narrative of linear and transformative change, Turner put forward strong hypotheses about the course of social change in Mwinilunga District.

With the benefit of hindsight what can we say about questions of social change in Mwinilunga? Turner's hypotheses will be tested against an empirical study of historical events, processes and consciousness. This thesis is not an attempt to conduct a case study in RLI fashion. Neither does it restudy Turner's work as such. Instead, it uses Turner's work as source material to grasp processes of social change in the 1950s and it engages with the hypotheses about the course, direction and pace of social change put forward by Turner.[82] Do narratives of linear change, propounded by RLI scholars, colonial officials and post-colonial experts alike, provide the best framework to understand processes of social change or should alternative interpretations be proposed? When viewed within a long-term historical perspective, the changes in settlement patterns which Turner observed as transformative appear contested, gradual and diffuse.[83] Rather than placing emphasis on ruptures or radical change, attention will be paid to continuity and processes of local negotiation, contestation and appropriation of change. By historicising Turner's observations and testing his hypotheses a different understanding of social change in Mwinilunga can be obtained.

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[76] Turner, *Schism and continuity*, 10.
[77] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 136.
[78] Turner, *Schism and continuity*, 138.
[79] Turner, *Drums of affliction*, 90.
[80] Turner, *Drums of affliction*, 130.
[81] Macmillan, 'Return to the Malungwana drift', 50-1.
[82] This work is significantly different from the work by Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees.*
[83] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* Chapter Three.

Reconceptualising continuity and change: Theories, narratives and representations

Why would it be relevant to study colonial assumptions and RLI thought about social change from the 1950s? It might be assumed that after more than fifty years such ideas would have become outdated or discredited. Yet RLI conceptions of social change were, in certain respects, very similar to later ideas about the course of change.[84] The 'language, metaphors, problems, and solutions' employed in the 1950s have implicitly and explicitly influenced current understandings of social change.[85] To assert a parallel in modes of thought and representations between the 1950s and more recent scholarship is in no way to suggest that recent work has not moved beyond old debates or interpretations. It is merely to acknowledge a strong historical legacy, as: 'the attachment of anthropologists and others to a linear metanarrative of emergence and progress is clearly an ongoing matter, and not simply an aspect of a now "out of date" historical past.'[86]

Parallel to the RLI interest in social change, academic thought from the 1950s onwards was dominated by 'modernisation' theories. Such theories provide prime examples of linear conceptualisations of social change.[87] Modernisation theories placed 'tradition' and 'modernity' in stark contrast to one another, suggesting that in a historically progressive process traditional societies would move towards modernity.[88] Ideas of modernisation have proven highly influential and enduring. Even if criticism of modernisation theories has been profound, recent work continues to engage with issues of modernity, its nature and what it entails.[89] Post-modern studies critique ideas of modernisation, yet they engage with notions of modernity. Despite all the insecurity about what 'the modern' is, it continues to be taken as a point of departure. Ideas of modernity have become a metanarrative, connoting assumptions which are not always voiced, but are ever present and inform thought.[90] The understanding of social change in the area of Mwinilunga has been heavily influenced by such ideas of linear change, modernisation and modernity.

The process of social change within a local setting will be examined, as 'the dismantling of linear teleologies of emergence and development remains an unfinished task – indeed a task barely begun – in African studies and elsewhere.'[91] How did 'big forces' such as colonialism and capitalism, influence – but in turn equally become shaped and changed by – actors operating on a small-scale local level?[92] Narratives of linear social change did not match the intricacies of historical practice. Change should not be interpreted as all-encompassing, as previous practices could linger on and actively shape responses to change.[93] Rather than stressing linear and transformative processes of social change, the inhabitants of Mwinilunga tend to emphasise a degree of continuity with the past. Notwithstanding

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[84] This is evidenced by the academic interest in RLI studies, see for example: J. Pottier, *Migrants no more: Settlement and survival in Mambwe villages, Zambia* (Manchester, 1988); Crehan, *The fractured community*; Gordon, 'Rites of rebellion'; Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees*; Ferguson, *Expectations of modernity.*

[85] Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees,* XXI.

[86] Ferguson, *Expectations of modernity*, 16.

[87] These ideas date back to the age of Enlightenment, but their main articulation was after the Second World War, by scholars such as W.W. Rostow. See: Thomas, 'Modernity's failings', 727-40; F. Cooper, 'Africa's pasts and Africa's historians', *Canadian journal of African studies* 34:2 (2000), 298-336; J.C. Miller, 'History and Africa/Africa and history', *The American historical review* 104:1 (1999), 1-32, for a discussion of progressive narratives of history and ideas about modernity and modernisation in African historiography.

[88] S.N. Eisenstadt, *Tradition, change, and modernity* (New York, 1972), 10; Cooper, 'What is the concept of globalization good for?', 196-7, 206; Thomas, 'Modernity's failings', 727.

[89] Englund and Leach, 'Ethnography and the meta-narratives of modernity'; Thomas, 'Modernity's failings'; Ferguson, *Expectations of modernity*.

[90] Englund and Leach, 'Ethnography and the meta-narratives of modernity', 226.

[91] Ferguson, *Expectations of modernity*, 17.

[92] Crehan, *The fractured community,* 9.

[93] See: F. Trentmann, 'The politics of everyday life', in: F. Trentmann (ed.), *The Oxford handbook of the history of consumption* (Oxford etc., 2012), 521-47; Cooper, 'What is the concept of globalization good for?', 192; Spear, *Mountain farmers,* 238.

changing appearances and fundamental social change, the Lunda 'speak of themselves as a people who have successfully maintained their traditions.'[94] Far from being a mark of changelessness, traditions are 'continually transformed as people struggle over social changes and conflicts within their society.'[95] Tradition has enabled the inhabitants of Mwinilunga to make sense of and deal with change. It could be 'a reservoir of flexible values from which (…) [people] continually sought solutions to new challenges.'[96] Tradition mediated processes of change and continuity: 'Tradition is thus both persistent and changing, a kind of historical running average, as the lessons of the past are continually reinterpreted in the context of a present that is itself in the process of being assimilated into the past.'[97] Traditions change gradually and incrementally, they are 'continually reinterpreted and reconstructed as 'regulated improvisations' subject to their continued intelligibility and legitimacy.'[98] In this sense traditions can be 'critically important in understanding historical processes of social change and representation.'[99] Studying the changing discourse of tradition can therefore enable an alternative understanding of the process of social change in the area of Mwinilunga.[100]

Continuity and change: Debates on labour migration, capitalism and kinship

Besides Turner's momentous studies of Mwinilunga District in the 1950s, Pritchett conducted extensive research in the area in the 1980s. Pritchett set out to study continuity and change, using history to gain an understanding of the present and to comprehend the 'indigenization of social change'.[101] Notwithstanding the merits and in depth analysis of Pritchett's anthropological work, he uses mainly secondary sources to outline the historical context of the area.[102] Pritchett overemphasises historical ruptures, such as the overwhelming influence of long-distance trade, the violent imposition of colonial rule, the transformative power of the colonial state or the impact of post-colonial development schemes. By using a more comprehensive range of archival and oral historical sources, notions of continuity and change in Mwinilunga will be historicised.

In his meticulous study of medical practitioners in Mwinilunga District, Walima Kalusa paints a more balanced picture. Challenging the transformative, disruptive and exogenous nature of colonial rule, he argues that the 'projection of colonizers as an all-powerful entity whose policies turned Africans into hapless victims' obscures 'the ways in which people on the imperial frontier appropriated western (…) knowledge and technologies.'[103] Kalusa proposes to study colonial rule through notions of dialogue and local agency, emphasising that the colonial encounter could produce unintended consequences beyond administrative control. Responses to colonialism should 'be read as part and parcel of a long-established tradition of cultural reinterpretation that preceded and outlived

[94] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* 5; This view has been confirmed by numerous oral interviews.

[95] T.T. Spear, 'Neo-traditionalism and the limits of invention in British colonial Africa', *Journal of African history* 44:1 (2003), 6.

[96] N. Kodesh, 'Renovating tradition: The discourse of succession in colonial Buganda', *The international journal of African historical studies* 34:3 (2001), 514.

[97] Spear, *Mountain farmers*, 238.

[98] Spear, 'Neo-traditionalism and the limits of invention', 26.

[99] Spear, 'Neo-traditionalism and the limits of invention', 5-6.

[100] This approach draws inspiration from: Vansina, *Paths in the rainforests;* C.A. Kratz, '"We've always done it like this … Except for a few details": "Tradition" and "innovation" in Okiek ceremonies', *Comparative studies in society and history* 35:1 (1993), 30-65; D.L. Schoenbrun, 'Conjuring the modern in Africa: Durability and rupture in histories of public healing between the Great Lakes of East Africa', *The American historical review* 111:5 (2006), 1403-39; P. Harries, 'Imagery, symbolism and tradition in a South African Bantustan: Mangosuthu Buthelezi, Inkhata, and Zulu history', *History and theory* 32:4 (1993), 105-25; Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu.*

[101] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*, 7.

[102] Gewald, 'Researching and writing', 471; Gordon, 'Rites of rebellion', 131-2.

[103] Kalusa, 'Disease and the remaking of missionary medicine', 9; See also his 'Language, medical auxiliaries, and the re-interpretation of missionary medicine in colonial Mwinilunga, Zambia, 1922-51', *Journal of Eastern African studies* 1:1 (2007), 57-78.

colonialism.'[104] By focusing on dialogue and local agency insight into processes of social change in Mwinilunga can be advanced.

Mwinilunga District shares a number of traits with the surrounding area. A regional focus which highlights interconnections is therefore indispensable. The empirically rich work of writers such as Von Oppen, Miller, Schecter, Hoover, Crehan, Kalusa, Chabatama and Kakoma has facilitated the contextualisation of Mwinilunga within the broader area and within long-term historical trends.[105] Yet even global forces which appear at first sight to have a universal or homogenising influence can become adapted in locally specific ways.[106] The social history of Mwinilunga District highlights the specificity, appropriation and internalisation of change. Even micro studies of remote localities can advance our understanding of large forces such as capitalism:

> concern with the small details of people's day-to-day lives in particular times and places allows us to trace out something of what the large abstractions of monetization, commoditization, the state, and so on actually mean on the level of individual lives – and to trace out what these translate into both as regards the material realities they produce at the local level and in terms of how these realities are understood and imagined. This focus on the lived realities of particular places at particular historical moments can also pose the hoary old question of structure and agency in a potentially more fruitful way. Precisely because of its narrow focus, the carefully located case study enables us to explore both the creativity of individuals and the structuring of the spaces within which that creativity is exercised – and explore this not in some vague and generalized way but through particular empirical realities.[107]

Questions of continuity and change, structure and agency as well as the internal or external causes of change, will be tackled by studying one locality in depth over a long period of time.

A longstanding debate in African history concerns the relationship between exogenous forces and local agency.[108] Within Central African historiography particularly colonialism, which has been linked to capitalism, industrialisation and urbanisation, has been heralded as marking an 'epochal divide'.[109] Such work stresses transformative and external change, rather than paying attention to internally generated processes of change.[110] A prime example within Zambian historiography is Macpherson's work, which asserts that colonial rule was established rapidly and unproblematically, if violently.[111] A close reading of archival sources suggests a different view:

> the incoming colonial administration was far from powerful, and was, instead, dependant on the goodwill of the local population (...) the colonial state had been established, not by conquest but in a series of initially symbiotic *ad hoc* relationships between junior representatives of the British South Africa Company and a varied and disparate arrangement of resident power brokers.[112]

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[104] Kalusa, 'Disease and the remaking of missionary medicine', 221.

[105] See above and: J.C. Miller, *Way of death: Merchant capitalism and the Angolan slave trade 1730-1830* (Madison, 1988); R.E. Schecter, 'History and historiography on a frontier of Lunda expansion: The origins and early development of the Kanongesha' (PhD thesis, University of Wisconsin Madison, 1976); J.J. Hoover, 'The seduction of Ruwej: Reconstructing Ruund history (The nuclear Lunda: Zaïre, Angola, Zambia)' (PhD thesis, Yale University, 1978); C.M. Chabatama, 'Peasant farming, the state, and food security in the North-Western Province of Zambia, 1902-1964' (PhD thesis, University of Toronto, 1999); B.C. Kakoma, 'Colonial administration in Northern Rhodesia: A case study of colonial policy in the Mwinilunga District of Zambia, 1901-1939' (MA thesis, University of Auckland, 1971).

[106] Cooper, 'What is the concept of globalization good for?'; Prestholdt, *Domesticating the world.*

[107] Crehan, *The fractured community*, 233.

[108] See in particular: Comaroff and Comaroff, *Of revelation and revolution;* Spear, *Mountain farmers*; Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees.*

[109] S. Ellis, 'Writing histories of contemporary Africa', *Journal of African history* 43:1 (2002), 5; RLI work equally proposed such views.

[110] For a critique, see: S. Feierman, 'African histories and the dissolution of world history', in: V.Y. Mudimbe, J.F. O'Barr and R.H. Bates (eds.), *Africa and the disciplines: The contributions of research in Africa to the social sciences and humanities* (Chicago and London, 1993), 167-212.

[111] Macpherson, *Anatomy of a conquest.*

[112] Gewald, 'Researching and writing', 471.

Studying continuity and change in Tanzania, Spear argues that external factors of change should not be overemphasised:

> Many writers stress the external forces acting on African societies as the main causes of change (…) Such a focus is clearly inadequate, however, when it comes either to explaining the multitude of changes which have occurred within African societies or to understanding how and why Africans responded to external forces as they did.[113]

Instead of pointing out the transformative nature of social change, as RLI scholars and much subsequent historiography have done, attention will be paid to individual agency, local negotiation and internally generated processes of change. In this manner the gradual nature of change and the long-term continuities which shaped consciousness and lived reality in Mwinilunga District come to light.[114]

The social history of Mwinilunga District can contribute to three ongoing debates within Central African historiography, namely those on labour migration, capitalism and kinship. Zambian historiography, due to the Copperbelt mines, has been dominated by urban studies and questions of labour migration.[115] Amin has negatively described Zambia as part of 'Africa of the labour reserves'.[116] The effects of labour migration on local communities have been much researched. Many studies have assumed that labour migration would profoundly affect, or even transform, the economic, social and political organisation of villages, either negatively (leading to proletarianisation, agricultural decline and family breakdown)[117] or positively (by creating wealth and agricultural entrepreneurship).[118] Yet the effects of labour migration did not have to be transformative. The case of Mwinilunga will be set within the regional context of mobility, by emphasising the longstanding nature of mobility and the agency of actors as they participated in urban economies or straddled the rural-urban divide.[119] Next to economic motivations, labour migrants were driven by socio-cultural aspirations towards 'self-realisation'.[120] Existing debates have all too often adopted polarising dichotomies of urban and rural, development and underdevelopment or modernity and tradition.[121] The case of Mwinilunga challenges such dichotomies, by pointing out the variety in migrant labourers' life histories. Some migrants returned, whereas others stayed in urban areas. Clearly defined 'stages' of migration do therefore not seem applicable.[122] Through an empirical analysis of life histories, which go against universal trajectories of migration, debates on labour migration can be advanced.

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[113] Spear, *Mountain farmers*, 8.

[114] Inspiration for this approach was taken from: Spear, *Mountain farmers*; Vansina, *Paths in the rainforests*.

[115] See: RLI work; Or recently: Ferguson, *Expectations of modernity*; J.L. Parpart, '"Where is your mother?": Gender, urban marriage, and colonial discourse on the Zambian Copperbelt, 1924-1945', *The international journal of African historical studies* 27:2 (1994), 241-71; For rural studies, see: Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees*; Pottier, *Migrants no more*.

[116] S. Amin, 'Underdevelopment and dependence in black Africa: Historical origin', *Journal of peace research* 9:105 (1972), 105-19.

[117] For rural breakdown see: Richards, *Land, labour, diet;* For a critique: Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees.*

[118] Watson, *Tribal cohesion in a money economy*; K.P. Vickery, *Black and white in Southern Zambia: The Tonga plateau economy and British imperialism 1890-1939* (New York etc., 1986).

[119] See: O. Bakewell, 'Refugees repatriating or migrating villagers: A study of movement from North West Zambia to Angola' (PhD thesis, University of Bath, 1999); I. Kopytoff (ed.), *The African frontier: The reproduction of traditional African societies* (Bloomington etc., 1987); J.A. Andersson, 'Re-interpreting the rural-urban connection: Migration practices and socio-cultural dispositions of Buhera workers in Harare', *Africa* 71:1 (2001), 82-112; H. Englund, 'The village in the city, the city in the village: Migrants in Lilongwe', *The journal of Southern African studies* 28:1 (2002), 137-54.

[120] J.I. Guyer, 'Wealth in people and self-realization in Equatorial Africa', *Man* 28:2 (1993), 243-65; See also: Andersson, 'Re-interpreting the rural-urban connection'; Englund, 'The village in the city'.

[121] See: Ferguson, *Expectations of modernity*; J.A. Andersson, 'Informal moves, informal markets: International migrants and traders from Mzimba, Malawi', *African affairs* 105:420 (2006), 375-97.

[122] See the discussion between: Ferguson, 'Mobile workers, modernist narratives'; Macmillan, 'The historiography of transition'.

Questions of labour migration have conceptually been linked to debates on capitalism.[123] Labour migration and capitalism, in conjunction, are alleged to have restructured the relationship between rural and urban areas.[124] For rural areas the working of markets and the influence of global capitalism on spheres of production, consumption and social relationships have been vehemently discussed.[125] It has long been debated whether Africa's involvement in the world economy led 'along a road toward material and social progress or into a dead end.'[126] Linear assumptions about change, such as those suggesting a transition from subsistence to market production, can be questioned through the case of Mwinilunga.[127] Capitalism should not be treated as a monolithic force, and this is borne out by the variety of reactions to cash crop production throughout Zambia. In the Southern Province, situated along the railway line and well connected to major markets, both small peasants and large-scale farmers emerged who focused on producing maize as a cash crop.[128] The same prosperity was not experienced in other parts of the country. The Northern Province provides an example of agricultural breakdown under the influence of labour migration.[129] Mwinilunga District is different still, for neither did the area experience agricultural collapse, nor did large-scale wealthy farmers emerge. Instead, 'most of the peasants of North-Western province remained relatively food secure in colonial Zambia, largely due to their resilience, initiative, and industriousness.'[130]

Contributing to debates on the influence of capitalism, markets and the state in the locality of Mwinilunga, this study will focus on the socio-economic aspects of daily life more than Turner and Pritchett's work has done.[131] Taking the material basis of society as a vantage point enables a different understanding of processes of social change. A socio-economic approach entails an emphasis on issues of livelihood procurement, agricultural production, the consumption of goods and motives for labour migration.[132] How did cash crop production influence social organisation within the village? Did the acquisition of store-bought goods signal market integration or did it merely lead to dependency? To answer such questions a shifting focus on 'large structures' and case studies of daily life is required, in order to understand how: 'the great surging narrative of contemporary capitalism translates into real power relations among real people in real places.'[133] The nature of capitalism in Mwinilunga will be analysed whilst remaining attentive to local variations and specificities of production, consumption and social relationships.

Capitalism did not only influence patterns of mobility, production and consumption, but affected social relationships and kinship as well.[134] According to Turner, the effects were negative: 'Everywhere, we see the spectacle of corporate groups of kin disintegrating, and the emergence of smaller residential units based on the elementary family.'[135] Turner predicted that forces of colonialism and capitalism would exacerbate the inherent tension between matrilineal descent and virilocal

[123] See: Amin, 'Underdevelopment and dependence'; A. de Haan, 'Livelihoods and poverty: The role of migration – a critical review of the migration literature', *The journal of development studies* 36:2 (1999), 1-47.
[124] Amin, 'Underdevelopment and dependence'.
[125] See: K. Polanyi, C.M. Arensberg and H.W. Pearson (eds.), *Trade and market in the early empires: Economies in history and theory* (Glencoe, 1957); P.J. Bohannan and G. Dalton (eds.), *Markets in Africa* (Evanston, 1962).
[126] F. Cooper, 'Africa and the world economy', *African studies review* 24:2/3 (1981), 1.
[127] R.H. Bates, 'Some conventional orthodoxies in the study of agrarian change', *World politics* 36:2 (1984), 234-54.
[128] Vickery, *Black and white.*
[129] Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees,* provide a more nuanced view.
[130] Chabatama, 'Peasant farming, the state, and food security', III.
[131] Van Binsbergen, 'Manchester as the birth place', 36; Van Donge, 'Understanding rural Zambia today', is of the opinion that the RLI did adopt a specific focus on material aspects of life.
[132] For a similar approach, see: Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees*; Spear, *Mountain farmers.*
[133] Crehan, *The fractured community,* 9.
[134] See: R.H. Bates, 'Capital, kinship, and conflict: The structuring influence of capital in kinship societies', *Canadian journal of African studies* 24:2 (1990), 151-64.
[135] Turner, *Schism and continuity*, 43.

marriage, causing village conflicts which could only temporarily be resolved through ritual redress.[136] RLI scholars, laying the foundation for current understandings of kinship, portrayed kinship as one of the mechanisms through which access to land, labour and material resources could be negotiated, as 'the flexible, dependent and contingent result of processes of political manipulation within that group.'[137] Even if the RLI understood kinship association as dynamic and flexible, RLI scholars have equally tended to view the relationship between kinship and socio-economic and political organisation as causal or unidirectional, assuming that the cash economy would lead to an individualisation of society and a disencumbering of links of extended kinship.[138] Instead, a dialectical relationship between kinship and social change should be asserted. Socio-economic relations stimulate particular forms of kinship, but in turn relationships of kinship shape reactions to socio-economic and political change. Affiliations among extended kin have not simply given way to the nuclear family or to a process of individualisation, as RLI scholars had predicted. Pritchett aptly emphasises the continued importance of relationships of kinship, generation, gender and class in Mwinilunga District.[139] It will therefore be examined how relationships of kinship are related to and affected by broader processes of social change. By looking at the nature, course and direction of social change in Mwinilunga District this study hopes to contribute to broader debates on labour migration, capitalism and kinship in Central Africa.

A local history of social change

In order to grasp processes of social change, it is imperative to situate this case study in space as well as time. How is it possible to study broad historical processes, such as colonisation, monetisation, capitalism and nationalism through the lens of a specific locality? Within Zambia, Mwinilunga District is regarded as a 'remote' or even a 'marginal' area.[140] Crehan asks how we should 'understand the place of "peripheral" rural communities within the overall trajectory of a global capitalist development that would seem to be continually expanding and reaching ever deeper into ever more corners of the world', but which 'at the same time has traced such a grossly skewed and uneven path.'[141] Sometimes locations at the margin can reveal broader processes, such as capitalism or globalisation, with particular clarity, by pointing towards reception, reinterpretation, negotiation, domestication and localisation.[142] The conclusions reached for Mwinilunga do not necessarily apply to other parts of the region. Nonetheless, studying a specific area in depth can illustrate that even processes which appear to be universal do not have a single outcome.[143] Conducting a study of continuity and change in this area can provide examples of how broad processes gain local specificity, how social change is mediated through historical practice and local agency. According to Cooper, studying capitalism in African localities is interesting exactly because of its anomalies, which point towards the variability of global trends and the contestation of outcomes. A study of the locality of Mwinilunga District can illuminate 'large-scale, long-term processes without overlooking specificity, contingency and contestation.'[144]

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[136] See: Turner, *Schism and continuity*; Turner, *Drums of affliction*; Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*; Van Doorne, 'Situational analysis', 486-8.

[137] Van Binsbergen, 'Manchester as the birth place', 37; Van Donge, 'Understanding rural Zambia today', 66-8.

[138] Van Donge, 'Understanding rural Zambia today', 61; See: Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*; Crehan, *The fractured community*; Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees*. Also: Berry, *No condition is permanent*; W. MacGaffey, 'Changing representations in Central African history', *Journal of African history* 46:2 (2005), 189-207.

[139] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*; For a similar view, see: Berry, *No condition is permanent.*

[140] See: Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*; Von Oppen, 'The village as territory: Enclosing locality in Northwest Zambia, 1950s to 1990s', *Journal of African history* 47:1 (2006), 60-1; Crehan, *The fractured community,* 1, 12.

[141] Crehan, *The fractured community*, 15.

[142] Miller, 'History and Africa/Africa and history', 30; Prestholdt, *Domesticating the world.*

[143] Cooper, 'What is the concept of globalization good for?'; Prestholdt, *Domesticating the world.*

[144] Cooper, 'What is the concept of globalization good for?', 200.

Mwinilunga is not a bounded unit of study. Prior to the colonial period, Mwinilunga District was not even a unit as such and the inhabitants of the area continue to be characterised by mobility. Labour migration, kinship and chiefly politics link Mwinilunga to the surrounding region in multiple ways.[145] Nevertheless, it makes sense to view the social history of Mwinilunga District, which did increasingly become a unit over the course of the twentieth century, through the lens of space and place.[146] A spatial approach 'draws attention to the places and zones of interaction where people carried out social practices and generated perceptions', about identity, social belonging and relationships to the wider world.[147] It will be analysed how individuals in Mwinilunga constituted social relationships in space, focusing on cohesion and collaboration, as well as contestation and conflict between local, regional, national and global levels.[148] In the 1950s Turner already pointed towards the importance of space, place and sociality in Mwinilunga by emphasising settlement patterns, village layout and social organisation. He observed that large concentric villages were progressively breaking up into smaller units located along the roadside, a process which influenced both space and sociality.[149] Questions of social change will be linked to spatial issues through this presumed transition. If inhabitants of the area indeed moved towards the roadside, to what extent did this movement influence forms of association and daily life? The locality of Mwinilunga will be viewed as a site where practices are produced, where social reproduction and contestation takes place, where meaning and historical consciousness are shaped.[150]

A locality is both spatial and social, it connotes not only physical space but also social connections between inhabitants.[151] Locality can be regarded 'as a particular mode of sociality, i.e. as a particular means of structuring social relations, practices and identities in space and time.'[152] A locality is not a bounded entity, but is actively and historically constructed. It involves a continuous process of creation, 'the production of locality', which can reveal power relations and contestations between actors.[153] How was the locality of Mwinilunga shaped and constructed over time? Locality is inherently relational to a broader context, with which it is in constant dialogue.[154] What is the locality of Mwinilunga produced 'from, against, in spite of, and in relation to'?[155] Focusing on the production of locality can shed light on why certain practices, ideas and values were applied at certain times, thereby exemplifying the nature, pace and outcome of processes of social change. Local neighbourhoods:

> are contexts in the sense that they provide the frame or setting within which various kinds of human action (productive, reproductive, interpretive, performative) can be initiated and conducted meaningfully (…) meaningful life-worlds require legible and reproducible patterns of action (…) a neighborhood is a context, or a set of contexts, within which meaningful social action can be both generated and interpreted.[156]

A locality defines its importance and meaning vis-à-vis other localities, regions and global developments. The production of locality is driven by this broader context, but also generates its own

[145] Bakewell, 'Refugees repatriating', 95-7; Schecter, 'History and historiography'.
[146] For a similar approach in nearby Chavuma, see: Von Oppen, 'Bounding villages'.
[147] A.M. Howard and R.M. Shain (eds.), *The spatial factor in African history: The relationship between the social, material, and perceptual* (Leiden etc., 2005), 21.
[148] See: Howard and Shain, *The spatial factor in African history*; C.J. Gray, *Colonial rule and crisis in Equatorial Africa: Southern Gabon, ca. 1850-1940* (Rochester, 2002).
[149] Turner, *Schism and continuity.*
[150] A. Appadurai, 'The production of locality', in: *Modernity at large: Cultural dimensions of globalization* (Minneapolis, 2003), 178-99.
[151] Appadurai, 'The production of locality', 178.
[152] Von Oppen, 'Bounding villages', 17.
[153] Appadurai, 'The production of locality', 181.
[154] Von Oppen, 'Bounding villages', 14.
[155] Appadurai, 'The production of locality', 184.
[156] Appadurai, 'The production of locality', 184.

context, within which local actions, ideas and values become intelligible. The spatial context of Mwinilunga District will be sketched, providing examples of the connections between Mwinilunga and the broader region as well as the specificity of the district itself. A focus on locality enables an understanding of how historical practice was given shape and how it was located in relation to spatial and social processes.

Social change will be approached from the vantage point of everyday history. This approach emphasises individual consciousness, motives and agency and highlights the specificity of Mwinilunga District.[157] The experiences, actions and habits of individuals will be studied, no matter how contradictory, elusive or slowly changing these might appear. The everyday is familiar and can therefore escape observation because it changes so slowly. Nevertheless, the everyday is the site where 'people find meaning, develop habits, and acquire a sense of themselves and their world.'[158] The everyday can be a platform on 'which people through their actions exercise direct influence on their condition.'[159] It is in the everyday that practices, habits and beliefs are either reinforced or come under pressure and change. The everyday life of the locality of Mwinilunga changed only gradually. This process of gradual change refutes narratives of linear and transformative change. Studying the everyday life of the locality of Mwinilunga can thus contribute to solving the paradox between continuity and change.

Approach, aims and method

Based on a reading of Central Africanist social sciences and historiography – in particular the works of the RLI – coupled with an assessment of archival sources and oral history, a metanarrative of social change has been identified. Social change in Mwinilunga District has dominantly, though not exclusively, been understood and represented within this metanarrative.[160] The metanarrative of linear and transformative social change has found expression in three separate, but interconnected, domains: in official policy, academic debate and in local historical consciousness.[161] With regard to agricultural production, for example, a linear transition from subsistence to cash crop production has been postulated throughout much of the twentieth century. Turner predicted the increasing importance of cash crop cultivation in the 1950s.[162] In tandem, colonial policies attempted to stimulate cash crop production, labelling maize as a 'modern' cash crop which should replace 'traditional' subsistence crops, such as cassava. Official policies and academic discourse, in turn, influenced local modes of speech and thought. Locally, cassava became denounced as a subsistence crop, 'just for eating'. Predictions of a transition from subsistence to cash crop cultivation have been made by academics, have been reproduced in policy circles and have been internalised by local cultivators.[163] Representations, be they those of colonial officials, experts or anthropologists, 'have a foothold in the complexities of the real world, but more important they have as one of their sets of referents those practices, meanings, and values' of historical actors themselves.[164] Yet this does not mean that narratives adequately reflect processes of social change, or that any single representation forms the best frame to understand historical practices.[165] Even if cassava is denounced as a subsistence crop, it has been marketed on occasion and it continues to be the favoured food crop among cultivators in

[157] See: J. Brewer, 'Microhistory and the histories of everyday life', *Cultural and social history* 7:1 (2010), 89.
[158] Trentmann, 'The politics of everyday life', 522.
[159] Trentmann, 'The politics of everyday life', 529.
[160] See the previous discussion of RLI work; Pritchett engages with this metanarrative, although he does challenge some of the hypotheses.
[161] See: Crehan, 'Tribes and the people who read books', for a similar disaggregation.
[162] V.W. Turner and E.L.B. Turner, 'Money economy among the Mwinilunga Ndembu: A study of some individual cash budgets', *Rhodes-Livingstone journal* 18 (1955), 19-37.
[163] Peša, 'Cassava is our chief'.
[164] Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees,* XIX.
[165] See the discussion in: Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees.*

Mwinilunga.[166] This work will examine to what extent the metanarrative of social change in Mwinilunga District adequately reflected historical practice and processes of social change.

The metanarrative of linear social change will be translated into four testable hypotheses for the spheres of production, mobility, consumption and social relationships. These hypotheses, which make predictions about the course of social change, have been adopted by colonial and post-colonial officials, anthropologists, scholars and to a certain extent even by the population of Mwinilunga District throughout much of the twentieth century.[167] For the sphere of production a transition from subsistence to market production of cash crops has been proposed; For the sphere of mobility a transition from immobility to mobility has been postulated, either positively leading to development or negatively leading to underdevelopment; For the sphere of consumption a transition from local self-sufficiency to a dependency on mass-produced store-bought goods has been proposed; For the sphere of social relationships a transition from extended kinship affiliation to family nucleation and individualisation has been postulated. Academic work, government policies and local discourse have presented such transitions as historically progressive.[168] In the 1950s, for example, both Turner's work and colonial reports predicted a transition from extended kinship towards family nucleation and individualisation.[169] Due to the passage of time, such predictions can be tested today. Was there indeed a trend towards individualisation? Or did historical practice diverge from the hypotheses formulated within the metanarrative of social change? In order to answer such questions, a detailed reconstruction of historical practices in Mwinilunga District from the 1870s until the 1970s has been made. If the hypotheses about the nature and course of social change did not prove true, how can this be explained? Why did subsistence production or kinship affiliation persist? Based on a historical reconstruction alternative frameworks for understanding social change will be proposed.[170] The account provided in this thesis is but one interpretation of historical events. It suggests an alternative framework through which to interpret processes of social change in Mwinilunga District. Yet despite careful analysis, there remain inevitable gaps and biases in the narrative. Some notes on the approach, method and aims of this work will further explain the choices made and will point towards the shortcomings.

A first attempt to unsettle prevailing analyses of social change in Mwinilunga District is the temporal focus of this study (1870s-1970s). The division of African history into pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods already suggests that colonialism has commonly been viewed as presenting a fundamental rupture in historical practice, consciousness and representation.[171] Official reports, works by the RLI and much subsequent historiography have suggested that 'colonialism has to be seen as introducing a real discontinuity.'[172] The break brought about by colonialism has been linked to a host of transitions, such as those from pre-colonial self-sufficiency to colonial and post-colonial market integration. Yet such discursive transitions obscure the long-term trends and continuities that straddle temporal divides.[173] Pre-colonial methods of production in Mwinilunga could already be market-oriented, whilst colonial and post-colonial methods of market production built on pre-colonial foundations. Parallels can be asserted between cassava production for long-distance trade caravans in the nineteenth century and market production in the 1950s or 1980s, as the production of cassava

[166] Peša, 'Cassava is our chief'.
[167] Turner, *Schism and continuity*; Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu.*
[168] Compare with: Ferguson, *Expectations of modernity.*
[169] Turner, *Schism and continuity.*
[170] A similar approach has been adopted by: Spear, *Mountain farmers.*
[171] Ellis, 'Writing histories of contemporary Africa', 5; For critiques see: Schoenbrun, 'Conjuring the modern'; Cooper, 'Africa's pasts and Africa's historians', 306, 318; Howard, 'Nodes, networks, landscapes, and regions', 103-4.
[172] Crehan, *The fractured community*, 56.
[173] For a critique, see: Feierman, 'African histories and the dissolution of world history', 167-212.

constituted the basis for market participation in Mwinilunga District both in earlier and later periods.[174] Due to the availability of written sources, the pre-colonial analysis of this work starts in 1870, but the historical overview chapter will point out long-term trends from the 1750s onwards.[175] In order to question whether political independence in 1964 constituted a rupture or whether long-term continuities prevailed, the analysis extends until the 1970s, although observations from later periods have been added where possible and appropriate.[176] Bridging discursive temporal divides, the focus on the period from the 1870s until the 1970s contests linear transitions, paying attention to long-term trends and continuities instead.

A second attempt to bring out the non-linear course of history is the choice for a thematic approach. The choice of narrative approach powerfully shapes the representation of historical events, the causal connections between events and the understanding of processes of social change.[177] A thematic approach – much more than a chronological approach – unsettles the linear assumptions which have dominated previous representations of social change in Mwinilunga District, highlighting the non-linear, uneven and contradictory course of change.[178] Each thematic chapter will first set out the narratives which have been deployed to represent social change in the spheres of production, mobility, consumption and social relationships. After an outline of existing narratives, an empirical case study of historical practice will be presented and alternative concepts for understanding processes of social change will be proposed. These four spheres have been chosen due to their prominence in archival sources, RLI works and oral interviews.[179] Other spheres could have been selected, and a study of religion or a focus on chiefly politics would no doubt have been valuable, yet this choice of themes provides a representative overview of narrative constructs and covers a variety of aspects of daily life.[180] In order to offer a historical overview and to contextualise subsequent chapters, the first chapter does adopt a chronological approach. Yet the thematic chapters do not follow a strictly chronological course. The nature of sources has not enabled an equal covering of all topics throughout all periods of time. Whereas descriptions of hunting practices might have been rich in the 1930s, subsequent sources might have overlooked the issue and detailed analyses of hunting might only be accessible from the 1950s or the 1970s. On the other hand oral history provides impressions of time periods, rather than pinning down exact events to exact years. The sketchy nature of sources could prove a distinct asset, though. Juxtaposing the 1870s with the 1950s and the 1980s – leaping through time to a certain extent – might bring out the nature of continuity and change more clearly.[181] In this manner, long-term continuities might appear where discursive ruptures have been proposed. This unconventional historical approach highlights the ambiguity, contestation and non-linear course of history.[182]

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[174] Peša, 'Cassava is our chief'.

[175] For pre-colonial trends, see: Von Oppen, *Terms of trade*; Miller, *Way of death*; Schecter, 'History and historiography'.

[176] For post-colonial accounts, see: M. Larmer and G. Macola, 'The origins, context, and political significance of the Mushala rebellion against the Zambian one-party state', *The international journal of African historical studies* 40:3 (2007), 471-96; J-B. Gewald, M. Hinfelaar and G. Macola (eds.), *One Zambia, many histories: Towards a history of post-colonial Zambia* (Leiden etc., 2008).

[177] For a discussion, see: W. Cronon, 'A place for stories: Nature, history, and narrative', *Journal of American history* 78:4 (1992), 1347-76.

[178] Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees,* also adopt a thematic approach.

[179] This choice of themes can be compared to Pritchett, Moore and Vaughan or Pottier for similarities.

[180] The theme of religion has been covered in great detail by the works of Turner. A restudy of Turner's work on religion would be extremely valuable, but the sources and my expertise did not allow such an undertaking. A study of chiefly, local and national politics is largely missing from this work, but see my forthcoming article: ''We have killed this animal together, may I also have a share?': Local-national political dynamics in Mwinilunga District, Zambia, 1950s-1970s', *Journal of Southern African studies* (2014).

[181] A similar approach has been adopted by: Spear, *Mountain farmers*; Vansina, *Paths in the rainforests.*

[182] See: Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees*; Berry, *No condition is permanent.*

This study rests on the premise that existing narratives of social change in Mwinilunga District have not adequately reflected historical practices and consciousness. To argue this, it is not sufficient to set out the narratives and their attendant hypotheses about the course of social change. Rather, it is imperative to test hypotheses against a detailed empirical analysis of historical practices.[183] Studying historical practice can provide an alternative perspective through which narratives of social change can be reassessed. The dynamic, untidy and non-linear nature of historical practice challenges narratives of linear and transformative change.[184] Whereas local voices were only rarely represented in the archival records, actions and practices were discussed and this might provide insight into aspects of consciousness. When agricultural experts proposed the cultivation of groundnuts as a cash crop in the 1950s, local cultivators refused to grow the crop due to ecological incompatibility and labour loads. This was not a rejection of market production, but might be interpreted as a resilience of existing practices and modes of thought, an assertion of agency.[185] Tracing such continuities, contradictions and acts of resistance in historical practice can counter linear narratives of social change. The 'importance of the mutual interpenetration of coexistent practices and representations' should be stressed, otherwise 'we are in danger of denying local people a significant domain of action, as well as consistently excluding them from the texts produced by scholars, officials, and experts on the grounds that they did not write them themselves.'[186] In the area of Mwinilunga individuals were able to negotiate continuity within change through practice and in historical consciousness.[187] Rather than adhering to a metanarrative of transformative social change, alternative concepts are thus called for.

Previous studies of Mwinilunga District have addressed questions of social change, but they have not made full use of historical sources and methods.[188] By using a rich body of historical sources, the specificity, nature and course of social change in the area of Mwinilunga can be approached from a different perspective. The historical method is particularly suited for studying social change, because history 'is the study of, and explanation for, change.' The historical approach seeks to contextualise events in order to identify 'the pace, direction, and essence of such change.'[189] Historians make sense of data by collecting, comparing and integrating information from many types of sources, such as oral, written and fieldwork materials, into a 'single, rich, multifaceted reconstruction that cannot be achieved by using any of these sources on its own.'[190] For this research several types of sources have been relied on, mainly archival material and oral history, combined with oral tradition and fieldwork observations. Despite attempts to balance different accounts against each other, to be attentive to ambiguities and to reach careful conclusions about the course of social change, all accounts – including the one presented here – remain 'particular representations embodying whole sets of assumptions', they can never represent 'raw unmediated "reality".'[191] Nevertheless, by making the mode of analysis explicit, the historical method can attempt to gain an understanding of processes of social change.

A wide range of archival sources dealing with Mwinilunga District has been consulted and assessed. Most importantly, research has been conducted at the National Archives of Zambia (NAZ) in Lusaka, where broad-ranging material on Mwinilunga District, the North Western Province and Zambia as a whole is located.[192] The NAZ mainly contain administrative reports, government publications,

[183] A similar approach has been adopted by: Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees.*

[184] See: Vansina, *Paths in the rainforests.*

[185] Compare with: Spear, *Mountain farmers.*

[186] Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees,* XXIII.

[187] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu.*

[188] Turner, *Schism and continuity*; Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*; Discussion in: Gewald, 'Researching and writing', 471; Gordon, 'Rites of rebellion', 131-2.

[189] D. Henige, 'Oral tradition as a means of reconstructing the past', in: J.E. Philips (ed.), *Writing African history* (Rochester NY, 2005), 185.

[190] J. Vansina, 'Epilogue: Fieldwork in history', in: C.K. Adenaike and J. Vansina (eds.), *In pursuit of history: Fieldwork in Africa* (Portsmouth NH and Oxford, 1996), 135-6.

[191] Crehan, *The fractured community,* 50.

[192] See: M. Hinfelaar and G. Macola (eds.), *A first guide to non-governmental archives in Zambia* (Lusaka, 2004).

newspapers and a collection of historical manuscripts by prominent individuals, churches and non-governmental organisations. The collection of District Reports (tour, monthly and annual reports, as well as District Notebooks) has proven of particular importance. A complete list of consulted documents can be found in the sources section. As the NAZ mainly contain material from the colonial period, sources for post-colonial history have been drawn chiefly from the United National Independence Party archives (UNIPA) in Lusaka. Reports and correspondences of the UNIP government are housed there, but there is also a collection of material dealing with the African National Congress (ANC). Also, the Zambian Consolidated Copper Mines archives (ZCCM) in Ndola have been consulted in order to contextualise labour migration from the urban end of the spectrum. Next to archival research within Zambia, additional data were gathered in the United Kingdom. The Public Records Office (PRO) in Kew, the Rhodes House Library (BOD) in Oxford and the Echoes of Service missionary collection (EOS) in the John Rylands Library in Manchester have been consulted. These archives contain manuscripts by colonial officials, most notably Theodore Williams and R.C. Dening, in addition to diaries, correspondences and newsletters of the missionaries of the Plymouth Brethren. Even if these documents 'do not constitute coherent reconstructed histories', they can provide 'raw materials that make possible the writing of history.'[193]

These writings have been analysed both as representations and as data.[194] Written sources contain information about 'events' and 'facts', but as such they have their shortcomings.[195] Although written sources provide a wealth of information on administrative affairs, covering topics of law and order, agriculture, medicine, education and chiefly politics, they remain silent on many other issues, providing only glimpses of daily life and social change:

> the reams of colonial paper express the point of view of outsiders. They do not tell us how events and situations were perceived by colonial or postcolonial subjects and they do not allow us to transcend the interpretations of the official outlook embedded in them (…) Momentous events, which are documented, are rare in the social history of communities, while changing trends often go unnoticed [in the archival record]. Moreover, much of what was going on was simply not visible to outsiders.[196]

To tease out details about social change, documents can be read 'against the grain' or 'in-between the lines'. This approach might recover the ambiguities, power relations and unspoken issues hidden within the archival records.[197] Official records can yield insight into tax evasion and motives for cash crop production. When read carefully they can illustrate local historical practice and consciousness even when they have been written by 'outsiders'. On the other hand, archival records can be studied as representations, for the discourse they produce and reproduce. By approaching the archives in this way, their shortcomings and biases can be embraced. Official reports are the foundation upon which anthropologists and later scholars based their narratives and understandings of social change and they are thus a good starting point to study the development of discursive practices.[198] Yet archival sources have to be carefully contextualised and for this other types of sources are indispensable.

By making use of oral data, in particular oral history and to a lesser extent oral tradition, written sources have been supplemented, contextualised and questioned. The alternative perspective provided by oral sources might subordinate:

> the official ("elite") record to the recollections of those whose voices seldom appear in this record, and then only in an adversarial way. In effect these are contributions to the life-history genre, in which

[193] T. Falola, 'Mission and colonial documents', in: J.E. Philips (ed.), *Writing African history* (Rochester NY, 2005), 274-5.
[194] Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees,* XXIII.
[195] J. Thornton, 'European documents and African history', in: J.E. Philips (ed.), *Writing African history* (Rochester NY, 2005), 255.
[196] Vansina, 'Epilogue', 135.
[197] A.L. Stoler, *Along the archival grain: Epistemic anxieties and colonial common sense* (Princeton NJ, 2009), 22, 34. See: Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees*, XVIII-XXV.
[198] Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees,* Introduction.

> individuals great and small testify to their lives, the lives of others as they saw them, and events from a perspective far different than the canonical one.[199]

By allowing a degree of intersubjectivity, oral sources can facilitate the assessment of different voices and interpretations of the past.[200] Oral data have been used to question the archival material, to add new perspectives and to bring out information which had previously remained less visible or even unknown. Yet oral and archival sources cannot be studied as detached, as they both influence and are influenced by one another. Oral and archival sources share discourses and deploy similar frameworks for understanding the past. Recollections gathered through oral history apply terms such as 'subsistence', 'cash crops', 'tradition' and 'modernity' in a similar manner as written sources do.[201] To study local conceptualisations and historical consciousness oral history has been matched with a focus on practice.

Concrete practices can be evidence of agency and self-presentation as much as voices or written accounts are.[202] Oral history has proven particularly useful where it has been able to contextualise historical practice. That written and oral sources could refine each other and that such an approach might advance an understanding of historical practice became clear through the case study of the introduction of taxation in Mwinilunga District in 1913.[203] The introduction of taxation was initially approached through a reading of secondary and archival sources. A close reading of written sources revealed contradicting accounts about the nature of colonial hegemony. Whereas some officials argued that the introduction of taxation would create a loyal and productive subject population, others pointed towards high levels of default and despaired that taxation had merely caused disorder and had proven the limits of colonial power. When conducting interviews in Mwinilunga District the topic of taxation would be fervently discussed. Elders recalled having paid taxation, but also vividly remembered having fled the approach of tax collectors. Tax evasion, flight and acts of dissent were, however, not necessarily long-term acts as colonial officials had imagined. Whereas officials described the flight of entire villages across the border into Angola or Congo, it would be more common for individuals to temporarily move into the bush on approach of the tax collector, moving back several days later once the official had long passed. The introduction of taxation did not cause widespread flight, famine or serious disruption as some officials suggested. Instead, the introduction of taxation was accommodated within existing patterns of mobility and daily life without transforming these. What this example illustrates is that historical practices can be interpreted and represented in multiple ways.[204] Practices, as much as words and texts, should be contextualised through oral and written sources. Written sources might contain ambiguities when read carefully and against the grain. These ambiguities might be better interpreted and contextualised through the use of oral sources. Oral sources do not always corroborate particular events described in the archives, but do enable an insight into historical consciousness. The focus on practice has enabled an indirect but crucial insight into historical consciousness, which is so essential to a comprehension of processes of social change.[205] An understanding of historical consciousness and local perceptions about the course of social change has further been obtained through observations from historical fieldwork.

Research in Zambia was first conducted from August until December 2008, and thereafter from December 2009 until November 2010. Observations during fieldwork in Mwinilunga District enabled a practical understanding of issues such as agricultural production, fishing and house construction, but

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[199] Henige, 'Oral sources', 187.

[200] Vansina, 'Epilogue', 138.

[201] Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees,* Introduction.

[202] Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees,* XXIII.

[203] See Chapter 1 for more details.

[204] For such different representations, see: Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*; Turner, *Schism and continuity*; Macpherson, *Anatomy of a conquest.* The example of taxation will be dealt with in more detail in Chapter 1.

[205] Inspiration for this approach has been derived from: Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees*; Spear, *Mountain farmers.*

also provided insight into issues of culture and consciousness, gender relations, ideology and religion. Although observations made in the present cannot simply be extrapolated to earlier periods, they can provide a context within which historical material is placed:

> Many threads link present or recent practices to past situations, whether social, political, religious, or economic. While change has indeed affected all these practices (otherwise there would be no history), experiencing the present and doing research on daily life in the recent past illuminates [historical trends].[206]

Historical fieldwork might, to a certain extent, balance the biases of other sources. Written records, for example, have a limited field of interest, omitting 'many data about the social details, unmentioned because they are supposed to be well known, and hence the absence of much information about the social reality of the time.'[207] Historical fieldwork brings forward exactly such data, providing insight into local historical consciousness. Another way in which to grasp historical consciousness was by learning the Lunda language. Gaining language proficiency illustrated modes of thought and facilitated social interaction and interviewing.[208] Interviews and historical fieldwork have been conducted in several localities throughout Mwinilunga District, in order to gain an understanding of the different villages and forms of socio-economic and political organisation in the area. In 2008 week-long residences in Ikelenge, Nyakaseya, Chibwika, Kanongesha, Ntambu and Kanyama were interspersed with stays in Mwinilunga Boma. In 2010 longer term residences in Ikelenge (two months), Nyakaseya (one month), Kanongesha (two months) and Ntambu (one month) were again interspersed with stays in Mwinilunga Boma. Informal conversations and semi-structured interviews have been conducted with a large number of elders, both male and female, a full list of which can be found in the sources section. Together with local research assistants elders would be contacted and repeated visits would be paid to most. Based on a reading of secondary literature and archival sources, themes of interest had been determined beforehand. Yet interviews brought out a variety of new themes and issues, generating a sensitisation to gender relations, property issues and rituals. Interview questions would be open-ended and the conversation would be directed to whatever the topic of expertise or interest of that particular person would be. For some this was hunting, for others female initiation, chiefly succession or a recollection of their personal experiences as labour migrants. Even if not all interviews have been quoted directly in the text, they have informed the framework of understanding and the narrative of social change proposed in this work.

Through this methodological approach an attempt has been made to grasp processes of social change in Mwinilunga District. The variety of research methods and sources might 'refine, challenge, inspire, reinforce, or confirm one another.'[209] In this manner, 'meanings, mentalities, and perceptions of mind' about the past have been explored.[210] Local experiences, beliefs and modes of knowing have been placed at the centre of analysis and have been juxtaposed to existing narratives of social change in Mwinilunga. The contradictions, ambiguities and struggles involved in history, historical consciousness and processes of social change have been scrutinised: 'History becomes, then, not the past itself, but struggles over the meaning of the past.'[211] An attempt has been made to move away from linear narratives of social change, which present history as single-stranded and definitive. Instead, attention has been paid to alternative views, contradictions and ambiguities in order to historicise the understanding of social change in Mwinilunga District.

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[206] Vansina, 'Epilogue', 136.
[207] Vansina, 'Epilogue', 136.
[208] On the importance of language for historical understanding, see: Vansina, *Paths in the rainforests.*
[209] B.M. Cooper, 'Oral sources and the challenge of African history', in: J.E. Philips (ed.), *Writing African history* (Rochester NY, 2005), 191.
[210] C.K. Adenaike and J. Vansina (eds.), *In pursuit of history: Fieldwork in Africa* (Portsmouth NH and Oxford, 1996), XL.
[211] Cooper, 'Oral sources', 198.

Chapter outline

Based on a reading of secondary, archival and oral sources four spheres of social change have been selected (production, mobility, consumption and social relationships) and four hypotheses about the course of social change have been formulated. In each thematic chapter one such hypothesis will be drawn out and tested, in order to assess the nature of social change and to come up with alternative concepts which might more closely reflect the course of change. For purposes of historical and spatial contextualisation, the first chapter will provide an overview of the history of Mwinilunga District from approximately 1750 until the 1970s (Chapter 1). Events in Mwinilunga will be placed in a regional and (inter)national context, highlighting patterns of interrelationship. This overview will contextualise subsequent chapters and will raise questions about the nature of social change. Continuity and change will be problematized, long-term trends will be pointed out and prevailing periodization will be questioned. Were transitions from the pre-colonial to the colonial and post-colonial period indeed sharp ruptures, as much of the historiography suggests, or did patterns of continuity prevail? Social change will be linked to changes in settlement patterns, a focus which will reappear in subsequent chapters.

The following chapters will each take one hypothesis about the course of social change as vantage point. These hypotheses and the attendant narratives of social change, which suggest a linear historical transition, will be analysed and compared with a detailed study of historical practice. Chapter 2 will address the sphere of production. This chapter will question whether there was a transition from 'subsistence' to 'market' production in Mwinilunga District, by problematizing the concepts of 'subsistence' and 'market' production and by questioning whether these categories were mutually exclusive. Rather than reflecting patterns of production or agricultural practice, concepts of subsistence and market production were part of constructed discourse. By engaging in debates about the 'moral economy' and describing the internal foundations of production in Mwinilunga District, it will be argued that although many producers did partake in market production, this was not universally attractive or beneficial.[212] Food security and risk minimisation might hold prevalence over profit maximisation or market production. Food crops and subsistence production could, in fact, constitute the basis for market participation. Rather than being connected to economic (ir)rationality, the involvement or non-involvement of producers with the market had to do with ideological frameworks and existing patterns of production.

Chapter 3 will engage with issues of mobility, taking the presumed mobility transition – which posits that individuals in (Central) Africa were relatively sedentary and immobile until colonialism, industrialisation and urbanisation unchained the population and led to unprecedented mobility – as a starting point.[213] It will be demonstrated that mobility was always part and parcel of life in Mwinilunga District. In certain respects the colonial and post-colonial state limited mobility through the demarcation of boundaries and legislative measures, such as pass laws. Rather than stimulating mobility, the (post-)colonial state could act as a constraining force. Notwithstanding restrictions on mobility, individuals were able to circumvent these through cross-border interactions and trade (Chapter 3A). Mobility proved an effective strategy to minimise risk and maximise profit. Debates on labour migration will be considered separately (Chapter 3B). Within the 'modernist narrative' labour migration has been connected to issues of 'development', 'progress' and 'modernity'. Others have argued that labour migration would lead to 'underdevelopment', proletarianisation and rural decay.[214] Through a detailed study of life histories and historical cases it will be explored how mobility influenced the locality of Mwinilunga in terms of identity, belonging and livelihood.

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[212] G. Hyden, *Beyond Ujamaa in Tanzania: Underdevelopment and an uncaptured peasantry* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1980).

[213] See: J. Lucassen and L. Lucassen, 'The mobility transition revisited, 1500-1900: What the case of Europe can offer to global history', *Journal of global history* 4:3 (2009), 347-77.

[214] See: Ferguson, 'Mobile workers, modernist narratives'.

Chapter 4 will look at consumption. This chapter will question the transition from local self-sufficiency in artefacts and utilitarian goods to a dependency on mass-produced, store-bought goods under capitalist influence. Turner highlighted the role 'of the European-owned stores in stimulating new wants', evident from 'the high percentage of expenditure devoted to store goods.'[215] Yet despite 'new wants' and an apparent 'consumer revolution', changes in the social value, meaning and use of goods did not have to be transformative.[216] The consumption of both locally produced and store-bought goods was motivated by longstanding concepts of 'wealth in people'.[217] Even as outward appearances changed, the meanings attached to goods remained far more constant. Goods continued to be used in similar ways, to craft and maintain social relationships and allegiances to kin, neighbours and dependents.

Chapter 5 will bring the previous chapters together, by assessing whether and how changes in production, mobility and consumption influenced social relationships. A discussion of social relationships is reserved for the last chapter, because in many ways the context provided by the previous chapters is necessary to enable an adequate grasp of changes in social relationships. Social relationships, after all, are at the core of social change.[218] Did Turner's observations of the disintegration of extended kinship, the emergence of the nuclear family and trends towards individualisation hold true? Turner posited that the cash economy would destroy ties of kinship within the village, leading to the disintegration of large village units into smaller 'farms'.[219] Nevertheless, social relationships, kinship affiliation and villages themselves have been flexible enough to accommodate change without breaking down. To what extent did economic and political change also lead to social change?

Colonial officials, anthropologists and many others have made predictions about the course of social change in Mwinilunga District.[220] By testing hypotheses of linear social change, from subsistence to market production or from kinship to individualisation, a different understanding of social change might be reached. In order to better reflect the course of social change, alternative concepts such as the 'internal foundations of production', 'culture of mobility', 'wealth in people' and 'self-realisation' will be proposed. The central question running through these chapters is how the process of social change has been negotiated in the area of Mwinilunga. How, if ever, can we assess and understand processes of social and historical change? It will be suggested that rather than running along a linear path of 'progress', 'development' or 'modernity', change tended to be ambiguous, contested and gradual.[221] Negating radical transformations of society and defying sharp ruptures between time periods, long-term trends and patterns of continuity in daily life and historical consciousness will be highlighted.[222] In this manner the question of social change might be viewed in a different light. Although this account cannot provide a definitive analysis of social change in Mwinilunga District, it hopes to provide a fruitful lens through which to approach questions of social change and historical consciousness.

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[215] Turner and Turner, 'Money economy', 31.

[216] R. Ross, M. Hinfelaar and I. Peša (eds.), *The objects of life in Central Africa: The history of consumption and social change, 1840-1980* (Leiden etc., 2013), Introduction.

[217] Guyer, 'Wealth in people'.

[218] See: Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees*; Berry, *No condition is permanent.*

[219] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 43.

[220] These predictions will be worked out in more detail throughout the following chapters.

[221] See: Ferguson, *Expectations of modernity*; Berry, *No condition is permanent.*

[222] See: Feierman, *Peasant intellectuals*; Spear, *Mountain farmers.*

Map 1: Map of Mwinilunga District
Source: Nel de Vink