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

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3A: Mobility

Borders, trade and identity

Kwenda kumona nzovu – To travel is to see an elephant, Lunda proverb⁸⁹²

Mobility is central to the socio-economic and political strategies of the population in Mwinilunga District and it can even function as a marker of identity.⁸⁹³ Movement can enable the grasping of opportunities, in hunting, trade or on the labour market.⁸⁹⁴ Contrastingly, people who just ‘sit around’ the village (*kushakama hohu*) are denounced and are not likely to attain wealth, status or power.⁸⁹⁵ Colonial officials have all too often described the Lunda as ‘naturally migratory’.⁸⁹⁶ Even so, Mwinilunga District has simultaneously been portrayed as a quintessentially rural area, remote, isolated and by implication immobile.⁸⁹⁷ How have various discourses of mobility been shaped over the course of the twentieth century, and have practices of mobility corresponded to or diverged from such discourses?

Throughout the colonial and post-colonial period official attitudes towards mobility have been ambiguous.⁸⁹⁸ On the one hand, policies have been underlain by a sedentary bias and a desire to regulate mobility.⁸⁹⁹ Movement has been curtailed through the demarcation of international borders, by means of pass laws and by encouraging fixed settlements.⁹⁰⁰ Mobility posed a threat to governmentality, because a mobile population is prone to autonomous behaviour and might undermine administrative control.⁹⁰¹ On the other hand, mobility has been actively encouraged. The *Pax Britannica*, for instance, facilitated long-distance movement and spurred labour migration to thriving mining towns.⁹⁰² Mobility has been positively associated with ‘development’ and even

⁸⁹² Proverb recorded by Gibby Kamuhuza, Ikelenge, April 2010.

⁸⁹³ O. Bakewell, ‘Refugees repatriating or migrating villagers? A study of movement from North West Zambia to Angola’ (PhD thesis, University of Bath, 1999); V.W. Turner, *Schism and continuity in an African society: A study of Ndembu village life* (Manchester etc., 1957).

⁸⁹⁴ F. De Boeck, ‘Borderland breccia: The mutant hero in the historical imagination of a Central-African diamond frontier’, *Journal of colonialism and colonial history* 1:2 (2000).

⁸⁹⁵ Interview with Justin Kambidima, Ntambu, 22 October 2010.

⁸⁹⁶ (NAZ) KSE6/2/2, F.V. Bruce-Miller, Mwinilunga Sub-District Half Yearly Report, 30 September 1923. Stereotypes of Africans as ‘naturally migratory’ or even ‘nomadic’ have been pervasive among European observers, see: M. Adas, *Machines as the measure of men: Science, technology, and ideologies of Western dominance* (Ithaca and London, 1989); I. Kopytoff, ‘The internal African frontier: The making of African political culture’, in: I. Kopytoff (ed.), *The African frontier: The reproduction of traditional African societies* (Bloomington etc., 1987), 7.

⁸⁹⁷ W.M.J. van Binsbergen, ‘Globalization and virtuality: Analytical problems posed by the contemporary transformation of African societies’, *Development and change* 29:4 (1998), 873-903; J.A. Andersson, ‘Administrators’ knowledge and state control in colonial Zimbabwe: The invention of the rural-urban divide in Buhera District, 1912-80’, *Journal of African history* 43:1 (2002), 119-143.

⁸⁹⁸ See general overview works: M.E. de Bruijn, R.A. van Dijk and D. Foeken (eds.), *Mobile Africa: Changing patterns of movement in Africa and beyond* (Leiden etc., 2001); F. Cooper (ed.), *Struggle for the city: Migrant labor, capital, and the state in urban Africa* (Beverly Hills, London and New Delhi, 1983); A.M. Howard, ‘Nodes, networks, landscapes, and regions: Reading the social history of tropical Africa 1700s-1920’, in: A.M. Howard and R.M. Shain (eds.), *The spatial factor in African history: The relationship of the social, material, and perceptual* (Leiden etc., 2005), 103-130; J. Urry, *Mobilities* (Cambridge and Malden, 2007). Also: H. Heisler, *Urbanisation and the government of migration: The inter-relation of urban and rural life in Zambia* (London, 1974), 1-12.

⁸⁹⁹ O. Bakewell, ‘Keeping them in their place’: The ambivalent relationship between development and migration in Africa’, *Third world quarterly* 29:7 (2008), 1341-58, 1345; Urry, *Mobilities*, 31.

⁹⁰⁰ See: 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).

⁹⁰¹ Urry, *Mobilities*, 49-50, discusses the problem of ‘governmentality’ over mobile populations.

⁹⁰² A.D. Roberts, *A history of Zambia* (New York, 1976).

'modernity'.⁹⁰³ In this connection, labour migration has been linked to social change and described in terms of a 'modernist narrative', depicting a transition from migrant labourers to permanent urbanites.⁹⁰⁴ Local practices of mobility, nevertheless, oftentimes disregarded, or rather creatively circumvented, government policies, subverting official discourses and administrative intentions.⁹⁰⁵ Mobility proved difficult to bound and provided room for manoeuvre for those who sought to exploit opportunities to their own advantage. Largely because of this, mobility has been designated as problematic.⁹⁰⁶ The difficulty to adequately police borders and check illicit cross-border trade constituted an administrative nuisance, posing an outright threat to state power and sovereignty.⁹⁰⁷ Similarly, although labour migration could provide access to waged employment and material gain, it has been connected to processes of proletarianisation, detribalisation and rural impoverishment.⁹⁰⁸ Oftentimes mobility has been described in polarising dichotomies of urban and rural, development and underdevelopment, or even modernity and tradition.⁹⁰⁹

Practices of mobility challenge such binaries. Mobility has been long-established as a strategy in Mwinilunga District.⁹¹⁰ The dynamics of movement might be explained through an internal and historically constructed 'culture of mobility', which encompasses economic, political and socio-cultural spheres.⁹¹¹ This culture of mobility has shaped reactions to and appropriations of (post-)colonial discourses and policies, and is therefore key to studying mobility in its own right.⁹¹² Within such an

⁹⁰³ J. Ferguson, *Expectations of modernity: Myths and meanings of urban life on the Zambian Copperbelt* (Berkeley etc., 1999); 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; 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.

⁹⁰⁴ J. Ferguson, 'Mobile workers, modernist narratives: A critique of the historiography of transition on the Zambian Copperbelt', *Journal of Southern African studies* 16:3 (1990), 385-412 and 16:4 (1990), 603-21; See also the works by RLI scholars.

⁹⁰⁵ S.J. Rockel, *Carriers of culture: Labor on the road in nineteenth-century East Africa* (Portsmouth etc., 2006); P. Harries, *Work, culture, and identity: Migrant laborers in Mozambique and South Africa, c. 1860-1910* (Portsmouth etc., 1994); P. Nugent and A.I. Asiwaju (eds.), *African boundaries: Barriers, conduits and opportunities* (London etc., 1996).

⁹⁰⁶ Urry, *Mobilities*, 8: Connects mobility to the unruly 'mob'; See also: Bakewell, 'Keeping them in their place'.

⁹⁰⁷ Nugent and Asiwaju, *African boundaries*; E. Allina-Pisano, 'Borderlands, boundaries, and the contours of colonial rule: African labor in Manica District, Mozambique, c. 1904-1908', *International journal of African historical studies* 36:1 (2003), 59-82.

⁹⁰⁸ G. Arrighi, 'Labour supplies in historical perspective: A study of proletarianization of the African peasantry in Rhodesia', *The journal of development studies* 6:3 (1969/70), 197-234; N. Plange, 'Opportunity cost' and labour migration: A misinterpretation of proletarianisation in Northern Ghana', *The journal of modern African studies* 17:4 (1979), 655-76; S. Amin, 'Underdevelopment and dependence in black Africa: Historical origin', *Journal of peace research* 9 (1972), 105-119; B. O'Laughlin, 'Proletarianisation, agency and changing rural livelihoods: Forced labour and resistance in colonial Mozambique', *Journal of Southern African studies* 28:3 (2002), 511-30; See also RLI work: A.I. Richards, *Land, labour and diet in Northern Rhodesia: An economic study of the Bemba tribe* (London, 1939).

⁹⁰⁹ See: De Haan, 'Livelihoods and poverty'; Bakewell, 'Keeping them in their place'.

⁹¹⁰ See: Turner, *Schism and continuity*; J.A. Pritchett, *The Lunda-Ndembu: Style, change, and social transformation in South Central Africa* (Madison, 2001).

⁹¹¹ Z. Ngwane, 'Christmas time' and the struggles for the household in the countryside: Rethinking the cultural geography of migrant labour in South Africa', *Journal of Southern African studies* 29:3 (2003), 683; H.P. Hahn and G. Klute (eds.), *Cultures of migration: African perspectives* (Münster, 2007).

⁹¹² The term 'culture of mobility' refers to a socio-cultural outlook, shaped by social, economic and political experiences of movement throughout history. This outlook shapes future movements. It encompasses the internal logic of whether a person should migrate, and if so, when and to which destination. Mobility has to do with local valuations, lifecycles and strategies. This approach places emphasis on the internal (rather than the external) logics of mobility, and focuses on relations between the migrant and society. See: J.H. Cohen and I. Sirkeci, *Cultures of migration: The global nature of contemporary mobility* (Austin, 2011), ix: A culture of

understanding, mobility is not necessarily transformative of society. Physical movement does not constitute a break in social relationships, but can serve to create new ties or enhance existing ones. If mobility is viewed as a social (rather than a purely geographical) practice, connections and long-term continuities come to light.⁹¹³ Mobility can then be seen as a strategy towards self-realisation, because 'mobility and migration may have been about recruitment of skills.'⁹¹⁴ Through mobility a person could become valued within the community, attaining status, wealth and respect among peers.⁹¹⁵ Mobility could be one of 'the varied struggles of people to value themselves in some publicly demonstrable way.'⁹¹⁶ Self-realisation through mobility is closely connected to other strategies, such as agricultural production, hunting and trade. Rather than conflicting, these various strategies could feed into one another.⁹¹⁷ Thus mobility could serve to diversify and secure livelihoods, maximise opportunities, build personhood and give shape to the locality.⁹¹⁸ Rather than understanding mobility as an economic strategy aimed at profit maximisation or a political strategy for evading government control, this approach probes into the socio-cultural predispositions behind mobility.⁹¹⁹ For the case of Mwinilunga it will be argued that a 'culture of mobility' has motivated, negotiated and guided movement throughout history.

Two aspects of mobility, namely cross-border interactions with Angola and Congo (Chapter 3A) and labour migration to urban areas (Chapter 3B), will be explored. Official discourse has attached dichotomous judgements to these patterns of mobility. Cross-border trade has either been described as an illegal dodging of the authority of the nation-state, or has been understood in terms of a profit-maximising logic.⁹²⁰ Labour migration has been hailed as introducing rural tribesmen to urban industry and civilisation, or has been denounced as leading to rural decay and impoverishment.⁹²¹ By placing mobility within the socio-economic, political and cultural context of Mwinilunga District, such binaries can be avoided. Rather than disruptive or transformative, mobility might have been constitutive of society.⁹²² The rural should not necessarily be seen as opposed to the urban, whereas trade with Angola and Congo was only part of the full repertoire of trade in the area. Patterns of mobility changed

migration 'acknowledges the various ways in which migration decisions are made and (...) demonstrates how individual decisions are rooted in the social practices and cultural beliefs of a population (...) Culture – in other words, the social practice, meaning, and symbolic logic of mobility – must be understood along with economics if we are to understand patterns of migration.'

⁹¹³ Kopytoff, 'The internal African frontier', 22; J.A. Andersson, 'Informal moves, informal markets: International migrants and traders from Mzimba, Malawi', *African affairs* 105:420 (2006), 375-97.

⁹¹⁴ J.I. Guyer and S.M. Eno Belinga, 'Wealth in people as wealth in knowledge: Accumulation and composition in Equatorial Africa', *Journal of African history* 36:1 (1995), 115.

⁹¹⁵ J.I. Guyer, 'Wealth in people and self-realization in Equatorial Africa', *Man* 28:2 (1993), 243-65; K. Barber, 'Money, self-realization and the person in Yoruba texts', in: J.I. Guyer (ed.), *Money matters: Instability, values and social payments in the modern history of West African communities* (Portsmouth etc., 1995), 205-24; F. de Boeck, 'Domesticating diamonds and dollars: Identity, expenditure and sharing in Southwestern Zaire (1984-1997)', *Development and change* 29 (1998), 777-810.

⁹¹⁶ Guyer, 'Wealth in people', 256.

⁹¹⁷ De Boeck, 'Borderland breccia'.

⁹¹⁸ Ngwane, 'Christmas time'.

⁹¹⁹ This approach has been inspired by: H. Englund, 'The village in the city, the city in the village: Migrants in Lilongwe', *Journal of Southern African studies* 28:1 (2002), 137-54; J.A. Andersson, 'Reinterpreting the rural-urban connection: Migration practices and socio-cultural dispositions of Buhera workers in Harare', *Africa* 71:1 (2001), 82-112.

⁹²⁰ See especially: J.L. Roitman, 'The politics of informal markets in sub-Saharan Africa', *The journal of modern African studies* 28:4 (1990), 671-96; J. MacGaffey, *The real economy of Zaire: The contribution of smuggling and other unofficial activities to national wealth* (London etc., 1991).

⁹²¹ A.L. Epstein, 'Urbanization and social change in Africa', *Current anthropology* 8:4 (1967), 275-95; J.C. Mitchell, 'The causes of labour migration', *Inter-African labour institute bulletin* 6:1 (1959), 12-47.

⁹²² This argument was made early on by: W. Watson, *Tribal cohesion in a money economy: A study of the Mambwe people of Northern Rhodesia* (Manchester, 1964).

constantly, adjusting to shifting geo-political and socio-economic settings, building on established trajectories of movement.⁹²³ In order to understand the rationale behind mobility, the local as well as the regional and (inter)national context have to be explored.⁹²⁴ Offsetting the limited opportunities within Mwinilunga District, mobility could enable access to lucrative markets for agricultural produce or coveted consumer goods. Furthermore, mobility could provide material gain, strengthen kinship ties or enhance social status. Mobility equally entailed risk, though. Wild animals, custom patrols and the troubles of settling into another community all added to the difficulty of travel.⁹²⁵ In this regard, the persistent attractions of mobility, which are related to issues of livelihood, power and identity, should be explored.

Historical roots of mobility

Movement has been a constantly recurring, integral part of social, economic and political life in the area of Mwinilunga, 'an intrinsic part of Lunda society and culture.'⁹²⁶ Mobility, for example, played a fundamental role in the establishment of Lunda settlements. Flows of migration from the core Lunda polity, situated further north in Congo, allegedly caused the formation of Kanongesha and other Upper Zambezi chiefdoms.⁹²⁷ Over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, furthermore, movement enabled traders to establish ties with the Angolan coast in order to obtain goods which were scarce locally, such as cloth and guns.⁹²⁸ This long-distance trade has been described in terms of globalisation, or at least proto-globalisation, discharging the myth that pre-colonial African societies were ever immobile, isolated or self-contained.⁹²⁹ Trade was crucial from early on, for instance because blacksmiths were few and far between, so that some villages had to depend on distant experts for essential provisions of knives, hoes and axes.⁹³⁰ Such trade links, in turn, could foster socio-cultural ties, cement political allegiances and shape aspects of identity.⁹³¹ Individuals and localities constantly sought connections to wider regional and even (inter)national entities through mobility. Movement facilitated the exchange of marriage partners between neighbouring or more distant villages, thereby solidifying socio-political ties and creating an interlinked vicinage.⁹³² The environmental setting of the area equally propelled movement, as individuals attempted to find a place which would secure a dependable livelihood. Villages commonly shifted their location at intervals of 1-20 years, to seek good hunting, fishing or cultivating grounds once their former sites had become depleted.⁹³³ But villages could equally shift as a consequence of political quarrels or deaths.⁹³⁴ Apart from entire villages,

⁹²³ See: Howard and Shain, *The spatial factor*.

⁹²⁴ A. Mbembe, 'At the edge of the world: Boundaries, territoriality and sovereignty in Africa', *Public culture* 12:1 (2000), 259-84.

⁹²⁵ See: Bakewell, 'Refugees repatriating'; Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*.

⁹²⁶ Bakewell, 'Refugees repatriating', 94.

⁹²⁷ 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).

⁹²⁸ J.C. Miller, *Way of death: Merchant capitalism and the Angolan slave trade 1730-1830* (Madison, 1988); 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).

⁹²⁹ J. Prestholdt, *Domesticating the world: African consumerism and the genealogies of globalization* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 2008); Van Binsbergen, 'Globalization and virtuality', 875.

⁹³⁰ C.E. Kriger, *Pride of men: Ironworking in 19th century West Central Africa* (Portsmouth, Oxford and Cape Town, 1999).

⁹³¹ Kopytoff, 'The internal African frontier'.

⁹³² Turner, *Schism and continuity*, 47: 'Villages are rarely built in complete isolation from neighbours (...) villages tend to be grouped in discrete clusters, of varying numbers and formation. Each cluster is called (...) a 'vicinage' (...) The vicinage has certain jural, economic and ritual functions.'

⁹³³ This pattern has been described by J. Vansina, *Paths in the rainforests: Toward a history of political tradition in Equatorial Africa* (Madison, 1990).

⁹³⁴ Turner, *Schism and continuity*, 44-8.

individuals moved across the landscape and this movement allowed some to establish a name for themselves, perhaps as good hunters or widely renowned experts in medicine or healing.⁹³⁵ Mobility could be a means towards self-realisation, involving both 'the realization of one's individual self-identity, autonomy and responsibility, implying volition, intentionality, individual ambition and self-consciousness' and a 'gradual body-centred insertion (...) into the lives of other individuals'.⁹³⁶ Individuals sought to advance socio-economic and political goals through mobility. Far from being unique, 'everyone has the potential of self-realization, self-creation.'⁹³⁷ Mobility could be a resource or a strategy, to fulfil both material needs and immaterial aspirations.⁹³⁸ Mobility equally played a role in social connectivity, as movement could confirm and at times expand inter-personal links. The unity of the chiefdom and even the Lunda entity as a whole was continuously redefined, either strengthened or questioned, through contact and movement.⁹³⁹ Furthermore, ceremonies such as initiation rites for boys were organised on a regional rather than on a local level, which gave rise to coherent age sets whose members were spread out over the area.⁹⁴⁰ Of course there were limits to individual mobility, as travel involved potential hazards and required preparation, capital and skills, but nevertheless mobility always remained an opportunity, as formal boundaries were lacking or could be transgressed.⁹⁴¹ These historical roots have given shape to an internal 'culture of mobility', an outlook which mediates the attitudes and responses towards movement.⁹⁴² Over time mobility has been deployed as a socio-economic, political and environmental strategy to make use of opportunities, enhance livelihoods and shape identities, to connect the local to the regional and global.

Official discourses did not necessarily acknowledge or comprehend these indigenous patterns of mobility, but rather sought to promote their own understandings, underlain by aims of administrative control and economic development.⁹⁴³ This resulted in ambiguous views towards mobility. Under colonial rule the population of Mwinilunga District was denounced as leading a 'nomadic existence'.⁹⁴⁴ Paradoxically, discourses portraying a remote, isolated and immobile population simultaneously gained acceptance.⁹⁴⁵ Whereas on the one hand mobility was associated with a lack of control and hence 'primitivity', on the other hand mobility was seen as a route towards and accompaniment of 'modernity'.⁹⁴⁶ Colonialism and capitalism would allegedly mark a 'mobility transition', lifting the barriers to movement from stable and self-sufficient societies and thereby spurring unprecedented 'development'.⁹⁴⁷ Official attitudes towards mobility remained contradictory throughout the twentieth century. By insisting on large, fixed settlements rather than small shifting homesteads, by demarcating borders, both between chiefdoms and international territories, as well as through census, passes and other regulations, movement was restrained. Mobility was encouraged in other respects, though. Travelling became easier due to the cessation of slave raids, whereas government policies promoted labour migration, trade and the marketing of produce, all of which

⁹³⁵ De Boeck, 'Borderland breccia'.

⁹³⁶ De Boeck, 'Domesticating diamonds and dollars', 794.

⁹³⁷ Barber, 'Money, self-realization and the person', 213.

⁹³⁸ M. Barrett, 'The social significance of crossing state borders: Home, mobility and life paths in the Angolan-Zambian borderland', in: S. Jansen and S. Löfving (eds.), *Struggles for home: Violence, hope and the movement of people* (Oxford, 2009), 85-107.

⁹³⁹ Schechter, 'History and historiography'; J.J. Hoover, 'The seduction of Ruweji: Reconstructing Ruund history (The nuclear Lunda: Zaïre, Angola, Zambia)' (PhD thesis, Yale University, 1978).

⁹⁴⁰ Turner, *Schism and continuity*, 187.

⁹⁴¹ Rockel, *Carriers of culture*; Kopytoff, 'The internal African frontier'.

⁹⁴² See: Hahn and Klute, *Cultures of migration*; Ngwane, 'Christmas time'.

⁹⁴³ Andersson, 'Administrators' knowledge'; Allina-Pisano, 'Borderlands, boundaries'.

⁹⁴⁴ (NAZ) KSE6/1/2, J.M.C. Pound, Lunda Sub-District Annual Report, 1912-13.

⁹⁴⁵ Van Binsbergen, 'Globalization and virtuality'.

⁹⁴⁶ De Haan, 'Livelihoods and poverty'.

⁹⁴⁷ Lucassen and Lucassen, 'The mobility transition revisited'.

incited forms of long-distance mobility.⁹⁴⁸ Over time, discourses of mobility were scrutinised, contested and altered. To what extent could discourses influence practices of mobility, or could individuals subvert policies through mobility? These questions will first be tackled by examining the case of boundary demarcation between Mwinilunga, Angola and Congo. Even as the boundary was firmly established on the ground, movement, contact and trade across the border persisted. This highlights the discrepancy between policy and practice and underlines the significance of historical roots of mobility.⁹⁴⁹

Drawing and crossing borders: An 'imaginary line' on the map

Despite attempts at administrative control through the demarcation of international boundaries, historical contacts, a culture of mobility, as well as new socio-economic and political circumstances propelled movement across borders.⁹⁵⁰ This continued cross-border movement, which defied official intentions, should be further explored.⁹⁵¹ Colonial boundary demarcations went against existing forms of mobility, contact and identity in the region of Mwinilunga.⁹⁵² At least from the seventeenth century onwards, the Lunda entity had forged social, economic, political and cultural ties across the South Central African plateau.⁹⁵³ These ties had not been territorially bounded, but were rather embodied through connections between people.⁹⁵⁴ Social connectivity, in turn, spurred mobility through the exchange of marriage partners and the establishment of long-distance trade links. Although certain rivers might be referred to as the boundaries of the power base of Chief Kanongesha, his influence was not confined to a clearly delineated area.⁹⁵⁵ Instead, power was expressed by the following which one could effectively muster.⁹⁵⁶ Largely unhindered by prohibitive boundaries, the population connected the area through mobility. The pre-colonial period was thus marked by fluidity and movement, rather than by isolated or bounded units.⁹⁵⁷ The colonial state, however, came equipped with different concepts of territorial rule and attempted to fix the boundaries of areas over which it sought to exert hegemony and control.⁹⁵⁸ Not only were individuals tied to bounded and static villages through census and tax registrars, but mobility was further curtailed by the demarcation of international boundaries which directed movement away from regional historical routes towards new administrative centres.⁹⁵⁹

Based on ideas of sedentarisation, attempts were made to replace practices of social connectivity and mobility with forms of rigid territorial rule.⁹⁶⁰ In 1905, by arbitration of the King of

⁹⁴⁸ Such policy ambiguity has been described by Bakewell, 'Keeping them in their place'.

⁹⁴⁹ A similar argument has been made by: Harries, *Work, culture, and identity*.

⁹⁵⁰ See: Bakewell, 'Refugees repatriating'; Von Oppen, *Terms of trade*; Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndemba*.

⁹⁵¹ For parallel cases see: Nugent and Asiwaju, *African boundaries*.

⁹⁵² 'The Barotse boundary award', *The geographical journal* 26:2 (1905), 201-4.

⁹⁵³ Schechter, 'History and historiography'; Hoover, 'The seduction of Ruwej'.

⁹⁵⁴ For an explanation of this principle, see R.D. Sack, *Human territoriality: Its theory and history* (Cambridge etc., 1986).

⁹⁵⁵ (NAZ) KSE4/1, District Notebooks, 26, 53-55: The Lunga River is regarded as the rough boundary between the areas of Chief Kanongesha and Chief Sailunga. However, (NAZ) NWP1/12/23, R.C. Denning Comments on Vaux Report, 31 May 1954: 'There is no proper geographical basis for divisions between Chieftainships in native custom (...) The lack of geographical boundaries between Chiefs in the traditional organisation presents administrative difficulties, and this has been recognised and boundaries have been discussed and agreed to in recent years.'

⁹⁵⁶ Rather than control over land, 'wealth in people' was sought. See: Miller, *Way of death*; Guyer, 'Wealth in people'. This point is equally made by Bakewell, 'Refugees repatriating', 94.

⁹⁵⁷ Kopytoff, 'The internal African frontier'.

⁹⁵⁸ T. Raeymakers, 'The silent encroachment of the frontier: A politics of transborder trade in the Semliki Valley (Congo-Uganda)', *Political geography* 28 (2009), 55-65; De Boeck, 'Borderland breccia'; Allina-Pisano, 'Borderlands, boundaries, and the contours of colonial rule'.

⁹⁵⁹ G. Kay, 'Social aspects of village regrouping in Zambia' (University of Hull, 1967).

⁹⁶⁰ Bakewell, 'Keeping them in their place', 1350.

Italy, cartography delineated colonial presence in Mwinilunga, even before physical rule was initiated on the ground in 1907.⁹⁶¹ As the twentieth century progressed international boundaries, with increasing precision and force, came to separate Mwinilunga District, under British rule in Northern Rhodesia, from neighbouring areas of Portuguese West Africa (Angola) and Belgian Congo (Congo).⁹⁶² To satisfy static territorial concepts and for purposes of administrative ease, boundary markers such as 'the ideal Congo-Zambezi watershed' or 'the 24th meridian east' were decided on and etched into the landscape.⁹⁶³ These artificial markers did not correspond with existing allegiances or patterns of mobility. When international boundaries were just being demarcated their unsound nature was already recognised. Administrators stated that 'from a purely native point of view this decision was extremely unwise', but 'boundaries tho' are usually fixed up by our "arm-chair" politicians at home.'⁹⁶⁴ Although at times ineffectually, the colonial administration sought to fix and control borders and movement.⁹⁶⁵ In order to settle population groups and exert control, colonial officials 'strongly recommended that villages within 6 miles of the Border be moved outside a 10 mile area, or the practice of this-side-today-and-over-tomorrow will continue.'⁹⁶⁶ In connection to this, village heads 'were nearly all told by the District Commissioner that they were to move before next harvesting either nearer the station or else right out of the Territory.'⁹⁶⁷ Borders came to separate kindred population groups, formerly connected by the Lunda entity, affecting ties of tribute, trade, friendship, marriage and political alliance.⁹⁶⁸ Efforts to establish territorial control through boundary demarcation thus influenced existing patterns of social connectivity and mobility.

In spite of the demarcation and policing of boundaries on the ground, cross-border mobility was not checked and neither were social ties cut up. People in Mwinilunga even at present continue to say that: 'We and the people in Angola and Congo, we are the same people!'⁹⁶⁹ Initially, boundaries were more like 'imaginary lines' as people failed to physically distinguish them.⁹⁷⁰ Borders appeared arbitrary and until the 1920s it remained unclear whether certain villages were located in Northern Rhodesian, Angolan or Congolese territory.⁹⁷¹ Under the auspices of various boundary commissions borders continued to be specified and altered until the 1930s.⁹⁷² Nevertheless, borders soon gained 'real material significance', even if only because population groups on either side of the border could exploit differences of policy and practice in the respective territories.⁹⁷³ This resulted in population movements back and forth across colonial borders, aiming to settle under the administration whose demands were least onerous or whose rule appeared most favourable.⁹⁷⁴ Borders never became

⁹⁶¹ (NAZ) KSE4/1, Mwinilunga District Notebooks.

⁹⁶² See: G. Abraham, "'Lines upon maps": Africa and the sanctity of African boundaries', *African journal of international and comparative law* 15:1 (2007), 61-84; J.W. Donaldson, 'Pillars and perspective: Demarcation of the Belgian Congo-Northern Rhodesia boundary', *Journal of historical geography* 34 (2008), 471-93; J-L. Vellut, 'Angola-Congo. L'invention de la frontière du Lunda (1889-1893)', *Africana studia* 9 (2006), 159-84.

⁹⁶³ Abraham, 'Lines upon maps'; Donaldson, 'Pillars and perspective'.

⁹⁶⁴ (NAZ) KSE4/1, Mwinilunga District Notebooks, F.V. Bruce Miller entry.

⁹⁶⁵ Nugent and Asiwaju, *African boundaries*.

⁹⁶⁶ (NAZ) KSE6/1/2, J.M.C. Pound, Lunda Sub-District Annual Report, 1912-13.

⁹⁶⁷ (NAZ) KSE6/2/1, T.M. Lawman, Lunda Sub-District Quarterly Report, 14 October 1912.

⁹⁶⁸ Bakewell, 'Repatriating refugees'; 'The Barotse boundary award', 202: 'geographers must certainly regret that the old unfortunate system of bounding political spheres by arbitrary lines, without any reference to physical, political, or ethnological facts, has in this case received a new lease of life.'

⁹⁶⁹ Interview with John J. Chiyuka, Kanongesha, 10 September 2008.

⁹⁷⁰ Abrahams, 'Lines upon maps'.

⁹⁷¹ (NAZ) KSE6/5/1, Balunda District Correspondence, C.S. Bellis to W. Hazell, 8 August 1910.

⁹⁷² The various Boundary Commissions active in the area were as follows: The Anglo-Portuguese Boundary Commission (APBC) in 1915 and 1925, the Anglo-Belgian Boundary Commission (ABBC) in 1911-14 and 1926-33.

⁹⁷³ Allina-Pisano, 'Borderlands, boundaries, and the contours of colonial rule', 67.

⁹⁷⁴ Whereas the occasionally violent nature of Portuguese rule and forced labour in Angola, or the Belgian policies of forced cultivation of crops such as groundnuts and cotton in Congo induced many to settle in Northern

absolute barriers, but remained 'social, political and discursive constructs', gaining significance in the way they are crossed.⁹⁷⁵ Apart from being merely restrictive, 'the border is also a place that gives room to considerable creativity and innovation.'⁹⁷⁶ Cross-border mobility built upon historical ties established by the Lunda entity, recreating social connectivity in new ways under changing economic and political circumstances.⁹⁷⁷ Throughout the twentieth century movement continued unabatedly, questioning the hegemony of the state:

Considerable numbers of natives are crossing from Angola and Congo [into Mwinilunga District] and are making unauthorised settlements, some in inaccessible places (...) In this area there is a phenomenal amount of coming and going between the villages: people are constantly moving their abodes and taking their children with them over the border when they go to work.⁹⁷⁸

Individuals 'built upon long-established historical patterns of independent migration', shaping the border from below.⁹⁷⁹ Through mobility the population could subvert colonial power, challenge official discourse and create alternative opportunities through socio-cultural and historical ties.⁹⁸⁰

Even as border posts were erected, customs regulations were enforced and passes or National Registration Cards were insisted on, borders remained permeable. Rather than being formal barriers, borders were regarded as conduits or corridors of opportunity.⁹⁸¹ Indeed, 'interstices are full of power, and (...) border residents are fully aware how they can use their interstitial power – their borderland advantage – to benefit themselves.'⁹⁸² In 1963 it could still be stated that 'the territorial boundary in this district is merely a line on a map as far as Africans are concerned; they come and go across borders the whole time.'⁹⁸³ What were the practical implications of this statement? What motivated people to move from one territory to the other and to what extent was border control ever effectively enforced? By looking at the practice of cross-border trade it can be explained why the border failed to gain acceptance as a symbol of territorial hegemony. The inhabitants of Mwinilunga built on historical connections and patterns of mobility, yet equally responded to new circumstances by crossing borders.

Cross-border trade: Calico, cigarettes and cassava

Regional and long-distance trade, as well as other economic contacts, have been of paramount importance throughout the pre-colonial period.⁹⁸⁴ Links of tribute connected Mwinilunga to the wider Lunda polity, circulating goods such as ivory, cloth, slaves and salt through the region.⁹⁸⁵ Building upon these ties of tribute, long-distance trade contacts with the Angolan coast gained significance in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Portuguese traders and African middlemen, such as the Ovimbundu, carried guns, cloth and liquor, which they exchanged locally for cassava, game meat, but

Rhodesia, the introduction of taxation by the British propelled others to leave. (NAZ) KDD4/1/1, Mwinilunga Sub-District Indaba Chiefs, 5 September 1925. See also: M.C. Musambachime, 'Escape from tyranny: Flights across the Rhodesia-Congo boundary', *Transafrican journal of history* 18 (1989), 147-59.

⁹⁷⁵ D. Newman and A. Paasi, 'Fences and neighbours in the postmodern world: Boundary narratives in political geography', *Progress in human geography* 22:2 (1998), 187; De Boeck, 'Borderland Breccia'.

⁹⁷⁶ Raeymakers, 'The silent encroachment', 63.

⁹⁷⁷ Bakewell, 'Refugees repatriating'; Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*.

⁹⁷⁸ (NAZ) SEC2/953, N.S. Price, Mwinilunga District Tour Report, 7 November 1938.

⁹⁷⁹ Andersson, 'Informal moves', 382; M. Doevenspeck, 'Constructing the border from below: Narratives from the Congolese-Rwandan state boundary', *Political geography* 30 (2011), 129-42.

⁹⁸⁰ J.A. Pritchett, *Friends for life, friends for death: Cohorts and consciousness among the Lunda-Ndembu* (Charlottesville etc., 2007), especially Chapter Six.

⁹⁸¹ Nugent and Asiwaju, *African boundaries*.

⁹⁸² D.K. Flynn, "'We are the border': Identity, exchange, and the state along the Benin-Nigeria border', *American ethnologist* 24:2 (1997), 312.

⁹⁸³ (NAZ) LGH5/4/2 Loc.3615, Mwinilunga District Security Scheme, 1963.

⁹⁸⁴ Vansina, *Paths in the rainforests*; Miller, *Way of death*; Von Oppen, *Terms of trade*.

⁹⁸⁵ Schecter, 'History and historiography'; E. Bustin, *Lunda under Belgian rule: The politics of ethnicity* (Cambridge etc., 1975).

also ivory, rubber and slaves.⁹⁸⁶ The colonial administration attempted to check these contacts through the demarcation of international boundaries and restrictive legislation, redirecting trade towards new administrative centres within the territory. Nevertheless, regional trade continued to clandestinely traverse borders.⁹⁸⁷ Historical trade routes influenced colonial and post-colonial forms of cross-border contact, by adapting to changing circumstances.⁹⁸⁸ How can the ongoing attractions of cross-border trade be explained? How did the culture of mobility in the area shape responses to various markets? These questions address identity and politics, as well as economic issues.

Borderland areas, such as Mwinilunga, are even at present regarded as marginal, fluid and therefore threatening to the hegemony of the state.⁹⁸⁹ Until far into the colonial period border areas remained loosely administered and difficult to control.⁹⁹⁰ During the opening decades of the twentieth century, for example, villages located directly along the border formed a refuge for various 'undesirables', smuggling ivory, rubber, guns and slaves.⁹⁹¹ Although 'control over people's movements (...) was crucial to and even constitutive of the colonial state in southern Africa',⁹⁹² individuals could subvert state power through mobility and cross-border trade. Trade could have economic motivations as 'differences in national economic policies, regional resources, and monetary currencies make borders lucrative zones of exchange and trade, often illicit and clandestine.'⁹⁹³ Nevertheless, the rationale for trade went beyond economics, encompassing struggles over power and identity.⁹⁹⁴ The example of the rubber trade during the first half of the twentieth century illustrates ways in which borders could be defied and administrative control could be questioned, pointing towards parallels and continuities between pre-colonial and colonial patterns of trade. Cross-border trade and mobility enabled economic entrepreneurship as well as a degree of political autonomy.

Trading rubber: Crossing borders, making profit and asserting autonomy

The rubber trade, to a large extent, built upon the precedent of the pre-colonial long-distance trade, making use of established inter-personal networks and following the same routes into Angola.⁹⁹⁵ Ancient trade routes and networks were relied on yet transformed to bypass official controls and maximise profit.⁹⁹⁶ Personal networks facilitated the lucrative rubber trade:

The prices offered for rubber in Angolaland are very high indeed, and in the face of the law parties are constantly taking rubber where they can (...) The collection of rubber is a particularly easy way of attaining wealth, and natives return with immense loads of calico, powder and guns.⁹⁹⁷

Economic motives were important as trade goods obtained from the Portuguese were cheaper and more readily available than those at stores within Mwinilunga. Due to price differentials and the availability of markets, crossing the border to Angola remained a constant attraction.⁹⁹⁸ In spite of boundary demarcations and official measures of control, such as tariffs and customs, 'devious routes

⁹⁸⁶ Miller, *Way of death*; Von Oppen, *Terms of trade*; D.M. Gordon, 'The abolition of the slave trade and the transformation of the South Central African interior', *William and Mary quarterly* 66:4 (2009), 915-38.

⁹⁸⁷ Bakewell, 'Refugees repatriating'; Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*.

⁹⁸⁸ MacGaffey, *The real economy*, 21.

⁹⁸⁹ De Boeck, 'Borderland breccia'; Doevenspeck, 'Constructing the border', 140; See also: J.C. Scott, *The art of not being governed: An anarchist history of upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven and London, 2009).

⁹⁹⁰ See examples in: F. Macpherson, *Anatomy of a conquest: The British occupation of Zambia, 1884-1924* (Essex, 1981).

⁹⁹¹ See: Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*.

⁹⁹² Allina-Pisano, 'Borderlands, boundaries, and contours', 61; Bakewell, 'Keeping them in their place', 1343-4.

⁹⁹³ Flynn, 'We are the border', 313.

⁹⁹⁴ MacGaffey, *The real economy*, 2.

⁹⁹⁵ Von Oppen, *Terms of trade*.

⁹⁹⁶ MacGaffey, *The real economy*, 21; Roitman, 'The politics of informal markets', 693.

⁹⁹⁷ (NAZ) KSE6/1/2, J.M.C. Pound, Lunda Sub-District Annual Report, 1912-13.

⁹⁹⁸ For a much more recent example, see: De Boeck, 'Borderland breccia'.

for crossing frontiers came into being and facilitated the development of unrecorded transborder trade.⁹⁹⁹ Due to their marginality, border areas proved difficult to control:

[People] seem to think how by going to the lower Luizabo [Angola] they are entering no man's land, where they will be left alone by the whiteman (...) Their position between the two borders as well as the rubber trade with all the wealth it begins is the cause of the difficulties they make and their independent ways (...) So long as these border people are so rich in powder and guns, and calico can be obtained so easily for rubber the Wandembo villages within close reach of the border will remain independent in their actions.¹⁰⁰⁰

Cross-border trade could be a means of asserting political autonomy, or even expressing resistance to the state.¹⁰⁰¹ The rubber trade, involving unregulated cross-border movements and providing access to guns and gunpowder, was thus cause for great administrative concern. Colonial officials made attempts to limit cross-border contacts, but trade could not simply be checked:

The areas where most of the indigenous rubber grows are principally situated on the Congo and Portuguese borders, where, on account of the uncertainty of the border line, the country was the last to be occupied, and where the natives are least amenable to control. On the British side of the border they are still rather wild and intractable and the presence of traders not all of whom are scrupulous, tends to keep them so. The fact that such traders used to buy in the Congo and Portuguese West Africa and to smuggle the rubber into British Territory (and encouraged the natives to do the same) tended to create friction and to keep the border in unrest.¹⁰⁰²

Rather than being formal barriers or beacons of government hegemony, borders continued to be corridors of opportunity, enabling trade, profit and autonomy.¹⁰⁰³ Portuguese traders offered high prices for rubber and supplied ample trade goods in return. This enticed numerous individuals to go rubber collecting in Congo, carry the rubber to Angola for sale and return to Mwinilunga 'staggering under the weight' of trade goods.¹⁰⁰⁴ Trade was not only economically profitable but could be a social and political strategy as well, to evade administrative control and establish, transform or strengthen cross-border networks of kinship, ethnicity and trust.¹⁰⁰⁵ Borders provided the Lunda with distinct opportunities, as 'in them [borders] they see ramparts beyond which we [government officials] may not at present operate, and behind which they are safe and secure.'¹⁰⁰⁶ The rubber trade built on historical precedents of trade, was underpinned by a strong economic rationale and responded to the new political setting of colonial rule, by attempting to evade restrictive policies and assert autonomy. In spite of its attractions, the rubber trade gradually died out towards the end of the 1920s. This was due to a combination of factors, including the disruption of the caravan trade, changes in international terms of trade, the establishment of colonial rule, as well as boundary demarcations.¹⁰⁰⁷ Nevertheless, the rubber trade was only one example of the varied and complex cross-border contacts throughout the twentieth century. Old patterns of long-distance trade were replaced by other forms of triangular trade relations, connecting Mwinilunga, Congo and Angola.

Circuits of trade: Legality, entrepreneurship and the state

Cross-border trade is the product 'of historical networks of trade and accumulation which stagnate, thrive, and mutate as new resources are accessed, and as national and global economic factors change.'¹⁰⁰⁸ Indeed, through constant mutation and reconfiguration trade with Angola and Congo

⁹⁹⁹ MacGaffey, *The real economy*, 21.

¹⁰⁰⁰ (NAZ) KSE6/2/1. J.M.C. Pound, Lunda Sub-District Quarterly Report, 14 April 1913.

¹⁰⁰¹ MacGaffey, *The real economy*, 10.

¹⁰⁰² (NAZ) A3/28/2 Loc.3996, L.A. Wallace Report, 4 September 1909.

¹⁰⁰³ Flynn, 'We are the border'.

¹⁰⁰⁴ (NAZ) KSE6/2/1, J.M.C. Pound, Lunda Sub-District Quarterly Report, 14 April 1913.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Roitman, 'The politics of informal markets', 675.

¹⁰⁰⁶ (NAZ) KSE6/5/1, G.A. McGregor, Balunda District Monthly Report, March 1909.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Von Oppen, *Terms of trade*; Bakewell, 'Refugees repatriating'.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Roitman, 'The politics of informal markets', 693.

remained important, if not essential, to Mwinilunga District throughout the colonial and post-colonial period.¹⁰⁰⁹ The terms of trade fluctuated continuously, depending on prevailing political and socio-economic dynamics.¹⁰¹⁰ It is exactly this constant fluctuation which could be exploited to the benefit of traders and enterprising agents. Traders crossed and creatively circumvented borders in order to take advantage of higher prices, lower tax rates or better access to trade goods and resources in other areas. Markets in Angola and Congo competed with, but also stood in relation to, national markets and 'the resulting plurality of markets entails the constituents of a multitude of power bases who are constantly defending and appropriating channels of accumulation.'¹⁰¹¹ The extent and variety of trade in the 1950s was notable:

The markets of the Congo are by far the closest and most profitable for the pedicle area [north-western part of Mwinilunga District], and I [D.C.] am quite prepared to see livestock sold over the border, bringing good prices (...) Angolans (Europeans and Africans alike) come across generally with loads of fish and return with general provisions and cloth (+gunpowder and ammunitions trade). Vehicles from the Congo bring cigarettes (Belga) and other small goods (penknives and the like), and return with either meat or poultry, which fetch a good price on the Congo line of rail only 50 miles away.¹⁰¹²

The term 'straddling' might capture the multiplicity of cross-border trade, as it 'involves dispersing risk by balancing alternative types of resources', it is a strategy for 'survival and the struggle for opportunities for accumulation'.¹⁰¹³ The significance of cross-border trade has to be seen in relation to other forms of trade, but also livelihood strategies such as agriculture, hunting and waged employment.

Trade could be driven to cross borders due to economic opportunities, state policies and more generally by aspirations of material gain or the desire to secure livelihoods.¹⁰¹⁴ In case marketing opportunities for certain crops or commodities proved more favourable in Angola, producers in Mwinilunga would take advantage of this discrepancy. The beeswax trade, described in the previous chapter, exemplifies this.¹⁰¹⁵ Throughout the post-colonial period trade was upheld, even during the civil war in Angola when consumer goods and food supplies were transported from Mwinilunga across the border, realising high profits in spite of the risks involved.¹⁰¹⁶ In a similar manner, traders from Mwinilunga ingeniously exploited price differentials and the ready availability of consumer goods in Congo. It was noted that hawkers 'do a flourishing trade, more especially in the sale of second-hand clothing of excellent quality, which is imported from the Congo in very substantial quantities and retailed at moderate prices.'¹⁰¹⁷ From the 1930s onwards livestock made up a large proportion of cross-border trade. Chickens, goats, sheep and to a lesser extent cattle, were traded from Mwinilunga to the Congolese urban centres, where a fowl could catch up to 25/- a piece in 1960.¹⁰¹⁸ The local drop in animal figures was blamed directly on 'extravagant selling in the mining areas of the Independent Katanga Province (...) The traffic of fowls to the Congo mining townships had increased and no doubt the developing food shortages will sharpen an already keen market.'¹⁰¹⁹ Being flexible and multifaceted, cross-border trade interacted with local livelihoods in numerous ways. Mobility and cross-border trade could be resources, opportunities for material gain and means to exploit disparities

¹⁰⁰⁹ Pritchett, *Friends for life*; Bakewell, 'Refugees repatriating'; De Boeck, 'Borderland breccia'.

¹⁰¹⁰ Von Oppen, *Terms of trade*.

¹⁰¹¹ Roitman, 'The politics of informal markets', 694.

¹⁰¹² (NAZ) SEC2/966, M.A. Hinds, Mwinilunga District Tour Report, 22 September 1958.

¹⁰¹³ Roitman, 'The politics of informal markets', 678, 685.

¹⁰¹⁴ MacGaffey, *The real economy*, 16.

¹⁰¹⁵ See Chapter 2.

¹⁰¹⁶ Bakewell, 'Refugees repatriating'; A. Hansen, 'Once the running stops: The social and economic incorporation of Angolan refugees into Zambian border villages' (PhD thesis, Cornell University, 1977); Pritchett, *Friends for life*.

¹⁰¹⁷ (NAZ) SEC2/155, Western Province Annual Report, 1948.

¹⁰¹⁸ (NAZ) MAG2/18/3, North Western Province, Stocktaking Programme of Work, 1960-1.

¹⁰¹⁹ (NAZ) NWP1/2/102 Loc.4919, E.L. Button, North Western Province Annual Report, 1960.

in national policies.¹⁰²⁰ Methods of trade varied and traversed the boundaries between legal and illegal, regulated and unregulated, European and African, Mwinilunga, Angola and Congo.

Cross-border trade has been designated as illegal, to varying extents, because its activities so frequently evade taxation, tariffs and customs, depriving the state of revenue.¹⁰²¹ In so far as it sought to circumvent border patrols and cumbersome government regulations, trade was problematic from an administrative point of view. Measures of control, attempting to regulate trade, never proved completely effective.¹⁰²² Clandestine trade and smuggling across the border, only rarely intercepted by customs control, flourished and found a lucrative, high-risk, niche, despite restrictive legislation.¹⁰²³ The extent of transactions and their level of organisation could be considerable, but small-scale tactics were equally common:

There is a large amount of cloth smuggling going on between Belgian Congo and this district. One man was found to have as much as 19 blankets, 174 yards of calico and several coats, trousers, singlets, pullovers, shawls – He was not a hawker but had received practically the whole of two years pay in cloth. The customs amounted to £2.¹⁰²⁴

The oppositions between legal and illegal, formal and informal, national and cross-border trade, should not be viewed as absolute. It is only in relation to formal channels of trade that cross-border trade gained significance.¹⁰²⁵ 'Informal spheres are *defined* by the state', whilst binary categories of 'formal' and 'informal' are in fact symbiotic.¹⁰²⁶ Formal and informal categories were intertwined, as trade profits made illicitly through livestock trade with Congo, could be deployed to pay government taxes:

It was well known that many people in the District depended on selling chickens, sheep and goats in the Congo for money with which to pay tax and buy clothes. In view of this the council had last year imposed a levy of 2/6 a head on a person trading with stock across the border, but now many innocent people had been arrested.¹⁰²⁷

Levies and fines imposed to punish traders failed to effect the desired outcome, leaving culprits unaffected whilst punishing travellers. Distinctions between 'legal' and 'illegal' trade proved difficult to make and impossible to enforce, not only for traders and the local population, but even for government officials. Not only could policies be highly ambiguous, but various circuits of trade were thoroughly intertwined.

Cross-border trade was oftentimes tolerated, if not always endorsed. Officials would turn a blind eye to the trade in more than one instance.¹⁰²⁸ As the example of trade with and through Congo in the 1950s evidences, cross-border trade could assume regulated forms, even being sanctioned by the government. The profitability of Congolese markets was recognised by the administration, although reservations applied: 'The nearest market for agricultural produce is the Belgian Congo, which is a foreign country and cannot therefore be regarded as an assured market as import controls can, and probably would apply.'¹⁰²⁹ Even low-value high-weight crops such as cassava could find a lucrative market in Congo, especially during the late 1940s and early 1950s. Because the market for cassava within Mwinilunga District remained limited, Congolese markets were so eagerly supplied that officials even lamented that 'cassava was fetching such a high price in the Congo markets that growers pulled out mature and immature plants alike and carried them off to the Congo to make the easy

¹⁰²⁰ See: Andersson, 'Informal moves'.

¹⁰²¹ MacGaffey, *The real economy*, 12, 19, 31.

¹⁰²² See: Raeymakers, 'The silent encroachment'; Flynn, 'We are the border'.

¹⁰²³ De Boeck, 'Domesticating diamonds and dollars'; Bakewell, 'Refugees repatriating'.

¹⁰²⁴ (NAZ) SEC2/953, N.S. Price, Mwinilunga District tour report, 21 May 1939.

¹⁰²⁵ MacGaffey, *The real economy*, 2.

¹⁰²⁶ Roitman, 'The politics of informal markets', 679, 683.

¹⁰²⁷ (NAZ) LGH5/1/3 Loc.3604, Lunda-Ndembo Native Authority Council, 5 November 1960.

¹⁰²⁸ For illustrative examples, see: J. Pottier, *Migrants no more: Settlement and survival in Mambwe villages, Zambia* (Manchester, 1988).

¹⁰²⁹ (NAZ) SEC5/214, Murray, Mwinilunga Crown Land Block, 23 December 1958.

money that was going there.¹⁰³⁰ Furthermore, transport through the Congolese railway system gained official approval, proving attractive to producers, traders and the government alike. When demand for foodstuffs on the Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt peaked, especially during the 1947-51 period, cassava and maize were transported from Mwinilunga via Mutshatsha in Congo by rail back into Northern Rhodesia to Ndola.¹⁰³¹ Congolese traders would buy up surpluses left in Mwinilunga:

Approximately 1,000 bags of surplus cassava were available, and Mr. Raftopoulos a trader in Belgian Congo, was permitted by the Director of Civil Supplies to buy this surplus (for export to the Congo) in the Mwinilunga District. The cassava was bought for cash at 9/10th of a penny.¹⁰³²

This trade linked African and European traders from Mwinilunga and Congo together in an intricate network. The District Commissioner Mwinilunga noted how he:

met three prosperous Africans whose main source of income accrues from buying meal and selling it to a Greek trader at Mutshatsha in the Congo at a landed price of 3 ½ d per lb. Transport of the meal is carried out by W.F. Fisher and Company Limited and paid for by the African traders.¹⁰³³

Although it proved possible to export foodstuffs from Mwinilunga to Congo in the 1940s and 1950s, trade could not be sustained at such high levels once demand in urban centres slumped.¹⁰³⁴ Transport costs, customs regulations and currency problems all militated against trade. In the early 1960s political upheaval in the Congolese province of Katanga further disrupted trade relations. In spite of being officially sanctioned during the 1940s and 1950s, cross-border trade reverted to its illicit status afterwards.¹⁰³⁵ Nevertheless, this example illustrates that cross-border trade was not necessarily opposed to government interests, but could in some cases be propelled by official directives.

Cross-border trade was subject to numerous rules and regulations, although these did not always have the desired outcome. The different currencies prevailing in Angola, Congo and Zambia, for instance, could cause difficulties. At the time of Congolese independence and the secession of Katanga 'the devaluation of the Katanga franc had rendered trade with Katanga hazardous.'¹⁰³⁶ Political upheaval threatened formal and established circuits of trade, which connected Mwinilunga to Congo: 'Hitherto, the district had relied on the traditional trade with Katanga for its wealth. This was now dead. The Congo franc was now worthless and the district must look to other sources of wealth.'¹⁰³⁷ Furthermore it was stated that:

Tax collection had been retarded as a result of the serious decline of trading with the Congo which used to be the main occupation and source of income for the people (...) Many locals who normally trade and shop in the Congo have ceased to do so and, in doing so, have found themselves burdened with considerable amounts of francs which can now no longer be exchanged at the stores in Mwinilunga nor with passing traders heading for the Congo markets.

Nevertheless, trade was flexible and the severity of the Congolese crisis even proved beneficial in some respects. Deflation of the franc could cause temporary advantages:

Export trade across the Border with the people in the Congo has been reduced, but due to deflation of the Congo currency quite a lot of purchases have been made by people on our side as even after customs duty has been paid material is generally much cheaper.¹⁰³⁸

This evidences the interrelated nature of regulated and unregulated trade, legislation, currency, taxation, entrepreneurship and personal initiative. Legitimate and illegitimate trade could not be separated, as they stood in relationship to one another.

¹⁰³⁰ (NAZ) NWP1/2/78 Loc.4913, F.R.G. Phillips, Western Province Annual Report, 1957.

¹⁰³¹ See: Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembo*.

¹⁰³² (NAZ) SEC2/958, K. Duff-White, Mwinilunga District Tour Report, 19 June 1951.

¹⁰³³ (NAZ) SEC2/963, R.S. Thompson, Mwinilunga District Tour Report, 26 April 1955.

¹⁰³⁴ See: K.P. Vickery, 'Saving settlers: Maize control in Northern Rhodesia', *Journal of Southern African studies* 11:2 (1984/85), 212-34; A. Sardan, *Africa, another side of the coin: Northern Rhodesia's final years and Zambia's nationhood* (London, 2003).

¹⁰³⁵ Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembo*.

¹⁰³⁶ (NAZ) MCD1/3/29, North Western Province, Provincial Team Meeting, February 1964.

¹⁰³⁷ (NAZ) LGH5/1/3 Loc.3604, Lunda-Ndembo Native Authority Council, 17 September 1963.

¹⁰³⁸ (NAZ) NWP1/2/105 Loc.4920, H.T. Bayldon, Mwinilunga District Annual Report, 1963.

In spite of official restrictions and political strife, trade with Congo and Angola continued after independence. Zambian relationships with neighbouring countries were profoundly influenced by political upheaval, civil disruption and war in both Congo and Angola.¹⁰³⁹ The position of Zambia as a 'frontline state' raised issues of security and border control.¹⁰⁴⁰ The prolonged Angolan civil war influenced economic relationships with Mwinilunga District. Regular trade was disrupted, the Benguela railway was shut in 1975, but nevertheless game meat, foodstuffs and guns continued to be exchanged clandestinely across the border, and some traders even managed to prosper due to such transactions.¹⁰⁴¹ Trade with Congo was particularly significant during the pineapple boom in Mwinilunga District, when large amounts of pineapples were sold in Congolese towns.¹⁰⁴² Even at present trade continues, as dried fish and game meat are illicitly imported from Angola to Mwinilunga.¹⁰⁴³ Trade across the border remained attractive, complementing or serving as an alternative to trade networks within Mwinilunga and Zambia.¹⁰⁴⁴ The enduring nature of cross-border trade raises questions as to why the relationships between Mwinilunga, Angola and Congo retained pertinence even in the context of socio-economic and political change.

Because the state defines legitimate economic activity, 'illegitimate' cross-border trade has predominantly been understood as an act of opposition to the state, an attempt to avoid its authority and control.¹⁰⁴⁵ Previous examples, however, have shown that legitimate and illegitimate trade cannot be clearly distinguished, as there are many points of intersection. Cross-border trade does not necessarily challenge the state, but rather finds its significance in relation to the state.¹⁰⁴⁶ Crossing the border might be 'the people's spontaneous and creative response to the state's incapacity to satisfy the basic needs of the impoverished masses.'¹⁰⁴⁷ Indeed, cross-border trade might generate higher returns than 'formal' channels of trade could, and this might explain its dynamics. Nevertheless, cross-border trade cannot simply 'disengage' from the state: 'one can hardly disengage from something without engaging in something else – this involves the cultivation of relationships to access resources, and hence confrontation with bases of power and authority which control these assets.'¹⁰⁴⁸ In order to pose an alternative to formal or national trajectories of trade, cross-border trade had to build upon social relationships, bonds of kinship, ethnicity and trust, which could have historical roots but were recreated and reinvigorated to respond to new circumstances.

Ties of kinship and Lunda ethnicity, as well as historical commercial linkages and trade routes, served to enable, encourage and uphold cross-border trade.¹⁰⁴⁹ The interrelationships between Mwinilunga, Angola and Congo proved multiple, complex and enduring:

¹⁰³⁹ In the case of Congo events following Congolese independence and the secession of Katanga in 1960-61, after the installation of Mobutu in 1965-67 and again in 1977-78 after Katangese gendarme attacks influenced security and international trade relationships and caused population movements into Mwinilunga District. In the case of Angola there was a prolonged civil war, starting with the struggle for national liberation and continuing with UNITA-MPLA strife throughout the 1960s-1990s. Population flows from Angola into Mwinilunga District increased after 1966 and again in 1976, peaking during the 1980s.

¹⁰⁴⁰ See: M. Larmer, *Rethinking African politics: A history of opposition in Zambia* (Farnham and Burlington, 2011); S. Onslow (ed.), *Cold war in Southern Africa: White power, black liberation* (London etc., 2009).

¹⁰⁴¹ For overviews of the Angolan civil war see: D. Birmingham, *Frontline nationalism in Angola and Mozambique* (London etc., 1992); W. Minter, *Apartheid's contras: An inquiry into the roots of war in Angola and Mozambique* (Johannesburg etc., 1994).

¹⁰⁴² See Chapter 2.

¹⁰⁴³ Bakewell, 'Refugees repatriating'; Pritchett, *Friends for life*.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Pritchett, *Friends for life*, Chapters Six and Eight.

¹⁰⁴⁵ MacGaffey, *The real economy*, 10; Raeymakers, 'The silent encroachment', 55.

¹⁰⁴⁶ See: Roitman, 'The politics of informal markets'; MacGaffey, *The real economy*.

¹⁰⁴⁷ MacGaffey, *The real economy*, 12.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Roitman, 'The politics of informal markets', 691.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Bustin, *Lunda under Belgian rule*.

The contact maintained by both branches of the Lunda here (Ndembo and Lunda) with their fellow tribesmen in Portuguese and Belgian Territory continues as strong as ever (...) Expanding industries in the Congo attract an increasing number of people from this District, but there is still an appreciable flow of population in the opposite direction (...) The natural areas for trade of this District are Angola and the Congo. Trade with the Congo is two way, consumer goods being brought here from Mutshatsha and other places on the railway line, and native produce being taken there from this district. There appears to be practically no export from here to Angola (...) There is however a good deal of hawking of fish and trinkets from Angola over here.¹⁰⁵⁰

Ties of kinship, ethnicity and historical contact could function as social assets, in order to access wealth and power.¹⁰⁵¹ Due to social connectivity to Angola and Congo, cross-border trade could function as an alternative to official national channels of trade:

The common cultural background and loyalties of those from the same ethnic group, and the mutual obligations and emotional bonds of family and kinship, all operate to promote the trust, accountability and sense of moral responsibility that is lacking in the official economy and that contributes to its irrationality and unpredictability.¹⁰⁵²

Even within the context of (post-)colonial rule historical ties of trade and kinship could be functional. In the setting of the Zambian nation-state, Mwinilunga District remained remote or marginal vis-à-vis the Copperbelt, line-of-rail and Lusaka.¹⁰⁵³ The area is far removed from major markets and poorly connected by transport networks, and therefore alternative avenues of cross-border trade became attractive. The historical roots of mobility, connecting the area to Angola and Congo, enabled inhabitants of Mwinilunga District to grasp opportunities for trade within a constantly changing setting. In the process, ties of identity and affiliation were recreated and given new meaning: 'capitalist penetration has led to new sources of wealth and power which are accessed through established channels (i.e. kin- or community-based relationships) and, in turn, utilised in ways which restructure (but not eliminate) old institutions and social relations.'¹⁰⁵⁴ Similarly to what MacGaffey has contended for the 'second economy' of Zaire (Congo), for Mwinilunga District it might be argued that due to national marginalisation, 'people are taking matters into their own hands and organizing an unofficial system; compensating for the inability of the state to supply the [necessary] infrastructure, services, and protection.'¹⁰⁵⁵ What did this 'unofficial system' consist of and how did it build upon a culture of mobility, recreating notions of identity, belonging and power?

Moving along the border: Migration, identity and the state

Due to its geographically remote location, Mwinilunga District appears marginal to the state.¹⁰⁵⁶ The area shares international boundaries with Angola and Congo, whilst being removed from the economic and political heartland of the Zambian nation by long transport hauls. The district does not enjoy favourable resource endowments, possessing neither minerals nor particularly fertile land, and consequently has never been central to government or capital interests.¹⁰⁵⁷ An early colonial official deplored Mwinilunga as 'the most elementary place in this elementary country.'¹⁰⁵⁸ Other officials did argue that the area held potential, for example having soils suitable for the cultivation of pineapples or being apt for prospective cattle ranching, but this potential remained largely unrealised.¹⁰⁵⁹ The

¹⁰⁵⁰ (NAZ) SEC2/155, R.N. Lines, Mwinilunga District Annual Report, 1948.

¹⁰⁵¹ MacGaffey, *The real economy*, 32-3; Roitman, 'The politics of informal markets', 689.

¹⁰⁵² MacGaffey, *The real economy*, 32.

¹⁰⁵³ See especially: Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Roitman, 'The politics of informal markets', 686.

¹⁰⁵⁵ MacGaffey, *The real economy*, 39.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Pritchett, *Friends for life*; Bakewell, 'Refugees repatriating'.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*; B.C. Kakoma, 'Colonial administration in Northern Rhodesia: A case study of administration in Mwinilunga District, 1900-1939' (MA thesis, University of Auckland, 1971).

¹⁰⁵⁸ (BOD) MSS Afr S 779, Theodore Williams letters, My dear mother, Mwinilunga, 21 May 1913.

¹⁰⁵⁹ This view is based on a wide reading of archival sources (NAZ).

North-Western Province as a whole has been labelled the 'Cinderella Province', holding vast but underutilised potential for development.¹⁰⁶⁰ The marginality of the area, however, did not have to be merely negative. The interstices created by loose state control and economic opportunity are full of power, which could and has been used to the benefit of the residents of the area.¹⁰⁶¹ In this sense, mobility could challenge and redefine the marginal position of Mwinilunga District.¹⁰⁶² Marginality could be 'both the constraining, oppressive quality of cultural exclusion and the creative potential of rearticulating, enlivening, and rearranging the very social categories that peripheralize a group's existence.'¹⁰⁶³ In the area of Mwinilunga mobility constituted a means to cope with marginality, renegotiate its terms and engage the state and markets on favourable terms.¹⁰⁶⁴ Through mobility the local was recreated and given new vitality.¹⁰⁶⁵ Mobility could be a resource, enabling access to a wide range of opportunities and allowing strategies towards self-realisation.¹⁰⁶⁶ Exactly because of the location of Mwinilunga on the border with Angola and Congo, mobility and trade could provide favourable and lucrative prospects, enabling the alleviation of national marginality by seeking and strengthening regional or international ties. Aspects of identity were deployed and redefined through mobility in order to access resources. Issues of identity, mobility and power interacted.

Over the course of the twentieth century regional allegiances, some dating to the foundation of the Lunda polity, have been reinvigorated, given new meaning and importance through mobility.¹⁰⁶⁷ Ethnic affiliation and notions of Lunda identity did not remain static.¹⁰⁶⁸ Rather, 'tradition and historic symbolic régimes are reinvented in a new setting. New opportunities are appropriated by a system which is itself transformed by the changing context.'¹⁰⁶⁹ Identity appeared to be situational, rather than absolute, fixed or well-defined.¹⁰⁷⁰ This is illustrated by the observations of a colonial officer, dealing with economic ties, political allegiance and population movement in the area of Mwinilunga:

The paramount Chief of the Lunda people lives in the Congo and is a cousin of Mr. Tshombe. Ethnographically the tribal centre is Katanga; economically it is Katanga and the Copperbelt of N. Rhodesia and politically, whatever the future has to offer. The territorial boundary in this district is merely a line on a map as far as Africans are concerned; they come and go across the borders the whole time. Therefore there will be no such thing as "African refugees" from ANGOLA or CONGO. It will merely be a case of living with one lot of relatives instead of another, and it is going on all the time.¹⁰⁷¹

Patterns of mobility and aspects of identity could become thoroughly intertwined. The border was given meaning through practice, and the movement of people, goods and ideas continued to go back

¹⁰⁶⁰ A. von Oppen, 'Cinderella province: Discourses of locality and nation state in a Zambian periphery, 1950s-1990s', *Sociologist* 52:1 (2002), 11-46.

¹⁰⁶¹ For a parallel see: Flynn, 'We are the border'.

¹⁰⁶² See the case studies in: De Bruijn, Van Dijk and Foeken, *Mobile Africa*.

¹⁰⁶³ A.L. Tsing, 'From the margins', *Cultural anthropology*, 9:3 (1994), 279.

¹⁰⁶⁴ A similar argument has been made by Bakewell, 'Refugees repatriating'; Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*.

¹⁰⁶⁵ A. Appadurai, *Modernity at large: Cultural dimensions of globalization* (Minneapolis, 2003).

¹⁰⁶⁶ These ideas will be elaborated later on.

¹⁰⁶⁷ See especially: Bustin, *Lunda under Belgian rule*; Pritchett, *Friends for life*.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Ethnicity is understood here as a flexible form of allegiance and identity, in accordance with J. Comaroff and J. Comaroff, *Ethnography and the historical imagination* (Boulder, San Francisco and Oxford, 1992), 50: 'Contrary to the tendency, in the Weberian tradition, to view it as a function of primordial ties, ethnicity always has its genesis in specific historical forces, forces which are simultaneously structural and cultural.' 52: 'Not only may its character change over time (...) but the way in which it is experienced and expressed may vary among social groupings according to their positions in a prevailing structure of power relations.' 60: 'While ethnicity is the product of specific historical processes, it tends to take on the "natural" appearance of an autonomous force, a "principle" capable of determining the course of social life.'

¹⁰⁶⁹ Roitman, 'The politics of informal markets', 687.

¹⁰⁷⁰ See the discussion in: B.J. Berman and J.M. Lonsdale, *Unhappy valley: Conflict in Kenya and Africa* (London, Nairobi and Athens, 1992).

¹⁰⁷¹ (NAZ) LGH5/4/2 Loc.3615, Mwinilunga Security Scheme, 1963.

and forth.¹⁰⁷² Through mobility individuals could take advantage of favourable conditions and policies on either side of the border. Thereby, the marginality of Mwinilunga and the lack of government control in the border area could be turned into distinct assets. By moving across the border individuals could navigate beyond the control of the state, take advantage of economic opportunities and access markets, whilst redefining notions of identity.¹⁰⁷³ Mobility was reinforced by opportunities towards self-realisation and material gain.¹⁰⁷⁴ In the area of Mwinilunga mobility could be a profitable strategy, expressed by incessant migratory flows, long-distance trade and flexible ties of identity and belonging.¹⁰⁷⁵ This gave shape to a historical and adaptive 'culture of mobility' in the area. Moreover, strategies of mobility could question the legitimacy of the national state in favour of alternative regional alliances.¹⁰⁷⁶

Population movement, refugees and identity

Ties of Lunda identity played an important role in this process.¹⁰⁷⁷ Historical ties between Mwinilunga and neighbouring areas of Angola and Congo remained strong throughout the twentieth century, expressed through population movements: 'the fundamental reason is the tribal and blood relationships and so long as the boundary cuts across the tribal pattern so long the people will come and go.'¹⁰⁷⁸ This constant movement gave rise to administrative concerns, as: 'stabilisation of population in a border area has particular difficulties. But underlying all is the lack of desire to stabilise where people are undecided which side of the border is their true home.'¹⁰⁷⁹ Throughout the colonial and post-colonial period ties of Lunda identity continued to be deployed, as an accompaniment of mobility, trade and population movement: 'the ambiguities of identities in borderlands can also be strategically played upon to forge, reformulate, and even mobilize ethnic identity to advantage.'¹⁰⁸⁰ When taxation was first introduced in Mwinilunga at the beginning of the twentieth century, for example, numerous individuals, families and even entire villages changed their place of residence, based on judgements of which territory would offer more favourable terms of settlement.¹⁰⁸¹

It is plain that the community building to-day, have vividly before them the possibility of circumstances arising to make them decide to again remove to-morrow (...) into Portuguese Territory where, only across the border and within a few miles of this place a Tom Tiddlers ground exists, as yet unvisited by the nearest official (...) Miles and miles of country are available across the border where there is positive immunity from the visits of interfering officials (...) There slave trading prospers; guns, caps and powder are to be had (...) the worrying tax gatherer is unknown, and work, work, work is not the national war cry.¹⁰⁸²

Through mobility individuals could evade onerous administrative demands, taking advantage of differential policies in other territories.¹⁰⁸³ Especially to those seeking waged employment, Congo

¹⁰⁷² De Boeck, 'Borderland breccia'; Bakewell, 'Refugees repatriating'.

¹⁰⁷³ See: Allina-Pisano, 'Borderlands, boundaries, and contours'; Raeymakers, 'The silent encroachment'.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Guyer, 'Wealth in people'.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Bakewell, 'Refugees repatriating'.

¹⁰⁷⁶ See especially: 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.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Bustin, *Lunda under Belgian rule*; Pritchett, *Friends for life*; P.M. Wele, *Kaunda and Mushala rebellion* (Lusaka, 1987).

¹⁰⁷⁸ (NAZ) SEC2/966, W.D. Grant, Mwinilunga District Tour Report, 24 October 1958.

¹⁰⁷⁹ (NAZ) SEC2/956, J.S. Jones, Mwinilunga District Tour Report, 28 August 1948.

¹⁰⁸⁰ R.R. Alvarez and G.A. Collier, 'The long haul in Mexican trucking: Traversing the borderlands of the north and south', *American ethnologist* 21 (1994), 607, quoted in: Flynn, 'We are the border', 314.

¹⁰⁸¹ This process has been described in: Macpherson, *Anatomy of a conquest*; Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*.

¹⁰⁸² (NAZ) BS2/199 IN2/1/3, G.A. McGregor, Balunda District Monthly Report, January 1909.

¹⁰⁸³ See: Allina-Pisano, 'Borderlands, boundaries, and contours'; Musambachime, 'Escape from tyranny'.

provided attractions.¹⁰⁸⁴ Congolese towns became known as 'a bourne from where no traveller returns', not only because of the favourable rates of pay and conditions of work in urban areas such as Kolwezi or Elisabethville (Lubumbashi), but moreover because 'Africans are not barred by race or creed from advancing to well paid posts, mostly in the technical and artisan grade.'¹⁰⁸⁵ Depending on prevailing opportunities, government policies, personal preferences and assessment of risks, crossing the border could be an attractive alternative to residence within Mwinilunga District.¹⁰⁸⁶ On the other hand, there were numerous 'push' factors, driving migration from Congo and Angola into Mwinilunga:

The chief reason is the unpopular compulsory cotton growing in the Congo Belge which although now abandoned has given place to equally unpopular compulsory cultivation of groundnuts; the second reason is the alleged unpopular administration in Angola and the third and least important reason is the reduction of tax in this area to 6/-.¹⁰⁸⁷

Population movement was facilitated by ties of Lunda identity, which were reinvigorated in the process. Ties of Lunda identity not only facilitated mobility, but enabled individuals to challenge national policies and prevailing marginality in powerful ways.

Building on historical precedents and a culture of mobility, population movements could foster and bolster ties of Lunda identity. Large-scale population movements were set in motion as a result of political upheaval and civil war in Angola and Congo, especially from the 1960s to the 1990s.¹⁰⁸⁸ Although the international community labelled this as a movement of 'refugees', the flow of population might more usefully be interpreted in the context of long-established practices of cross-border mobility, ties of kinship and Lunda identity.¹⁰⁸⁹ In 1962, for example, it was noted that: 'events in Katanga resulted in an upheaval on our border and an influx of refugees, Cabinet ministers and fleeing elements of the Katangese military forces, including mercenaries (...) The steady flow of immigrants mainly from Angola continues.'¹⁰⁹⁰ This mobility and the resultant influx of population into Mwinilunga District were seen as problematic by officials. Shelter, food and other necessities had to be provided, causing administrative and logistical difficulties, straining limited resources.¹⁰⁹¹ Population movement could equally have more positive consequences, though. Headmen and chiefs welcomed the additional population to their villages as this boosted their prestige and made their villages eligible for government services, since the allocation of schools, hospitals and other social facilities depended on the number of inhabitants in an area.¹⁰⁹² Furthermore, migrants and refugee camps could form a market for the sale of foodstuffs.¹⁰⁹³ Bartering or selling food for cash, goods or in

¹⁰⁸⁴ An overview of mining development in Congo is provided by: J. Higginson, *A working class in the making: Belgian colonial labour policy, private enterprise, and the African mineworker, 1907-1951* (Madison etc., 1989).

¹⁰⁸⁵ (NAZ) SEC2/962, R.S. Thompson, Mwinilunga District Tour Report, 16 September 1954.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Bakewell, 'Refugees repatriating'.

¹⁰⁸⁷ (NAZ) NWP1/2/10 Loc.4898, N.S. Price, Mwinilunga District Tour Report, 1 March 1939.

¹⁰⁸⁸ See especially: A. Hansen, 'Once the running stops: Assimilation of Angolan refugees into Zambian border villages', *Disasters* 3:4 (1979), 369-74; A. Hansen, 'Refugee dynamics: Angolans in Zambia 1966 to 1972', *International migration review* 15:1/2 (1981), 175-94; P.J. Freund and K. Kalumba, 'Spontaneously settled refugees in Northwestern Province, Zambia', *International migration review* 20:2 (1986), 299-312; O. Bakewell, 'Repatriation and self-settled refugees in Zambia: Bringing solutions to the wrong problems', *Journal of refugee studies* 13:4 (2000), 356-73; O. Bakewell, 'Repatriation: Angolan refugees or migrating villagers?', in: P. Essed, G. Frerks and J. Shrivvers (eds.), *Refugees and the transformation of society: Agency, policies, ethics and politics* (New York and Oxford, 2004); O. Bakewell, 'The meaning and use of identity papers: Handheld and heartfelt nationality in the borderlands of North-West Zambia', *IMI working paper*, 5, University of Oxford, International Migration Institute (2007), <http://www.imi.ox.ac.uk/pdfs/wp-5-use-of-papers.pdf>.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Bakewell, 'Refugees repatriating'.

¹⁰⁹⁰ (NAZ) NWP1/2/102 Loc.4919, H.T. Bayldon, North Western Province Annual Summary, 1962.

¹⁰⁹¹ Bakewell, 'Keeping them in their place', explains policy views which depict migration as problematic.

¹⁰⁹² Pritchett, *Friends for life*, Chapter Eight; Bakewell, 'Refugees repatriating'.

¹⁰⁹³ Hansen, 'Once the running stops'.

exchange for labour services, to visitors, travellers and migrants, had been a long-established practice.¹⁰⁹⁴ At the beginning of the twentieth century it was remarked that:

any surplus [of food] they may have is eagerly bought (and usually paid for by labour only) by the continual stream of immigrants from Angola and the Congo. These new arrivals are usually quite content to work for their food or until such time as they can get their own gardens established.¹⁰⁹⁵

All through the post-colonial period food – predominantly maize – was sold to refugee camps throughout the North-Western Province, in Zambezi and Solwezi Districts and especially to Meheba refugee camp which was opened in 1971.¹⁰⁹⁶ On a smaller scale and more informally, migrants who settled outside of refugee camps could buy up the standing crop of cassava or perform work in established gardens throughout Mwinilunga District.¹⁰⁹⁷ In a labour and cash strapped environment this additional income and productive force could prove particularly advantageous. A further potential benefit to the economic wellbeing of the area accrued from the immigrant population. International donor aid could be redistributed, or even commercially resold, by those dispensing these resources. Consequently, food aid, blankets and cooking utensils proved lucrative items of trade, rather than being relief for the deprived.¹⁰⁹⁸ Although refugees were thus regarded as problematic by officials, there could also be beneficial consequences to their presence in Mwinilunga, especially from the perspective of the local population. Issues of identity and belonging of migrants proved important as well. Through ties of Lunda identity migrants legitimated their right of settlement and claims to land in the area of Mwinilunga. Numerous migrants, labelled ‘self-settled refugees’, settled outside of refugee camps, merged in with the local population and refrained from returning to their country of origin upon cessation of the conflicts. One might therefore question whether identity is ‘handheld’ (the nationality noted on a national registration card) or ‘heartfelt’ and to what extent the two correspond.¹⁰⁹⁹ Due to incessant mobility issues of identity and belonging remained fluid and uncertain. This flexibility was already acknowledged by the District Commissioner in the 1920s:

A large proportion of the new people were not born in this territory, so when Angola is blessed with a more efficient administration it is possible that a number will return to the home of their ancestors: although, if questioned now, one and all would aver that they had shaken the dust of Angola off their feet for ever.¹¹⁰⁰

Mobility strengthened ties of common Lunda identity between the inhabitants of Congo, Angola and Mwinilunga District. The option of movement and the ‘return’ of migrants was always open, as ties of identity and belonging remained negotiable. In the 1950s it was remarked that: ‘Immigrants from the two neighbouring territories [Angola and Congo] pass through the District on their way to the urban labour markets and sometimes return to settle here [Mwinilunga] but, in many cases, they retain ties and allegiances in their old home areas, which results in protracted visits or removals.’¹¹⁰¹ In the 1990s ties of kinship, allegiance and ethnicity still appeared to be situational and permeable, rather than fixed or bounded. How did issues of identity and mobility interact? How could ties of Lunda identity serve to question the authority of the Zambian nation-state?

The politics of belonging: Crafting and challenging the nation-state

In the area of Mwinilunga the flow of population in various directions created an uncertainty of identity and belonging. This ultimately complicated the issue of national identity, which gained heightened significance after independence.¹¹⁰² The support which voters in Mwinilunga lent to ANC, the relative

¹⁰⁹⁴ Von Oppen, *Terms of trade*.

¹⁰⁹⁵ (NAZ) KSE6/2/2, F.V. Bruce-Miller, Lunda Sub-District Quarterly Report, 30 June 1922.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Hansen, ‘Once the running stops’; Bakewell, ‘Refugees repatriating’.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Pritchett, *Friends for life*.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Pritchett, *Friends for life*, Chapter Eight.

¹⁰⁹⁹ Bakewell, ‘The meaning and use of identity papers’.

¹¹⁰⁰ (NAZ) KSE6/1/4, F.V. Bruce-Miller, Mwinilunga Sub-District Annual Report, 31 March 1921.

¹¹⁰¹ (NAZ) NWP1/2/37 Loc.4903, D. Clough, Mwinilunga District Annual Report, 1950.

¹¹⁰² See: Larmer, *Rethinking African politics*.

underdog party, during the run-up towards independence in the 1950s and 1960s, was motivated by resistance to the dominant and exclusionary nationalist discourse of UNIP.¹¹⁰³ Whereas UNIP was seen as a party of ‘foreigners’ defending a distant national interest, support for ANC was locally justified in ethnic terms, referring to the historical Lunda entity and geopolitical linkages fostered through mobility.¹¹⁰⁴ In this connection chiefs in Mwinilunga deplored that:

they are very sorry and ashamed they are hated by other Chiefs, Government and UNIP because that they are the Chiefs who have made A.N.C. to be strong. Even so they said they can not stop it because they are the people of Mwantiyamvwa not from Nyasaland (...) We dislike Mr. Kaunda. Kaunda is a Nyasalander.¹¹⁰⁵

At independence individuals in Mwinilunga did not envision a change in their economically and politically marginal position through UNIP’s nationalism.¹¹⁰⁶ On a national level Lundas were demographically, economically and politically in an inferior position vis-à-vis Bemba, Nyanja and Tonga speakers.¹¹⁰⁷ Consequently, grievances concerning development were mixed with ethnic grudges: ‘up to now there are any roads, any buses running your subjects? Any Hospitals? For your information, we your sons here cannot get promoted unless you are Bemba speaking worker [sic].’¹¹⁰⁸ Poverty and lack of development, which had been the main political rallying points before independence, appeared to change only slightly under the UNIP government.¹¹⁰⁹ The Credit and Marketing Supervisor in 1964 protested that ‘as loans were concerned the district had been forgotten for about ten years.’¹¹¹⁰ After independence, high hopes were shattered as development funds lagged behind, planned projects were not completed or loans were not released: ‘The result is that the public is dissatisfied and get the feeling that the government is inefficient.’¹¹¹¹ Local grudges were powerful as well as persistent, and people even wondered:

why the Colonial Government had hated this Province (...) [and why] this hangover continues today (...) this Province has suffered too long and we expect tremendous changes in this Government (...) The important thing is to fashion the machinery which will respond to the aspirations of the people quickly, otherwise we are running the risk of having Government overthrown because people will not be satisfied with merely having discussions and nothing coming out from it. The effort of building our beloved young nation should in no way fall short of expectations, and so that the livelihood and standard of living of the common man should be improved as fast as possible.¹¹¹²

Rather than looking towards the national centre, fortune was sought in regionalism, by strengthening ties to Angola and Congo.¹¹¹³

Some politicians even expressed the desire to ‘reunite’ the ‘Lunda Empire’: ‘The Lunda have long cherished a hope that Lundaland, now arbitrarily divided between three European powers, would

¹¹⁰³ See: Larmer and Macola, ‘The origins’; Larmer, *Rethinking African politics*; D.C. Mulford, *Zambia: The politics of independence, 1957-1964* (London etc., 1967); G. Macola, *Liberal nationalism in Central Africa: A biography of Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula* (Basingstoke, 2010); Wele, *Kaunda and Mushala rebellion*.

¹¹⁰⁴ Larmer and Macola, ‘The origins’; Pritchett, *Friends for life*; Bustin, *Lunda under Belgian rule*.

¹¹⁰⁵ (UNIPA) ANC2/7, Bernard Mashata, Report of ANC Mwinilunga to National President ANC, 28 June 1962.

¹¹⁰⁶ Pritchett, *Friends for life*; Larmer and Macola, ‘The origins’; Wele, *Kaunda and Mushala rebellion*.

¹¹⁰⁷ See: Macola, *Liberal nationalism*; Larmer, *Rethinking African politics*; Compare to: D.N. Posner, ‘The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi’, *American Political Science Review* 98, 4 (2004), 529-45.

¹¹⁰⁸ (UNIPA) UNIP5/3/1/57, Sons on the Copperbelt to all Chiefs North-Western Province, Prior to 1969 Referendum.

¹¹⁰⁹ This opinion has been expressed in numerous oral interviews, for example Mr John Kapayipi, 17 March 2010, Ikelenge.

¹¹¹⁰ (NAZ) LGH5/1/3 Loc.3604, Mwinilunga Rural Council, 9 July 1964.

¹¹¹¹ (NAZ) LGH5/2/8 Loc.3613, North-Western Province, District Secretaries Conference, 9 September 1965.

¹¹¹² (NAZ) CO4/1/3, Development Committee Minutes, North-Western Province, 9 October 1967.

¹¹¹³ This has been described by: Bakewell, ‘Refugees repatriating’; Pritchett, *Friends for life*; Wele, *Kaunda and Mushala rebellion*.

one day be reunited.¹¹¹⁴ By imagining a broader Lunda entity and enhancing geopolitical linkages to Angola and Congo, the locality of Mwinilunga could express hopes of future power in the face of national marginalisation. Whereas UNIP denounced cross-border ties to Congo and Angola, ANC politicians actively fostered links, particularly to Katangese counterparts.¹¹¹⁵ Geopolitical linkages fed into local affairs through mobility, as ANC politicians from Mwinilunga travelled to Katanga to raise funds for their campaigns: 'Mr. John Njapau has been delayed by the Katanga President for some valuable goods to help ANC activities.'¹¹¹⁶ Although the formal resurrection of the Lunda Empire remained but a vague possibility for most, and was not necessarily actively pursued or aspired, the linkages between ANC and Katanga enhanced the popularity of the party locally.¹¹¹⁷ Apparently, allegiances in Mwinilunga were more easily stirred by events in Katanga, than by the remote national cause which revolved around the Copperbelt and line-of-rail areas, where UNIP had its strongholds.¹¹¹⁸ Ties to neighbouring areas, formerly united through the Lunda entity, seemed to offer more favourable prospects, economically, socially and politically, than connections to the Copperbelt or Lusaka. Through regional and international linkages, the population of Mwinilunga was able to propose an alternative view which offered the prospect of a less marginal future.¹¹¹⁹ The demographically, economically and politically weak position of Lundas on a national level strengthened feelings of non-incorporation throughout Mwinilunga District, which in turn triggered political opposition, cross-border affiliations and hopes of a 'Lunda Empire'. Through mobility, as well as ties of identity and belonging, inhabitants of Mwinilunga challenged the exclusionary nationalism of UNIP, by means of oppositional affiliation to ANC.¹¹²⁰ Social, economic and political dynamics thus interacted with patterns of mobility, feeding into issues of identity, belonging and ideas of the nation.

This pattern of looking across the international borders for support, rather than towards the national government, continued even after Zambia obtained independence. In Mwinilunga District connections to Angola and Congo remained alive in political thought, but also in population movement and trade.¹¹²¹ During the Angolan civil war nationalist leaders crossed the border to Mwinilunga, whilst MPLA soldiers had regular contact with chiefs in the area.¹¹²² Cross-border ties could threaten the hegemony of the Zambian nation-state, causing concerns, expressed by a UNIP official in 1975:

The behaviour of the freedom fighters in Angola (M.P.L.A.) was discussed as it was revealed that quite many of them come to visit certain chiefs and that one chief has been given a landrover. This behaviour was found dangerous in that it could easily bring division in that area of our country which in the long run would encourage disloyalty towards the state.¹¹²³

The 'Mushala rebellion' during the late 1970s formed a further threat, especially as Mushala proposed plans to resurrect the 'Lunda Empire' in defiance of the Zambian nation-state.¹¹²⁴ Although the government made attempts to forcefully subdue this movement and solidify support for the ruling party, this was only partially effective:

¹¹¹⁴ (NAZ) SEC2/961, R.C. Denning Mwinilunga District Tour Report, 21 November 1952.

¹¹¹⁵ Macola, *Liberal nationalism*; Larmer, *Rethinking African politics*; Larmer and Macola, 'The origins'; M. Hughes, 'Fighting for white rule in Africa: The Central African federation, Katanga, and the Congo crisis, 1958-1965', *The international history review* 25:3 (2003), 592-615.

¹¹¹⁶ (UNIPA) ANC2/7, Bernard Mashata, ANC Mwinilunga to National Secretary, 1 August 1961.

¹¹¹⁷ John Japau, 'New Plan for North-Western Rhodesia to Join Lunda with Angola': 'We, of the Lunda Empire, have decided to do away with this government. We are to join together with the people of Angola and Katanga to form up a great force but we don't want fighting we want peace'. Quoted in P.M. Wele, *Zambia's most famous dissidents: From Mushala to Luchembe* (Solwezi, 1995), 157.

¹¹¹⁸ See: Larmer, *Rethinking African politics*; Macola, *Liberal nationalism*.

¹¹¹⁹ Bakewell, 'Refugees repatriating'; Pritchett, *Friends for life*.

¹¹²⁰ Larmer and Macola, 'The origins'.

¹¹²¹ Hansen, 'Once the running stops'; Bakewell, 'Refugees repatriating'.

¹¹²² (UNIPA) UNIP1/2/13 Loc.011, UNIP Tour of North-Western Province, Addendum, 27 May 1975.

¹¹²³ (UNIPA) UNIP1/2/35, UNIP National Council Reports, 1975.

¹¹²⁴ Larmer and Macola, 'The origins'; Wele, *Kaunda and Mushala rebellion*; Pritchett, *Friends for life*.

The Province has enjoyed peace and calm during the period under review [1977], in spite of the Mushala terrorist gang which has been terrorising the people (...) for the last two years now. However, our fighters from the Zambian National Defence Forces have done the best they can to contain the situation (...) the Party in the Province is enjoying the support of the masses though not very many have joined the Party but appreciating the efforts of the Party in forging ahead in development.¹¹²⁵

Mwinilunga District was only marginally integrated into the national framework, and consequently, opposition to the nation-state was expressed through cross-border movement and ties of Lunda identity. Through mobility identity could be instrumentalised, as historical ties and patterns of movement were reinvented and given new meaning in a changed context. Being Angolan, Zambian or Congolese depended on the setting and the accruing benefits, and consequently issues of identity and political allegiance remained fluid and negotiable. Social connectivity, bolstered through mobility, could give substance to issues of identity and political allegiance.

Mobility could be motivated by social relationships, but also by an assessment of economic and political opportunities. Through marriage, trade and migration individuals established ties beyond their homestead and village. These ties, at various moments, might serve to strengthen or question socio-economic and political relationships, but the socio-economic and political context in turn equally influenced mobility and interpersonal ties.¹¹²⁶ Patterns of social connectivity could be called upon as a safety net in times of difficulty or could be a resource to take advantage of opportunities. As the examples of cross-border trade, refugee movements and nationalism have shown, 'one can hardly disengage from something without engaging in something else.'¹¹²⁷ Through mobility the inhabitants of Mwinilunga District could question the authority of the national state and avert prevailing marginality, by taking advantage of opportunities across the border. They could merely do so, however, by fostering ties of Lunda identity which served as alternative channels of opportunity through cross-border movement.

Conclusion

Mobility has hitherto been interpreted as a means by which rural communities have gained access to the wider world, a route towards 'development' or even 'modernity'. Such assumptions foreground both the transformative effects of mobility and its economic nature.¹¹²⁸ Mobility, however, has been 'an intrinsic part of Lunda society and culture', expressed through a 'culture of mobility'.¹¹²⁹ Through mobility the population of Mwinilunga District could subvert state power, challenge official discourse and create alternative opportunities through socio-cultural and historical ties. Rather than being underlain by a purely economic rationale, mobility can be about social connectivity and self-realisation: 'migrants are social actors making decisions about their futures that are framed by traditional beliefs, cultural expectations, and social practices and embedded in their immediate and broader environment.'¹¹³⁰ Mobility did not necessarily transform society, but could serve to constitute it. Individuals and entire villages might 'move while retaining their structure.'¹¹³¹

Mobility has contributed to the identity of Mwinilunga District, for example by proposing an alternative association to the Zambian nation-state through cross-border movement. Marginality might be subverted through mobility, in an attempt to access power and to shape the course of local lives. Through mobility the local could be recreated and given new vitality. In this sense, mobility has been deployed as a strategic resource, as an integral part of individual strategies and to access a wide range of opportunities. Mobility has historical roots and builds on continuities in socio-cultural

¹¹²⁵ (UNIPA) UNIP1/2/21, Annual Report for the North-Western Province, 31 December 1977.

¹¹²⁶ Howard, *The spatial factor*.

¹¹²⁷ Roitman, 'The politics of informal markets', 691.

¹¹²⁸ Andersson, 'Informal moves'.

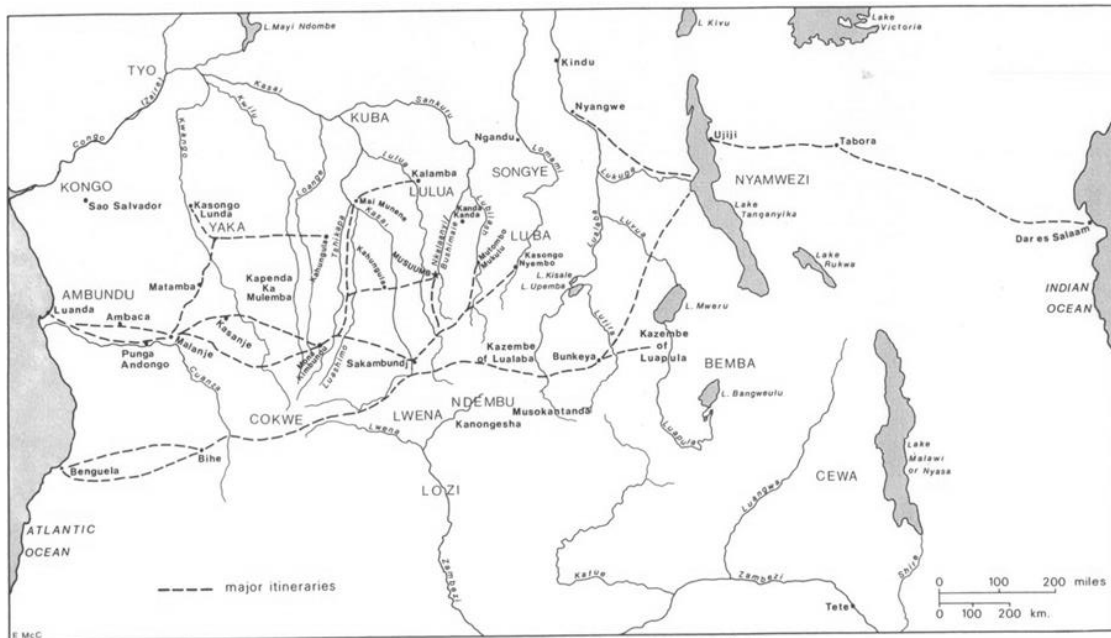
¹¹²⁹ Bakewell, 'Refugees repatriating', 94.

¹¹³⁰ Cohen and Sirkeci, *Cultures of migration*, 14.

¹¹³¹ De Boeck, 'Borderland breccia'.

organisation, rather than being induced by the state or capital.¹¹³² Through a historical culture of mobility, the inhabitants of Mwinilunga District could seek to negotiate forces such as capitalism, colonialism and the nation-state. In the area of Mwinilunga, cross-border movement and contacts with Angola and Congo built on existing Lunda affiliations and historical roots of mobility. Consequently, when the colonial state sought to demarcate borders, movement proved difficult to curb. Through cross-border trade and mobility opportunities and avenues towards wealth could be opened up, posing an alternative to markets within Zambia, despite the risks involved. Mobility, cross-border trade and issues of identity are thus thoroughly intertwined. Next to cross-border movement and trade, mobility and social connectivity have been exercised through labour migration. Labour migration equally built upon the historical 'culture of mobility' in the area, utilising and enhancing existing opportunities.

¹¹³² Andersson, 'Informal moves'; De Boeck, 'Borderland breccia'.



Map 2: Long-distance trade routes between Mwinilunga and the Angolan Coast
Source: Bustin, *Lunda under Belgian Rule*, 19



3A.1: Early roads and transport
Source: (NAZ) SEC2/964, Mwinilunga District Tour Report, Accompanying Photographs