Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

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

Pesa, I.

Citation
Pesa, I. (2014, September 29). *Moving along the roadside: A social history of Mwinilunga District, 1870s-1970s*. Retrieved from https://hdl.handle.net/1887/28744

Version:	Corrected Publisher's Version
License:	Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden
Downloaded from:	https://hdl.handle.net/1887/28744

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Cover Page

Universiteit Leiden

The handle http://hdl.handle.net/1887/28744 holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation.

Author: Peša, Iva
Title: Moving along the roadside : a social history of Mwinilunga District, 1870s-1970s
Issue Date: 2014-09-23

5: Villages
Competition, co-operation and relationships

> *Mukala wasema yawantu, mukala diyi amaama yawantu* – The village gives birth to the people, therefore the village is the mother of the people[2032]
>
> *Tunga kwisanga, wumonanga ihungu; tunga kwitu, wutiyanga nyiswalu* – If you build in the bush, you see trouble; if you build in the jungle to hide from trouble, you hear rustling (Although living in a village can cause problems, it is better than living alone. You cannot find peace anywhere, certainly not by running away from trouble)[2033]

In the 1950s Turner witnessed conflict and processes of village fission, 'the spectacle of corporate groups of kin disintegrating and the emergence of smaller residential units based on the elementary family.'[2034] He assumed that colonial rule, coupled with factors such as labour migration, cash crop production, education and Christianity would cause erosive change within society throughout Mwinilunga District.[2035] These processes of change would lead to a transition from solidarity and communalism to individualism, competitiveness and a nucleation of the family.[2036] Under the influence of capitalism large stable villages would disintegrate into smaller units ('farms'), where acquisitive nuclear families would prevail over extended kin-based associations.[2037] When viewed in a long-term historical perspective, can such views be endorsed? Over the course of the twentieth century village organisation and social relationships changed profoundly. Influenced by processes of social change categories of kinship, age and gender were questioned, authority was redefined and tradition was negotiated.[2038] Change, however, did not simply lead to a demise of previous practices. Far from disintegrating, people continue to live in villages and attach importance to relationships of kinship and communality rather than engaging in individualised profit-maximisation.[2039] Furthermore, long-standing beliefs concerning the authority of chieftainship, the efficacy of rituals and discourses of witchcraft have remained significant even as they have incorporated new elements and meanings.[2040] Continuity and change will be at the heart of this chapter, by examining issues of village residence, interpersonal association, competition and co-operation. How did the tension between individualism and communalism play out, how did social change influence relationships between people, especially relating to kinship, gender and authority?

[2032] Interview with Mr Kenneth Kalota, July & August 2010, Kanongesha.

[2033] (BOD) R.C. Dening Papers, Uncatalogued, Lunda Proverbs.

[2034] V.W. Turner, *Schism and continuity in an African society: A study of Ndembu village life* (Manchester etc., 1957), 43.

[2035] Turner, *Schism and continuity*; V.W. Turner, *The drums of affliction: A study of religious processes among the Ndembu of Zambia* (Oxford and London, 1968). Turner's work tied into RLI concerns with social change. More generally, see: R.H. Bates, 'Capital, kinship, and conflict: The structuring influence of capital in kinship societies', *Canadian journal of African studies* 24:2 (1990), 151-64.

[2036] For critiques, see: N. Price and N. Thomas, 'Continuity and change in the Gwembe Tonga family and their relevance to demography's nucleation thesis', *Africa* 69:4 (1999), 510-34; F. de Boeck, 'Domesticating diamonds and dollars: Identity, expenditure and sharing in Southwestern Zaire (1984-1997)', *Development and change* 29:4 (1998), 777-810; S.S. Berry, *No condition is permanent: The social dynamics of agrarian change in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Madison, 1993).

[2037] Turner, *Schism and continuity*; This view is reflected in colonial reports, (NAZ).

[2038] J.A. Pritchett, *The Lunda-Ndembu: Style, change, and social transformation in South Central Africa* (Madison, 2001).

[2039] See: A. von Oppen, 'Bounding villages: The enclosure of locality in Central Africa, 1890s to 1990s' (Habilitationsgeschrift, Humboldt University Berlin, 2003).

[2040] E. Turner, 'Zambia's kankanga dances: The changing life of ritual', *Performing arts journal* 10:3 (1987), 57-71.

Despite the fact that there has been profound change in Mwinilunga District over the course of the twentieth century, it is the question whether this has led to deep changes in the social order. Rather than witnessing village breakup and crisis, kinship structures and their attended ideologies have been flexible enough to accommodate changes. To what extent does the assumption that economic and political change leads to social change hold good?[2041] Relationships between men and women, youths and elders, chiefs, headmen and commoners will be examined to see whether there was indeed a trend from communality, reciprocity and reliance on extended kin towards individualism, self-interest and family nucleation.[2042] This will be done by looking at cases of competition and co-operation within the village, such as work parties, practices of communal eating, witchcraft accusations and the performance of rituals. Village settlement patterns will be viewed from a historical perspective, to see whether the emergence of the 'farm' was indeed an expression of village breakup and societal fission or whether Turner perhaps overlooked the long-term continuities behind such settlement patterns.[2043] Did social change sever communal ties, or did change perhaps heighten the need to invest in personal relationships as a means of insurance, to gain influence and wealth?[2044] Did modes of thought, patterns of conduct and interpersonal association experience rupture and ultimately perish, or did they creatively adjust, retaining significance even under changed circumstances?

Villages and farms: Settlement patterns, social organisation and authority

According to a romantic, yet surprisingly thorough supposition, pre-colonial African societies were once harmonious units, part of a homogeneous culture.[2045] Turner described the 'traditional village' in such stereotypical terms, suggesting a village setting marked by egalitarianism, solidarity and strong kinship bonds: 'The traditional village was a circle of pole-and-mud huts typically containing a core of matrilineally related kin under the leadership of a member of the senior genealogical generation chosen by the villagers.'[2046] The most striking change Turner observed during his fieldwork in the 1950s was the breakup of these large and stable villages into so-called 'farms':

> In the last few years profound changes have occurred in the residential structure in this area: the most noteworthy has been the breakdown of traditional villages into small units headed by younger men who participate in the encroaching cash economy (…) The *ifwami* or 'farm' consists of one or more Kimberley-brick houses bordered by a few mud huts and it is occupied by the farm head, his elementary family and a small fringe of kin and unrelated persons.[2047]

Turner linked the process of village breakup to the dissipation of ties between extended matrilineal kin and to challenges to village authority. The emergence of nuclear families and a trend towards individualisation would result from the penetration of the cash economy, wage labour and agricultural market production.[2048] Was the appearance of farms really so new, and did it indeed mark a shift from communalism to individualism?

First of all, the stability and large size of pre-colonial Lunda villages has to be questioned.[2049] Even if there were large villages surrounding the chiefly palace or along rivers and on fertile plains,

---

[2041] G. Wilson and M.H. Wilson, *The analysis of social change: Based on observations in Central Africa* (Cambridge etc., 1945).

[2042] De Boeck, 'Domesticating diamonds and dollars'.

[2043] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*, Chapter Three.

[2044] Berry, *No condition is permanent.*

[2045] De Boeck, 'Domesticating diamonds and dollars', 800; K. Crehan, ''Tribes' and the people who read books: Managing history in colonial Zambia', *Journal of Southern African studies* 23:2 (1998), 203-18.

[2046] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 10, 189.

[2047] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 10.

[2048] V.W. Turner and E.L.B. Turner, 'Money economy among the Mwinilunga Ndembu: A study of some individual cash budgets', *Rhodes-Livingstone journal* 18 (1955), 19-37; Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 43.

[2049] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 40-2; Turner does acknowledge that Lunda villages might never have been very large, but nevertheless he argues that the appearance of 'farms' is a new phenomenon. See: D.M. Gordon,

most villages in the area of Mwinilunga remained small, dispersed and would shift regularly.[2050] Around 1870, Cameron described how: 'The winding road passed many small hamlets consisting only of a few huts in the centre of a patch of cleared and cultivated ground.'[2051] Large villages were a symbol of power, signifying that the village head was the leader of a large and prosperous household, a 'Big Man'.[2052] Nevertheless, this ideal was only rarely achieved. The emergence and persistence of a large village remained precarious, depending 'on such factors as the ability of the headman to keep his following together, the maintenance of reasonably good relations between the men of the matrilineal core and their brothers-in-law, and the biological accidents of fertility and freedom from disease.'[2053] Numerous individuals would seek to become village heads, aspiring the status and authority which came with this title. Ill-defined and malleable rules of succession would result in competition and the proliferation of small settlements, as Livingstone observed: 'people are scattered over the country, each in his own little village. This arrangement pleases the Africans vastly, and any one who expects to have a village gives himself airs in consequence, like the heir presumptive of an estate.'[2054] Low population density and the precarious environmental setting further propelled the small size and mobile nature of villages, preventing strong centralised forms of authority.[2055]

Early colonial reports corroborate the small size and lack of stability of villages. In the opening decades of the twentieth century villages 'from one to four huts' were noted, as 'every man wants to be his own headman.'[2056] One official recorded that: 'Several natives were discovered to be living singly in the bush away from their villages.'[2057] Another official remarked that headmen would complain because 'their followings are leaving them, and making small family villages in the bush', and furthermore that 'the tendency of the natives to form small family communities and build some distance away from their chief or headman is more marked in this sub-district than in any I know.'[2058] The propensity to establish small settlements was linked to competition over authority and power: 'the ambition of the Alunda is to collect a dozen natives around him and then request that he may be recognised as a headman (…) The tendency of villages is to split up into family groups.'[2059] In the light of these examples, the trend towards village breakup, which Turner described in the 1950s, appears far from new. Rather, the establishment of small settlements might have been inherent and cyclical.[2060]

Although the occurrence of farms appeared preponderant in the 1950s, small settlements had long historical precedents in the area of Mwinilunga.[2061] Farms may have resembled pre-colonial settlement patterns, as Turner himself suggested.[2062] The true anomaly might have been the large

'The abolition of the slave trade and the transformation of the South Central African interior', *William and Mary quarterly* 66:4 (2009), 915-38.

[2050] See: 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).

[2051] V.L. Cameron, *Across Africa* (London etc., 1885), 404.

[2052] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*, Chapter Three; Turner, *Schism and continuity*; K. Crehan, 'Of chickens and guinea fowl: Living matriliny in North-Western Zambia in the 1980s', *Critique of anthropology* 17:211 (1997), 225.

[2053] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 76.

[2054] I. Schapera (ed.), *Livingstone's African journal: 1853-1856* (London, 1963), 248.

[2055] 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).

[2056] (NAZ) KSE 6/2/1, F.V. Bruce-Miller, Mwinilunga Sub-District Quarterly Report, 31 December 1914.

[2057] (NAZ) SEC2/952, C.H. Hazell, Mwinilunga District Tour Report, 23 August 1932.

[2058] (NAZ) KSE6/2/1, F.V. Bruce-Miller, Mwinilunga Sub-District Quarterly Report, 31 March 1914.

[2059] (NAZ) KSE6/6/2, G. Hughes-Chamberlain, Mwinilunga Sub-District Tour Report, 12 November 1926.

[2060] G. Kay, 'Social aspects of village regrouping in Zambia' (University of Hull, 1967).

[2061] Von Oppen, *Terms of trade*; Kay, 'Social aspects of village regrouping'.

[2062] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 41: 'the present small size of villages represents partly a return to an ancient type.'

village, established under colonial legislative pressure.[2063] Notwithstanding administrative attempts to establish large villages, such as the ten taxpayer rule, small settlements continued to predominate:

> Before the arrival of the Europeans in this corner of the Territory the Lunda were accustomed to live in small family settlements of often only three or four men with their wives and families. The Government however has always encouraged larger villages but they have never been popular here: big villages would lead to factions and quarrelling.[2064]

In this connection, village breakup into farms might have been cyclical rather than progressive. Large and long-established villages held much prestige amongst their inhabitants, creating 'a certain amount of moral pressure not to secede from it and 'kill the village'.'[2065] Nevertheless, large villages lacked stability. All too often conflicts would arise, and these conflicts might lead to village fission and the formation of new settlements, such as farms.[2066] This appeared to be an ongoing historical process, halted temporarily by the emergence of large stockaded villages due to threats of slave raiding or by (post-)colonial legislative pressure, but reignited thereafter.[2067] Instead of stable units, villages had always been sites of struggle for influence and power. Rather than being attempts to escape from village authority, small settlements could constitute the nuclei from which large villages would grow up. Farm heads would attempt to attract kin and dependents towards their settlements, building authority and wealth in people. Even in the 1980s it was described that young men, rather than going to the village of their maternal uncle and waiting for succession there, would generally 'prefer to start their own villages and then invite relatives to join them at the point when they can most profitably use additional labor.'[2068] Although a large village was the ideal within the framework of wealth in people, rivalry fostered the appearance of small settlements. Over time some farms might develop into large villages, although tension, competition and fission would prevent this in many cases.[2069] Throughout the twentieth century there was a continual process of village build-up and fission, giving rise to a large number of small villages rather than a select number of large ones. This process was not necessarily connected to capitalism or colonialism, but was inherent to village organisation.[2070]

Nonetheless, in accordance with Turner, colonial officials persistently asserted the proliferation of farms throughout the 1940s and 1950s, complaining about problems of village fission and instability. Officials connected the appearance of farms to the authority of village heads: 'There seems to be a growing tendency for villages to split up and chiefs seem inclined to favour this as more villages, however small, give them greater prestige than a few large ones.'[2071] Colonial officers would link the weakening authority of village heads to inter-generational struggles, claiming that 'many of the younger generation' felt the urge to 'break away from their headmen and village discipline.'[2072] It was lamented that: 'Many old headmen are little more than immobile receptacles of old custom and it is inevitable that the average villager, often an ex-line worker, loses patience with them.'[2073] Issues of authority and generational struggle were linked to the encroaching cash economy:

[2063] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*; K. Crehan, *The fractured community: Landscapes of power and gender in rural Zambia* (Berkeley etc., 1997); 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).

[2064] (NAZ) SEC2/955, H.B. Waugh, Mwinilunga District Tour Report, 11 October 1940.

[2065] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 104.

[2066] Turner, *Schism and continuity*; Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu.*

[2067] Gordon, 'The abolition of the slave trade'; Kay, 'Social aspects of village regrouping'*.*

[2068] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* 196.

[2069] See: Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* Chapter Three.

[2070] Kay, 'Social aspects of village regrouping'*;* D. Jaeger, *Settlement patterns and rural development: A human geographical study of the Kaonde, Kasempa District, Zambia* (Amsterdam, 1981).

[2071] (NAZ) SEC2/955, H.B. Waugh, Mwinilunga District Tour Report, 11 October 1940.

[2072] (NAZ) NWP1/2/78 Loc.4913, F.R.G. Phillips, North-Western Province Annual Report, 1957.

[2073] (NAZ) NWP1/2/33, D. Clough, Mwinilunga District Tour Report, 1950.

> cash wealth has tended to fall into the hands of the younger and more active men rather than those of the older headmen. The former have developed ambitions to found villages of their own and the result has been the multiple fission of older villages into a number of "farms".[2074]

Younger men who had earned monetary wealth would aspire to become the head of a prosperous village settlement, achieving the status of 'Big Man'.[2075] As within existing villages some would be frustrated in their aspirations, these young men might move away and establish their own settlements elsewhere. The occurrence of farms was attributed to such quarrels over influence and power, for 'If people lived in close proximity to each other friction was bound to ensue.'[2076] Even more than challenges to authority, colonial officials blamed factors related to capitalism for the increasing appearance of farms throughout Mwinilunga District.[2077]

Farms were linked to such socio-economic factors as the cash economy, labour migration and the sale of agricultural produce: 'Most true farms are situated beside the motor roads, for the typical farm-head is a man who has earned money, often on the line-of-rail, and who intends to earn more locally.'[2078] Allegedly the establishment of farms would be driven by the entrepreneurial spirit of individuals aspiring to accumulate money and build wealth through farming.[2079] The following case might be exemplary:

> There is one man who has shown himself to be possessed of an unusual amount of initiative (…) having established himself as a trader, he recently built a good standard Kimberley house, and cut a passable motor road to enable lorries to fetch away cassava meal.[2080]

This man had built his house at a considerable distance from the main village in order to develop his agricultural enterprises. Referring to such cases, officials argued that farms would enhance individual entrepreneurship, which had previously been restrained by the communal claims and redistributive expectations prevalent in larger villages. In an attempt to avoid the burdensome obligations of sharing with kin, individuals would be propelled to establish farms.[2081] Due to increasing individualism under the accumulative tendencies of the money economy, a man might claim that:

> It was not worth his while to work hard to produce a plentiful supply of food for sale, or to maintain big flocks, since the inept and the idle in the village, as well as the sick and the old, would claim a share in his wealth as of right. People were therefore, given permission to live by themselves in 'farms' (…) There is no doubt that it has resulted in very great progress in rural conditions in the District, and has created a situation in which by propaganda and pressure the people can be driven to better themselves.[2082]

Whereas large villages were associated with communal obligations which would lower productivity and profit, officials connected farms to high productivity and economic development: 'an enterprising man living by himself is not "sponged on" by his relatives, to quite the same extent as would be the case if he were living among them.'[2083]

Moreover, farms were connected to changes in patterns of kinship affiliation: 'Farm heads were disencumbering themselves of many of the obligations of kinship, and retaining for their own use and for the use of their elementary families money they earned as wages and by the sale of cash-crops or surplus subsistence crops.'[2084] Turner asserted that in time farms would come to supplant 'villages', as nuclear families would pursue their individualised economic interests in defiance of the grasping claims of extended kin and the 'traditional authority' of headmen and chiefs.[2085] This trend did not

---

[2074] (NAZ) NWP1/12/18 Loc.4951, T.M. Lawman to P.C. Solwezi, 12 August 1953.
[2075] Compare to: Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees*.
[2076] (NAZ) SEC2/963, R.S. Thompson, Mwinilunga District Tour Report, July 1955.
[2077] Kay, 'Social aspects of village regrouping'.
[2078] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 36.
[2079] Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees.*
[2080] (NAZ) SEC2/958, K. Duff White, Mwinilunga District Tour Report, 12 November 1950.
[2081] Kay, 'Social aspects of village regrouping'.
[2082] (BOD) R.C. Dening Papers, Mwinilunga District Tour Report, No. 5, 1954.
[2083] (NAZ) SEC2/959, K.J. Forder, Mwinilunga District Tour Report, 5 November 1951.
[2084] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 133.
[2085] Turner, *Schism and continuity.*

materialise. The remainder of this chapter will attempt to explain why this was not the case, by exploring the dynamics of accumulation and sharing, competition and co-operation, as well as patterns of authority within the village. Large villages continued to be an ideal, a means of building wealth in people, gaining authority and power. Competition and individual entrepreneurship could indeed lead to the establishment of small settlements, yet this was a recurrent process rather than a trend brought about by colonialism or capitalism.[2086] Small villages would grow and become larger villages, as living in villages continued to be an essential element of life and a structuring principle of everyday experience.[2087]

The village has proven to be remarkably enduring. In the 1980s Pritchett set out to restudy Turner's work, concluding that rather than disintegrating: 'The village continues to be a fundamental location for the formulation of individual identity, a necessary element in productive strategies, and a key ingredient in individual plans for the afterlife.'[2088] Although the size of individual villages had perhaps diminished somewhat, Pritchett advanced that villages had always been 'fluid, ever-changing units offering individuals a variety of residential options.'[2089] Villages would change continuously, being reconfigured in reaction to social change. How can the persistence of the village be explained within an environment of flux, fission and social change? By looking at the social organisation of village life an answer to this question will be sought.

Chiefs, headmen and authority: Governance and mediation

Village fission and the establishment of farms have commonly been associated with the weak(ening) authority of village heads. Younger, more ambitious men would seek to disencumber themselves from the authority of headmen and chiefs by establishing their own settlements.[2090] Exploring the historical development of village authority, patterns of chieftaincy and headmanship can counter such views. The trend towards individualisation and the demise of 'traditional authority', which Turner identified in the 1950s, might not have been so straightforward.[2091] Village authority had never been stable as intravillage competition had worked against the establishment of large settlements.[2092] The position of headmen and chiefs was generally desired as village heads were able to mediate between the village population and the outside world, gaining status and respect within the ideology of wealth in people.[2093] In order to understand the desirability of the position of village head, the foundations of authority and mediation should first be explored.

Chiefs and headmen have transformed and maintained their position, despite numerous changes throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century.[2094] Their continued influence is based on a number of ritual, socio-economic and political pillars, which have enabled village heads to act as effective intermediaries between local, regional, national and international levels of governance.[2095]

[2086] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*, Chapter Three.

[2087] A. von Oppen, 'The village as territory: Enclosing locality in Northwest Zambia, 1950s to 1990s', *Journal of African history* 47:1 (2006), 57-75.

[2088] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* 108.

[2089] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* 103.

[2090] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 43.

[2091] W.G. Morapedi, 'Demise or resilience? Customary law and chieftaincy in twenty-first century Botswana', *Journal of contemporary African studies* 28:2 (2010), 215-30.

[2092] Von Oppen, *Terms of trade,* 345-9.

[2093] Turner, *Schism and continuity*; Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*; Crehan, 'Of chickens and guinea fowl'.

[2094] On the resurgence of chieftaincy, see: M. Mamdani, *Citizen and subject: Contemporary Africa and the legacy of late colonialism* (Princeton etc., 1996); A.A. Costa, 'Chieftaincy and civilisation: African structures of government and colonial administration in South Africa', *African studies* 59:1 (2000), 13-43; B. Oomen, '"We must now go back to our history": Retraditionalisation in a Northern Province chieftaincy', *African studies* 59:1 (2000), 71-95; J. Ubink, 'Traditional authority revisited: Popular perceptions of chiefs and chieftaincy in peri-urban Kumasi, Ghana', *Journal of legal pluralism* 55 (2007), 124.

[2095] For the concept of mediation, see: Ubink, 'Traditional authority revisited', 125-8.

For one, chiefs and headmen have mediated their position vis-à-vis other headmen and chiefs within the setting of the Lunda polity. Ever since their departure from Musumba, chiefs in Mwinilunga have maintained contact with other Lunda chiefs, not only with Paramount Chief Mwantiamvwa but also with chiefs such as Musokantanda, Ishinde and Kazembe, forging enduring links between Mwinilunga, Angola, Congo and other parts of Zambia.[2096] Through trade and tribute, intermarriage and ceremonial connections, ties have been upheld between different parts of the Lunda entity.[2097] Ties of allegiance were materialised through flows of tribute, running from individuals through village heads to chiefs, ultimately connected to Mwantiamvwa and his court.[2098] This hierarchical system of tribute was largely discontinued under colonial rule, due to international boundary demarcation and other regulations, yet gifts between subordinates and superiors continued to be exchanged during formal visits, cementing the regional ties of the Lunda polity.[2099] In the course of the twentieth century, connections between Lunda chiefs seemed to be weakening. Colonial officials would assert that: 'relations with (…) Mwachiamvwa appear to be breaking up in many ways quite rapidly.'[2100] Nevertheless, expectations that ties within the Lunda entity would be severed appeared ill-founded. In 1955 it was noted that: 'Great respect continues to be shown to Chief Mwatiamvwa across the Congo border by all Lunda/Ndembu.'[2101] Even in 2010, when Mwantianvwa was scheduled to attend the *Chisemwa ChaLunda* ceremony hosted by Chief Kanongesha, the announcement instantly attracted crowds of spectators from Angola, Congo and the Zambian Copperbelt.[2102] The Lunda connection was more than symbolic, influencing trade, identity, the formulation of political claims and allegiances.[2103] Through Lunda ties, headmen and chiefs persistently underlined connections between the local, regional and international level, boosting their power through the process of mediation.

Politically, chiefs and headmen were imperative in negotiating involvement with the colonial and post-colonial state.[2104] Chiefs depended on the state for official recognition and the payment of their subsidies, but the state depended on chiefs in numerous ways as well.[2105] The collection of taxes or the recruitment of labour, for example, were premised on the collaboration of headmen and chiefs.[2106] Chiefs might be given quota by the government to supply a number of labourers for road construction work. Similarly, when recruiting labourers for the mines, the co-operation of chiefs and headmen was indispensable to persuade men to go to work.[2107] Being the main representatives of state policies within the local setting, chiefs became central actors in the administration of law and order.[2108] Nevertheless, chiefs did not simply comply with government policies: 'The truth is that, even

[2096] J.A. Pritchett, *Friends for life, friends for death: Cohorts and consciousness among the Lunda-Ndembu* (Charlottesville etc., 2007); E. Bustin, *Lunda under Belgian rule: The politics of ethnicity* (Cambridge etc., 1975).
[2097] J.J. Hoover, 'The seduction of Ruwej: Reconstructing Ruund history (The nuclear Lunda: Zaïre, Angola, Zambia)', (PhD thesis, Yale University, 1978); Schecter, 'History and historiography'.
[2098] (NAZ) SEC2/402, Harry Vaux Report on Sailunga Kindred, 1936.
[2099] Bustin, *Lunda under Belgian rule*; O. Bakewell, 'Refugees repatriating or migrating villagers? A study of movement from North West Zambia to Angola' (PhD thesis, University of Bath, 1999).
[2100] (NAZ) SEC2/955, C.M.N. White, Mwinilunga District Tour Report, 20 April 1940.
[2101] (NAZ) SEC2/963, P.L.N. Hannaford, Mwinilunga District Tour Report, 17 March 1955.
[2102] Observations from Kanongesha area, July 2010.
[2103] Pritchett, *Friends for life*; Bakewell, 'Refugees repatriating'; Bustin, *Lunda under Belgian rule.*
[2104] Mamdani, *Citizen and subject*; S.N. Chipungu, 'African leadership under indirect rule in colonial Zambia', in: S.N. Chipungu (ed.), *Guardians in their time: Experiences of Zambians under colonial rule, 1890-1964* (London and Basingstoke, 1992), 50-73.
[2105] T.T. Spear, 'Neo-traditionalism and the limits of invention in British colonial Africa', *Journal of African history* 44:1 (2003), 3-27.
[2106] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*, 40-1.
[2107] (NAZ) KSE6/1/3, F.V. Bruce-Miller, Mwinilunga Sub-District Annual Report, 31 March 1918.
[2108] M.L. Chanock, *Law, custom and social order: The colonial experience in Malawi and Zambia* (Cambridge etc., 1985); S.S. Berry, 'Hegemony on a shoestring: Indirect rule and access to agricultural land', *Africa* 62:3 (1992), 327-55.

where they might, these chiefs and headmen will not assist the Administration if such assistance in any way affects their own people.'[2109] Chiefs and headmen would hide tax defaulters, disguise poachers and deliberately fail to meet quota.[2110] Being mediators between the population and the government, chiefs and headmen proved crucial, for they 'perform, in reality, the day to day administration.'[2111] Even after independence, this remained the case. The government relied on chiefs to assist in 'calls to the people for voluntary effort, selfhelp schemes, emergency school building and fund raising for a new University', arguing that 'the success of these projects depends very largely on the mobility and influence of a Chief.'[2112]

Combining political and economic power, chiefs and headmen could play a role as mediators of trade.[2113] Within the context of the pre-colonial long-distance trade, chiefs and headmen could function as middlemen between traders and the village community. They would establish contacts with traders, exact tribute, fees and goods from them and secure favourable terms of trade.[2114] In order to negotiate commercial transactions, caravan leaders would have to donate copious gifts to village heads, without whose consent trade relations would be bound to fail.[2115] Revealing his own lack of power, Livingstone desperately described how one chief:

> made a demand of either a tusk, beads, a man, copper armlets, a shell, or we should not be permitted to enter his august presence. No one was admitted without something of the sort, and as the country belonged to him we should not pass through, unless we came down handsomely.[2116]

Some village heads and chiefs grew wealthy by amassing amounts of cloth, firearms and beads which they would distribute among subjects to secure their allegiance. Village heads could gain influence as trade intermediaries, becoming 'Big Men' with a prosperous and large following.[2117] The slave trade was the dramatic apex of this exchange of goods for human allegiance.[2118] Colonial officials described how the predecessors of the current chiefs were the ones 'who grew rich by the simple means of selling their people into slavery.'[2119] Underlining their position of economic leadership within the community, chiefs and headmen could guarantee debts or could be held responsible for the payment of fines of their subjects. If a person had a case with somebody from another village, but was unable to pay the fine, he or she would rely on the goodwill of the village head to fulfil the payment.[2120] The authority of village heads, thus, comprised not only rights but also responsibilities. Throughout the twentieth century village heads continued to mediate the economic contacts of their villages.[2121]

Another enduring aspect of the economic importance of chiefs and headmen was their connection to the land, from which they derived a degree of their authority to rule.[2122] Land allocation

---

[2109] (NAZ) KSE6/5/1, J.M. Pound, Balunda District Monthly Report, October 1910.
[2110] See: Pritchett, *Friends for life*; Bakewell, 'Refugees repatriating'.
[2111] (NAZ) SEC2/402, Harry Vaux Report on Sailunga Kindred, 1936.
[2112] (UNIPA) UNIP5/3/1/13, Annual Report North-Western Province, 1965.
[2113] See: Gordon, 'The abolition of the slave trade'; Von Oppen, *Terms of trade.*
[2114] Compare to: S.J. Rockel, *Carriers of culture: Labor on the road in nineteenth-century East Africa* (Portsmouth, 2006); J. Prestholdt, 'On the global repercussions of East African consumerism', *The American historical review* 109:3 (2004), 755-81.
[2115] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu.* Chapter Six; Based on my own reading of pre-colonial traveller accounts.
[2116] Schapera, *Livingstone's African journal*, 98.
[2117] Gordon, 'The abolition of the slave trade'; J.C. Miller, *Way of death: Merchant capitalism and the Angolan slave trade 1730-1830* (Madison, 1988).
[2118] C. Piot, 'Of slaves and the gift: Kabre sale of kin during the era of the slave trade', *Journal of African history* 37:1 (1996), 31-49.
[2119] (NAZ) SEC2/953, N.S. Price, Mwinilunga District Tour Report, 29 September 1957.
[2120] Gordon, 'The abolition of the slave trade'; Miller, *Way of death.*
[2121] Von Oppen, *Terms of trade;* Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu.*
[2122] J. Vansina, *How societies are born: Governance in West Central Africa before 1600* (Charlottesville etc., 2004); Schecter, 'History and historiography'.

would proceed from chiefs to headmen to household heads.[2123] Rights would be granted in usufruct: 'As all Chiefs hold the land of the Chieftainship in trust for their descendants they are unable to give, dispose of or sell any of their land outright.'[2124] Chiefs and headmen derived great power and prestige from their control over land: 'The influence of Chiefs is such that few, if any, rural Africans would be bold enough to make any suggestion of a freehold title if they still wished to retain the protection and assistance of the Chiefs in domestic affairs.'[2125] Land officially became vested in the president after independence, yet leasehold or freehold tenure remain exceptions until this day.[2126] Access to and control over land afforded village heads economic prominence, enabling them to exert influence over the activities that take place on the land.[2127] Some chiefs might encourage economic activity in their area. In 1955 an official reported that Chief Ntambu 'encourages the growth of many varieties of produce', developing agricultural production for purposes of marketing.[2128] Officials would remark that: 'the encouragement to develop agriculture rests (…) principally with the Chief (…) the advancement of an area depends upon the Chief being one step ahead of his people.'[2129] Major economic stakeholders, such as the Chinese miners who appeared in Chief Chibwika's area in 2009, would be required to pass through the chief and obtain his formal approval before commencing their enterprises.[2130] Due to such complex economic, political and social mediation of the local, regional, national and international levels, village heads were able to secure a persistently important position for themselves.[2131] Consequently, the position of village heads was fiercely contested, giving rise to village fission and the small size of settlements.[2132]

Despite the importance of the position of village heads, their titles do not appear to have been fixed or well-defined prior to colonialism.[2133] Chieftaincy and headmanship did not adhere to bounded categories or communities. The title *mwanta,* chief, is a generic term which can signify master, headman, employer, or can even be used by a wife to call her husband. Only when reference to the *lukanu* (royal bracelet) is added, as in *mwanta walukanu*, does it become clear that a chief is meant.[2134] This suggests that chieftaincy was a fluid and contested category. The position of chief was not clearly demarcated from that of a village head, but depended on individual merit, performance and claims of historical precedence.[2135] Succession to the title of chief or headman remained open to competition: 'at one time all the Hierarchy were Heads of Extended Families (…) [The Chief] may be succeeded by any of his titular children, which means that in theory anyone in the Kindred may be chosen provided

[2123] See: E. Colson, 'The impact of the colonial period on the definition of land rights', in: V.W. Turner (ed.), *Colonialism in Africa, 1870-1960, Volume 3* (Cambridge, 1971); P. Shipton and M. Goheen, 'Introduction: Understanding African land-holding: Power, wealth, and meaning', *Africa* 62:3 (1997), 307-25.

[2124] (NAZ) NWP1/12/18 Loc.4951, District Commissioner Mwinilunga to Provincial Commissioner Solwezi, 4 November 1954.

[2125] (NAZ) NWP1/12/18 Loc. 4951, R.S. Thompson to Provincial Commissioner Solwezi, 17 December 1954.

[2126] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu.*

[2127] Compare to: Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees;* W.T. Kalusa, *Kalonga Gawa Undi X: A biography of an African chief and nationalist* (Lusaka, 2010).

[2128] (NAZ) SEC2/963, P.L.N. Hannaford, Mwinilunga District Tour Report, 26 May 1955.

[2129] (NAZ) NWP1/12/18 Loc.4951, District Commissioner Mwinilunga to Provincial Commissioner Solwezi, 4 November 1954.

[2130] Based on observations in Kanongesha area, July 2010; R. Negi, 'The micropolitics of mining and development in Zambia: Insights from the Northwestern Province', *African studies quarterly* 12:2 (2010/11), 27-44.

[2131] Ubink, 'Traditional authority revisited', 125-8; Spear, 'Neo-traditionalism'; P. Englebert, 'Patterns and theories of traditional resurgence in tropical Africa', *Mondes en développement* 30:118 (2002), 51-64.

[2132] Turner, *Schism and continuity*; Crehan, 'Of chickens and guinea fowl'.

[2133] Schecter, 'History and historiography'; Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*, 37-8; Vansina, *How societies are born.*

[2134] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 323-4; Schecter, 'History and historiography'; Confirmed by oral interviews.

[2135] Crehan, 'Of chickens and guinea fowl'; Von Oppen, *Terms of trade,* 345-70.

age and deportment permit.'[2136] Even if there were rules of succession, these could be manipulated to a large extent, giving rise to contestation and a general ambition towards headmanship:[2137]

> Succession usually runs in the male line; all things being equal the eldest son succeeds – next come the younger sons – then the sons of a brother – failing these the sons of a sister. To these rules I have come across a good many exceptions. If popular, a headman's nephew will often be chosen to succeed, even when the headman has several eligible sons.[2138]

Due to the function of mediation between the village population and the outside world, the position of village head was desired and open to ambitious men (and women in some cases), resulting in fierce competition over positions of village leadership.[2139]

The position of a village head depended on achievement, rather than ascription. Authority would depend on the ability to mediate social, economic and political influences between the village and a broader arena. Some village heads, who proved successful at mediation, might achieve great power and influence over the village population. Nonetheless, authority could and often would be questioned. Due to malleable rules of succession and low population densities, ambitious young men could move away from large villages and establish their own settlements elsewhere: 'in a Lunda village nephews get tired of the perpetuation of the authority of the generation above them, and break away to form separate villages.'[2140] It was noted that 'every man wants to be his own headman' and consequently 'the ambition of the Alunda is to collect a dozen natives around him and then request that he may be recognised as a headman.'[2141] This was not necessarily an expression of village breakup, or the demise of authority. Rather, it was a recurrent tendency through which new village nuclei would be established which might grow out to become full-fledged villages.[2142] Due to such competition, colonial officials would note that 'internecine disputes, and mutual distrust between every village and its every neighbour make combination most remote, if not utterly impossible.'[2143] Establishing a new village and becoming the village head of such a settlement could be a route to prominence and power, but nonetheless, this might fail and the village might remain small, perishing with time.[2144] By highlighting the changes and challenges which colonial and post-colonial rule posed to patterns of authority, it will be explored how this dynamic played out.

Village leadership in a historical perspective

Chieftaincy in Mwinilunga has ancient origins, going back at least to the Lunda migration towards the Upper Zambezi around 1740.[2145] Although chiefs differ from each other, as they have their own form of governance, they all contribute to the continuity of the Lunda tradition of chieftaincy.[2146] The continued salience of chieftaincy might be surprising as chiefs have generally been associated with 'traditional' small-scale and bounded social units, whereas the colonial and the post-colonial state sought to propagate a more large-scale form of authority, epitomised by the nation-state. Consequently, chieftaincy would be doomed to wither away on the route to 'civilisation' and

[2136] (NAZ) SEC2/402, Harry Vaux Report on Sailunga Kindred, 1936.
[2137] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 87-90; Schecter, 'History and historiography'.
[2138] (NAZ) KSE4/1, Mwinilunga District Notebooks, 141.
[2139] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* 94-5.
[2140] (NAZ) LGH5/5/11 Loc. 3621, C.M.N. White, Land Tenure Report North-Western Province, 1956.
[2141] (NAZ) KSE6/6/2, F.V. Bruce-Miller, Mwinilunga Sub-District Tour Report, 14 February 1926.
[2142] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* Chapter Three.
[2143] (NAZ) HC1/2/43 BS2/251 Loc. 130, G.A. MacGregor, Balunda Monthly Report, January 1909.
[2144] K.M. de Luna, 'Affect and society in precolonial Africa', *International journal of African historical studies* 46:1 (2013), 123-50; J. Vansina, *Paths in the rainforests: Toward a history of political tradition in Equatorial Africa* (Madison, 1990), 69, 99.
[2145] Schecter, 'History and historiography'; Vansina, *How societies are born.*
[2146] '*Anyanta ejima adi na nyichidi yawu, na nshimbi yawu, na yisemwa yawu, ilanga chisemwa yawantu yawaLunda chidi chimu hohu*' – All chiefs have their own ways, their own laws, their own traditions, but the tradition of the Lunda people is only one, Interview with Mr Jesman Sambaulu, 10 August 2010, Kanongesha.

'modernity'.[2147] Despite such rhetoric, chiefs remain important in present-day Mwinilunga and 'traditional ceremonies', such as *Chisemwa ChaLunda* hosted by Chief Kanongesha, attract large crowds. Although the power of chiefs has been profoundly affected by colonial and post-colonial policies, chiefs continue to be important in mediating the local, national and international level.[2148]

Despite their importance on a village level, it is doubtful whether chiefs and headmen in the area of Mwinilunga held positions of overwhelming political or military power.[2149] Turner asserts that:

> High spatial mobility contributed powerfully to the considerable political autonomy of the village (…) with the continual movement of villages from site to site, and with the frequency of village fission, it became extremely difficult for (…) headmen to exert political authority over the inhabitants of their areas.[2150]

Early colonial officials complained that: 'There is no powerful Chief in this division (…) These men have but little power, nor do they seem anxious to be made powerful.'[2151] Chiefs could operate with a high degree of independence:

> After the initial division of the land, the local sub-chiefs became virtually independent of the Paramount Chief's authority. The latter became a sort of 'primus inter pares', having no rights in the territories of his sub-chiefs. His administrative, judicial and economic control did not extend beyond his own immediate area.[2152]

Rather than using force, village heads would give guidance to their communities by relying on ritual power and moral justification.[2153] Such functions legitimised and strengthened their rule: 'A strong emotional quality goes with their symbolic significance as epitomising Lunda tribal identity.'[2154] Although the position of headmen and chiefs had been loose and contested, the position of village head was nevertheless aspired to. This had to do with notions of wealth in people.[2155] Turner explained that people 'saw success in life as measured by the number of followers a man could acquire',[2156] and consequently men would aim 'to obtain influence, and subsequently office, in traditional villages.'[2157] Despite the general aspiration to become the leader of a prosperous village, patterns of succession to the title of headman might frustrate the ambitions of enterprising men, who might move away to establish their own village and their own authority.[2158] Turner describes this structural competition within villages, as impatience to succeed to the office of headman might lead some to 'hive off from the village' and 'found new settlements', because if a man 'wishes to enjoy a long period of leadership, he may well prefer to give up his chance of succeeding to office in a long-established village, despite the greater prestige of such an office, than to wait until he is old.'[2159] Such competition encouraged the small size of settlements.

Over the course of the nineteenth century, when the long-distance trade enabled some rulers to amass wealth, yet slave raiding caused insecurity and warfare, the position of chiefs and headmen changed.[2160] Expressing wealth in people, villages with more than one hundred inhabitants sprung up as a consequence of raids and warfare. These large villages would be ruled by strong village heads, 'Big

---

[2147] Morapedi, 'Demise or resilience?', 216; Mamdani, *Citizen and subject*; Costa, 'Chieftaincy and civilisation'; Oomen, 'We must now go back to our history'.

[2148] Ubink, 'Traditional authority revisited'; Englebert, 'Patterns and theories of traditional resurgence'.

[2149] Schecter, 'History and historiography'; Vansina, *How societies are born,* 258.

[2150] Turner, *Schism and continuity*, 6, 15.

[2151] (NAZ) KSE6/1/3, F.V. Bruce-Miller, Mwinilunga Sub-District Annual Report, 31 March 1915.

[2152] (NAZ) NWP1/12/18 Loc. 4951, T.M. Lawman to Provincial Commissioner Solwezi, 12 August 1953.

[2153] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 318-21; Schecter, 'History and historiography', 5-6; Hoover, 'The seduction of Ruwej', 103.

[2154] (NAZ) NWP1/2/83 Loc. 4914, Land Tenure Report, North-Western Province, 1947.

[2155] De Luna, 'Affect and society'; Vansina, *How societies are born.*

[2156] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 134.

[2157] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 135.

[2158] Vansina, *Paths in the rainforests*, 69, 73-82, 99.

[2159] Turner, *Schism and continuity*, 88-9.

[2160] Gordon, 'The abolition of the slave trade'; Miller, *Way of death.*

Men', who could organise unified action in times of attack. In this setting, chiefs and headmen commanded unprecedented authority over their subjects, deciding over matters of life and death.[2161] This minutely orchestrated form of governance proved short-lived, though:

> The people concentrated in large villages heavily stockaded and porticullised but spread out into temporary hamlets during interludes of peace (…) The compact strategic concentrations made necessary by the threat of slave raids, have been superseded by scattered hamlets, where complicated machinery of administration is not required.[2162]

The small size of villages, loose patterns of authority and constant competition were temporarily offset by the threats of slave raids and the need to congregate into larger and more formally organised villages.[2163] At the start of the twentieth century large villages broke up into smaller units once again. Soon thereafter, the authority of village heads was profoundly affected by colonial rule.

Colonial adaptation: Authority, recognition and village fission

The policy of indirect rule, 'with its co-option of local authority figures as an extremely cheap lower tier of colonial administration', appeared attractive in the light of concerns to reduce expenditure.[2164] British colonialism formally claimed to uphold the position of headmen, chiefs and customary rules, yet it brought about profound changes in forms of governance, according to some even 'inventing tradition'.[2165] The colonial administration sought to rule through chiefs and headmen, using their existing authority and keeping established forms of governance in place. At the same time, chiefs and headmen were given new tasks under colonial legislation.[2166] Chiefs were held responsible for judicial, legislative, executive and administrative tasks, amounting to a formal fusion of authority in the person of the chief.[2167] The judicial role of the chief changed under colonialism, as Chief Ikelenge summarised:

> Chiefs did not in the past hold court. We all know that the Chief's role in so far as courts were concerned was that of an adviser who counselled with his subjects whose duty it was to try cases. This practice was reversed by the Colonial Government which required Chiefs to hold court as part of the functions for which they were paid.[2168]

In some respects, the colonial administration strategically boosted the position of chiefs and headmen by assigning administrative tasks to them.[2169] Colonial officials noted that: 'there is no doubt that under our influence the Chiefs themselves have taken up more and more of an executive position.'[2170] Next to judicial tasks, the collection of taxes, the compilation of census, the maintenance of law and order, the enforcement of forestry, game and agricultural legislation, and much more became the responsibility of chiefs, and to a lesser extent headmen as well.[2171]

The existing rivalry between headmen and chiefs was merely heightened as a result of their new responsibilities and formalised status in the administrative hierarchy. Because chiefs received a salary and colonial rule aimed to minimise expenses, debates arose over who was – and who was not – to be recognised as a chief or headman.[2172] From 1931 onwards 'Government Staffs of Office' were awarded to a limited number of titleholders, creating a formal hierarchy. Due to the scarcity of

[2161] Gordon, 'The abolition of the slave trade'.
[2162] (NAZ) SEC2/402, Harry Vaux Report on Sailunga Kindred, 1936.
[2163] Von Oppen, *Terms of trade.*
[2164] Crehan, 'Tribes and the people who read books', 205; Berry, 'Hegemony on a shoestring'; Spear, 'Neo-traditionalism'.
[2165] Chanock, *Law, custom and social order*; Mamdani, *Citizen and subject*; E. Hobsbawm and T.O. Ranger (eds.), *The invention of tradition* (Cambridge etc., 1983).
[2166] Chipungu, 'African leadership under indirect rule'.
[2167] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* 40-2; Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 10-8.
[2168] (NAZ) LGH5/4/12 Loc. 3618, House of Chiefs Minutes, 9 December 1965.
[2169] Berry, 'Hegemony on a shoestring'.
[2170] (NAZ) NWP1/12/23, R.C. Dening Comments on Harry Vaux's Report, 31 May 1954.
[2171] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* 40-2.
[2172] Crehan, 'Tribes and the people who read books'.

government funds, the number of salaried chiefs was limited to nine under the Lunda-Ndembo Native Authority. Sailunga (Lunda) and Kanongesha (Ndembo) were awarded the title of 'Senior Chief', whereas Kanyama, Kakoma and Ntambu (Lunda) and Nyakaseya, Ikelenge, Mwininyilamba and Chibwika (Ndembo) were appointed as chiefs.[2173] During the pre-colonial period the distinction between headmen, chiefs and senior chiefs had been more difficult to make, or had perhaps not existed at all.[2174] According to Chief Ikelenge there was 'no seniority amongst the chiefs when they first came to this country. At present there is none – they sit on equal mats before Kanongeshya.'[2175] Under colonial rule, however, chiefly recognition and hierarchy were formalised, giving rise to quarrels over authority and recognition. Because many people could claim an influential position due to malleable rules of succession, 'the competition for any traditionally acknowledged headmanship, with its potential of succeeding to the salaried position of Native Authority chief, became fierce.'[2176] When deciding which chiefs to recognise, government would consider the personality of a chief, questioning whether the chief was likely to do good work in his area and whether his population was big enough to warrant his chieftainship.[2177] Factors such as population density, facilities (schools, missions, roads and levels of agricultural production), as well as the character and co-operation of a chief all played a role. Quite different from the pre-colonial requirements for chiefly authority (including lineage, age and rhetorical ability) colonial rule introduced new markers of success.[2178]

Today, there are numerous headmen in Mwinilunga District who claim to have been chiefs in the past – although some can substantiate their claims more convincingly than others.[2179] One example of a chief who was deposed under colonial rule is Ntambu-Sachitolu.[2180] Because Ntambu-Sachitolu refused to co-operate with the collection of taxes, his staff of office was taken away by officials in the 1920s.[2181] This act had far-reaching consequences for his authority and for the villages in his area:

> We the children of Ntambo are very sorrowful that the Chieftainship is no longer recognised; he was our father very powerful and respected (…) Now he has no government recognition his people are scattering and we feel like orphans without a father [*sic*].[2182]

Whereas Ntambu-Sachitolu tried to contest his deposition in the 1940s, other chiefs declined to recognise his claims, as they feared for their own position in the competitive colonial environment: 'All the Chiefs were agreed that at no time had Ntambo any valid claim to chieftainship nor any right to territory or population.'[2183] Lack of colonial recognition could thus result in the small size of villages and in the dispersal of population, as chiefly authority would fade. Even some recognised chiefs complained that their authority was jeopardised due to colonial rule. Chief Sailunga claimed that 'he was losing his power and that the headmen never now come to visit him.'[2184]

On the other hand, colonial recognition could boost the position of some chiefs and draw population towards their areas. A case in point is Chief Ikelenge, who was subordinate to Chief

---

[2173] This is based on a reading of archival sources, (NAZ); See: Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*; Turner, *Schism and continuity.*

[2174] Schecter, 'History and historiography'; Turner, *Schism and continuity.*

[2175] (NAZ) SEC2/222, Provincial Commissioner North-Western Province to Chief Secretary Lusaka, 13 December 1945.

[2176] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* 42.

[2177] (NAZ) NWP1/3/2 Loc. 4921, H.T. Bayldon, North-Western Province, 24 August 1961.

[2178] Von Oppen, 'The village as territory'.

[2179] This view is based on numerous oral interviews, for example Headman Mwinilunga, 31 October 2010, Mwinilunga; See: Schecter, 'History and historiography'.

[2180] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 12-3; Confirmed by a reading of archival sources, (NAZ) and oral interviews.

[2181] This view is based on numerous oral interviews, for example with Ex-Chief Ntambu-Lukonkesha, 11 August 2010, Kanongesha; as well as a reading of archival sources (NAZ). The exact date of Ntambu-Sachitolu's deposition is not recorded in the archives, yet it was somewhere in the 1920s.

[2182] (NAZ) SEC2/304, James Ntambo to Legislative Council Lusaka, 9 February 1946.

[2183] (NAZ) SEC2/304, Provincial Commissioner North-Western Province to Chief Secretary Lusaka, 30 April 1946.

[2184] (NAZ) KSE6/5/1, C.S. Bellis, Balunda District Monthly Report, July 1910.

Kanongesha yet managed to gain power due to his co-operative stance towards the government and due to the large mission which was established in his area.[2185] Consequently, Chief Ikelenge's area became the nucleus of a concentrated, large and prosperous population. In the competitive political climate of the 1960s, ANC members condemned Chief Ikelenge for being 'a "Mission and government stooge"', pleading to Chief Kanongesha that 'the government is grooming Chief Ikelenge to take over the senior Chieftainship.'[2186] Due to government loyalty Ikelenge chiefdom became the hub of agricultural investment and schemes of development, attracting even more population towards the area.[2187] The attitude of chiefs could considerably influence population density and settlement patterns in an area, either leading to village dispersal or to concentration of settlement.

Headmen would only gain recognition from the colonial government if their villages contained a minimum of ten taxpaying men.[2188] Nevertheless, villages with ten taxpaying men never became the rule, evidenced by the small number of registered villages.[2189] Colonial officials would repeatedly complain that chiefs and headmen could not live up to their expectations: 'the small headmen who crow from the dung heaps of their villages are but idle fellows and not to be taken too seriously.'[2190] Despite official encouragement to form large and stable villages, the contrary appeared to be occurring, as villages split up into small settlements.[2191] Officials attributed this to the weak authority of village heads: 'There are now very few headmen who are respected enough to lead the people to perform their ordinary village duties and labours', and consequently 'there seems to be a tendency for villages to split up.'[2192] The demise of the authority of village heads was blamed partially on inter-generational struggles. Headmen were described as operating within 'the old tight, custom bound village circle.'[2193] The tendency of 'many of the younger generation to break away from their headmen and village discipline' in order to found their own settlements, was attributed to the personality of the headman.[2194] Within the previously described competitive atmosphere over authority and recognition, the establishment of small settlements does not appear surprising, though. Competition and fission had been inherent in Lunda villages and village breakup rather than cohesion was the norm.[2195] Due to new administrative tasks and a limited number of officially recognised chiefly positions, colonial rule enhanced existing competition between village heads. Yet despite contradictions and conflicts, chiefly rule and the authority of headmen adapted to changing circumstances, albeit in altered forms.[2196] Apart from small villages, a number of large villages headed by a strong headman or chief did arise. Under the influence of nation-building in independent Zambia, the position of headmen and chiefs was further altered.

[2185] This view is based on observations; oral interviews; a reading of archival sources (NAZ); See: W.S. Fisher and J. Hoyte, *Ndotolu: The life stories of Walter and Anna Fisher of Central Africa* (Ikelenge, Rev. ed., 1992).
[2186] (NAZ) LGH5/4/5, Lunda-Ndembo Native Authority Minutes, 6 May 1961.
[2187] This view is based on observations; oral interviews, for example Mrs Yiness Ikelenge, 10 April 2010, Ikelenge; a reading of archival sources (UNIPA).
[2188] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*; Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees.*
[2189] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 34, 37.
[2190] (NAZ) KSE6/5/1, G.A. MacGregor, Balunda District Monthly Report, 1 November 1908.
[2191] Turner, *Schism and continuity.*
[2192] (NAZ) SEC2/955, H.B. Waugh, Mwinilunga District Tour Report, 11 October 1940.
[2193] (NAZ) NWP1/2/33, D. Clough, Mwinilunga District Tour Report, 1950.
[2194] (NAZ) NWP1/2/78 Loc. 4913, F.R.G. Phillips, North-Western Province Annual Report, 1956.
[2195] Kay, 'Social aspects of village regrouping'; Turner, *Schism and continuity.*
[2196] Crehan, 'Of chickens and guinea fowl'; Von Oppen, 'The village as territory'.

Village leadership within the Zambian nation-state

Chieftaincy held a potentially ambiguous role within the Zambian nation-state. Although the Zambian government did create a 'House of Chiefs' as a complementary body to parliament, the role of chiefs remained advisory.[2197] Yet the government wanted to reassure chiefs:

> that they have a significant role to play even in the changed circumstances of the administration. It is also important that Chiefs are identified as far as possible with the development of the country and the people, and do not feel that they are being by-passed or brushed aside.[2198]

The influence of chiefs was confined, for example by policies which vested land in the president. Consequently: 'Many Chiefs feel that they have little part to play in the day to day running of their areas and that they are ignored and unwanted by their own people.'[2199] In an attempt to centralise authority, the government limited the independent powers of chiefs:

> President Kaunda today warned Chiefs here [in Mwinilunga] that if they flouted Government authority and tried to exercise their own in its place they would be dismissed instantly (…) The President told the Chiefs the Government would not be obstructed in its present role of building up the country.[2200]

Confronted with nation-building aspirations chiefs and village heads were losing ground, particularly if they did not co-operate with government aims.[2201] It might have been expected that villages would disintegrate into ever smaller units due to the loss of authority of village heads. Nevertheless, this has not occurred. In the 1980s, men would 'still dream of arriving at old age as the headman of a large village.'[2202] Chiefs and headmen have retained their positions intact into the present: 'it was still headmen who were the key players in local political life and the de facto power of headmen (…) depended to a significant extent on their ability to build up their villages by getting kin to settle with them.'[2203] The authority of village heads depended on attracting followers and building wealth in people, by mediating between the village and a broader (inter)national setting. Since the 1990s it might even be argued that chiefs and headmen have been experiencing a 'resurgence' of their authority. Chiefs managed to reinvent their position and assert their continued authority, for example by instituting 'traditional ceremonies', such as *Chisemwa ChaLunda*.[2204]

The prediction that village authority would weaken over time has not proven true. The occurrence of small settlements or farms cannot be linked to the diminishing power of village heads, as their position has always been contested. Competition between village heads indeed fostered the establishment of small settlements, yet the personality of the headman or chief equally held the potential of establishing large, prosperous settlements.[2205] The role of the village head reveals the tension between individual aspirations and communalism, village cohesion and fission. Turner described the personality of the 'ideal' village headman, the leader of a large village:

> The good headman is the good fellow, the man who 'laughs with everyone', who is hospitable, self-respecting, helpful and democratic (…) His field of friendly co-activity is not circumscribed by narrow minimal lineage relations; it extends outwards to include everyone of the village, regardless of their precise degree of relationship to him. The headman in his person should typify and exemplify the most general norms governing social interaction within the village.[2206]

Nevertheless, few individuals could meet these exacting standards. Because of tensions between individualism and communalism, large villages would only rarely appear or would split up after some

---

[2197] W.M.J. van Binsbergen, 'Chiefs and the state in independent Zambia: Exploring the Zambian national press', *Journal of legal pluralism and unofficial law* 25/6 (1987), 139-201; Englebert, 'Patterns and theories of traditional resurgence'.

[2198] (NAZ) LGH5/2/5 Loc. 3612, North-Western Provincial Development Committee, May 1965.

[2199] (NAZ) LGH5/2/7 Loc. 3612, Mwinilunga District Quarterly Newsletter, May 1967.

[2200] (NAZ) Times of Zambia, 24 June 1966.

[2201] M. Larmer, *Rethinking African politics: A history of opposition in Zambia* (Farnham and Burlington, 2011).

[2202] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* 194.

[2203] Crehan, 'Of chickens and guinea fowl', 225.

[2204] Ubink, 'Traditional authority revisited'; Englebert, 'Patterns and theories of traditional resurgence'.

[2205] Vansina, *Paths in the rainforests,* 73-82.

[2206] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 202.

time: 'Because few men possess or develop the personality ideally required for headmen new settlements often fail to become established.'[2207] Rather than being progressive, tension and competition were recurrent. No matter how precarious the balance, due to the skills of social, economic and political mediation the position of village heads has remained established throughout the twentieth century. Ultimately, the most important form of mediation was that over people. Chiefs and headmen aimed to become 'Big Men' with a large following, yet due to competitive tendencies the following of a village head would not remain stable for long. The position of village heads was reconfigured in reaction to government policies and social change, yet village heads persistently asserted their importance at the interstices of individual, village, regional and (inter)national authority.[2208] Headmen and chiefs mediated over people in a continually shifting setting, and this constituted the basis of their authority, the long-term thread in their rule. The tension between individualism and communalism did not only manifest itself in the position of village heads, but permeated many other aspects of village life.

Competition, co-operation and relationships: Reciprocity, accumulation and power

Village breakup into farms was attributed to a trend towards individual accumulation, disregarding relationships of reciprocity among extended kin.[2209] Officials greeted individualism with a degree of scepticism, for although it might contribute to economic entrepreneurship and development, it could equally hinder the orderly functioning of village society.[2210] Binary oppositions between communalism and individualism, household reciprocity versus self-interested accumulation, and kinship obligations versus a nucleation of the family were asserted and tensions between the two spheres were proposed as the root cause for village fission.[2211] Turner argued that the 'cash economy tends to destroy ties of corporate kinship *within* villages.'[2212] Nevertheless, trends towards individualisation and accumulation should be questioned.[2213] By looking at examples of agricultural work parties, communal eating and witchcraft, the tensions between accumulation and reciprocity will be brought out. It will be proposed that there was an inherent competitiveness in Lunda villages, yet that this did not necessarily disrupt patterns of reciprocity or co-operation.[2214] Rather than diminishing due to the money economy, kinship relations retained importance, constituting the essence of self-realisation and personhood and underpinning residence in villages.[2215]

Work parties and piecework: Co-operation or competition?

Agricultural production in Mwinilunga District has been described as highly individualistic.[2216] Nevertheless, because some tasks in agricultural production could be laborious, individuals, next to relying on the labour supply of the household, could occasionally call for assistance from kin and

[2207] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 203; Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* 191.
[2208] See: Kalusa, *Kalonga Gawa Undi X.*
[2209] Turner, *Schism and continuity*; See: Bates, 'Capital, kinship and conflict'; K. Crehan, 'Women and development in North Western Zambia: From producer to housewife', *Review of African political economy* 27/8 (1983), 51-66.
[2210] This view is based on a reading of archival sources, (NAZ).
[2211] Price and Thomas, 'Continuity and change in the Gwembe Tonga family'; De Boeck, 'Domesticating diamonds and dollars', 800; Bates, 'Capital, kinship and conflict'.
[2212] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 51.
[2213] See: Berry, *No condition is permanent*; De Boeck, 'Domesticating diamonds and dollars'; Price and Thomas, 'Continuity and change in the Gwembe Tonga family'.
[2214] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*; Von Oppen, *Terms of trade.*
[2215] Berry, *No condition is permanent*; J.I. Guyer, 'Wealth in people and self-realization in Equatorial Africa', *Man* 28:2 (1993), 243-65.
[2216] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 23; Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* 277.

neighbours to complete tasks rapidly.[2217] Such 'work parties' would last for one day, as one colonial official described: 'the man who wants assistance lays on a feast, consisting largely of beer, and other villagers help him with his garden in exchange.'[2218] Because work parties facilitated the completion of large tasks within one day, they enabled increased productivity. Although work parties stress collaboration, reciprocity and sharing, they hold the potential of developing into a system of paid agricultural work, 'piecework', which is marked by individualism, accumulation or even exploitation.[2219] Work parties could foster economic differentiation, leading to 'a vortex of impoverishment, intensifying the unequal exchange between haves and have-nots.'[2220] Yet, work parties did not have to work out in this way. They might equally enable a mixture of personal ambition and equity, containing inequality and overt accumulation through a focus on reciprocity and kinship.[2221] Work parties might be 'seen as a creative attempt to combine the impact of the money economy and processes of commodification with pre-existing ideas of reciprocity, personal ambition and ultimate equality.'[2222] Hosting a work party and expanding one's field could serve to approximate the ideal of becoming a 'Big Man', but status and wealth equally entailed responsibilities of reciprocity and the constitution of social relationships.[2223] Work parties did not necessarily promote individual accumulation, but rather created reciprocal dependence. The host of the work party would become responsible for the welfare of its members, creating webs of interdependence which would limit the extent of accumulation.[2224] Hosting a work party might be 'integral to the constitution of economic actors as moral persons.'[2225] Looking at the tensions between individualism and communalism, accumulation and sharing in work parties can therefore reveal social dynamics and power relations within villages throughout Mwinilunga.

Most agricultural tasks in Mwinilunga District are completed within the household. Even if co-operation in tasks such as tree-felling or harvesting might occur, individual activity is the norm.[2226] When attempting to organise game drives to eliminate vermin which was jeopardising the growing crops, colonial officials would complain that: 'trenches mean hard work and the individualistic Lunda thought themselves incapable of organising communal hunts.'[2227] Despite individual patterns of production, important headmen and chiefs could lay claim on communal labour: 'The Village Head is entitled to free labour for the clearing of his farm', yet 'it is not within his executive power to command this service.'[2228] Rather than being coerced, labour services depended on the respect, authority and status of the village head among his subjects. This respect enabled the village head to command labour, yet the continued assertion of respect depended on the relationship between the village head and his subjects, constituting a mutual dependence.[2229] Another form of communal labour was the *chenda*

[2217] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 22; W. Allan, *The African husbandman* (Edinburgh etc., 1965), 44; M.P. Miracle, *Agriculture in the Congo basin: Tradition and change in African rural economies* (Madison etc., 1967), 21.
[2218] (NAZ) NWP1/2/73, R.C. Dening, Comments on Harry Vaux's Report, 31 May 1954.
[2219] P.L. Geschiere, 'Working groups or wage labour?: Cash-crops, reciprocity and money among the Maka of Southeastern Cameroon', *Development and change* 26:3 (1995), 503-23; H. Englund, 'The self in self-interest: Land, labour and temporalities in Malawi's agrarian change', *Africa* 69:1 (1999), 139-59; D.F. Bryceson, 'Ganyu casual labour, famine and HIV/AIDS in rural Malawi: Causality and casualty', *The journal of modern African studies* 44:2 (2006), 173-202; Von Oppen, *Terms of trade,* 319-28.
[2220] Bryceson, 'Ganyu casual labour', 199.
[2221] Geschiere, 'Working groups or wage labour?'; Englund, 'The self in self-interest'.
[2222] Geschiere, 'Working groups or wage labour?', 521-2.
[2223] Englund, 'The self in self-interest'; De Boeck, 'Domesticating diamonds and dollars', 797.
[2224] Von Oppen, *Terms of trade,* 319-28; Englund, 'The self in self-interest'; Geschiere, 'Working groups or wage labour?'.
[2225] Englund, 'The self in self-interest', 138.
[2226] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* Chapter Two; Turner, *Schism and continuity.*
[2227] (NAZ) SEC2/956, F.M.N. Heath, Mwinilunga District Tour Report, 21 January 1948.
[2228] (NAZ) SEC2/402, Harry Vaux Report on Sailunga Kindred, 1936.
[2229] Geschiere, 'Working groups or wage labour?', 513-5.

(work party), which might be commissioned by any individual. Because tasks such as constructing mounds, hoeing or weeding are labour intensive, individuals might call for assistance from their neighbours (both kin and non-kin) to complete tasks rapidly. Large amounts of beer would be brewed, hunters might provide game meat, a goat or a sheep might be slaughtered or money could be offered as an incentive to attract assistance. In the morning people would gather to perform the required tasks and once the job was completed beer, meat or money would be offered as a reward in the evening. Work parties would last for one day and might be commissioned by any man or woman with sufficient resources to remunerate labourers.[2230] Work parties enabled increased productivity, as they facilitated the completion of large tasks in a short time-span. Enjoying access to a pool of temporary labourers enabled some to cultivate a large acreage and to engage in cash crop production for the market.[2231]

Work parties have been long-established in the area of Mwinilunga.[2232] Communal labour would generally involve a form of reciprocity. Village heads would be authorised to solicit communal labour for the cultivation of their fields or the construction of their house, but this was only because of the services which they provided to the community.[2233] Village heads offered protection, bestowed fertility and brought prosperity to their communities, which could be translated into claims on labour in a reciprocal relationship.[2234] Work parties organised by village members among themselves would equally be marked by a certain reciprocity: 'everyone else can demand communal labour for the clearing of his farm, but is also bound to perform the same service for others when called upon to do so.'[2235] The feasts which followed work parties would distribute scarce goods and delicacies, such as money, game meat or beer, among members. Work parties:

> may have been for a very long time just one alternative access to scarce goods and labour between individuals (…) within the local economy, and may have had a socially balancing effect between the individuals and groups involved to even out temporary shortages.[2236]

Rather than fostering exploitative accumulation, work parties appeared to possess a balancing mechanism.[2237] One colonial official noted that: 'The higher the status of a villager, the more he is bound theoretically to fulfil his communal obligations as an example to the public.'[2238]

Nevertheless, work parties did contain a more individually accumulative or even exploitative potential.[2239] Wealth and power differentiation might occur if rich farmers would habitually call on poor village members to perform labour in return for low rewards. Whereas the host of the work party would be able to expand fields, produce cash crops and procure wealth through the market, labourers would be caught in a vicious circle. Only minimal remuneration could be earned by working for others, yet labour inputs for work parties might clash with requirements in one's own fields. Labourers would have less time to cultivate their own fields and would become trapped in poverty.[2240] Patterns of accumulation and incipient wage labour could be witnessed in work parties from early on.[2241] Court records from 1916 mention the case of a man who had worked in another person's garden but had

---

[2230] See: Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 22; Von Oppen, *Terms of trade,* 319-22.
[2231] Bryceson, 'Ganyu casual labour'; Crehan, 'Women and development in North Western Zambia', 66.
[2232] Von Oppen, *Terms of trade,* 319.
[2233] Compare to: Englund, 'The self in self-interest', 146, 151.
[2234] F. De Boeck, ''When hunger goes around the land': Hunger and food among the Aluund of Zaire', *Man* 29:2 (1994), 257-82.
[2235] (NAZ) SEC2/402, Harry Vaux Report on Sailunga Kindred, 1936.
[2236] Von Oppen, *Terms of trade,* 324.
[2237] Englund, 'The self in self-interest'; Geschiere, 'Working groups or wage labour?'.
[2238] (NAZ) SEC2/402, Harry Vaux Report on Sailunga Kindred, 1936.
[2239] This has been noted by: Von Oppen, *Terms of trade*; Geschiere, 'Working groups or wage labour?'; Englund, 'The self in self-interest', all authors qualify this assertion to some extent.
[2240] Bryceson, 'Ganyu casual labour'; J. Pottier, *Migrants no more: Settlement and survival in Mambwe villages, Zambia* (Manchester, 1988), 84-6.
[2241] Compare to: Von Oppen, *Terms of trade,* 319-28.

not been paid the promised 2/-.[2242] Even though British currency had but barely penetrated the area, men would already charge one another for agricultural labour. A further case of labour contracts which held an exploitative potential was that of recently settled Angolan and Congolese immigrants. Because immigrants often lacked close kin in Mwinilunga District, their access to land would be complicated and this would encourage their participation in work parties to obtain food and capital.[2243] In the 1920s it was noted that:

> Any surplus they [inhabitants of Mwinilunga] 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 until such time as they can get their own gardens established.[2244]

Similar to later flows of refugees who were landless and lacked ties to the area, agricultural labour could assume exploitative properties, but only under specific conditions.[2245]

Piecework was another form of short-term contract which exchanged labour for remuneration in currency or kind.[2246] Through formal contracts missionaries and colonial officials had spread the practice of piecework, employing day labourers to herd cattle, maintain a road or build an office.[2247] But individuals could also commission their neighbours for specific piecework. This was a particularly common practice in the case of large-scale cash crop production for the market.[2248] Because a single household would not manage to complete all the tasks of cultivation in large fields, they would call on others for assistance. This assistance would usually be casual and short-term (the Lunda word for piecework, *chikonkwanyi,* means stint of work) on previously agreed conditions.[2249] Pineapple farmers, in particular, would employ pieceworkers to assist in tasks such as constructing ridges, weeding or harvesting pineapples. Labourers would be paid per completed ridge and remuneration might be in money, cloth, fish or meat.[2250] Pineapple farmers might commission pieceworkers to cultivate their cassava fields in exchange for a share in pineapple profits. This practice would undoubtedly benefit large farmers, who would be able to expand their fields without jeopardising food security.[2251] Nevertheless, this practice did not lead to the impoverishment of pieceworkers. This did not have to do with a lack of individual accumulative desire, nor with an inherent disposition towards egalitarian sharing, but rather with the constitution of personhood and the importance of social relationships, as large farmers were dependent on pieceworkers for prestige and power in the same manner that pieceworkers depended on large farmers for goods and support.[2252]

Work parties and piecework are subject to power hierarchies, being part of the 'micro-politics of everyday life.'[2253] They allow for a redistribution of wealth in the village, as resourceful individuals who have earned money through labour migration or cash crop production can provide others with access to scarce resources through agricultural employment.[2254] Farmers usually employ kin or neighbours, only rarely strangers.[2255] The most common pool of labourers consists of women and

---

[2242] (NAZ) KSE3/1/2/1, Jorombo of Katundo v. Sakasumbi of Kalene Hill Mission, 19 September 1916.
[2243] Von Oppen, *Terms of trade,* 325-6; For examples from the 1990s, see: Bakewell, 'Refugees repatriating'.
[2244] (NAZ) KSE6/2/1, F.V. Bruce-Miller, Mwinilunga Sub-District Quarterly Report, 30 June 1922.
[2245] Englund, 'The self in self-interest', 153; A. Hansen, 'Once the running stops: The social and economic incorporation of Angolan refugees into Zambian border villages' (PhD thesis, Cornell University, 1977).
[2246] Von Oppen, *Terms of trade,* 321-8.
[2247] See: Fisher and Hoyte, *Ndotolu*; R. Short, *African sunset* (London, 1973).
[2248] Crehan, 'Women and development'; Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* 88.
[2249] *Lunda-Ndembu dictionary*; Confirmed by numerous oral interviews, for example with Mr John Kamuhuza, April 2010, Ikelenge.
[2250] See interviews with Mr Kamuhuza, Mr Saipilinga and Mr Kamafumbu, March and April 2010, Ikelenge.
[2251] Bryceson, 'Ganyu casual labour'.
[2252] Englund, 'The self in self-interest'; Geschiere, 'Working groups or wage labour?'.
[2253] Englund, 'The self in self-interest', 151.
[2254] Bryceson, 'Ganyu casual labour'; Geschiere, 'Working groups or wage labour?'.
[2255] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 22. Compare to: Englund, 'The self in self-interest'; Geschiere, 'Working groups or wage labour?'.

youth, who by working in other people's fields could earn income which might be invested in consumption, education or in their own agricultural enterprises.[2256] The material interests of labourers could play a role in their acceptance of piecework and they might in fact initiate the piecework relationship: 'When someone wants something, e.g. pair of shoes, he goes to somebody who has some and asks: "What can I work for you so that you give me the shoes?"'[2257] The relationship did not become exploitative, as pieceworkers would retain their independence by cultivating their own fields, 'which restricted the access of the richer farmers to additional labour, and thus limited their possibilities for further extending their farms.'[2258] This independence not only checked accumulative tendencies, but furthermore 'labourers themselves disclose their constitutive relationships by working for their recruiter.'[2259] Pineapple farmers could become 'Big Men', but they could only do so through the support of others, which involved responsibility for their well-being. Pineapple farmers could be:

> self-interested actors whose concern is to protect, and possibly increase, personal wealth. Yet wealth (…) becomes wealth only when it mobilises others (…) Wealth which is individual and private, mobilising no one but the person him- or herself, constitutes its proprietor as the inversion of moral being.[2260]

Pineapple farmers were expected to provide for the education of their nephews and nieces, build a house for their parents, etc.[2261] Work parties and piecework could provide an avenue towards self-realisation and create a dynamic of growth, but because aspects of personhood remained relational, this dynamic would not become exploitative.[2262] An individual could not attain wealth single-handedly, but would depend on others for their labour, skills and for building personal prestige and power: 'Persons and households appear as the outcomes of others' contributions and are, in turn, morally obliged to act in line with those relationships.'[2263] The relationships in work parties and piecework were therefore not unduly hierarchical, but would be characterised by a reciprocal dependency.

Work parties provided a model for post-independence policies of Humanism, co-operative organisation and self-help.[2264] Officials would argue that: 'Zambia has always had a tradition of mutual aid in the villages, and this is a very valuable basis on which to build a co-operative movement.'[2265] Promoting a form of equity, rather than competition, policies aimed to: 'stop the exploitation of one man by another through the cooperative practice of one man one vote and equitable distribution of profits (…) communities willingly contribute communal labour and available local resources.'[2266] Work parties could be motivated by individual aspirations. Nevertheless, work parties did not result in self-centred exploitation of labourers by 'Big Men' but rather emphasised the multiple forms of interdependence within village communities. Hosts would depend on labourers not only for physical labour, but for social standing. Self-realisation could not be achieved single-handedly, but was dependent on social relationships which constituted social and moral personhood.[2267] Hosting a work party could mark prestige in the village, whereas arising inequalities continued to be 'contained within the old idiom of reciprocity and kinship.'[2268] Work parties could accommodate social change, express individual aspirations and competition within the village. Rather than promoting individualisation

[2256] Crehan, 'Women and development', 66.
[2257] Von Oppen, *Terms of trade,* 323.
[2258] Geschiere, 'Working groups or wage labour?', 319.
[2259] Englund, 'The self in self-interest', 152.
[2260] Englund, 'The self in self-interest', 151.
[2261] Interviews with Mr Kamuhuza, Mr Kamafumbu and Mr Saipilinga, March and April 2010, Ikelenge.
[2262] De Boeck, 'Domesticating diamonds and dollars'; Guyer, 'Wealth in people and self-realization'.
[2263] Englund, 'The self in self-interest', 146.
[2264] J. Gould, 'On the genealogy of the post-colonial state: Lugard and Kaunda on cooperatives and authority in rural Zambia', in: H.S. Marcussen (ed.), *Improved natural resource management: The role of formal organisations and informal networks and institutions* (Roskilde, 1996), 232-57.
[2265] (UNIPA) UNIP1/1/7, Ministry of Agriculture Annual Report, 1964.
[2266] (UNIPA) UNIP5/3/1/52, R.C. Kamanga, Address to the District Governor's Workshop, 10 June 1971.
[2267] De Boeck, 'Domesticating diamonds and dollars'; Englund, 'The self in self-interest'.
[2268] Geschiere, 'Working groups or wage labour?', 505.

which would lead to village breakup, commercial agriculture could be combined with ideas of reciprocity and personal ambition.[2269] Another practice which can highlight the tensions between individual accumulation and reciprocity is the sharing of food.

Sharing a meal: Food, power and hierarchy

Food is a 'prime constituent of social relations.'[2270] Moreover, 'Food is a common medium through which people define relations of reciprocity, exchange and social control, and thereby manipulate status, politics and prestige', in addition to categories of gender, age and personhood.[2271] In Mwinilunga a meal is only rarely consumed by an individual in isolation, as food can be used to express, strengthen or question social relationships. Eating is a social experience, evidenced by the paramount importance of communal eating and food sharing within the village.[2272] Commensality might be 'a metaphor of the orderly life, representing generosity, mutuality and freedom from greed.'[2273] Nevertheless, commensality does not merely express egalitarian tendencies of sharing and kinship solidarity, as eating is part of the micro-politics of daily life and can give rise to aspirations for self-aggrandisement as well.[2274] Noting a trend towards individualisation, in the 1950s Turner described that communal eating was giving way to consumption of food within the nuclear family:

> Sometimes an elementary family, including the husband, would eat together in the wife's kitchen (…) this arrangement is becoming more common today than the collective meal of the men's group. This is yet another aspect of the general breakdown of the traditional social organization in this area where subsistence cultivation is steadily giving way to petty commodity cultivation.[2275]

Even if it is no longer universal, communal eating persists until the present day.[2276] In order to persist, the practice of communal eating had to be maintained, increased or weakened by every member of the community on a daily basis.[2277] The act of eating expressed the tension between individualism and communalism, being 'a process involving reinterpretation to fit the changing events of everyday life.'[2278] The politics of food, sharing and communal consumption will be explored, revealing the tensions and power relations which lay at the basis of the seemingly simple and mundane act of eating.

Eating is governed by rules, regulations and taboos. This rule-bound aspect makes food an instrument for communication, expressing power relations along lines of gender and age.[2279] The meal connects production and consumption through redistributive acts which give some members of the community entitlements to food which they have not produced themselves.[2280] Before food reaches the plate, it has gone through a number of transformations, oscillating between collective and individual spheres of ownership.[2281] Whereas ownership of land and resources is vested in the Lunda

---

[2269] Geschiere, 'Working groups or wage labour?', 521-2; Englund, 'The self in self-interest'.

[2270] M. Douglas and J. Gross, 'Food and culture: Measuring the intricacy of rule systems', *Social science information* 20:1 (1981), 1.

[2271] De Boeck, 'When hunger goes around the land', 261.

[2272] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 23-4; Von Oppen, *Terms of trade,* 253-4.

[2273] J.H. Hamer, 'Commensality, process and the moral order: An example from Southern Ethiopia', *Africa* 64:1 (1994), 137.

[2274] Hamer, 'Commensality, process and the moral order'; Turner, *Schism and continuity*; S. Bahuchet, 'Food sharing among the Pygmies of Central Africa', *African study monographs* 11:1 (1990), 27-53; E. Mandala, *The end of chidyerano: A history of food and everyday life in Malawi, 1860-2004* (Portsmouth, 2005).

[2275] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 24.

[2276] Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees,* 193-7. For the Northern Province, Richards equally predicted that communal eating would fade due to capitalism, yet the practice persists until today.

[2277] Douglas and Gross, 'Food and culture', 5.

[2278] Hamer, 'Commensality, process and the moral order', 139.

[2279] Douglas and Gross, 'Food and culture', 1.

[2280] Turner, *Schism and continuity*; De Boeck, 'When hunger goes around the land'; Mandala, *The end of chidyerano*, 221.

[2281] Mandala, *The end of chidyerano,* 203-38.

as a collective, bestowed by *Nzambi* (God the creator) and the ancestors and held in custody by chiefs and headmen, production is predominantly individual.[2282] Collective landholdings are subdivided into individual plots, worked by men and women separately. Similarly, the collective wealth of game and honey is appropriated by individual hunters or honey collectors if they prove successful in the bush.[2283] No matter how fortunate a producer might be, an individual would always acknowledge that success and wealth depended on others, as *kashinshi* (responsibility) was the most valued characteristic of all.[2284] Producers depended on kin and neighbours for collaboration and would seek ancestral or communal blessing for the success of productive activities.[2285] During the *musolu* rain ceremony crops and agricultural implements would be sacrificed at an ancestral shrine to ensure a regular rainfall during the season.[2286] Likewise, after a hunter had killed an animal, he would go to a hunting shrine to sacrifice (*kupesha*) the intestines (*mujingwa* from *jila*, be sacred, subject to taboos) of the animal to ancestral spirits to secure continued success in the hunt. Should a hunter fail to make these sacrifices, he would risk misfortune or even death.[2287] Food connects the individual to a wider community:

> the daily activities of cultivating, hunting, cooking and feeding create and make possible the integration of individuals into the household as the social redistributive and food-sharing unit which provides the constructive basis from which they properly engage in social relationships with the world beyond.[2288]

Individual producers would acknowledge their debt to the community through the act of eating, by sharing food with neighbours and kin in communal meals.

Communal meals, rather than being symbols of harmony or the outcome of a 'golden age theory' of reciprocal sharing and support, were a daily site of contestation, subject to power relationships within the village.[2289] Turner gives a standardised description of the daily meal:

> In villages men eat in the central thatched shelter (*chota* or *njang'u*) and the women take turns in cooking for the whole group (…) Cassava mush, the invariable staple of every meal, was prepared by a woman and her daughters (…) Women, girls and uncircumcised boys ate their food, cooked on a different fire from that on which the men's food had been prepared, in the kitchens, either in family groups or with friends.[2290]

Far from being egalitarian, food consumption was differentiated along lines of kinship, gender and age.[2291] Whereas men would eat food together in the *chota*, women would eat in separate kitchens, although several women might keep each other company, share food and cook together. Each household was expected to contribute something to the communal men's meal, in the form of *nshima* or relish (vegetables, beans, fish or meat). This ensured that a variety of food would reach the men's shelter – as a hunter might contribute meat, whereas a fisherman would come with fish, etc. – and it spread risks.[2292] Even the best hunters could be struck by misfortune and in this case they could rely on others without immediately suffering from hunger. Furthermore, the sharing of food would make it easier to provide for elders, orphans and visitors. Rather than becoming the exclusive responsibility

---

[2282] (NAZ) SEC2/402, Harry Vaux Report on Sailunga Kindred, 1936; Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* 310; Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 217.

[2283] V.W. Turner, *The forest of symbols: Aspects of Ndembu ritual* (Ithaca etc., 1970), 280-98; De Boeck, 'Domesticating diamonds and dollars'.

[2284] Interview with Mr Justin Kambidima, 22 October 2010; De Boeck, 'Domesticating diamonds and dollars'; Turner, *Forest of symbols,* 280-98.

[2285] See Turner's work; Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* 190.

[2286] This view is based on numerous oral interviews, for example Mr Mazondu Sanyikosa, 27 May 2010, Nyakaseya; Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* 247-9, 275-81; Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 16, 298, 327.

[2287] This view is based on numerous oral interviews, for example Mr Fanwel, 5 May 2010, Nyakaseya; See: Turner, *Forest of symbols,* 280-98.

[2288] De Boeck, 'When hunger goes around the land', 272.

[2289] Mandala, *The end of chidyerano,* 204; Bahuchet, 'Food sharing among the Pygmies', 27-8.

[2290] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 23-4.

[2291] De Boeck, 'When hunger goes around the land'; Mandala, *The end of chidyerano.*

[2292] This view is based on numerous oral interviews and observations; See: Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 23-4.

of a single household, care for needy individuals would be spread among different households.[2293] Still, sharing food was far from unproblematic.

Not all individuals could make equal claims on all types of food. Inequality in access revealed power relations within society.[2294] For one, there were hierarchies based on age and status within the male communal eating group. Elders would start eating first and would be allocated the best pieces of meat, whereas young boys would get the leftovers. If any food was left after the meal, it would be brought back to the women in their kitchens.[2295] Similarly, hierarchies would play a role when dividing meat from the hunt. These hierarchies would be contested and subject to change:

> The pattern of distribution of meat varies with the size and composition of the residential unit. If this unit is small, containing a small bilateral extended family (*ntang'a*), in addition to the portions reserved for the hunter and those given to the senior headman or chief, a back leg will be given to the hunter's brother or mother's brother or is divided between several brothers; a back leg or a front leg will be given to his mother; a front leg will be divided among his sisters; the saddle will go to his wives; the breast will go to his father; and any small pieces that remain will be distributed among boys too old to live in their parents' huts. In the larger villages containing two or more minimal matrilineages, a leg may be allocated to the senior man of each lineage, and it will be further subdivided by the latter among the married men of his lineage.[2296]

Meat distribution could be a means to acknowledge, honour and strengthen interpersonal ties within the village. A hunter would divide meat between the headman, his brothers, sisters, wives, mother and children, thereby strengthening his future claims on their labour, services and support.[2297] Meat distribution was far from equitable. Because rules remained malleable, meat distribution could become a source of tension and struggle. Conflict might erupt after a communal *ikuna* hunt:[2298]

> The buck had all been dismembered for easier distribution. Each hunter who had killed a buck was given the "head" (this technical term includes the head, neck, heart and lungs and may only be eaten by the hunter lest the magic of his hunting prowess be stolen from him), and a leg. A leg also of each buck was taken by [headman] Malovu who doubtless shared them with the other headmen. Malovu then began to distribute the remainder of the meat to all who had taken any part in the "burn". All this was accompanied by much shouting and arguing, the men who had not actually killed anything clamouring loudly for their share. This process of distribution is called *kwanzañena,* from *kwanza* (to eke out).[2299]

The division of meat was not fixed and would be subject of debate. Access to and distribution of meat could express and strengthen social relationships and make a hunter a 'Big Man'.[2300]

Because of the social and political functions of food, which enabled the building of wealth in people, not only individual consumption but food sharing among kin and neighbours would be resorted to. The tensions between individualism and communalism are brought out by Turner's description:

> It is considered to be good manners for each man or woman who has received meat to have a portion of it cooked for the men's eating-group in the village shelter, each retaining a share for his or her own elementary family. A good deal of grumbling goes on both over the precise division of the meat and over the amounts cooked for the men's group (…) Throughout the economic system a tension is set up between the individual producer or killer of food and the group who by custom have claims in it. A 'greedy person', one who persistently retains what he produces for himself, ultimately may be expelled from the village. Conversely, a professional hunter who resents the claims of remote classificatory kin

---

[2293] This view is based on numerous oral interviews, for example Mr Pierre Shimishi, 1 May 2010, Nyakaseya; Compare to: Mandala, *The end of chidyerano.*

[2294] De Boeck, 'When hunger goes around the land'; Hamer, 'Commensality, process and the moral order'.

[2295] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 23-4.

[2296] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 31.

[2297] De Boeck, 'Domesticating diamonds and dollars'; Turner, *Forest of symbols,* 280-98; Compare to: S.A. Marks, *Large mammals and a brave people: Subsistence hunters in Zambia* (New Brunswick etc., 2005).

[2298] See Chapter 2.

[2299] W.S. Fisher, 'Burning the bush for game', *African studies* 7:1 (1948), 38.

[2300] De Boeck, 'Domesticating diamonds and dollars', 792.

> on the product of his hunting may lead away from a village a small group consisting of his wives, and children, and his sister's children, to found a new village.[2301]

Despite tensions, sharing food was about making constitutive relationships visible, about establishing moral personhood:[2302] 'If food is treated as a code, the messages it encodes will be found in the pattern of social relations being expressed. The message is about different degrees of hierarchy, inclusion and exclusion, boundaries and transactions across the boundaries.'[2303] To return to the division of meat, rights over the distribution of meat were perhaps more important than access itself. By distributing meat, social relationships could be built and strengthened and that is why decision-making powers would be so vehemently contested.[2304] Food was not valued exclusively as nourishment, but could serve to establish a large and influential following. Hunters could become 'Big Men' by sharing meat and building a following, or by establishing villages of their own.[2305] By sharing produce through communal meals, individuals acknowledged interdependence with the village community: 'Foodstuffs (…) become food only in so far as they are the result of reciprocity and exchange, and relate to reproduction and life-transmission. Processes of circulating, distributing, preparing and consuming food constitute an indirect socialization of the transmission of life.'[2306] The persistence of communal meals therefore argues against individualisation and village breakup.[2307]

Communal meals could express rivalry and power relations within the village, being contested events. Not all households or individuals could contribute equally to communal meals. Notorious figures included *chibodi* (a person who is not a hunter but who likes to eat meat) and *kabwengenenge* (a person who does not like to cultivate).[2308] Even though these persons would not contribute their share to productive activities, they would demand food from others.[2309] This might result in quarrels, witchcraft accusations or even court cases: 'Sambula caught two bush-buck. He gave me a small piece of one. I told him the piece of meat was too small and we quarrelled over the matter.'[2310] The headman and elders would reprimand and encourage the lazy person to start producing more food. This communal pressure from the *chota* would evoke *nsonyi* (shame, embarrassment) which could act as a moral incentive to increase production.[2311] Starting from a young age children would be educated to work hard. In the *chota* male youths would be taught: 'If you do not contribute to the communal pot, you will get starved, you will receive no food.'[2312] Despite productive imbalances, affluent and productive village members would continue to share food with their less successful counterparts. Sharing food was a strategy towards self-realisation and a means to build wealth in people: 'self-worth is based upon wealth and power, which ironically can be obtained only through disciplined self-restraint and generous redistribution of food and material reward to others.'[2313] Becoming a 'Big Man' involved a 'balance of acquisitiveness and self-aggrandisement with sharing, avoidance of greed,

---

[2301] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 31-2.
[2302] Englund, 'The self in self-interest'.
[2303] M. Douglas, 'Deciphering a meal', *Daedalus* 101:1 (1972), 61.
[2304] Crehan, 'Women and development', 57.
[2305] See: Turner, *Schism and continuity*.
[2306] De Boeck, 'When hunger goes around the land', 267.
[2307] Compare to: Mandala, *The end of chidyerano*; Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees.*
[2308] This view is based on numerous oral interviews, for example Mr Jonathan Chiyezhi, 2010, Mwinilunga; See: Pritchett, *Friends for life.*
[2309] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 148-52.
[2310] (NAZ) KSE3/2/2/2, Rex v. Sambula, Makaka, Japinda and Musatchi, 6 September 1915.
[2311] This view is based on numerous oral interviews, for example Mr Jinguluka, May 2010, Nyakaseya; (NAZ) SEC2/402, Harry Vaux Report on Sailunga Kindred, 1936.
[2312] Interview with Mr Jackson Jinguluka, May 2010, Nyakaseya.
[2313] Hamer, 'Commensality, process and the moral order', 130.

generosity, and restraint.'[2314] Generosity in dispensing food would not only be rewarded with status at present, but might be converted into remembrance after death as well:[2315]

> There is a tendency to forget and ignore the spirits of bad men (…) and to boost the memory of good men. The spirits of mighty hunters are greatly respected (…) In general, a well-known man will have been an expert in some activity, hunting, fishing, medicine and so on, and his spirit will be invoked by anyone indulging in that profession; he is so to speak the patron saint or the guardian angel in respect to that activity.[2316]

Because influence and power depended on people, distributing food could serve to establish personhood and status within the community.[2317]

In the 1950s Turner predicted the demise of communal eating and linked this to a trend of individualisation. Commercialisation would strain reciprocity and promote individual accumulation.[2318] In the light of these predictions, the persistence of food sharing might be surprising. Nonetheless, despite its inherent contradictions, sharing food could serve to pool risks and enhance group cohesion, underlining relationships of mutual dependence.[2319] Because rights of ownership were based on 'each individual's responsibility in assuring the prosperity of the community', access to meat and fish entailed obligations towards others.[2320] The sharing of food was linked to other forms of exchange, to the circulation of goods in the village and beyond.[2321] Even if sharing involved responsibilities, it could accrue benefits, creating a web of ties within the community. Dispensing food entailed the expectation of a return gift, creating a debt and boosting the respectability of the host.[2322] The practice of communal eating was vital, as 'life-transmission only becomes possible through sharing, reciprocity, relatedness and complementarity.'[2323] Food had always been consumed within the household, as well as in groups.[2324] Yet exclusive individual consumption would ultimately prove unsustainable. Communal eating has not withered away, as eating continues to be a way in which to constitute and express social relationships, upon which wealth, influence and power are based.[2325] In a context of social change, economic or political insecurity, social ties could be a 'safety network'.[2326] Wealth in people constituted a desired goal and a 'Big Man' would '*diisha antu yakudya*, feed the people, that is, spend wealth on social prestige, transform *maheta* (things) into *kavumbi* (respect).'[2327] Enhancing one's connections to others by sharing food could further individual interests and resources. Although dependents, especially unproductive individuals such as *chibodi* or *kabwengenenge*, could be a burden, they could be important assets as well.[2328] Communal eating might 'help to build networks as well as to enhance an individual's reputation for generosity and public mindedness.'[2329] When compared to the beginning of the twentieth century, the frequency of communal meals has diminished, but food continues to be an important means of establishing social relationships.[2330] As an ostentation of wealth and status, food is shared with extended kin and visitors to build an individual's

[2314] Hamer, 'Commensality, process and the moral order', 130.
[2315] Pritchett, *Friends for life.*
[2316] (NAZ) NWP1/2/23, R.C. Dening Comments on Harry Vaux's Report, 31 May 1954.
[2317] Hamer, 'Commensality, process and the moral order'; De Boeck, 'When hunger goes around the land.'
[2318] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 24; Compare to: Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees*.
[2319] Mandala, *The end of chidyerano*; Bahuchet, 'Food sharing among the Pygmies'.
[2320] Bahuchet, 'Food sharing among the Pygmies', 40.
[2321] Bahuchet, 'Food sharing among the Pygmies', 38-9; Von Oppen, *Terms of trade.*
[2322] De Boeck, 'When hunger goes around the land'; Hamer, 'Commensality, process and the moral order'.
[2323] De Boeck, 'When hunger goes around the land', 269.
[2324] This view is based on numerous oral interviews; See: Mandala, *The end of chidyerano.*
[2325] Hamer, 'Commensality, process and the moral order'; De Boeck, 'When hunger goes around the land'.
[2326] Berry, *No condition is permanent.*
[2327] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* 131.
[2328] See: Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* 194.
[2329] Berry, *No condition is permanent,* 161.
[2330] Mandala, *The end of chidyerano.*

base of support and influence. Food can serve to strengthen interpersonal ties, which remain the most important resource in the area of Mwinilunga. Because of this, communal eating has retained its importance, even if its form has changed.

Witchcraft, jealousy and power: Discourses on accumulation and sharing

Colonial officials in Mwinilunga held that witchcraft beliefs were a thing of 'uncivilised Africans', primitive markers of 'tradition':[2331]

> The wholesale practice of witchcraft which is so deep seated that it enshrouds every aspect of the daily lives of people is an obstacle which must be broken down by strong propaganda in order to ensure the success of any concerted development.[2332]

According to linear narratives of historical change, witchcraft beliefs and practices would inevitably demise, influenced by the spread of education, Christianity and civilisation.[2333] Nevertheless, this has proved far from straightforward. Rather than seeing it as a local or conservative manifestation, witchcraft has increasingly been associated with modernity and globalisation.[2334] Looking at witchcraft might be a way 'to understand the manner in which individuals and collectivities manage human problems and seek to explain the world in which they live.'[2335] Instead of a mere belief, witchcraft is a product of moral community, a part of the 'texture of life', connected to 'adultery, jealousy, selfishness, discord, sickness, and death.'[2336] Witchcraft can reveal tensions between the individual and the community, providing a discourse in which to discuss norms of communal sharing, legitimate accumulation and the attainment of wealth.[2337] Witchcraft accusations are often attributed to a failure to share wealth and a 'disregard of basic principles of respect, reciprocity and solidarity', in favour of self-interested accumulation of profit.[2338] Witchcraft has all too often been analysed through the prism of 'social levelling', curbing initiatives towards 'individual accumulation'. Nevertheless, a binary opposition 'between communal values and selfish individualism' should be avoided as the two stand in a dialectic relationship:[2339]

> A sorcery discourse nearly always has 'levelling' implications: sorcery as originating from jealousy and seen as an attack on old or new inequalities. But this is often balanced by 'accumulative' implications: the same discourse can also serve to protect or reinforce the accumulation of wealth and power.[2340]

Witchcraft in Mwinilunga will be analysed to see how it could mediate forms of individuality and sociality. Was it used as a social levelling mechanism in times of stress and social change, or could it further individual wealth and entrepreneurship? Witchcraft discourses could simultaneously be a means of legitimising and contesting wealth: 'The idiom of witchcraft has its own power. It may frame

---

[2331] (NAZ) LGH5/1/3 Loc.3604, Lunda-Ndembu Native Authority Meeting, 13 April 1961.

[2332] (NAZ) LGH5/5/8, Mwinilunga District Development Plan, 1956.

[2333] See: V.W. Turner, 'Witchcraft and sorcery: Taxonomy versus dynamics', in: *The forest of symbols*, 112-30; F.H. Melland, *In witch-bound Africa: An account of the primitive Kaonde tribe and their beliefs* (London, 1967).

[2334] See: H. Englund, 'Witchcraft and the limits of mass mediation in Malawi', *Journal of the royal anthropological institute* 13 (2007), 295-311; J. Comaroff and J. Comaroff (eds.), *Modernity and its malcontents: Ritual and power in postcolonial Africa* (Chicago and London, 1993); G.C. Bond and D. Ciekawy (eds.), *Witchcraft dialogues: Anthropological and philosophical exchanges* (Athens, 2001); H.L. Moore and T. Sanders (eds.), *Magical interpretations, material realities: Modernity, witchcraft and the occult in postcolonial Africa* (London etc., 2001).

[2335] Bond and Ciekawy, *Witchcraft dialogues,* 4.

[2336] K.E. Fields, 'Political contingencies of witchcraft in colonial Central Africa: Culture and the state in Marxist theory', *Canadian journal of African studies* 16:3 (1982), 586.

[2337] H. Englund, 'Witchcraft, modernity and the person: The morality of accumulation in Central Malawi', *Critique of anthropology* 16 (1996), 257-79.

[2338] De Boeck, 'Domesticating diamonds and dollars', 789-92.

[2339] R.A. Austen, 'The moral economy of witchcraft: An essay in comparative history', in: Comaroff, *Modernity and its malcontents,* 92.

[2340] C.F. Fisiy and P.L. Geschiere, 'Sorcery, witchcraft and accumulation: Regional variations in South and West Cameroon', *Critique of anthropology* 11:3 (1991), 253.

a social or political critique, tracing the social fault lines of wealth, power, and authority.'[2341] In this sense, witchcraft might provide a lens to study village cohesion and competition, questioning the trend towards individualisation and village breakup.[2342]

All forms of adversity, such as the delayed onset of rains, the inexplicable occurrence of disease or death, might be conceived in idioms of witchcraft. Next to extraordinary circumstances, witchcraft can deal with everyday experiences, being 'intimately bound up with people's ideas about production, exchange and consumption.'[2343] Witchcraft can at once present a fault line and a point of intersection between the individual and the community:

> Witchcraft is a social and cultural manifestation that reveals the capacity of individuals to be subjected to and resist an established normative order (…) It is built upon desire, jealousy, avarice, and the belief that through manifestations of the human will and the application of particular skills, human emotions may affect the fortunes of others. It recognizes the necessity of being social but also the limiting impositions and normative constraints derived from the incumbency of social positions, their expectations, and their anticipated obligations.[2344]

Because discourses, beliefs and practices of witchcraft stand at the intersection of the individual and the community, they can be a tool to study social change and intra-village struggles over power, wealth and meaning. Witchcraft might heighten in situations of social change and tension.[2345] Within a context of flux, witchcraft discourses might be seen as 'moral frameworks for making sense of wage labour, consumption, migration, productive regimes, structural adjustment programmes, development policies and the functioning of markets.'[2346] In the area of Mwinilunga, witchcraft is a discourse about the attainment of power and wealth, involving control over production and reproduction, being:

> an argument about *how* (…) prosperity is to be achieved. Witchcraft unravels a relational notion of personhood; accumulation is endowed with moral adequacy as long as the enterprising person makes his or her constitutive relationships visible, usually through gift-giving, patronage or feasting. Conversely, the morally despised form of accumulation derives from the perception of the person as an individual. In brief, witchcraft discourses are (…) occasions to contest and manage the images of the person as a moral being.[2347]

How could witchcraft discourses mediate processes of social change, expressing tensions between individuals and the community? Looking at witchcraft and its changing manifestations over time can reveal norms about accumulation and sharing, how these norms have been contested and why the importance of social relationships has not been superseded by overt expressions of individualism.

Witchcraft as a discourse about fertility, wealth and power

Witchcraft is all too often associated with negative, anti-social and malignant forces, charged with afflicting evil, harming others and usurping power by illicit means. According to Turner, it might even be representative of 'a world of decay, where all that is normal, healthy and ordered is reduced to chaos and "primordial slime."'[2348] Witchcraft might heighten in times of social change and societal stress. More positively, witchcraft might be a way to give direction to change, domesticating some aspects of change whilst debating, contesting or rejecting undesirable consequences.[2349] Although in Mwinilunga witchcraft possessed dangerous and destructive elements, it simultaneously held a positive, protective and power-enhancing potential.[2350] Discourses on witchcraft are commonly

[2341] Bond and Ciekawy, *Witchcraft dialogues,* 11.
[2342] E. Colson, 'The father as witch', *Africa* 70:3 (2000), 333-58.
[2343] Moore and Sanders, *Magical interpretations,* 15.
[2344] Bond and Ciekawy, *Witchcraft dialogues,* 317.
[2345] Colson, 'The father as witch', 335; Turner, 'Witchcraft and sorcery'.
[2346] Moore and Sanders, *Magical interpretations,* 15.
[2347] Englund, 'Witchcraft, modernity and the person', 260.
[2348] Turner, 'Witchcraft and sorcery', 125.
[2349] Comaroff, *Modernity and its malcontents*; Englund, 'Witchcraft, modernity and the person'.
[2350] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* 288-313; See: Turner, *Schism and continuity.*

associated with issues of fertility, wealth and power.[2351] The notion of *maheta* (wealth, riches, property) implies not only material possessions, but also fertility in the broadest sense of the word, including offspring, agricultural produce, meat and fish.[2352] Fertility is highly valued within the ideology of wealth in people. Norms of solidarity, reciprocity and fertility 'characterize the cultural order of life in the village, given form in the relationships between the generations, or between genitor/genitrix and offspring.' This cultural order is 'defined by life-giving reciprocity between hunter and family, husband and wife, between living and dead, and between the generations.'[2353] Witchcraft can be negatively associated with the blockage of life-flow, the lack of desired fertility or the failure to be self-sufficient.[2354] Because childlessness is the inversion of fertility, old spinsters might be accused of witchcraft for failure to bear children.[2355] One colonial official noted that a person accused of witchcraft would in most cases be 'some friendless old woman or a wretched domestic slave who by reason of some bodily infirmity was not capable of earning his keep.'[2356] Social relationships are vital to the constitution of moral personhood. This is particularly pronounced in *Nyamuweji*, a small settlement for accused witches established by the missionaries of Kalene Hill in the 1910s and still in place today.[2357] One of the current inhabitants was accused of witchcraft after her nephews and nieces had started dying from undefined causes. The witchdoctor who divined the cause of the deaths attributed the misfortune to the old woman, who had remained childless all her life. She was accused of being in possession of a *ndumba* (cat-like demon, evil spirit possessing witch) with which she would eat the lives of her family members. Consequently, she was chased from her village to *Nyamuweji*.[2358] This accusation was based on a notion of undesirable life-inverting fertility, the woman was accused of 'having "eaten the life" of another person.'[2359] Underlining the notion of wealth in people, social relationships are valued as major assets. Therefore, old spinsters who lack support and relationships can be accused of witchcraft, for attempting to usurp the fertility of others.[2360]

Apart from being a negative force which wrests power, witchcraft could have more positive effects. Chiefs, for example, could enhance the fertility of their areas, engaging in witchcraft which might be socially legitimate. Chiefs were associated with witchcraft as a means of protecting the population.[2361] During the time of pre-colonial slave raiding, when villages congregated within stockades (*mpwembu*), the village head could provide additional protection through charms such as *mujiminu,* which would make the village invisible to outside attackers, or by deploying an *ilomba* (mythical snake) in a magical feud (*chipuupu*).[2362] Chief Kanongesha Ndembi was openly associated with witchcraft: 'An amount of clandestine witchcraft activity is carried on with the Chiefs tacit approval and he himself is popularly believed to be something of an expert.'[2363] Knowledge of witchcraft could evoke reverence, but also fear among the population: 'His open belief in black magic

---

[2351] De Boeck, 'Domesticating diamonds and dollars'; Colson, 'The father as witch'; A. Apter, 'Matrilineal motives: Kinship, witchcraft, and repatriation among Congolese refugees', *Journal of the royal anthropological institute* 18 (2012), 25.

[2352] *Lunda-Ndembu dictionary*; De Boeck, 'Domesticating diamonds and dollars'.

[2353] De Boeck, 'Domesticating diamonds and dollars', 789.

[2354] Turner, 'Witchcraft and sorcery'; Colson, 'The father as witch'; Apter, 'Matrilineal motives'.

[2355] Contrast to: Colson, 'The father as witch'.

[2356] (NAZ) HM6/CO3/4/1, E.A. Copeman Papers.

[2357] Fisher and Hoyte, *Ndotolu.*

[2358] Interviews in Nyamuweji, 4 May 2010, Nyakaseya.

[2359] (EOS) Echoes of Service Magazine, A. Agard, 'Murders for Witchcraft', Kazombo, No. 634, 36th Year, November 1907.

[2360] Apter, 'Matrilineal motives', 25.

[2361] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 326-7; Vansina, *Paths in the rainforests,* 96-8; Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* 303-6.

[2362] This view is based on numerous oral interviews, for example Mr Fanwel, 5 May 2010, Nyakaseya; See: D.M. Gordon, *Invisible agents: Spirits in a Central African history* (Athens, 2012).

[2363] (NAZ) LGH5/4/5 Loc. 3616, Lunda-Ndembo Native Authority Meeting, 6 May 1961.

and witchcraft flouts the laws of the country and he is greatly feared by the people of his area.'[2364] Chiefs were associated with witchcraft exactly because of their power,[2365] being resourceful enough to possess charms: 'Mwachiamfwa, being a man of resources, claims to have a 'medicine' to make chiefs witch proof.'[2366] Whereas witchcraft could serve to 'reinforce the existing power structure',[2367] power could also be questioned through the idioms of witchcraft.[2368] In the 1950s colonial documents contained long transcripts of the dispute between Chief Chibwika and Kanongesha over the ascendancy of the Kanongesha chieftaincy. Both parties resorted to witchdoctors, either to harm their opponent or to protect themselves from attack. Discourses of fertility and power were involved in the dispute, as Chibwika professed that: 'Chief Kanongesha had been at his throne for a long time and he wanted to take over that throne.' Chibwika consulted a witchdoctor (*chimbanda*): 'to give him medicine for his body, so that anyone who mentioned his name would die.' Kanongesha's witchdoctor declared that: 'Chief Kanongesha said that Chief Chibwika was trying to kill him, and he asked me for defence medicine. So I gave him a tortoise shell and two sets of crossed sticks, to defend him against lions and snakes when he went outside.'[2369] Tensions between Chibwika and Kanongesha gave rise to a *chipuupu* in which claims to power and authority were contested. Kanongesha feared attack and therefore he:

> protects himself by having an extensive knowledge of the local medicines himself, by confining himself to his own village, and by taking water only from a stream unknown to everyone else and food from a special trusted servant. He surrounds himself with an aura of magic, and (…) even educated men will not approach his house at night.[2370]

Rather than being a social levelling mechanism, witchcraft could act as a discourse to legitimise the attainment of wealth and power. Chiefs are associated with witchcraft practices because of the position of power they occupy.[2371] Not only should they be able to protect themselves from attacks, but they might actively use witchcraft to enhance their status.[2372] This use of witchcraft was considered legitimate, for with the chiefly position of power came responsibility over subjects. Witchcraft was condoned as long as a chief would rule well, protect his subjects, share his riches and bring prosperity to his area.[2373] Paradoxically, a chief would be depicted as a warrior and a bringer of peace at the same time. The population might ask: '*Anganda ami nikwinka hodi? Etu tunahani kovwahila*' – 'My chief what can I give you? We have given you respect.'[2374] This means that the chief bestows benefits on the population through his rule and that the population should reciprocate chiefly benevolence and custody by granting respect. Nonetheless, witchcraft and chiefly power could not be overtly individualising, as a chief depended on his subjects for respect and authority. Because the chief would bestow fertility on the community, he would be considered a 'Big Man' within the framework of wealth in people and he would be authorised to engage in socially legitimate forms of witchcraft.[2375]

[2364] (NAZ) LGH5/4/5 Loc. 3616, Lunda-Ndembo Native Authority Meeting, 30 January 1959.
[2365] Vansina, *How societies are born,* 268-9.
[2366] (NAZ) KSE6/2/1, F.V. Bruce-Miller, Mwinilunga Sub-District Quarterly Report, 30 June 1919.
[2367] Colson, 'The father as witch', 344.
[2368] Gordon, *Invisible agents*; Fields, 'Political contingencies of witchcraft'.
[2369] (NAZ) SEC5/242, R.C. Dening on the Misconduct of Chief Chibwika, 27 August 1953.
[2370] (BOD) R.C. Dening Papers, Mwinilunga District Tour Report, No. 6 1947.
[2371] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* 304: 'The power possessed by chiefs may provoke envy and enmity among his subjects. Yet (…) that power is widely acknowledged as a necessary element in maintaining the balance of forces between this world and the other.'
[2372] Gordon, *Invisible agents*; Vansina, *Paths in the rainforests,* 96-8.
[2373] De Boeck, 'Domesticating diamonds and dollars'; Englund, 'Witchcraft, modernity and the person'.
[2374] Mulumbi Datuuma II, 'Customs of the Lunda Ndembu, Volume I, The Kanongesha chieftainship succession in Zambia' (Unpublished manuscript, 2010).
[2375] De Boeck, 'Domesticating diamonds and dollars'; Englund, 'Witchcraft, modernity and the person'.

Hunters were another category of the population frequently associated with witchcraft due to their connections to fertility and power.[2376] Talented hunters might be accused of using witchcraft to kill game, as this would explain their exceptional accumulation of life-force: 'successful gun-hunters [*chiyanga*] are regarded as sorcerers, who acquire their power in hunting by killing people by means of their familiars.'[2377] Control over highly valued game meat would be regarded as a symbol of fertility, contributing to communal welfare and being a means to enhance power.[2378] Thus, successful hunters might be associated with witchcraft. A *chiyanga* would be:

> assisted by the guardian shade of a deceased hunter kinsman and by magical charms, he performs rites to propitiate the shades of the hunter-dead before he ventures into the bush, and he is believed to encounter there the inimical powers of witches, sorcerers, ghosts, werelions, and persecuting ancestors.[2379]

To enhance his powers as a hunter, a *chiyanga* would go through a competitive and hierarchical cult.[2380] After proceeding through several grades, the *chiyanga* would be honoured by 'a celebration of the hunter's skill and success over a long period and a feast in honor of his guardian ancestor spirit who has provided him – and through him his dependents and fellow villagers – with a regular supply of meat.'[2381] Witchcraft could enhance the power and fertility of hunters and was deemed necessary to become a successful *chiyanga*. More negatively, witchcraft could set limits to individual power and accumulation. Witchcraft accusations could result from quarrels over the division of meat, as 'a professional hunter who resents the claims of remote classificatory kin on the product of his hunting', might be charged with greed or lack of sharing by a *chisoda* (unsuccessful hunter).[2382] Despite communal claims on meat and norms of reciprocity, individual *chiyanga* hunters could deviate from such norms. Hunters might use witchcraft to set their own terms, differentiate themselves from others and gain power vis-à-vis their peers. A *chiyanga* would enjoy remarkable freedom of movement, could express individualism and would hold great power.[2383] Through witchcraft tensions between individualism and communalism could find expression.

The case of hunting illustrates that witchcraft could, on the one hand, be used to underline communal norms and foster reciprocity, functioning as a social levelling mechanism.[2384] A *chisoda* might claim his share of meat by bewitching a greedy *chiyanga,* promoting the equitable division of meat.[2385] On the other hand, witchcraft might enhance individualism, power and fertility. By using witchcraft a *chiyanga* might increase his success and create a name for himself.[2386] Witchcraft could be used to substantiate communal claims as well as to assert individual agency. Underlining norms or challenging them, witchcraft could be a force of both continuity and change.[2387] By deviating from norms, a successful gun-hunter might gradually reconfigure standards and expectations, yet only within certain limits. Even a *chiyanga* protected by witchcraft could not afford to be selfish and greedy, cutting off social ties by keeping all meat to himself. Within the context of wealth in people, greed, stinginess and selfishness (*chifwa*) were likened to social death (*fwa*, to die).[2388] Nevertheless, a hunter could question and modify established norms by becoming a powerful and respected person, thereby

[2376] De Boeck, 'Domesticating diamonds and dollars'; Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 32.
[2377] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 32.
[2378] De Boeck, 'When hunger goes around the land'.
[2379] Turner, 'Themes in the symbolism of Ndembu hunting ritual', 281.
[2380] Confirmed by numerous oral interviews, for example with Mr Paul Maseka, 18 May 2010, Nyakaseya.
[2381] Turner, 'Themes in the symbolism of Ndembu hunting ritual', 283-4.
[2382] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 32.
[2383] Confirmed by numerous oral interviews, for example Mr Steven Chikwili, 14 October 2010, Ntambu.
[2384] See: Austen, 'The moral economy of witchcraft'.
[2385] Interview with Mr Mischek Maseka, 11 May 2010, Nyakaseya.
[2386] See Turner's work.
[2387] See: Bond and Ciekawy, *Witchcraft dialogues*; Moore and Sanders, *Magical interpretations.*
[2388] *Lunda-Ndembu dictionary*; De Boeck, 'Domesticating diamonds and dollars'; Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*, 194-5.

setting a precedent for others to follow. Hunters were regarded as solitary figures who could make a name for themselves, gain recognition and fame in a large area. Occupying a special position, hunters were at once part of society and stood outside of it.[2389] In this sense, witchcraft could lead not only to a confirmation, but also to a potential 'rearticulation of inherited ideological elements.'[2390]

As the previous examples have shown, witchcraft could be a means to enhance individual and communal fertility, wealth and power.[2391] In order to protect oneself against the manifold risks of everyday life, an individual could resort to the use of charms.[2392] Examples are *chikaka* and *ndakala*, which provide protection against crocodiles and hippos in the river or against snakes and wild animals in the bush.[2393] Some charms could confer good luck unto a person in his or her productive activities. Roots and leaves from various plants could be gathered and put into an *izawu* (medicine pot) in the middle of a field. Before planting, a seed or root would first be dipped into the *izawu* and this would ensure a plentiful harvest, even in fields of a small surface.[2394] Other charms might be used to wash a hoe, axe, hunting spear or fishing hook in, ensuring abundant supplies of crops, meat or fish.[2395] The charm *mutookela* could be used for good luck in agricultural production, hunting or fishing endeavours, as well as to solicit a warm welcome when embarking on a long journey.[2396] Witchcraft could actively enhance the power and fertility of individuals. Therefore witchdoctors would be greatly esteemed:

> The Chiyomboka, the witch doctor and Diviner, whether he be an honest man trying to stamp out evil, or a charlatan encouraging evil for his own ends, is looked upon with great respect as a public prosecutor and guardian of the people.[2397]

Witchcraft could play into existing relationships and hierarchies in the village, reflecting age, gender and power differentials.[2398] It appeared that the increased power and prestige of old age caused a heightened proclivity towards witchcraft: 'All men are suspected dabblers in the Occult, and it is regrettable that the old men, whose age and wisdom should command the respect of the youth, are often by their very age and wisdom the more suspect of Sorcery.'[2399] Yet apart from reflecting existing hierarchies, witchcraft could challenge hierarchies, serving to acquire influence and power.

Witchcraft could be an idiom in which to express struggles and power relations within society.[2400] In a competitive atmosphere in which power and authority were contested, a *chipuupu* (magical feud) might be resorted to:

> Many of the Lunda people, especially the men, spend a good deal of their time on what may best be termed magical feuds. These feuds consist of a kind of battle between two people with black magic as the weapon. It generally begins with a quarrel (…) [Upon ascertaining that one person wishes to inflict harm on another, recourse to a witch-doctor is sought. One] tells the witch-doctor his trouble and is told what fee he must pay. If his enemy is a powerful man (…) a big fee will be demanded (…) The richer

---

[2389] Turner, *Schism and continuity*; De Boeck, 'Domesticating diamonds and dollars'.

[2390] S. Feierman, *Peasant intellectuals: Anthropology and history in Tanzania* (Madison, 1990), 26.

[2391] Gordon, *Invisible agents*; Apter, 'Matrilineal motives'.

[2392] Colson, 'The father as witch', 338; Melland, *In witch-bound Africa*; W. Singleton Fisher, 'Black magic feuds', *African studies* 8:1 (1949), 20-2.

[2393] This view is based on numerous oral interviews, for example Mr Fanwel, 5 May 2010, Nyakaseya.

[2394] This view is based on numerous oral interviews, for example Mrs Zabetha Nkemba, 8 May 2010, Nyakaseya; See: Melland, *In witch-bound Africa*; Colson, 'The father as witch'.

[2395] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 16.

[2396] This view is based on numerous oral interviews, for example Mr Fred Mpenji, 3 August 2010, Kanongesha; *Lunda-Ndembu dictionary.*

[2397] (NAZ) SEC2/402, Harry Vaux Report on Sailunga Kindred, 1936.

[2398] Turner associated male witchcraft with free will and power, whereas a female witch would have witchcraft 'thrust upon her', 'she is thought to be quite aware of what has happened, but for fear of her own life cannot resist the lethal demands of familiars against her kin.' Turner, 'Sorcery and witchcraft', 120. This distinction was not reflected in my own observations.

[2399] (NAZ) SEC2/402, Harry Vaux Report on Sailunga Kindred, 1936.

[2400] Gordon, *Invisible agents.*

> of the two continues to make black magic while the poorer man, unable to continue paying the witch-doctor's fees succumbs from superstitious fear, pines and dies.[2401]

Possessing an *ilomba* could make one extremely powerful: 'The owner of 'ilomba' becomes very strong, physically, and does not die early. The possession of 'ilomba' assures the owner generally from all harm or personal violence.'[2402] Nevertheless, power was not without risks. After an initial period of co-operation between the owner and the witchcraft familiar, an *ilomba* might turn against the owner:

> At first the *ilomba* is the servant of his owner and is occupied in obeying his commands, killing the people whom his owner wants out of the way (…) The *ilomba's* appetite grows with success (…) It appears that the owner is powerless to resist the *ilomba's* demands and so the *ilomba* soon becomes its owner's master, excepting that he can never swallow the shadow of a victim unless it is named by its owner. Finally the *ilomba's* demands become so exorbitant (he will even ask for its owner's favourite wife or dearest child) that the owner will commit suicide rather than accede to them.[2403]

Although individuals could assert power and question norms of communal sharing through witchcraft, power relations were not turned on their head through the witchcraft dialogue.[2404] Whilst witchcraft could be used as a protective or power enhancing means, it could not be controlled by its owner:

> It is (…) well-known that important personages in Lundaland usually have more than what they consider their fair share of enemies; they are therefore given the power to transfer their spirits to some animal permanently; so that if they are poisoned or shot they do not die, as they have no life to lose! This however has one disadvantage, because if the enemy can discover which animal has been entrusted with the spirit, and can obtain the necessary fetishes to kill that animal, the native who has parted with his life expires with the animal.[2405]

Witchcraft stood at the interstices of opportunity and risk. It might be used for positive or negative purposes, being a discourse about the power inherent in society.[2406] Witchcraft could simultaneously enhance and jeopardise power. How did witchcraft interplay with norms about reciprocity, sharing, wealth and accumulation?

Rather than being self-generating, wealth (*maheta*) should be actively produced or even captured (*heta* to gain, possess, own).[2407] Norms stipulate what is considered to be 'legitimate accumulation' of wealth, versus illegitimate 'self-interested profit-making', yet norms are continuously breached and these breaches find expression in idioms of witchcraft.[2408] Witchcraft accusations might occur when a person has accumulated wealth and power, but has failed to share this adequately with kin and neighbours. Such individuals might be accused of or attacked by malignant witchcraft.[2409] One woman explained the death of her brother through reference to witchcraft. Because he had bought several motorcars and had started a successful trading business, others felt jealous and plotted to kill him through witchcraft, because he had not shared his riches among his kin.[2410] Witchcraft might be associated negatively with social levelling mechanisms, discouraging entrepreneurship, and favouring an attitude of 'getting things from others for nothing.'[2411] Allegedly, nobody would want to 'put his head above the parapet', because 'he will be bewitched because he thinks he is better than his

[2401] Fisher, 'Black magic feuds', 20-2.
[2402] (NAZ) KSE4/1, Mwinilunga District Notebooks, 159.
[2403] Fisher, 'Black magic feuds', 22.
[2404] Englund, 'Witchcraft, modernity and the person'; De Boeck, 'Domesticating diamonds and dollars'.
[2405] (NAZ) HM17/MI5/2, Bruce-Miller Papers, Central African Spiritualism.
[2406] Fields, 'Political contingencies of witchcraft'.
[2407] 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).
[2408] Englund, 'Witchcraft, modernity and the person'; Bond and Ciekawy, *Witchcraft dialogues.*
[2409] Fisiy and Geschiere, 'Sorcery, witchcraft and accumulation'; Englund, 'Witchcraft, modernity and the person', 271-2.
[2410] Anonymous interview, March 2010, Ikelenge.
[2411] (NAZ) MCD1/3/29, North-Western Province, African Provincial Council, June 1955.

fellows.'[2412] Nevertheless, witchcraft should not necessarily be associated with the limitation of wealth or levelling processes. Norms of reciprocity within the village were not universally shared or uncontested, but would rather be debated through idioms of witchcraft.[2413] In the case of chiefs or successful hunters, witchcraft might enhance individual accumulation, enabling the building of wealth and power.

Not only could witchcraft reconfigure the familiar, but it could be an aid to make sense of the unfamiliar.[2414] Domesticating new influences in 'an ongoing argument in which multiple voices participate', witchcraft is closely linked to modernity and thrives 'as a means by which rural and urban Africans alike confront contemporary problems.'[2415] Rather than being an archaic remnant, in the area of Mwinilunga witchcraft was intricately bound to market production, labour migration and the consumption of mass-manufactured goods.[2416] Witchcraft could incorporate change, making use of such attributes as telephones to communicate with ancestors, or Hondas as a means of transportation for witches.[2417] Witchcraft was neither a sign of individualisation and self-interested accumulation, nor a social levelling mechanism espousing communal solidarity. Instead, witchcraft could be a discourse about the constitution of moral personhood, the ideal being a person who is 'courageous, firm and brave, who has self-restraint and shows perseverance, strong will, character, courage, and a sense of responsibility.'[2418] Accumulation of wealth and power itself was not critiqued, but pathways of accumulation could be questioned. Moral personhood was conceived as thoroughly social and relational, and therefore a person who achieved wealth without making his or her constitutive relationships visible would be suspect of witchcraft.[2419]

Witchcraft was not a social levelling mechanism, as it could equally enhance individual wealth and power, being used by both the rich and the poor. Witchcraft could be evoked by envy (*ichima, lwisu*) which the poor feel towards the rich. But it might equally originate from the greed (*chifwa, chisumi, kababa*) of the rich and powerful, who possess riches and power but want more. More benignly, witchcraft could provide protection against both envy and greed.[2420] Witchcraft could function as a critique of illegitimate accumulation. The man-eating lion *Kabalabala* might threaten the material wealth of returning labour migrants who had not shared goods with kin.[2421] Similarly, during the pineapple boom, wealthy farmers might be accused of witchcraft or could be attacked by the witchcraft of others, if they failed to dispense their riches to neighbours.[2422] Witchcraft can illustrate norms, reflecting how people think things should be organised within society. At the same time, witchcraft provides an opportunity to question norms, effect change and establish new discourses, causing gradual value transformation.[2423] Norms do not remain fixed, but are continually contested and reconfigured. This reconfiguration might occur through the discourse and practice of witchcraft. Although 'longstanding moral matrixes and habituses' could play a role in guiding behaviour, individuals continually 'reinvent older notions, mentalities, practices, and moralities' within the changing circumstances of their daily lives.[2424] Witchcraft was neither an expression of growing

[2412] Interview with Mr Paul Fisher, 27 September 2008, Hillwood Farm; For witchcraft and social levelling, see: Moore and Sanders, *Magical interpretations.*

[2413] Colson, 'The father as witch'; Englund, 'Witchcraft, modernity and the person'.

[2414] Comaroff, *Modernity and its malcontents*; L. White, *Speaking with vampires: Rumor and history in colonial Africa* (Berkeley etc., 2000).

[2415] Englund, 'Witchcraft, modernity and the person', 257.

[2416] Moore and Sanders, *Magical interpretations,* 15.

[2417] E. Turner, 'Philip Kabwita, ghost doctor: The Ndembu in 1985', *The drama review* 30:4 (1986), 28.

[2418] De Boeck, 'Domesticating diamonds and dollars', 794.

[2419] Englund, 'Witchcraft, modernity and the person'; Fisiy and Geschiere, 'Sorcery, witchcraft and accumulation'.

[2420] *Lunda-Ndembu dictionary;* Englund, 'Witchcraft, modernity and the person'.

[2421] See Chapter 3B.

[2422] See Chapter 2.

[2423] Fields, 'Political contingencies of witchcraft'; Colson, 'The father as witch'.

[2424] De Boeck, 'Domesticating diamonds and dollars', 801; Feierman, *Peasant intellectuals.*

individualism nor a safeguard for communal norms of reciprocity and sharing, but rather adapted to changing historical circumstances, debating their course and affecting their outcome.

Kinship, gender and the family: Social relationships and individualisation

The appearance of farms in the 1940s and 1950s was persistently linked to patterns of individualisation and a nucleation of the family.[2425] Colonial officials, missionaries and anthropologists alike proposed that 'capital has a profound impact upon the structure of kinship systems at the local level.'[2426] If individualisation and family nucleation would materialise, this would have far-reaching and indeed transformative effects on patterns of social relationships, gender, kinship and village residence.[2427] Studying change in village, family and household organisation is highly complex, because of a lack of sources, the discourse employed in the sources and because change is likely to be gradual, diffuse and contested, rather than clearly observable or straightforward.[2428] Instead of assuming linear transitions from extended kinship to individualisation and family nucleation, we should:

> look, first, at what resources are at stake in a community (including people), with an awareness of how their relative values can change over time. Then we should look at the control exercised over these resources, the complex contracts, negotiations and shifts which take place at all levels of society in response to this, and the varied patterning of relationships which results.[2429]

By paying attention to historical contestation and negotiation within the village, family and household a view which is quite different from family nucleation or individualisation might arise.[2430] After looking at gender relationships, the issue of kinship and social relationships will be returned to, as 'people create their own histories but do so through discursive and practical strategies that embody the 'received categories' of their cultures and the political-economic conditions of their existence.'[2431] It will be suggested that 'changes in the family and kinship structure in response to local social and economic transformation can be equated not with nuclearisation [or individualisation] but with the emergence of a modified form of family and kinship.'[2432]

Men and women: Contestation, co-operation and accumulation within the household

The model of the nuclear family assumes distinct but complementary male and female spheres of production and reproduction. Ideas of the male breadwinner as household head rest on the separation of female domestic labour and male wage labour outside the household sphere.[2433] The case of Mwinilunga District suggests a different pattern. Gender relationships in the area were inherently contentious and fluid, signified by individual production and separate spheres yet equally by household

[2425] Turner, *Schism and continuity*, 43; Turner and Turner, 'Money economy'; Price and Thomas, 'Continuity and change in the Gwembe Tonga family'.
[2426] Bates, 'Capital, kinship, and conflict', 151.
[2427] Price and Thomas, 'Continuity and change in the Gwembe Tonga family'; Kay, 'Social aspects of village regrouping'; Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees.*
[2428] M. Vaughan, 'Which family?: Problems in the reconstruction of the family as an economic and cultural unit', *Journal of African history* 24:2 (1983), 275-83; Mandala, *The end of chidyerano,* 203-38; Vansina, *Paths in the rainforests.*
[2429] Vaughan, 'Which family?', 275-6.
[2430] Price and Thomas, 'Continuity and change in the Gwembe Tonga family'.
[2431] P.E. Peters, 'Revisiting the puzzle of matriliny in South-Central Africa', *Critique of anthropology* 17:125 (1997), 128.
[2432] Price and Thomas, 'Continuity and change in the Gwembe Tonga family', 512.
[2433] Crehan, 'Women and development', 51; Price and Thomas, 'Continuity and change in the Gwembe Tonga family', 510-12; A. Spring and A. Hansen, 'The underside of development: Agricultural development and women in Zambia', *Agriculture and human values* 2:1 (1985), 60-7.

complementarity.[2434] Tracing power struggles within the household can question basic assumptions about 'the family', 'kinship' and 'individualisation'.

Productive, consumptive and even social relationships between the sexes in Mwinilunga District have been described as characterised by *chaambu*, separation or division.[2435] This separation of tasks by gender is reflected in the Lunda proverb '*neyala wubinda, namumbanda lusemu*' – 'for the man hunting, for the woman procreation'.[2436] Men and women have been viewed in terms of opposition, man the hunter and life-taker, woman the agriculturalist and life-giver.[2437] According to the observations of colonial officials, productive activities were almost completely segregated by gender. Men would focus on hut building, hunting and might assist in heavy agricultural tasks such as the cutting of trees. Women, on the other hand, would draw water, cook and do most agricultural tasks, such as hoeing, weeding and harvesting.[2438] Such divisions were by no means complete, unchanging or uncontested. Even if descriptions suggest only a minimal degree of overlap between male and female tasks, such discourses obscure everyday forms of collaboration between the sexes. Complementarity rather than joint labour prevailed. Men and women would occasionally collaborate in such tasks as hoeing and sowing, although these tasks were predominantly female and men would assist only if need arose.[2439] In the end, however, productive tasks were interdependent and complementary – a male hunter could not do without the *nshima* provided by his wife, whereas a female cultivator would depend on her husband to cut the trees in her field.[2440] Rather than being independent, individuals were linked together in a series of mutually constitutive gender roles.

The tension between independence and complementarity is brought out by the reciprocal claims to labour and resources made in marriage and divorce cases.[2441] Women would be expected to cultivate their own field, and therefore official court statements from the colonial period might assert that: 'a husband is entitled to chase [divorce] his wife, if she does not carry out her functions as a good housewife.'[2442] According to the saying 'the woman without a garden is not worthy to marry', a wife who failed to cultivate would risk being divorced.[2443] One man requested divorce from his wife, complaining in court because: 'She is very lazy and continually refuses to do her share of cultivating – when I remonstrate her she runs off to her mother.'[2444] Women could equally lay claims on the labour of their husbands.[2445] One woman requested divorce, stating that: 'I have been living by myself at my village for 2 years now – my husband has not built me a hut. He has not given me any present since 1915.'[2446] Women would systematically lay claims on the labour and possessions of their husbands and failure to fulfil legitimate claims would cause contestation and might lead to divorce.[2447] Once cloth

[2434] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* Chapter Five; Crehan, 'Women and development'; Crehan, 'Of chickens and guinea fowl'.
[2435] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 23; Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* 177.
[2436] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 27; Confirmed by numerous oral interviews.
[2437] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* 187-91; Turner, *The drums of affliction,* 179; See: Crehan, 'Women and development'; Crehan, 'Of chickens and guinea fowl'.
[2438] (NAZ) KSE4/1, Mwinilunga District Notebooks, 157 for a schematic overview of 'male' and 'female' tasks. Oral interviews also tend to reproduce a standardised division of labour; See: Crehan, 'Women and development'.
[2439] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*; Turner, *Schism and continuity.*
[2440] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*; Turner, *Schism and continuity*; Crehan, 'Women and development'.
[2441] Crehan, 'Of chickens and guinea fowl'; Chanock, *Law, custom and social order*; See: J.L. Parpart, '"Where is your mother?": Gender, urban marriage, and colonial discourse on the Zambian Copperbelt, 1924-1945', *The international journal of African historical studies* 27:2 (1994), 241-71.
[2442] (NAZ) SEC2/963, R.S. Thompson, Mwinilunga District Tour Report, July 1955.
[2443] (NAZ) Mutende, February 1944.
[2444] (NAZ) KSE3/1/2/1, Chikwanda of Ntambo v. Chiwemba of Chisunka, 15 January 1922.
[2445] Crehan, 'Of chickens and guinea fowl'.
[2446] (NAZ) KSE3/1/2/1, Malato v. Chirundu & Shamiombwe, 26 July 1917.
[2447] Confirmed by numerous oral interviews, for example Mrs Julian Chiyezhi, 2010, Mwinilunga; Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* Chapter Five.

spread widely throughout the area it became acceptable for a woman to demand presents of cloth from her husband. Especially if a man engaged in migrant wage labour or sold cash crops, a woman might claim one cloth a year from her husband. At present, such claims continue to be acceptable and a woman without clothes is ridiculed for having a lazy husband.[2448] Despite productive individualism, complementarity between gender roles prevailed. Even if they might act independently in the majority of cases, women and men would depend on one another in the productive and consumptive order of village life, by laying reciprocal claims on each other's labour, wealth and resources. Yet claims and rights remained far from stable, being subject to continuous debate and historical change.[2449]

Through everyday interactions, the relationships between men and women were negotiated and reconfigured. Over the course of the twentieth century gender divisions of labour in agricultural production were modified in reaction to socio-economic and political change.[2450] Ideas about male and female roles were contested, but change played out differently according to household, locality and social setting. Gendered divisions of labour could constitute 'structures of moral expectation', giving rise to reciprocal obligations, which established 'specific power landscapes' in which individuals would operate.[2451] How were these moral expectations, with regard to gender roles in agricultural production, given shape and how did they change over time? Throughout Mwinilunga District oral tradition steadfastly locates agricultural production within the female sphere.[2452] Accounts suggest that men would only assist women with specific tasks, such as the cutting of trees, but would otherwise steer clear of agricultural production. Rather, men preferred to engage in quintessentially male activities in the bush, such as hunting or honey collecting. These occupations would require bouts of intense but periodic activity in contrast to the daily and prolonged effort of agricultural production.[2453] Oral tradition thus suggests uncontested and unchanging divisions of labour since time immemorial, an assertion which appears unwarranted.[2454] Colonial officials in the first half of the twentieth century observed that men could in fact be relatively active in agricultural production. In 1915 the District Commissioner remarked that: 'it is the aLunda men who do nine-tenths of the hoeing etc. in the garden.' This overstatement was meant to counter male labour migration, which would cause 'starvation for the women whilst the men were away', if women would not be 'taught the "dignity of labour".'[2455] Serving ulterior motives, such discourses pleaded for industrious behaviour and increased female agricultural productivity.[2456] More in accordance with oral tradition, other reports might note that: 'The cultivation of land and the raising of the crops is usually left to the woman and very little supervision or interest is exercised by the [man].'[2457] Such diametrically opposed views might appear puzzling, yet they attest that gender roles were never fixed, being subject to contestation and change. Gender roles were not simply given by social norms, 'but had always depended very much on the specific circumstances of the individuals and kinship groups involved.'[2458]

Over the course of the twentieth century men and women rearticulated gender roles in agricultural production, but they did not necessarily do so along officially expected lines. Officials asserted a discursive opposition between female 'subsistence' and male 'market' production, connoting expectations of increasing individualism and gender separation in productive

[2448] This view is based on numerous oral interviews; See: K.T. Hansen, *Salaula: The world of secondhand clothing and Zambia* (Chicago etc., 2000).
[2449] Crehan, 'Women and development'; Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*; See: Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees.*
[2450] Crehan, 'Women and development'; Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees.*
[2451] Crehan, 'Of chickens and guinea fowl', 213.
[2452] Based on oral interviews; See: Schecter, 'History and historiography'; Von Oppen, *Terms of trade.*
[2453] Turner, *Schism and continuity.*
[2454] Vaughan, 'Which family?', 275-6.
[2455] (NAZ) KSE6/1/3, F.V. Bruce-Miller, Mwinilunga Sub-District Annual Report, 31 March 1915. See: (NAZ) KSE6/2/1, F.V. Bruce-Miller, Lunda Division Quarterly Report, 30 September 1916.
[2456] Compare to: Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees.*
[2457] (NAZ) Department of Agriculture, Lunda Division, Annual Report, 1925.
[2458] Crehan, 'Of chickens and guinea fowl', 218.

relationships.[2459] Nevertheless, such divisions remained permeable and contested, rather than becoming absolute or fixed.[2460] In the 1950s female predominance in subsistence agricultural production appeared firmly established, yet women would equally participate in market production.[2461] Contemporary observers noted that women accounted for the main part of agricultural production, particularly in the riverside gardens where a variety of crops – such as vegetables, rice, maize and beans – were produced for sale.[2462] Women might carry food for sale in baskets over long distances, the cultivation of rice was described as a female prerogative and 'at most villages some of the women have streamside gardens, where maize and beans are grown.'[2463] Due to labour migration, which caused male absence for prolonged periods of time and thus limited male participation in agricultural production and marketing, women were able to take advantage of heightened opportunities for crop marketing in the 1940s and 1950s. By intensifying their labour inputs, relying on the assistance of neighbours and kin or by organising work parties, some women developed into veritable agricultural entrepreneurs.[2464]

Nevertheless, the strong position of women in agricultural production did not go unquestioned. Agricultural commercialisation would supposedly lead to economic individualism and clearly defined gender roles. As a result, women would largely be confined to subsistence production whereas men would engage in market production.[2465] Turner both confirmed and questioned such assumptions, concluding that:

> In the new cash economy men are acquiring an economic supremacy *vis-à-vis* women which they never possessed in the past when the women provided the regular and stable sources of nourishment from their cassava and maize gardens. On the other hand while women continue to retain an independent sphere within the subsistence economy and exercise control over the moneys obtained from the sale of their produce, they have a means of asserting their social independence from their husbands. The sexes are less interdependent than in the past and economic individualism both in production and consumption seems to be the keynote of the new cash economy.[2466]

In the 1940s and 1950s women had been able to seize agricultural marketing opportunities largely because men were engaged in wage labour in urban centres, or because men focused on other (more profitable) income-earning opportunities, such as the production of wax, rubber or items of carpentry, next to hunting, fishing or rearing livestock.[2467] From a 1950s survey it appeared that women, overall, earned more money from crop sales than men (£3 4s 9d versus £2 5s 7d). Yet whereas crop sales were only a relatively minor source of income for men, they constituted the main source of income for women.[2468] Once the profitability of cash crop production was realised, some men intensified their agricultural activities and questioned female dominance in production.

Several factors favoured men over women in commercial agricultural production.[2469] Official schemes of agricultural 'improvement' or 'development', such as the peasant farming scheme,

---

[2459] E. Boserup, 'Economic and demographic interrelationships in Sub-Saharan Africa', *Population and development review* 11:3 (1985), 383-97; Spring and Hansen, 'The underside of development'; Crehan, 'Women and development'; See: J.I. Guyer, 'Naturalism in models of African production', *Man* 19:3 (1984), 371-88.

[2460] Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees.*

[2461] Von Oppen, *Terms of trade*, provides examples of female agricultural entrepreneurship.

[2462] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu.*

[2463] (NAZ) SEC2/966, C.J. Fryer, Mwinilunga District Tour Report, 9 September 1958. See: (NAZ) NWP1/2/17, Stockwell-Jones, Mwinilunga District Tour Report, 1 October 1948.

[2464] This view is based on numerous oral interviews, for example Mrs Yiness Ikelenge, 10 April 2010, Ikelenge, and a reading of archival sources, (NAZ); Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* 184-5; See: Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees.*

[2465] Crehan, 'Women and development'; Spring and Hansen, 'The underside of development'.

[2466] Turner and Turner, 'Money economy', 36.

[2467] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*; Turner, *Schism and continuity.*

[2468] Turner and Turner, 'Money economy', 29.

[2469] Crehan, 'Women and development'; Spring and Hansen, 'The underside of development'; Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees,* 114-5.

agricultural demonstration or livestock loans, would be geared towards men and would only rarely target women or include them as beneficiaries.[2470] Similarly, when marketing boards started buying crops from the area after independence, men asserted themselves as the main producers and commercial agents. Marketing boards would focus on relatively unfamiliar crops, such as maize, for which a starting capital would be necessary. Hybrid maize required expensive seed, fertiliser and other inputs. Next to the initial outlay of capital for inputs and land preparation, the risks of production and sale of hybrid maize could be high. Pests might ruin the harvest, weevils could affect stored maize, transport might fail to come or markets could slump. If successful, however, profits of market production could equally be high.[2471] Through their previous wage-earning experiences, men enjoyed easier access to capital with which to engage in agricultural market production. Some men invested time, energy and resources to create large farms along scientific and market-oriented lines.[2472] Nevertheless, contrary to predictions of economic individualisation, the division between male cash crop production and female subsistence production remained more apparent than real.

As a result of the income-earning opportunities provided by market production women could, on the one hand, increase their independence from men, yet, on the other hand, women risked being subdued by men or becoming overburdened by the onerous tasks of agricultural production.[2473] According to some, women stood at the 'underside of development', being subject to 'double exploitation', as they struggled to engage in market production yet social reproduction and repetitive agricultural tasks such as weeding, making mounds and preparing food tended to become more onerous as a result of expanded agricultural production.[2474] In this view, women would increasingly be restricted to the subsistence sphere of production, whereas men would come to dominate the more profitable income-earning opportunities, including cash crop production and extra-agricultural wage employment.[2475] Examples from Mwinilunga District contradict such views of female underdevelopment, as women were particularly active in the production of rice, beans and pineapples for sale throughout the twentieth century.[2476] Even if men appeared to dominate formal channels of marketing, women continued to play an important role in agricultural production and would regularly sell amounts of beans or maize through informal networks during the 1960s and 1970s.[2477] Rather than a single pattern of gender change leading to productive individualisation, men and women negotiated, contested and at times collaborated with each other.

Some women joined their husbands in joint agricultural enterprises, creating household-run commercial ventures. In the case of pineapple farming, both husband and wife could participate, resulting in large farms such as those of Mr and Mrs Kamafumbu. Whereas Mr Kamafumbu supervised the marketing of pineapples, Mrs Kamafumbu supervised the numerous pieceworkers whom they employed to cultivate their fields. Profits from pineapple sales would be used not only to maintain and expand existing pineapple fields, but would also benefit the household through the purchase of clothing, salt and meat, or by financing the education of children, the construction of a brick house and the purchase of a vehicle which facilitated the marketing of pineapples.[2478] Over the course of the twentieth century men did not necessarily become breadwinners or uncontested heads of the

[2470] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu;* A. Bowman, 'Ecology to technocracy: Scientists, surveys and power in the agricultural development of late-colonial Zambia', *Journal of Southern African studies* 37:1 (2011), 135-53.
[2471] Crehan, 'Women and development', 64-6; Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu.*
[2472] This view is based on numerous oral interviews, for example Mr Saipilinga Kahongo, 22 March 2010, Ikelenge.
[2473] Turner and Turner, 'Money economy'; Crehan, 'Women and development'; Spring and Hansen, 'The underside of development'.
[2474] Boserup, 'Economic and demographic interrelationships'; Spring and Hansen, 'The underside of development'.
[2475] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* 182-7.
[2476] This view is based on a reading of archival sources (NAZ); Confirmed by numerous oral interviews, for example Mrs Josephine Sokawuta, 15 April 2010, Ikelenge.
[2477] Pritchett, *Friends for life.*
[2478] Interviews with Mr and Mrs Kamafumbu, March and April 2010, Ikelenge.

household.[2479] Particularly after the 1970s women enjoyed an influential position. A 'newly admitted importance of women' was identified:

> Since the decline of the copper industry, men have found it hard to find work, yet (…) they have not taken up agriculture to any extent (…) the work of women in agriculture has grown with the increased size of the family. In effect, the women are the center of existence in modern Zambia. It is their efforts that keep the country from true famine, and this is known by all.[2480]

Throughout the twentieth century men and women negotiated gender roles according to changing opportunities. Relationships between the sexes in Mwinilunga District did not accord with views of kinship solidarity, household co-operation or individualisation. Even where productive individualism prevailed, men and women remained interdependent for labour, resources and for generating wealth. Both sexes would seek to use claims and resources to their advantage within 'structures of moral expectation'. Change did not follow a self-evident or preconceived course.[2481] Neither men nor women gained supremacy over the productive sphere, brokering access, entitlement and claims within a shifting power field.[2482]

Cultivating separate fields: Labour, gender and property

Agricultural commercialisation did not lead to the individualisation of productive activities. Nonetheless, individual production has been a persistent feature of agriculture in Mwinilunga District.[2483] This is borne out by the practice of cultivating individual fields.[2484] It is rare for an individual to hold absolute rights of ownership over goods, land or people in Mwinilunga.[2485] Ownership would more commonly be vested in a wider kin-based group, under the authority of the headman or chief of an area. Nevertheless, individuals would be afforded land use rights, generally on a life tenure basis. Particularly if an individual had cleared and worked a plot of land, he or she would be granted unrestricted access to this land and its fruits.[2486] Some households would cultivate a single field or several dispersed plots of land collectively. Not uncommonly, others might cultivate separate plots of land individually. In the latter case, a man, his wife and elder children would all cultivate separate plots of land.[2487] The agricultural capabilities of individual girls would be tested from a young age by giving them a plot of land to cultivate, because only strong women would be considered good marriage partners.[2488] In order to prove strength in cultivation, to avoid rousing conflicts between co-wives and to minimise the risk of quarrels between household members over crop harvests and their consumption, the practice of cultivating separate fields became common in Mwinilunga District, highlighting the tensions between individualism and communalism.[2489]

Nevertheless, rather than being a straightforward assertion of individualism, the cultivation of separate plots of land reveals gender dynamics, patterns of household interdependence and contestation over time.[2490] Cultivating separate fields revolved around rights of distribution, rather

[2479] Price and Thomas, 'Continuity and change in the Gwembe Tonga family'.
[2480] E. Turner, *Experiencing ritual: A new interpretation of African healing* (Philadelphia, 1992), 92.
[2481] Crehan, 'Of chickens and guinea fowl', 213.
[2482] Compare to: Crehan, 'Of chickens and guinea fowl'; Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees.*
[2483] See: Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* Chapter Five.
[2484] This has been brought up in interviews; See: Turner, *Schism and continuity*; Von Oppen, *Terms of trade.*
[2485] Colson, 'The impact of the colonial period', 194.
[2486] See: C.G. Trapnell and J.N. Clothier, *The soils, vegetation, and agricultural systems of Northwestern Rhodesia: Report of the ecological survey* (Lusaka, 2nd edn., 1957); Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*; Turner, *Schism and continuity*; Shipton and Goheen, 'Understanding African landholding', 307; S.S. Berry, 'Social institutions and access to resources', *Africa* 59:1 (1989), 41.
[2487] Turner, *Schism and continuity*; Von Oppen, *Terms of trade.*
[2488] Interview with Mrs Maria Samanjombi, 4 October 2008, Chibwika.
[2489] This is based on numerous oral interviews; Also mentioned in archival sources (NAZ).
[2490] Crehan, 'Of chickens and guinea fowl'.

than rights of ownership.[2491] Even when a husband and a wife would cultivate separate plots of land, they would collaborate in tasks such as hoeing and weeding in each other's fields. A man would cut the trees in his wife's field, whereas a woman would weed her husband's field. But although household members might cultivate together, they would still distinguish use rights over different fields.[2492] The motivation to do so would be an attempt to minimise quarrels over property and its distribution. By enabling the cultivator to dispose of the fruits of his or her own labour, the practice of cultivating separate fields facilitated a degree of individual decision making power. When matrilineal relatives of a wife would visit her, for example, she could feed them from her own field rather than having to request assistance from her husband. Similarly, if a member of the household wished to engage in market production of crops, he or she could cultivate these crops on a separate plot without assistance from other household members. Furthermore, upon divorce quarrels over property would be minimised, as the woman would take the produce she had cultivated herself.[2493] Thus: 'A common estate remained less evident in African marital property regimes than in Western ones, reversing the images of individualist West and communalist Africa.'[2494]

Whether such individual tendencies had been long established in the area or whether they had increased as a consequence of commercialisation and definition of land rights, remains to be ascertained. Women had already produced cassava for sale to pre-colonial caravans from their own plots of land, but the proliferation of separate plots was perhaps encouraged as a consequence of market production.[2495] Cultivating separate plots of land strengthened claims to individual ownership, but aspects of communalism, co-operation and distribution remained important as well.[2496] A husband and a wife might cultivate separate plots, yet harvested food would commonly be stored in a single household grain bin. This had profound consequences if food was sold on the market, as contestations over profits and spoils would be invited.[2497] Property was not regarded as individual, but would rather be redistributed among kin and dependents through complex relationships of reciprocity: 'Communal tenure and individual tenure are unnuanced visions that seldom fit African realities (…) *Private* property need not imply *individual* property, or vice versa; nor should individualism and collectivism be confused with exclusivity or inclusivity on the land.'[2498] The rights over and use of land were not well-defined but elusive, contested and changing, 'the result of a balance of power which was continuously reproduced through social struggles.'[2499] Rather than being fixed, relationships between men and women in agricultural production had always been subject to debate. Gender roles did not develop in a particular direction under capitalism, neither towards individualism nor towards a male breadwinner model. Men and women remained profoundly interdependent for labour, agricultural produce and other resources. Consequently, the room for negotiation of gender roles remained large: 'while various moral claims may have been accepted unquestioningly in principle, all kinds of evasions were possible when it came to their more tangible implications.'[2500]

[2491] Crehan, 'Women and development', 57; De Boeck, 'When hunger goes around the land'.

[2492] This view is based on numerous oral interviews, for example Mr and Mrs Kalota, July 2010, Kanongesha; See: (NAZ) KSE4/1, Mwinilunga District Notebooks.

[2493] This view is based on numerous oral interviews, for example Mrs Kalota, July 2010, Kanongesha; See: Crehan, 'Women and development'; Berry, *No condition is permanent.*

[2494] M. Chanock, 'A peculiar sharpness: An essay on property in the history of customary law in colonial Africa', *Journal of African history* 32 (1991), 81.

[2495] Von Oppen, *Terms of trade,* 247: 'Widespread individual production can be seen as an important basis of the growth of market production.'

[2496] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* Chapter Five.

[2497] Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees*.

[2498] Shipton and Goheen, 'Understanding African land-holding', 311-3.

[2499] Von Oppen, *Terms of trade,* 270.

[2500] Crehan, 'Of chickens and guinea fowl', 218.

Marriage: Households, kinship and social connectivity

Being more than a link between two individuals, marriage among the Lunda creates a bond between kin groups.[2501] Obtaining a marriage partner from a different village can therefore be a political act: 'for any link between villages might be the precursor of further links of kinship and affinity within and between vicinages and chiefdoms in the loose, decentralized polity.'[2502] Confirming the marriage relationship, bridewealth is considered a prerequisite for the recognition of a marriage, even if it merely involves a symbolic article or amount.[2503] Bridewealth could consist of a variety of goods, such as 'a bracelet, a piece of string, a shilling, or some other small token of the contract.'[2504] Particularly common during the first half of the twentieth century was a *mubulu* (metal bracelet) which symbolised betrothal, but this could be substituted by or given on top of a *makasa* (small white bracelet), an *iimba* (ivory pendant) or a *masumba* (small neck chain).[2505] As the twentieth century progressed store-bought items, such as cloth and soap, but most especially money, started to play a prominent role in marriage transactions.[2506] Bridewealth was not solely or even primarily concerned with the transaction of material objects, but rather pivoted around rights to labour and offspring and held a socio-political dimension.[2507]

Because marriage is so intimately connected to procreation and fertility, marriage continues to be socially expected throughout Mwinilunga District.[2508] The additional labour power of children is highly valued and sought after. In this sparsely populated district where general labour scarcity prevails, fertility could be a tool to build a loyal following and to become a respected member of society. The envisaged outcome of the marriage bond is childbirth, which expands and strengthens the kin group and creates enduring bonds between dispersed households. Within the context of wealth in people the route to success is premised on a large and prosperous household, following and village, and therefore 'Big Men' and 'Big Women' desire offspring.[2509] Thus the proverb '*iyala walema wudi namumbanda*' – 'an important man has a wife'.[2510] On the other hand, unmarried, widowed or childless men and women risk social ostracism.[2511] Claims to children and their labour would be fiercely contested. In a matrilineal society where virilocal residence upon marriage is the norm disputes between families could arise over children, particularly between fathers and mother's brothers.[2512]

Rather than being a single act, marriage in the area of Mwinilunga should be regarded as a process, proceeding through a number of stages and creating increasing bonds between families.[2513] To compensate for the loss of labour power of the wife's kin, a husband would perform labour duties for his in-laws for some weeks, months or even for a whole year:[2514]

> The husband lives at the village of his parents-in-law and usually performs some arranged services for them – cultivation and hut-building. On the birth of the first born he takes his wife to his own or his parent's village – his proper habitat. During the time when he is in residence at his parents-in-law he

[2501] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*; Crehan, 'Of chickens and guinea fowl'.
[2502] Turner, *Drums of affliction,* 264.
[2503] Price and Thomas, 'Continuity and change in the Gwembe Tonga family'; Parpart, 'Where is your mother?'.
[2504] (NAZ) KSE3/1/2/1, Chivumbi v. Mikelo, 27 January 1916.
[2505] Mulumbi Datuuma II, 'Customs of the Lunda-Ndembu'; Confirmed by numerous oral interviews, for example Mr Windson Mbimbi, 6 September 2010, Kanongesha.
[2506] This view is based on numerous oral interviews, for example Mrs Lukaki Salukenga and Mrs Lutaya, 6 August 2010, Kanongesha.
[2507] Chanock, *Law, custom and social order,* 145-60, 177, 184.
[2508] Turner, *Schism and continuity*; Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*; De Boeck, 'When hunger goes around the land'.
[2509] Turner, *Schism and continuity*; Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*.
[2510] Proverb gathered by Gibby Kamuhuza, May 2010, Ikelenge.
[2511] V.W. Turner, 'The spatial separation of generations in Ndembu village structure', *Africa* 25:2 (1955), 121-37.
[2512] Turner, *Schism and continuity*.
[2513] Turner, *Drums of affliction,* 264; Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 265; Chanock, *Law, custom and social order.*
[2514] Crehan, 'Women and development'; Crehan, 'Of chickens and guinea fowl'.

> does not come under the control of their Headman but is still under his own and can be called upon by him.[2515]

Betrothal, marriage and brideservice created ties of interdependence between groups of kin. Most importantly, relationships created by marriage constituted the starting point for contestations over property, labour and offspring, involving both rights and obligations.[2516] Rights over people and property were minutely elaborated in marriage and divorce regulations, but rules would rarely be defined absolutely. Rather, the application of rules would be subject to debate, contestation and change over time.[2517] Although kinship laid down structures of moral expectation, these might be interpreted in a variety of ways.[2518]

Over the course of the twentieth century marriage underwent a number of changes. For one, rates of bridewealth were adjusted.[2519] Due to increased income-earning opportunities, higher amounts of bridewealth would be demanded from migrant labourers and market farmers, who might also increasingly circumvent elders in closing a marriage deal. A man who had worked in town for a year could earn his bridewealth single-handedly and would therefore be less dependent on his father for support or approval.[2520] Nevertheless, marriages which do not enjoy the approval of the elders of both families continue to be condemned and lack full recognition. The role of the extended family in marriage remains important. Bridewealth is not shared merely within the elementary family, but serves to cement ties with distant kin as well.[2521] Due to greater mobility, marriage is increasingly contracted between members of distant villages, or even different ethnicities and nationalities, rather than being a bond between close kin.[2522] What remained constant was that marriage created a tie between individuals, kin groups and society – rather than leading to family nucleation or individualisation.[2523] Marriage and the exchanges and claims involved in marriage revolved around labour, created social networks and could act as visible markers of social relationships, embodying wealth in people.[2524] Marriage ties were malleable and rights conferred by marriage were contestable. But it is exactly herein that their strength, adaptability and enduring importance lies.

Matrimonial disputes were described as 'extraordinarily rife' throughout Mwinilunga District,[2525] and it was suggested that 'the Lunda have the most unstable marriages of any tribe in Northern Rhodesia.'[2526] Cases of adultery would frequently be brought to court, as these disputed not only the marriage bond, but also rights over persons, labour and status. The judicial procedure which followed cases of adultery was by no means standardised. It formed a platform on which rights and obligations between spouses could be contested:[2527]

> if a man marries a woman properly, and lives well with her for some time and then hears she has slept with another man, he follows that man for goods. The limit is 3, 4, or 5 cloths (…) or he would ask for a gun, or if a very strong man he would ask for two guns. These guns he would take to the relatives of the

[2515] (NAZ) KSE6/2/1, F.V. Bruce-Miller, Lunda Division Quarterly Report, 30 September 1916.
[2516] Berry, *No condition is permanent*; Chanock, *Law, custom and social order*; Crehan, 'Of chickens and guinea fowl'.
[2517] Chanock, *Law, custom and social order*; Parpart, 'Where is your mother?'.
[2518] Crehan, 'Of chickens and guinea fowl'.
[2519] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 265; During fieldwork people complained that bridewealth was skyrocketing.
[2520] Confirmed by numerous oral interviews, for example Mr Wilson Kanyembo, 16 January 2010, Lusaka; See: Parpart, 'Where is your mother?'; Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees.*
[2521] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*; Turner, *Schism and continuity.*
[2522] This view is based on numerous oral interviews, for example Mrs Yiness Solwezi, 10 March 2010, Ikelenge.
[2523] Price and Thomas, 'Continuity and change in the Gwembe Tonga family'; Crehan, 'Of chickens and guinea fowl'.
[2524] B. Cooper, 'Women's worth and wedding gift exchange in Maradi, Niger, 1907-89', *Journal of African history* 36:1 (1995), 121.
[2525] (NAZ) KSE6/2/1, F.V. Bruce-Miller, Mwinilunga Sub-District Quarterly Report, 31 December 1921; Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 62; Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*, 192, mention high divorce rates.
[2526] (NAZ) LGH5/5/11 Loc. 3621, C.M.N. White, Land Tenure Report North-Western Province.
[2527] Chanock, *Law, custom and social order.*

> wife. He would say – Your daughter has done badly, I cannot keep the goods made from her body so I give them to you. The relatives would say – You had to work hard to get these, and they would return to him – the husband, half of the value. He would still keep his wife. Then if there was a second offence, the husband would follow for goods, value as before; and would bring the goods as before to the relatives, saying – Your daughter has been bad again. I have forgiven her once, but will not keep her any longer. I bring her to you with the goods I have got for her adultery. The relatives would then remember the "nseu" [bridewealth], and say – Our daughter is bad to cause you this trouble, they would return all the goods in the case, saying – You keep all these goods against the "nseu" you paid for her. The woman would then be free to marry any one else without a case. The goods for adultery are always brought to the relatives (…) in this way [the relatives] are always held accountable for the return of the "nseu" on divorce for any reason.[2528]

Although this account suggests otherwise, the procedure following cases of adultery was by no means standardised. The outcome of the case depended on the circumstances: 'everything depended on the personality of the parties most intimately concerned and the composition of the council before which the case was brought.'[2529] What becomes apparent is that matrimonial disputes and their settlement revolved around interpersonal relationships and involved power struggles within the village. Adultery and the cases which followed adultery could cut the ties between two groups of kin, but only after a prolonged and negotiated settlement: 'African rural societies were built upon an absence of civil or juristic equality. Status hierarchies involved proprietary rights, the rights to demand labour and goods, and reverse rights to gifts and subsistence.'[2530] Because marriage created a strong interpersonal tie, confirming and strengthening links of kinship and interdependence, its importance has endured throughout the twentieth century, continuing to be a platform through which to debate rights, obligations and relationships.[2531]

Marriage remained a social bond in which spouses could lay claims on each other's labour and offspring. Rather than leading to individualisation or nucleation of the family, marriage bonds underlined the importance of the extended family and could strengthen bonds of kinship.[2532] Spouses and their kin would lay claims on the labour and offspring of the other spouse, creating enduring but contested bonds. Claims and expectations could change over time and negotiations over rights and property would occur, yet the marriage bond underlined the importance of the concept of wealth in people, relationships of kinship and marital interdependence.[2533]

Kinship, wealth in people and individualisation

Turner anticipated that cash crop production and wealth generated through labour migration would cause associations between extended kin to dissolve into nuclear families, propelling increasing individualisation: 'economic individualism both in production and consumption seems to be the keynote of the new cash economy. This individualism is snapping the traditional ties of extended kinship and breaking up corporate residential groupings such as the village.'[2534] Others have similarly suggested that matrilineal kinship would be vulnerable under conditions of increased wealth, social differentiation and inequality: 'under economic changes brought about by contact with Western industrial nations, matrilineal descent groups gradually disintegrate. In their place, the elementary family eventually emerges as the key kinship group with respect to residence, economic cooperation, legal responsibility, and socialization.'[2535] Kinship, descent and affiliation were indeed inexorably linked

[2528] (NAZ) KSE4/1, Mwinilunga District Notebooks, 171, F.V. Bruce-Miller, 1920.
[2529] Melland, *In witch-bound Africa,* 74-5.
[2530] Chanock, 'A peculiar sharpness', 83.
[2531] Chanock, *Law, custom and social order*; Crehan, 'Of chickens and guinea fowl'.
[2532] Berry, *No condition is permanent*; Price and Thomas, 'Continuity and change in the Gwembe Tonga family'.
[2533] De Boeck, 'Domesticating diamonds and dollars'.
[2534] Turner and Turner, 'Money economy', 36.
[2535] K. Gough, 'The modern disintegration of matrilineal descent groups', in: D.M. Schneider and K. Gough (eds.), *Matrilineal kinship* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1961), 631; M. Douglas, 'Is matriliny doomed in Africa?',

to 'goods, claims, obligations, positions, and statuses', being inherently social and part of power struggles in society.[2536] Despite profound changes ties of extended kinship remain of paramount importance in Mwinilunga District.[2537] Kinship continued to provide 'the basic threads out of which social life was woven', naming and locating individuals in the social world and constituting the 'basic – and most emotionally powerful – model for *all* human relationships.'[2538] Ties of kinship proved important in a social, economic and political sense. A Lunda saying goes that 'to be without social linkages is akin to being lost in the deep forest.'[2539] How could ties of kinship and social relationships adapt to changing circumstances?

Ties of kinship could constitute a source of influence and power, making a person famous (*mpuhu*), a 'Big Man' within the framework of wealth in people.[2540] Members of kin could be one's following and source of support in political contestations:

> When a man wishes to succeed to office or to found a village of his own, he looks for the backing of his own children in these ventures, as well as to his uterine kin. A man's major unit of political support is the circle of his closest kin (…) In addition to his own and his sisters' children, these kin include his brothers and their children. Such a group contains the nucleus of a new generation, the junior adjacent genealogical generation over which he and his siblings exercise authority and control.[2541]

Exactly because of village fissure and high levels of mobility, a wide range of interpersonal relationships was created and upheld in the area: 'the continual flow of visits between matrilineal kin, however far apart in space, serves to maintain their connection.'[2542] Fluid ties of kinship could be an asset within a competitive environment, as a person could gain influence and power by attracting the allegiance of distant kin and establishing a large settlement. Up to the present, it remains the ideal to become the headman of a large and prosperous village, and for this the support of kin is indispensable: 'The essence of life is to become both *mukwakuheta* (one who possesses many things) and *mukwakwashi* (one who helps many people). Such individuals are adorned with praise and surrounded by followers anxious to do their bidding.'[2543]

The continued salience of kinship can be illustrated by looking at strategies towards self-realisation.[2544] Within a village those who have a name (*akweti majina*) would be distinguished from those who lack a name (*abula majina*).[2545] Whether through hunting, cultivation, labour migration or ritual eminence, individuals would strive to establish a name for themselves. Yet establishing a name for oneself could never be a solitary act. Rather, it involved profound social engagement, which underlined the importance of kinship bonds.[2546] Growing towards personhood involved both 'the realization of one's individual self-identity, autonomy and responsibility' and 'a gradual body-centred insertion (…) into the lives of other individuals.' This process implied social responsibility:

---

in: M. Douglas and P.M. Kaberry (eds.), *Man in Africa* (London, 1969), 121-33; Peters, 'Revisiting the puzzle of matriliny', 126-7.

[2536] Vansina, *How societies are born,* 93.

[2537] See: Price and Thomas, 'Continuity and change in the Gwembe Tonga family'; Berry, *No condition is permanent.*

[2538] Crehan, 'Of chickens and guinea fowl', 214.

[2539] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* 84.

[2540] De Boeck, 'Domesticating diamonds and dollars'; Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* 113; Pritchett, *Friends for life,* 225.

[2541] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 108.

[2542] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 87.

[2543] Pritchett, *Friends for life,* 107.

[2544] Guyer, 'Wealth in people and self-realization'; De Boeck, 'Domesticating diamonds and dollars'.

[2545] This issue was raised in numerous oral interviews, for example Mr Jackson Jinguluka, May 2010, Nyakaseya; (NAZ) SEC2/402, Harry Vaux Report on Sailunga Kindred.

[2546] Turner, *Schism and continuity*; De Boeck, 'Domesticating diamonds and dollars'; Pritchett, *Friends for life,* 107, 109.

> The more one becomes the focus of the social life of the kin group, the more one is given respect, but the more, also, one becomes responsible for the redistribution and sharing of the goods that circulate in the kin group.[2547]

A person would not only be expected to develop individual personhood, but also to foster social relationships by becoming a 'Big Man' or a 'Big Woman', a *mukwakwashi*, one who takes care of others and is thereby able to build a large and prosperous household and village.[2548] Prominent individuals did not only derive respect and influence from neighbours, kin and following, but were expected to reciprocate this support by occupying an exemplary position: 'The higher the status of a villager, the more he is bound theoretically to fulfil his communal obligations as an example to the public.'[2549] Ties of kinship were not well-defined, but inherently flexible and negotiable. Individuals could claim allegiance to either the maternal or the paternal side of the family, whereas the residence of children would continually be contested.[2550] Exactly because of this ambiguity, ties of kinship could be a resource in times of stress, providing support and protection:

> If access to resources and opportunities depends on one's ability to negotiate, people may be more interested in keeping options open than cutting them off, and in strengthening their ability to participate in and influence negotiations rather than acquiring exclusive control over resources and severing connections which are not immediately profitable.[2551]

Although interpersonal ties could be liabilities as well as assets, power and prestige continued to depend on social relationships: 'People do not just do things for you because you have prestige; rather, you have prestige because people do things for you.'[2552]

In the area of Mwinilunga, the persistence of extended kinship bonds was viewed by some as a nuisance.[2553] Wealthy individuals might be 'sponged upon' by their less fortunate relatives and as a result migrant labourers might experience difficulties: 'The tradition of extended families was working against town dwellers. Relatives flocked to stay with their townfolk. Even where there was no chance of being employed uncles, cousins, sisters, and aunts found their way to towns.'[2554] Nevertheless, kinship did not have to be a burden. In the 1950s, Turner described several cases of enterprising individuals who continued to value 'traditional' kinship affiliation, because they:

> saw success in life as measured by the number of followers a man could acquire, and not by the insignia of conspicuous wealth that could be purchased by money (…) [They] continued to work in their gardens, to gossip and discuss cases in the village *chota*, to participate in ritual as cult-members and patients, to exercise their traditional rights and fulfil obligations as kin (…) they felt that the royal road to eminence within the village way of life now lay through the acquisition of cash. Possessions of cash gave them large houses, bride-wealth for several wives who might give them children and enable them to offer hospitality, and the means of retaining their children and giving them a good education. They wanted money to better their position within the traditional system, not as a means of loosening their ties with it.[2555]

These men clearly adhered to notions of wealth in people, even if they participated actively in the money economy. Nevertheless, Turner equally described the rise of a new type of men, those of the younger generation who pursued money and wealth for its own sake, feeling 'embarrassed by the demands of their kin for presents in cash or kind', wishing to 'separate themselves from the village sphere and village way of life.'[2556] According to Turner the second pattern would come to predominate

---

[2547] De Boeck, 'Domesticating diamonds and dollars', 794.
[2548] Turner, *Schism and continuity*; De Boeck, 'Domesticating diamonds and dollars'; Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*, 131; Pritchett, *Friends for life,* 227.
[2549] (NAZ) SEC2/402, Harry Vaux Report on Sailunga Kindred, 1936.
[2550] Crehan, 'Of chickens and guinea fowl'; Turner, *Schism and continuity.*
[2551] Berry, *No condition is permanent,* 14.
[2552] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* 131.
[2553] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* 131.
[2554] (NAZ) HM77/PP/2, Peter Matoka, Review of Zambia's 33 Years of Independence, 8 November 1997.
[2555] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 134.
[2556] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 135.

in the long run, giving rise to individualisation and the establishment of farms. This prediction did not hold good.[2557]

In the area of Mwinilunga individuals overwhelmingly retained social ties, rather than cutting them. The establishment of farms was not a sign of individualisation. Instead, farms might be the nuclei from which new, larger villages would grow up. Farms could be locations where kinship was redefined and gained new significance. Acquiring a large following and establishing a prosperous village continued to be a widely held ideal and to achieve this goal kinship support proved indispensable.[2558] Kinship could be a means to access productive resources and advance social standing:

> Funerals, marriages, naming ceremonies, and initiation rites create opportunities for individuals to gain respect and create obligations among their kin and neighbors by contributing food, drink, clothing, ritual offerings, and gifts. People's contributions to such ceremonies may serve, in turn, to reaffirm or advance their status within their families and communities and their ability to draw on the resources or support of the group in negotiating their own claims to productive resources.[2559]

Social networks and kinship remain important because 'people's ability to generate a livelihood or increase their assets depends on their access to productive resources and their ability to control and use resources effectively', all of which are mediated through social relationships.[2560] Therefore, no village in Mwinilunga today is composed exclusively of nuclear families, but rather nephews, nieces, and other extended kin reside in a household or village to access education, medical facilities or markets.[2561] Relationships between extended kin can be used as resources to maximise opportunities, enabling trade relationships over long distances or facilitating the reception of a labour migrant in town.[2562] The UNIP government after independence actively promoted aspects of community cohesion, self-help, co-operative production and communal labour.[2563] In fact, 'Many family and kinship systems, in changing social and economic contexts, do not nucleate but adapt and reconstruct; in a number of cases extended kin bonds strengthen under pressure from 'modernising' forces.'[2564] Rather than becoming obsolete in times of stress and social change, bonds of kinship could be reaffirmed, underlining the salience of village residence and concepts of wealth in people.

Social change, continuity and reconfiguration: Disputes, rituals and value transformation

Rather than being harmonious units, villages have always been full of strife. Whether this was over the division of meat, the distribution of wealth or over issues of power and authority, conflicts would crop up regularly.[2565] In the 1940s one colonial official remarked with a sense of despair that 'a large amount of Lunda time must be spent in trying to resolve conflicts and hold society together at all.'[2566] Even if these conflicts might lead to village fission and breakup, when resolved successfully they could enhance village cohesion.[2567] Looking at conflicts and how these conflicts were resolved therefore says much about the tension between individualism and communalism. Social norms are rules that direct behaviour within society, and even if these norms lay 'down a particular social landscape with specific contours of power', creating sets of moral expectations, these expectations would be 'continually negotiated in their day-to-day dealings with others', being 'essentially ill-defined and unbounded, and

[2557] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* Chapter Three; See: Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down trees.*
[2558] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*, 142, 194.
[2559] Berry, *No condition is permanent,* 160.
[2560] Berry, 'Social institutions and access to resources', 41.
[2561] Based on my own observations; See: Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu.*
[2562] See: Von Oppen, *Terms of trade*; Pritchett, *Friends for life.*
[2563] (NAZ) Department of Community Development, Annual Report 1964.
[2564] Price and Thomas, 'Continuity and change in the Gwembe Tonga family', 528-9.
[2565] Turner, *Schism and continuity*; Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu.*
[2566] (NAZ) LGH5/5/11 Loc. 3621, C.M.N. White, Land Tenure Report North-Western Province.
[2567] Turner, *Drums of affliction.*

morally binding and indissoluble.'[2568] One setting in which norms would be discussed, defined and altered was the *chota.*

The *chota* (open palaver hut, village council, law court) was a forum where men could interact with one another.[2569] In the *chota* men would sit together, drink beer, consume their meals, chat and discuss village affairs. In the *chota* male children would be taught about norms and values, through stories of famous ancestors or tales about successful hunters. Not only good precedents would be discussed in the *chota*. Bad examples would equally be narrated as a discouragement to the youth. Lazy persons would be denounced and pressure would be applied to deviant members of society to conform to rules.[2570] The *chota* could have an administrative and judicial role as well. Elders would:

> make public pronouncements concerning the administrative requirements of the village (…) One might say that the village is short of salt, or another that the cassava should be fenced against the ravages of wild pigs. If a pronouncement of this kind is received favourably, it is echoed round the village, and the Village Head is constrained to summon a meeting. The matter is debated before him, and he gives an executive pronouncement embodying the will of the majority (…) an executive decree is the expression of public opinion clothed in the pragmatic sanction of religion. It is not possible to be disobedient without flouting public opinion and causing offence to the Departed Spirits.[2571]

Within the *chota* communal norms were given expression. Nonetheless, 'rules and rights were less prominent than the continuing flow of inter-lineage relationships.'[2572] Yet the *chota* was not merely a platform to craft village cohesion and enhance communalism. Expressions of individualism equally occurred. Through persuasive rhetoric individuals could earn respect and prestige, question or redefine communal norms, and so 'men and women vie for prominence and assert their worthiness for leadership.'[2573] The *chota* could serve as a debating ground where conflicts within the village would be discussed and resolved. Through the *chota* people could confirm and strengthen norms and morals, codifying these into laws, or they could question long-standing paradigms through diverging practices, gradually effecting value transformation.[2574] Within the *chota* social change was domesticated and tradition redefined. Conflict, rather than challenging social relationships, could in fact strengthen these. This becomes evident by looking at rituals.

Rituals, conflict and reconciliation

Some of the earliest European observers in the area of Mwinilunga emphasised the importance of ritual, noting a general 'spirituality'. Livingstone remarked that the Lunda 'seem to possess a more vivid conviction of their relation to the Unseen world than any of the Southern tribes.'[2575] He described the practice of *kupesha* (to propitiate spirits, to perform rites) at a small clearing where the forked branch of the *muyombu* tree is inserted in the ground:[2576] 'Here they go, when anxious for anything, to pray to the gods (…) If what they desired comes to pass, the worshipper takes some food and presents it to the tree or gods.'[2577] Next to soliciting fortune and good luck, rituals might be performed as a consequence of afflictions, such as disease, death, witchcraft, grudges (*chitela*) or quarrels

[2568] Crehan, 'Of chickens and guinea fowl', 212, 219.
[2569] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 24, 35
[2570] This is based on my own observations, numerous oral interviews, for example Mr Jackson Jinguluka, May 2010, Nyakaseya, and readings of archival sources, such as (NAZ) KSE4/1, Mwinilunga District Notebooks and (NAZ) SEC2/402, Harry Vaux Report on Sailunga Kindred, 1936.
[2571] (NAZ) SEC2/402, Harry Vaux Report on Sailunga Kindred, 1936.
[2572] Chanock, *Law, custom and social order,* 184.
[2573] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* 48.
[2574] Chanock, *Law, custom and social order*; Melland, *In witch-bound Africa;*
[2575] D. Chamberlain (ed.), *Some letters from Livingstone, 1840-1872* (London etc., 1940), 249.
[2576] See: Turner, *Drums of affliction*; Confirmed by numerous oral interviews, for example Mr Mushipi Musungumuki, 12 May 2010, Nyakaseya.
[2577] Schapera, *Livingstone's African journal,* 275.

(*ndombu*) within society.[2578] Turner argued that the performance of 'rituals of affliction' could relieve tension, solve conflict by healing the afflicted individual and could even unify society: 'Ndembu ritual (…) may be regarded as a magnificent instrument for expressing, maintaining, and periodically cleansing a secular order of society without strong political centralization and all too full of social conflict.'[2579] Ritual could be a means of redress, restoring the order which had been breached and resulting in health, prosperity and fertility:

> in order that any village life should be possible, it is necessary that members of a village should observe certain common values, and that the norms governing behaviour between village members (…) should be upheld. Where customary values are deeply entrenched it is usual to find institutionalized machinery of redress. Each instance of breach in social relations is made the occasion of a restatement of their regulative norms.[2580]

Rather than evoking village fission, conflict could lead to village cohesion and could strengthen norms of communality through ritual redress. Although Turner predicted that ritual would 'lose its efficacy' under the influence of 'aggressive individualism' and a desire to earn cash,[2581] ritual performances persist into the present and have successfully transformed themselves.[2582]

Turner suggested that ritual could be a means of communal cohesion: 'Ritual is the social mechanism by which a group is purged of the anarchic and disruptive impulses which threaten its crucial norms and values.'[2583] Next to being a mechanism of redress and promoting continuity, rituals could equally be 'revolutionary movements capable of supplanting old paradigms of disease causation and treatment and of generating new (…) knowledge to deal with problems arising from social change.'[2584] After revisiting Mwinilunga in 1985, Edith Turner observed that although the form of ritual had changed considerably, and 'the imperialism of the missions on the one side and of the Marxist humanist government on the other has flooded and killed many aspects of Ndembu culture', nonetheless 'healing rituals are becoming more frequent.'[2585] Rituals and medical knowledge could transform themselves over time, being receptive to outside knowledge and influences: 'the assimilation of foreign symbolic resources into pre-existing medical culture provided an idiom through which the Lunda restructured their social relations and identities.'[2586] Ritual elements would be borrowed from neighbouring population groups, but also from Europeans and Christian missionaries. Turner described the *Tukuka* and *Masandu* cults. In these cults 'treatment consists of giving the patient European foods, served by a "houseboy," miming European dancing in couples, wearing European dress, and singing up-to-date songs such as "We are going in an airplane to Lumwana."'[2587] Even if 'the symbolic elements may be novel in themselves (…) the framework of meaning in which they are embedded is a long-standing one.'[2588] Apparently, new symbolic elements gained meaning and importance within long-standing frameworks which retained significance by adapting to changing circumstances. Rather than being a corollary of village fission or perishing over time, ritual could provide village cohesion and vitality.

[2578] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*; W.T. Kalusa, 'A history of disease, missionary medicine and African medical auxiliaries in North-Western Zambia: The case of Mwinilunga District, 1893-1964' (PhD thesis, John Hopkins University, 2003).

[2579] Turner, *Drums of affliction,* 21.

[2580] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 92.

[2581] Turner, *Drums of affliction,* 22-3.

[2582] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*; Kalusa, 'A history of disease'; Turner, 'Philip Kabwita'.

[2583] Turner, *Schism and continuity,* 124.

[2584] Kalusa, 'A history of disease', 31; J. Comaroff, 'Healing and cultural transformation: The Tswana of Southern Africa', *Social science and medicine* 15:3 (1981), 367-78; S. Feierman, 'Struggles for control: The social roots of health and healing in modern Africa', *African studies review* 28:2/3 (1985), 73-147.

[2585] Turner, 'Philip Kabwita', 16-7.

[2586] Kalusa, 'A history of disease', 34.

[2587] Turner, *Forest of symbols,* 15.

[2588] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* 309.

Creating a sense of commonality, all Lunda youths go through initiation ceremonies at puberty.[2589] The initiation ceremonies for girls (*nkanga*) and those for boys (*mukanda*) differ in many respects. Whereas boys are initiated in groups, girls undergo initiation as individuals; whereas boys are taught communal values, hunting skills and are given sexual instruction, girls are absolved from productive activities whilst in seclusion, focus on sexual aspects and are prepared for marriage; whereas the initiation of boys is located in the bush, the initiation of girls is associated with the domestic and village spheres.[2590] The act of initiation unifies the Lunda and marks them off from others: 'The circumcised form a group whose physical state transcends their tribal differences in contrast with all uncircumcised tribes.'[2591] This *rite de passage* transforms children into active members of society. Turner claimed that the circumcision of boys represents:

> the unity and continuity of the widest society (…) By emphasizing these in the sacred context of a great public ritual, the divisions and oppositions between corporate groups and between the total social system (…) are "played down" and forced out of the center of ritual attention (…) From being "unclean" children (…) boys are converted by the mystical efficacy of ritual into purified members of a male moral community, able to begin to take their part in the jural, political, and ritual affairs of Ndembu society.[2592]

Turner associated initiation ceremonies with conformity to social norms and communal cohesion, being a 'mechanism "built-in" to the system of customs which give a measure of form and repetitiveness to Ndembu social interactions. It is a mechanism that temporarily abolishes or minimizes errors and deflections from normatively expected behaviour (…) redressing breaches of norms.'[2593] Through an initiation ceremony, 'the legitimacy of certain crucial principles of Ndembu society is most fully and publicly endorsed.'[2594] In this manner, norms in Lunda society could be constituted and transmitted. After *mukanda* boys were expected to be men and to take on the full responsibility of their new roles: 'they must obey their elders, fulfill the norms governing each category of kinship relationship, and may be punished for disobedience by any male senior to them.'[2595] Because through initiation children become aware of the rights and responsibilities of adult status, initiation rituals are constitutive of social identity.[2596] Next to communal elements, initiation equally provided room for expressions of individuality.

Initiation rites in the North-Western Province have been described in terms of vitality, reflecting 'the elasticity of these people to adapt their customs to new conditions and ideas rather than abandon[ing] them.'[2597] This vitality brought out the tension between the communal elements and acts of individual expression in initiation rites: 'Ritual custom itself was modified and even distorted from the "ideal pattern" (…) It was modified by the purposive activities of persons and groups organized according to the very principles repressed by overt ritual custom.'[2598] In the area of Mwinilunga there were 'powerful expressions of individualism' coupled with 'notions of individual autonomy, freedom of choice, and control over one's own body.'[2599] This individualism was embodied in male initiation by the hierarchy between the initiates. There was competition over the positions of *Kambanji* ('war leader', the first to be circumcised), *mwanta waMukanda* ('master of *mukanda*',

---

[2589] C.M.N. White, 'Notes on the circumcision rites of the Balovale tribes', *African studies* 12:2 (1953), 43; Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* 263, 189; Turner, *Drums of affliction,* 199.
[2590] This view is based on numerous oral interviews; See: Turner, *Forest of symbols,* 7-8.
[2591] White, 'Notes on the circumcision rites', 43.
[2592] Turner, *Forest of symbols,* 265-6.
[2593] Turner, *Forest of symbols,* 269-70.
[2594] Turner, *Drums of affliction,* 198.
[2595] Turner, *Forest of symbols,* 268.
[2596] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*; See: C.A. Kratz, '"We've always done it like this … except for a few details": "Tradition" and "innovation" in Okiek ceremonies', *Comparative studies in society and history* 35:1 (1993), 30-65.
[2597] White, 'Notes on the circumcision rites', 50.
[2598] Turner, *Forest of symbols,* 272.
[2599] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* 84.

second in order), *kaselantanda* ('he of the rising morning star', third in order), *mulopu* ('the heir', fourth in order) and *Kajika* ('the dunce', last in order). Whereas *Kambanji* would generally be the oldest, ablest and most developed boy, *Kajika* would be the last boy to physically arrive, the slowest in answering questions or the one who cried out the loudest when cut.[2600] For all the emphasis placed on communal values, there was room for personal differentiation in initiation rites. Able boys could earn a name for themselves during the rites and this was also the case for girls.[2601] For each *kankanga*: 'an outlet is given to her suppressed individuality on the day of her 'coming-out' dance, when she becomes the observed of all observers.'[2602] Through expressions of individuality, the rituals of initiation changed whilst preserving much of their previous form and values.[2603]

The political aspects of initiation rituals could be important.[2604] Initiation ceremonies would be collaborative events, in which members of many different villages could participate. Large amounts of beer would be brewed by women and crowds would gather from afar. This was a time to strengthen alliances between kin and to plot for a rearrangement of power relations.[2605] It was 'a time for powerfully presenting a particular worldview.'[2606] Elderly men would compete for positions of prominence within the organisational hierarchy of *mukanda*, bringing out the tensions between individualism and communalism:

> Individuals and groups saw in *Mukanda* not only a means of correcting and adjusting the wider framework of their social relationships, but also of augmenting their own prestige or establishing their claim to certain rights in subsequent secular and ritual situations (…) the same persons were at one and the same time motivated to act for the general good of the vicinage and to compete with one another for scarce values.[2607]

Men competed with one another over the labour and allegiance of young boys, over the ritual and political prominence which came with hosting a successful *mukanda*. Interpersonal rivalries and competition could be expressed within initiation ceremonies. Initiation transcended the particular case and gained broad societal and political importance, propelling changes in the form of ritual itself.[2608]

Over time, initiation ceremonies have been reproduced and transformed, they have persisted albeit in an altered form.[2609] The form of initiation ceremonies has been influenced by the tension between the personal and the collective, between the individual and society. General guidelines and norms of the ceremonies have been transformed by individual actions and creativity.[2610] Influenced by the shifting socio-economic and political setting of Lunda society, change has occurred. Changing circumstances have been domesticated and incorporated into initiation ceremonies, leading to 'innovations in (…) ceremonial practices which bring some of these new domains of experience and differentiation into the initiation process, thereby relating them to those of continued relevance and

---

[2600] This view is based on numerous oral interviews, for example Mr Kenneth Kalota, July 2010, Kanongesha; See: Turner, *Forest of symbols*, 216; Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* 147-8.

[2601] Interview with Gibby Kamuhuza, March and April 2010, Ikelenge.

[2602] Turner, *Drums of affliction,* 266.

[2603] Kratz, 'We've always done it like this'; Turner, 'Zambia's kankanga dances', 57-71.

[2604] V.W. Turner, 'Ritual aspects of conflict control in African micropolitics' and '*Mukanda* boys' circumcision: The politics of a non-political ritual', *On the edge of the bush: Anthropology as experience* (Tucson, 1985), 43-51, 53-69.

[2605] This view is based on numerous oral interviews, for example, Mr Kabanda, 22 May 2010, Nyakaseya.

[2606] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* 148.

[2607] Turner, *Forest of symbols,* 270.

[2608] See: F. De Boeck, 'Of bushbucks without horns: Male and female initiation among the Aluund of Southwest Zaire', *Journal des africanistes* 61:1 (1991), 37-71.

[2609] Turner, 'Zambia's kankanga dances'; Kratz, 'We've always done it like this'; De Boeck, 'Of bushbucks without horns'.

[2610] De Boeck, 'Of bushbucks without horns', brings out the tension between individualism and communalism.

power from past times.'[2611] Far from remaining static, Lunda initiation ceremonies appeared highly dynamic. They could incorporate new elements, as described in the 1950s:

> The full rites have (…) not been without changes due to modern conditions; bandages may now be used instead of leaves to put on the wound; the duration of the seclusion has been shortened and the age of the novices lowered to meet modern conditions (…) In short the rites have shown no disposition to decay under present conditions, and have shown many features in which they can adapt themselves to the modern era, and still be highly prized by society.[2612]

Small changes have been incorporated through personal choices and styles, yet the initiation ceremonies – irrespective of their transformed nature – have persisted until this day, despite the influences of education, Christianity and government policies.[2613] In 1985 Edith Turner returned to Mwinilunga after 30 years absence and noted the changes in female initiation. Dances and dress practices had been altered to meet Christian norms of decency, there had been widespread borrowing of elements from neighbouring people and money had pervaded the most intimate aspects of the rites, yet 'the tradition has never in fact been stable and (…) it was able to alter according to circumstances.'[2614] Despite change, 'the democratic, communal, and even spiritual character of the rite has been maintained.'[2615] Initiation was and is a powerful means to relate the individual to the community, negotiating change through the tension between private and public.

Continuity and change in village life

In the 1950s Turner predicted pervasive change in the social fabric of village life throughout Mwinilunga District. He identified that 'there was clearly "a wind of change," economic, political, social, religious, legal, and so on, sweeping the whole of central Africa and originating *outside* all village societies.'[2616] Yet despite profound social change, villages have continued to exist, whereas categories of kinship, age and gender or patterns of authority and discourses of witchcraft have retained their significance, even whilst transforming and incorporating change. The changes which Turner predicted appear less clear-cut or linear when viewed within a long-term historical perspective. This might be because 'people experience and channel change through pre-existing ideas, ways and practices.'[2617] Therefore, change tends to be gradual and incremental, rather than rapid or transformative. Change is mediated through existing categories, as 'values are the social sub-system most resistant to change in society, but when they do change their impact is more pervasive than that of changes in any other sub-system.'[2618] Even whilst social forms and relationships have profoundly changed, paradoxically, the inhabitants of Mwinilunga District assert that they have maintained their traditions and they discursively propose continuity with the past. This 'contrast between rocklike stability in conceptions alongside radical change in practice' needs to be explained.[2619]

Individuals appropriate change by 'following the rules yet creating new forms at the same time', both continuing and modifying cultural categories.[2620] Through 'a deeply rooted habitus, a past, a bedrock of moral matrixes' the present might be renegotiated and invested with meaning, and by looking at this process 'the significance and the rhythms of reciprocity, commensality, conjugality and gender relations are most fully explored and defined.'[2621] Rather than resulting in a disintegration of the social fabric, change propelled the continual negotiation and redefinition of existing categories and

[2611] Kratz, 'We've always done it like this', 50.
[2612] White, 'Notes on the circumcision rites', 44-5.
[2613] Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu,* 189; Confirmed by numerous oral interviews.
[2614] Turner, 'Zambia's kankanga dances', 57.
[2615] Turner, 'Zambia's kankanga dances', 71.
[2616] V.W. Turner, *Dramas, fields, and metaphors: Symbolic action in human society* (Ithaca, 1974), 31-2.
[2617] Peters, 'Revisiting the puzzle of matriliny', 140.
[2618] Price and Thomas, 'Continuity and change in the Gwembe Tonga family', 528.
[2619] Feierman, *Peasant intellectuals,* 5.
[2620] Feierman, *Peasant intellectuals,* 13.
[2621] De Boeck, 'Domesticating diamonds and dollars', 806.

social relationships. Thus, 'long-term continuity and active creation are in fact compatible', as individuals 'follow their own trajectories and choose their own paths within the historically conditioned range of possibilities.'[2622] Cultural categories and social relationships were not fixed but contested, being sites of struggle rather than bedrocks of an established normative order. As this chapter has argued, social relationships were subject to definite but gradual change. Although prominent individuals could uphold the moral premises and communal norms of the village, they could equally deviate from these norms and establish new patterns, for example by displaying exceptional hunting skill, by achieving status through an initiation ceremony or perhaps through witchcraft. Such exceptional individuals caused change in society, in the form of rituals and in patterns of belief. Yet change built upon established norms and a pre-existing order: 'The material conditions of life and the facts of intimate socialization (…) produce a homogenization of dispositions and interests, leading people to improvise in regulated ways.'[2623]

Continuity and change could thus coincide. Existing social structures changed continuously, yet in such a manner that a discursive continuity could still be upheld. Although norms, moralities and patterns of social relationships were contested, they formed the foundation from which action took off. Whilst there was continuous change, change was gradual. Rather than forming a sharp breach with past practices, change would be domesticated and familiarised: 'We can thus speak of both the continuity of tradition *and* its transformation as part of a single unending process of renovation, innovation and transformation.'[2624] *Chisemwa* could both change and endure. Enterprising individuals, who sought to make a name for themselves by establishing a large and prosperous household or by exhibiting rhetorical ability in the *chota*, might deviate from social norms and thereby establish their own rules, creating a precedent which others might follow. Traditions might change whilst remaining intact, providing 'individuals with a rich corpus of pre-established (traditional) forms *and* with the opportunity to "swing free" in creative endeavours that inevitably transform those forms.'[2625]

Conclusion

Beyond doubt villages in the area of Mwinilunga today look different and are organised in a different way than those at the start of the twentieth century. Despite profound social change, villages persist and have not disintegrated as Turner predicted in the 1950s. Villages and the social relationships which form the core of village life have changed over the course of the twentieth century, but this change did not always follow a clear, preconceived or linear course. Change was the outcome of active and purposive (re)production. Change could result in the rearticulation of existing discourses or the reconfiguration of previous practices, rather than in the emergence of wholly new forms.

Linear transitions from communalism to individualism, from extended kinship to family nucleation or from sharing to accumulation did not materialise. Binary oppositions were more discursive than real, as competition and contestation had always been part of village life. The establishment of 'farms', which Turner observed, was not a sign of individualisation, but matched long-established trends of inter-village competition and underlined aspects of wealth in people. Wealth in people was what underpinned the continued importance of social relationships. A *mukwakuheta* (rich person) could not become powerful without simultaneously being considered a *mukwakwashi* (one who helps others). Although capitalism might have exacerbated existing rivalries within villages, this did not evoke radical change in social relationships, which remained pivoted around webs of interdependence and personal allegiance. Becoming a 'Big Man' involved investing in the village rather

[2622] Feierman, *Peasant intellectuals,* 3, 21.
[2623] Feierman, *Peasant intellectuals,* 28.
[2624] T.T. Spear, *Mountain farmers: Moral economies of land and agricultural development in Arusha and Meru* (Oxford etc., 1997), 238-9.
[2625] R. Handler and J. Linnekin, 'Tradition, genuine or spurious', *The journal of American folklore* 97:385 (1984), 287.

than distancing oneself from it. This explains the persistence of village residence and the paramount importance of social relationships.

5.1: Chief discussing village affairs with the male population
Source: (NAZ) SEC2/964, Mwinilunga District Tour Report, Accompanying Photographs

5.2: Women and children welcoming District Commissioner
Source: Dennis Brubacher