1 | *Imagining the Copperbelts*

Introduction

The exploration and settlement of the Central African Copperbelt in the early twentieth century, while not the focus of this study, was foundational for the subsequent development of Copperbelt society and how it was understood. While the novelty of social life in its new mine camps and towns was clear to all observers, European officials and missionaries in particular saw them within a racialised framework that counterposed African backwardness to European modernity. Mining towns were, from this perspective, inherently Western spaces in which Africans were out of place and in need of close surveillance and discipline, albeit in contrasting forms. Katanga's mines pioneered a model of African urban settlement and family life in the 1920s and 1930s, while Northern Rhodesian mine companies sought unsuccessfully to retain a migrant system and retain the 'rural' identity of African urbanites.

African protests and strikes, and the changed context of the post–World War Two world, led in the late 1940s and 1950s to a huge expansion in efforts – by mine companies, late colonial states and their intellectual advisors – to effectively urbanise the growing African population of Copperbelt towns. New social scientific institutions conducted an unprecedented wave of research on the urban African experience. While some researchers asserted that Africans were adapting successfully to this 'modern' milieu, establishing new institutions and cultural forms, others believed Africans needed official instruction in how to be urban and worried that their dislocation from supposedly stable rural norms would create alienation and discontent. This chapter provides a necessarily brief overview of key themes in the vast body of RLI and CEPSI research – building on the more detailed work by Schumaker, Ferguson, and Rubbers and Poncelet – and

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identifies aspects of their imaginaries of Copperbelt societies, formed in this period, that would go on to shape the way that African life in its towns was understood over the next half-century.

The chapter demonstrates that this body of research, while diverse in its assumptions, methods and conclusions, was fundamentally shaped by its engagement with African societies themselves: not only indigenous research assistants, but also the agency and ideas of African elites who understood the political consequences of academic knowledge production and sought to shape it in ways that would support their own perspective and interests. Copperbelt migrants shared some of the notions of the colonial authorities about urban society: that it represented a new form of social organisation that needed to be understood and navigated, and that knowledge about it should be disseminated to new arrivals, via familial and ethnic support and socialisation networks. Through an analysis of a single African-authored work of fiction, the chapter argues that African migrants, far from seeing Copperbelt life as outside their experience, consistently and creatively generated their own understandings of urban society that both overlapped and contrasted with official and academic discourses.

Formative Influences: Copperbelt Imaginations in the Early Twentieth Century

Colonial rule of Africa in the early twentieth century was an evidently self-conscious process in which Western actors believed the imposition of effective authority on and exploitation of Africans required forms of governance, education and development that were distinct, both from those in existence in Africa at the moment of colonial conquest and from those practised in Western societies. The decades-long debates among European colonial administrators over indirect rule, chiefly authority and assimilation versus adaptation were underwritten by assumptions of difference between Europeans and Africans in the form and/or level of 'civilisation', grounded in pseudo-scientific race theory and their own understanding of Europe's recent history of social, political and economic change.[1]

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[1] For indirect rule and colonial governance, see (among many others) Heather J. Sharkey, 'African Colonial States', in John Parker and Richard Reid (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Modern African History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 151–70; Adiele Eberechukwu Afigbo, *The Warrant Chiefs:*

There is no space here to challenge this viewpoint by providing even a meaningful summary of the pre-colonial history of Central Africa: it will hopefully be sufficient to state that the 'Copperbelt' of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had experienced enormous creative innovation in forms of political authority, from the Luba kingdom to the Lunda Commonwealth. Trade in copper and other minerals and goods had linked these polities to the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, before global trading links and influences had fuelled inter- and intra-African societal conflict and the rise of the Yeke warlord state of Msiri in southern Katanga, all of which made the Copperbelt in general and its Congolese part in particular a zone of exceptional historical flux.[2]

Colonial rule nonetheless rested on a general assumption that existing African societies were essentially static and ahistorical small-scale social systems in which patriarchal authority, customary law and cultural norms went largely unchallenged from within. Europeans disagreed about whether this was a good thing and debated whether Africans should be disrupted out of their traditional order by the imposition of tax, labour or law, or preserved in it and protected from the forces of modernity raging around them. The extent to which this debate mattered is itself debatable: colonialism in practice, while certainly uneven in its impact across the continent, demanded that Africans work and pay taxes and adhere to reconstituted versions of 'native' authority now uneasily integrated into the colonial order, arguably regardless of the outpourings of European observers searching for ways to preserve or remake African authority and identity in the face of what they understood as a qualitatively new, revolutionary wave of social change for which Africans themselves were allegedly wholly unprepared. Nonetheless, the writings of missionaries, European

Indirect Rule in Southern-Eastern Nigeria 1891–1927 (London: Longman, 1972); Gregory Mann, 'What was the Indigénat? The "Empire of Law" in French West Africa', *Journal of African History* 50, 3 (2009), pp. 331–53; and Justin Willis, 'The Administration of Bonde, 1920–60: A Study of the Implementation of Indirect Rule in Tanganyika', *African Affairs*, 92, 366 (1993), pp. 53–67.

2   For this period, see Jan Vansina, *Kingdoms of the Savannah* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966), chapters 6 and 8 and, more recently, David M. Gordon, *Nachituti's Gift: Economy, Society, and Environment in Central Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), esp. chapter 1, and Giacomo Macola, *The Gun in Central Africa: A History of Technology and Politics* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2016).

administrators and company officials on these topics, rooted in their distorted perception of race, authority and historical change, were deeply influential on how social change in general and specific phenomena such as wage labour, urbanisation and cosmopolitan society came to be understood in mid-twentieth-century colonised Africa in general and in the Central African Copperbelt in particular. The notion that pre-existing African societies had common, longstanding 'customs', ensuring a stable social order overseen by recognised politico-legal authorities, would prove central to societies' efforts to implement and contest supposedly 'modern' legal, economic, political frameworks in both colonial and post-colonial Africa.[3]

Because deviation from the supposed stable norms of the African rural social order attracted the attention of Western observers, the camps that grew up around the new copper mines of Haut-Katanga in the 1910s and the Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt from the late 1920s, as well as the African societies that provided labour to them (and other workplaces in southern Africa), were the concern and the subject of analysis by missionaries and company and colonial officials. Missionaries generally saw African and European civilisations as essentially different, or believed African society was lagging behind but following in the path of European modernisation. Either way, the pre-colonial society that was now fast disappearing under the pressure of its superior Western counterpart was romanticised as not only appropriate to the 'primitive' level of African development, but free of the social ills of urban society:

Whatever may be said for or against the tribe as a primitive form of governmental control, it must be recognised as a successful expedient for the integration of community life; everybody was domiciled, fed and clothed according to the standards of the group, crime was rare, prostitution, orphanage and pauperism were altogether unknown.[4]

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[3] The role of custom was of course a central focus in the work of Max Gluckman, founder of the Manchester school of anthropology and the second director of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute: most notably in Max Gluckman, *Custom and Conflict in Africa* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1956). Among many subsequent studies, see Chanock, *Law, Customs and Social Order*; Abner Cohen, *Custom and Politics in Urban Africa: A Study of Hausa Migrants in Yoruba Towns* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004 [1969]); and Elizabeth Thornberry, 'Virginity Testing, History, and the Nostalgia For Custom in Contemporary South Africa', *African Studies Review*, 58, 3 (2015), pp. 129–48.

[4] J. Merle Davis, *Modern Industry and the African* (London: Macmillan, 1933), p. 45.

'Tribal' societies were however equally considered in need of urgent reform to remove harmful 'traditional' practices such as forced labour and polygamy. Creating new legal orders to govern Africans living in town was however fraught with complications: since 'normal' African tribes were believed to be ethnically homogeneous and immobile, the lines of authority in multi-ethnic urban migrant societies were evidently compromised. Where would the line be drawn between European and African law? Which customs would apply when Africans of different origin encountered one another? How would urban Africans enter into contracts of employment or marriage, or acquire housing or credit? The ways in which the authorities approached these questions were informed by an assumption that urban Africans were people out of place: they needed to be in possession of internal passports known as '*situpa*', which identified their chief and village of origin, and a contract of employment to justify their presence in town.[5] The ways the authorities in the two parts of the Copperbelt managed these problems developed in markedly different ways, reflecting their distinct colonial cultures and the differential development of their mining industries, differences that would have a profound long-term impact on Copperbelt society.

The Belgian administration of Congo was haunted by the failure of King Leopold's Congo Free State and sought to justify its continued governance of this vast territory by 'improving' the lives of its indigenous inhabitants.[6] Inter-war Belgian Congo saw significant interventions in the health and social care of its African population. When the Katangese mining company UMHK struggled to recruit sufficient African workers to its operations, it seemed logical to lengthen their contracts from six to twelve months and, with the encouragement of the colonial administration and the Catholic Church, to invest in the stabilisation of their residence in its mining camps.[7] Meanwhile, UMHK production was periodically constrained by recruiting problems. Colonial officials collaborated with recruiters to provide

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[5] Passes of this kind were used to control African movement and employment across southern-central Africa until independence and, in South Africa, until the mid-1980s.

[6] Matthew G. Stanard, *Selling the Congo: A History of European Pro-Empire Propaganda and the Making of Belgian Imperialism* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 2012).

[7] Vellut, 'Les Bassins Miniers'; Bruce Fetter, *The Creation of Elisabethville* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1976).

increased labour, but ongoing shortages forced the company into mechanising aspects of production as early as 1913. The skill base of African workers, and a wage scale that rewarded such skills, was raised with the aim of replacing their expensive and politically suspect white counterparts following strike action in 1919.[8] *Union Minière du Haut-Katanga* and its state and church partners helped arrange marriages for single mineworkers, incentivised married life with the provision of larger houses for married workers and provided an increasingly elaborate system of natal and child care – the latter drawing on Belgian colonial natalist policies but here developed to their greatest extent via the revenue generated by mining.[9] The Benedictine mission headed by the towering figure of Father Jean Felix de Hemptinne would play a decisive role in this process from 1925, when it was granted authority to open its first school for African boys in Elisabethville.[10] Subsidised by the Belgian state, Benedictine education inculcated the 'civilised' values that would be necessary to live a moral life in town. Ultimately the most advanced Africans, educated and having adopted a Western lifestyle, could acquire '*évolué*' status. In the Congolese context, the definition of *évolués* was endlessly debated by policymakers and advisors in relation to whether colonial policy should cherish and protect African civilisation on its own terms, or if Africans should be assimilated into European civilisation.[11]

However, beneath the focus on welfare and education lay the unresolved question of social adaptation and transition: what forms of political authority and social organisation were appropriate to the supposedly new urban African societies of Haut-Katanga's mining towns? The Belgian solution to these problems was intervention: the careful management of all aspects of migration and urban life. Mine police controlled entry into and out of the 'camps' and monitored who was living in each house built by the company. This would over time develop into a fully-fledged system of what Dibwe dia Mwembu characterises as authoritarian paternalism, in which every aspect of work and social life

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[8] Perrings, *Black Mineworkers in Central Africa*, pp. 29–31.
[9] For Belgian colonial childcare more generally, see Nancy Rose Hunt, '"Le Bebe en Brousse": European Women, African Birth Spacing and Colonial Intervention in Breast Feeding in the Belgian Congo', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 21, 3 (1988), pp. 401–32.
[10] Fetter, *The Creation of Elisabethville*, p. 105.
[11] Daniel Tödt, 'The Lumumba Generation: African Bourgeoisie and Colonial Distinction in the Belgian Congo' (In Press, Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021).

was carefully managed so as to produce an ideal modern urban worker with a family to match.[12] The company system of hegemonic, protective control would replace the authority of the patriarchal chief and the stable rural social order. Many Africans, however, lived in the '*cité indigene*', the town area outside mine control where African life was freer but also more precarious. This spatial division between ordered mine space and more autonomous urban areas would remain central to the hierarchies and ideational understandings of Copperbelt towns for many decades (see Chapter 3). Such urban areas were revealingly known as '*centres extra-coutumier*' (CECs), a name infused with colonial anxiety about ensuring effective authority in the absence of customary order.[13]

By the late 1920s thousands of mineworkers and tens of thousands of other Africans were essentially urban residents, but they were denied wider rights of, for example, property ownership by the segregationist policies of Belgian colonialism. As soon as they arrived in town, African residents created their own mutual 'self-help' associations organised along kinship or ethnic lines. The public manifestation of such urban associations, for example in the form of 'tribal dances', was the subject of official concern, as was the potential for the merger of ethnic identities into something generically 'noncustomary': attempts were made to bring all such activities under closer official control by, for example, relocating dances to the CEC centre. Meanwhile, the creation of the Cercle *Saint-Benoît* by the Benedictines represented an attempt to promote a multi-ethnic elite identity among Catholic-educated white-collar workers who were or who aspired to become *évolués*.[14] Mine companies encouraged the integration of Africans from different backgrounds by promoting the use of Kiswahili as a common urban language and housing them together – an ethos of '*tshanga-tshanga*' or ethnic mixing. Simultaneously they sought to keep mineworkers in touch with their rural societies by encouraging the performance of distinct 'tribal' dances.[15] It should be stressed that this interventionist approach in

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[12] Dibwe dia Mwembu, *Bana Shaba*.
[13] Fetter, *Creation of Elisabethville*, pp. 132–4.
[14] Jean Omasombo Tshonda et al. (eds.), *Katanga Vol 1, Peuples et L'Occupation de L'Espace* (Tervuren: Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale, 2018), p. 163.
[15] Dibwe dia Mwembu, 'Histoire des Conditions de Vie', p. 25.

no way resolved the inherent contradictions of managing urban African life.

In Northern Rhodesia meanwhile, debate over such questions initially focussed on the loss of productive male labour from rural areas and the dislocating effects on patriarchal authority of cash-rich young workers: chiefs and missionaries bemoaned this impact and, as Merle Davis' quote above shows, looked back nostalgically at the rural order supposedly being lost in the face of powerful modernising forces. While many Africans remained in town for lengthy periods, pass laws and short-term contracts prevented African migrants from establishing secure residence or permanent employment. Rural depopulation was a concern shared by Katangese observers, who sought to stabilise urban communities so as to limit the constant outflow of rural migrants to town in an otherwise uncontrolled manner.

For many European observers, urban mining communities were places of disorder, sin and unchecked materialism among Africans who lacked the socialisation needed to manage their households and morals. A particular concern in Northern Rhodesia was the negative influence on Africans of the thousands of white mineworkers who, in contrast to Haut-Katanga, continued to dominate skilled mine jobs and who successfully defended a colour bar at work and residential segregation in mine and non-mine areas alike.[16] Northern Rhodesian mine companies, suspicious of what they regarded as liberal missionaries and resistant to any influence over their activities of a colonial state officially dedicated to the protection of 'native' interests, liaised with their workforce via 'tribal elders', later 'tribal representatives'.[17] These were respected older men, some from aristocratic backgrounds, who were chosen to represent mineworkers in a variation on the British policy of indirect rule practised in rural areas.[18]

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[16] Duncan Money, '"No matter how much or how little they've got, they can't settle down": a social history of Europeans on the Zambian Copperbelt, 1926–1974', unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Oxford (2016).

[17] Northern Rhodesia was established in 1924 as a British protectorate, in theory protecting its African population from the settler-driven demands for labour and land experienced in Southern Rhodesia.

[18] Interview, Morris Chimfutumba, Mufulira, 13 July 2018. For indirect rule on the Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt see Walima T. Kalusa, 'Death, Christianity, and African Miners: Contesting Indirect Rule in the Zambian Copperbelt, 1935–1962', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 44, 1 (2011), pp. 89–112.

In sharp contrast to the de facto Benedictine alliance with UMHK, African Christian activity south of the border ran ahead of its European missionary counterpart: in 1925 the Union Church, the first of any kind on the Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt, was established by African migrants in Mindolo, near Ndola. Eschewing the denominational mission franchises of Northern Rhodesia's rural communities, Union Church leaders established branches in all the main mine compounds.[19] European missions were largely absent from the Copperbelt until the recommendations of the Merle Davis report prompted the establishment of the multi-denominational United Missions to the Copperbelt (UMCB) in 1936. Its missionaries remained reluctant to involve themselves in an ethnically mixed urban community where, they believed, the lines of traditional authority were unclear and where migrants had already developed their own interpretations of Biblical scripture. United Missions to the Copperbelt's social outreach activities received modest government funding but little support from mine companies, which worried that missionaries would stir up discontent among their African workforce.

In both regions, the global Depression of the 1930s threw thousands of Africans out of work and conjured the spectre of unemployed urban 'natives', unmoored from indigenous authority and ripe for radicalisation. Chauncey suggests that, though the disruptive effects of the Depression on suddenly retrenched African mineworkers were relatively brief, they had a disproportionate and lagging impact on the Northern Rhodesian government's desire to avoid stabilisation.[20] During World War Two, however, the Central African Copperbelt emerged as a globally strategic economic location, providing vital minerals for the military and industrial war effort. Wartime demands meant that rural areas and populations were more directly exploited for agricultural produce, accelerating rural depopulation and, in a context of rapidly rising prices, putting living standards under profound pressure. Colonial policymakers

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[19] Denis M'Passou, *Mindolo. A Story of the Ecumenical Movement in Africa* (Lusaka: Baptist Printing Ministry, 1983), pp. 1–5; Stephanie Lämmert, 'Reimagining the Copperbelt as a Religious Space', in Larmer et al., *Across the Copperbelt*, pp. 347–72.

[20] George Chauncey Jr., 'The Locus of Reproduction: Women's Labour in the Zambian Copperbelt, 1927–1953', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 7, 2 (1981), pp. 135–64, p. 157.

increasingly perceived the vulnerability of their new urban African communities to subversive influences, ranging from communism to messianic independent churches, that might undermine their loyalty to the colonial project.

Understanding of such threats was influenced by the growing importance of the human sciences in colonial policymaking: sociological theories developed to explain Western industrial society were now combined with religious and political interpretations to diagnose problems and offer solutions. The 1940 Northern Rhodesian strike provided clear evidence, for the Forster Commission of Inquiry, that Africans were in towns to stay and that it was necessary to adopt urban stabilisation policies similar to those well established in Katanga, to manage the dangerous new phenomena of

the skilled native … who stands on the threshold of the enjoyment of the luxuries of our civilisation, he is the man who is the most affected by any rise in the cost of living … he is also the person that we can expect industrial trouble from in the future.[21]

At the same time, Northern Rhodesian policymakers sought to keep workers in touch with their rural communities of origin and insisted they return to their villages at the end of their working lives. Five years earlier, the inquiry into the more limited 1935 Copperbelt riots also prompted urgent soul-searching about the dangerously bifurcated nature of African society and the stark choice facing mine companies and policymakers. One compound manager told the subsequent Commission: 'These people form a definite social group quite shorn of anything tribal, they live in a world entirely different to the other natives.'[22] The failure of tribal representatives to warn of the impending unrest suggested, in the testimony of the Provincial Commissioner to the Inquiry, that

a situation existed on the mines which was particularly dangerous, undesirable, and quite unique in my experience. Because if natives riot on occasion of tax without any indication that they are dissatisfied, with no attempt to make representation of their grievances, without even making an attempt to evade

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[21] Forster Commission of Inquiry, quoted in Perrings, *Black Mineworkers in Central Africa*, p. 224.
[22] Quoted in Jane L. Parpart, *Labour and Capital on the African Copperbelt* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1983), p. 47.

payment, then I say that a spirit prevails among these natives which is altogether novel.[23]

The inquiry report stated: 'The choice lies between the establishment of native authority, together with frequent repatriation of natives to their villages; or alternatively, the acceptance of definite de-tribalization and industrialization of the mining under European urban control'.[24]

In Haut-Katanga, the 1941 mineworkers' strike, arising in similar wartime conditions to that in Northern Rhodesia one year earlier, was assessed in very different ways (see Chapter 4). For government and UMHK officials it was not an expression of new urban identity but rather a sign of disorder in mine camps in which societal and familial norms had been disturbed. The solution was therefore a radical expansion in the company's existing programme of social interven-tion. This would build on its pioneering but limited efforts at urban stabilisation and family support, which were now combined with policy lessons drawn from wartime and post–World War Two Western Europe, deployed in Congo to combat the negative social effects of extreme inequality and the ethnicisation of political extrem-ism, via a limited tripartism bringing together company, state and worker representatives.

These events and the policy response to them will be further elaborated in Chapter 4. Here, it is worth noting that one official response to the 1935 revolt was the establishment of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute (RLI) to advise the authorities on new chal-lenges to racial relations in Northern Rhodesia. In Haut-Katanga, likewise, the establishment of the *Centre d'Études des Problèmes Sociaux Indigènes* (CEPSI) heralded a massive investment in know-ledge production predicated on the notion that the urban commu-nities of central Africa were generating new and urgent social problems that, in the optimistic spirit of the time, could be under-stood and addressed by the right forms of scientifically informed intervention.

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[23] Western Province Commissioner Goodall, evidence to 1935 Commission of Inquiry, quoted by Epstein, *Politics in an Urban African Community*, p. 30.

[24] Government of Great Britain, 'Report of the Commission appointed to inquire into the disturbances in the Copperbelt, Northern Rhodesia. October, 1935' (London: HMSO, 1935), p. 41.

RLI and CEPSI in Late Colonial Context

The Rhodes-Livingstone Institute was formally established in 1938, officially to contribute towards 'scientific efforts … to examine the effect upon native African society of the impact of European civilization', primarily through the applied use of social anthropology.[25] The *Centre d'Études des Problèmes Sociaux Indigènes*, as has already been noted, was founded eight years later, with similar aims of applying the tools and insights of social science more generally. While both institutes had broad remits for the study of African societies in Belgian Congo and Northern Rhodesia (and indeed, in the RLI's case, further afield in British-ruled Africa), the Central African Copperbelt was a primary focus of their collective attentions. It provided a compelling case study of European impact and consequential social change on African society and, as an area of political and economic importance, attracted considerable research funding. The Northern Rhodesian government was an early funder of the RLI; while Anglo American was sceptical about the RLI's liberal social scientists, CEPSI received significant support from UMHK.

Researchers for RLI and CEPSI were in turn influential in international and inter-imperial networks of research and policymaking in areas such as housing, labour and social welfare, reflecting the wider late colonial concern about the distinct problems of urban Africans. The RLI's Clyde Mitchell and CEPSI's Arthur Doucy and René Clémens were, for example, present alongside Georges Balandier, whose pioneering sociological analyses of Brazzaville equally highlighted the urban African experience, at a landmark UNESCO conference held in Abidjan in 1954 on urbanisation and industrialisation.[26] In practice however, there was comparatively little practical inter-imperial co-operation between the different research institutes addressing these issues, and certainly between the contrasting conclusions of CEPSI and RLI analyses of Copperbelt societies.

The work of the RLI and, to a lesser extent, CEPSI must itself be one of the most studied (and restudied) sets of social scientific research

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[25] Quoted in Godfrey Wilson, 'Anthropology as a Public Service', *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, 13, 1 (1940), pp. 43–61, p. 43.

[26] See, for example, Georges Balandier, *Afrique Ambiguë* (Paris: Plon, 1957). The papers from this conference were published as UNESCO, *Social Implications of Industrialisation and Urbanization South of the Sahara* (Paris: UNESCO, 1956).

activity anywhere. This chapter does not pretend to offer anything approaching a comprehensive history of their ideas, organisation, methods and activities, which have in any case been expertly analysed and historicised elsewhere.[27] Its more limited aim is to identify key themes in the work and approach of both institutes that, it is argued, shaped subsequent perceptions of the Copperbelt's form of urban modernity. Further specific themes central to their work – including political participation, economic power and consumption, familial relations and personal development – will be explored in subsequent chapters.

'Endless Becoming' – African Societies in Transition

A central assumption in the work of both CEPSI and RLI researchers was that new urban African societies such as the Copperbelt's mining towns were experiencing a rapid transition from one type of society to another. Migrants who had grown up in small villages with person-alised social relations, agricultural economies, customary law, recipro-cal exchange of goods, patriarchal authority, localised belief systems, homogeneous cultures and stable social orders had relocated to towns marked by myriad manifestations of modernity: industrial labour rewarded by cash wages, enabling the purchase of consumer goods; Western legal and political systems; Christianity and the nuclear fam-ily; and exposure to foreign cultures and cosmopolitan communities with diverse customs. Wilson's 1941 study of the Broken Hill mining compound starts from the classic functionalist assumption that 'society is an equilibrium, a balanced or coherent system of groups, relation-ships and institutions, all inextricably connected with and determining one another'. Africans with their origins in such balanced societies now

27 Ferguson, *Expectations of Modernity*; Schumaker, *Africanizing Anthropology*; Poncelet, *L'Invention des Sciences Coloniales Belges*; Rubbers and Poncelet, 'Sociologie Coloniale au Congo Belge'; Bruce Kapferer, 'Situations, Crisis, and the Anthropology of the Concrete: The Contribution of Max Gluckman', *Social Analysis*, 49, 3 (2005), pp. 85–122; Jan Kees van Donge, 'Understanding Rural Zambia Today: The Work of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute', *Africa*, 55, 1 (1985), pp. 60–76; Richard P. Werbner, 'The Manchester School in South-Central Africa', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 13 (1984), pp. 157–85; Hugh Macmillan, 'The Historiography of Transition on the Zambian Copperbelt – Another View', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 19, 4 (1993), pp. 681–712.

found themselves thrust into 'a heterogeneous world, stratified into classes and divided into states, and so find themselves suddenly transformed into the peasants and unskilled workers of a nascent nation-state'.[28] Epstein described the scale of change in characteristically evocative terms: 'Where once there was only bush with scattered African villages linked by a network of winding paths, there are now large towns of multi-racial composition, linked with one another, and with the outside world, by road and rail, telephone and wireless.'[29] This transition was understood to be an accelerated or truncated version of the modernisation of Western Europe between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries that had encompassed religious disenchantment, enclosure of the commons, urban migration and the increasing domination of materialist values and broader social identities based on class and nation. Authors stressed the rapidity and dislocating effects of these changes: Doucy and Feldheim, for example, stated that 'in the industrial centres … three different worlds collide: the customary and traditional African, the West and the transitional world'.[30] Powdermaker asserted that there was 'in this part of Africa' a drastic broadening of space via contact and communication with other cultures, the regulation of time, the money economy, the nuclear family, the undermining of respect for elders by new hierarchies based on education, wealth and status, all combining to change the dominant social unit from 'tribe' to 'nation'.[31]

More recent social change in the contemporaneous West was also an influence on these thinkers: sociological research that supported the post–World War Two growth of statist developmental intervention inspired researchers to recommend or apply such approaches to Central Africa. The extent to which the West, either historically or in the current period, was a useful analogy was, however, the subject of some disagreement. The notion – today an indisputable and indeed uncontroversial historical truth – that African societies had themselves always been historically dynamic, had mutated and changed to meet

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[28] Godfrey Wilson, *The Economics of Detribalization in Northern Rhodesia* (Livingstone, Zambia: Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, 1941). Broken Hill, later Kabwe, was outside the Copperbelt region itself.

[29] Epstein, *Politics in an Urban African Community*, p. xi.

[30] Doucy and Feldheim, *Problèmes du Travail*, p. 8.

[31] Hortense Powdermaker, *Copper Town: Changing Africa* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), pp. 15–18. Powdermaker was not officially a RLI researcher but worked closely with the Institute.

changing societal challenges, and had shaped and been shaped by relevant global dynamics (religious, economic and political) in the centuries preceding colonial annexation, was almost wholly absent from these analyses.

A key concern was therefore whether Africans were able to manage this unprecedented transition, to adapt to its requirements and become functioning members of modern societies. Wilson was concerned that externally driven economic change was running ahead of African society's ability to adjust, so that 'men and women alike find themselves morally and intellectually unprepared for the new conditions'.[32] Max Gluckman, Wilson's successor as RLI director, stressed, however, the centrality of the new urban context in shaping African behaviour and identity in his memorable phrase, 'An African townsman is a townsman, an African miner is miner: he is only secondarily a tribesman'.[33] While some researchers shared Gluckman's optimism about African adaptability, many were concerned about social dissonance and dislocation in the transitional period. There was a desire to avoid the negative side effects of modernisation as it had unfolded in the West, which (depending on one's political orientation) might encompass social deprivation, for example slum housing or poor child socialisation, or industrial and social unrest and political 'extremism'. More concretely, an immediate concern of researchers working with mine companies was 'productivity', the extent to which African mineworkers could adjust to the demands of skilled employment and continuously improve their abilities. In a central African industry whose prime advantage had been the cheapness of its African workforce, higher wages would need to be earned by major improvements in this area (see Chapter 2).

There was, it must be stressed, significant variation in CEPSI, RLI and official thinking about adaptation and transition between the two colonies and in the relatively short period between the establishment of these institutions and the end of colonial rule. More conservative observers initially characterised urban Africans as orphaned children, unmoored from their patriarchal norms, unable to adjust to the complex urban order and therefore vulnerable to the social evils of

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[32] Wilson, 'Economics of Detribalization', p. 14.
[33] Max Gluckman, 'Tribalism in Modern British Central Africa', *Cahiers d'études africaines*, 1, 1 (1960), pp. 55–70.

modern life. Albert Gille, Provincial Commissioner for Coquilhatville, extolled the vital role of CESPI in overcoming the 'evils' that were 'undermining Native society' and the need to address the 'African's inability to react, freely and rationally, against the factors of modern life, in all its aspects, invading and dislocating his own'.[34] Gille rejected any comparison with the West and saw the truncated process of African adjustment as uniquely problematic:

Can one begin to compare the mentality, the needs, the stage of historic evolution, of working classes or war victims in Belgium, with those of our Natives? Our Natives' tribal mentality in process of disintegration, seeking new outlets; the social instability of the majority; their psychological and professional instability; their moral code wavering between ancestral fetichism [*sic*] and the new Christian appeals; their family institutions and, even to-day, the inefficiency of their political framework; the inadequacy of population statistics; the heterogeneity of races; the juxtaposition of locations and European settlements, giving rise to a psychological and social complexity which is absolutely *sui generis*; are these not facts for which no parallel exists in Europe?[35]

Notwithstanding their varying perspective, there was a general consensus that this difficult transition needed to be guided by interventions by the European authorities – the colonial powers, the mine companies and their allies in the church, educational and social services – to avoid social malaise and ensure Africans became modern at the appropriate pace and to the extent of their ability. Overtly racialised characterisations of distinct African and European 'civilisations' were increasingly displaced by late colonial discourses of managed development and ostensibly depoliticised by the application of rational social scientific analysis to inform policy. Gille asserted in 1950:

We are working for a long-term development in which gradual gains may, in the course of generations, filter down into the masses and establish themselves. Thus they will serve as a sure stepping-stone to future advances towards new stages of progress, avoiding all disequilibrium.[36]

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[34] Albert Gille and Ferdinand Grévisse, 'The Social and Scientific Role of C.E.P.S. I.', *African Affairs*, 49, 195 (1950), pp. 151–7, p. 151. These authors were Belgian colonial administrators, the latter a senior administrator in Kolwezi and Jadotville/Likasi.
[35] Gille and Grévisse, 'Social and Scientific Role', p. 152.
[36] Gille and Grévisse, 'Social and Scientific Role', p. 153.

A rushed process of transition therefore would be disastrous, creating social and even psychological anomie. Doucy and Feldheim's rejection of trade unionism and the continuing need for colonial paternalism showed that CEPSI thinking was at times not incompatible with the earlier and still influential ideas of de Hemptinne and complemented Belgium's postponement of envisaged decolonisation to the far future (see Chapter 4).[37] As Rubbers and Poncelet argue, the adaptation argument rested on the characterisation of the rural village and the urban mine town as not only geographically distinct but representing distinct evolutionary stages.[38] In Clémens' understanding of life in Katuba, a CEC in Elisabethville, Africans were migrants not simply into urban towns but into European culture and civilisation, forcing a brutal acceleration of their historical development that left them psychologically disoriented and in need of European guidance.[39] While RLI researchers such as Clyde Mitchell found evidence, following Gluckman, of the adaptability of African society and culture to its new urban setting, they equally accepted the underlying notion that industrial towns were inherently 'modern' and contrasted them, implicitly or explicitly, to 'traditional' rural Africa. Powdermaker, while showing the apparent compatibility of 'modern' and 'traditional' life, nonetheless also counterposes them:

Now traditional and modern orders exist side by side. Men who participated in a tribal dance on Sunday afternoon might be dancing on Saturday night to jazz music at the Welfare Hall. Witchcraft-thinking did not prevent people from using the services of the clinic and hospital. They listened to modern songs and to current news and stories over the radio, and used their traditional proverbs and folk tales to make a point in colloquial conversation. . . . The goal of individual careers was new, but it had not eliminated traditional duties to kindred. Many people went to church, but they also followed some traditional customs at birth, puberty, marriage, and death. . . . Some people tended to be more traditional and others more modern in their general orientation [but] the traditional and modern were found not only in disparate groups, but within the same individual.[40]

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[37] Doucy and Feldheim, *Problèmes du Travail*.
[38] Rubbers and Poncelet, 'Sociologie Coloniale au Congo Belge'.
[39] René Clémens, 'Le Développement des Sciences Sociales et le Congo Belge', *CEPSI Bulletin*, 31 (1955), pp. 87–96.
[40] Powdermaker, *Copper Town*, p. 7.

In numerous CEPSI articles published throughout the 1950s, insightful empirical research was overshadowed by this explicit framework. An otherwise informative analysis of indigenous trading in the CEC area of Elisabethville, for example, had as its underlying assumption that Africans could only learn to become entrepreneurs through their exposure to white counterparts:

The modern monetary economy in which we have plunged the Black without the transition that was experienced by generations of Europeans has provoked, among those living in the cities, a rupture with their clan links and a distortion of their customary rules. . . . The coexistence of these two groups will provoke an acculturation by the less evolved group.[41]

Because the resultant survey assumed that African businesspeople learnt trading methods from their European counterparts, it made no effort to discover whether they did so or not.

Applying Social Science: The Political Uses of Knowledge Production

The RLI and CEPSI researchers were themselves well aware of the political significance of their work and, as well as producing findings, they often wrote and spoke about the wider consequences of their findings for African society and for political change. For CEPSI, Grévisse claimed:

While functional ethnology contents itself with observing the evolution of Native society under the influence of outside forces, C.E.P.S.I. goes further. It is trying to take an active part in determining the direction and the rhythm of this evolution, by grasping the realities of Native life as a whole, by watching the forces in action, and by noting how they react on each other.[42]

Initially, however, human agency in this process was confined to European 'government officials, missionaries, directors of large business concerns, traders and settlers'.[43] These agents had a duty to 'define their attitude to the Native, whom they ask to join them in some form of partnership. For this partnership it is essential that the Native be freed from his old ways of thought, and given new aptitudes, new

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[41] Anon, 'Le Commerce Indigène au CEC d'Elisabethville', *CEPSI Bulletin*, 28 (1955), pp. xli–lxxv.
[42] Gille and Grévisse, 'Social and Scientific Role', p. 154.   [43] Ibid.

ambitions and new wants'.[44] Therefore, CEPSI was an overtly 'practical' institute and in this respect differed somewhat from the RLI, but both institutions believed that the gathering and effective dissemination of applied research – the production of knowledge – was a vital ingredient in societal progress.[45]

As much that was customary was falling away in the face of the supposedly unstoppable forces of modernity, it was ever more vital to document what was happening and what was being lost. The *CEPSI Bulletin* devoted a great deal of space to administrator Ferdinand Grévisse's encyclopaedic descriptions of African 'tribes', which encompassed their distinct histories, food, material life, clothes, housing, labour and economic activities. This, 'at a time when industrialization is ... gradually leading to innovations that a policy of integration presupposes, ... preserves for autochthones more than a vague memory of the orientation of the spirits of their ancestors'.[46] The envisaged audience for this research, beyond white officials and settlers, was then African elites themselves who – it was assumed – were themselves incapable of carrying out the preservation and documentation of their own culture (see especially Chapter 7).

As a corollary of this, African 'tribes' were profiled for and ranked by their ability to adjust to the demands of modern industrial society. In Northern Rhodesia, the Lamba, the indigenous inhabitants of the Copperbelt who had responded to the presence of the mines with significant commercial agricultural activity and thereby avoided being drawn into mine labour, were as a result stereotyped as being unsuited to modern life.[47] In contrast, the Bemba – pioneers of mine migration to Katanga and then the Northern Rhodesian mines – and the Luba Kasai – who migrated to the Katangese mines in large numbers from the 1930s – were championed by their respective Catholic mission interlocutors as particularly well suited for industrial labour. This ethnic approach to labour profiling was given a scientific makeover in 1950s Katanga with UMHK's introduction of psychological testing of new

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[44] Gille and Grévisse, 'Social and Scientific Role', p. 155.
[45] Rubbers and Poncelet, 'Sociologie Coloniale au Congo Belge'.
[46] F. Grévisse, 'Notes Ethnographiques Relatives à Quelques Populations Autochthones du H-K Industriel', *CESPI Bulletin*, 32 (1956), pp. 65–207.
[47] Brian Siegel, 'The "Wild" and "Lazy" Lamba: Ethnic Stereotypes on the Central African Copperbelt' in Leroy Vail (ed.), *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa* (Oxford: James Currey, 1989), pp. 350–71.

recruits. Intelligence testing meanwhile enabled the comparison of IQ results for children in Elisabethville and Kolwezi primary schools with those of their counterparts in Belgium and the United States.[48] Occupational psychology was also practised in Northern Rhodesia's mines, though it appears this focussed primarily on white mineworkers.[49]

A key concern, for CEPSI as for policy-makers, was the preservation of peri-urban African development in the hinterlands of the mining towns, both to provide alternative forms of employment to migrants and to ensure these towns could feed themselves. Initiatives to stimulate agricultural entrepreneurship however foundered, it was argued, on African conservatism: 'They could never be strong enough to disengage the indigenous population from its primitive methods of work, so that it remains practically frozen in a subsistence economy.'[50] Consistent with CEPSI's applied approach, Clémens himself founded, with UMHK funds, an experimental village on the outskirts of Elisabethville to which Africans were encouraged to relocate from the *cités indigenes*: this was to be, in Clémens' term, a 'kibboutz-bantou', a model horticultural centre that would give birth to a 'new Bantu agriculturalist' under European supervision.[51]

Over time, it must be emphasised, this research evolved considerably: while CEPSI assumptions about African cultural mindsets never fully dissipated, the evident ability of Africans to adapt to the urban industrial context of Haut-Katanga led to an increasing emphasis on context-specific findings and the development of innovative research methods that enabled more effective analysis of societies in flux. As Rubbers and Poncelet rightly argue, CEPSI researchers were increasingly critical of many colonial practices – of settlers, administrators and

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[48] AGR2 Brussels, UMHK archives (hereafter UMHKA), File 672: *Centre de psychologie et pédagogie*, 1954–8. See also Amandine Lauro, '"The British, The French and Even the Russians Use These Methods": Psychology, Mental Testing and (Trans)Imperial Dynamics of Expertise Production in Late Colonial Congo', in Larmer et al., *Across the Copperbelt*, pp. 267-95.

[49] Schumaker, *Africanizing Anthropology*, p. 160. Psychological testing of workers in late colonial Africa is analysed in the work of Kerstin Stubenvoll on Cameroon: www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/–dgreports/–inst/documents/project/wcms_220106.pdf (accessed 11 September 2020).

[50] René Wauthion, 'Pour le Developpement d'une Economie Rurale dans L'Hinterland des Grands Centres Industriels du Haut-Katanga: Contribution a une Initiative du CEPSI', *CEPSI Bulletin*, 34 (1956), pp. 5–21.

[51] Rubbers and Poncelet, 'Sociologie Coloniale au Congo Belge', p. 98.

others – but never (until the last, hurried days of decolonisation) questioned the Belgian presence in Congo.[52]

The RLI's own commitment to what its researchers regarded as progressive social change is equally evident. They strongly disagreed with colonial officials' characterisations of town life: far from being places of disorder, they believed urban Africans were making new forms of social order. Typically, Epstein notes in regard to African advancement into skilled mine jobs, 'the local Africans showed a capacity for adjusting themselves to the conditions of the new society'.[53] And they were aware that the stakes were high: if Africans were shown, against the racial prejudices of administrators and most white settlers, to be capable of full participation in 'modern' society, they could not then be denied political participation up to and including the independence of their countries.

Elites and *Évolués*

Many of the more optimistic social scientific findings regarding African adaptation and participation, however, rested on research that focussed largely or solely on the most skilled or advanced sections of urban African society, *évolués* in Belgian official parlance. In post–World War Two Congo, attempts to clarify *évolué* as a legal category were supported by those who sought to encourage an indigenous bourgeoisie, but opposed by those who thought it would fuel class identification.[54] While educated Congolese, like their Northern Rhodesian counterparts, sought to claim an advanced position by the formation of elite associations, they continued to be marginalised in political decision-making. This marginalisation contrasted sharply, however, with their disproportionate prominence in CEPSI analysis, as subjects but also increasingly as research assistants. Doucy and Clémens, whose fieldwork in Congo was restricted to brief sojourns from their university positions in Liège and Brussels, relied for their data on information provided by European but also *évolué* researchers.[55] Robert Dethier's 1961 study '*Une famille de citadins au Katanga*', Rubbers and Poncelet note, was an analysis of the

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[52] Rubbers and Poncelet, 'Sociologie Coloniale au Congo Belge', p. 99.
[53] Epstein, *Politics in an Urban African Community*, p. 101.
[54] Schalbroek, 'The Commission for the Protection of the Natives', pp. 201–9.
[55] Rubbers and Poncelet, 'Sociologie Coloniale au Congo Belge', p. 104.

Katuba-based family of an *évolué* who had himself been involved in previous social studies carried out by the University of Liège.[56] This was a not atypical example of the blurring of boundaries between researcher and subject.

Similar dynamics can be identified in much RLI work on the Copperbelt. Epstein's seminal *Politics in an Urban African Community* focussed explicitly on 'a small group of urban leaders, composed largely of younger and better educated men'.[57] In a society in transition away from rural African tradition and towards an inherently Europeanised modernity, it was thought logical to make this group the primary subject of analysis:

the leadership of these men was accepted by urban Africans because, by virtue of their education, their proficiency in English, and their more obvious approximation to European standards in dress and habit, they were not only the intermediaries between the mass of the African people and the European authorities, but also because they pointed the way forward to a new order of society.[58]

While it was widely assumed that class divisions would ultimately replace those of 'tribe', in this transitional period educated Africans, aspiring to European lifestyles but politically excluded from them by colonialism and racial segregation, provided leadership to what Clyde Mitchell characterised as a unified African political class:

In this situation the 'white collar' workers will become the African political leaders because they can speak English and can present their grievances and make their demands known in terms easily intelligible to Europeans. . . . the Africans on the Copperbelt as a political class are not yet divided by either tribal or socio-economic class affiliations.[59]

Epstein was, however, aware of the potential tensions arising from such elite representation: 'the very factors which brought the Union leaders into the position of power have now come to be regarded by many Africans as an index of the distance which separates these leaders from the people'.[60] This was a partial acknowledgement of the

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[56] Robert Dethier, *Une Famille de Citadins au Katanga* (Liège: Institut de sociologie, 1961); Rubbers and Poncelet, 'Sociologie Coloniale au Congo Belge', p. 104.

[57] Epstein, *Politics in an Urban African Community*, p. xv.   [58] Ibid., p. xvi.

[59] Clyde Mitchell, 'The Kalela Dance', pp. 17–18.

[60] Epstein, *Politics in an Urban African Community*, p. xvi.

otherwise dismissive racialised attitude of British colonial administrators who, in viewing social progress as essentially Europeanisation, understood such 'advanced' Africans as by their very advancement alienated from the mass of the African population.

Later CEPSI researchers such as Caprasse drew on the more progressive insights of the RLI to analyse what he identified as a shift from 'tribal' or cultural associations rooted in tradition to more modern associational forms that rejected simple imitation of European institutions and involved 'an awareness of their own worth and a willingness to take back their destiny in areas largely beyond the control of the European'.[61] The continuing focus on leadership during transition meant that the resulting research largely ignored, or made sweeping assumptions about, the majority of African residents of Copperbelt towns, notably women and those not in formal employment. It also meant that this small male African elite shaped the context and findings of RLI/CEPSI research to a striking extent, both as subjects and as researchers.

African Agency in RLI/CEPSI Knowledge Production

Consistent with this argument, Schumaker's study of the everyday work of RLI researchers demonstrates and stresses the extent to which the Institute's research rested on the activity and insights of African research assistants. Schumaker writes of the cadre of RLI African researchers, many of whom she interviewed:

Whatever their actual union sympathies, RLI assistants dressed and talked like members of the breakaway staff association and, like them, sometimes expressed contemptuous attitudes toward miners. . . . The research assistants also saw miners as among the least '**enlightened**' of urban Africans, 'kept back' by mine management in order to make them easier to control as workers.[62]

Schumaker finds that the innovative urban survey work of the RLI necessitated the employment of many more African research assistants than was the case in conventional anthropology, making them

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[61] Caprasse, *Leaders Africains en Milieu Urbain*, quoted in Rubbers and Poncelet, 'Sociologie Coloniale au Congo Belge', p. 102.

[62] Schumaker, *Africanizing Anthropology*, p. 217. Emphasis added.

disproportionately influential.[63] Powdermaker similarly acknowledged her dependence on her research assistants, young men educated at Lusaka's elite Munali secondary school, in shaping her research in Luanshya in 1953–4.[64] These RLI assistants, some of whom had themselves been labour migrants and mine clerks, had of course their own positionality: they were comparatively educated in a context where formal schooling bestowed high status and they generally preferred – like their Western counterparts – to conduct research among men they identified with, the small number of educated or advanced Africans. Similarly, Rubbers and Poncelet note that CEPSI's Belgian researchers worked closely with literate Congolese research assistants and regarded *évolués* as 'privileged informants in their research'.[65]

For their part, African research assistants saw themselves as political actors who understood their research to be politically relevant and influential. Its successful conduct was itself dependent on this perceived political influence. One such RLI research assistant, Jacques Chiwale, in an interview with Schumaker in 1992,

emphasized that their political involvement was what made the urban research possible at all. Their membership in the miners' union, in the Northern Rhodesian ANC, and later in UNIP – or their contacts with friends in these organizations – gave these assistants access to urban compounds that were increasingly coming under nationalist or union control.[66]

Such access, however, often depended on convincing political activists of the impact of their research. Schumaker argues: 'They promoted the idea that social research would help to improve living conditions and provide ammunition for debates with colonial officials, a strategy that they employed to get informants to cooperate with their work.'[67] Union or party leaders challenged RLI researchers to demonstrate the utility of their research and made access to field sites conditional on this. One such encounter was described to Clyde Mitchell by his research assistant M. B. Lukhero:

[63] Schumaker, *Africanizing Anthropology*, p. 35.
[64] Hortense Powdermaker, *Stranger and Friend: The Way of an Anthropologist* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1966), p. 289; cited in Karen Tranberg Hansen, 'After Copper Town: The Past in the Present in Urban Zambia', *Journal of Anthropological Research*, 47, 4 (1991), pp. 441–56, p. 442.
[65] Rubbers and Poncelet, 'Sociologie Coloniale au Congo Belge', p. 100.
[66] Schumaker, *Africanizing Anthropology*, p. 215.   [67] Ibid., p. 214.

We were asked to climb on top of the table one by one in order to be seen by people. The [Union Branch] Secretary introduced our work and told people it was of great importance and that our Department was not 'connected' with the government. One question was put to me by one man 'Do you belong to government' I said 'We have nothing to do with the Boma and we do not belong to them at all. We only ask for cooperation from every concerned organization'.[68]

While Lukhero's description of this encounter suggests a certain pleasure in gaining access by claiming his research would advance the cause of the African urban community, it can equally be read as evidence that African mine communities and their leaders were not only aware of the political importance of applied research, but also that they sought to influence it in ways that would advance their own position and their characterisation of Copperbelt society. Indeed, 'The union management, in particular, expressed an interest in social research and at one point requested that Epstein conduct a study of its organization'.[69] It can then be argued that African interlocutors – research assistants but also the wider elite of educated, senior political and intellectual leaders – were decisive in shaping the RLI portrayal of Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt society as adaptable, urbanised, materialistic and implicitly proto-nationalistic in its outlook.

Meanwhile, across the border in Katanga, a different set of African political elites had equally grasped the importance of social scientific research and sought links with its leading figures. Rubbers and Poncelet detail the connections between, for example, Balubakat leader Jason Sendwe and Arthur Doucy, who advised Sendwe during the crucial Round Table conference that paved the way to Congolese independence. René Clémens became an advisor to Moïse Tshombe, president of Conakat and of the Katangese secessionist state.[70] Meanwhile the anthropologist Bruno Crine-Mavar, carrying out research in the Lunda capital Musumba, supplied, in Bustin's words, 'the Mwaant Yaav and his entourage with a good deal of the theoretical and scientific ammunition they needed to enhance the credibility of the imperial

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[68] M. B. Lukhero to J. Clyde Mitchell, Mitchell papers, quoted in Schumaker, *Africanizing Anthropology*, p. 216. 'Boma' refers to the local government office that symbolised colonial authority.
[69] Mitchell papers, cited in Schumaker, p. 220.
[70] Rubbers and Poncelet, 'Sociologie Coloniale au Congo Belge', p. 100.

concept',[71] that is, the notion that the Lunda polity should be understood as an 'empire' under the singular authority of its ruler, the Mwaant Yaav. The comparatively prominent role of ethnically oriented indigenous leaders in Katanga – relative to their Northern Rhodesian counterparts – may also help explain why CEPSI researchers were less convinced than their RLI counterparts about the degree to which the urban towns they studied had 'adapted' to modernity. Association with academic research was, in both contexts, much more than a badge of respectability: African elites understood, from their observation of and belated participation in late colonial policy-making, that apparently disinterested knowledge production was a vital resource in advancing and giving authority to contemporary political arguments and claims. Following national independence African leaders and states would seek to nationalise the production of knowledge about their societies for exactly this reason (Chapter 6).

African Perspectives

What then of the wider African Copperbelt community? It is tempting, when critiquing the perspective of Western colonial and social scientific observers, to contrast its ahistoricism and its use of modernist artificial binaries to a 'real' African perspective that will provide an accurate characterisation of the underlying realities of Copperbelt society, if only we can ask the right questions or develop the correct research tools. The reality is, as suggested above, that African understanding of and assertions about urbanisation and social change shared many of the notions of Western observers regarding, among other things, differences between rural and urban societies, counterposed notions of tradition and modernity, and the seismic impact of European colonisation and modernisation on African societies. This does not mean that these were hegemonic ideas that had been passively transmitted from European knowledge production to Africans as a 'derivative discourse'.[72] Diverse sections of African societies had always had

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[71] Edouard Bustin, *Lunda under Belgian Rule* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), p. 193, where his name is given as Fernand Crine; Bruno Crine-Mavar, 'Histoire Traditionnelle du Shaba', *Cultures au Zaïre et en Afrique*, 1 (1973), pp. 17–26.

[72] Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993 [1986]).

their own ideas about historical and social change and were as invested as Europeans in deploying and articulating knowledge for social, cultural and political purposes, the relationship of which to 'reality' was always an indirect one in need of critical assessment.

Accessing those ideas from the historical present is, however, fraught with difficulties. The number of our interviewees with their own memories of migration during the late colonial period is inevitably small, and interviews with older residents are themselves infused with the experiences of a lifetime during which dominant ideas of Copperbelt society have circulated and interacted with personal change, which has necessarily shaped the perceived relationship between past and present. It is nonetheless clear that African migrants always had their own notions about what it meant to move to the Copperbelt towns, either to pursue temporary economic opportunities or to make a new life in the city. What can be observed is that everyday African analysts of Copperbelt life observed distinctions between the 'rural' and the 'urban', but explained their meaning and the social consequences of those meanings in diverse ways. Very few African migrants took a conscious decision to migrate permanently from village to town: many more explored the opportunities of urban education or employment in an open-ended way and many of these returned periodically to the village for its lower costs, family support, easier availability of food and specifically for marriage (see also Chapter 5).[73] Ilunga wa Kumwanza came from his village near Luena to Lubumbashi for schooling in the 1950s and split his time between the city, where he studied to be a mechanic, and transporting goods back to the village that he visited for fishing and holidays as he saved for his education: fighting during the Katangese secession forced him back to the village where he helped on his father's farm.[74]

New arrivals were then concerned with the immediate challenges of securing a place to stay and a way to earn a living and, in the medium term, with advancing their own economic and social standing, improving their housing and educating their children. These were activities that, as this book will show, could be pursued, depending on one's abilities, opportunities and constraints, via formal employment or by

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[73] Interviews: François Batabata Nsenga, Likasi, 7 June 2018; Fridah Mwale, Mufulira, 6 July 2018.
[74] Ilunga wa Kumwanza, interview, Likasi, 8 June 2018.

trading and farming in town, peri-urban area or village, and for families a combination of these activities and places over time. African migrants nonetheless appreciated that town life could be difficult to understand for new arrivals: their initial hosts, often older relatives, uncles or sisters for example, would advise them on such things as seeking employment or moving around town without a *situpa*, or navigating the systems of surveillance in UMHK's mining camps, patrolled by mine police.[75] Washeni Mweni, for example, came to Mufulira in the 1950s looking for employment, following his sister who was married to a mineworker and staying in their mine house (breaking company rules in doing so). He went looking for employment and found gardening work at the home of a local white resident.[76]

Living in town, whether temporarily or permanently, certainly required knowledge of how its explicit rules, implicit practices and social and cultural norms compared with those of the village. A kind of everyday socialisation was indeed practised and associational structures, both informal and more formal and often ethnic in character, sprang up to support new arrivals from specific rural areas or societies. Patson Katwisi's evocative account of his arrival in Chingola in 1959 is a case in point:

for me and other people of my age . . . we only used to hear of certain things such as that there was a train but we had no idea what it was like. We could also only imagine what it looked like through the descriptions of the people who had seen it and [who] then came to the village. From them, we also learnt about cars and aeroplanes but never saw them. When we got on the bus, we never used to sleep for twelve hours . . . because we wanted to see everything and ask questions concerning what we saw. When we arrived in Chingola, it being a mining town had the railway quite close to the mining area as well as other buildings and structures which to me looked foreign and I am sure to many other people. When my brother came to pick me up . . . I could speak to him using my own language and he knew I never knew anything so he took his time to explain things to me.[77]

A very particular insight into those rules and practices, and how they circulated among new migrants, is provided in *Namusiya at the Mines*,

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[75] Interviews: Maxwell Mukupa, Mufulira, 11 July 2018; Séraphin Musoka, Likasi, 6 June 2018.
[76] Washeni Mweni, interview, Mufulira, 13 July 2018.
[77] Patson Katwisi, interview, Mufulira, 3 July 2018.

the first novel to be published in colonial Zambia. Written in Ila by Enoch Kaavu in 1944 and translated into English for publication in 1949, the book tells what might be considered the quintessential Copperbelt story: the migration from village to mine town by its titular protagonist.[78] Namusiya experiences the new sights and sounds, conditions and rules, opportunities and hazards of life and work in the mines, as well as other aspects of urban life central to academic and political understanding of its inherent modernist novelty: rail travel, pass documents, tribal representatives, work discipline and the cash economy, township organisation and social life, the temptations of the beer hall and prostitution, and the salvation of Christianity and modern marriage. As Macola eloquently argues,[79] *Namusiya* represents a pioneering articulation of Ferguson's 'localist' cultural style and is emblematic of much early Zambian fiction in its rhapsodic celebration of rural values and rejection of the initially compelling but ultimately hollow material existence of town life, as conveyed in this quote: 'As a result of his long stay in the mines Namusiya became largely detribalised. He forgot many of the customs of his people and learned to follow European ways of life'.[80]

It is equally noteworthy that Namusiya is provided with his knowledge of both formal patterns of working life and the unwritten rules of social and sexual behaviour by a series of mainly African patrons and interlocutors, rather than via the formal structures established by mine companies to socialise their workers. African ideas and claims about this period of historical change circulated unevenly and unequally though Copperbelt society and spaces, informed by and informing (at one or more steps removed) the ideas and writings of European producers of knowledge about those societies. Popular song, in particular, provided an important avenue for the expression of ideas about migrant life (see Chapter 7). This does not of course mean that Africans uncritically replicated those ideas, any more than the other way around: they had their own diverse perspectives, ideological and cultural notions, and positionality, which shaped the ways in which they understood and articulated their understanding of African society. *Namusiya*, like the works of social scientists, was published in a context, not a vacuum: it

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[78] Enoch Kaavu, *Namusiya at the Mines* (London: Longman, 1949).
[79] Giacomo Macola, 'Imagining Village Life in Zambian Fiction', *Cambridge Anthropology* 25, 1 (2005), pp. 1–10.
[80] Kaavu, *Namusiya at the Mines*, p. 52.

was, for example, co-translated into English by Robinson Nabulyato, an 'advanced African' who was in the 1950s one of the first African members of Northern Rhodesia's Legislative Council and who was later speaker of the Zambian national assembly for two decades. It was not, however, recalled by interviewees and no claim is made here that it itself influenced popular understandings of migration and urban integration among new urban settlers. It then does not provide an 'authentic' view of African urban migratory experience, but rather draws attention to the ways in which the production of knowledge that asserted particular views about Copperbelt life was a central part of its social history from the start.

Conclusion

This chapter, in providing a necessarily truncated history of ideational constructions of Copperbelt society in the early-to-mid twentieth century, has emphasised the extent to which most European observers saw these urban societies as inherently novel: capitalist, Westernised, modern and therefore 'unAfrican'. Policy makers, missionaries and European intellectuals concerned themselves with the negative consequences of rural-to-urban migration for existing African societies and for the morality and behaviour of migrants themselves. African unrest and protest reinforced the need for enhanced understanding of urban African communities and prompted an unrivalled project of social scientific knowledge production in the late colonial Copperbelt. Researchers, while disagreeing about the capacity of Africans to adapt to their new urban condition and about the form and degree of European assistance required to do so, generally agreed that Copperbelt towns represented a qualitatively different social order to migrants' villages of origin, requiring in turn new forms of association, behaviour and outlook among their new residents.

The chapter, while recognising Schumaker's insights regarding the extent to which RLI research was shaped by African research assistants, goes further in arguing that the African intellectual and societal context played a central role in shaping the findings of both RLI and CEPSI researchers. This took different forms in the two Copperbelt regions, with RLI research asserting earlier and more strongly the adaptability of African society and culture to the inherently new realities of urban life, while CEPSI research continued to emphasise the

need for ongoing official intervention to ensure that Africans could live successful and ordered lives in town. Meanwhile, African urbanites as a whole compared and reflected on the similarities and differences between village and town life, but recognised more than most researchers that these were connected societal contexts in which change was the historical norm rather than an exception. These contrasting ideas about the nature of the new urban African order would continue to shape both the social and ideational history of the Copperbelt over the coming decades.