

6 Uncaptured Again: History and the Subsistence Mantra of Development Studies

6.1 A Déjà-Vu of Economic Transformation

Lago/Meluluca has traditionally been a relatively isolated community depending on subsistence agriculture and fishing. The community is currently in a process of considerable change, primarily as a result of the improved road built from the district capital Metangula in 2008. This has not only set in motion enhanced economic activities particularly in fishing, but also processes of increasing inequalities between the poor and the better-off.¹

In the introduction to this book, I raised the issue of the misleading portrayal of the history of the area around Nkhlongue by the development consultants of the Swedish embassy (see pp. 40–42). The quotation above—focusing on the local economy—is an alternative version to that presented in the introduction. It is recited here to highlight the topos of the subsistence cultivator now being suddenly modernized. This is a topos that remains popular in development studies and is frequently used in descriptions of the current situation in Niassa.²

But for the historian of social change in Africa, this topos also causes a striking sense of déjà-vu. Since the beginning of colonization, scholars and observers have repeatedly described the ongoing social transformation of “traditional” African society. Consider the anthropological studies of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute or, with respect to Nkhlongue, the revolution of village life that missionary Cox thought he saw during the plantation boom of the early 1920s (see p. 164). Scholarly labels and priorities have changed over time, but processes described as “peasantization,” “proletarianization,” “modernization,” “deagrarianization,” “livelihood diversification,” or “globalization” have all tended to postulate an inescapable and linear path of economic transformation from past to future.

1 ORGUT, “1st Reality Check in Mozambique: Brief,” accessed December 4, 2020, <https://www.sida.se/globalassets/global/countries-and-regions/africa/mozambique/brief-1st-reality-checks-final.pdf>.

2 For examples, see: Jennifer Landry and Praxie Chirwa, “Analysis of the Potential Socio-Economic Impact of Establishing Plantation Forestry on Rural Communities in Sanga District, Niassa Province, Mozambique,” *Land Use Policy* 28, no. 3 (2011): 542–51; Anne Kristine Thorsen, “Reducing Social Vulnerabilities through Foreign Investments: A Case-Study of Niassa Green Resources in Northern Mozambique” (Master thesis, Universitetet i Stavanger, 2017); Winfridus Overbeek, *O avanço das monoculturas de árvores em Moçambique: Impactos sobre as comunidades camponesas na Província de Niassa. Um relatório de viagem* (Montevideo: World Rainforest Movement, 2010).

Given the recurrent affirmations of the radical transformation of “traditional” African society, it is surprising that notions of the “uncaptured” subsistence cultivators keep popping up in political and scholarly discussions about the need for development in Africa. Time and again, the goal has been “to break through the barriers of subsistence agriculture into more commercialised medium-scale stature,”³ as the OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook for 2016–2025 put it. Words such as “continue,” “persistence,” “remain,” and “still” are omnipresent in descriptions of the current state of rural Africans.⁴ In the words of Jeffrey Sachs, “a large part of the African population continues to eke out an existence as subsistence farmers working tiny land plots.”⁵

The central goal of this chapter is to demonstrate that a village seemingly dependent on subsistence since time immemorial possesses a surprisingly dynamic and globally connected economic past. It will be shown that Nkholongue’s inhabitants have not stayed but have become the subsistence-oriented “peasants” who they are nowadays. The importance of subsistence production⁶ has not just stagnat-

3 OECD and FAO, eds., *OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook 2016–2025. Special Focus: Sub-Saharan Africa* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2016), 91. On this point, see as well: Tania Murray Li, “Indigeneity, Capitalism, and the Management of Dispossession,” *Current Anthropology* 51, no. 3 (2010): 396.

4 Evelyn Dietsche and Ana Maria Esteves, “Local Content and the Prospect for Economic Diversification in Mozambique,” in *Mining for Change: Natural Resources and Industry in Africa*, ed. John Page and Finn Tarp (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 209–10; Wilma A Dunaway, “Nonwaged Peasants in the Modern World-System: African Households as Dialectical Units of Capitalist Exploitation and Indigenous Resistance, 1890–1930,” *Journal of Philosophical Economics* 4, no. 1 (2010): 19; James Ernest Murton, Dean Bavington, and Carly A Dokis, “Introduction: Why Subsistence?,” in *Subsistence under Capitalism: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. James Ernest Murton, Dean Bavington, and Carly A Dokis (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2016), 3–36; John W McArthur and Jeffrey D. Sachs, “A General Equilibrium Model for Analyzing African Rural Subsistence Economies and an African Green Revolution,” *Africa Growth Initiative Working Paper*, no. 12 (June 2013): 4; Ousmane Badiane and Tsitsi Makombe, “Agriculture, Growth, and Development in Africa,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Africa and Economics. Volume II: Policies and Practices*, ed. Célestin Monga and Justin Yifu Lin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 307; Sarah Aलो Loison, “Rural Livelihood Diversification in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Literature Review,” *The Journal of Development Studies* 51, no. 9 (2015): 1127; Megumi Muto and Takashi Yamano, “The Impact of Mobile Phone Coverage Expansion on Market Participation: Panel Data Evidence from Uganda,” *World Development* 37, no. 12 (2009): 1887; Holger Kirscht, *Ein Dorf in Nordost-Nigeria: Politische und wirtschaftliche Transformation der bäuerlichen Kanuri-Gesellschaft* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2001), 310.

5 Jeffrey Sachs, “Africa’s Demographic Transition and Economic Prospects,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Africa and Economics*, ed. Célestin Monga and Justin Yifu Lin, vol. 2: Policies and Practices (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 877.

6 Note that I do not use the term “subsistence economy,” which is sometimes confused with that of “subsistence production.” In my view, the term “subsistence economy” is not only too vague to

ed or decreased over time, rather there have been phases in which the significance of subsistence production also increased. Furthermore, systems of subsistence—this includes types of products planted and locations of fields—have equally changed. It will also be seen that many individuals have had very different main means of income during their lifetimes such as wage labor or market production even if their main occupation today might be subsistence production.⁷ The chapter shows that, in the case of Nkhlongue, livelihood diversification is no new phenomenon.⁸ Last but not least, the chapter will highlight that, despite its traditional appearance, the local fishing sector has a long history of capitalist-like relations of production.

With this goal, the chapter tries to challenge the notions of rural inertia in Africa which are connected to the longstanding and profound impact of the arguments of substantivists in academia and public debate alike.⁹ Going back to Karl Polanyi's characterization of non-capitalist and pre-industrialist societies, substantivists have argued that cultural forces—the moral economy—rather than market forces continue to dominate resource allocation in rural Africa. In the words of Göran Hydén, one of the substantivists' more prominent representatives, the Afri-

allow for reasonable analysis, but also evokes rigid notions of “uncapturedness.” Following Elwert and Wong, my notion of “subsistence production” is also not limited to agricultural or food production but includes other sectors such as handicraft, household work and house construction. On a conceptual level, my notion of subsistence also includes the care sector (including the care of children and elderly). See: Georg Elwert and Diana Wong, “Subsistence Production and Commodity Production in the Third World,” *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 3, no. 3 (1980): 503.

7 This is consistent with recent findings of Zachary Guthrie, who argued that his migrant workers engaged in many different occupations over the course of their lives. See: Zachary Kagan Guthrie, *Bound for Work: Labor, Mobility, and Colonial Rule in Central Mozambique, 1940–1965* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2018). See also Frederick Cooper's recent call for an analysis of social relations of production in relation to the worker over the life course: Frederick Cooper, “The ‘Labour Question’ in Africa and the World,” in *General Labour History of Africa*, ed. Stefano Belucci and Andreas Eckert (Woodbridge: James Currey, 2019), 627–628.

8 Livelihood diversification is usually considered a phenomenon that began to appear in the 1980s. See: Deborah F. Bryceson, “Domestic Work,” in *General Labour History of Africa*, ed. Stefano Belucci and Andreas Eckert (Woodbridge: James Currey, 2019), 301–332.

9 For the potency of these arguments, see: Henry Bernstein, “Considering Africa's Agrarian Questions,” *Historical Materialism* 12, no. 4 (2004): 117–118; Bernd E.T. Mueller, “The Agrarian Question in Tanzania: Using New Evidence to Reconcile an Old Debate,” *Review of African Political Economy* 38, no. 127 (2011): 24; Peter Geschiere, “Witchcraft: The Dangers of Intimacy and the Struggle over Trust,” in *Trusting and Its Tribulations: Interdisciplinary Engagements with Intimacy, Sociality and Trust*, ed. Vigdis Broch-Due and Margit Ystanes (New York: Berghahn, 2016), 69; Elizabeth Harrison, “People Are Willing to Fight to the End”: Romanticising the ‘Moral’ in Moral Economies of Irrigation,” *Critique of Anthropology* 40, no. 2 (2020): 194–217; Johanna Siméant, “Three Bodies of Moral Economy: The Diffusion of a Concept,” *Journal of Global Ethics* 11, no. 2 (2015): 163–175.

can peasantry remains “uncaptured” as a consequence of its “economy of affection.”¹⁰

The arguments of substantivists have fed very different currents of intellectual thinking, some of which celebrate successful (egalitarian) peasant resistance à la James Scott and others of which are essentially Afro-pessimistic.¹¹ Arguments by substantivists have also found much resonance in the development industry. This is not surprising, as the development discourse is generally based on the premise that its target is “aboriginal, not yet incorporated into the modern world.”¹² It is, however, noteworthy that development discourse has increasingly used substantivist arguments not only to describe the status quo of its targets, but also to propose a particular path of modernization. Such approaches can be linked to the Chayanovian tradition of the “agrarian question,” which has viewed peasants as a central actor in rural development.¹³ They include what has been defined by its critics as “neo-classical neo-populism” or “dynamic versions of agrarian populism.”¹⁴ These approaches are informed by substantivism insofar

10 Göran Hydén, *Beyond Ujamaa in Tanzania: Underdevelopment and an Uncaptured Peasantry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980). For a newer publication, in which Hydén argued that his claim still holds validity in 2007, see: Göran Hydén, “Governance and Poverty Reduction in Africa,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 104, no. 43 (2007): 16754. For his newest version of “economy of affection,” see: Göran Hydén, Kazuhiko Sugimura, and Tadasu Tsuruta, eds., *Rethinking African Agriculture: How Non-Agrarian Factors Shape Peasant Livelihoods* (London: Routledge, 2020).

11 For Scott, see: James C. Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976); James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

12 James Ferguson, *The Anti-Politics Machine: “Development,” Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 71.

13 Paul Hebinck, “Post-Apartheid Land and Agrarian Reform Policy and Practices in South Africa: Themes, Processes and Issues,” in *In the Shadow of Policy: Everyday Practices in South Africa’s Land and Agrarian Reform*, ed. Paul Hebinck and Ben Cousins (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2013), 6.

14 For the resonance of such ideas in the development industry, see: Mueller, “The Agrarian Question in Tanzania”; Geschiere, “Witchcraft: The Dangers of Intimacy and the Struggle over Trust,” 69. For the definition of “neo-classical neo-populism,” see: Terence J. Byres, “Neo-Classical Neo-Populism 25 Years On: Déjà Vu and Déjà Passé. Towards a Critique,” *Journal of Agrarian Change* 4, no. 1–2 (2004): 17–44. For the definition of the dynamic version of “agrarian populism,” see: Gareth Austin, *Labour, Land, and Capital in Ghana: From Slavery to Free Labour in Asante* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2005), 25–26. The most vocal critic of all modes of “agrarian populism” remains Tom Brass. See: Tom Brass, *Peasants, Populism and Postmodernism: The Return of the Agrarian Myth* (London: Frank Cass, 2000); Tom Brass, “Weapons of the Week, Weakness of

as they assume that rural Africa continues to consist of a largely homogeneous and non-capitalist peasantry shaped by communitarian values. Combining neo-populist enthusiasm for smallholder agriculture with neo-classical market fundamentalism, they believe that these “traditional” values can be used to deliver a more egalitarian modernization that avoids the usual pains of capitalist transformation. Ideas and notions of such agrarian populism are popular among a wide range of actors, including NGOs, social movements such as Vía Campesina, and even UN institutions. They can be found, for example, in the current United Nations’ decade of family farming (2019–2028). Thus, family farmers are equated with “traditional communities,” described as “caretakers of the environment,” and said to promote “social inclusion and equity” and “preservation/transmission of knowledge and culture.”¹⁵

The criticism of substantivism expressed in this chapter is not new.¹⁶ Historians have long warned against the danger of characterizing African economies as “subsistence economies.”¹⁷ The essentialist notion of the “uncaptured” peasant is at odds with the findings of several distinguished scholars, including Polly Hill, Colin Bundy, Sara Berry, Antony Hopkins, and Martin Klein. All of them have made compelling cases for the historical extent of market involvement of African agriculturalists.¹⁸ The term seems particularly inappropriate given what we know about the history of the slave trade and especially the history of colonialism. Just think of the history of forced labor, the history of labor migration and the history

the Weapons: Shifts and Stasis in Development Theory,” *Journal of Peasant Studies* 34, no. 1 (2007): 111–153; Tom Brass, *Class, Culture and the Agrarian Myth* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

15 FAO and IFAD, “United Nations Decade of Family Farming 2019–2028 – Global Action Plan” (Rome: FAO, 2019), 12. On the popularity of agrarian populism among social movements, see as well: Hebinck, “Post-Apartheid Land and Agrarian Reform Policy and Practices in South Africa,” 7; Mueller, “The Agrarian Question in Tanzania.”

16 Polly Hill called it a dead duck in relation to West Africa in 1978 already. See: Polly Hill, “Problems with A. G. Hopkins’ Economic History of West Africa,” *African Economic History*, no. 6 (1978): 127. See as well: Rosemary E. Galli and Jocelyn Jones, *Guinea-Bissau: Politics, Economics and Society* (London: Pinter, 1987), 6.

17 Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, *A Modern Economic History Africa*, vol. 1: The Nineteenth Century (Dakar: Codesria, 1993), 6; Masao Yoshida, “African Economic History: Approaches to Research,” in *Writing African History*, ed. John Edward Philips (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2005), 308.

18 Hill, *The Migrant Cocoa-Farmers of Southern Ghana*; Berry, *No Condition Is Permanent*; Colin Bundy, *The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry* (London: Heinemann, 1979); Hopkins, *An Economic History of West Africa*; Martin A. Klein, ed., *Peasants in Africa: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1980).

of colonial intermediaries. It also seems difficult to reconcile it with the arguments of dependency theory and its idea of the development of underdevelopment.¹⁹

Despite this considerable opposition, substantivists' stereotypes have remained important and influential in academia. Achille Mbembe, for example, has repeatedly referred to Africa as the "last frontier of capitalism" in recent years.²⁰ Even historians continue to nurture such ahistorical notions of uncapturedness.²¹ Thus, Eric Hobsbawm claimed in his standard work *The Age of Extremes* that "[m]ost of [black Africa's] inhabitants did not need their states, which were usually too weak to do much harm, and, if they grew too troublesome, could probably be by-passed by a retreat into village self-sufficiency."²² Iva Peša's recent history of social change in northwestern Zambia represents a somewhat contradictory combination of neo-liberal and substantivist arguments,²³ in which people responded "astutely and eagerly" to market incentives and, at the same time, possessed a seemingly infinite power and autonomy in evading state demands and

19 The incompatibility of dependency theory and agrarian populism was already highlighted in the 1980s by Kenneth Good and Gaving Kitching. See: Kenneth Good, "The Reproduction of Weakness in the State and Agriculture: Zambian Experience," *African Affairs* 85, no. 339 (1986): 264–265; Gavin Kitching, *Development and Underdevelopment in Historical Perspective: Populism, Nationalism, and Industrialization* (London: Routledge, 1982), 176.

20 For a critique of this representation, see: Horman Chitonge, "Capitalism in Africa: Mutating Capitalist Relations and Social Formations," *Review of African Political Economy* 45, no. 155 (2018): 158–167. Mbembe can certainly not be called a full-fledged substantivist. But even more so his repeated use of the phrase is questionable: António Guerreiro, "Achille Mbembe: 'África é a última fronteira do capitalismo,'" *Público*, December 9, 2018, accessed December 10, 2018, <https://www.publico.pt/2018/12/09/mundo/entrevista/africa-ultima-fronteira-capitalismo-1853532>; Thomas Blaser, "Africa and the Future: An Interview with Achille Mbembe," *Africa is a Country*, accessed January 27, 2021, <https://africasacountry.com/2013/11/africa-and-the-future-an-interview-with-achille-mbembe/>; Achille Mbembe, *Out of the Dark Night: Essays on Decolonization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2021), 36.

21 This is also argued by: Harrison, "People Are Willing to Fight to the End"; Siméant, "Three Bodies of Moral Economy"; Joseph Morgan Hodge, "Writing the History of Development (Part 1: The First Wave)," *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 6, no. 3 (2015): 437. Hyden's "economy of affection" has remained a catchphrase within political science and development studies. It was one already in the 1990s. See: Edward A. Alpers, "Africa Reconfigured: Presidential Address to the 1994 African Studies Association Annual Meeting," *African Studies Review* 38, no. 2 (1995): 6.

22 Eric J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914–1991* (1994; repr., London: Abacus, 1995), 352. The narrative of rural inertia is also prominent in the work of Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch. See: Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, *Afrique noire: permanences et ruptures*, 2. éd. rév (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1992), 145–47.

23 This combination resonates with "neo-classical neo-populism."

maintaining their communitarian traditions.²⁴ It is telling that James Brennan has only recently called Hopkins' seminal 1973 book still "vaguely radical [...] in the confident way that it dismisses substantivists and modernization theorists alike for positing a traditional Africa characterized by anti-capitalist values."²⁵

The field of literature about development and social change in Africa is vast and diverse. It crosses into many different scholarly disciplines. The subfield of studies that comes closest to this chapter are the more empirical (regional) case studies that focus on rural change in the long run. They include the work of Gareth Austin, Chima Korieh, Elias Mandala, Susan Martin, Iva Peša, Leroy Vail, Landeg White, Megan Vaughan and Henrietta Moore.²⁶ While following different foci and arguments, the work of these scholars have all contributed to counter images of rural inertia in Africa. However, this chapter stands out from most of these studies in four areas:

First, most studies on rural change in Africa have tended to analyze history in a linear model of "continuity and change."²⁷ In line with the considerations presented in the introduction to this book (see Section 1.4), this chapter proposes a more dynamic model, highlighting for example moments of discontinuity in processes that might at first glance appear to be continuous. The chapter thus hopes to contribute to what James Ferguson calls "the dismantling of linear teleologies of emergence and development."²⁸ This chapter emphasizes that the history of eco-

24 Peša, *Roads through Mwinilunga*, 126.

25 James R. Brennan, "Book Review of Africa, Empire and Globalization: Essays in Honor of A.G. Hopkins," *Britain and the World* 8, no. 2 (2015): 254–55.

26 Elias C. Mandala, *Work and Control in a Peasant Economy: A History of the Lower Tchiri Valley in Malawi, 1859–1960* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990); Elias C. Mandala, *The End of Chidyerano: A History of Food and Everyday Life in Malawi, 1860–2004* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2005); Henrietta L. Moore and Megan Vaughan, *Cutting Down Trees: Gender, Nutrition, and Agricultural Change in the Northern Province of Zambia, 1890–1990* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1994); Austin, *Labour, Land, and Capital in Ghana*; Chima J. Korieh, *The Land Has Changed: History, Society, and Gender in Colonial Eastern Nigeria* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2010); Susan M. Martin, *Palm Oil and Protest: An Economic History of the Ngwa Region, South-Eastern Nigeria, 1800–1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Peša, *Roads through Mwinilunga*; Vail and White, *Capitalism and Colonialism in Mozambique*.

27 Thus, Megan Vaughan and Henrietta Moore have described the transition from slash-and-burn agriculture to semi-permanent fields as well as the growing dependence of people on the market as linear processes. See: Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting Down Trees*, 23, 46. The same applies for the work of Iva Peša even though she pretends to question narratives of linear change. Her model of "gradual and incremental" change, while overcoming older ideas of transformative change, remains a very linear model. See: Peša, *Roads through Mwinilunga*.

28 James Ferguson, *Expectations of Modernity: Myths and Meanings of Urban Life on the Zambian Copperbelt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 17.

conomic life of Nkholongue's population is not one of ever-increasing interdependence with the world economy. It is not a history of a gradual integration into world markets. Nor is it necessarily a history of growing dependence, at least not in every aspect of daily life. Looking at economic history from Nkholongue's vantage point, one will also notice phases of decreasing interdependence in the village's economy.

Second, the state usually plays a central role in works of historians on rural change in Africa. While the (economic) policies of the state and their local implications play a role in other chapters of this book (see Chapters 5, 7, 8, and 10), the state is absent in a significant part of the processes analyzed in this chapter. This is in line with the argument here that while Nkholongue was on the margins of state control and influence for many periods of its existence, the village's economy was nevertheless connected to (global) capitalism. The chapter thus intends to highlight that even remote and seemingly isolated areas could experience significant economic change. Nkholongue's population never experienced the kind of peasant-led cash-crop revolution that happened in South Africa or many colonies of West Africa, and was also only marginally affected by colonial forced labor schemes such as the Portuguese cotton regime, as highlighted in Section 5.3. Still, the nature of Nkholongue's economy has changed considerably during the last 140 years.

Third, some studies on rural change have been surprisingly monosyllabic when it comes to the local impact of the slave trade.²⁹ While the reach of the slave trade into the region of study is frequently mentioned, its effects on local developments are often either downplayed or then described vaguely in very general or abstract terms. Rarely is its presence truly considered for the analysis of the history of rural change.³⁰ This chapter is not concerned with the period of the slave trade. However, together with the findings of the previous chapters (see especially Chapter 2), this chapter argues for the importance of reflecting the impact of the

²⁹ Exceptions are: Austin, *Labour, Land, and Capital in Ghana*; Vail and White, *Capitalism and Colonialism in Mozambique*.

³⁰ Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting Down Trees*, chaps. 1, 3; Korieh, *The Land Has Changed*. Elias Mandala describes the slave trade as a dramatic and disruptive process, but with no or only limited long-term effects. See: Mandala, *Work and Control in a Peasant Economy*, 67–79, 270. Similarly, Peša writes that the slave raids “caused disruption and propelled profound, but not permanent change.” See: Peša, *Roads through Mwinilunga*, 62. In her work on the Ruvuma Region, Doris Schmied claimed that “long-distance trade existed as an independent entity parallel to the subsistence economy.” See: Doris Schmied, *Subsistence Cultivation, Market Production and Agricultural Development in Ruvuma Region, Southern Tanzania* (Bayreuth: Eckhard Breiting, 1989), 60.

slave trade on local communities and their economies, even though the availability of sources may often limit detailed analysis.

Fourth, most studies by historians on rural change are regional studies. Henrietta Moore and Megan Vaughan have even explicitly explained why they did not make a village study, highlighting residential mobility and the smallness and instability of villages.³¹ This chapter argues that the focus on the economic history of a single village can not only be justified but also valuable. Justified, first, because Nkhlongue proved to be a comparatively stable settlement, and second, because mobility can be accounted for by including the life histories of emigrants, as has been done in this study. Valuable, first, because a local study can reveal dynamics that might be flattened by a more regional approach, and second, because the focus on one village can best serve the goal of refuting ahistorical notions of rural inertia. After all, the “traditional African village” has always been the reference point for those who argue that African societies are not part of the capitalist world.³² Moreover, it is hoped that the focus on one village will contribute to make tangible the experiences of the people who ought to be developed.³³

“History matters” has long been a commonplace in discussions of poverty and development in Africa.³⁴ Sweden’s reality checkers also highlighted the importance of considering the history of their research sites.³⁵ Even Jeffrey Sachs argued for first “taking a ‘history’” of his Millennium Villages.³⁶ However, contrary to this advocacy for micro-level analyses, explanations for the persistence of poverty in Africa usually take place on a much larger scale.³⁷ The same is true of a number of

31 Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting Down Trees*, xvii.

32 Chitonge, “Capitalism in Africa,” 163.

33 The need for concrete case studies is also emphasized by Mueller, who argues that the mostly theoretical and abstract nature of the discussion on the “agrarian question” has contributed to the fact that scientific findings have found so little resonance in the development community. See: Mueller, “The Agrarian Question in Tanzania,” 25.

34 Morten Jerven, *Africa: Why Economists Get It Wrong* (London: Zed Books, 2015), 72.

35 ORGUT, “Inception Report,” 9, 12–13; Jones and Tvedten, “What Does It Mean to Be Poor?,” 158.

36 Jeffrey Sachs, “The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time,” *European Journal of Dental Education* 12, Special Issue: Global Congress on Dental Education III (2008): 20. In his book, he put it this way: “Providing economic advice to others requires a profound commitment to search for the right answers, not to settle for superficial approaches. It requires a commitment to be thoroughly steeped in the history, ethnography, politics, and economics of any place where the professional adviser is working.” See: Jeffrey Sachs, *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time* (New York: Penguin, 2005), 80–81. For a critical assessment of the Millennium villages project, see: Japhy Wilson, “Paradoxical Utopia: The Millennium Villages Project in Theory and Practice,” *Journal of Agrarian Change* 17, no. 1 (2017): 122–143.

37 See for example Sachs’ own “analysis” for the reasons of poverty in Africa: Sachs, *The End of Poverty*, 2005, chap. 3. It is also worth repeating in this context that the Millennium Villages are

historians who, over the past 15 years, have underscored the importance of introducing historical rigor to the debates of development led by scholars from other disciplines:³⁸ they have as a rule focused on quantifiable macro-processes.³⁹ This also applies to the activists in the global peasant movement, who, with their focus on transnational agrofood companies have ignored examining what Tania Murray Li has called “capitalism from below” or the “microprocesses of dispossession among small-scale farmers.”⁴⁰

This chapter hopes to rectify the discrepancy between the widespread development credo of “small is beautiful”⁴¹ and the ignorance of local history and trajectories. It is divided into three parts. The first part is concerned with a specific period of subsistence reversal in Nkholongue’s history. Focusing on the 1940s and 1950s, it will highlight the importance that the manufacture of pots had acquired as a result of Nkholongue’s role as a firewood station of the Anglican steamships. Pots were not only sold to passengers but also bartered for food in neighboring villages. As will be shown, the end of the steamer era in 1953 meant that this pottery livelihood became much less feasible. The result was profound changes in village life, including the migration of most of the village population to the Malango river and the increasing importance of food subsistence production. Parts 2 and

rarely what most people would consider a “village,” but in fact constitute much larger units (see Section 1.2). See also in this regard the allegedly well-informed analysis of Lago’s history by Sweden’s reality checkers, which in reality remains very superficial and schematic. See: ORGUT, “Sub-Report, District of Lago: Year One, 2011,” 8–9.

38 Examples are: Antony G. Hopkins, “Making Poverty History,” *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 38, no. 3 (2005): 513–531; Antony G. Hopkins, “The New Economic History of Africa,” *The Journal of African History* 50, no. 2 (2009): 155–177; Gareth Austin, “The ‘Reversal of Fortune’ Thesis and the Compression of History: Perspectives from African and Comparative Economic History,” *Journal of International Development* 20, no. 8 (2008): 996–1027; Gareth Austin and Stephen Broadberry, “Introduction: The Renaissance of African Economic History,” *The Economic History Review* 67, no. 4 (2014): 893–906; Morten Jerven, “A Clash of Disciplines? Economists and Historians Approaching the African Past,” *Economic History of Developing Regions* 26, no. 2 (2011): 111–124; Jerven, *Africa: Why Economists Get It Wrong*; Morten Jerven et al., “Moving Forward in African Economic History: Bridging the Gap between Methods and Sources,” African Economic History Working Paper Series, no. 1 (Lund: Lund University, 2012).

39 This is also argued by: Andreas Eckert, “Scenes from a Marriage: African History and Global History,” *Comparativ: Zeitschrift für Globalgeschichte und vergleichende Gesellschaftsforschung* 29, no. 2 (2019): 41.

40 Li, “Indigeneity, Capitalism, and the Management of Dispossession,” 396. See as well: Tania Murray Li, *Land’s End: Capitalist Relations on an Indigenous Frontier* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014). Mike Davis speaks of “petty exploitation” and “relentless micro-capitalism” in his *Planet of Slums*. See: Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums* (London: Verso, 2006), 181.

41 E.F. Schumacher, *Small Is Beautiful: Economics as If People Mattered* (London: Blond & Briggs, 1973).

3 take a more diachronic perspective. Part 2 will analyze the nature of agricultural production in Nkhlongue in the long run, highlighting that while farming was primarily for subsistence at most points in time, crops and techniques nevertheless changed significantly and not infrequently as a result of changes in the overall economy. The final part will deal with processes of commercialization and social differentiation within local fisheries, showing that they had been going on since colonial times.

6.2 The Rise and Fall of Nkhlongue's Pottery Manufacture in the 1940s and 1950s

It is tempting to read the first two decades of the 21st century as the moment when Nkhlongue's economy started to change and finally started to "open up to the world outside."⁴² Similar to the development advisors at the Swedish Embassy, I was also initially seduced by this image of ongoing first-time transformation. The village surveys conducted in 2012 and 2016 seemed to provide further evidence of this fact. They showed that households produced a significant part of the food they consumed in subsistence. This concerned above all the cassava used for the polenta-like stiff porridge called *nsima*, eaten as a standard meal twice per day. In the 2012 survey, 80 percent of households reported having a *machamba* or farm.⁴³ The exceptions were some "external" employees of the newly arrived tourism enterprise Mbuna Bay, some younger people, and migratory fishermen, locally called *makuli*.⁴⁴ A majority of the households indicated that they were self-sufficient when it came to cassava production. But the surveys also showed that all households depended to varying degrees on money and market when it came to other needs. This concerned consumer goods such as clothes and shoes, but also ingredients for the side dishes eaten with *nsima* such as cooking oil, salt, and

⁴² See the quotation from the report by ORGUT in Section 14 ("The Aboriginal Delusion") on p. 41.

⁴³ *Machamba* is a Swahili loanword for agricultural fields used in Mozambican Portuguese. Literature on agriculture in Malawi or Zambia often refers to "gardens" instead. Paul Zeleza has criticized the use of the word "garden" as an uncritical adoption of the colonial nomenclature that drew a distinction between the "primitive" gardens of the "natives" and the progressive farms of the settlers. From an analytical viewpoint, a similar criticism could be raised against *machamba* which was the "native" counterpart of the settlers' *fazenda*. See: Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, "Review of Cutting Down Trees: Gender, Nutrition, and Agricultural Change in the Northern Province of Zambia, 1890–1990," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 28, no. 2 (1995): 404–6.

⁴⁴ The word *makuli* is most likely derived from the English "coolie worker." See: R.H. Gower, "Swahili Borrowings from English," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 22, no. 2 (1952): 155.

fish. Most households indicated that they generated their income either through working for Mbuna Bay or fishing.

Considering the recent arrival of Mbuna Bay and the boom of fisheries at the time, these all seemed to indicate the ongoing “process of considerable change” described by the development consultants of the Swedish embassy and quoted at the beginning of this chapter. In this section, the factuality of this development shall not be questioned. But it will be demonstrated that this process of considerable transformation had been preceded by other processes of considerable transformation. Thereby, changing economic relationships to the “world outside” had often deeply impacted local economic processes and not rarely been accompanied by significant migration and changes in the settlement structure.

We have already come across such moments in the preceding parts of the book. Thus, in the previous chapter we have seen how the extensive use of forced labor on cotton plantations disturbed local food production in the early 1920s and thus resulted in widespread famine. While in Section 4.3, we have seen how the end of the slave trade triggered migration and changing settlement patterns. Though the evidence is scarce, there is reason to claim that the end of the slave trade also involved changes in local food production and consumption. Thus, the emigration of Saide Salimo's group to the lake's hinterland in the 1910s (see p. 134) can be read as a sign of retreat into food subsistence. According to the local historian Chadreque Umali, Mtucula, the name they gave to their new location, translates to “he who does not eat is not a person” and was meant to say “that people had to work in order to have food.”⁴⁵ In what follows, we will focus on another past process of considerable economic change that allows for a better and more systematic analysis: the rise and fall of Nkhlongue's pottery manufacture in the 1940s and 1950s.

At first glance, the 1940s and 1950s seem to constitute a period offering plenty of evidence to substantiate Nkhlongue's historical economic “uncapturedness.” For, as we have already seen in the previous chapter, Nkhlongue was definitely on the margins of Portuguese colonialism during this period. The Portuguese cotton regime of 1938 was only rudimentarily implemented, and the state's capacity to tax its subjects was limited. We might expect, then, that the village's economy during this period was indeed relatively isolated and static, and that subsistence production was the main occupation of the people. A closer look, however, reveals a period of profound local economic change that occurred largely outside the influence and scrutiny of the Portuguese colonial state. Still, the transformation of that time cannot be understood without considering global developments.

45 PA, Chadreque Umali, *História de Nyanjas* (Metangula, 1996), 58.

Next stop “Nkholongue Station”: “Wooding” in the “Steamer Parish”

A prime cause of the transformation was the end of what Charles Good called the “steamer parish.”⁴⁶ We have already come across the importance of steamboats for the Anglican mission UMCA for their evangelism. Steamboats had generally played an important role in the early colonization of the region and had also been used by the governments of Germany and Great Britain.⁴⁷ The steamboats frequently anchored in Nkholongue because the village served them as a “wooding station,” as a place to buy the firewood needed for the engines. The most frequent guest in Nkholongue was the S.S. Chauncy Maples, known locally primarily by her acronym CM (see Figure 2). CM was the flagship of the Anglican mission. She had initially been designed and used as a floating combination of church, classroom, and hospital. From 1921 onward, however, she was used for transportation and communication work between the different stations of the mission around the lake. Timetables changed over time, but CM was a regular guest in Nkholongue from her maiden voyage in 1901 until her end of service in 1953. Table 3 provides an approximate overview of the frequency of stops in Nkholongue at various points in history.

Geography certainly contributed to the fact that Nkholongue served CM as a “wooding station.” The village was ideally situated between two important centers of the Anglican mission, Messumba and Nkhotakota. Both Messumba and Metangula, with their adjacent steep mountains and relatively dense population were not suitable as “wooding stations.” But Nkholongue, with its comparatively flat backcountry and limited population offered perfect conditions. Furthermore, the bay of Nkholongue protected the anchorage against the frequent southerly winds.⁴⁸ It is noteworthy that the mission’s steamers used Nkholongue as a “wooding station” even between 1901 and 1912, when the mission was not allowed to have a school in Nkholongue because of the conflict it had with Chingomanje II (see Section 4.2). This further speaks to Nkholongue’s suitability as a “wooding station,” although it can also be assumed that the mission was interested in maintaining a foothold in this predominantly Muslim village.

⁴⁶ Good, *The Steamer Parish*.

⁴⁷ The Portuguese colonial state was the only one that never had any steamboat on the lake.

⁴⁸ See as well: PA, I107: interview with P1074 (♀, ~1940) (Malango, April 5, 2016), min 00:06:04–00:08:47; PA, I128: interview with P1426 (♂, 1929) (Malindi (Mangochi District, Malawi), May 28, 2016), min 03:40:23–03:40:42.

Frequency of stops	
before 1901	two stops per month by S.S. Charles Janson (CJ) ⁴⁹
1901 – 1914	two stops per month by S.S. CM, ⁵⁰ plus occasional stops by S.S. CJ ⁵¹
1914 – 1921	only occasional stops by S.S. CM and S.S. CJ ⁵² (CM commandeered by the British Government because of the war)
1921 – 1922	one stop per month by S.S. CM ⁵³
1922–c. 1930	no official stops ⁵⁴ (“Wooding” at Metangula, because of orders by the <i>Companhia</i> ⁵⁵)
c. 1930 – 1951	two stops per month by S.S. CM ⁵⁶
1952	one stop per month by S.S. CM ⁵⁷

Table 3: Stops of the Anglican steamboats in Nkhlongue.

49 Regular stops are documented for 1896 and 1897 (despite its title, the logbook contains no entries for the years 1898–1901): AUMCA, UX 144: Log Book of S.S. “Charles Janson”, 1896–1904.

50 Regular stops are documented for 1903–1906: AUMCA, A4(VI)1: Log of the S.S. “Chauncy Maples”, 1903–1906.

51 AUMCA, UX 144: Log Book of S.S. “Charles Janson”, 1896–1904.

52 CM’s logbook lists only one stop by S.S. CM in Malango in 1918. For S.S. CJ, one stop is documented for April 1915. We can though assume that there were several undocumented stops: ASM, Chauncy Maples Log 1914–1924; Abdallah, “News from the Stations: VI. Unangu,” *NDC*, no. 48 (July 1915): 22.

53 ASM, Chauncy Maples Log 1914–1924.

54 This is documented for 1922 to 1924 by the entries of CM’s logbook and for 1928 by the official timetable. See: ASM, Chauncy Maples Log 1914–1924; MNA, UMCA 1/2/21: Order of Sailing S.S. Chauncy Maples, 1928 (Diocese of Nyasaland).

55 MNA, UMCA 1/2/17/1: Letter from A.F. Matthew to the Bishop, May 30, 1922.

56 Regular stops are documented for 1939 and 1949. We can assume that this timetable was in use from about 1931 when the government allowed the captain of S.S. CM to “make his own arrangements [regarding firewood] at as many places as he likes.” We also have a documented occurrence of “wooding” at Nkhlongue already for late 1930. See: H.A. Machell Cox, “News from the Stations: IV. Msumba,” *NDC*, no. 110 (January 1931): 8–9; MNA, UMCA 1/2/20/13/1: Letter from H.A. Machell Cox to the Bishop (Luchimanje, July 29, 1931); Harry P. Liponde, “My Job: IV. Life on the ‘Chauncy Maples,’” *CA* 57, no. 676 (1939): 65–68; MNA, 145/DOM/2/4/11: Order of Sailing S.S. Chauncy Maples, 1949 (Diocese of Nyasaland).

57 MNA, UMCA 1/2/22/3: Order of Sailing S.S. Chauncy Maples, 1952 (Diocese of Nyasaland).

		April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
M	Dep. Malindi	T 19	M 16	M 13	M 1	M 15	M 12	M 10	M 28	W 21
M	Bar Mponda's	19	16	13	18	15	12	10	28	
T	Mkope Nkudzi Malopa	20 W	17	14	19	16	13	11	29	
W	Nkhotakota	21 Th	18	15	20	17	14	12	30	
Th	Chingomanje Messumba	22 F	19	16	21	18	15	13	Dec. 1	
F	Ngoo Likoma	23 S	20	17	22	19	16	14	2	24
M	Mbamba Bay Liuli	25	23	20	25	22	19	17	5	27
T	Njambe Mkiri Mbaha Manda	26	24	21	26	23	20	18	6	28
Th	Njambe Liuli Mbamba Bay	28	26	23	28	25	22	20	8	29
F	Likoma	29	27	24	29	26	23	21	9	30
S	Ngoo Messumba	30	28	25	30	27	24	22	10	31
M	Chingomanje Nkhotakota	May 2	30	27	Aug. 1	29	26	24	12	Jan. 2
T	Chilowelo Malopa Pilidzinja	3	31	28	2	30	27	25	13	3
W	Mkope Bar Mponda's	4	June 1	29	3	31	28	26	14	4
Th	Malindi	5	2	30	4	Sept. 1	29	27	15	5

Table 4: Order of Sailing S.S. Chauncy Maples, 1949.

The importance attached to the steamboats in the daily lives of Nkholongue can be gathered from oral history. While the information from the interviews about the time before 1960 was as a rule rather sketchy, it proved to be surprisingly detailed as far as the steamboats were concerned. I still vividly remember how my third interview partner began to enumerate the ships he had seen navigating on the lake. He always emphasized whether the particular ship was powered by diesel or by firewood, a piece of information the importance of which I began to realize only later.⁵⁸ Also, people still remembered that CM always came from Nkhotakota on Thursday, which fits perfectly with CM's timetables of 1939, 1949, and 1952 (see the example of the 1949 timetable in Table 4).⁵⁹ One interviewee even stated that CM stopped in Nkholongue on its northbound trips on Thursday and southbound on Monday, an impressive accuracy for something that dates back more than 60 years, especially in a place where time and numbers usually led to numerous misunderstandings in the process of interviewing.⁶⁰ Undoubtedly, CM's timetables gave a rhythm to life in Nkholongue.

CM's regular stops in Nkholongue enabled the villagers to earn money by selling firewood they had cut, collected and dried. We have already seen in the previous chapter that the money people earned through CM could be used to pay taxes. The money was also used to buy products such as salt or clothes. In the early days, the missionaries even used salt and clothes as direct payment for firewood. This is noteworthy because salt and clothes competed with locally produced alternatives. In the case of clothing, this was the "traditional" bark cloth, locally called *chiwondo*. Some interviewees said they still wore *chiwondo* as children, but the basic tenor of my interviewees suggests that by the 1940s *chiwondo* had already largely disappeared around Nkholongue.⁶¹ In the case of salt, the subsis-

58 PA, I003: interview with P0792 (♂, 1917) (Nkholongue, August 20, 2010), min 01:45:32–01:50:56.
 59 This timetable is based on: MNA, 145/DOM/2/4/11: Order of Sailing S.S. Chauncy Maples, 1949 (Diocese of Nyasaland).

60 PA, I001: interview with P0050 (♂, ~1922) (Nkholongue, August 17, 2010), min 01:06:47–01:07:00; PA, I007: interview with P0298 (♀, ~1922) (Nkholongue, September 1, 2010), min 00:30:12–00:32:10; PA, I004: interview with P0147 (♀, ~1928), P0129 (♀, 1930) (Nkholongue, August 25, 2010), min 00:27:37–00:27:52.

61 PA, I008: interview with P0299 (♂, 1938) (Nkholongue, September 1, 2010), min 00:13:02–00:11:38; PA, I045: interview with P0242 (♂, 1945) (Malango, August 17, 2013), min 00:18:17–00:20:10; PA, I046: interview with P1045 (♀, 1932) (Malango, August 20, 2013), min 00:46:20–00:50:46; PA, I087: interview with P1452 (♂, 1927) (Lichinga, September 10, 2013), min 01:20:16–01:21:23; PA, I011: interview with P0050 (♂, ~1922) (Nkholongue, September 3, 2010), min 00:49:54–00:51:23; PA, I082: interview with P1141 (♂, 1932) (Malango, September 8, 2013), min 00:03:34–00:04:48; PA, I123: interview with P1460 (♀), P1461 (♂, ~1935), P1462 (♂, ~1935) (Meluluca, April 25, 2016), min 01:05:24–01:06:44. Around Metonia, some of the Wayao apparently still

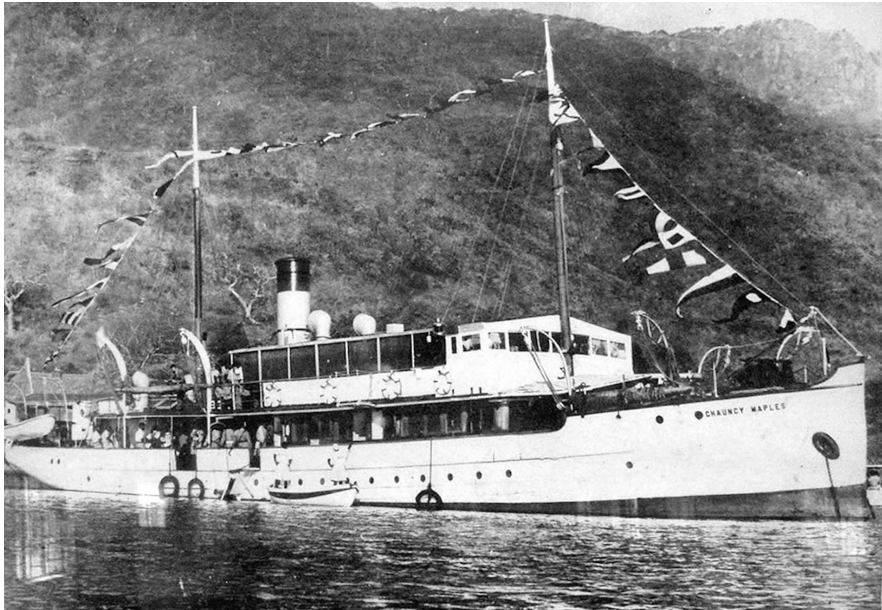


Figure 2: CM during its “Golden Jubilee Voyage” in 1951. Source: “MV Chauncy Maples,” Wikipedia, accessed April 20, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=MV_Chauncy_Maples&oldid=881783935.

tence equivalent was a salt derived from plant ashes (potash), locally called *chidulo*. Evidence explicitly referring to Nkhlongue documents how the salt brought by the steamer began to replace its locally produced alternative. In 1896, a missionary described the purchase of wood in Nkhlongue as follows:

wore garments made of bark cloth in the 1940s. This fits with the testimony of an interviewee who claimed to have seen *chiwondo* only when Wayao from the *planalto* came to the lakeside to buy fish. See: “Mtonya,” CA 61, no. 724 (1943): 46; PA, I058: interview with P1074 (♀, ~1940) (Malango, August 28, 2013), min 00:32:57–00:34:04. See as well the observations by Gerhard Liesegang, who stated that in some areas of northern Mozambique bark cloth was still in general use until the 1940s: Gerhard Liesegang, “A First Look at the Import and Export Trade of Mozambique, 1800–1914,” in *Figuring African Trade: Proceedings of the Symposium on the Quantification and Structure of the Import and Export and Long Distance Trade in Africa 1800–1913*, ed. Gerhard Liesegang, Helma Pasch, and Adam Jones (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1986), 493–494.

In the afternoon I again went ashore to take a photo of the purchase of wood, a pinch of salt being given for each log brought. Native salt thus used, coarse dark stuff, which is made from the ashes of the burnt root of a water plant “mchele.”⁶²

CM's stops were more than just an opportunity to sell firewood. “Wooding” was time consuming. Since there was no pier, all the wood had to be first loaded on small tender boats and then transported by them to the steamer anchored off the beach. CM's “wooding” provided a platform for exchange for the residents of Nkhlongue as well as the steamer's crew and passengers. The villagers of Nkhlongue were able to purchase different goods.⁶³ These included salt, which by the 1940s was no longer used as payment for firewood but was traded by crew members.⁶⁴ Beside trades, there were also other forms of exchange. CM's captain, for example, offered the village a trap for catching lions after the villagers told him about problems with these animals.⁶⁵ One interviewee, who was still a child at the time, recounted how he and his friends would drive their canoes to the steamer, board it, and play with the children of the whites while the steamer was anchored at Nkhlongue. Sometimes, he said, they received “little things.”⁶⁶ In addition to this exchange of goods and ideas, CM's stops also facilitated people's mobility. Several of my interviewees used CM for their journeys.⁶⁷

One of the most important functions of CM's stops in Nkhlongue was that they provided the women of Nkhlongue with an opportunity to sell their clay pots. Those became a most wanted and famous good. Or, as one interviewee put it: “Passengers coming [to Nkhlongue], the first thing they wanted to get [was]

62 AUMCA, E2, f. 142: R. Webb, “African Tour May 1896 – Nov. 1896,” 126–127.

63 PA, I093: interview with P0050 (♂, ~1922) (Nkhlongue, January 19, 2016), min 00:21:27–00:22:17; MLM, 018: interview with L. M., transcript Chinyanja (Malango, June 27, 2007).

64 PA, I128: interview with P1426 (♂, 1929) (Malindi (Mangochi District, Malawi), May 28, 2016), min 03:40:42–03:40:56; PA, I002: interview with P0128 (♂, 1928) (Nkhlongue, August 18, 2010), min 00:37:04–00:37:24; PA, I007: interview with P0298 (♀, ~1922) (Nkhlongue, September 1, 2010), min 00:30:12–00:31:05.

65 PA, I014: interview with P0147 (♀, ~1928), P0129 (♀, 1930) (Nkhlongue, September 8, 2010), min 00:12:07–00:13:01; PA, I015: interview with P0367 (♂, 1936) (Nkhlongue, September 9, 2010), min 00:38:17–00:39:52. The trap was still in the village at the time of fieldwork and was in the possession of Chief Chingomanje VIII.

66 PA, I105: interview with P0242 (♂, 1945) (Malango, April 4, 2016), min 00:06:42–00:09:27.

67 PA, I053: interview with P0189 (♀, 1940) (Nkhlongue, August 27, 2013), min 00:09:08–00:10:18; PA, I113: interview with P0367 (♂, 1936) (Nkhlongue, April 13, 2016), min 02:52:30–02:59:05; PA, I093: interview with P0050 (♂, ~1922) (Nkhlongue, January 19, 2016), min 00:11:11–00:12:39; PA, I004: interview with P0147 (♀, ~1928), P0129 (♀, 1930) (Nkhlongue, August 25, 2010), min 00:28:14–00:29:11; PA, I111: interview with P0266 (♂, ~1932) (Metangula, April 11, 2016), min 01:24:46–01:25:18.

pots.”⁶⁸ Little is known about the origins of the fame of Nkhlongue’s pottery.⁶⁹ However, CM’s stops at Nkhlongue were certainly an important factor, if not in the creation, at least in the rise of the pottery market. Already in 1921, the Anglican missionary William Percival Johnson wrote that the pots “of Nkhlongue village are so good that they are coveted by the women as far off as Monkey Bay,”⁷⁰ an impressive 90 miles from Nkhlongue as the crow flies. Many years later, the pots of Nkhlongue were even worth a comment to Henry Masauko Chipembere, the most important political opponent of Malawi’s first president Hastings Kamuzu Banda. Chipembere praised the pottery of Nkhlongue, saying that the people of Nkhlongue “make pots and other cooking or water keeping utensils of a quality that has not been seen anywhere else in central and East Africa.”⁷¹

While pottery was the main attraction for passengers traveling on CM, the people of Nkhlongue also sold other handicraft. Interviewees particularly emphasized the role of ivory carving. In 1949, one British visitor traveling on CM described how “Africans came on board selling beautifully-made waterpots of brown earth with polished blacklead necks, which looked like silver” when the steamer was “wooding” at Nkhlongue.⁷² And in 1951, another passenger of CM reported that a “boat-load [of pots] was put aboard for some Church Dignitary further up the lake” when they were at Nkhlongue, and further: “The Natives also do Silver Work, carve in Ivory and make Palm Mats.”⁷³

68 PA, I128: interview with P1426 (♂, 1929) (Malindi (Mangochi District, Malawi), May 28, 2016), min 03:41:06–03:41:25.

69 One interviewee claimed that her ancestors had already brought the skill with them from Nkhotakota. See: PA, I128: interview with P1426 (♂, 1929) (Malindi (Mangochi District, Malawi), May 28, 2016), min 03:41:28–03:41:33.

70 It is “Chikole” in the original. See: Johnson, *The Great Water*, 62. Johnson mentioned the pots of Nkhlongue in the same breath as the pots at the north end of the lake, most probably referring to the pots of Ikombe, which have remained famous to this day and have also received considerable scholarly attention. On Ikombe pottery, see: Sac Waane, “Pottery-Making Traditions of the Ikombe Kisi, Mbeya Region, Tanzania,” *Baessler-Archiv* 25 (1977): 251–317; Eginald Mihanjo, “Transformation of the Kisi Pottery Enterprise in Southwest Tanzania,” in *Negotiating Social Space: East African Microenterprises*, ed. Patrick O. Alila and Poul O. Pedersen (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2001), 273–290; Shakila Halifan Mteti, “Engendering Pottery Production and Distribution Processes among the Kisi and Pare of Tanzania,” *International Journal of Gender and Women’s Studies* 4, no. 2 (2016): 127–141.

71 It is “Nkhlongwe” in the original. See: Henry B.M. Chipembere, *My Malawian Ancestors*, 1969, 11.

72 Sybil Baber, “Journey up Lake Nyasa,” *CA* 68, no. 807 (1950): 43–45.

73 The capital letters are as in the original. See: Ralph J. Whiteman, “A Traveller’s Letter Home: Jubilee Voyage of the ‘SS Chauncy Maples’ (Written in October 1951),” June 2011, 6, accessed August 9, 2011, http://www.chauncymaples.org/newsletter/chauncy_maples_jubilee_voyage.pdf.

The production of goods for CM was clearly gendered. Pottery was women's work. Ivory carving and cutting firewood was done by men.⁷⁴ The latter is noteworthy because cutting firewood for domestic use was and remained a female task.⁷⁵ One interviewee explained this difference by the different type of wood needed for CM.⁷⁶ However, nowadays, fuelwood-cutting (for cooking) is also done by men if it is for sale. It can therefore be assumed that the male domain in firewood cutting for CM was also due to a more general idea of women's work belonging to the domestic sphere. It is all the more interesting that pottery remained women's work.

This becomes even more evident when one considers that the importance of Nkhlongue's pottery went beyond that of a supplementary income. For the pots were not only sold for money to the passengers of CM, but also bartered for food, especially cassava, in other villages along the lakeshore.⁷⁷ An 86-year-old woman recounted:

In our culture, since our ancestors, our mothers who gave birth to us, and even our grandmothers, agriculture was not so important. In their custom, they placed much faith in pots. These pots, we carried them on our heads to Metangula and sold⁷⁸ them there for food.⁷⁹

The importance of the pot production for food procurement was also emphasized by James Amanze, professor of theology at the University of Botswana and a descendant from Nkhlongue on his father's side. He described the significance of Nkhlongue's pottery as follows:

74 PA, I093: interview with P0050 (♂, ~1922) (Nkhlongue, January 19, 2016), min 00:23:32–00:29:27; PA, I106: interview with P0262 (♀, ~1940) (Malango, April 4, 2016), min 00:20:02–00:24:13; PA, I035: interview with P0743 (♀, ~1930), P0765 (♀, ~1932) (Nkhlongue, July 28, 2012), min 00:39:41–00:43:24.

75 My findings put into question the claim by Charles Good that the cutting of firewood for the steamer was women's work. See: Good, *The Steamer Parish*, 178.

76 PA, I108: interview with P1074 (♀, ~1940) (Malango, April 6, 2016), min 00:13:36–00:19:26.

77 PA, I112: interview with P0129 (♀, 1930), P0128 (♂, 1928) (Nkhlongue, April 12, 2016), min 00:03:13–00:03:38; PA, I138: interview with P1498 (♂, 1940) (Nkhotakota, June 2, 2016), min 00:15:08–00:15:22; PA, I105: interview with P0242 (♂, 1945) (Malango, April 4, 2016), min 00:55:49–01:06:40; PA, I106: interview with P0262 (♀, ~1940) (Malango, April 4, 2016), min 01:58:37–02:05:20.

78 The word used in the Chinyanja original is *kugulitsa*, which corresponds to the English “to sell,” and differs from the Chinyanja expression for “to barter,” which is *kusinthanitsa*. However, the description of process shows that, as a rule, this was a direct exchange of different goods not including the exchange of money.

79 PA, I112: interview with P0129 (♀, 1930), P0128 (♂, 1928) (Nkhlongue, April 12, 2016), min 00:01:59–00:02:29.

The women were extremely skilled in making pots from clay. They were very skilled indeed the best in the entire region. Because Nkholongue was not good for agriculture women used to carry lots and lots of pots on their backs and heads and go to sell them at Micuio, Metangula, Chuanga, Chia and sometimes all the way to Ngoo. They used to exchange their pots for food. This became their lifetime work and there was a lot of competition on making these pots.⁸⁰

The information from the interviews differed slightly as to the origins of this bartering of pots for food. Some interviewees, like the 86-year-old woman quoted above, described it as a conscious way of life, as a part of their ancestors' customs.⁸¹ Others, however, emphasized the necessity, and pointed out that the reason for the barter was a lack of food.⁸² It is plausible that these different perceptions relate to different times, for making a living by pottery became increasingly impractical in the 1950s.⁸³ This change was caused, at least in part, by the end of CM.

The End of CM and the Refounding of Malango

There were several reasons for the end of the steamer era in Nkholongue. For one of my interviewees, born in 1936, the main reason was however obvious:

By the time, when CM, it was moving here continuously, I was young like this one (pointing to a boy). Then, when it changed, not coming here, it's now, ourselves we are grown up and by then it was using fuel. And at first, they were using firewood. So, they changed now to be using fuel. So here, they stopped it, not coming here.⁸⁴

What this interviewee reflected on here was the change in technology that was happening at the time. M.V. *Ilala*, for example, the lake's new "flagship," commis-

⁸⁰ It is "Nkholongwe," "Mikuyu," "Mtengula," and "Chiwanga" in the original. See: PA, James Amanze, "Nkholongue Village, Niassa," email, May 5, 2018.

⁸¹ For other examples, see: PA, I138: interview with P1498 (♂, 1940) (Nkhotakota, June 2, 2016), min 00:15:08–00:15:22, 00:19:34–00:19:46; PA, I105: interview with P0242 (♂, 1945) (Malango, April 4, 2016), min 00:58:36–00:59:23, 01:04:52–01:05:45.

⁸² PA, I057: interview with P0262 (♀, ~1940) (Malango, August 28, 2013), min 01:11:23–01:13:12; PA, I105: interview with P0242 (♂, 1945) (Malango, April 4, 2016), min 00:55:49–00:57:20.

⁸³ Locally produced pots were (still) in high demand among the population in the 1940s, especially during World War Two. Monica Wilson pointed out that the trade in pots at the north end of the lake increased during the war because imported goods were scarce. See: Monica Wilson, *For Men and Elders: Change in the Relations of Generations and of Men and Women among the Nyakyusa-Ngonde People, 1875–1971* (New York: Africana, 1977), 11.

⁸⁴ PA, I013: interview with P0367 (♂, 1936) (Nkholongue, September 8, 2010), min 00:25:14–00:25:47.

sioned in 1951 for the transport company Nyasaland Railways was not a steamship running on firewood like most previous vessels, but a motor ship powered by a diesel engine.⁸⁵

The immediate reason for the end of CM, however, was not this change in technology, but the fact that it had become too expensive for the mission to operate the steamer. Compared to the heydays of missionary work at the end of the 19th century, it had become increasingly difficult to raise money in Europe for such projects.⁸⁶ Furthermore, the institutionalization of the church and the growing infrastructure such as roads, telegraphs etc. had reduced the need for the mission to have its own CM-sized steamer.⁸⁷

CM made its last trip for the mission in 1953. After that, some transport was taken over by a small schooner, the M.V. Paul. But this boat, which had been converted to diesel propulsion in 1953, no longer had a need to go to Nkhlongue.⁸⁸ CM was sold in 1956 to a Rhodesian company which used her for fishing in the British waters of the lake. It was only after the government of Malawi had bought CM to use her as a passenger ship that her steam engine was finally replaced by a diesel engine in 1965. So, although somewhat inaccurate in the specific case of CM, my interviewee had a very correct perception of the general trend: global technical progress, combined with economic and cultural developments at other places around the world cut Nkhlongue off from the most technically advanced transport infrastructure it ever had.

The end of the steamer era had a significant impact on life in Nkhlongue. Even if direct causalities are difficult to substantiate, there is no doubt that it fueled a change in settlement patterns that was connected to a growing importance of subsistence food production. We have already discussed the point that Nkhlongue was also affected by the dispersal of settlements after colonization (see Section 4.3). Between the 1890s and 1950, several people had left the village and moved to other places such as Malango or Malo. Nevertheless, it must be emphasized that Nkhlongue remained or returned to being a comparatively compact settlement in the 1940s.⁸⁹ According to my interviewees, most houses were located on the plain around the small peninsula of Linga between the two intermittent creeks

85 P.A. Cole-King, *Lake Malawi Steamers* (Limbe: Department of Antiquities, 1987).

86 The UMCA was struck by a financial crisis after World War Two: Good, *The Steamer Parish*, 206.

87 Good, 205–213.

88 Good, 212.

89 The sources do not allow us to say how Nkhlongue's spatial organization changed from 1900 to the 1940s. We must therefore keep in mind the possibility that there were processes of disaggregation, which were then again followed by processes of aggregation.

of Nkholongue and Cabendula (see Figure 3 and Map 3).⁹⁰ In 1951, António Serrano, a member of the MCT (Mission for the Combat of the Trypanosomiasis, see Section 5.4), described Nkholongue as a large village situated on a small plain cultivated with cassava.⁹¹ “Large village” here does not refer to the large number of inhabitants of the community, but precisely to the comparatively large settlement. The statistics clearly show that Chingomanje’s chiefdom had few inhabitants compared to other neighboring communities.⁹² However, while other chiefdoms of the region were spread over various hamlets, Nkholongue’s population was concentrated in one relatively compact village.

We can assume that Nkholongue remained so compact because the regular stops of CM had made the village’s inhabitants less dependent on agriculture than other people in the region. In any case, the end of CM set in motion what was probably the most massive change in Nkholongue’s spatial organization since the village had been first founded in the 19th century. During the 1950s, most of Nkholongue’s population left the previous location of the village. Some migrated south to neighboring village of M’chepe, but the majority migrated north to the creek of Malango. When the Portuguese forces resettled the population of Nkholongue in 1966 during the Mozambican War of Independence, the majority of Nkholongue’s population, including the village’s chief, did not live at the previous location of the village but precisely around the bay of Malango.⁹³

We have already dealt with another “emigration wave” to Malango, that of Salimo Chingomanje in the 1890s (see Sections 3.3 and 4.3). Salimo is said to have lived in Malango until his death. But as already mentioned, his son Saide Salimo left Malango with his family to live in Matawale and later in Mtucula. Information from my interviews indicates that no one resided in Malango after Saide Salimo’s departure.⁹⁴ António Serrano’s article on the local outbreak of the sleeping sickness con-

90 PA, I107: interview with P1074 (♀, ~1940) (Malango, April 5, 2016), min 00:51:21–01:36:01, 02:08:12–02:53:11; PA, I111: interview with P0266 (♂, ~1932) (Metangula, April 11, 2016), min 00:08:56–00:15:08; PA, I112: interview with P0129 (♀, 1930), P0128 (♂, 1928) (Nkholongue, April 12, 2016), min 01:18:12–01:21:27; PA, I113: interview with P0367 (♂, 1936) (Nkholongue, April 13, 2016), min 00:46:43–00:57:15.

91 Serrano, “Um reconhecimento no Distrito do Lago,” 673.

92 See Table 2 on p. 160.

93 PA, I153: interview with P1477 (♂, ~1940) (Micucue, June 17, 2016), min 00:35:38–00:36:12; PA, I113: interview with P0367 (♂, 1936) (Nkholongue, April 13, 2016), min 00:39:34–00:40:21; PA, I115: interview with P0160 (♂, 1952) (Metangula, April 18, 2016), min 01:35:31–01:35:55.

94 PA, I111: interview with P0266 (♂, ~1932) (Metangula, April 11, 2016), min 00:05:55–00:08:34; PA, I107: interview with P1074 (♀, ~1940) (Malango, April 5, 2016), min 01:41:22–01:41:51.

firms that no one lived there in 1950.⁹⁵ The emigration to Malango and M'chepa was not a sudden event but a gradual move. Interviewees indicated that they initially only tilled fields and had temporary houses (*chisani*) here. Only after some time did they move to Malango permanently.⁹⁶ The first migrants seem to have left Nkholongue around 1953. Towards the end of the 1950s, people living in Malango began to outnumber people living in Nkholongue.⁹⁷



Figure 3: Aerial view of Nkholongue showing the plain between the creeks of Nkholongue and Cabendula. The bay of Malango can be seen in the top left of the photograph. Photograph taken by Robert Layng in 2010.

Most of my interviewees did not make a causal connection between the cessation of CM and their emigration to Malango or M'chepa. Rather, they stated that they went to Malango to look for new fields because they suffered from hunger in

⁹⁵ Serrano's detailed maps do not show a settlement on the Malango. Likewise, he did not mention one. The omission would be odd, since it is precisely the creek of Malango that is mentioned in his article as a "frontier" of the sleeping sickness. His article is dated January 24, 1951. See: Serrano, "Um reconhecimento no Distrito do Lago."

⁹⁶ PA, I135: interview with P1494 (♂, 1942) (Nkhotakota, June 2, 2016), min 00:40:14–00:41:27; PA, I058: interview with P1074 (♀, ~1940) (Malango, August 28, 2013), min 01:07:47–01:10:55.

⁹⁷ PA, I113: interview with P0367 (♂, 1936) (Nkholongue, April 13, 2016), min 00:33:40–00:35:24; PA, I120: interview with P1102 (♂, 1932) (Malango, April 21, 2016), min 00:03:50–00:04:38; PA, I135: interview with P1494 (♂, 1942) (Nkhotakota, June 2, 2016), min 00:40:14–00:41:27.



Map 3: Modern-day Nkholongue and the previous location of the village around Linga. Please note that the creeks/ rivers on the map are all intermittent ones that flow only during rainy season. Map by the author using Map data©2019 from Google Maps.

Nkhlongue.⁹⁸ The reasons given for the origins of this food scarcity vary slightly. Many cited some sort of soil degradation.⁹⁹ Others pointed to the fact that the people simply were not growing enough crops,¹⁰⁰ while some linked it to the rising lake level that had destroyed homes and fields.¹⁰¹

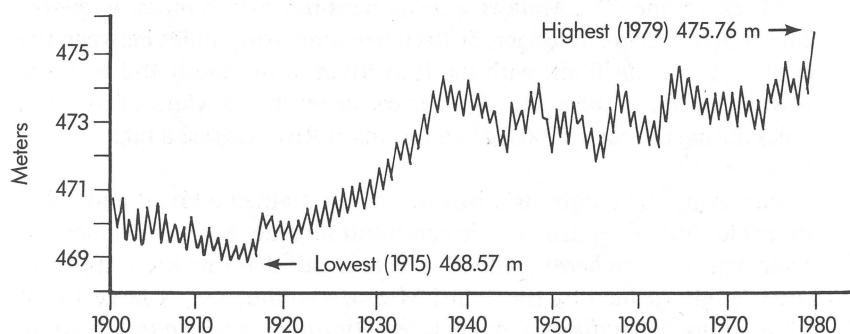


Figure 4: Level of Lake Malawi, 1900–1980. Source: Elias C. Mandala, *Work and Control in a Peasant Economy: A History of the Lower Tchiri Valley in Malawi, 1859–1960* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), 6. Reprinted by permission of the University of Wisconsin Press. © 1990 by the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System. All rights reserved.

It is difficult to determine a definite causal chain, but we can be fairly certain that different factors fueled each other and that the cessation of CM exacerbated an already critical situation. The rise of the lake level by up to five meters is well documented by many different sources. It destroyed houses and fields alike and forced people to retreat inland.¹⁰² It thus also reduced the size of Nkhlongue's already

⁹⁸ PA, I109: interview with P1081 (♀, 1945) (Malango, April 6, 2016), min 00:30:15–00:30:55; PA, I118: interview with P1218 (♀, 1930) (Malango, April 21, 2016), min 01:20:22–01:21:06.

⁹⁹ PA, I116: interview with P1457 (♀) (Metangula, April 18, 2016), min 00:44:44–00:44:55; PA, I057: interview with P0262 (♀, ~1940) (Malango, August 28, 2013), min 01:11:23–01:13:12; PA, I118: interview with P1218 (♀, 1930) (Malango, April 21, 2016), min 01:20:22–01:21:06; PA, I109: interview with P1081 (♀, 1945) (Malango, April 6, 2016), min 00:11:40–00:12:07.

¹⁰⁰ PA, I112: interview with P0129 (♀, 1930), P0128 (♂, 1928) (Nkhlongue, April 12, 2016), min 01:14:18–01:15:35; PA, I106: interview with P0262 (♀, ~1940) (Malango, April 4, 2016), min 02:03:04–02:04:09; PA, I100: interview with P0025 (♀, 1948) (Nkhlongue, February 22, 2016), min 00:04:52–00:05:13, 00:08:38–00:09:18.

¹⁰¹ PA, I048: interview with P1446 (♂, ~1945) (Metangula, August 21, 2013), min 00:01:44–00:02:40; PA, I058: interview with P1074 (♀, ~1940) (Malango, August 28, 2013), min 01:07:47–01:10:55.

¹⁰² For evidence from the interviews, see: PA, I004: interview with P0147 (♀, ~1928), P0129 (♀, 1930) (Nkhlongue, August 25, 2010), min 00:10:13–00:11:33; PA, I002: interview with P0128 (♂, 1928) (Nkhlongue, August 18, 2010), min 01:04:30–01:06:57; PA, I001: interview with P0050 (♂,

small plain. But it was certainly not a direct cause for the emigration. For, as Figure 4 shows, the rise of the lake level took place before 1940.¹⁰³ It is evident that the rise added pressure on the land. The fact that there was a significant degree of soil degradation in Nkholongue is confirmed not only by oral history but also by the statement of a European passenger on CM who wrote in 1951 that there was “a tremendous amount of erosion.”¹⁰⁴ It is obvious that the ongoing degradation of the soil in Nkholongue increased people’s dependence on trade and barter to obtain food. With the cessation of CM, one important part of the income disappeared and all the pressure shifted to bartering with neighboring villages.¹⁰⁵ It seems that the pressure became too intense, not only because people no longer felt safe but also because their increasing need to barter pots for food was not welcome in other places. One interviewee stated that it was Chilombe, the chief of Metangula, who forbade them to come to Metangula and sell their pots. According to her, this was why people started going to Malango to grow cassava.¹⁰⁶

Emigration to Malango and M’chepa went hand in hand with an increase in the importance of agriculture and thus a decrease in the importance of pottery. One interviewee explicitly referred to the fact that in Malango they did farm and no longer go to other places to exchange pots for food.¹⁰⁷ Thus, the 1950s saw a growing emphasis on subsistence food production.

However, the increasing importance of subsistence food production did not lead to a general decoupling of Nkholongue’s population from the market. Money was still needed to pay the taxes, and the appetite of Nkholongue’s population for goods such as clothes had not disappeared. On the contrary, the region around Nkholongue does not seem to have been exempt from the worldwide emer-

~1922) (Nkholongue, August 17, 2010), min 01:23:00–01:23:54; PA, I104: interview with P0298 (♀, ~1922) (Nkholongue, March 1, 2016), min 00:42:54–00:44:18.

103 The chronology of the rise is also documented by reports of the Anglican missionaries based in Messumba: “News from the Stations: V. Msumba,” *NDC*, no. 116 (July 1932): 16–17; “News from the Stations: V. Msumba,” *NDC*, no. 119 (April 1933): 9; “News from the Stations: V. Msumba,” *NDC*, no. 127 (April 1935): 7–8; “News from the Stations: V. Msumba,” *NDC*, no. 134 (June 1937): 8–10.

104 Whiteman, “Traveller’s Letter Home,” 26.

105 One interview partner was quite explicit about this causality: PA, I120: interview with P1102 (♂, 1932) (Malango, April 21, 2016), min 01:25:25–01:25:50.

106 PA, I072: interview with P0262 (♀, ~1940) (Malango, September 5, 2013), min 00:26:35–00:29:56; PA, I106: interview with P0262 (♀, ~1940) (Malango, April 4, 2016), min 01:58:50–02:00:35.

107 PA, I105: interview with P0242 (♂, 1945) (Malango, April 4, 2016), min 01:07:25–01:07:29. For others who mainly highlighted the increasing importance of agriculture in Malango in general, see: PA, I100: interview with P0025 (♀, 1948) (Nkholongue, February 22, 2016), min 00:04:52–00:05:13; PA, I112: interview with P0129 (♀, 1930), P0128 (♂, 1928) (Nkholongue, April 12, 2016), min 01:14:15–01:17:34.

gence of a consumer society at that time.¹⁰⁸ New desires and lifestyles were the result. Tailoring, for example, had become a most popular apprenticeship around that time.¹⁰⁹ Two of my interviewees had traveled to Nkhotakota with CM in the 1940s, learnt tailoring there, and brought home a sewing machine.¹¹⁰ In Metangula, an “Indian” trader named Osman had opened a store around the same time, selling clothes, sugar, and salt, among other things.¹¹¹ For most of those born before the 1950s, Osman’s store was a prominent and positive reference point in the interviews, which can be clearly taken as a sign of the centrality of growing consumer aspirations in the population.¹¹²

What people lost with the end of CM was an important place to generate income. The demand for firewood had evaporated and the sale of handicraft lost its main market. People had to find new ways to generate income to pay taxes and buy consumer goods. And they did. Compared to their fellow craftswomen, the village’s ivory carvers seem to have been more successful in taking their business to

108 On the fact that these developments also occurred elsewhere in rural Africa, see: Korieh, *The Land Has Changed*, 193–194.

109 Around Nkhlongue, tailoring was and is a male profession. One interviewee stated that, for a woman, it was only possible in Messumba to be a tailor. It is therefore possible that, around Messumba, Christian missionaries promoted this as a female profession. This would, however, require further investigation. See: PA, I114: interview with P1074 (♀, ~1940), P1141 (♂, 1932) (Malango, April 15, 2016), min 02:30:53–02:32:10. For interviewees who learned to tailor, see: PA, I005: interview with P0641 (♂, 1952) (Nkhlongue, August 27, 2010), 00:13:40–00:16:55; PA, I066: interview with P0085 (♂, 1960) (Nkhlongue, September 1, 2013), min 00:05:20–00:12:18; PA, I141: interview with P0375 (♂, 1962) (Nkhlongue, June 6, 2016), min 00:29:45–00:31:18; PA, I099: interview with P1420 (♂, ~1922) (Ngongo, February 16, 2016), min 00:58:24–00:58:57. For another villager who learned to tailor, see: MLM, 018: interview with L. M., transcript Chinyanja (Malango, June 27, 2007).

110 PA, I011: interview with P0050 (♂, ~1922) (Nkhlongue, September 3, 2010), min 00:00:00–00:07:49; PA, I002: interview with P0128 (♂, 1928) (Nkhlongue, August 18, 2010), min 00:13:33–00:16:00, 00:41:50–00:42:17.

111 According to the information provided by an interviewee, it can be assumed that this was a branch of Osman Adam LTD, a trading company based in Blantyre (Malawi), as he explicitly named the store “Osman Adam” and not just “Osman.” However, since this interviewee spent a long time of his life in Nyasaland, and Osman Adam LTD was a prominent company there, it is also possible that he simply got something mixed up. The fact that the same interviewee also reported that Osman of Metangula obtained his goods in Tanganyika rather contradicts the version that Osman of Metangula was a branch of a Nyasaland-based company. See: PA, I010: interview with P0792 (♂, 1917) (Nkhlongue, September 3, 2010), min 00:28:42–00:37:23.

112 PA, I038: interview with P1439 (♂, ~1940) (Malango, August 15, 2013), min 01:21:07–01:22:46; PA, I046: interview with P1045 (♀, 1932) (Malango, August 20, 2013), min 00:46:20–00:50:46; PA, I004: interview with P0147 (♀, ~1928), P0129 (♀, 1930) (Nkhlongue, August 25, 2010), min 00:53:32–00:57:42; PA, I007: interview with P0298 (♀, ~1922) (Nkhlongue, September 1, 2010), min 00:13:11–00:16:18.

other places. Since ivory carvers were more mobile than their fellow craftswomen, they were able to travel around and offer their skills elsewhere.¹¹³ While little is known about the mobility of carvers prior to the cessation of CM, it can be observed that after 1953 at least two important ivory carvers from Nkhlongue moved to work outside the village. One of them went to Mandimba to work at the house of a Portuguese cotton functionary and the other went to live near Lupilichi at the camp of some Portuguese hunters.¹¹⁴

Male labor migration seems to have generally increased after the end of CM. One interviewee born in 1936 stated:

I have already told you about the job of our ancestors, the job of the steamer, this one of CM, right? [I told you t]hat our ancestors received from that job. Well, when we began to mature, that job no longer existed. We could only go to Nyasaland and do the job there [...].¹¹⁵

While there are no data on the changing importance of labor migration in the long run,¹¹⁶ the growing importance of labor migration in the 1950s appears to have been a development that was not limited just to Nkhlongue but affected the wider region. As mentioned in the previous chapter, labor migration to Nyasaland and South Africa had begun to play a role after the introduction of the hut tax in 1903. By the 1950s and early 1960s, labor migration had become so widespread that it was considered part of the standard curriculum of a young man. Of my interviewees who were adults at the time of the outbreak of the War of Independence, almost all had gone abroad at least once on labor migration. Some of them migrated permanently and never returned to Nkhlongue or returned very late in their

113 The mobility of potters was limited, as the quality of the pots depended not only on their skill but also on the quality of the clay that could be used. Cultural reasons may have also contributed to the fact that men were able to move around more easily than women.

114 For the one who went to Mandimba, see: PA, I113: interview with P0367 (♂, 1936) (Nkhlongue, April 13, 2016), min 00:04:20–00:09:17, 00:17:27–00:18:58. For the one who went to Lupilichi, see: PA, I040: interview with P1030 (♀, 1965), P1009 (♀, 1958), P1029 (♂, ~1959) (Malango, August 16, 2013), min 00:07:11–00:27:27; AHD, MU/GM/GNP/RNP/0032/00342: PIDE Moçambique, “Informação N.º 996 – SC/CI(2),” September 30, 1969, 1. See as well: PA, James Amanze, “Nkhlongue Village, Niassa,” email, May 5, 2018.

115 PA, I154: interview with P0367 (♂, 1936), P0373 (♀, 1940) (Nkhlongue, June 18, 2016), min 00:37:38–00:40:46.

116 An isolated collective recruitment contract from 1912 that I found in the holdings of the AHM lists workers from Lussefa, Ngolocolo, and Metangula, but none from Nkhlongue. See: AHM, SNI, cx. 745, Anno de 1912, Processo 3: [Labour contract], July 16, 1912.

lives.¹¹⁷ The same is true for the same age cohort of interviewees from other villages of the region.¹¹⁸

An idea of the extent of labor migration at that time can also be gained from population statistics (see Table 5). The 1957 tax census for the administrative post of Metangula includes only 66 adult men for every 100 adult women. While part of this striking ratio can certainly be explained by tax evasion,¹¹⁹ we can assume that, in the 1950s, the difference was mainly due to labor migration. Presuming an equal ratio of the sexes in society, more than 1,000 men are missing from the 1958 tax census. In other words, 20 percent of the male population were absent. Considering that not all labor migrants were permanently absent (and thus may have been included in the tax census), the level of absenteeism could even have been considerably higher at certain times of the year. In line with this, the Portuguese geographer Raquel Soeiro de Brito, who visited the region in the early 1960s, noted that “almost all Anyanja emigrate temporarily.”¹²⁰

117 For those who went to South Africa, see: PA, I038: interview with P1439 (♂, ~1940) (Malango, August 15, 2013), min 00:13:18–00:13:55; PA, I056: interview with P1102 (♂, 1932) (Malango, August 28, 2013), min 00:00:16–00:01:52; PA, I013: interview with P0367 (♂, 1936) (Nkhlongue, September 8, 2010), min 00:13:41–00:23:04; PA, I087: interview with P1452 (♂, 1927) (Lichinga, September 10, 2013), min 00:22:13–00:26:52. For labor migrants with other destinations (including Nyasaland, Tanganyika, Southern and Northern Rhodesia), see: PA, I093: interview with P0050 (♂, ~1922) (Nkhlongue, January 19, 2016), min 01:59:59–02:01:33; PA, I002: interview with P0128 (♂, 1928) (Nkhlongue, August 18, 2010), min 00:13:33–00:16:00; PA, I003: interview with P0792 (♂, 1917) (Nkhlongue, August 20, 2010), min 01:07:59–01:14:53, 01:20:22–01:33:01; PA, I048: interview with P1446 (♂, ~1945) (Metangula, August 21, 2013), min 00:28:35–00:29:45. For an exception who did not go abroad, see: PA, I111: interview with P0266 (♂, ~1932) (Metangula, April 11, 2016), min 01:20:03–01:20:56.

118 PA, I123: interview with P1460 (♀), P1461 (♂, ~1935), P1462 (♂, ~1935) (Meluluca, April 25, 2016), min 01:01:48–01:05:24; PA, I149: interview with P1501 (♂, 1949), P1513 (♂, 1943) (Chinuni, June 11, 2016), min 00:16:49–00:18:12; PA, I152: interview with P1476 (♂, ~1935) (Milombe, June 16, 2016), min 00:28:25–00:39:45; PA, I094: interview with P0727 (♂, ~1940) (M'chepa, January 27, 2016), min 00:24:46–00:26:13; PA, I099: interview with P1420 (♂, ~1922) (Ngongo, February 16, 2016), min 00:48:27–00:48:51. One could also add the labor migrants interviewed by the oral history projects of Arianna Huhn and the AHM. For examples, see: MLM, 018: interview with L. M., transcript Chinyanja (Malango, June 27, 2007); AHM, Seção Oral, Cassettes N.º 157–159: Entrevista com um grupo de velhos de Seli (Metangula), interview by Gerhard Liesegang, Teresa Oliveira, and Mujuane Mainga Vicente, July 22, 1981, N.º 159B: 308–399. For an exception, see: PA, I063: interview with P1488 (♂, ~1930) (M'chepa, August 31, 2013), min 00:07:10–00:07:40.

119 One indication of this is the higher number of underage men compared with the number of underage women. But the large differences between the 1957 and 1958 census in the number of minors also point to the fact that non-taxpayers may have been generally underrepresented in these censuses. This is also suggested by the low number of children in general.

120 Raquel Soeiro de Brito, *No trilho dos descobrimentos: Estudos geográficos* (Lisboa: Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimentos Portugueses, 1997), 199. Such a picture was

	1957		1958
Total	9,686		10,682
Men	4,305	80 men per 100 women	4,893
Women	5,381		5,789
Adults	6,137		6,247
Men >18	2,434	66 adult men per 100 adult women	2,561
Women >18	3,678		3,686
Children	3,597		4,435
Men <18	1,871	110 boys per 100 girls	2,332
Women <18	1,703		2,103

Table 5: Tax censuses of the administrative post of Metangula, 1957–1958.¹²¹

One of the most popular destinations for labor migration was South Africa.¹²² This is surprising because, as has already been discussed in the previous chapter, there was actually no more official recruitment for the Rand mines along the lakeshore after 1912. Such recruitment had even been prohibited for about two decades. However, this did not stop people from going there on their own. They now simply went to Nyasaland and joined Wenela,¹²³ the South African labor agency there.¹²⁴

This shows the importance of people's agency in upholding labor migration to the mines. In line with this and what has been said above about the growing consumer aspirations, most labor migrants explained their migration less in terms of the need to get the tax money than in terms of their desire to get clothes and con-

not uncommon in the larger region. In Zambia's Eastern Province, the percentage of adult males who were absent from home was reportedly 60 percent in 1958. See: Jim Pletcher, "Ecological Deterioration and Agricultural Stagnation in Eastern Province, Zambia," *The Centennial Review* 35, no. 2 (1991): 375.

¹²¹ AHM, SNI, cx. 66, A/23/4/10 1959–1962: Mapa comparativo dos recenseamentos dos anos de 1957 e de 1958: Circunscrição de Maniamba (Maniamba, December 31, 1958).

¹²² See Footnotes 117 and 118.

¹²³ Wenela was the popular name of the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association.

¹²⁴ Alexopoulou and Juif have shown that the prohibition "did not prevent residents of the northern districts from travelling to the recruitment stations [in the southern districts.]" However, the fact that people also went to recruitment stations abroad does not seem to have been taken into account in their reflections. See: Kleoniki Alexopoulou and Dácil Juif, "Colonial State Formation without Integration: Tax Capacity and Labour Regimes in Portuguese Mozambique (1890s–1970s)," *International Review of Social History* 62, no. 2 (August 2017): 215–252.

sumer goods.¹²⁵ Or, as one person from Malango interviewed by Arianna Huhn, put it:

We went to Nyasaland because we wanted to dress well. For, that time, there was no job here.¹²⁶

There is no doubt that this kind of labor migration had its attractive sides for young men. Labor migrants were comparatively rich people who brought with them not only money and clothes but also such attractions as phonographs.¹²⁷ One interviewee responded to my question as to whether young men had no choice but to go abroad in this way:

That was not an obligation. It was like this: you stay here and you have a friend who was there. The day that he returns, you see him well dressed with a coat and even shoes. Sometimes he comes with a bicycle. [...] Then you start to see it like this: I will also go, I will also have it.¹²⁸

As this quotation however already suggests, push factors continued to play an important role, even if in the 1950s the pressures came less from the state than from local society. After all, work in the mines was not without danger. According to the statements of two interviewees, accidents occurred regularly.¹²⁹ The pressure was not only to get nice clothes, but also to find the money to pay for marriage. One labor migrant from Chinuni for example stated that “you didn’t get married, if you didn’t go.”¹³⁰ In the same vein, the Portuguese forestry engineer Camilo

125 One exception was: PA, I063: interview with P1488 (♂, ~1930) (M’chepa, August 31, 2013), min 00:08:28–00:08:54.

126 “[P]ofuna tivale vabwino wanthu amayenda kupita kunyasaland (Malawi) kuti nyengoyo muno muli ata ntchito.”, MLM, 018: interview with L. M., transcript Chinyanja (Malango, June 27, 2007). For other similar statements, see: PA, I135: interview with P1494 (♂, 1942) (Nkhotakota, June 2, 2016), min 01:08:06–01:08:15; PA, I094: interview with P0727 (♂, ~1940) (M’chepa, January 27, 2016), min 00:23:10–00:24:13; MLM, 025: Song by Various Women (Nkhlongue, June 27, 2007); PA, I154: interview with P0367 (♂, 1936), P0373 (♀, 1940) (Nkhlongue, June 18, 2016), min 00:36:21–00:44:47. See as well: Katto, “Grandma Was a Guerrilla Fighter,” 85.

127 PA, I105: interview with P0242 (♂, 1945) (Malango, April 4, 2016), min 00:46:54–00:49:21. See as well: Katto, “Grandma Was a Guerrilla Fighter,” 226.

128 PA, I111: interview with P0266 (♂, ~1932) (Metangula, April 11, 2016), min 01:20:23–01:20:56.

129 PA, I013: interview with P0367 (♂, 1936) (Nkhlongue, September 8, 2010), min 00:35:06–00:35:42; PA, I056: interview with P1102 (♂, 1932) (Malango, August 28, 2013), min 00:12:40–00:32:14.

130 PA, I149: interview with P1501 (♂, 1949), P1513 (♂, 1943) (Chinuni, June 11, 2016), min 00:18:02–00:18:06. For similar statements, see: PA, I094: interview with P0727 (♂, ~1940) (M’chepa, January 27, 2016), min 00:08:52–00:09:41.

Costa wrote in a 1959 article on Niassa that “many do not consider themselves ‘men’ unless they have been abroad.”¹³¹

As labor migration was overwhelmingly male, it becomes clear that the revival of food subsistence production of the 1950s depended mainly on female labor. With the absence of male labor, it was the women who did the work at homes and farms and also supported the less productive forces of the community.¹³² In light of the decreasing importance of pottery manufacture, the 1950s in Nkhlongue can thus be read as a history of female retreat into subsistence production and of growing male labor mobility.

Subsistence, Migration, and the Market: Economic Dynamics in the Long Run

As stated above, the fall and rise of Nkhlongue’s pottery manufacture was not the only example of the dynamic and multidirectional nature of the interplay of subsistence, migration, and the market in Nkhlongue’s history. Another example are the economic processes in the late colonial and early post-colonial period, which will be discussed in the two following chapters. Reflecting on the patterns of subsistence reversal in Nkhlongue’s history in the long run, we can gather at least five insights.

First, we can assert that processes of subsistence reversal generally do not appear as a conscious “exit option” by the people. Rather, the major movements (back) to subsistence in Nkhlongue’s history all seem to have been triggered by externally induced market disruptions. Thus the “exit option” was in reality

¹³¹ Costa, “O Niassa visto por dentro,” 177.

¹³² Going back to arguments by Harold Wolpe, the contribution of the (female) subsistence economy to “cheap” migrant labor has been repeatedly highlighted. As Cooper and Austin have pointed out, however, it may be shortsighted to view this process only in terms of the exploitation of subsistence labor. Rather, they have argued that the system could also be used by Africans to meet their needs in various ways. See: Harold Wolpe, “Capitalism and Cheap Labour-Power in South Africa: From Segregation to Apartheid,” *Economy and Society* 1, no. 4 (1972): 425–456; Gareth Austin, “The Return of Capitalism as a Concept,” in *Capitalism: The Reemergence of a Historical Concept*, ed. Jürgen Kocka and Marcel van der Linden (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 217–18; Frederick Cooper, “Africa in a Capitalist World,” in *Crossing Boundaries: Comparative History of Black People in Diaspora*, ed. Darlene Clark Hine and Jacqueline McLeod, Blacks in the Diaspora (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 401. See as well the comments by Clarence-Smith, who emphasized that migrant labor was not necessarily “cheap” when productivity levels are considered: William G. Clarence-Smith, “Thou Shalt Not Articulate Modes of Production,” *Canadian Journal of African Studies/Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines* 19, no. 1 (1985): 21–22.

more necessity than preference.¹³³ We have seen this in the previous pages with regard to the end of CM. A similar process could be observed in the time after independence. As will be discussed in detail in the next chapter, the majority of Nkhlongue's population was resettled to Metangula as part of the Portuguese counter-insurgency strategy. Resettlement went hand in hand with the increasing importance of wage labor.¹³⁴ People were still able to farm in Metangula, but the evidence clearly shows that agriculture lost its previous importance due to the fact that many men found employment with the growing Portuguese military apparatus. This reduced people's dependence on subsistence production, or as one interviewee put it:

Now, as for food, even if someone couldn't farm, he had a job. We earned money and could buy food with it.¹³⁵

But, for most villagers, this was only a temporary change. After the war, many jobs disappeared again and most of the resettled returned to Nkhlongue or Malango, a return that was accompanied by a renewed focus on (subsistence) agriculture. This retreat into subsistence was re-inforced by the fact that the years that followed independence were characterized by widespread shortages of consumer goods such as salt, sugar and clothes. These shortages drove people (back) into subsistence production, even in areas where it had hitherto not existed for a considerable time span.

An example for this is the case of salt. We have already discussed in the previous pages how the locally produced *chidulo* salt had been replaced by "imported" salt with the arrival of the mission steamers. With salt barely available on the market in the years after independence, people resorted to making *chidulo*. They "were using the same method that their parents had used before,"¹³⁶ as one interviewee

¹³³ This evidence supports an older similar argument made in relation to the socialist period in Mozambique by Peter Meyns. See: Peter Meyns, "Zur Praxis ländlicher Entwicklungspolitik in Afrika – Anmerkungen zu Mozambique und Tanzania," in *Agrargesellschaften im portugiesisch-sprachigen Afrika*, ed. Peter Meyns (Saarbrücken: Breitenbach, 1988), 52.

¹³⁴ Some authors such as Carlos Bozzoli, Tilman Brück and Paul Collier have singled out processes of reversal to subsistence as wartime coping strategies. This cannot be confirmed for the case of Nkhlongue. Rather, here, the two wars went hand in hand with growing dependence on the market and wage labor. See: Carlos Bozzoli and Tilman Brück, "Agriculture, Poverty, and Postwar Reconstruction: Micro-Level Evidence from Northern Mozambique," *Journal of Peace Research* 46, no. 3 (2009): 377–397; Paul Collier, "On the Economic Consequences of Civil War," *Oxford Economic Papers* 51, no. 1 (1999): 168–183.

¹³⁵ PA, I037: interview with P0855 (♂, 1954) (Malango, August 14, 2013), min 00:48:29–00:48:51.

¹³⁶ PA, I005: interview with P0641 (♂, 1952) (Nkhlongue, August 27, 2010), min 00:51:15–00:51:44. For a similar statement, see: PA, I078: interview with P0258 (♂, 1953) (Nkhlongue, September 7,

put it. Similarly, people began to use extracts from the roots of the *njujo* tree as a substitute for “imported” soap to wash clothes.¹³⁷

It needs to be highlighted, however, that processes of reversal to subsistence could have their limits. Thus, while salt and soap were replaced by local substitutes after independence, the same was not the case with clothes. Despite the lack of clothes in the years after independence, there was no return to the formerly locally produced *chiwondo* bark cloth. This is all the more interesting because 60 years earlier a similar shortage of clothes, which had been caused by the disruptions of World War One, had still led to a regional revival in the use and production of bark clothes. Thus, in October 1916, missionary Eyre reported from Metonia that cloth was unobtainable and that, therefore, many people were resorting to bark cloth.¹³⁸ While in October 1920, Augustine Ambali wrote from Ngoo that “every man and woman and child wears bark-clothes” as in “antiquity times,” since clothes were almost unavailable.¹³⁹ Obviously, wearing *chiwondo* was no longer viable in the 1970s. We can assume that it had become unimaginable to wear *chiwondo* in everyday life. Also, even heavily worn clothes were probably still valued as the more attractive option over the less practical bark cloth. Furthermore, the knowledge of making *chiwondo* had largely vanished.

Second, reverting to subsistence in one area could go hand in hand with increasing market integration in another. This has been demonstrated in the previous pages, when the importance of subsistence food production based on female labor grew simultaneously with the significance of male labor migration. Similar processes could be observed in the years after independence. At the same time as labor migration had lost its importance and market shortages led to an increase in the importance of subsistence production in some sectors (*nsima* flour, salt and soap production), attempts at stronger market integration could be observed in others. Thus, the government of newly independent Mozambique promoted agri-

2013), min 00:32:37–00:32:57. See as well: PA, I042: interview with P1193 (♀, 1953) (Malango, August 17, 2013), min 00:42:10–00:45:46.

137 The Latin name of the tree is *Ekebergia benguelensis*. PA, I115: interview with P0160 (♂, 1952) (Metangula, April 18, 2016), min 02:14:12–02:15:34; PA, I162: interview with P0512 (♀, 1967) (Nkhlongue, June 22, 2016), min 00:18:31–00:19:08; PA, I042: interview with P1193 (♀, 1953) (Malango, August 17, 2013), min 00:45:46–00:47:43; PA, I046: interview with P1045 (♀, 1932) (Malango, August 20, 2013), min 00:42:50–00:46:20.

138 “News from the Stations: VII. Mtonya,” *NDC*, no. 53 (October 1916): 26–28.

139 Augustine Ambali, “News from the Stations: IV. Ngoo Bay,” *NDC*, no. 69 (October 1920): 9–10. Similar processes of reversal have been observed for northwestern Zambia for the same time by Peša: Peša, *Roads through Mwinilunga*, 291.

cultural intensification and especially surplus production of maize.¹⁴⁰ Furthermore, fishing cooperatives were to improve the marketing of fish (see Section 6.4). In both cases, the successes were very limited, and still, the policies had tangible effects on the ground.

The period after independence also saw the beginning of a professionalization of the construction of houses. After independence, the walls of houses began to be built of sun-dried mud bricks instead of the plastered skeletons of trunks and beams.¹⁴¹ The point is that the old way of building walls was done “in subsistence” by the senior male member of the household. Bricklaying, by contrast, was and is a professionalized activity. Household members often dry their own bricks, but they will usually pay someone to lay them.¹⁴² Since both types of construction relied on local building materials, market shortages did not directly stand in the way of the increasing use of extra-household labor.

Third, the economic history of Nkhlongue shows that people have long been active in diversifying their livelihoods and adapting their activities according to new realities. Rather than becoming life-long subsistence farmers, men in particular pursued a great many different occupations over the course of their lives. We have however also seen that it would be wrong to assume that it was simply so that the men provided for the extra-income while the women stayed at home and se-

140 PA, I119: interview with P0855 (♂, 1954) (Malango, April 21, 2016), min 01:23:25–01:24:06; PA, I108: interview with P1074 (♀, ~1940) (Malango, April 6, 2016), min 01:03:32–01:03:35; PA, I118: interview with P1218 (♀, 1930) (Malango, April 21, 2016), min 02:01:21–02:03:18; PA, I106: interview with P0262 (♀, ~1940) (Malango, April 4, 2016), min 01:45:32–01:46:03; APGGN, QJ: Alfredo Filimone Lituri, “Relatório da Administração do Distrito de Metangula, Julho 1975” (Metangula, August 4, 1975), 2; APGGN, 1 A: Júlio Reis and Alfredo Filimone Lituri, “Relatório do Distrito de Metangula,” Primeira Reunião de Administradores, Comissários Políticos e Grupos Dinamizadores dos Distritos da Província do Niassa (Metangula, May 16, 1976), 2; APGGN, 1 A: Frelimo, “Relatório do Distrito de Metangula, por ocasião do Conselho Provincial” (Metangula, January 1, 1977), 4; “Niassa: Libertar a riqueza de uma terra fértil,” *Tempo*, Número especial: Dedicado à viagem presidencial à Província do Niassa (December 26, 1979): 56–80; Joan Antcliff, “After Ten Years and Now Peace,” *Lebombo Leaves* 63, no. 12 (1975): 10. See as well: Olaf Tataryn Juergensen, “Peasants on the Periphery: A Geohistory of Rural Change in Mozambique, c.1960–1992” (PhD thesis, Kingston (Canada), Queen's University, 1996), 215–16.

141 PA, I062: interview with P0713 (♂, 1944) (Nkhlongue, August 30, 2013), min 00:23:11–00:24:12; PA, I093: interview with P0050 (♂, ~1922) (Nkhlongue, January 19, 2016), min 00:41:44–00:45:46; PA, I100: interview with P0025 (♀, 1948) (Nkhlongue, February 22, 2016), min 00:24:30–00:25:42; PA, I117: interview with P1458 (♂, ~1945) (Micundi, April 20, 2016), min 02:05:26–02:06:45.

142 PA, I096: interview with P1216 (♂, 1957) (Malango, February 1, 2016), min 00:41:42–00:44:07; PA, I117: interview with P1458 (♂, ~1945) (Micundi, April 20, 2016), min 02:06:45–02:07:41; PA, I097: interview with P1454 (♂, ~1951) (Malango, February 5, 2016), min 01:32:15–01:32:43.

cured the subsistence as agricultural workers. The rise and fall of Nkholongue's pottery manufacture demonstrates that this relationship was far more complicated. Also, in the long run, women's role in diversifying livelihoods was not only in agriculture. Although it was again mainly men who took up wage labor in the *aldeamento*¹⁴³ of Metangula during the Mozambican War of Independence, women also generated extra-income, for example, by selling firewood. Moreover, pottery never lost its significance completely, as the *ndiwo* side dish has continued to be cooked in locally made pots to this day. And while the production of pots suffered further due to competition from imported pots and containers during the time in Metangula,¹⁴⁴ pottery also regained importance at other times or under other circumstances. Thus, two women who fled to Malawi during the war claimed that it was precisely during the war that their pottery skills became more important again, allowing them to eke out a living as refugees in Malawi until the moment they could harvest from their own new fields.¹⁴⁵ In recent years, the production of pots has seen a surprising revival in the village since the Mbuna Bay lodge set up two handicraft shops for tourists, one at the lodge in Nkholongue and the other at the Girassol Hotel in Lichinga. This has allowed the women of the village to sell their pots to tourists and visitors, much as their mothers had done to the passengers of the S.S. Chauncy Maples more than 60 years ago.

Last but not least, it is important to highlight that subsistence did not simply linger on perpetually throughout Nkholongue's history.¹⁴⁶ It was not that there was just such a thing as extra-subsistence work or extra-subsistence production that was simply activated or deactivated depending on the market situation. Rather, the examples from Nkholongue's history show that people re-oriented their economic lives several times profoundly. The major movements back to subsistence were even all connected to processes of migration. Furthermore, subsistence production itself changed considerably since the 19th century. Subsistence production was not an isolated sector of economic life outside history. Rather, subsistence techniques were repeatedly modified, and not uncommonly as a consequence of ex-

143 The *aldeamentos* were strategic villages to which the Portuguese forces resettled the rural populations during the Mozambican War of Independence. For more on this, see Chapter 7.

144 PA, I112: interview with P0129 (♀, 1930), P0128 (♂, 1928) (Nkholongue, April 12, 2016), min 00:03:50–00:04:53; PA, I108: interview with P1074 (♀, ~1940) (Malango, April 6, 2016), min 00:25:49–00:26:49; PA, I157: interview with P1455 (♂, 1952) (Tulo, June 18, 2016), min 00:26:32–00:26:54.

145 PA, I100: interview with P0025 (♀, 1948) (Nkholongue, February 22, 2016), min 00:17:38–00:18:54; PA, I007: interview with P0298 (♀, ~1922) (Nkholongue, September 1, 2010), min 00:55:40–00:59:05, 01:09:28–01:12:12.

146 As for example suggested by: Deborah F. Bryceson, "The Scramble in Africa: Reorienting Rural Livelihoods," *World Development* 30, no. 5 (2002): 727; Bryceson, "Domestic Work," 316.

changes with the outside world. This shall be demonstrated in more detail by looking at the history of cassava cultivation in Nkholongue.

6.3 From Sorghum to Cassava to Maize to Cassava: Complicating the History of Subsistence Food Production

We have already seen at the beginning of the previous section that subsistence food production played an important role in the village at the time of research. In 2012, 80 percent of the households had a farm.¹⁴⁷ Most of these farms were cassava farms, located in the vicinity of the village on the rather flat stretch between the shores of the lake and the first hills of the hinterland. According to the village survey of 2016, only nine out of 127 registered households had a farm (usually an additional one) outside these lowland areas. Five of them were located near the neighboring village of Ngolocolo along the banks of the Luina river and used mainly for rice production. Four were highland farms, locally called *mpanje*,¹⁴⁸ located about a 60-minute walk from the lake in hilly forest land. They were used for maize cultivation.¹⁴⁹

While the previous section focused on showing that the significance of subsistence production changed over time, this section intends to demonstrate that agricultural subsistence production itself changed considerably. Cassava, while today doubtlessly the central subsistence crop of Nkholongue, was not always the most important crop people cultivated to meet their subsistence needs. The adoption of cassava as the main staple crop only occurred in the 20th century. Being no “indigenous” food of Africa, it was originally brought to the continent from South America by Portuguese traders in the 16th century. When Nkholongue was established in the second half of the 19th century, it was already known along the lake-shore.¹⁵⁰ But it was not yet cultivated as widely as nowadays. My older interviewees all indicated that their parents had still relied primarily on sorghum.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁷ According to the Swedish “Reality Checks” this number was even higher in neighboring villages, as they observed that all households “have access to at least one agricultural field.” See: ORGUT, “Sub-Report, District of Lago: Year One, 2011,” 16.

¹⁴⁸ *Mpanje* or *mphanje* translates as “uncultivated land.”

¹⁴⁹ Maize is also planted through inter-cropping in the lowland areas. However, this maize is not used to produce flour, but is consumed as corncob. In Nkholongue’s Chinyanja, this is called *chimanga chotafuna* (sg.) or *vimanga votafuna* (pl.), as much as “maize to chew.” Sometimes *maçaroca* (the Portuguese expression for corncob) is also used for maize cultivated for this purpose.

¹⁵⁰ AUMCA, A1(VI)A, f. 1270 – 1293: Letter from George Swinny to W.H. Penney (Isle of Likoma, May 15, 1886); William P. Johnson, “A Visit to the Magwangwara in July, 1882,” *CA* 1, no. 3 (1883): 38.

Oral accounts differ as to the local origins of cassava. The majority stated that cassava spread from the north to the south.¹⁵² Some of my interviewees claimed that cassava came from Nkhotakota,¹⁵³ while others associated the rise of cassava with missionary activity.¹⁵⁴ As for explanations for the rise of cassava, several interviewees emphasized cassava's role as a food security crop.¹⁵⁵ Two placed it in the context of the Portuguese cotton regime. While one of them implied that it was indeed the Portuguese who pushed them to grow cassava around the time of the cotton campaign, the other merely stated that they used the former cotton

151 PA, I001: interview with P0050 (♂, ~1922) (Nkholongue, August 17, 2010), min 00:45:36–00:46:15; PA, I112: interview with P0129 (♀, 1930), P0128 (♂, 1928) (Nkholongue, April 12, 2016), min 00:37:57–00:42:15; PA, I113: interview with P0367 (♂, 1936) (Nkholongue, April 13, 2016), min 00:21:10–00:21:41; PA, I046: interview with P1045 (♀, 1932) (Malango, August 20, 2013), min 00:05:42–00:07:41; PA, I052: interview with (♀, 1940) (Nkholongue, August 26, 2013), min 00:02:19–00:05:00; PA, I111: interview with P0266 (♂, ~1932) (Metangula, April 11, 2016), min 00:57:53–00:58:28; PA, I106: interview with P0262 (♀, ~1940) (Malango, April 4, 2016), min 01:56:35–01:57:22.

152 PA, I132: interview with P1439 (♂, ~1940), P1507 (♀, ~1930), P1508 (♀) (Ndegue (Salima), June 1, 2016), min 02:29:07–02:29:24; PA, I123: interview with P1460 (♀), P1461 (♂, ~1935), P1462 (♂, ~1935) (Meluluca, April 25, 2016), min 00:42:49–00:47:42; PA, I112: interview with P0129 (♀, 1930), P0128 (♂, 1928) (Nkholongue, April 12, 2016), min 00:41:19–00:41:38; MLM, 037: interview with S. M., Portuguese translation of the Chinyanja transcript (Meluluca, June 29, 2007); PA, I002: interview with P0128 (♂, 1928) (Nkholongue, August 18, 2010), min 00:47:00–00:47:39; PA, I120: interview with P1102 (♂, 1932) (Malango, April 21, 2016), min 01:27:56–01:28:56.

153 PA, I118: interview with P1218 (♀, 1930) (Malango, April 21, 2016), min 00:43:14–00:44:53; PA, I106: interview with P0262 (♀, ~1940) (Malango, April 4, 2016), min 01:56:35–01:57:22; PA, I112: interview with P0129 (♀, 1930), P0128 (♂, 1928) (Nkholongue, April 12, 2016), min 00:41:23–00:41:28.

154 AHM, Secção Oral, Transcrito NI 04: N.º 154–155, Entrevista com um grupo de velhos em Chiwanga, interview by Gerhard Liesegang, Teresa Oliveira, and Mujuane Mainga Vicente, July 9, 1981, 60; MLM, 043: interview with C. J. C. (Chia, July 4, 2007), 18; PA, I120: interview with P1102 (♂, 1932) (Malango, April 21, 2016), min 01:27:56–01:28:54. Beyond doubt, cassava was already present along the lakeshore when the missionaries arrived there (see Footnote 150). However, it might be that they promoted its cultivation or introduced new varieties.

155 PA, I002: interview with P0128 (♂, 1928) (Nkholongue, August 18, 2010), min 00:48:47–00:52:16; PA, I043: interview with P1148 (♂, 1960) (Malango, August 17, 2013), min 00:46:44–00:50:12; PA, I057: interview with P0262 (♀, ~1940) (Malango, August 28, 2013), min 00:26:35–00:29:56; PA, I120: interview with P1102 (♂, 1932) (Malango, April 21, 2016), min 01:28:54–01:30:10. It is possible that cassava spread during years of famine. Apart from the famine conditions during World War One and the early 1920s, which we have already discussed on pp. 162–167, we have evidence of droughts around Metangula for the years of 1935 and 1949. See: H.A. Machell Cox, "News from the Stations: V. Msumba," *NDC*, no. 128 (July 1935): 7–9; "The Bishop's Letter," *NDC*, no. 161 (June 1949): 1–9.

fields to subsequently plant cassava on them.¹⁵⁶ In fact, the cultivation of cassava was actively promoted by the colonial government in other regions of Mozambique precisely because it freed up labor and the better soils for the cotton regime.¹⁵⁷ But since the cotton regime was short-lived in the case of Nkhlongue and the importance of agriculture was rather low at the time, the impact of colonial promotion of cassava cultivation may have been limited here.

It is also likely that cassava's rise went hand in hand with the growing importance of labor migration. While other crops like sorghum or maize were grown in a relatively labor-intensive system of slash-and-burn agriculture on highland farms, cassava could be grown in a much less labor-intensive process on marginal soils along the shores of the lake that requires much less shifting than highland farms.¹⁵⁸ Especially because clearing highland farms was and is men's work, it seems evident that the prolonged periods of men's absence made cassava cultivation more attractive. In other contexts, cassava has therefore also been referred to as a "women's crop." But the introduction of cassava did not simply reduce the necessary labor input in general; while cassava cultivation is not overly labor-intensive, the processing of cassava into flour is all the more time-consuming. Cassava thus did not just replace another crop; its adoption also "entailed a significant shift in the gender division of labor."¹⁵⁹

The information on exactly when cassava superseded sorghum as the staple crop of the region is inconclusive. Certainly, the transition did not occur all at once. Different communities and different families were still relying on other crops, while some had already switched to cassava.¹⁶⁰ Seedlings needed their time to spread.¹⁶¹ In 1928, missionary Cox wrote of the impossibility of settling

156 PA, I001: interview with P0050 (♂, ~1922) (Nkhlongue, August 17, 2010), min 01:45:47–01:48:54; PA, I112: interview with P0129 (♀, 1930), P0128 (♂, 1928) (Nkhlongue, April 12, 2016), min 00:41:54–00:42:51.

157 Isaacman, *Cotton Is the Mother of Poverty*, 164–65. See as well: Merle L. Bowen, *The State Against the Peasantry: Rural Struggles in Colonial and Postcolonial Mozambique* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000), 36.

158 The connection between the rise of cassava and the increasing importance of labor migration was made by: PA, I111: interview with P0266 (♂, ~1932) (Metangula, April 11, 2016), min 01:00:30–01:00:51.

159 Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting Down Trees*, 87.

160 MLM, 037: interview with S. M., Portuguese translation of the Chinyanja transcript (Meluluca, June 29, 2007).

161 However, unlike other crops, cassava has the advantage of being propagated by cuttings. Its propagation, therefore, does not require the direct curtailment of others' harvest. Nevertheless, as with other crops, future cassava growers depended on others to provide them with the cuttings.

on a common Thanksgiving date because the crops of the region varied so much from one place to another. He reported:

So this year the villages where the maize was the main crop observed their day on June 17th. whilst the millet folk kept theirs on July 15th. At Messumba itself we are still waiting, as *our* main crop is cassava.¹⁶²

In the case of Nkhlongue, we can assume that sorghum had more or less lost its former importance by 1950 at the latest. In 1951, a European visitor traveling aboard the CM observed cassava to be the chief food of Nkhlongue. This observation was apparently based on his sighting of the cassava fields around the village.¹⁶³ However, oral history accounts show that some villagers focused on growing rice in Ngolocolo around this time.¹⁶⁴ Furthermore, there is reason to believe that people's emigration to Malango was related not only to a growing importance of agriculture in general, but also to that of cassava in particular. One interviewee stated that it was the chief of Metangula who gave them cassava cuttings, which they used to plant the new fields in Malango.¹⁶⁵ Cassava was undoubtedly the most important food of the village when the population was resettled to Metangula by Portuguese troops in 1966.¹⁶⁶

162 It is "Msumba" in the original. Emphasis as in the original. See: H.A. Machell Cox, "News from the Stations: IV. Msumba," *NDC*, no. 101 (October 1928): 16.

163 Whiteman, "Traveller's Letter Home," 26.

164 PA, I105: interview with P0242 (♂, 1945) (Malango, April 4, 2016), min 00:55:49–00:57:20; PA, I107: interview with P1074 (♀, ~1940) (Malango, April 5, 2016), min 01:34:15–01:34:39; PA, I108: interview with P1074 (♀, ~1940) (Malango, April 6, 2016), min 01:16:15–01:23:18; PA, I109: interview with P1081 (♀, 1945) (Malango, April 6, 2016), min 00:12:07–00:16:11; PA, I118: interview with P1218 (♀, 1930) (Malango, April 21, 2016), min 00:39:51–00:40:40; PA, I129: interview with P1426 (♂, 1929) (Malindi (Mangochi District, Malawi), May 29, 2016), min 02:15:04–02:16:19; PA, I131: interview with P1434 (♂, 1942) (Lifuwu (Salima District, Malawi), May 31, 2016), min 00:18:05–00:18:54; PA, I166: interview with P1479 (♀, ~1922), P1505 (♂, 1957) (Nampula, June 28, 2016), min 00:00:52–00:03:30; PA, I112: interview with P0129 (♀, 1930), P0128 (♂, 1928) (Nkhlongue, April 12, 2016), min 00:25:41–00:27:43; PA, James Amanze, "Nkhlongue Village, Niassa," email, May 5, 2018.

165 PA, I072: interview with P0262 (♀, ~1940) (Malango, September 5, 2013), min 00:26:35–00:29:56.

166 This is evident from the reports of the Portuguese navy units that helped the population to transport the harvest of their fields to Metangula during the War of Independence. See: ADN, FO/F002/SC002/117: Anexo "A" (Dispositivo e Actividade das F. Navais na ZIN) ao SITREP Circunstanciado N° 23/66 (Nampula, June 6, 1966), 7; AHMar, Colorado, Pasta 058/MO: Relatório da Companhia N° 6 de Fuzileiros, referente à comissão em Moçambique desde 19 de Março de 1965 a 18 de Maio de 1967, n.d., chap. III, 3–5; AHMar, Colorado, Pasta 156/MO: Anexo "A" (Dispositivo e Actividade das F. Navais na ZIN) ao SITREP Circunstanciado N° 35/66 (Nampula, August 29, 1966), 4; AHMar, Colorado, Pasta 156/MO: Anexo "A" (Dispositivo e Actividade das F. Navais na ZIN) ao SITREP Circunstanciado

After independence, the newly independent government of Mozambique tried to make people plant maize as a way out of the “monoculture of cassava,”¹⁶⁷ as a local government report put it in 1975 (see also Chapter 8). As elsewhere, post-colonial officials viewed cassava as a backward subsistence crop to be replaced by the more progressive maize. People were urged to produce surpluses for the markets in order to substitute the income formerly generated by labor migration.

As a consequence, the people of Nkhlongue and Malango indeed began to increasingly grow maize after independence in the *mpanje* farms in the hilly hinterland. *Mpanje* translates as “uncultivated land” and refers to the fact that this was previous forest land that was slashed and burned in order to cultivate maize. *Mpanje* fields are normally used for a couple of years, after which new tracks of forest are cleared. While the location and system seem to have resonated with the form sorghum had been cultivated in earlier years,¹⁶⁸ younger people perceived *mpanje* as something new at the time. One interviewee said:

Mpanje is something new. In the past, there was no *mpanje*. There was only cassava.¹⁶⁹

And another stated:

Maybe, it existed before I grew up. But, my father never told me that “let’s go to *mpanje*” or “we are making *mpanje*,” no.¹⁷⁰

ciado N° 36/66 (Nampula, September 5, 1966), 2, 4; AHMar, Colorado, Pasta 156/MO: Anexo “A” (Dispositivo e Actividade das F. Navais na ZIN) ao SITREP Circunstanciado N° 50/66 (Nampula, December 12, 1966).

167 APGGN, QJ: Alfredo Filimone Lituri, “Relatório da Administração do Distrito de Metangula, Julho 1975” (Metangula, August 4, 1975), 2. See as well: APGGN, 1 A: Júlio Reis and Alfredo Filimone Lituri, “Relatório do Distrito de Metangula,” Primeira Reunião de Administradores, Comissários Políticos e Grupos Dinamizadores dos Distritos da Província do Niassa (Metangula, May 16, 1976), 2. For the local promotion of maize, see: PA, I118: interview with P1218 (♀, 1930) (Malango, April 21, 2016), min 00:42:39–00:42:57; APGGN, 1 A: Relatório resumido da situação sócioeconómica e cultural do Distrito do Lago, 1983, July 20, 1983, 3–4; PA, I119: interview with P0855 (♂, 1954) (Malango, April 21, 2016), min 01:23:25–01:24:06; PA, I127: interview with P1468 (♂), P1469 (♂), P1470 (♂), P1471 (♀) (Malo, May 2, 2016), min 00:40:44–00:41:15.

168 PA, I106: interview with P0262 (♀, ~1940) (Malango, April 4, 2016), min 01:56:35–01:57:22; PA, I120: interview with P1102 (♂, 1932) (Malango, April 21, 2016), 01:26:40–01:27:10; PA, I112: interview with P0129 (♀, 1930), P0128 (♂, 1928) (Nkhlongue, April 12, 2016), 00:37:57–00:39:18; PA, I093: interview with P0050 (♂, ~1922) (Nkhlongue, January 19, 2016), min 00:48:21–00:51:20.

169 PA, I117: interview with P1458 (♂, ~1945) (Micundi, April 20, 2016), min 01:28:52–01:28:56.

170 PA, I115: interview with P0160 (♂, 1952) (Metangula, April 18, 2016), min 02:30:48–02:30:58.

This post-independence revival of slash-and-burn agriculture is noteworthy, since the post-colonial policy of maize promotion was actually intended to enhance agricultural intensification. In this view, slash-and-burn shifting cultivation was considered a backward technology. Such situations have been described for other regions. In their book *Cutting Down Trees*, Henrietta Moore and Megan Vaughan have for example shown that slash-and-burn agriculture in northern Zambia (there called *citemene*) survived despite post-colonial efforts to promote agricultural intensification.¹⁷¹ In Nkhologue, the effects on the ground were even more at odds with official government policy. Here, slash-and-burn agriculture was evidently not continued against all odds, but only (re-)introduced as a result of the government's demands for modernization.

The significance of maize production since independence has been unsteady and locally uneven along the lakeshore. In the case of Nkhologue, marketing of maize beyond subsistence production remained limited in the long run despite the government's efforts to the opposite. The growing importance of maize cultivation after independence was disrupted by the coming of the Mozambican Civil War as this made agriculture in the forests unsafe.¹⁷² After the war, however, many people again returned to open maize fields. The number of maize fields declined again in the 21st century. As mentioned earlier, only four households had a *mpanje* farm in the 2016 survey. This decline was probably due to the fact that the boom in fisheries and tourism was more compatible with the focus on cassava, which, as described above, is less labor-intensive in terms of male labor.¹⁷³ One interviewee described this shift of labor from agriculture to fishing by saying that the young men nowadays are only busy spreading out the sardine-like *ussipa* to dry it in the sun before it is "exported" to Metangula or to Niassa's capital Lichinga. In his words:

There was a lot of food here in Malango. I'm not kidding. The boys of today don't want to weed. The weeding of theirs is just to spread what? – *Ussipa*.¹⁷⁴

But *mpanje* farming has remained an option. It was during my fieldwork in 2016 that some people in Malango made the decision to reopen their fallow *mpanje* fields, as market prices of maize had been very high in the preceding years.

171 Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting Down Trees*, 234–235.

172 As we will see in Chapter 9, Nkhologue's chief was abducted by Renamo while he was staying at his maize field at Mang'ombo.

173 In other places the *mpanje* boom continued, as could easily be recognized by the many cultivated fields in the forests at the time of research.

174 PA, I119: interview with P0855 (♂, 1954) (Malango, April 21, 2016), min 01:27:24–01:27:41.

Their main objective was thereby not to produce surplus maize, but to substitute the maize they had purchased to supplement or vary their cassava staple.¹⁷⁵

Local Channels of Labor Mobilization in Agriculture: A History of Family Labor

While the period since independence has seen some attempts to increase the marketing of maize, farming in Nkhonlongue's history has mainly been aimed to meet subsistence needs.¹⁷⁶ In the 2016 survey, only three households reported earning money by selling agricultural produce or laboring in the fields of others. This reflects the fact that labor mobilization in agriculture has mainly taken place within the (nuclear) family. The principal productive unit seems to have always been the family-household consisting usually of a woman, her husband, and her children.¹⁷⁷ Even in the period of the slave trade, agricultural labor seems to have mainly been organized at this level, even if each family had to give up part of its harvest to the chief or work some time on their master's fields.¹⁷⁸ A certain kind of obligation to work for the chief existed into the colonial period. Information from the interviews is, however, imprecise as to the details and extent of this duty and the timing of its disappearance. In later periods, the obligation seems to have been primarily in the form of working in the chief's fields on certain days of the year, the yield of these fields being directed rather toward meeting the chief's subsistence needs ("reproduction") than toward marketing ("production").

The larger kinship has not formed a regular channel for mobilizing agricultural labor in recent times. This is in line with the observation that land has long been held individually.¹⁷⁹ There is, however, a kind of neighborhood cooperation that people call *Chidao*. It has been used to mobilize labor on certain days for plastering the houses or for communal work in the individually held fields. *Chidao* is the local variation of the beer-work-parties that have existed in similar forms in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa. The one whose field was worked that day had to provide the

175 It also needs to be emphasized in this regard that Mozambique's government continues to promote the cultivation of maize. I could myself witness this in 2016 when during a conversation with the village's chief a state official arrived on his motorbike with ten hoes to be freely distributed among maize cultivators.

176 For the period of the slave trade, however, there is some uncertainty on this issue.

177 The same has been argued for the Achewa in Malawi: Mandala, *Work and Control in a Peasant Economy*, 50–51; Brian Morris, *An Environmental History of Southern Malawi: Land and People of the Shire Highlands* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 88; Harri Englund, "The Self in Self-Interest: Land, Labour and Temporalities in Malawi's Agrarian Change," *Africa* 69, no. 1 (1999): 149.

178 See Section 2.4.

179 H.A. Machell Cox, "Communal Cultivation," *CA* 27, no. 316 (April 1909): 100–101.

others with food and a kind of beer made from millet or sorghum. *Chidao* is hardly practiced nowadays. It seems to have been still common in the first half of the 20th century, primarily at the time of the preparation of a new field. In 1909, missionary Cox wrote that, especially around Nkhotakota, this kind of communal work was used for all the heavier steps of cultivation.¹⁸⁰ Cox's observation runs somewhat counter to the usual argument by Elias Mandala and others that voluntary collaboration between different households was never common in the larger region.¹⁸¹ The historical relevance of this type of work is, however, difficult to assess in the specific case of Nkhlongue. It is also difficult to determine the exact chronology of its decline; some say that it began with the War of Independence but others claim that it was still practiced occasionally after the Civil War. In addition, there are also some very old interviewees who stated that they themselves never or only very rarely engaged in *Chidao* and usually just saw others doing it.¹⁸² There is some reason to believe that its decline in agriculture was linked to the rise of the less-labor intensive cassava as a staple crop.¹⁸³

The rise of maize cultivation after independence seems to have not led to a revival of *Chidao*. Rather, this seems to have been linked to a growing importance of wage labor. For at least in recent years, labor peaks in *mpanje* fields have largely been satisfied by hiring temporary workers. In cassava fields, the recruitment of temporary workers is very rarely seen but is not non-existent. As cassava "remains" the chief produce of Nkhlongue it can be said that wage labor has current-

180 Cox, "Communal Cultivation," CA 27, no. 316 (April 1909).

181 Mandala, *Work and Control in a Peasant Economy*; Englund, "The Self in Self-Interest," 149.

182 PA, I116: interview with P1457 (♀) (Metangula, April 18, 2016), min 00:24:17–00:28:42; PA, I070: interview with P1448 (♀, ~1935) (Metangula, September 3, 2013), min 00:06:08–00:10:33; PA, I051: interview with P0481 (♀, 1942) (Nkhlongue, August 26, 2013), min 01:35:58–01:40:41; PA, I059: interview with P0090 (♀, ~1932) (Metangula, August 29, 2013), min 01:15:36–01:17:01; PA, I049: interview with P0267 (♀, 1949) (Nkhlongue, August 23, 2013), min 00:51:47–00:54:11; PA, I062: interview with P0713 (♂, 1944) (Nkhlongue, August 30, 2013), min 00:39:13–00:40:37; PA, I057: interview with P0262 (♀, ~1940) (Malango, August 28, 2013), min 01:29:58–01:32:44; PA, I054: interview with P0554 (♀, 1949) (Nkhlongue, August 27, 2013), min 01:03:52–01:06:10; PA, I053: interview with P0189 (♀, 1940) (Nkhlongue, August 27, 2013), min 00:35:44–00:37:02; PA, I166: interview with P1479 (♀, ~1922), P1505 (♂, 1957) (Nampula, June 28, 2016), min 00:26:00–00:27:18. For an old person who claimed to have never taken part in *Chidao*, see: PA, I104: interview with P0298 (♀, ~1922) (Nkhlongue, March 1, 2016), min 00:47:31–00:48:04.

183 The Anglican missionary D.J. Hitchman wrote, for example, about the situation in Northern Rhodesia in 1942: "Harvesting is also a communal job where the crop is sorghum or maize; but where it is the root-crop, cassava, the women take their hoes and dig it up as it is needed, there being no special time of harvest." See: D.J. Hitchman, "Men, Manners and Modes in Northern Rhodesia: VI. To Each His Task," CA 60, no. 714 (June 1942): 52.

ly little importance in local agricultural production. The case is, however, different in other lakeside villages, where maize production is more widespread.

Some Qualifications on Cassava's Role in Nkholongue's History

In the long run, the history of agricultural production in Nkholongue shows that while farming was mostly for subsistence, it has by no means been static and outside of market relations. Types and volumes of cultivated crops changed over time precisely because of the interconnectedness of people's (economic) lives with the world outside.

Furthermore, it has to be stated that cultivation practices have not necessarily remained the same. This is shown by the way cassava has been harvested in Nkholongue. It is commonly considered an advantage of cassava that the crop can be preserved in the soil itself until it is needed for consumption.¹⁸⁴ This is also the technique used by the villagers of Nkholongue today. However, until the 2000s, it was still standard practice to harvest the whole field, slice the roots, dry them, and store them in bags.¹⁸⁵ Interestingly, both harvesting techniques had long been in use along the eastern lakeshore. Already in 1922, missionary Johnson noted that people north of Cobué left the ripe cassava in the ground until it was needed, while people down south dug up and stored the year's crop all at once.¹⁸⁶ I have not been able to determine with certainty why people in Nkholongue originally stored cassava in bags and why they changed the system at precisely that time.¹⁸⁷ But the advantages and disadvantages of the both systems seem clear: bag-stored cassava tends to develop a bad taste over time. In turn, it is much easier

184 Emmanuel Akyeampong and Hippolyte Fofack, "The Contribution of African Women to Economic Growth and Development in the Pre-Colonial and Colonial Periods: Historical Perspectives and Policy Implications," *Economic History of Developing Regions* 29, no. 1 (2014): 48.

185 PA, I124: interview with P0376 (♂, 1968) (Nkholongue, April 26, 2016), min 00:22:44–00:23:58; PA, I112: interview with P0129 (♀, 1930), P0128 (♂, 1928) (Nkholongue, April 12, 2016), min 01:39:03–01:40:35; PA, I094: interview with P0727 (♂, ~1940) (M'cheba, January 27, 2016), min 01:49:23–01:50:47.

186 Johnson, *The Great Water*, 39. Leaving the ripe cassava in the ground was also the standard practice on the other side of the lake already in the 1940s. See: Veronica Berry and Celia Petty, eds., *The Nyasaland Survey Papers 1938–1943: Agriculture, Food, and Health* (London: Academy Books, 1992), 50. See as well: Velsen, *The Politics of Kinship*, 16.

187 It noteworthy in this respect that around Messumba the old system of storing cassava in bags is still in use: PA, I097: interview with P1454 (♂, ~1951) (Malango, February 5, 2016), min 02:09:02–02:11:56.

to defend against human and animal thieves, and the method of harvesting everything at once was what people were used to from the crops they had grown before.

The history of agricultural production in Nkhlongue allows us to also make some qualifications with regard to cassava's "reputation." Cassava has long been a controversial crop. While being at times valued as a drought-resistant famine crop, it has been often regarded as the crop of the "lazy" and the poor, and one with limited nutritional value and marketing potential. As mentioned above, post-colonial officials, in particular, viewed it as a backward subsistence crop to be replaced by the more progressive maize. In recent years, however, the tide seems to have turned. A group of agricultural economists called it "Africa's best-kept secret," and a development assistant named it the "root" of community development. Iva Peša speaks of a "rebellious crop" that allowed people to evade state demands and simultaneously "freed up labour" to diversify income strategies.¹⁸⁸ Peša has also emphasized that cassava has in reality been marketed to a considerable degree.¹⁸⁹ Many of her arguments are similar to those of Achim von Oppen who had already designated cassava as a "safeguard for autonomy" and as "way to the market"¹⁹⁰ 20 years earlier.

While the history of cassava in Nkhlongue confirms some of these newer findings with regard to food security and livelihood diversification, there are three reasons why the role of cassava as an expression of people's autonomy and economic strength should not be overemphasized in the case of Nkhlongue.¹⁹¹ First, we have seen that the adoption of cassava affected the gender division of labor. From this perspective, cassava above all strengthened men's autonomy but less that of women. Second, the stance of the colonial government toward cas-

188 Felix I. Nweke, John K. Lynam, and Dunstan S.C. Spencer, *The Cassava Transformation: Africa's Best-Kept Secret* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2002); Rodah Namwalizi Lester, *Cassava Is the Root: Community Development with Women. Recipes for Africa* (Toronto: lulu.com, 2010); Iva Peša, "Cassava Is Our Chief: Negotiating Identity, Markets and the State through Cassava in Mwinilunga, Zambia," in *Transforming Innovations in Africa: Explorative Studies on Appropriation in African Societies*, ed. Jan-Bart Gewald, André Leliveld, and Iva Peša (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 178; Peša, *Roads through Mwinilunga*, 128.

189 Peša, *Roads through Mwinilunga*, 81, 125–126. Korieh offers evidence for the importance of marketed cassava flour (*gari*) in Nigeria. See: Korieh, *The Land Has Changed*. In northern Mozambique considerable amounts of cassava were equally marketed in colonial times. See: Bravo, *A cultura algodeira*, 222.

190 Achim von Oppen, "Cassava, 'The Lazy Man's Food'? Indigenous Agricultural Innovation and Dietary Change in northwestern Zambia (ca. 1650–1970)," in *Changing Food Habits: Case Studies from Africa, South America and Europe*, ed. Carola Lentz (Amsterdam: Harwood, 1999), 43–71.

191 This interpretation of the functions of cassava is central to Peša's argument. See: Peša, *Roads through Mwinilunga*, 8–9, 120–121.

sava was decidedly more positive in the Portuguese case than in the British. Unlike in colonial Zambia, cassava cultivation was clearly in line with state interests in colonial Niassa.¹⁹² Third, the identity of being “cassava-eaters” is not as decidedly positive in Nkhlongue as it is in northwestern Zambia and elsewhere.¹⁹³ At least nowadays, most people in Nkhlongue seem to prefer to eat maize or rice if they can get them. Cassava in this regard indeed appears as the food of the poor.

6.4 Fishing *Ussipa*: A History of Capitalism from Below

The previous sections have shown how the livelihoods of Nkhlongue’s inhabitants have changed considerably over time. They have also highlighted that there were numerous economic connections with the world outside. However, they may have also given the impression that all villagers were affected by these changes and connections in more or less the same manner. This section attempts to highlight the importance of recognizing processes of social differentiation between the inhabitants of Nkhlongue. It thus intends to challenge views that tend to ignore the existence of social inequality in villages and the class character of rural development.

While the lack of (historical) statistics on income and property restricts the analysis of the extent of social stratification in the long run, the village’s history offers plenty of evidence to substantiate social stratification. The village’s roots in the slave trade already speak volumes in challenging the notion of the homogeneous village community. In fact, the first years of the village’s existence constitute doubtlessly the purest example of intra-village social stratification given the fact

192 For evidence from Niassa, see: APGGN, 1 A: Luciano Rebelo, “Relatório da Reunião de Administradores realizada em Vila Cabral nos dias 15 e 16 de Agosto de 1969” (Vila Cabral, August 30, 1969), 8. See as well: Bravo, *A cultura algodeira*, 210–211. But even in Northern Rhodesia, the government’s attitude toward cassava was more ambiguous than Peša suggests. Several scholars have shown that the British officials at times promoted and even enforced the cultivation of cassava in Zambia (including in the region of her study) and elsewhere. See: Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting Down Trees*, 43; Obi Iwuagwu, “The Spread of Cassava (Manioc) in Igboland, South-East Nigeria: A Reappraisal of the Evidence,” *Agricultural History Review* 60, no. 1 (2012): 74–75; Chewe M. Chabatama, “Peasant, Farming, the State, and Food Security in the North-Western Province of Zambia, 1902–1964” (PhD thesis, Toronto, University of Toronto, 1999); Donald H. Bwalya, “Agricultural Change in the Northern Province of Zambia, 1948–1978: A Case Study of Maize Production in Kasama District” (Master thesis, Lusaka, University of Zambia, 1989), 18–22, accessed April 20, 2020, <http://dspace.unza.zm/bitstream/handle/123456789/1950/BwalyaDHJ0001.PDF?sequence=2&isAllowed=y>. Peša, herself, presents examples in her book that the attitude of the government toward cassava was historically much more ambiguous. See: Peša, *Roads through Mwinilunga*, 117.

193 For the positive identification with cassava in these regions, see: Oppen, “Cassava, ‘The Lazy Man’s Food’?,” 45, 47, 67; Peša, *Roads through Mwinilunga*, 9.

that villagers were bought and owned by other villagers (see Chapter 2). As I argued in Section 4.3, social inequalities at the level of the community appear to have diminished with colonization, as the end of the slave trade reduced the power of masters over their slaves. For later periods, the extent of social stratification is difficult to assess in detail. From the interviews, it is however clear that people have perceived inequalities between each other throughout the village's existence. One female informant, for example, denied my question of whether she had also cut fuelwood for the steamers not with reference to her sex but with reference to her social standing, saying "[n]o, back then I was rich."¹⁹⁴ For colonial times, the wealthy of the village were identified as comprising three main groups: the ivory carvers, those who had traveled extensively (as for example labor migrants), and those who had kinship ties to the colonial elite.¹⁹⁵ The latter was also the case for the woman just quoted, whose father was a black customs officer from Maputo who had several relationships with local women while working in Metangula.¹⁹⁶ Another interviewee had a half-brother who was the offspring of his mother's relationship with an "Indian" trader from Vila Cabral.¹⁹⁷ His half-brother not only enabled him to attend a Catholic boarding school, but also paid him a sewing machine and provided him with a place for his tailoring business

194 PA, I118: interview with *P1218* (♀, 1930) (Malango, April 21, 2016), min 00:46:56–00:47:17. Similarly, another interviewee explained that her father did not sell firewood on the basis that he was a Muslim preacher always traveling around. See: PA, I106: interview with *P0262* (♀, ~1940) (Malango, April 4, 2016), min 00:18:59–00:20:02.

195 PA, I105: interview with *P0242* (♂, 1945) (Malango, April 4, 2016), min 00:46:13–00:47:46; PA, I118: interview with *P1218* (♀, 1930) (Malango, April 21, 2016), min 01:45:06–01:45:30; PA, I120: interview with *P1102* (♂, 1932) (Malango, April 21, 2016), min 01:38:59–01:40:33; PA, I111: interview with *P0266* (♂, ~1932) (Metangula, April 11, 2016), min 00:28:28–00:30:31; PA, I131: interview with *P1434* (♂, 1942) (Lifuwu (Salima District, Malawi), May 31, 2016), min 02:01:19–02:01:58; PA, I112: interview with *P0129* (♀, 1930), *P0128* (♂, 1928) (Nkholongue, April 12, 2016), min 00:31:20–00:33:05; PA, I132: interview with *P1439* (♂, ~1940), *P1507* (♀, ~1930), *P1508* (♀) (Ndegue (Salima), June 1, 2016), min 02:31:58–02:33:35; PA, I108: interview with *P1074* (♀, ~1940) (Malango, April 6, 2016), min 01:30:18–01:32:00.

196 PA, I118: interview with *P1218* (♀, 1930) (Malango, April 21, 2016), min 00:03:02–00:15:06. Her father's origin is also "visible" in her second name (patronym), which is a Portuguese name, something that is most uncommon for people of her age.

197 PA, I135: interview with *P1494* (♂, 1942) (Nkhotakota, June 2, 2016), min 00:29:36–00:30:28; PA, I129: interview with *P1426* (♂, 1929) (Malindi (Mangochi District, Malawi), May 29, 2016), min 02:11:41–02:13:41; PA, I112: interview with *P0129* (♀, 1930), *P0128* (♂, 1928) (Nkholongue, April 12, 2016), min 00:31:20–00:33:53.

in Vila Cabral.¹⁹⁸ He also supported another sibling, taking him to Vila Cabral and giving him work as a shop assistant. This second half-brother, who also worked as an ivory carver, was able to earn enough money to send his children to a private school in Nampula.¹⁹⁹ My interviewees characterized wealthy people of the past above all in terms of their access to goods and commodities and their ownership of durable assets. Thus, rich people were said to eat well, to have big houses with glass windows, and to own such attractions like phonographs.²⁰⁰

The question here is when and in what ways such social inequalities also influenced labor relations inside the village. As Helena Pérez-Niño has recently argued in her study of tobacco farmers in Tete, it is not wealth in the first place but “the relational aspects of the social division of labour and the ownership of the means of production”²⁰¹ that define social differentiation. As we have seen in the previous section, agriculture was barely affected in this regard. However, the case is quite different with regard to fisheries, a sector that, as we will now see, has a long history of separation of labor from the means of production.

For observers from outside, fishing as practiced in Nkhlongue nowadays might appear as a traditional activity destined to meet subsistence needs. The development consultants of the Swedish embassy are not the only ones to think so. In his recent work on land tenure in Cobué, the anthropologist Elísio Jossias has claimed that fishing is done first and foremost to satisfy the “needs of redistributive consumption” of the households involved.²⁰² This is certainly not the case in the lakeside villages south of Metangula nowadays. While the situation around Cobué may be less pronounced, around Nkhlongue the market is today undoubtedly the first priority. Fish gets exported as far as Lichinga and Malawi. In particular, catching the sardine-like *ussipa* requires comparatively high investments. Since the early 2000s, *ussipa* catching is done at night with large nets made of in-

198 PA, I002: interview with P0128 (♂, 1928) (Nkhlongue, August 18, 2010), min 00:24:21–00:26:35; PA, I009: interview with P0128 (♂, 1928) (Nkhlongue, September 1, 2010), min 00:02:21–00:04:03, 00:21:18–00:35:06.

199 PA, I166: interview with P1479 (♀, ~1922), P1505 (♂, 1957) (Nampula, June 28, 2016), min 00:06:52–00:11:05, 01:09:38–01:14:21.

200 PA, I105: interview with P0242 (♂, 1945) (Malango, April 4, 2016), min 00:47:46–00:55:02; PA, I131: interview with P1434 (♂, 1942) (Lifuwu (Salima District, Malawi), May 31, 2016), min 02:02:00–02:02:31; PA, I132: interview with P1439 (♂, ~1940), P1507 (♀, ~1930), P1508 (♀) (Ndegue (Salima), June 1, 2016), min 02:31:58–02:33:35.

201 Pérez-Niño, “Post-Conflict Agrarian Change in Angónia,” 277.

202 Elísio Jossias, “O primeiro a chegar é o dono da terra”: Pertença e posse da terra na região do Lago Niassa” (PhD thesis, Universidade de Lisboa, 2016), 148.

dustrial fibers.²⁰³ *Ussipa* swarms are attracted with light and then driven into the nets by beating paddles against the sides of boats and canoes or on the water surface. Until about 2012, oil lamps were used as light sources. Today, LED bulbs, powered by car batteries, are used. In the daytime, the car batteries are either recharged by solar panels or sent to Metangula where they can be connected to *Cahora Bassa*, the common term for the national grid in Mozambique. Five to six men are needed to work one net.



Figure 5: Fishing *ussipa*: dugout canoe with car battery and LED light bulbs. Photograph taken by the author in April 2016.

In spite of the “traditional” appearance, *ussipa* fishing also involves a clear separation of labor from the means of production. The owners of the means of production (including the boats, dugout canoes, net, battery and light bulbs) often do not participate in proper fishing, but let others do the work for them. As a rule, the owner receives half of the night’s haul. The other half is divided equally among the workers. Even though fishing is still a widespread activity in Nkhlongue, there is a significant degree of professionalization. The best sign of this is the already mentioned *makuli* households. The *makuli* are fishermen from outside the village who have settled in simple makeshift houses made out of straw on Malan-

²⁰³ According to my interviewees, the system was introduced from Malawi: PA, I163: interview with P0028 (♂, 1969) (Nkhlongue, June 22, 2016), min 00:24:02–00:24:44; PA, I097: interview with P1454 (♂, ~1951) (Malango, February 5, 2016), min 01:21:39–01:22:10; PA, I086: interview with P0375 (♂, 1962) (Nkhlongue, September 9, 2013), min 00:09:48–00:11:26.

go's main beach. But the professionalization is even evident on the level of the original village population. In the 2016 survey (which did not include the *makuli* households), about 45 percent of the households reported buying fish within the village. Sixteen percent said that they would receive their fish from relatives, friends, or neighbors. Only 34 percent of households (43 households) had members who were directly involved in fishing. Of these, about half were owners of fishing nets, and the other half worked for the owners of such nets.

Fishing *ussipa* nowadays has little to do with an alleged subsistence mode of production. Rather, this is nothing other than capitalism in the sense that private owners of fishing nets and boats exploit the labor of others, extracting surpluses through wage-labor-like relations. The boom in fisheries, fueled by Mozambique's overall economic growth and facilitated by improved transportation infrastructure, has certainly strengthened this evolution of capitalism from below in recent years. However, the roots of this constellation go back much further.

Market integration of the local fisheries is old. In colonial times, and most probably even in pre-colonial times, there was a significant amount of bartering between the lakeshore population and the Wayao population from Niassa's *planalto*. Fish was exchanged for other food like maize, millet or beans.²⁰⁴ While it is difficult to quantify the extent of this bartering, the information from the interviews suggest that, for Nkhlongue, fish-for-grain exchange never reached the importance of the pottery-for-food bartering. However, unlike pottery, fish was exported from all lakeshore villages. Fish was also already sold in colonial times, even though the quantity of the bartering was more significant. The German agronomist Hermann Pössinger gave the example of a household in Cobué that in 1962/63 earned 600 Escudos from the sale of fish.²⁰⁵ This amount corresponded to the salary of a village chief at that time and was slightly more than five times the annual tax.²⁰⁶ The means of production were also bought on the market in colonial times.²⁰⁷ While the oldest fishing nets were produced locally by professional crafts-

204 PA, I058: interview with P1074 (♀, ~1940) (Malango, August 28, 2013), min 00:34:04–00:38:17; PA, I120: interview with P1102 (♂, 1932) (Malango, April 21, 2016), min 01:33:56–01:35:21. This barter was also observed by: Brito, *No trilho dos descobrimentos*, 181; Hermann Pössinger, *Landwirtschaftliche Entwicklung in Angola und Moçambique* (München: IFO, 1968), 201–4; Hermann Pössinger, *Bericht über eine Reise nach Angola und Moçambique* (München: IFO, 1964), 34. Before the appearance of “imported” (European) hoes, fish might also have been used to be bartered for hoes that were produced on the *planalto*. For, according to William Percival Johnson, hoes were rarely made along the lake but mostly came “from the people in the hills.” See: Johnson, *The Great Water*, 43.

205 My thanks go to Andreas Stucki for drawing my attention to Pössinger's report: Pössinger, *Landwirtschaftliche Entwicklung in Angola und Moçambique*, 203–204.

206 Pössinger, 200, 204.

207 Pössinger, 204.

men from a plant of the nettle family locally called *thingo*,²⁰⁸ nets made of industrial nylon fibers had already appeared then. Simultaneously, people also began to use mosquito nets for fishing.²⁰⁹

The most important observation for our analysis of the local development of capitalism is however that the system of distribution of the catch between the owner of the means of production and the workers already existed in colonial times. It was also already applied to *thingo* nets.²¹⁰ According to the Portuguese geographer Raquel Soeiro de Brito, who carried out research in the region in the early 1960s, the distribution was two thirds for the owner of the net and one third for the net's workers at that time.²¹¹ Later, when AHM's oral history team visited the region in 1981, the distribution was 50–50 and thus equivalent to the present formula.²¹²

The historical division of labor and ownership of the means of production is also confirmed by a survey that the Mozambican *Instituto de Investigação Pesqueira* (IIP) conducted in the region in June 1983. It provided detailed numbers of owners and workers for each village of the lakeshore. In the case of Nkhlongue and Malango, there were 76 fishermen, of whom 26 (34%) were labeled as “proprietors” and 50 (66%) as “assistants.”²¹³ The survey also highlighted the importance of market production, stating that more than 50 percent of the lakeshore's production was illegally exported to Malawi and Tanzania. The IIP's investigators explained this by the “inability of [local] society to absorb fishermen's capital.”²¹⁴

208 The plant belongs to the genus of *Pouzolzia*.

209 Pössinger, *Landwirtschaftliche Entwicklung in Angola und Moçambique*, 203; Brito, *No trilho dos descobrimentos*, 206; PA, I083: interview with P1102 (♂, 1932), P1074 (♀, ~1940), P1141 (♂, 1932) (Malango, September 8, 2013), min 00:02:21–00:13:42.

210 PA, I117: interview with P1458 (♂, ~1945) (Micundi, April 20, 2016), min 00:48:11–00:50:03; PA, I123: interview with P1460 (♀), P1461 (♂, ~1935), P1462 (♂, ~1935) (Meluluca, April 25, 2016), min 00:57:21–01:01:48; PA, I119: interview with P0855 (♂, 1954) (Malango, April 21, 2016), min 00:15:38–00:17:40.

211 Brito, *No trilho dos descobrimentos*, 206. See as well: PA, I113: interview with P0367 (♂, 1936) (Nkhlongue, April 13, 2016), min 02:41:25–02:42:05; PA, I117: interview with P1458 (♂, ~1945) (Micundi, April 20, 2016), min 00:48:42–00:49:41; PA, I123: interview with P1460 (♀), P1461 (♂, ~1935), P1462 (♂, ~1935) (Meluluca, April 25, 2016), min 00:59:01–01:00:50; PA, I129: interview with P1426 (♂, 1929) (Malindi (Mangochi District, Malawi), May 29, 2016), min 02:17:36–02:20:02.

212 AHM, Secção Oral, Cassettes N.º 157–159: Entrevista com um grupo de velhos de Seli (Metangula), interview by Gerhard Liesegang, Teresa Oliveira, and Mujuane Mainga Vicente, July 22, 1981, N.º 158A: 000–046.

213 Alfredo V. R. Massinga and Patricio Contreras, “The Fishing Centres of Lake Niassa (Mozambique),” *Revista de Investigação Pesqueira (Maputo)*, no. 17 (1988): 40.

214 Massinga and Contreras, 14. On this point, see as well: APGGN, 1 A: Carta N.º 286/DPIEN/F/1/985 ao Director Provincial do Comércio Interno do Niassa, October 24, 1985.

This inability was most probably a consequence of the general market disruptions in Mozambique after independence. Accordingly, an FAO report from 1992 stated that the commercialization of fish had suffered in the region after Mozambican Independence “due to the breakdown of the Portuguese colonial commercialization network which used to play a very important role in the supply of fishing equipment, materials and consumer goods, and also commercialize the surplus production of the local fishermen.”²¹⁵

Mozambique’s post-independence government made efforts to steer local fisheries in a direction compatible with socialism. It encouraged people to form fishing cooperatives, obviously with little success as the IIP survey showed. It also established the *Combinado Pesqueiro* in Metangula in 1980. The *Combinado Pesqueiro* was to distribute/sell fishing equipment to the people and to advise them on fishing methods and fish processing technologies.²¹⁶ According to my interviewees, it also bought up surplus fish and employed several fishermen from Nkhlongue directly as wage laborers.²¹⁷ One of the *Combinado*’s two *Posto de Apoio e Compras* (‘post of support and purchases’) was installed in Nkhlongue.²¹⁸ The importance of the *Combinado* for Nkhlongue’s fishery was short-lived as its activities were first hampered by internal problems and misuse of resources²¹⁹ and then more or less paralyzed by the Mozambican Civil War from 1985 onward.²²⁰

215 G.W. Ssentongo and Nfamara J. Dampah, “Report of the Technical Consultation between Malawi and Mozambique on the Development and Management of the Fisheries of Lakes Malawi, Chilwa and Chiuta,” UNDP/FAO IFIP Project (Bujumbura, March 1992), 68–69, accessed September 2, 2015, <http://www.fao.org/docrep/014/am851e/am851e.pdf>.

216 For the date of the *Combinado*’s establishment, see: APGGN, 1 A: Relatório resumido da situação sócioeconómica e cultural do Distrito do Lago, 1983, July 20, 1983, 5. For a rather impressionist article on the *Combinado*, see: Peter Sketchley, “Fishing Co-operatives on Lake Niassa: Seeds of a New Socialist Society or New Roots for an Old Exploiting Class?,” *Review of African Political Economy* 9, no. 24 (1982): 85–95.

217 PA, I141: interview with P0375 (♂, 1962) (Nkhlongue, June 6, 2016), min 00:59:41–01:01:50; PA, I145: interview with P0284 (♂, 1966), P0273 (♀, 1950) (Metangula, June 9, 2016), min 00:52:47–00:53:23; PA, I122: interview with P1459 (♀, 1942), P1464 (♀, ~1974) (Capi, April 22, 2016), min 00:39:37–00:40:01; PA, I124: interview with P0376 (♂, 1968) (Nkhlongue, April 26, 2016), min 01:15:21–01:34:50; PA, I115: interview with P0160 (♂, 1952) (Metangula, April 18, 2016), min 03:21:02–03:22:39; PA, I105: interview with P0242 (♂, 1945) (Malango, April 4, 2016), min 02:27:54–02:48:05; PA, I094: interview with P0727 (♂, ~1940) (M’chepa, January 27, 2016), min 01:36:11–01:37:38.

218 Helena Motta, “Processamento artesanal de pescado em Moçambique,” Instituto de Investigação Pesqueira, Boletim de Divulgação, no. 30 (Maputo, 1990), 4.

219 APGGN, QJ: Carta N.º 282/D/86 de Manuel Luis Gonçalves (Director da Unidade de Direcção da Pesca de Pequena Escala) à Direcção Provincial da Indústria e Energia de Niassa (Maputo, April 30, 1986); APGGN, 1 A: Carta de Salomão Cossa (Chefe do Serviço Provincial de Pescas do Niassa) ao

While the boom in the 21st century was certainly unprecedented both in terms of quantity and quality,²²¹ the local fisheries had long known processes of market integration, social differentiation and accumulation. As nowadays, these processes were however not always recognized as such or were discussed somewhat contradictorily. Thus, the FAO report quoted above could tell of the breakdown of commercialization after independence, but simultaneously record that fishing in colonial times was “mainly fishing for subsistence by individual fishermen.”²²² In a similar vein, a British observer who visited in Metangula in the early 1980s witnessed “virtually no signs of accumulation or differentiation between the fishermen and the subsistence peasants alongside them.”²²³

Nkhlongue’s history, however, shows that there was more than meets the eye. While differentiation might have been indeed limited, there was at least one who was expanding his business rather quickly and against all turnings of the tide. This was Salimo Chiboa. According to my interviewees, he had made his money initially as an ivory carver and, then, as a trader and owner of fishing nets. During the War of Independence, he was resettled to Metangula. There he opened a store,²²⁴ and, later, also one of Metangula’s first guest houses.²²⁵ His activities were also not cur-

Secretário das Pescas (Maputo) (Ref. 194/DPIEN/F-1/86), (July 14, 1986); APGGN, QJ: Telegrama N.º 467/GAB/58, Dirigente da Província do Niassa ao Secretário de Estado das Pescas (Maputo) (Lichinga, November 12, 1985); PA, I105: interview with P0242 (♂, 1945) (Malango, April 4, 2016), min 02:42:26–02:43:01; APGGN, 1 A: Encontro havido entre sua Excelência o Governador da Província e a Senhora Maria Teresa Sousa, esposa do Senhor Jorge, Director do Pescado de Metangula (Metangula, February 16, 1983); PA, I141: interview with P0375 (♂, 1962) (Nkhlongue, June 6, 2016), min 00:53:39–00:56:23, 00:57:18–00:57:29.

220 Ssentongo and Dampha, “Report of the Technical Consultation between Malawi and Mozambique on the Development and Management of the Fisheries of Lakes Malawi, Chilwa and Chiuta,” 70. According to one of my interviewees, the *Combinado’s Posto de Apoio e Compras* at Ngoo was destroyed by Renamo: PA, I105: interview with P0242 (♂, 1945) (Malango, April 4, 2016), min 02:38:15–02:44:23.

221 This was also perceived as such by my interviewees, several of whom also claimed that the availability of fish inside the village had declined because of commercialisation.

222 Ssentongo and Dampha, “Report of the Technical Consultation between Malawi and Mozambique on the Development and Management of the Fisheries of Lakes Malawi, Chilwa and Chiuta,” 68.

223 Sketchley, “Fishing Co-operatives on Lake Niassa,” 86.

224 PA, I117: interview with P1458 (♂, ~1945) (Micundi, April 20, 2016), min 01:35:13–01:37:17; PA, I120: interview with P1102 (♂, 1932) (Malango, April 21, 2016), min 01:39:14–01:40:33; PA, I079: interview with P0510 (♂, 1963) (Nkhlongue, September 7, 2013), min 00:06:11–00:07:18; PA, I141: interview with P0375 (♂, 1962) (Nkhlongue, June 6, 2016), min 00:17:13–00:17:36, 00:22:15–00:24:33.

225 PA, I117: interview with P1458 (♂, ~1945) (Micundi, April 20, 2016), min 01:36:09–01:36:17; PA, I162: interview with P0512 (♀, 1967) (Nkhlongue, June 22, 2016), min 00:26:50–00:26:59.

tailed by socialism after independence. Instead, he was able to turn his shop into a consumer cooperative.²²⁶ One interviewee described his role as follows:

He was the leader, because this shop belonged to him. Now those of Frelimo wanted to smash the shop and said, “we don’t want everyone to have their own shop, we only want cooperatives with each shop having 60 members.” Well, he used his money to just gather 60 people. *Pronto*, registration, *pronto*.²²⁷

Chiboa might have been an exception, but his history also exemplifies the characteristics of the development of capitalism in Nkhlongue. On the one hand it is certainly inherent in the logics of capitalism that one will not find too many capitalists on the level of an African village, where many invest, but most fail on the way to becoming capitalists. Those who are successful emigrate to town. On the other hand, several specific circumstances may have limited this development, including the racist legislation in colonial times, the market disruptions after independence and the two wars which interrupted or redirected processes of differentiation.²²⁸ Also, the fact that nobody has really been landless in Nkhlongue has limited the leverage potential capitalists have on (cheap) laborers.²²⁹

6.5 Conclusion

For almost 150 years, Africa has been time and again “the object of a transformative project, of turning ‘tradition’ into ‘modernity’.”²³⁰ This chapter has set out to challenge notions of inertia and isolation that continue to dominate development discourse and to influence academic writing about rural Africa. It has done so by

226 PA, I162: interview with P0512 (♀, 1967) (Nkhlongue, June 22, 2016), min 00:23:39–00:25:00; PA, I141: interview with P0375 (♂, 1962) (Nkhlongue, June 6, 2016), min 00:14:19–00:21:53; PA, I163: interview with P0028 (♂, 1969) (Nkhlongue, June 22, 2016), min 00:17:15–00:18:33; PA, I066: interview with P0085 (♂, 1960) (Nkhlongue, September 1, 2013), min 00:13:22–00:14:52; PA, I117: interview with P1458 (♂, ~1945) (Micundi, April 20, 2016), min 01:35:13–01:36:17.

227 PA, I141: interview with P0375 (♂, 1962) (Nkhlongue, June 6, 2016), min 00:16:46–00:17:13.

228 It is however important to note in this regard that the wars often went hand in hand with processes of (temporary) proletarianization as is shown by the experiences of both people resettled to Metangula during the War of Independence and wartime refugees in Malawi (see Chapter 7). See also: Pérez-Niño, “Post-Conflict Agrarian Change in Angónia,” 196.

229 The *makuli* households could however be considered as a further step towards proletarianization in this regard.

230 Cooper, “Africa in a Capitalist World,” 391. See as well: Pauline Peters, “Land Appropriation, Surplus People and a Battle over Visions of Agrarian Futures in Africa,” *Journal of Peasant Studies* 40, no. 3 (2013): 551–552.

directly addressing the economic history of a specific place, highlighting the incompatibility of this history with existing essentialist explanations.

This chapter has shown that Nkholongue, although exhibiting all the trappings of a subsistence-oriented village in transformation, has a much more dynamic economic history than one might expect. Far from having just recently been “connected to the world outside,” the population of Nkholongue has in reality been connected to (global) markets throughout the village’s history. It has also been demonstrated that the village’s economy changed significantly as a consequence of these connections. We have also seen that the level of dependence on subsistence production for different products varied highly over time.

Nkholongue’s unique position in this respect certainly needs to be highlighted. Not every village’s history was so intrinsically connected to the slave trade, and not every village visited regularly by a steamship over a period of more than 50 years. However, many other changes that have been discussed affected the other villages as much as they did Nkholongue. This concerns among others the history of fishing, the history of labor migration, the history of salt and clothing, and many aspects of the history of agriculture. Furthermore, even if Nkholongue’s women stood alone with their skills in making pots, those who bought the pots with food were equally part of this market exchange.

There is no doubt that the inhabitants of Nkholongue have not remained but rather become the peasants and fishermen that they are today. The awareness of these dynamics on the micro-scale alone does, of course, little to explain the “big” questions of the development industry. However, the reflection of these dynamics, certainly, contributes to refute certain popular claims, to clear up the historical contradictions that are inherent to many of those explanations, and to improve our knowledge of capitalism’s history at its (African) periphery. Let me just single out five aspects in this respect:

First, the term “uncapturedness” seems to be quite inappropriate to describe the economic experience of Nkholongue’s inhabitants. Rather, the people of Nkholongue have long interacted with (global) capitalism, and their lives have been marked and constrained by it at many turns.²³¹ This chapter has also highlighted how this interaction has influenced production within the village in manifold ways.

²³¹ This terminology has been taken from John Saul and Colin Leys who have argued that “Africa south of the Sahara exists in a capitalist world, which marks and constrains the lives of its inhabitants at every turn, but is not of it.” I, however, doubt whether it is appropriate to say that sub-Saharan Africa is indeed not of this capitalist world. See: John S. Saul and Colin Leys, “Sub-Saharan Africa in Global Capitalism,” *Monthly Review: An Independent Socialist Magazine* 51, no. 3 (1999).

Second, the experience of Nkhlongue's contradicts globalization teleologies. From the perspective of Nkhlongue, the claim that, in the 21st century, "Africans are more likely to travel longer distances in search of employment"²³² than they have before is misleading. Here, it was the opposite. The inhabitants of Nkhlongue were much more likely to travel longer distances in search of employment in the 20th than in the 21st century. The importance of labor migration to South Africa illustrates that many people indeed had far more intense experiences with the "world outside" than being refugees in Malawi, as claimed by the development consultants of the Swedish embassy. One has to consider that some labor migrants were even flown to South Africa by plane.²³³ The teleology of increasing mobility seems even more strongly misplaced if we add to this analysis of the forced long-distance transportation of slaves to their labor destinations in the 19th century.

Third, my research confirms the assumptions and findings of others who have claimed that "livelihood diversification" is in a fact not as new a phenomenon as is commonly claimed.²³⁴ Most people in Nkhlongue did not grow up to become life-long cassava farmers. Rather, above all the men pursued very diverse types of work in the course of their lives.²³⁵ However, the fall and rise of Nkhlongue's pottery manufacture demonstrates that, among women too, economic life was historically not as monotonous as one might expect at first glance. There is no doubt that, in the case of Nkhlongue, "livelihood diversification" existed *avant la lettre*.

²³² Osborn, "Work and Migration," 203.

²³³ PA, I087: interview with P1452 (♂, 1927) (Lichinga, September 10, 2013), min 00:22:13–00:26:52;

PA, I013: interview with P0367 (♂, 1936) (Nkhlongue, September 8, 2010), min 00:20:55–00:22:03.

²³⁴ The term "livelihood diversification" has been popularized by Deborah Bryceson: Deborah F. Bryceson, "Deagrarianization and Rural Employment in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Sectoral Perspective," *World Development* 24, no. 1 (1996): 97–111; Deborah F. Bryceson, "Multiplex Livelihoods in Rural Africa: Recasting the Terms and Conditions of Gainful Employment," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 40, no. 1 (2002): 1–28. See as well: Aloba Loison, "Rural Livelihood Diversification in Sub-Saharan Africa." For those who have claimed that this phenomenon might have, in fact, not increased in importance, but just been increasingly recognized, see: Grace Carswell, "Livelihood Diversification: Increasing in Importance or Increasingly Recognised? Evidence from Southern Ethiopia," *Journal of International Development* 14, no. 6 (2002): 789–804; Erik Green, "Diversification or De-Agrarianization? Income Diversification, Labor, and Processes of Agrarian Change in Southern and Northern Malawi, Mid-1930s to Mid-1950s," *Agricultural History* 82, no. 2 (2008): 164–192; Frank Ellis, "Household Strategies and Rural Livelihood Diversification," *Journal of Development Studies* 35, no. 1 (1998): 5.

²³⁵ This confirms the findings of Zachary Kagan Guthrie, who in his work on labor migrants from Central Mozambique argued that most of his interviewees did not engage in just one type of labor during their lifetimes, but rather in many different ones. See: Guthrie, *Bound for Work*. On this point, see as well: Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting Down Trees*, 143–147.

Fourth, this chapter has highlighted the repeated profound reorganization of economic life in Nkholongue. With regard to Nkholongue, this chapter has thus not only disproved ideas of rural stasis but also invalidated linear one-way models of transition from subsistence to market production.²³⁶ In Nkholongue, subsistence production did not just continue to exist. It disappeared and reappeared in different areas at different times. It remained an important option throughout Nkholongue's history especially with regard to flour production, though as the evidence shows it was not necessarily the first option. Rather, subsistence production in Nkholongue's history appears to have been more necessity than choice. The most pronounced reversals to subsistence were all a consequence of (external) market disruptions. The chapter has thus also shown that Nkholongue's inhabitants should not be essentialized as "risk-averse" peasants driven by an unchanging "subsistence ethic,"²³⁷ even though they were certainly not unaware of the dangers that a reduction or abandonment of subsistence production could mean for their fate (as shown in their resistance against cotton cultivation, see Section 5.3).

Fifth, this chapter has shown that Nkholongue has not only been part of the capitalist world for a long time, but that capitalist relations of production also began to develop inside the village economy. While the development of capitalism has certainly still been limited, this chapter has, with regard to the fishing sector, underlined the importance of examining production practices closely. Social differentiation can be greater than it appears at first glance. My study underlines the danger of approaching so-called smallholders as a homogeneous group with common interests and concerns. Those considered "subalterns" can also be capitalists.²³⁸ This, of course, connects to the much older study on cocoa farmers in Southern Ghana by Poly Hill, who called them capitalists rather than peasants.²³⁹

It has been more than 40 years since Sherilyn Young wrote that "faith in a static Africa can evidently not be eliminated by a single submission to the ordeal of

236 Sociologist Tony Waters has for example claimed that this transition constitutes a "socio-ecological divide" that, once crossed, allows no turning back. See: Tony Waters, *The Persistence of Subsistence Agriculture: Life beneath the Level of the Marketplace* (Lanham: Lexington, 2006), 2. For similar arguments, see: Bridget O'Laughlin, "Proletarianisation, Agency and Changing Rural Livelihoods: Forced Labour and Resistance in Colonial Mozambique," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 28, no. 3 (2002): 527; Pérez-Niño, "Post-Conflict Agrarian Change in Angónia," 119, 195; Giovanni Arrighi, "Labour Supplies in Historical Perspective: A Study of the Proletarianization of the African Peasantry in Rhodesia," *The Journal of Development Studies* 6, no. 3 (1970): 197–234.

237 These terms are taken from: Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant*, 2–5.

238 On this point, see also Holger Droessler who even uses the term "subaltern capitalists": Holger Droessler, "Copra World: Coconuts, Plantations and Cooperatives in German Samoa," *The Journal of Pacific History* 53, no. 4 (2018): 417–435.

239 Hill, *The Migrant Cocoa-Farmers of Southern Ghana*.

academic inquiry.”²⁴⁰ This chapter represents another attempt to help overcome this persistent faith. As has hopefully been shown, Nkholongue’s economic past has been shaped by more than “The Unpredictable Grace of the Sun.”²⁴¹

240 Sherilynn Young, “Fertility and Famine: Women’s Agricultural History in Southern Mozambique,” in *The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa*, ed. Robin Palmer and Neil Parsons (London: Heinemann, 1977), 66.

241 “The Unpredictable Grace of the Sun” is a quote from Kristin Phillips’ *Ethnography of Hunger* (2018), a book on the Singida region of Tanzania. Phillips’ concept of “subsistence citizenship” falls within the tradition of substantivism. Livelihood diversification is portrayed as a recent process; agricultural and pastoral subsistence work is said to still trump all other work. Phillips’ emphasis on the annual cycle of life runs through the book. According to Phillips, deviations from the regular cycle are almost entirely due to environmental factors such as drought or disease. Accordingly, Phillips’ chapter on the past is titled *The Unpredictable Grace of the Sun*. See: Phillips, *An Ethnography of Hunger*.