

# **Producing Beer; Agricultural Livelihoods and Commodities in Serenje District of Zambia**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Drawing on data collected in rural Serenje District, in the Central Province of Zambia, this thesis focuses on the production, consumption and valorisation of grain beer, a significant livelihood practice for people. The discussion is contextualised by detailed reference to both the changing national and global politico-economic scene and to local agricultural practices. I argue that an understanding of livelihood practices must take account of both 'micro' and 'macro' level factors, as these form part of the material and conceptual 'resource repertoire' of local people. Focusing on particular case examples, the discussion reveals, for rural Serenje, the multiplex ways in which value is ascribed to beer - a highly significant livelihood resource. The data highlights the socio-symbolic, ritual, and commoditised contexts in which beer is produced and consumed. The analysis of this resource highlights how the relationship between different social arenas of experience, and the socially constructed value of beer are integrated in subtle and complex ways.

A central theme of the thesis focuses on issues of value and argues that value notions are multiple social constructions. Resources, then, have many different associations of value. These different kinds of value are, in certain contexts, contested by actors, and it is in contexts of social interaction, negotiation and accommodation that resources are ascribed with value. Furthermore the fixing of value in this way provides contexts in which social identities are asserted and modified.

The empirical chapters of the thesis draw attention to the importance of beer and maize in terms of people's income strategies. These livelihood practices remain firmly embedded in social life, however, and therefore concern more than the singular pursuit of cash. Consolidating, establishing, and reaffirming social relations are also a fundamental part of people's 'economic' life and co-operation in securing material and social resources remains vital.

Methodologically the thesis synthesises situational analysis and discourse practice paying particular attention to the concepts of practice and agency.



## CONTENTS

<b>LIST OF TABLES .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>LIST OF MAPS AND FIGURES .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>PREFACE.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....</b>	<b>10</b>

### CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Demarcation of the fieldwork area .....	11
Space, Place and Community .....	11
The Geography of Kamena .....	16
The People .....	17
The Research Problem .....	18
The 1991/1992 Drought .....	19
National Political and Economic Conditions .....	21
Methods Employed .....	22
Organisation of the Thesis .....	26

### CHAPTER 2: SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS, DISCOURSE, AND SOCIALLY CONSTRUCTED VALUE

Introduction.....	29
The Case Study Method and Situational Analysis.....	31
Critique .....	36
Discourse as Event, a Situational Method .....	38
Practice and Agency .....	46
Material Goods and The Social Construction of Value.....	48
The Notion of Commodity.....	54

### **CHAPTER 3: THE ZAMBIAN NATIONAL ECONOMY AND THE WIDER ARENAS: THE EXPERIENCES OF URBAN ZAMBIANS**

The Wider Arenas of Decision and Action.....	61
National and International Relations .....	64
A Single Export Commodity: Copper, the 'Boom' Period.....	66
The 'Bust' Period: the Collapse of a Single Export .....	70
Struggles with the I.M.F. and the World Bank .....	71
The Agricultural Sector.....	73
The 'Maize Crisis' of 1993.....	79
Interpreting Value: Income Diversification and Social Practice .....	82
The Increasing Importance of Beer Sales; Restricted Purchases and Illegal Brewing.....	83
Summary .....	89

### **CHAPTER 4: FOR THEIR COOKING POTS, THE MARKETS AND EXCHANGE: AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES IN KAMENA**

Introduction.....	92
The Annual Cycle of Agricultural Production.....	94
Millet and Gardens; Nshima and Relish.....	101
Citemene millet .....	101
Ibala millet.....	104
Hoed Gardens.....	105
Maize, Capital and Credit.....	106
Maize Cultivation .....	106
Capital for Maize Production .....	108
The acquisition of fertiliser and involvement with credit .....	109
The Credit Institutions and Receiving Loans .....	111
Knowledge for Maize Production.....	112
Labour; Co-operation and Recruitment.....	114
The Labour Requirements of Millet Production.....	119
Labour For Maize Production .....	121
The Valorisation of Agricultural Commodities.....	124
The Value of Money .....	126
Summary.....	128

## **CHAPTER 5: THE VALORISATION OF BEER: RITUAL AND SOCIAL DOMAINS**

Recasting the Role of Beer: A Local Context of Dispute.....	131
Domains of Significance; the Ritual Context of Beer in Zambia.....	137
'Ubwalwa bwafiombe; beer for the spirits' .....	141
To wash in the beer - 'Ukusamba mubwalwa', and beer for the ancestors .....	143
'Ubwalwa bwamuchinshi kupongoshi' - a respect beer for in-laws .....	146
Continuity And Co-operation .....	149
'Ubwalwa Ukubombela Nchito': Beer For Work .....	149
'Ubwalwa Ubwakutemena Kwa Joel'; Beer for Cutting at Joel's.....	153

## **CHAPTER 6: THE BREWING AND SALE OF BEER**

A January beer party at Kayi Chibuye .....	158
Communicative Social Action and Drinking Practices - The Analysis of a Beer Party .....	166
Cash Incomes and the Sale Context of Beer.....	167
Katata and Katubi: Maize and Millet Beer .....	170
Principles of Village Brewing.....	172
Social and Organisational Factors in Brewing .....	174
'Twatotela Bacikombe, Bana Bupe'; 'We thank the brewer, Bana Bupe' .....	175
The Seasonal Cash Needs for the Farm and Household.....	179
Beer and Household Expenditure .....	183
Beer Revenue in Support of Agriculture .....	185
Kayi Chibuye's 'Village' and Their Beer .....	187
Beer Brewing , Gender and The Control Over Resources.....	192
Barry, Ester and Gladys .....	196

## **CHAPTER 7: SOCIAL RELATIONS, THE REDISTRIBUTION OF GOODS AND THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF VALUE**

Introduction.....	201
Social Relations and Strategies of Production; The Case of Jestone Kasubika .....	203
Analysis; Strategies of Co-operation and the Acquisition of Fertiliser.....	208
Further Co-operative Ventures .....	214
The Social Dynamics of Exchange, Jestone Kasubika and Maize Accumulation.....	217
Analysis; Obligation, Respect and Generosity .....	221
Social Relations; Good and Bad.....	225
Witchcraft, Claims and Social Cohesion.....	227
Samson Peliga and a Family Dispute.....	229
Summary.....	233

## **CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION.....234**

## **APPENDICES**

APPENDIX 1: The Initial Cost (in Kwacha) of Sending a Child to Secondary School .....	241
APPENDIX 2: New Apostolic Church Work Parties.....	242
APPENDIX 3 (a): Clans in Kamena.....	243
APPENDIX 3 (b): Villages centred on a senior female, and the clan land they use .....	243
APPENDIX 3 (c): Villages centred on a senior male, and the clan land they use .....	244
APPENDIX 4: Broken Hill Management Board, Native Canteen Fund 1947-1948 .....	245
APPENDIX 5: Agricultural and Household Survey Questionnaire (Part one) .....	246
(Part two) .....	247
APPENDIX 6: Beer Brewing Record.....	248

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY.....249**

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1 Land, crop type and cultivation cycles .....	95
Table 4.2 Food availability calendar, Teta 1992 Chief Kabamba .....	99
Table 4.3 Serenje District Co-operative Marketing Union maize purchases 1989-1992 .....	107
Table 4.4 Seasonal income sources (men and women).....	109
Table 4.5 Men's labour activities.....	118
Table 4.6 Women's labour activities.....	118
Table 4.7 Maize and fertiliser prices 1992/93 .....	128
Table 6.1 Beer brewing and input and distribution of labour: Bana Bupe 1992 .....	177
Table 6.2 Idealised Account of Allocation of Income from Beer Sales: Kamchanga Women's Club.....	183
Table 6.3. Beer brewing and the distribution of expenditure, Kamena 1992-1993 .....	184
Table 6.4. Beer Sales and the Seasonal Allocation of Expenses in Respect of Agriculture.....	186
Table 6.5. Incomes from Maize and Beer Sales for Barry Kayi: 1992-1993 Season	191
Table 6.6 The Beer Parties of Ester and Gladys, 1992/1993 .....	196
Table 6.7 The Cost of Brewing and the Cash Raised.....	198
Table 6.8 The Allocation of Cash Raised from Beer Sales.....	199

## LIST OF MAPS AND FIGURES

Map 1.1 Serenje District, Zambia.....	12
Map 1.2 Kamena Area, Serenje.....	13
Fig 4.1 Cultivation Cycle for Chibale.....	96
Fig 4.2 Cycle of Men's Labour Activities .....	117
Fig 4.3 Cycle of Women's Labour Activities.....	117
Fig 6.1 Drinking groups at Kay Chibuye .....	162
Fig 6.2 Beer Brewing Cycle Kamena 1992-1993 .....	182
Fig 6.3 Beer Brewing cycle Kamchanga Women's Club 1992-1993.....	182
Fig 6.3 Genealogy of Kayi Chibuye.....	188
Fig 7.1 Nakapepa before Febby's departure.....	204
Fig 7.2 Nakapepa following Febby's departure.....	205
Fig 7.3 Samson Peliga's genealogy .....	230

## **PREFACE**

This study focuses on examining the ways in which beer acquires value for small scale farmers. It concentrates on livelihood practices, paying particular attention, however, to people's relationship to resources, both material and human. Beer is a significant resource as it provides an important source of income, the occasions on which it is consumed also provide a significant focus for social interaction. The study of the brewing and drinking practices forms the basis of much of the discussion in this thesis, which illustrates the way in which such activities are located within a nexus of other agricultural based livelihood pursuits, income opportunities and social practices.

The methodological issues that stimulated this research are bound up with earlier sociological work carried out in Zambia; most significantly, and clearly spelt out in these works, are the case study method and situational analysis. These two methodological advances (often undervalued) occupy a central place in the collection of rich case material promoted collectively by those social scientists associated with the former 'Manchester school'.

This thesis deals explicitly with revitalising these methods. I reject the structural-functionalist framework of the Manchester School and instead draw inspiration from Foucault's concept of discourse practice to provide further methodological support for the study of 'micro' situational practices. My work differs from other forms of discourse analysis in that I focus on practice and social action (not only language and cognition) as the basis for understanding the social construction of agrarian life. I argue that combining situational and discursive methods enables the context of study to embrace not only highly specific local arenas of knowledge and practice, but also wider arenas of decision and action (at a national and global level). The extent to which these wider arenas or contexts become a significant part of 'local' discursive practices is a recurrent theme and central to the thesis. Focusing on the significance of beer (in social life and as a source of income) the methods I employ enable the analyst to unravel the complex and multifaceted value notions associated with this resource. Socially constructed value notions are predicated by people's exposure to different discursive practices which provide experiential as well as ideological, political, cosmological and practical 'support' for specific livelihood practices and world views. I use the situational and discursive methods, then, to focus on a detailed analysis of the interactive contexts within which

beer (or goods generally) become central to social action. These contexts include, exchange contexts in which beer is sold, its use for labour recruitment (traditional and in raising cash to pay for hired workers), its use in ritual and symbolic contexts, and its role in the support of commercially oriented agricultural production. Beer has multiple associations for people. These multiple value notions are simultaneously central to the way in which beer is appreciated by people, but in some contexts one or other value will be seen to gain prominence. I retain an interest throughout this study in the important place that symbolic and social criteria have on the valorisation of particular goods. In turn, these social considerations are central to understanding the use of particular goods in the problem solving and livelihood strategies of small-scale farmers.

My own attempts to understand the defining characteristics of the concepts of value and livelihood practice have necessitated explorations in the use of these concepts by proponents of different empirical and intellectual arenas. From anthropology, for example the notions that underpin the way in which we view, use and define, the concept of value, include the concepts of commodity, exchange, use, and social categories of value. Discourse as a concept provides a way of integrating some of these theoretical and methodological concerns without recourse to a totalising or systematising theoretical framework. I am interested in the relationship between individual and collective practices and social action, which I believe cannot be adequately accounted for simply by reference to the classic dualities of actor/structure, micro/macro, subject/object and so on. Instead, I prefer to focus on the relationship between practice and agency by reference to people's experiential encounters of discourse practice. I suggest that the regularity and order that exists alongside the discontinuities in social life are a result of people's active participation and practical engagement with the creation of their own life worlds. I do not propose to develop a theory of practice (in the way that Bourdieu does), since I believe that the limits to action in a given social context are defined by actors themselves, and not by the concept of 'embedded history' or 'habitus'. People's actions are informed and modified by their experiences of different arenas of discourse practice (in both local and wider domains of decision and action), these practices are given meaning in locally significant ways which are interpreted and modified by local actors to suit their own circumstances. Such circumstances become shared experiences, that give meaning to and shape the livelihood practices of rural people. It is this that facilitates the view that there is a sense of collective order or regularity in social life. Some of these issues I address directly in my thesis, but they are part of an ongoing series of analytical explorations that give meaning to and reshape my own work.

## Acknowledgements

From the outset I must thank the Economic and Social Research Council, who provided generous funding, enabling my project to get off to such a good start. I also owe a debt of gratitude to the Anthropology Department at The London School of Economics for supporting my original proposal, and thereby giving me faith that my area of study was indeed worthwhile. Henrietta Moore remains an extremely encouraging, enthusiastic and pragmatic supervisor and mentor, without whom I would probably not enjoy, so well, my intellectual explorations and writing.

I must also thank Ilsa Mwanza, at the Institute for African Studies, The University of Zambia, for her logistical support and friendly advice. Among the many friends I made in Zambia, I wish to thank especially, Mr and Mrs Sigauke of Serenje whose love and generosity I will always hold dear. Also, Simon Kandela and other friends in Kabwe, Maurice Mapani, Boyd Choongwa and Jestone Kasubika my research assistant in Kamena, and especially the women who brewed us beer - *Twatotela sana, bana mayo!*

BaEleni and Mary brewing beer in Kamena.



Finally it remains for me to thank my father, Norman Long for his enduring interest and intellectual companionship, my mother Ann for her endearing support, and Tanya without whom the pleasure and pain of completing this task would have been mine alone.



# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### Demarcation of the fieldwork area

This study is based on fieldwork carried out between April 1992 and October 1993 in the Kamena area of Chief Chibale, Serenje District in the Central Province of Zambia (see map 1.1). The area known as Kamena lies approximately 40 kilometres from Serenje Boma (the District administrative capital) on the Chisomo valley road. I took up residence for the duration of fieldwork at the site of the agricultural depot known as Kamena Agricultural Camp, and shared a small government-built concrete house with one of the local agricultural officers. The people and the activities to which I refer in this text are located within the immediate locality of the depot as the population of Kamena is concentrated in this area.

### Space, Place and Community

Kamena is named after a renowned and well-respected village headman. The *Ngulube* clan to which his descendants belong is traditionally responsible for the funeral arrangements of the Chibale Chiefs and their burial ground lies close to the village now known as Kamena.<sup>1</sup> The Kamena area, however, extends beyond the boundaries of the village. Although it is certainly possible to demarcate the Kamena area and other communities in Chief Chibale according to administrative and geographic criteria, it is more difficult to delineate communities in terms of definitive social boundaries. Many people in Chief Chibale are related to each other, either directly or through clanship. To this extent there is a good deal of social movement between areas and communities within Chibale as a whole. Administratively the Kamena ward extends from the bend in the road at the *Chinuma* hills, to the Lukasashi river (see map 1.2). Despite the relatively clear administrative boundaries, there are a number of people who reside beyond the boundaries cited above, who must, nevertheless, be considered active members of the community of Kamena. The question of 'belonging' is a complex one. In this study I concentrate on those people who live within close proximity to the agricultural camp, since access to their daily work and leisure activities was relatively easy. However, in delineating a field of research I include all

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<sup>1</sup>I was unable to visit this site as local people would not reveal the exact location of the burial ground and remained highly suspicious of visits to the area.

# REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

Scale 1:1,500,000

Miles 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100  
Kilometres 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

- City
- Principal Town
- Town
- Village
- Settlement
- International Boundary
- Provincial Boundary
- District Boundary
- National Park
- Airports
- Roads
- Trunk Routes
- Main Roads
- Other Roads and Tracks
- Railways
- Spot Heights

- Altitude 1000
- 750
- 500
- 250
- 0

This map is not to be considered an authority on the delineation of international boundaries.

Some names in this map are in the possession of the Government of Zambia.

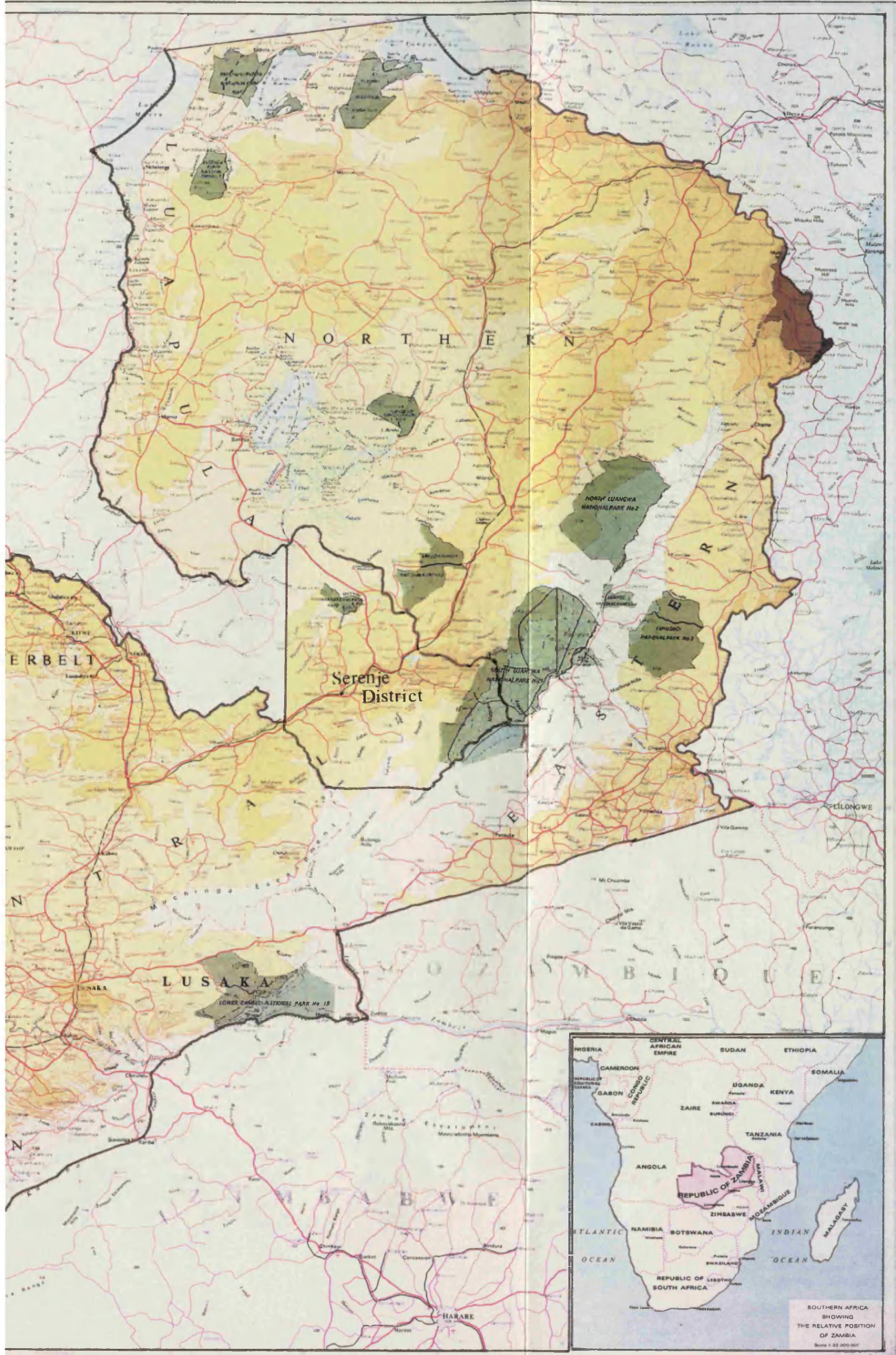


Essential names not indicated by the Government of Zambia: Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, Lusaka 1988.

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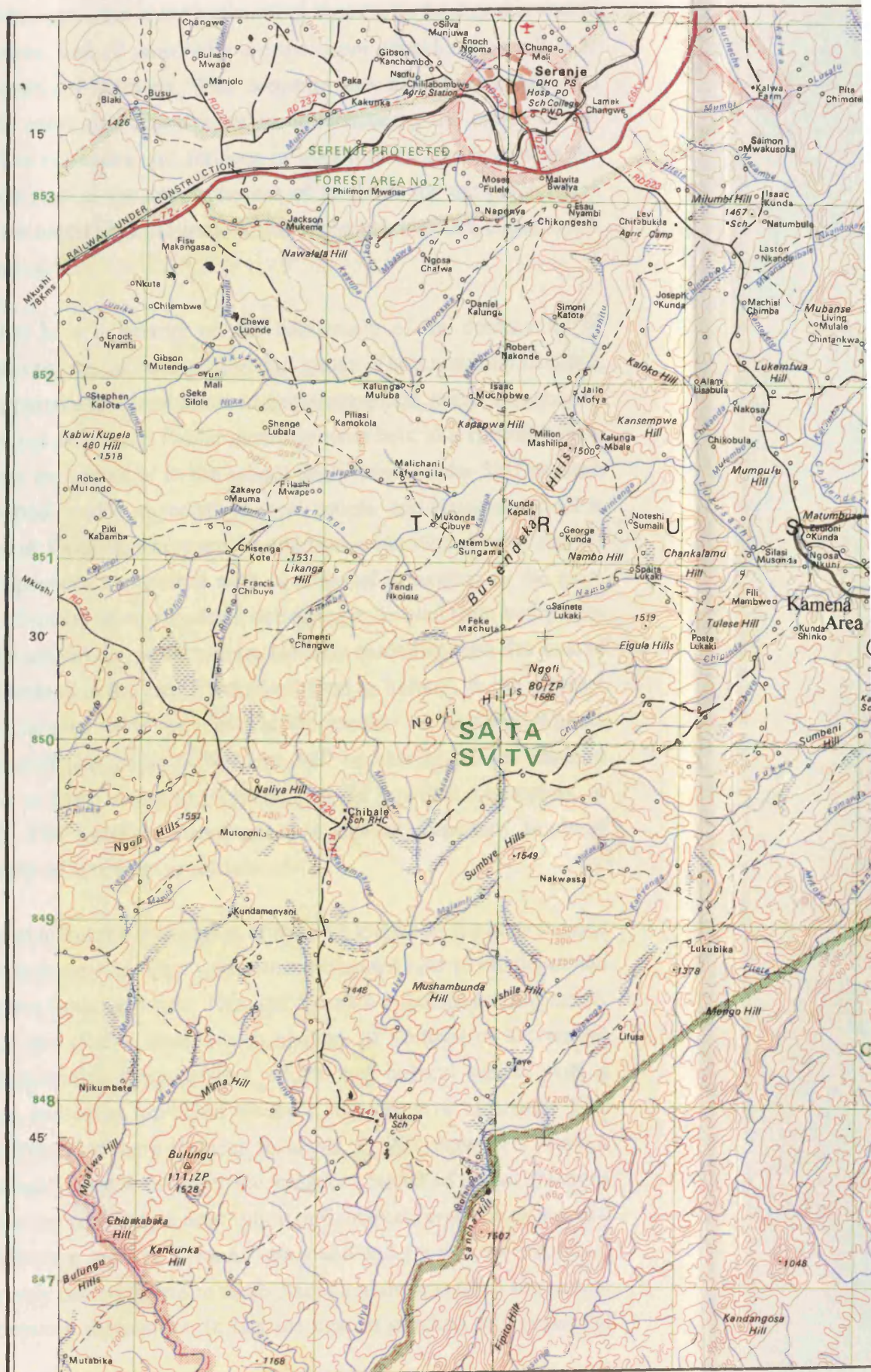


MAP 1.1 SERENJE DISTRICT, ZAMBIA



Source GRZ (1986)







[illegible]

those who use the facilities provided at the agricultural depot. The facility constitutes an important local resource, and all those who use the depot consider themselves to be part of the community of Kamena. The common use of infrastructure and resources is perhaps the most significant factor in understanding the extent of the community I studied. The resources and services in question include, access to the services of the extension staff at the depot, the use of facilities for the purchase of produce, and access to the credit organisations, whose representatives are either based at or visit the agricultural camp.

Other factors that have a bearing on the delineation of the community of Kamena concern the movements of both people and goods. The maximum distance that people will walk to partake in a beer drink, to exchange goods, share resources or to attend public meetings is important. Public meetings were held at a specially built *nsaka* (open shelter) near the school or in the school itself (see Chapter 5). Common access to the primary school is also important to local people, and Kamena school is very close to the village of Kamena. There are, in addition, a number of other factors that have a bearing on people's association with or sense of belonging to the area. These relate to a sense of social belonging. Such belonging is derived from being born into social networks that are firmly rooted within, but may extend beyond the area of present-day Kamena. The land in the area is acknowledged to 'belong', in the sense of usufruct rights, to the clans of those who live in the locality of Kamena. Almost without exception the adult population of Kamena will be able to tell an enquirer which land they utilise or have access to (Appendix 3a-3c provides a summary of settlements clan land). The history of land use provides an important sense of continuity for local people with respect to settlement.

Other factors that affect the delineation of the area known as Kamena include common use of the mono-pump and other water sources located near to the depot and the existence of collective burial grounds. This and the above factors are important, and for the purposes of this study I have chosen to think of Kamena as a common geographical and administrative space, within which and beyond which exist a number of co-operative and often kin-based resource redistributive networks. This does not make people from elsewhere Kamena residents. It does, however, create a situation in which the analyst must consider the broader context of social relations and resource networks when providing a description or demarcation of the researched community. The neighbouring areas of Khama, Teta and Sancha wards are important to people as they invariably have relatives in these places and there is often movement of goods and people between these areas. In fact the nearest grinding mill (essential

for processing maize into flour) to Kamena was in Khama. Children who visited the mill for their mothers would very often stop over at the homes of relatives to see their cousins and friends, and to be fed. Some of the data represented in this thesis comes directly from these other areas of Chibale as there are a considerable number of similarities in terms of livelihoods and social practice both within and between the different chiefdoms of Serenje District (the areas of Khama, Sancha and to some extent Teta share with Kamena similar ecological and geographical niches). There are also some notable differences between areas, indicating marked socio-economic differentiation even within Chief Chibale (see Chapter 4).

While this study concentrates on the livelihood activities of those who inhabit the Kamena area, it is important to recognise that there are no clear cut boundaries in terms of people's social experience and their encounters. As the following chapters of this thesis will reveal it is necessary to gain some insight into how these various contexts are represented in locally significant ways (a point I return to at various junctures throughout the thesis). The empirical focus of much of this thesis, namely beer production and consumption practices, necessitates that we consider the community of Kamena in terms of the distance that people are prepared to walk for the sake of enjoying the sociality of a beer drink. It was not uncommon for people to walk the length of the administrative area from the Lukasashi river to the foot of the *Chinuma* Hills for beer parties. Farther a field than this was considered too far to go for beer unless an important kinsperson was to host a party. Spatial distance itself suggests the extent of community as defined by local criteria. This factor is significant as people often walk great distances to the homes of kin, to their fields for work and on occasion to Serenje Boma.

The pattern of settlement for many is dictated by the cycle of traditional agricultural practices, - most notably the *citemene* or slash and burn 'system' - and the need to be based near to permanent fields and the agricultural infrastructure for the cultivation of hybrid varieties of maize. Temporary residences during such times of the year as millet harvesting and *citemene* land preparation are often relocated at some distance from permanent residences. These temporary settlements (*nkutu* or *mitanda*) must be included as part of the conceptualisation of Kamena in spatial terms; visits to these sites for beer parties and other activities are not uncommon. Furthermore children attending Kamena primary school often walk from these sites to the school during term time. They sometimes return to *nkutu* after school in the evenings or afternoon, but usually the distances to these sites are great (three hours walk or more) and so during the week they stay with relatives who do not practice



dual patterns of residence, for example, an elderly grandmother. The land that surrounds Kamena, then (in every direction all to be seen is dense tree cover and hills) must be considered an important part of the geographical and social space that is Kamena.

### **The Geography of Kamena**

Serenje District as a whole and the Congo-Zambezi watershed along which the Great North Road runs, is part of the area known broadly as the Central African Plateau (see map 1.1.). Zambia is unusual geographically, and a cross sectional view (looking north from the Zambezi river) would reveal that to the East and Malawi there is a similar plateau area, although at a lower altitude. The middle and Eastern area of Zambia is occupied by the vast Luangwa valley, with a dramatic escarpment to the West and to the East the *Ngoni* hills that stretch into Malawi. Serenje is to the west of the valley regions and lies on the plateau. Kamena is in the South Eastern part of Serenje and is approximately 1200 metres above sea level. Kamena is located at the confluence of the Lukasashi and the Chipendeshi rivers, the former is a substantial river and cuts through much of Chief Chibale. These rivers are permanent (although in the dry season are often considerably reduced in volume) and flow eventually through the Chisomo valley joining the Lunsemfwa and Luangwa rivers. The highest outcrops of rock and the hills that surround the Kamena area rise to 1500 metres, but fall dramatically to 250 metres in the Chisomo valley some 40 kilometres beyond Kamena.

Geographically the area is diverse, with a mixture of rocky outcrops and wet land river margins interspersed with areas of good quality flat cultivable land (of loamy and sandy loam soils). These latter areas are somewhat limited due to the undulating nature of the land. There are very few areas that are suitable for ploughed fields of more than a single hectare. In this respect Kamena differs considerably from many, but certainly not all areas of Chief Chibale. The hilly nature of the area does, however, provide a good number of wet land areas that border the perennial streams which abound. These areas are known as the dambo margins, and act as both water sources and areas for garden production. It is often possible even in the dry season (July-September) to dig water holes at the edge of these areas. It is worth noting that due to the marginal geographical position of Kamena (it is the last administrative settlement before the tsetse control and the Chisomo valley), and the dense woodland cover, there are a number of game animals to be found within the locality. These include puku, duiker, porcupines and civet cats. From time to time, even crocodiles



and hippo are said to come up the Lukasashi river from the Valley region. The extent to which these are a valuable resource for local people is hard to determine, but there was meat available for sale on a weekly basis. In addition to the small income derived from game meat sales such meat provides a very valuable source of protein.

## **The People**

Both the Mkushi and Serenje areas of Zambia continue to be inhabited predominantly by the Lala people. The Lala belong to a wider complex of people related to the Bemba of Northern Province; these include the Bisa (both valley and plateau based), the Ambo, and the Nsenga (found in the valley areas and towards Eastern Zambia across the Luangwa valley). Although the tribal identity of people in Chief Chibale is undoubtedly Lala, and people refer to themselves as 'Lala People'; there are also a good number of immigrants to the area. These include people from as far a field as Zimbabwe, but more commonly those who have moved into the chiefdom are Zambian, albeit from different tribal origins. During the period of field work there were persons from the Eastern Province (Ngoni), Northern Province (Bemba), and Southern Province (Tonga) in Kamena. Agricultural extension staff and school teachers are very often posted to work in areas other than their own. Others who are not Lala have either married Lala women whilst in urban areas and then moved with them following retirement, or settled in the area after a period of work in one of the small-scale mining ventures in the area.<sup>2</sup> These latter immigrants often marry locally and follow the traditional Lala matrilineal practices associated with such unions. The accepted norm includes bride service and a period of uxori-local marriage. These practices are by no means rigidly adhered to and there are many ways in which people, either locals or immigrants, negate or alter their obligatory periods of bride service. Matrilineality remains, however, a dominant organising principle for agriculture and livelihoods. Goods are inherited through the female line and are generally passed to sisters' sons or mothers' brothers' sons. These practices are also open to modification and often become the hot bed of dispute between kin in the event of a person's death. I do not address the issues of tribal identity and matrilineality directly but make reference to these issues as social idioms, expressed both through social practice and interactional encounters that denote the sentiment and content of particular relationships and organising principles.

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<sup>2</sup>There was in fact a large geological survey carried out, in 1964, in Kamena by F. F. Christien and Company to mine and Mica (see footnote 18 Chapter 7).

## **The Research Problem**

This thesis examines rural livelihood issues, and focuses on the production, consumption and valorisation of home-produced grain beer in particular. Despite the many studies that address agrarian questions with respect to small-scale Zambian cultivators, relatively little attention has been paid to in-depth studies of so-called 'off farm' income generation and the valorisation of locally-produced resources. The significance of beer in rural localities has long been recognised for the role it plays in social and ritual contexts, in labour recruitment, and in the last thirty years or so, as a source of income. However, with the exception of Colson and Scudders' remarkably detailed book, *For Prayer and Profit* (1989), there have been no works that closely examine the value or meaning that is attributed to this crucial resource by rural people. The impetus, then, for the present study came initially from a desire to add further to our understanding of the significance and role of beer in respect of rural livelihoods. Livelihood strategies and struggles of rural people are closely bound up with agricultural production and it therefore seemed pertinent to pose a simple question and one central to understanding the relationship between agriculture and other activities; namely, to what extent does the production and consumption of beer play an important role in the support of agricultural production and livelihoods?

While agricultural practices constitute the most significant range of activities in the lives of people in rural Zambia, livelihoods involve a variety of activities which include multiple types of agricultural work in different 'spheres' of production (loosely termed for convenience as 'subsistence-based' and 'market-oriented'). In addition, people engage in many other income generating and socially significant ventures which involve them in a number of resource redistribution and co-operative social networks. Within this spectrum of activities there is a good deal of variation such that between and within households there is, in respect of such activities, a good deal of socio-economic differentiation. To this extent, although people's lives are intimately related to agriculture, their livelihoods are by no means homogeneous, even though people deploy a similar range of opportunities or options in the pursuit of socio-economic success. This thesis attempts to embrace the multiplex significance of the available livelihood opportunities with specific reference to people's income and exchange strategies, and does so through a focus on the social practices of production and consumption of grain beer.

Since Audrey Richards work in the 1930's, the focus of much sociological research in rural Zambia has given precedence to the centrality of agricultural

practices in understanding the organisation of livelihoods. Agriculture is undoubtedly essential to livelihood security, and provides for much of the food and cash needs of rural dwellers. Yet within this complex of agricultural activities there are also a number of other practices that are vital to livelihoods. In order to begin to appreciate these it is necessary to shift attention away from agriculture per se to focus on livelihoods more broadly. Livelihoods are embedded in many aspects of people's social lives and involve a series of social and financial commitments and activities. The analysis of beer production and consumption practices provides a focus for a more thorough examination of the complexities of livelihood strategies.

Beer is central to the livelihoods of farmers in Serenje because it epitomises the way in which both resources (material and human) and agricultural practices are given meaning by a number of overlapping frames of reference. Put simply, whilst commitment to the acquisition of cash may at times be at the forefront of local income strategies, such processes also involve the maintenance of important social relationships and values. Idioms of status and authority, for example, are expressed between people through beer consumption practices. This is most notable with tribute beer, which is embedded in local conceptions of 'tradition'. In the face of beer becoming increasingly important as a commodity, and therefore acquiring exchange value, these other associations do not entirely disappear. They become fused, forming part of a diverse framework of practices within which beer sales and the subsequent cash incomes are significant. In order therefore to gain an understanding of the way in which income strategies, including beer sales, are thus situated we must adopt a more holistic perspective. Such a perspective must include both 'macro' and 'micro' considerations and illustrate the way in which such 'external' and 'internal' dimensions are mediated by the strategies, understandings and commitments of different actors and actor-networks, thereby generating a variegated pattern of social forms that represent differential responses to similar 'problematic' circumstances' (Long and van der Ploeg 1992).

### **The 1991/1992 Drought**

During the 1991/1992 season, many people in Kamena failed to harvest enough grain for their own consumption needs due to a serious drought that afflicted the whole Southern African region. Such a crisis cannot be underestimated and although there were no recorded deaths attributed directly to hunger it was certainly a very difficult year for most. During August and September of 1992, there were a number of cases of

dysentery that required hospitalisation and the generally poor nutritional status of many households increased the risk of illness substantially amongst the old and young. The problem worsened throughout the dry season (May - October), such that the opening of Serenje secondary school was delayed due to poor sanitation. The number of cases of dysentery increased to the point where the hospital erected army tents to accommodate the sick. Elsewhere in Zambia the situation was worse. In the valley regions and in urban areas, there were a large number of reported cases of dysentery and a considerable number of cholera victims. The situation was so bad that periodically the hospitals on the Copper Belt could not accommodate the sick, and there were photos in the national newspapers depicting patients lying in the grounds of the Ndola General Hospital with intravenous drips suspended from the branches of garden shrubbery.

The situation in Serenje was less dramatic. The high altitude and dense tree cover no doubt helped, and there was some localised precipitation. However, people still experienced hardships with many running short of their staple food requirements and failing to repay their agricultural loans. It is in view of these severe circumstances in 1991/1992, that the significance of income generation through beer sales must be located. In such times of stress, it is the diversity and adaptability of agricultural and other livelihood strategies that help to spread the impact of such natural misfortune as drought. The vagaries of the drought situation, although ostensibly unusual, push farmers to make optimal use of the limited resources available to them. The actions of people during the research period in 1991/1992 to overcome food and income insecurity were in essence not dissimilar from the range of possible options open to them at other times. In Zambia, the insecurity of rainfed agriculture often leads to shortages in food supply and the consequent implementation of a diverse range of strategies to overcome such difficulties. These activities also illustrate the imaginative and creative use of local resources in attempts to meet food and cash needs. In order to overcome the crisis people made extensive use of their own co-operative networks to acquire food and cash, but also to provide the necessary inputs and labour needed to invest in the coming years' agricultural plans.

## National Political and Economic Conditions

In the 1990's the dominant national political and economic rhetoric in Zambia has increasingly become neo-liberal in attitude. This is, in part, a response to meeting the conditionality of the International Monetary Fund (I.M.F) and the World Bank (I.B.R.D.) in an attempt to improve Zambia's economic performance and repay the huge foreign debt. Significantly, this neo-liberal approach is also ideologically and intellectually fuelled by the departure from the orthodoxies and commitments of the previous government under President Kaunda. For the rural population this has meant a restructuring of the largely, government-controlled co-operative parastatal marketing unions, who were responsible for the distribution of inputs, the allocation of credit facilities, and the purchasing of harvested grain. This has led, in turn, to a great deal of uncertainty for farmers, not knowing if they will receive a good price for produce or be able to pay off their loans in the face of uncertain pricing and so on. The drought in 1991-1992 only exacerbated the situation.

The present circumstances, although apparently new, show remarkable continuities with the past. Since the first interventions by the colonial administration, aimed at increasing food production to feed a growing urban migrant population, to the peasant farming schemes of the 1940's, rural populations have become more involved in market-oriented production, although with varying degrees of success. In the 1970's, government interventions aimed at promoting market involvement promised improved infrastructure, health and education facilities, as well as the provision of water wells. These incentives and the lure of cash incomes made the idea of hybrid maize cultivation highly desirable. The 'back to the land' policy of government during this period was motivated towards making the country self sufficient in grain. The emergence over the last fifty years or so of national markets for produce, new technologies of production, new trade arrangements in the private sector and new international economic relations, does not, however, necessarily imply the instatement of new social, economic and political modes of organisation at farm level. There are undoubtedly changes with respect to crop priority and the organisation of labour, but in principle the existence of markets and infrastructure to promote increased commercialisation has added to, rather than replaced, existing organisational practices and strategies. Established social practices, commitments, ideals and livelihood options do not become displaced by the inroad of new so called 'external stimuli'. Existing patterns of organisation and social relations remain intact but become modified in the context of an increasing range of physical and ideational<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Ideational is my own construction, and refers to ideas potentially manifest through practice.

resource options. In short it is the articulation of both 'old' and 'new', of 'micro' and 'macro' factors and what emerges which are central to this study. The complexities of the 'new' do not simply become adopted or absorbed by people, they become modified, transformed or subsumed by other 'older' practices and ideas.

In this thesis I explore these overlapping frames of reference with respect to the way in which beer is valued. I draw into my discussion the important place of context in generating such value notions, and discuss the importance of contexts other than the immediate rural local for the construction of value notions vis-à-vis beer.

### **Methods Employed**

As will become clear in the following chapters I am concerned with developing an appropriate methodology that both informs the data collection process and provides theoretical justification for the use of certain concepts and methods. Whilst I reject the notion of 'anthropology as science' I do not reject point blank the usefulness of data collection based on quantitative techniques. I will return to these below, but first, it is appropriate to examine briefly the importance of my own experiential encounters with people in Kamena. Good field work is largely dependant on the relationships the enquirer makes with local people. No amount of professional expediency can force such relationships, and although I gathered data from a large number of people, the most significant came from those with whom I was personally involved. These people, who were my neighbours and later friends, provided me with insights into the daily life practices of people in the wider community. It was only through active involvement and inquisitive, but unobtrusive enquiry, into the livelihood activities of these people that an account of their struggles and successes began to emerge. In addition to the relationships I made with people over time, sharing both good and bad, my own sense of shared experience with people comes from experience of the Serenje area and farther afield. In this way it was possible to find similar if not identical common ground on which it became possible to initiate conversation with people. Gaining any insight into the lives of others must fundamentally come from an active engagement with the social and physical environment within which their livelihood and other practices are located. The method of situational analysis which I discuss in detail in the following chapter lends support to this proposition, despite the fact that experience shared in this way is never complete and must remain partial.

I carried out a detailed agricultural and household survey of ninety two

separate eating groups or kitchens ('households'). I use the terms 'kitchen' and 'eating group' in place of household throughout the thesis as the former indicate a greater sense of shared consumption. When I discuss the specific activities of particular residential groups I use the term 'eating group', elsewhere when I am making more general statements about the activities of people in Kamena I use the term household. Eating groups seems a more appropriate term to describe co-operative groups, since they are not 'fixed' in the sense that they always include the same people. Depending on the circumstances they at times may be composed of different family members, visitors and dependants. In this thesis (see Chapter 7) I draw attention to the prevalence of co-operation at the point of consumption and indicate the social flexibility of 'eating groups' and 'kitchens'. The questionnaire format I employed is reproduced in Appendix 5. I found that conducting a detailed survey provided an excellent opportunity to introduce myself to people, and created the initial organising context for discussions concerned with livelihood activities. In conducting research amongst agricultural cultivators it is imperative to conduct these kinds of surveys precisely because without a broad appreciation of the activities and levels of production achieved, it is impossible to make any credible statements about the relative contributions of agricultural and non-agricultural activities to household incomes and livelihoods. Surveys of this kind (for agricultural communities) also address specific questions that concern, amongst other issues, the extent to which people are involved in credit schemes, the different technologies employed in cultivation tasks and how people access the labour they need. The interesting aspect of the survey I conducted - apart from the wealth of data I gathered - was the way in which it unfolded over time. I realised, for example, that it was not fruitful to ask questions about the ability of people to make claims. Invariably people would give some idealised account, saying that they could always claim from their kin and vice versa. It seemed more appropriate to document such things in context than to ask a series of bland questions.<sup>4</sup>

Alongside this survey I kept detailed records of all the beer parties that took place during the fifteen months of fieldwork, a total of 297 (see Appendix 6). I was concerned to gather data that would show how income from beer sales was spent. I also wanted to know the origin of the grain needed for brewing; whether it was bought, came from the brewer's own granary or was acquired from other sources.

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<sup>4</sup>I had general knowledge of Chief Chibale, having the good fortune to spend ten months in Mukopa in 1987. Hence, I had the benefit of knowing what the major agricultural activities of the people were, but naturally I was uncertain of their mix in Kamena.

Together with the agricultural survey, this exercise provided important data that informed the manner in which more detailed interviews with selected brewers and farmers were conducted. It is important to recognise, however, that although the vast majority of beer parties were hosted to sell beer, there were a number of other occasions on which beer was brewed. These other occasions, often involving the consumption of different forms of 'respect beers', became an important source of information relating to the 'non-commoditised' values of beer.

In respect of participation I made the utmost effort (sometimes with dire consequences to my digestive system) to partake in the consumption of beer. It was only in this way that I was able to become intimately involved with the social practices of consumption. I also wanted to show my respect for locally-valued social encounters. It is not enough simply to taste the beer. It is essential to drink deeply to experience the effects of both the alcohol (so much enjoyed by people) and the conviviality and sociability of local men and women. Beer parties are also important social arenas in which local issues are discussed, and it is possible to have the attention of many people. Significantly they are also dynamic social situations in which it is possible to observe the behaviour of people in their interactions with each other.

Participating as fully as possible in people's lives does not mean that you can literally 'stand in another's shoes', but it does mean that through a series of dialogues and social encounters it is possible to arrive at an informed opinion about social practices and value notions. The strength of anthropological methods, which require long periods of residence in a research community, comes from personal involvement with people. It is only in this way that it is possible to appreciate the daily problems people face and the solutions they devise for overcoming such problems. Yet social life is never simply a series of different problem-solving and strategising activities. There are also joyous and happy moments of interaction, and it is vital to share these with people as far as is possible. As the methodology I develop in the next chapter will show, personal involvement with others and experience of their practices is essential. To this extent I spent a good deal of time fulfilling the role I had acquired, as defined by my neighbours and friends - that is, I became a source of information, medical supplies, transport, and entertainment.

During the time I spent in Kamena I also attended a number of public meetings, and learnt first hand of local political disputes and other concerns of significance to people. The problems caused by the drought were frequently a focus



of such concerns and I was often enlisted to buy mealie meal at the Boma to resell to my neighbours and other people. To a degree my presence no doubt alleviated the problems that my immediate neighbours faced with food shortages. After all I had a vehicle and travelled frequently to both Serenje Boma and to Kabwe. I would buy and resell mealie meal, and sometimes other goods (at cost) that people wanted. This in itself I do not consider to have made a great deal of difference to people beyond fulfilling immediate needs nor did it alter substantially the importance of their own problem solving actions. Indeed people showed me time and again that they were extremely capable of managing in the face of quite difficult circumstances. I actually consider my presence and the resources at my disposal to have been exploited by some, respected by others and simply used opportunistically by a few. On the face of it, this does not seem to be very different from the way in which people make use of the range of other resources available to them. Nevertheless I consider the role that I played in transporting both people and goods an important statement of my commitment to local people. I certainly needed the co-operation and assistance of my neighbours and other informants to complete my fieldwork, but I also needed their support on the domestic front. It is not insignificant that as an outsider I managed to find a suitable role within the community that was of some consequence to people. From this vantage point, having a vehicle provided an opportunity to ask questions of people who shared the driver's cab. To recall Gudeman and Rivera (1990), the vehicle provided a confined arena within which it was possible to have extended conversations with people. What is obvious, but significant nevertheless, is the fact that, since I had transport, I travelled a good deal in Zambia visiting mostly Kabwe and Lusaka. Here I experienced social life, no less Zambian than my Kamena experiences, in many different contexts. This gave me an insight into the way in which urban experiences and livelihood practices, both directly and indirectly, bear on the lives of the many who live in rural areas. I was not the only one who, during my stay in Kamena travelled to urban areas for one reason or another. I conclude that the extent to which I became personally involved in the life struggles of inhabitants of Kamena and others who became good friends in urban areas adds substantially to my own understanding of the life circumstances of those amongst whom I conducted research.

## Organisation of the Thesis

Chapter 2, opens my account by developing an appropriate methodology, and outlines the intellectual justification for focusing on unravelling the complexity and diversity of livelihood practices. I draw on the situational method of van Velsen and Foucault's concept of discourse practice to suggest that the concepts of practice and agency are central to understanding the social construction of agrarian life. It is in contexts of practical action or praxis that goods and relationships acquire values. These values I argue are constructed through the diversity of people's practical experience, and unravelling these facilitates an understanding of the social construction of livelihoods, as well as the social valorisation of resources. In combining these methods it is possible to move away from overarching, systematised and determinist theoretical approaches that have been commonly associated with the study of agrarian life.<sup>5</sup>

In Chapter 3 I provide a discussion of those discursive practices that have significance for rural livelihoods and I give a description of the wider contexts within which rural producers operate. These wider contexts or arenas of decision and action are not simply backdrops to the study but are, I argue, a significant part of the analysis of beer production and consumption practices. The chapter focuses on the discursive practices of urban experience, the effects of government policy and international relations, and how these relate to rural and urban livelihood practices and strategies. I suggest that conceptually there is little or no urban/rural divide; instead, at the level of experience, these spatial arenas are part of an overlapping continuum.

In Chapter 4 I focus on agriculture because these range of activities are perhaps the most significant discursive practices central to understanding the organisation of production and income generation. Here I identify the practices and value notions that are fundamental to agriculture production and which become manifest or observable in the organisation of the activities themselves.

Chapters 5 and 6 look more closely at the way in which beer has a multiplicity of values and uses. I use the situational method to present material that illustrates clearly not only that there are many values ascribed to beer, but that these are articulated by actors in support of their own expectations and desires in various social encounters. Chapter 5 focuses initially on a dispute that involved the articulation of different values attributed to beer. In this chapter, I use the dispute as a

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<sup>5</sup>For example, Marxist or structuralist approaches.

way into discussing the attributes of beer in respect of local ideas about 'tradition'. I consider the ritual and symbolic values of beer and consider in what ways these feature in the social and ritual encounters I witnessed during fieldwork. Chapter 6 considers the contribution that beer makes in terms of income, and I address the question of the role of beer sales in support of agricultural production. Again, using the situational method, I follow the activities and beer brewing ventures of one family to show the relative financial contribution that beer makes. In this chapter I provide a description of the brewing process, and consider the various labour contributions that family members make to brewing and income generation more generally. I also explore the relationship between men and women in terms of the control over the resources central to beer production and sale.

Chapter 7 explores further the value constructions of particular resources and relationships in active contexts of redistribution and exchange. This chapter builds on the emergent themes of the two previous chapters and illustrates how a focus on beer can lead to a consideration of the valorisation of agricultural resources. The case material presented clearly shows how agricultural inputs become part of important networks of co-operation and resource redistribution, illustrating how some aspects of so-called 'externalities' or interventions come to have specific local values and interpretations. In this way the discursive practices of the wider arenas become part of the local discursive practices associated with agricultural organisation and income generation without displacing other important local discourse practices central to the maintenance of existing networks.

My intellectual concern with understanding the way in which value is multiply constructed in a particular social and cultural context does not conflict with the more pragmatic or objective purposes of this thesis, namely, to provide a detailed account of the livelihood practices of the people amongst whom I conducted research. Central to this achievement is the recognition that the analysis itself must, in a sense, emerge from the data collected and be guided by the fieldwork context. The way in which I came to understand the notion of value, for example, was in response to my attempts to grapple with the complex and diverse data I collected and my own experience of other peoples lives whilst conducting research in Zambia.

A focus on beer entails a detailed examination of the significance of this good in terms of how it is perceived and used by local people, and how its value is socially and contextually constructed by actors in relation to specific social practices. Livelihood strategies that include beer brewing and sale are given substance by the

value or significance that beer acquires for people. It is not simply enough to say that beer is important because of its potential to realise a cash value through its sale or because of its ritual or symbolic significance for people. The social construction of value involves the articulation of multiple criteria. If the meaning ascribed to beer is multiply constructed by specific actors both in abstract terms and within and across particular action contexts, it is important to try and elucidate precisely what these multiplex associations consist of. The next chapter begins by focusing on the theoretical and methodological implications of such a task, proposing a method that draws on situational analysis and the concept of discourse practice.

## CHAPTER 2

### SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS, DISCOURSE, AND SOCIALLY CONSTRUCTED VALUE<sup>1</sup>

#### Introduction

In this thesis I adopt an open-ended ethnographic approach which attempts to unravel the complexities of meaning and social action through the development of a conceptual framework which accords priority to understanding everyday life situations.<sup>2</sup> This focus on everyday life situations has its roots in the work of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute (R.L.I.) group of scholars (notably van Velsen and Gluckman discussed below). In addition to providing a wealth of interesting and detailed ethnographic material with the same regional interest as myself, I was surprised to find that their methodological focus attempted to deal with questions not dissimilar to those posed by more contemporary social analysts, in particular the work of Foucault. Attempts to understand and interpret regularity, order and continuity, whilst simultaneously accounting for difference, irregularity and the discontinuities inherent in social practice, are central to both the methods of situational and discourse analysis. Situational analysis has been confined to 'history' by many anthropologists because of the structural-functionalist theoretical framework within which it was originally developed and its insistence on the importance of a 'social structure'.<sup>3</sup> I similarly reject a belief in the hegemonic status of 'social structure', but insist that such 'totalising' frameworks within which the proponents of situational analysis worked should not inhibit a more creative and possibly imaginative reading of their texts. To this extent I believe that the usefulness of a tried and tested method (the case study method and situational analysis) in anthropology deserves reawakening, and

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<sup>1</sup>The following discussion is based on an earlier formulation of my ideas published in 1992 entitled, 'Goods, knowledge and beer; The methodological significance of situational analysis and discourse', in N. Long and A. Long (eds.), 1992.

<sup>2</sup>This project is closely associated with the attempts made by Long and Long (1992), 'to develop a sound theoretical grasp of problems of intervention and knowledge construction' (1992:4). Although I am not directly concerned with the problems of development research as they are, we certainly share the same methodological concerns; to allow for the elucidation of actors' interpretations and strategies, and to show how these interlock through processes of negotiation and accommodation.

<sup>3</sup>Bourdieu argues that these anthropologists delayed the 'bringing to light of the presuppositions of the objectivist construction by the efforts of those who sought to 'correct' the structuralist model by appealing to context or situation to account for variations, exceptions and accidents' (1990:53). He fails to mention, however, the implicit concern with agency and social practice which is brought to light through a close reading of the texts. See especially Turner (1957) and van Velsen (1964).

being given a more rigorous and contemporary treatment. In this chapter I will synthesise these methods to arrive at a more sophisticated theoretical understanding of livelihoods and social practice.<sup>4</sup>

I propose that we must use the concepts we choose in an open ended, unbounded and critical way. In this way it becomes possible to break from the simple and mechanistic model building of ethnocentric and 'positivist' approaches (not confined to a single theoretical approach, but rather to a whole tradition of analysis which broadly includes Marxism, functionalism and structuralism), which create overly 'systematised' explanations. The nature of such categorisation is grounded in a scientific approach that places emphasis on a coherent taxonomy, and principally the opposition between subject and object; aspects that have permeated implicitly and explicitly the analytic frameworks of much of social science (as we noted for the R.L.I. works). Bourdieu rather astutely comments that,

'Those who have the monopoly on discourse about the social world think differently when they think about themselves and about others...they would have been less inclined to use the language of the mechanical model if, when considering exchange [for example], they had not thought of the potlatch or kula, but also of the games they themselves play in social life, which are expressed in the language of tact, skill, dexterity, delicacy or savoir-faire' (1990: 80).

The implication of this is that such anthropological constructs often tend to compartmentalise social action, creating bounded units of economic, ritual, political, and social domains, which, although they interact with each other, remain analytically separate. This thesis is an attempt to break from this mould.

I will begin the discussion by reference to the work of scholars who conducted research in Zambia under the influence and direction of Max Gluckman, who developed the extended case study method and situational analysis. I also draw on Foucault's concept of discourse practice, realised or actualised in terms of events (verbal statements and contexts of action). I adopt a conceptualisation of discourse which explores the relationship between socially constructed knowledge, practice and social differentiation. It is principally with reference to 'context' that I use the term discourse. Viewed in this way discourse does not principally refer to linguistic and cognitive dimensions but to a broader range of situated practices that give meaning to

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<sup>4</sup>I do not use the notion of discourse simply to mean language or text, but instead think of discourse as that which constitutes and gives meaning to context.

and shape the way in which actors use what they know in developing strategies to solve practical problems. My approach, then, cross-fertilises situational analysis with an emphasis on discourse practice. The situational method provides a way of focusing analysis on specific social contexts and practices, whilst the concept of discourse practice allows the analyst to explore the wider contexts within which such practices are situated. The analysis of these wider arenas reflect the diversity and complexity of peoples' life experiences, their social interactions and acquired knowledge central to understanding their own specific livelihood practices. Such a methodology I argue reveals the inherent flexibility of the social valorisation of goods, whilst simultaneously providing a detailed description of the livelihood practices associated with the good in question, namely beer.

To support and develop this methodology further I look more closely at the social construction of value, exploring the concepts of practice and agency. I argue that these two terms, although implicit in the discussion of discourse (see below), are central to understanding the way in which notions of value are constructed by individuals and groups. I illustrate my arguments with reference to discussions of commodity value and commoditisation processes.

### **The Case Study Method and Situational Analysis**

The anthropologists of the Manchester School were a closely knit group who shared the same regional focus and many analytical and theoretical assumptions (van Donge 1985).<sup>5</sup> The school began as a group of researchers at the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, Livingstone and then later, at Lusaka, under the leadership of Max Gluckman. Then, when Gluckman established the Chair of Social Anthropology, a number of them joined him in Manchester. The original group later expanded to include a younger generation of Manchester-trained scholars. The contributions they made were many. On a general level, they showed an implicit recognition of the multiplicity of factors (although idealised) that influenced the societies they studied. There was also a concern for the complexity and ambiguity found in many areas of social life, even though the analysis was often structural-functionalist or institutionalist in character. At a more specific level, they made a significant contribution to 'ethnography rich in actual cases' (Mitchell, cited in Werbner

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<sup>5</sup>Despite this, as Clyde Mitchell once remarked, 'seen from outside, the Manchester school was a school, but from the inside, it was a seething contradiction. And perhaps the only thing we had in common was that Max [Gluckman] was our teacher' (personal communication to Dick Werbner, cited in Werbner (1984:157)).

1984;157).

Many of these 'micro-histories' are still received enthusiastically: 'The opening of the bridge' by Gluckman (1940), 'The tales of Cikoja' and 'The Kalela dance' by Mitchell (1956), 'Sandombu' by Turner (1957), 'The death of Meya' by van Velsen (1964) and 'The visit of Pati the townsman' by Long (1968). Indeed this collection of detailed case material is essential to the contribution made by the Manchester anthropologists, and such accounts remain accessible as documents that testify to the lives and struggles of people in the Central and Southern African regions.<sup>6</sup> This aspect of their work has persisted even though the merits of their theoretical approach might be questioned. I would like to concentrate, therefore, on the methodological importance of their work, and I will summarise those aspects of their work most relevant to my own endeavours.

The methodological starting point for many of their monographs is to provide a description of the material base.<sup>7</sup> They begin with an historical overview of how people make their living, a description of the local agricultural system, and show how migration and cash crop production affect people's lives. Gluckman said of the seven year plan he devised for the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute that it should be concerned with 'the differential effects of labour migration and urbanisation on the family and kinship organisation, the economic life, the political values, the religious and magical beliefs... [bringing] into perspective...the diversity in response to general forces of change' (Gluckman 1945, cited in Werbner 1984).

The monographs abound with insights into the complexities and ambiguities of family and kinship relationships. In van Velsen's *The Politics of Kinship* (1964), for example, kinship is depicted as an idiom through which people talk about their life situations and their aspirations. The case of Meya's death deals with marital and cross-cousin relationships in action. An account of the active content of these relationships reveals how different people use their knowledge of such relationships

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<sup>6</sup>This documentation of various aspects of peoples' lives, which may later be available as texts that are of historical significance, because of the data they contain, is I believe one of the most important contributions that we can make as anthropologists.

<sup>7</sup>The structure of this thesis incidentally follows in the footsteps of the monographs of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute (R.L.I.) trained anthropologists. The first chapters I dedicate to providing a broader context within which to situate the practices of people in rural Serenje and I provide an account of the material base. As will become clear I don't only include these early chapters to provide a 'context' or backdrop, but rather to contextualise (in the sense of discourse practice) and as such they are a significant part of the analysis.



strategically in different situations. Similarly, Mitchell's (1956) study of the Yao village, in particular the case of 'Cikoja', focuses on the management of personal and political reputations and is thus concerned with the negotiations that take place between people in specific arenas. Turner (1957) also explores, through the case of Sandombu, human creativity and consciousness in the negotiation of cultural and social order, and provides an analysis of the power-seeking manipulations of self-interested individuals.

Gluckman's analysis of the opening of Malungwana bridge in modern Zulu land (1940) likewise shows concern for complexity. His analysis describes a series of events occurring on a single day.<sup>8</sup> The central tenet behind the description of the situation is that it provides data from which it becomes possible for the anthropologist to make abstractions, though this will depend on the material collected and the theoretical orientation. The conception that was to have the greatest impact on the development of a sociological method by the Manchester School was the notion of adherence to or deviation from 'norms', although not clearly formulated at this stage. In the case of the bridge, those present behaved in accordance with what the authorities (and Gluckman) took for granted as the accepted norms of Zulu-European relations. The Zulus were not allowed to eat or drink with Europeans, 'even the cup of tea given to the [Zulu] Regent was brought to him across the road...by a woman missionary' (1940:13). This issue of norms is taken up by van Velsen in later work (1964), the significance of which I discuss below.

Gluckman's case sows the seeds of a method, but one which was not without problems. The case described is an oversimplified version of the complex interactive dynamics of Zulu-European relations based upon a particular historical (and later legal) context. It is used by Gluckman to emphasise endurance, stability and different types of change within a given structure. The norms he refers to are directly equated with his understanding of the concept of structure. This constant reference to social structure remains the weakest aspect of Gluckman's analysis. In effect he gave social structure the status as the sole determinant of the behaviour of Zulus and Europeans. In support of Gluckman's position Mitchell (1964:xxviii) argues that 'the extended case method can only be used in conjunction with a statement of the structure of society' since it deals with choices within a given social order. However, van Velsen, in contrast to Mitchell and Gluckman, grabs the bull by the horns and denies the

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<sup>8</sup>Of course an interest in social situations was, for anthropologists, at that time not completely new. Malinowski (1922) and Evans-Pritchard (1940) both in various ways explored the sociological significance of social situations.

existence of a fixed social structure at all. He argues that the limits, if any, that constrain action are defined by actors themselves in specific contexts, and may be associated with resources or personal relations, but are not determined by a body of unwritten rules or coherent set of norms.

Van Velsen went on to criticise structural-functionalist analysis for its emphasis on consistency and its neglect of variability, and he argued that situational analysis provides 'a method of integrating variation, exceptions and accidents into descriptions of regularities' (Mitchell 1964:xxviii). Norms or general rules of conduct he argued are in fact translated by actors into practices that are ultimately manipulated in social situations in an effort to serve particular ends. Van Velsen's insight does not attempt to define norms or rules of conduct in the abstract; they are part of a body of social knowledge that is constructed by individuals through active engagement with their world and their meanings are context specific. One of the basic assumptions of situational analysis is that norms are often vaguely formulated and discrepant, not all individuals in a community will agree on what the norms consist of. It is this fact that allows for their manipulation by members of society in furthering their own aims (van Velsen 1967:146). Within this conception there is the kindling of an idea of knowledge being used as a strategic resource.<sup>9</sup>

In support of van Velsen's approach, Mitchell explains:

'It is only in seeing the way in which people build up social relationships or withdraw from others in order to gain specific social, political or economic ends that one can understand them. In particular he [van Velsen] examines the way in which the Tonga utilise their manifold links for political manoeuvring. The same sets of social relationships may serve different interests at different times and the same people may be involved in new relationships as their interests change. In other words social relationships are more instrumental in the activities of people than they are determinants of them. In order to be able to study the process through which people select a wide range of possible relationships in order to achieve their ends we must observe people in a wide variety of social situations' (1964:xxviii).

Later, van Velsen (1967) offered some practical procedures for carrying out fieldwork from this perspective. He argued that it was important to obtain different accounts and interpretations of disputes or other events from a variety of people rather

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<sup>9</sup>Although the case of Meya's death in *The Politics of Kinship* is not spelt out in this way, it is valuable because it actually documents in detail the negotiations that take place between specific people in various contexts, illustrating how individuals are active agents who create their own space within which they may attempt to achieve their goals.

than to search for the right account or interpretation. If we compare the inadequacy of a search for the 'right' interpretation with the idea that Foucault proposes (see below) concerning the erroneous task of seeking a singular truth or 'origin', van Velsen's approach comes close to being at least metaphorically, 'anti-science'. The search for inner-meaning (right interpretation) only eclipses the possibility of presenting a description that includes a multiplicity of factors. In view of the fact that livelihood strategies are multiply constructed, to attempt to find a single or simple definition of them would obscure their very complexity. To seek many interpretations is important in that there are always a multiplicity of perspectives or meanings associated with a particular situation or event. Van Velsen goes on to argue that there are no right or wrong views; there are only differing views representing different interest groups, statuses, personalities and so forth. Therefore as much as possible of the total context of cases should be recorded. In the case of disputes, in which van Velsen had a particular interest, this is especially interesting because they may in actual fact be specific manifestations of wider conflicts and social struggles, and certain disputes may be the vehicle for other less immediately obvious conflicts. For example, Mitchell's (1956) case of Cikoja and the disputes that become manifest in sorcery accusations are shown to be important events that lead to a fuller understanding of the wider context of cleavages between lineages (see also Chapter 7 below) in the struggle over resources and political office.

In recognising the importance of a multiplicity of interpretations, these studies show an implicit concern with patterns of socio-economic differentiation. Van Velsen approaches this problem from a methodological perspective, arguing that data collection and analysis should place emphasis on the actions of individuals as strategic agents and personalities responding to changing circumstances, rather than as occupants of particular statuses or structural locations. Patterns of social differentiation then are only made meaningful when situated in terms of everyday social practices and situations. In other words, it is necessary to show how relationships, resources and values are contextualised (actualised) through specific action contexts, and the focus on action is central to this endeavour. As van Velsen shows, practice and knowledge are intricately intertwined.

## Critique

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the Manchester School's work that I embrace, and which is implicit in this thesis, is their recognition of the change, complexity, ambiguity, diversity and multiplicity characteristic of social practice. Van Velsen gave this significance by attempting to retain a sense of continuity, order, and regularity whilst recognising various social discontinuities. In this thesis, the way in which beer, for example, is assigned with a multiplicity of meanings or values by people, and the way in which these become the subject of negotiation and accommodation raises the issues of complexity, diversity, differentiation and so forth. This is close to the concerns of the R.L.I. scholars. In addition, I share van Velsen's discomfort with the idea of a social structure, formulated as a set of unwritten rules or codes of conduct; he was forward thinking particularly when arguing that 'the limits [to action] are defined by actors themselves in specific contexts' (1964).<sup>10</sup> Implicit therefore in their work is the notion of agency, which allows for the 'elucidation of actors interpretations and strategies and how these interlock through processes of accommodation and negotiation' (Long and Long 1992:5). Furthermore this thesis attempts to go beyond van Velsen and earlier formulations of situational analysis to suggest that we must rid ourselves of the inherent ethnocentric bias that comes from applying simple mechanical models or methods of research. Such models are very often buried epistemologically in the works of social scientists but made manifest in terms of dualist explanations (i.e. macro/micro, actor/structure, subject/object). For example, working within structural analysis, van Velsen's argument that situational analysis provides a method of integrating variation, exceptions and accidents into descriptions of regularities only touches on, but does not adequately explore how 'norms or rules of conduct' may be constructed by actors themselves. Van Velsen is unable to explore further the relationship between actors and the wider contexts within which they are situated. These wider contexts or 'macro' factors are shaped by distant time-space arenas but are nevertheless only intelligible in situated contexts. That is, they are grounded in the meanings accorded them through the on-going life experiences and dilemmas of men and women (Long and Long 1992:6).

The inability to move between analytical arenas, differentiated by time and space criteria, but which are nevertheless an integral part of the frameworks of meaning within which actors operate, appears to be a major drawback of situational analysis located within a structuralist perspective. Gluckman showed an explicit

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<sup>10</sup>See, for example, Bourdieu's use of habitus (1990:54).

recognition of this problem, as Kapferer argues:

'Gluckman was aware, despite his highly drawn contrast, that rural and urban dwellers were all conditioned within the embracing circumstances of a colonial political economy and its wider international articulation' (Kapferer 1987:15).

Nevertheless, Gluckman's structuralist orientation tended to confine his analysis to the accepted contrast between two polarised social structures, the 'tribal' as against the 'town'. Such dualist reductionism blurs the inherent heterogeneity of both possible and realised reactions of people to the different spatial, temporal and ideological contexts of social action within and between urban and rural situations. Later in the thesis, I attempt to redress these theoretico-methodological inadequacies, through discussing the representation of macro phenomena at the level of local practical contexts. For example, in Chapter 7 I make reference to farmer strategies associated with the use of an introduced 'modern', hybrid maize and fertiliser package, which is transformed in meaning and use to conform with the exigencies of local livelihood needs and values. This type of situational analysis only becomes possible through the incorporation of concepts such as discourse, practice and agency.

Also significant and implicit in the situational method is the recognition that social relations are central to understanding the negotiated outcome of interactive contexts, such as exchanges of various kinds. Fundamental to this is an understanding of the way in which in any situation or event there are a number of sometimes incompatible views or interpretations, and that it is important to document such differences and provide as much of the context as possible. Multiple interpretations place emphasis on individuals as strategic agents and personalities responding to changing circumstances. Chapter 5 and 6 of this thesis clearly show for specific contexts how these multiple interpretations are central to understanding the value accorded to beer. Chapter 7 reflects that even within a defined context the value accorded to goods may remain multiple; the potentialities of beer (its values) persist in the minds of the actors even though the dominant value of beer at any one time may appear to be solidified vis-à-vis its specific use context. In other words, even if the beer is being sold, its symbolic and social values remain an important part of the range of value notions ascribed to beer. These meanings do not disappear in the face of other values they may simply be obscured by the prominence or situational importance of other criteria. In terms of livelihood practices it is necessary to come to appreciate these various local interpretations, whether partial, fully realised or combined as they are central to understanding the motivations, expectations and

desires of local people. To this extent contexts are themselves partially constructed by the knowledge of other contexts. In Zambia this is exemplified by the exposure of people to different arenas of experience, for example, the urban scene, rural village life, listening to the radio, travelling within the country and, for certain groups, the interactions with various other nationals and foreigners they may have. Hence the significance of macro representations being reflected or refracted in micro contexts.<sup>11</sup> In seeking to represent these different contexts the next chapter (3) of this thesis discusses the changing nature of the economy at national level, and the urban experiences of Zambians.

In the remainder of this section I shall examine the way in which the notion of discourse may add to our understanding of social situations and thereby illuminate the complexity of livelihood practices and strategies. Issues of local knowledge and social practice are central to both discourse and situational analysis, and are implicit in the analysis of social diversity and differentiation.

### **Discourse as Event, a Situational Method**

There is a degree of complementarity between van Velsen's formulation of situational analysis and Foucault's project concerned with the description and analysis of discourse.<sup>12</sup> Foucault begins by disclaiming categories for thinking about discursive unities, insisting that the building blocks of analysis must be a pure description of the discursive field. Tilley comments that 'Foucault does not provide any over-arching systematisation; his work is fundamentally opposed to any attempt to provide a single all-embracing theoretical system for the study of society, history or whatever' (1990:282). The defining characteristics of a particular discourse, whose parameters are diffuse, can only come from an understanding of a particular research context (whether this be a community, discipline or set of related practices and ideas) and the actors centrally involved in the arena of study.<sup>13</sup> The situational method comes close

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<sup>11</sup>Macro representations can mean very many different analytical levels - global factors, that effect national economic arrangements, but also more significantly larger frames of meaning and action. Bourdieu refers to these forms of representation as habitus, or embodied history (1990:54). In addition we may consider the macro as cultural dispositions and the distribution of power and resources in the wider arena. It is to the latter idea of macro that I refer throughout this text.

<sup>12</sup>Foucault's *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972) lays the foundation for a series of research enquiries devoted to the description and analysis of discourse, such as *The Birth of the Clinic* (1973a), *The Order of Things* (1973b), *Discipline and Punish* (1977) and *The History of Sexuality* (1978).

<sup>13</sup>The various different arenas of research that have provided a focus for discourse analysis in effect are responsible for the diversity of ways in which the term discourse is used. We simply cannot have a

to recognising the importance of context for the foundations of analysis (and not simply description) but failed to develop the idea of context precisely because its proponents conceptualised these 'building blocks' as part of a body of norms or rules of conduct predicated by the existence of a social structure. The context was assumed, and was in essence indivisible from the notion of social structure. Of his group van Velsen, however, comes closest to the discursive method and his discussion of norms raises some interesting issues that have parallels with Foucault's treatment of discourse. Neither van Velsen or Foucault try to define their concepts in the abstract; instead they treat them as a body of social knowledge constructed by individuals and groups in their active engagement with the world. Furthermore, both 'norms' and discourses are translated by actors into practices that are ultimately manipulated in particular situations to serve particular ends. There is a semblance of discourse in van Velsen's discussion of norms, but it was impossible for van Velsen to rid himself entirely of structuralist-functionalist beliefs.

I believe that discursive analysis can be of great use in developing a methodology similar to, but more sophisticated than, the situational method. This enables us to, not only provide a description of social encounters and practices themselves, but also to situate the contexts of action within a broader framework of discursive practices. In this way it becomes possible to analyse in detail the livelihood practices and strategies of people with reference to the wider arenas of decision making and action. The concept of discourse links 'micro' and 'macro' levels of analysis. Such a focus also provides the possibility to come to grips with the ways in which meaning and value are socially ascribed to peoples material resources and social relations, which are an important aspect of their livelihoods.

The concept of discourse as developed by Foucault is essentially an amalgam of linguistic and practical concepts and categories which place discourse at the fulcrum of the relationship between, on the one hand, 'theories' of the world, and on the other, what people do and say in respect of these various theoretical notions (Barrett 1991:126). To this extent discourse practices are part of a set of processual activities that give meaning and substance to the interpretation of and engagement in action. Perhaps the most significant (and certainly the most frequent) way in which the concept of discourse has been used is in respect to language and 'textual' analysis

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commonly accepted, unified or systematised analysis of discourse practice in reference to varied arenas of study, although we may, however, find that in abstract theorisations there is a sense of a mechanical genealogy of the term. This is, however, rather against the 'spirit' of Foucault.

in particular.<sup>14</sup> It is also used by anthropologists and other scholars in relation to more common sense definitions, that attribute discourse with a unity that is presupposed by academic or institutional boundaries and often refers to conversation or 'disciplinary intercourse'. Clearly discourse is a complex concept that can be used to analyse a vast number of different aspects of our social worlds and at many levels. However, in this thesis I want to focus on a specific and hitherto under utilised aspect of discourse.

In a Zambian rural setting (and elsewhere) actors may not necessarily conceptualise their livelihood practices in relation to notions of discourse, nor do they necessarily think of the social and material resource options available to them as being allied cognitively and practically to particular discourses. They may instead think of 'tradition', the virtues of maintaining their matrilineal kin links, or the 'market' in providing just some of the frames of reference they operationalise to justify their options and choices. The term remains useful analytically, however, since thinking in terms of discourse provides the possibility of detailing the complex and diverse reference frames available to people. To this extent the concept of discourse may help elicit, for a particular social context, the modes of action and cognition constructed by actors themselves over time. These become manifest in, what Foucault (1972) calls, discursive practices that take the form of cultural "statements" expressed in language, material objects or social practice (Foucault 1972 and 1980). Paraphrasing Said, one can say that discourses are what enables small-scale cultivators or farmers to be small-scale farmers and creative income generators. Over longer periods of time such exposure to discourse practices become epistemological enforcers (albeit constantly open to modification by actors) of what these people think, live and speak.<sup>15</sup> It is in this way that material objects and social practices become fused at the level of discourse as cultural statements through people's experiential encounters. The objects or social practices (statements) central to such encounters may remain highly specific and localised aspects of particular discourses (rather like an in-joke) or may become grand cultural symbols or statements (as in the less humorous rhetoric and economic practices of the 'market').

The way in which such cultural statements are both expressed and appreciated by actors in a given context (often only partially represented) reveals the extent to

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<sup>14</sup>See, for example, Derrida 1981, Ricoeur 1976, and Moore 1986.

<sup>15</sup>Edward Said explains that, 'what enables a doctor to practice medicine or a historian to write history is not mainly a set of individual gifts, but an ability to follow rules that are taken for granted as an unconscious a priori by all professionals... these rules over long periods of time became epistemological enforcers of what people thought, lived and spoke' (1988:10).



which there may be a number of different (but not necessarily incompatible) positions taken by people with respect to their own experiential encounters and consequent explanations. Focusing on the regularities and differences that are part of all social practice, it becomes possible to interpret the actions of people in terms of which discourses have significance for them. The dispersions and discontinuities that exist between the way different actors conceptualise their understanding of the world become activated in these contexts, and are manifest in many ways in terms of social differentiation. The intersection point between the regularities and the discontinuities that exist are central to Foucault's concept of a discursive formation.

'Whenever one can describe, between a number of statements [events], a system of dispersion, whenever, between objects, types of statement, concepts, or thematic choices, one can define a regularity (an order, correlations, positions and functionings, transformations), we will say...., that we are dealing with a discursive formation' (1972;38).

Both continuity and discontinuity, then, are evidence of the existence of discourse; to elicit these, however, involves engaging in methods that require close attention to the contexts of action. The knowledge that an actor may have about the potentiality of a particular material object, for example, is constructed from the various discursive practices and contexts that that person and others are actively involved in creating at different times. In view of discourse being realised as event, as enveloped within practice, it becomes crucial to focus research on the events themselves in order to describe the particular view or construction actors may have regarding a good. Given an actor's life span and the changing nature of discursive forms there is always an historical dimension to understanding discourse. As part of the method that Foucault suggests, the complexity of a description of the relations that constitute discursive events demands that we choose, empirically, a field in which the relations are likely to be numerous, dense, and relatively easy to describe (1972;29).<sup>16</sup> This reflects van Velsen's point that we must gather many interpretations of events since discursive forms are only ever represented by individual actors as partial traces.

In reference to material objects and social practice, the social information or knowledge that actors possess concerning the potentiality of a particular good is constructed from the various discursive encounters they are actively engaged in over

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<sup>16</sup>Foucault again is referring to his own field of enquiry, science. There is the view in the social sciences generally that 'science' is actually manufactured in specific intellectual communities and is consequently socially constructed. Such a community posits its own truth vigorously. Perhaps this is in principle no different from any other community that holds to certain truths above others. A rural Zambian community for example.

time. The implication of this is that discourse involves a continuous practical engagement with their world. All discourse may be realised as event,<sup>17</sup> from the simplest of verbal statements, to complicated multivocal events such as a beer party, and as such peoples' practical involvement with their world becomes a crucial factor in the construction of their practical and esoteric knowledge. To consider discourses as both manifest and constructed by 'events' enables us to bring action or practice to the fore. This is central to my work as I am concerned with the development of a method that can help elucidate the dynamism of actor's livelihoods with an emphasis on practical problem solving and coping strategies. Practice, then, is a concept that becomes central to this task. Practice must relate to peoples' experience, which in turn refers to both elements of knowledge and to practical action, in the literal sense. In addition the concept of practice is predicated by time-space relations and these factors provide clues to the way in which particular manifestations or value notions are understood and represented by actors and their actions. The experiential and practical representations of actors are central to the creation and the strategic use of discursive forms in particular action contexts. The case study that opens Chapter 5, for example, illustrates how certain dominant discursive practices give meaning to the representations of different actors in a dispute concerning the value of beer.

From a methodological point of view, in order to understand what descriptively may constitute a discourse practice, the researcher must become involved in the events themselves not just as observer but as agent. However, it is primarily as a descriptive device that the concept of discourse becomes useful. I understand and use discourse differently from other forms of discourse analysis in that I consider the relationship of discourse to practice and not simply to categories of language or cognition.<sup>18</sup> Returning briefly to Gluckman's suspicions of an anthropology where 'practice was excised from the agenda' (for example the work of Levi Strauss), Gluckman argued 'that the study of ideas independently of their contextualisation in lived realities could lead to interpretational error' (Kapferer 1987:11). In similar vein, but more forcefully, Foucault's use of discourse moves away from the position taken by structuralist analysis. He explains:

'[my] task... consists of not - no longer - treating discourse as a group

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<sup>17</sup>Foucault's conception of a discursive formation and statement takes the form of a criticism of the dangers of attempting to conceptualise discourse by reference to linguistic or epistemological criteria (Gane 1986:37).

<sup>18</sup>See, for example, *Knowledge and Power in a South Pacific Society*, by Lamont Lindstrom (1990), which applies discursive analysis to language and the conversational domain in particular.

of signs (signifying elements referring to contents or representations) but as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak. Of course, discourses are composed of signs; but what they do is more than use these signs to designate things. It is this *more* that renders them irreducible to the language (*langue*) and to speech. It is this *more* that we must reveal and describe' (1972:49).

Allied to the possibility of description that discourse provides it becomes of methodological importance for an analysis concerned with social complexities, ambiguities and difference. He continues,

'my aim was to show what the differences consisted of, how it was possible for men within the same discursive practices, to speak of different objects, to have contrary opinions and to make contradictory choices' (1972:200).

In part, his work is at once an ethnography (although unorthodox) and methodological treatise (see footnote twelve). He is concerned with both the description of discourse and with developing concepts that facilitate this description. It is important to recognise that the premise behind Foucault's project of a pure description of discourses is based on his notion of an 'archaeology'. The significance of this term is that,

'he does not propose to treat discourses as documents to be interpreted, he does not seek for what is behind the document, the reality which is more or less represented by certain traces. Rather, he treats those traces as describable elements of discursive formations' (Gane 1986:35).

This search for 'inner meaning' only obscures or actually prevents description taking place. It implies the search for a singular 'truth'. Discourse, however, by definition allows for a multiplicity of 'truths' that can only be revealed and explained through description. A concern with the multiplicity of meanings that actors ascribe to their material goods is quite different from a determinist search for a truth or inner meaning behind discursive forms, which anthropology 'as a science' attempts to achieve. Tilley (1990) comments that Foucault does not relate discourses to a particular manifestation of a structural logic underlying social practices. In agreement with this assertion, I would add that a discourse is a specifically socio-historical product of actors practical engagement with their world that combines many factors (levels of analysis) and as such allows for the possibility of describing social practices without recourse to 'systematising thought'.

We must take great care, however, not to reify the notion of discourse. It is not some tangible or objective substance that we can measure or make judgements about. We can only describe, with reference to what people may say about their motivations, actions and statements, what these negotiations consist of. To use the term discourse is to imply that people are aware of the content of their strategising or negotiations and not to imply any 'universal dis-logic' like 'maximising gain'. To view discourse as the product of negotiations enables us to examine how local actors use and assign meaning to their material world, in particular those material forms that can be considered descriptively as 'commodities' in developing strategies for combining their resources and relationships. The relationship between power and discourse is realised through negotiation or more generally interaction. I do not, however, in this thesis focus specifically on issues of knowledge and power except by reference to a number of interesting local disputes that illustrate the negotiable and ambiguous quality of those social constructions that give beer and other goods their multiplex meanings or associations.

The co-existence of multiple discourses produces a situation in which the different discourses (on value, for example) may at times be hierarchically ordered. This does not mean that we can determine in advance which ones will predominate in a particular context; 'some discourses over-determine others, and various sub-dominant discourses develop in opposition to dominant ones' (Moore 1994:59). There is then a power dynamic even at the level of discourse, the analysis of which assists us to locate the nexus of power within networks of social relations for specific contexts. To this extent, therefore, the significance of certain 'statements' over others in the collection and analysis of data should be informed by the contexts within which these 'statements' are produced.

The issue of power is also central to understanding the way in which actors as agents have the ability to use various discursive forms to make 'claims' or justifications in support of their actions. The ability to make these kinds of justifications is partly dependent on the ability of the actor making a claim, but also on the various attributes of the discourse to which reference is made. In the Zambian rural context there are many examples of the way such claims are enacted by individuals. One example is the possibility that a younger person may not want to follow the accepted practices of bride service (providing labour for in-laws) and seeks justification for breaking with this 'tradition' by arguing in favour of the merits of his individual efforts to produce for the market. In defence an older person may argue

that all have a responsibility to uphold 'tradition'.<sup>19</sup> Between the two sides of the negotiation we can see that different discursive domains are being utilised to make claims and counterclaims. Some discursive forms raised to the level of language in this way are used by actors and makes certain discourses seem more persistent, dominant or hegemonic than others. We must acknowledge that as a part of any discursive analysis, the notion of power and inequality must be considered (Moore 1986). Power and knowledge then are inseparable from an understanding based on the notion of discourse.

Discursive analysis may prove valuable, although crucial to such an approach is the recognition that the boundaries of such analytical units are very difficult to define with absolute clarity. In addition there are always a multitude of discourses in any social world, and these are often overlapping and diffuse. In a any social context the body of knowledge with which people operate is one that is hybrid in form. In fact is it possible to ever think of knowledge as 'pure' or untainted by 'foreign' influence? It is worth remembering that some of what we consider a 'western' body of knowledge is also common place in other contexts. This is largely due to the fact that, like elsewhere, rural Africa, for example, is actually part of a wider socio-economic order and a colonial experience. This relationship with a wider 'order' is not necessarily a recent phenomenon. Evidence of the way that discursive formations have left their mark is often shown by amongst other things, linguistic accretions and material goods.<sup>20</sup> Experiences such as migration to urban centres for employment, exposure to forms of global communication such as radio, and the dissemination of the teachings of Christianity can all be considered as evidence of discursive practices. In addition to this, knowledge that is brought to the area by development workers and government officials also becomes 'localised'. In this way these external forms of knowledge become internalised to become part of a body of 'local' knowledge.

It must be reiterated here that, although it is possible analytically to interpret knowledge as constructed of various discursive elements, rural people themselves may not actually conceptualise their life world in this manner. This does not mean

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<sup>19</sup>Focusing on gender, Moore argues that within a given context of dispute, particularly at the level of household, the discourses of gender and the differences in opinion that various members of the household have and that become manifest in disputes are actually a set of practical activities which operationalise discursive practices (1994:92).

<sup>20</sup>Two nice examples from Zambia include the term Basulutani, meaning village headman, which possibly derives from the Arabic sultan, and the recycling in villages of defunct motor cars for pots, pans and axe blades.

that they are unaware of the existence of various discursive formations, just that they may conceptualise things differently. As Moore puts it, 'it is not necessary for an actor to possess mastery of such schemes on a discursive level in order to be able to apply them in practice' (1986:78). However discourse remains useful, since it points towards the possibility of describing a particular context while not remaining simply confined to that context or being limited to using highly systematised or bounded conceptualisations.

### **Practice and Agency**

The notions of practice and agency are closely related and come together through various contexts of social experience. Such experiences are multiple, and involve social encounters in contexts that may stand at some distance to people's own immediate environment, for example, urban experiences, travel, different forms of work and leisure, and experiences that are not necessarily direct or personal in nature but passed on through a person's social involvement with others. These are, however, limited by the extent to which any individual is capable of absorbing and interpreting such exposure or experience. Collectively there is a degree of overlap between the discursive experiences of people, such that there always appears to be a degree of regularity, continuity and order.

Although I do not propose that we develop a theory of practice as Bourdieu attempts to do,<sup>21</sup> practice is nevertheless a significant concept, since it is central to understanding the construction, modification and strategic use of discursive practices and forms. Furthermore situational methods are predicated on the necessity to understand actors' representations of their social practices. Despite his claim that the discussion of concepts for their own sake runs the risk of being both schematised and formal (1990:290), Bourdieu insists that practice is best understood through the concept of habitus. Habitus, he states, is:

'a product of history, [which] produces individual and collective practices in accordance with the schemes generated by history. It ensures the active presence of past experiences, which, deposited in each organism in the form of schemes of perception, thought and action, tend to guarantee the 'correctness' of practices and their constancy over time, more reliably than all formal rules and explicit norms'. (1990:54)

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<sup>21</sup>See, for example, *The Logic of Practice*, 1990, especially pp 52-65 and 80-97.

I would argue that although interesting and in fact quite close to my own understanding of practice, Bourdieu's formulation of habitus is unable to free his analysis from totalising and therefore limited conceptualisations. What is more, although he attributes the generation of the condition of habitus to individual and collective agents, he does not give any primacy to the concept of agency. Whereas Bourdieu argues that habitus 'is predisposed by its range of historical uses to designate a system of acquired, permanent, generative dispositions' (1990:290), I would counter this by proposing that actors as agents (whether wittingly or unwittingly) always have the capacity to change such 'acquired, permanent, and generative dispositions'. The data presented in this thesis illustrates clearly how livelihood strategies are socially embedded and are therefore subject to an enormous possible range of variation and modification by people themselves. If there is any sense of social order or regularity it is not because practice is replete with historically significant, 'permanent and acquired dispositions' but because the limits to action are defined by actors themselves within a given range of discursive contexts. Continuity exists, therefore, because within a given social context, individual agents only have limited conceptual and practical capacity to absorb and rework the constraining and enabling elements defined by the discursive arenas they are exposed to. This is not the same thing as 'methodological individualism', wherein explanations of social behaviour are reduced to the motivations, interests and intentions of individuals. In asserting that agency is predicated by exposure to the available (and potential) discursive arenas, I insist that all knowledge and practice is socially determined, but not determined by 'structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures' as Bourdieu would have it (1990:53).

I prefer to think instead of agency and practice in terms of experiential encounters which may be both highly individual and collective. The idea of experience also contains within it a sense of both time and space which are also central to understanding practice and agency. During a person's lifetime, experiences create a sense of what are considered accepted practices in collective and individual ways. These then provide a 'sense' of regularity or continuity and order, which may or may not be acted upon. Individuals remain 'knowledgeable' and 'capable' (Giddens 1984:1-16) and are therefore able to exercise their own personal judgement or decision making power with respect to their social practices. In this way agency allows for the possibility of many and possibly competing 'theories' or interpretations of one's life's social, esoteric and physical encounters. These are not generated in abstract but are related to practice (experiential encounters). Agency, which essentially attributes to individual actors the capacity to process social experience and

to devise ways of dealing with life's many social encounters, practical problems and even epistemological dilemmas, always remains central to understanding practice and the way in which knowledge is generated and disseminated. The concept of agency refers to action within social relations and can only be effective through them. The situational method of van Velsen makes this clear, even though the thrust of his argument remains structuralist, albeit whilst criticising the structural precedents of the 'hidden rules or codes' variety. The social relations to which a number of R.L.I. anthropologists directed their attention are significant as people often use their knowledge of relationships in strategic ways; and in this way both perpetuating social relations (which are not necessarily fixed) and modifying such relations in various different contexts of social action. Decision making underlies agency and is based upon the implicit or explicit use of discursive criteria in formulating objectives and in presenting arguments for the decisions taken. It is not only with respect to decision making, however, that agency plays an important part in discourse practices. In support of a position taken by an individual in solving the problems he/she encounters, arguments are advanced that draw on various discourses (for example the dispute in Chapter 5 over 'traditional' versus 'cost benefit' values) that display the agency of individuals and groups. Discourse does not exist outside of the knowledgeability and capability of individuals to act and in this sense agency and practice are inseparable.

Practice - by which I mean the actions of people, not simply doing but learning through doing and more significantly giving meaning to material form and social process through particular contexts of action (experience) - is also fundamentally related to both discourse and agency. It is through practice that agency is actualised, and it is through practice that a sense of order and continuity, but also dislocation and irregularity, are produced and reproduced.<sup>22</sup> Situational analysis acknowledged indirectly both practice and agency but at that time was unable to develop these notions to any degree of sophistication.

### **Material Goods and The Social Construction of Value**

The concepts of practice and agency are intricately related and are situationally manifest in the problem solving activities of individuals and groups of actors. Methodologically these propositions are important as it is only in reference to social events or situations (active contexts) themselves that it is possible to describe, in an

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<sup>22</sup>Cf. Anthony Giddiness (1987:11) structuration theory which gives a central place to agency in the constitution, reconstitution and transformation of structure.



holistic way, people's conceptual and practical knowledge. Although material things exist as physically concrete forms independent of any individual's mental image of them, they only become meaningful by virtue of the relationship people have with them. This relationship involves the social practices within which goods feature and the mental or cognitive associations that people have. Social practice implies the existence of social relations and the interplay of actor's interests and strategies. It is in this way, then, that material goods embody meaning; they are the product of meaningful action in determinate social and historical contexts (Moore 1990). Notions of value, central to livelihoods, are only meaningful as they are actualised through peoples' interactions with their material world and each other. Value is always socially and contextually constructed, and there will always be a multiplicity of value associations and criteria upon which value is predicated. These factors are often overlapping and in certain instances are shared cross-culturally even if they have specific local significance. The task for analysts is to try to come to grips with these complex associations and relationships, which are at best often only partially represented by individual informants.

To insist on locating the analysis within the contexts in which conceptual and practical concepts are socially created, demands moving away from the primacy for anthropologists of locating their discussions of value in a number of classic dualisms. These include (for economic anthropology) the oppositions between gift/commodity (Gregory 1982 and Strathern 1988<sup>23</sup>), exchange/use (Marx 1979), and market and non-market (Polanyi 1957 and Sahlins 1974). Such constructions are the product of an ethnocentrism inherent in social science, and are too mechanistic to leave much theoretical space for agency and practice. The recognition of the subtleties of language and practice, and the many variations and exceptions within and between dualities (which form the most short-sighted but frequent criticisms of such approaches), have been incorporated into the theoretical frameworks of anthropology. As the opening section of this chapter detailed, this is really nothing new: after all the anthropologists of the R.L.I. and others have produced 'ethnographies rich in actual cases'. The point, however, is to try to move away from what Foucault calls 'systematised thought' (1980), implying a type of thought that is inherently ethnocentric which systematically masks or conceals the dynamics and complexity of social life. The dualisms in anthropology are classic examples of such thinking. In support of this assertion Stirrat, for example, argues that 'such generality prevents us from recognising that there are significant differences between the various phenomena lumped together under such headings' (1989:94). Parry and Bloch also

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<sup>23</sup>Strathern does, however, make the 'fictional' character of the gift/commodity contrast quite clear.

make the reflexive suggestion that such oppositions between, for example, 'commodity' and 'non-commodity', are 'historical falsifications', specific to the construction of concepts within particular anthropological discourse. Despite this, I contend that remaining within the confines of such theorisations (i.e. seeking ever more sophisticated ways to discredit duality to understand both the anthropological and cultural discourses of value) leads us away from, and not towards adequate analytical frameworks. While I do not wish to dispute the validity of reflecting on existing intellectual 'dialogues', I propose a more radical approach: rather than investigating the many and varied exceptions and articulations within and between dualities, we must ask ourselves the questions of 'how' and 'why' there are so many deviations or anomalies. These questions echo van Velsen when he insists that the limits, if any, that constrain people's actions are defined by the actors themselves in specific contexts, but not by a body of unwritten rules or coherent set of norms as structuralist would have it. Reflecting on anthropology's own social constructions and the social and historical context in which these have been produced is, I suggest only part of the solution to a much more complicated set of problems. Parry and Bloch (1989) provide an insightful and detailed account of the cultural variations that exist within certain dualist categories, but remain, unfortunately, bound within such dichotomised frameworks by not dispensing with the dualities they suggest are analytically inadequate.

Unfortunately the analysis of value within anthropology still relies on grounding discussions theoretically in terms of the anthropological categories of 'social', 'use', and 'exchange' value, which to a certain extent provide anthropologists with their own ready-made 'coherent set of norms or rules'. This thesis draws attention to the significance of such categories, but insists that for actors themselves these distinctions are most unlikely to be clearly stated or even consciously acknowledged at all. I would even go so far as to say that all value is social, in that the notions of value that people have are discursively constructed, and cannot be meaningful outside of particular social contexts. An interesting discussion that supports this view is proposed by Smith, whose work examines auctions. He suggests that,

'unlike the economic and psychological perspectives that view auctions as "revealing" market forces and constraints, the sociological perspective recognises auctions as a means for generating these same forces and constraints. It argues that these meanings are inherently social in origin and character. In the case of auctions, this social process explicitly entails the reproduction of new collective definitions of value' (1989:4).

In an agricultural setting the complex mixture of social values may include various notions based on ideas concerned with 'modernised' farming and the acquisition of cash, farm and family property relations and commitments, and the importance of cost-benefit types of calculations. Other social values may be based on taste or food preferences, cultural habits, the expectations of others or the fulfilling of obligations to family, neighbours and friends. In certain contexts, then, it is likely that any one of these values, or indeed others, may gain credence over others. For example, the accepted value of a good in a seemingly straight forward exchange (i.e. cost/benefit) may be displaced in favour of another value, perhaps a familial obligation. This may be the result of the particular internal dynamics of the relationship between the transactors or because some unforeseen eventuality creates a situation where the 'vendor' changes his or her mind and simply consumes the item at home or gives it away. The important point is that although certain contexts of practice are analogous to the fixing of particular values this does not mean that other value notions (potential or realised) do not exist simultaneously for the actors in question. These other values may simply depreciate in the face of more pressing needs. Transactors know this very well since they remain the agents of the constructed value of a good. In this way it is not adequate to isolate a single context and say categorically that an item is important simply for use or some other social potential. A social construction approach must, therefore, include an understanding of so-called 'hidden agendas' or 'games' played by actors in fulfilling their motivations, desires and expectations. In short,

'we can never have a single theory of value; we can only have actor generated value notions that form part of the 'mental' and 'moral' maps of individual and collective actors, and which crystallise within the encounters that take place between different actors' (Long 1994;8).

These encounters are themselves situated within what Parry and Bloch (1989) refer to as the 'cultural' matrix or set of contexts.<sup>24</sup> We need to recognise what this 'cultural' matrix consists of in a given social context. In general terms it consists of multiple realities or 'life-world' perspectives which include both local practices and macro-representations.<sup>25</sup> Although shaped by distant time-space arenas (for example,

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<sup>24</sup>I use the term matrix not in the mathematical sense but instead in terms of the metaphor of womb (see the seventh edition of the Concise Oxford Dictionary 1984) .

<sup>25</sup>By 'life-worlds' (following Long and Long 1992:257) I refer to the constraining and enabling elements encountered in specific social processes, to the cultural and normative repertoires embedded within these processes and to the concept of agency, that is, to the ways in which people deal with and manipulate these constraining and enabling elements. For an overview of the philosophical roots of this term, see Crespi (1989:64).

the conditionality imposed by the I.M.F. to insist that subsidies are removed), these representations are grounded in the meanings accorded them through the on-going life experiences and dilemmas of men and women (for example, how they cope with increased pricing of goods). These alternative realities or discourses are available in differing degrees to all actors in society:

'[A]ll societies contain within them a repertoire of different life styles, cultural forms and rationalities which members utilise in their search for order and meaning, and which they themselves play (wittingly or unwittingly) a part in affirming or restructuring. Hence the strategies and cultural constructions that relate to notions of value employed by individuals do not arise out of the blue, but are drawn from a stock of available discourses (verbal and non-verbal) that are to some degree shared with other individuals, contemporaries and perhaps predecessors or ancestors' (Long and Long 1992:25).

In addition, the variety of meanings that people ascribe to their material environment and to specific goods is in part the outcome of their socialisation. This is important for understanding economic behaviour because decisions are made as the production/consumption process unfolds. Social constructions based upon previous experience provide a framework within which producers/consumers act, and may be manipulated to justify altered plans. Such constructions are to some extent dependent on the potential for realising the value of a particular good, whether in an exchange or in some other socially-acceptable manner. For example, in the case of increased commercial maize production in rural Zambia, producers have the opportunity to retain surplus maize, if they so wish, for their beer needs, and to acquire labour through providing grain, rather than selling it through government marketing channels. They may also later raise cash by selling the maize locally or through beer sales.

Interactive experiences that constitute the socialisation process may be highly individual or shared, and in some cases 'institutionalised' as with initiation experiences or 'rites of passage'. Within a group, differences of experience, in rural and urban settings, between young and old, between men and women, or between people of different economic status or religious affiliation, incline people towards different interpretations of their world that often entail differences in their estimation of value vis-à-vis goods and people. In this way social actors or groups become differentiated from each other as they acquire social identities through material goods. In Zambia and elsewhere the things a person owns or utilises are ascribed with meaning by that person and/or by others. Status and prestige is bestowed upon others

vis-à-vis their access to material goods. Hence self identity is established socially through a set of discourses which are both practical and discursive. These discourses establish the grounds for identity and the framework(s) within which identity becomes intelligible (Moore 1994:37). In a Euro/American context the issue of whether or not one's items of clothing bear the appropriate labels is a good example of how identities are constructed through material goods. Parents of teenage children may not think the issue is worth the money paid out on some of these items but they would not deny how important these things can be in terms of identity. The car one drives, the beer one drinks, the house one owns and so on, all help to create a sense of identity for people. People who ostensibly live in the same or similar material surroundings or share the same income level may nevertheless display differences in style, however subtle, which are manifest in terms of their choice of material conditions. Their living spaces, their dress, and the other consumption items they prefer, are all part of the creation of a self identity (Miller 1986).

If people's social constructions are based on both their on-going interactive and cognitive experiences within their own life worlds and those of others, it follows that an analysis that focuses on people's social constructions will always retain diversity, continuity, change, discontinuities, regularities, variations, accidents and deviations as its major themes - all of which are central to a perspective that asserts a social constructivist approach. It is possible then to move away from the bounded dualities of much economic anthropology by making the differences that exist between 'world views' and various local and global discourses the centre of description and analysis, in this way developing methodological and theoretical abstractions from such complex foundations, rather than refining the theory to make all the 'exceptions to the rule' fit, or excluding those that do not.

I now turn the discussion towards a reflection on the way in which the notion of commodity has been used, illustrating both its usefulness and limitations for the approach that I propose.<sup>26</sup> I conclude that commodities are not in fact things but ideas we apply to things. The discussion is useful in providing some insight into how values are fixed by people in particular contexts and also draws the analyst into a highly significant area of activity for people since generating cash both locally and in terms of the national markets, are important livelihood options.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>The issue is salient because this thesis is concerned with understanding the livelihood practices associated with beer production and consumption and beer as a source of income is highly significant for local people.

<sup>27</sup>In addition to this, the idea that things become commodities is an interesting area of study because

## The Notion of Commodity

In a strict sense, commodities are theoretically defined by reference to exchange value, i.e. the value they realise in the market. The way in which the term has been commonly used follows Gregory (1982:12), who distinguishes between 'an exchange of alienable things between transactors who are in a state of reciprocal independence', and 'non-commodity' or 'gift exchange' which represents 'an exchange of inalienable things between transactors who are in a state of reciprocal dependence'. However, according to Marx (1964), commodity exchange conceals the more fundamental social relations essential to their production, which, in a capitalist economy, are based on the appropriation of the 'surplus value' of (alienated) workers by a class of capitalist owners. This process by which important social relations of production are masked is what Marx calls the 'fetishism of commodities' - a notion that constitutes the basis for his extended critique of capitalism. Indeed as Rubins explains,

'Marx did not only show that human relations were veiled by relations between things but rather that in the commodity economy, social production relations inevitably took the form of things and could not be expressed except through things' (Rubins 1973:6).

This view of commodities and commodity exchange, then, points to the existence of hegemonic forms of social consciousness and capitalist ideology that shape the meanings accorded to commodity forms. Interpreting commodity (goods) exchange in this way stresses the dominance of capitalist values and relations at the expense of other possible meanings or values that people may attribute to the very same goods, even when they are exchanged through commodity markets. Clearly social relations are central to understanding the meaning or significance of things, but these social relations take many forms and do not necessarily have to be seen as inherently unequal or exploitative. In addition, to restrict one's understanding of commodities and commodity exchange to the aforementioned theoretical ancestry creates an analytical 'cul-de-sac', and unnecessarily confines theorisations to abstract intellectual arenas.

In fact there is a great deal of fluidity in the way we characterize goods. To confine them to a single conceptualisation of value conceals their other significances for people. An important point made by Kopytoff (1986) is that commodities have

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as non material things, (for example, labour or knowledge) become commoditised, they also symbolically take on something of the identity that we construct for material things. To this extent the job or labour one does, and the holidays people take, when viewed in a commoditised way are subject to the same criteria of valorisation associated with other commodities.

what he calls 'biographies', that is, the meaning or value attached to things that define them as commodities is not consistent or stable but fluctuates over time and space. He goes on to argue that,

'the only time when the commodity status of a thing is beyond question is the moment of actual exchange. Most of the time, when the commodity is effectively out of the commodity sphere, its status is inevitably ambiguous and open to the push and pull of events and desires as it is shuffled about in the flux of social life' (Kopytoff 1986:83).

Though insightful, this interpretation does not go quite far enough, since it does not make explicit that in many situations particular goods given as gifts, transacted according to norms of reciprocity, or never exchanged at all, nevertheless retain a potential exchange value. For example, presents that have been purchased, once given, are said to be removed from their 'commoditised state', though the receiver still knows the potential value and often compares them with what others may receive in quasi-monetary terms.

Exchange is certainly a central feature of the valorisation of goods because most things have the potential of realising exchange value (Rawlings 1986; Appadurai 1986). However commodity exchange will not necessarily dominate actors' understandings of the significance that a good may have. Formulating analysis in terms of 'commodity' versus 'non-commodity' relations does not address the questions of when and by whom commodity values, over and against other types of value, are judged to be central to the definition of particular social relationships and to the status of specific goods. Implicit in these questions is the need to recognise the agency of people and to take account of the active contexts in which the values of goods are negotiated or established. To do this we need to broaden our perspective and insist that all values are socially constructed and to consider the centrality of particular social practices in the construction of these values.<sup>28</sup> The language we use must reflect the many potential values and interpretations assigned to a good. As Douglas and Isherwood (1978:62) show, goods may be concerned with communicating messages, with symbolic content and social value. Their communicative and symbolic

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<sup>28</sup>In reference to the ways in which money, for example, is ascribed with multiple values, Zelizer (1994) provides an interesting discussion of the different social practices associated with the history of its public and private use in the U. S. A. She comments that, 'at each step in money's advance, people have reshaped their commercial transactions, introduced new distinctions, invented their own special forms of currency, earmarked money in ways that baffle market theorists, incorporated money into personalized webs of friendship, family relations, interactions with authorities, and forays through shops and businesses' (1994:2). Even the most 'fetished' of commodities has, then, has a multitude of social values.

content is, like language, a context-specific manifestation of the interplay of particular discursive formations, and as such cannot be isolated from either the actions of individuals or the contexts of action. To this extent the concept of commodity is too restrictive since it attempts to define in abstract terms the value or significance of goods. As shown in Chapters 5 and 6, the different local terms applied to beer in its contexts of consumption are clearly associated with its significance in those contexts. For example, *ubwalwa bwankombo*, meaning beer for the calabash, is specifically associated with its significance in appeasing an unruly ancestor. This and other discursive associations of beer remain important to people despite the emergence and existence of other values. In the context of brewing for sale, for example, (a 'commodity' context?) the implications of *ubwalwa bwankombo* are still significant and have a bearing on both brewing and consumption practices. That actors supply their own value notions of goods reveals to the analyst the various social meanings attributed to goods in their different contexts of use. This echoes Barth's (1966) insistence that we 'root' our concepts and categories in terms understood by 'native actors' themselves and then document the ways in which particular goods become the foci of social action. Such an approach requires that we reserve 'commodity' for use as a descriptive term indicating a particular meaning attribution and context. The central position it occupies in commoditisation theory is too restrictive for the analysis presented in this thesis.

Commoditisation is usually treated as the historical process by which things become commodities, though, as both this thesis and recent research shows, this is by no means a linear or irreversible trend (van der Ploeg 1990). Furthermore, as Long points out,

'commoditisation processes take shape through the actions of a diverse set of interlinked social actors and are composed of specific constellations of interests, values and resources. Commoditisation has no given and necessary trajectory, except that negotiated by the parties involved, and as a process it is never 'complete'. It constitutes a label we apply to ongoing processes that involve social and discursive struggles over livelihoods, economic values and images of 'the market'. In fact it is more a way of looking at things than a clearly defined special category of things' (Long 1994:8).

National markets and marketing channels, which are part of capitalist discourse that have 'penetrated' all Third World countries, are in effect only added to and do not entirely replace the existing range of potential ways of utilising locally-produced resources. Nor does the hegemonic ideology that accompanies and is integral to such



discourse necessarily alter or modify in irreversible and permanent ways the values assigned to goods in local use contexts. Even though constrained by circumstances, people still exercise some degree of autonomy in the marketing of their produce, and may decide to retain cash crops that have local uses in order to realise some other potential later in the season.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore the inputs that accompany new hybrid crop varieties may themselves end up not being used for the purpose for which they were originally intended by agronomists and other experts. They may instead end up becoming central to local networks of co-operation and redistribution or be used, for example, to make fishing poison or gun powder. The values attached to commercialisation, to capitalist notions of individualism, growth and accumulation, are not necessarily adopted wholesale by rural producers, nor do they interpret development discourse in a unified, 'packaged' way. They may instead choose to 'unpack' the packages in original and creative ways to suit their own expectations, obligations and desires. For these reasons it is inadequate to talk in terms of commoditization processes as though they were unproblematic, and therefore of great scholarly validity. It is precisely because they are diverse and differentiated processes and are an important aspect of rural people's lives that we should continue to address these issues. Rural social and economic change cannot be reduced to peasants walking the road to become either capitalist farmers or dependent wage workers, (see Long, A. 1992:152).

Kopytoff's analysis of the fluctuating status of commodities adds weight and provides stimulus to thinking more broadly about the way in which to interpret commoditization processes. However, as Parkin (1976) urges us, we must go further and acknowledge that all transactions (material and non-material, commodity and non-commodity) form part of a process of symbolic communication, such that there is no separation between economic and social exchange. Two partners, even when engaged in what might be regarded as an 'economic' transaction, are simultaneously involved in exchanging deference, affection, information and negotiating the meaning or value of the good. Hence exchange contexts and the dynamism of these fundamentally social encounters may be used strategically by people to achieve their desired ends, whether these may be financial, or social or both. In the rural Zambian context when food items are exchanged the primacy for such exchanges is oriented towards redistributing scarce goods but these exchanges often take place between people who belong to the same co-operative networks. Hence the goods exchanged may simultaneously symbolise the content of the relationship between the parties concerned, whilst at the same time remaining significant for the exchange of items or

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<sup>29</sup>Hyden (1980) makes a similar point in reference to peasant farmers in Tanzania.

commodities. In this way, the notion of exchange itself is replete with a multiplicity of meanings that can be exploited by the transactors themselves.

Cross fertilising situational analysis with the study of discourse practice enables us to develop a sophisticated approach to the description of events and social practices. Such an approach not only enables us to describe the events or cases themselves as isolated in time but as a integral part of the on-going struggles, negotiations, and problem solving activities central to the maintenance and modification of peoples' life worlds. Furthermore, operationalizing these methods provides the possibility of understanding the ways in which various practices and knowledge are socially constructed in relation to the discursive practices that actors are exposed to during their own life times. This thesis uses this situational method to examine the complex value associations and meanings of beer production and consumption practices.

The livelihoods of rural people are no less embedded in and constitutive of wider arenas than they are a product of local circumstances. Chapters 3 and 4 then offer some understanding of these arenas. Chapter 3 focuses on the unstable and fluctuating nature of the national economy, which brings to the fore the issue of the diversity of discursive experience. The rural people of Serenje have to varying degrees an active knowledge of their national and regional predicament, and many people have had experiences of urban employment and living. In addition, global forms of communication, the radio, newspapers and magazines are available and consequently people are aware other people's world views and perspectives. Naturally access to such discursive knowledge is differentiated amongst the population, but, in various ways, ideological, political, religious and 'cultural' (fashion art, and music) discourses are shared by a great many people. The focus of Chapter 3 however remains closely tied to examining the ways in which the national economy has changed in the light international and regional change. The last part of the chapter draws us nearer to the rural areas to discuss how political and economic shifts and changes are reflected in agricultural policy and to show how in the last few years, the international discourses and practices associated with neo-liberal economic domination have created difficult circumstances for those whose livelihoods are closely bound up with agricultural production.

The analysis moves then, in Chapter 4, to looking more closely at agricultural practices in Serenje, and Kamena in particular. It is in relation to agriculture that people are most actively involved in constructing their own life worlds. Since

agriculture is the principle means by which resources are generated, redistributed and used. In fact agricultural practice provides the most prevalent of discursive practices and consequently many value notions are constructed with agriculture as the basic reference point. In addition, agriculture is not simply a product of the local arena, but is fostered by a number of 'external' interventions which become part of the localised discursive contexts. Beer is a product of agriculture and in some cases a facilitator of production. It would be impossible to consider beer brewing without reference to agriculture. Moreover the potentiality of crops can only be understood in reference to the social relations essential to their production. This raises important questions over the potentiality of agricultural resources and focuses on the differential access to, and control over, such resources by different members of the community (men and women, young and old etc.). These two chapters provide contextualising data from which it becomes possible to situate the detailed data concerned specifically with the social construction of value in respect to beer brewing and consumption practices. These chapters, however, form a significant part of the analysis and are not simply provided as a backdrop.

Chapters 5 and 6 bring the situational method to the fore and discuss the contexts in which beer is brewed and consumed. The analysis explicates the dynamics of social encounters and focuses on the diversity of ways in which people give meaning to beer. It also highlights the important discursive arenas in which people negotiate and modify their value constructions. Beer is examined in relation to people's practical livelihood involvements as well as in relation to important ritual, cosmological, and income value associations. In Chapter 5 the discussion focuses on the varying interpretations of beer that become manifest in a dispute between a group of women and the chief's messengers. Chapter 6 continues the analysis by looking at a specific beer party. This illustrates how various value notions are simultaneously operative and describes the significance of beer in relation to other sources of income. The relationship between husbands and wives and the distribution and allocation of resources is then examined in relation to both the income and expenditure associated with brewing. Chapter 7 broadens the discussion to consider the ways in which exchange practices and livelihood strategies are socially embedded and argues that the understanding of these processes entails a broader understanding of discursive practices. The descriptions around which the discussion is constructed focus on the practices of people during the not unusual but nevertheless difficult times of drought and the recovery period.

According a central place for the conceptualisation of discourse in the analysis

allows us to extend the boundaries of the study to explore the many discursive factors that have an effect on the way in which value is constructed. Examining the value of beer from a social constructivist perspective also helps us to understand the complexities of the discursive forms themselves and enables us to consider the centrality of agency essential to discourse and practice. Because discourse is influenced, created and modified by many different social arenas, the analysis I present has no difficulty in incorporating different discursive levels. In fact the analysis of beer brewing and consumption as presented in this thesis tacks between these various levels, and in so doing provides a contextualisation for the understanding of livelihood practices.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **THE ZAMBIAN NATIONAL ECONOMY AND THE WIDER ARENAS: THE EXPERIENCES OF URBAN ZAMBIANS**

#### **The Wider Arenas of Decision and Action**

The Zambian national economy has, in its relatively short existence,<sup>1</sup> been affected in a number of ways by both regional and international conditions. Although in time and space, rural Zambians would appear to stand at some considerable distance from the interplay of such global scenarios, they are nevertheless integrally locked into these wider domains of decision and action. This chapter examines the impact of these wider arenas on the fortunes of the national economy and characterises, in broad terms, how the various discourse practices central to wider political and economic arenas shape the life experiences, social practices and economic activities of Zambians. This chapter, then, provides a discussion of the wider discursive contexts within which to situate a detailed analysis of the value constructs and use of beer in livelihood practices.

I argue that the possibilities for urban employment, fostered by the early successes of the mining based economy, and the expansion of commercial activity must be seen as part of the range of important and varied experiences for Zambians - experiences that have contributed to the emergence of new and modified associations and expressions of value, status and social practice. Later in this chapter the discussion shifts attention to the urban context of brewing and consuming grain beer to focus on how these practices are an amalgam of the discourses of 'rural tradition' and urban 'financial gain'. These become engrained in the value associations that people have regarding beer which are then displayed in the tensions and discontinuities that exist between the various expressions of value. These expressions represent what become signifiers of identity for people: for example, a policeman caught between the colonial law on the one hand, and his own and other's sense of identity symbolised in consuming grain beer (see below). Seen in this way a discussion of the changing national economy and the wider discursive arenas of

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<sup>1</sup> Although one of the earliest mechanised mining ventures began in 1902 at Broken Hill (Kabwe), and we can use this as a marker for subsequent industrialisation, in this chapter I am not directly concerned with a chronology of historical events, see Roberts (1976) Chapters Ten and Eleven for a detailed history of the expansion of the region.

political and ideological action become central to understanding the social and economic creativity and agency of Zambians. We must not assume that rural inhabitants live in a geographically or discursively bounded or 'localised' space. An important assumption that underlies the argument in this chapter is that the relationship between the urban and rural areas in Zambia is an important one and should be visualised in terms of a socio-economic continuum rather than a divide, since people have experience of both environments and articulate ideas and practices common to both. What is more, although rural people may not know or care too much about the international scene, they are nevertheless incorporated through, for example, the impact of 'structural adjustments' that eventually 'trickle down' to the rural farmer, in the form of grain and input prices. In addition, changing fortunes nationally affect among other things, the cost of imported goods, resulting for many rural people in a decline in their level of material existence.

The relationship between the rural and urban areas is an intimate one: in 1990 approximately 57.9% of the population resided in rural areas, as compared with 42.1% inhabiting urban areas.<sup>2</sup> The fact that the population is so evenly distributed between the two areas accounts for the close social and economic ties that exist between rural and urban people. This suggests that rather than there being a clear divide between rural and urban people in terms of their understanding and appreciation of the world, at the level of discourse practice, there is considerable overlap. By extension, urban Zambia is in terms of 'cultural' criteria (clothing and music styles, cinema, television and so on) also influenced by regional and global discourse. In order to interpret the value associations connected with livelihood practices in rural areas which involve a mixture of agricultural and other income activities, I argue that some appreciation of the history of exposure to the wider influences, experientially and in terms of various government moves to control both the economy of Zambia and the economic actions of Zambians, is essential.

Attempts by both the colonial and post-colonial administrations to draw the population into increasingly commoditised relations of production in urban and later rural areas have not taken a unilinear or progressively successful path. However, the need for cash by people at different times must be examined against the changing situation of commoditisation in Zambia. The fortunes of the national economy have in effect waxed and waned in response to regional, international politico-economic adjustments, and to the national demands of a burgeoning urban population. For the

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<sup>2</sup>G.R.Z. Population census 1990

rural agricultural sector, changes at different times with respect to national economic and political considerations, frequently in direct association with industrial and urban demands, are significant. The urban areas have at different times provided both markets for rural produce and a source of employment in the mining and manufacturing areas. Government agricultural policy has also been directly affected by the demands of both urban industry and the population growth in this sector. The need for agricultural inputs for commercially oriented production is perhaps one of the most significant issues in this respect. These inputs are imported and their prices determined by, on the one hand, international markets and on the other, by government policy towards subsidisation.

Integration into the 'cash economy' has had implications for livelihood practices and strategies, and the meaning that is given to social and economic action. Not only have rural strategies of production and consumption been affected by wider discursive arenas, but also these wider arenas have been interpreted by people in response to their own value associations and social criteria.<sup>3</sup> Urban employment and residence created a situation in which people became involved with different kinds of social interaction - interaction with Europeans and with fellow Zambians from different ethnic backgrounds. I am not suggesting that there therefore emerged some new kind of homogeneous 'class' or type of people labelled 'urban' but simply that such varied social experience has an impact on the practices and attitudes of people. This chapter will, then, provide a description of both the wider economic contexts in which to situate rural livelihood practices, but also consider the impact of practical involvement with the various cultural and social manifestations of such experience.

I will first provide a description of the nature of the relationship between Zambia and a wider network of global relations that influenced (directly and indirectly) national economic developments. I consider the fluctuating success of the economy at a national level, to provide a sense of both the time-frame and the economic context in which such developments took place. The second part of this chapter considers both the agricultural policies and interventions of government, and the effects of such policy combined with urban social experience in order to examine the social construction of livelihoods and notions of value later in the thesis. I then turn to look more closely at the social and 'cultural' significance of such economic change in terms of people's social interactions with specific reference to the practices

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<sup>3</sup>The issue of tribal identities and their modification as people become increasingly involved in urban contexts, for example, has been the subject of a number of sociological studies in Zambia (see Mitchell 1956, and Epstein 1958).



of brewing and drinking grain beer.

### **National and International Relations**

From the affluence of the immediate post-independence period (1964 to the early 1970's), through years of turbulent regional political instability (early 1970's to late 1980's), to the present debt-related crisis, involvement with and careful consideration of international economic links have been an integral part of Zambian government policy and have in fact greatly influenced practice. The changing nature of the economy is perhaps best characterised in terms of it being at different times either in a state of 'boom' or 'bust'.<sup>4</sup> The present state of the national economy, since 1973-4, for example, has been described as in crisis, in decline and in various ways in stagnation: the 'bust' period (Loxley 1990, Mwanza 1992). Previous times by contrast have seen great successes in both the private and public sectors, a period of economic 'boom', with growth in many sectors from the immediate post-World War II era through independence until the oil crisis and the international recession of the 1970's. Zambia's main source of income has been and remains the export and sale of copper. Studies by Baldwin (1966) and Turok (1989) support this assertion. Turok, for example, states that between 91% and 95% of total exports were copper during the 1980's (1989:208). Zambia has remained wholly dependent on copper exports whatever the state of the international markets. The optimism that prevailed during the 'boom' period and the very high prices being paid for copper on the international markets (see below) fuelled this dependence. During this period some emphasis was given to other productive enterprises, but these remained haphazard and supported essentially the hydro-electric schemes and, in a smaller measure, cement manufacture and the National Agricultural Marketing Board (NAM-Board) in the agricultural sector. The problems of dependence on a single export were compounded further by the fact that the mines were controlled by foreign companies, principally Nchanga Consolidated Copper Mines (N.C.C.M.) and Roan Consolidated Copper Mines (R.C.M.), which were later taken over by the Anglo-American Corporation and Amax respectively. Despite the government taxing these companies at a rate of 73% when the world copper prices began to slump, the government had little or no control over either the total revenue from copper sales nor the decisions concerning future investments in these companies (Turok 1989:20).

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<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Turok (1989:112-115)

Despite the fact that copper exports account for Zambia's major international economic link, we must not overlook the important part played by other international political and economic factors. During the 1970's, for example, the oil crisis that created a global recession had serious consequences. The increased price of oil hit Zambia especially hard - a land locked country wholly dependent on imports for its fuel oil needs. In addition, political instability in the Southern African region compounded the problems faced during the (post 1973) 'bust' period. South African Apartheid and the resultant sanctions imposed by the international community, put a lot of pressure on Zambia's access to vital resources. Imports had to be re-routed via Tanzania and the port of Dar es Salaam. The cost to Zambia was extensive: oil and other imports were air lifted in; even copper was exported by air. The Great North Road became the single most important land access route to the coast and was metalled. The Tanzania/Zambia (Tazamma) oil pipeline and Zambia's refinery at Ndola were built and, in order to divert imports and exports to the sea port of Dar es Salaam, the 1860km Tazara railway was built starting in Kapiri Mposhi in Zambia. The sanctions imposed by the international community against the National Party and Apartheid in South Africa had an impact on Zambia, since to remain in political favour the Zambian government had to comply with these sanctions. There were many ways, however, in which these restrictions were overcome by enterprising companies. From the point of view of the public political arena and at an international level, it appeared as though Zambia complied with sanctions, and indeed they did at their cost. Yet private businesses managed to bring in goods via South Africa re-directing them through Botswana, under company names registered there. Some of these 'private' enterprises were rumoured to be ministerially controlled, but independently of the government. In 1987 it was possible to see many trucks on the roads with Botswanan registrations. They carried both South African goods and those imported through Durban.

Problems in Zimbabwe, Angola, Mozambique and Namibia exacerbated the situation. The transition to independence by Zambia and Malawi was relatively easy and was achieved in 1964. But for Zambia's other neighbours things were not so straight forward. Zimbabwe fought a bloody ten-year battle with the Rhodesian forces, and the resultant sanctions and defence costs to Zambia were considerable. The extent to which this affected ordinary people is hard to imagine but it clearly was significant. Many Zimbabweans were living in Zambia and working for the railways and in other capacities. There were a good number of young men in secret training camps in remote parts of Zambia, who were prohibited from visiting relatives for the duration of hostilities. In the border areas people could not farm because of land

mines and military skirmishes. And from a national point of view, 'Zambia became a military target because of its moral, political and material support for liberation movements...Expenditure covered material support for the liberation movements, state defence spending, raids into Zambia, loss of human life, destroyed infrastructure, sanctions and opportunity costs' (Banda 1990:12). In 1978 and 1979 Zambia suffered from two air raids on Lusaka (Chakaodza 1993:33).

The international stage, then, was clearly very important and had a considerable impact on the Zambian economy. The present situation in Zambia is no less intertwined with international relations, though fortunately this entanglement is no longer due to the situation of military conflict. The long period of political instability in the Southern African region cost the Zambian economy dearly and was clearly a catalyst on the path to the present debt crisis.

In order to assess Zambia's most recent past and the present situation it is appropriate to return to a more detailed examination of the performance of the economy. As we shall explore below, such performance is related to the fortunes of copper. The post 1975 period is characterised by a massive contraction of the economy leading to it becoming trapped in low level stagnation. Imports declined between 1977 and 1983 from 335 million to 157 million *Kwacha*. By comparison exports fell from 807 million to 550 million *Kwacha* and the total GDP for this period remained at 1447 million *Kwacha* (Mwanza 1992:6,9). In the next section we will examine more closely the background to the present situation including the government's involvement with the I.M.F. and the World Bank (I.B.R.D.). The latter have had important implications for the whole of Zambia, but not least the agricultural sector.

### **A Single Export Commodity: Copper, the 'Boom' Period**

Since the 1920's, Zambia has been heavily dependent on the earnings of a single export commodity, copper (Watson 1958:190, Turok 1989:26). Such dependency has led to a high degree of instability in the economy. The story of the fortunes of the Zambian economy is then to a large degree the story of the changing situation with regard to earnings from the export of copper. The development of Zambia's national infrastructure, including the roads, the railways, and the electricity distribution routes, together with urban population growth and the development of the commercial and industrial sectors along the line of rail, were in the first instance determined to a large extent by the development of the mining industry. In addition the development and

support of commercial agriculture, nation-wide, but in particular along the line of rail, has also been subject to the needs of a growing population in the towns that developed as a result of mining and its support industry. In later years, by contrast, the story is one of a complicated set of relations with international donors and other financial institutions.

The post Second World War period in Zambia (then Northern Rhodesia) saw a constant rise in the price of copper. By the late 1950's Zambia and the Katanga region of the former Belgian Congo (Zaire) supplied approximately 25% of the world's copper (Watson 1958:190). Prices reached a high in 1955. Yet, unfortunately for Zambia, the Central African Federation, made up of Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) and Nyasaland (now Malawi) which was disbanded in 1964, diverted huge sums of money to the coffers of Southern Rhodesia. Despite the fact that the Northern Rhodesian mines of this period provided the largest portion of the Federal Government's income tax revenue, it did not receive the lion's share of the mining profits. Between 1953 and 1964, 70 million pounds were transferred from Northern to Southern Rhodesia (Mwanza 1992). There was, however, during this period substantial economic growth such that by the early 1970's the mining sector accounted for over 40% of the total GDP (Loxley 1990:6). Such growth led to developments in other areas, including the agricultural sector, but this was mostly limited to the line of rail areas and to the commercial farms of European settlers that were 'propped up by government intervention' (Mwanza 1992:2). Many people sought employment on the Copperbelt and in other urban areas during this and earlier periods. A concern with male absenteeism from rural areas has played a prominent role in studies of rural agriculture.<sup>5</sup> The issue of migrancy for employment and male absenteeism is significant. However, in this chapter I limit my discussion to considering, generally, the impact of urban experience and do not deal directly with the issue of migrancy nor male absenteeism.

For the first ten years following the dissolution of the Federation and the achievement of independence by Zambia, there was relative economic stability. The First National Development Plan (1966-1972) achieved most of its targets. The government of Kaunda improved the infrastructure, including education, health, energy and transport. This was made possible by the high price of copper during this period and the tax revenues received from this. As a consequence of the 'boom' many

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<sup>5</sup>This preoccupation with male absenteeism pervades accounts from Audrey Richards (1939) through to later work by Watson (1958) for example, and has been discussed in length by Moore and Vaughan (1994).

people were employed in construction projects and there was still the possibility of finding work in the mine sector. Testament to the successes of this period are the number of African owned stores that sprung up in rural localities, such as Chief Chibale's area in Serenje District where a wide range of goods were sold, including three different types of bottled beer (Long 1968). The ordinance maps printed for the same period also show a number of private air strips located along the line of rail on commercial farm land. In addition, many of these farms today still possess the rusting remains of prestigious jaguar cars.

A number of commentators (see, for example, Watson 1958, 1959, Long 1968, Pottier 1988) concerned with developments in the rural agricultural sector have placed a great deal of emphasis on the growth of the mining industry as a major source of employment for migrant labourers. An argument central to these accounts is that this led to a depletion, in some areas, of male labour due to migrancy. This, in turn, had a significant impact on the availability of male labour for agricultural practice. We may infer then that, so long as there was still the possibility of finding mine employment, there was little or no incentive for people to become involved in commercially-oriented agriculture. Such a proposition does not deny, however, the fact that in various ways people already had long-established experience of commoditised relations. During this period the government itself did not provide the necessary infrastructure or price incentives for agricultural development until the 'boom' period went into decline and until the implementation of the Second National Development Plan (1972-1976). This did not mean, however, that rural people had no interest or need for cash; simply that the mechanisms for generating cash through commercial agricultural production were not in place. Furthermore at this juncture (with the exception of a few limited projects, tobacco for example) people did not have the necessary discursive and practical experience to produce commercial crops.

Despite the opportunity for people to earn money in mine employment and despite the economy being strong, to discuss this 'boom' period as if it were without problems and characterised by increasing profits and levels of production would be too simple. To do so overlooks a number of important criteria and suggests that there was prosperity for all Zambians. There were in fact marked differential rates of growth in Zambia, both regionally and in terms of the different economic sectors (Bates 1976). Experiences of commoditisation varied between localities and social groups. In addition, the prosperous years for Zambia encompass two different political epochs, which had different consequences for various sectors of the community. We must also recognise that the time-frame allocated to the 'good' years

is broad; it is difficult therefore to say with certainty that the whole period was one of prosperity. Looking at the several patterns of statistical growth it may indeed be possible to conclude, for the thirty year 'boom' period, that the economy experienced growth (see, for example, Baldwin 1966, Turok 1989, Loxley 1990, Gardner 1993). For the first three quarters of Zambia's existence as an administrative body (under company rule, colonial rule, the Federation and finally independent Zambia) the country stands out as one of the more affluent of African countries. However, the economy operated on many levels, and for those in rural areas, at some distance from the line of rail, as well as for many urban dwellers, the income situation and the availability of goods and services waxed and waned during this so called 'boom' period. For example, Banda (1990) has documented that formal income levels for many town dwellers were low, necessitating secondary and often illegal employment by young people and women. His account illustrates the differential experience and activities that people have for problem solving. Records of conversations with urban women in Lusaka concerning the necessity of brewing and selling beer, add further testimony to the low levels of income from formal male employment: 'my husband is a labourer, he gets very little money and if I don't help him to find money in this way we cannot have enough food and clothes' (a Chewa woman's comments to Chansa 1955, see below).

Prior to Independence the policies of government that directly affected the Zambian work force were racist and exclusionist in conception. These and other aspects of life on the Copperbelt have been discussed at length and in remarkable detail by Hortense Powdermaker in her book *Copper Town* (1962). These included restricted access to places of entertainment, shops and drinking establishments, and the denial of certain types of employment and economic enterprise to Africans. Indeed most managerial situations and entire trade networks were organised, financed and profited from by Europeans. The possibilities for Africans to become involved in hawking or in small-scale trade were few, except those of an illegal kind. The establishment of trade networks by Europeans supported by the colonial authorities became an important avenue for European expansion and contributed to the spreading of a cash nexus in colonial Zambia (Seleti 1992:154). The urban areas were both administratively and commercially controlled by Europeans, in fact Lusaka had separate White, Asian and African trading zones. Nevertheless, and despite the discriminatory nature of pre-independence government policy, what is clear for this period is that the possibility of formal employment in the mine areas (Copperbelt) and hence the availability of cash to purchase goods and services, and to meet increased tax payments, was higher than it had ever been.

But in the rural areas improvements to infrastructure and the provision of agricultural resources for commercially-oriented production were still very limited for many people. Consequently during the earlier part of the period of growth, for many rural inhabitants the view of town life and the possibilities that existed for employment there remained significant.<sup>6</sup> It was not until Independence that substantial measures were taken to redress the neglect of rural areas. As part of the first two National Development Plans (1966-70 and 1972-76 respectively), the government of Zambia promised to improve agricultural production and transform subsistence agriculture.

There is an interesting tension, then, that develops between two levels of analysis. From a formal economic point of view, there was growth in Zambia until 1973-4 due principally to the increase in the price of copper. Yet, from a more socially discerning perspective, the living conditions of lower income Zambians and those in the rural areas remained quite poor and rudimentary. What growth there was in the economy, then, was by no means evenly distributed and for many years there was a wanton neglect of the rural areas, despite the aspirations and efforts of rural people themselves.

### **The 'Bust' Period: the Collapse of a Single Export**

The post-1975 period is that referred to in this text as the 'bust' period. Problems were exacerbated by falling export and rising import prices, resulting in an increased deficit in Zambia's balance of payments and in the national budget. Mwanza (1992) argues that such exogenous pressures were fuelled by internal policy mistakes resulting in inappropriate pricing policies, the maintenance of an over-valued exchange rate, repressive financial measures and an inefficient parastatal sector headed by the Industrial Development Corporation (later INDECO). It is interesting to note the different priorities given by scholars in the analysis of the economic situation in Zambia. Drawing on a different but not totally conflicting set of discourses 'outside' observers and Zambians view the situation differently. Foreigners often stress the poor performance of the government. For example, Zambia's political economy has been characterised in terms of an uneven distribution of income within state capitalism which, in itself, did not prevent individual Zambians from

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<sup>6</sup>The ways in which 'town' as a social construct is expressed by rural people has been described in detail using the situational method by Long (1968) for the case of 'The Visit of Pati, The Townsman' (1968:166-199).



accumulating capital and branching out into private ventures but which worked to the disadvantage of state enterprises (Gardner 1993:9). It has also been argued that the one-party state, installed in 1972, in effect became a huge bureaucracy, which consumed national income and intervened in policy issues to the extent that party and state structures became indivisible (Chakaodza 1993). By way of contrast, Zambian intellectuals and analysts refer to factors beyond the control of government, such as the oil crisis and the falling price of copper (Mwanza 1992). Despite this contrasting rhetoric - which constitutes part of the politics of 'apportioning blame' - the situation was of course a complex mix of these various perspectives.

By 1990 the extent of the problem amounted to a national debt of 7.2 billion US dollars, with many development strategies failing because they relied too heavily on imports and subsidies. The collapse of the copper price affected both the capacity to import and the government's ability to support the subsidy-dependent sectors including agriculture. In addition, unfavourable weather in the 1980's led to massively increased food imports (a situation that was repeated during the present author's own fieldwork period). There were shortages of raw materials, which led to further reductions in the manufacture of consumer goods leading to more imports, at considerable cost to the government and the consumer. The fiscal system failed to supply government expenditure requirements resulting in increased reliance on the commercial banks and foreign borrowing. At the same time, the government also reduced its expenditure on subsidies and introduced price liberalisations. Between 1977 and 1983 there was little or no investment in infrastructure, particularly in respect to the construction business, transport and communications (Mwanza 1992:6). It became increasingly clear that the problems faced by the government could not be met by relying on domestic solutions and resources, and so Zambia became more and more involved with external institutions.

### **Struggles with the I.M.F. and the World Bank**

As early as 1973 the Zambian government considered the assistance of the international donor community and secured a limited S.D.R. (special drawing right) of 19 million US dollars. This and other early loans had little in the way of attached conditionality, whilst subsequent loans from the I.M.F. were accompanied by severe conditions of practice. The conditions by 1983 imposed included: a reduction in subsidies, decontrol of prices, imposition of credit ceilings to reduce money supply, imposition of ceilings on wage rises, decontrol of interest rates, rescheduling of the repayment of external debt, the devaluation of the *Kwacha*, the introduction of the

auction of foreign exchange, increased private and foreign investment, and the privatisation of the inefficient parastatal sector. At this time Zambia was spending 60% of its foreign exchange on debt servicing.

The reduction of subsidies as a condition of the I.M.F. is perhaps the most obvious aspect of relations with a 'wider order' that had an immediate and dramatic effect on people's lives, resulting in food riots in 1986 and the death of fifteen people. Such political unrest became of great concern to the government: it questioned their ability to handle the debt problems and their monopolisation of almost all national enterprises in the form of parastatals - some for personal gain. This created a dissatisfied electorate. On the 1st May 1987, in fear that its harsh conditionality would lose them political favour and lead to their downfall, the Zambian government abandoned the I.M.F. structural adjustment programme. Following such a move, 1988 saw a good year for Zambia, principally because of a good harvest, but things quickly deteriorated again and, in 1989, the government rejoined the I.M.F. - I.B.R.D. (World Bank) fold. The I.M.F. and World Bank had, during the year or so of suspension, fought a propaganda war against Zambia such that other international donors felt uncomfortable in offering them help. The political world mood, at least rhetorically, favoured countries whose political organisation was based on a multi-party democratic system. Zambia did not fit this model and consequently was disfavoured.

Conditionality was re-imposed by the I.M.F. and Zambia re-instated some of the harsh economic measures that in the first place had put them under such great domestic pressure. In summary, those conditions that had the most impact on people's immediate livelihoods were the removal of subsidies, the devaluation of the *Kwacha* and introduction of the auction system of foreign exchange. The auction system brought with it a high degree of regressive distribution of incomes which pauperised many people and imposed serious strains on the country's political system (Mwanza 1992:20). Furthermore the country witnessed an unprecedented rate of malnutrition, not seen since the 1920's and 30's (Moore and Vaughan 1994). The problems mounted, resulting in the elections of October 1991 and landslide victory for President Chiluba and the M.M.D. party.

The issue of subsidies has been, and continues to be a highly emotive issue in Zambia. It is not something new: as early as the 1940's, the colonial government implemented a policy to hold maize prices low in order to restrain increases in urban living costs (Kydd 1988:143). These measures effectively remained in place until the late 1980's. Under such a system producer prices were negotiated between the

representatives of large-scale commercial farmers and the government, taking into account a number of criteria, including cost of production, fair return to the producer, import parity, export parity, national self sufficiency and political acceptability (Dodge 1977:92). Hence the removal of subsidies became an issue of great concern for all those involved and in part accounts for why maize has always remained a highly political crop. The problem was multi-faceted. On the one hand, continued subsidisation was adding to the country's debt but, on the other, the removal of subsidies on maize meal could have serious effects, as witnessed in the 1986 riots and political unrest. The subsidisation of agricultural inputs and the buying price for harvested maize created a further problem, namely small-scale farming enterprises would be adversely affected by the removal of such subsidies. Thus subsidising agriculture may incur several social costs to government and increase their debt, while on the other hand, importing grain from South Africa and Zimbabwe also expends a good deal of valuable foreign exchange.

The following section examines in more detail the agricultural sector and how national policy level interventions have affected the rural areas. Here we concentrate on an analysis of the involvement of rural people in a wide range of income generating activities in response to changes in the economy.

### **The Agricultural Sector**

Agricultural policy and the other concerns of government at the level of the national economy are intricately related. In this section the discussion will focus on those facets of government policy that have had a significant impact on small-scale farming. Although over time the emphasis on different cash crops has changed, the single most important crop to receive attention throughout both the colonial and post-independence periods has been maize. Hence, the context of maize production becomes crucial to understanding rural producer's organisational strategies vis-à-vis their livelihood practices. Rural people's involvement with both grain production and the possibility of generating, using grain, an income through secondary or 'off farm' practices (in particular, beer) must be examined against an understanding of the broader context of the discourses relating to both government maize policy and agricultural practices. Such policy can be seen both positively and negatively but nevertheless infrastructural interventions of the kind that promote increased commercial production become part of the possible resource repertoire of farmers and therefore play an important part in the organisation of productive life. We will return later to this point in Chapter 4, when we consider farmer involvement in the

acquisition of credit and fertiliser.

After a short, selective review of the situation during the pre-independence periods the discussion will consider the policy measures implemented during the years of economic decline. Of particular relevance to the following chapters of this thesis are the issues relating to crop pricing and the subsidisation of agriculture. These are perhaps the two most important aspects of government policy that affect the plans and possibilities of small-scale farmers in a direct and often uncompromising way illustrating the way in which different discourse practices become fused in practical livelihood contexts. This relationship between small-scale farmers and the wider economic scenario I will illustrate, in this chapter, with a brief review of the marketing situation following liberalisation in 1992.

During the 'boom' years, there was very little invested in agriculture outside of the line of rail areas. In fact there are little data concerning African agricultural production for the colonial period,<sup>7</sup> which in itself suggests a lack of interest or commitment to such areas (Dodge 1977:41). For the line of rail areas, however, according to Baldwin, 'in 1937 the mines purchased 80% of the beef consumed in the territory, and even in 1959 the mining areas consumed 50% of total livestock slaughtered for commercial markets' (Baldwin 1966:141). At this time the mines also bought 25% of all maize sales on the domestic market (Dean 1970:11-13). These figures show the extent to which commercial agriculture during this period was sponsored by the existence of the mine markets for produce. The rural population outside the commercial zones were largely ignored by the colonial authorities and until the last few years of colonial rule functioned mostly as a labour reserve. The colonial policy of separate and unequal treatment of African and European agriculturalists, that was also divided in geographical terms, led to serious problems in the agricultural sector at independence.<sup>8</sup> The inequalities created a situation in which the vast majority of rural inhabitants were virtually unsupported in their agricultural endeavours. Such an imbalance can be seen in the regional data available for crop sales in the years immediately before independence. For 1961, the line of rail

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<sup>7</sup>The data that does exist come predominantly from sociological sources including Richards (1939) for the Bemba, Gluckman's works on the Tonga and Lozi (1943, 1955), work by Allan (1949), Trapnell (1953), and Peters (1950).

<sup>8</sup>Moore and Vaughan (1994) provide a detailed discussion of colonial attitudes and interventions. These were primarily concerned with ecology and environmental problems and the need to administer the rural population for taxation purposes. Agricultural development was not a central feature of these concerns.

provinces accounted for 89.3% of all maize sales as against 2.8% for other areas (excluding the Eastern province which sold 8.0%), (Kydd 1988:46).

There were a few initiatives during the colonial period concerned with rural development but these were limited in scope and application. One example is that of the 'peasant farming schemes' established in 1949, five of which were located in Serenje District of Central Province. According to Moffat, the main objective of these schemes was, '(1) the need for a stable rural economy to permit the African to make an adequate living on the land, (2) the concentration of the population in suitable areas since until this should come about costs of social and economic services were too high, and (3) to check absorption of able bodied men which threatened to reach a point dangerous to social stability' (Extracts from Minutes of the Administrative Conference of Provincial Commissioners and Heads of Social Services Departments, quoted in Seur 1993:72). Underlying Moffat's concerns we can sense the dominant mood of administrators during the colonial period. Although concerned with rural standards of living and the farmers' plight in making a living from the land, there were also fears about the growing number of migrants to the Copperbelt for mine employment. In addition the dominant view with regard to agricultural practice, especially in the Central and Northern Provinces, was that the 'traditional' methods of agriculture, in particular *citemene*, were highly destructive and were beginning to show vulnerability (Peters 1950, Moore and Vaughan 1994). What motivated these initiatives for rural development was no doubt a combination of administrative self interest and genuine concern for the plight of rural Zambians. These interventions were small scale and limited in scope; what is more they were regionally based. Yet what was significant about the pre-independence period in Zambia was not the extent of development initiatives towards the rural African producers but rather the extent to which the production of maize and its marketing was dominated by the commercial farmers and central government. In 1964, the commercial farmers along the line of rail produced 60% of all the country's marketed maize; and the remainder came from smaller scale farmers living in well-serviced areas in Eastern, Central and Southern Provinces. Agricultural policy, then, during this period was directed primarily towards maize production and the commercial farms. This focus continued with independence but policy was broadened to include other sectors of the rural population.

Agricultural policy after independence fluctuated with the emphasis being focused at different times on social considerations, economic needs and political goals (Wood 1985), but with the major aim being predominantly to secure urban food needs without recourse to importation. In line, however, with its socialist aims the

government professed to reduce inequality in the rural areas. It stressed increased 'African' participation in marketed agriculture so as to reduce the reliance on the predominantly European commercial farms and in so doing to redress the economic imbalance between regions. Following Colonial policy there was a continued emphasis on maize production. This involved, for independent Zambia, a monopoly in the trade of maize and state control over producer and retail prices. Some of the initiatives for increased production included: subsidies on farmers' inputs, the expansion of the network of input supply and crop collection depots, extension support and advice services, farmer training, credit provision and subsidised land preparation. All of this constituted an attempt to boost the production of maize and became part of a 'back to the land' policy (Second and Third National Development Plans 1971, 1979, see also Moore and Vaughan 1994:206). To do this the National Maize Marketing board (NAMboard) took over the remote depots formerly run by the Agricultural Rural Marketing Board. NAMboard had previously run only those depots located in the more accessible parts of the country. Similar to other initiatives encouraging the centralisation of control over economic resources, this created one monolithic parastatal organisation that ran the network of input supply and crop collection system. These measures led to considerable investment in the agricultural sector and accounted in part for the fact that production levels for grain crops between 1975 and 1988 almost doubled. National maize purchases are recorded at 6,216,000 90kg bags for 1975, rising to 11,276,000 90kg bags in 1988, and in Northern province between 1975 and 1988 maize production rose by an estimated 850% (Moore and Vaughan 1994:206). The reasons for this were straight forward enough: the National Development Plans for that period gave priority to the cultivation of maize and emphasised new national marketing structures with subsidised transport and fertiliser use and large increases in ministerial spending on agriculture (Loxley 1990).

One of the consequences of the increase in production suggests that there was a narrowing of rural-urban income differentials, which until this point had been wide enough to lead to very uneven patterns of national development. Despite significant increases in the amount of maize sold at various depots, and declining opportunities for earning cash in urban areas the extent to which there was a 'real' narrowing of income disparity between rural and urban areas is difficult to assess. The inadequacies of infrastructural arrangements during the 1980's led to delays in the arrival of inputs, the deterioration of transport, and the late or non-collection of maize that had been sold to the marketing organisation. Also farmers faced many difficulties in acquiring the credit they needed to purchase inputs (Moore and Vaughan

1994:207).

While continuing to inject funds aimed at increasing production the government ran up a huge foreign debt. Thus, as the situation for many rural people improved since they now had a local source of cash, so the national economy declined to the extent that, though farmers in remote areas may have had cash, there were increasingly fewer goods in the stores for them to purchase. This situation is clearly illustrated for Chief Chibale's area of Serenje District (see Seur 1992, Chapter 7). From the period of early involvement in hybrid maize production (during the 1960's) through to the maize boom period of the 1980's, Seur documents the fact that many respondents stressed that it was common for them to have a regular or stable source of income from crop sales, which enabled them to 'purchase items such as clothing, blankets, local beer, salt, sugar, cooking oil, soap, washing powder, vegetables, meat and dried fish' (ibid:203). Indeed many of these goods were available in local stores. In the longer run such an income enabled a number of female and male farmers to purchase cattle and farming implements as well as consumer durables such as furniture, beds, bicycles, watches, radios and galvanised roofing sheets. Yet farmers themselves often argued that the success of the inhabitants of Nchimishi in Chief Chibale was not necessarily reflected in their ability to purchase particular consumer goods. Some respondents suggested that this was due to the devaluation of the *Kwacha* coupled with the high rate of inflation. During the late 1980's, when Seur carried out his research, many goods had become scarce or had completely disappeared from the Serenje shops and were not available in the rural areas at all. During my own stay there in 1987 it was not always possible to buy Coca Cola or beer.

Government interventions in the agricultural sector, of course, had a number of important consequences to the producer. These become obscured if we concentrate exclusively on the available statistical data concerning increases in production levels. One critical dimension mentioned by many small-scale farmers was the increasing specialisation of agriculture. Although, as I underline in the following chapters, people always exercise choice with regard to their agricultural activities, even if specialisation has gone apace, this process has not occurred at the expense of existing forms of agriculture. The dominant discourse practices associated with local forms of agriculture, then, remain an important focus for people. It has also been argued that the specialisation of agriculture is likely to result in reduced food security in the event of a poor maize harvest (Loxely 1990) and in increased demands on labour and access to credit which are now becoming major problems (an issue discussed at more length



in Chapter 4). A further issue relates to how smaller-scale farmers view the benefits of maize cultivation. Seur provides some account of this for Nchimishi in the 1980's and details the advantages of maize production over other crops. In the 1990's the Adaptive Research Planning Team (A.R.P.T.), Central Province, also collected a good deal of data that testifies to both the importance and the benefits of maize in people's lives (A.R.P.T. 1990, 1992). Their data and my own show that people value maize as a food security crop: with equal amounts of stored maize and millet, maize is said to last longer. It is valued for consumption, for income and for beer brewing. It must be remembered, however, that maize did not entirely replace other staple food crops, though for many it became an important staple and cash crop. People retained a diversified agricultural base, knowing from experience that this strategy provided them with better food security. The different priorities and labour constraints for men and women in patterns of agricultural production and consumption fostered this diversification.

Perhaps the most burdensome of factors associated with agricultural policy was the issue of subsidisation. This issue was very much a thorn in the side of the U.N.I.P. government, and cost them considerably. Subsidies are central to interpreting the huge increase in maize production during the 'back to the land' initiatives of the 1980's. Quite simply, subsidies for the agricultural sector involve consumer and producer support. But since 1982 and as part of I.M.F.'s conditionality measures, subsidies have been reduced - though with considerable difficulty - as is highlighted by the increased consumer price for milled maize flour which sparked off the urban riots of 1986. From the producers' perspective, the subsidisation of inputs (especially fertiliser) made them affordable and played an important part in the increases in production that took place between 1975 and 1988. The price farmers received for their maize crop placed the burden for meeting transport costs on the government, thus encouraging further production. Hence the gradual erosion and subsequent removal of these subsidies placed more and more of a financial burden on both producer and consumer.

The specific problems encountered by smaller-scale producers with the removal of subsidies will be addressed in more detail later when I examine the 1992/93 season in Serenje District. Suffice it to say that the present situation is such that the cost of inputs, for example, can no longer be met without the assistance of agricultural loans. Although it remains to be seen what will happen in the coming seasons, it is highly unlikely that we will witness again the huge increases in maize production that we once did; nor perhaps will people again see maize as the 'saving

grace' for their incomes. Of course maize production will, in varying degrees of intensity, remain but an important question that remains unanswered is how far people will turn their attention towards other productive activities and generate cash through other means. The following section of this chapter illustrates further the difficulties faced by both the government and the small-scale farmer during the 1993 marketing season, drawing attention to the precarious position that maize occupies as the dominant cash and staple crop.

### **The 'Maize Crisis' of 1993**

In October 1991 there was a long awaited change of governments and the Movement for Multi-party Democracy (M.M.D.) took power. It introduced a restructuring of the political and economic system along the lines of the neo-liberal democratic 'North'. Despite the difficulties faced with inheriting an 'economy under pressure' (rising cost of goods in the stores and rapid inflation), most people expressed satisfaction with the change in the political system. Many of the road blocks disappeared and the rhetoric was now one of 'freedom of speech', 'liberalisation' and 'privatisation'. In response to pressure from the I.M.F. and the World Bank, Zambia has been burdened with the sale and reorganisation of a huge number of state run enterprises (parastatals). This has affected all sectors but with varying degrees of success. The government continues to hold a monopoly with respect to the provision of agricultural services and buying produce, despite opening the way for the private sector.

In 1993 the opportunity for private sector maize buying agents was encouraged. The season, however, was plagued with difficulties, not least as a consequence of the previous years drought. The principle criteria for these new agents included having adequate storage and transport facilities. This limited, somewhat, the number of agents who were eligible for such ventures. In addition the government continued to exercise strict export controls, setting an upper limit of two million 90kg bags of maize. The fear of coping with food shortages in the face of another drought was upper most in the mind of President Chiluba. Despite this applications for export licenses reached ten million bags by July 1993 (Weekly post 23-29 July 1993:7). For that season there was an estimated surplus of eighteen million bags, and many smaller farmers experienced much higher yields than they had the previous two seasons.

It was assumed by the farming community (both small-scale and commercial farmers alike) that the price of maize would be dictated by 'market forces', in line with the political rhetoric. Expectations were that a 90kg bag would fetch more than

10,000 *Kwacha*; indeed the lack of maize in neighbouring countries (for example, Angola, Mozambique, and Zaire) created a clandestine market for maize meal that had persisted to push up the price of maize. This was common knowledge and often reported on T.V. and in the newspapers. With the very real possibility to export and the increasing price of maize meal in urban areas, it is not surprising that farmers expected the price to reflect the market conditions of the region. The discourses of the market that people are exposed to in a variety of ways are clearly important and show the extent to which people make evaluations based on these wider arenas. In addition to this, the removal of input subsidies meant that for the farming community to receive a reasonable return for the investments they would have to ask a high price for produce. Interviews with both small-scale farmers in Serenje and commercial farmers in Kabwe, lend testament to such expectations.

In an attempt to soothe an increasingly frustrated urban population the M.M.D. government fostered a 'food affordable to all' approach. They therefore suggested a floor price for maize that should not exceed 7,000 *Kwacha*. This suggestion led to outrage and disappointment amongst farmers. Although the government wanted to encourage what they called a liberal economy and as such did not actually set the ceiling price for maize their suggestion was enough for pricing to remain low.<sup>9</sup> Maize has long been a politically sensitive crop in Zambia, but perhaps not so markedly as in 1993. The system of subsidisation that existed under the previous government created an unusual situation. Farmers living near to towns could sell all their maize and buy mealie meal, thereby realising a profit at the expense of the government.

The country's annual consumption of maize totals approximately ten million (90kg) bags. At the suggested price this would cost the government seventy billion *Kwacha*. Purchasing began in early July principally by the loan institutions who negotiated between the millers and farmers to set the price. The National Milling Company began to buy directly from farmers and transporters who were given the status of official buying agents. The market price was at this time between 5800 and 7500 *Kwacha* per 90kg bag. Many farmers held on to their crops during this period in the hope that the price would increase. However, as the maize came on to the market the price of mealie meal in urban areas actually dropped. Although the government released money to the loan institutions for purchases as sales increased funds were

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<sup>9</sup>It was suggested to me, by a number of sources, that as a result of previous experiences with a dictatorial leadership, it would take time before they actively stood up and questioned the directives of the ruling party.

exhausted very quickly, resulting in the loan institutions giving no more than credit receipts for the maize they purchased. The farmers were then told to wait until the government could release the necessary funds. It is customary for small-scale farmers to experience such delays in payment for their crops, ordinarily the sales receipts they are given must be exchanged at the District loans offices for cheques which they then cash at the banks. To overcome the delays in 1993, many farmers in the Serenje area went directly to the stores with their receipts and purchased goods on credit providing the crop receipts as security. In fact in Serenje the store keepers had made agreements with the marketing union to receive their payments against these receipts directly from the union, who collect the farmers produce.

Maize purchasing continued throughout August and September, and the annual closing date for purchases (September 30th) was extended to buy the remaining bags. Sales were primarily delayed because of the lack of government funds. There were even reports that the salaries of government workers in education and agricultural extension were diverted into accounts to pay for maize.<sup>10</sup> Reports in the national newspapers shed light on the difficulties faced by the government: for example, in late September the buying agents owed farmers seventeen billion *Kwacha* and had purchased 6.1 million bags (Weekly Post 1-7 October 1993:10).

The 'crisis' hit both commercial sector and small-scale farmers alike. The commercial farmers who relied on commercial bank loans, with high interest rates (between 140% and 150%), had great difficulty in simply covering their investments. Some sold their maize as quickly as possible, in order to lessen the cost of interest payments, others talked of boycotting sales and withholding their maize. By the middle of October the commercial banks began calling in their loans and the commercial farmers had no choice but to seek other ways of raising the money they needed. Options for these farmers included making private deals with transporters who had acquired export licenses and selling off surplus agricultural equipment also became a common occurrence. A number of commercial farmers in the Kabwe area became official buying agents, others bought clandestinely from the immediate rural area in order to add maize to their own stocks. They paid exceptionally low prices (as little as ZK3500 per 90kg bag) to the small-scale farmers who faced their own problems and also needed cash.

The situation for small-scale farmers during such periods of crisis was no less

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<sup>10</sup>During this period the agricultural extension staff in Kamena received their salaries for August a month late (fieldnotes 13/10/93).

significant. However, the financial stakes for these people were considerably lower. Interest rates on loans received from the credit institutions are set between 40% and 50%. Despite the low investments made compared to commercial farms, the scale of the farming enterprises in rural Serenje and the lower income levels of many smaller farmers makes the need for cash no less significant amongst this group of farmers. The ways in which such problems are overcome by people in Kamena of Serenje District is addressed later in the thesis.

It is in the context of such difficulties that we see an increasing diversification of livelihood strategies in both rural and urban areas. The consequences of change at the level of the wider political and economic arenas has historically had an effect on the livelihood practices of Zambians. The 1993 season in this respect was no different, although due to the significant changes that took place there was a good deal of uncertainty for people. Problems were overcome in a variety of imaginative and resourceful ways, which illustrate that the discourse of market practice may be powerful but it is by no means immovable nor the only significant orientator of livelihood actions. In the remainder of this chapter I will return to the urban scene to look at the various ways in which income and livelihood options become manifest with specific reference to beer drinking and consumption practices. The focus of the chapter shifts then to examine beer consumption and production practices and to exploring how such practices represent the localisation of broader discursive experience. I will, then, examine the various ways in which value and meaning have been ascribed to beer in respect of its various contexts of urban significance. This is important as in rural areas beer is increasingly important in the context of commoditised values and relationships that affect the many practices of consumption.

### **Interpreting Value: Income Diversification and Social Practice**

It would be naive to assume that in the early phases of industrial expansion and urban growth those who came to town simply shed their own value notions and associated sets of discourse and adopted new ways in the face of other more dominant discourses. Certainly the influence of European values and modes of behaviour are significant, but not all pervasive. In this section, I will consider the value associations for the Zambian population of varying backgrounds in respect of both the different local and wider discourse practices. I will focus on drinking practices in order to assess the way in which the value associations that developed in urban areas reflect a mixture or variety of identifiable but nevertheless partially represented discourse practices. I contend that such associations of value have become part of rural

discourses of value, and that the emergence of these social constructions is part of a more general appreciation of Zambians' exposure to the wider socio-economic arenas central to the growth and decline of the national economy. I argue that the wider matrix of discourses within which such practices and constructions are located is integral not only to understanding the significance and intensity of such activities, but also the meaning given to these activities and the goods which are central to them.

It is useful to consider the changing social and historical context of beer brewing and drinking practices in an urban setting, as these have a relevance for understanding the changing contexts of the production and consumption of beer in rural areas. Colson and Scudder (1988), for example, draw attention to the fact that drinking is learned behaviour, and that prolonged visits to town provided the opportunity for rural people to experience drinking in an urban setting both in bars, and at private homes, 'shebeens'. Active involvement in the various contexts of beer consumption, both in urban and rural areas provides an opportunity for people to internalise and hence to localise their experiences of beer consumption and production practices. Indeed many rural inhabitants have some experience of urban or peri-urban life, if not directly then through the recollections of the experiences of family and friends.

### **The Increasing Importance of Beer Sales; Restricted Purchases and Illegal Brewing**

In 1919 an international agreement was signed that effectively banned the supply of all European liquor to Africans and restricted them to traditional beverages. Such measures were passed because of the Europeans general fear that the African labour force would succumb to the 'white man's fire water' in the same way that American and Australian aboriginal peoples had been affected (Ashton 1960). Such motives were not only ideologically racist but was also significantly influenced by economic factors. During the 1920's, and no doubt in part as a result of the harsh legislation, there was a rapid commercialisation of illicit grain beer production amongst Africans in the town setting. This only increased the determination of the white authorities to bring alcohol use in urban areas under state control. By the 1930's the British effectively banned all African brewing in towns and strongly encouraged the white-settler controlled municipalities to brew and sell grain beer at beer halls modelled on those established in Durban, South Africa, in the early part of this century (Ambler 1990:295-296).

'The requirement that drinking be confined to beer halls and under the strict control of a white supervisor in itself implied a fear, notably among the white settlers who controlled municipal governments, that wide spread drinking would threaten the security of white residential areas. That the beer halls had to be fenced and were permitted to open only during daylight hours underscored those worries. Embedded within concerns about unregulated drinking were fears that alcohol made Africans aggressive and violent, and that white women might become the targets of those impulses' (Ambler 1990:297).

At a conference of East African Governors in August of 1945 European attitudes were beginning to change and it was

'recognised that African society was no longer an undifferentiated whole. Africans were breaking loose from their tribal shackles and forming new associations, they were becoming a new generation of town dwellers' (Ashton 1960:5).

A concern for economic returns remained central to the agenda, however, and in view of the rise of black marketeering in European liquor, beer and wine, 'it was argued that if the supply (of liquor, beer and wine, that was undermining the morals of African urban communities) became legal, Africans could make the choice between their own Native beer and the European product with a clear conscience, and normal economic forces would operate to stabilise the situation' (1960:6). The ban on purchases was lifted in Nyasaland (now Malawi) in 1947, in Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) in 1948 and in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) in 1957. The African Representative council aired the views of Zambians and continuously pressured for Africans to have drinking rights on a par with Euro-Africans and Europeans and the rights to make and sell beer. Despite the more liberal attitudes of the authorities during this period, it remained illegal, in urban areas, to brew versions of traditional grain beer. The local authorities maintained a monopoly over the production and sale of their own 'native beers' through the beer halls, run by the municipalities and the mines. The revenue from the beer halls was intended to support the welfare of Africans and pay for their amenities. Records from the Broken Hill Management Board for 1947 and 1948 Native Canteen Fund clearly show how the money raised from beer sales was spent (see Appendix 4). The issue of illicit brewing and the conditions of beer halls remained contentious and it was reported that 'natives rumoured to intend boycotting beer halls due to stringent action now being taken by the police against illicit brewers', and the report of one welfare officer for 1947 reads,

'Beer hall music has had to be cancelled owing to a 'short' accounting for the amplifier breakdown..... I am hoping that some other means of



providing music for the beer hall can be adopted. Without music I am afraid it will lose its popularity which will mean more illegitimate revenue for private beer brewers'.<sup>11</sup>

If the situation created problems for the authorities, these were small in comparison to the problems faced on a daily basis by the African urban dwellers. Despite lifting the ban on purchases Africans were still restricted from drinking in the places they chose. This was as a direct result of separatist policies and the respective income disparity between Europeans and Africans which resulted in effective economic apartheid. Traditional drinking practices and traditional beverages are closely associated with people's sense of identity. To this extent the illicit brews that the colonial administration so feared were symbolically important for the new urban dwellers. Drinking 'illicit' grain beer, revived for people a sense of rural, perhaps tribal, but certainly African identity. Such choices and the autonomy of drinking in the home of a welcoming and hospitable African hostess became a way implicitly and explicitly to reassert a sense of African social identity. An account written in 1955 by Chansa lends weight to the problems faced by African residents in Lusaka, and illustrates the problems faced in trying to police the brewing of illicit beer. An African Police inspector on visiting an ANC secretary's wife's home to drink remarked, after drinking,

'We know the houses to protect; the houses of good men who are high in the community. This is the way to teach African people our proper aim in the police force. In the police we do not hate our fellow African people, but because of the law, bad or good we are forced to arrest them. We know beer is food to any person and we drink African beer in the villages and we have to drink it too in towns. Once you arrest too many for illicit beer brewing the African public will hate you' (Chansa 1955:26).

Not with standing the support of the local police, the continual harassment of the illicit brewers by the police led to growing protests by the women of Lusaka. On May 21st 1954, women in Lusaka marched on the District Commissioners headquarters to demand the right to brew and sell grain beer in their compounds. The 2000 or so women, many of whom carried infants on their backs presented their case, which centred on five main points:

1. Our husbands get low wages and we have large families. On our incomes we must pay tax and rents, church fees etc.

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<sup>11</sup>Minutes of African Welfare Advisory Committee (A.W.A.C.) meeting 31/1/47.

2. The Government does not allow us to buy spirits (whiskey, brandy and gin). They say it is too strong. Why should the Government forbid us to brew our National beer which is not strong to us?

3. To us beer is food.

4. If the Government is afraid that we will make business out of beer there should be a law to allow us to drink African beer without selling it.

5. If the Government is convinced that we shall make a business of beer brewing then we can be allowed to sell beer at the beer garden under the Municipal Authority and pay a small sum of money; not more than 2/6 per day for each seller. (Haworth et al 1981:12)

These statements reveal the values that beer had for the women and it is interesting to consider how closely they echo the present situation in Kamena. The fact that beer is considered food, is important as a source of income, and that the consumption of certain forms of beer reflect a sense of identity are all important facets of understanding the way in which beer is valued by inhabitants of rural Serenje. The following statements by women recorded in 1955 by Chansa, lend further support to the ways in which grain beer was appreciated and valued for them at that time.

'I sell beer to earn some money and partly to drink it' (Lozi woman).

'I sell beer to earn money so that it helps me to return to my tribal area quickly. The money that my husband earns from his carpentry work is not enough for us in the family' (Mbundu woman).

'My husband gets 80/- as a labourer, on this money I cannot feed my children and clothe them well. My husband and I cannot drink beer on 80/- so I brew for our consumption and also to earn money' (Nsenga woman). (Chansa 1955:15)

The women's grievances demonstrate the changed function, frequency, attitude, social setting and symbolic associations surrounding beer brewing. Its function had become almost solely a money making device in order to survive in the urban setting (Smith 1973). To a large extent the sales of home produced grain beer in the urban areas was encouraged by legislative measures introduced by successive colonial administrations.<sup>12</sup> The space set aside for urban Zambians to drink was not favoured by all. The quality and price deterred some whilst for others it was the

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<sup>12</sup>For detailed accounts of the legislation see, Chicken 1948 and Ashton 1960.

places they did not like. At the beer halls men brewed the beer, traditionally a woman's task and there was no way to ask for a taste or *djonko*. In addition some considered the municipal beer halls to be dirty (Chansa 1955:31). The grubby physicality of the spaces that were the beer halls and the reasons for people's dislike of such large and inhospitable places illustrates very clearly how important beer consumption practices are for the construction of social identity. Despite the negative aspects of beer halls they remained important social arenas, and were lively places (Powdermaker 1962). The beer halls were organised so that the money spent there would provide funds for 'African amenities', another resentment by working people.

'I could not get a municipal house as there are none empty and even so the rents are too high for my pocket, having five children. So I built our house with burnt brick and thatch all myself at Kalingalinga where we were not suppose to stay but are allowed because there is no where else for us. We have no water, no lights, no schools and no lavatories, but the municipality says they will build us a big beer hall. If we drink beer to give profits then one day there will be water supplied for us in taps. How much beer must I drink beer before my children can drink water? Do other countries make people drink beer to collect money for water?' (Hall 1967:130)

In an urban context it was not only the concerns of a city-based legislature that had an effect on the way in which grain beer was brewed and consumed. Such criteria may have fuelled the rising tide of beer, due to restricted access to commercially available brews. But perhaps more significantly, and as the following chapters of this thesis demonstrate, beer drinking is very closely related to a peoples sense of identity and their shared history of 'tribal' and rural experiences. Customary ritual practices of rural Zambians may have practically disappeared in towns but the other social functions of which beer is an integral part nevertheless persist. Beer is important for bestowing and receiving respect and through it expressions of co-operation, trust and social participation are articulated. Despite this an important aspect of beer brewing for urban dwellers is the cash raised from its sales. The beer parties organised in the homes of women in urban compounds are more comfortable places, where the atmosphere is more akin to the close knit community feeling of rural villages. However, drinking in bars and other public places with many strangers, requires a different code of behaviour and a different style of drinking to the communally consumed *cipumu* or *katubi* of the Bemba and the Lala. As some commentators have remarked, men's interest in beer was not just in drinking but in getting drunk (Haworth 1981:1.24). Similarly the commonly heard saying in Two-Ten compound, Lusaka, intimates the same sentiment of drinking, 'to get satisfied is to get drunk'

(Chansa 1955:17).

The changing function of beer in the urban context is echoed by similar changes regarding beer in rural areas. The legislative restrictions imposed on brewing in urban areas never had quite the same impact on brewing in a rural context, although along the Line of Rail brewing permits were obligatory (Chicken 1948). The economic significance of beer in urban areas cannot be overlooked, because it gave cause for beer to enter the political arena, and has been used strategically by both Europeans and Africans. Access to beer became a significant political issue (particularly for urban inhabitants) in the run up to independence (Ambler 1990), and again during 1990 and 1991 when U.N.I.P. monopolised beer sales from the National Brewery.<sup>13</sup> Beer is so important to the people of Zambia that it often rhetorically enters political debate. Beer has always been an important focus of political action in short because of the role it plays in the political mechanisms of authority through various traditions of tribute and libation. This is significant in the rural areas but stretches into an urban context and the political arenas found there. An understanding of an urban context and the wider arenas is important for understanding the increasing commoditisation of beer in rural Serenje. Many people in the Kamena area, for example, have experience of town life and practices of drinking in that context. There are also a number who are retired urban employees, who bring with them ideas, attitudes and expectations that become internalised in a local rural context. The beer most prevalent in Kamena is called *katata* and is made from maize. This beer is undoubtedly urban in origin and is mentioned by both Chicken (1948) Chansa (1955). It is similar to the beer brewed by the national brewery known as *Chibuku* and originates in an urban context from the municipal beer halls.<sup>14</sup>

In view of the increasing commercialisation of agriculture, particularly with hybrid maize cultivation in rural areas it is not difficult to see how traditional practices associated with beer drinking are being modified in various ways. Such modifications include; the diminishing importance of libation to the ancestors; modifications with regard to labour recruitment and the provision of beer; and the increasing significance of beer as a source of income. The commoditisation of

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<sup>13</sup>Conversation with the late Magoey T. Sigauke, bar owner and entrepreneur, in Serenje 13/2/92. See Schatzberg (1980) for a discussion of politics and beer vis-à-vis social and political success for bureaucracy and business in Zaire.

<sup>14</sup>Beal (1945:5) provides a description of the way in which beer is made in the beer hall brewery of Mufulira. This compares closely with the description provided by Chansa (1955:50) for *katata* beer, which is itself identical in principle to the recipe I collected in Kamena for 1993.

agriculture, involvement with credit and the ever present role of cash in the rural economy, in conjunction with other discursive and predominately urban based practices, lead to shifts in the meanings and values associated with beer. The use of beer as part of a broad range of livelihood strategies becomes central to understanding the ways in which social practice is integral to the value constructions of beer. In this study (Chapters 5 and 6) I examine the significance of beer for actor's coping strategies, particularly in the face of national economic strife, a poor infrastructural base and the drought.

## **Summary**

During the different periods of expansion and contraction in their economy, Zambians have in various ways not only been exposed to new experiences but have been actively involved in constructing their own lifeworlds in respect to such changing circumstances. The creativity and agency of people in this context has lead to the emergence of a range of modified and reorganised livelihood practices centred on small-scale business trading and income ventures. Any visitor to Zambia will immediately notice the number of people who are engaged in commercial activities, from the many motor vehicle workshops that operate from street corners, to young children selling chewing gum and soft drinks on the buses and women selling produce in many markets and at vantage points along the main roads. In addition to these obvious activities there are also a huge number of 'hidden' income opportunities. These include the sale of goods from people's homes which include such items as bottled beer and soft drinks, home made bread and sweet buns and garden vegetables. A variety of services such as hair dressing and tailoring are also common place.

In the rural areas we also find a large number of possibilities for people to diversify their income strategies. These are intricately related to their agricultural practices, often with regard to those items cultivated for sale, hence they become obscured and from an observers perspective are difficult to see in such an obvious way as similar urban pursuits. Such activities are not confined to any particular group or income bracket, rather it can be said that such an array of diverse income possibilities are, when given the right opportunities, practised by people from all walks of life. Not only amongst the poorer income groups in town, but in the face of high inflation many government employees and professionally employed people are finding it increasingly necessary to broaden their income bases. For example, the Ministry of Agriculture employees at the research station in Kabwe grow maize crops there to sell in order to boost their meagre incomes. These people are ideally situated

to grow fairly large areas of maize, but cultivation of small gardens and crops is not unusual and it is common to see maize and other crops growing on the many small plots of land in and around densely populated urban housing areas. The items of consumption grown and the other small ventures contribute greatly to household income and, even in the more affluent residential districts people keep chickens, grow garden vegetables and it is always possible to find beer being sold.<sup>15</sup>

Such diversification in terms of income strategies is not something new, nor are they a direct result of a failing economy. It would be presumptuous to assume that the national level economy is so determinist in its influence. However, it remains a powerful discourse (both rhetorically and practically) that cannot be overlooked. In rural areas food security has been so dependent on the partial and often precarious integration into the cash economy (i.e. the possibility to generate cash) that seeking ways to raise money is vital. The devaluation of the *Kwacha*, for example, has had a significant impact on wages, and inflation has left many without the income they need to purchase even the most rudimentary basket of items of household consumption. Increasing diversification of income possibilities is one important strategy by which men and women raise the additional income they need. In this respect people may operate a certain degree of choice or autonomy with regard to how they secure an income and consequently remain active agents who make choices in the construction of their own life worlds. Such choices are limited, however, by access to the various resources, skills, and social networks that exist within a given person's or group's social world. In rural areas it is agricultural practice that is central to understanding this nexus of resources, skills and networks.

This thesis contends that the opportunities for diversified income strategies in both the rural and urban areas have in recent times become increasingly important, and that people have found both new and existing ways to secure the cash they need in the face of a deteriorating and unstable economy. During such periods of difficulty, due either to adverse economic conditions or to natural/environmental disasters, people make the best strategic use of possible income generating activities. This entails operating within a wide range of discourse practices and directly involves both the experiences of such practices and the imaginative or creative mobilisation of resources and social networks. For many urban inhabitants who survive on very low incomes these additional sources of money are crucial. In the rural areas the food and

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<sup>15</sup>Whilst making arrangements for a funeral I went together with the Provincial manager of The Standard Chartered Bank (Copperbelt Province) to one of his neighbours to purchase beer for the expected guests.

cash needs of households cannot always be met through the sale of agricultural produce and alternative means are sought to raise funds. What is common for urban and rural areas is the extent to which during difficult times people rely almost exclusively on the ability to make use of 'local' if undeveloped markets and the means to generate cash.

This chapter began by providing a brief description of the Zambian economy and government agricultural policy. I also detailed how these domains have been affected by changes with respect to the wider arenas of decision and action. This emphasised that the livelihood actions of Zambians must be viewed in relation to the changing situation with respect to national economic changes. I then examined the way in which the urban context of drinking and producing grain beer developed in response to both people's cash needs and their desire to exercise autonomy in respect to traditional drinking practices, a sense of well being and identity. I argue that whilst providing a context or background within which it is possible to locate the practices described later in the thesis, the issues discussed in this chapter are also central to the interpretation of social constructions of agrarian life, livelihoods and value notions in particular. A number of themes raised in this chapter will be pursued in other chapters of this thesis. These include the view that there is no clear urban/rural divide at the level of discourse practice, and that the discourses of wider arenas are reflected in local practices and become internalised by actors who then give them meaning and value within their own social and material contexts. Central to this venture is the idea that livelihood practices are located within the wider arenas of overlapping discourses and that an interpretation of these requires analysis of the ways in which they become represented, even if only partially in the strategies and actions of actors. Before focusing on beer brewing and consumption practices and the various ways in which these activities and the discourses that inform them provide a spectrum of values for rural people, the next chapter will deal with agriculture: the most significant range of social and practical activities that give shape and meaning to the livelihoods of small-scale farmers.

## CHAPTER 4

### FOR THEIR COOKING POTS, THE MARKETS AND EXCHANGE: AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES IN KAMENA

#### Introduction

Rural livelihood practices are fundamentally related to agriculture. In order, then, to understand the significance of other income and food procurement strategies and activities it is essential to gain some insight into the organisational principles and practical contexts of agriculture. This chapter is not intended to represent an exhaustive description of the various cultivation techniques or crops grown.<sup>1</sup> The main purpose is to show how agricultural practices in the Kamena area differ from neighbouring parts of Serenje District and to provide an overview of production processes. The social organisation of such processes informs social relations in other livelihood contexts and in this way agriculture becomes a metaphor or ideal which gives shape and meaning to people's livelihoods. I begin, then, with a general overview of the annual production cycle, followed by a focus on hybrid maize and millet cultivation in order to explore the various ways in which these crops are produced and how their production is organised. These crops are significant for food security, incomes and as resources that become central to redistributive and co-operative social networks. Beer production and consumption practices, for example, are closely related to, but also support the production of maize and millet, the main staple crops. The following descriptive account provides the context in which other livelihood activities are located and draws attention to the multiplex ways in which agriculture underpins the strategic use of resources. I will consider the valorisation of agricultural produce and inputs in the final section, by drawing attention to the existence of the marketing facilities to suggest that the discourse practices associated with agriculture and marketing (locally and from the wider contexts) play an important role in people's value constructions.

In Kamena of Chief Chibale agricultural practices are characterised by their diversity and adaptability. A diverse array of practices and strategies are manifest in terms of the range of crops grown and the types of fields and gardens cultivated. There are also a diverse number of ways in which different agricultural products are

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<sup>1</sup>Han Seur (1992 pp 49-200) provides a very detailed account of crop typologies and production techniques for the Nchimishi area of Chief Chibale. In Kamena agriculture practices are very similar to those in Nchimishi. The significant differences are merely in the use of technology (the use of ox-ploughs is common place in Nchimishi) and in levels of hybrid maize production, and the use of *citemene* methods.



utilised (including for the cooking pot, the markets and for barter exchange). Although there is a good deal of continuity from season to season with respect to agricultural practices, there is also a good deal of seasonal variation. At the local level such seasonal variation results from a variety of environmental and social factors. Micro-ecological variation is one of the major characteristics of the plateau region and consequently accounts for a great deal of differentiation between and within areas. Such differences are common place throughout the rural areas of Serenje and account in part for the range or diversity of agricultural priorities. Pressures that foster variation are also due to infrastructural inefficiencies in the network of input supply and marketing at the District, Provincial and National levels (described in Chapter 3). It is in the face of such uncertainty that agricultural practices are often reorganised or adapted by people to meet the various challenges that arise as a result of factors that are often beyond their control.

The season during which the main fieldwork was conducted was unusual in two respects. Firstly the drought conditions that affected the Southern African region caused a substantial reduction of crop yields. Secondly the reorganisation of the largely government controlled system of marketing and input supply created further difficulties in accessing inputs and selling produce.<sup>2</sup> Each season in Kamena people adopt a similar range of coping strategies to overcome such misfortunes as drought and the inefficiencies of the support services. The means by which such shortfalls are overcome is critical to our understanding of farmer strategies vis-à-vis the available resource repertoire of households. Livelihood security includes household food security which is the ideal outcome of strategies of production, exchange and cash generation (Drinkwater and McEwan 1992). I argue, therefore, that it is not possible to isolate agriculture from other activities that are part of a spectrum of livelihood strategies, discourses and options. In view of this it is essential to adopt a more holistic picture of agricultural practices. In later chapters I will consider the contribution that beer makes to these coping strategies. This particular activity, however, is closely associated with agricultural production and as such it is necessary to situate it within the context of agricultural practices.

The two preceding chapters drew attention to the centrality of practice in understanding the way in which people's lifeworlds are socially constructed. Material and social resources are given value and meaning in relation to practice. In this chapter I continue this theme by focusing on agricultural practice. I argue that such

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<sup>2</sup>Although these factors are frequently responsible for productive uncertainty in the 1991/1992 season they were the major catalysts responsible for the problems faced by people in Kamena.

practices are central to the creation and dissemination of the necessary experience and knowledge required for continued agricultural production and innovation. Let me begin, however, with a description of the yearly agricultural cycle.

### **The Annual Cycle of Agricultural Production**

There is both continuity and change in respect of agricultural. Traditional and well established crops and tillage techniques exist along side new crop varieties, technologies and consumption practices. For hybrid maize cultivation farmers rely on the support of agencies who supply credit, inputs and the infrastructure to purchase produce. This institutional and infrastructural assistance is dependant on politico-economic conditions at the national level, which, as Chapter 3 shows is by no means consistent but is subject to a whole range of criteria that is beyond the control of rural farmers. It is against this background of relative uncertainty that agricultural activity must be viewed. The mix of cropping techniques, which include slash and burn methods, hoe cultivation and various sorts of mounding to utilise natural mulch and composts are long established practices. There are also more recently introduced variations on these methods applied to upland flat fields that include the use of fertiliser (for hybrid maize) and a series of timing, seed spacing and weeding recommendations. These different practices have become fused in various ways, however, such that traditional crop varieties are grown using more recently introduced tillage techniques and sometimes with the application of fertiliser. The diverse mixture of agricultural possibilities and mixed cultivation techniques that it is possible to observe and record reflects this fusion of different practices (see Fig 4.1 for a visual representation of the mixture of crops and ecological environments within which they are grown. Table 4.1 provides this information in summary).

In communities dominated by hoe and axe (hand cultivation) techniques with typically low levels of production for markets, the overriding concern of farmers is to meet their food needs. Despite this primacy for consumption, most crops are recognised to have the potential to realise a value through various forms of exchange, or through processing and subsequent sale. Recognition of the potentiality of agricultural produce is important as it is conceptually inadequate to talk in simple dichotomised terms about production for subsistence and production for the market. Both these outcomes of crop production are related and provide the impetus for farmers to cultivate. Although producers may initially plant with either the table or the market in mind they adjust to circumstances as they present themselves. In this way it is difficult for people to know exactly how much of a given crop they will

produce and where it will end up; in the cooking pot or on the 'market'. Production and consumption decisions are made as the season unfolds and in relation to the particularity of individual household needs.

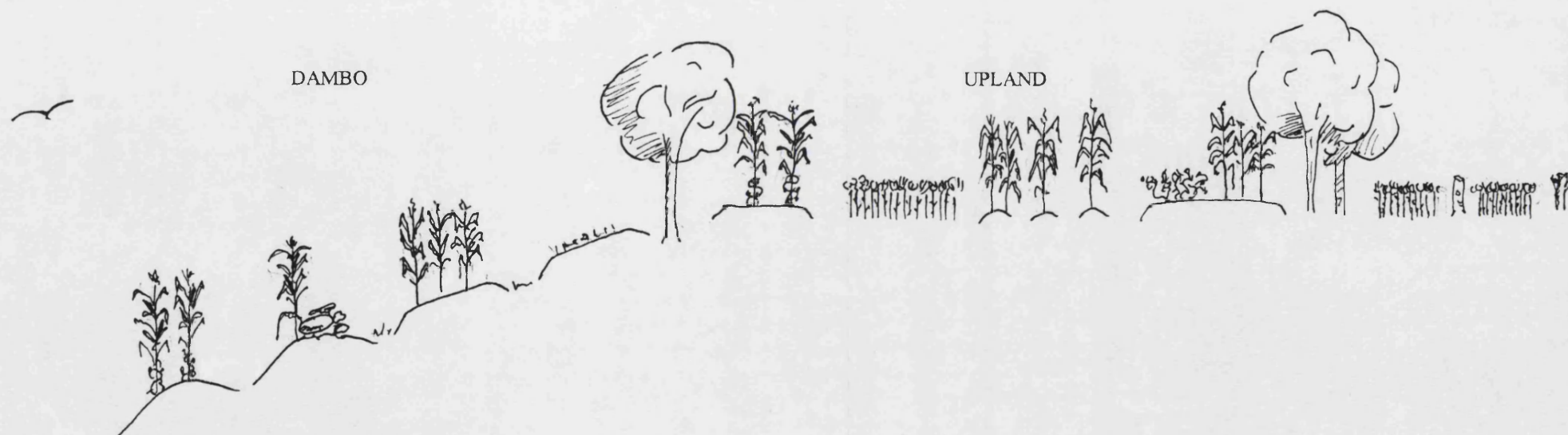
Table 4.1 Land, crop type and cultivation cycles

LAND TYPE	CROP	PLANTED	HARVESTED
<i>FISEBE</i>	BEANS	AUGUST	NOVEMBER
	LOCAL MAIZE	AUGUST	JANUARY
<i>KATOBELA</i>	BEANS	OCTOBER	JANUARY
	LOCAL MAIZE	OCTOBER	FEBRUARY
<i>IFIBUNDE</i>	LIVINGSTONE POTATOES	MAY	MARCH
<i>IBALA</i>	MILLET	DECEMBER	MAY
	MAIZE	NOVEMBER /DECEMBER	JUNE
<i>IMPUTA</i>	BEANS	JANUARY	APRIL
	SWEET POTS	JANUARY	APRIL
	MAIZE	OCTOBER	MARCH
<i>CITEMENE</i>	MILLET	DECEMBER	MAY
	PUMPKINS	DECEMBER	FEBRUARY

The concern of many nutritional studies and interventions has been to gain a better understanding of the nutritional needs of particular populations with a view in the longer term to improving the nutritional status of target groups (Abrahamsson and Velarde 1977, Kwofie 1979, I.R.D.P. 1986). Food security issues ultimately concern what people eat. Procuring these items however is not simply a matter of putting home grown produce in the 'pot', since the acquisition of cash is at times an important aspect of people's ability to provide food for the household (Pottier 1985:24). Providing food for the household is an activity that is closely associated with other livelihood activities that encompass agricultural production and income or resource generating activities. There are lean months during the agricultural cycle, which for the grain crops normally begins in March and April (see Table 4.2), for some these become periods of hunger. The ways in which these sparse periods are dealt with and the ways in which producers overcome their short falls are predicated by involvement with a wide range of social relations and co-operative networks, which are associated with different discursive arenas (local and 'external'). The movement of goods and food items within local networks particularly in times of scarcity is central to the analysis of food procurement. Social relations, then, and particularly matrilineal based kin relations are central to the organisation of agricultural production.

Fig 4.1 CULTIVATION CYCLE FOR CHIBALE (Adapted from Goldman (1987))

96



FIELD TYPE FORM	IMITIPULA Mounds in wet dambo e.g. 3×1× 0.6 metres	CISEBE mounds with burnt grass, in wet dambo	KATOBELA Longer mounds in dry soil (3×4× 1m)	IFIBUNDE Very long high mounds 100×3×1	KATOBELA As in dambo	IBALA MILLET Long strips cleared woodland burnt not tilled	IBALA MAIZE fals/ridges	IMPUTA Short high mounds 4× 1.5×0.5, in fertile soil	CITEMENE small circles and longer rectangular ash patches
CROP	Lala.Maize/beans	L.Maize/beans ,pumpkins	L.Maize/beans	Livingstone pots	L.Maize/beans	Finger millet	Hybrid maize?pumpkins	Sweet pots/ cassava/beans/maize	Finger millet/pumpkins, cucumbers
PLANTED HARVESTED	August Beans-Nov Maize (green)-Jan	August Beans-Nov Maize (green)-Jan	October Beans-jan Maize(gree)-feb	May March	As in dambo As in dambo	December May	Nov/Dec June	From Jan From April	December Pumpkins-Feb
YEAR 2	Split and mound again	Split and mound again	Split and mound again	Leave, start new mound	Used as in Imputa	Hybrid maize	H. Maize	H. Maize	Millet-May
YEAR 3	Repeat	Repeat	Repeat	Fallow	Fallow	H. Maize Millet	H. Maize	H. Maize	sometimes used for groundnuts
YEAR 4	Repeat	Repeat	Repeat	Fallow	Fallow	H. Maize Millet	H. Maize	H.Maize	Fallow
YEAR 5	Repeat	Repeat	Repeat	Fallow	Fallow	2 years fallow	H. Maize	H.Maize	Fallow

The organisational strategies that draw on the co-operation of kin are significant and bring into play the discourse practices associated with matrilineality. For example, the practices of bride service linked to uxori-local marriage arrangements (see below), and other obligations that exist between kin are crucial to organisational strategies and production. I will examine these forms of local discourse practice - associated with social relations and crop cultivation - below, when I discuss the labour demands of millet and maize cultivation (and again in Chapter 7 vis-à-vis exchange).

The agricultural year effectively begins, for millet cultivation, in June with the cutting of trees and for maize in November with the first ploughing. In some cases people will prepare the land for maize as early as March to ease the labour burden later in the year. This is known as winter ploughing (*kufukika*). Planting takes place in October/November for millet and December for hybrid maize. Ridges or mounds in which beans and local varieties of maize are planted are generally prepared during November and December, continuing into February whilst the soil remains wet from the rains (from the end of October until Beginning of March). The agricultural work load begins to lessen from February onwards until May when the harvest begins in earnest.

The diversity of crops grown and the exploitation of different eco-systems necessary for their production provides a degree of food security. This observation is not new and has been commented on by amongst others, Pottier who in 1985 (whilst conducting research in Rwanda) recognised that the agricultural research community began to realise that,

'mixtures were regarded as the strength of the poor. The notion of resilience-through-diversity was based on the understanding that mixtures reduced risk, [and] that some components will always grow well in the face of climatic irregularities' (1994:83).

Although this is the case for Kamena, and the maturation cycle of various crops may overlap to a certain extent, there are still gaps in the availability of food items during the year. When there is staple grain there is often not much in the way of relish crops and vice versa. *Ubwali* the Bemba term for *nshima* is used synonymously to mean food. Subsequently in rhetorical terms any meal that does not include *nshima* (made from grain or grain/cassava meal) is not considered 'food', even though what is eaten may provide a degree of adequate sustenance. To this extent it is important to consider the various alternative ways in which people provide for their food needs in the event of the not infrequent failure to yield sufficient grain to provide for a full season's food and cash needs.

The calendar of food availability (Table 4.2) shows that for 1991 the major staples hybrid maize and millet were prevalent following the harvest until January when the supplies began to dwindle. In February cassava is ready and normally lasts until some time in May when the millet is once again ripe enough to harvest, although it is often left in the sun to dry further before storage. At this time hybrid maize is also nearing maturation and people sometimes harvest and shell it early to speed up the drying process. Local varieties of maize and beans planted in either *icisebe*, or *katobela* gardens (in the *dambo* or wet low land areas, see Fig 4.1), are available from January and February and provide additional food. Beans are prevalent throughout the year and are a significant source of relish, although they are also often sold or exchanged with traders who come from the Copperbelt towns and other urban centres. Table 4.2 clearly shows for one season the gaps in the supply of various staple and relish crops. It does not show, however, the seasonal variation in this supply. In Kamena, for example, many people experienced severely diminished supplies of staple (maize and millet) as early as November and December. The relative security of traditional mounding methods in the *dambo* margins was also affected by the drought conditions and there was little green maize available at that time. Cassava by contrast has some resistance to drought conditions and is planted in a three yearly cycle in *imputa* (upland mounds, see Fig 4.1). Cassava was an important food security crop for the 1991/1992 season. Table 4.2 illustrates, generally, the extent to which supplies run low and in some cases run out altogether. Maize, for example, is annually in short supply between April and July, when it often has to be purchased.

The other important food crops grown are sweet potatoes (*kandolo*) and pumpkins. The former may be sold, although sweet potatoes are considered a staple crop and known locally as 'Lala bread',<sup>3</sup> as it is very often eaten in the mornings and at times when there is little staple available. Pumpkins are similar in this respect as they mature in February when other food stuffs become short. *Kandolo* (sweet potatoes) are grown in *imputa* and *ifipushi* (pumpkins) are grown in *citemene* plots. The leaves of pumpkins (*chibwabwa*) are very often eaten in place of other green vegetables, as are bean leaves and cassava leaves. The contribution that these unlikely relish crops makes to people's dietary intake is extremely important, since hunger for some is an annual problem. Hunger must not be seen as simply a consequence of poor rains, it can also be exacerbated by national and local political, social and economic

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<sup>3</sup>Fieldnotes Kamena 4/2/93

Table 4.2 Food availability calendar, Teta 1992 Chief Kabamba, 25 km's from Kamena (courtesy of M. Drinkwater)

MONTH	AU G.	SEPT.	OCT.	NO V.	DE C.	JAN.	FEB.	MA R.	AP R.	MA Y	JUNE	JULY
Maize	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●	●●●	●●	● <sup>4</sup>	mainly buy	mainly buy	mainly buy
Sorghum	●●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●								●●●●●
Millet	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●	●●	●				
Cassava		●●●●●	●●●●●					●●●●●	●●●●●	●		
S. Pots	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●							●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●
Beans	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●
G. Nuts	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●				●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●
Ntoyo - G.Beans									●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	
C.Peas									●●●	●●		
kashaba										●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●
L'stone Pots	●●●●●	●●●							●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●
Cucurbits							●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●		
Cucumber					●●●●	●●●●						
Umusalu - vegetables	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●	●●	●●	●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●
Pumpkin	●●	●	●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●
Irish Pots	●●●●	●●●	●●		●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●	●

<sup>4</sup>Where five symbols represent s the maximum availability of an item.

dimensions (Drèze and Sen 1989:47), but for the 1991/92 season the failure of the rains played a major role in the poor supply of staple food (C. Chimbala, Christian Council of Zambia, National co-ordinator of drought relief programme sponsored by The World Health Organisation, W.H.O.).<sup>5</sup>

It is clear that for the farmers of the Kamena area, farming practices are complex and not simply reducible to either a crop typology nor the various techniques employed. Cultivation for most involves a mix of crops and cultivation techniques, involving traditional and introduced crop rotations and inter-cropping practices (see Fig 4.1). Such practices - people know from experience - have an effect on crop yields. These are sometimes lower with respect to inter cropping, but the labour saved in weeding and cultivation tasks often takes precedence over expected yields. The techniques involved in traditional tillage practices include mounding of various sorts (hoe based) in both lowland wet and upland flat field types, and naturally fertilised gardens achieved through clearing and burning (axe based) methods. The crops that have been introduced, although not requiring entirely new forms of tillage, have specific requirements that can only be met with the support of the agricultural extension services. These crops include: hybrid maize varieties, cotton, kenef (used for industrial fabrics, most notably sack cloth) and in the past, tobacco (see Long 1968:23). Although these agricultural innovations have added substantially to the possible options of farmers in Kamena, Trapnell (1953) and Richards (1939, Chapters XIII, XIV and XV) provide good evidence of the complex and mixed farming practices involved in traditional methods of farming, including *citmene*. Moore and Vaughan (1994:39) point out that the traditional 'variation in crop mixtures and in rotation cycles produced a large range of possibilities' for farmers. More recent possibilities for commercially oriented production in effect have simply been added to the existing range of possibilities. Despite these developments, then, there remains a good deal of continuity in agriculture.

The remaining sections of this chapter are devoted to examining in more detail not only the issues of diversity and adaptability, but to the specificities of particular cultivation practices, and the organisation of their production.

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<sup>5</sup>Fieldnotes Kamena 4/12/92



## Millet and Gardens; *Nshima* and Relish

### *Citemene* millet

Finger millet, the traditional staple grain crop, is grown in two different ways: by *citemene* methods and on cleared flat land (*ibala*). Firstly it is cultivated on burnt ash patches in newly cleared areas. This method is known as *iconde* by the Lala, and the areas cleared are referred to as *ifyonde* (pl). It is a form of slash and burn agriculture known more widely in Zambia using the Bemba term *citemene*. There are a number of important accounts of *citemene*, the best being by Trapnell and Clothier (1937, 1953) for North Western Zambia and the Kaonde peoples, Richards for the Bemba (1939), Peters (1951) for the Serenje Lala, and for Chief Chibale Long (1968) and later Seur (1992). Each area shows some variation but they all share the same basic characteristics. For the Serenje area the method involves cutting trees at waist height, stacking the branches in circles (*myunda*) or long bands (*bakulakula*) and then burning the dry material just prior to the onset of the November rains. The date for the burning in Chief Chibale is set by the Chief and fines are extracted for early burning. This reduces the risk of premature burning which results in the ash being blown away and therefore losing any value it may have had on the soil.<sup>6</sup> The significant difference between the *iconde* or *citemene* practices of the Serenje Lala and other groups is the manner in which the trees are cut and the area of wood needed to achieve the desired yields. The Bemba, for example, lop the branches off the tree but leave the trunk intact. They also create very large ash circles or *myunda* (Richards, 1939:288-292), whereas the Lala create numerous small circles or ash patches.<sup>7</sup>

The supposed destructiveness of the system became central to the colonial debates concerned with *citemene* production. The narrow focus on cutting and burning by colonial officers and analysts, who were primarily concerned with averting environmental degradation, obscured the important place of other forms of production that accompanied *citemene* (Moore and Vaughan 1994:30), most significantly the use of a variety of hoed gardens and rotations in former ash patches. An important oversight in attempts to calculate the effective carrying capacity of *citemene* systems was to focus on not only the cutting and burning, but the production of millet as

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<sup>6</sup> Early burning has in the past played a significant role in both colonial rhetoric and practice. The Citemene Control Scheme of the 1930's proposed 'early burning' to ensure that the protected areas of woodland remained unburned. See, for example, Allan (1949:86). Early burning at the time of my study simply refers to burning before the date set by the chief.

<sup>7</sup> The Lala *citemene* or *citeme* is sometimes referred to as the 'small circle' system, see Long (1968:12).

separate from the wider selection of crops and cultivation techniques that existed at the time. *Citemene* must be seen as an integral part of a range of different but nevertheless related cultivation practices. Moreover the persistence of *iconde* as a cultivation method, opposes the view, put forward by, amongst others, Peters (1951:73) and Allan (1949:69), that due to the destructiveness of the system it will lead to its own demise. Clearly, then, there has been some dispute as to the possible persistence or demise of *citemene* cultivation. Perhaps the most important thing to consider about this form of ash cultivation, however, and certainly its most timeless feature, is its constantly changing and evolving responsiveness to factors that include socio-economic as well as ecological conditions (Trapnell 1953: 34, 37, 39-56).

Millet is grown throughout Serenje district but varies from one area to the next in its importance along side maize as a staple. In Lumpampa to the West of Serenje Boma, and in Chief Chisomo, for example, sorghum replaces millet and accompanies maize as a staple. There are two major factors that affect the frequency of millet grown using the *iconde* method, both of which relate to the availability of sufficiently mature trees. The topography of some areas is not conducive to *iconde* cultivation, being too hilly or rocky. This is particularly the case in the south east of the district that lies towards the edge of the escarpment leading to the Chisomo valley. Deforestation is another reason for inadequate tree cover, most dramatic in the immediate Serenje urban area, where much of the surrounding woodland has been cut for fuel. Millet is brought by train from Northern Province where it is sold in the market and throughout Zambia Compound by traders. Deforestation is also notable in other areas, for example, Nchimishi in Chief Chibale where hybrid maize cultivation has become dominant. Much of the tree cover there has been cleared to make way for hybrid maize cultivation.<sup>8</sup> The absence of sufficiently grown trees does not in itself preclude the cultivation of millet, only the use of the *iconde* method, since millet is also grown in rotation with maize on flat upland fields.

The second factor that affects the frequency of millet grown in *ifyonde* is the extent to which other crops are a significant part of the diet, most notably the degree to which hybrid maize production for both the market and for consumption is seen as a suitable or desirable primary crop. In the Nchimishi area for example axe and hoe cultivation has given way to plough cultivation. Significantly Seur (1992) records 80% of all households surveyed (in total 255 persons) cultivated crops in flat ploughed fields. Comparing the data collected in the 1960's by Long and Seur in

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<sup>8</sup>The longitudinal aerial photographs reproduced by Seur (1992:76,77) clearly show the expansion of cultivated fields and settlements.

1987/88 lends weight to the declining importance, in some areas, of *iconde* as a method of cultivation; in 1964 63.6% of the adult male population used only *iconde* methods (Long 1968:247) whereas in 1988 14.3% of all households used the *iconde* method to cultivate finger millet. Although these figures show, for the Nchimishi area a significant decline in the use of *iconde* methods, they do not accurately reflect the number of people who employ altered or modified versions of *citemene* (Seur 1992:51). The method itself is frequently used to clear new fields, the resultant ash patches being used for a single season, and instead of abandoning the cleared area it is subsequently used for flat land (*ibala*) cultivation, and becomes part of the rotation cycle of these fields (see Fig 4.1). Millet grown on *ibala* land in Nchimishi accounts for 79.2% of the millet produced in that area (Seur 1992:51),<sup>9</sup> in total 93.5% of those included in Seur's survey produced millet.

In the Kamena area, by contrast, significantly more people cultivated *iconde* millet. Of all households included in my survey (92 separate kitchens or eating groups, approximately 478 persons (including children under 15 years)), 44.5% used the *iconde* method to produce millet in 1992/93, for the same season 44.5% cultivated millet on *ibala* land representing a total 90.1% cultivating millet (less than the total for Nchimishi but in Kamena considerably more people employ *iconde* methods). The number of farmers in both areas producing millet is substantial and attests to its importance as a crop. The most significant reason for the differences in land type used for millet between the two areas is the extent to which ox drawn ploughs are used. The two areas are also quite distinct topographically. Kamena is significantly more hilly and has poorer quality soil.<sup>10</sup> *Iconde* produced millet fares well on poorer quality soils and in areas where there are hills not normally of use for other agricultural purposes. The extent to which communities are in marginal areas geographically, i.e., at some distance from the existing agricultural/institutional infrastructure also plays a part in determining the type of grain production and techniques employed. Nchimishi, for example, is physically further from the Boma but is well serviced: the road into the area is graded each season to facilitate transportation of maize and inputs. The area has been opened up in this way for many

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<sup>9</sup>Nchimishi is somewhat unique in the Serenje district as is Chief Chibale as a whole. Firstly the ox-plough has been used in increasing numbers since the 1940's following a peasant farm scheme introduced there. In addition the marketed output of hybrid maize is significant: in 1985 the output for Chief Chibale's area accounted for half of the total marketed output for the whole of Serenje District (I.R.D.P. 1985:12). For the first three years of the 1990's the Nchimishi depot marketed more than any other single depot in the Serenje District (see Table 4.3).

<sup>10</sup>Maurice Mapani, agricultural officer and block supervisor for Kamena and Kaseba, fieldnotes 23/5/93.

years, and the dirt road into the area is easier to transverse than the road into the Kamena area. In addition to the ecological and environmental differentiation between the two areas, the different technologies available to cultivators is also significant.

### ***Ibala* millet**

Millet grown on flat ploughed land, usually follows maize in an attempt to make use of residual fertiliser. Those farmers in Kamena who cultivate both maize and millet preferred this type of cultivation: 47.8% of households surveyed cultivated *ibala* millet in conjunction with maize, whereas only 35.8% cultivated *iconde* millet and hybrid maize. *Ibala* land preparation for millet is similar to the preparation as for maize, but the field needs to be cleaned and levelled not ploughed into ridges. Sowing takes place in November and December and is carried out in the same broadcast manner as for *iconde*, the seeds being raked into the soil following sowing. This method is favoured by many since it is closely associated with other forms of flatland cultivation and the land may be used in rotation. With sufficient rains yields show better returns for the area seeded and the plots are often nearer to people's permanent homes, near to the roadside. In the event of insufficient rains, however, millet grown in this manner has little drought resistance, and during the 1991/92 harvesting season many reported that they failed to harvest enough for basic needs.

Millet is a major staple food and is easily hand ground; furthermore people really enjoy the taste of millet *nshima* and beer.<sup>11</sup> It has an important role in the production of beer. Both maize (*katata*) and millet (*katubi*) beer require the millet for taste. It is vital as it also plays an important part in fermentation, providing enzymes that assist the fermentation process (see Chapter 6). Millet is also sold or exchanged for goods, and commands a high sale or exchange 'price' because of its important role in the production of beer. Preston Thomson recorded for the 1950's in the Serenje area that 33% of all exchanges involved millet (1954:55). At the time of my fieldwork I found that maize had replaced millet as the most significant exchange item, but millet nevertheless remains important.

Interestingly, in discussions with people concerning the various merits of

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<sup>11</sup> A finger millet ranking exercise conducted by Drinkwater (1991) identified for three separate varieties of millet 16 different attributes that were compared with each other. Taste for beer and *Nshima* together with storage and the range of soil types which fostered good growth were all considered as the most important criteria for evaluating the quality of the grain. Despite this farmers do not separate out the various millet types because when sown in mixed form the combined qualities provide better yield security.

millet production using either *iconde* or *ibala*, one important and negative aspect of *iconde* referred to is the stigma of 'backwardness' attached to it. For younger male respondents the idea of cutting and living in the remote bush is not appealing. Comments such as 'where is the profit in that' were common. Younger people prefer *ibala* cultivation as it is easy to cultivate millet in this way along side or in rotation with maize, the crop that many younger people find desirable. Older people recognised the important food security value of millet and expressed few protestations concerning the *iconde* method. The old and young have had quite different experiences with respect to the discursive practices associated with the two methods. For example, younger people know that *ibala* cultivation does not have the same consequences for the division of labour nor for expectations of bride service on marriage. In contrast older people's concerns reflected the reduced yields attainable from *iconde* compared with the past, and recognise the importance of using a number of methods to reduce food insecurity. Despite the comments by informants, it is clear that exercising choice with respect to cultivation techniques very much depends on the labour arrangements of ones household and very often the relative importance of cash for peoples livelihoods. Informants responses illustrate the different practical and esoteric associations of millet and the different cultivation techniques.

### Hoed Gardens

Hoed garden produce is significant from a food security point of view as it provides many additional food crops. The food calendar (Table 4.1) illustrates the seasonal availability of different relish crops. In addition to their consumption, these crops are also sold locally and to traders from urban areas. Women play a key role in the production of crops in these gardens, and they traditionally accompanied millet cultivation. Figures 4.2 and 4.3 (see p. 116) illustrates the additional amount of labour that women contribute to crop production. Tables 4.5 and 4.6 (see p.117) clearly shows that a good deal of this labour is dedicated to the production of garden produce. For example, in August and September the preparation of *cisebe* (*fisebe* pl.) occupies considerably more of the time they allocate to labour than men. Men do, however, assist in their preparation but do not dedicate the time to these gardens that women do. The most significant garden crops are: local varieties of maize, grown in *fisebe*, beans also grown in *fisebe*, sweet potatoes and cassava cultivated in *imputa*, and ground nuts grown in *katobela* (see Fig 4.1 above). Groundnuts, beans, and sweet potatoes are all saleable items and a valuable source of income for women. *Tute* or cassava, is also a significant crop and is of some importance in providing a staple in the event of poor grain yields. For the 1992/93 season, for example, 82.6% of those

farmers included in the survey grew *tute*. The division of labour may not be as significant for these crops as it once was, Long for example, states that for the Nchimishi area *dambo* cultivation of hoed gardens are the sole responsibility of women (1968:22). In the 1980's Seur's research draws attention to the fact that these crops are increasingly being grown on *ibala* or flat land, for which the sexual divisions of labour are no longer clear cut.

## **Maize, Capital and Credit**

### **Maize Cultivation**

This section focuses on the production requirements of hybrid maize. In short the most significant thing about the cultivation of hybrid maize, in contrast to the cultivation of local varieties of grain (millet and maize), is the extent to which involvement with so-called external institutions is necessary. In addition to having adequate cleared land and access to labour, hybrid maize production needs financial investment and a degree of specialised knowledge. For maize to provide a source of cash for people, marketing, storage and transport facilities are provided. There are, however, many recurrent problems associated with such infrastructure. Institutional and infrastructural irregularities have a direct effect on livelihood practices, and alterations in the course of a seasons planning to compensate or accommodate such 'uncontrollable' factors must be seen as an everyday reality for Kamena farmers. The 1993 marketing season exemplifies such problems, which became acute as the government introduced new criteria for marketing and pricing in line with their liberalisation policies. Despite these difficulties, many when asked, would point to the problems of labour as the single most limiting factor in maize production. In the Kamena area there were only two cultivators who owned their own oxen. The vast majority of people relied solely upon hoe methods of tillage. The average area under cultivation for the 1991/92 and 1992/3 seasons in the Kamena area were 0.74 hectares and 0.73 hectares respectively. If we compare these figures to those collected by the Integrated Rural Development Project (I.R.D.P.) for the 1981/82 and 1982/83 seasons around Chibale depot, (1.56 and 1.80 hectares) (I.R.D.P. 1984;15) it becomes clear that production is certainly limited by hoe or hand techniques. The labour demands of cultivation are significant and attest to the low levels of maize sales at the Kamena Depot.

Table 4.3 Serenje District Co-operative Marketing Union maize purchases 1989-1992.<sup>12</sup>

<b>AGRICULTURAL DEPOT</b>	<b>Amount Harvested (90 Kilo bags) 1989-1990</b>	<b>1990-1991</b>	<b>1991-1992</b>
<b>MUKOPA</b>	14296	9151	879
<b>CHIBALE</b>	12440	5812	6971
<b>TETA</b>	9225	5115	3355
<b>KASEBA</b>	7642	2683	198
<b>KAMENA</b>	4279	1492	430
<b>KHAMA</b>	7106	3202	1218
<b>FINKOMBWA</b>	6797	1223	586
<b>KOFI KUNDA</b>	13475	5227	3201
<b>NCHIMISHI</b>	18362	12264	7746
<b>TOTAL</b>	93622	46169	24568

Table 4.3 illustrates for three consecutive seasons the total number of 90 Kilo maize bags sold to the different marketing depots in Chief Chibale as a whole. It provides a number of important comparisons with other depot areas in Serenje. In terms of maize production, Kamena is amongst the lower producing areas, the highest areas of production being Chibale, Mukopa, Nchimishi and Kofi Kunda. The Mukopa and Kofi Kunda areas include farmers who operate on a commercial scale, i.e. using mechanisation (tractors) and permanently employing farm labour. This in part accounts for the higher proportion of maize sales. In addition these areas are also host to many smaller producers using ox-drawn ploughs. In Nchimishi, for example, 22.0% of a survey sample conducted by Seur owned oxen and 15.4% owned ploughs (1992:451). This compares with 2.1% of the survey for Kamena which I conducted who owned cattle and 1.0% who owned ploughs. The figures for the 1991/92 season show a considerable reduction in the total marketed output of all depots. This is due to the drought that affected the whole of the Southern African region during that year.

The maize yields for the 1991-1992 season for the Kamena area were unusually low. In Kamena the struggle to raise cash to secure staple food became a priority. Sources of purchased maize during this period included purchases from those who planted early and therefore had surplus, from the stores in Serenje in processed meal form, and from those who had obtained maize from the drought relief programme.<sup>13</sup> Such relief was provided through a food for work programme, the work

<sup>12</sup> Data courtesy of Mr. R. Kango, Serenje District Co-operative Marketing Union stocks office.

<sup>13</sup> Maize acquired from Serenje depot by the Christian Council of Zambia for distribution was on two separate occasions looted from the delivery trucks that became stuck on the poor road into the Kamena

including repairs to the school roof and road maintenance. In a 'normal' season the eagerly awaited annual crop sales provide for, at least, some major purchases (blankets, clothes and at times more expensive material items, for example, radio/cassettes and bicycles) and allow many to pay off their loans and reinvest in their farm enterprises for the coming season.

Maize is an established crop in the Kamena area. The hybrid variety is grown on cleared flat land, *ibala*. Local varieties are grown in *cisebe* gardens. The local varieties are consumed by the household and eaten in a fresh condition, either roasted or boiled. The hybrid varieties are not consumed fresh or green as they are not considered sweet enough. Although during periods of scarcity they are often picked and shelled before they have completely dried on the stalk, which speeds up the drying time to allow early processing for consumption. In other areas of Chief Chibale these hybrid varieties of maize have been grown since the 1960's. Widespread cultivation of hybrid maize, the 'maize boom', however, took root elsewhere in Serenje during the 1970's as part of a government initiative. Following a maize shortage in 1970, the government (see the Second National Development Plan 1972-1976), implemented a maize crop self-sufficiency drive and hybrid maize was quickly adopted by many Zambian farmers as they already had considerable experience with maize in their 'traditional' gardens (Seur 1992:96).

### **Capital for Maize Production**

The significant difference between the local varieties of maize and hybrid maize is use of fertiliser on the latter. In addition hybrid seeds are not reproducible locally but must be bought in each season. To encourage increased production the Zambian government offered credit to supply inputs, facilitated through the agricultural extension services of the Ministry of Agriculture. They also provided infrastructural services such as the maize depots and staff for the provision of inputs and to purchase grain. Despite the financial investment needed, and the dependency that credit creates, hybrid maize is favoured by many because of its high yields per acre and the cash profits that are possible from sales. Unlike cotton or tobacco maize is both a cash and staple crop, so in the event of a poor harvest the crop may be retained for household consumption. This fact was often referred to by farmers when asked to comment on the various attributes of their grain crops.



Table 4.4 Seasonal income sources (men and women)<sup>14</sup>

<b>JAN.</b>	Sale of <i>inswa</i> (flying ants) collected by men and sold by women.
<b>FEB.</b>	No reported activity
<b>MAR.</b>	Sale of beans to urban traders, mostly by women.
<b>APR.</b>	Bean sales (as above)
<b>MAY</b>	Bean and sweet potato sales, to urban traders by men and women
<b>JUNE</b>	Sale of sweet potatoes (as above) and sales of hybrid maize to national markets.
<b>JULY</b>	Sale of Sweet potatoes and hybrid maize (as above)
<b>AUG.</b>	Hybrid maize sales to National Marketing Board
<b>SEP.</b>	Hybrid maize sales to National Marketing Board
<b>OCT.</b>	Sale of <i>inswa</i> to urban traders as for January
<b>NOV.</b>	Sale of <i>inswa</i> (as above)
<b>DEC.</b>	Sale of <i>inswa</i> (as above) and the collection and sale of <i>finkubala</i> , caterpillars by women.

During 1992 and 1993 the removal of agricultural subsidies created a situation in which the price of fertiliser effectively became out of the reach of many who relied on simply purchasing these inputs. Prior to the increase in the price of fertiliser it was possible simply to buy inputs directly from the depots with cash raised through various means. Table 4.4 illustrates the various ways in which cash is raised for this and other purposes seasonally. Money was commonly raised through the sale of beans and sweet potatoes to traders and through the sale of *inswa* (flying ants) or *finkubala* (caterpillars). These income sources can be very important. Indeed Seur's account of the fortunes of Musonda Kalaka (1992:235-265) clearly show that through growing beans she was able to buy the necessary inputs to begin cultivating hybrid maize, and eventually to become one of the most successful farmers in that area.<sup>15</sup> In Kamena many people said that the sales of beans and beer enabled them to purchase the fertiliser they needed for hybrid maize cultivation.

### The acquisition of fertiliser and involvement with credit

Hybrid maize requires the application of two types of fertiliser, a basal dressing (ammonium nitrate) and a top dressing (phosphates). The need for and access to credit for such inputs is not consistent but varies from one season to the next. During the U.N.I.P. era agricultural subsidies imposed by government created a situation of affordable but unrealistic pricing. These subsidies were not restricted to inputs: an

<sup>14</sup>The sale of chickens, bananas, garden produce (vegetables), and the provision of services, for example, brick-laying, thatching, small-scale domestic manufacturing (pots, baskets and wooden utensils) and blacksmithing, also provide small injections of cash. Beer sales are also excluded from this accounts, as I deal with them in detail in later chapters.

<sup>15</sup>See Moore and Vaughan (1994:182), for further details concerning women's access to cash through the sale of beer, crops and collected bush foods.

inflated price was also paid for the produce by government buying agents. The resultant mealie meal was sold at a reduced price, creating an unusual situation. Those farmers who lived in areas near to local service centres and stores could profit by selling most or all of their produce. They could then buy their mealie meal requirements at a subsidised price. Ideally the profits from a good harvest could easily be reinvested in the necessary inputs for the coming season. Despite the favourable price of fertiliser many people became involved in the acquisition of credit; it was after all available to them. Experience of stable prices for both inputs and produce, and knowing the benefits of cultivating maize (lower demands on labour with higher yields for a crop that is versatile as a food security and cash crop) created an environment in which farmers were confident that they could borrow inputs and easily repay their debts through commodity payments; returning bagged maize in lieu of their debts. This confidence in the situation led (during seasons with favourable rains) to increased production.

During the period of research (1992-1993) there were substantial changes made by the government in the re-organising the economy along the lines of the neo-liberal industrial North (under duress from the I.M.F. and World Bank which came in the form of conditions attached to debt rescheduling). Subsidies were removed and the credit institutions relationships with the largely government controlled co-operative marketing unions became more autonomous. It was, however, primarily the removal of subsidies on inputs that created a situation of either greater dependency on loans or on 'opting out' of hybrid maize production altogether. In addition the effects of the previous seasons drought only exacerbated the situation leaving many people with little choice but to default.

Hybrid maize production is completely dependent on the acquisition of fertiliser. The various ways in which people can acquire the fertiliser they need in addition to receiving it through credit is important to understand fully people's involvement with loans. Once acquired fertiliser is a valuable commodity in local contexts of exchange. Although its redistribution is strictly speaking unacceptable to the loan institutions it is often redistributed amongst kin. Social relations, particularly those based on matrilineal kin are crucial to procuring fertiliser in this way. In one sense fertiliser may have a value beyond its immediate use on the land. The extent to which it is seen as a crucial resource by local people beyond its use in facilitating crop growth is significant. Drinkwater found that,

'the responses of informants varied as to the way they view credit, but it became clear that in broad terms securing loans is seen as either essential to production and hence to be secured at all costs, or

important for more opportunistic reasons, a bonus if secured but not necessarily a problem if not repaid' (Drinkwater 1994:135).

Although no further insight into 'fertiliser as a bonus' is offered by Drinkwater, conversations with informants in Kamena revealed that fertiliser is central to resource redistribution, particularly among kin. Some said they received fertiliser through one or other of the credit organisations, but in fact it was their spouse who was actually named on the application. These inputs - external in origin and design - become important resources that form part of 'local' networks of co-operation and exchange, hence their uses and values become 'internalised' in local ways. These networks of co-operation are often similar in composition to other significant networks that foster the success of agricultural production and testify to the continuing importance of matrilineal ties. In addition the use of goods of this type ties farmers to wider socio-economic arenas that are directly affected by factors such as state policy and intervention. In Zambia the removal of agricultural subsidies as a condition of the Structural Adjustment Programme is a classic case.

### **The Credit Institutions and Receiving Loans**

There are three major lenders to the small-scale farmer in Zambia. These being the Credit Union and Savings association (C.U.S.A.), and Zambia Co-operative Finance (Z.C.F.), formerly the Agricultural Finance Company (A.F.C.). The commercial banks also offer agricultural loans, small-scale farmers, however, do not take such loans as the interest rates<sup>16</sup> are too high and very often farmers do not have any collateral as security. In Kamena there is also Lima Bank, which was set up for small-scale farmers, offering loans at interest rates comparable to the other credit organisations. These credit institutions are represented in most rural areas, although frequently one or other institution has the monopoly. The institutions generally ask for loans to be returned with interest rates of between 40% and 50%.<sup>17</sup> The interest collected is put into what are known as revolving funds which are then released as loans to other farmers. These institutions are to some extent government controlled, in that the government provides initial funding for loans. In the 1992-1993 planting season, for example, the creditors ran into problems as they did not receive sufficient funds from the government whose expenditure that year went on recovering the costs of the drought. In the case of default the creditors, particularly Z.C.F. and Lima Bank, rely

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<sup>16</sup>The Bank of Zambia's interest rate for loans was as high as 138% during July 1993. Weekly Post, July 23-29, (1993:7).

<sup>17</sup>P. Ngosa fieldnotes 30/11/92.

entirely on government funds to give further credit. These funds are very often themselves donations or development loans from overseas donors.

Data collected from the Zambia Co-operative Finance (Z.C.F.) representative in Kamena shows that for the 1991/92 season 78 individuals received loans, this compares with 56 individuals for the 1992/93 season. Lima bank for 1992/93 allocated 27 individual loans.<sup>18</sup> There were difficulties with establishing exactly who had loans during the 1992/1993 season. The number of people who said that they received their fertilisers through credit did not match with the official records held with Z.C.F. Questions concerning a households' loans were often answered simply with reference to whether or not the household used inputs acquired from a financial institution, but not who exactly had the loan. It was common for a husband and a wife to receive separate loans and for the inputs to be used on a collective 'acre'. In some cases where loans were acquired separately the inputs would be used for separate fields. According to P. Ngosa,<sup>19</sup> the Z.C.F. representative for Kamena, the policy of Z.C.F. is to divide the allocation of loans equally between men and women. Naturally this depends on the number of either sex who apply for loans: in 1992/93 it was fairly evenly divided, 29 men as against 27 women received loans. In the opinion of Ngosa,<sup>20</sup> women are better payees; they are more responsible with money and better at raising it than men. Composite figures from Z.C.F. of loans allocated and paid back in full between 1989 and 1991 reveal that of those likely to receive loans for the 1992/93 season (33 people in total) 20 or 60.6% were women. In fact figures gathered later during the study reveal that 31 people who received loans from Z.C.F. had had credit from them the previous season and of these 19 or 61.2% were women.

### **Knowledge for Maize Production**

Despite considerable experience with local varieties of maize, the requirements of cultivating hybrid varieties demand a degree of specialised knowledge. Agricultural extension officers are employed in Kamena and during the 1992/93 season they were engaged in Training and Visiting exercises with farmer groups. The Training and Visit (T and V) system of transferring knowledge to farmers has been extensively criticised for promoting the idea that farmers are passive receivers of expertise

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<sup>18</sup>No figures were available at the time of study for 1991/92 loans allocated by Lima bank.

<sup>19</sup>Fieldnotes 2/10/92.

<sup>20</sup>ibid.

generated by scientists and passed on to farmers through extension. For example, Röling (1994:245) who states that the technologies (or expertise) are usually blanket recommendations, comprising routine calendar-based applications. Such methods very often exclude, amongst other things, any consideration of farmer's own initiatives and experimentation with agricultural techniques and technology, which has the effect of leaving the hegemonic status of agricultural extension vis-à-vis farmer participation intact. Despite this it is worth pointing out what the recommendations offered through the extension services include. Hybrid maize production requires an 'external package' which includes inputs and financial considerations as well as a degree of externally generated knowledge. This package becomes absorbed in different ways in rural contexts by farmers who are by no means passive recipients. They will use what agricultural resource options are available to them in strategic and imaginative ways, and in so doing perhaps only accept their preferred 'bits' of the hybrid maize package.

The information for hybrid maize cultivation provided by the agricultural extension officers in Kamena include: recommended spacing for each seed station and between rows, correct quantities of and timing for fertiliser application, the timing for planting seed, and recommendations for weeding activities. For the Kamena area extension staff recommended that the crop should be sown no later than the 15th December. Past experience had shown that in the event of late or inadequate rains the earlier the crop is sown the better the chances of a good yield. Data collected in 1981 and 1982 by the I.R.D.P. confirms the importance of timing, 'there is a marked fall off in yield if it [planting] is delayed for any significant time after the establishment of the rains [primarily due to the reduction in soil temperature]' (I.R.D.P. 1984, Table 7.1.2). The figures collected show that as much as 51% reduction in yield can be experienced between an early planting date (1st of November) and a late possible date (1st of January) (ibid.). Timing is also vital for the application of fertiliser. Basal dressing (urea) needs to be applied at the same time as planting, with top dressing (ammonium nitrate) being applied approximately six weeks later, normally in January or early February. At the same time as the application of top dressing the plants should be weeded. Attention to weeds is very important: application of fertiliser on land that contains many weed seeds only promotes their growth. Left unchecked weeds become a major problem for hybrid maize cultivation and weeding is essential to maintain reasonable yields. In contrast to *iconde*, where the heat produced through burning substantially reduces weed growth, there is no burning at the ploughing stage for maize production.

For many the recommendations are not easily followed. Timing is crucial, and

it is extremely difficult to achieve good yields when often the land that is being used differs substantially from the land used in agronomists trials. The labour demands of other important productive activities may conflict with those of hybrid maize and finding the labour for weeding and fertiliser application may prove difficult. In addition the infrastructural problems associated with the delivery of seed and fertiliser often compounds the problems of following a strict timetable of cultivation tasks. There are, then, a number of constraints associated with hybrid maize production, which some farmers may overcome by simply using what they can of the hybrid package. In this way the discourse practices associated with commercialisation and cash crop production only become absorbed by people in so far as they can fulfil certain organisational criteria. What in effect happens is that as these packages reach the rural areas they become modified to meet local social and physical conditions. It is in practice, then, that various discourse practices of agriculture become fused. To understand these better we actually need to examine the activities themselves and consider labour and farm organisation.

### **Labour; Co-operation and Recruitment**

There are a number of labour recruitment or mobilisation options commonly available to people in the Kamena area. In short these include: making claims for assistance from other members of one's household or extended kin and hiring piece workers for cash or goods. There are a number of church congregations and women's clubs that offer their services to others, and charge for these services (see Appendix 2 for details of New Apostolic Church work parties). In addition to these, labour recruitment is possible through the provision of beer or food. These practices are known by the Bemba words *imbile* or *ukutumya* (beer for work) and *ukupula* (food for work). The latter practice is an integral part of the labour arrangements made between members of the same eating groups. There is, however, a distinction made between those who are entitled to food, for example, ones own children, and more distant relatives who have to earn their keep through the provision of labour. The principle of patronage and providing food for labour extends beyond the limits of the household to encompass payments to occasional labourers made through food. Richards makes a highly pertinent point here. She writes:

'it is virtually impossible to make a clear distinction between the feeding of relatives and the feeding of labourers in a society in which kinship is the basis of economic co-operation' (1939:142).

Although this is certainly also the case in the 1990's, the situation is much less clear

cut than that of Richards in the 1930's. Land preparation tasks accomplished using labour recruited from outside of one's immediate eating group and rewarded with food are often formally organised. The grain or mealie meal provided in return for labour may continue in the tradition of kin-based redistribution but it is also a direct form of payment for work done, such that a standard amount of grain is given to each worker in return for a specified task. To this extent, then, the provision of food for work is more 'commoditised' than Richards suggests for the 1930's. During the 1991/1992 drought the principles of working for food became institutionalised, and formed an important part of the drought relief programme supported and sponsored by the World Food Programme of the World Health Organisation.<sup>21</sup> In addition to maize being given as food, seed was distributed to those who had prepared their land but were unable to raise the capital they needed.

*Imbile* or 'beer for work' is a further labour mobilisation option for some. It is an efficient means of accomplishing the heavy tasks of cutting woodland and preparing mounds for cassava or beans. Despite its importance in terms of labour, an ethos of co-operation and conviviality remains a central feature of such beer drinking sessions. A detailed discussion of these forms of labour is provided in Chapter 5.

Access to the various forms of labour is in principle open to all but is nevertheless restricted by a number of important factors. The most significant of these factors relates to the resources a household has at its disposal, and grain stores in particular. Such assets as stored grain are central to raising cash, either through direct sales or through processing and subsequent sales in the form of beer. The money raised in this way is often used for recruiting labour. Grain crops may also become part of a series of exchanges that lead in various ways to the transformation of the value of the grain, ultimately perhaps with the motive of raising cash. Used in this way grain becomes part of a redistributive process that greatly assists those with less.

The ability to call upon the assistance of household members to meet the labour demands of a given crop or season is the first choice for many in the Kamena area. Any additional labour recruitment requires reciprocation in material terms. Also the important contribution that children make to household labour must not be overlooked. Although sometimes reluctantly, many children will help their parents with all forms of tillage. Children are also required at an early school age to help with the teacher's gardens and clear the long grass from around schools.

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<sup>21</sup>Cecilia Chimbala, drought relief co-ordinator (Christian Council of Zambia). Fieldnotes 4/12/92.

Husbands and wives co-operate in fulfilling the demands of agricultural production. In many cases there are no strict divisions of labour, although certain cropping techniques are firmly identified as specifically men's or women's tasks. With *iconde* millet cultivation, for example, cutting is man's work whereas stacking branches and harvesting are women's jobs. *Kwikala ubuko* or uxori-local marriage arrangements (see Long 1968:20 and Richards 1939:124-127) are the considered theoretical norm, and involve men residing with and eating from their in-laws granaries. In return the son-in-law is expected to provide labour, particularly in cutting for *iconde*. Such services continue until the second or third child is born at which times the in-laws give their daughter autonomy over her own kitchen and granary, and the son-in-law is free to work on his and his wife's own gardens. Many young men are reluctant to reside with in-laws who practice *iconde*, expressing concerns for their 'wasted' labour, and the comment 'where's the profit in that'<sup>22</sup> often being proposed as reason enough not to want to cut for one's in-laws. Seur's data makes reference to the attitudes of young men and women, who consider *kwikala ubuko* a waste of time, a waste of 'power' (Seur 1992:189). Many teenagers become involved in the cultivation of their own maize or garden crops (particularly beans and sweet potatoes) albeit on small plots, well before they have to consider marriage. In their view, therefore, to marry and live with in-laws who rely on millet and *iconde* cultivation would detract from any individual efforts they have already established. Tensions between in-laws and their sons-in-law because of the conflicting expectations of the young and old and over personal gains versus collective responsibilities are common place.

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<sup>22</sup>Fieldnotes 2/10/92.



Fig 4.2 Cycle of men's labour activities<sup>23</sup>

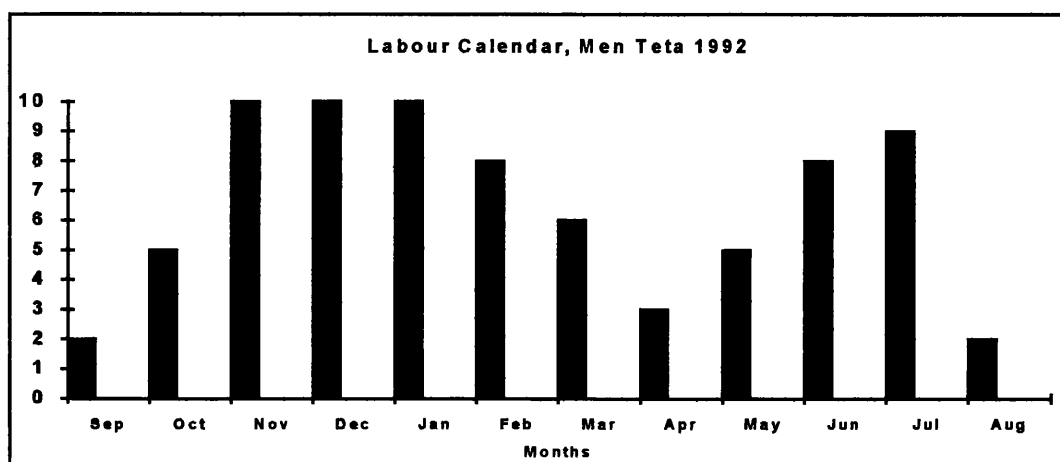
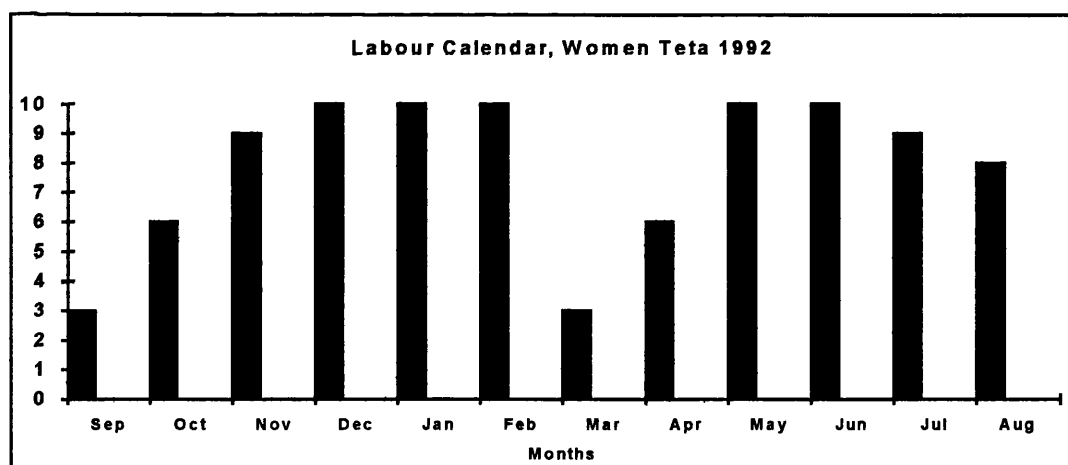


Fig 4.3 Cycle of women's labour activities



The peaks for labour occur in June as trees are cut for millet cultivation and the harvesting of maize and millet also takes place. There are again peaks during the planting period in November and December. Significantly women commented that they did more work than men in the *dambo* (wet land) areas, and at harvest time.

<sup>23</sup>The data presented in Figs 4.2 and 4.3 along with the supporting Tables 4.4 and 4.5 were collected at a participatory planning meeting held with farmers and A.R.P.T. (Central Province) staff in Teta 30/9/92.

Table 4.5 Men's labour activities

MONTHS	MEN'S LABOUR ACTIVITIES	SCORE <sup>24</sup>
SEPTEMBER	<i>Fisebe</i> land preparation..	2
OCTOBER	<i>Ukulima</i> , ploughing, hybrid maize, sorghum, and millet	5
NOVEMBER	Ploughing /planting sorghum, hybrid maize, and <i>ibala</i> millet, preparing mounds ( <i>fisebe</i> ) for beans.	10
DECEMBER	Planting maize, millet, sweet potatoes, and cassava. Fertiliser application (basal)	10
JANUARY	Weeding hybrid maize and <i>ibala</i> millet, planting beans cassava and sweet potatoes. Fertiliser application (top dressing)	10
FEBRUARY	Fertiliser application (top dressing) planting beans cassava and sweet potatoes.	8
MARCH	<i>Kufukika</i> (winter ploughing) <i>ibala</i> land, clearing old <i>ibala</i> land for millet planting, planting livingstone potatoes.	5
APRIL	Winter ploughing, clearing <i>ibala</i> land, and planting livingstone potatoes.	3
MAY	Harvesting millet, and beans, and constructing <i>fitaba</i> ,for storing maize.	5
JUNE	Harvesting millet sorghum maize ground nuts and cutting trees for <i>citemene</i> .	8
JULY	Shelling maize, putting sorghum and millet in storage bins, cutting <i>citemene</i> and stacking branches, transporting maize to the depot.	9
AUGUST	Preparing <i>fisebe</i> for local maize and sweet potatoes.	2

Table 4.6 Women's labour activities

MONTHS	WOMEN'S LABOUR ACTIVITIES	SCORE
SEPTEMBER	<i>Fisebe</i> land preparation, local maize and pumpkins.	3
OCTOBER	<i>Ibala</i> land preparation -ploughing for hybrid maize, <i>katobela</i> , for beans imputa, for cassava.	6
NOVEMBER	Planting hybrid maize, sorghum, beans, ground nuts, cowpeas, cucumbers.	9
DECEMBER	Planting millet and the above, weeding and fertiliser application on hybrid maize.	10
JANUARY	Preparing <i>imputa</i> for sweet potatoes, planting beans on old cassava mounds, weeding fertiliser application, planting Irish potatoes on <i>ibala</i>	10
FEBRUARY	Planting sweet potatoes, beans in <i>fisebe</i> , livingstone potatoes on <i>ifibunde</i> , weeding millet,, maize, sorghum, ground nuts.	10
MARCH	<i>kufukika</i> - winter ploughing, preparing cassava mounds.	3
APRIL	Winter ploughing, harvesting ground nuts.	6
MAY	<i>Ukusepa</i> - harvesting millet, bird scaring, threshing millet and sorghum, harvesting beans	10
JUNE	Harvesting hybrid maize and millet continues, levelling <i>citemene</i> plots, stacking branches for <i>citemene</i> .	10
JULY	Harvesting continues, shelling maize, and loading storage bins, stacking branches for <i>citemene</i> .	9
AUGUST	Preparing <i>fisebe</i> for local maize ,pumpkins, beans, potatoes, and tomatoes.	7

<sup>24</sup>The scores are based on an arbitrary scale from one to ten which indicates the approximate and relative amount of work needed for each month.

Figures 4.2 and 4.3 and the accompanying tables (4.5 and 4.6) illustrate the cycle of work and tasks for men and women. These labour calendars for the neighbouring area of Teta clearly show the peak labour times for agricultural work. The cycle of work is the same as for Kamena. For maize the heaviest work load comes in November, December, January and February. The major tasks being ploughing (hoeing), planting, weeding and fertiliser application. There is then a slack period followed by a further peak of labour in May, June and July which are arduous months as harvesting, shelling, bagging and transporting the maize become priorities. It is significant that the responses of women when questioned about labour shows that they considered there is more work to be done than men. Although within a household cultivation tasks (with the exception of *iconde* and to some extent *cisebe* gardens) may be equally shared between men and women, women still have responsibility for cooking and looking after children. It was expressed to me by men that equality between the sexes was not something they desired, arguing that they did not want to be equal to women because of all the additional work they had!

### **The Labour Requirements of Millet Production**

The labour cycle of *iconde* usually begins in April or May whilst the previous season's crop reaches maturity. For most, however, the heaviest work of cutting begins in June and continues until August. The labour for cutting is ordinarily provided by the male members of a family, and younger brothers, or sons-in-law help with this task. It is possible, however, to have this work completed by organising a co-operative work party and providing beer for those who attend. For households headed by women, piece workers are commonly hired for this task. This was the case with the three female-headed households in the survey who had *iconde* plots. Cutting is regarded as men's work, the women are responsible for stacking the cut branches. The three female-headed households in the survey sample who relied exclusively on *iconde* millet gardens for the 1992/93 season, all acquired some form of assistance for cutting; one woman claimed the help of her children for the task, another paid piece workers with cash raised from the sale of beans, and the third sold garden crops and beans locally to raise the necessary cash to hire piece workers. Stacking they accomplished themselves. This is painstaking and skilled work since all the stems must face one direction and the branches the other. Only in this way is it possible to ensure an even spread of ash when burning finally takes place. This work accompanies the task of cutting, although it may be left until the branches cut are partially dry, thus being of reduced weight.

The date set for burning at the time of the study was the 10th September, approximately the same period each season. The burning is carried out by either men or women, and demands minimal supervision. Sowing the seed, broadcasting, is again a joint gender venture, although one family member may be considered expert at this task and take responsibility for the job. It is extremely important whilst sowing to ensure an even spread of seed otherwise the plant population may be too low or high resulting in poor yields. Harvesting takes place between May and August and is considered women's work, although it is possible with adequate resources to hire piece workers for this task. During the harvest period it is a common sight to see mothers with young infants on their backs join with sisters or daughters to harvest millet. The technique involves cutting of the finger shaped heads of grain with a small knife. Harvesting may be accompanied by other tasks that take women to their *ifyonde*, like collecting fire wood. The millet heads are collected in baskets and then stored in grain bins (*fitabo*, (pl.)) which are usually situated in the fields or close to peoples temporary *iconde* shelters. The *fitabo* are made from wattle and daub, and the quantities harvested are measured in terms of the bin sizes. A bin that is as wide as a man's outstretched arms to the very tip of his extended fingers is known as *icifuba*, with outstretched arms and clenched fists as *shinkula*, one outstretched arm the other bent and placed on the chest is called *ipeta*, and both hands on the chest with elbows akimbo is known as *kaikumbate*.

The *ifyonde* are often situated at some distance from permanent settlements. Sometimes they are so distant that people choose to relocate to these areas during the peak labour periods, such settlements are called *nkutu*, *makutu* (pl.). People from the Mukopa area of Chief Chibale claim that before Independence (in 1964) they were able to travel daily from their villages to their *ifyonde*. Following the implementation of the Zambian Government village regrouping policy in 1971 (First and Second National Development Plans, 1966-1970 and 1971-1975), which aimed to concentrate the rural populations around services centres and access roads, this became more difficult. These *makutu* are presently at some considerable distance from people's permanent homes, being three or four hours walk, some are even located up to a full days walk.<sup>25</sup> As early as 1906 when the British South Africa Company put into effect the forced policy of amalgamation that brought villages into units of a hundred hut, reference was made to 'people building and sleeping in their gardens' (Serenje District note book 1906, cited in Long 1968:80-81). Others have drawn attention to these settlement forms, notably, Richards (1939:299), who referred to them in Bemba as

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<sup>25</sup> A. Long (1987:19) (unpublished fieldwork report).

*imitanda*. Harris-Jones and Chiwale (1963) and Stromgaard (1985) also make some mention of them. For purposes of tax collection and accountability such settlements were discouraged by the colonial administration, and such discriminatory policies towards this form of settlement were conducted with the aim of discouraging *iconde* cultivation practices. Such settlements are common place among those who practice *iconde* in Kamena. This is partly due to Kamena being geographically isolated. It is the last major concentration of settlement with an agricultural depot before the road descends to the Chisomo Valley and game management areas.<sup>26</sup>

In addition to the necessary labour and of course seed, which is retained from previous harvests, no other inputs are required for the cultivation of *iconde* millet. As Paul Ngosa put it "there are no application forms to fill".<sup>27</sup> Land may be used, in part according to availability but, more significantly, in accordance with clan usage. The lack of available and appropriate clan land was, for a handful of people during the 1992/93 season, reason enough for not growing millet by *iconde*.

### **Labour For Maize Production**

In contrast to *iconde* there is no division of labour along gender lines with hybrid maize cultivation. All tasks are considered equally applicable to men and women. Survey data from Kamena reveals that 16.3% of settlements were at the time of the survey headed by women, and all of them cultivated hybrid maize. Of these female-headed households, 86.6% produced both hybrid maize and millet on flat land compared to 20% who produced maize on *ibala* land and millet on *iconde* plots. A total of 97.8% of all households questioned produced some hybrid maize, the remaining two households were both single elderly men, one of whom (Robbie Kalusha England) is disabled, and the other (Paul Kunda, ex-cinema projectionist from Kitwe) preferred to live alone and in a very meagre way. He produced charcoal for sale locally and would buy maize when he needed to. Both these men simply grew a small amount of local maize and focused on garden cultivation, subsisting largely on cassava and sweet potatoes, but selling or exchanging garden produce locally for maize. They would also occasionally undertake piece work.

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<sup>26</sup>Although greatly diminished in number, game animals are still hunted from the remote *makutu*. Preference for residing at *nkutu* sites was expressed by some, who stated that at their *nkutu* there was always 'good milile', i.e. meat. The presence of game animals, so enjoyed as food, at these sites must be seen as an important part of the continued practices of dual residence associated with *iconde* cultivation.

<sup>27</sup>Fieldnotes 2/10/92.

Land preparation begins in late October and November, many people choosing to leave the tillage until the soil has become moistened by first rains. Hoe cultivation is extremely hard work while the soils are still hard following the dry season, although this does not deter some people from practising winter ploughing. Labour peaks in December and January, when final hoeing takes place and planting together with initial fertiliser application is carried out. Both men and women perform these tasks. During this period early mornings are devoted to such work, and the pressure is on to complete planting at the earliest possible date. For maize there is a short lull in the work cycle before weeding and further fertiliser application takes place, approximately one month to six weeks following planting. A range of other crops are planted at the same time as hybrid maize, and mound preparation must be accomplished during the period in which ibala land is cultivated.

For a single acre plot of maize the amount of labour needed with two to three people working approximately three hours is as follows: Land preparation, hoeing, ten days to two weeks; planting and initial fertiliser application, three to five days; weeding, one week; basal fertiliser application, two days; harvesting, three days; transporting harvested maize, three days - accomplished simultaneously with harvesting; threshing and bagging, one week; transporting to the depot depends on the distance. For all these tasks, except planting and threshing, it is possible to hire labour in various ways. Commonly this is done by paying cash to piece workers, although for ploughing and weeding it is possible to use *imbile* or beer in return for work. Harvesting is often paid for with maize and frequently is accomplished by people from the valley region who come specifically for this task.<sup>28</sup>

Labour arrangements, the use of land and the relationship between men and women are all important factors in understanding the control of resources. I recognise that the issue of gender is central to any discussion of resource control and management. Seur (1992) gives a full and detailed account of the relationship between men and women and the control of resources for the Nchimishi area, I will therefore only deal with these issues briefly in this section. Later in the thesis (Chapter 6) I provide a detailed account of these issues with respect to the control of beer and revenue raised through its sale.

At different times both men and women have differential control over a number of resources. Such control is, however, in many cases decided together. Conjugal relationships between men and women very often involve many joint

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<sup>28</sup>Fieldnotes 29/10/92

decisions, negotiations and accommodations. Land is a crucial variable and to some extent access to and control of it underpin the relationship between men and women.<sup>29</sup>

The amount of labour that individuals invest in agricultural production is central to our understanding of a person's control over produce. There is no doubt that this is an important issue, but it is essential also to ask whether or not this becomes a defining characteristic for local people. Many people responded to this question by reference to paid labour. They did not consider the labour of their family members or wives in the same way as that which they acquired through remuneration. Indeed, within a single 'eating group' or kitchen it hardly matters how much either spouse contributes in totality as to who then controlled the use of crops. Decisions are still made with the consent of one's partner. In the case of one elderly married woman in Kamena she did all the necessary work on the permanent fields including the hybrid maize crop. When asked who then controlled the cash raised she responded that her husband did. This was indeed the case, she even secured a loan in her own name for the inputs. The cash raised after loan repayment and sales was then given to her husband.

There is a sexual division of labour with regard to certain agricultural pursuits. Briefly, with citemene millet cultivation it is quite clear which tasks should be accomplished by men and which by women. It is however categorically stated that

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<sup>29</sup>In Kamena and Chief Chibale as a whole, land is accepted as being in the custodianship of the Chief. Anyone may petition the chief to access a previously unused area of land, although success in claiming rights to land or the rights to the produce of that land involves access to a network of social relations that incorporates kin, neighbours, local officials and sometimes bureaucrats and politicians (Moore and Vaughan 1994:210). In the context of the increasing commodification of land through its permanent and intensive use for cash crops, women may have more difficulty in accessing good quality land. Their effective networks tend to be more localised and their access to wider political and economic resources is more limited, indirect and insecure (ibid.). However, in Kamena, the issues of access to highly valued land suitable for commercially-oriented production appeared less consequential than the issue of control of agricultural produce.

A person's access to land is determined by their residence and to which clan or lineage either they or their senior householder belongs. Of forty nine separate settlements in Kamena, twenty nine used land under the control of the senior males lineage and twenty used land controlled by the senior woman's lineage. Marital arrangements determined which of the various clans land would be used. For example, in situations of uxorial residence following marriage it is common that a man will use the land that his in-laws have at their disposal. This is in turn determined by their own clan lineage and which areas of land they may use. Those who choose to reside independently of their in-laws may use the land that belongs to the senior householder's clan (see Appendix 3a,b and c). The distribution and use of land is, despite being controlled by the lineage, determined by a 'first clearance' principle. A millet garden is considered to be a man's for example if he first cleared the land (see Richards 1939:244). The produce from such a garden, however, is said to 'belong' to his wife, as ultimately she is responsible for the use of any stored produce destined primarily for the cooking pot.

the control of the millet grown in this way is in the hands of women. Likewise, the subsidiary gardens or permanent village fields in which a variety of crops are grown (including; millet, cassava, pumpkins, beans, local varieties of maize, and relish crops) are traditionally considered as the sole responsibility of women. They after all invest more labour in these crops than do men (see Tables 4.5 and 4.6). Permanent fields now significantly include those *ibala* fields growing hybrid maize. The division of labour on these fields is by no means clear cut. Men and women may do a variety of tasks. In fact it is the women who have a great deal of work to do here in weeding and fertiliser application.

### **The Valorisation of Agricultural Commodities**

The commodities associated with agriculture include the produce grown and the inputs needed for certain forms of production. The value associations that people have regarding these goods are bound up with the both the practices and actual work involved in their procurement and with a series of different social relations involved in organising productive activities. Goods have a range of specific uses, and may at different times acquire a cash value. In the context of barter type exchanges, the cash value attributed to many items is often of little or no significance (see Chapter 7). The acquisition of goods themselves is often more significant than the realisation of their cash values. From a financial perspective the terms of trade at the market in Serenje may be more favourable. The problem remains, however, as to how to access them. At the market transactions are all based on cash equivalents, and very often people do not have the cash with which to make their purchases. There is also the problem of distance to and from town, and the demands of other farm and household commitments. People are acutely aware of these drawbacks and where possible prefer to obtain the food and other items needed through barter. The distribution of social, material and physical resources in Kamena is by no means even, nor is it constant, and this helps maintain an appropriate environment for barter exchanges. The items that are exchanged which provide for food needs (maize, millet and garden produce) and the requirements of agricultural production (fertiliser), have a cash value which in the case of maize and fertiliser are largely determined by the pricing policies of government. This creates a situation in which, on one level, the pricing of locally sold or exchanged maize is based on the market equivalents as determined by the government and buying institutions. The quantities sold locally (in 20 litre tins) are priced accordingly but pricing in the national market place remains outside the control of local people. Although the cash value of such goods is in some contexts 'ignored' by the participants of exchange, this does not mean that people forget or do



not know the cash value of particular items.

Traders from the Copperbelt towns know full well that rural people have great difficulty in accessing the goods they desire, and commonly bring items with them to exchange for produce that they later sell in the urban markets. When local produce, primarily beans, groundnuts and sweet potatoes are harvested these traders bring with them such goods as, soap, salt, sugar, cloth, small radios, dresses, shirts, shorts and bicycle spare parts. They also come to trade for local delicacies; *inswa* or dried ants and *finkubala* or caterpillars. In 1993 these creatures were in abundance and on this occasion the traders who came paid in cash. It was obviously worth their while. On one occasion they paid out a total of K56,000, a sizeable investment for *inswa*, but which are very profitable on resale in the urban market. These traders did not necessarily have relatives in the area, but hospitality and generosity was shown them through the offer of accommodation and food. Very often such traders are women, and it is local women who assist them. Aware of the fact that the produce they acquired had a cash value, the traders endeavoured to procure the items through the exchange of specific goods. This was very much to their advantage as they could acquire goods for less than their actual cash value in external markets. This disparity is of no consequence to people in Kamena as they themselves need certain goods, particularly clothes. To acquire them at the nearest urban market is cost prohibitive and so they prefer to deal with the traders who come to them.

Credit organisations prefer commodity payments since these ensure optimum chance of loan recovery. Rather than waiting until people have cashed their cheques, they accept maize as it is brought to the depot to sell. This, they argue, provides them with a degree of security. If they wait until people have cashed their cheques, the cash is liable to be spent before debts are settled. This also avoids the problem of collecting a large amount of cash and having the problem of safely depositing it in the bank. In 1993, the government faced problems with purchasing nationally produced maize; they simply did not have the money to buy it. Liberalising the national economy opened the way for private enterprise, and so urban traders used the opportunity to trade goods for maize. The shop keepers in Serenje also became involved. They released goods to farmers on the production of their crop sale receipts, and then collected the payments in the form of maize. This was subsequently sold to the Serenje District Co-operative Marketing Union (S.D.C.M.U.)

The utility of goods in place of cash is to some extent circumstantial, as it was for the Serenje shopkeepers who took advantage of the changing marketing system and the inability of the government to settle quickly their accounts with farmers (see

Chapter 3). The shopkeepers later ran into trouble as the government failed to raise sufficient funds to pay for the maize. They had gambled that they could cover themselves for the period between receiving their payments. The manager at Ika Fashions in Serenje, for example, complained that he had a duty to his customers and therefore provided them with goods on credit, but that he did not have the cash to renew his stocks and his suppliers were now demanding cash payments. For urban traders exchange of goods is central to their strategy as this is the easiest way to realise a profit once the goods they acquire are transferred to the market place. This arrangement suits local people as they feel that they get what they want without recourse first to raising the cash.

Despite the utility of goods in avoiding the problems of generating cash, cash still has a crucial role in people's lives. Without it they cannot drink their beer, send their children to school, grow hybrid maize, buy food stuffs, and pay for the costs of health and transport.

### **The Value of Money**

Money is an important factor and integral to socially constructed value notions vis-à-vis goods that are sold or exchanged it is, therefore, an important feature of livelihoods. Even though it may be absent in some contexts of exchange, people retain a sense of the cash value of various goods. This value is itself open to manipulation in the same way that the value of goods in the exchanges (discussed in Chapter 7) are subject to social relations and negotiation.

A useful study carried out in 1964 by George Kay explains this. His research involved an economic survey of Chief Kalaba's village, in the Mansa district of Zambia. The results of the survey provide a useful perspective on goods and the values people attach to them. The data demonstrates unequivocally that even in regard to the acquisition value of a good there are no fixed standards. Kay's introduction to the findings of the survey is particularly interesting. He points out why it proved so difficult to interpret the results of a quantitative analysis. One such difficulty was to calculate the work done for a particular household. This was due in part to the fact that the contributions made by children and workers from outside the family, who on occasions worked for beer, were not recorded in detail and often those involved in this type of organisation had no real account of who did what for whom and who received what for work done. In addition, of the exchanges that were recorded, approximately 66% were transfers or exchanges of goods only and therefore involved no cash transfers. It was therefore extremely difficult to accord some form of

standard value to them. Kay explains:

'The villager, when asked to place a cash value on a commodity, considers the circumstances of the transaction as much as the inherent value of the article concerned. For instance, a hand of bananas might be offered to me - a rich European - at 5s.; the same bananas might be offered to an African in regular employment for 2s. 6d., or be exchanged for a shillings worth of fish with a fellow villager, or be distributed freely by the owner to close kin and friends. Similarly on different occasions commodities acquire different values.... The price [of a commodity] would be related to the ability to pay, the relationship with the vendor, the character of the vendor, the number of potential vendors and so on (Kay 1964:5).

The most significant resource available to people in Kamena is maize. In different ways maize plays a pivotal role in many income-generating activities and its cultivation is often seen as a desirable goal. Maize is often used as standard measure of value in the context of exchange. Twenty and five-litre tins are the favoured quantities (see Chapter 6). People make their calculations in terms of tins, and it is commonly accepted that six tins are the equivalent to one ninety-kilo bag of maize. During fieldwork the price of maize more than doubled from one harvest to the next (see Table 4.7). The price of a twenty-litre tin subsequently rose from K500 to @K1000, and people remarked that this was because of the increase in the prices of goods at the stores in the Boma. Similarly, the price of a cup of beer doubled from ten to twenty *kwacha*.

Maize is a key commodity and its price has an effect on the price of related goods, beer and mealie meal, for example. It is also significant that the price of maize on the national market affects local prices. In this way it becomes possible to highlight how changes on a national level rapidly have consequences in a rural setting. Yet in addition to national inflation, there are a number of local criteria which contribute to establishing the standard cash value of maize. Availability is obviously an important factor, and for the 1992-1993 season, the previous seasons drought made this a particularly significant factor. Judging exactly how much to sell and how much to retain for consumption and beer requirements is often difficult to predict in advance. There may be circumstances at harvest time that change during the rest of the season. Generally decisions concerning the use and allocation of grain are made as the season unfolds, and consequently people may sell initially more than they later discover they need.

Table 4.7 Maize and fertiliser prices 1992/93

ITEM	DATE	PRICE
MAIZE	AUG. 1992	@K2200 (per 90kg)
--"--	AUG. 1993	@K5500 --"--
FERTILISER	AUG. 1992	@K4200 --"--
--"--	AUG. 1993	@K9000 --"--

Once the maize has been sold it is removed and taken to the district storage depot at Serenje. While the prices of maize in Kamena during the leanest period in April and May of 1993 were in the region of K1000 to K1200, in Serenje the price remained lower, at @K850. A number of people informed me that the price was due to availability, but went on to say that people recognise the potential that maize has for beer and the possible returns to be made from beer sales and, consequently, this kept the prices high.

The price of fertiliser rose from K4200 to K9000 in 1993 (Table 4.7) and, like maize, the price was subject to both inflation and policy change. The price for fertiliser is set by institutional and political structures that remain completely outside the control of local farmers. This does not mean, however, that fertiliser remains 'commoditised' in respect of all its various uses and values. It has a use value that would surprise many agronomists. Fertiliser, particularly ammonium nitrate (top dressing), is used to make gun powder for use in muzzle loading guns, and is sometimes used to make fish poison, although the latter is not so common. The importance of fertiliser for the latter uses by no means displaces its important role in successful hybrid maize production. But these other uses must form part of our understanding of the values ascribed to it. Agriculture in Kamena remains diversified in terms of crops and techniques of production, but maize has become an enduring part of agricultural practice. Its accumulation for sale through cultivation or exchange is an important strategy for many. The existence of a marketing infrastructure at local level provides an outlet for the sale of maize, including maize that may be acquired through means other than cultivation.

## Summary

Although this chapter has focused on the production of grain crops, since these are significant for household income and food security, the major characteristic of agriculture for the Kamena area and Serenje as a whole remains its adaptability and diversity. Such diversity is important and analysis should begin with an attempt to

unravel the complex mix of agriculture and related practices because these not only affect household food security, but are to a large extent responsible for there being any security in food and incomes at all. The mixture of agricultural activities practised and the different ways in which people organise these activities reflects the various discursive practices that inform crop management. The practical knowledge that people operationalise in different agricultural contexts is part of a continuous dialectic between the different discourses. Many of the discursive practices associated with agriculture become fused, such that customary practices are reshaped to accommodate new crop varieties and cultivation techniques and organisational strategies. Indeed it is possible to conclude that elements or traces of 'so-called' traditional discourse practices within agriculture remain virtually intact. For example, there is still a strict division of labour with respect to *iconde*. The descriptions of this form of millet cultivation and associated garden production from sources, such as Allan (1949) and Trapnell (1953), compare well with my own observations. In respect to hybrid varieties of maize, more recently introduced to Kamena, there are certain practices which build on the expertise of local agricultural practice, but also significantly these activities demand practical knowledge generated from sources 'external' to the immediate locality (i.e. from agricultural research stations and the work of agronomists and plant specialists). Thus in order to gain insight into the valorisation of agricultural commodities (whether used directly for agricultural purposes or in other exchange contexts), it is useful to consider the way in which such value notions are predicated and shaped by the various practices within agriculture that contribute to the valorisation of such goods. I have identified the major characteristics of agriculture: the range of crops grown, the techniques employed and the organisation of labour. I have also shown to what extent the organisation of agricultural production is underpinned by a series of discourse practices that may become manifest in agricultural production activities but are also, as we shall see below, represented in other contexts of social action.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE VALORISATION OF BEER: RITUAL AND SOCIAL DOMAINS

To appreciate the way in which notions of value are constructed in relation to beer demands an examination of the complex of interlocking discursive practices that become manifest in contexts of social action. The previous chapter drew attention to the broader context of agricultural practice and in particular those organisational aspects of production which it is possible to consider as tied to discourse practice. Such practices are central to both the orchestration and organisation of cultivation activities and to the meaning or interpretation given to such action. The value that beer acquires at different times must be considered vis-à-vis agricultural practice, as it is both a product of agriculture and plays an important role in the organisation of agricultural activities. I will return to these considerations in the next chapter. There are a number of other significant contexts of action within which beer features and these, then, have an effect on the valorisation of beer. They include ritual and social dimensions. I begin this chapter by showing how the situational method enables us to get at these various contexts of action which give shape to the various value notions of beer. The material presented below clearly illustrates how, on the one hand, local political struggles are expressed with reference to the different value associations of beer, whilst on the other, the public meeting in question shows that the value of beer is not necessarily fixed, but rather subject to a range of considerations. The set of grievances aired at the public meeting reflect the changing significance of beer production and consumption practices. Although relatively short, this dispute highlights how certain discourse practices inform the statements of people, which are expressed symbolically through the various value notions of beer. Following van Velsen's lead, to fully appreciate the significance of the dispute it becomes necessary to gather as much information about the context as possible. This context actually consists of many discursive practices that have contextual or practical significance for people. I will concentrate the discussion in this chapter on the various ways in which beer has 'traditional' associations for people and the way in which these are linked to an array of discursive practices associated with 'tradition' that permeate the activities and strategies of farmers.

The dispute in question essentially unfolds as part of a series of contestations and counter-contestations of political status and legitimacy. The main protagonists (the *filolo* or chief's messengers and local women), who represent different but not

incompatible views implicitly bring to the dispute the importance of wider contexts of meaning and action. These are expressed by reference to the different valorisations of beer. We may be able, in other contexts, to observe the ways in which beer is significant for different groups of people, but the expressions of people at the meeting were only partial and it therefore becomes necessary to include a fuller analysis in this chapter of the depth and strength of those discourses which the *filolo* and the women articulate during the meeting. I use the situational method in this chapter to focus on the particularities of one context within which the different value notions of beer are expressed. The dispute I use, then, to illustrate how there are multiple value constructions for beer, that at times are conflicting, but are nevertheless all integral to the analysis of value. In addition, it becomes clear that these various value notions are tied rhetorically and practically to certain discourse practices (of ritual, tradition and the market) that cut across different action contexts and social encounters. I focus the discussion in this chapter on the implications of the allusions of the *filolo* to the wider discourse practices central to traditional political authority and show how this is related to understanding the role of beer in 'tribute' and as an expression of respect, generosity and continuity with relation to lineage and ancestors. This chapter focuses on the 'traditional' discourse practices that unite beer with a sense of social identity. In the next chapter I will concentrate on the women's arguments which draw more specifically on the discourses of 'the market' and the significance of beer as a source of income. The discursive arenas that the women and the *filolo* draw on in support of their arguments are not clearly divided, but in fact overlap to a large extent, such that the two sides of the dispute are not totally incompatible. The *filolo* and the women both have experience and knowledge of the associations brought forward in support of each other's positions. Furthermore, we shall see throughout this and the next chapter that there is considerable overlap in practice with respect to those discourses that are significant to the valorisation of beer.

### **Recasting the Role of Beer: A Local Context of Dispute**

'Beer should be sold at 20 *Kwacha*<sup>1</sup> per cup, since the price of goods (for example, soap is 200 *Kwacha* and rising) are going up continuously. 20 *Kwacha* will only be for strong beer, sour beer will remain at 10 *Kwacha*. People should be adding more millet!! People are not skilled at brewing *katata*, and we cannot charge 20 *Kwacha* a cup unless the quality of the beer is improved. The *filolo* should go to taste the beer to detect the sour brews, in which case the beer is to be

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<sup>1</sup>Where 388.1 *Kwacha* is equivalent to 1 Pound Sterling, Barclays Bank of Zambia 8/07/92

sold at 10 *Kwacha*. If someone insults the *filolo* and therefore shows no respect, saying... 'you *filolo* don't brew beer you only drink ours'.. he or she will be charged. The brewer should not be allowing people to stay while there is still beer. People should take their beer home or at least away from the brewer's premises. We *filolo* will be charging people who don't disperse drinkers after dark (18 hours). These days there are too many cases of theft and trouble concerning men chasing after women. The brewers should also be washing themselves, first thing, before the customers arrive, they should be smart and clean around the place'.<sup>2</sup>

Beer plays an important role in the economic and social lives of people in Kamena. This was never more clearly stated than at a public meeting called by the chief's messengers or *filolo* (*chilolo* (s)) in April 1993. The discussion that took place, following the *filolo* speech after the meeting at Kamena school, was brief but nevertheless interesting as it made concrete many whisperings and inconclusive accusations that I happened upon in the course of my social encounters during fieldwork. Reiterating, in a diplomatically muted form, the accusation that I had heard elsewhere, - 'you *filolo* don't brew beer, you only drink ours'- the *filolo* tried to affirm their authority and the right to be given free beer, as part of their assertion of chiefly prerogative.

Public meetings of one form or another are a common occurrence in Kamena.<sup>3</sup> The local political party chairman would call meetings to discuss not only party policy but also local matters. In the opening statement of an address he made in January of 1993, the issue of tribute beer was introduced in a subtle but astute way. This issue was obviously an emotive topic, and Kapson Kapilya the newly appointed M.M.D. (Movement for Multi-party Democracy) chairman made good rhetorical use of it.

'The reason I have called this meeting has got a meaning,<sup>4</sup> especially to us working people. That is why I have called you all, so that we may

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<sup>2</sup>Fieldnotes 30/4/93. Extracts from the opening address of Kaston Kamena, senior *chilolo*, Kamena area, translation by J. Kasubika.

<sup>3</sup>At the time of fieldwork there were four women's clubs in the Kamena area and three different church congregations (Jehovah's Witnesses, Catholic, and New Apostolic Church) all of which meet on a regular basis. In addition, there were meetings called by either politicians or under the authority of the chief. There was a specially constructed *nsaka* or shelter for the purpose of these meetings and other events at which people would come together to discuss disputes and family conflicts.

<sup>4</sup>Kapilya called this meeting to discuss the role of local councillors, and the Parent-Teacher Association and to listen to various reports of local government workers in agriculture and health.



come and solve these problems. Not as it was in the previous party when people like the *chilolo* were claiming beers.'

The issue was raised again in public after there had been a good deal of talk and obvious discontent amongst people over the demands (real or imagined) that the *filolo* were making of local people. The *filolo* themselves had called their own meeting to counter a number of accusations made against them, the most serious of which concerned land allocation.<sup>5</sup> In countering such accusations in public, the *filolo* created the necessary space within which they could negotiably reassert their own authority. The disparate views expressed at the meeting, reflect the changing ways in which political authority is both expressed and applauded by local people and the changing significance of beer for people in such expressions. Central to the *filolo* defence were a number of reproaches criticising the M.M.D. chairman for deriding them before Chief Chibale at his court. Complaints against the *Filolo* included selling land, in other words not passing on land and farm registration fees to the Chief. Following this topic the issue of pricing was raised, and included in the meeting was a short discussion on the price of locally available tobacco (*balani*) and beer. The pricing criterion, suggested by the *filolo*, for beer was its strength. There were some reservations about judging the strength of the beer, which meant the involvement of the *filolo* as they would themselves do the tasting. Despite the murmured protests from some women, it was Kayison Chibuye who spoke openly:

'When the big man Kamena (Kaston), who is a *chilolo*, is drunk he doesn't talk sense, but when he's sober he does'.<sup>6</sup>

Kayison implied that even the *filolo* make mistakes: when they drink they are just as liable to talk rubbish as any other man. This response was met with applause and laughter. In this way the assembled gathering showed their appreciation for his humorous way of defusing the tension, whilst making it clear that the *filolo* are not necessarily better or more deserving than anyone else. A full picture of the dispute did not really emerge, until after further discussions with those present. The *filolo* for example, argued that they should be given beer freely since it had always been given

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<sup>5</sup>Land in the Kamena area is in the custodianship of the Chief, although there are some people who have title deeds to the land they use. Allocation of land is said to be the responsibility of the *filolo* sanctioned by the Chief and not as, one *chilolo* pointed out, the responsibility of local politicians. Claims over land and its allocation are often the subject of heated disputes. 'Rights regarding land are not fixed, but rather multiplex and historically determined, often being bound up with the biography of particular individuals' (Moore and Vaughan 1994:210), see also Pottier (1989:150).

<sup>6</sup>Fieldnotes 30/4/93.

freely to them as tribute and in respect for the chief:

'According to our tradition [our culture] the *filolo* are supposed to be given respect like village headmen. They are the Chief's council. In the colonial period people settled in villages, each with a headman. When someone happened to kill an animal they had to give a portion to the headman; also when beer was brewed they had to give freely.'<sup>7</sup>

Mr Chita who attended the meeting opposed the *filolo*, saying,

'the *filolo* are not supposed to demand free beers, its up to the individual to give freely if they so wish.'<sup>8</sup>

The women's grievances, which Mr Chita undoubtedly shared, were not underwritten by political agendas, but by practical and financial concerns. The women stated that they could not give 'free beer' to the *filolo*, because this would affect the amount of cash they could raise through beer sales. Beer for them is primarily seen as an important resource, that enables them to purchase needed food items and provide for their households' and children's needs. It was unreasonable, they argued, despite the Lala 'traditions' of tribute for the *filolo*, to demand part of their income. By contrast the *filolo* made rhetorical use of 'Lala tradition' to argue in favour of continuing to provide tribute beer. Reminding people that as the Chief would visit in August, millet should be donated in order to brew beer for him. Tribute to the chief, in the form of beer, people accepted was part of tradition. This local assertion is supported by the findings of Audrey Richards who remarks that tribute to the Bemba chiefs for both unexpected levies and customary annual gifts at harvest time were (at the time of her fieldwork in the 1930's) in decline but nevertheless still an important part of recognising chiefly authority (Richards 1939:253).<sup>9</sup> The Bemba Chiefs at that time remembered with enthusiasm the glorious past, 'all day long they carried tribute (*Batula*). They brought millet and beer and meat. They were always bringing tribute' (1939:252). The relationship between food (including beer) and the social idiomatic expression of ones relationship to others cannot be overlooked. 'The giving or receipt of food is part of most economic transactions, and may come to represent a number of human relationships whether between different kinsmen or between subject and chief'

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<sup>7</sup>Fieldnotes 6/10/92.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Barnes (1967:144-145), for example, emphasised the relationship between beer drinking, chieftainship, tribute and authority for the Ngoni. Furthermore he asserts that the Ngoni are an excellent example of how beer drinking represented and confirmed existing political structures.

(Richards 1939:45). In Kamena demands by the *filolo* for tribute beer echoed the traditional relationship between authority, tribute and beer, but the issue is more complex and reflects the changing political and economic situation in rural areas.<sup>10</sup> Local women and men responded to *filolo* rhetoric in various ways, but all were concerned with the fact that, although respect should possibly be shown, the giving of beer freely to friends would undermine their own incomes, and especially to the *filolo* who were keen to re-invent<sup>11</sup> themselves and their version of 'Lala tradition'. The strategic use of 'tradition' as a series of discursive practices that give ideological and moral support to their own position and status would thereby underwrite their claims to authority.

The discussions that took place were fuelled by a local political struggle between M.M.D. and U.N.I.P. in the run-up to local elections. The political discourses of the wider arenas enter local interactive encounters and become embedded in locally significant expressions. The *filolo* on this occasion represented themselves as the chief's messengers, but used the stage to voice their opposition to M.M.D. Interestingly the *filolo* being senior and well respected local men were, during the former government, accredited with political authority as headmen and ward chairmen and through the chief became local players in the organisational structures of party and government. This institutional authority was lost to them when M.M.D took power in 1991. In contrast, the M.M.D chairman was formerly an urban employee with Duly Motors in Lusaka and an ambitious new farmer/retiree. Often walking the 35 kilometres to Serenje Boma for political meetings, he was keen to make political advances. The recent changes in the political leadership of Zambia, and the consequent rhetorical struggles that became part of daily debate on a national

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<sup>10</sup>The office of the *filolo* was created during the colonial period as part of the policy of indirect rule. Changing residential arrangements, and the reorganisation of agricultural production have led to the demise in the status of individual headmen, and altered settlement arrangements (Long 1968:3). Richards mentions *bafilolo* as having no hereditary title but nevertheless being important legal and executive positions (Richards 1939:24). The office of *filolo* gave the chief wide reaching control over often distant followers. For the Lala of Serenje, such office extended the authority of the chief and allowed the colonial administration to penetrate the rural areas. Such councillors or *ivilolo*, as Watson refers to them, are also important to the Mambwe. However, the extent to which their role differed from the village headmen is questionable (1958:73). At independence the *filolo* were discontinued, but reintroduced in 1991 by U.N.I.P. in an attempt to regain political hold over the rural communities. Local people are aware of the recreation of the *filolo* and are thus more sceptical as to the 'traditional' authority and subsequent respect that the *filolo* demand. In addition, as the *filolo* are associated intimately with both the U.N.I.P. era and local political structures, people display a certain degree of dissatisfaction with these *filolo* as representatives of an unfavourable regime (Fieldnotes 6/10/92, conversation with Meals Chiluba, one of six *filolo* for the Kamena area).

<sup>11</sup>To paraphrase Hobsbawn and Ranger (1983).

level were to some extent mirrored in this local setting. This apart, the manner in which beer became a significant focus of debate, however, reflects the way in which beer occupies an important place in the lives of local people. To understand this more fully it is necessary to examine the way in which beer becomes a focus of social action in those domains that have 'traditional' or customary associations.

The traditional occasions on which beer is brewed and distributed freely include those contexts of social action in which local perceptions of respect, obligation, social harmony and continuity are articulated. '*Ubwalwa bwamuchinshi*' or 'respect beers' are brewed on a number of occasions. A wife will brew for her husband; '*ubwakukanda ifisapya*' 'to soothe his blisters acquired through work'; or '*ubwakukanda ifipapansha*' 'to remove the dust and twigs that get into the eyes' during agricultural work. Both of these are specifically associated with men's labour involving the cutting of *iconde*. In the union of man and woman (marriage), beer also has an important role: '*ubwalwa bwamuchinshi kubapongoshi*' is the beer brewed by a mother to give her daughter autonomy over her own kitchen and food stores, ('*ukulanga mulilo*', literally 'to show fire'). This beer is also in honour of or to show respect to the son-in-law, and marks his final acceptance by the in-laws and the consolidation of the marriage. Significant also are occasions for which beer is used to communicate in various ways with the ancestors: '*ubwalwa bwafiombe*' or beer for the calabash, as it is known in this context.

Among the present-day population of Kamena, there are also a number of symbolic practices associated with the brewing process. These are not rigidly adhered to but nevertheless may at times be important to the brewer, and express generally accepted views concerning the significance of the ancestors. The whole area of 'tradition' is a complex mix of ritual and social practices. Expressed by people in the Kamena area, for example, are suspicions that the failure or souring of a particular brew may be because of the interventions of an unsettled ancestor: '*ukusamba mubwalwa*', literally meaning 'to wash in the beer', signifies an ancestor who may have symbolically come and washed in the beer. Although most people would offer practical or technical explanations for the beer being sour, this did not exclude people having suspicions about interference by their ancestors.

Yet despite its social and symbolic meanings beer remains a significant source of cash for people in the area (after crop sales). To understand more fully the significance of beer production in the livelihood strategies of local people, it is necessary to consider beer from a broader or more holistic perspective. Central to

such a perspective is the way in which processes of commoditisation (with particular reference to crop production and sales) have increasingly affected the productive contexts and value notions of beer. On the other hand, though, examining beer brewing and consumption practices from a commodity perspective alone would overlook the important social values that beer holds in other use contexts. One important use context that crosses the divide between beer as a commodity and beer fulfilling a non-commodity social function is the work party. Later in this chapter I consider the significance of such work parties (or *imbile* as they are known locally) for both the contribution they make to fulfilling the labour demands of *iconde* produced millet and in relation to other social functions. *Imbile* practices are closely associated with organisational strategies within agricultural production and reflect the importance of networks of co-operation. Events involving beer are obviously important arenas of social action wherein beer becomes both the focus of various social exchanges, while remaining important as the means through which collective labour can be organised.

The local debate with which this chapter opened echoes the changing ways in which beer becomes central to many social encounters. The use of beer and how it is conceptualised is constantly changing, and is negotiably redefined to suit people's specific needs. On the one hand, it is conceptually or symbolically associated with accepted idioms or norms of social respect, generosity and 'tradition'; and on the other it is associated with people's incomes and consequent livelihood strategies. It is necessary therefore to examine these various contexts or local frames of reference to arrive at a fuller picture of the significance of beer in the Kamena area.

### **Domains of Significance; the Ritual Context of Beer in Zambia**

Ivan Karp (1980) makes an interesting observation concerning the use of beer among the Iteso of Kenya, when he states that beer drinking pervades Iteso social activity. 'The contexts in which beer is found illuminate the role that beer plays in defining those contexts and in realising the goals of the persons active in such situations' (1980:84). The essential point raised is that beer as a specific 'good' has a multiplicity of meanings for the actors themselves, and 'in their complex of belief, custom and attitude surrounding beer drinking, the Iteso express an implicitly held set of ideas about the nature of their social world and their experience of it' (1980:83). Likewise in Kamena the contexts in which beer features are clearly situations or events that become social arenas for such expressions, where beer becomes central to social

interaction. For both rural and urban areas the consumption of beer is an important focus of entertainment, and becomes an appropriate context in which social relationships are re/negotiated, consolidated and maintained. Beer is sometimes, as we shall see, brewed in Kamena specifically for its social-symbolic value in consolidating particular social relationships. Although in other contexts in which it is produced and consumed it may have quite different objectives, when beer enters the social arena it always plays an important part in communicative action identified with the maintenance of meaningful social relationships.

To provide a broader comparative perspective I will review the literature that identifies and describes the various ritual, symbolic traditional contexts of production and consumption of beer. There are clearly defined contexts of use for beer in rural areas; it is either being sold at a beer party, it is being consumed freely, given in return for labour, used for the specific purpose of showing respect, or used in a more ritual way to accompany 'traditional' ceremonies. Exploring these various contexts in which beer features in Kamena help us to build a broad picture of the social significance of beer.

There are essentially three contexts in which beer is brewed and consumed in Zambia; for ritual purposes (Richards 1939, Turner 1957, Watson 1958, Colson and Scudder 1988), in the recruitment of labour (Richards 1939, Watson 1958, Marwick 1965, Pottier 1985), and for direct sale (Colson 1971, Colson and Scudder 1988, Pottier 1985, Long, A. 1992, Hedlund and Lundahl 1984). The following discussion deals with ritual contexts and labour recruitment.

There are frequent references to the use of beer in ritual practices among Zambian people. Concerned specifically with the Lala and related peoples the best sources are perhaps Richards (1939), and Stefaniszyn (1964) who worked with the Ambo in the valley region. Sources that deal with other ethnic groups and their ritual associations of beer are to be found in works by Colson (1971), Scudder (1962), Gluckman (1965), Watson (1958), and Turner (1957), and later studies include Pottier (1989), and Colson and Scudder (1988). With the exception of Colson and Scudder's *For Prayer and Profit* (1988) none of these works concentrates on beer per se; however they all mention the important role that beer plays in the ritual activities that they discuss.

In regard to some general notions concerning the role of beer in ritual activity it is normally thought to be offered as a form of libation to ancestors in those rituals

that demand their appeasement. Many healing rituals can be thought of in this manner. Turner (1957) and Watson (1958) both provide good accounts of such rituals as do Colson and Scudder (1988). Beer can be considered as a form of tribute in relation to these rituals. Colson and Scudder (1988) make reference to the way people seek communion through the offerings they make to their ancestors. They also draw our attention to the manner in which the household (symbolised by hearth) and the field (symbolised by grain) were brought together in the synthesis of beer. This is a common theme in the ritual practices of peoples in Zambia. It manifests itself in different ways, but the same associations with ancestry, agriculture and marital organisation are prevalent symbolic themes. Furthermore, as Colson and Scudder (1988) point out, the ritual significance of beer underwrites its legitimacy. For the Gwembe people the economic returns gained from beer sales became an important element in determining how Gwembe people thought about beer, but nevertheless, for those who do not brew beer the history of its ritual associations and usage underlie their support for its production.

Religious change and new educational opportunities have had an impact on the way in which people appreciate and act in relation to traditional practices (Long 1968). With regard to both ancestors and beer, religious teaching from the Christian world condemned drinking and challenged the belief in the power of the ancestors. This has undoubtedly had an effect on attitudes and practices and in some cases led towards new forms of social organisation that are at least in doctrine at variance with local social organisation and the importance of kinship. The Jehovah's Witnesses are clearly an example of one religious groups' determined strength in attempting to move away from traditional values.<sup>12</sup> Despite this, however, many Jehovah's Witnesses are still tied into a whole series of local kin relations. They also share with their kin and neighbours at least some understanding of the importance of ancestors and the role of beer in social and ritual life. Variations in the social make-up of rural communities is an important consideration, and sheds some light on the differentiated way in which local perceptions and action are not only constantly modified but also maintained. To this extent there are both continuities and discontinuities in ritual practices and the role that beer plays within them.

For the Lala of the Serenje area there is very little reference, in the literature,

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<sup>12</sup>For a more detailed discussion of Jehovah's Witnesses among the Lala, see Long (1968:200-237) and Seur (1992:285). The latter states that 'the Jehovah's Witnesses emphasise the bond between the members of the nuclear family...instead of the lineage or the clan'. See also Parkin (1972)

made to their ritual and symbolic practices. Such an absence may reflect the extent to which such practices are at the forefront of daily life. However, there is an infrequently practised spirit exorcism ceremony (discussed below) that involves beer consumption, and there is good evidence to suggest that ritual practices involving beer are still important if not common place in Kamena. Beer and its symbolic associations with the ancestors consequently form part of people's conceptualisation of beer. This remains so even in the context of an increasingly commoditised attitude towards beer usage. In fact *katubi* (millet beer) is often used as a payment for the divination and healing services of traditional healers. Beer that is used in association with the ancestors is generally known as '*ubwalwa bwankombo*' or beer for the calabash.

Richards (1956) documents the *Chisungu* ritual of initiation for pubescent girls. In her account there are many references to the use of beer to mark certain phases in the ritual. Beer is seen to have warming properties since the beer traditionally drunk by the Bemba (*chipumu*) is drunk hot. The girl's condition is said to be cold when she first begins to menstruate. There is a connection to hearth and to the role women themselves expect to fulfil as reproducers of the family. The terms of the symbolism used in the ritual also point towards the idea that women are responsible for their role in a domestic capacity. They are thought to be the 'owners' of the grain that their husbands may produce from which the beer is made (Richards 1939). Beer is also thought of, both literally and symbolically, as food, which strengthens the symbolic associations made to the hearth.

Beer is often symbolised through ritual practice as some aspect of the natural cycle of crop production and reproduction amongst people who rely on agriculture for their continued existence. In Zimbabwe, for example, amongst the people in the eastern highland regions who practice rain making rituals, beer represents male semen, as does the rain; and it has fertile qualities and is a symbol of virility (Jacobson-Widding 1986). For the Lala areas, a less ritualised and recently revived ceremony called *icibwela umushi*, (going back home) took place in Mukushi in August of 1993. This ceremony can best be described as a harvest festival. It involved all seven Lala chiefs, who came together to celebrate the harvest and the completion of the agricultural year. Beer consumption was central to this ceremony and in this way may be considered to have symbolic associations with the fulfilment of the agricultural cycle.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, at harvest time, it was customary for the Bemba to give

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<sup>13</sup>The ceremony was broadcast on national television, as were other tribal ceremonies that year, the most famous of which is the *kuomboka* ceremony of the Lozi, who move to high ground before the rainy



tribute to the chief in the form of beer and food. Such practices reiterate the powerful associations made between the chief's political and ritual authority and the ancestors symbolised through acts involving gifts of food and beer (Richards 1939). Further, there are associations with fertility and the 'natural' agricultural cycle that are symbolised through such acts of giving (1939:365). The giving of food in this way is associated with the well being of the whole tribe (1939:148).

### **'Ubwalwa bwafiombe; beer for the spirits'**

During the 1992/93 season in Kamena, there was only a single case of what one might describe as a public ritual practice that involved beer, although there were other more privately practised ritual occasions (see above). The public ceremony was conducted by a local 'witch doctor' known as Dr. Zulu. It was conducted at the request of local families whose kin were said to be possessed by malevolent ancestral spirits. The beer associated with this event is known as *ubwalwa bwafiombe* or 'beer for the spirits'. Spirit possession is commonly attributed to unexplained illnesses and behaviour. The general principle behind the exorcism of spirits involves identifying and removing the spirit or ancestor who is said to be responsible. Exorcism is achieved through prolonged bouts of dancing until a trance like state is reached at which time the spirits are said to leave or come out of the bodies of the afflicted.

At the homestead of Dr. Zulu, in Teta, an enclosure similar to a cattle kraal, but, less substantial, was built. Inside this defined space was a further circle of mealie meal sprinkled on the ground. Within this circular enclosure, the afflicted danced throughout the night to drums. The family, friends and neighbours who gathered to witness the event sat around fires that surrounded the enclosure. Water was heated for the *katubi* which had been brewed for the occasion from millet that was donated by the afflicted's families. The dancers who were painted white were given an initial private consultation with Dr. Zulu who gave them some 'herbs' to smoke, in order to encourage the spirits to be released. As the dancers fell into a trance Dr. Zulu shouted

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season. In principle these ceremonies involve moving back to permanent village sites to celebrate the end of the harvest. *Icibwela umushi*, 'going back home', was reported to me to be of little consequence in the lives of people in the Kamena area. It belongs to a time when it was very common for those involved in *citemene* production, lived for much of the cutting season at temporary settlements. When the work was done they would return to the villages, and spend time enjoying themselves and relaxing. There is in a sense no specific ceremony attached to 'going back home', it simply meant the end of the cutting and harvesting period, when there was time and grain for beer parties. Hence the ceremony as conducted in Mukushi was nothing more than the re-invention of a loosely defined tradition.

at them to make it known who were the ancestors within them. In this way they were released. The spectators dispersed as the beer finished. The dancers however continued into the night. They consumed beer the following morning and were provided with hot bath water by Dr. Zulu's family.

The significance of beer in this ceremony was as part of the spectacle. It was initially consumed by those gathered to witness. They sang and clapped accompaniments to the dancing and created a much more animated scene than perhaps would have been possible without beer. Although beer was simply consumed and not poured in libation as found elsewhere (see Colson and Scudder 1988 for example) its role as part of the ceremony is nevertheless significant. Ancestors and beer are commonly associated, and there is both a sense of continuity and identity through the continued practice of brewing beer. Such exorcism ceremonies are not common place, but it is said at times they are necessary. People are not infrequently diagnosed as being possessed for one reason or another. Attributing illness or disaster to the anger of an ancestor or ancestors concerning the behaviour of their descendants is a common theme throughout Zambian ritual practices (see, for example, Colson and Scudder 1988:63).

Superstition and the fear of witchcraft are powerful phenomena in Zambia as a whole. They are no less important to people in the Kamena area of Chief Chibale.<sup>14</sup> People's social worlds are constructed not simply by concrete and visible interactions and experiential practices but also by fear of the unknown and a whole range of conceptions of a more spiritual cosmogeny. Beer becomes significant in this realm through its relationship to the ancestors. In the Kamena area it is said that an ancestor who is unhappy with his living family may cause calamity, including illness and death. It is also supposedly possible for people to call upon the ancestors to cause misery to other living members of the community. The following discussions concerning these issues show clearly how beer is associated with the ancestors. Furthermore it illustrates for the people of the Kamena area (echoing Karp's work) how teasing out some of their complex of belief, custom and attitude that surrounds beer drinking is important to our understanding of the nature of their social world and

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<sup>14</sup>During a previous period of research in Mukopa, Chief Chibale (1987), I recorded incidents of illness and subsequent death, suicide and even murder that were directly attributed to witchcraft (fieldnotes 6/04/87). These incidents alone, not to mention the occasional newspaper stories of similar events, for example, *The Weekly Post* 5/11/93 "Are some deaths caused by witchcraft", support the notion that we cannot overlook the importance of witchcraft and the fear of sorcery that forms part of Zambian peoples view of the social world in which they live.

their experiences of it.

### **To wash in the beer - '*Ukusamba mubwalwa*', and beer for the ancestors**

In the past it was customary to offer libations to the ancestors. During an earlier period of fieldwork in Chief Chibale (Long, A 1987), I observed, in the bush behind an elderly woman's house a small spirit shrine. These are known locally as *impeta* or *ichipupula*.<sup>15</sup> Whenever Bambwia Mangelash, the grandmother of my hosts, had beer she would without fail put a small portion of it aside to be placed in a beer calabash or '*bwankombo*'. She kept these at her *impeta* along with a few other kitchen utensils and old coins. The beer placed at the shrine was left for the ancestors. This practice was not evident in Kamena, although people clearly knew about such things. In the absence of the *ichipupula*, libations can, I was informed, be poured directly onto the graves of ancestors. I was not fortunate to witness this practice although it is said to be practised from time to time by older members of the community. The most likely occasion on which libations are given is when sickness is diagnosed and attributed by a local healer to the unease of an ancestor. The procedure is as follows. The family place some mealie meal and money on a plate which they then put in a beer calabash or *bwankombo*. This is left in the house until the *shinanga* or doctor tells them otherwise. He informs them that they must brew beer. The family then brews *katubi* for the ancestor. This beer is consumed privately by the family and a portion is given in reward or as payment to the *shinanga*. The beer is not poured as a libation to the ancestor but is nevertheless dedicated to the ancestor to appease her/him.

It is quite common for beer to become sour and people fear this prospect. Brewing is a skilled task and at each stage in the process it is possible for the quality to be affected. The critical factors that effect brewing are the quantities of grain used, heat and timing. Heat is an important technical consideration<sup>16</sup> but may also have

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<sup>15</sup>There are two types of such spirit shrines evident in Chief Chibale. One, that known as *masala masala*, is no longer found in the Kamena area. It was usually situated in the fields and after the harvest mealie meal from the new millet would be sprinkled there. The other form of spirit shrine, *impeta*, is a more permanent structure and found near to the homesteads. In the Kamena area it was reported that one such shrine could be found at Millie Mofita's farm. I was unfortunate not to see it, no one would accompany me, because of their fear of upsetting the ancestors. Both Richards (1939) and Watson (1958) make reference to their being two kinds of shrine, in general terms these can be referred to as ancestral or land based.

<sup>16</sup>During the dry, hot season August to the end of October, many brews become sour as the night time temperature combined with the extra heat of the kitchen fires. 'The beer drums were left warm in the kitchen overnight, as there was a fire in the kitchen'. Eleni Kalokoni, fieldnotes 5/8/92.

symbolic content and accounts in part for prohibitions related to sexual intercourse (that produces heat) and the preparation of food. Beer that is brewed for sale is considered of inferior quality if it sours. The consequences of such an event are felt sharply by the *cikombe* or brewer because the beer is either discarded or sold at a reduced price. Explanations for beer souring are many but perhaps the most emotive involves the intervention of ancestors.

On a rainy day in November we attended a beer party at Lemson Mukangasa's home. To avoid the rain we huddled in one small room of Lemson's house. This provided an ideal opportunity to ask some collective questions concerning sour beer. As is usual at such events much of the discussion overlapped, everyone was trying to speak at once, however the men eventually conceded to let the women speak. The dynamism of this conversation reflects the different views expressed by men and women. Enika Chibuye, Lemson's junior wife, commented that she had had sour beer on more than one occasion so she had consulted the 'doctor'. He had said that she 'should remember those who are deceased'. She remarked that 'bad spirits had come and washed in her beer', (*ukusamba mubwalwa*).<sup>17</sup> Mr Kanekwa, a visiting trader from Serenje, seemed sceptical and offered a more 'rational' explanation, saying that, just like food the beer has to be cooked properly. If the *cikombe* or brewer does not boil the *itimba* (active fermentation agent) for long enough or does not add enough *chimena* (malted mixture) then it will not taste good. Mr Kanekwa reluctantly agreed that despite this the spirits may come and wash, and that according to local belief this was true. Joseph Ntembwa put it nicely when he said,

'I'm a boozer. So when I'm dead people should remember me, with respect. A deceased person should be remembered so that the beer is good all the time.'<sup>18</sup>

Opinion was divided as to whether or not the ancestors would actually come and sour beer, although everybody agreed that there were indeed spirits, not only their own ancestors but other spirits from elsewhere in Zambia:

'Someone may dream that a distant ancestor has come in the night to 'wash in the beer' to make it sour. On waking he/she would tell the family about the dream and perhaps suggest that they brew beer to

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<sup>17</sup>If beer is not offered it is believed that the spirits wash their hands in it and it becomes sour' (Haworth et al, unpublished report 1980:1-16)

<sup>18</sup>Fieldnotes 17/11/92

appease the ancestor. The next time beer is brewed they may pour some on the graves of their ancestor'.<sup>19</sup>

The issue of *ukusamba mubwalwa* is a contentious one and it is difficult to get a consensus of opinion on it, thus highlighting the existence of many overlapping discursive frames of reference in explaining misfortune. Further ideas concerning such practices came from Patrick Muleba,<sup>20</sup> who stated that he thought it was jealousy that provoked people to physically sour someone's beer. He continued to explain that those who are provoked can stir the beer with a dead person's hand or put some other nasty ingredients into the beer.<sup>21</sup> As the discussion developed, it became clear that an ancestor would not literally come and wash in the beer. This was merely a metaphorical explanation. It is actually the *cikombe* who becomes affected by the ancestor and subsequently makes mistakes during the brewing process. Thus, the explanation may have both a technical and spiritual dimension, but if a competent brewer is unfortunate enough to produce sour beer more than occasionally suspicion mounts and interpretations will tend towards the spiritual.

Further explanations offered as to why a particular brew may sour are related to practices involving sexual intercourse. Put simply, a woman who menstruates is not supposed to brew since this can cause the beer to sour, implying that the beer was over cooked due to the heat produced by the woman, echoing Richards' account for the *Chisungu* ceremony. In addition, a man and a woman should abstain from sexual intercourse during the brewing of beer, lest this has a similar effect on the brew. Sexual intercourse and menstruation are said to produce heat, which may inadvertently 'over cook' the beer.<sup>22</sup>

Colson and Scudder's comments suggest how important this may be. In the past among the Gwembe Tonga, 'beers for ritual and for work parties encouraged adherence to more ceremonious behaviour' (1988:6). As the above material illustrates there are by no means clear cut and commonly accepted or shared perceptions concerning beliefs as they relate to beer; instead we find multiple interpretations that

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>The agricultural extension officer for Teta.

<sup>21</sup>Fieldnotes 16/11/92.

<sup>22</sup>Audrey Richards (1939) and (1956) records for the Bemba the symbolic significance of heat as it relates to women and sexuality in particular.

overlap.

The next section adds further to our interpretation of the beliefs and practices that surround beer drinking and will, for a specific context, concentrate on the way in which beer is customarily used to bestow respect. Just as beer is traditionally given in tribute to headmen and to chiefs as a way of showing respect, it also symbolises respect when brewed for family members, particularly husbands and sons-in-law. Such beer drinks are also a symbol of co-operation and unity. Idioms of respect, which are an important part of daily social encounters are in some contexts ritualised. In these contexts the discourses of ritual and tradition overlap with accepted idioms expressive of respect and co-operation. To exhibit a willingness or ability to give beer to both kinsmen and friends simultaneously commands respect from others and displays a mark of respect for the beneficiary.<sup>23</sup> Such acts reflect the importance of symbolic and ritual continuity.

#### **'Ubwalwa bwamuchinshi kupongoshi' - a respect beer for in-laws**

*Kwikala ubuko* or uxorilocal marriage arrangements (see Chapter 4) are still practised in the Kamena area. Bride service, in one form or another, is customarily expected of a son-in-law. The obligation of a young husband to his in-laws is such that if bride service is not met through the provision of his labour for specific agricultural tasks, as is 'traditionally' expected, it is met in other ways. The strengthened social ties, established through marriage, give parents-in-law the prerogative to make claims on their son-in-law's material resources. Under circumstances of changing labour arrangements and in view of increased cash-crop farming, obligations are sometimes met by providing agricultural commodities or cash (see Chapter 7). Seur (1992) found that women, in particular, would at times call on 'traditional' norms which emphasised uxorilocality and the obligations a son-in-law has towards his wife's parents in an attempt to ensure that a son-in-law fulfilled his obligations. In addition, under present conditions Seur says that some people also expressed how 'useful' a son-in-law could be to his mother-in-law, since in the past when agriculture and domestic work were characterised by a strict division of labour, the bride service of sons-in-law had frequently been to the benefit of the father-in-law. Nowadays, however, a son-in-law

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<sup>23</sup> An apt illustration of this kind of generosity that may endorse a mark of respect is the English phrase 'let me buy you a drink'; although in the Zambian context it is not achievement alone but more significantly one's social status that occasion such an act.

can be asked to carry out a wide variety of tasks for his mother-in-law' (Seur 1992:288).

There is both a great deal of continuity and change for people in Kamena. Ritual practices associated with marriage confirmation are still practised, although in view of the changing economic and social milieu within which they are embedded they are themselves subject to modification. We must not assume that these practices necessarily follow any strict format.<sup>24</sup> Beer and food are central symbols in these events, and there are certainly expected practices associated with their provision but the way in which these different elements are combined varies and may perhaps remain relatively ad hoc.

It is customary practice for beer to be brewed for a son-in-law soon after he takes up residence with his wife at her parents' home. This beer is a token of respect and is consumed by the young man with his father-in-law, close family and friends. *Ubwalwa bwamuchinshi kupongoshi*, literally translates as 'beer in respect for the son-in-law'. During this first phase of marriage, referred to as *mutebeto*, the newly weds reside with the daughter's family, they eat from the in-laws' grain stores and work for the most part in the family fields. After a number of years, usually following the birth of two or three children the daughter is 'given' her own kitchen or 'fire'. This incident is referred to as *ukulanga mulilo* or 'to show fire'. This change in the relationship between mother and daughter and consequently between mother-in-law and son-in-law is symbolised through the production and consumption of beer. Colloquially this beer is known as *nshima*<sup>25</sup> and, after its consumption, a son-in-law no longer has to follow certain practices of avoidance with regard to his mother-in-law, the most significant of which is avoidance in eating and drinking. Although the son-in-law may still practice avoidance in order to demonstrate his continued respect, such practices are relaxed. On the occasion of marriage, beer, gifts of money and prized food items (for example, chicken or meat dishes) are prepared and then given. Money is left under the beer drums by the son-in-law and money is placed on the plates of food

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<sup>24</sup>To illustrate this point, it is worth remembering that even within the Christian churches the ceremonies conducted at Christmas and so on (for example, The Nativity) do not necessarily have to follow a precise formulae so long as all the important symbols, actors and events are represented.

<sup>25</sup>*Nshima* is the grain porridge that is the staple food. Both beer and this meal are made from the same ingredients and require 'cooking'. Beer is considered food by many people in Zambia. In the Kamena area, for example, I met the school master of Kaseba primary school who was walking to the Boma (some 45 kilometres distant), he was carrying a plastic (5 litre) container of beer. He commented that it was always a good idea to carry some 'food' in case you meet someone on the way. You can at least then offer him something (fieldnotes 22/1/93).

(customarily an inverted plate is placed on top of food to keep it warm) by the in-laws. Such sums are not substantial and are merely symbolic of the reciprocal relationship between in-laws.

One such *ubwalwa bwamuchinshi kupongoshi* that took place in Kamena illustrates the way in which such practices are adaptable, despite retaining in sentiment an underlying ethos of matrilineal obligation and the continued traditions of respect. The local agricultural extension officer, Maurice Mapani, a Tonga from the Mazabuka area of Southern Zambia, married a local Lala woman. His status as a salaried government employee is well respected and due to his work programme it would have been impossible to have taken up residence with his new wife and her in-laws. From the outset his wife Doris, resided with him at the agricultural camp in Kamena. Due to these circumstances her parents immediately allowed her the right to her own kitchen and presented her with a collection of kitchen utensils that she needed. After the birth of their first child, Maurice was called to attend a beer party in his honour. *Katubi* beer was brewed and Maurice consumed this with his closest friends and his in-laws' family. They were provided with enough beer to take some home after they had finished at the in-laws. Maurice was very happy to have been shown such respect and delighted to be able to relax the avoidances that he practised in accordance with customary Lala practice.

This short account shows how such traditional practices with regard to beer persist, though in modified form. Respect and obligation are then an important part of social relations and remains central to this and other contexts in which beer features. Despite the fact that the extension officer was an 'immigrant' to the area, and hence expectations of his obligations towards in-laws may have been somewhat different from the experiences of others in the locality, his in-laws wanted to show him as much respect as they could for being a loyal, kind and hard working son-in-law. This is a revealing example, precisely because it illustrates that such practices involving beer are still important domains of communicative action. The initial residential arrangements for Maurice and his wife may have been a little unusual, but illustrate how flexible uxorilocal marriage arrangements can be. The importance of obligation, mutual respect and co-operation have not disappeared. They are simply manifest in various new and adapted older practices.

Beer has a ritual-symbolic dimension that cannot be over looked since it pervades many aspects of people's understandings of their cosmological world. Such a 'world' has important consequences for interpreting other aspects of social life and for



the way that people conceive of their lived-in-world, even in the face of social change. For the Gwembe Tonga, Colson and Scudder draw attention to the importance of beer as a key symbol, which holds in much the same way for the Serenje Lala. They write:

'Beer connoted the establishment of marriage, the continuities between the dead and the living and so the continuity of life itself, the basic values of lineage membership, the relationship between fathers and children, and the importance of membership in a local community. Even more than food it represented the basic reciprocities of social life. It derived its full meaning from its association with a way of life dependant on agriculture, in which each household had fields and raised its own food; and it had multiplex associations with water, that agricultural necessity and fire, that essence of human life associated with hearth, food and the heat of sexuality that leads to new life. It was thus a 'key symbol,' linking almost everything that Gwembe people thought important' (1988:65).

## **Continuity And Co-operation**

### **'Ubwalwa Ukubombela Nchito': Beer For Work**

The foregoing discussion focused on the way in which the various ritual or symbolic use contexts of beer provide an insight into its social value. To understand further the social importance of beer it is useful to examine the context in which it becomes central to labour recruitment. *Imbile* or *ukutumya* (the Bemba terms used for work beer) practices provide an important work context in which an ethos of co-operation is enjoyed and expressed by local people. Furthermore, these work for beer parties, provide an opportunity for the host to show his respect for others and to gain prestige through the provision of beer. Salutations of respect are idiomatically expressed by people using comments that refer to particular qualities of the beer, '*ukukulwa sana*', for example, meaning that the beer is good quality is one way in which it is possible to show respect for the host. During the conviviality of these parties it is not uncommon for people to sing '*twatotela bacikombe*', 'we thank the brewer', not heard of at beer for sale parties, except on very special occasions or in awe of a particularly good brew. In addition beer is regarded by people in the Kamena area as food, just as it is in many other parts of Central and Southern Africa. The brewing process is referred to as 'cooking' (*kwipika*), and the grain that is used in the process is also the major staple and an important source of vitamin B (Richards 1939:76).

Beer and food items may at different times both be provided in return for labour. 'Food for work' (*ukupula*), provides a way for less well resourced households to acquire additional food items. During the 1992/93 season many people from the valley region that borders on the Chief Chibale area came to seek maize grain in return for piece work. *Ukupula* became an important mechanism for the distribution of drought relief maize during this period in Zambia and many people were employed to maintain the roads and to fix dilapidated school buildings.<sup>26</sup> Church congregation work parties, a common feature of labour recruitment, are also provided with a food in addition to a collective payment made to the congregation. Food, including both relish and staple *nshima*, is also provided for *ukutumya* or *imbile*. This is expected but not considered a reward for work, since beer remains the significant reparation. Practices of giving consumption items and food in particular are well established and a commonly accepted mechanism for redistribution. Beer for work is in essence not dissimilar to other contexts in which food is distributed for work done. It remains special, however, since the consumption takes place collectively and the 'food' in question is intoxicating and so therefore provides entertainment as well as some nourishment. Furthermore, if we accept that such work for beer expresses a degree of co-operation and not payment, and that it is the work that is reciprocated (Watson 1958:107-8), then the practice of *ukupula* is quite different as there is no obligation to reciprocate work done. Pottier, for example, writes for the Mambwe that, 'while widows often worked for food (*ukupula*), their participation was not reciprocated'.

There are a number of detailed accounts of such *imbile* practices, most notably Richards (1939) account of the Bemba, Watson's (1958) study of the Mambwe, Pottier's (1988) restudy of Mambwe villages and Marwick's (1965) discussion of such work organisation among the Chewa of Malawi. Richards described *imbile* as the work done by a man in return for beer. These beer drinks are primarily associated with *citemene* cultivation, but not exclusively, as it is possible to recruit people with beer for any arduous agricultural work. The diversified agricultural production techniques employed in the Kamena area, *iconde*, *ibala* and mound cultivation, all involve a large amount of land preparation. Any one of these tasks may be accomplished by providing beer for work. The beer that is provided takes on the name of the task involved; for example, the beer given in return for cutting *iconde* is known as *ubwalwa ubwakutemena* (*ukutema*= to cut) and the beer for tasks of digging is called *ubwalwa uklimina* (*ukulima*=to dig). In contrast to Richards assertion that

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<sup>26</sup>Fieldnotes 4/12/92

these work parties predominantly involve men's labour in return for beer, in the Kamena area they are by no means exclusively attended and enjoyed by men.<sup>27</sup> However, the tasks accomplished with this form of labour recruitment invariably involve heavy work (cutting, for example, is considered 'traditionally' to be man's work) and consequently it is men who take a more active role in their completion. Watson's account focuses on those work parties organised and attended by women, since he worked amongst the 'grassland' Mambwe, where much of the primary agricultural work was accomplished using mounding techniques that utilise turned grass as a natural compost. Such techniques, he informs us, were not organised according to a strict division of labour on the basis of gender, as we find in *citemene* systems. Furthermore, Watson is keen to point out that there was a significant absence of men who were away from their natal homes, employed in various urban settings and consequently he records women's involvement in *imbile* (1958:106). Thus it is clear that although overt beer drinking is regarded, at least in public etiquette, as a 'man's job',<sup>28</sup> there are no absolute 'rules' governing the organisation of this type of collective work. Regardless of whether these work parties are organised and attended by either men or women they are ordinarily predicated on the need to accomplish heavy agricultural tasks. The work of cutting and clearing or putting new grassland under the hoe dominate these work parties.

Work parties are normally arranged so that the morning can be devoted to the work - usually a few hours is enough to complete the task - followed by the drinking. Those who attend the work session make their way to the homestead of the host. On arriving they leave their axes or hoes, which are then hidden inside one of the huts. It is the host's responsibility, not only on these occasions but at all beer parties, to keep dangerous tools safe and away from those drinking. One such session was hosted by Joel Kafusu, at his *nkutu* (temporary settlement at an *iconde* site), although the work was carried out on behalf of his daughter, who brewed the beer and whose *iconde* site it was. For the 1992/93 season I recorded eight incidents of labour recruitment through the provision of beer from a total of 279 documented beer parties. Of these five (three organised by men and two by women) were for the preparation of *iconde* and involved cutting. The remaining three sessions were organised by women, one for harvesting millet and two for digging mounds or *fisebe* for cassava (*ubwalwa*

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<sup>27</sup>The attendance and active participation of women in these work parties is for some areas a new phenomena. This in part, explained the changing sexual division of labour in the face of new crops and techniques of cultivation.

<sup>28</sup>Fieldnotes 14/12/92

*bwakubombela nchito yamputa shya tute*).

In the Kamena area none of the work parties recorded for the 1992-1993 season were organised for the preparation of land used in the cultivation of commercially oriented crops. Pottier states for the Mambwe that, 'the meaning of *cipumu* (millet beer) has shifted from being a symbol of (presumed) guaranteed reciprocity (Watson 1958:106) to being a means of straightforward payment' (1988:129). This may indeed be the case among the Mambwe and perhaps echoes the changing nature of labour arrangements in the face of increased socio-economic differentiation and cash cropping in Zambia as a whole. Pottier's statement also reflects the way in which people are becoming accustomed to thinking in a monetarised way with regard to certain agricultural commodities. Yet commodities such as beer, which still occupy an ambiguous or negotiable position vis-à-vis financial returns, nevertheless retain a significance in terms of a range of other social values. This is certainly the case for the Kamena area of Serenje. The case material presented below demonstrates this point and illustrates the extent to which the status of beer in the context of *imbile* is ambiguous; it has both social and material values.

Audrey Richards raises the question of 'economic' viability of this type of labour recruitment and points out that 'the system is inefficient from an economic point of view perhaps, since the proportion of the day spent in beer-drinking is very large compared to that spent on actual work' (1939:146). Yet an econometric analysis of this type of labour organisation will not stand up to scrutiny simply because in local terms the value of *imbile* work sessions have a social content that cannot necessarily be equated with monetary return. On the other hand this does not mean, of course, that people do not appreciate the local cash value of either their labour or indeed beer, but simply that the dominant frame of reference for those who attend these work sessions is that the events are important from a social point of view. Some households with cash, and therefore the possibility to hire labour directly, may at times calculate the relative cost of providing beer as opposed to paying for labour directly. In practice, for the heavy tasks it is often easier to provide beer than to pay cash. Frequently people brew beer first to sell and then pay for the labour they need with the money they raise. This grain-beer-cash-labour-grain (or other food crops) cycle is significant since often the cash raised through beer sales will be distributed amongst various needs of which labour may be one. The actual number of beer for work parties was low for 1992-1993 and the major form of payments for labour were with cash and maize (see Chapter 4). It remains significant that during the 1992-1993 season in Kamena no one hired labour with cash to cut *iconde*, thus reiterating the

significance of non-commoditised relations and discourses associated with this form of cultivation

*Imbile* labour recruitment is significant for a number of reasons, each of which reflect important local considerations or frames of reference. For some members of the community, most notably the labour deficient sectors and those with little surplus cash if any, particularly women headed households, *imbile*, provides a context in which the heavy agricultural tasks, associated primarily with a households domestic consumption needs, may be achieved. For other households the labour burden of particular tasks can be accomplished with ease using this form of collective labour recruitment, whilst at the same time the host can consolidate his or her social standing by providing beer. In doing so, however, the millet used is not equated with its value in cash, although people are still clear as to the general value of millet or other grains in cash terms. Such work sessions have a social value that cannot strictly be measured against financial gain or loss. Significantly in the Kamena area these work parties were not carried out to accomplish work on commercially oriented crops.

Nevertheless people are absolutely aware of the commoditised value of beer and the grain used in its production. When beer is produced for *imbile* the amount of grain that is used to make the beer has a significant potential cash value. When sold the money raised is often more than would have been needed to pay for labour directly. *Imbile* remains important for the value it has in terms of social co-operation. In addition these long established practices remain important for the value they have in accomplishing agricultural work without involving cash, and in the Kamena area are still related to non-commoditised agriculture. The importance of this form of labour recruitment, particularly for women, is reaffirmed in Richards' work, where she states that 'deserted wives.... may be unable to get a house or granary built in any other way' (1939:146). In this way these type of work parties exemplify an ethos or co-operative spirit that exists between people with regard to their traditional agricultural practices.

### ***'Ubwalwa Ubwakutemena Kwa Joel'; Beer for Cutting at Joel's***

The work party I attended for Royda (Joel's Daughter) involved cutting an area of wood land for subsequent preparation. There were approximately thirty-three men present, and we all did a share of work. Attendance was not restricted to immediate neighbours or kinsfolk, although the majority of those who attended lived in close

proximity to Joel's residence and many were kin. The agricultural extension officers and depot workers were also present, and had come for the beer. The way in which the party was conceived by local people was primarily in terms of its entertainment value, although the reciprocal nature of the events was also part of the proceedings since participants stated that they would expect Joel and his kinsmen to attend other, future, work sessions.

In contrast to paid labour where the land worked is divided into specific portions and rewards are apportioned according to the amount of work accomplished by the individual, at this *imbile* session all those present worked together to complete the task. A few hours work was enough to complete the task and consequently no single person found the work too arduous. Cutting is considered extremely hard work for one person alone and may take a few weeks or even a month or more to accomplish. Everyone enjoyed the work as it was a very sociable experience. There was some friendly rivalry between various people who were related through their joking clans<sup>29</sup> and the older more experienced men took pleasure in affectionately deriding the younger men for their inexperience.<sup>30</sup> There were no women present at the cutting session. They were busy elsewhere stacking branches at another *iconde* site that also belonged to Royda. They were however part of the same event, only busy with separate work.

Royda is a widow, but has had *iconde* for the last three seasons. The previous cutting was accomplished by her adult son who subsequently married. In the absence of a husband or the labour of her son, Royda relied on *imbile* to cut sufficient trees for 1993. Joel, his wife, Royda and the rest of his household (altogether 11 people) were formerly part of a village known as Kasata, although Joel is actually from Chief Serenje and came to settle in the Kamena area in 1948. The present settlement known as Kasata is next to Joel's permanent farm. His wife Erika Kunda is related to the three sisters, Fele Munsha, Betty Mwape and Fwaita Kunda and their families who live at Kasata; she is their maternal aunt. During the cutting season they all shift to their temporary *nkutu*. These are at some distance from their permanent settlements, but all share roughly the same tract of land. Those present at the *ukutemena* (cutting) session included those from Kasata who had their own *makutu* near to Joel's, and others from nearby. In addition, a number of the people who lived near to the

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<sup>29</sup>The relationship between clans has been described in detail by Watson (1958:138), his description is close to the same phenomenon as found among the Lala clans.

<sup>30</sup>We were only unfortunate this time as Kafusu's son cut himself very badly with an axe.

agricultural depot in Kamena attended. For the depot workers and agricultural officers the occasion was seen as one of relaxation and primarily concerned drinking, although they also worked.

Following the work all those present returned to the *nkutu* site, where Joel and his family had settled for harvesting and preparing the new *iconde*. Their chosen site was approximately an hours walk from their other permanent home and was located close to other *nkutu* sites.

Beer tasting or *djonko* prior to the work is not normally acceptable, whereas this is common practice at beer parties where the beer is sold. After working, normally a few hours work can complete the task in hand, the rest of the day is devoted to beer drinking. There was plenty of beer available for all, (a single 210 litre drum) and it was brought out in buckets and calabashes for the three groups of men and one group of women. There was certainly no rivalry or tension between the drinkers, all were given an equal share of beer. At beer parties where the beer is sold there is often petty bickering and tension between those who regularly buy their beer and those who may be considered 'scroungers'. The delivery of beer was staggered, so as not to reveal exactly how much beer had been prepared or consumed. Among the Lala in Chief Chibale there is a customary practice at these '*ubwalwa ukubombela nchito*' known as *katobansaka*. This refers to the last calabash or bucket of beer that is brought out for the drinkers. The practice of *katobansaka* is considered 'deep Lala' (i.e., old parlance). It is a sign that the beer is finished, and that the assembled workers/drinkers should begin to disperse. Banging the beer drums as is the customary practice to signal that the beer is finished does not work in this context as people wait in expectation for *katobansaka*. On this occasion we all shared the *katobansaka* beer, but it is normally considered to be kept especially for those people who regularly attend a person's work or sale beer parties.<sup>31</sup> Establishing whether or not the beer was actually finished became an animated, protracted process of negotiation, and it seems an integral part of the last stages of this (quite drunken) social event. Eventually, however, people began to accept their fate and were heard to say, '*ubwalwa bwapwa, nomba kusansa amashi*', 'the beer is finished, now sieve the mash'.

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<sup>31</sup> Joel Kafusu and I were neighbours, and so we would attend beer parties together. It was likely and agreed by my companions that we had been given *katobansaka*, even though we were not strictly regulars workers, out of respect for my being a visitor.

The beer that we drank was brewed from Royda's new millet harvest. The *itimba* for fermentation she had prepared herself. Her sisters-in-law, Sofina and Lilian, had assisted with the grinding and collecting water, whilst Joel had organised and collected the firewood. There was some dispute as to what kind of beer we were actually drinking, and interestingly the *bacikombe* or brewer said that it was *katata* or maize beer. From the ingredients she used it certainly was *katata*, but an unusually large amount of millet had been added to give the beer its strength. It is customary for *katubi* or millet beer to be offered on these occasions. No one complained about the quality of the beer, it was certainly intoxicating. Using *katata* was risky as many people could have complained that they had worked not for weak beer, but for *katubi*. Prior to drinking a number of people expressed dissatisfaction at being presented with *katata*. Both Royda's households had a particularly good millet harvest and so she was not short of ingredients for beer. Making use of both maize and millet in beer ensures that millet supplies are not wasted in the event of a failed brew. Royda went against expectation, but produced a beer to be proud of, and people made comments such as, '*lelo na cinwa sana*', 'today I have drunk excessively', or '*na bunwa nyine lelo bobwanwa*', 'today I drink beer, and the beer drinks me'.<sup>32</sup>

The above account shows how such collective work parties have a social value that is intimately related to certain forms of organisation within agricultural work. There is certainly an ethos of co-operation and reciprocity underlying such beer parties. We will see in the next chapter how this is also the case with regard to sale beer parties, even, if manifested in different ways. Significant is the extent to which 'beer for work parties' are desirable with regard to production concerned primarily for consumption. *Imbile* practices are not intrinsically associated with more individualist notions of gain or accumulation as expressed for more commercially-oriented agriculture, although the type of beer brewed on the above occasion is itself associated with other more commoditised contexts. Royda's choice therefore illustrates the way in which, although there may be expectations of accepted practices, these are not necessarily adhered to rigidly, and are constantly changing as a result of innovation or experimentation on the part of the *bacikombe* or host. In addition, such innovations may be fuelled by the need to be resourceful and to make the best use of available resources, whilst at the same time retaining a clear sense of what is socially acceptable.

In view of the increasing practical and discursive links between cash and

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<sup>32</sup>Fieldnotes 1/12/92



agriculture, particularly with hybrid maize cultivation, it is not difficult to see how traditional practices associated with beer drinking are becoming modified in various ways. Such modifications include; the diminishing importance of libation to the ancestors; modifications with regard to labour recruitment and the provision of beer; and the increasing significance of beer as a source of income for people. The increasing commoditisation of agriculture, involvement with credit and the ever-present role of cash in the rural economy has led to the shift in meanings associated with beer. In view of this, the next chapter will consider in detail the important role that beer has as a source of income for people in rural Serenje.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **THE BREWING AND SALE OF BEER**

This chapter opens with a description of a beer party that I attended in January of 1993. This provides some sense of the context within which beer sales as a source of income are located. At certain times of the year, beer parties are important social events, as this chapter will highlight. Such events constitute one of the important practical contexts within which the various value notions ascribed to beer can be elicited. Following a description of the beer party, I consider the role of income derived from the sale of the beer and examine the income strategy of the case-study family. I will also highlight the ways in which the cash raised are allocated between husband and wife, and consider the contribution that beer makes to income and livelihood activities.

#### **A January beer party at Kayi Chibuye**

There had not been a quality beer drink for more than a week, and the evening before the beer was to be ready and an early morning excursion to Kayi's place imminent, the discussion between myself, Boyd Choongwa my house-mate, and Jestone Kasubika my assistant, focused on the prospects of a good days entertainment. We also laughed as the previous antics of Barry (our prospective host) were retold and elaborated upon. Barry had been by our house to say that there would be beer at his home the following day. We had already heard this and in fact had known for a few days that there would be beer. I had observed the beer drums myself on the way to visit their neighbour concerning some private matter, where in the course of conversation it was mentioned that there was to be beer. Their neighbour was a quiet retiree, who abstained from noisy drinking scenes and concentrated on his family and business, as an industrial mineral prospector. Barry had stopped at our place whilst visiting our immediate neighbours to purchase some Peter Styvesant cigarettes. He had been unlucky with his intended purchase; they had sold out and so he paid us a visit. He found cigarettes and stayed to ask us to come for beer the following day, entertaining us with his satirical renditions of Chinese men and their quest for African ladies. He had previously worked for them on the construction of the Mansa road and Mukuku bridge across the Luapula river. Concerning the beer he informed us that he had been

given a calabash of beer by his senior wife Ester and would like us to share it with him. He left after requesting to borrow a bicycle.

As predicted we made an early morning start and set off for Barry's place. It is only a ten minute walk, but along the way we met others who were already about their business. Kayton Chifita had avoided going to the beer. He said he was on his way to apply top dressing (fertiliser) to his maize and that if he drank he may get 'pissed up' and apply too much fertiliser resulting in a burnt crop. We exchanged greetings and continued. He made a point of telling me that if he burnt his maize because he was drunk then I would not write him a favourable report; we laughed (I never managed to explain to everyone my purpose in Kamena). We also met Mr Bwanga, the headmaster from Kasebe primary school (some 15 kilometres to the South West). He had bought a 5 litre container of beer and was carrying it with him. He said he was on his way to Serenje Boma, and thought it wise to carry some beer with him for refreshment. We were offered beer from his 'plastic', and he remarked that it was a good idea to carry some with you in case you happened to meet someone, in which case at least you would have some 'food' to give them.

Although early, we found on our arrival that there were around fifty people already busy drinking. They were dispersed in groups around the village. As is the custom we greeted a few people who came forward to say hello, but made our way as quickly as possible to Ester's kitchen from where the beer was being sold. Her kitchen was a solid mud brick affair, with a small veranda. There was one beer drum on the veranda, and I noticed another inside the main room of the kitchen. Such interior spaces were invariably used as storage rooms, with the cooking being conducted outside, weather permitting. It was approximately 8.15am, and the first drum was almost all gone. The remaining beer was being sieved as there is always a great deal of sediment left in the bottom of the drums. Some of this '*amashi*' was being given to the children, who were hanging around their mothers near the kitchen. Most of it, however, was being thrown to the chickens, who were busy at the rubbish pit behind the kitchen. Ester seemed tense, but we were greeted and welcomed to the drinking by being offered '*djonko*'. It is customary for customers to receive a free cup of beer or '*djonko*' in order to taste the brew prior to purchasing. This was agreeable, and we expressed our satisfaction with the brew, acknowledging that the beer was '*katimba*', meaning that it was not too strong nor weak, not too sour nor sweet, but nevertheless intoxicating.

I could see that some of my friends had already settled themselves at various

strategic places around the homestead. Initially we spent some time greeting the women who were gathered around the kitchen. These included Barry's mother, Celica, both Barry's wives, Ester and Gladys, and Ester's young sister, Jennifer, from Teta. Seated adjacent to the building were the senior women with whom I was best acquainted, being my immediate neighbours at the agricultural camp. They were engaged in an animated conversation with Justin Moyenda, an elderly man. All the other drinking groups, except for a single married couple, consisted of men. The division between men and women at such events is striking. This particular beer drink was no exception. Ordinarily the only significant group of women gathered at beer parties consists of those women closely related to the brewer or those who may have assisted in the brewing. In addition to these women, there is often a group of older women for whom divisions based on sex are less significant as was the case with the group adjacent to the kitchen. They come to chat and to take a drink, some use the gathering to sell locally produced tobacco, cigarettes bought at the Boma, and dried fish. In fact anyone who has something to sell, perhaps garden vegetables or small farm and kitchen utensils, will bring them to the beer drink in the hope of either selling or exchanging them.

The drinking groups are clearly divided on the basis of age and sex but also by status, although these divisions are not always as clear as they may seem. Status is associated with a number of criteria and is bound up with a whole range of factors relating to social differentiation. Such factors include: age, the number of children a man has, position within a particular lineage or clan, the holding of political office (party political or through the authority of the chief), the ability to be income and food secure, being able to meet the claims of kin and to provide materially for immediate family or household members etc. In addition to these factors there are a range of more subtle expressions of status that become manifest in the clothes a person may wear, the beer one drinks (particularly in an urban context), and the people with whom one associates. But we must not assume that these status criteria are in any concrete way fixed. A person's ability to be provide food and income, for example, is subject to a set of changing social and physical circumstances. Similarly criteria based on political office of one kind or another may be subject to various negotiations and consequently do not remain constant. The position of village headman, for example, is at present no longer significant in the context of changing social and residential arrangements. Gluckman argues for the 1950's that 'inherent in his [the village headman's] position is the likelihood of role conflict: at times he is torn between his loyalty to his kinsfolk and his loyalty to his chief and administration, and this places him in a particularly difficult and ambivalent situation' (Gluckman,

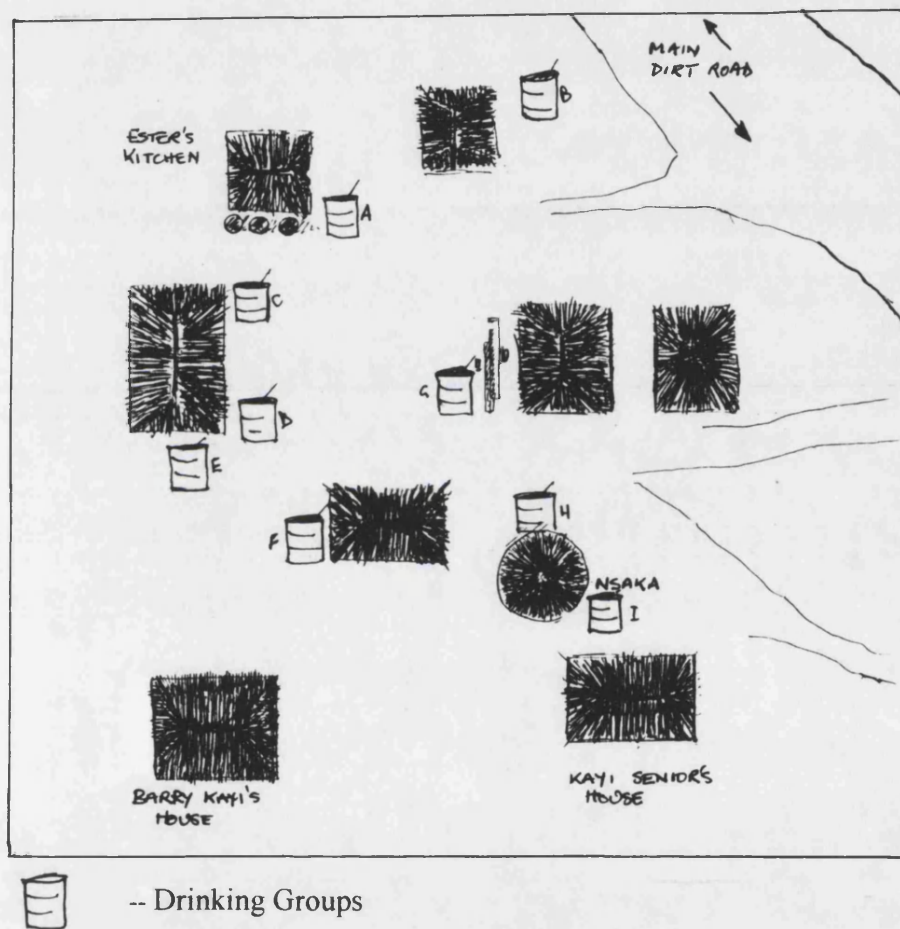
Barnes and Mitchell 1949). The situation by 1992/93 was that the political authority of 'village headmen' had been displaced by other political offices and positions of authority, most notably the chairmanship of a local political party, or the position of '*chilolo*' or chief's messenger. Interestingly beer parties themselves become critical social arenas in which positions of status and prestige are affirmed or negotiated, often in quite subtle ways; for example, through the provision of beer or the simple act of allocating a chair. In addition, beer parties provide an excellent opportunity for people to assert themselves vis-à-vis others. They are after all open and public events.

In contrast to relaxed conviviality displayed by many, Jestone, my assistant, was fidgety and nervous whilst we were so close to the kitchen. I decided to greet a few people and to make note of where various people were seated and with whom. I left Jestone to collect the beer brewing data we had become accustomed to gathering at such events (see Appendix 6), and later he joined us in our customary group. Shortly after becoming settled, he expressed the reasons for his earlier discomfort. One of the elderly women who was sitting near to the kitchen was his mother-in-law. She had recently come to stay with her sister (my immediate neighbour) and was engaged during her stay in negotiations concerning Jestone and his wife's reunion. At this stage in the negotiations no settlement had been reached and Jestone felt that he was being watched by his in-laws; too closely for his own comfort. In addition to a general practice of avoidance between the sexes in various public contexts, it is even more important for a son-in-law to avoid his mother-in-law at beer drinks and when eating.

Of the nine drinking (see Fig 6.1) groups that were evident during the first stages of the beer party, one consisted of young teenage boys (group A). They sat well apart from the older and elderly men's groups. I believe that they remained at a safe distance because young boys drinking publicly was frowned upon. In addition, based on my olfactory senses they appeared to be smoking 'dagga' or marijuana. This was a regular habit and many people with whom I spoke concerning such things stated that whilst at school or in the fields it is a common thing for young boys and men to do. Although older men smoked, it was commonly and publicly condemned. It was not unusual, however, for those who so wished to have a smoke whilst meeting friends quietly in the bush or whilst walking to a beer drink, but this was acceptable in its visible absence. Excessive smoking was associated with lethargy but also with a degree of brilliant madness. The young men who are habitual users are referred to as

'rasta'.<sup>1</sup> The young men's group remained distant from the others until they finally broke up and went their own ways. They may have been hungry for more beer but the lack of money no doubt prohibited this. At a later stage in the drinking, however, I saw one of these teenage boys being given beer by his brother in-law.

Fig 6.1 Drinking groups at Kay Chibuye



Another group of drinkers, who sat under a tree resting were people from the Chisomo Valley region taking a break from the long walk, whilst on their way to Serenje Boma. At this time of the year (January) the reeds that grow along the banks of the Lukasashi river are cut and dried to make mats (*impasa*), baskets and other

<sup>1</sup>This term became enshrined in a very well known popular Zambian song from 1991, *Nali gomauka*, meaning literally 'to be broken or fallen', but inferring a sense of being crazy, crazy from youthful exuberance and excessive consumption of drink and dagga. Such persons are referred to a 'rasta', Serenje Kalindula, *Nali gomauka* 1991 Teal Record Company (Z) Ltd.

cane ware. Chickens are also commonly taken to the Boma for sale. It takes approximately two days to walk the eighty odd kilometres to Serenje from the valley. The valley region is environmentally, ecologically and geographically quite a different place from the plateau. It was often said that *bena Nsenga*, people from the valley, would need to trade their goods in the district market to raise the cash to purchase mealie meal. They would also come to Kamena to look for piece work in exchange for mealie meal and cash. They experienced food shortages on a regular basis, but the 1991/92 harvest was reported to be particularly bad. Chief Chisomo's area became a priority for the health and drought relief extension services that tried to give assistance to badly affected areas. On this occasion these traders numbered about twelve and were travelling together as a group. It was common for them to stop in the area near to Kamena to refresh themselves, being about half way to town. They drank heartily and were soon quite inebriated. On more than one occasion I heard it said that they probably had not had a drink for months, there being a drought the previous season and that's why they were so drunk. The young teenage boys in Kamena, although fond of girls from Chief Chisomo in the valley, often joked about the accent of the '*bena Chisomo*' or '*Chisomo line*', and to some extent they became the hub of jokes that played on the imagined weaknesses of people who live in remote regions away from the influence of towns and fashion. They were even considered to look different, being shorter and darker skinned than those from the plateau.

The other groups were made up of local men of varying ages, and the elderly women's group near to the kitchen. It was a jovial and pleasant scene, supported by the buzz of conversation and the occasional outburst of laughter or some other vocal expression. People would take the opportunity to circulate to some extent among the other groups. This is unavoidable in any case as people are in close proximity to each other. Meeting others in the kitchen area when buying beer provides a good opportunity to exchange greetings, to comment on the brew and to catch up with friends and family news. Although the men tended to sit amongst their age peers there was a good deal of interaction between them. In all the drinking groups beer was shared in the accepted manner; each person taking a cup at a time and then passing it on. Those who did not actually buy beer or did not intend to do so were sometimes offered beer but were reticent to help themselves. Buying beer and giving beer in this context shows that not only does one have money but also a degree of generosity. Similarly buying beer for others symbolises respect both for the giver and the receiver. Many of the social exchanges in the context of such beer parties are replete with sublime salutations addressed to seniors and expressed through the provision of beer.

One group adjacent to our own consisted of a group of older men sitting in the open sun on an array of 'furniture', including an old camping chair with a duiker skin cover, an upright locally made kitchen style chair and an assortment of logs and bricks. These men and a number of others would always be found in each others company at beer parties. Some are related in various ways through marriage, but all share proximity to residence and the locality in common. They were all well respected for being both family men and for supporting their dependants adequately, in addition to which, they all had had experience of living in an urban context or elsewhere in the district.

The conversation with the older men turns to problems of credit and transport. The late Dick Pinn complains bitterly about the Lima Bank's mismanagement of funds; their inability to keep decent account books. He continues to deride the credit supervisor, arguing that,

'it is his responsibility to make sure all the inputs are there and that all accounts are kept in order. Chibale, for example, is experiencing problems with the availability of inputs. The Z.C.F. representative there is newly employed and inexperienced.'<sup>2</sup>

Paul Ngosa replies,

'he is probably a bit frightened to converse with his seniors in Z.C.F. at the Boma, to solve the problem.'<sup>3</sup>

The conversation then moves to complaints about other aspects of the servicing of local areas with transport and the inputs needed to farm.

As the beer party wears on and the sun moves position so do the drinking groups. A new party of young men drift into the beer drink. They have a tape recorder, and one is carrying a home made banjo. They mill around and greet a few people and then find themselves a quiet corner to partake in their beer. The event was considered a success: the beer was good quality, there was enough to go round and there was no unruly behaviour. By mid day the beer had been sold, although the party continued into the afternoon.

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<sup>2</sup>Fieldnotes 22/1/93.

<sup>3</sup>ibid.



Sometimes at beer drinks people buy their beer in advance, even paying up front before the beer is ready. The number of cups bought in this way are reserved and brought out when desired. In this practice there are echoes of the associated practice of *katobansaka*<sup>4</sup> (see Chapter 5). Although advance payment ensures supply it has a further social dimension. Reserving beer and then recalling it in this way is not ritualised as it is in the context of the work parties, and is practised with subtlety, not wanting to show overt favouritism to certain people against others. Firstly, it ensures that the purchaser remains in control of the beer and its subsequent distribution. In this way there may be beer left over that can be taken home to drink in private, or beer reserved to drink with particular people. Although credit is not given in such a transaction, buying beer in this way consolidates a drinker's position vis-à-vis the seller. This is achieved by going in advance to the home of the brewer or *cikombe* and depositing the money. During the course of these encounters many other social exchanges take place even if they remain simple and on a salutatory level. Guaranteeing at least some sales in advance and being given support in this way is reassuring for the brewer. Credit is disapproved by the *cikombe* as it is extremely difficult to settle accounts at a later date when the buyer may not choose to recall the exact number of beer purchases. Among a peers buying beer in quantity in this way shows both a man's generosity but more importantly his purchasing power, giving him a certain status.

The beer that was given to Barry by his wife to drink freely with his friends was put to one side in Barry's house. We were invited to drink this beer in private and joined Barry inside his home. Honoured with glasses, a table and chairs and the cool interior of the darkened house we consumed the beer to the accompaniment of conversations about the more clandestine opportunities to earn cash. These included hunting game animals, and mining and selling gem stones, both illegal but nevertheless seen as real opportunities by some local men.

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<sup>4</sup>*Katobansaka* refers to bringing beer for those of the *nsaka* or 'mens shelter', reinforcing the solidarity and dominance of men. Seur (1992 Chapter 11; 327-337) describes the changing relations between men and women and their access to various social arenas. The *nsaka*, traditionally the domain of men and the place where boys recieved 'education' and were socialised by other men, is symbolised through the practice of giving beer.

## **Communicative Social Action and Drinking Practices - The Analysis of a Beer Party**

The foregoing account provides some picture of the atmosphere and circumstances of a beer party. They are interesting and enjoyable events, not simply because they provide an opportunity to witness and experience how rural people in Serenje entertain themselves but also, and more significantly, because of the way in which they become arenas of multiple social action. Whilst beer is sold by the brewer to realise a profit, and to this extent plays an important role in the livelihood practices of many local people, the events are multiplex social occasions. The significance of beer in its mediation of social relations (both living and sometimes dead), and the way in which beer symbolises sentiments of respect and status between people, become together in the context of beer drinking. These, then, co-exist with the financial concerns of the brewer. To this extent the various social meanings or values that are attributed to beer become significant for consumers even in abstract terms.

At the beer party we witness interaction between the various actors, and the extent to which these encounters form part of wider interactive processes wherein the content of specific social relations are recreated, consolidated, negotiated and maintained. The unease felt by Jestone, for example, at being close to his mother-in-law whilst drinking expresses the degree to which there was a formality in their relationship due to tensions created through an earlier separation from his wife. The customary avoidances practised during the early years of marriage and prior to Febby, Jestone's wife, being given autonomy over her own kitchen and food stores, were reinstated during the negotiations for the reunion. Such practices although considered Lala tradition, are often achieved or implemented in diverse ways and are part of the dynamics involved in social relations of this kind (see Chapter 4). Jestone and his mother-in-law should clearly not be seen drinking together, nor would they have wanted to. Similar interactional standards were among others during the beer party. The interactions between men that involve the redistribution of beer, for example, became meaningful when considered in the light of the important symbolic value of beer. Respect, tribute and the various conceptualisations of status and prestige, then, may all be expressed through beer drinking practices.

The fact that the beer, on these occasions is sold, gives beer added social, symbolic and material value. Access to the drinking groups, and therefore the ability to buy for others or one's own group, has a bearing on the status of an individual. To partake involves, for many, spending money. The association that beer has for people,

for example, in its symbolic role as a preferred gift of tribute, remains intact (people still give each other beer for respect) but in some sense it is an ability and willingness to pay for beer and not the beer itself that represents or expresses a person's relationship to others. Indeed it may be said that the beer is the symbol but money is the facilitator in the context of such beer drinks. Even the short description with which this chapter opened reveals a great deal of information about the different dimensions that give meaning to beer. The context in which beer is sold and the significant role of beer as part of a range of livelihood strategies are both important to our understanding of the way in which local people frame their understanding of beer and its role in their life worlds.

Later in this chapter I will return to this beer party to discuss in detail the implications of the event in terms of the income it raised for Barry and his two households. I will also discuss the organisation of the brewing process; where the inputs came from, who did what work, and in what ways the money was distributed and spent.

### **Cash Incomes and the Sale Context of Beer**

In the previous chapter we argued that the ritual and symbolic associations of beer form part of an unfolding historical context within which beer has increasingly been attributed a monetary value. These various contextualisations, that give beer such a rich 'biography',<sup>5</sup> are central to the analysis of local expressions of value. Whilst the organisation of this thesis may suggest that it is analytically possible to separate out these frames of reference, they in fact remain integrated in subtle and complex ways. The foregoing account of a particular beer party illustrates how the social dynamics of such parties play an important role in the social construction of value as ascribed to beer. Identifying local idioms through which value is ascribed to various resources, in this case beer, does not mean that they remain uncontested. In fact, as we have seen, these various idioms are often the subject of debate and reflect the dynamic and fluid

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<sup>5</sup>Here I draw on Kopytoff's (1986) interesting discussion on the social life of commodities, but suggest that with a commodity like beer (with a very short lifespan) the 'biography' must consist of a range of potentialities, identified and given meaning by specific people in a given context of consumption. To this extent 'things' only have biographies by virtue of the role they are accorded by specific actors. In the same volume, Appadurai (1986) comments further that commodities are things that have a particular type of social potential. Whilst this may be so, it is my contention that whether commodities or not, goods such as beer have many social potentials which are often diffuse and overlapping. These potentials are multiply expressed in their contexts of use.

way in which local people interpret their social world. Data collected during 1992 and 1993, in the Serenje area, suggests that whilst those features of beer use, identified in Chapter 5, remain an important part of the local discourses surrounding beer production and consumption practices, they are by no means the only frame of reference. The cash value that beer acquires through its sale, also contributes significantly to the values that it is ascribed with in Kamena. The transformation of grain into beer and then through beer sales into money provides an avenue through which both millet and maize acquire a significant local monetary value. There is, then, an important relationship between the production, consumption, exchange and sale of these grains and the production of beer in the mediation of various social and material values. The next section of this chapter is devoted to examining the ways in which the 'commoditisation' of maize, millet and beer affect the social constructions of their value.

Considering beer brewing and consumption practices as part of a wider framework of commoditisation processes provides us with the analytical space for describing the organisation of labour and co-operation between spouses and between women. Furthermore, adopting such a perspective, it becomes possible to consider in a more econometric way the various contributions that crop and beer sales make to livelihoods. Central to such an analysis is the recognition that there are coexistent and overlapping frames of reference for interpretation and action within the social and economic world of Kamena.

In the context of diversified agricultural production practices and multiple income generating activities, beer sales provide a significant contribution to cash incomes. Such a contribution is by no means constant, however, as beer production is linked to agricultural production which in turn is influenced by ecological and national politico-economic factors. Socio-economic differentiation within a locality also accounts for the variation that exists vis-à-vis the role of beer and cash incomes. At different times beer sales have assumed more or less prominence for the livelihoods of people in the Serenje area and Zambia as a whole. For a given locality the role of beer also varies, depending on the extent to which people are involved in other livelihood activities, including differential involvement in commercially-oriented maize production and other cash generating options. In Nchimishi, for example, the purchases made with money raised from beer sales are usually used for the provision of household consumption items and the buying of spare parts for bicycles. This contrasts with Kamena where, during the 1991/92 season, approximately 24% of beer sales were made over in support of agricultural

production and very few people owned bicycles. Despite such variations, cash values are attributed to maize through the established markets, through the production of beer and through local barter exchanges. The standard measure for exchanges involving maize (a 20 litre tin and parts thereof) becomes an important equivalent against which other goods are measured (this point will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7).<sup>6</sup> The ingredients for beer brewing are also measured using the same containers. A 20 litre tin of maize was valued at 500 *Kwacha* in September of 1992 and at 9950 *Kwacha* a year later. There is no doubt that this figure was established in relation to the value of maize in the national market place and its transformed local value as beer. The standard 20 litre measure is also used in relation to millet and it acquires a cash value through beer processing and sales. Although there are no national outlets for the sale of millet, it is occasionally sold to people in Zambia Compound at Serenje Boma for use in beer production. The very fact that both these grains acquire value in relation to so-called 'external' criteria, that is national and local urban markets, and are subject to inflation,<sup>7</sup> is further evidence of important 'macro' factors in a local context. The price of beer itself was subject to increases locally and rose from ten to twenty *Kwacha* in April 1993. There was little opposition to the increase: many people commented that it was necessary since the cost of goods in the store, fuel and transport had already increased.

Hedlund and Lundahl (1984:61) state that beer drinking and brewing patterns in Central Africa reflect economic and social patterns of a more fundamental nature. In the Zambian context this is undoubtedly the case. Changes in agricultural practices, experiences of an urban context and the ever apparent need for cash are all mirrored by the increasing importance of rural beer sales and the emergence of new beers and patterns of drinking. Furthermore, the analysis of beer brewing practices and subsequent sales reflects the dynamic and changing nature of gender relations. Hence this chapter also addresses the issue of gender relations with regard to beer brewing and sale practices in terms of the control over grain and cash as significant resources.

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<sup>6</sup>As Ortiz (1973:162f) points out, as cash crops such as coffee, is often a surrogate for money and used to establish cash equivalence.

<sup>7</sup>The rate of inflation, based on a shopping basket of goods obtained from Serenje stores in September 1992 and November 1993 respectively, was 275%.

## Katata and Katubi: Maize and Millet Beer

Let me first provide an overview of the brewing process, supported by case material, to illustrate that brewing is by no means a simple and easy task. It demands skill, expertise and co-operation both in the management of maize and millet supplies and in the brewing process itself. The issues of labour and the control of resources become central to the discussion. A considerable amount of labour, for example, is devoted to the brewing process, often involving the co-operation of husbands and wives or co-operation between female matrikin (mothers, sisters, and sometimes friends and daughters). Such co-operation is essential and raises the issue more generally of co-operation at intra and inter-household levels. The question of who controls various resources is important, and illustrates how struggles over the control of farm and household resources more generally are part of a continuously negotiated and changing set of practices. The material presented below shows how these various themes are inter-woven or synthesised in present-day beer brewing and consumption practices.

The emergence of *katata* (maize) beer over the last fifteen to twenty years is the most significant innovation that has taken place with regard to beer production and consumption practices in Serenje. It has almost entirely replaced the traditional millet beer (*katubi*) and its rise to prominence is closely associated with the introduction and widespread adoption of hybrid maize cultivation. Hybrid maize now occupies an important place in the consumption and income strategies of people in the Kamena area. Therefore the relationship between beer sales and agricultural incomes (particularly the sale of grains) is central to understanding the value of beer. The account of the displacement of *katubi* and the move towards maize beer that follows, helps to situate present practices in a more historical context and highlights the differences between these two types of beer.

The beer sold in Kamena is a light beer made predominantly from maize. This beer, *katata*, has not entirely replaced the traditional thick millet beer known as *katubi*, although in the context of beer sales *katata* reigns supreme. In addition to these two beers, there are other intoxicating beverages made for the purpose of sale. These were of a rather experimental nature and included a form of wine made from yeast, tea and sugar. In addition a variant of maize beer was made by an elderly Zimbabwean woman. Although she said that it was no different from the brews that were available elsewhere, hers was extremely intoxicating and was sometimes referred to locally as *chicochana*. Local people swore that she added yeast during the

brewing process, although she denied this.

*Katubi* made from millet is considered the traditional Lala beer. The Bemba refer to this type of beer as *chipumu*, and have a reputation for making a very thick variety which can be dried and reconstituted with hot water. It is enjoyed especially by the older generation and can be quite intoxicating.<sup>8</sup> Consumed in a communal way from a single calabash, each drinker waits his/her turn to take draughts through a pipe, either made from a reed or, as is more common, copper piping, often acquired from industrial sources during periods of urban employment. People often bring their own drinking straws or *umulonde* to avoid being 'poisoned' by another's magic. Hot water is added to the thick porridgy mash in the calabash, and those who drink sit around the fire waiting for the pot of water to become hot. There were only a few recorded incidents of this type of brew in Kamena, most commonly brewed for home and free consumption. It is said, following so-called 'traditional' practices to be the only beer that can be used for the recruitment of labour,<sup>9</sup> and any other events that make use of beer in specific ritual or symbolic contexts.

Often when *katata* beer is brewed a small quantity of *katubi* is also brewed for consumption by family or close friends. The active mixture that starts the fermentation process, called *itimba*, is generally made from millet whether or not the malted ingredients are to produce *katata* or *katubi*. It is therefore not difficult to brew a small quantity of *katubi* at the same time as brewing larger quantities of *katata*.

In contrast to *katubi*, *katata* is made from maize, although some millet or sorghum is required to assist in the fermentation process. The quantities of *katata* brewed on a single occasion are much more substantial than for *katubi*: often as much as three drums (210 litre oil drums). Once the beer has matured it is ready for consumption, requiring no further water or drinking paraphernalia other than a suitable container to carry it to where it is to be consumed. This beer is drunk from a cup, filled each time from a larger container (anything suitable and to hand or borrowed from the *cikombe* or brewer) and passed around. *Katata* is conducive to an individualistic style of drinking and more akin to drinking styles found in urban bars,

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<sup>8</sup>The alcohol content of this type of beer, from samples collected by Richards in 1933 and analysed by a Dr. Widdowson, varied between 2.10% and 4.44% (Richards 1939:77). A study carried out in 1981 by Haworth et al. indicate that the alcoholic content of village beer is generally between 2.3% and 4.2% alcohol. *Katubi* may seem more intoxicating as it is consumed hot.

<sup>9</sup>Although this is no longer strictly the case, as we saw in Chapter 4.

where *cibuku* or bottled beer is consumed. It is more portable than *katubi* and some people prefer to take the beer away to drink it in the privacy of their own homes. Unlike *katubi*, *katata* is not considered a traditional local beer, but instead is thought of as originating from outside the area. Various different origins were suggested, including places as far apart as Zimbabwe and Tanzania. The exact point in time when this beer became widespread in Serenje is difficult to pin-point. In Long's 1968 account there is no mention of this type of beer although as Seur's 1992 account bears witness to it is at present an important feature of social life. In fact Seur remarks that 'during the 1980's, returning female migrants introduced a new type of beer to Nchimishi: *Katata*' (Seur 1992;233). During the period in which Norman Long carried out research (1963-64) there was easy access to *cibuku*, as well as three types of imported bottled beer in Chief Chibale. Perhaps during this period there was little need for any other types of beer. Later, and accompanying a decline in the general growth of the economy in the 1970's, there was a subsequent drop in the availability of imported goods, including bottled beers. Those with cash in the rural areas found there was little to spend their money on so an opportunity presented itself to women who had acquired brewing skills elsewhere. It must, therefore, have been during this period that *katata* was widely adopted in rural Serenje. In Kamena, *katata* is said to have been introduced in the 1970's by women who had lived for a time on the Mukushi farm block where their husbands were working. It is likely that *katata* was introduced to the Kamena area earlier than it was in Nchimishi since there was never a possibility of buying bottled beer in the area.<sup>10</sup>

### Principles of Village Brewing

Audrey Richards describes the brewing process in her 1939 account of the Bemba and asserts that beer making is the longest and most skilled cooking task that a woman can undertake. The brewing procedure for grain beers is similar throughout Zambia and has changed little from Richards' original description. Perhaps one of the most important changes that has taken place, however, is in the utensils used in the process. Formerly baskets and calabashes would have been used but these have been superseded by the use of twenty litre tins for measuring quantities of grain and disused 210 litre oil drums used for 'cooking' and storing the beer. The use of such items allows larger quantities of beer to be brewed and was no doubt instrumental in

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<sup>10</sup> Although there was a small store in Kamena during the 1950's and early 1960's, it did not sell bottled beer.



the introduction of *katata*. Colson and Scudder make a similar point with regard to the Gwembe Tonga, commenting upon the more efficient equipment and the possibility of having grain ground at one of the locally installed 'hammer' mills (Colson and Scudder 1988:45). The beer drums are highly valued articles and not all households own their own. For this reason lending and borrowing beer drums for larger brews, such as *sundowns*,<sup>11</sup> becomes essential. The drums become an important aspect of the many resource flows that women engage in the pursuit of brewing.

It is difficult to provide a precise description of the method employed in brewing as no single brewer could provide a definitive account of the recipe. In practice however the same general formula is applied to both *katata* and *katubi*. The village beers require two separate mixtures, a malt and a fermentation agent which are cooked (*ukwipika*) separately and only in the final stages of the process are added together.<sup>12</sup> The mixing, *umuposelo*, is the critical stage in the process and is considered a skilled operation. Co-operation between women (neighbours, friends and matrikin) at this stage is common and some women are considered experts. The taste of the two mixtures is the primary consideration and, although women are in charge of the brewing, a husband or father may play a role in the tasting operation.

The process is as follows: Grain (either maize or millet) is left in a sack in a nearby stream for as long as it takes to sprout: in the warmer weather a day is normally sufficient. The grain is then left in the sun to dry and is ground into flour, known as *chimena*. The grain for *chimena* may take up to a week to dry thoroughly and it must therefore be prepared in good time and in advance of the brewing process in order to make sure it dries completely. Depending on the type of grain used it is then either taken to the grinding mill or ground at home by hand. Millet is ordinarily processed in this way. The charge for grinding *chimena* is fifty *Kwacha* more than the charge for an equivalent amount of ordinary grain. This is a direct result of the increased value it will acquire as beer and millers take advantage of this. The cooking

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<sup>11</sup>*Sundowns* differ from other beer parties, in that they are usually much larger events, and often housed partly in a grass enclosure where a small entrance fee is paid by the drinkers. Invariably music is provided by a tape player, or local musicians. These beer parties are always hosted to make money, with normally five or six 210 litre drums of beer being brewed investments are high.

<sup>12</sup>This is in fact not dissimilar to the process employed by the commercial brewing industry. I am indebted to Mr. M. P. Donald (Master Brewer and consultant for the brewing, fermentation, food and beverage industries, at Carlton Consulting Ltd.) for the discussions we had concerning the commercial brewing process.

can take a whole day or longer and creates a mash which turns the starch in the malt into fermentable sugars. The other active ingredient, the fermentation agent or *itimba*, is made from ground millet or maize which is mixed with boiling water and then cooked until a light porridge consistency is reached. The following day a little of the *chimena* flour is added to the *itimba*. This is then left in the kitchen or a warm place to sour and is stirred at regular intervals, in the morning and again in the late afternoon. As this mixture putrefies, natural bacterial yeasts are formed. This process usually takes between three and four days.

When the *itimba* is considered sour enough it is cooked for approximately five hours or until brown in colour, then left to cool. The following day it is cooked once more and cooled. At this stage the *chimena* is cooked in a 210 litre oil drum. It is boiled until it has been reduced in quantity to approximately half its original volume and is then left to cool. The two solutions are then mixed slowly and in various smaller containers, until the desired sweet taste (*chibilila*) is reached. These are then poured into a large drum and left overnight in a warm place. The following day they have reacted with each other to produce beer.

The difference between *katata* and *katubi* is realised in a number of ways. Firstly the quantities of maize as against millet used and secondly the amount of water needed differ. When maize is used in place of millet or sorghum the end result is a beer that is more bitter tasting than sweet. I was informed that the more millet is used, the stronger the beer will be. This may be due to the enzymatic qualities of the fermentable sugar that is released from millet which differs from those released from maize. Strength, however, is a quality that is difficult to assess and may be based on highly subjective criteria. There is little or no quality control during the process, although cleanliness is recognised as an important part of the proceedings. No two beers are alike even though the principles employed in the process follow the same pattern or procedure.

### **Social and Organisational Factors in Brewing**

The above description is simplified in the extreme, but the accounts of brewing recorded during fieldwork reveal some interesting considerations. First of all the whole process can take anything from five to nine days to complete, despite the fact that this beer is commonly referred to as 'seven days' beer (see Chansa 1955, Haworth et al. 1981, and Colson and Scudder 1988). The length of time it takes to complete the

process depends on a number of factors. Some of these factors are technical in nature; for example, temperature, which may relate to the time of the year at which a beer is brewed. The temperature affects the fermentation process and may slow it down considerably. Other factors are more closely related to a brewer's familial arrangements and access to assistance.

A considerable amount of water and firewood is needed, the collection of which is an arduous task. The distance from the source of water is often quite substantial. Consequently assistance is frequently sought for this task and the services of children may be used if available. It is possible to claim help from matrikin, particular sisters for water collection. Men will not often assist in the collection of water, since this is considered a woman's task. The collection of firewood on the other hand, although ordinarily considered a woman's task, may be undertaken by the husband, particularly if the beer is being brewed at the request of the man. In addition we must not over look the fact that husbands and wives co-operate in many ventures and will often assist each other. Naturally this is not always the case and conflicts of interest may arise but it was not uncommon for men to be seen carrying firewood for the hearth specifically for cooking beer on their way back from the fields.

During the days in which beer is brewed, most of the work falls on the penultimate day before drinking. It can take six or seven hours work on this day, due to the length of time taken up with cooking to reduce the *chimena* solution. The fire must be kept well stoked throughout this period. This period is perhaps the most critical and often the assistance of an expert brewer will be sought to assist. Sometimes payment may be made for such assistance but ordinarily women rely where possible on their mothers or other senior and more experienced female kin. Brewing beer is rarely a solitary event for the *cikombe* or brewer and the following account illustrates further the importance of enrolling the help of others.

### **'Twatotela Bacikombe, Bana Bupe'; 'We thank the brewer, Bana Bupe'**

Firewood is generally brought in advance, small amounts being collected every day. This may be supplemented at a later time but it is often gathered in anticipation of a particular brewing. Bana Bupe, together with her husband and eldest daughter, would collect firewood while away from home to attend to tasks such as harvesting ground nuts (the women) or winter ploughing (the husband). A good deal of water is required for brewing and on the first day, when the *itimba* was prepared, fifty litres of water

were needed. Bana Bupe collected this herself from the monopump, approximately half a kilometre distant. Three trips were needed to collect enough.

Table 6.1 illustrates clearly how much time was given to the various brewing tasks. The water was then put on the fire in an oil drum and brought to the boil, taking approximately forty-five minutes. To this Bana Bupe added maize mealie meal that had already been suspended in a solution of cold water. This follows the standard procedure for making *nshima* to avoid it becoming lumpy. Her husband helped her throughout this first task by simply being there and passing various utensils and keeping the fire going. The drum was then placed in the kitchen and left overnight. The following day there was little to do except add a small amount of *chimena* flour to the mixture. This flour was ground in small amounts over the nine days spent preparing the beer (see Table 6.1). Soaking the grain for three days in a fertiliser bag, left in a water filled drum ensured germination. The *itimba* was left for a further night in the kitchen as it had not taken the first day. Their kitchen was a disused 'minerva' or tin shed, completely blackened through constant kitchen fire smoke. Being entirely made of metal these tin sheds can become extremely cold at night on the plateau. The *itimba* therefore took longer than it may have if left elsewhere.

During the first few days of the brew Bana Bupe and her husband Joseph would go to their fields early in the morning. Joseph was at the time busy with winter ploughing (hoeing); turning the soil whilst it retains some moisture prior to the planting period makes the task of ploughing at a later date much easier. Joseph hired piece workers for the latter ploughing task.

By the morning of the fifth day the *itimba* was sufficiently soured. Both Bana Bupe and her neighbour and friend Doris Mapani (the wife of the agricultural extension officer) tasted the *itimba* and discussed what they would do next. There remained at least half the total quantity of *chimena* to grind. Working together Bana Bupe and her neighbour Doris, decided to grind it by hand to save not only the money but also the lengthy walk to the nearest mill (approximately 15 kilometres away). In total it took them four three hour sessions to complete the task. This work they spread over a period of four days.

Table 6.1 Beer brewing and input and distribution of labour: Bana Bupe 1992

DAY	TIME SPENT IN MINS	TYPE OF WORK	NAME/ WORKER
1	90	Collecting water and cooking <i>itimba</i>	Bana Bupe Joseph
2	120 15	Grinding <i>chimena</i> . Mixing flour with <i>itimba</i> solution and stirring.	Bana Bupe
3	60 120	Collecting firewood. Grinding <i>chimena</i> .	Bana Bupe
4	180 10 120	Grinding <i>chimena</i> . Stirring mixture, mornings and evenings. Collecting firewood whilst at fields	Bana Bupe Joseph, Bana Bupe and daughter
5	20 180	Stirring and tasting. Collecting firewood.	Bana Bupe and Doris Mapani (a neighbour) Joseph
6	180 60	Grinding <i>chimena</i> . Collecting firewood	Bana Bupe, Doris Howard (a teenage neighbour)
7	120 300	Grinding <i>chimena</i> flour. Cooking <i>itimba</i> and first mixing with <i>chimena</i>	Bana Bupe and Doris
8	90 360 120	Collecting water. Cooking, mixing and cooling <i>chimena</i> and <i>itimba</i> . Grinding <i>chimena</i>	Bana Bupe, Doris and Bana Anna (unrelated neighbour) and maternal Niece (visiting) to Bana Bupe.
9	180	Adjusting mixture and collecting fresh <i>itimba</i> .	Bana Bupe, Joseph, myself, Doris, Bana Anna, Maurice Mapani
TOTAL	38HRS 45MINS		

The final two days of preparation were extremely demanding for Bana Bupe; each day she rose early in the morning and started by stoking the fire for cooking. Doris had gone to her parent's place in Kasebe (approximately 20 kilometres west of Kamena) to harvest her own ground nuts so was unable to help. Most of the work over the last two days involved boiling and mixing the *itimba* with small quantities of *chimena*. The final stage of mixing *chimena* took place on the last day. It took almost six hours to complete, as mixing is often done piece meal. This was partly due to the small containers that Bana Bupe was working with and in part to carefully monitor the taste. During this period the remaining *chimena* was ground. Bana Bupe claimed the assistance of a young niece, who was at the time living with her, to complete the grinding and help with the collection of water. Water was needed in substantial quantities on the final day and a further six trips to the monopump were required. The mixing appeared to go well and the taste was sweet enough (*chibilila*). Unfortunately, however, the expected fermentation did not take place. Despite waiting a considerable time, by midnight that day it had still not begun to react properly. The assistance and advice of various neighbours was sought. It was decided that there had not been enough *itimba* added during mixing, despite the tasting. Joseph knew that at

a farm beyond the Lukasashi river Spooni Enleshi had been preparing *itimba* for beer she was planning. Although Spooni was not related to Joseph he thought that he could probably get what was needed from her. Joseph sent his teenage son Edigar to collect some *itimba* from Spooni's village. He returned after about an hour with the *itimba*, which was then added to the beer and everyone retired.

Early the following morning at four o'clock Joseph and Bana Bupe woke up, only to find that the beer still had not risen. One of the two 50 litre drums that had been prepared showed some signs of bubbles, but these were not enough evidence that the beer had reacted properly. It was decided between them that they should ask Spooni for the remaining *itimba*. Joseph took a five litre tin of mealie meal with him to offer to Spooni; the first *itimba* she had given freely. Fortunately Spooni was happy to oblige saying that she had only prepared the *itimba* so that she could make a small calabash of beer for her husband. She wanted to see the mealie meal before she gave the *itimba* but this demand was orchestrated with good humour. She asked when the beer was likely to be ready. Joseph replied at around fourteen hours, and Spooni responded by saying, 'I'll come and taste your beer as you are using my *itimba*'. The beer was ready in the late afternoon and it was enjoyed freely by Joseph, myself, our neighbours and friends. The drinking was a great success. There was dancing and to thank the brewer the older women sang '*twatotela bacikombe*' ('we thank you Mr brewer') to the accompaniment of an inverted bucket (drum).

The above account raises a number of interesting observations concerning the brewing process and associated activities. Of which, perhaps the most significant is the way in which both Joseph and his wife co-operated during the brewing procedure. The beer had actually been prepared at the request of myself and the other agricultural extension staff at the depot in Kamena. Bana Bupe had agreed to provide her services freely as it was her husband who asked for her assistance. This was not '*ubwalwa ubwakukanda ifisapya*' (beer to soothe the blisters), the beer normally brewed in respect of a husband's labour. Joseph had said that he could not let his wife do all the work 'one out'. In addition she would cause him 'problems' if he showed no willingness to help. The grain for the beer was provided by myself. Millet was not grown by the employees at the agricultural camp and so I had acquired it from elsewhere in Chief Chibale. The price for millet at the time was 900 *Kwacha* for one tin (20 litres). Joseph remarked that he would help his wife to brew whenever he requested her to do so and not only on those occasions when he wanted beer to drink freely with his friends. The account of this brew reveals the extent to which, in this case, both the husband and wife co-operate to fulfil various brewing tasks. Later I

shall discuss, in more formal terms, how co-operation in labour, and the investments in brewing inputs, become part of the negotiated sharing of money raised through beer sales.

The account also illustrates how the brewing process may be a protracted and often an ad hoc procedure, the brewer responding to the demands of the process as it unfolds. In addition, it shows the extent to which there is risk involved in brewing: grain may easily be wasted if a beer fails to ferment or becomes sour. Later in this chapter we will consider the risk factor in relation to the cost invested in brewing inputs and the possible returns from sales. In the case of Bana Bupe, as Table 6.1 shows, the ninth day was devoted to adjusting the *itimba* and *chimena* mixture, which at this late stage is known as *Kaposha*. In response to the problems they faced, Joseph and Bana Bupe called upon the assistance of Spooni Enleshi, who was herself preparing *ubwakukanda ifisapya* (beer to soothe the blisters) in respect of her husband. She lived at some distance across the *Lukasashi* river that marks the administrative boundary between Kamena and neighbouring Kasebe. This woman was unrelated to either Joseph or Bana Bupe. *Itimba* was given freely and in a generous manner. Although ultimately an exchange of maize mealie meal was made for the *itimba*, it was not demanded, a simple request to come to taste the beer was the only behest made by Spooni. On this occasion an important resource (*itimba*) for beer brewing moved between households without it being endorsed through kin relations or direct remuneration. Assistive redistribution of this kind, between unrelated people, is important and is not displaced in the face of an increasing number of more commoditised relations. Co-operative relationships, between friends for example, remain an important aspect of the social networks within which people operate. On this particular occasion the beer was brewed for free consumption and the inputs were provided by myself. Nevertheless, the account illustrates the brewing process and shows how certain unforeseen circumstances may be overcome to achieve a successful brew.

### **The Seasonal Cash Needs for the Farm and Household**

The following sections draw attention to the role of beer for the 'household economy' and in support of agricultural production. Some measure of the importance of beer is gained by examining the allocation of moneys raised from beer sales. The relationship between agriculture and beer production is brought to the fore in a number of ways, including the latter. Firstly there is a direct relationship between the availability of

grain, a lull in the round of agricultural work, and the frequency with which beer is brewed. The frequency with which beer is brewed corresponds to the seasonal availability of grain, the presence of which is a prerequisite in the production of beer. In addition to this the relationship between beer and agriculture is further strengthened by the use of beer sales in the purchase of agricultural inputs, and to pay either the initial costs of acquiring loans or the debts incurred at the end of the season.

As a general rule beer is most commonly available from May onwards, as millet and maize are harvested. There is a steady increase in the frequency with which beer is brewed throughout the following months until towards the end of October when there is a marked decline in the number of beer parties. Fig 6.2 illustrates this rise and fall. When compared with Figs 4.2, 4.3 and Table 4.2 (see Chapter 4), which represent the cycle of agriculture (including labour and access to produce) there is a clear relationship between the availability of grain, a reduction in the labour demands of agricultural tasks and the frequency of beer brewing. Following the harvest the labour demands of maize and millet cultivation are at their lowest point and leisure time is often dedicated to drinking. During the months of May to October money raised from crop sales,<sup>13</sup> begins to filter back into the community as people cash their cheques at banks in Serenje. The availability of cash, adequate leisure time and plentiful supplies of the grain needed for brewing are the key determining factors in the frequency of brewing. Fig 6.3 presents an idealised model of the frequency of beer production for Kamena. These data were collected at the beginning of the fieldwork period, and show the general rise and fall of the beer cycle.<sup>14</sup> When this is compared with data recording the actual number of brewings over a full year (see Fig 6.2) we encounter a number of anomalies. In October of 1992 (Fig 6.3), for example, when we would expect the number of beer parties to fall, following the gradual decline in August and September, there is an unexpected increase in their number. The records clearly show that of twenty-eight beer parties in October, thirteen or 46.4% were staged in order to raise money to repay agricultural loans (see Table 6.4). Similarly in November, twelve beer parties or 63% of a total of nineteen brews, were aimed at

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<sup>13</sup>Money certainly makes its way into the rural areas through crop sales, and often during this period people may be seen wearing new clothes or carrying with them their latest acquisitions. Both environmental and social factors have a bearing on crop sales to national markets. The 1992 marketing season (May-September) was characterised by a low record level of sales (430 bags) due to the drought and 1993 was plagued by institutional restructuring and inefficiency combined with the lack of money by government for purchasing maize.

<sup>14</sup>These data were collected at a meeting convened by myself with the Kamchanga Women's Club. We were concerned with repairing a grinding mill established by these women, but I used the opportunity to discuss the seasonality of beer brewing. Fieldnotes 1/10/92.



loan repayment. The rise in the number of beer parties during October and November reflects the priority farmers give to raising the cash they need to remain involved in the various credit schemes. Debts of this kind are ordinarily settled through commodity payments made in the form of maize. The drought, however, resulted in an unusually high number of brews aimed specifically to raise money for the credit institutions. Despite the low yields at harvest grain was acquired for brewing through purchases. Most of these purchases were made locally, from those who were fortunate enough to obtain reasonable yields.<sup>15</sup>

Notwithstanding the unusual circumstances there are ordinarily other periods of the year during which beer money is used in support of agriculture. The records show (see Table 6.4; column 6 'other agricultural uses' and Fig 6.2) that between May and September there is a need to pay for grain bags and to transport produce to the depot for weighing and sale. There is a corresponding rise in the number of beer parties during these months. Similarly during the peak labour demands of the season, a number of beer parties are organised with the specific intention of raising money to pay for hired labour. Household and domestic purchases that are financed through beer sales (for example, purchasing clothes, blankets, food items and educational expenses), are also subject to such seasonal variation. Educational expenses - a highly significant cost - although more evenly distributed, are nevertheless, more frequent during the school holiday periods, when parents are concerned to cover transport costs, buy school books, pens and additional clothing.

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<sup>15</sup> See Chapter 4 for an account of the necessity for timely planting and fertilizer application.

Fig 6.2 Beer Brewing Cycle Kamena 1992-1993

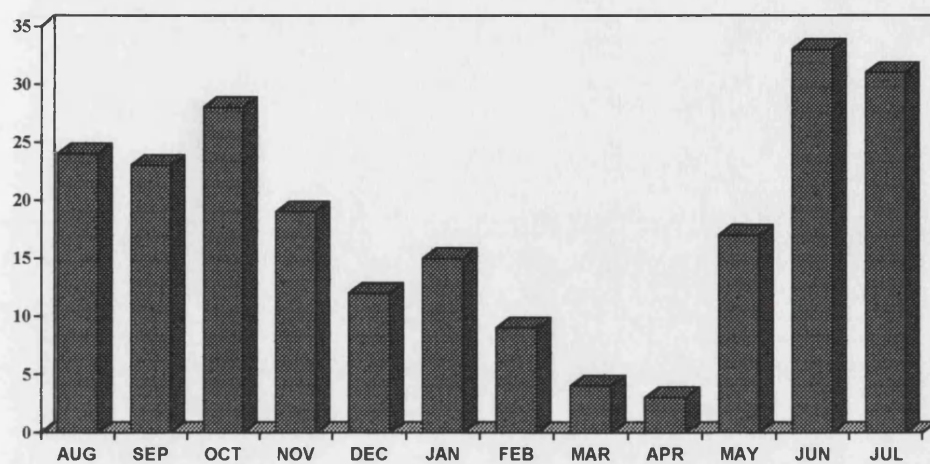


Fig 6.3 Beer Brewing cycle Kamchanga Women's Club 1992-1993  
(an idealised account)

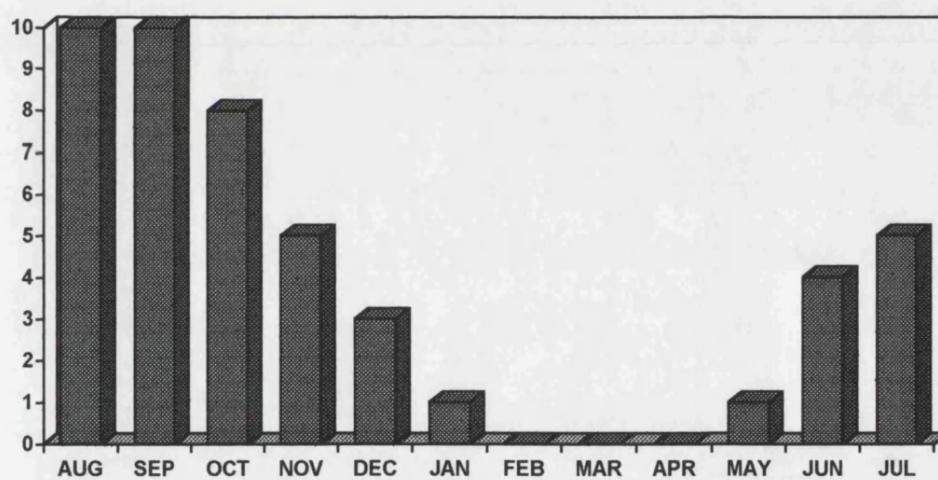


Table 6.2 Idealised Account of Allocation of Income from Beer Sales: Kamchanga Women's Club

<b>MONTHS</b>	<b>BEER USES AND ALLOCATION OF INCOME FROM SALES</b>
August	Buying grain bags, transporting maize to depot, hiring labour for ploughing. School expenses and buying household items, including grinding costs.
September	Transporting maize, paying for piece work, repaying agricultural loans, school expenses, buying household items, costs of grinding.
October	Paying for labour, hoe ploughing, repaying loans, buying household items and grinding.
November	<i>Imbile</i> (work parties), buying household items and grinding.
December	Paying for labour, weeding and mound cultivation, buying household items and grinding.
January	Paying for labour, mound cultivation ( <i>tute</i> or cassava).
February	No beer
March	No beer
April	No beer
May	Free/ 'hidden' beers
June	Paying for labour, winter ploughing and harvesting maize. Buying household items.
July	Buying grain bags, paying for transport of produce. Buying household items.

### Beer and Household Expenditure

Following the maize harvest, between June and September, a good number of people expect to receive an income from their maize sales in national markets. At other times of the year, cash may be raised through the sale of garden crops, such as beans, rape and sweet potatoes. This is achieved both locally and through contact with urban-based traders who come to Serenje at certain times of the year. In addition to agricultural produce, they also buy ants and caterpillars which are abundant at the beginning of the rainy season. The sale of chickens, bananas, garden produce (vegetables), and the provision of services, for example, brick-laying, thatching, small-scale domestic manufacturing (pots, baskets and wooden utensils) and blacksmithing, also provide small injections of cash. Most frequently, however, it is beer sales that generate the income for many immediate household cash needs. These include: food items, and household consumables, such as, soap, salt, cooking oil, and paraffin, the purchase of beer and to pay for the grinding of maize. Buying clothes and blankets, paying for education and related expenses, providing for the cost of various health services (including divination) and personal transport are also met

through beer sales. The cash raised from beer sales for the 1992-1993 season<sup>16</sup> was, spent as follows: household consumption items (47.3%), educational purposes (11.4%), in support of agriculture, including the repayment of agricultural loans, hiring labour, the purchase of empty grain bags and small amounts of fertiliser, and transporting bagged maize to the depot for weighing and subsequent sale (27%). The cash from the remaining beer sales was given over to purchase exchangeable items (2%), and other miscellaneous uses (8.4%), while the remaining brews were given in return for *imbile* labour arrangements and freely for respect (3.9%).<sup>17</sup>

Table 6.3. Beer brewing and the distribution of expenditure, Kamena 1992-1993

Purpose of brew	No. of brews	% of total
Communal work party	7	2.3%
Repaying Agricultural loans	40	13.4%
Miscellaneous agricultural uses; bag purchases and transport	32	11%
Hiring labour	8	2.6%
Educational expenses	34	11.4%
Purchase of household consumption items, incl. food and clothing <sup>18</sup>	140	47.3%
Purchase of goods for exchanges	6	2%
Respect /hidden beer	5*	1.6%
Other uses	25	8.4%
Total	297	100%

*\*Two of these beer brews were to honour the chief on his annual inspection of villages.*

The amount of cash actually needed for various items and services determines to a degree which income activity or mix of income options a person will select to raise the money. Smaller items can be purchased with ease from the money raised from beer sales: Household consumables, food, transport, and grinding, for example,

<sup>16</sup>The collection of this data entailed a detailed record of 297 separate beer parties.

<sup>17</sup>There were few recorded incidents of beer brewing for occasions of respect. It is impossible to guess at how frequently beer was brewed for free consumption in this way as it was often 'hidden' or brewed secretly.

<sup>18</sup>The purchase of clothing is significant and it is considered the responsibility of a husband to cloth his wife or wives and children. Despite this men do not always manage to meet this obligation and this in itself may constitute grounds for divorce. Men will try to meet this obligation primarily through the sale of the maize crop, but failing this may rely on the wife's beer sales to meet such demands.

account for the majority of purchases with money obtained from beer sales. Other more costly items compel people to raise money in a variety of ways. The initial cost of sending a child to secondary school, for example, is one of the most financially demanding commitments. Data in Appendix 1 show, for the Ntembwa family, the number of items required, the cost of these and from whom they were acquired. Such expenses are substantial and are often met in a variety of ways, and require a mix of strategies. For some families the costs of secondary school education is prohibitive.<sup>19</sup> Many of the items needed by the Ntwembwa family were bought with the wages that Joseph received as a general worker at the agricultural depot. They did not therefore have to brew beer to generate cash, although their case illustrates the high costs of secondary school. In addition to those purchases made by the father, claims were made against a maternal aunt (MZ) married in Ndola, who provided most of what they needed. These claims were made during the prospective students prolonged visit to town.

### **Beer Revenue in Support of Agriculture**

Many of the beer parties in the months following the poor harvest of 1992 and preceding the planting period (June-October) were designed to raise money for recovering agricultural loans or for opening accounts with the credit institutions. Despite the drought however, I was informed that there are always a good number of beer parties around harvest time. In total I recorded 297 beer parties among the 92 separate households surveyed and 69.2% of households brewed beer at some point during the period of research. Not all the farms, then, brewed beer. Some residents were Jehovah's Witnesses and did not drink because of religious conviction, others expressed annoyance at having drunken people noisily occupying their farms, and so did not like beer parties. Despite this, when asked about income from beer sales, many people acknowledged that it was certainly significant. For some it is obviously more important than for others.<sup>20</sup> The fact that more than half those questioned had

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<sup>19</sup>During 1993, only two children at Kamena primary school, both boys, passed the entry exams for secondary school. There were, however, a number of others who were already attending secondary school, and many in primary education at the local school. The initial costs of sending a child to secondary school may be too high to meet through beer sales alone. Continuing maintenance costs however are often met in this way.

<sup>20</sup>In the season prior to my research it was said of one family headed by an elderly woman, who lived with her adult daughters and grandchildren, that they relied exclusively on beer sales to provide them with their staple grain. They bought the ingredients with what small cash they could raise through chicken sales and from claims made against other kin. They would brew and sell beer to raise money with which to buy food stuffs, and any remaining cash would be used to buy ingredients for further

brewed beer at some point during fieldwork is testament enough to the importance of beer for livelihoods.

Table 6.4. Beer Sales and the Seasonal Allocation of Expenses in Respect of Agriculture

MONTH	TOTAL NO. BEER PARTIES	WORK PARTIES	LOAN REPAYMENT	LABOUR PAYMENTS	OTHER AGRIC USES
AUG 1992	24		3		1
SEPT	23		5		
OCT	28		13		
NOV	19		12	1	
DEC	12		4	3	
JAN	15				4
FEB	9			1	1
MAR	4			1	
APR	3	1	1		
MAY	17		2		3
JUN	33	1		1	4
JUL	31	1			6
AUG	39	2			9
SEPT	40	2			5
TOTAL (%)	297 (100%)	7 (2.3%)	40 (13.4%)	8 (2.6%)	32 (10.7%)

During 1991/1992, the drought reduced crop yields significantly. In 1990-91 Kamena agricultural depot purchased 1492 90kg bags of maize, but the following season this figure fell to 430 bags (see Table 4.3, Chapter 4). The primary reason for this was the drought. Within Kamena many people were adversely affected since approximately 90% of households included in my survey produced hybrid maize. As a consequence of such wide spread involvement in hybrid maize cultivation, there were a good number of people who faced problems with loan repayments. Records kept with the three loan institutions at Kamena depot, indicated that there were 90 individual loans allocated for the area. The main lending body - Zambia Co-operative Finance (Z.C.F.) - who had a representative resident in the area accounted for the majority of loans. Following the poor yields of 1991/92 many people did not manage to pay back their previous season's agricultural loans through crop sales as they had hoped.<sup>21</sup> In order to continue cultivating hybrid maize further loans were required for the 1992/93 season. In addition having to repay loans in full, the credit institutions also require a security deposit before new accounts can be opened. In pursuit of these ends, many beer sales that took place were deliberately held to raise money simply to continue with the lending institution. Approximately 13.4% of all beer parties

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brewings. In this way they subsisted for a good part of the season.

<sup>21</sup>For the financial costs of acquiring credit see Chapter 4.

recorded were intended to meet these objectives.

In view of the number of beer parties hosted with the direct aim of raising cash for agricultural purposes, beer production must be seen as an important activity that is very much a part of the range of farming strategies adapted to meet the demands of commercially oriented cultivation. This is particularly the case during times of shortage, perhaps as a consequence of drought conditions. The importance of beer production as an income strategy, for both agricultural purchases and household items is illustrated the case material that follows.

### **Kayi Chibuye's 'Village'<sup>22</sup> and Their Beer**

The significance of the following account of Barry and his wives, Ester and Gladys, is that it provides a organisational context evaluating the role of beer sales vis-à-vis agricultural production.<sup>23</sup> To complement the opening part of this chapter I concentrate in this section on the analysis of a beer party, and the financial aspects of brewing for sale. I will also discuss the relationship between maize production and the distribution of household resources.

First, however, it is useful to say a few words regarding the settlement and general family and kinship arrangements of Kayi's settlement. The 'village' is composed of three separate but related 'kitchens' or households (see Fig 6.3). One belongs to Barry (B5, Fig 6.3) and his senior wife (B6), one to Celica Chanda (A2) and Kayi (A3) and the third to his maternal aunt. Joyce Mwansa (the aunt, A1) is a divorced women with three children and Celica Chanda (his mother) has seven dependants, two of which are unmarried teenage girls. These two women and their dependants are entirely responsible for their own kitchens and granaries.

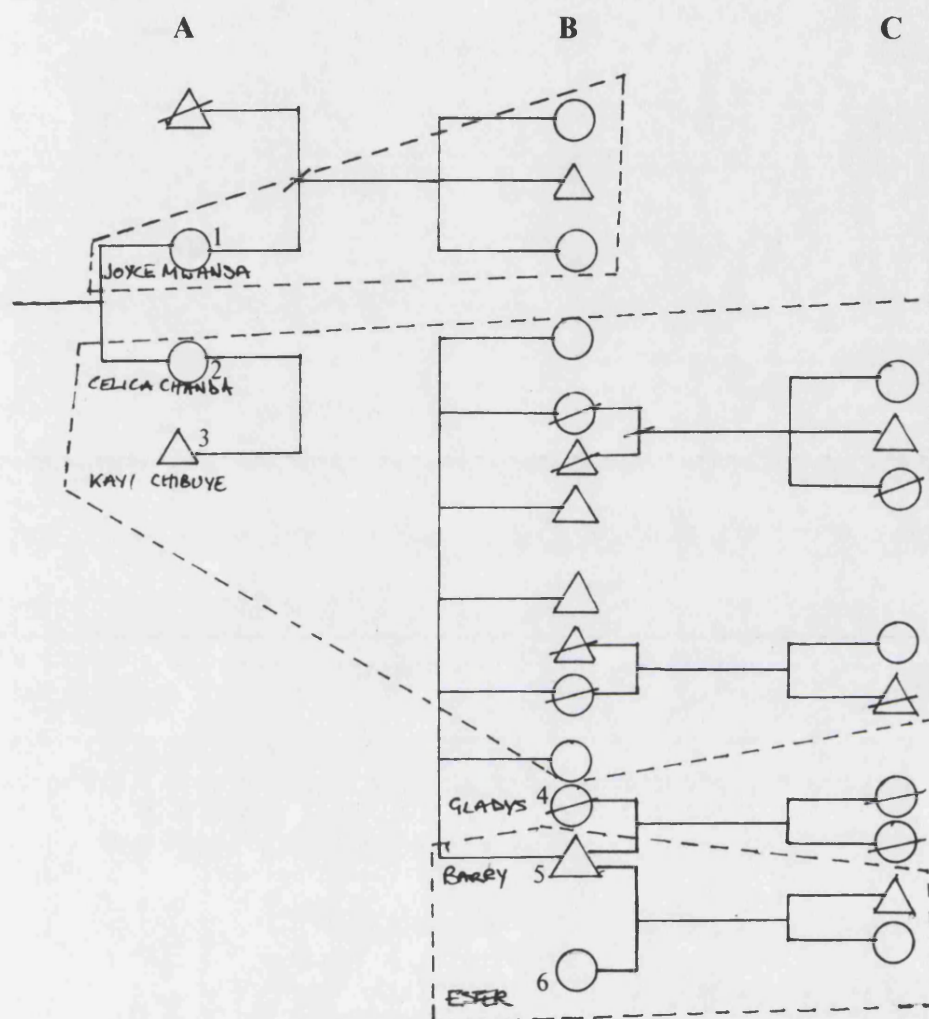
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<sup>22</sup>Here I use the term village as distinct from household, since the settlement arrangements to which I refer include three separate but related households or kitchens. It seems an appropriate term, as the Bemba/Lala term for village (*umushi*) is often used by local people themselves when referring to 'home', or household. For example, if asking where someone is going they often reply, 'to the village', '*kumushi*'.

<sup>23</sup>In addition it is also of some significance methodologically, as it was only through enquiries into the specific context of a particular beer party that 'space' was created in which a discussion of the broader issues of household organisation became possible. In this way a specific enquiry became an organisational context in which to discuss wider problems. A beer party provides an excellent situation in which the researcher can enrol informants in his or her own project, in such a way that the experience for both parties involved is completely dialogical. Local people also use the situation to involve the researcher in their own projects. Even temporal projects like doing their utmost to drink deeply.

Fig 6.3 Genealogy of Kayi Chibuye

Generations



In practical terms we should consider the three households as separate and related only as kin, not through work. Kayi senior is a polygamist and has another wife in Khama, a neighbouring area. He is often absent from the village due in part to his nocturnal wanderings and in part because he frequently goes to the valley (Chief Chisomo) region to collect medicinal herbs. He does not take an active role in providing labour in Celica, his wife's, fields, although she tells me that he demands some of the profits. Ester Muleba, the first and senior wife to Barry Kayi, is the eldest daughter of Patrick Muleba, a successful, innovative farmer who is also the agricultural extension officer at Teta, some 25 kilometres distance. She has a reputation for being a good *cikombe* (brewer), is a hard worker with her own maize field and has her own loan. The second wife to Barry is the daughter of a local immigrant farmer from Zimbabwe. She does not reside at Kayi Chibuye, but at a



neighbouring village.<sup>24</sup> Incidentally she and her mother are prominent brewers, the latter making a variant of the local *katata* beer but adding yeast, a common practice in Zimbabwe (their beer parties were memorable events due to the highly intoxicating brew).

Barry himself is a charismatic man of about 35 years old. He is always well dressed in pressed slacks, polished shoes and a clean shirt. He is well groomed. By contrast, Kayi Chibuye, Barry's father, is seen unshaven, never wears shoes despite the many kilometres he walks between wives, and wears ragged clothes. He has a reputation for being an experienced herbalist, is well liked, respected and also has charisma. He is an elderly man who divides his time between Kamena, Khama and Chisomo, where he has additional wives. These two are very much a case of like father like son. The settlement to which I refer in this chapter is named after Kayi, the senior.

In local parlance Barry is considered 'very movious' and is a polygamist. The implications of this phrase are two fold. Firstly, he frequently moves around, travelling between Kamena and Serenje Boma and to the towns on the Copperbelt. These excursions are in part business opportunities, although he is actually very discrete about his town episodes. It is said that he had many 'wives', and is indeed a charmer; hence the second implication of being 'movious'. In having wives who can brew good beer, Barry, has a source of income in addition to agricultural activities, as do his wives Ester and Gladys. Barry is also an expert bricklayer and house builder, and would be contracted on occasions to build for local people.

The organisation of their households is such that in the production of maize each wife shares with Barry an independent field and they have each had loans at various times for the necessary inputs. They were not involved in the production of millet using methods that involved cutting and burning, although they did produce millet on the flat or *ibala* land, which is an important grain in the production of beer. They plant this millet crop in a second year field in rotation after maize. It is said that the residual fertiliser left in the soil when used on the maize the first time round still has some potential for the millet. For the 1992/93 season both Barry and his junior wife Gladys had loans with Lima bank and Z.C.F. respectively. The total area under cultivation split between the two wives' fields was 2.5 hectares. Collectively they had

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<sup>24</sup>For purposes of analysis, and in practice, it is useful to consider Gladys' home and her household as separate from Ester's. Despite this, in some circumstances Barry and his wives work together.

acquired twenty bags of fertiliser for this land, four of which they had retained from the previous season. As it is Gladys who carries the burden of debt, the larger portion of land is under her control. Barry will work with either Ester or Gladys on these fields but the actual amount of work that they do as individuals varies and on occasion extra labour is hired. For the heaviest cultivation tasks for the last three seasons they have hired church work parties, principally members of the local Jehovah's Witness congregation. Ester is a member of this sect. The money for hiring may come from any number of sources, including beer sales. At harvest time they pool their efforts and work together, completing one and then another field. For their efforts Ester and Gladys receive a dress or some other item of clothing they need, in addition to a share of the cash earned from crop sales. For the work he does, Barry receives a share of the cash raised from crop sales and is sometimes given an item of clothing as a gift from his wives. They do not have a formal contractual arrangement for the provision of labour: instead Barry will make demands on his wives or vice versa, and they negotiate with each other until both parties are satisfied with the arrangements. The children of Barry's respective wives are too young to provide heavy labour, and so are not significant in this context. The other members of Kayi Chibuye do not work with Barry's household. They are entirely responsible for their own affairs, and I am told that they sometimes hire one of the church work parties for ploughing *ibala* land in the preparation of their maize fields.

The importance of beer production as an income strategy in the lives of Barry and his wives comes into focus when we consider the possible remuneration from beer sales. Consistently hiring labour through church groups is some indication of the income security of these households, wherein beer sales are an important element. Ester and Gladys considered themselves as relatively well off. They were often well dressed and between them raised a respectful income. Their relative security in terms of incomes relates both to their ability to produce a successful maize crop and to raise money through beer. Although adversely affected by the drought in 1991/1992, resulting in reduced yields, their involvement in beer production became an important additional source of cash for Barry's household. For the 1992/1993 season Ester and Gladys brewed a total of 22.75 drums for sale. They hosted thirteen beer parties. Some of these were at Ester's home, when she brewed (as described below), and some were at Gladys's home village.

In April 1993 the price for a cup of beer doubled from 10 to 20 *Kwacha*, ostensibly keeping in line with the level of inflation. By this time Ester and Gladys had sold 12 drums of beer at an average price of K2250 per drum, and the remaining

4 drums were sold at parties later in the season at the new price of K4500 per drum. This gave them a total income from beer sales of K45,000. If we compare this figure with the projected figure for crop sales for 1993, we can see that for Barry's households, their income from beer is about a quarter of their annual income from maize sales. The projected figure for maize sales (in 90kg bags) is 45 bags. This figure is based on Barry's own expectations and his past accomplishments. For the harvest in the year preceding the drought of 1991/1992, Barry sold 45 bags of maize to the depot, some of which was used to repay his loan. The acreage and the quantity of inputs used for the 1992/1993 season are the same as for his previous year and their situation regarding labour remained unchanged. In 1993 there were favourable rains and we can assume therefore that the yield would have been very similar to the 1990/1991 season. If they had sold 45 bags at the 1993 market price, K5500, then their income for this season's crop would be expected to be in the region of K250,000.

Table 6.5. Incomes from Maize and Beer Sales for Barry Kayi: 1992-1993 Season

<b>MAIZE SALES</b>	45 (90KG BAGS), @ K5500	@ K250,000	84.7%
<b>BEER SALES</b>	12 DRUMS, <sup>25</sup> @ K2250 4 DRUMS, @ K4500	@ K27,000 @ K18,000	15.3%
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>		@ K295,000	100%

Table 6.5 expresses the relative contributions of beer and maize sales for the 1992/93 season. Of all households in the research area Barry's ranked in the top 5 for the frequency with which they brewed beer. 15% of an estimated annual income came from beer sales. The respective beer parties at both Barry's senior and junior wives' residences were recorded specifically for raising the money needed for household goods in 68.75% of cases, for repaying loans in 25%, and in 6.25% of cases they used the money to purchase empty grain bags. Despite the relative income security for Barry's families, this did not mean that they did not have their share of domestic tensions and squabbles, but when asked in an abstract way to talk about their household organisation they articulated an idealised account without recourse to a discussion of the negative aspects. The wives did not talk freely about the probable competition for the affections of the husband. In Barry's choice of wives he negated the problem of providing bride service for his in-laws. Yet he showed his respect for them by providing clothes and other goods whenever he could; and in his capacity as

<sup>25</sup>One drum is equal to 210 litres.

a brick layer he built a substantial house for Ester's father, Patrick. This aside, both in-laws were considerably better off than Barry and his wives. They both used oxen for cultivation. Indeed the late Dick Pinn Makinganwa, Gladys father, was one of only three farmers in the Kamena area who owned and used oxen for cultivation and transport.

In a Zambian rural context processes of commoditisation and the way that commodities are perceived and used locally are undoubtedly influenced by local as well as external stimuli and conditions. The foregoing discussion highlights the way in which grain crop production and beer are related. The relationship between these two important livelihood activities exemplifies the way in which involvement with commercially oriented maize production is not simply dependant on external criteria but also bound up with a number of important local social arenas and practices.

Let me now return to the case and discuss brewing and the control of resources. Focusing on the contributions made by members of Barry's household in the production of the beer. Here it becomes clear that despite Barry's public role as household head and the contribution he makes the process of brewing itself remains firmly in the control of the women.

### **Beer Brewing , Gender and The Control Over Resources**

The emotional content of conjugal relationships between men and women is extremely important in determining the extent to which there is both co-operation and understanding between partners in the maintenance of their livelihoods. A sense of love, loyalty, responsibility and commitment to each other and to any offspring must have a bearing on the negotiations that take place between men and women in the management of their daily affairs. It would be imprudent to make any generalisations about the emotional content of such conjugal relations but in any discussion concerning the relationship between men and women and their livelihood practices we must retain a sense of the importance of the sentimental, sexual and emotional ties that exist. Despite this, it is possible to consider the more pragmatic arrangements made between spouses in the pursuit of both co-operative and individually-oriented objectives. It is also possible to examine what these joint enterprises bring to men and women.

It is all too easy to make statements that affirm the subordinate position of

women in rural Serenje. Understanding the status of men and women, nonetheless, depends on the analytical perspective that one adopts. It seems pertinent therefore to state, from the outset, that the attitudes of the Colonial Government in reference to agricultural policy largely ignored women as producers and controllers of a number of important resources (see Chapter 4). In fact, according to Whitehead (1991:451-2), one of the probable reasons for the neglect of women was that the colonial authorities conceptualised the conjugally-based household as a stable unit in which the husband/father managed the resources on behalf of other members, who were conceptualised as his dependants and who provided labour under his direction. Such an attitude showed a flagrant disregard for the fact that,

'Conjugal partners have a complex and shifting set of rights in each other that include rights to labour, land, and resources as a corollary of their relationship with each other. Conflicts over land and labour bring into play both traditional and non-traditional forms of authority as the individual partners seek to impose their own interpretations on a changing situation' (Moore and Vaughan 1992:210).

The perspectives adopted by successive administrations were largely ignorant of the matrilineal system of kinship and inheritance. Administrators and policy makers manifested a short-sightedness in that they could not see that after marriage the resources of the husband and wife did not become merged. There are a few written records during this period that include the views of women but they were mostly ignored. They were denied access to legal arenas, at both a local and district level:

'[women] did not speak in the courts on the procedures, rights and duties involved in marriage divorce and inheritance. Women did not do these things because government officials and chiefs, headmen and other males did not see fit to ask them: customary law was not the 'legitimate' concern of women, and they were therefore ignored as contributors to the debate' (Fullan 1991:112).

The present study takes the view that, on this level, women were undoubtedly subordinate to men. There is no doubt from the above statements (although brief) that women occupied a subordinate status to men in political and legal terms. However, as this thesis seeks to emphasise, it is also clear that both men and women have the ability to assert their own views of their world and to act accordingly. Bringing up children becomes one of the major joint projects undertaken between spouses.

Children provide women and men with status:<sup>26</sup> their continued success, in terms of health and education reflects upon the parents. Being seen as good providers and having large grain stocks is also desirable and reflects a person's status. Husbands and wives both stand to benefit if their grain bins are full. The ability to brew quality beer gives a woman status in her own right: a good brewer is a good wife. In order for a husband to benefit from her expertise co-operation is essential. Both men and women have vested interests in continued involvement in agricultural production, in various income generating activities, and with bringing up children. Some of these interests are given meaning in respect of a person's individual expectations and some are given meaning in relation to the combined expectations and desires of a married couple. Data collected in Kamena, illustrates that co-operation between men and women is not only essential but desirable. This does not mean that there are no conflicts between spouses, there clearly are<sup>27</sup> and in the private domain there are constant negotiations, renegotiations and accommodations in the quest for autonomy and domination by both men and women. At times women are stronger and achieve their autonomy, they stand up to men and are proud. They can refuse to have sexual intercourse with their husbands, threaten to leave and take the children with them and they can refuse their labour. In contrast, men have few sanctions (other than aggression or violence) that they may impose on their wives; although they may refuse sexual intercourse this is unlikely. They may, however, refuse to share profits from crop sales, or to provide money in other ways. But these sanctions are risky, since in joining a wife the husband becomes embroiled in a whole series of important in-law relations that provide a degree of 'external' control over the relationship between spouses. Yet despite this men and women often act independently, albeit with some consultation, in reference to a range of possible income activities. The question of 'ownership' with regard to maize and particularly millet is often open to a number of local interpretations. The tradition of a strict division of labour in respect of *citemene* millet cultivation is no longer strictly adhered to as new crops and technologies have become absorbed and reworked into existing agricultural arrangements. It is not clear to what extent a man or a woman may control these various resources, and although it is possible to describe in general terms some of the organisational arrangements, the clearest way is to view them with specific reference to a particular context (see below). Seur 1992 (Chapters 8-11) focuses his discussion

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<sup>26</sup> After having a child the mother, and in some contexts the father, are known by the name of the child: for example Bana Bupe, where Bupe is the name of her last born child, and means 'gift'.

<sup>27</sup> On more than one occasion I witnessed the aftermath of a violent domestic fight. In one case a husband was severely beaten. Fieldnotes 25/12/93.

on changing gender relations and the control of land and produce. In the context of the increasing commercial orientation of agriculture in Nchimishi (Chibale Chieftdom), some women have become independent entrepreneurs and farmers. Although no such independently successful female farmers were in evidence in Kamena, Seur's discussion provides an important contribution to our understanding of such relations as they have developed over time for a specific locality. In Kamena women may not be 'commercial farmers'; they nevertheless create their own space for financial independence, acquiring loans, producing their own maize and growing other vegetables.

Within the confines of conjugal relations both men and women have different but equally important responsibilities in the maintenance of their joint livelihoods. Securing the necessary foodstuffs and raising cash are often considered as joint enterprises, albeit that specific ventures may be embarked upon by either a husband or a wife in a singular fashion. In such an event any remuneration that is forthcoming may stay firmly in the control of the individual, but, importantly, this may free up the cash raised from other avenues for joint household use. To an extent, then, all activities that contribute to a household's production and reproduction may be considered equally important to the unit's food and income security. Beer brewing is a significant practice in this respect, often considered to be a woman's domestic skill recast for economic advantage through its sale. This may be so, but we should not assume that women therefore remain singularly in control of the proceeds of beer sales. Often the control over the income from beer sales is a matter for negotiation and accommodation between conjugal partners. The degree to which men and women co-operate, retain control over resources and exercise their own autonomy within their conjugal relationships with respect to various aspects of their livelihoods is often difficult to gauge. Each set of circumstances within the context of a highly diversified agricultural and income portfolio must be considered as both unique and yet part of a wider pattern of negotiated outcomes. Such outcomes involve the maintenance of many co-operative ventures, the majority of which are generated within the household. Livelihood activities are often overlapping and consequently it is necessary to consider in broader terms the various contributions men and women make in their different ways.

With respect to beer there are a number of specific resources that are either invested in or generated by its production. These include: the grains used as inputs, the labour for collecting water and firewood, and the time spent in brewing. In addition the cash generated through beer sales becomes a crucial resource. In order to

examine more closely these contributions and entitlements of men and women, let me return once more to Kayi's beer party.

### Barry, Ester and Gladys

No two seasons are quite the same. Environmental and institutional instability have an impact in various ways on the organisational, strategic allocation and use of resources. Similarly, particular family arrangements often change creating new circumstances and modifying old. For the two seasons prior to fieldwork in 1992/93, Barry's respective households had brewed for twenty three separate beer parties. Ester brewed on thirteen occasions whilst Gladys brewed ten times (see Table 6.6).

Table 6.6 The Beer Parties of Ester and Gladys, 1992/1993

NAME	DATE	DRUMS	INPUTS: MAIZE	INPUTS: MILLET	CASH RAISED	CASH FOR?	CONTROL
ESTER	18/8/92	4	4 tins (own)	1.5 tins at K750	K5100	Household/ grinding	ESTER
GLADYS	18/8/92	1	1(own)	1 at K500	K1350	Loan repayments	GLADYS
ESTER	28/8/92	2	2 (own)	1 at K600 <sup>28</sup>	K2300	Household/ grinding	ESTER
ESTER	7/10/92	1	1 (own)	1 at K600	K2000	Household items	BARRY
GLADYS	27/10/92	2	2 (own)	2 (own)		Loan repayments	GLADYS
ESTER	17/11/92	2	4 (own)	1.5 at K900	K5600	Loan repayments	BARRY
ESTER	10/12/92	1	3 at K1800	1 at K900	K2150	Household items	ESTER
GLADYS	1/1/93	2	4 (own)	1 at K850	K5600	Household items	GLADYS
ESTER	22/1/93	2.5	3.5 at K2400	1 at K1000	K10,200 <sup>29</sup>	Household items	ESTER
GLADYS	12/2/93	1	0.5 (own)	0.75 (own)	K3200	Transport fare to Lusaka	GLADYS
GLADYS	18/5/93	2	3 (own '93)	1.25 (own '93)	K14000	Household items	BARRY
ESTER	20/7/93	1.75	2 (own '93)	2 (own '93)	K6000	Buying grain bags	ESTER
GLADYS	3/9/93	1	2 (own '93)	1 (own '93)	K5800	Household items	BARRY

For the 1991/92 season they brewed fewer beers than previously because of the drought. For the same reason, however, a number of beer parties were held to raise

<sup>28</sup> Ester informed me that she kept a revolving fund to pay for the inputs needed for beer brewing. She would retain enough cash each time she brewed to pay for further grain.

<sup>29</sup> The price of a cup of beer doubled in April 1993 from K10 to K20.



the money needed to clear outstanding debts with the credit institutions. In this season Barry was unlucky and had no free beer brewed for him, in accordance with traditional practices of respect (see Chapter 5), although he did managed to recieve a small calabash of the beer each time it was brewed. The beer party described in the opening section of this chapter took place in January 1993, when many people were increasingly dependent on food purchases to meet their consumption requirements. Barry and his wives were no exception, the party he and Ester hosted was intended to raise money to purchase a range of household items, but they stressed buying food as the most important. On this occasion it was Ester who decided to brew. Her consultation with Barry amounted more to a statement of forthcoming events than to a request. Although in general terms she told me that it was Barry who controlled the household cash, with regard to this particular beer brewing she had reserved some money from a previous beer sale to buy further brewing inputs.

The preparation of *itimba* and *chimena* Ester accomplished alone. A good deal of time and effort was saved by sending the young nephew of her co-wife to the grinding mill to have the *chimena* ground. Ester collected firewood on her way from the fields, Barry also helped in a small way with this task. Two days before the beer was ready Ester's younger sister, Jennifer, came to visit. She had brought a twenty litre tin of maize with her to give to Ester as part of the beer ingredients. This donation was at once both a contribution to Ester's household and used as the vehicle with which Jennifer made a claim for assistance from her sister. Providing inputs in this way ostensibly gave Jennifer the legitimacy to request that she be included in the distribution of profits to be made from the beer sales. When I asked Ester about this legitimacy, she simply replied "*ouo ninka shandi*", "she is my sister", implying that this relationship was all the legitimacy that was needed. Needless to say on the final day of preparation Jennifer was very busy collecting water.

In total three and a half twenty litre tins of maize and one tin of millet were used for the beer (see Table 6.7). Ester bought all these inputs, although one tin of maize was provided at a later stage by Jennifer. The maize was bought from Pastor Changwe at Nsaka 'village', where there was surplus even with the drought, at a total cost of K2800. A further K1000 was spent on millet, bought from the neighbouring area of Kasebe and K420 was spent on grinding. Two and a half drums of *katata* were brewed and K10,200 was raised through beer sales. After deducting the costs of inputs amounting to K4220, the remainder was divided up between Barry, Ester and Jennifer. Jennifer received the proceeds from one drum of beer, (K3200). She had intended to help her husband repay his agricultural loan with this money, but

unfortunately because of his existing debts he was refused a further loan. So Jennifer spent K3000 on fertiliser, bought privately, and purchased K150 worth of *kapenta*, which she ate with her parents and husband. The remaining K50 she gave to her father for beer. Ester and Barry were left with K2780 after expenses. This they shared in the sense that they both bought goods for the home, including: some rape at K30 (Ester's purchase), a portion of game meat for K230 (bought locally), soap at K230, cooking oil at K1240 and salt at K100. These latter purchases were made by Barry in Serenje (see Table 6.8). In addition, they also bought one tin of maize at K800 and Barry received K150 for beer money.

Table 6.7 The Cost of Brewing and the Cash Raised

NAME	MAIZE	MILLET	GRIND-ING	NO OF DRUMS BREWED	CASH RAISED
ESTER	3.5 TINS K2800, from Nsaka	1 TIN K1000, from Kasebe	K420	2.5	K7000
BARRY	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
JENNIFER	(1 TIN)*			1	K3200
TOTAL	K2800	K1000	K420	3.5	K10200

\* One tin donated

It is clear from Table 6.8 that most purchases were made by Barry even though they were largely of a domestic nature. Barry would walk to Serenje whenever the need arose, and would at times go there for his own amusement. It became clear, following the discussions I had with them, that Barry, organised his two households along similar but quite separate lines. The financial concerns of each home were considered as separate accounts. It also became clear that, although on a domestic level both Barry and his wives knew how much cash they had at their disposal, any private funds they may have had were kept distinct. Interestingly when I asked both Barry and Ester in public who controlled the 'purse strings', they both agreed that it was 'the husband' who controlled. Privately, however, there was obviously a good deal more to it. They would discuss at length the various cash needs of the household and how to fulfil these needs.

Table 6.8 The Allocation of Cash Raised from Beer Sales

NAME	HOW MONEY SPENT
ESTER	Retained to cover cost of inputs K4220, Purchase of, rape K 30
BARRY	Purchase of, Game meat K 230 (locally), Maize K 800 (locally), Soap K230 Salt K 100 Cooking oil K1240 ,Beer K 150
JENNIFER	Purchase of, Fertiliser K3000, <i>kapenta</i> K 150 Beer (for father) K 50
TOTAL	K 10,200

Ester certainly had autonomy over the domestic scene. She after all decided to brew the beer in question without consulting Barry. Furthermore she allowed her sister to cash in on their beer brewing enterprise. Barry could not object without insulting his in-laws.

Despite the two households being relatively income secure, at least during the period of fieldwork, Barry was in a much better position than either of his wives. Being a polygamist he had at his disposal the resources of both his wives, although he would have had to work at securing some of these. They were both well known for their brewing prowess and each had loans for the cultivation of hybrid maize. They would work collectively in the fields; at harvest time, for example, they would clear one crop and then move on to the next. The cash raised from such crop sales were divided between them, not equally but certainly in accordance with how labour was secured, who paid for it, and who had acquired a loan.

Unlike his wives who had only two children each, Barry actually had four and this gave him considerable status in local terms. In view of having two wives Barry could make claims on either wife, although not always successful, as in the case of demanding a share of either wife's earnings from crop sales. Such claims must be seen as additional to his own more clandestine money-making ventures. He could eat at either Gladys's or Ester's kitchen and he would spend a period with one and then the other wife, and obviously was able to command the affections of both women. The children of these marriages would eat at either kitchen with either of their 'mothers'. The two wives were in fact immediate neighbours and were not in dispute with each other, although as stressed earlier public appearance and internal household dynamism are not necessarily one and the same thing.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>I was not overly concerned with conflict during fieldwork, although interesting and often sociologically significant, I exercised a degree of sensitivity with regard to people's more personal struggles.

The relationship between men and women with regard to the control over resources is often quite fluid. It is not fixed, but like many other aspects of life is open both to negotiation between individuals and to the dictates of a particular context. This brief account goes some way towards a fuller understanding of the complex ways in which many criteria have a bearing on gender relations and the significance of such relations vis-à-vis the control of key resources. Furthermore it illustrates that the 'traditional' domain of women in a rural Zambian context (the kitchen) may remain firmly in their control, but not without the occasional intervention of men and husbands.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **SOCIAL RELATIONS, THE REDISTRIBUTION OF GOODS AND THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF VALUE**

#### **Introduction**

In the two previous chapters I examined the various ways in which beer acquires significance for people. The contexts within which different value notions gain significance are, however, only made meaningful by virtue of the network of social relations within which they are located. The content of such relationships is moreover crucial to understanding how value notions are constructed within and between specific social practices and interactions. In order to examine this proposition more closely one needs to look at the interactions between people that involve resource redistribution and more generally exchanges. I argue that when people exchange goods they retain a sense or understanding of the various potential as well as realised values attributed to the goods. These value notions are always multiply constructed, but in those interactive contexts focused on resource redistribution one or other of these values may be seen to predominate over others. This may be the case for the analyst as much as for the people involved themselves. The values that are attributed to goods may be conceived of in terms of the cash they may realise in exchange, in terms of fulfilling immediate needs, and as social values for maintaining and re/negotiating networks and social relations. The social values that goods may have is difficult to quantify. Social networks of various kinds are central to people's productive or livelihood activities. These networks are mediated through both action (redistribution of resources) and rhetoric (statements that demonstrate or affirm social positioning). In this chapter I illustrate the way in which the action contexts of exchange and the discursive practices associated with maintaining networks become fused. This fusion of practical and discursive horizons, I suggest, is revealed through giving close attention to the social practices involved in resource redistribution. I argue more generally that since livelihood practices are socially constructed they consequently involve social as well as production, income and consumption considerations. Indeed during exchanges these various concerns and objectives may be simultaneously achieved, thereby bringing together the social and financial aspects of the value a good may be ascribed with.

The social encounters of exchange are just one context in which people actively demonstrate and articulate both the highly personal and discursive substance of their relations with others. In this chapter I examine these events as social interactive episodes, with specific but not always intended outcomes. Expressions of respect and generosity are central to the mediation of social relations and during exchange encounters such expressions become manifest symbolically by the material outcome of transactions, and the values that are given to items negotiated in exchange. Respect and generosity are both important precursors to understanding the nature of co-operative social links in Kamena and I will make reference to the importance of maintaining good links with affinal and kin based networks in the cases described below. I will also look more broadly at various forms of co-operation. Affinal and kin relationships are central to understanding co-operation and I will, therefore, examine these in relation to the redistribution of agricultural inputs both within the household and in different contexts of exchange. To understand more fully the importance of maintaining co-operation I will examine the significance of potential discord among kin and consider the implications of sorcery accusations. The case highlights peoples fear of non-conformity and illustrates how the accusations made stand in opposition to the politeness and respect normally accompanying exchanges. Again notions of respect and generosity are central to this sense of conformity, which I will consider in relation to the issue of claims. The discussion highlights how expressions of respect and generosity (local communicative idioms) are relevant to understanding resource redistribution practices, the valorisation of goods and the maintenance and modification of social relations. The discussion, then, identifies the need to go beyond a simple examination of exchange based on the 'presumed' value of goods to consider the social content of exchange, and particularly the interactive episodes within which values are fixed.

The following case study of Jestone Kasubika provides a short description of his agricultural endeavours, and underlines the importance of co-operation between kin during difficult times. It also illustrates the precarious nature of hybrid maize production and suggests that labour is by far the most significant variable in organising production (see Chapter 4). This case emphasises the importance of co-operative social relations for on-going strategies of production and draws attention to the way in which particular social relations (notably kin and affines) are seen as a resource by local people. The enterprising and strategic use that Jestone makes of resources provided by the credit and marketing organisations reasserts a theme that runs throughout the thesis, namely that such 'externalities' become internalised by local people, giving them a value that is both context specific and socially

constructed. This case then looks in more detail at a series of interesting exchanges that formed the basis of Jestone's strategy to overcome his maize shortage. The analysis of the communicative aspects of these exchanges highlight the importance of social relations for peoples continued livelihood success. Such success is dependent on the favourable outcome of such exchanges, which remain an important way in which both cash and goods are redistributed.

### **Social Relations and Strategies of Production; The Case of Jestone Kasubika**

At Barry Kayi's beer party Jestone Kasubika drank his beer in an obviously uncomfortable manner and kept a discrete eye on the whereabouts of his mother-in-law. The departure of his wife for her natal family in Serenje the previous year had an enormous impact on Jestone. He was therefore concerned not to adversely affect the negotiations that were taking place on his behalf for her return. He was not only lonely after Febby (his wife) left - she had taken their two children with her - but faced considerable difficulty in completing a number of labour intensive agricultural tasks. The season before she left (1990/1991) they cultivated a range of vegetable crops and they harvested sixteen 90 kilo bags of maize, eight of which they sold for cash, four they used to repay their loan with Z.C.F., and four they retained for consumption. The following season maize yields were affected by the drought and they faced considerable hardship. Although they had prepared the same area of land and acquired two extra bags of fertiliser they only harvested a total of four bags. They planted some millet on *ibala* (flat) land and harvested a total of three 50 kilo bags. Both the maize and millet was retained for consumption. In addition to the poor rains, Jestone complained that inputs had been delivered late and that he would undoubtedly have reaped more had they been applied in good time.<sup>1</sup> Febby (D14 Fig 7.1) left Jestone before the 1991-1992 maize harvest but Jestone received help with bringing his crop in from his own sisters and their husbands.

At Nakapepa, the 'village' where Jestone lives, prior to Febby's departure there were five eating groups and a total of twenty-five people (Fig 7.1), following her departure these groups re-formed to become three units (Fig 7.2). Figures 7.1 and 7.2 represent their positioning of people within these kitchen units. Each of these groups both before and following their regrouping looked after their own affairs and provided their own food and incomes.

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<sup>1</sup>The late delivery of inputs is a common problem.

Fig 7.1 Nakapepa before Febby's departure

# Generations

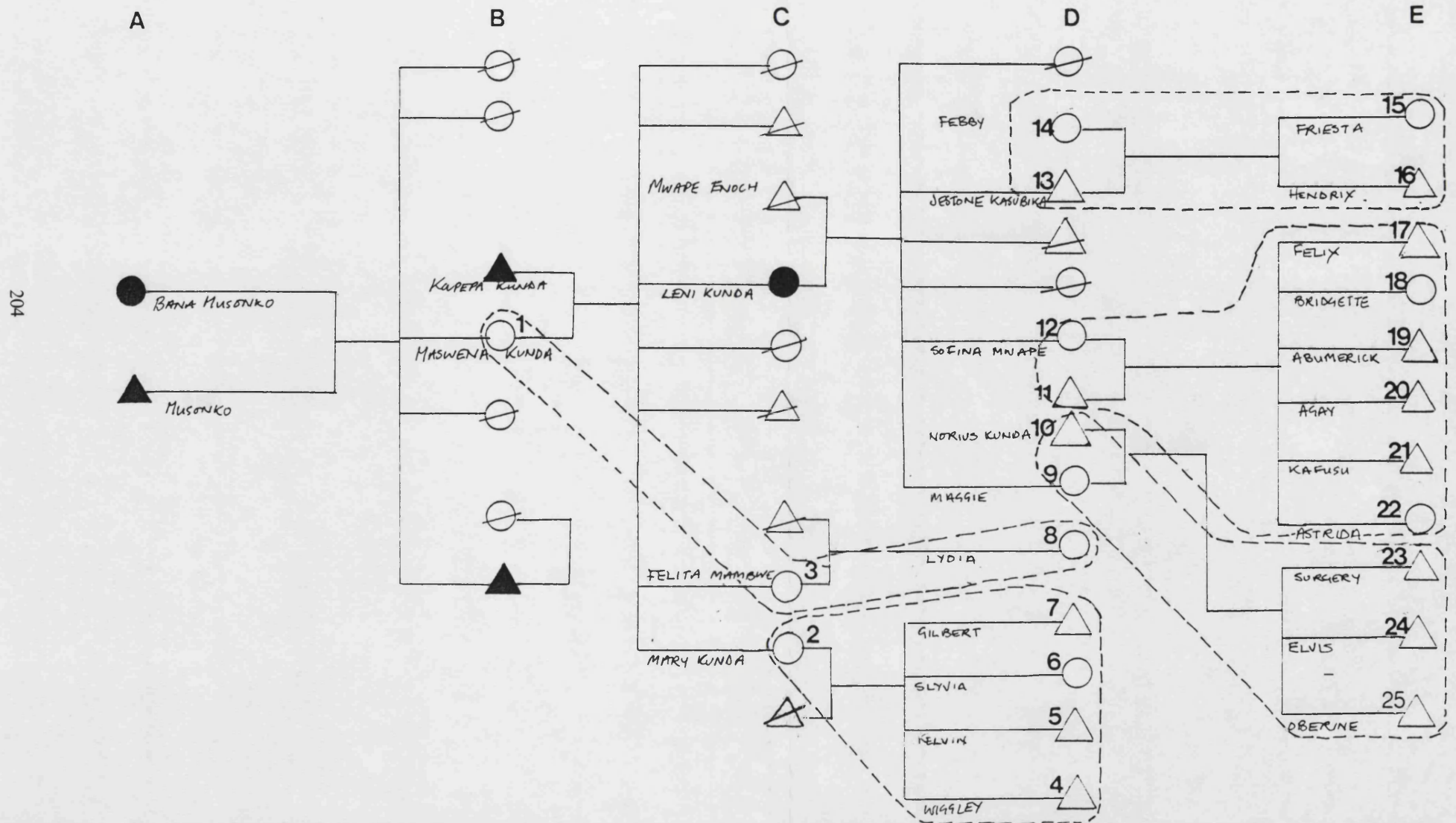
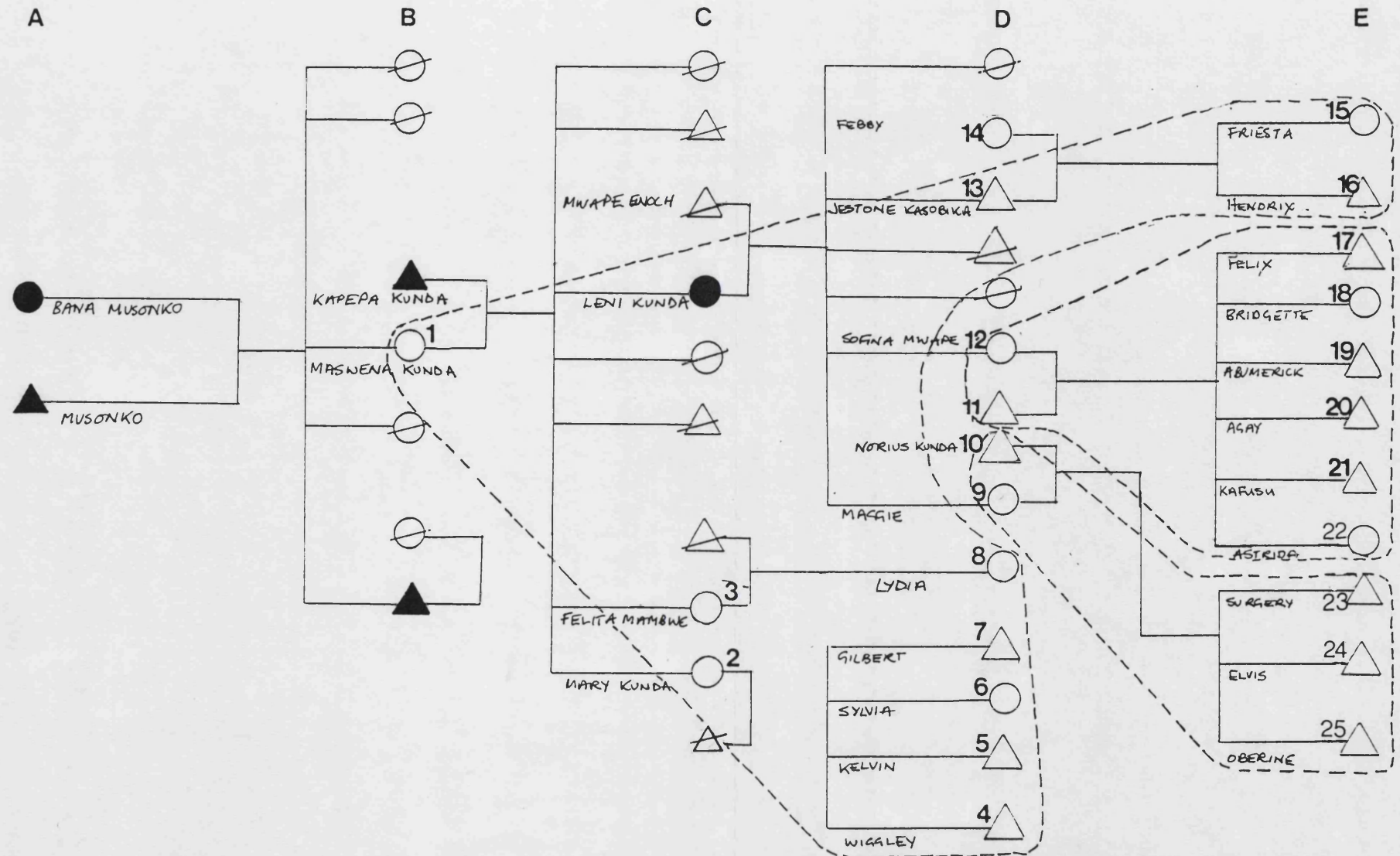




Fig 7. 2 Nakapepa following Febby's departure

# Generations



The drought created problems for everyone and two of these kitchen groups merged to support each other and share what little they had. The reorganisation of eating groups following the drought and Febby's departure led to Jestone eating with his mother's sisters and maternal grandmother. Such arrangements were quite fluid. Jestone would eat from their kitchen and supply grain and relish whenever possible. No prior arrangements would be made. Jestone would simply eat if and when there was food prepared by either of his aunts. This arrangement was clearly not ideal and they faced food shortages throughout the year. Negotiating the return of Febby was clearly in everyone's interests. Jestone and his aunts Felita and Mary (both divorcees) joined forces to try to provide enough food for a total of seven children and their elderly grandmother.<sup>2</sup> Mary faced the problem of harvesting very little maize, in total only a few baskets. She was fortunate, however, as she had not applied for a loan, relying on the belief that the previous season's soil-based residual fertiliser would suffice. She may not have had much maize but she had no debt. Felita was left with an outstanding debt but had harvested five bags of maize, so at least they had some staple food between them, a total of approximately nine bags. Both Felita and Mary relied, whenever possible, on a mixture of income generating strategies in addition to the cultivation of crops. With little stored and a total of eleven people to feed the priority was to use their maize for food. In previous seasons they had brewed beer to pay for piece workers to plough *ibala* land, and to purchase household items, as well as for consumption. In the absence of beer sales, the only possible options left to them at the time were to sell their chickens and the bananas that grew in the village.

Jestone is the voluntary health assistant for the Kamena area and is responsible for the distribution of commonly needed drugs, donated monthly by the W.H.O. He received no income for this but would have his transport costs to and from the Boma reimbursed at the hospital. The absence of Febby left Jestone alone in cultivating the land he had assigned for maize planting. His aunts had their own problems in this respect and had not the time nor the 'power' to assist him. In view of his predicament and the fact that he was well respected for distributing drugs and was always willing to assist people in health matters, he received free assistance with his cultivation. In December 1992, he had a total of seventy three people congregated in his fields to help him finish cultivating his one hectare plot. Most of those who came were members of the New Apostolic Church, Jestone's own congregation. A few other

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<sup>2</sup> Maswena Kunda was at the time of fieldwork a rather frail old woman. She even refused to answer survey questions on the grounds that she could not remember what they had cultivated in the previous two seasons.

people from his extended family and a number of unrelated friends also came to assist. For the 1992/93 season he had been allocated a Lima bank loan for the inputs and the labour he needed. Unfortunately he failed to repay the previous loan he had from Z.C.F., but had raised the money to pay the security deposit with Lima bank. Lima Bank had agreed a provision for labour, which Jestone later arranged to transfer into a provision for extra fertiliser, arguing that he had ploughed more land than he had intended without having to hire piece workers and therefore needed additional fertiliser.

He was optimistic that he could clear both this loan and an outstanding balance that remained with Z.C.F. from crop sales following the harvest. Ploughing and preparing the land is certainly important but Jestone faced further problems. Planting seed, applying fertiliser, and the important task of weeding are all time consuming and labour intensive activities. In an attempt to accomplish these tasks Jestone worked alone for a period but finally managed to get his wife to agree to returning the children to Kamena. His two children were eleven years and seven years old and consequently could not manage a lot of heavy agricultural work. They did however help with planting, fertiliser application, and weeding tasks. They were sometimes reluctant to do so preferring instead to be off and about with their cousins and friends. They would, however, help when pressed. The children became, in practice, the collective responsibility of Nakapepa and were fed from any of Jestone's aunts or sisters kitchens. The arrangement he had with his family was such that he would provide for them in any way he could and in return they would feed him and help provide for his children Hendrix and Friesta. In view of the circumstances it became clear to Jestone that he would not be able to use all the fertiliser he had. Even with the help of his children he could not hope to prepare one full hectare.

He explained that he applied for the additional loan to pay for labour to plough his land, but decided that given his own labour circumstances, and the likelihood that he would not be able to plant and harvest a full hectare, it was in his best interests to receive fertiliser. I realised later that to have the fertiliser was important as it is seen by local people as a resource that could be distributed amongst one's kin and affinal networks. Jestone's maternal aunts, Felita and Mary (C2 and C3 Figs 7.1 and 7.2) received fertiliser for their own fields in this way. By providing what he could, in this case fertiliser, Jestone was able to maintain his status as a provider in the family. He had suffered quite badly from the previous seasons poor crop yields, and sometimes expressed how important it was for him to improve his production for the new season in terms of what it would enable him to do both socially and

materially. He aspired to be thought of as a generous and important person who could provide for many people. In addition giving fertiliser was his contribution during a difficult period when the family pooled their resources.

Throughout the period of research his wages and other resources were redistributed amongst his family. This certainly helped him in asserting his own position within his group, albeit in a limited way. Despite Jestone's willingness to share his own income with his family, who under other circumstances would operate their ventures in a relatively independent way, there was no evidence to suggest that directly reciprocal arrangements were made between them. Jestone did what he thought was expected of him and fulfilled his obligation to his mother's sisters. Although from time to time he would complain when his family made claims on his resources he could make claims against theirs.

The labour needed for cultivation was not provided by the family collectively, they were responsible for their own needs. Despite this, the various groups within Nakapepa would come together for the harvest, finishing one plot then moving on to another. Unable to plant, fertilise, and adequately weed his plot, due to a shortage of labour Jestone experienced a second poor harvest. Yields for 1993 were much higher than people had expected, but without careful management and access to labour, hybrid maize is a difficult crop to grow consistently well. Despite considerable help with tillage, Jestone's yields were badly affected. He in fact harvested only fourteen bags of maize, ten of which he needed to repay his loans, the remaining four were not enough to feed him and his family for more than five months and there was no surplus to sell. At the time of the harvest his wife, Febby, had returned and he then had extra responsibilities for clothing and providing for her. In addition they had a new member of their family, Gift, and needed soap and clothing for the baby.

### **Analysis; Strategies of Co-operation and the Acquisition of Fertiliser**

In this section I will focus attention on the way in which fertiliser becomes valued for reasons other than its immediate use on the land. Fertiliser is redistributed primarily through networks of trustworthy social relations (kin, affines and friends). While the exchanges that take place to secure fertiliser are crucial to livelihoods, they are also important social encounters within which these relationships are renegotiated, realigned or affirmed. The significance of fertiliser lies, then, in the many values assigned to it.

A number of interesting issues are also revealed in the preceding case material. The crucial production variable for those at Nakapepa is labour. The problem was exacerbated for Jestone due to the departure of his wife. The contribution that family labour makes in fulfilling important agricultural tasks cannot be overlooked as these social relations are central to the labour supply. Despite having received assistance in the first stage of land preparation, through the church network and with the help of others, not adequately accomplishing the other no less significant tasks of planting, weeding, and fertiliser application created further problems. Febby's absence meant she did not make a contribution to this work, a contribution that would have made a significant difference to the course of events. In addition, during her absence there were few if any vegetable crops grown and this did not help as relish therefore had to be purchased. Jestone was lucky to have had his children with him for a good part of the year, he certainly enjoyed their company and they did help in their small way with planting and fertiliser application. The significant contribution that children make is hard to quantify but in extreme cases such as this it becomes clear how important their labour may be. In addition to the work they carried out in the fields they were also enlisted by their aunts to collect water, firewood, and to run errands.<sup>3</sup>

The way in which the eating groups of Nakapepa were reorganised illustrates that 'households' are by no means stable units (see Figs 7.1 and 7.2). The collaboration between Jestone and his mother's sisters clearly made sense in the context of food shortages. The various contributions made by the members of the new residential grouping, were collectively more secure than they would have been operating independently. Joining forces in this way further illustrates the co-operation that takes place between kin. Co-operation is clearly important and a sense of both duty and desire to assist ones own family and by extension others often pervades the organisational strategies of both agricultural production and income generation. Interestingly co-operation at this level is more frequent at the point of consumption rather than at the point of distribution and production. This is commonly the case and relates to the provision for immediate needs rather than forecasted or projected needs. In the context of limited resources adjustments and co-operation of this sort are central to the livelihood strategies of farmers as these strategies are processual, open ended and predicated by a degree of reliance on kin relations. Through his church network Jestone was able to enlist the help of the congregation for ploughing tasks. I

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<sup>3</sup>For an interesting discussion that illustrates the problems of quantifying the contribution children make see P. Reynolds (1991), *Dance Civet Cat, Child Labour in the Zambezi Valley*.

was told that they would assist any loyal member of the congregation in these productive activities (see Appendix 2). The content of these relationships are differentiated from those with kin by the extent to which assistance is made during production or consumption periods. The congregation work groups may be considered a good network for production tasks but later in the season the church groups would become fragmented, with individual members being primarily concerned to acquire food stuffs for their own immediate kin groups. .

For two seasons running Jestone's maize yields fell short of his expectations. The drought was an unforeseeable natural disaster, which for some was partially avoided by early planting, the precise timing of fertiliser application and weeding. Unfortunately not many people were so advantaged. Recovery from such a catastrophe requires skilful re-organisation of production strategies. Jestone completed his ploughing and received a loan for fertiliser, he could not, however, overcome the problem of his labour shortage. Consequently for the second year running his crop did poorly. Jestone's predicament clearly shows how potentially vulnerable people become when involved in hybrid maize cultivation. The successful production of maize is dependant on many factors, and it requires experience and careful management. The fact that financial investments are needed creates huge problems. Although the credit organisations encourage small-scale farmers to take loans, experience for many has shown that it is all too easy to get into debt. Despite the fact that failing to repay loans means that further access to such cash is denied, Jestone and others were not worried or deterred by this. The important issue for many was to get loans regardless, worry about repaying them later, and in the event of default rely on other people with loans who redistributed inputs.<sup>4</sup> It was clearly more important for him to receive fertiliser even if he did not use it on his land, because it enabled him to redistribute it to his family.

The issue of co-operation is relevant to understanding the motivation behind Jestone's act. He informed me that he relied for a period on the support of his aunts, they helped him willingly even if they expressed some concern at how they would manage. He was not directly reciprocating for their assistance but contributing to the on-going welfare of his own village. The welfare of his village was dependent on the co-operation and mutual assistance of the members of the group. I suggest that such mutual support and its organisation are central to understanding local discursive practices which are manifest in different practical contexts, including exchange. The

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<sup>4</sup> Many men find it difficult to receive loans due to their continued problems of debt.

items and services that form part of exchanges are not only symbolic of co-operative links, but an integral part of the contexts of interaction which give meaning to an array of social relations. It is interesting that an item such as fertiliser, which has a specific use value for people, can also come to be valued for its role in the continuity of local discursive practices vis-à-vis kin networks, i.e. in the dialogues and actions that give support and maintenance to accepted idioms of co-operation. These different notions of value are simultaneously operative, and it is for this reason that it becomes difficult, to elicit the significance of local value constructions without reference to the broader discursive practices associated with social relations and livelihoods. The value that fertiliser acquires for Jestone's aunts is considerable, they would after all use it on their own fields, and the cash value equivalent of fertiliser is recognised by all. Fertiliser also became a symbol of Jestone's capacity and willingness to assist them and has therefore an important value for Jestone in terms of the investments he made with respect to his family. These different value notions are underpinned by the different practical contexts within which they are expressed. They are also given substance because of the way in which the discourses of the wider arenas have a degree of relevance in a local context. At this level the credit institutions and the provision of inputs is viewed in terms of the utility of such items and services to support the productive capacity of farmers. This gives support to the value that fertiliser has for soil fertility experienced by people in Kamena. As the fertiliser enters the local arenas, however, it becomes valued for reasons other than its immediate use on the land. There is, then, a fusion of 'discursive horizons' with respect to the value expressions of agricultural products and inputs. There is, then, both continuity and discontinuity in terms of the way in which the different discursive domains become a significant part of the social construction of value with respect to this good. Those 'cultural statements' concerned with the content of particular kin relations, and expressed in acts of co-operation and assistance, are flexible enough to allow aspects of the wider discursive order to become symbolic of local discourse. In this way so called 'macro' criteria or factors (i.e. agricultural inputs and knowledge of their purposes) become meaningful in a local context. To this extent the availability of fertiliser and more generally the credit institutions, and other marketing infrastructure must be seen as a resource that people use to their full social advantage, even if this means, on one level, debt and problems of repayment in the next season.

A summary of the manner in which fertiliser is acquired through formal channels (see Chapter 4) does not provide a full picture of the way in which credit and fertiliser become important local resources. Such a summary is at best a mechanical representation of the organisational structures of credit supply and

distribution. In rural areas there are no apparent rules governing the movement of goods and resources, although certain exchanges (seen as advantageous) ordinarily only take place between kinsfolk. This is particularly the case with exchanges involving fertiliser. There is a great deal of mistrust and anxiety between people when it comes to accumulation, or success in agricultural production (a point I will return to later). This is in part because of locally sanctioned discourses associated with continuity and respect mediated through ancestors and sometimes endorsed through acts and accusations of sorcery. Also in the recent past, given the dictatorial nature of political rhetoric and the existence of wide spread political 'tentacles',<sup>5</sup> people were often suspicious of each others motives and afraid that manifestations of social tension (i.e. disputes) would expose them to public arenas in an extremely unfavourable light. This kind of exposure to public scrutiny could seriously jeopardise the chances of gaining access to amongst other things credit. The existence of hegemonic discourses at the national political level pervade the discourse practices in rural localities, although they are by no means evenly accepted by all. The Jehovah's Witnesses in rural areas often had problems politically and their refusal to demonstrate allegiance to 'The Party' by being party card carriers lead to their subsequent exclusion from various government controlled credit schemes. The difference between rural beliefs and activities, and socio-economic differentiation that is prevalent creates a situation in which people from these different alliances organise their lives with reference to sometimes quite different discursive practices (Jehovah's Witnesses for example). In this way not everyone will use the resources available to them, including knowledge, in the same ways, although there will be a degree of conformity as circumstances, on a social, material, and discursive level may be similar.

Fertiliser is an expensive item (see Chapter 4), and its redistribution between kin is significant as it provides one way in which farmers invest their income in maintaining or advancing their position within established social networks. Berry (1993:159) makes a similar point in respect of many forms of resource redistribution. In this way once fertiliser enters these networks, its potential values may shift discursively from being predominantly associated with the discourses of commercial production (a 'statement' or symbol of commoditised agriculture) to being allied to local discourses associated with maintaining and supporting kin and other co-operative social networks (symbol of the co-operative social ethos). The negotiations

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<sup>5</sup>The organisational structure of the United National Independence Party (U.N.I.P.), extended into the rural areas through the ward, village and section committees, see Ollawa (1979:263).



that take place between kin members for the provision of fertiliser often involve the return of maize at harvest time. Such arrangements became more common place during the 1993 planting season, in response to the cessation of cash fertiliser sales from the Marketing Unions and the credit organisations in 1993. Strictly speaking, redistributing fertiliser and not using it on your own land is 'illegal'.<sup>6</sup> For this reason resource flows that include fertiliser are restricted to kin or close friends and trusted people. In addition to fertiliser being distributed amongst kin networks and transferred to others, loans can be acquired collectively. This type of co-operation pervades many activities. Paying the security deposit or part of one for someone else eligible for a loan is common practice. Fertiliser is given in lieu of the financial support provided. The other option is to raise money in various ways and then buy inputs from other people. Even purchases of this sort are restricted to close kin or trusted others, many people expressed unease at my questions concerning the origins of their fertiliser. Although there is a sense of delayed reciprocity to these transfers, reciprocal arrangements are not necessarily fixed and may be modified at a later date. Poor crop performance testifies to the need for fertiliser, as does its rapid redistribution amongst kin based resource networks. As fertiliser becomes a discursive symbol of the co-operative nature of these relations it becomes identified with its potentiality in social terms and acquires a social value. People's social identities are also intricately related to these transfers. Being able to distribute fertiliser affirms the social position of the donor. Jestone's own prestige and status as a provider was reasserted and maintained through his resource donations. The 'world of the market' which includes the credit schemes, inputs, and the possibility to sell through existing infrastructure become an important source of valued resources. These resources not only have a value for soil fertility and in crop production but become part of the on-going negotiation of livelihoods and social relations as they are distributed in a local context. Discursive practices firmly embedded in the wider arenas are linked to rural areas in a multitude of ways. Through the provision and subsequent redistribution of fertiliser these links become less clear cut as discursive practices are reinterpreted to suit local priorities and expectations. I suggest that this reinterpretation of resources and practices by local people is best understood by careful consideration of the issues of agency and practice for specific contexts. I do not want to imply that the issue of human agency presupposes strategic intent on the part of individuals and groups of actors. Often the outcomes of such redistributive

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<sup>6</sup>On opening an account with the credit organisation one enters into a contract with them, part of which stipulates the use of fertiliser for the area of land that was ear marked in the application. P. Ngosa, Z.C.F. representative (fieldnotes 22/02/93).

practices have no predictable, direct and immediate consequence for the donor. The unpredictable nature of labour arrangements, the movement of people, the poor rainfall, infrastructural irregularities and agricultural outcomes generally may change the strategies, plans and possibilities of people and it is as the season unfolds that strategies are modified and/or re negotiated. People know from experience that collaboration and co-operation provides better food security, and despite that fact that assistance is most often forth coming at the point of consumption, people's strategies include concerns for the on-going welfare of their kin networks. Further examples of the importance of collaboration and co-operation, with particular reference women's networks can be found in works by Pottier (1988: Ch.7), Sharpe (1987, 1990) and Moore and Vaughan (1992).

### **Further Co-operative Ventures**

Co-operation is clearly an important issue in Zambia as a whole.<sup>7</sup> This section, however, is concerned with co-operation at a local level and between kin; co-operation that relies on a given collective or network of social relations (the kind of co-operation that perhaps Kaunda had in mind during the institutionalisation of village social values). Mitchell (1986;74) states that 'social actors always create their own limited personal communities which provide them with a meaningful framework within which they can solve the problems of their day to day existence'. Co-operation, is central to our understanding of such 'personal communities' or networks and the day to day problem solving of individuals. Jestone Kasubika drew on his own networks to seek the assistance he needed in cultivating his land. In Chapter 5, Joel Kafusu provided beer for people who came to cut his *iconde*, those who came are part of Joel's own co-operative networks. These co-operative networks are not clearly defined, but include a range of kin, clan and friendship based social contacts. Such networks are also overlapping and it is possible to have access to a number of networks. It is through co-operative acts themselves that these networks are created and maintained, and although co-operation and a sense of it is dependant upon such action a sense of mutual assistance is held in esteem as a conceptual ideal by people

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<sup>7</sup>There are a large number of officially sanctioned co-operatives at a district, provincial and national level. This is a legacy of Kaunda's governance and the philosophy of 'Zambian Humanism', which promoted the virtues of co-operation and village life (see for example, Kaunda (1966) *A Humanist In Africa: Letters to Collin M. Morris*). In institutionalising co-operation the state tries to incorporate non-kin by imposing kin-like co-operation on non-kin. Zambia is not alone on the African continent for politically promoting such socialist ideals, Tanzania and the 'Ujaama' village development programme shows similarity with the Zambian case, (see for example, Hyden 1980).

in Kamena. Both social networks and the range of co-operative social practices that exist are constitutive of discursive practices but also shape and reshape the discourses that provide meaning for such collaborations. The redistribution of vital resources through exchange provides people with the things they need, but such contexts are also important arenas of social action and interaction that play an important role in consolidating social networks. The bonds of mutual assistance that exists in these contexts are perhaps less morally binding when between people who are not matrilineally related. This is clearly so in the context of fertiliser redistribution and in the case of meeting the claims of kin. Certain co-operative arenas and the discursive practices that shape and support them, then, take precedence over others.

Co-operation between people manifests itself in many ways (the organisation of labour in agriculture and beer brewing, for example, were examined in Chapters 5 and 6). Different kinds of activity or work require different kinds of co-operation and assistance. Women who co-operate in beer brewing, for example, will not hire the services of others to collect water or firewood, they rely on the co-operation of their own close female kin and husbands (see Richards 1939:102 and Chapter 6 above). In ploughing and other agricultural work, co-operative assistance is achieved primarily with the help of one's own 'eating group' or household. Any additional labour is sought through other kinds of co-operative networks, which may be promoted through the provision of cash, beer or food for work. In Kamena there are also a number of women's agricultural clubs<sup>8</sup> which operate a number of co-operative ventures. These include, brewing beer, and producing maize. In the latter case the women help each other prepare separate fields but apply for a single loan, they then divide up the inputs and come harvest pool the maize to repay the loan. This practice is institutionally sanctioned (at least co-ordinated by the extension services) and is primarily targeted at those women considered 'poorest of the poor',<sup>9</sup> mostly single mothers, and widows. Establishing exactly who belongs in these categories is difficult and consequently there were many married and well fed women in the clubs. One of these clubs had in the past also received a loan for a grinding mill which had been over worked and consequently broke down. Church working parties and labour for beer parties (*imbile*) are also important contexts of co-operation. Other areas of co-operation include, the timing of beer parties to avoid clashing with other brewers, in some areas there are

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<sup>8</sup>These clubs are all run and organised by women who said that they did not intend to exclude men, however, the men did not show much interest in becoming involved.

<sup>9</sup>The language of Agricultural Extension used to identify resource poor households. Maurice Mapani, fieldnotes 1/10/92.

even brewing clubs that organise their own brewing rotas.<sup>10</sup> Within the context of resource distribution the beer drums and sometimes the fermented mixture (*itimba*) are also shared. In producing large quantities of beer, for example, for a *sundown* as many as six or seven drums may be needed. These drums circulate between the various women brewers who need not necessarily be kin, however, this is an important co-operative network for them.

Between women there is a considerable amount of co-operation in work, see for example, Richards (1939), Watson (1958), Pottier (1988), and Moore and Vaughan (1992). Such co-operation may be frequent and of a domestic nature as between networks of related women. As with sisters, mothers, and daughters who will look after each others children and help with food preparation tasks like shelling beans or maize. Co-operation may also be more formally organised, as are the work parties of the various women's clubs, and church congregations. Co-operation of this sort between men is not absent entirely but is much less visible. Men clearly co-operate at work parties organised through the provision of beer, and also through the church networks, but they don't actively help each other with domestic work. In the context of exchange, however, they assist each other, or co-operate in the redistribution of needed goods. It is the same for women, although in the purchase or procurement of food items they are often more vocal in their negotiations. These differentiated forms of co-operation are informed by different sets of discursive practices that in the main are associated with 'traditional' divisions of labour and the different arenas of socialisation. Such socialisation practices are more diffuse than they perhaps were in the past, but nevertheless the fact that men and women become involved with different co-operative ventures suggests that differently constructed gender discourses are central to understanding co-operation.<sup>11</sup>

Traders who travel to the rural areas to buy produce may not have relatives in the area they visit but nevertheless they will always be given a place to sleep and may partake in the meals of the household where they reside. One possible way of understanding such hospitality is to consider what may be gained in social terms by such charitable action. Whether or not such actions are directly reciprocated is of little importance, what seems to be central is the possibility of reciprocity to others. It was explained to me that hospitality towards outsiders to an area is simply a way of

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<sup>10</sup>Patrick Mulebwa, fieldnotes 3/2/93.

<sup>11</sup>For a detailed description of the principles of socialisation and the changing arenas of action for men and women in Chief Chibale, see Seur (1992: Ch.11).

showing respect to those people. Perhaps at a future time a 'brother' or 'sister' may find themselves in another part of the country to where the visitors belong, they too will be shown similar hospitality. When travelling the distances covered are often great, and at times people will spend the night on the roadside. In rural areas hospitality is always extended to visitor and providing shelter and perhaps food are the norm. The extension of hospitality, respect and demonstrations of co-operation to visitors has been suggested as important features of 'an African welfare system', that is centred on seeing people as the most important of resources.<sup>12</sup>

To suggest that an ethos of co-operation or mutual assistance is an important aspect of social and economic life is not too suggest that life in Kamena is idyllic and trouble free, simply that co-operation is an ideal. The possible problems arising from non-conformity act as powerful sanctions against poor co-operation. The difficulties and demands of agricultural production and income generation are very often overcome through co-operation, but the necessity to do so does not exclude the possibility that there may at times be conflict. Continuity and discontinuity are central features of co-operative arrangements and the organisation of livelihoods, in fact conflicts actually reveal the principles of co-operation. During the period of fieldwork there were a number of local disputes and conflicts. These included disputes over the allocation of land, accusations of adultery, theft and a number of witch craft related accusations. Charges of sorcery and witch craft are serious and viewed by many as a last resort. They very often become manifest when co-operation between people breaks down and are normally part of an on-going situation of conflict that often includes a whole range of different complaints. I will examine the discontinuities with respect to co-operation below. First let me return to the case of Jestone Kasubika to consider the active content of his exchanges for maize.

### **The Social Dynamics of Exchange, Jestone Kasubika and Maize Accumulation**

Social relations are central to the organisation of agricultural production, they are also significant in shaping the outcome of critical exchanges, as the following case illustrates.

On one of my trips to town I agreed to bring Jestone a 25 kilo bag of salt

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<sup>12</sup>Conversations with S. Kandela Tunkanya, 12/10/94, 3/2/95.

worth K3350. He intended to trade this for maize in order to overcome his poor harvest. He accumulated a total of two 90 kilo bags of maize through exchanges involving salt.<sup>13</sup> Jestone held a virtual monopoly in these and was the only person for that season who exchanged salt in any quantity. There were, however, a number of others who throughout year had brought goods from town with a view to selling them for cash.<sup>14</sup> His trades were not restricted to kin, any one from the area who happened to pass his home or who had heard that he had salt, eagerly anticipated acquiring it. Often they would receive their salt and then Jestone would receive the deferred payment in maize when people next passed. Children were usually enlisted to take the maize to Jestone's home. Children were always used for such errands being obliged to help their older family members; co-operation is instilled at an early age. Jestone had no trouble in disposing of the salt, it being a scarce good in the area. Exchanges of goods often operate in this way, there being a good deal of trust between people in such transactions. What is more, ensuring that the quantities exchanged are equal to the amounts agreed is dependant on the measures used. Old fertiliser sacks are the most commonly used containers for grains, they are highly prized, and although may be lent from time to time were invariably returned. Maize is measured into an appropriate container before being transferred to the sack. These measures are standardised by the use of five litre oil cans. Oil changes on my vehicle were eagerly anticipated and people would order the empty tins in advance.

The two bags of maize that Jestone received fell short of the amount he expected to raise. He said that the shortage was due to having given too much *imbasela* (the practice of giving an extra portion freely to show good will), and not being able to refuse the claims of some of his in laws. Jestone was not too concerned

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<sup>13</sup>Salt is an interesting 'commodity' and has a particular significance as a valued item. Richards, for example, comments that salt for the Bemba is a preferred item in exchange because 'women often want salt in a hurry and they agree to sell you what you want' (1939:225). Moore and Vaughan also make reference to the importance of salt as a preferred commodity in exchange. 'Women's exchange and barter networks are extensive, and, in some parts of the [Northern] province, salt is a more acceptable form of currency than cash' (1994:193). People really want salt and will 'pay' highly for it. At harvest time when maize is most plentiful, women are more than willing to exchange their maize for salt. Despite the high costs of salt people will give large quantities of maize in exchange for it as it is such a prized item. The financial costs of salt and maize do not affect their barter value and when we take cash out of the equation and consider how abundant maize is, the 'price' for salt seems more reasonable.

<sup>14</sup>During the first six months of research there was a bus service to Serenje Boma, however, it was requisitioned during a local election campaign in November 1992. It was later taken out of service and was partly 'cannibalised' to keep a sister bus from the United Bus Company of Zambia on the road. As the transport situation deteriorated some of the people who sold goods bought in the market at Serenje either stopped trading or failed to make sales as they increased the price of their items beyond what people considered a reasonable price.

that he had not raised more at least he had something, and he had helped others as far as he could.

Interested in the course of events and Jestone's strategy in particular, I sat together with him to work out how much maize he could raise through exchange and what this would be worth in cash terms. For some time he watched as I made out the various calculations on paper. I already knew what a 500ml cup of salt was worth in exchange for maize, the going exchange rate was one *namiyombo* (500ml cup, a standard measure and also used in selling beer) for two five litre tins of maize. Relative to the cash value of maize, salt is an inexpensive item. If we compare the established cash value of these two commodities (salt bought at the market is worth K100 per cup and two five litre tins of maize is worth @K500) then those who receive salt clearly lose out. I had often seen *imbasela* given, so naturally I wanted to include this aspect in my own calculations, after some time I sought support from Jestone for my calculations. He said that he thought they were fine but he could not say whether or not I was right, nor was he going to predict how much maize he would collect in total. 'We'll have to wait and see what happens' was his considered advice. It became clear that the unpredictable factor was the amount of *imbasela* given and how this related to the possible claims of kin. To try to calculate how much one could raise was a futile venture. The basis for such exchanges were not only worked out in a fixed way, using standard measures. They were also subject to the dictates of the relationship between the two parties. Evaluating the social dimensions of exchange requires repositioning the cash or financial considerations. These values remain significant, peoples livelihoods are at stake, but it became clear immediately that there was no sense in making evaluations based on cash equivalents. Jestone's strategy then included a sense of the unintended outcomes of his venture. He was not prepared to try to calculate his gains in advance, he would adjust if at all possible the outcome of his strategy as it unfolded.

*Imbasela* is generally given by both parties, how much is given depends not only on the classificatory nature of relationships,<sup>15</sup> but on the specific internal dynamics of ones relationship with another individual or their representative. For example, when Jestone gave salt to Enika Chibuye the daughter of his mother-in-law's mother's sister (MZD) (C10 Fig 7.3) he was obliged to give a large *imbasela*. Such affinal ties are important generally but in Jestone's case and in view of the

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<sup>15</sup>By classificatory I mean, the labels we may attach to patterns of relationships as a form of 'linguistic short hand', for example, an in-law, maternally related, or related through clanship et cetera.

negotiations that took place on his behalf between the two families he had little choice but to honour his affines. He was obliged to his in-laws, but wanted also to show his respect, so he gave generously. His own grain needs, were still pressing so despite his desire to assist he was still not satisfied with the gains he made through these exchanges. Jestone commented that the two bags he had raised were not enough and he would still need to get hold of at least two more bags. His position within his own family and renewed status in marriage meant that there were high expectations of him.<sup>16</sup> His obligation to feed and clothe particularly his wife but naturally his children at this time was being put to the test. The poor harvests and escalating costs could not admonish Jestone of his responsibilities and the need to continue to show respect for his in-laws.

Investing a small sum in dried fish, from Luapula Province to the north, but bought at the market place in Serenje, Jestone continued his exchanges. His fish raised a further two bags of maize. In total he now had eight bags, which was considered enough for their food consumption, for some sales, and possibly their beer needs. Not surprisingly *imbasela* became an issue with the fish, but was not so problematic as it was with salt. The fish were approximately ten to fifteen centimetres long and it was not possible to give *imbasela* generously to everyone. The item exchanged does have a bearing on the material outcome of some exchanges, but even so the social dynamics remain at least in principle the same.

Jestone Kasubika clearly improved his position and attained the eight bags of maize he wanted for that season. He had consolidated his relationships with his immediate kin and re-affirmed those with his in-laws. The above description and discussion of just one person's struggle to meet the demands of his family, his pocket and his kitchen, show how important it is to consider the contexts of exchange in a way that encompasses more than simply the exchanges themselves. The wider contexts of such practices, and the discursive arenas that inform them are central to understanding Jestone's strategy. Viewed in this way the goods themselves become multiply constructed 'statements' that acquire socially significant values as symbols of co-operation, respect, and obligation, whilst remaining vital to food security or income strategies. All parties involved in transactions will retain, to differing degrees, an appreciation of these various value 'statements', but priority will be accorded to one or other value, depending on the context and nature of the participants

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<sup>16</sup>Following school in Kabwe, Jestone had worked as a depot clerk. When he had money he said that he would at times send some home for his mother.



relationship to each other.

### **Analysis; Obligation, Respect and Generosity**

Observations of transactions as they took place in Kamena, were animated and often enjoyable experiences. Both parties involved would consider their own needs and state their own position strongly. This in itself however would not distract the parties involved from maintaining their objectives in an exchange, nor would this context necessarily displace the respect that exists between people. The manner in which networks are constructed through clanship and family ties are such that few transactions social or otherwise would be devoid of the fundamental aspects of respect. Although such situations become arenas in which respect and status are negotiated; in most cases the 'discursive games' played by the transactors, which draw on local idioms of respect, concern negotiating the terms of an exchange. As an integral part of such social transactions respect and the terms of respect used may in themselves become the tools with which one or either party establishes what we may call a 'price'. Naturally it depends on who is involved with who in a given transaction, whether they are male or female, young or old, related in various ways through kinship, and whether or not they belong the same networks of co-operation in different contexts.

*Imbasela* is an important condition of barter type exchange practice. It is not confined to exchange in Kamena but is more widely practised in market places and private exchange contexts throughout Zambia. How *imbasela* is given and how much, is in itself a 'statement' concerned with the content of the relationship between the two parties in a transaction. Maintaining good relations is as important in any transaction as is making a profit, it is frequently possible to profit mutually in social terms, and in so shift the emphasis of a goods value from being materially grounded to being a symbol of social conciliation or perhaps even dislocation. Claims for assistance are met or contested during such encounters and form an integral part of the constant affirmations of social position and identity. Social relations are not a given or fixed entity but are subject to these and other contexts of negotiation, accommodation and modification. Such interactive episodes are a particularly significant part of all transactions, and the material goods are significant to the relations involved because they may be concerned with, as Douglas and Isherwood state with communicating messages, with symbolic content and with social value (1978:62). The language and outcomes of such exchanges become central to understanding the social relations

involved. These can be interpreted by reference to the discursive practices that are partially revealed during such encounters.

Notions of respect or *umuchinshi* and a co-operative ethos pervade the contexts of exchange and give a framework to the dialogues that take place. In relation to beer, for example as Chapter 5 and 6 highlight, there are many contexts in which idioms of respect become central. In all contexts of social interaction trouble is taken by individuals to address other people correctly. There are numerous greetings, for example, that make reference to whether a person is working (*mabombeni*), sitting (*mwaikalen*), or visiting (*mwatandaleni*). These are in turn given content further by reference to a persons age, gender, political standing, and kin relationships. Forms of address may either be expressed directly in speech or through a series of body gestures, with increasing clapping of hands and lowering of the body to signify respect. They are also symbolically expressed through 'things' as they are in contexts of exchange. To evaluate these discursive traces requires making the contexts of their emergence central to research and analysis.

One example of how terms of respect may be seen as discursive mediators in a transaction is in the use of the term *bamudala* (meaning; old man, or big man, or denoting that the other has senior status in age or social standing). It is often heard in conversations between men, in both formal and informal situations. An older man may use it in endearing terms to someone who is clearly junior, as a means by which he can achieve certain ends, perhaps a good 'price' or bargain, but also to achieve a sense of mutual amiability, as for example when trying to refuse a claim of a younger nephew. Similarly, *bawish* is another term that is used in respect, it means simply that one has children. A father-in-law may be addressed as *bapongoshi*, meaning 'in-law' and a brother-in-law is referred to as *mulamo* meaning 'brother/sister in-law. Typical comments would often include the terms of address as well as the elements of negotiation. For example, '*napapata bapongoshi, bamudala, batata, umpeleniko amataba*', meaning 'please father-in-law, old man, father, give me maize'. A mother-in-law would not be addressed with the equivalent terms, it would, for example, be insulting and presumptuous to call her *mayo* or mother. All these dialogues form part of the negotiations that take place in a transaction. Such interplay, is not confined to people who know each other intimately through friendship, or kinship. It also takes place between two strangers if conversation or negotiation takes that course as in the context of market vendors and their transactions with customers.

The various ways in which respect is expressed are clearly influenced by the

relationship of the parties in question. An in-law, particularly a mother-in-law or her maternal sisters are ideally shown a great deal of respect by a son-in-law. Jestone who, in Chapter 5, displayed discomfort at drinking in the presence of his mother-in-law, revealed in his behaviour the importance of avoiding her whilst eating and drinking. The situation is somewhat different between male in-laws. No avoidances are practised and the two may drink and eat together. This reflects a continuity with regard to the tradition of divided male and female social arenas. The *nsaka*, the open shelters used for eating, drinking and socialising are thought of as the preserve of men. Although this is by no means rigidly adhered to, men and women often now share the same social space, the *nsaka* and the *chikeni* or kitchen are thought of as spatially significant arenas in which boys and girls receive gender specific socialisation. Food prepared in the kitchen is brought to the male members of a household in the *nsaka*, women will very often eat in the *chikeni*. The size and composition of many family eating groups are very often small enough for it to be practical and convenient for a husband to eat with his wife and children. Where uxori-local marriage arrangements are practised the men and women of the group maintain these socio-spatial gender divisions until it is deemed suitable to relax them. With the arrival of visitors these practices of separation with respect to eating are sometimes temporarily restored in order to show respect to the guests.<sup>17</sup>

The relationship between men and women is often mediated by a degree of respect and manifest in the case of female in-laws in avoidances which are exaggerated in public. Avoidances between married women and unmarried men are also common place. They are less well observed though, and men may, without causing offence, show their respect for unrelated women with children by referring to them as *mayo* or mother. Equally women show men respect, and will only approach a group of seated men by first crouching down and clapping quietly to get their attention. The same practice is used by younger people when addressing or approaching their seniors. Seniority in terms of age is an important criteria for establishing respect. Terms of address used in greetings often refer to a person's seniority, for example, *bamudala* meaning old man, or *bashikulu* and *bambwia* meaning grandfather and grandmother respectively. Having children gives both men and women status and those who have them are therefore shown respect, hence the use of the term *bawish* (with child). A man with no children is considered a 'poor man'. Amongst the younger generation there was a fear expressed that a great calamity in life would be to die without having had children. It is said if this happens

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<sup>17</sup>For further discussion, see Seur 1992, pp 227-237.

to a woman she will be buried with a piece of charcoal up her anus (symbolising the unborn child).

In addition to the above a person is given respect as a result of their status in the community. This in itself is manifest in a number of ways including the above; age and having children. A person's status in the community, by virtue of their political position (party political membership or through the office of the Chief), their employment status, income security and in terms of material possessions including clothes all contribute to evaluations of a persons status. In material terms few people in Kamena have expensive material possessions, although a number of people had tape cassette players and radios. Finding the money to pay for batteries, however, was always a problem.

There were less than a handful of people who owned oxen, not surprisingly these few men were of some standing, one being the local M.M.D. chairman, another a *filolo* and the third the biggest local farmer and a former works foreman employed by F.F. Christien and Company (Southern Rhodesian Branch) who surveyed the area around Kamena in the 1960's.<sup>18</sup> Only a few people owned wheel barrows or bicycles, these being very expensive and sought after items. These items would be hired out following the harvest when people needed to transport their maize to the depot for sale. A few local products such as well smithed axes or other tools were prized items, but generally ownership of such things is interpreted by others in a less significant way to bicycles and the like, every adult male owns an axe for example, but some may be admired for their quality.

To illustrate further the strategic importance of social relations I will continue the discussion by drawing attention to the importance of claims. Not fulfilling certain social obligations and meeting the expectations of one's networks can lead to social tension that are manifest in a number of ways.

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<sup>18</sup>F.F. Christien and Company were sub contracted by the Anglo-American Corporation to carry out survey work to mine and sell mica. Mica sales receipts of F.F. Christien and Company, 8/9/64.

## Social Relations; Good and Bad

In Kamena and rural areas in general, people are related to a large number of other people. The clan networks are extensive and not confined to the immediate local, they extend throughout Chief Chibale, and further afield. According to Munday (1940:314) and Whitely (1951:37) there are approximately thirty Lala clans, (Appendix 3 provides a list of the Lala clans in Kamena). People belong to the clans of their mothers, and those who belong to the same clan regard each other as brothers and sisters if of similar age, and as mothers and fathers if there is a large age difference. This is the case even though there may be no direct blood relationship between the two parties. Clanship and the changing contexts of common residence provide a degree of collective or shared history for people in Kamena. Such familiarity underpins many social contexts and people are aware of their relationships with others and the most suitable way to behave in their presence.

There is also an element of trust between people. This is in part born of personal familiarity and in part, from sense of duty, obligation and a co-operative ethos that are ever present themes in contexts of social interaction. If we consider those exchanges common place at harvest time, notably to acquire maize, it becomes clear that although the overriding objective of the 'vendor' may be to increase the number of bags he or she has available for sale to the depot, it is not done so at the expense of existing relationships. *Imbasela* illustrates the way in which local discourse practices become mediating factors during these encounters, providing a least some shared 'territory' within which to negotiate. At times there is a tension between various competing domains of discourse such that one or other may be stronger. For example, the discourse practices that prioritise maize acquisition (local livelihood needs and the expectations of the wider order to accumulate), may at times conflict with the need to maintain stable social relations, resulting in practice, in a dilemma or even loss for the vendor.

Jestone Kasubika once said in response to my concerns with the poorly ripening maize, "yes its a problem but still people can go to a neighbour or relative to say, 'help me, I will come and give you when my maize will be ripe,'"<sup>19</sup> meaning when faced with difficulties it is possible to claim resources or assistance from neighbours or kin. Such claims are essentially requests for assistance, they may be demands for material resources including cash and goods or demands for the services or skills of

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<sup>19</sup>Fieldnotes 13/3/93

another. Meeting such claims are integral to maintaining good relations, although they are seen by some as invasive and parasitic. Anyone may make a claim from another, but the likelihood of success depends largely on the relationship between the two parties involved. To a large extent the personal interactive contexts of making or meeting claims are sanctioned by local discursive practices, but sometimes references to other discursive orders are made in support of certain demands or refusals.

The importance of certain matrilineal kin come into their own in respect of claims. The most significant issue in this respect is that of inheritance. Under 'customary law' only close matrilineal male descendants are eligible to inherit (i.e. uterine brothers or sisters' sons), though under present conditions and in the light of fluctuating levels of monetary involvement the principles governing property claims are becoming more and more indeterminate. The law in Zambia allows men to make wills leaving property to their sons and disinherit their matrilineal relative, but this is often cause for conflict. Long (1968:193) draws attention to the fact that many prosperous farmers and store keepers in Nchimishi wished to leave property to their own children rather than their sister's sons. To achieve this they maintained close contacts and received assistance from their own matrilineal kinsmen, which created a potentially explosive situation on the man's death. During an earlier period of research in Chief Chibale I found that to avoid the claims of close matrilineal descendants a number of farmers, during their own lifetime, transferred some of their material assets to their sons, so that on their death the sons already had possession of those items likely to cause dispute (1987:7). In other areas of Zambia, especially those with a high incidence of in-migration (for example, Ndola rural and Mpongwe) that many people choose to settle away from their natal areas, to avoid the crippling claims of kin. Moses Musonda, the former U.N.I.P. ward chairman and a prominent farmer explained that,

'For the purpose of loans it is important to clearly identify fields as belonging to particular individuals, in our case we [Musonda and wife] cultivate separate fields. Having separate loans and fields will help us in the event that after my death the relatives who come to grab will know whose property is whose'.<sup>20</sup>

Claims, significant as they are, are not always met and they were often contested. Despite this people did not question the fact that they would sometimes have to accommodate the claims of their 'brothers' and 'sisters' and look after their

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<sup>20</sup>Moses Musonda, fieldnotes 1/05/93

children for a period. When claims are made in this way it is practically impossible to refuse. At a later date such claims may be made in reverse. In addition to keep one's status it is important to give, if at all possible. To have enough grain to feed and therefore show hospitality towards visitors and to be able to consistently meet the claims of one's kin is publicly important to positions of status. There is no disgrace in asking, and a refusal generally means no more than 'I'm sorry I simply can't help'. The ability to make claims must be considered as part of persons social and material resource repertoire.

Non compliance with the above ethos of co-operation, the necessity to meet claims and compliance with accepted idioms of respect may lead to social tensions. These rather more abstracted and constantly shifting attributes of social life in Kamena are influenced by individual expectations and desires drawn from the experience over time. Conflicts of interest, be they individual, family, or network oriented, are always possible. Failing to meet the claims of hopeful kin, and the demands made by anticipatory relatives in the case of inheritance are emotive local issues and often lead to disputes of varying severity. In the case that follows, the simple claims of an old man are denied by his grandchildren. He insults them leading to an argument with his son-in-law, which eventually leads to conflict with his wider kin based network. The dispute ultimately leads to a subtle threat, that almost brought about an accusation of sorcery.

### **Witchcraft, Claims and Social Cohesion**

One of the more interesting dynamics involved in disputes is the possibility of accusations of witchcraft being levelled by either party. It must be said that such accusations are extremely serious, and they can lead to a series of social and financial calamities for anyone involved. Fears of the practices that are rumoured to be involved and the accusations of sorcery themselves are powerful endorsements against causing trouble in general. Notwithstanding such fears there are still conflicts of many kinds in Kamena. During fieldwork there were a number of physical fights that broke out due to rivalry over women and there were a number of land disputes. On two occasions relief maize destined for the valley area of Chief Chisomo was looted by a minority of armed people from the Kamena and Kaseba areas whilst in transit. Some of this maize was then sold locally to others. Such dramatic events, not surprisingly, resulted in heightened tensions. However, accusations of witchcraft were visibly absent in these disputes. They are normally associated with enduring disputes

and often involve land. Land access has many associations for people and includes: a sense of lineage identity (people predominantly use the land that has a history of use by their own clans), the presence of ancestors and a cosmogeny that relates to 'the hearth', 'the field' and 'life and death'. Land is also a major resource. Disputes that are related to land are often much more protracted and complex complaints, than those for example, that relate to accusations of adultery. In respect to land disputes informants responses to questions that addressed the possibility of sorcery were met with nervous denial or lacklustre and regretful admissions to its existence.

*Ukungula* - the practice of 'stealing' a neighbours crop through magical means was often the most vocalised of sorcery/land complaints. *Ukungula* is essentially a kind of spell that is cast over the crops of the victim. In order to gather the ingredients for the spell the cut bark from a tree in the targeted field may be sought or the sorcerer may walk in the field collecting soil in the cracks of his or her feet. Sometimes it is said even a bewitched rat (witch familiar) may be sent to the fields to steal the seeds. There are a number of versions of the methods employed and there is a good deal of doubt when it comes to how it is actually carried out. The point for many people is not how it actually happens but that they believe it does and they fear it. *Ukungula* involves gaining at the expense of others, which is contrary to expressions of a co-operative ethos seen at other times. If say a large area of maize is planted but only very low yields are experienced and the neighbouring fields are small by comparison but yields are high this can be explained with reference to sorcery and *ukungula* in particular. As a consequence of the fear of sorcery people would not visit each others field without invitation. Data collected by Rap (1992) in Teta cites *ukungula* as one of the reasons why there was reluctance for farmers to attend field visits organised by the Adaptive Research Planning Team of the Ministry of Agriculture. Seur (1992:249-252) also records a clear account of a dispute that involved accusations of *ukungula*. There is no doubt that it is considered a powerful force. In Seur's case it is Musonda Kalaka, a prominent woman farmer, who is accused. The accusations made against her are fuelled by her success and the use that she makes of cleared land obtained from a distant kinsman. This case illustrates the importance of jealousy as a central feature of such accusations. Success is not always thought of in terms of an individuals own efforts and merits, frequently people will measure success against the misfortunes or failures of others. Success in farming and entrepreneurial activities is often looked upon with envy. Sometimes success is seen as boastful and people are therefore conscious of not wanting to attract attention to themselves or create grounds for jealous accusations. One prominent farmer in Kamena went so far as to sell his large harvest of maize through other people so that



it would appear he harvested less, to avoid the jealousy of others and the potential repercussions of sorcery accusations.<sup>21</sup> Accusations involving *ukungula* are very often complex disputes that involve a series of conflicts or tensions between people. One such dispute in Kamena that eventually manifest itself in implied threats of *ukungula* is the case of Samson Peliga. This case demonstrates the importance of rhetoric and threats which are almost the exact opposite of expressions of politeness and respect that accompany exchange practices. It also illustrates the protracted and complex nature of conflict and shows how important it is to maintain good relations with kin and affines.

### **Samson Peliga and a Family Dispute**

Following retirement in 1991 and a brief period of settlement at Mukushi, Samson returned to Kamena with his wife to join his daughter's family. They had returned from the Copper Belt town of Mufulira themselves in 1989 and had taken up residence at Kalokoni. *Bambwia* (grandmother) Kalonkoni (see B1, Fig 7.3 below) is Samson's wife's (Ester Chibuye B2, Fig 7.3) sister. They moved to their present site a short time later, recalling that there were too many people staying at Kalokoni. Initially they used the land that is customarily used by Ester and Kalokoni's clan; the *imbulo* (or iron) clan. After a period Samson's family also began to use land designated as *ngulube* (bush pig) clan land.

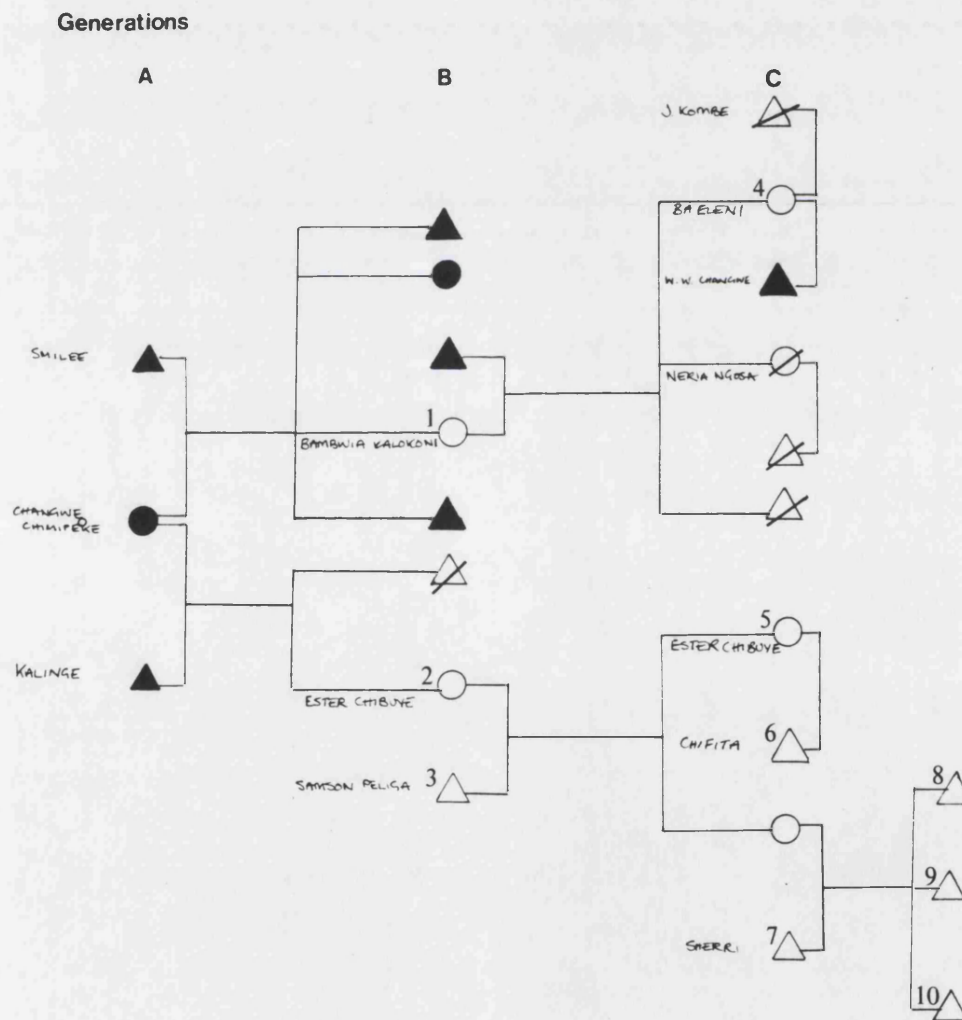
A young agricultural assistant was posted to Kamena in 1992. To boost otherwise very meagre earnings the assistant planted a large area with mounds (*imputa*) of beans. The land he used had previously been used by Samson. One day Samson happened to pass the fields whilst the assistant was working and remarked that it would be unwise for him to continue to use that land otherwise something bad would happen. Not making his comments any more illuminating he left with a final remark saying 'you wait and see'. A few days later the same general warning was passed on to the assistant by one of his senior colleagues, who had also been paid a visit by Samson. To some extent the various comments made by Samson seemed innocuous enough, but not in the context of *ukungula*. The implications of the passing remarks gave cause for concern in that the agricultural assistant expressed extreme annoyance and was obviously distressed. What is more, other people had said that

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<sup>21</sup>He also did this to deliberately avoid repaying one of his agricultural loans, and did not want to reveal to the credit organisation the extent of his harvest.

they had seen Samson walking in fields other than his own, stressing that although there are a lot of paths that go near the fields and even through them they were in no way confused about the locations of their sightings. In addition to this it was stated that the previous year Samson had planted only half a lima of *ibala* millet but had a full grain bin and this was during a drought season; very suspicious.

Fig 7.3 Samson Peliga's genealogy



To gain some insight into the threats the assistant went to the Kalokoni family who had rights over the land he used to ask them if their was more to it. It turns out that Samson was actually in dispute with his own in-laws and had been charged at an *akabungwe*<sup>22</sup> with threatening behaviour. The threats of *ukungula* were it seems part of an on-going struggle and although directed at the assistant were related to Samson's feud with his in-laws.

On the 17th February 1993 an *akabungwe* was held to hear the case brought against Samson (B3, Fig 7.3) by his own son-in-law. It was presided over by the *filolo* (Jestone Chisenga and Kaston Kamena). Samson had a reputation for being too proud and boastful, what is more his in-laws at Kalokoni had said that he insulted people often. On this occasion Samson had insulted his daughter's husband (Sherri C7, Fig 7.3) and his in-laws in general by calling his own grandchildren sons of dogs '*mwebana bambwa*'. They had refused his request for them to collect firewood. Sherri overheard Samson and became furious, the two men fought, Samson yelling that Sherri should go back to Mukushi. There was an exchange of insults involving the denigration of each others sexual organs and then Samson grabbed an axe and Sherri a stick. At this point in the fight Chifita (C6, Fig 7.3), the other son-in-law, stepped in to break it up. Sherri, Chifita, Samson, Enika, her daughter and a granddaughter who was present during the fight all attended the *akabungwe* (see Fig 7.3 for a representation of the kin relations of those involved in the dispute).

After hearing the case, the *filolo* passed judgement against Samson and he was fined K500, payable to Chief Chibale. The *filolo* said that they did not want to hear anymore from him and if they did they would charge him K700 for every single insult. By insulting his own grandchildren Samson had in fact insulted his wife's family,<sup>23</sup> the threats made towards the agricultural officer were part of this dispute and a way for Samson to create further discord towards his in-laws. The beleaguered agricultural officer decided that it was not worth taking Samson's threats too seriously in view of the complexities of the case and some time later left the area for a while to carry out other duties. Prior to leaving he joked about the fact that once he was gone we could let it be known in a subtle way that Samson had threatened him with

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<sup>22</sup>The word *akabungwe* as been translated into English as 'committee', although this term is not adequate to convey the meaning in the vernacular. The term *akabungwe* refers to a group of interested parties in the community; it conveys more the idea of an informal court than a bureaucratic committee, Fullan (1991:207).

<sup>23</sup>Children are considered the 'property' of the wife and her maternal family.

*ukungula* and tarnish his reputation further by making it public. Come harvest time the bean crop was in fact very poor, much less than had been expected. The explanations for this varied but it was agreed that it was probably due to a heavy cover of weeds and the fact that the soil was exhausted. In this case no one actually accused Samson of practising *ukungula*, it was merely suspected, for a number of reasons. These included his previous and unexpected successes with a millet harvest, when many people had reduced yields due to the drought. He was considered anti-social, and generally a trouble maker, which are unacceptable in view of the dominant and pervasive discourses of co-operation and respect people show so much concern for. By the time the problems reached the agricultural officer, who was still new to the area, Samson actually implied that he might practise *ukungula*. He was never openly accused of practising sorcery, but in view of the potential severity of the case this did not matter. What people thought privately and what they expressed in public were quite different. The implications of *ukungula* are enough in themselves for people to become uneasy and fearful. The existence of such powerful discourses that can bring discord and fear to people when the accepted ethos of co-operation and assistance breaks down must be seen as an integral part of the more generalised discourse practices associated with social cohesion and support.

*Ukungula* and the discussions that take place concerning it become idiomatic of an expression of tension that may already exist between people. During the main growing season for maize (February to June) in Kamena people become anxious as to the progress their crop is making. Notwithstanding all the technical difficulties with achieving a good yield people are also concerned about having their crops tampered with (magically) by others. This case illustrates the extent to which it is important for people to try to maintain good relations with their own kin and others. The many contexts of interaction that exist become arenas in which people actively seek to support their networks and maintain co-operative links. The potential consequences of not doing so can be dramatic and fearful. Such networks are crucial - whether they involve immediate kin, affinal relations or are based on specific resource flows - to the livelihood possibilities of people in Kamena. The discontinuities that arise from time to time resulting in the possible breakdown of assistive networks draws attention to the importance of co-operation and assistance, as ideals for people in Kamena. Social relations and the socio-cultural constructs that consolidate them are central to maintaining social networks and have a direct bearing on exchange practices and strategies of production organisation. Maintaining these networks is vital and people give priority in many situations to their social networks over and above other considerations.

## Summary

This chapter has shown, with reference to specific case studies, the existence of multiply constructed value notions with regard to exchange items. To get at these different value notions entailed a detailed analysis of exchange practices. Within these interactive encounters people have varying motives and expectations. These, and the content of the relationships involved will have a significant bearing on the outcome of exchange and hence the values given to goods in these contexts. It is clear that exchanges involve operationalising different practical and discursive kinds of knowledge, a central feature of which includes: social considerations and the maintenance of effective networks of co-operation, financial concerns, and the need to acquire goods for a range of immediate needs. This chapter highlighted how these different value constructions come together in contexts of exchange and social interaction. I drew attention to the discursive frames of reference that are prevalent at the local level and that originate from elsewhere. To understand the way in which value notions are socially constructed demands looking closely at the social practices within which these are expressed. These contexts are also part of the on-going creation and modification of discourse practices that give meaning to people's livelihoods and strategies of action. It is worth stating again (see Chapter 2) that material things on their own exist as physically concrete forms independent of any individual's mental image of them. They then only become meaningful through practice. In this way specific material goods embody meaning, they are the product of meaningful action and are involved in the reproduction of meaningful action in determinate social and historical contexts (Moore 1990). However we must realise that it is not action or conceptualisation but a continuous dialectic between the two that is important. We must assume an interdependence between meaning and action, the meaning ascribed to a good is the actualised product of social actors in a particular context and is thus context dependent (Moore 1986).

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **CONCLUSION**

I began this thesis by synthesising two different, but nevertheless compatible methodological approaches: situational and discourse analysis. These two methods are undoubtedly the products of quite different intellectual arenas of study. Gluckman, and later van Velsen, who studied Southern African societies, developed the situational method in respect to detailed ethnographic research, which placed the complexities and ambiguities of everyday life at centre stage. By contrast the analysis of discourse, proposed by Foucault, takes a rather different point of departure. His work explores the intellectual and institutional context of ideas as a field of study in its own right. Despite the disparity between these different fields of study, in terms of subject matter and intellectual chronology, the methodological approaches they developed combine to offer a unique and illuminating way of exploring livelihood practices and the social construction of value notions. I argue that such a methodology reveals the inherent flexibility of the valorisation of goods, whilst simultaneously enabling a detailed description of the livelihood practices which centre around the use of such resources. Material and human resources are ascribed with value as they are the product of meaningful action in specific social contexts of interaction. They are an integral part of the social practices and the networks of social relations that shape livelihoods. Such livelihood activities and strategies involve many different financial and social commitments, and are focused in different ways on solving practical problems. The combined attributes of discourse and situational analyses offer an appropriately dynamic way of exploring not only the complexity of these livelihoods but also the multiple ways in which resources acquire value.

While situational analysis is particularly useful for the description and analysis of specific social events and practices, discourse analysis provides a way of integrating locally situated practices in their broader practical and conceptual context. This is particularly important in that livelihood practices for small-scale producers are not isolated in time and space but are embedded in the wider arenas of decision and action. While this thesis focused on the production, consumption and valorisation of home-produced grain beer - an activity that has considerable social and financial significance - the analysis of beer production and consumption practices can simply be viewed as one methodological entry point for exploring the relationship between the valorisation of resources and livelihood practice. Understanding this relationship entails exploring how different discourse practices have a bearing on locally situated

value notions and the ways in which these, in turn, have a bearing on practice. To use a visual and spatial metaphor, the thesis began with a view from 'above' and considered the implications of the wider global order on national economic and political change. This provides the thesis with a conventional context or background discussion while simultaneously focusing on the implications of such hegemonic political and economic discourses which, in muted and often modified form, filter through to the practices, representations and values of ordinary people. Later chapters take up this theme and illustrate how localised interpretations, actions and valorisations reflect these wider discursive arenas. In this way, discourse analysis provides an understanding of the link between 'macro' factors and 'micro' representations.

Value, I argue, is always socially and contextually constructed, since in any social context there will always be a multiplicity of value associations and criteria upon which it is predicated. In each chapter of this thesis I explore, in different ways, how various domains of action have a bearing (either directly and indirectly) on the construction of value notions. I argue that indirect social experience is highly relevant to my discussion, since such experiences are passed on through different forms of communication (for example, the radio and newspapers) and through social networks of various kinds. National economic change and agricultural policy (see Chapter 3) also become manifest in the strategies and practices of farmers as they seek ways to overcome the dramatic effects of factors such as I.M.F. conditionality, which affects producer prices and the cost of inputs. A further example of indirect experience is the historico-legal aspects of changing policy which, for urban areas, affected where, when and what types of beer people could drink. The direct experiences of urban living and employment created a situation in which many people gained first-hand experience of living and working in a socio-economic context different from their natal areas. Rural people are tied to urban areas in a number of social and economic ways and in this thesis I consider the relationship between the two as a continuum rather than a divide. The diversity of ways in which value is ascribed to beer, then, relates to both local contexts of organisation and production and to wider contexts. This assertion sheds important light on our understanding of the processes that shape the social construction of value.

At a more local level, the analysis of situated contexts of practical action (problem solving activities - livelihoods), which give shape to the valorisation of resources, demands giving primacy to issues of practice and agency. The ethnographic chapters of this thesis are an attempt to illustrate the ways in which both

practice and agency are central to the creation and dissemination of meaning and value in respect to beer. Since agency, in general terms, attributes to individuals the capacity to process social experience and to devise ways of coping with life (Long and Long 1992:22), it is actualised in practice. The practices of brewing and consuming beer are central to the construction of its various values and it is for this reason that I dedicate Chapters 5 and 6 to the different contexts in which it features. Whereas the analyst must document and detail these activities, they are implicitly understood in different ways by those who have multiple experiences of them; namely local people. This is obviously the case for a whole range of practices and not only those that involve beer. I contend, then, that the value of certain resources as expressed by different groups of people in specific practical contexts are central to our understanding of livelihood strategies and activities; and that situational analysis is a particularly suitable method for the task of describing and analysing these locally situated expressions of value.

Value notions have further analytical significance since they become idioms through which individuals and groups of actors express their expectations, desires and priorities (see, for example, the opening parts of Chapter 5). The analysis of idiomatic expressions of value allows us to explore the notion of agency because it is through social experience that those value notions central to resources and livelihoods become meaningful. Given the breadth of people's social experience, such value constructions remain multiple in character and it is in unpicking this plurality that we gain detailed insights into livelihood practice. The social constructivist approach that I adopt retains as its central themes: diversity, continuity, change, discontinuity, regularity, variation, accidents, and deviations. These are, after all, some of the thematic facets of people's on-going interactive and cognitive experiences within their own life-worlds and those of others.

Experiential encounters and social interactive episodes involving resources are central to understanding livelihoods. I have, throughout this thesis, tried to provide accounts of the different contexts of such experience. The early parts of my account explore the link between 'macro' and 'micro' considerations. I then focus more closely on the local contexts of practice. One highly significant set of practices relates to agriculture, although it was never my intention to carry out a complete and detailed study of agricultural practice. Rather, I chose to limit this study primarily to the analysis of beer. Agricultural practices, however, constituted a major reference point for people. The organisation of agricultural production involves people in many types of activity and a number of important co-operative social links. It is essential to



explore these, since such links are reflected in the organisation of other livelihood options and strategies. Social relations, then, are crucial to understanding livelihoods within agrarian settings. Among the Lala of Serenje District, the principles of uxori-local marriage remain an important feature of social organisation, although they may become manifest in different practices and are open to manipulation. Nevertheless, these principles provide a metaphor or model against which other social practices and relations may be evaluated. This interweaving of principles, practices and social relations are both explicitly and implicitly central themes in the thesis. Understanding local issues of value requires an appreciation of the ways in which the maintenance and mediation of social relations often shapes the outcome of exchange or activities aimed at resource redistributions. These interactive contexts are also constitutive of the social relations themselves which thereby gives them shape and meaning. Furthermore, the value of particular resources may be evaluated with specific reference to certain relationships or co-operative links; for example, between spouses or between related women. The whole issue of fixing value must necessarily include such social and relational considerations. This assertion arises from the particularities of my own field work, but I believe that, regardless of the context, such issues remain central. The social dimensions of value cannot, however, be adequately accounted for by conceptualisations that focus specifically on singular aspects of value, for example, on commoditisation, or on generalised anthropological constructs of 'use', 'exchange', and 'social' categories of value (see Chapter 2).

As we have seen in the ethnographic chapters of this thesis (Chapters 5, 6 and 7), the complex mixture of values expressed in different contexts may include various notions based on ideas concerned with commercial farming and acquiring cash, with farm and family property relations and commitments, and on the importance of calculations based on principles of 'maximising gain', or on sustaining livelihood options. Other values are rooted in culinary preferences, cultural habits, the expectations of others, or obligations to kin, neighbours and friends. In some circumstances it is likely that any one or other of these social values, may be accorded priority. For example, the value of the items Jestone exchanged in Chapter 7 could not realise their full potential material value in the face of pressing familial obligations. This was the result of the particular internal dynamics of the relationship between the Jestone and his affines. It might however have been because of some other unforeseen eventuality, the visit from a needy relative or food needs at home perhaps. The important point is that although certain contexts of practice are analogous to the fixing of particular values this does not mean that other value notions (potential or realised) do not exist simultaneously for the actors in question.

These other values may simply depreciate in the face of more pressing needs. Actors are fully aware of this plurality, since, as agents, it is they who make choices and ascribe goods with value; their value is not ascribed by certain structural givens. Agency, then, is absolutely central to our analysis.

If actors remain the agents of their own value notions - even in the face of external pressures (for example, market forces or pricing) - then in the process of establishing one value over another in a specific context reveals various aspects of actors' social identities. Hence different interpretations of social experience and the differences in the estimation of the value of both goods and people, provide indicators of the ways in which different individuals and groups acquire social identities. These become manifest in the negotiations and accommodations that form part of all encounters that involve the redistribution of goods. In Chapter 5 I explore, through the analysis of a public meeting, the different expressions of value vis-à-vis beer. The discussion demonstrates the differential importance of 'traditional' and changing patterns of authority in the face of the need for cash incomes and viable livelihoods. It is clear, therefore, that the beer is not only appreciated in different ways, but that its expressions of value are articulated in the struggle to assert particular social identities. For example, the chief's messengers (men) wanted to be shown respect and to be given authority, in contrast to the women present who showed concern for maintaining their own status as producers and providers and who primarily viewed beer for its value in income generation. Their negotiations simultaneously gave a public 'airing' to the various social and financial values of beer and provided a context within which the two parties contested and asserted their own sense of identity. This dispute also concerned the assertion of shared or collective rights and entitlements, which were in this context symbolically expressed through the values ascribed to beer.

The issue of social identity is one that is central to all social interaction. In this thesis the interactive encounters in which beer becomes the focus of social action are all concerned with the social and symbolic value that beer acquires in different contexts. The different contexts in which beer is consumed, whether or not it is purchased, drunk and distributed freely or given in return for labour, are all episodes during which the value of beer plays an important part in the negotiation of identity through symbolic communicative interaction. Chapter 7, which deals with exchange and social relations, also draws attention to the symbolic and communicative value of resources, while still retaining their important uses and values for production or consumption. The ethos of generosity expressed during the transactions in question

displays the important role that resources have in affirming social positions and in negotiating the relationship between the transactors, for example, the relationship of a man to his maternal affines. These issues are likewise fundamentally related to the negotiation and assertion of social identity. The analysis of value notions, then, is central to unlocking the myriad ways in which people assert their identities. These latter may be based on status, political or respect criteria (as with beer redistributions) or they may be based on the importance of being seen as both generous and willing to fulfil obligations to affines (as with redistributions of fertiliser). In other contexts such self assertions communicated through the negotiation of resource values may help construct appropriate gender identities or the expectation of gender roles. Such considerations only become meaningful at points of intersection during the negotiation or fixing of value and as such can only be elicited from the analysis of particular events or practices.

To recapitulate, value is multiply constructed, and includes many social, financial and other commitments. Such commitments are based on both local and wider contextual criteria. Exploring these provides us with the possibility of analysing the diversity and plurality of livelihood practice in situated contexts and allows us to pay particular attention to notions of agency, practice, and social identity. The ethnographic chapters of this thesis include data which illustrate these processes. The data also aims to contribute to an empirical understanding of the livelihoods of rural small-scale producers in Zambia.

I have attempted to integrate the above concerns by paying detailed attention to methodological issues. It is my belief that there is no separation between methodological and theoretical issues as they both inform practice. Practice that involves the researcher in fieldwork and data collection, but also practice in terms of analysis and interpretation. I accept that this may not be a completely new position and that I am greatly influenced by the work of certain Manchester scholars. However, adopting this position enables me to forge a link with Foucault's 'project'.

Much of the data presented in this thesis was collected using situational methods, which facilitate the collection of detailed ethnographic material. The ideas and discussions of discourse developed by Foucault became important for me both during fieldwork and in the subsequent writing up period as conceptual 'tools' that enabled me to think in an unbounded and critical way about the idea of multiple contexts. In this sense, the methods deployed were concerned not with 'what' is studied but 'how' it is studied. This point of view is supported by my own experiential

encounter with fieldwork. I chose beer as the focus of my study, but realised during field work that, although beer production and consumption practices are undoubtedly important for livelihoods, the study of beer offered a way of revealing the complex set of relations that link practice, social networks, action and ideas that encompass both local and wider arenas. In this period of supposed intellectual freedom (dubbed with a number of post - 'periodisations') I believe attention to methodological issues becomes central to the closer integration of theory and practice. This thesis provides a step in this direction.

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1

#### The Initial Cost (in *Kwacha*<sup>1</sup>) of Sending a Child to Secondary School<sup>2</sup>

Items required	No of items	Cost in <i>Kwacha</i>	Source of item
<i>School clothing</i>			
Blue trousers	1	1800	Father
White shirt	1	1500	--"
Black shoes	1	4500	--"
Tropicals	1	650	--"
Grey jersey	1	2800	--"
P.E. shorts	1	2500	--"
<i>Freetime clothes</i>			
Tee shirts	2	--	Maternal aunt
Gym shoes	1	--	-----"
Trousers	2	--	-----"
Shirts	2	--	-----"
Blankets	3	2800	-----"
School books	8	1280	Father
Toilet paper	2	200	--"
Face cloth	1	320	--"
Bed sheets	2	3000	--"
Plates	2	--	--"
Cup	1	--	Home
Spoon	1	--	-"
Slasher	1	1500	Father
Hoe	1	--	Home
School Fees		3120	Father
<i>Totals</i>	35	25,970	

<sup>1</sup> Where 388.1 *Kwacha* is equivalent to 1 Pound Sterling, Barclays Bank of Zambia 8/07/92

<sup>2</sup>Data from Serenje Secondary School, courtesy of Joseph Ntembwa, fieldnotes 12/07/92.

## APPENDIX 2

### New Apostolic Church Work Parties

#### Prices for work

##### Winter ploughing

The price depends on whether or not the land is new or old. A new field requires having the bush cleared and is a much more labour intensive task. Old fields simply need re-digging. The time of the year is also a factor, as this determines how hard the ground may be. In the dry season, for example, the soil may be so hard that it can be impossible to till. The price for work is also discussed with the person who requests it, and this may have a bearing on the cost. The account below represents the basic charges as reported to me by the minister, Norius Kunda (10/05/93).

1 acre new field of maize ( <i>ukufukika</i> ) May-July	K5000
1 acre old field of maize Oct-Dec	K4000
1 Lima new field of maize ( <i>ukufukika</i> ) May-July	K3500
1 Lima old field (maize), Oct-Dec	K2500
1 Lima mounds ( <i>imputa</i> ), S pots/cassava Feb-Mar	K3500

#### Cultivation tasks accomplished for 1992/1993

1. Ester Chibuye	1 lima old field	K750	maize
2. Norius Kunda	1 lima old field	K750	maize
3. Mary Kunda	1 acre old field	K2500	maize
4. Evewell Mambwe	1 acre old field	K2500	maize
5. Adam Kafusu	1 lima imputa	K3500	cassava
6. Boyd Kafusu	1 lima imputa	K3500	cassava
7. Rosa Binson	1 lima imputa	K3500	cassava
8. Malu Masaiti <sup>1</sup>	1 lima new field	K3000	maize

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<sup>1</sup>With the exception of Malu Masaiti, all the above are members of the congregation. The congregation totalled 196, but there was ordinarily only forty or so who would work for others at any one time. Norius and Mary Kunda, reside at Nakapepa village, as does Ester Chibuye. Interestingly, the charges for both Norius Ester are lower than the rest; Norius is the minister, while Ester is his maternal mother in-law.

### APPENDIX 3 (a)

#### Clans in Kamena

Lala name	English name
1. BENA NYENDWA	VAGINA (ROYAL CLAN)
2. " NKASHI	MILLET
3. " MBUSHI	GOAT
4. " MUSAMBA	TREE ( <i>CIMUTI</i> )
5. " IMBULO	IRON
6. " NGOO	LEOPARD
7. " NGUNI	HONEY BIRD
8. " NGULUBE	BUSH PIG
9. " TEMBO	WASP
10. " MPANDE	BEADS
11. " BWAL	FOOD
12. " NSWI	FISH
13. " IBI	BAD

### APPENDIX 3 (b)

#### Villages centred on a senior female, and the clan land they use

Village	Clan land
Ndaba	Nyendwa
Mupeta	Nyendwa
Nachisala	Ngulube
Zebron	Nguni
Lise	Ngoo
Nsaka	Imbulo
Musunte	Imbulo
Kachawa	Ngulube
Taxon Chibuye	Ngulube
Naemmah	Nkashi
Mulubw	Ngoo
Nakapepa	Nyendwa
Naperiod	Nkashi
Nachitana	Mpande
Menshi	Nkashi
Nakabamba	Nyendwa
Nachibuye	Nyendwa
Kasata	Nkashi
Samu	Ngulube
Kalokoni	Mbulo

## APPENDIX 3 (c)

### Villages centred on a senior male, and the clan land they use

Village	Clan land
Kolala	Ngoo
Cheupe	Nyendwa
Moses Musonda	Imbulo
Patson Kaluba	Ibulo (immigrants from Mpika)
Staff Kasaka	Nyendwa
Kamena	Ngulube
Kaston Mafute	Ngulube
Malu	Nguni
Tembo	Musamba
Musonda	Ngulube
Saisolo	Musamba
Masaiti	Ngoo
Kabula	Nkashi
Five	Tembo
Kalunga	Imbulo
Binson	Nkashi
Aaron Chibuye	Nyendwa
Chimbo	Nyendwa
Kantole	Nyendwa
Kayi	Nyendwa
Chifundu	Imbulo
Lemson	Bwali
Musopa	Nyendwa
Pieson	Musamba
Mukolwe	Imbulo
Powders	Nyendwa
Lunda <sup>1</sup>	

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<sup>1</sup>A Bemba immigrant who retired to Kamena in order to mine industrial minerals. He uses land that belonged to the late D. Pinn , another former immigrant ,whose family now own titles to the land.



## APPENDIX 4

### BROKEN HILL MANAGEMENT BOARD, NATIVE CANTEEN FUND 1947-1948<sup>1</sup>

EXPENDITURE, ITEMS AND SERVICES	1947 (Pounds Sterling)	1948 (Pounds Sterling)
1. Admin	342	472
2. Grains and Stores	1100	1750
3. Firewood	345	300
4. Stores	55	50
5. European Salaries	870	700
6. Native labour	1000	1000
7. Transport	160	160
8. Water	60	60
9. Stationary and coupons	50	40
10. Sanitation	216	240
11. Police supervision	50	60
12. Telephone rental	32	30
13. Rents (African employees)	60	85
14. Rates	8	8
15. Auditor	35	35
16. Depreciation on canteen and sundry assets	360	570
17. Sundries	35	35
18. Repairs/renewals,		
Grinding mills	60	60
Kiosk Tables	50	50
Buildings	80	80
French drain	5	5
Ballast at beer hall	15	15
19. Capital expenditure,		
Yeast cooker (erection)	--	60
Extesnion to beer hall	--	300
Estimated Balance	51.4	38
10% to central fund		
To ammenities account	460.16	342
Total expenditure	5500	6500
Total beer sales	5500	6500

<sup>1</sup>Estimates of revenue and expenditure for the year ending 31/12/48, from the minutes of the African Welfare Advisory Committee meeting, Broken Hill (now Kabwe), Institute for African Studies library, UNZA, Lusaka Zambia.

## APPENDIX 5

### Agricultural and Household Survey Questionnaire (part one)

#### (EXAMPLE)

AGRICULTURAL SEASON....90/91<sup>1</sup>

NAME OF RESPONDENT....Savious Ntembwa    NAME OF FARM.....Naemmah

POPULATION.....7 (4 adults: 1 man, 3 woman and 3 children)

CROPS PLANTED	AREA TILLED	TOOLS USED	INPUTS <sup>2</sup> USED	QUANTITY HARVESTED
Maize	1 acre	Hoe	2 up , 2 down	8 in total: 3 - 90 kilo bags sold locally and 5 bags retained for consumption purposes.
Millet	1 lima	Axe		3 - 90 kilo bags (unthreshed)
G. Nuts	.25 lima	Hoe	-----	No nuts, only poppers, i.e. no seeds.
			-----	
S. Pots	<i>Cisebe</i>	Hoe	-----	2 - 90 kilo sized bags (not weight) - consumed.
Beans	<i>Cisebe</i>	Hoe	-----	1.5 tins (30 litres in total) - consumed.

<sup>1</sup>The same series of questions were asked with respect to the two seasons prior to fieldwork , and the 'active' season.

<sup>2</sup>Inputs refer only to the application of fertiliser. 'Up' refers to top dressing (ammonium nitrate), and 'down' refers to basal dressing (urea).

# **APPENDIX 5 (part two)**

LABOUR	CREDIT	BEER	EXCHANGE AND INCOME	CONTROL	COMPOSITION
<p><b>90/91</b> - hired 3 people for piece work, money came from mine work.</p> <p><b>91/92</b> - hired piece workers with money from Lima Bank loan.</p>	<p><b>90/91</b> - bought fertiliser from depot, money came from mine work.</p> <p><b>91/92</b> - loan from Lima Bank (husbands name)</p> <p><b>92/93</b> - bought inputs from depot, sold meat to raise cash.</p>	<p><b>90/91</b> - 6 sale beers, items purchased with cash included: clothes, household items, salt, soap, paraffin, matches, and use of the grinding mill.</p> <p><b>91/92</b> - 6 sale beers, purchases included: blankets, household items (as above), and money used for loan repayments.</p>	<p>Beer sales.</p> <p>Piece work at Lunda's quarry/mine.</p> <p>Sale of vegetables and other crops, locally, to Copperbelt traders and to Depot. Sale of chickens, and occasionally game meat.</p>	<p>Decisions concerning money allocation are made together with wife. In brewing, either husband or wife suggest to brew, profits divided according to needs.</p>	<p>Two elderly uterine sisters, the daughter of Naemmah, her husband (Savious) and their three children (primary school age). These persons constitute a single 'eating group'.</p>

## APPENDIX 6

### Beer Brewing Record

(Example)

DATE	FARM	BREWER	TYPE OF BEER	PURPOSE OF BREW	NO OF DRUMS	INPUTS: MAIZE /MILLET	CASH FOR INUTS	CASH RAISED	CASH FOR?	CONTROL
22/1/93	KAYI	ESTER CHIBUYE	KATATA	SALE	2	2TINS /1TIN	OWN GRANARY	ZK 7500	HOUSEHOLD ITEMS; COST OF GRINDING ,SOAP, COOKING OIL	ESTER CHIBUYE
27/1/93	PIESON	MARY KUNDA	KATATA	SALE	1.5	1.5TINS/ .75TINS	ZK750/600	ZK6000	LIMA BANK LOAN REPAYMENTS	PIESON

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