

**ETHNIC CONSTRUCTION IN CENTRAL PROVINCE OF ZAMBIA: A CASE STUDY
OF THE *KAONDE-ILA* PEOPLE OF MUMBWA DISTRICT.**

BY

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**A Dissertation Submitted to the University of Zambia in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in History**

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

LUSAKA

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DECLARATION

I, Boyd Mwanabayeke declare that this dissertation:

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ABSTRACT

The central theme of this study is ethnic construction. It focuses on the meeting in Mumbwa district of some sections of the Kaonde who migrated from the Democratic Republic of Congo (D.R.C) briefly settled in North-Western Province of Zambia and some Ila groups from Namwala in Southern Province which resulted into a new ethnic group called *Kaonde-Ila*. Through a process of intermarriages and intermingling new linguistic, cultural, customary and socio-political characteristics that came to constitute a new *Kaonde-Ila* society were acquired by the two groups.

The study shows that the physical setting, climate, environment and ecology of Mumbwa district were very instrumental in the settlement, evolution and formation of the *Kaonde-Ila*. The study therefore, concludes by highlighting the extent to which the environmental pattern of Mumbwa district provided an area of economic transition thereby enforcing a system of economic activities with which the *Kaonde-Ila* were identified. As a result of the changed physical and social environment there were some modifications in the socio-cultural and economic activities of the *Kaonde-Ila*.

DEDICATION

To my grand father: Million Ponyongo Mwanabayeke who did not live long enough to see the fruits of this work.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BOMA.....British Overseas Military Administration

B.S.A. Co.....British South Africa Company

CSO.....Central Statistical Office

D.C.....District Commissioner

D.R.C.....Democratic Republic of Congo

G.M.A.....Game Management Area

K.N.P.....Kafue National Park

L.R.C.....Lutale Resettlement Scheme

N.A.Z.....National Archives of Zambia

CHAPTER ONE

1.0. INTRODUCTION AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The term 'ethnic' has been employed in scholarly sources for a group of people with a consciousness of its own identity, usually symbolised by its own self-given name and commonality of territory, language, customs, history, and socio-political organisation. This awareness of a separate ethnic identity may arise from migrations and association in a new locality, circumstances of conquest or some combination of these. Ethnic identity may also come about when conquering groups become submerged by a powerful local people or even acquire the language of the people they dominate. Furthermore a new ethnic group may emerge when large ethnic groups conquer small ones, bring them under their political control and transmit part of their culture to the conquered subjects.¹ The above given circumstances on ethnic construction could be some of the ways that led to the meeting of the Kaonde and the Ila in Mumbwa district under chiefs Mumba, Kaindu, Chibuluma, Moono and Mulendema resulting in the evolution and formation of a new ethnic group called Kaonde-Ila which is the central theme of this study.

Kaonde-Ila's own legends, ecological, linguistic and ethnological evidence undoubtedly show that when these Kaonde and Ila groups arrived in Mumbwa district, the only indigenous communities they found were remnants of the Bushmen who fled the area upon the arrival of these powerful groups. This was further illustrated by Timothy Kasemune who in his account on the arrival in about 1870 of the Kaonde elephant hunters under Chonamuningo who founded Mumba's chiefdom found the Bushmen living at the present Mumbwa Caves who upon seeing tall people fled the area to the South.² *Kaonde-Ila* apparently was thought to be the ethnicity of these people basically from the language spoken and from the fact that the *Kaonde-Ila* treasury which was founded in 1937 brought together the various Kaonde and Ila chiefs in the area.³

Win Van Binsbergen records that the Kaonde settled in what is the North-Western Province of Zambia probably in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries having migrated from the Luba Kingdom in the north. Some recognised Mwatayambo as their most senior traditional authority. Binsbergen explains that during the eighteenth century, independent Kaonde groups became powerful players in the history of the area joining the Lozi in slave raids against the Ila in the south.⁴

In a related development, W.V. Brelsford states that the Kaonde were as much Luba as any tribe could be. Brelsford points out that, the Kaonde were referred to as Luba in the past and even when they became known as Kaonde their chiefs retained the Luba connections.⁵ Chief Mumba for example, now a *Kaonde-Ila* chief is according to Mumbwa District Note Book descended from a Luba who with his followers came to Mumbwa from Kaonde country in about 1880. He acquired cattle from the Ila and his followers intermarried with both the Ila and the Kaonde.⁶ Shortly afterwards two other Luba chiefs, Kaindu and Kashinka moved southwards also from Kaonde country in the unoccupied area of chief Mumba. Both Kaindu and Kashinka were classified in earlier lists of chiefs as *Kaonde-Ila*, not Luba chiefs.⁷

The Ila people are the traditional inhabitants of Namwala district in Southern Province and engage mostly in cattle keeping, fishing and subsistence farming. In his account, Richard Hall explains that the Ila are emphatic that their ancestral home was beside Lake Tanganyika and that there are cultural links to support this claim. According to Hall, in Southern Province and nowhere else in Zambia the chiefs are always addressed as '*Mwami*', a thousand kilometres away to the north in Burundi chiefs are given the same name.⁸ Hall points out that through contacts often enforced by their neighbours the Kaonde, the Ila acquired many cultural traits which were essentially Congo rooted.⁹

In their classification of the Ba-ila people, Smith and Dale illustrate that in the north were the *Bambala*, “the northern people”. Smith and Dale note that, except near the Bwila border, the *Bambala* were somewhat intermixed with their neighbours the Kaonde.¹⁰ Because of their northern location and proximity to the Kaonde under chief Mumba as recorded by Smith and Dale we can further suggest that possibly through the process of intermingling and intermarriages there was the disintegration of the original ethnic identity of the *Bambala* and the mushrooming of a new *Kaonde-Ila* identity.

1.1. Statement of the problem

Ethnic identity may arise from migrations, association in a new locality or when conquering groups become submerged by a powerful local people and even acquire the culture of the people they dominate. A new ethnic group may also emerge when large ethnic groups conquer small ones, bring them under their political control and transmit part of their culture to the conquered people. In the context of the above mentioned circumstances, the meeting of the Kaonde and the Ila in Mumbwa district resulted into a new ethnic group called *Kaonde-Ila* with a new identity, language, culture, customs, socio-political and economic organisation. There has been no comprehensive historical study on the *Kaonde-Ila* transformation. This study is an attempt to reconstruct the history of the *Kaonde-Ila* in Mumbwa district.

1.2. Objectives of the study

- (a) This study attempts to investigate the factors that led to the settlement, formation and evolution of the *Kaonde-Ila* people as a new ethnic group in Mumbwa district.
- (b) The study also documents the changes that occurred in the *Kaonde-Ila* language, customs, traditions and socio-political organisation as a measure of new ethnic identity.

(c) . Lastly, the study examines how the environment influenced the economic activities of the *Kaonde-Ila* in Mumbwa district leading to new ethnic identity.

1.3. Significance of the study.

The study contributes to the ethnic historiography of Zambia and in particular of Central Province. The study also contributes to knowledge on the dynamics of Zambia's ethno-history. It will further provide literature giving general background information on Mumbwa district in Central Province.

1.4. Review of related literature

A survey of literature on Central Province in general and Mumbwa district in particular reveals little discussion on the formation and evolution of a new ethnic group long after most ethnic groups settled in Zambia during either the sixteenth, seventeenth or middle of the eighteenth century.

The study by S.J. Chibanza on the Kaonde is a very important source to the *Kaonde-Ila* study. In his account on the origins of the Kaonde, Chibanza explains the formation of the Kasempa chieftainship and the installation of Chipoko I as chief Kasempa. Chibanza points out that there was perhaps a dispute among the people as they were unsettled in those days and each tribe preferred to have its own chief. According to Chibanza, the Kaonde are of Luba stock and were certainly mixed with the Basanga and Chipoko was the first man to be appointed by the general approval and consent of paramount chief Musokantanda and confirmation by the Mwatayambo.¹¹ Chibanza further highlights that Chipoko settled on the river called 'Kaonde' (in what was formally the Belgian Congo). He explains that it is from there that the tribe derives the name 'Kaonde' after the river on which they first settled under chief Chipoko.¹² This account by

Chibanza on the origins of the Kaonde provides vital background information on the study of the *Kaonde-Ila* in Mumbwa district.

Significant to the study on the *Kaonde-Ila* is the work by Frank H. Melland. He points out that the northern section of the Kaonde came into the country from the Baluba leading a colony from the south-east across the *Luenge* (Kafue River).¹³ Melland records that the Kaonde crossed the Kafue River and because of overcrowding on the other side they were under pressure from the Ila. The Ila called the settlers ‘*Baluba*’.¹⁴ Melland further states that whilst there the Kaonde would come in hunting parties west of the Kafue River which was always a good place for elephants. Because these hunters noted that the country was good and owing to congestion or pressure of some kind on the other side a move was suggested or provoked. They crossed the Kafue River and settled where they are now between the Ba-Luba and the Ba-ila on whom they trespassed.¹⁵ This study by Melland is important in that it gives insight on the origins of the *Kaonde-Ila*.

In a related development, Brelsford states that chief Mumba, one of the chiefs in Mumbwa district is descended from the Luba. According to Brelsford, Mumba together with his followers came to Mumbwa from Kaonde country in about 1880. Mumba acquired cattle from the Ila and his followers intermarried with the Ila and the Kaonde.¹⁶ This development is important to the study in that it has a bearing on the emergence of the *Kaonde-Ila* in Mumbwa district.

Furthermore, Brelsford highlights that Kapijimpanga, a Kaonde chief was closely associated with Kaindu and Kashinka. Kapijimpanga and Kaindu were some of the Kaonde chiefs who were driven southwards into the Luba pocket of the Kafue. Kapijimpanga married the daughter of Mwene-Kahare of the adjoining Mashasha tribe.¹⁷ Later, Mwene-Kahare and Kapijimpanga quarreled and fought. Kapijimpanga was driven southwards and took up an area north of chief

Mumba together with Kaindu and Kashinka. Once established, Kapijimpanga returned on a raid and drove the Mashasha south to the headwaters of the Luena River and placed a relative as chief over the Mashasha. Kapijimpanga returned to the area north of chief Mumba. There he left Kaindu and Kashinka and went still further north beyond the Kafue River to live in the area he now occupies in Solwezi.¹⁸ This development is also very important in that it suggests the early settlement of some Kaonde groups in Mumbwa district which could have led to early contacts between the Kaonde and the Ila resulting in the emergence of the *Kaonde-Ila*.

The works by Dirk Jaeger are also an interesting feature. In his account Jaeger points out that there is a resemblance between the Kaonde and the group of Bemba languages, for example Lamba, Lala and Ambo.¹⁹ According to Jaeger, these languages share 50% of their vocabulary. Jaeger argues that affinity of the group of languages which are spoken to the east of North-Western Province is even greater than with other languages in the province such as Lunda, Luvale and Chokwe.²⁰ The present study will demonstrate that there is a close relationship between the Kaonde and the Ila in Mumbwa district.

In order to understand and investigate the history of the *Kaonde-Ila* and fill in the knowledge in the existing gaps the study by Smith and Dale is of crucial importance. In their classification of the Ba-ila people Smith and Dale explain that when they speak of the Ba-ila proper they mean at least a number of groups. According to Smith and Dale, while the Ila themselves restrict the name to inhabitants of Namwala district, there are a number of others outside its limits who also claim to be Ila. Such are the people to the west whom the Ba-ila call *Bambo*, ‘the western fork’ and the *Babizhi* in the south.²¹ Smith and Dale explain that the same may be said of the *Balundwe* to the south-east. Their dialect is rather different and they are to some extent

intermixed with *Batonga*. According to Smith and Dale these are near enough to have the right to the sacred name of Ba-ila.

Furthermore, Smith and Dale highlight that along the Kafue River are the river people, the *Batwa*. Their name is widely found in Africa. Smith and Dale explain that the name may mean ‘aborigines’ and has been applied by the Bantu invaders to the peoples they found in possession. Smith and Dale point out that there are many differences between the Ba-ila and the *Batwa*. They seem to have a language of their own but those living near Bwila speak Ila.²² Smith and Dale further illustrate that on the north are the *Bambala*, ‘the northern people.’ Smith and Dale note that except near the Bwila border the *Bambala* were somewhat intermixed with their neighbours the Kaonde.²³ This observation by Smith and Dale on the *Bambala* is significant to the study on the *Kaonde-Ila* in that because of their northern location and proximity to the Kaonde under chief Mumba we can suggest that this is the Ila group that easily came into contact with the Kaonde in Mumbwa and through intermingling and intermarriages this could have led to the disintegration of their original ethnic identity and a mushrooming of a new *Kaonde-Ila* identity.

In his account, Andrew Roberts argues that the Ila have a great and deserved reputation as fighting men but their comparative paucity in number and the possession of great herds of cattle made them a great prey to invaders organised on a large scale.²⁴ Roberts states that during the early nineteenth century the Ila were invaded in the north and a colony was established by Kaingu in the Hook of the Kafue. According to Roberts, Kaingu traced his origins from the Kaonde.²⁵ Roberts further explains that Kaingu’s people hunted elephants and his colony adopted many Ila customs, kept a few cattle and the people were of such mixed origin that the Ila called them *Lumbu*, meaning foreigners.²⁶ The observations made by Roberts are important as

they provide an understanding on the origins of the *Kaonde-Ila* which is the central theme of this study.

Also very significant to the *Kaonde-Ila* study is the account by Robin J. Fielder. He records that some sections of Ila groups settled in Mumbwa district along the north-western and north-eastern margins of the Kafue Flats. Fielder illustrates that the flats vary from nine to thirty two kilometres in width. He highlights that in the rain season lasting from January to about May the flats are several metres deep in water. According to Fielder the flood rises and disperses some two months after the end of the rains. Fielder explains that in the dry season, the flats are used for grazing cattle.²⁷ Fielder further emphasises that the lagoons and the ox-bow channels sunken below the surface of the plain provide cattle with sweet grass during a season when animals in less fortunate areas are desperately searching for nourishment among the drying bush land vegetation. For this reason, Fielder notes that the plain supports a higher concentration of cattle.²⁸ The study by Fielder is important in that it points to the environmental factors that had an impact on the economic activities of the *Kaonde-Ila* people.

Of greater value to this study are the works by Yizenge Chondoka. In his study of the history of the Tumbuka and the Senga, Chondoka records that the Bisa of Mwatayamvo came and occupied Chimanyavyose chiefdom from 1780. According to Chondoka, the Bisa did not fight with the Tumbuka under Chimanyavyose. The Bisa conquered the Tumbuka chiefdom by trickery method.²⁹ Chondoka explains that thereafter, the Bisa who were renamed Senga by the indigenous Tumbuka established Senga chiefdoms in the territory of Chimanyavyose. Chondoka states that leadership changed hands from the Tumbuka to the Senga. The Senga authorities have been ruling the indigenous Tumbuka from about 1785. Chondoka records that the relationship that has developed between the two groups since then is excellent and the rulers have continued

receiving great respect from the Senga and the Tumbuka in the district.³⁰ Chondoka explains that since the Senga came without women they gradually married the local Tumbuka women. That was the beginning of the loss of much of their mother tongue, Chi-Bisa language that is very similar to Chi-Bemba language. They also adopted many aspects of Tumbuka culture.³¹ The study by Chondoka on the Senga and the Tumbuka is important in that it will enhance the conceptual framework of the study on ethnic construction.

Also essential to the *Kaonde-Ila* study are the works by P.B. Mushindo on the history of the Bemba. Documenting the history of the Bemba, Mushindo explains that when the Bemba settled in that part of Zambia called Kasama district, their language was called Luba.³² According to Mushindo, Luba was not known by the Bemba and other tribes among whom they settled. Mushindo illustrates that as time went on; the Luba were absorbed by a very small ethnic group. Bemba and the language of the latter with a mixture of Luba words is the language spoken by this ethnic group even today.³³ According to Mushindo, many people of similar or related ethnic groups such as the Tabwa and Bisa like to call themselves Bemba and they take tattoo marks to appear like real Bemba.³⁴ The study by Mushindo on the Bemba is crucial in that it helps in the conceptualisation of the study on ethnic construction.

It is also important to note the works by Mutumba Mainga. In her account, Mainga records that, the people known as Ma-Lozi today were originally known as 'Aluyi or the Aluyana' until the nineteenth century. According to Mainga, in the middle of the nineteenth century, the Aluyi were conquered by the Makololo, a people of Sotho stock from the south and it is alleged that the Aluyi were given the name of Ma-Lozi by the Makololo.³⁵

In the same dimension, the observations made by Mainga on the Lozi are also noted by Max Gluckman who in his account on the Lozi records that the name Lozi is of comparatively new

origin. He points out that formally the people were known as Aluyi or Aluyana. In the middle of the nineteenth century they were temporarily conquered by the Makololo a horde with the Basotho nucleus under whom their name seems to have changed to Barotse.³⁶ He illustrates that since the Aluyi liberated their country from the Kololo, but retained the Kololo language, *Rotse* has become Lozi in accordance with regular phonetic changes of *r* to *l* and *ts* to *z*. The surface similarity of *Rotse* with *Hurutshé*, the present stock of the Tswana (*Bechuana*) and with Rozwi, the dominant ‘Shona’ group has led some ethnologists to relate the Aluyi to these peoples in the south.³⁷ But the Lozi’s own legends, ecological, linguistic and ethnological evidence undoubtedly show that they are akin to the Lunda in the north. The studies by Mainga and Gluckman on the Lozi are significant in that they help in improving the conceptual framework of the study on ethnic construction.

It is evident from the foregoing survey of writings that some of them give a guide on how to fill the gaps on the *Kaonde-Ila* study. However, it appears many shortcomings emerge from the combined works. It is clear that none of them has evenly explored the evolution and formation of an ethnic group in Zambia long after most of the ethnic groups now living in Zambia had settled in the country from a historical perspective. In close reference to Central Province and Mumbwa district in particular none of the works has vividly documented the evolution and formation of the *Kaonde-Ila* People.

1.5. Conceptual Framework

The concept of ethnicity adopted by this study is based upon the idea by Irving Kaplan and others and Fredrick Barth that the term ‘ethnic’ has been employed in scholarly sources for a group of people with a consciousness of its own identity, usually symbolised by its own self-given name and commonality of territory, customs, language, history, socio-political and

economic organisation. This awareness of a separate ethnic identity may arise from migrations and association in a new locality, circumstances of conquest or a combination of these. Ethnic identity may also come about when conquering groups become submerged by a powerful local people or even acquire the language of the people they dominate. Furthermore a new ethnic group may emerge when large ethnic groups conquer small ones, bring them under their political control and transmit part of their culture to the conquered subjects.³⁸ This study examines the Kaplan and others and Fredrik Barth's conceptualisation of ethnic constructions and uses their approach to interrogate the process as it relates to the *Kaonde-Ila* of Mumbwa district.

1.6. Organisation of the dissertation

This dissertation is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is the introduction and the historical background of the study. This chapter also attempts to review the works of other scholars which were relevant to the study.

The second chapter contains a summary of the physical setting, climate, environment and ecology of Mumbwa district which are important on the evolution and formation of the *Kaonde-Ila* people. The chapter also gives a historical background of the *Kaonde-Ila* chieftainships. Special attention is given as to how each of these chieftainships was established in Mumbwa district.

The third chapter looks at the extent to which these groups of the Kaonde who moved from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (D.R.C) briefly settled in North Western Province's districts of Solwezi and Kasempa and some Ila groups from Namwala areas in Southern Province acquired a new language and how they evolved a new culture, customs, traditions and a new socio-political organisation that came to be called *Kaonde-Ila* by which they are identified today as an ethnic group.

Chapter four examines how the geographical position of Mumbwa district in Central Province provided an area of transition between the main economic areas of Namwala in Southern Province, Solwezi and Kasempa in North-Western Province. The chapter is a further attempt to highlight the extent to which the environmental pattern of Mumbwa district in which these Kaonde and Ila groups settled enforced a system of economic activities with which the *Kaonde-Ila* were identified. The fifth chapter is the conclusion of the study.

1.7. Research Methodology

Data for this dissertation was collected first from the University of Zambia Main Library where both primary and secondary sources which included Colonial Annual Reports, books, journal articles and dissertations were consulted and analysed. These sources provided me a broad view on the evolution and formation of the *Kaonde-Ila* people of Mumbwa district. Secondly, data was collected from the National Archives of Zambia. The data collected was from primary sources and other documents notably, District Note Books, Annual Reports and Tour Reports. The documents contained vital information on the *Kaonde-Ila* people. The final part of data collection involved field work in Kasempa, Solwezi, Mumbwa, Itezhi-Tezhi and Namwala districts. Different categories of people were interviewed in order to find out about the origins and cultural transformation of the *Kaonde-Ila*.

ENDNOTES

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36. Max Gluckman, 'The Lozi of Barotseland in North-Western Rhodesia' in E. Colson and M. Gluckman (eds) *Seven Tribes of Central Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), p.3.

37. Gluckman. 'The Lozi of Barotseland in North-Western Rhodesia,' p.3.
38. Kaplan et al, *Area Hand book for Zambia* (2nd Ed) (Washington D.C: American University, 1974), p.75. Also see Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, p.10.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0. PHYSICAL SETTING OF THE AREA, CLIMATE, ENVIRONMENT, ECOLOGY AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF *KAONDE-ILA* CHIEFTAINSHIPS IN MUMBWA DISTRICT.

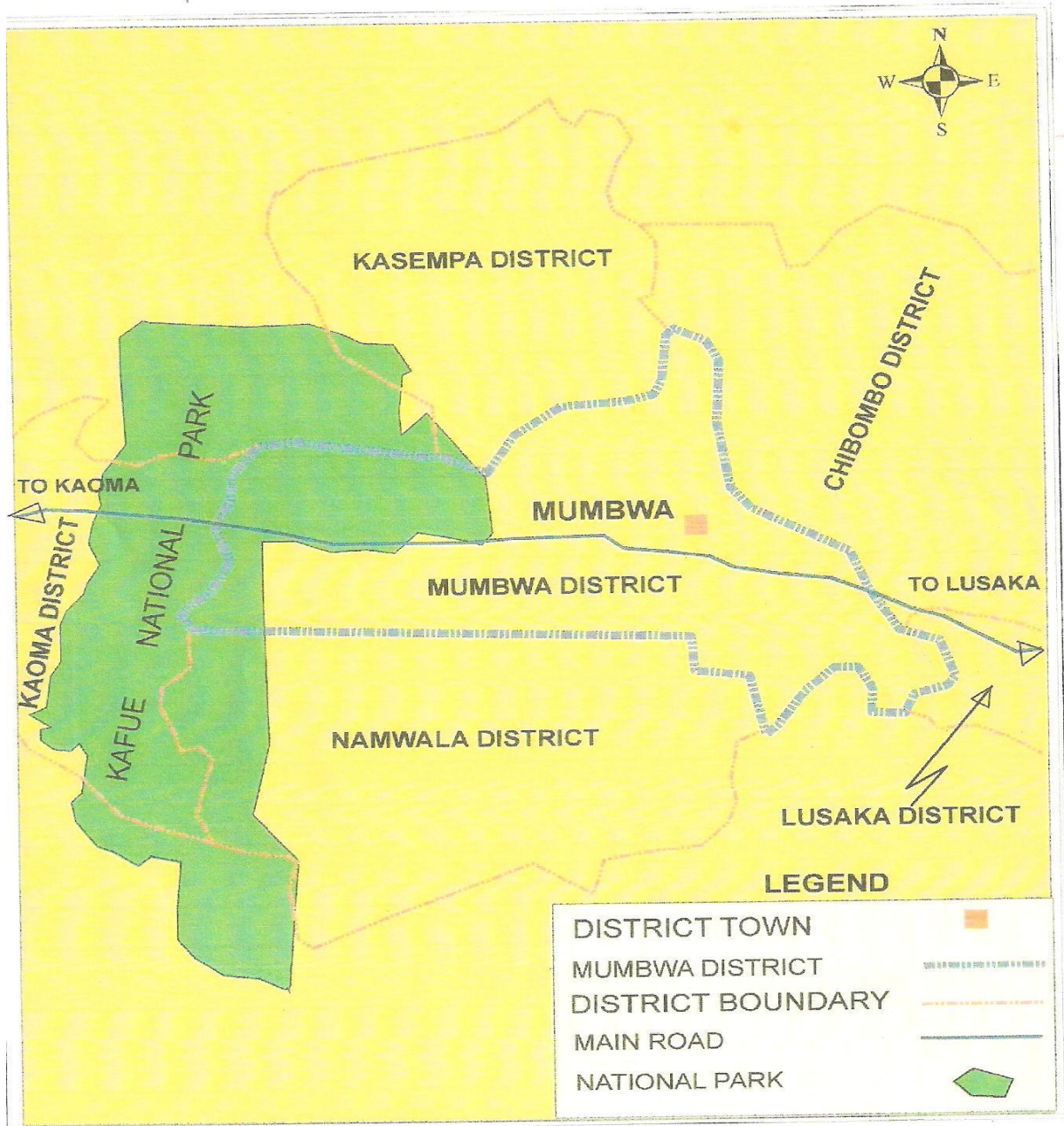
2.1. Introduction

The environment consists of all the elements that influence people's living conditions. The environment provides resources with which to achieve development. A Special relationship, therefore, is created between the population and the environment.¹ In this context therefore, the unique characteristics of Mumbwa's climatic, environmental and ecological factors had far-reaching consequences in setting the *Kaonde-Ila* distinct and apart from their neighbours. Certain of their characteristics were directly traceable to the land and the circumstances under which they lived. This chapter discusses the location, boundary delineation, climate, ecology and the environmental aspects of Mumbwa district. The chapter demonstrates how migration and settlement of the people who came to constitute the *Kaonde-Ila* society in Mumbwa district was also to a great extent determined by environmental and ecological factors. Therefore, the chapter also addresses the establishment of *Kaonde-Ila* chieftainships in the area.

2.2. Area of Study, Climate, Environment and Ecology of Mumbwa District.

The *Kaonde-Ila* people inhabit the central, south-western and north-western parts of Mumbwa district. Mumbwa district is one of the six administrative centres in Central Province of Zambia. The district covers the western part of Central Province bordering Kaoma in Western Province, Namwala in Southern Province, Lusaka in the east, Kasempa in the North-Western Province and Chibombo to the north-east.² About a third of the land in the west, south-west and north-west of

MAP SHOWING MUMBWA DISTRICT



INSERT: OF PROVINCES & DISTRICTS MAP OF ZAMBIA
 MINISTRY OF LANDS, ENERGY & WATER DEVELOPMENT
 SURVEY DEPARTMENT, LUSAKA.

the district is covered by the Kafue National Park (KNP), several Game Management Areas (GMA) and forest reserves. These areas are particularly devoid of people or inhabitants so that the average population density for the settled areas is 10.5 people per square kilometre.³ The population is dispersed over the area in small villages.

Like most parts of Central Province the district is a monotonous plateau land with an average elevation of 1,202 metres above sea level.⁴ There are however, a few peaks which rise up to 1,500 metres, the highest of which are the Nambala hills found in the southern part of the district. The people who inhabit these well wooded hills have the advantage of diversified and interesting scenery but on the other hand, these same hills and valleys are infested by tsetse fly and thus do not have the wealth in cattle that those who live on the plain have.⁵ The general landscape is that of a gently sloping plateau. The altitude drops considerably at its southern border with the Kafue Flats. The land is mainly cut by a river system which flows into the Kafue River. Notable among these numerous streams are the Chibila, Lutale, Lukanga and the Nansenga.⁶ Many villages cluster near these rivers and streams for easy access to water. The many streams in the area originate in the grass plains called dambos. These are shallow depressions within the plateau surface which are swampy during the rainy season but in most cases dry up in the dry season.

Like other parts of Zambia and Southern Africa as a whole, Mumbwa district experiences a climate with three distinct seasons. The summer or hot rain season runs from November to March. This is characterised by heavy rains in January and February leading to the flooding of the numerous streams that run through the district and the Kafue Flats in the south. The cold dry season sets in around April and runs up to August. This season is followed by the hot dry season which runs from September to November when the rains break in.⁷ It is during this season when the *Kaonde-Ila* in the southern part of the district drive their cattle for lagoon grazing on the flats.

The cattle remain there until the floods force them back to the dry land areas around December. The rainfall in the district is particularly determined by the humid Congo air stream which brings rains from the equatorial regions from about October to April. The rains in the area are influenced by the Congo air and stabilised by the Inter-tropical Convergence Zone. This southward movement of the equatorial low pressure belt in the rain months is associated with the migration of the overhead sun. With the arrival of the rains at the end of October or the beginning of November there is a sharp decrease in temperature in spite of the continued heating power of the overhead sun. Much rainfall is mainly confined to between December and April giving a mean annual rainfall of 1, 184 mm.⁸

About 50 percent of the district is covered by plateau soils.⁹ These ferrallitic ‘sand veldt’ soils found in the northern part of the district are fairly leached and have low fertility. They are suitable for extensive cultivation of grains such as sorghum, finger millet and maize. The other types of soils found in the district are black clays, found throughout the flats in the south. Other areas are associated with red clays, dambo, hill soils, rock and rubble.¹⁰ In the northern parts of the district, the dominant vegetation cover is “Miombo “woodlands, a semi-continuous tree cover dominated by small trees of the *Brachystegia* and *Juberrnadia* family.¹¹ Along the edges of dambos vegetation is thick consisting of a large variety of trees and shrubs. In general the ground is slightly covered with short grasses. Large anthills are a noticeable characteristic of the landscape. In the southern parts of the district, the vegetation is typical savannah forming a wide plain with varied and diverse tree and grass species in the Kafue flats. The flats are devoid of vegetation except at the flood margins where anthill vegetation (mixed scrub and small tree species occur).¹²

The presence of tsetse fly is a significant aspect of the ecology of Mumbwa district in the west, south-western and north-western parts which are covered mostly by the Kafue National Park (KNP). Nearly 70 percent of the district in these areas is plagued by glossina morsitans in varying degrees.¹³ The combination of a very low population density and a high density of game due to the existence of many protected areas combine to make this area the most seriously tsetse infested parts of Zambia.¹⁴ This fly is a vector carrying Bovine trypanosomiasis from a number of animal species to humans and livestock and from humans to humans (human trypanosomiasis). Wild animals usually buffalo, antelope, warthog and bush pig serve as reservoirs of trypanosomiasis.

To give a comprehensive view, it is important to mention the wealth of animal life in this district. In the south-western areas of the district grass species are diverse depending on the land treatment and degree of tree cover. Many grass types are extremely palatable and nutritious to cattle. In addition to supporting large herds of cattle, the flats are important for fishing as well as hunting as they support large numbers of game.¹⁵ Travelling across the wide plain Holub saw extensive herds of game, large and small. Thus Holub remarked; “In between large herds of zebras, stripped gnus, eland and kabonda grazed. At times we even saw reedbuck and oribi here and there.”¹⁶

At certain seasons the earth, the heavens and the waters all teem with life. Although the largest animals are seldom seen, herds of elephants on their migrations visit the district annually following a route centuries old. Hippopotamus are also still numerous but have decreased much in later years owing to the campaign waged against them.¹⁷ The small fauna are still found in numbers and varieties. In the forest bordering the flats, sable, waterbuck and kudu are found in company with the graceful roebuck, bushbuck and steenbok while the largest of the antelope

family, the royal eland is the most plentiful of them all. On the Kafue flats the wildebeest, the roan antelope and the zebra are constantly seen grazing. Other animals found on the Kafue flats are the reedbuck, puku and lechwe. The latter congregate in vast herds, and may be seen daily literally not in hundreds but in thousands. The morasses and papyrus swamps are the home of the sitatunga.¹⁸

With such an abundance of food-supply, it can readily be supposed that the carnivores were not absent. Lions, leopards, serval, cheetahs, wild dogs and jackals were constantly hunting their prey. All the members of the cat family are numerous.¹⁹ Snakes abound in great variety but fortunately cause few casualties. The mamba, the puff-adder, the African cobra and a small silver snake named *chisembwe* are the most deadly, though nearly all are dangerous. The sandy bush contains land lizards and land tortoises.

Of the game birds the largest is the greater bustard, closely followed in point of size by the spur wing goose.²⁰ Both the greater and lesser bustard are common at certain seasons. The dikkop is always to be found in the forests with the common guinea-fowl and five kinds of francolin and partridge. Quail and button quail arrive in numbers and snipe of two varieties (painted and jack snipe) are plentiful. Storks of several varieties, cranes, hornbills and flamingoes are regular frequenters of the flats and ponds and are daily seen picking up small fish and snails.²¹ The beautiful crested crane, after the breeding season is seen in flocks of forty to fifty.

While land birds are plentiful, it is difficult to describe the numbers in which the water-fowl exist. Flocks of ducks such as spur wing goose, the Egyptian geese, and knob-nosed duck, whistling duck, white marked duck and a number of other kinds of duck such as the widgeon often hide in sand banks which they frequent.²² All along the reed-beds fringing the Kafue river the attention is arrested by a succession of water-birds such as egrets, the blue and white herons,

pelicans, clatter bills, hammer wings, darters, kingfishers of wonderful plumage, ibises, plovers, sea swallows and gulls are all seen preying on the marvelous food supply the river holds for them while high over the handsome fish-eagle with its harsh scream sails around.²³

2.3. Establishment of *Kaonde-Ila* Chieftainships in Mumbwa District.

Documenting the socio-political history of Central Zambia, Andrew Roberts records that it is characterised not by centralisation but by fission (a process of splitting and dividing into two or more groups) and migrations.²⁴ In some cases the migrations were triggered by family quarrels. For example the Kaonde under chief Kaindu were at the beginning of the eighteenth century living under Mwatayamvo whose kingdom was divided against itself. Smith and Dale record that Kaindu and his brothers Nyoka, Mushima and Kapijimpanga were driven south into the Luba country in what is today Kasempa district adjacent to today's Kaoma area. After some time, Kaindu moved on in search of a new area and came to the unoccupied area between chief Mumba and the Kafue River in the north.²⁵ Roberts also explains that during the nineteenth century, some groups of the Ila living in the Hook of the Kafue within proximity of present day Mumbwa district were invaded by a group of elephant hunters under the leadership of Kaingu who traced his origins from the Kaonde. Kaingu's people and his colony adopted many Ila customs, kept a few cattle and that the people who evolved were of such mixed origin that the Ba-ila proper called them *Lumbu*, meaning foreigners.²⁶

Given the rich climatic, environmental and ecological resources of Mumbwa district some Ila groups from the northern areas of Namwala district in Southern Province were also attracted to come and settle in Mumbwa district through a process of migrations in form of hunting expeditions, and colonising parties. As argued by Fredrick Barth in his conceptualisation of ethnic construction that an ethnic group may arise as a result of migration and association in a

new locality.²⁷ We can thus suggest that the settlement of these two groups of people in Mumbwa district which were ethnically different in terms of origin and the resulting intermingling and intermarriages between the two groups was in itself a foundation of the evolution and the formation of the *Kaonde-Ila* as a new ethnic group. This section of the study therefore, historicises how some of these sections of the Kaonde from the present day Democratic Republic of the Congo (D.R.C) briefly settled in North-Western Province's districts of Kasempa and Solwezi and some sections of the Ila formerly from Namwala in Southern Province were actively engaged in bringing about *Kaonde-Ila* settlements in Mumbwa district of Central Province.

2.3.1 Chief Mumba

Chief Mumba's chiefdom surrounds Mumbwa *Boma* and his own village is about seven kilometres away to the north. He is thus the nearest of the *Kaonde-Ila* chiefs to the *Boma* and Mumbwa township.²⁸ According to one tradition, in about 1870 a group of Kaonde people under Chonamuningo specialising in elephant hunting left Kola in present day Democratic Republic of Congo (D.R.C) pursuing elephants until they reached Kasempa. In pursuit of these elephants they crossed the Kafue River and reached Mumbwa caves.

When they arrived at the Mumbwa Caves, this group of elephant hunters under Chonamuningo found the Bushmen living there. Upon seeing tall people the Bushmen fled the area and headed for the south.²⁹ During the 1890s in an attempt to establish a Native Authority, the British colonialists came to this area and asked for a chief. They were led to Mumbwa Caves where they found people living under the leadership of Chonamuningo. The colonialists appointed Chonamuningo as chief and proceeded in naming the area "Mumbwa" (corrupted from Mumba).³⁰

Chonamuningo the first Mumba is buried at the Mumbwa Caves. As the Kaonde followed a matrilineal system of inheritance, upon his death, Chonamuningo was supposed to be succeeded by his nephew Kabonzhanchili but because Kabonzhanchili was still young, his sister Bombwe was appointed to rule as regent. When Kabonzhanchili grew up, he assumed leadership as the second Mumba. Kabonzhanchili shifted from the Mumbwa Caves and came to settle at Kalilwe near the Mumbwa Hot Spring on the Chibila stream.³¹

It was during the reign of Kabonzhanchili, the second Mumba, that effective leadership over the area was established as he is credited with the founding of a ruling dynasty in form of villages which are still found in the area today. Kabonzhanchili inherited one of his uncle's wives who was left pregnant. Kabonzhanchili's adopted wife gave birth to a son who was named Sempe.³² Later, Kabonzhanchili got married to a wife of his own choice with whom he bore a son who was named Kasemune. Kasemune, his brothers and sisters crossed the Chibila stream to go and find their own village while Sempe remained in his own village as well. Kabonzhanchili got married to another woman with whom he had a son who was named Mukuba. Mukuba and his brothers also went to open their own villages. Langson Mukuba who is the current chief Mumba is descended from the Mukuba line. Kabonzhanchili further married a third wife with whom he had three daughters and a son. The son by the name of Chali upon growing up went on to find the Chilimboyi village.³³

When the Kaonde moved into Mumbwa area under Chonamuningo, the first Mumba, they were just a small group until about the 1880s when there was a large immigration from the Kaonde country. By that time, the first Mumba had acquired cattle from the Ila and his people had intermarried with them.³⁴ This had set the foundation and evolution of the *Kaonde-Ila* in the area.

2.3.2 Chief Kaindu

On leaving Mumbwa *Boma* and travelling north one immediately leaves Mumba's area and enters that of chief Kaindu. The Kaonde under chief Kaindu were at the beginning of the eighteenth century Lunda natives living under Mwatayambo whose kingdom was then divided against itself. A section of his people under the Balonga clan born from Nonyi, sister of a reigning chief whose first born was Kapijimpanga, followed by Nyoka, Mushima and Kamutombang'ombe (later known as Kaindu) being the last born, were driven south into the Luba country in what is now Kasempa district and adjacent to an area there occupied by Mwene Kahari (the Mashasha chief now of Mankoya-Kaoma). Mwene Kahari received the visitors amicably and gave Kapijimpanga his daughter to marry.³⁵

After a time the friendly relations between the Mashasha of Mwene Kahari and the Kaonde under Kapijimpanga were broken by a quarrel between the two chiefs over a question of wearing the *impande* shell (an emblem of authority introduced by the Kaonde).³⁶ Mwene Kahari fought with Kapijimpanga and made things so uncomfortable for him that Kapijimpanga sent one Kabimbi to search for a new country for him to settle in and make gardens in preparation for migration. Kabimbi found Mumba living about eight kilometres west of where Mumbwa *Boma* now is and from him obtained permission to settle in the unoccupied country between him (Mumba) and the Kafue River in the north. Kabimbi settled on the left side of the Nansenga and was soon followed by Kapijimpanga and Kamutombang'ombe and their people who by now called themselves Bakaonde.³⁷

Soon after he had established his people south of the Kafue where they came into contact and fought the Baila on and off for years, Kapijimpanga returned north of the Kafue and succeeded in driving his old enemy Mwene Kahari south to where he is now on the headwaters of the Luena

river in Kaoma district. Kapijimpanga did not return south after his triumph but left his relation Kamutambang'ombe to be chief of the people he had brought down. Kamutambang'ombe had by now adopted the title of Kaindu.³⁸ Kaindu became the hereditary title of the new chieftainship. The Kaonde under Kaindu intermarried freely with the Baila as the Kaonde now crossed the Kafue River into Ila country which then extended further and was more densely populated than it is now. A protracted conflict took place in which the poisoned arrows of the invaders gave them a great advantage and the Baila were compelled to surrender a considerable stretch of territory.³⁹

2.3.3 Chief Chibuluma

Chief Chibuluma's area is along the Mumbwa-Namwala Road and goes as far as the Nansenga River. The chieftainship was originally established by Mwanza an Ila from the *Bambala* "people of the north" who settled in an area called Lwanda also known as Lukumba. This area was north of Namwala district. Mwanza came to this place with his brother Mayaba who became the second chief after the death of Mwanza. Mayaba was succeeded by Namwenda. After Namwenda came Chinenga, then Chilele and the sixth chief was Shakupelenga. All these were *Bena Mpongo* (the goat's clan) who were the rightful owners of the chieftainship.⁴⁰

The hereditary title of 'Chibuluma' is associated with an event that occurred during the reign of Chilele, the fifth chief. Chilele sent his father-in-law who was accompanied by four slaves to go and buy an extra slave in Kaonde country under chief Ngabwe in the north. He gave them three *impandes* (emblems of chiefship) and one *Isalu ulya Nzuzhi* (a serval skin). They went straight to chief Ngabwe in Kaonde land to go and exchange the items which they were given for a slave. Chief Ngabwe gave them a slave by the name of Nsumbula. The slave picked his belongings and

carried them on a *mukuli* (carrier that is put on somebody's shoulders with the loads placed on both sides). They went with this slave and delivered him to chief Chilele.⁴¹

This slave, a bachelor grew up in Chilele's home and while serving as a slave he got married to a woman by the name of Mulende. When Shakupelenga, the successor to Chilele died, Shamukana a woman vested with authority to sanction the appointment of the next chief appointed Nsumbula to act as chief on behalf of Mambwe Chipanzha the rightful heir to the throne who was still working in South Africa. In the process of Nsumbula's reign in acting capacity, he named himself as 'Chibuluma' meaning *wabuluma bwami bwabeni* (one who has roared for other people's chieftainship).⁴²

Nsumbula could have been purchased as a slave in the early twentieth century because slavery seems to have been going on in these areas until on July 16, 1906 when a proclamation was issued by Lewanika, the paramount chief declaring that all slaves held by him and his people were thereby free. This law covered the Ba-ila as well since they were considered part of Lewanika's subject peoples.⁴³

Colonial officials also had to deal with vestiges of slavery long after the establishment of colonial rule as recorded by Captain Dale who in November, 1917 thus commented on the continued existence of slavery in Northern Rhodesia:

The government has taken up a very strong attitude over domestic slavery and refuses to recognise it at all. The men and women were assembled in each district and had the matter explained to them. Those who wished to claim their freedom were told to step out and were given certificates. It created a great stir and scores claimed their freedom and the BSA Company was heartily to be congratulated.⁴⁴

The circumstances under which Nsumbula became chief also could have been due to the nature of the Ila slavery system. In the Ila slavery system, many slaves lived a fairly happy life though they still remained slaves. In Ila society a slave could even hold property but he could never call it his own.⁴⁵ The Baila spoke of a slave redeeming himself. Through industry and zeal in his

master's service a man could raise himself to a position of trust and influence so that he could have the name *mwenzina shimatwangakwe* ("his lords friend").⁴⁶

Furthermore, if a man was zealous he would do all he could to increase his master's wealth. A slave could be sent to trade and would do his utmost to gain slaves for his master. As the slaves increased he would be regarded by them as their chief and so would enjoy the dignity of being able to use them as his servants.⁴⁷ It is possibly because of the nature of the Ila slavery system that we can suggest reasons why chief Chilele could have sent his father-in-law in the company of four other slaves to go and buy him an extra slave in the Kaonde country of chief Ngabwe.

It is noticeable that the first chiefs were known by their own names whereas ever since Nsumbula took over all the subsequent chiefs took the title 'Chibuluma' in addition to their names. Upon the ascendancy of Nsumbula to the throne some village headmen left Lwanda and went to settle in Makunku near Namwala and others went to Moono. The majority of the village headmen remained under Nsumbula in what had now become known as Chibuluma.

Under the 1950 declaration which resulted in the creation of the Lutale Resettlement Scheme (L.R.S) to make separate Game Management Areas (G.M.A) in the Kafue National Park and to avoid a lot of tsetse fly infections, all the villages under chief Chibuluma which were west of the Lutale river and south of the designated resettlement area were moved to the east of the Lutale river. The operation was completed by the middle of 1955. In order to extend the "fly" free belt more people under chief Chibuluma were further moved eastwards and settled on both sides of the Mumbwa-Namwala road where they live to date.⁴⁸ Besides the ascendancy of a Kaonde to the Chibuluma throne, the resettlement of some of the people under Chibuluma further east by the government through the Lutale Resettlement Scheme brought these people within proximity of

the Kaonde under chief Mumba. This situation provided a conducive environment for the formation and evolution of the *Kaonde-Ila* as a new ethnic group.

2.3.4 Chief Moono

Moono's area extends along the Chibila valley from a point about 8 kilometres south of Mumbwa *Boma*, southwards along the Chibila valley as far as the Mumbwa-Namwala boundary. All except two villages, Mululi and Mbabala are situated on the edge of the Chibila dambo or on the tributary dambos and the majority are within one kilometre of the Chibila stream and have gardens within the dambo.⁴⁹

The origin of this chieftainship is also associated with a section of the Ila people north of Namwala district known as *Bambala* "people of the north" who left an area known as Nakanjoli and came to settle in Lwanda in an area in which they asked chief Chilele (fifth in line of what came to be the Chibuluma dynasty) for a place to settle.⁵⁰ Chilele instructed Mwanashendi to demarcate a boundary for them to settle in. Other relatives started coming and the population grew. Originally all this area belonged to Mwanza founder of what came to be the Chibuluma chieftainship.⁵¹

Basically these people were great fishermen who caught fish in the Chibila stream using *Miono* (plural for Moono). Moono was a fish trap in the form of a conical basket made of light sticks and bark-string. It was elongated and with an inside trapdoor called *buvwazhi*.⁵² The fish entering the wide open end found themselves unable to come out. The *Miono* were arranged in numbers at the confluence of the Chibila and other streams. It is from this fish trap that the name Moono is derived.⁵³

Their first leader was Shing'onze a great hunter who hunted big game by digging lines of cleverly concealed pitfalls called *Milambwe*.⁵⁴ Shing'onze got married to a woman called

Munyambala with whom he bore a son who was named as Chuupa Mabula. When the Europeans came, Shing'onze and his people were so scared that they went into hiding. Chuupa Mabula came to meet the Europeans and because of his courage, the Europeans crowned Chuupa Mabula as chief Moono.⁵⁵

The people under chief Moono suffered greatly in the latter part of the nineteenth century for they were raided not only by the Kololo and Ndebele but also by the Chikunda from the south.

Later, the Mbwela attacked them and the Lenje raided them as recently as about 1910 forcing Moono to take refuge with chief Mumba of the Kaonde.⁵⁶ Smith and Dale also record that, because of their northern location the people under chief Moono were some what intermixed with their neighbours the Kaonde.⁵⁷

2.3.5 Chief Mulendema

Chief Mulendema's area is found in the western part of Mumbwa district along Lusaka-Mongu road. It is bordered by chief Mumba's area in the north-east, chief Chibuluma's area in the south-east and the western part of the chiefdom is in the Kafue National Park bordering Kaoma in Western Province.⁵⁸ Most of the population in Mulendema's chiefdom is settled along the Lutale stream. The chiefdom was founded by Munyama, a prominent Ila hunter of big game who came from the west in the Batenge area of Namwala district. He reached a place called Lwanga in Nalusanga area along Lusaka-Mongu road in present day Kafue National Park. Lwanga was a thicket of bush and small trees. This later became a shrine to which the people under Munyama used to go and pay homage to their ancestral spirits.⁵⁹ Having settled in this area, Munyama conquered the surrounding people especially those around the Nalusanga River. At that time, the Nalusanga used to be a very big stream and the people used to grow a lot of sorghum as maize was not yet known.⁶⁰

Munyama the head of this chiefly family and all the rulers that came after him were known by this title of Munyama. The name 'Mulendema' is associated with the fifth born son of Munyama who had great skill in singing and drumming. Mulendema was the term used to describe the good quality of the sound that he produced when beating the drums and the good sound that his voice produced when singing. When this chief's son became chief he kept the name of Mulendema and when the colonialists came they also maintained the title of Mulendema.⁶¹

The intrusion of Kaonde influence in this area which was in former times mostly Ila occurred during the reign of Kabambakuku Munyama who married a Kaonde woman from the northern Kaonde country as one of his wives. Later on, Kabambakuku Munyama's Kaonde wife brought a brother by the name of Lukataika Kalinso so that he could come and stay with her at the matrimonial home. Kabambakuku Munyama employed his brother-in-law Lukutaika Kalinso as a Kapasu (Native Authority policeman) at the palace.⁶² As a Kapasu, Kalinso carried out his duties so diligently to the point of being admired by the District Commissioner at the *Boma*.

The choice of heir to the throne was between the two sons of Kabambakuku Munyama namely, Matabula Mwanga and Chivwema Chuulabantu. Matabula Mwanga died while his father was still alive. Suspecting that his brother had been bewitched, Chivwema Chuulabantu left the area for Sala in Shakumbila area fearing that he would die in the same manner that his brother had died.⁶³ This situation created a vacuum in terms of who was to succeed Kabambakuku Munyama when he died in 1940. R.C. Denning the District Commissioner gave a three month ultimatum in which a successor to the throne had to be found.⁶⁴

The successor to the throne could not be easily found and the three months ultimatum given by the D.C elapsed. In order to facilitate development and continuity in the chiefdom, the D.C made a decision which was not to be questioned by anybody in which Lukutaika Kalinso (the Kapasu)

was appointed chief.⁶⁵ The members of the royal family were incensed with the decision made by the D.C of appointing Lukutaika Kalinso as chief who was a foreigner from Kaonde country and wanted him killed. The D.C protected Kalinso by keeping him at the *Boma* for some time. In protest the members of the royal family destroyed all the native authority and treasury documents at the palace by throwing them into the Lutale River.⁶⁶ The D.C sent messengers to go and punish these members of the royal family by way of whipping them using sjamboks. The members of the royal family and a number of villages comprising their supporters fled to the south in the border area with Namwala.

Lukutaika Kalinso was taken back to Mulendema and began ruling as chief under the protection of government messengers provided by the D.C. When Kalinso became chief, the Kaonde began migrating in large numbers to go and settle in Mulendema's area because their own person had now become chief.⁶⁷ This interference by colonial officials on behalf of claimants with appealing promise and personality made Kalinso consolidate his hold on power such that it became difficult for the owners of the chieftainship to get it back as Kalinso reigned for 43 years a period during which the majority of the rightful claimants to the throne died. At the same time, while the number of Kaonde villages in Mulendema increased that for Ila villages declined, turning the Ila into a minority group in their own area.

By the late 1930s state policies shifted towards creating bigger and allegedly more efficient Native Authorities. T.F. Stanford, Acting Chief Secretary in 1939, informed the Provincial Commissioners in the territory that, 'the present policy is to abolish petty subordinate authorities at suitable opportunities with the object of building up strong central authorities.'⁶⁸ As a consequence of this, the influx of the Kaonde in Mulendema's area reached the highest peak with the withdrawal of recognition of two Kaonde chieftainships of Kashinka and Kampengele in

1946 and 1948 respectively. Commenting on the influx of the Kaonde in Mulendema's area, District Commissioner for Mumbwa, H. Nigel Barry wrote:

Chief Mulendema's area quadrupled its territory since 1942 by taking over part of two abolished Kaonde authorities of Kampengele and Kashinka. The Native Authority that consisted of 12 villages in 1941 had grown since by the additions in whole or part of abolished authorities as follows: Part of Kashinka in 1946, 13 villages and part of Kampengele in 1948, 11 villages.⁶⁹

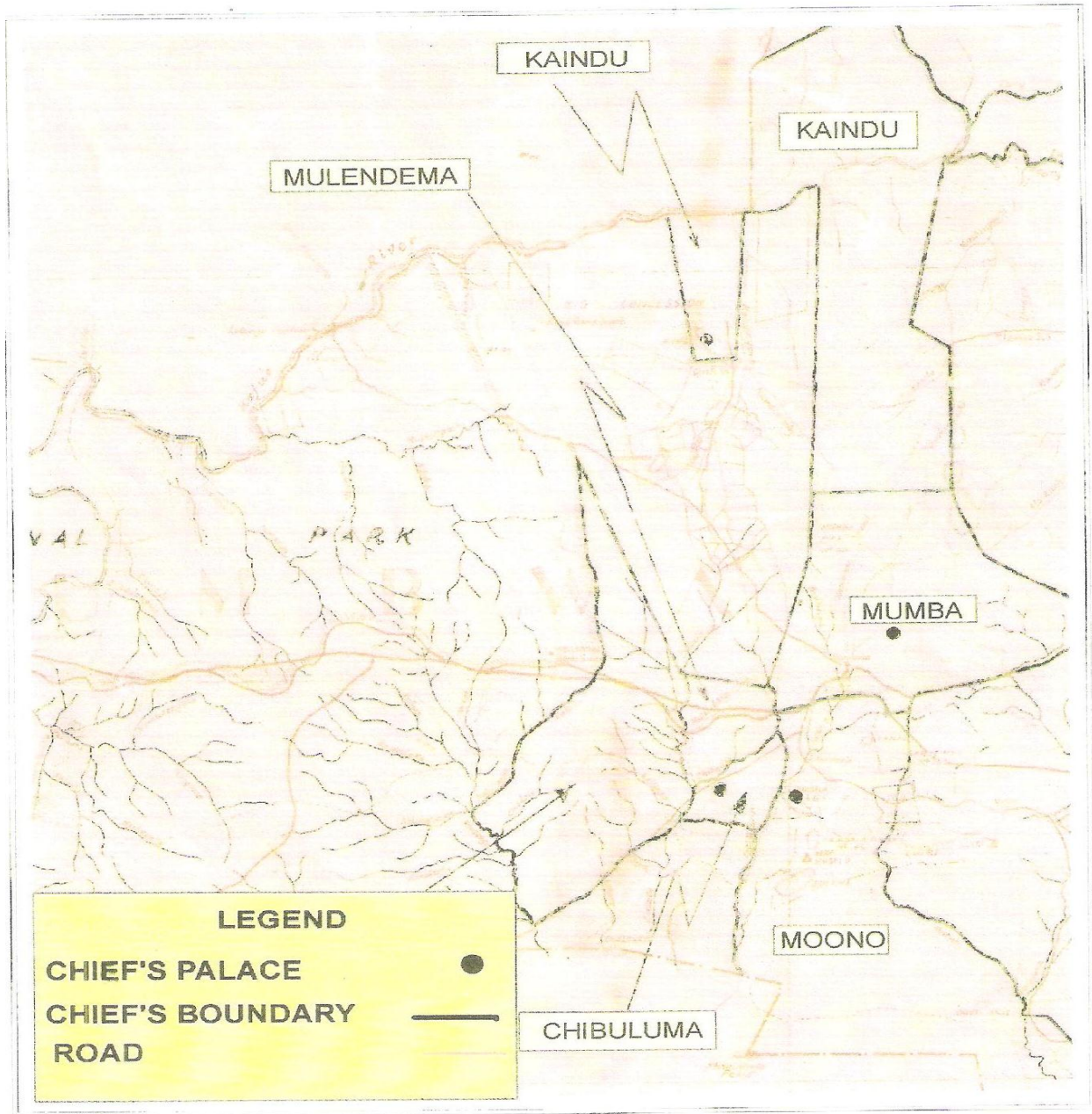
Therefore, the colonial government policy of restructuring which involved creating larger native authorities also had a profound effect of bringing the Kaonde and the Ila together in some parts of Mumbwa district leading to the emergence of a more ethnically integrated *Kaonde-Ila* society.

2.4. Conclusion

Ecologists and environmentalists have highlighted the importance of the environment to human existence. In this context the chapter has demonstrated that, because of the rich and delicately balanced ecosystem of Mumbwa district, some Ila groups from the northern areas of Namwala district in Southern Province and some Kaonde groups from Kasempa and Solwezi districts in North-Western Province through a process of migrations in form of hunting expeditions, slave trade and colonising parties were attracted to come and settle in Mumbwa district.

Later on the colonial government's policy of resettling people to make separate Game Management Areas in order to avoid a lot of tsetse fly infections and also governments concern about the caliber, ideology of native authority staff led to interference in chief installations and amalgamation of subordinate chiefs. This also precipitated the coming together of these two groups in Mumbwa where through intermarriages and intermingling they acquired similar linguistic, socio-cultural and economic characteristics that came to constitute a *Kaonde-Ila* society. The following chapter will examine some aspects of the changes that occurred in the *Kaonde-Ila* language, culture, customs and socio-political organisation as a measure of them having transformed into a new ethnic grouping.

MAP SHOWING KAONDE - ILA CHIEFS



INSERT: OF CENTRAL PROVINCE CHIEF'S BOUNDARY MAP
MINISTRY OF LANDS, ENERGY & WATER DEVELOPMENT
SURVEY DEPARTMENT LUSAKA

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CHAPTER THREE

3.0. THE *KAONDE-ILA*: LANGUAGE, CULTURE, CUSTOMS, TRADITIONS AND SOCIO- POLITICAL ORGANISATION.

3.1. Introduction

In their conceptualisation of ethnic construction, Kaplan and others argue that an ethnic group is understood to designate a population with a consciousness of its own identity usually symbolised by a commonality of territory, customs, language, history and socio-political organisation. This awareness of identity may arise from migrations and association in a new locality¹. In this context therefore, this chapter concentrates on examining the extent to which these groups of the Kaonde from Kasempa and Solwezi in North-Western Province and some Ila groups from the northern areas of Namwala in Southern Province, two ethnic groups with separate origins, through a process of invasions, trade and intermixing were transformed and evolved into a new ethnic grouping called *Kaonde-Ila* by the acquisition of a new language, culture, customs, traditions and a new socio-political organisation as a result of having settled in a new locality of Mumbwa District.

3.2. *Kaonde-Ila* Language

Fredrik Barth records that language is one of the features that people look for and exhibit to show identity. He points out that a new ethnic group may emerge in a situation where a conquering group becomes submerged by a powerful local people they dominate. Barth further argues that a new ethnic group may also emerge when large ethnic groups conquer small ones bring them under their political control and transmit part of their culture to the conquered people.² As argued by Barth, invaders may impose or lose their own language at the expense of others. Language changes over the course of time in which new dialects develop. It is thus no

easy matter to guess at which time the *Kaonde-Ila* language emerged apart from suggesting that the foundation for the emergence of the *Kaonde-Ila* language could have been laid early in the nineteenth century when one Kaingu, who traced his origins to the Kaonde established a colony north of the Ila not far from present day Mumbwa district. Kaingu's colony adopted many Ila customs and the people were of such mixed origins that the Ba-Ila proper called them *Lumbu*, meaning foreigners.³

The *Kaonde-Ila* language spoken in Mumbwa today is a mixture of the original Kaonde language spoken in Kasempa and Solwezi and the original Ila language spoken in Namwala in Southern Province modified into several different forms. The emergence and development of the *Kaonde-Ila* language was precipitated through intermingling and intermarriages which led to an on going influx of new words in the *Kaonde-Ila* vocabulary. *Kaonde-Ila* borrowed words from the original Kaonde and Ila which were combined and recycled to create new ones whilst losing old words. The extent and degree of this *Kaonde-Ila* language transformation was also noted by R.I. Cunningham the District Commissioner for Mumbwa District in 1956 who on a tour of the district commented as follows:

An interesting light was thrown on the break down of original ethnic identity by the fact that many of the people in the southern part of Mulendema and Chibuluma's areas did not know to which ethnic group they belonged. These people were in former times Ila, but they had so intermarried and intermingled with the Kaonde that all individual features of the two ethnic groups seem to have disappeared. *Kaonde-Ila* apparently is thought to be the language spoken and due to this fact the *Kaonde-Ila* treasury which was founded in 1937 brought together the various Kaonde and Ila chiefs.⁴

Although there are some similarities due to the fact that *Kaonde-Ila* language is descended from the two common ancestral Kaonde and Ila languages, listening to their individual acts of speech and utterances it is obvious that utterances of *Kaonde-Ila* differ in pronunciation, grammar and

vocabulary from the typical Kaonde spoken in Kasempa and Solwezi and the typical Ila spoken in Namwala district of Southern Province.⁵

The sociolinguist Jennifer Coates describes linguistic change as occurring in the context of linguistic heterogeneity.⁶ In this context, the linguistic change that took place leading to the evolution and development of the *Kaonde-Ila* language occurred in a society where the members were initially very different from each other. The linguistic change could have taken place when a new linguistic form used by some sub-group (Kaonde or Ila) within a speech community was adopted by other members of that community and accepted as a norm. Language was influenced by the changes that occurred in *Kaonde-Ila* society as a result of the two groups coming together. The classification of the *Kaonde-Ila* as members of a new ethnic group using the language bearing aspect as a measure of the evolution and formation of a new ethnic identity as argued by the ethnologists Kaplan and Barth is based on them exhibiting particular traits of a new language. Rough classifications between the *Kaonde-Ila* language and the original parent Kaonde and Ila languages based on the extent to which they differ can be made in order to prove the emergence and development of a new language called *Kaonde-Ila*. In the illustration below, Smith, Dale and Melland give us original Kaonde and Ila names for some game and other animals and Charles Mwambi gives us examples of how either an Ila or Kaonde name replaced the other⁷ in the

Kaonde-Ila transformation:

Kaonde	Ila	<i>Kaonde-Ila</i>	English
Mbizhi	Chibize	Chibize	Zebra
Makata	Chipile	Chipile	Puff adder
Ngulube	Nkuntula	Ngulube	Wild pig
Nsefu	Musefu	Musefu	Eland
Kiba	Inzhiba	Chiba	Ring dove
Kashya	Nakasha	Nakasha	Duiker

In their family relationships or when addressing an elderly person, most ethnic groups in Zambia use ‘Ba’, The Ba-ila proper never used ‘Ba’ when addressing elders.⁸ Because of this, Smith and Dale record that the Ba-ila were often thought of by the outsiders as being rude and yet they had scrupulous regard for laws of politeness.⁹ Being patrilineal the marriage practices of the Ba-ila proper were polygamous. Possibly because of the practice of polygamous marriages introduced by the Ba-ila who settled in Mumbwa district which created situations in which one Ila man married two or more Kaonde women, the children born from such unions were raised under a lot of Kaonde influence.¹⁰ As a result of this Kaonde influence, the examples below show that the *Kaonde-Ila* in Mumbwa adopted the title ‘Ba’ as a form of respect:

Kaonde	Ila	<i>Kaonde-Ila</i>	English
Bata	Ta	Baata	My father
Bama	Ma	Baama	My mother
Batabanyike	Tatamwaniche	Baatabaniche	My uncle
Batankazhi	Tatamukaintu	Baatabakaintu	My aunt
Bamwinsho	Achisha	Bachisha	My uncle

This adoption of the title ‘Ba’ by the *Kaonde-Ila* as a form of respect is in line with Chondoka’s argument in the review of the works of other scholars in chapter one which were relevant to the *Kaonde-Ila* study where he explains how the Bisa who conquered the Tumbuka were renamed Senga by the indigenous people. According to Chondoka the Senga who came without women gradually married the local Tumbuka. That was the beginning of the loss of their mother tongue Chi-Bisa language.¹¹ They also adopted many aspects of Tumbuka culture. This linguistic and cultural transformation that occurred to the Bisa is in line with the ethnologist Barth’s argument that a new ethnic identity may emerge when conquering groups become submerged by a powerful local people or even acquire the language of the people they dominate.

Besides conquest, the other sociolinguist William Labov, following Jennifer Coates records that change in language results from social interactions and processes.¹² In this regard, the other aspect worth noting in the *Kaonde-Ila* language transformation that occurred through the process of interactions between the two groups of the Kaonde and the Ila who settled in Mumbwa district was that the prefix of nouns or verbs that began with ‘K’ in Kaonde were changed in *Kaonde-Ila* language to start with ‘C’¹³ as in the few examples given below:

Kaonde	Ila	<i>Kaonde-Ila</i>	English
Kipushi	Ipushi	Chipushi	Pumpkin
Kijiba	Iliba	Chiliba	Falling trap
Kipuku	Chipuku	Chipuku	Ghost
Kibi	Chibyabi	Chibi	Something bad

As can be seen from the few given examples, the change in the prefix starting with ‘K’ in Kaonde to that starting with ‘C’ in *Kaonde-Ila* reflects Ila influence on those Kaondes who settled in Mumbwa. Through interactions between the Kaonde and the Ila new words and sayings were generated and integrated into speech. As a result of a new cultural environment, group of speakers reflected new places, situations and objects in their language.

3.3. *Kaonde-Ila* Culture, Customs and Traditions

When the Ila proper found in Namwala district and the Kaonde proper found in Kasempa and Solwezi districts are compared to the *Kaonde-Ila* living in Mumbwa district it is further noticeable that the linguistic change in these groups of the Kaonde and the Ila who settled in Mumbwa was part and parcel of the cultural, customary and traditional change taken as a whole. Edmund Leach argues that every ethnic group adopts new values and ideas, pursue different patterns of life and institutionalise different forms of behaviour when faced with different opportunities offered in a different environment. He records that, besides language, the other features that will show a separateness of an ethnic group are clothing and body decoration, house

architecture, ceremonial rites and socio-political organisation.¹⁴ In this context therefore, the study on the *Kaonde-Ila* socio-cultural transformation will progress on the line taken by Leach as the examples he has given reflect a number of overt cultural, customary and traditional forms of the *Kaonde-Ila* that can be considered as new traits exhibiting the effects of immigration, ecology and a history of adaptation to a new social environment.

The ethnic marks of the Ba-ila proper are two: first three slits (*mapobe*) cut on the temples and second the knocking out (*kubanga*) of the four upper incisor teeth. This was done in order to resemble their cattle. It had no connection with the puberty rites as it could be done before or while a boy or girl was only eight or ten years of age or after when they were sixteen.¹⁵ The *Kaonde-Ila* on the other hand perforated their ears and inserted a ring (*kaseka*) made of wire or a bit of grass (*kasanga*) or a stud made of two buttons (*imbula*).¹⁶

The other observable cultural transformation of the *Kaonde-Ila* was in the area of clothing and decoration. In the years before industrialization, nationalism, western education and much else began to alter their way of life, the Ba-ila proper were content to be almost naked. The men until quite recently wore no vestige of clothing. This custom was supported and encouraged by women who much preferred to have the men naked.¹⁷ Nowadays cotton prints are worn around the waist. Many wear shirts but the only European covering that is really popular is the blanket. The *Kaonde-Ila* who never went naked softly dressed in pelts of small animals such as the tiger or jackal. The skins of the lion or leopard could be worn only by chiefs, *shabwami* ('regalia'), showing authority.¹⁸

The Ba-ila proper women had always been scrupulous in covering the lower part of the body. It was a serious offence for a woman either on purpose or by accident to allow her skin petticoat to

slip off.¹⁹ Their garment was a single one, the nicely dressed skin of the Lechwe usually fastened around the waist and some times under the armpits by means of the *miombo*, the leg-skins of an animal. The breasts were usually and without self-consciousness left bare. The Kaonde came into contact with the Portuguese traders in Angola from whom they obtained cloth earlier than the Ila.²⁰ Possibly as a result of Kaonde influence in Mumbwa district the *Kaonde-Ila* women wore calico around the waist and a long stretch of brightly coloured print was tied on the shoulder and hung gracefully around the figure, leaving the arms free.

Furthermore in the Ba-ila proper a woman dressed for some festive occasion had her head freshly shaven and anointed with oil. If it could be secured she had a new skin petticoat. Around her waist she wore the *mukaku*.²¹ This was made by plaiting palm-leaf strips into a band, two and a half centimetres wide and long enough to encircle the body. Along the two edges and in the centre were three rows of large beads, the outside rows white, the middle row blue and the third row yellow. Dangling down in front were strings each terminating in a small bell, made by doubling over a piece of thin iron, perforated with numerous small holes.²² These gave a jangling sound as the woman moved. If iron bells were not to be had, small shells (*bwindi*) took their place.²³

Among the *Kaonde-Ila*, this ceremonial belt took another form and was called *chiawala*.²⁴ Upon a cord around the waist were suspended numerous strings each threaded with seven or eight centimetre long sections of a thick reed-like grass. These gave a rustling sound as the woman walked or danced. On her arms the woman wore bracelets. If she was a wife of a chief she would have *inkaya* (“ivory bangles”) perhaps six on each arm.²⁵ She had several other brass-wire armlets or others made of copper-wire twisted closely around a basis of fine grass. On most of her fingers she wore rings (*mambaminwe*) of brass-wire beaten thin.²⁶ The use of copper and

other metals for decorating the body was brought in the area by the Kaonde who were good metal craftsmen.²⁷

As a rule, the Ba-ila proper kept no hair on their faces. One exception was during the period of mourning when from the time of death till the *mudidila*, the final funeral feast, perhaps a year later, the men neither shaved nor washed and the women neither washed nor cut their hair nor shave their head.²⁸ Older men who were said to be no longer *shinkwela*, which means that they are past the age for attracting women were more indifferent to their appearance and allowed the hair to grow. However, among the *Kaonde-Ila* in Mumbwa district the keeping of hair and beards was more common.²⁹

Furthermore, in the Ba-ila proper tradition when the girl was in the seclusion of the initiation hut, her hair was plaited up in one of the styles named *shimbulumbumba* and *shimpuki*. There was no much difference between them. In each case, the hair was plaited up in small knots or rolls with the aid of *butele*, a paste made from groundnuts.³⁰ By the time this got intolerably untidy she was ready to be shaven, a sign that she had reached adulthood. On the other hand the *Kaonde-Ila* in Mumbwa did the girls hair up in beads. The use of beads was an introduction by the Kaonde in the area who obtained them from their trade with the Portuguese.³¹

Boys also had their hair dressed in the *buyombo* style in which strands of the hair were twisted (*kupesa*) with the powdered ash (*inshizhi*). Then clay from a certain kind of anti-heap (*kaumbuswa*) or ochre (*chishila*) mixed with animal fat was rubbed into the locks.³² Mixed fat and ochre were used from time to time to anoint the hair. The hair was allowed to grow and that on the crown was gathered in a cone plastered with wax and clay. The hair around the base of the cone was shaved off. This one was named *impumbe* and it marked the boy's emergence from

childhood. He was now a *mukubushi* (“a young man”). The *impumbe* underwent a further development into the *isusu*, the tall hair style peculiar to the Ba-ila.³³

Contrary to the Ba-ila proper, different hair styles prevailed among the *Kaonde-Ila*. Some Kaonde-Ila groups maintained a hair style which was called *mapolombwe* by the Ba-ila.³⁴ In this style, hair was allowed to grow long falling almost to the shoulders and was twisted in rolls. Other *Kaonde-Ila* groups like those found in Chibuluma’s area had their hair in a big mop, shaven in front to give the appearance of a loft forehead. The hair was often threaded with beads. Because of cultural mix it became a matter of fashion among the Kaonde-Ila such that when one man set a new style the others soon followed.³⁵

Barth records that house architecture is one of the diacritical features that people look for and exhibit to show identity.³⁶ Therefore, the other feature that showed some kind of cultural transformation in the life styles of the Ba-ila proper and the *Kaonde-Ila* was in the type of the houses that each group built. The principle of construction was the same in all cases. As elsewhere, the strict division of labour between men and women, each sex taking its customary share in the building operation was followed. The men cut the poles and the reeds and the women cut the grass and dug out clay for plastering.³⁷

In the Ba-ila proper construction system the first process was to mark out the hut (*kufundulula*). This was done by men. Tying one end of a string, the length of the radius of the hut to a stick planted at the centre, the man fastened the other end to another stick and with it subscribed a circle. Then with a hoe a narrow trench (*mwimbi*) was dug along the circle line. The upright poles (*mazhilo*) were planted in the trench. If the poles were plentiful, they were set close together, forming when bound and plastered a very solid wall.³⁸ An opening was left for a doorway. There was no window. The uprights were now bound together with withes (*imbalo*) tied at

intervals with string made of bark (*lozhi*).³⁹ Along the top of the wall a layer of several withes was strongly tied to act as a wall plate (*lubalo lwachilongolongo*). Over the door about one and half metres was bound a transom (*chikotamino*) and the spaces between it and the wall filled with sticks (*bubelo*).⁴⁰ A stout log was placed as a thresh hold (*chikanguzho*). That completed the frame work. The structure so far completed was called (*lwampa*) and was often left for months with a temporally covering of grass if it was inhabited until the near approach of the wet season stirred them to putting the roof.⁴¹

In construction of a roof there was a difference between the true Ba-ila and the *Kaonde-Ila*. Possibly it was an introduction by the Kaonde in construction; the *Kaonde-Ila* planted a long straight poll (*musemu*) in the centre of the hut to support the roof.⁴² The upper end of this was cut into a long tenon which pierced a disc of wood about thirty or forty centimetres in diameter through the centre. The principal rafters (*matangusho*) were now prepared by being sharpened at the thick end and a hole being drilled there. They were then placed in position with the thick end resting on the disc and the other on the wall plate. The two ends were now bound to the disc and the wall plate respectively. In the former case, the string passed through a hole already made. When these were all in position, they were bound together with withes and bark string and other poles were pushed in to fill up the spaces round the circle. The overhanging ends of the rafters were then cut even (*kukonkolola*).⁴³

The *Kaonde-Ila* only used the *musemu* and the disc when imitating the Ba-ila in building large huts. In most cases the *Kaonde-Ila* used three or four principals (*matangusho*) which were tied together on the ground at the thick pointed ends and then hoisted to the wall plate. After being stretched apart and bound to the wall, a basket work of withes was woven around the polls at the apex and into the interstices were pushed (*masondo*) secondary rafters, the weaving being

continued until the poles were firmly bound together at the summit. Withes were then tied on the intervals along the rafters and smaller subsidiary poles *masomo* were pushed in until the spaces were filled.⁴⁴ This formed a very neat well fitted and firm roof which could last ten years or more.

During social and cultural entertainment, the Ba-ila proper used only one drum. The Kaonde introduced the use of three drums in social and cultural dances. The Kaonde were also renowned for their good dancing skills in *machacha*, originally a Kaonde dance performed by women only for the girls' initiation ceremony. Because of their prowess in dancing, the Ila began to hire the Kaonde to dance at their initiation ceremonies.⁴⁵ The *Kaonde-Ila* in Mumbwa also adopted the use of three drums in their social and cultural dances. The *machacha* dance also became prominent among the *Kaonde-Ila* but this time it was performed more in songs that exhibited Ila characteristics.

Another cultural transformation took place in *kuzemba*, a funeral dance in the original Ila custom in which the *namalwa* (friction and the *kayanda* drum were used). The men rushed up and down the village with spears stabbing into the air. The women also rushed about uttering shrill cries. It was now interesting to note that in Mumbwa district when rushing up and down, women swung small branches in a sweeping motion from the hands.⁴⁶

Another aspect of Ila culture that was adopted by the *Kaonde-Ila* was *Lubambo*. *Lubambo* was an Ila custom of public acceptance in which some one had a romantic or sexual relationship with someone he was not married to. Any wife or husband with connivance of spouse could take a lover, the male lover always paying the gift of cattle to the husband of the woman he temporarily cohabited with.⁴⁷ In 1933, Brelsford the District Commissioner for Namwala made the following comments on *Lubambo*:

Chief Chibuluma an important chief of the *Kaonde-Ila* in Mumbwa district is an offspring of a Kaonde mother and a mwila father. Both he and his immediate ancestors practiced *Lubambo* and they are an example of how this practice is spreading to non-Ba-ila peoples.⁴⁸

3.4. Socio-Political Organisation of the *Kaonde-Ila*

The *Kaonde-Ila* were not merely or necessarily a new ethnic group based on the occupation of an exclusive new territory of Mumbwa district but they also developed into an ethnic boundary with a new socio-political organisation that canalized their social life. This new socio-political organisation which was developed among the *Kaonde-Ila* also became a means by which they were identified as members of the same ethnic group as this implied the sharing of criteria of evaluation and judgment.

Like other ethnic groups in Zambia, the principal social groups among the *Kaonde-Ila* were the family, the clan and the community. The family was the domestic establishment among the *Kaonde-Ila* consisting of a man, his wife or wives, their children under his guardianship and sometimes an aged parent. All these were grouped together as the man's *bana* ("children").⁴⁹ The clan, *mukowa* was totemistic in character, that is to say, the members of a clan called themselves by the name of some animal or plant or natural object between which and themselves they conceived to be a certain relationship and which they accordingly regarded with considerable respect.⁵⁰ The word community was the equivalent for the *Kaonde-Ila* word for *chishi*. *Chishi* connotes not only the body of people but also the locality in which they live. The rule of the communities was in the hands of the chiefs and headmen all of whom had the name *bami* (sing. *Mwami*). Each *chishi* had its chief and headmen. The chiefs and headmen formed a council which settled disputes and judged cases.⁵¹ As shall be demonstrated later in this chapter, among the *Kaonde-Ila* there was no supreme chief who yielded authority like that of the Lozi's Litunga or the Bemba's Chitimukulu. Each *chishi* was entirely independent.

One area that shows some kind of transformation in *Kaonde-Ila* social system is the clan. The clan name is compounded of the prefix *bana* and the name of the animal. Smith and Dale explain that, this prefix must not be confused with the word *bana* (“children”) of which the singular is *mwana*. The singular of the clan system is *Muna*. Among the Luba groups there is a similar prefix (*mwina, bena*).⁵² The *mu* is a prefix denoting person, living thing and its plural is *ba*, so that *munampongo* means literally “he, of the goat” and *banampongo* means, “they, of the goat.”⁵³ This illustration by Smith and Dale therefore, helps us to understand some factors which seem to indicate the effects of immigration in Mumbwa district as the names of animals that were used to denote clans are not those in common use today. Thus, the Ila name for lion is *shumbwa* but the word *nkalamo* which is part of the clan name *banankalamo* is the one that is often used among the *Kaonde-Ila*. *Nkalamo* is the name for lion for most Luba groups from which the Kaonde originate.⁵⁴ It can also be suggested that the *banankalamo* clan has immigrated from somewhere among those people or more likely that when the Ila and the Kaonde formed one people that came to be called *Kaonde-Ila*, they adopted the same name *nkalamo* for lion.

The same seems to have happened for the “goat’s clan.” The Ila name for goats is *impongo* so that the clan name was known as *banampongo*. But the commonly used name among the *Kaonde-Ila* in Mumbwa district is *benambuzhi*. *Bambuzhi* is the Kaonde name for goats.⁵⁵ The Ila name has been lost while that of the Kaonde has been kept.

Another noticeable effect of immigration in *Kaonde-Ila* society is in the system of inheritance, the practice of passing on property, titles, debts, rights and obligations upon the death of an individual. Traditionally, the Kaonde and the Ila had different methods of descent and inheritance. The Ila proper favoured descent by patrilineal, a system in which the choice of heir was made among the sons, brothers and male grandchildren of the deceased while the Kaonde

followed a system based on the principle of matrilineal descent in which succession was by nephews, the male children of the sister to the deceased.⁵⁶

In *Kaonde-Ila* society, candidates for inheritance did not appear to be restricted by any particular degree of relationship to the deceased whether patrilineal or matrilineal. Generally, in most cases of inheritance or succession both matrilineity and patrilineity would be taken into account and candidature was confined to the direct descendants and collaterals of the deceased. The selection of the heir was the preserve of the elders who were closely related to the deceased. Their decision was final over the matter.⁵⁶ The tendency in the case of headmen was to select an intelligent young man who would avoid trouble with the administration.⁵⁸ The main consideration in the selection was not the benefit of the rightful individual but the good of the clan. Therefore, unsociable and inhospitable persons were regarded with suspicion. Likewise an adulterer who instead of conserving the inheritance of the clan mismanaged it or a quarrelsome one who would cause the clan to split up instead of consolidating it, such were also looked upon with disfavour.⁵⁹

The lack of a properly regulated system of descent and inheritance brought about weak leadership especially among headmen and chiefs. This at times led to instability and prolonged succession disputes. With the imposition of colonial rule in about 1900, this further created a problem for the colonial authorities who insisted on dealing with Africans as belonging to ethnic units under the authority of chiefs.⁶⁰ This problem of selecting a successor resulting from a mixed system of descent and inheritance was noted by H. Nigel Barry, District Commissioner for Mumbwa in 1947 who made the following comments during a tour of a small *Kaonde-Ila* Native

Authority of Kabulwebulwe in the neighbourhood of Mulendema's chiefdom:

Chief Kabulwebulwe is now definitely at the age of retirement and must vacate office. He has been chief for many years and appears to be almost seventy years old. It was obviously a matter which people had been discussing. His people are a mixed race of which 55% are the Ba-ila and about 45% are Kaonde. The Ila section favour descent to a son. The Kaonde favour the matrilineal system. It is therefore, no easy matter to assist the authority and the people to choose a successor.⁶¹

To date the compromised tradition of the *Kaonde-Ila* kinship system continues to cause instability in most chieftainships. For example, before his death, the eighth chief Mumba Kasapato brought in the Ila tradition by subjecting his son Bobolo to deputize him ignoring his nephews in accordance with the Kaonde tradition.⁶² As a result, upon his death in 1989, his son Bobolo became the successor at the expense of the nephews. In this case succession to the throne became patrilineal. When Bobolo the ninth Mumba died in 2002, those from the paternal side thought that this would be the trend and as such they contended for the throne leading to a dispute that lasted for five years from 2002 to 2007 a period in which the successor to the throne could not easily be agreed upon.⁶³ Furthermore, at the time of this research, there was a court injunction against Hedley Chibuluma restraining him from taking over the throne after the death of his father Cephas Chibuluma the 10th in 2011 because according to Robert Chipanzha, Hedley was a grand son of Nsumbula.⁶⁴ Nsumbula was a Kaonde slave mentioned in chapter one who took over the chieftainship and became Chibuluma after forcing the ruling family into exile in Moono.

The weak system of descent and inheritance also has its roots in the decentralised background nature of both the Kaonde and the Ila. Binsbergen records that, the main focus of Ila society was the household. Leadership was mostly only in a crisis that might emerge. People could also raise

themselves above their fellows to positions that one might call chief only in terms of skill transfer such as building, craftsmanship or hunting.⁶⁵ Brelsford also points out that, the Kaonde chieftainships in North-Western Zambia operate as independent units. There is no paramount chief or centralised governance system.⁶⁶ The circumscribed nature of the power of headmen and chiefs does not seem to be anything new. Complaints of their lack of authority are a constant feature of the reports of the various colonial officers. In 1913, for instance, there is an irritated comment about the dispersal nature of the villages and how reluctant people were to move together, one of the reasons for which was the apathy of the headmen. Many of them seemed to think that if a man was likely to cause trouble, the further away he was the better.⁶⁷ Furthermore, in 1915 there is a note that:

The *Kaonde-Ila* chiefs are not accustomed to and do not like strong chiefs and headmen and with a few exceptions the chiefs and headmen are not very anxious to govern.⁶⁸

This evidence therefore, suggests why there is no paramount chief among the *Kaonde-Ila* in Mumbwa district.

3.5. Conclusion

By examining the Kaonde-Ila language, culture, customs, traditions and socio-political organisation, this chapter has shown that the basic elements of the *Kaonde-Ila* language spoken in Mumbwa district are a mixture of the original Kaonde language from Solwezi and Kasempa in North-Western Province of Zambia and the original Ila language from Namwala in Southern Province which underwent some transformation as a result of the two groups immigrating into Mumbwa district. Furthermore, the chapter has demonstrated that, like any other society, in response to changed social and physical environment there were some modifications to the two groups' culture, customs, traditions and socio-political organisation and creation of a clear *Kaonde-Ila* socio-cultural heritage with which these people are identified. The subsequent

chapter will attempt to examine how the environment of Mumbwa district in which the *Kaonde-Ila* settled impacted on their economic activities, further leading to new ethnic identity.

ENDNOTES

1. Kaplan et al, *Area Handbook for Zambia* (2nd ed), (Washington DC: American University, 1974), p.75.
2. Frederick Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1970) p.10.
3. Andrew Roberts. *A History of Zambia* (London: Heinemann, 1976), p.137.
4. N.A.Z. SEC2/646 Mumbwa Tour Report No 11 of 1956.
5. Interview with Phillip Yalukanda, Solwezi, 5th September, 2011. Being from Solwezi, Yalukanda spoke proudly of himself as a pure Kaonde.
6. Jennifer, Coates, *Women, Men and Language: A Socio-linguistic Account and Gender Differences in Language* (London: Longman Group Limited, 1993), p.228.
7. Edwin W. Smith and Andrew M. Dale, *The Ila-Speaking Peoples of Northern Rhodesia*. Vol, 1 (New York: University Books, 1968), p.150. Also see Frank H. Melland, *In Witch Bound-Africa* (London: Seeley, Service and Company, 1922), p.268. Oral interview with Charles Mwambi, Mumbwa, 6th January, 2012.
8. Interview with Mwambi.
9. Smith and Dale, *The Ila-Speaking Peoples*, p.361.
10. Interview with Mwambi.
11. Yizenge, Chondoka, *A History of the Tumbuka and Senga in Chama District 1470-1900*, (Lusaka: Academic Press, 2007), p.5.
12. William Labov, *Principles of Linguistic Change* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p.273.
13. Interview with Charles Mwambi.
14. Edmund Leach, 'Tribal Ethnography,' in Elizabeth Tonkin, Marion Macdonald and Malcolm Chapman (eds), *History and Ethnicity* (London: Rout ledge, 1989), p.23.
15. Smith and Dale, *The Ila-Speaking Peoples*, p.69.
16. Smith and Dale, *The Ila- Speaking Peoples*, p.70.

17. Interview with Enoch Tumbama, Itezhi-Tezhi, 10th November, 2011. Enoch Tumbama lives in Kaingu's chiefdom. Kaingu's area is another area of mixed Kaonde-Ila culture. Also see Smith and Dale, *The Ila-Speaking Peoples*, p.70.
18. Interview with Tumbama.
19. Interview with Nelson Mukaku, Namwala, 11th November, 2011.
20. Smith and Dale, *The Ila-Speaking Peoples*, p.98.
21. Interview with Dean Shikonka, Itezhi-Tezhi, 15th November, 2011.
22. Interview with Shikonka.
23. Interview with Shikonka.
24. Smith and Dale, *The Ila- Speaking Peoples*, p.101.
25. Interview with Friday Mulowa, Mumbwa, 18th November, 2011.
26. Interview with Mulowa.
27. Roberts, *A History of Zambia*, p.105.
28. Smith and Dale, *The Ila-Speaking Peoples*, p.63.
29. Interview with Chipemba Nachamba, Namwala, 13th January, 2012. Chipemba Nachamba is Headman in chief Muwezwa's area and a member of the Palace Committee.
30. Interview with Nachamba.
31. Kate Crahan, 'Mukunashi: An Exploration of Some Effects of the Penetration of Capital in North-Western Zambia' *Journal of Southern African Studies*. 8,1 (1981) p.105.
32. Interview with Boas Mukabo, Namwala, 21st November, 2011. Boas Mukabo boasted of being a mwila proper from chief Mukobela near Namwala.
33. Interview with Mukabo.
34. Smith and Dale, *The Ila-Speaking Peoples*, p.65.
35. Interview with Hedley Chibuluma, Mumbwa, 3rd January, 2012. Hedley Chibuluma is a son to the late Caphas Chibuluma the 10th. At the time of this interview Hedley Chibuluma was acting as chief.

36. Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, p14.
37. Interview with Chibuluma.
38. Smith and Dale, *The Ila-Speaking Peoples*, p.114.
39. Interview with John Mweemba, Mumbwa, 6th January, 2012. John Mweemba is Secretary of the Palace Committee at chief Moono.
40. Interview with Henry Shantolo, Kasempa, 8th September, 2011.
41. Interview with Mweemba.
42. Smith and Dale, *The Ila-Speaking Peoples*, p.114.
43. Interview with Shantolo.
44. Interview with Shantolo.
45. Interview with Denwit Chibutu, Mumbwa, 6th January, 2012. Denwit Chibutu is Headman Mukuwanshiku in chief Moono's area and a member of the Palace Committee.
46. N.A.Z Mumbwa District Note Book Vol 1, 1929.
47. Smith and Dale, *The Ila Speaking Peoples*, p.83.
48. N.A.Z. SEC2/1073 Namwala Tour Reports 1933-39.
49. Interview with Bota Shikomo, Mumbwa, 3rd January, 2012. Bota Shikomo is village Headman in Mulendema's area. Besides his immediate family Shikomo was also looking after his mother aged about 90 years.
50. Interview with Shikomo.
51. Interview with Shikomo.
52. Smith and Dale, *The Ila-Speaking Peoples*, P.288.
53. Smith and Dale, *The Ila-Speaking Peoples*, p.288.
54. Melland, *In Witch-Bound Africa*, p.42.
55. L.C. Kamwengo, 'Hunting and Conservation in Kasempa District of North-Western Province of Zambia 1934-1994' M.A. dissertation, University of Zambia, 1999, p.38.

56. N.A.Z. Mumbwa District Note Book, Vol 1, 1929.
57. Interview with Elina Ng'anza, Mumbwa, 4th January, 2012. Elina Ng'anza is a sister to the current chief Mulendema, John Shazemba.
58. Interview with Ng'anza.
59. Interview with Ng'anza.
60. N.A.Z. SEC2/639 Mumbwa and Lusaka Annual Reports, 1936-37.
61. N.A.Z. SEC2/639 Mumbwa Tour Report No 5, 1947.
62. Interview with Dowell Chilimboyi, Mumbwa, 2nd January, 2012. Dowell Chilimboyi is young brother to the late Allan Chilimboyi who was a claimant to the throne from the paternal side after the death of Bobolo in 2002.
63. Interview with Chilimboyi.
64. Interview with Robert Chipanzha, Mumbwa, Zambia, 6th January, 2012. Robert Chipanzha is a son to Mambwe Chipanzha who was the rightful heir to the throne after the death of Shakupelenga when Nsumbula took over the chieftainship.
65. W.V. Binsbergen, *Tears of Rain: Ethnicity and History in Central Western Zambia*, (London: Kegan Paul International Limited, 1992), p.15.
- 66 W.V. Brelsford, *Tribes of Zambia* (Lusaka: Government Printers, 1965), p.56.
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- 68.: N.A.Z. ZA/7/1/3/6 Annual Provincial Reports Broken Hill, 1915.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0. THE *KAONDE-ILA* ECONOMY

4.1. Introduction.

The environment is important to human existence. It provides the resources with which to achieve development. The life pattern of every society is influenced and dictated by the environment in which that particular society exists.¹ The purpose of this chapter therefore, is to examine how the geographical position of Mumbwa district in Central Province provided an area of economic transition for the *Kaonde-Ila* between the main economic areas of Namwala in Southern Province and Solwezi and Kasempa in North-Western Province. The chapter is a further attempt to highlight the extent to which the environmental pattern of Mumbwa district in which some Kaonde and Ila groups settled enforced a system of agriculture, livestock keeping, hunting, fishing and food gathering that became a measure of *Kaonde-Ila* economic identity.

4.2. *Kaonde-Ila* Agriculture

The Ba-ila proper were subsistence cultivators as well as agro- pastoralists. As cultivators they grew crops such as sorghum, millet, sweet potatoes and groundnuts. Smith and Dale record that these were the indigenous crops and as to how the Ila found themselves growing these crops they have no knowledge or tradition on the subject beyond saying that *Leza* (God) caused these gifts to descend.² The axe-hoe technology was used for cultivation. Cultivation remained on subsistence level. In times of shortfalls, the Ila traded their cattle for grains from the Tonga. Holub's observation was that, "the Ila do not grow as much grain as they need and buy most of it from Matoka and Mankoya in exchange for lechwe skin and cattle."³

On the other hand the Kaonde practiced shifting cultivation and *chitemene* farming (cut and burn).⁴ Trees were cut down over an area and felled trees were arranged in circles around termite hills and on broad strips of land, left to dry and burnt just before the rainy season. Ash from the burnt trees was scuffled up with a hoe by both men and women and children aged between eight and fifteen years in order to make the soil more fertile. Women and their daughters sparsely planted maize seeds with a hoe, before again planting sorghum seeds in the spaces covering them lightly with soil using a hoe to prevent them from being eaten up by birds. Pumpkin, gourd and bean seed were also sparsely planted and covered with a hoe in or around the sorghum garden (*majimi*). The garden was usually fenced off by men and their sons to keep away the wild animals such as pigs and hippopotamus. Unburnt land near the sorghum garden was cultivated and planted with sweet potatoes on mounds. Finger millet which was usually used for brewing beer was grown in burnt termite hill areas.⁵ Women and their daughters later weeded and harvested the crops while their husbands and sons hunted wild animals.

In northern parts of Mumbwa district the dominant vegetation cover is '*miombo*' woodland.⁶ This is an extension of the semi-continuous tree cover found in North-Western Province. In the southern part of the district, the vegetation is typical savannah forming a wide plain with varied and diverse tree and grass species in the Kafue flats. The flats are devoid of vegetation except at the flood margins where anthill vegetation (mixed scrub and small tree species occur).⁷

Because of the special ecological and environmental circumstances prevailing in the northern and southern parts of Mumbwa district, the *Kaonde-Ila* evolved two systems of agricultural practices. The plateau soils on the higher levels in the northern wooded areas of Mumbwa district were poor and only able to sustain a two or three year cultivation circle before failing off and due to the woodland nature the *Kaonde-Ila* living in this area practiced a form of '*chitemene*' which

appeared to differ in some respects from the method generally practiced in the Northern Province both in the preparation of the plots and the rotation of the crops. The *Kaonde-Ila* in these forest areas practiced a form of *chitemene* in which once an area had been selected, the trees were lopped and the stumps were left standing.

The selection of the site did not revolve round the presence of an anthill as the case was with the Kaonde. In the first year a legume was planted and Kaffir corn, sorghum and maize were planted in the following year. Each year, instead of establishing further gardens at some distance from the old, the local practice was to extend the old garden itself.⁸ The method of agricultural practice adopted by the *Kaonde-Ila* possibly as a result of Ila influence and possibly because of the semi-continuous nature of tree cover in the area was different from that of the Kaonde as the *Kaonde-Ila* did not move on to new grounds when the soil became exhausted.

The central area of the district which borders the Kafue flats in the south is well watered with the main water systems being the Lutale River with its tributary the Lukanga and the Chibila with its tributary the Bulungu. In this area, almost without exception, all *Kaonde-Ila* villages made gardens on the fringes of these streams and dambos and these gardens were in most cases cultivated continuously for several years. In these areas, even in a comparatively bad rain fall year, the planting of maize, cassava and other relish crops was conspicuous.⁹

The shortage of trees for the making of burnt gardens also caused a revolution in the agricultural methods of the *Kaonde-Ila* living on the fringes of the Kafue Flats. They also adopted some sort of fixed cultivation in response to the special environment prevailing in the area. The District Officer for Mumbwa, P. E. Aldus on a tour of chief Moono's area in 1949 recorded his experiences:

The area on the edge of the Kafue Flats is an extremely fertile area of the territory and even if the rainfall is scanty, the gardens are kept green and healthy by the flood waters from the Kafue River. Because the gardens are dependable, famine is almost an unknown word. Maize, relish crops like groundnuts and sweet potatoes are grown. Fruit trees like mangoes, paw paws and mulberries are grown in most villages for their fruits and shade.¹⁰

In a related development, District Commissioner for Mumbwa, N.S. Night on a tour of Kaindu's area in 1951 also noted this purposive adaptation in *Kaonde-Ila* agricultural methods in response to special environmental conditions and recorded thus:

It is interesting to note that in the former predominantly Kaonde western area only one village was found cutting 'bush' gardens. All villages had gone to dambo and stream cultivation. This was attributed to Ila dambo fringe cultivation. As a result, especially north of the Kafue, village gardens are heavily concentrated along valuable dambos which had perennial running water.¹¹

In terms of the crops grown, tobacco cultivation by the *Kaonde-Ila* in chief Moono's area of Mumbwa district seemed to be a result of immigration as this crop was not grown by the Ba-ila proper in Namwala district.¹² The tobacco grown by the *Kaonde-Ila* was of good quality but they were very ignorant of the proper means of curing and preparing it. The seed was sown towards the end of the rain season under the shade of the roof of a hut and the plants were transplanted when big enough to a fertile patch preferably an anthill. No care was taken to patch the suckers or to curtail the number of leaves and the plants were allowed to set seed. They had two ways of preparing it. The kind called *nalubotu* or *mukweka* was made of short leaves pounded in the mortar and turned out in flat cakes. This was very strong.¹³ *Namakali* from long leaved plants was cooked and made into large sausage-shaped lumps weighing about five kilogrammes or more. This tobacco grown was not a cash crop but was just consumed locally. They used pipes with earthen ware bowls and long reed stems for smoking. In smoking (*kufweba*) a piece of tobacco was broken off the hump, placed in the bowl with a live coal on it. After a few whiffs the pipe was passed on to a companion.¹⁴ Both men and women smoked.

4.3. The *Kaonde-Ila* and Animal Rearing

Originally the *Kaonde* did not keep cattle because of the presence of tsetse flies in their area of original settlement in the North-Western Province of Zambia.¹⁵ The tsetse fly was found over a wide area in the region. The most affected areas were those which today form the Game Management Areas and the surrounding areas of Jifumpa, Kalasa, Kamakechi and Mukunashi. On the other hand goats (*bambuzhi*) and pigs (*bankumba*) were found in many parts of the region. Apart from game meat, chickens (*banzolo*) also provided meat to the majority of the indigenous people.¹⁶ Most of the domesticated animals such as goats, pigs, chickens and pigeons were never slaughtered to satisfy hunger but for special reasons. A chicken for instance, was the most prized reared bird which was eaten at special functions such as marriages, funerals, birth and so on.¹⁷

Cattle keeping was the most vital aspect of the *Ba-ila* economy. The Kafue Flats on which the *Ba-ila* lived, in some areas varied in width from nine to thirty two kilometres. In the rainy season lasting from January to April, the flats were several metres deep in water. The floods rose and dispersed some two months after the rains. In the dry season, the flats were used for grazing cattle. The lagoons and the ox-bow channels sunken below the surface of the plain provided cattle with sweet grass during a season when animals in less fortunate areas were desperately searching for nourishment among the drying bush land and vegetation. The plain therefore, supported a higher concentration of cattle.¹⁸ From the earliest records it is obvious that the history of the *Ila* has been associated with cattle ownership. Cattle were highly valued for their social importance. As among the Tswana of Botswana, the possession of cattle was itself a symbol of status in society. A man's wealth was estimated mainly by the size of his herds and

one with a large herd was generally respected and was more influential in the affairs of the community.¹⁹

Given this economic historical background of both the Kaonde and the Ila and the existing ecological and environmental conditions, District Commissioner, N.S. Night recorded the *Kaonde-Ila* living in the south-eastern and south-western parts of Mumbwa district in chiefs Moono and Chibuluma's areas on the margins of the Kafue Flats as having adopted 'cattle keeping' as a major aspect of their economic life.²⁰

The adoption of cattle keeping by the *Kaonde-Ila* in this part of the district was also accompanied by a radical change in their measure of value as well. Like cattle with the Ba-ila proper, in the initial Kaonde society, the muzzle-loading gun was the standard of currency. All customary payments in marriage, inheritance, and compensation for death, adultery claims and all such payments were made in guns. In civil cases in Kasempa, guns were frequently preferred to cash.²¹ Because of Ila influence; the *Kaonde-Ila* in Mumbwa district began to place high value on cattle for their ritual and symbolic significance. Their practical value was also highly appreciated. Cattle were killed for funerals and puberty ceremonies. The *Kaonde-Ila* also began to use cattle in bride wealth and as fines and awards for damages.²²

Initially, the Kaonde lived chiefly on kaffir corn largely supplemented by maize, with sweet potatoes, groundnuts, beans, lentils, pumpkins and cucumbers. Honey, wild roots and fruits, meat and fish were also used to vary their diet.²³ As a result of the transformation in which the *Kaonde-Ila* began to keep cattle; fresh milk (*mukupa*) and sour milk (*mabishi*) were added to their diet.²⁴

Further in the north-east in chief Kaindu's area only considerable areas are free from tsetse flies. Here small stocks were common among the *Kaonde-Ila*. In many villages there were great

numbers of goats, pigs and chickens. Goats and chickens shared some of the ritual importance of cattle. Both were killed for mourning or for any occasion when an offering was required. They were also killed to provide food for important guests or returned wanderers.²⁵ Possibly as a result of Ila influence, pigs on the other hand were regarded with general disgust as dirty beasts and were kept purely for sale to Europeans. Many *Kaonde-Ila* claimed that they would not eat pig meat though when a pig was killed for some reason or the other, most forgot about these correctly or wrongly held beliefs and ate the meat.²⁶ A few families also kept pigeons and ducks.

4.4. The *Kaonde-Ila*: Hunting, Fishing and Food Gathering

Like any other ethnic group in Zambia and Central Africa as a whole, hunting became a very important feature of *Kaonde-Ila* economy. Travellers in the area reported numerous and varied game throughout the area. As pointed out in the second chapter, on the flats were the lechwe, wildebeest, zebra, buffalo, roan antelope, reedbuck, oribi, sitatunga, leopard, lion and hyena. In the woodland were kudu, hartebeest, and warthog. In the rivers were the crocodiles and hippopotamus.²⁷ One of the European travellers, Harding made similar observations near Mumbwa in 1900 when he wrote:

Game abounds, in fact through our morning's trek we saw more than during the whole period of our trip; every species seems to have selected this spot as a rendezvous. Eland, sable, zebra, hartebeest, wildebeest with steinbok, oribi and duiker, all these I saw within three hours march and it was with great reluctance that I left such an ideal sportsman's spot but as we had plenty of meat and not being on a hunting expedition we passed without killing any.²⁸

Living amidst the wealth of game noted above, the *Kaonde-Ila* became lovers of hunting. They developed good methods of hunting copied from both the Kaonde and the Ila. First was the day to day hunting with dogs and spears, bows and arrows. Second, springing traps were used to kill small animals. Third, trenches were dug for big animals. Fourth was the communal hunt called *chila*, the most famous hunt being the buffalo hunt. *Chila* were most effective for the lechwe.²⁹

Since most of the hunting was for subsistence and not for trade, the effect of these methods on the game population was small. Given the population of the time and judging from the traveller's reports there was no noticeable reduction in game.³⁰

As explained in chapter two, the Mumba chieftainship was established by a group of elephant hunters from the present D.R.C. These specialised elephant hunters could have been responsible for the skill in *Kaonde-Ila* old method of hunting elephants called *wanzovu wa pamisangi* in which spears were used.³¹ The hunters would note the elephants' trail and preceding the herd, would mount a tree with an overhanging branch. Other members of the party would go to herd the elephants in the desired direction. The waiting hunters were armed with very large spears. When the elephants came under the tree, the leader was allowed to pass, but at the second elephant, the hunter hurled his spear, aiming at the base of the neck. So would be the case with the next and the fourth if they were lucky. They could even go up to five on a good occasion.³²

Because of their early trade contacts with the Portuguese in Angola and the Belgian Congo where they obtained gun powder, the Kaonde were also the earliest to own the muzzle-loading gun than the Ila.³³ With the introduction of the muzzle-loading gun as a result of Kaonde influence in Mumbwa district, the procedure changed in the *Kaonde-Ila* method of hunting elephants for guns were used to the exclusion of spears. A shelter was first made near the hunt of elephants and the youths of the party were left in this shelter. The elders moved on with their guns to hunt. All guns were loaded, the powder usually being provided by one man. Once the elephants were located, a beast was selected and all fired at the same animal and kept on firing until it was dead. This was much less effective than the old method because it frequently happened that the hunters had to return to fetch more powder then pick up the track of the wounded beast again.³⁴ The elephant belonged to the man who supplied the powder. After the

death, he stood on top of the carcass while the others sang. After the song he climbed down and cut off the tail. Then the tusks were removed. This done, the youths were summoned from the shelter and all camped together to cut up the meat and dry it.³⁵

The Kafue River, its lagoons and tributaries swarmed with fish which the Ba-ila made extensive use of as food. They caught this fish using various fishing methods. The simplest way of fishing was to wade into a shallow pool and grope with the hands for the fish hidden away in the mud at the bottom. The Ba-ila also used hooks called *tulobo* and as a bait (*bupo*) bits of meat or fish. The hook was tied by a strong string to reeds on the river-bank and there being no float it sunk as far as the line allowed. The fisher returned at intervals to examine it. Or the baited hook was tied by a string to a bundle of reeds and thrown into the stream. The fisher watched its progress down stream and when he had reason to think a fish was caught, he went in a canoe to pull in the hook.³⁶ The fish were also speared with the barbed fish-spears (*miumba*) in different ways.³⁷ Two men would go along in a canoe, one paddling, the other armed with a fish-spear elongated by means of a reed attached to it. As the canoe glided along he shot the spear into the water at random sliding the long shaft through his hand so as to keep control over it. Most times he got nothing but it was astonishing to see the number of fish they could spear in an hour in this fashion.³⁸

In the early part of the rain season when the dry water courses began to fill and flow into the river, the fish, so the Ila said, came out of the rivers into these tributaries to *chela* (to find food). The fish were there in great numbers and the people took advantage of it. Hundreds of men armed with *miumba* walked through water that was not so deep in these streams, prodding as they went and in a very short time went off laden with fish, barbell fish for the most part. Often this fishing took place in the night by torch light. This method was called *ikuo*.³⁹ In August or

September, the process was repeated in the large pools left by the previous season's floods and once again they gained a rich harvest.

The Ila also had a way of constructing weirs for entrapping fish. Small streams which later would dry up were dammed (*kunshinkilizha*) so as to allow some of the water to escape.⁴⁰ As the stream dried, the fish were unable to get away and were simply scooped up above the dam. Among the rocks on the banks of the Kafue River the spaces were blocked and as the river fell, many fish were stranded in the same way.

The *Kaonde-Ila* developed a fishing method not employed by the Ba-ila proper. In September or October they made *lwando*, a long open-work reed mat, attached to it was a supplementary mat called *masambala* to prevent the fish from jumping over.⁴¹ This was sunk upright in the river and kept vertical by means of weights called *manda* formed of large lumps of hard ant heap covered with grass. Men wade along in the river pushing this mat in front of them and gradually edge in towards the bank enclosing a number of fish which were then scooped out.

In chief Moono's area, the *Kaonde-Ila* continued to use a fish trap called *Moono* introduced in the area by the *Bambala* a group of the Ba-ila in the northern part of Namwala district who were the founders of the chiefdom. As pointed out in chapter two, it is from this fish trap that the chiefdom derived its name. The *Moono* fish trap was in the form of a conical basket made of light sticks and bark-string. It was elongated and with an inside trap door called *buvwazhi*. The fish entering the wide open door found themselves unable to come out again.⁴² The *Miono* were arranged in numbers at the confluence of the Chibila and other streams.

Although fishing was an important resource exploited by the *Kaonde-Ila* especially those living on the margins of the Kafue Flats and consumed large quantities of this fish themselves, for trade, the Kafue fishing was largely in the hands of foreigners and always has been.⁴³ It was only

in Kaindu's area where there was less emphasis on cattle keeping, where fishing was well developed. Here fishing rights were much more pronounced than elsewhere. Part of Kaindu's power was acquired by exacting tribute from fishing rights. The development of the fishing industry in Kaindu's area was noted in 1936 by District Officer D.B. Hall while touring the area who made the following observation:

The natives on the Kafue in the northern part of the district are very good in the art of catching and killing fish. This industry was formerly in the hands of the Lozi and other alien natives. These natives are still engaged in it but through the efforts of chief Kaindu, the local natives began to interest themselves. The season which lasts from the end of August to December, a considerable quantity of fish is carried to the copper mines for sale. Small quantities of fish are disposed off at Mumbwa Township.⁴⁴

Food gathering is one of the oldest practices by most African societies against famine caused by drought, warfare or slave raiding. It must also be mentioned that food gathering was carried out even in times of plenty. All human societies have at one time or the other depended on food gathering for sustenance.⁴⁵ Of far more importance, therefore, in the economic life of the *Kaonde-Ila* was the gathering of wild food products which went on throughout the year. Roots and wild greens loomed large in the daily diet and often provided the daily relish. At certain seasons the *Kaonde-Ila* gathered large quantities of wild fruits. Besides wild fruits, at the beginning of the rains there were both termites and mushrooms to eat.⁴⁶

On the contrary, the Ila proper had little success in collecting honey. This was not a regular activity as most people among the Ba-ila had a dislike for sweet things. But after having come under the influence of the Kaonde who introduced the use of hives, the *Kaonde-Ila* began to cheerfully ignore stings and got the combs if they were lucky enough to stumble upon a hive full of honey.⁴⁷ The Ba-ila proper also only used to brew beer from millet grains but with the introduction of honey also came *imbote* (honey beer) in the Kaonde-Ila transformation. *Imbote*

was made of *mankanza a mana*, the honey combs full of young bees mixed with honey and water. The mixture was placed in a narrow-mouthed calabash (*iloba*) and set near a fire or in the sunshine to ferment. Next day it was ready for drinking or if there was need it could be made in the morning and drunk the same evening. It was said to be very intoxicating.⁴⁸ The other forest products which were never eaten by the Ba-ila proper but had now become part of the *Kaonde-Ila* diet in Mumbwa district were caterpillars.⁴⁹

4.5. Conclusion

Owing to two types of varied ecological and environmental circumstances, a form of '*chitemene*' cultivation was practiced by some *Kaonde-Ila* groups in the forest areas of Mumbwa district. This type of *chitemene* appeared to differ in some respects from the methods generally practiced by Luba groups. The soils on the margins of the Kafue Flats and along the river basins, valleys or dambos retained moisture longer than did the soils in woodlands. The soils in these areas were also able to withstand constant cultivation without recourse to fallowing. In response to this special environment, the *Kaonde-Ila* who settled in these areas adopted some form of fixed cultivation. The existence of good pasturelands in these areas also encouraged the *Kaonde-Ila* to adopt cattle keeping. Furthermore, as a result of Kaonde influence, the *Kaonde-Ila* also evolved new hunting skills of big game such as elephants. Subsistence fishing was carried out by the *Kaonde-Ila* although this was only highly developed in Kaindu's area as people there could not raise cattle due to the presence of tsetse flies. The *Kaonde-Ila* also adopted the collecting of honey which was accompanied with the brewing of a honey beer called *imbote*. The *Kaonde-Ila* also ate caterpillars, a practice that was not common among the Ba-ila proper.

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16. Interview with Chishimba.
17. C. L. Kamwengo, 'Hunting and Conservation in Kasempa District of North-Western Province of Zambia 1934-1994' M.A. dissertation, University of Zambia, 1999, p.38.
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25. N.A.Z. SEC2/637 Mumbwa District Tour Reports 1933-39.
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27. F.C, Selous, *Travel and Adventure in Africa* (London: Lowland, 1893), p.211.
28. C. Harding, *In Remotest Barotseland*, (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1904), p.330.
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30. E.K. Jordan, 'Namwala in 1906,' *Northern Rhodesian Journal*. 2,1 (1953), p.26.
31. Melland, *In Witch Bound Africa*, p.258.
32. Melland, *In Witch Bound Africa*, p.260.
33. Melland, *In Witch Bound Africa*, p.271.
34. Interview with Amon Mutebe, Mumbwa, 2nd January, 2012. Amon Mutebe is grand son of Jacob Mutebe, a former prominent hunter in Mulendema area.
35. Interview with Mutebe.
36. Smith and Dale, *The Ila-Speaking Peoples*, p.160.
37. Smith and Dale, *The Ila-Speaking Peoples*, p.160.

38. J.K. Rennie and A. Mubita, 'Pre-Colonial Economy and Society around Itezhi-Tezhi' in R. Derricourt (ed), *Man on the Kafue*, (London: Ethnographica, 1985), p.44.
39. Rennie and Mubita, 'Pre-Colonial Economy and Society around Itezhi-Tezhi,' p.44.
40. Smith and Dale, *The Ila-Speaking Peoples*, p.161.
41. Smith and Dale, *The Ila Speaking Peoples*, p.162.
42. Interview with Fanwell Chilenga, Mumbwa, 6th January, 2012. Fanwell Chilenga is from Katumpa Village situated on the Chibila River in chief Moono. The subjects of Katumpa village were renowned fishermen in Chibila River.
43. Interview with Chilenga.
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48. Smith and Dale, *The Ila-Speaking Peoples*, p.140.
49. Interview with Norah Luubi, Mumbwa, 6th January, 2012. Norah Luubi is Headwoman Shikapoli in chief Moono's area. She spoke highly of her Ila background and did not eat caterpillars.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0. CONCLUSION

The study has demonstrated that critical investigation of the origins, evolution and formation of the *Kaonde-Ila* in Mumbwa district reveals that the questions of climate, environment and ecology have to be put side by side with those of the migration and settlement of some Kaonde and Ila groups in Mumbwa district. In this context the main argument was that the rich and well balanced ecosystem of Mumbwa district attracted some Kaonde and Ila groups to settle in the area who came either as colonising parties or hunting and fishing groups.

The study has also highlighted that due to ecological and environmental factors, the colonial government came up with a policy of resettling people to make separate Game Management Areas in order to avoid a lot of tsetse fly infestations. This led to the creation of resettlement areas such as the Lutale Resettlement Scheme in 1955. This scheme brought the people under chief Chibuluma who were predominantly Ila into proximity with the Kaonde of chief Mumba. This situation provided a further conducive environment for the formation and evolution of the *Kaonde-Ila* as a new ethnic group.

The study has shown that *Kaonde-Ila* does not really refer to only one language but to the whole group of the two languages' or dialects broadly alike but differing in many details from typical Kaonde and Ila in terms of pronunciations, grammar and vocabulary. In this case the study established that, linguistically, the current *Kaonde-Ila* language is descended from the two common ancestral Kaonde and Ila languages and so belong to the same family of languages as each of them seem to have influenced the other.

Inevitably, the study also highlighted that like any other society the two groups were responsive to the changed social and physical environment. In this case the study showed that the linguistic

change in these groups of the Kaonde and Ila who settled in Mumbwa was part and parcel of a cultural, customary, traditional and a socio-political organisational change taken as a whole. Here the main argument was that, as a result of the changed physical and social environment there were some modifications to the two groups' culture, customs and socio-political organisation and a creation of new socio-cultural practices with which these people came to be identified.

The study has further illustrated the importance of the environment to human existence. It showed how the life pattern of every society is very much influenced and dictated by the environment in which that particular society exists. In this case the study demonstrated how, owing to the changed ecological and environmental circumstances in which the *Kaonde-Ila* found themselves they adopted methods of cultivation which were different in some respects to original Kaonde and Ila way of cultivation. The existence of good pastures on the margins of the Kafue flats in the southern part of Mumbwa district encouraged the *Kaonde-Ila* to adopt cattle keeping which could not be done in North-Western Province because of the existence of tsetse flies. The *Kaonde-Ila* also evolved new hunting skills of big game such as elephants due to Kaonde influence. Originally both the Kaonde and the Ila were only renown for subsistence fishing. But the *Kaonde-Ila* in chief Kaindu's area became commercial fishermen who began supplying fish for sale to the copperbelt and Mumbwa Township.

Important of all, the study has demonstrated the ethnic construction of the *Kaonde-Ila* in the sense that, arising from migrations and association in a new locality some sections of Kaonde from the present day Democratic Republic of Congo (D.R.C.) briefly settled in North-Western Province's districts of Kasempa and Solwezi and some sections of the Ila formerly from Namwala in Southern Province that settled in Mumbwa district became one group of people

known as *Kaonde-Ila* with a consciousness of their own identity which came to be symbolised by the occupation of common territory, language, culture, customs, history, socio-political and economic organisation.

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