

CHAPTER II:

EUROPEAN AND AFRICAN CULTURAL PERCEPTIONS

Environments are as much a product of men's minds as they are of the natural forces working on the earth's surface. If we wish to understand how landscapes are built and shaped, then we must inquire into the role played by human attitudes and assumptions.

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When used with deliberate care, the terms "European" and "African" not only identify the people that exist on two large continents of the world, but also convey two crucial sets of attitudes and assumptions. For example, the British and Portuguese and Belgians, as Europeans, share many common perceptions of the environment, despite enormous national differences. These perceptions evolved from the historical interactions of groups of individuals in similar geographic settings. All came to take for granted their cool climate with four distinct seasons, rainfall throughout the year, and the great topographic diversity that existed within relatively short distances.

In the nineteenth century, when Europeans had just come to Africa, they used these old attitudes and assumptions to interpret and evaluate their new environment. Likewise, the Lunda, Luvale, Kaonde, and Lamba as Africans,

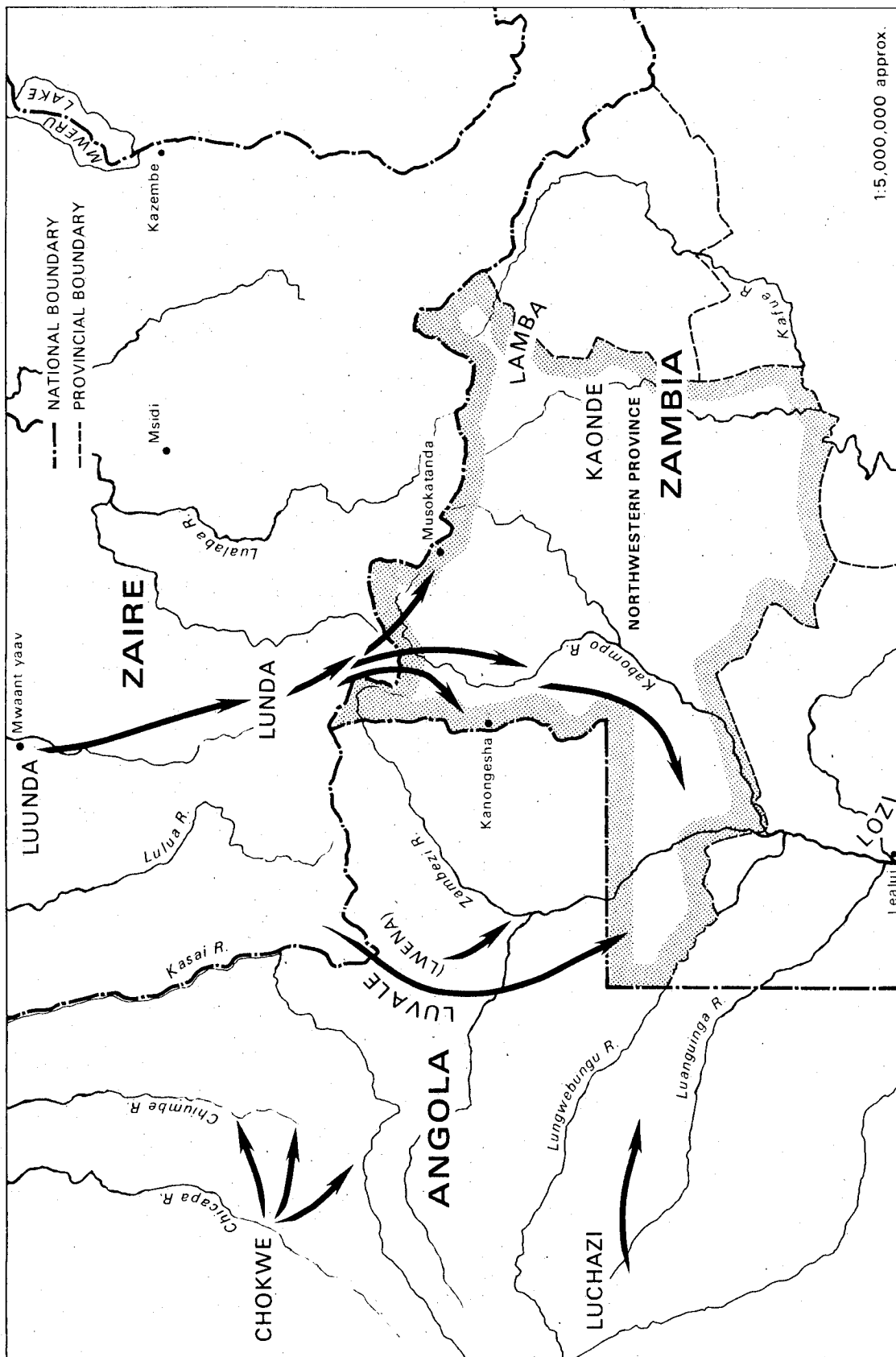
{1} Environmental Evaluation and Risk Adjustment in Eastern Africa (Syracuse: Syracuse University, Program of Eastern African Studies, 1969), Occasional Papers, no. 52, p. 1.

evolved a common set of perceptions despite equally great differences among them. Distinct rainy/dry seasons, for example, were taken for granted as the most significant climatic variations. Consequently, when 'black men' and 'white men' met each other in the late nineteenth century, the color of their skins was not only apparent. It also symbolized the confrontation between two very different sets of mental perceptions about this savanna region of Africa which produced countless political, economic, religious, and social changes.

Parameters of the Environment

The present-day NWP is part of the heartland of the savanna, the largest vegetation zone on the African continent. It lies halfway between the equatorial forests to the north and the Kalahari Desert to the south. In addition, it lies midway between the Atlantic and the Indian Oceans. Its geographic characteristics resemble those of contiguous areas in Angola and Zaire (Congo), and together these three areas form the core region of the southern savanna. In addition, the NWP covers 125,935 square kilometers (48,582 square miles), and is larger than Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales combined. But while the latter have a combined population of over nine million people today, the NWP has fewer than four hundred thousand.

TRADITIONAL AFRICA



Three climatic characteristics dominate the environment: three seasons--hot/dry, hot/wet, and cool/dry; a moderate temperature range that reflects the NWP's interior continental position; and high altitude. More specifically the total yearly rainfall in different sections varies from about 900 mm. (36") to 1400 mm. (70") and the mean annual temperature ranges from about 17° C. (64° F.) in July, the coolest month, to 24° C. (76° F.) in October, the warmest. Although contiguous areas of Zaire might have a higher annual rainfall, the variations remain slight throughout this entire core region of the savanna. Furthermore frost is uncommon. With irrigation most crops can be grown throughout the year.

The seasons indicate how moderate the climate is. October is the hottest month in the hot/dry season. At this time the sun is overhead and the rains have not yet begun. But low humidity moderates the effect of the heat and nights are pleasant because of the high altitude and limited cloud cover. As the tropical rain belt follows the sun and the hot/wet season begins, crops are planted, and the land is transformed from burnt brown to green. By February travel is difficult because the "long grass" becomes almost impenetrable and small creeks become raging rivers or vast lakes. But from May to August, in the cool/dry season that follows, rivers subside, grass is burnt, and long distance travel is once again relatively easy. This cool season is the equivalent of the Northern Hemisphere's autumn: crops are

harvested and festivities are common. {2}

The NWP's topography is also typical of the African savanna. To the world traveler the area seems an undulating and unending expanse of earth. Although it contains beautiful spots, such as the Kabompo Gorge in Mwinilunga District, most of the region lacks variety. Mountains, oceans, and large lakes are absent. Frank Melland described it as "'pretty' better than 'grand.'" The river valleys probably provide the greatest variety. Near the Zambezi/Congo watershed, rivers are narrow and swift. In the west, however, the upper Zambezi absorbs many fast-flowing rivers and emerges as a lazy, meandering river of hypnotic beauty. {3}

{2}For use of the words "long grass" to identify the region and its vegetation, see: Dan Campbell, Back to the Long Grass: My Link with Livingstone (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1923). For a lucid and brief description of the seasons and ecology in one specific locale, see Arthur G. Hansen, "Once the Running Stops: the Socioeconomic Resettlement of Angolan Refugees (1966 to 1972) in Zambian Border Villages", (Ph.D. Dissertation, Cornell University, 1977), 64-81.

{3}Melland, Kaonde, p. 19. Melland was one of the first colonial officials to live for a reasonably long period in the NWP (eleven years). Many of his very perceptive observations about the area remain unchallenged today. The pejorative title of the book is misleading since the quality of his ethnographic research is excellent. I have based many of the comments in this section on my observations, made during 1963-1968 and 1971-1979. During that time I lived in three different parts of the NWP. My observations coincide with those of Melland, pp. 17-26, "Hypnotic beauty" is not hyperbole. From 1963-1968, I lived on one of the two big bends of the Zambezi River near

Variations in the soils and vegetation are more noticeable than those in the climate and topography. Soils range from very porous, white/grey Kalahari sands in the upper Zambezi Valley to very heavy, red clays in the east and north. These differences in soils help create natural vegetation of considerable variety. In the deep sands--large parts of which are annually flooded in the rainy season--short grasses are more common. Most of the region, however, is well-wooded, with brachystegia forests predominating. Although the deep sands are of marginal value, many of the other soils can be very productive for the cultivation of maize and cassava. [4]

The fauna is also typical of the savanna. In 1912 Albert W. Bailey described the large herds of animals that

Zambezi (Balovale) boma, and will never forget the sight of the sun setting on the Zambezi. Earlier, in 1963, within a week of my arrival in Zambia a friend described Chavuma (north of Zambezi) as "heaven on earth." That is hyperbole, but only just.

[4] Since 1936, the standard work on soils and vegetation has been C. G. Trapnell and J. N. Clothier, The Soils, Vegetation and Agricultural Systems of North Western Rhodesia: Report of the Ecological Survey (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1936). According to Philip Page, Agricultural Officer in Solwezi, 1976-7, this otherwise awesome study contains some serious underestimations of the potential of many soils in the province for agricultural development. Unfortunately the newer soil surveys made in the 1960s and 1970s do not seem to be available outside some government departments. Almost all other authors writing about this area have quoted or paraphrased the work of Trapnell and Clothier. An especially useful study, but one that still depends on Trapnell and Clothier, is John D. Hellen, Rural Economic Development in Zambia, 1890-1964 (Munich: Weltforum Verlag [London: C. Hurst and Co.], 1968), 220-32.

roamed parts of the region.

Game was very plentiful in the territory traversed, so that there never was a day's meat famine on the trip. Herds of wildebeeste and hartebeeste beset the path. Great hulking, snorting hippos abounded in the Lunga River. Flocks of puku made the river plains resemble sheep pastures. Eland, roan, sable, waterbuck, impalla, steenbuck, reedbuck, and wild pigs added to the bewildering variety of game animals with which nature has endowed Central Africa. It would be a poor hunter indeed who would lack game in such a country. If the appetite for meat palled, there were flocks of Guinea fowl, almost as tame as barnyard fowls, and the rivers teem with fish that have never learned the nature of a hook. {5}

While these herds of game have been historically important as a source of protein, a much less obvious creature, the tsetse, has been much more significant to man. While it does not harm the wild animals, it does cause sleeping sickness in man and quickly kills his domestic animals. Hence, large parts of the region--some like the Chizera District with excellent soils and rainfall--have been difficult to inhabit.

Like contiguous parts of the savanna to the north and east in the Congo, the NWP is rich in minerals. Copper, iron, and salt have been used in varying degrees, and cobalt, gold, manganese, uranium, and diamonds are known or suspected to exist. Prior to the colonial era, people in different places smelted copper and iron. Likewise, several salt pans have had long and continuous use in areas like Kaimbwe, halfway between Kasempa and Solwezi. During the colonial era, people continued their subsistence operations

{5} South African Pioneer (hereafter cited as Pioneer), 25 (April 1912), 53.

since the deposits were too small for commercial exploitation. Iron smelting stopped, however, because products were imported from Europe. Only copper mining expanded when deposits of high grade and easily accessible ore were located. The most notable of these has been at Kansanshi near the Solwezi bona. The most significant deposits of copper, however, were located to the north and east of the NWP in the area collectively known as the Congolese and Northern Rhodesian 'copperbelts'. {6}

Different Perceptions of the Environment

Initially, most Europeans who came to this part of the savanna perceived the region in negative terms: it was an enormous, ill-defined, unhealthy, and very hot area in which travel and communications were exceedingly difficult. They had formed much of this image from stories of earlier travelers before they ever left Europe, even though these often referred to the coast and the climatic zones of West Africa rather than to the savanna.

{6} This is largely based on personal observations and general historical information acquired whilst working in NWP development projects, 1975-9. Pirouet describes an impoverished European involved in the subsistence operations of the salt pans at Kaimbwe in Appendix E. Kansanshi has not been continuously worked because of problems with its high water table. The word 'copperbelt' is often, but inconsistently capitalized by writers on Northern Rhodesia/Zambia.

The journey inland from the coast reinforced the negative assumptions of these early European travelers. They lacked the forms of transport that much of mid-nineteenth century Europe took for granted, including navigable rivers, canals, and railroads. Neither could they use horses to transport their goods because of the dangers posed by the tsetse. Hence the journey necessitated the use of Africans as carriers. This tended to dehumanize them in Europeans' eyes and prevented the travelers from averaging more than twenty to forty kilometers a day. This method and pace of travel also unsettled basic concepts of time and space. Unlike Europe, the savannah lacked awesome barriers, such as mountains; yet it was much, much larger. A typical journey to interior places like the NWP took two to three months from the coast. Furthermore, since the indigenous population was small, many Europeans assumed that the land through which they were passing was poor and truly godforsaken. {7}

Major E. A. Steele gave a speech to the Royal Geographical Society that illustrates these impressions. Principally describing his work on the delimitation of the British/Belgian border between Northern Rhodesia and the Congo, he also sketched in the similar work of the

{7} In 1924, on her initial trek to Kalene from the Congolese railhead, Elsie Burr and her entourage averaged eighteen miles a day. This was as fast or faster than her predecessors travelled. Kalene Memories (London: Pickering and Inglis, 1956), p. 89.

British/Portuguese demarcation along the Northern Rhodesian and Angolan border. Steele described the problems and frustrations he felt in trying to bring in essential supplies.

The problem was how to maintain eight white men and four hundred black men in a practically uninhabited and foodless country for fifteen months, the farthest point of which was 350 miles or a twenty-eight days' journey from our railhead at Baya. As a Native can only carry a total load of twenty-eight daily rations, it follows that he cannot be sent further than a fourteen days' journey, in which case he will have consumed all the flour he started with, as he required the remaining fourteen rations to feed himself coming back. As the first half of this country was tsetse fly area, any form of animal transport was also out of the question.

Steele was obviously relieved when the border commissions met just north of Kalene at the junction of Angola, the Congo, and Northern Rhodesia. He concluded by noting that "we were able to turn our backs once and for all on what must surely mark the beginning of one of the most dreary and desolate parts of Africa". {8}

Not all Europeans shared, or at least continued to share, Steele's negative perceptions. Dr. Walter Fisher, the founder of Kalene Mission, is a good example. Fisher thrived not because his early perceptions were different, but because his religious convictions caused him to stay long enough to acquire new, more positive perspectives. This especially occurred after he explored the thickly forested watershed, which Steele later demarcated, and

{8}"Zambezi-Congo Watershed", Geographical Journal, 50 (Sept. 1917): 180-93; quotations from pp. 184-5, 187.

founded a permanent mission station on Kalene Hill. From it, hundreds of square kilometers of Angola, the Congo and Northern Rhodesia woodlands were visible. He and his family, like many later immigrants, soon learned that a cool night in July, when the temperature was only two or three degrees centigrade, was no warmer than a similar night in London or Paris in early winter. Likewise, they learned that the hot days of October, which had low humidity and were accompanied by cool nights, were not really so hot as the summer days of Lisbon, Rome, or Athens. Furthermore, Fisher helped improve the use of several drugs for tropical diseases. For example by experimenting with, and insisting on, the use of small regular doses of quinine, he helped eliminate malaria's deadly derivative, blackwater fever. With such medical advances, he helped make the environment almost as healthy as the European countryside. {9}

For most Europeans, however, these initial perceptions changed more slowly. The immigrants seemed to need negative thoughts of the African environment to sustain a favorable image of their old homes in Europe.

African perceptions were obviously very different.

{9} In the historical records available, Fisher does not specifically compare Africa and Europe. These examples are inferred, however, from the records to make this point. In the 1960s and 1970s numerous personal visits that I made to Kalene and the nearby Hillwood Farm, with the attached school for missionary children at Sakeji, easily convinced me how healthy the area could become. Living in similar places in the NWP for reasonably long periods gave me further proof.

Because the area was the only home they knew, they made internal rather than external comparisons. To them, the differences between sections of the region were large. The land was neither monotonous nor alike. For example, the thickly forested Congo/Zambezi watershed with its heavy, red clay soils, and the lightly wooded Zambezi Valley with its deep, sandy soils and slightly warmer temperatures were different ends of a closed spectrum.

In 1914 George Suckling recorded the way in which some young men responded to these internal differences. When he left Fisher at Kalene to found Chitokoloki Mission, ten young men--some with families--walked three hundred kilometers south along the Zambezi River to join him. While the distance of the journey did not appear to disturb them, "the change of altitude did not seem to suit them." It was too hot. After several got sick and one died, others returned to their old, "healthy" environment. {10}

European and African perceptions thoroughly diverged over the meaning of land and its possession. The white immigrants believed that all land had an exact beginning and ending. A particular space belonged indefinitely to a particular individual(s) and kin. In other words, they believed in a fixed tenure of land that distinguished their own portions from that of other people. Industrialization and urbanization had separated the average middle class

{10} Suckling, 15 March 1914, Echoes of Service (hereafter cited as Echoes), 43 (June 1914, pt. 1), pp. 215-6.

European from any autochthonous oneness with his environment.

Africans believed the land was an extension of each individual's persona. The spirits of his ancestors in the past, his kin in the present, and his children in the future were united through the land. People used what they needed to survive and what they could defend against envious neighbors. Power struggles arose over choice spots, but the vastness of the region helped to minimize conflicts.

Thus African concepts of the land were both broader and narrower than those of the European. "Our" land was defined as that which the individual and his kin were currently using. "Theirs" was what other people were using. But since kin were spatially separated and dispersed among other people, "our" land was not simply one compact unit of land, but extended throughout a large area of the savanna. Ultimately, through the land all the peoples of the savanna were united, forming a completeness, a oneness. Maybe one white observer was correct when he said, "'Mother Earth' is a common expression in civilization. But to Africans the earth is intimate and 'mother' to a degree that suggests an African origin of the phrase." [11]

[11] Watson, On Trek, Vol. 19 (May/June 1945), p. 5. For the complex relationships that arose over land, see especially Victor W. Turner, Schism and Continuity in an African Society: A Study of Ndenbu Village Life (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1964 [1957], for the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, Northern Rhodesia [Zambia]).

For the newcomers, the land might be either beautiful or ugly. For the indigenous people, such an observation was irrelevant. Function determined beauty, not the abstractions of a more complex society. The land, and the trees and animals thereon, had 'beauty' when it had a positive function. The significant question to them was whether or not it helped them survive and prosper. One of Elsie Burr's witty anecdotes, recorded during her early travels around Kalene, far more vividly and charmingly contrasts these two sets of environmental perceptions.

On one trip I had no cook-boy with me, so I took one of my ordinary carriers and showed him my simple requirements. At the first camp he set the little table for the meal. I had opened a tin of sardines. After arranging the table in what he thought was the correct way, he vanished into the bush and came back with a large red wild flower, just the head of it. This he crammed into the empty sardine tin and solemnly set it in the middle of the table. The onlooking and wondering village people were surprised and said to him: "Is she going to eat it?" With withering scorn, he replied: "Oh, you people of the villages, you know nothing, nothing at all! Don't you know that the white people cannot swallow their food unless their eyes are resting upon a flower?{12}

The two distinctly different sets of environmental perceptions, especially highlighted by this anecdote, indicate the vast differences between European and African conceptual worlds. In fact, these different perceptions are only the tips of two conceptual icebergs. The deep and wide chasm between them, which still remains hard to bridge, is indicated by the following comparison of some key social and

{12} Kalene Memories, p. 72. In general, this same wide gap between European and African perceptions of the land still exists.

political concepts and realities that existed late in the nineteenth century.

Opposing Social Conceptions and Realities

Although generalizing for much of Africa, Guy Hunter, a prominent social scientist, succinctly described the salient characteristics of the traditional NWP social and political order. He also indicated why Europeans--even the most sympathetic--initially failed to understand what they saw.

These societies were extremely varied in their social and political structure. . . . Yet certain factors were widely found which make the sharpest distinction between the principles and values informing the whole life in Tropical Africa and the engrained assumptions of the Europeans.

African social and often political organization was built up almost invariably on units of the extended family, lineage or clan, sometimes cross-cut horizontally by organizations of age-grades and further complicated by individuals, groups or associations with a particular religious status or function. This veritable cat's cradle of relationships, stretching far back into the past, sometimes covering a wide area with many villages, embracing a host of rights and obligations, taboos and status rules, was intimately connected with religious observance through its link with ancestors. It combined both a rigid framework of support, certain built-in flexibilities (through exogamy and other rules) and often a system of checks and balances to avoid an undue concentration of power.

This exact and complex network was society. . . . The existence of a chief did not necessarily imply, as the European was so apt to think, a single all-embracing power. The fact that the life-force and well-being of a tribe might be symbolized and immanent in the chief from whom to ask hospitality, with whom to make treaties, through whom to rule, in total ignorance of the real

social entity they were meeting, treated all Africans as "tribes" with "chiefs," and accordingly supposed their political organization to be as simple and undeveloped as their techniques. They had no means of appreciating the complexity, the subtle political texture, the elements of grass-roots democracy, the balance between communal, family and individual rights which have since been disclosed by patient and sympathetic study. {13}

Having thus described the old African order and the inability of Europeans to understand it, Hunter concluded: "thus, from the beginning, there were to be deep misunderstandings between white men and Africans, due to mutual ignorance." These initial misunderstandings are significant to this study because they often led to the later misunderstandings that developed as Europeans and Africans increasingly interacted in the twentieth century. {14}

Hunter's general description indicates what has already been noted about the difference between African and European conceptions of the land. The former conceived the world more holistically than did the latter. And, as the land was an extension of persona, so the dividing line between social relationships, religion, politics, and the economy was hazy and indistinct or non-existent. The Europeans, on the other hand, tended to divide exactly, or compartmentalize society (see Chapters IV-VI): the missionaries handled religion, the government officials controlled politics, and big business and the settlers

{13} Hunter, The New Societies of Tropical Africa: A Selective Study (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 11-2.

{14} Ibid., p. 15.

operated the economy. In the NWP the different social and political concepts and realities appear in a comparison of the following: matrilineal and patrilineal descent that linked individuals into families; segmented clans within small regional states and families united within societies and polities to form centralized tribes and nations; and frontiers and boundaries that determined divisions between people. {15}

Europeans readily identified the patrilineal descent of some African peoples, such as the Zulu in South Africa or the Maasai in East Africa, but the matrilineal descent found in many African societies, like those in the NWP, confused them. Unlike patrilineage in the Bible and in the present-day western world, matrilineage traces descent through the mother, not through the father. Europeans did not understand how such social relationships organized society, let alone see their religious, political, and economic implications. Late nineteenth century European languages had yet to evolve terminology describing such social phenomena as matrilineal relationships.

Virilocal patterns of living also confused these Europeans. In most of these matrilineal groups, women lived in their husbands' areas, and matrikin continually segmented and dispersed among other groups. In turn, these segmented

{15} I would like to remind my readers that even this section of this chapter is part of the modern evolution of this type of specialization. To isolate and analyze some aspect of a holistic oneness is a contradiction.

kin maintained identity through dispersed clans. For example, among the loose clustering of LLC peoples in the NWP and contiguous areas, about twelve clans predominated and were scattered throughout this multi-linguistic and cultural clustering of peoples. [16]

Failing to understand matrilineage, these Europeans could not comprehend its significant political implications. Lineage connections in different places ensured peace and cooperation and limited conflict. In the NWP, they implied a widespread egalitarianism and lack of strong hierarchical systems. Scattered matrikin not only failed to provide a base for political centralization, but also made the need for such centralization less necessary. Only stateless societies or, more commonly, small local states, existed in the NWP during the late nineteenth century. Languages and cultures that shaded into each other provided regional differences, but these did not necessarily imply tribes, especially as conceived by nineteenth century Europe. In contrast, the patrilineal descent typified by Old Testament society and medieval European societies, more frequently joined male patrikin and often laid a base for a more centralized tribe or prototype national state.

As just implied, the fluid African political and

[16] For details about several NWP societies' complex social relationships, especially see works by C. M. N. White and Victor Turner. Also see works by Doke and Melland. For material on these dispersed clans, especially see White, "Clan, Chieftainship, and Slavery in Luvale Political Organization," *Africa*, 27 (1957): 59-75.

social relationships did not require fixed boundaries. Yet in nineteenth century Europe, everything was divided and defined by boundaries, from personal land holdings to national states. Thus, Europeans wrongly perceived the NWP peoples as peripheral segments of the large Lunda-Luba kingdoms, especially the mwaant-yaav (mwatayave), far to the north. While a fount of some political and social concepts, these kingdoms, as shown later, never tried to conquer the NWP area with an invading army. Instead, individuals and small clusters of matrikin migrated short distances to maximize economic resources and political ambitions. For example, in the eighteenth century, Lunda princes moved southwards into parts of Mwinilunga and adjacent areas, and small states coalesced around them. [17]

[17] For the Mwinilunga Lunda example, see Jan Vansina, Kingdoms of the Savanna (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), pp. 162-5 and Schecter, "History and Historiography on a Frontier of Lunda Expansion: The Origins and Early Development of the Kanongesha" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1976), especially pp. 166-226. The number of scholarly works on the pre-colonial history of the south-central savanna region of Africa has increased rapidly in the post-colonial era. In addition to Vansina and Schecter, the following are especially useful: Thomas Q. Reefe, The Rainbow and the Kings: A History of the Luba Empire to 1891 (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1981); Joseph Calder Miller, "Chokwe Expansion, 1850-1900," (Madison, WI: African Studies Program, University of Wisconsin, 1969), and Kings and Kinsmen: Early Mbundu States in Angola (London: Clarendon Press, 1976); J. Jeffrey Hoover, "The Seduction of Ruwej: Reconstructing Ruud History (The Nuclear Lunda; Zaire, Angola, Zambia)" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1978); and Robert Papstein, "The Upper Zambezi: A History of the Luvale People, 1000-1900" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California: Los Angeles, 1977).

The geopolitical concept of 'frontiers' best explains the difference in perceptions. Frontiers refer to the unique, fluid, often indeterminate expanses of land between two or more political entities, but they also imply a special set of perceptions and interactions between polities. Unlike a boundary, that is "inner oriented. . . . created and maintained by the will of the central government," a frontier is:

outer-oriented. Its main attention is directed toward the outlying areas which are both a source of danger and a coveted prize. The hinterland--the motherland--is seldom the directing force behind the pulsations of frontier life. As history, . . . well illustrates, the borderlands often develop their own interests quite different from those of the central government. They feel neither bound by the center nor binding to its realm. Rather, they represent runaway elements and interests.

In this frontier fashion, the Lunda traditions spread south through the formation of tiny egalitarian states, not only through one titleholder, but also later through other autonomous, contentious elements from this titleholder's matrilineage. [18]

[18] L. D. K. Kristoff, "The Nature of Frontiers and Boundaries," Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 49 (1959): 262-82, cited in Haru J. de Blij, Systematic Political Geography, 2nd ed. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1973), pp. 136-48, quotation on p. 137. Many political geographers distinguish quite carefully between the terms frontiers and boundaries. Use of these terms in this chapter is based on the following works. For a text description, see: de Blij, pp. 83-188. Of the vast literature, two works by an African and Indian, respectively, are noteworthy: A. O. Cukwurah, The Settlement of Boundary Disputes in International Law (Manchester:

Papstein's description of the Luvale peoples provides a comprehensive example of how all these African social and political concepts were realized in one part of the NWP through the late nineteenth century. At this time, neither any large political state(s) nor a Luvale tribe existed. People with a similar culture and language vaguely noted their affinity as Luvale through a loose association with the chinyama titleholder of the royal nana-kungu matrilineage. The chinyama had little political significance beyond a very small local state, that was of indeterminate size and much like others in the region. All association with the chinyama was much less important to individuals than the association with matrilineal clansmen, who were widely scattered among groups later designated as Chokwe, Luchazi, Lunda, and Luvale (LLLC). [19]

According to their historical traditions, the original Luvale titleholder, Chinyama cha Mukwamayi, headed the royal nana-kungu matrilineage. With his matrikin, he moved from a state in the north that preceded or was affiliated with the partially legendary Lunda-Luba Empire.

Manchester University Press, 1967); and T. S. Murty, Frontiers: A Changing Concept (New Delhi: Palit and Palit, 1978). For an exceptionally useful historical work on African international boundaries, see: A. C. McEwen, International Boundaries of Africa (London: Oxford University Press, 1971). See also, Carl Gosta Widstrand (ed.), African Boundary Problems (Uppsalla: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet [Scandinavian Institute of African Studies], 1969).

[19] Papstein, "Luvale," pp. 129-205.

Having been connected with the royal court, this original titleholder brought with him two symbols of his royalty, the lukano-bracelet and the lupembe-bell. Thus, the matrilineal chinyama-titleholders that followed became the first among equals with social prestige but little political power. {20}

Papstein also relates that with these symbols of authority, "the nama-kungu-established a loose position of political dominance over the mbwela-lineages . . . by combination of warfare, intermarriage, ritual and technological innovations." Mbwela-matrilineages were autochthonous stateless peoples, who lacked any formal specialized political structures, and these dispersed matrilineages functioned as the region's basic social unit. Among them, the nama-kungu-matrilineage also segmented and dispersed thus extending the frontiers of the chinyama-traditions. Consequently, over many generations the nama-kungu-clan and the mbwela-both created and then retained a new set of symbolic political and social relationships. One of the significant ritual innovations that the nama-kungu-introduced was mukanda, and through such evolutionary changes the chinyama-traditions became a symbolic focus of the lands' fertility. People began to perceive the chinyama-and nama-kungu-as a part of themselves. They did not require a European-type subservience. {21}

{20} Ibid.

{21} Ibid., p. xvi.

Possibly the most important thing about these traditional social and political historical realities and the concepts that underlay them has been the degree to which they changed in the colonial era. They were neither better nor worse than nineteenth century European realities and concepts. Africa was no more a paradise than Europe, particularly after being traumatized by the western-oriented slave trade. The realities were, however, the unique adaptations of the people in the region to their environment. But these were lost or changed during the colonial period, sometimes directly by European force. As Africans adapted to the new order, they both consciously and unconsciously modified or replaced their conceptual world with European concepts. Thus both directly and indirectly, Europe's enormous power continually changed Africa in the first half of the twentieth century.