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Kamwala Shopping World
Competition and Cooperation among Zambian and Chinese Traders in Lusaka

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Abstract

This thesis concerns Chinese small-scale traders in Zambia, and the relations between Chinese and Zambian traders. It is based on ethnographic field research in Kamwala Market in Zambia's capital Lusaka. The number of Chinese migrants living in Zambia is increasing, and Chinese independent small-scale traders are selling Chinese manufactured consumer goods side by side with Zambian traders. Both media and academia have shown a growing interest in Chinese investments and activities in Africa. However, the media often focuses on large Chinese state run projects in Africa, and points to the negative sides of China's role on the continent. The aim of this thesis is to draw a more nuanced picture of the exchanges between Chinese and African actors, and through a grounded perspective show that the picture is not entirely positive or negative; rather it is complex and context specific.

From recent perspectives in anthropology on mobility and mobilities, and using in particular the concepts of 'mobile livelihoods', 'multi-placement', 'translocality' and 'imagined mobility', this thesis argues that the Chinese traders live mobile lives, where they maintain a strong presence in more than one locality. They engage in onwards and return migration, and they view Zambia as a place to do business, not to settle down. In a sedentary logic, to migrate is seen as being pulled up by the roots and then planted somewhere else. But the Chinese traders in Lusaka do not think like this. For them, Zambia is a place to moor temporarily to work towards their ambitions of social mobility for themselves and their family. They travel to different places where they see opportunities to do business, as a strategy to obtain social and economic mobility in China and other countries.

The relations between Zambians and Chinese at Kamwala Market can be characterised as ambivalent. They both compete and cooperate, they are interdependent but at the same time, there are many conflicts and misunderstandings. To understand the relations between Zambians and Chinese at the market, this thesis analyses the relations in a holistic manner and explores some of the conditions - structural, linguistic, economic, legal and cultural - configuring the relations of ambivalence and conflicting experiences. The study explores how the interactions and relations unfold in practice on a daily basis in the market. The aim is to grasp the relations within defined African locales, engaging the Chinese presence in a grounded context.

There is a process of market saturation at Kamwala Market, and there is intense competition for physical, economic and social space. In the saturated market many, both Zambians and Chinese, are provided with opportunities to earn a living and potential for upwards social mobility, while others face falling profits and economic problems, and potential

downwards social mobility. This thesis examines the different traders' responses to market saturation, and argues that the recent level of competition has led to increased geographical mobility among the traders, as trading networks are expanding and people and goods are increasingly moving in all directions. The thesis further argues that geographical mobility is related to social mobility and imagined mobility, and that mobilities are key for understanding the processes currently taking place at Kamwala Market.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The number of Chinese migrants living in Africa is rapidly increasing, and there are thousands of Chinese migrants living and working in Zambia today. Many of them are independent small-scale traders, selling Chinese manufactured consumer goods side by side with Zambian traders at local markets. This thesis is based on four and a half months fieldwork at Kamwala Market in Zambia's capital Lusaka, and discusses the relations between Zambian and Chinese small-scale traders. The aim of the thesis is to draw a more nuanced picture of Chinese influence in Africa. The media often focuses on large Chinese state run projects in Africa, and points to the negative sides of China's role on the continent. However, there are many different Chinese actors operating in different African countries, and the picture is not entirely negative; it is complex and context specific. Moreover, China and Africa are often perceived as homogeneous and generalised categories. This thesis argues against such generalisations, and by highlighting specific relations, it shows the complexities of the exchanges between Chinese and African actors at a specific market. The thesis also emphasises the importance of seeing the relevance of local contexts in shaping Chinese's preferred forms of engagement in African countries. My material is based on ethnographic research from within defined African locales, engaging the Chinese presence in a grounded context.

I will use a theoretical framework of mobility to understand how the Chinese traders live mobile lives and how the increasing competition at Kamwala Market has influenced people's geographical and social mobility. The concept of mobility relates to different aspects of peoples' livelihoods, and geographic, economic, social and imagined mobilities are interconnected and important aspects in understanding the Chinese and Zambian traders' lives and relations. The Chinese traders are not in Zambia for permanent residence, and they operate in many locations at once. I will examine their multi-placement, their aim to pursue upwards social mobility through onwards migration, and their imagined mobile futures. I also analyse the Zambian traders' strategies and responses to the increased competition in Kamwala Market. Markets in Zambia are highly contested spaces, and the Chinese presence intensifies the competition, which in turn influences Zambian traders' opportunities to economic and social mobility.

To grasp these processes from a grounded perspective, I find it important to follow specific relations in the market. The relations between the Zambian and Chinese traders are complex and multifaceted, and I argue that the relations can be characterised by ambiguity and ambivalence. Furthermore, the relations are characterised by ephemeral encounters; there is

little face-to-face interaction and personal friendships are rare. However, Chinese traders as employers and their Zambian employees do interact and cooperate, and there is an exchange of knowledge and ideas between them. The varied and complex relations create innumerable consequences and are met with diversified responses from both Zambian and Chinese traders and employees at the market, and my aim is to grasp some of these dynamics.

Before concentrating on Kamwala Market, the traders and the relations between them, I find it important to introduce some of the major trends in China-Africa and China-Zambia relations. This chapter relates to the wider context – to the larger picture of Chinese-African relations, with a focus on Zambia. In addition, I will elaborate and reflect on my position as a researcher at Kamwala Market, before I discuss how the market is linked to larger networks of global flows.

China-Africa Relations

Varied as cities on the African continent are, a new common feature has emerged over the last ten years: in every large or small African town, there is at least one shop owned by a Chinese migrant (Dobler 2009:707).

China-Africa relations have long historical ties, but the current size and level of engagement, and the rapidly increasing number of Chinese migrants on the continent are relatively new phenomena (Gill and Reilly 2007, Mwanawina 2008). For example, Chinese trade with Africa has more than doubled in the past few years; it has increased as much as 45.1 % in 2008 alone, and trade reached a total of US\$107 billion the same year (Carmody 2010). In 2010, the trade had reached US\$115 billion (McNamee 2012), and it is still growing. The drive behind this development is partly due to global resource scarcity and the expansive policy of Chinese state capital and private businesses to secure resources to the growing Chinese industrial economy (Carmody 2010, Dobler 2007). In addition, the Chinese see Africa “as not only a boundless font of natural resources but a *business opportunity* – a near billion-person market for low-cost Chinese manufactured goods” (McNamee 2012:8). The Chinese state's involvement in Africa also includes China-Africa summits, expanded contribution to UN Peace keeping forces in Africa, growing development assistance, debt cancellations, massive infrastructure projects, new loans and increased resources for public health, education and training (Gill and Reilly 2007, van Dijk and Kragelund 2009). China's engagement in Africa has altered the terms of trade and the distribution of wealth in many African countries. In addition, the political

engagement, which comes with economic bonds, has changed the diplomatic scene (Dobler 2007).

The long historical ties between China and various African countries stem back to the Cold War. During this time, China's interest was mainly political, with China forming links with socialist governments as a way to counter Western powers. However, in the last two decades, China's interests in Africa have shifted from political to economic. Despite the long historical ties, the current Chinese investments are highly controversial, and China's engagement with Africa is full of contradictions. On one hand, the Chinese investments create new jobs and economic growth. On the other hand, their disregard of labour and safety regulations, poor working conditions, low wages, and environmental damages have generated labour unrest and political opposition in several countries (cf. Carmody 2009, Carmody and Hampwaye 2010, Mohan and Kale 2007, Kragelund 2009, Mwanawina 2008). These conditions are also prevalent in China, which means the Chinese have transferred their practices to Africa and are not exploiting the Africans specifically. Other areas of concern are violations of human rights and the out-competing of local companies. Chinese traders can now be seen at the local markets selling Chinese goods affordable to the African consumer, but at the same time, the influx of Chinese goods have marginalised African producers and displaced African traders from the market (The Economist 2006, French and Polgreen 2007, Mwanawina 2008).

Nevertheless, when debating China's impact in Africa it is important to remember that Africa is a huge and diverse continent and that the histories, structures and capacities of African states affect relations of engagement and the consequences of the Chinese presence in each country. Mohan and Power argue that "it is important to disaggregate 'China' and 'Africa' since neither represents a coherent and uniform set of motivations and opportunities" (2008:24). They criticise common representations of China's presence in Africa as a 'resource grab', and of Africans passively submitting to the will of external powers. It is important to avoid such generalisations about China's impact on Africa and African politics, and necessary to study the different attitudes and relations between the actors in different places and at different levels. Mohan and Power further state that "[t]here is an urgent need to listen to what Africans themselves are saying about China's influence in Africa" (2008:26). This is a two-way relationship, and I therefore find it essential to understand the complexities of the exchanges between Chinese and African actors that are presently less visible in the media and academic literature. According to Large (2008) there is a need for more extensive field research on the topic. Alden emphasises the importance of the influence of Chinese migrants living and working in African countries, and to be aware of the fact that, "[t]he behaviour of thousands of

newly settled Chinese businessmen and the conduct of the African communities in which they live and work will matter as much as diplomacy and concessions made at government level” (Alden 2007:128). Moreover, Africans and Chinese meet, interact and explore each other’s worlds on the streets and markets; on the grassroots level (McNamee 2012). Therefore, I chose to conduct my field research on the streets of Lusaka and especially in Kamwala Market, to learn how the Chinese and Zambian small-scale traders interact and relate in a specific context on a daily basis.

Zambia and China

I decided to do my field research in Zambia because of the extensive Chinese investments, the high number of Chinese migrants living in the country, and the currently contested nature of Zambian engagement with Chinese economic interests including political campaigns and demonstrations. Zambia is a landlocked country in Southern Africa. It is rated as one of the poorest countries in the world (Gadzala 2010, UNDP 2011), with an annual GDP per capita of US\$1500 and around two-third of the population living below the poverty line (Gadzala 2010). The presence of Chinese migrants in Zambia dates back to the arrival of Chinese labourers in the 1970s (McNamee 2012). The first migrants worked on the Tazara railway linking Zambia and Tanzania, while later migrants were mainly mineworkers in the copper industry (Carmody 2010). However, the Chinese engagement in Zambia today covers trade, agriculture, mining, manufacturing, construction, communication, transport and health (Mwanawina 2008). Chinese investments are concentrated in Lusaka and the Copperbelt region because of mining, urban manufacturing and retail markets (Carmody and Hampwaye 2010). Since the early 2000s, the scale of Chinese migration to Zambia has seen a dramatic increase.

Zambia’s economy is highly urbanised and dependent on its copper sector. In 2008, copper mining accounted for over 74 % of Zambia export earnings, meaning that the country is vulnerable to changes in the copper prices. After the collapse of copper prices during the first oil crisis in 1974 and through to the early nineties, per capita income declined by 50%, leaving Zambia as one of the poorest countries in the world (Gadzala 2010). Because of China’s drive to secure enough raw materials for their growing economy, Zambia, as a major copper producer, has received substantial Chinese investment in the copper industry. However, these large investments do not necessarily bring benefits to the Zambian population as a whole. Dobler (2007) points out that without the appropriate policy measures, China’s influence may lead to dependency on the export of raw materials for many African countries. This is, according to

Dobler, “an economic position that tends to come with high vulnerability due to price volatility and with high inequality due to corruption and rent-seeking” (2007:96).

The Chinese multi-national corporations and state owned companies in the mining and construction industries in Zambia have paved the way for Chinese small-scale entrepreneurs to set up small businesses around the country. Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, Africa has seen the arrival of Chinese entrepreneurial migrants who come to Africa to follow their own economic interests. They engage in diverse business activities, including retail and wholesale trade, manufacturing, printing, pharmaceutical and medical service, restaurants and beauty salons (Marfaing and Thiel 2011). According to Alden (2007), it is these small-scale entrepreneurs, especially the wholesale and retail traders, who have had the greatest impact on ordinary Zambian’s lives. In Zambia, as in most African countries, hundreds of Chinese small-scale traders that are independent of the Chinese state, set up businesses and run wholesale and retail shops at local markets. There is no reliable data on how many Chinese migrants are living in Africa; however, estimates put the number at more than a million (McNamee 2012). I have also been unable to find reliable sources about the current number of Chinese people living in Zambia, but van Dijk (2009) estimated that there were about 80,000 Chinese migrants in Zambia in 2006. None of the Chinese I spoke to in Zambia knew how many Chinese were living in the country, but they estimated the numbers in Lusaka alone to be between 10,000 and 30,000.



Chinese owned shops under construction, between Kamwala Market and the intercity bus station.

Chinese owned shops are present in every large Zambian city, and both politicians and the public are growing increasingly concerned about the negative effects on local retail trade and manufacturing industries. Contested issues in Zambia have been working conditions in the

mining industry, Chinese-run chicken farms competing with Zambian produced chicken and the out-stripping of Zambian traders at Kamwala Market. In the political campaigns during the last two presidential and parliamentary elections, China-Zambia relationships was much debated (Munshya 2010, Redvers 2011). Michael Sata, who won the election in 2011, has for several years used what borders on xenophobic rhetoric against the Chinese in order to rally support (BBC News 2011, Carmody 2009, Larmer and Fraser 2007). In the 2006 election, while Sata was an opposition leader, he warned about letting Zambia become a “dumping ground” for Chinese people and goods. Several Chinese owned shops were vandalised after the criticism and debate during the 2006 election, and Chinese traders feared for their safety (McNamee 2012). As president, however, Sata has shifted from anti-Chinese rhetoric to speaking about a “smart partnership” with China (Allafrica 2011). Despite the debate and political tension that has arisen in Zambia towards the Chinese presence, the Zambian government welcomes the Chinese investments (Gill and Reilly 2007, Mwanawina 2008, McNamee 2012).

In this thesis, I will examine how the political climate and public debates influence the Chinese traders, ranging from access to trading licenses and visas, to their relations with Zambian employees and customers. To examine the contested nature of the relations between Zambian and Chinese traders, we need to understand that Zambian markets are contested spaces where traders often operate in highly competitive and vulnerable economic niches (Hansen 2010). I will now turn to the situation at Kamwala Market and its competitive environment.

Kamwala Market: A Contested Space

Kamwala Market is a large and busy market area in the city centre of Lusaka. The market consists of small shopping centres, independent shops, stalls, open street markets and street vendors. I chose this specific market because of the high number of Chinese migrants doing business there. The traders at Kamwala Market are mostly small-scale traders who run one or two shops. They rely on personal networks and contacts to supply their businesses with capital, labour and merchandise. Today there is a process of market saturation at Kamwala Market, and it is a highly competitive urban space. The influx of Chinese traders and goods has further increased this competition. Hansen and Vaa define urban space as “a dynamic field of interaction for economic, social, cultural and political processes” (Hansen and Vaa 2004:8). Because of the high competition at Kamwala Market, the increasing competition from Chinese traders has had significant consequences for many Zambian traders. People’s opportunities for social mobility have changed, with some traders benefiting from the influx of Chinese goods and traders while others are losing. This situation has multiple affects, and my study indicates

that we cannot generalise the consequences and responses of the interaction between Chinese and African actors. For many young people at Kamwala Market, the Chinese traders create job opportunities, which are seen as a springboard to other jobs or to start their own business. The Chinese wholesalers also provide Zambian retailers with cheaper products and an opportunity to purchase goods to resell in other areas of the city or beyond. For others, the Chinese presence has led to decreased income and the closing of businesses. These limitations are met with a wide range of different strategies, which I explore in Chapter 5.

Both with and without Chinese traders, the markets in Lusaka are contested spaces, where people compete and negotiate the rights to physical, social and economic space. Kamwala Market is congested. Stalls and designated market spaces are popular and hard to find, and some traders selling from stalls are only allocated space for a few days a week. In addition, many street traders claim space on streets and by the roadsides, which means it is difficult even to begin street trading for newcomers. Markets and streets in Lusaka are important sources of informal employment, and many households are completely dependent on the revenue from the market trade to survive (Hansen 2008). It is important to see Zambians' reactions to the growing competition in the market in light of the difficult economic situation many of these traders are in, and the importance of the revenue for their households and families.

Because of the historical importance of trade in many African countries, a major focus of the growth in the informal economy has been in commerce, with trade in streets and markets being economically significant, and a key source of new jobs for the urban poor (Lyons and Brown 2010). Hansen (2010) has focused on the contested space of streets and markets in Lusaka and examined the role of different actors in claiming urban space. According to Hansen, markets in Zambia are contested spaces because of the disputed nature of issues concerning market regulations, management, ownership, and reconstruction projects. "Within markets, different groups quarrel over who is in charge in a process that pits marketeers' associations, LCC [Lusaka City Council], the ministry, and political party branches against one another" (Hansen 2010:19). Hansen notes that, "Zambia's strained economic atmosphere and its tenuous political situation make intervention in marketing and street vending a complicated strategy" (Hansen 2004: 65).

Despite the recent competition from Chinese traders, they are not the only source of the increasing competition and influx of Chinese goods at Kamwala Market. Chinese goods were imported to Zambia long before the arrival of Chinese small-scale traders, and there is a diversity of routes where Chinese goods enter Zambian markets. Zambians' complaints about

the influx of Chinese traders richly supports Marfaing and Thiel's (2011) argument from studies in West Africa that,

...when interest groups in Ghana and Senegal denounce the unfair competition created by Chinese entrepreneurs, they do not complain about Chinese competition itself but rather about the influx of Chinese traders in a domain that local merchants have mastered themselves since at least the 1970s: the import of affordable consumer goods from Asia (2011:7).

However, the influence of Chinese traders are not merely negative. Several Chinese traders I met felt that the accusations made against them were unfair, especially since they supply local retailers with goods. The Chinese traders serve as an important link in supply chains in Africa (McNamee 2012). Also, for many low-income households in Zambia, the presence of Chinese traders who offer a wide range of goods, has increased their purchasing powers and made goods available which they could only dream about a few years ago. A Zambian retailer at Kamwala Market told me,

You see, in Zambia the majority have a low standard of living, so it is good we have these [Chinese] shops so normal people have the possibility to buy as well. The Chinese give better prices for the customers. It is good that people from different classes can buy their things in Kamwala. There is something for everyone.

Purchasers from other parts of Zambia and countries in the region also benefit from the cheap Chinese goods. Small-scale traders can now purchase larger amounts and varieties of goods to sell in their shops elsewhere, which have created new job opportunities and networks. In this way, the presence of Chinese traders and goods have expanded trade networks in the region and led to increased cross border trade, and, hence, increased mobility among traders in the region. Daniel, a Zambian man in his twenties, who works in a large Chinese owned shop selling blankets, bags and decorations as well as accessories and hygiene products, told me that the cheap Chinese goods are always quick to sell out. He is positive towards the Chinese in Lusaka and that they are opening shops. He explained that Zambian people do not have enough money to open large shops themselves and they cannot afford to employ as many people as the Chinese traders do. For him, the Chinese owned shops meant work opportunities and cheap goods. He continued, "Kamwala wouldn't have been so big and busy without them [the Chinese]".

However, the reluctance towards Chinese goods is growing amongst customers because of the poor quality and the Chinese traders' lack of a return and repair policy.

The influx of Chinese traders and goods at Kamwala Market is a complex issue that affect people differently and are viewed in both positive and negative ways. To grasp the responses and strategies, as well as the exchanges between traders, I found it vital to follow specific relations and networks at the market. To achieve this, I participated in people's everyday lives to understand the situation from their perspective.

Methodological Considerations: Work and Encounters in Kamwala Market

This study is based on ethnographic fieldwork, and I learned about the traders' perspectives, livelihoods and business methods through participant observation, informal talks and interviews in and around Kamwala Market. I spent most of my time working in shops, both owned by Chinese and Zambian traders, helping where needed and learning how they ran their shops on a daily basis. Spradley points out that, “[r]ather than *studying* people, ethnography means *learning from* people” (1980:3). Participating and helping in the shops was a great way to learn from the shop owners and their employees. In addition, I found participating and observing very informative in that people did not always do as they said they would, and that many practices were never verbalised (cf. Kawulich 2011, Rudie 1994, Holy and Stuchlick 1983). It would have been difficult to learn about many aspects of the interactions between Zambian and Chinese traders without being in the market as an observer.

The largest share of ethnographic material stems from my everyday experiences, observations and conversations at the market. In addition, I conducted several interviews with academics, politicians and economists, as well as in depth interviews with both Zambian and Chinese traders inside and outside Kamwala Market. I did not use a tape recorder during the interviews, mainly because it did not feel natural in the informal settings of the conversations in the market. In the beginning, I tried to take notes during interviews with traders, but this hampered the conversations as people stopped talking while I was writing and did not appear to speak freely. In addition, we were often working together during the conversations and interviews, such as serving customers, cleaning the shops, putting goods onto shelves and so on, which made it difficult to make notes. I got into the habit of sitting down in a café or restaurant in the market to write notes between interviews and visits to shops, which I then expanded and transferred to my laptop in the evenings. However, when interviewing economists, academics and other specialists, I was able to take full notes during the interviews.

When I arrived in Lusaka, I was anxious and concerned that the traders would not want to interact with me. Fortunately, I did not have to be concerned for long. The Zambian traders, employees and customers at Kamwala Market were incredible friendly and open, and happy to teach me about their businesses and daily chores. Many thought it was peculiar that a young European woman was interested in trading and businesses in Zambia, but nevertheless they patiently answered my questions and welcomed me into their lives.

I received indispensable help from my research assistant, Levis, who is a Zambian man in his forties. He was a door opener and my translator, in addition to being an inexhaustible well of local knowledge. He made it easier to begin building a network at the market. I will always remember my first “appointment” with a trader at Kamwala Market. It was a few days after my arrival to Zambia and Levis had called an old friend of his, Anne, who owns a small tailoring shop at the market. She met me with a big, warm hug and I was invited into her shop for something to drink. Anne became a good friend and her shop became a regular place to visit during my fieldwork. During the first few weeks, I spent most of my time walking around the market together with Levis, chatting to traders and customers and learning about trading practices. We introduced our study, asked a few questions and if we could visit again another day. This way we acquired a large network of acquaintances during the first few weeks, whom we could revisit for more in-depth questions later.

Sometimes I found it difficult to explain my intentions in the market, but Levis always knew how to make people understand. Levis’s social skills made people relax and open up. In addition, people trusted Levis as a respected Zambian man in his forties, and, hence, his presence helped justify my presence as a field researcher. However, it is important to be aware that a research assistant and/or translator will affect the access to information as well as the definition of the setting and relationships (Berremann 1962, Borchgrevink 2003). While people felt more comfortable talking to Levis in certain situations, in other situations I found it better to be on my own. Especially when working for a whole day in a shop, it was easier to take the role as an apprentice and to participate in the daily chores when I was alone. I frequently gained access to different kinds of information together with Levis compared to on my own, and I valued both types of information. In addition, when interviewing Chinese migrants, I often felt it was better to do so alone, as they appeared more relaxed when speaking to me only.

According to Spradley (1980), communicating the aims of the research is a process of unfolding rather than a once-and-for-all declaration. I found that my main interest, namely the relationships between Zambian and Chinese traders, was a subject surrounded with scepticism, ambiguity and sensitivity. It was a difficult subject to ask about and people appeared suspicious

about my intentions for asking. Instead, in the beginning, I often chose to explain that I was interested to learn about trading in general and about the daily life in the market. This was an easier way to start conversations, and the topic of the Chinese traders often came up as an integrated part of conversations. However, informants have the right to know the ethnographer's aim and it was important for me to be open and explain my project as clearly as possible.

Most Zambians at the market spoke English, but, regardless, it was often useful that Levis could explain or elaborate on certain topics in one of the Zambian vernacular languages. In addition, I felt more comfortable walking around this huge and busy market together with Levis. When I walked on my own, young men often approached me in a way that made me uncomfortable. However, after a few months I felt more relaxed walking on my own as well, since I knew traders in most of the areas of the market. Even though most people were welcoming and friendly, many were also sceptical about my intentions and role, and some were quite reserved towards us in the beginning. A breakthrough came when I asked to help behind the till and to help advertise their goods to customers. This was followed with a lot of laughter and joking, but the next time I entered the shop I was expected to work and help together with the other employees. I found working in the shops very interesting as well as the best way to get to know people. When it was quiet in the shops, we would share tea and food and spend hours talking. Most of my interviews were informal, often conducted while sitting on piles of clothes in the back of a shop, at a shop's entrance or behind the till, chatting to both Zambian and Chinese shop owners and employees.

I also interviewed traders from other African countries and from the Middle East. I spoke to traders in large and small shops and at stalls. I also talked with street vendors, as well as employees in shops, family members and friends of traders, customers and passers-by. Snowball sampling became an important method, as one trader would lead me to another trader and that trader would recommend me to speak to a friend and so on. Referring the researcher to someone else to interview requires a level of trust between informant and researcher (Kawulich 2011). As many of the shop owners and employees became friends of mine, we also met outside the market. We went to church, met for meals or just wandered in the city centre, and they invited me to their homes. These meetings provided me with useful information about people's ways of life, their perspectives, as well as the conditions they live in and how they create meaning in this particular context.

While the Zambian traders and employees were open and welcoming, it turned out to be difficult and time consuming to interact with the Chinese traders. One of the main reasons

for this was that they did not actually work in the shops themselves, but let their *Zambian* employees run the shops. The Chinese traders at Kamwala Market have experienced resentment and resistance from local traders, local and international media and the *Zambian* government, especially the Immigration Office, which means that they are sceptical to people they do not know, and that included me. In addition, language was a major obstacle in my communication with the Chinese traders, since I do not speak Chinese and most of them had little knowledge of English. As a result, I spent more time with the *Zambian* traders. After the first two months, I had only interviewed one Chinese shop owner and two Chinese employees, despite seeing Chinese traders on a daily basis at the market, and the fact that I attempted to speak to everyone I saw. Most of the Chinese traders I encountered refused to speak to me, moved away or told me to go away. The few who agreed to speak with me only did so shortly, answering my questions reluctantly. An exception was two young Chinese employees in a Chinese owned shop who enthusiastically answered my questions. But after two meetings they did not want to have contact with me again because they were concerned that their Chinese employer would find out and disapprove of us meeting. I changed my tactic and began giving out flyers written in Chinese, both to Chinese people in and around the market and to *Zambian* employees in Chinese owned shops. The flyers explained who I am, what I was studying and my contact details, as well as asking for an interview. It is useful to point out the importance of formal business cards in China and that they open doors as these flyers did. The flyers only resulted in one interview with a Chinese shop owner and one Chinese employee, but they proved very useful in that the shop owners knew who I was and allowed me to work in their shops and speak to their *Zambian* employees. The Chinese shop owners' approval was crucial to be able to work in their shops, since their *Zambian* employees would be cautious about speaking to me without their employer's approval.

您好！我叫卡里（Kari），我是一名来自挪威的研究生。我对贸易和在赞比亚的不同的贸易关系非常感兴趣。我正在写一份研究卡瓦拉市场不同类型的企业之间的关系报告。我只是一名学生，我来这里并不是做生意的。我只希望用我的研究论文取得挪威大学的毕业报告。在报告中我也不会提到任何个人的名字或资料，也不会做损耗您的生意利益的事情。请您相信并能帮助我，我真的非常感激您，您的观点视角将对我的研究有很大的帮助！如果方便，我将问你几个问题，好吗？谢谢！

致以最真诚的问候与尊重！

Kari Mjaavatn Stien
0973135069

The flyer¹

A major breakthrough concerning my contact with Chinese came after visiting a casino on the outskirts of Lusaka. Casinos are popular places for Chinese migrants to meet and relax, and the alcohol seemed to make many of them more at ease and open to speak with me. Mr Wu, one of the Chinese traders I met at the casino, became one of my main informants and he provided me with a better understanding of the situation of Chinese traders in Zambia. He became a vital door opener to information and other Chinese traders. Despite the initial difficulties in speaking to the Chinese, my network expanded over time and in the end, I had interviewed twenty-two Chinese migrants in Lusaka. Of these, fifteen were shop owners or employees at Kamwala Market, four worked in a Chinese state owned construction company, one owned a restaurant, one worked in a Chinese travel agency and one was a farmer. I conducted most of the interviews at Kamwala Market, but I also visited some of the Chinese traders' homes and met with other Chinese migrants outside the market.

Twelve of the Chinese migrants I spoke to were fluent in English, while seven spoke poor English and three did not speak English at all. It is not a coincident that the majority of the Chinese migrants I interviewed had a good knowledge of English. When I approached a trader who did not speak English, he or she would either reject my approach or direct me to one of

¹ A Chinese friend in China translated the flyer from English to Chinese. The English translation is: Hello, My name is Kari and I am a master degree student from Norway. I am very interested in the trade and different trading networks in Zambia. I wish to write a research paper about the different types of businesses and the relationships between the traders in Kamwala market. I am a student, and I'm not here to do business. I will only use my research paper to graduate at the university in Norway. I won't mention any names or personal details in my paper, and I won't do anything that can harm you or your business. Is it okay if I ask you a few questions? I would really appreciate it and it would mean a lot for my studies to get your point of view. With all respect, Kari Mjaavatn Stien.

his/hers employees who spoke better English. Likewise, when I interviewed the Chinese who spoke little or poor English, other Chinese would translate. Some of the Chinese migrants use English names, while others use their Chinese names when talking to their Zambian employees and me. I therefore use a mixture English and Chinese pseudonym names in this thesis, reflecting the traders' own choice of names. The fact that I have worked in China for six months and travelled extensively in the country became an entrance to many conversations with Chinese migrants. The few phrases of Mandarin I know also proved important in getting in touch with Chinese. People appeared positively surprised over my interest in their background, country and language. It was crucial to explain that neither the Chinese nor the Zambian government were involved in the study, that I was not a journalist and that all the information would remain anonymous. Despite the successful interviews with Chinese traders, the majority of my data is from participant observation, conversations and interviews with Zambian traders and employees in the market, so in many ways I have learned more about their views and opinions. That said, I also feel I got an insight into Chinese traders and businessmen and women's lives in Zambia.

This thesis is a result of the interactions with people I met and what these people were doing. We cannot choose what our informants do, are concerned about and choose to include us in as researchers, and, hence, this thesis is a result of my encounters with people and their lives in specific places and specific times. My position in the field changed in different situations and at different times. Before I began the fieldwork, I was worried that my presence would affect what was going on – what people did and said. However, I realised that they were the ones affecting me. My social position in the market was defined by the traders and it was in a constant process of defining and redefining. My role in the field became what they allowed me to be. Of course, the ethnographer's presence and participation in the field has consequences for what is going on, but rather than "contaminating" what is observed, these effects should be seen as "the very source of that learning and observation" (Emerson et al. 1995:3). Emerson et al. continue, "[r]elationships between the field researcher and people in the setting do not so much disrupt or alter ongoing patterns of social interaction as reveal the terms and bases on which people form social ties in the first place" (1995:3). Instead of viewing reactivity as a defect, it is important to be sensitive to how the ethnographer is seen and treated by others (Emerson et al. 1995). In addition, it is important to remember that ethnographic truths are always partial, committed and incomplete (Clifford 1986). Crapanzano emphasises that, "ethnography is historically determined by the moment of the ethnographer's encounter with whomever he is studying" (Crapanzano 1986:51). Ethnographies never represent a culture, only

an interpretation of a section of it at a specific moment (Clifford 1986). Furthermore, Clifford points out that, “[c]ulture is contested, temporal and emergent. Representation and explanation – both by insiders and outsiders – is implicated in this emergence” (Clifford 1986:19). We do not find a culture, but we describe cultural meetings, and culture and meaning is a process, which is always in creation (Rudie 1994).

The fact that I am a young woman undoubtedly affected my relationships and the production of information. In some ways, being young was a door opener as I could easily talk with the young employees in shops and relate to their lives, as well as take on the role as a student and apprentice. However, some traders were sceptical about me as a young woman, especially Indian and Arabic traders. When this was the case, they usually directed their answers and conversation towards Levis instead. My role as an outsider affected the information I was able to gather as well. A problematic area was issues concerning ‘witchcraft’, ‘business medicine’ and ‘Satanism’, which many Zambians refer to when discussing increased social and economic differences. Detail knowledge of such practices are regarded as the prerogative of the elders, and younger people often referred me to them. However, many of the elders refused to discuss it with me since I was “still young”. In addition, the younger informants often seemed embarrassed to discuss such issues with a foreigner.

English is the major business language at Kamwala Market, but the majority of the small talk was in Zambian vernacular languages. My research assistant translated some of these conversations, but I undoubtedly missed a lot of what this talk entailed. I conducted most of my interviews in English, though; I did some with help of Levis as a translator. The odd occasion an interviewee preferred to speak in a Zambian language, it was not because he/she did not speak English, but because he/she felt more comfortable speaking in his/her mother tongue. The interviewee would understand Levis’ translations into English and could agree and comment upon those, as well as understand my questions. In other words, these conversations were conducted in a mix of English and Zambian vernacular languages.

An important point to note in this thesis is that the names of the traders and others have been changed in order to preserve their anonymity. The exceptions are my research assistant, Levis, who wished to have his real name in the thesis, and academics, economists and politicians I interviewed in a formal manner. I have also chosen to exclude details that can harm peoples’ interests or reveal their identity. When I explained to informants that I would keep all the information anonymous, many told me that it was not necessary as they did not have anything to hide. Nonetheless, I told them that changing their names was a standard procedure in my field of studies. Occasionally, a person who had insisted on using his/her real name,

would re-ask later if I still changed their names, since they had something sensitive to tell me. To keep their names and information anonymous created a sense of trust and openness. It is important to safeguard the informant's rights, interests and sensitivities and to examine the implication of the research for informants (Spradley 1980).

Global Flows

The obviousness of massive global flows makes it impossible for anthropologists to maintain the illusion of detached localities. (Trouillot 2003:125)

The local economy at Kamwala Market is tied to large worldwide networks and global economic processes. This means that even though this thesis deals with microlevel processes, in that it examines the concrete relations and developments on the ground, it also deals with macrolevel processes because the local retailing practices are tightly linked to international trade networks and economic changes. "Zambia and the local concerns of its citizens are inextricably bound to the macrolevel" (Hansen 2000:19). Price changes, merchandise production and networks in other areas of the world constantly affect the traders. Kamwala Market is a well-known trading hub for Southern Africa and a redistribution centre for merchandise from all over the world. There is a constant flow of goods entering and leaving Kamwala Market, followed by a flow of traders from neighbouring countries as well as from the Middle East and Asia. Additionally, Zambian traders travel to Southern African countries as well as to Asian countries and the Middle East to purchase goods. They resell these goods at Kamwala Market to traders from all over the region who bring the goods back to their home country to sell in their shops.

The complexity in Kamwala Market in the sense of the range of merchandise and trade networks observed in the market is a product of the interplay of historical and current local and global forces. Trade networks expand across national boundaries, regions and continents and create innumerable relationships, contacts, jobs and opportunities, but also certain limitations. I will elaborate on these networks throughout the thesis. In addition to price changes and different types of merchandise production in various regions, the Zambian traders and their customers are influenced by policies and import regulations in different countries.

Gregory (2009) argues for the importance of economic anthropology to see the smaller cases in the bigger picture, to see local economy in relation to global economic structures and changes. There is a need to look at how global trends affect the economic, political and social

structures of local people and how these people adapt, resist and alter the global trends to best fit their situation (Gregory 2009). Researchers need to reach out from micro-processes to macro forces, which connects the local to the global without losing sight of experiences of globalisation operating in specific localities (Brickell and Datta 2011). And it is in this connection between the local and the global we have to examine the “local as situated within a network of spaces, places and scales where identities are negotiated and transformed” (Brickell and Datta 2011:5). The local is in this sense a place where the global is negotiated and experienced by social actors (Brickell and Datta 2011). This thesis examines how global migratory movements, production chains and trade networks affect the traders at Kamwala Market, and how these traders negotiate and tempt to alter these trends by responding in specific ways.

Localities are not necessarily limited to location, but are an area for activity or groups (Brickell and Datta 2011). Therefore, when studying Kamwala Market, I cannot consider the market as a place disconnected from other locations. It is important to understand the wider context in order to grasp what is happening in the market. However, the ‘local’ and the ‘global’ is not something in itself, instead, it is a question of demarcation. Although it is impossible to define exactly the boundaries between the ‘local’ and the ‘global’, the attempt to do so is analytically productive because it allows us to study more closely and theorise how different processes with different geographical and historical origins articulate (Moore 2004). Moore emphasises moreover that to understand the interconnections between the local and the global we have to study how “people themselves form those interconnections and to understand that process within specific contexts – economic, political, technological, symbolic” (Moore 2004:81). When it comes to globalisation we need to recognise that, “[w]hatever the global or globalization might consist of, they have not managed to produce ‘sameness’: local cultures and ways of life accommodate to these processes, resist them and shape them for their own purpose” (Moore 2004:71). It is therefore important to study how these global flows are articulated and shaped in specific places, and to avoid generalisations.

Kamwala Market is a multi-cultural market with traders from all over the world selling and buying a wide range of merchandise. There are traders from other African countries as well as a large number of Indian and Lebanese, and recently Chinese traders. Despite the growing numbers of migrants operating at the market, it is important to note that migration is not a new phenomenon, but in today’s globalised world, it is more common and takes place with a lesser sense of permanency than in previous centuries (Pang and Sterling 2012). The scale of migration is increasing, and individuals, families and whole communities do currently find

themselves with stakes in interconnected worlds, which they try to maintain simultaneously despite being widely separated spatially (Grillo 2007). In addition, people no longer travel only from the “third” to the “first” world. Instead, every nation sends and receives migrants, at different scales and levels of permanency (Pang and Sterling 2012). In social science there has been a redirection of the analytical focus from place to mobility; “from the bipolar view of ‘place of origin’ and ‘place of destination’ to the movements involved in sustaining mobile or cross-border livelihoods” (Sørensen 2007:6). The Chinese traders interact and identify with multiple places, and hence their practices contribute to the development of transnational networks (Sørensen and Guarnizo 2007). I find this focus on mobile livelihoods critical for an understanding of the Chinese migrants working at Kamwala Market, and to understand migration as a dynamic process.

An Analytical Framework of Mobility and Mobilities

What was striking at Kamwala Market was both the Zambian and Chinese traders’ flexibility, drive and mobility. I therefore find it necessary to analyse my material through an analytical framework of mobility. Salazar (2010 a) emphasises that today we are in a constant flux of people, cultures, objects, businesses, services, information and ideas. Hence, mobility relates to a myriad of forms in both spatial and temporal dimensions. The different forms of mobilities include movement within rural or urban areas, between rural and urban areas, across national borders, nomadism, refugeeism and tourism. The concept of mobilities encompass the large scale movements of people, capital, objects, and information, and the more local processes of daily movement through public space and the travel of material things within daily life (Gough 2008). In addition to referring to movement in space, mobility can also be used in relation to movement in society, such as economic and social mobility. Physical movement often relate to social mobility, either upwards or downwards. Both the Zambian and Chinese traders engage in geographical mobility in order to obtain goals of upwards social mobility.

In this thesis, I argue that the Chinese traders are mobile; they plan to return to China, move onto other African countries or to other continents, and they do not perceive themselves as permanent migrants to Zambia. I further argue that the Chinese migrants are multi-placed because their livelihood practices are expanded to several locations. The Chinese traders engage in geographical mobility to search for opportunities for economic and social mobility, and they imagine mobile futures. The Chinese traders’ mobilities include both physical, economic, social and imaginative mobility, and these mobilities are shaped by cultural knowledge and practices (Salazar 2010 b). The fact that the Chinese traders imagine mobile futures, both geographically

and socially, is important to their livelihoods. This means that both actual and potential movements organise and structure the Chinese migrants' social lives (Hannam et al. 2006). Social mobility is a cultural imagination for future development. It is about how you imagine the world in different spaces, and anthropology needs to find a way to connect time, space and cultural imagination. Systems of mobility are complex, and there are inter-relational dynamics between physical, informational, social and imaginative forms of mobility (Hannam et al. 2006).

The increasing competition in the market has led to increasing hardship for many Zambian traders, and they have to find new strategies to survive in this competitive trade. Traders use different strategies to cope with this situation, but despite the variety, I will argue that a common feature is mobility. The recent level of competition in Kamwala Market has led to growing mobility amongst the Zambian traders in that trading networks are expanding and people and goods are increasingly moving in all directions. The Zambian traders become more mobile as they travel to other countries, move between several markets, shift to other types of businesses or start additional ones, as well as swapping between different types of goods and between different categories of customer. Furthermore, the increased competition has led to upwards and downwards social mobility for Zambian traders. Some see business opportunities disappearing while others see new opportunities arising.

Campbell and Heyman write that, "anthropologists are increasingly interested in the escalating pace and intensity of social change" (2009:131). I argue that mobility is an important category to describe social changes and draws attention to the movement of people, ideas and goods. In addition to the mobility of people and goods at Kamwala Market, there is also a mobility of information and ideas. The Chinese traders transfer knowledge about business operations and trade networks to their Zambian employees, and the Zambian employees share their knowledge about specific market demands and conditions with their Chinese employers. Different ideas and expectations about employment relations, work ethic and ways of interaction also meet at the market. The different traders' ideas and expectations often clash with the others' ideas, rendering the relations tense and ambiguous.

It is essential to be aware that mobility is perceived and experienced in different ways by different actors, and that mobility itself appears in multiple forms (De Bruijn et al. 2001). Mobilities create an integrated system where mobilities can be observed at scales ranging from the household and the community to the national and international migration flows (Schiller and Salazar 2013). Salazar argues that "all forms and types of mobility are deeply embedded in wider cultural and socio-economic structures and, thus, mobility always needs to be analysed

in the specific context in which it occurs” (2010 b :64). To understand the mobility of the traders at Kamwala Market, we need to be aware of the complexities and variations, as well as to understand the specific situations and the wider context people are acting. Mobilities, both across internal and external boundaries, involve more than just movement; they are “infused with cultural meaning” (Salazar 2010 b:55). Cultural elements partly decide how people are mobile, yet the way people move also exerts strong influence on their culture and society (Salazar 2010 b). Moreover, we need to recognise the relations of unequal powers in mobilities, which act on people’s opportunities and ease of travel. Schiller and Salazar (2013) argue for the use of the term ‘regimes of mobility’ to highlight the “relationships between the privileged movement of some and the co-dependent and stigmatised and forbidden movement, migration and interconnection of the poor, powerless and exploited” (2013:188). We need to study mobilities through a relational approach that theorises place-making, relations to places, and borders as part of the networks of social relationships and movements (Schiller and Salazar 2013).

Structure of the Thesis

In this chapter, I have covered the wider context of Chinese-African relations, and introduced the subject matter and relevant theories. The thesis is now divided into four main topics; the Zambian traders and the context of Kamwala Market, the Chinese migrants, the relations between the Zambian and Chinese in the market, and the characteristics of and responses to increased competition and market saturation. First, in Chapter 2, I introduce the reader to Kamwala Market and its traders, and the historical, social, economic and political relations that have made the market what it is today. I argue that Kamwala Market is a global “shopping world”, connected to global trade networks and occurrences in multiple locations around the world. I examine how the market has evolved in the interplay of local and global forces and powers.

Secondly, in Chapter 3, I describe the Chinese small-scale traders working at Kamwala Market, why they migrate and what they aspire to accomplish. I argue that the Chinese migrants’ livelihood practices are expanded into several locations, and that they are multi-placed because they maintain a strong presence in more than one locality. The Chinese traders’ geographical mobility is a strategy to pursue upwards social mobility in China and other locations around the world. I analyse the migrants’ multi-placement through anthropological perspectives on mobility and translocal geographies.

Thirdly, in Chapter 4, I explore the relations between Zambian and Chinese traders, and between the Chinese traders as employers and their Zambian employees at Kamwala Market. I analyse the relations from a perspective of strangership, and I examine how the mixed nearness and distance between the Zambian and Chinese traders and employees creates ambivalent relations. I explore some of the conditions that render the relations contested, and I argue that the relations have to be understood in light of the specific conditions at Kamwala Market, as well as the different people's livelihoods.

Lastly, in Chapter 5, I examine the increased competition and the saturation of the market. In this highly competitive market, traders have to find new strategies to survive as business people. I argue that the recent level of competition has led to increased geographical mobility, as people and goods are increasingly moving in all directions. For some traders, the growing influx of cheap Chinese goods has created opportunities for establishing and expanding businesses, and hence for upwards social mobility, while others see their opportunities dwindle and are therefore facing downwards social mobility. I argue that geographical mobility is related to social mobility, and that mobilities are key to understanding the processes currently taking place at Kamwala Market.

Chapter 2: Kamwala Shopping World

Kamwala Market welcomes you to the entrance of the market with a large, colourful sign that says “Kamwala Shopping World”. The coat of arms of Lusaka is displayed in the upper left corner of the sign, while in the lower right corner it says “China Hainan (Z) Ltd”. Even here at the entrance to the market, the Zambian and Chinese relation is shown. Kamwala Shopping World is possibly a more accurate description of the market than just Kamwala Market, as the area pulls together different historical and contemporary global processes into one single place. The name also highlights the presence of the high number of traders from all over the world, who each bring complex and diversified ways of trading. However, both Zambian and foreign traders commonly refer to this area as “Kamwala Market”, and I therefore choose to use this name in the thesis.

The protagonists in this thesis are the traders at Kamwala Market. The word 'trader' is a broad term that covers a range of different types of traders. In this thesis, it is used for retailers, wholesale dealers, suppliers and purchasers. Many Zambians are both traders and customers in the market. There are primarily two different types of Chinese actors operating at Kamwala Market; Chinese companies as property owners, such as China Hainan Ltd, and Chinese small-scale traders who have specialised in importing cheap goods from China. In this thesis, I sometimes refer to the Chinese small-scale traders as shop owners. They own the shops in the sense of the merchandise and furniture inside the shops, but it is important to specify that these traders do not own the properties, rather they are tenants renting mainly from China Hainan Ltd, Lebanese or Indian property owners. I speak about the Chinese traders in Kamwala as traders, shop owners, tenants and employers.

Kamwala Market is a global meeting place for traders and goods. Traders and customers at the market categorise goods according to from what country the goods were imported into Zambia, and thus according to the traders' nationalities, with generalisations about which nationalities sells what qualities. These categories are also transferred to generalise about shop set-ups and trade practises. The influx of Chinese traders and Chinese goods to Kamwala Market has changed the way Zambians understand, talk about and categorise goods, and the large variety of different goods available at the market has created a larger complexity in the different categories of goods. Concepts of 'ethnicity' and 'nationality' are important to navigate in the social universe of traders, shops and goods at Kamwala Market.

This chapter will introduce Kamwala Market, its location, historical background and social composition. Furthermore, the chapter examines market regulations and areas of conflict.

Finally, it introduces the networks of traders and goods meeting at Kamwala Market, and how traders navigate in the social and material landscape of this global “shopping world”.

Introduction to the Market

The original name for the market in this area was Luburma Market, which was set up during the colonial period. Luburma later grew and spread out into the surrounding area, which is called Kamwala, hence today’s name Kamwala Market. Even today, it is easy to distinguish Luburma Market by its older stalls and small shops divided by narrow and dark alleyways. A ring of newly constructed one story shops built and owned by China Hainan Ltd encircles Luburma Market. The majority of traders in these new shops are Chinese and Zambian, in contrast to Luburma Market where mostly Zambian traders operate. To the west of this section of the market are several large Chinese and Lebanese owned shopping complexes, along with independent shops, street markets and stalls. To the south and east of Luburma Market are shops mostly owned and run by Indian traders. These streets and shops are dominated by buildings in colonial architecture. The Indians began trading in Kamwala during the colonial time, and they still dominate certain economic niches of the market.

The market is restrained to the north by Independence Avenue, and partly to the west by the main railway track. Independence Avenue is one of the busiest roads in Lusaka’s city centre. On the opposite side of this road is the central inter-city bus station, with buses linking Lusaka to other Zambian cities as well as cities in neighbouring countries. The railway track is the main line linking the Copperbelt region in Zambia with Johannesburg in South Africa. These travel links provide easy access to the transport of goods for the traders in the region. It also makes Kamwala Market the hub of market activity in the area and a convenient place to shop for travellers. Surrounding Kamwala Market are residential areas with lush gardens, government houses and public buildings. The market is in walking distance from the central business district of Lusaka. A big white mosque can be seen to the east of the market, next to a Hindu temple and a Hindu hall. To the west, on the other side of the railway tracks, you can see the recently built Brazilian Pentecostal Church - The Universal Church of the Kingdom of God. The presence of these different religious buildings shows the multiculturalism and complexity in this small area. People with different religions, nationalities and backgrounds work, live, cooperate and compete in and around Kamwala Market.



An overview of the outskirts of Kamwala Market from the flyover bridge at Independence Avenue.

A great viewpoint over the market can be had from Independence Avenue's bridge over the railway tracks to the west of the market. This elevated view provided me with a tool to contemplate the complexity of the area. From here, I could see various stalls displaying all kinds of goods, street sellers, shopping complexes, long streets with small shops, warehouses and the corrugated iron roofs of Luburma Market. I could also see several buildings under construction, which would eventually be turned into shops. Stalls spill out across the railway tracks, and people can easily walk across and along the lines as trains are infrequent and the lines are not barred. Several large trees are scattered around the market, providing a welcome shade and nice areas of green. There are also small trees, bushes and a few flowers along the railway tracks, and more large trees along Independence Avenue. Otherwise, the landscape is urban and quite barren.

Kamwala Market is busy and bustling, full of both people and a variety of goods. The market is sensual in smells, sounds and colours. Lovely food scents come from small restaurants scattered along the streets, from women cooking the local porridge, meat, fish and vegetables on the narrow streets leading into the alleyways of Luburma Market, and fresh fruit and spices being sold on the street. These scents are mixed with the smell of litter and food rotting in the heat, urine outside public toilets, dust, perfumes and soaps being sold by street sellers. Along with this array of smells there are many different types of music being played from speakers in the shops out on to the streets to get the customers' attention. This music includes Zambian, Malawian, Congolese, South African, European, American, Arabic and Indian music. The music blends in with traders shouting, people chatting and laughing. This soundscape is also dominated by people talking in many different languages. I quickly became aware of the variety of languages used in the market; different Zambian languages and African languages from neighbouring countries, as well as English, Indian, Arabic and Chinese. The variations in

nationalities, languages, religions, clothes, smells, goods and music show the cultural and social complexity of Kamwala Market. This is what makes the market a global “Shopping World”.

Most of the shops are painted in different colours, often with the shop name or with various advertisements painted directly on the wall. The paint is usually bright and colourful, despite it often being old, faded and partly falling off. Several shops have the old signs or names still painted on the walls, like a clothes shop where “Zambia's tastiest fried chicken!” remains written outside the shop. In contrast, the newer shopping complexes are painted in one colour that covers all of its shops. Most of the shops in the market resemble a garage; they have no windows and only a large metal shutter door at the front that is pulled down at the end of the day for security. The shops are built like a garage as well, as they consist of one square concrete room with minimal decoration inside. Shopkeepers display their goods by hanging them around the door, on the outside walls and from the roofs, which makes the streets abound with goods in all shapes and colours.

The gravelled roads in Kamwala Market are potholed and bumpy, making them a challenge to drive on. In the rainy season, they are transformed into muddy puddles, while in the dry season they become dry and dusty, covering the whole area in clouds of dust. When inside the market area, there are people everywhere. Customers stroll around, some just looking and having a good time with their friends, while others are carrying large bags of goods. Young men transport customer's goods in wheelbarrows, trucks offload goods to the shops, while cars and taxis manoeuvre through the narrow and congested streets. The young wheelbarrow porters constantly hurry around the market with barrows loaded with goods. If you do not watch your step, you might be run over by one of these fast moving wheelbarrows, fall into a muddy puddle, or, even worst, step on someone's goods that are being displayed on the ground. The paths and passageways around the market are normally very busy, narrow and winding. This almost forces you to follow the flow of people around the market, even if you want to go in a different direction.

Kamwala Market is also a place where people meet, talk, exchange knowledge and ideas, have lunch together and make friends. People talk, work and do business together across nationalities, religions, culture and languages, learning how to adapt, communicate and handle different relations and situations. I observed a high number of Indian and Middle Eastern traders at Kamwala Market. They can often be seen outside their shops, chatting with other traders, or sitting behind the cashiers till inside their shops. They are easily recognised by their Muslim hats, long coats and beards. I observed Chinese signs, Chinese characters on the sides of trucks and Chinese labels on a lot of the goods. However, it took several days before I saw any Chinese

people, despite the fact that many shops are owned by Chinese traders. Zambia's traders told me that the Chinese only come briefly once or twice a day to inspect their shops and then leave the market.

Historical Background

To understand the physical and social context of Kamwala Market and the processes currently taking place today, I find it important to look at the historical background of the market. Kamwala Market has evolved in the interplay of local and global forces and powers, from colonisation, independence and nationalisation to the past two decades of economic and political liberalisation. However, these historical processes have different origins, durations and effects. Mbembe points out that,

In the case of Africa, long-term developments, more or less rapid deviations, and long-term temporalities are not necessarily either separate or merely juxtaposed. Fitted within one another, they relay each other; sometimes they cancel each other out, and sometimes their effects are multiplied (2000:260).

Mbembe argues that all areas in the world are affected by world history by some degree, but that “world time” is domesticated in different ways. He writes, “These modalities depend on histories and local cultures, on the interplay of interests whose determinants do not all lead in the same direction” (2000:260). Different historical processes have shaped the physical, social and cultural context of Kamwala Market. My presentation of the historical background of Kamwala Market is based on both written sources and interviews. In particular, it is based on interviews with Dr. Chileshe Mulenga and Yusuf Dodia. Dr. Mulenga is a research fellow at the University of Zambia and a specialist on urban development and the economic history of Zambia. He is also the former Head of Research and Development of Patriotic Front, the party in government from 2012. Yusuf Dodia is a Zambian-Indian business man who is well known in Zambia, and the Chairperson of Private Sector Development Association.

The area of today's Zambia became a British protectorate in 1924 (Rakodi 1986 a). Dr. Mulenga emphasised that Kamwala Market was established during the period of colonial racial policy as a 'second class' trading area for non-European and non-African (e.g. Indians) merchants who catered for the growing African urban population. Cairo Road, the central business district of Lusaka, was the 'first class' trading area where only whites were allowed. In addition to Kamwala Market, there were some small 'second class' trading areas in Chachacha

Road and Freedom Way. In 1928, the site of today's Luburma market was chosen to be developed as a market catering for Africans (Wood 1986). The construction of Luburma Market was part of the colonial authority's plan for the new capital of what was then called Northern Rhodesia (Henkel 1986). Africans were not allowed to own or rent land in the cities during colonial times, and were confined to stay in designated areas (Rakodi 1986 b). In spite of the policies that denied Africans the right to own housing or shops in cities, there were several 'bush markets', which were small, unauthorised markets run by Africans, scattered around in the area of today's Kamwala Market (Henkel 1986).

Indians came to Zambia to trade as early as in the 1920s, when Lusaka was racially segregated (Mulenga 27.03.12, Henkel 1986, Wood 1986). Until 1948, Africans were only allowed temporarily permits to the cities, and, because of these regulations, it was easy for the Indians to do business there (Mulenga 27.03.12). The African Housing Ordinance in 1948 granted the African population the right to reside in towns with their families, and, as a result, the African population in Lusaka grew rapidly. Prior to this, Africans were treated as temporary residents in urban areas and therefore only allowed to reside in cities for shorter periods and without bringing their families (Mulenga 2003). Even though Africans were allowed to stay and trade in the cities after 1948, they were confined to trade only in designated markets, like Luburma Market (Mulenga 2003, Makasa 2010). During the colonial period, the markets in Lusaka were under the control of the African Affairs Department of the Municipal Council, which supervised the city markets by enforcing laws and regulations, such as that the area was kept clean, and that market fees were paid. There were regulations governing everything from working hours to who could sell goods there. Only Africans with produce from Northern Rhodesia were allowed to sell in the designated African markets in Lusaka. Africans could only sell food produce, like fish, vegetables, bread, Mealie-meal and rice, as well as firewood and charcoal (Nyirenda 1957).

In 1956, African traders boycotted the markets as a protest against rising market fees. The colonial government underestimated the force of the boycott, and the growing awareness amongst the African traders arose. The boycott lasted for several months, and resulted in the forming of the Lusaka African Marketeers' Co-operative Society Limited. The union of traders managed to stop the increase of market fees and the African traders gained more power over market affairs. These traders came from present day Zambia and its neighbouring countries. Nyirenda writes that, "[the boycott] revealed a remarkable solidarity amongst a mixed group brought together only by a single economic interest" (1957:63). The union of traders was one of the first of its kind in the colony and probably in the whole of Southern Africa (Nyirenda

1957).

Even though Africans were not allowed to own shops in the cities during the colonial time, it did not mean that they did not trade. The most successful African traders, in what was then Northern Rhodesia, often had shops just outside the city boundaries. African trade has a long history, and in the Luapula valley in today's Zambia, local successful traders had accumulated a considerably fortune before Independence. However, it was only by independence that business really became an opportunity for Zambians (Mulenga 27.03.12). Oberschall writes about the situation at Independence,

To be sure, there had been for some time African market traders, fish traders, hawkers, and starting in the 1950s also African retailers operating small groceries, bars and stores in or near African neighbourhoods (called compounds) in towns and in rural areas. But it is not an exaggeration to state that at the time of Independence, in 1964, non-African foreigners (referred to as expatriates) played an unchallenged, dominant role in the economic life of the country, with the exception of agriculture in Southern Province. (1973:474-475)

After Independence, the independence government implemented several reforms to enable Zambians a larger share of economic ownership and to participate at all levels of the labour force. Licenses to run retail shops were granted only to Africans, forcing many Indian traders into hardware and pharmaceutical trade, where they could obtain licenses (Oberschall 1973). The consequences of this policy can still be seen in Kamwala Market today, where Indian companies especially dominate the hardware and pharmaceutical businesses. According to Dr. Mulenga, nationalisation of factories and trade in the 1970s pushed many foreign traders out of Zambia. New rules stated that large stores and supermarkets had to be owned by the state. This threatened many Indian businesses, and many Indian traders responded by diversifying their businesses, opening several smaller shops and spreading their investments to circumvent the new regulations (Mulenga 27.03.12).

Kamwala Market grew and expanded after Independence, with both Zambian and Indian businesses thriving. The market soon became known for being one of the liveliest shopping areas in Lusaka. Hansen writes about Kamwala Market that, “[a]s the shopping area of choice for people with limited income, it grew rapidly. By the mid-1990s the space outside the market had filled, absorbing traders who were displaced by the development of the new market at Soweto and many others” (2008:233). Luburma Market, the original market in Kamwala, grew

rapidly from 165 vendors in the late 1950s to 448 in 1974 and 652 vendors in 1986. The growth has continued rapidly through the 1990s, and is still growing today (Hansen 2008).

The increased liberalisation of the economy, which followed in the wake of the reintroduction of multi-party elections in 1991, has influenced the evolution of the market in the past two decades. The shift towards a liberalised economic regime has led to privatisation and increased foreign investment in retail trade in Zambia. For some traders it became easier to earn money and expand their businesses, while others were forced out of the markets by foreign traders. According to Hansen, "... freeing the market has meant opening it up to external rather than local participation" (Hansen 2004:64). Nevertheless, from the 1990s, indigenous Zambians began buying and running businesses in Cairo Road, which was previously the first class trading area reserved for Europeans. More Zambian traders managed to secure enough capital to travel to places like South Africa, China and Dubai to purchase goods and to open larger shops. Business people of European descent went out of small-scale trading and into franchise holdings like Subway, Debonair's and Toyota as well as heavy construction and financial services like banking. Zambians of Indian descent continued as importers, supplying the local markets, and many went into big scale farming, a sector where the white settlers had previously dominated. In recent years, more and more Chinese traders have started businesses in Zambia, supplying new types of goods to the local customers (Dodia 18.04.12). Investors from South Africa and Zimbabwe have also left their mark on the Zambian economy. South African capital has been invested in the tourist sector and in gem stone mining. Zimbabweans have mainly invested in commercial farming, food manufacturing, and transport. However, unlike the Chinese, these investors do not compete directly with Zambians in the markets and economic niches where poor urban Zambians operate. The presence of Chinese traders has reorganised ownership structures, heightened the competition and increased the availability of Chinese goods in Kamwala Market.

The different historical processes have changed Kamwala Market, and led to an increasing complexity. The complexity is clearly visible in the large variety of shops, goods and traders seen in the market today.

Market Regulations, Powers and Conflicts

Today, the Lusaka City Council regulates the market and ensures that the area is clean and that the traders pay their licenses. The traders in shops pay a yearly license, while traders operating from stalls pay a daily fee to the council. All the traders in shops must register at the council with a document describing the shop and a photo of the owner (Mulenga 22.05.12). Markets in

Zambia are built on state land, and the minister of Local Government and Housing has the power to delegate management and development of the markets to local authorities (Hansen 2008). Lusaka City Council owns the stands inside Luburma Market. It is difficult to procure one of these stands as they are very popular and always rented out. Most often, a trader needs connections inside the council to know when there are stands available. Due to the shortage of stands, new traders with some capital often start cross border trading, selling goods to retail shops, instead of operating from a stand. Some Zambians with only small amounts of capital start selling from their homes or on the street to avoid paying the market fee (Mulenga 27.03.12).

The City Council is elected to run the affairs of the city, and they approve all development plans for Lusaka (Mulenga 2003). Several projects to upgrade Lusaka's markets have been launched by the government during the last 20 years. Some of these projects have been to demolish old market structures to give way for newer buildings (Hansen 2010). A Chinese funded redevelopment project began in Kamwala Market in 2001. The project was a private investment by the company China Hainan (Z) Ltd, through a contract with the City Council (Hansen 2008). The (Z) in the company's name refers to the Zambian branch of China Hainan Ltd's operations. The company leased the area surrounding Luburma Market, which is land owned by the state, for 65 years and constructed large shop buildings. The traders running shops in these buildings pay rent to China Hainan Ltd and market licences to Lusaka City Council. China Hainan Ltd owns the buildings, collects rent and is responsible for the maintenance. This redevelopment project created many controversies. Hansen writes, that,

The redevelopments of parts of the old, dilapidated market appeared as a welcome solution to the oppressive crowding in the market. But the construction progressed slowly, stalling several times as marketeers, including container-based operators, refused to move. Problems arose over rental fees. Politics entered as MMD cadres [the political party Movement for Multiparty Democracy] criticized the high rental fees, their pegging to the dollar, and the implied prioritizing of foreign investors (2008:233).

The increased rental fees forced hundreds of Zambian small-scale traders away from the area (Hansen 2008, Hansen 2010, Mulenga 22.05.12). The traders were originally promised a market with 400 stalls, but this plan was changed to 101 shops, mainly given to Chinese traders and rich local businessmen (Hansen 2004). They accorded the traders who had occupied these premises before the redevelopment the first right to rent. However, due to the high rent, most

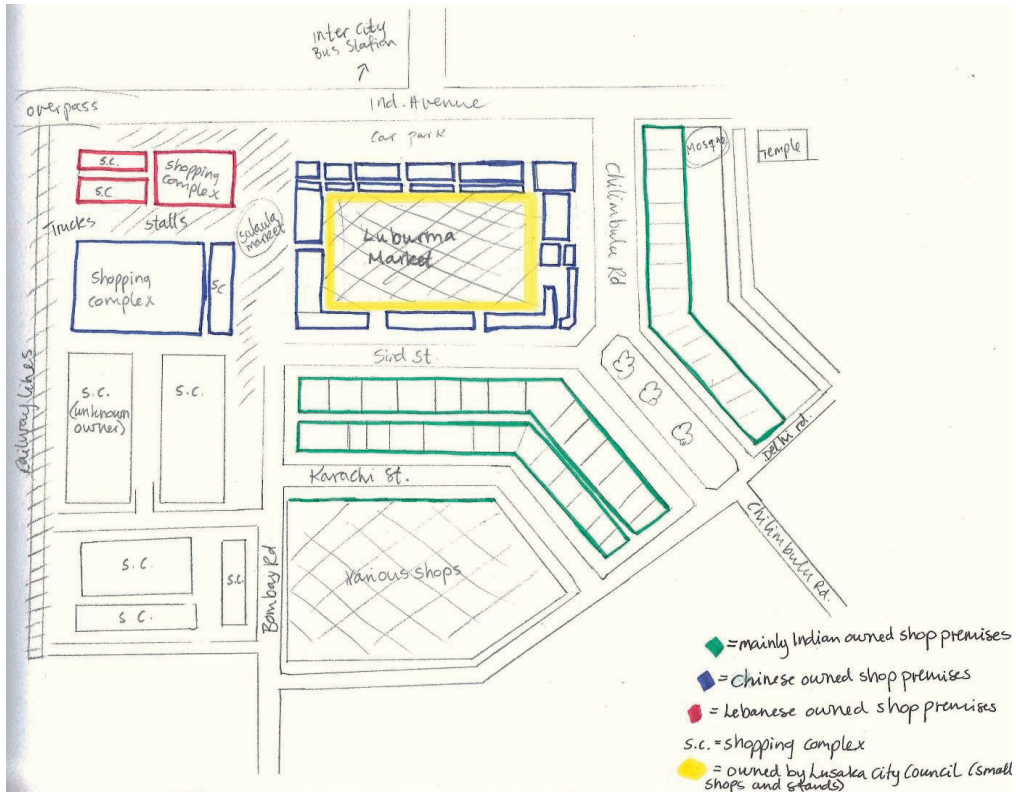
of the Zambian traders could not manage and had to abandon their shops or stalls. The expelled traders had to find other often short-term and illegal solutions to sell their goods. The project was also criticised for the 65 year long lease of the area as it contradicted with the rules of the Local Government Act, which only allow the City Council to lease land for maximum 15 years at a time (Hansen 2008). As a result of the high rent, there are today more Chinese than Zambian traders in these new Chinese owned and built buildings surrounding Luburma market. However, the majority of Chinese traders in Kamwala Market do not rent from Chinese, but from other property owners, especially the Indians (Mulenga 22.05.12). McNamee (2012) estimates that about half of the Chinese traders in Zambia rent from Indians.

Kamwala Market is currently flooded with Chinese manufactured consumer goods, and the growing entrants of both goods and traders increase the competition. In the past, it was the Indians who imported goods in bulk and supplied the local market, while today the goods come extensively from China. When the market was monopolised by the Indian traders, their fixed prices meant the prices were relatively high. Today, the entrance of new traders and the high level of competition have pushed the prices down. Gadzala (2010) estimated that there were over 100 Chinese small-scale enterprises based in Kamwala Market in 2010. Currently, Chinese, Indian and Zambian traders import Chinese goods to Zambia. Mr Dodia told me that he thinks the Chinese importers have brought positive effects in terms of Chinese products to Zambia, in the sense that the low prices benefits the low-income customers. A pair of jeans in Kamwala Market used to cost ZMK 100,000 (\$ 19.2) ten years ago, but today you can buy similar jeans for as little as ZMK40,000 (\$ 7.7). He told me that his gardener can now afford a digital radio with access to all the world news, a DVD player, satellite TV, electric cooker, fridge and even a microwave. Such goods would have been out of his range just a few years ago (Dodia 18.04.12).

Customers benefit from the cheap and easily available goods, while many traders suffer from the increasing competition and the higher rent. The Chinese traders have several advantages compared to their Zambian counterparts. Through their networks, relations to Chinese factories and favourable investment climate, in part because of the Bank of China's favourable loans and exchange systems for Chinese people in Zambia, they can easily get hold of key resources like credit, skilled labour and information (Mulenga 27.03.12). The increasing competition is often debated, and areas of conflict between traders and also between traders and the local authorities are leasing, licenses and ownership.

Categorising Shops

There are different categories of shops at the market, such as 'shops', 'stalls', 'shopping complexes' and 'street shops'. These categories can have different meanings in different places, with variable conditions, expressions and forms. I therefore find it necessary to clarify what I mean with these categories when describing Kamwala Market. Shops are places where goods are sold from a room in a building, with walls and a roof, while stalls do not have walls, and can be anything from a small stand to several large tables, some with a roof above. Stalls are temporary, and less stable than shops. Shops can be found within Luburma Market, in the newer shopping complexes, and in the colonial buildings along the streets. The shopping complexes in Kamwala Market are usually quite large, square cement constructions divided into smaller shops which are leased to different traders. These individual shops usually have no windows and only one door. The door is either facing an open corridor in the middle of the complex or facing the street. The rent for these shops is relatively high, and many traders opt for the smaller, older and cheaper shops within Luburma Market. The shops in Luburma Market are constructed of cement and wood, with corrugated iron roofs and wide doors facing the narrow alleyways. Larger trading companies, often family businesses with more solid capital are usually found within the shopping complexes and newly constructed Chinese buildings surrounding Luburma. On the streets to the south and east of Luburma Market are long rows of shops in old buildings in colonial architecture, with arcades and ornaments and decorations typical for that time's architecture. These are mainly owned by Indian and Lebanese traders and leased to individual traders of any nationality. These shops are similar to the ones inside the shopping complexes in that they usually consist of one room with a large front door. However, these buildings often have a second floor, used as an apartment for the owner or as a warehouse. The doors in all the types of shops function as both an entrance and a place to display goods.



Sketch of Kamwala Market.

Stalls are scattered around the whole area. Large parts of Luburma Market and open areas between shops and shopping complexes are occupied with stalls. Stalls are easy to put up, with some vendors taking them down every evening, and others only removing their goods when they leave. The goods sold from the stalls are often purchased from the wholesale stores in Kamwala Market, and in Lusaka in general. Stalls selling *salaula*, which is imported second hand clothes and shoes, are especially popular and always busy (Hansen 2000). Street sellers sell their goods from the ground, bikes, bags and baskets they carry around. Some only have a few things to sell at a time, displaying the three or four things they are selling in their hands. There are street sellers walking around everywhere in Kamwala Market, selling ice lollies, drinks, SIM cards, batteries etc. Some shopkeepers pay street vendors to sell their goods from outside their shops, to attract passers-by and to extend their selling hours.

Zambians often describe shops as either 'Indian', 'Chinese' or 'Zambian'. Several different conditions and types of shops are included in these categories. An 'Indian shop' can be either a shop owned by an Indian and rented out to someone else, a shop owned by a person

with another nationality but rented by an Indian, a shop in the old colonial buildings (independent of the ownership) or a shop owned or rented by another nationality who appears Indian. In contrast, the term 'Chinese shop' is only used to describe shops rented by Chinese traders. If a Zambian is renting a shop in a Chinese owned building, it will be called a 'Zambian shop'. Also worth noting is that if it is a trader from Singapore, Malaysia or Japan it will most likely be called a 'Chinese shop' by Zambians.

The emic categories, used by Zambians in the market, also indicate certain shop set ups and types of goods. Most 'Chinese shops' look the same in what they display, types of shelves, packaging, prices, variety and quality of goods, while 'Indian shops' sell another type of goods and therefore have different set ups to their shops. Many Zambian traders are trading in what they call "better quality goods" than what the Chinese are selling. In the beginning, I could not tell which shops were owned by whom, while the traders usually were able to point out which were Chinese owned shops, even though I could hardly see any Chinese traders around. I later learned to recognise these differences, even though they were often minor. Recognising the nationality of the shop owner is a way of knowing what type and quality of goods can be found in the shop. Therefore nationality, or categories based on ideas about nationality, is a way of navigating in the market for both traders and customers.

The categories based on nationalities also suggests the way a shop is managed. Most Chinese traders do not work in the shop themselves, but let their Zambian employees run it, while they visit once or twice a day to check upon the workers and to collect the turnover. In comparison, many Indian traders have a more hands on approach and stay in their shops during the day. They can often be seen sitting on a high chair, supervising their Zambian workers. The language of communication also plays an important role in the way traders run their shops. Many Indian traders are second or third generation Zambian-Indians, and speak both English and Zambian vernacular languages fluently, while most of the Chinese traders have been in Zambia for a short period and have poor knowledge of English and no knowledge of the vernacular languages. The Chinese traders' lack of English knowledge restricts communication with employees, customers and other traders. In most Zambian owned shops, the owner of the business is also the shop keeper, employing a few Zambian workers, often family members or friends.

The shops differ in the ways goods are sold as well. Since Kamwala Market is an important redistribution centre of goods for the whole region, many shops are wholesale stores, which supply traders from neighbouring countries as well as rural areas of Zambia with goods. Some wholesale stores also sell goods as retail, but at higher prices. Many Lusaka residents do

their shopping there, buying just a few goods at a time. However, if a customer buys in bulk it is possible to get a discount. The Chinese owned shops are especially set up for wholesale, which can be observed by the fact that most goods are still in their original packaging, stacked on top of each other in bulk and ready to be brought as a whole. Chinese wholesale shops are very functional, and not fancy, establishments. Some shops, particularly Zambian owned shops that sell more expensive goods, sell only retail, with no specific wholesale discounts and many do not have bulks of goods available. The majority of stalls and street sellers sell retail, though they usually buy their goods from the wholesale stores.



Shopping complexes built by China Hainan Ltd, surrounding Luburma Market. Salaula stalls in the foreground.



Indian owned shopping premises from the colonial period.



*A small Zambian shop within
Luburma Market.*



*Alleyway in Luburma Market. Tailored clothes and
Chinese-made blankets from Tanzania.*

Navigating in the Social Universe of Traders, Shops and Goods

Traders at Kamwala Market are young and old, women and men with different educational backgrounds, employment experiences and ethnicities. For many Zambians, concepts of 'ethnicity' (or 'tribe') and 'nationality' are important to navigate the social universe of traders, shops and goods. In an urban area such as Kamwala Market, traders and customers cannot operate with all the categories of 'tribe' and 'nationality' as interactional categories. Smaller 'tribes' are often included in larger 'tribes', and "smaller" nations are included in larger nations, or labels of continents. An example is that many Asians are simply referred to as "Chinese", or that whites are called "Europeans". The same system of social categories are used to differentiate between forms of organising the trade and shops, and onto the material world, such as merchandise, style of architecture and interior of the shops. Knowing the nationality of the traders provides clues as to what range of merchandise, price level and quality a customer can find in each shop. This generalisation makes it quicker and simpler to sum up various traders and goods in such a huge and complex market. The display of cultural belonging is a way to navigate in an urban space where people of different origins have settled in the same area (Mitchell 1956).

The term 'Indian' is an inclusive category, including newly arrived Indians, Zambian-Indians and other "Indian looking" people, for example Pakistani, Egyptians and sometimes Lebanese. However, in Lusaka, Lebanese traders are often recognised as such, since they own several shopping complexes and are well known for this. The term 'Chinese' is also used for other Asian people, with examples I observed being people from Japan, Singapore and Malaysia. But these distinctions are a matter of knowledge of the person. From the beginning, I found that my research assistant called every "Indian-looking" person an "Indian", but after interviewing and getting to know several traders, he distinguished them by their actual nationality, as for example, "Hamid, The Egyptian trader" or "our friend, the Lebanese trader" etc.

In contrast to Zambians, who are both traders and customers in Kamwala Market, most Indian and Chinese people are only traders. Many Zambians were of the opinion that Indian and Chinese people could afford better quality goods sold elsewhere in Lusaka, and therefore did not need to do their shopping at Kamwala Market. To my knowledge, there are no white Europeans trading at the market. During my four and a half month study at Kamwala Market, I only saw other *wazungu* (the word for "white people" or "European" in the Zambian vernaculars, singular: *muzungu*) a few times, as customers, tourists or passers-by. The term *muzungu* denotes everyone with European looks, including Americans, Australians and white

Zimbabweans. Purchasers from neighbouring countries are recognised by their language and dialects, as well as previous contact. Traders know which types of goods are popular in which countries, and will show these goods first when the purchasers enter their shop. Most clothes shops therefore sell a variety of styles to accommodate the different preferences in the different countries in the region.

Place of origin and 'tribes' are important ways of identifying one another in Zambia, with different dialects and languages as important markers. I am using the word 'tribe' as an emic term, used among the Zambians in Lusaka to talk about belonging, language and cultural identity. Lusaka is a melting pot of different tribes and cultural traditions. Tribe is an interactional category, which forms the social relationships in urban Zambia. In his seminal paper on the formation of urban social relations among immigrants from rural areas to the Copperbelt in the 1940s and 1950s, Mitchell (1956) writes that 'tribe' functioned primarily as a category of interaction, and that people from the smaller 'tribes' were subsumed under the larger 'tribes' in the geographical area from which they came. He writes, "[t]his tendency to reduce the wide diversity of tribes to a few categories is part of a general sociological process which it is essential to grasp if we are to understand social relationships among Africans in urban areas" (Mitchell 1956:28). He continues explaining that "[...] the more distant a group of peoples is from another, both socially and geographically, the greater the tendency to regard them as an undifferentiated category and to place them under a general rubric such as 'Bemba', 'Ngoni', 'Lozi' etc." (Mitchell 1956:28). Today, it is also common to use geographical origin, such as being from the north, the south, west or east, as labels, instead of 'tribe' (Simonsen 2010). The same mechanism of reducing a large number of social categories into a limited number of operational categories are evident at Kamwala Market today, but is extended to include categories of nationality, and geographical categories of continents.

Cultural identity and belonging is occasionally expressed in the market. When the Bemba tribe's chief died in April 2012, the Bemba traders gathered and carried out several rituals in the market. The Bemba originate from the Northern Province in Zambia. The Bemba's joking cousins (people belonging to tribes originating from the Eastern Province) threw white powder on all the Bembas, covering their faces and clothes. I was told that this is a way of mourning the dead chief and also a way for the tribal cousins to cheer up the mourning Bemba. The Bemba chief is an important person for the Bemba's cultural identity. In the building of a Zambian national identity since independence, the chiefs have become symbols of, and are regarded as carriers of, authentic Zambian traditions and cultures (Simonsen 2010). Traditionally, people used to throw limestone powder or maize flour on the mourning people,

to show respect and commemorate the deceased. However, in the market they used perfumed baby powder (talcum) imported from China, which they had bought in Chinese owned shops. The shop owners and employees would throw the powder on all the Bemba people who entered their shop that day. This incident made me realise that people often immediately recognise what tribe other people came from. The people who were not Bemba watched, appreciating the commemoration and the cultural heritage. Traditional ceremonies are revived by urban residents in Zambia's growing cities, and ethnic identity and belonging are important notions in these revived ceremonies. "In the past two decades, Zambians have taken an increased interest in the past and in preserving their cultural heritage" (Simonsen 2010:45). Simonsen further argues that "the ritual is an integral part of current political processes, contributing to according regional identities and cultural heritage greater significance" (2010:51). Categories of regional and national identities are important ways of navigating in the social universe of traders. As well as to label traders, categories of origin are also applied to shops as a way to navigate in the large variety of types of shops and goods sold in them.

There are different characteristics of businesses to the different 'national' categories in Kamwala Market. Most of the Zambian traders I spoke to, who ran small family businesses, with one or two small shops in Kamwala Market, relied on family and kin to help out in the shops. However, street sellers and small stalls are often run by individual traders working mainly on their own. Most street sellers are young men without any other job opportunities in the city. Some of the traders with more capital and bigger shops hire several workers from outside their family, often acquaintances, to help out in their shops. More prosperous traders travel to China, Dubai and Thailand to purchase goods themselves, while others frequently travel to South Africa, Tanzania, DR Congo and Botswana. In contrast, most street sellers, traders with small stalls and *salaula* traders buy their goods from within Lusaka. Indian businesses are also often family run, employing family and acquaintances as well as Zambians to do menial work. The family network is important for both Indian and Zambian traders, while Indian traders often run businesses on a bigger scale and therefore need to employ more people from outside the family as well. In the case of Chinese-owned businesses, many of these are also family run. The managerial positions are employed by Chinese, usually family members and acquaintances of the owner. However, the Chinese stand out from the other traders in Kamwala Market in that they do not work in the shops themselves. They hire young Zambians to work and maintain the shop, doing everything from serving customers, handling the money and sorting the goods. The Chinese traders manage their businesses from other locations in the city, only checking upon their shops once or twice a day.

When it comes to gender, certain patterns are visible, while in other settings it is not significant. Zambian shop keepers and their employees are equally divided amongst men and women. Most mobile street sellers at Kamwala Market are young men, while there are more women selling *salaula*, jewellery, fruits and snacks from the streets than men. When it comes to the Indian traders, all the shops I visited had male shopkeepers, while women often work in the shops and serve customers. The Chinese family run businesses are often run by a Chinese man or couple, who employ young Chinese men to help manage the business. Chinese shop owners employ both male and female Zambians to work in their shops, however, these were always young people. Most Zambian employees in Chinese owned shops are unskilled workers, with few job opportunities elsewhere. There are also a small group of employees who hold university degrees, who were unable to find a relevant job or were saving money to continue their studies. A Chinese trader told me that they preferred to employ young people as these were “less trouble” than older ones.

Range of Merchandise and Trade Networks

In the same way as Kamwala Market is a meeting place for traders from different nations, it is also a hub for regional and international trade networks and goods. Trade networks expanding across national boundaries, regions and continents create innumerable relationships, contacts, jobs and opportunities, but also certain limitations. The complexity in these networks can be seen in the following case. Lucas, a Zambian trader in his late thirties, with a small shop selling shoes, blankets and belts in Luburma market, travels to Tanzania to buy what he called “better quality Chinese goods” to sell in his shop. “Better” refers to better than the very cheap but low quality goods the Chinese traders are selling. Every month, Lucas will take an overnight bus from Lusaka to the port of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, a journey of 25 hours. If the sales go well in Kamwala Market he will travel more often for supplies. The shoes in Lucas's shop may move like this: A Tanzanian agent in China buys the shoes and ships them across, on order from a Tanzanian trader in Dar es Salaam. The Tanzanian trader collects the shoes at the docks of Dar es Salaam and sells them in his wholesale store in the city centre. This is where Lucas purchases the shoes. He buys around 10-20 pairs of each style. Usually, he will not buy more than he can transport in large bags on the bus home. Sometimes he will rent a truck together with other Zambian traders to transport the goods back to Lusaka. In Kamwala Market he sells the shoes as both retail to local customers and as wholesale to traders from outside Lusaka and neighbouring countries. The shoes might then be bought by a Congolese trader, who sells them in his own shop in a city across the border. Here, the shoes might be sold on to another trader

from the Congolese countryside and so on.



Chinese-made 'second class' shoes from Tanzania displayed in Lucas' shop in Luburma Market.

Almost everything can be traded at Kamwala Market and there is a varied selection of different types of goods. You can buy second hand clothes or new clothes, medicine from a pharmacy or Chinese herbal medicine from a Zambian lady on the street. You can buy electronics, spare parts for all types of machines, CDs and DVDs, jewellery, phones, kitchenware, hygiene products, curtains, furniture, spices, fishing nets and so on. However, farm produce and groceries, which was the original merchandise of Luburma Market, are no longer dominating in the market.

The goods found in Kamwala Market come from all over the world. Recently, however, most of the goods have come from China. The goods' trade routes from China to Kamwala are manifold. Some are sent directly from China to Zambia through Chinese and Zambian importers, while others are imported to other African countries before they are transported to Lusaka, like the example about Lucas above. The Chinese goods come to Africa on cargo ships. Consignments ordered by traders in Zambia from China, are offloaded in the ports of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania or Durban in South Africa. After the goods are cleared at port and loaded on trucks, they are transported to warehouses in Zambia. Many traders use commercial freight companies and clearing agents in Dar es Salaam and Durban to handle the goods, while some pick up their goods themselves and bring them back to Zambia by bus or truck. Zambian traders can order 'better' quality goods directly from factories in China or from wholesale shops in Tanzania or South Africa. Zambian traders who purchase larger loads in Dar es Salaam or Durban use their own trucks, or trucks provided by the freight company. The various networks and flows of Chinese goods create job opportunities for traders in the region, as well as in

transportation businesses, at the large ports, at wholesalers selling Chinese goods in Dar es Salaam and Durban and by freight companies and intermediaries.

Kamwala Market is a trading hub for Southern Africa, and merchants from Zimbabwe, Malawi, Botswana, Angola and DR Congo come to Kamwala Market to purchase goods, which they import to their home countries. Zambian traders go to DR Congo to purchase *chitenge* (fabric with batik printing) and to Botswana to purchase electronic housewares. In addition, peasants and traders from all over Zambia come to Kamwala Market to purchase bulks of goods which they sell in rural areas. Many peasants add to their agricultural income by selling goods in their home region. They come to Lusaka to sell their agricultural produce and use some of their profit to buy cheap shoes, clothes, bags and kitchenware from Chinese owned shops. This suggests that part of the trade in the market is seasonal, following the agricultural seasons. In the same way, since many of the customers are purchasers from neighbouring countries, the market is influenced by economic and political conditions in these countries. Many of the wholesale customers at Kamwala Market come from Zimbabwe. The falling value of currency, as well as border regulations and policies in Zimbabwe affect the number of traders from Zimbabwe to Zambia, and the amount of merchandise they purchase. Many of the countries that share borders with Zambia experience political unrest, and this affects the economic opportunities for its traders as well as access to transport and border crossings. In other words, the socioeconomic and political factors prevalent in neighbouring countries affect the sales of goods in Zambia (Hansen 2000). Chinese, Zambians, Indians and other traders in Kamwala Market import goods and earn good money on wholesale to traders from the region.

Categorisation of Merchandise: How ‘Nationality Speaks’ About Quality

The influx of Chinese goods has changed the ways in which Zambians categorise and speak about goods and their qualities. Marfaing and Thiel (2011) have argued that at the markets in Southern Africa, the quality and authenticity of a product is constructed at the time of purchase. People at Kamwala Market categorise the goods according to the country of production and the country of purchase from wholesalers. In a sense, they apply the same categories to differentiate nationalities between traders at the market, on the goods. That is, the categories they use to map their social world and shops, are also used to map the goods. They speak of “Chinese goods”, “Tanzanian goods”, and “South African goods”. All of these goods may have actually been produced in China, yet they only use the term “Chinese goods” for goods which are directly imported to Zambia by Chinese traders. The Zambian traders and customers regard these goods as being of a lesser quality. In contrast, “Tanzanian goods” and “South African goods” refer to

goods that Zambia traders purchase from Tanzania and South Africa, irrespective of whether the goods are produced in China or not. These are regarded as being of a higher quality than the Chinese manufactured goods imported by the Chinese traders. These country categories are, thus, also a way to speak about the quality of goods.

Chinese factories produce the same type of merchandise in different classes of quality; 'first', 'second', and 'third'. The traders at Kamwala Market also use such numeric classification, but have introduced a 'fourth class'. "First class" goods are high quality Chinese goods that are sold in upmarket chain stores in Cairo Road and at the large shopping malls. What is referred to as "second class" goods are sold at Kamwala Market, often in Zambian owned shops. 'Second class' goods may also be of high quality, but not as high as the 'first class' goods and cheaper. The goods sold by Chinese traders, and which are imported directly to Zambia, are regarded as very low quality and are spoken about by the Zambians as "third" and "fourth class" goods. At Kamwala Market, many Zambian traders choose to trade in 'second class' goods, because they cannot compete with the low prices in the Chinese shops. However, the differences in quality are small and the competition remains high. In the grading of merchandise into numeric classes, one may conjecture not only a connection to the Chinese manufacturers' grading but also to the market's colonial history as a "second class trading area". Merchandise regarded as being of lower quality fit for the lower social strata still characterises Kamwala Market today.

Through which trade routes the goods are imported to Zambia appear to follow the pattern of which quality of Chinese goods are exported to the various countries in the region. Zambian traders buy 'higher quality' Chinese products from the port of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania to sell in Zambia, while Tanzanian suppliers travel to Zambia to purchase cheap 'low quality' Chinese goods, imported directly to Zambia by Chinese traders, to sell in Tanzania. Most of the goods sold at Kamwala Market are made in China, but the goods vary greatly according to quality and price, as well as the trade routes through which they enter Zambia.

The customers are often not aware of the goods' country of origin. They rely on the labels and tags on the goods for their identification of the origin and quality. The merchandise sold by Chinese traders in Kamwala Market has Chinese labels and tags on them, often written in Chinese characters, which denote that the goods are imported directly from China to Zambia by Chinese traders, and hence are categorised as 'third' and 'fourth class'. Because of this, street sellers and Zambian traders selling Chinese goods purchased from Chinese wholesale shops often remove the labels and tags to conceal the low quality and place of purchase, and, therefore they can sell the goods for a slightly higher price. Chinese goods from for example South Africa,

as well as in Europe, often have South African or European brands and labels on, because they are ordered and imported by South-African or European companies who label their goods themselves. Goods with such labels are known for being of better quality than goods with labels with Chinese characters.

Abigail, a young Zambian woman working in a Zambian clothes shop told me that they sell “better quality Thai clothes” imported from Thailand. This shows that traders in the market also sell goods that are not made in China. Thai clothes have entered the market as a high quality category and as an alternative to similar Chinese ‘better quality’ clothes. Additionally, some traders also sell goods purchased from Botswana that are produced in other countries and Congolese-made products from DR Congo. These goods are called “Botswana goods” and “Congolese goods” and also imply a higher quality than “Chinese goods”.

Defining the standard and authenticity of the goods, is for the customers also a way of communicating their position in society: consumption is a means by which people define themselves. I asked the Zambian employee Esther, who works in a Chinese owned shop, if she would buy her clothes from the Chinese owned shop herself. She looked at me in surprise, started laughing and said, “No, of course not!” She explained that she knew the difference between the ‘poor quality’ and ‘better quality’ goods, and preferred the latter. For Esther and many others, buying ‘better quality’ goods was a way to show that they had a stable job and income, in contrast to buying cheap Chinese goods, which they regarded as a tendency for poorer people. Esther explained that people who do not have much money prefer to buy their clothes from the Chinese owned shops. Because consumption is a means by which people define themselves, economic and cultural issues intersect in people’s consumption of goods (Hansen 2000).

Concluding Remarks

“Kamwala Shopping World” is constantly in its making. It is a product of many historical and current global processes and relations (Mbembe 2000). I find it important to highlight three major phases introduced in this chapter that have shaped the physical, social and cultural environment of Kamwala Market. First, colonialisation led to the establishing of separate markets, shops and qualities of merchandise based on colonial racial classification order of Europeans, non-Europeans and Africans. Furthermore, Independence and the period after independence is characterised by nation building and Africanisation of the markets. The third phase is neo-liberal reforms that began in the 1990s with a strong alliance between the Lusaka City Council (LCC), which is the regulatory authority in Lusaka, and Chinese investors.

These different historical processes have led to increasing complexity in the market. There are a multitude of relations and connections, but in terms of forces of development, there is a hierarchy of relations. Some relations have been more significant than others, such as the alliance between the local authorities and Chinese investors. As I pinpointed in the beginning of this chapter, this relation is evident on the signboard at the entrance to the market, where the coat of arms of Lusaka and China Hainan (Z) Ltd are displayed together.

The three different phases; colonisation, independence and Africanisation, and neo-liberalism and increased south-south global flows, are all historical global processes in Mbembe's sense (2000). They are processes with different historical depth, force and speed of change, and different configurations of power relations. The global processes are articulated by the local contexts, and hence they are articulated and shaped differently in various places. Local cultures and ways of life accommodate to the different historical processes, and people resist and shape them (Moore 2004). The developments these processes create are not merely economic, but they also act on the cultural categorisations people use to navigate in their social and material environment (Mbembe 2000).

Chapter 3: Mobile Livelihoods and Multi-placement: Chinese Small-Scale Traders at Kamwala Market

To understand the relations between Zambian and Chinese traders, it is essential to identify who the Chinese traders are and what they aspire to accomplish. This chapter will examine the reasons for migration and the Chinese migrants' lives in Zambia. My main argument is that the Chinese traders are not in Zambia to settle permanently, but to explore and exploit business opportunities. As one Chinese trader at Kamwala Market, Mr Wu expressed it, "Zambia is a place to do business, not to settle down". The Chinese traders are mobile. They plan to return to China, move onto other African countries or to other continents, and they do not perceive themselves as permanent migrants to Zambia as their livelihoods practices are expanded into several locations. They maintain a strong presence in more than one locality. Olgwig and Sørensen's (2002) concepts of 'mobile livelihoods' and 'multi-placement' are central to my analysis of the Chinese migrants in Zambia. From a theoretical perspective of 'translocal geographies' (Brickell and Datta 2011), I argue that multi-placement does not necessarily mean that the migrants are separated from localities. Zambia is a stop on the way to onwards migration, it is a place to moor temporarily, and a springboard to move on to other places. I therefore also argue that the Chinese migrants in Lusaka do not form a close-knit community, or a 'diaspora'. The Chinese traders' 'imagined mobility' (Salazar 2011) is important to their decisions and choices, in that they perceive themselves as mobile people and imagine mobile futures, both geographically and socially. Many migrants moved to Zambia in order to pursue upwards social mobility in China. To grasp the dynamic character of their migration, I view migration as a process rather than a single event.

Independent Small-Scale Traders

One particular characteristic that is interesting about the Chinese migrants, and which makes them different from other recent entrepreneurial immigrants, such as "white" Zimbabweans and South Africans, is that they are found in all sectors and classes of the Zambian society; from rich Chinese investors and managers in large companies, to poor small-scale traders, construction workers and restaurant employees (Dr Mulenga 22.05.2012). The majority of the Chinese migrants in Kamwala Market are not rich, but small-scale traders who struggled in the competitive Chinese labour market. Some are well off compared to Zambian standards, but most live modest lives and save as much money as they can for their families and to invest in their business. There seems to be a difference between Chinese traders who have been in

Zambia for more than three years and those who have been there less. The ones who have stayed longer than three years are mainly independent traders who own shops, while the newcomers are mainly young males employed by the shop owners. The newcomers migrate with the help of family members or friends already in Zambia, and they come to help and to learn how to do business. To be able to set up a shop at Kamwala Market the Chinese migrants need start-up capital, as well as knowledge about how to purchase goods in Chinese factories, import them to Zambia, obtain shop premises and deal with Zambian trade regulations. In other words, starting an independent business in Zambia is a long process that requires money, experience and knowledge. The Chinese shop owners typically manage the business, recruit workers in China and arrange for the migration of the Chinese employees themselves.

The majority of the Chinese traders at Kamwala Market live on the outskirts of Lusaka and manage their businesses from their homes, which also act as warehouses and offices for the business. Newcomers and Chinese employees often live in the shop owner's house. The Chinese traders in Zambia rely on networks of friends, relatives and personal contacts in China to purchase their merchandise from factories or wholesalers there. The traders will sometimes travel to China to organise the purchase themselves, while others use intermediaries, often family or friends in China, to arrange the transactions. When the trader is in China to purchase goods, family members in Zambia keep the shop during his absence.

The Chinese traders at Kamwala Market are independent small-scale traders, operating on their own initiative without any backing or support from the Chinese government; they are entrepreneurial migrants trading at their own risk. Most of the traders I spoke to came to Zambia to trade, while some came via Chinese state owned companies. Upon expiry of their work contract, many chose to stay in Zambia to trade instead of returning to China. Haugen and Carling (2005) have called the Chinese migrants in Cape Verde 'new entrepreneurial migrants', where 'entrepreneur' partly overlaps with 'trader' but also includes those entrepreneurs not involved in trade. These entrepreneurial migrants in common with the ones at Kamwala Market, "do not enter established wage-labour markets in existing communities of overseas Chinese but set up their own businesses" (Haugen and Carling 2005:642). The Chinese traders at Kamwala Market seize opportunities, and this often involves trying new types and new ways of doing business. Some of the Chinese traders at Kamwala Market have experience with trade from China, but surprisingly there were also many who had never worked as traders before they came to Zambia.

Reasons for Migration

My material suggests that there are multitudes of reasons why people decide to migrate. Important reasons for the Chinese migrants I interviewed were to obtain goals in China, such as buying an apartment, securing their ageing parent's livelihoods, to gain international work experience, obligations to help family members already in Zambia, or to escape personal problems. People's decisions to migrate are also influenced by their plans for future migration; onwards, circular, or return migration. Due to the Chinese migrants' mobile livelihoods and multi-placement, push and pull theories that presuppose permanent migration are insufficient to describe their mobility.

Tough competition and difficult circumstances in the Chinese labour market in comparison to the favourable conditions in Zambia, where there is a high demand for goods and few barriers to market entry, are some of the main reasons Chinese choose to migrate to Zambia. Circumstances such as the need for China's booming manufacturing industry to establish new and global markets, and liberalisation of the Chinese labour market and emigration regulations, have opened up for small-scale traders to migrate. The large market for low-cost Chinese goods in Zambia makes it possible for even the poorest among them with little start-up capital and business experience to engage in the trade. A Chinese employee in a Chinese owned shop at Kamwala Market told me that, "In Zambia I can earn more money easier and quicker than in China". A young manager in a Chinese owned construction company told me that he was able to save five times as much in Zambia than he could in China. When I asked how this was possible, he explained that the salary is not a lot higher than it would be in China, but while he works in Zambia, the company pays for his accommodation, food and a car, which means he can save his entire salary every month. His contract lasts for two years, and his plan is to save all the money he earns to secure his future in China.

The Chinese migrants search out new opportunities, which allow them to improve and diversify livelihoods practised and valued in China. For many young Chinese migrants, it was crucial to get international work experience to become more competitive in the labour market in China. For them working in Zambia was a way to start their career. Many regarded working a few years in former British Africa as a great opportunity to learn English or improve their English language skills. Working in Zambia is seen as an investment for the migrants' future in China. A young Chinese employee at Kamwala Market told me that by working in Zambia he would be able to save money for an apartment in China for himself and his parents. For many Chinese men it is essential to own an apartment in order to marry. Personal ambitions for success for themselves and their family, for social mobility in China or other places, was a

major drive behind many migrants' decision to move.

Various other personal reasons also played an important role in people's decisions to migrate. A Chinese restaurant owner explained that she came to Zambia because she had trouble with her ex-husband and wanted a fresh start somewhere else. She started working for her aunt who owned a restaurant in Lusaka. She has now lived in Zambia for sixteen years and owns her own restaurant. Other Chinese business women had come to Zambia as companions to their husbands who had been recruited by Chinese companies.

Trager (2005) argues that the old "push-pull" theories to explain migration have been found unsatisfactory. Push and pull theories are somewhat limited as they often presuppose permanent migration, which is not fitting for the Chinese migrant in Zambia. Rather, the Chinese migrants view Zambia as one of many places they operate. Zambia is a place they moor temporarily, on their way to further migration or return to China. Olwig and Sørensen (2002) point out that, despite the fact that migration is usually explained in terms of economic factors, there is often no clear correlation between economic changes and migration movements. Migration is not just about exploring economic opportunities not available locally, but also to pursue culturally and socially desirable livelihoods (Salazar 2011). The Chinese migrant move to Zambia in order to obtain social mobility for themselves and their families in various places. This means that they do not necessarily migrate to start a new life elsewhere, but rather to search out new opportunities that may allow them to enhance livelihoods practised and valued in other places (Olwig and Sørensen 2002). Through migrating to different places, the Chinese migrants seek to gain access to a range of resources not accessible in their home country (Trager 2005).

Mobile Livelihoods, Multi-Placement and Imagined Mobility

The Chinese traders live mobile livelihoods that span across geographical, social and cultural spaces, and there is a constant flow of information, people and goods between these spaces. They communicate on a daily basis with family members residing in other countries and fulfil their obligations towards them. A Chinese migrant may trade in Zambia, have his business connections, savings, and wife and children in China, while his uncle works in another African country, his brother in another Zambian city, his eldest son studies in the USA, while the trader is aspiring to move on to Europe in the future himself. As such, the Chinese migrants engage in repeated moves and maintain a strong presence in more than one location through active engagement in fields of socio-economic relations. Such relations span across and connect different localities (Olwig and Sørensen 2002). Therefore, to move from one place to another does not necessarily mean displacement but rather multi-placement (Olwig and Sørensen 2002).

Even though the trader do not necessarily move physically between all these places, his livelihood in Zambia as well as his family's livelihoods in these various places are connected and interdependent. He sends money to his wife and children in China, as well as his son in the USA and he receives help from his business contacts in China and brother in another Zambian city. The trader has all these livelihoods in mind. Multi-placement is both about imaginaries and concrete actions that span across different locations simultaneously, and one may speak of their survival as 'mobile livelihoods' (Olwig and Sørensen 2002).

Because the Chinese migrants working at Kamwala Market plan to return to China or move onto other places after a period, they are not permanent migrants and their migration is best understood as a process rather than a single event (cf. Trager 2005). Some traders wanted to set up businesses in other African countries, while for others the goal was to migrate to Europe or the USA. Many of the young Chinese employees in Chinese owned shops only come to work in Zambia for two or three years before they return to China. The set-up of the Chinese owned shops at Kamwala Market reflect the Chinese traders' mobile livelihoods. They operate from simple, rented shops, which they can easily depart from if they want to and move onto other places in search of better business opportunities.

A strong evidence of mobile livelihoods and multi-placement in the sense that their businesses in Zambia supports wives, children and other family members in China with their salaries and profits from Zambia, is the fact that Chinese traders deposit their earnings directly into Chinese bank accounts through the Bank of China in Lusaka. The Bank of China gives favourable rates to Chinese citizens, as well as letting Chinese customers in Zambia deposit Zambian currency into Chinese bank accounts, where the money is directly transferred to Chinese currency and immediately available in the bank's branches in China. This means that the Chinese traders' family members can access their earnings from Zambia directly through access to their Zambian-Chinese bank accounts.

During my four and a half months of fieldwork, I did not see any Chinese children in Kamwala Market. Chinese traders often choose to send their children to school in China. The parents emphasised the importance of learning Chinese and the good quality of education in China compared to Zambia. Many traders' wives, girlfriends and families do not migrate to Zambia, but remain in China. The Chinese migrants I spoke to all stayed in touch with their family and friends on a daily basis through phone calls and the Internet. Many traders also frequently travel between China and Zambia and other locations. Hsu (2007) has described the Chinese traders moving to Africa as a new wave of business people who are "highly

individualistic, very mobile and often remained tightly connected through spouse and child with the PRC [People's Republic of China]" (Hsu 2007:122).

To be mobile is a strategy the Chinese migrants use to secure their families' livelihoods. Chatelard explains that,

A useful way of looking at recent population movements from China to Zambia would be to think of mobility as one method, among others, to secure a family lineage (real or imagined): in other words, how best to ensure the longevity of the family line, either as the prolongation or the segmentation from one's older generation (*lao yi bei*). Settling in Zambia is neither the objective nor the final destination for many of these people. Their stint in Africa – which may last several generations – is just one part of the long, arduous and unpredictable journey of a family lifeline (Chatelard quoted in Tsai 2010)².

Long defines livelihood as, "[t]he idea of individuals and groups striving to make a living, attempting to meet their various consumption and economic necessities, coping with uncertainties, responding to new opportunities, and choosing between different value positions" (2000:196). The Chinese migrants' livelihood strategies span across large geographical and social distances, and the Chinese traders' practices connect different localities. Their livelihoods are mobile, and in order to study mobile livelihoods and multi-placed survival strategies, we have to expand the study of livelihoods in time and space (Olwig and Sørensen 2002). When looking at the migrants' livelihoods, we cannot only consider their activities in Lusaka, because their activities in Lusaka constitute the livelihood means for their families in China and other places. They send money to their children in China and for studies abroad, and to their ageing parents. The Chinese migrants maintain a presence in more than one place, and this multi-placement is part of their livelihood strategies, to secure their family's economic and social future. Olwig and Sørensen's (2002) approach to mobile livelihoods examines livelihoods as something that is practised and conceived in a particular context by particular actors.

The migrants' families make a living of migrant remittances. Moreover, Chinese traders are geographically mobile and commute between China and Zambia. They make use of their networks of producers and suppliers in China to purchase cheap merchandise that give them competitive advantages in Kamwala Market. As social and economic actors, the Chinese migrants are situated differently in the various locations. They might be the sole provider for

² Chatelard is a Sino-Zambian relations scholar, associate at the Max Planck Institute for Anthropology and a Ph.D. candidate at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques (Science Po) in Paris

their children's education, or their remittance might just add to other types of income or support. The remittance can be the primary means for their parents' livelihoods in China, or their accumulation of wealth in Lusaka is currently only a future pension insurance for their parents. By expanding our analyses in time and space, we are able to grasp how the Chinese migrants imagine their futures and the other locations, and that these imaginaries form the basis for their activities and actions today. They are multi-placed because they operate in and imagine several locations simultaneously, and the conditions and developments in the various locations act on their mobility and livelihood strategies. Their multi-placement implies that migration do not only include physical movement but also extend acts of visualising and imagining connection between places and spaces (Brickell and Datta 2011).

The Chinese traders migrate in order to succeed in upwards social mobility in China and various other places, which means there is a relationship between social and geographical mobility. Hage (2005) has called this a relationship between 'existential mobility' and 'physical mobility'. Existential movement is the sense of being existentially on the move to somewhere better. Hage argues that physical mobility is closely connected to existential mobility. The Chinese migrants do not engage in existential mobility in order to experience physical mobility, rather they engage in physical mobility to be able to obtain existential mobility. Hage (2005) critically examines the assumption often made that the study of migration is the study of physical mobility, and argues that migrants do not actually spend that much time travelling from one place to another. It is rather the existential mobility, a sense of "going somewhere", that matters for most migrants; it is the sense of movement towards a better future, the possibility for social and economic mobility (Hage 2005). In other words, the Chinese migrants imagined futures matter for their mobility, in that it influences their decisions about where and how to migrate. The migrant's activities in one place act on activities in other places, and the migrants' lives and income in Lusaka play an important role for family members' potential for upward social mobility in the other locations.

The Chinese traders relate to different locations simultaneously, without necessarily physically travelling between these locations. Once when I visited Mr Wu in his home in Lusaka, he showed me a picture of his son who had studied in Australia, while simultaneously chatting to a Chinese friend and his Zambian manager, as well as taking a business call to a Chinese colleague in Malawi. Another example of the multi-placement is how Mr Wu is earning money in Zambia for his son to study in China, Canada and Australia, and for his son to eventually move to Zambia to take over the business. The imagined movement is just as important as physical movements, and both actual and potential movements organise peoples'

social life and are taken into consideration in their actions and decisions in the present (Hannam et al. 2006:11). There are inter-relational dynamics between physical, informational, virtual and imaginative mobilities (Hannam et al. 2006).

The Chinese traders' multi-placement can be grasped through the idea of translocal geographies, which is understood as a "simultaneously situatedness across different locales" (Brickell and Datta 2011:4). Multi-placement does not mean that the Chinese migrants are separated from localities; rather, the different places they are moored, even temporarily, shape and affect their mobility. Translocality draws attention to exactly this, as it focuses on various forms of mobility without losing sight of the importance of localities in people's lives (Conradson and McKay 2007, Brickell and Datta 2011). We cannot describe mobilities without paying attention to the necessary spatial, infrastructural and institutional moorings that configure and enable mobilities (Hannam et al. 2006). Translocality puts a focus on groundness and mooring during movement, and how the different spaces and places need to be examined through their connectedness to other localities as well as their situatedness. The various places the Chinese migrants operate all affect their current actions, as well as plans for the future. For example, the Chinese traders' business activities in Zambia are closely connected to their goals and obligations, as well as networks, in China. Additionally, family members and friends in other areas of the world also affect their ways of thinking about Zambia as well as future migration.

Brickell and Datta (2011) take a 'place-based' rather than 'place-bound' understanding of the local, which means that locales become stretched and transformed when people become more mobile. To take a translocal view of place means to focus on social relations within a place as well as the connections that stretch beyond the specific locality. The Chinese migrants are not dispossessed of locatedness because they are always "[s]ocially and spatially situated actors rooting the transnational in the place-making practices of the translocal" (Brickell and Datta 2011:9). In a description of translocality and mobile livelihoods, it is important to analyse those not as liminal, in between places, because such representations decontextualise and conflate different personal and institutional subject positionings (Grillo 2007).

Brickell and Datta (2011) argue for the use of translocality since many everyday movements are not necessarily transnational. They emphasise that we need to examine migration both across and within national borders, as well as the movements of supposedly 'immobile' groups who negotiate different kinds of local-local movements. "If this means we pay attention not just to the transnational migrant; but also to those who move across other scales beyond the nation, we can no longer confine ourselves to the debates on

transnationalism” (Brickell and Datta 2011:4). Moving across national borders does not have to mean that this is the most significant and defining element in people’s lives. Rural-urban migration is for many far more dislocating and alienating than moving across borders. In other words, it is important to have in mind that the significance of crossing national borders is not objective, but something people experience subjectively (Hage 2005). The Chinese migrants’ livelihoods are closely connected to several places and not necessarily bound by nations and national identities. In addition, many are closely connected through networks to several localities within nations. And these localities are again connected to various other places around the world. Mobility and immobility are interrelated, and there are relations between mobility and immobility, localisation and transnational connections, rootedness and cosmopolitan openness (Schiller and Salazar 2013). Moreover, there are different personal and institutional subject positionings, which means that multicultural and intercultural practices often take many different forms, and people cannot readily escape national, ethnic and cultural rootedness (Grillo 2007:213).

Migration affects people in different ways, and therefore it is not a singular phenomenon. In addition to this, it is a long-term and ever changing process (Grillo 2007). The Chinese migrants live very different lives, and different people are “[f]ollowing different trajectories, and pursuing different projects which may be more or less realistic or attainable, more or less durable and stable, with more or fewer options, more or less well regarded or rewarded” (Grillo 2007:213). Different backgrounds, positions in China as well as in Zambia, responsibilities and motivations for migration vary greatly. Therefore, I will analyse two specific cases, to elaborate on the complex motivations for migration, as well as the concrete translocal networks linking the two traders in Lusaka to other locations.

Tao – A Young Chinese Employee

Many young Chinese migrants working in Kamwala Market migrated to gain international work experience, experience a different way of life and to earn money. One of these is Tao, who I was introduced to through Zambian employees in a Chinese owned shop at the market. Tao is twenty years old and comes from Hubei province in central China. He works as a translator and assistant for a Chinese trader at Kamwala Market. Before Tao came to Zambia, he studied English at a Foreign Language College in Hubei. He still has a year left of his degree, which he intends to complete when he returns to China. A friend at the college introduced Tao to his uncle, a trader who runs several shops at Kamwala Market. He needed a translator and offered Tao the job. Tao thought this was “a great opportunity to practice English and gain work

experience abroad”.

Tao told me that because he is the only son in his family, he feels great responsibility for his parents. His sister will be unable to help as she will move to her future husband's family, which means the responsibility will be solely on Tao. His parents, who are in their fifties, work long hours in a factory, and they have worked hard to pay for his education. Tao wants to take care of them and enable them to retire before they become too old. During a school holiday in secondary school, Tao went with his parents to the factory, and he was surprised at how hard his parents had to work. He worries especially for his mother. This is the reason why he decided to study hard so that he could get a better position and earn enough money to support his parents and ensure that they did not have to work when they grew old.

When I first met Tao, he had been in Zambia for ten months. His contract is three years, and the agreement is that he has to work for two years before his employer provides him with the time and money to travel to China, on a month's leave. In the meantime, he has to work long hours, seven days a week. He helps translating for his employer in the shops, at business meetings, in supermarkets, and at restaurants. Tao will not be paid for his work until the end of the contract, which is a common practice among Chinese companies and shop owners at Kamwala Market. After three years he will have earned about 100,000 RMB (Chinese currency) (\$16,245). In the meantime, his employer covers his daily living costs, such as accommodation, food and transportation. He lives together with his employer, his employer's wife and three other Chinese employees on the outskirts of Lusaka. Every month Tao receives a small allowance to cover food, drinks, phone calls etc., but he hardly uses any money, since he spends most of his time with his employer who covers these expenses. Tao explained that the employer and his wife treat him well; “I'm like a son to them”. However, he misses the freedom to go wherever he likes and buy whatever he wants.

Even if the job can be tiresome at times, Tao enjoys living in Zambia, which he regards as a peaceful and safe country. He told me that he misses his family and his girlfriend, especially when the job is difficult and routine. However, he keeps in touch with his family and friends on a daily basis through the Internet. He referred to a Chinese proverb that says if things go bad you should not be too sad, and if things go well you should not be too happy – you should be balanced at all times. He explained that this is what he tries to be, because in that way he will be able to cope with both hardship and success. When his contract finishes, he plans to use his accumulated salary to finish his studies in China and to settle down there. He does not plan to return to Zambia, unless he is unable to find a good job in China. However, as he stated, the business environment in Zambia is getting more and more competitive, so if he were to come

back to Africa he might go to Botswana or Uganda, where he has heard that the business is better. He would also like to work in the USA for a while. In any case, his wish is to eventually settle in China. “I will always have a Chinese passport and remain Chinese”, he said.

Tao is simultaneously situated in several places, and he is closely connected to family and friends in China. Furthermore, he is imagining mobile futures in which he might both work in other African countries or other continents, as well as maintaining his obligations to his family in China. He is temporarily moored in Zambia, and his actions there are directed towards his present relations and future plans in China and elsewhere. We can see that Tao’s daily practices of translocality does not reside only in geographical movement but also extend to acts of visualising and imagining connection between places, and between these places in the past, the present and the future.

Mr Wu – A Senior Trader and Long Term Resident in Zambia

Mr Wu came to Zambia as an employee in a Chinese state owned company in 1993. He studied English in China and after his studies he was employed as an interpreter in the company. When his three year contract in Zambia had expired, Mr Wu and his wife decided to stay. They could see that the business environment was favourable and they wanted to “try their luck” by importing Chinese goods. Today, Mr Wu owns two clothes shops at Kamwala Market and one in the city centre. He also owns and runs a small factory, and he is the co-owner of a restaurant in a neighbouring country. Mr and Mrs Wu told me that they like being in Zambia, however, he explained, “We like China better of course, but Zambia is a very good place”. They told me that they have little options but to stay in Zambia, since there is currently too much competition in the Chinese labour market.

Mr and Mrs Wu live and work in the same house. Their home, the factory and the shops' warehouse are in the same building in Lusaka's industrial area. Their living room functions also as a reception, and Mr Wu's office is next to their bedroom. They live modest and simple. Their Chinese employees also live together with them. Mrs Wu does not work, and she spends large parts of the year in China, visiting friends and family. Mr and Mrs Wu have one son, who is 29 years old and grew up in China together with relatives. Mr Wu proudly told me that his son has studied in both Canada and Australia thanks to Mr Wu's hard work in Zambia. At the moment, their son works in China, but the plan is for him to move to Zambia to take over the business. His son does not wish to live in Zambia, but according to Mr Wu, he has no other option. Mr Wu said, “After all Zambia is where the family's business is”. When Mr Wu retires, he would like to move back to his family and friends in China. However, he explained that he will keep

travelling to Zambia when he retires as well, to visit his son and his old friends in the country. He spoke of Zambia as his second home. Mr Wu was the only Chinese migrant I met that spoke so fondly of Zambia and planned to spend a major part of his future in the country.

What Mr Wu earned by working in Zambia was used to meet expectations and needs in China, as well as to sponsor his son's education abroad. Their main reason for living in Zambia was not to start a new life there, but to improve livelihoods practised in China. Their mooring in Zambia affect their plans for the future, and the simultaneously situatedness in Zambia, China and other locations influence their retirement plans, as well as their plans for their son. Mr Wu travels to China several times a year to maintain business connections and deals that enable him to run his businesses in Zambia. Mr and Mrs Wu transfer part of their income to family members in China and other countries, and the remittance form part of the livelihood for these family members, in various locations. Therefore, Mr and Mrs Wu's livelihoods cannot be confined to one particular place on the geographical map; their networks and social relations span across huge geographical areas; they live mobile livelihoods. Moreover, they stay closely connected to friends and family in China. In this sense, multi-placement is an expansion of the space for personal or familial livelihood practices to several locations.

The Importance of Social Network in Migrants' Mobility

The Chinese migrants in Zambia mainly acquire employment through acquaintances, and, in this subchapter, I will therefore explore the impacts of chain migration and social networks for the Chinese traders' mobility. Literature on international migration often focuses on the role of interpersonal ties in migration, and Poros (2001) argues that social networks are crucial to migration flows and the economic behaviour of migrants. The Chinese migrants I spoke with had seen little advertisement in China about working in Africa. Instead, they learn about the possibilities of migrating to Zambia through friends and relatives who are already in the country. The Chinese migrants emphasised that it is not popular to travel to Africa among their friends in China. According to them, most Chinese look at Africa as a "dangerous, war ridden continent", and many met opposition from their friends when planning to move to Zambia. Instead of formal advertisements and recruitment, chain migration and social networks play the dominant role in disseminating information about work opportunities in Zambia. Only five of the Chinese traders and employees I spoke to at Kamwala Market came through the company they were employed in China, and only one came as a response to a newspaper advertisement.

Robert, who works for a Chinese construction company in Lusaka, explained that there is a good job recruitment system in China, but despite this, companies find it difficult to recruit

enough people to work in African countries. His company advertise on the Internet and new employees in the company have to work for one or two years in Zambia as part of their trainee period. Other Chinese migrants told me that they had wished to move abroad, originally to Europe or the USA, but since this was very difficult, Zambia was a more achievable opportunity. McNamee has pointed out that, “Africa is the bottom-rung destination of China's migrants. The continent draws the poorest and least educated of the Chinese diaspora” (2012:4). Robert said, “Africa doesn't attract young Chinese people. This time the ones who come only come for work, but maybe in the future they will realise that life here is good”.

All of the Chinese traders I met cooperated with relatives and/or friends, employing at least one or two family members or close friends in their shops. Chinese migrants already in Zambia will help family, friends and acquaintances to enter the Zambian labour market and to set up a business. In other words, migrants facilitated migration through personal networks, and the migration patterns can be described as chain migration. It is getting increasingly harder to obtain work permits and visas in African countries and new migrants without contacts in Zambia that have knowledge about the workings of the immigration system in the country, have limited chances of obtaining visas and work permits. Language barriers also make this process complicated and difficult without the help of contacts in Zambia. Chain migration is hence an important resource to enter the Zambian market. In the context of Kamwala Market, most new migrants start as assistants in the Chinese owned shops that are already established, but eventually aspire to become self-employed. McNamee has pointed out about Chinese traders in Africa, that

Sometimes it is just one family member who serves as the pioneer, establishing him/herself as an informal trader in one location before moving upward to become a business owner or wholesaler, in the process drawing other members of his extended family or hometown to the same location, a phenomenon known as chain migration (2012:15-16).

Light et al. argues that, “[m]igrant networks are entrepreneurial resources that *expand the economic opportunities* immigrants confront in destination economies” (1993:37). These networks allow more migrants to find work than would have been possible had the general labour market been the only provider of employment (Light et al.1993). The networks are important in order to move and settle down into Zambia, but also in order to succeed in trading. Hence, the rapid expansion of Chinese entrepreneurialism in Zambia is a product of networks,

rather than a cultural characteristic (cf. Mohan and Kale 2007). The social connections in the host country often provide support and reduce the monetary costs, through accommodation and information on employment opportunities (Banerjee 1983). This means that chain migration is cost saving and provides a level of trust for the Chinese employers and employees (Peng 2004).

Since employment is done through acquaintances and social networks, employers make sure their employees are provided with housing, food and other necessities. In return, the employees are expected to show loyalty and willingness to work hard. It is a common practise by many Chinese employers, especially among small-scale, independent and often family run businesses, that employees are not paid before the completion of their contract. Some have to pay back the cost of their plane tickets to Zambia from China, and are indebted for the first months of working. Chinese employees at Kamwala Market stated that they would never end their contract before it was completed, because of the commitment to, and respect for, their employers. The key here is that the relationships between the Chinese employers and employees are essentially family and friendship relations, which are evident in the values of loyalty, mutual trust, and reciprocal social obligations. The Chinese traders emphasised the importance of trust, and that they preferred to employ people they knew from China in higher positions, because they trusted their motivations and commitment to work hard. Chain migration reduces the employer's economic risks, as well as the new migrant's risk of settling into a new place.

A case of chain migration and the support social networks provide is Mr Wu's childhood friend who had recently arrived in Zambia. I was introduced to him during a regular visit to Mr and Mrs Wu's house. He was accompanied by his son, who is in his mid-twenties, has a university degree and speaks fluent English. Father and son were in Zambia to set up a business and Mr Wu was helping them to get started. Mr Wu's childhood friend lost his job in China and Mr Wu had persuaded him to try his luck in Zambia. He had never been to Africa before and appeared a bit cautious, though his son seemed eager and committed to start the business. Their friends in China were sceptical about migrating to Africa, and the son explained, "they think people in Africa are starving and fighting and that it is a very dangerous place". After an initial exploration of opportunities and discussions with Mr Wu and his friends, they decided to establish a printing service in Lusaka. They were in the process of applying for a trading license and work permits, and finding ways to import printing equipment from China. Mr Wu will help his friend with accommodation and start-up capital, as well as finding a suitable shop premise, dealing with the Immigration Office, and to find qualified Zambian workers. Another case in point of providing such assistance and cooperation is Tao's employer. His sister has opened several shops close to Kabwe, in central Zambia, and the sister's husband runs one shop in

Kitwe, in the Copperbelt region of Zambia. They continually cooperate and help each other, so in many ways it is a family run business cooperative. Networks of interpersonal ties channel immigrants into particular occupations in specific destinations. In the process, different local labour markets are linked (Poros 2001). The social ties in the Chinese migrants' pre-migration networks are important in shaping how they migrate and with what expectations and prospects for economic opportunities they settle in Zambia or other places.

Community, Cooperation and Competition

Despite the close personal networks experienced between some Chinese traders, many migrants explained that there were no unity or community feelings between the Chinese living in Lusaka. They are highly individualistic traders who operate independent of other traders, and I therefore suggest that we cannot talk about the Chinese traders in Lusaka as one social group. They do not share common meeting places and rituals that defines them as a group, and therefore they do not form a diaspora, in the sense of a homogenous group (Faist 2009).

An example of this is that despite the large number of Chinese owned shops, I never saw the Chinese shop owners interact with one another. The Chinese shop owners would arrive at the market together with their employees, visit their shop and then leave again, without talking to other Chinese traders, whom they might have passed en route to their shop or who worked in the shop next door. They would nod and smile, but not actually talk or cooperate. It became apparent that this was not a close-knit community of traders, but rather separate networks of traders and their families who operated independently from each other. They came from different regions in China with different cultural practices and languages, and from a diverse background and social strata. Some had been traders in China, while others had never done it before. Some were students, some had worked in factories in China, while a few were rather well off businessmen in China and in Zambia. It was not natural for them to suddenly form a close-knit group with people whom they would not normally interact with.

In his study of Chinese traders in the Namibian town Oshikango, Dobler found a similar pattern. He writes, “[t]heir backgrounds are as diverse as their hometowns – from the son of a peasant who started selling rice as a small side-business twenty years ago, to the upper-middle-class son trained at Beijing University business school” (2008:425). The Chinese traders at Kamwala Market would not have interacted in China and they do not interact in Zambia. It is important to be aware of, and to avoid, the fallacy of labelling migrants by ethnic or national categories (Faist 2009). Gender, age, social positions, educational level etc. are often overlooked when speaking about generalised categories, such as “the Chinese traders”, and

hence one can easily draw the conclusion that these traders form a homogeneous group. By labelling all of the Chinese traders working at Kamwala Market as 'Chinese traders' I am not suggesting that they constitute one homogeneous group with a strong connection and community feeling. Nevertheless, the label 'Chinese trader' implies some general characteristics, such as country of origin, types of business and language, as well as reflecting the categorisation made by Zambians, and, hence, I find it productive to use this label in this thesis.

The migrants often view other Chinese primarily as competitors. The exception is family members who often do cooperate. Some come together to celebrate Chinese holidays and festivals, but there is no common meeting place. Mr Wu said that even though he has many Chinese friends in Lusaka, there are also many he does not want to get involved with, and he always stays away from politics and functions at the Chinese embassy. Mohan and Kale (2007) argue that low integrations among Chinese companies in Africa is a general trend, and they write that Chinese companies enter into relatively few joint ventures due to factors such as lack of trust, political (in)stability, and a tradition of top-down corporate governance. The competition at Kamwala Market results in tense relationships between the Chinese traders, and they therefore often avoid each other. This contrasts with Dobler's (2009) findings in Namibia, where Chinese traders formed a close community on a social level, despite competing in business. Market set-up and safety issues could be factors affecting the lack of community feelings among the Chinese traders at Kamwala Market, compared to Namibia. In Oshikango, most of the Chinese traders live in their shops, and spend the evenings sitting outside their shops chatting to each other. In comparison, the Chinese traders at Kamwala Market live in various areas away from the market. This is mainly because of a lack of security and poor living conditions in Kamwala. Due to popular backlashes and the outbreak of xenophobic demonstrations targeting Chinese traders in Lusaka, many Chinese migrants live in fenced houses with guards and strict security on the outskirts of Lusaka.

Despite the lack of a sense of community and cooperation amongst unrelated Chinese traders in Lusaka, there were rare cases when Chinese traders did cooperate. When Chang and his uncle came to Zambia, they contacted China Hainan Ltd to ask if they had any available shops at Kamwala Market. At that time Chedrick, a Zambian man, worked for another Chinese trader who wanted to close his business and move back to China. The Chinese employee in China Hainan Ltd introduced Chedrick and his colleagues to Chang, who then employed them. This case reveals the types of networks and contacts that do exist between the Chinese traders and companies in Kamwala Market. However, in this case the contact was facilitated by the

rental company China Hainan Ltd, and not the individual traders. While some Chinese traders know each other and may cooperate in some aspects, such as recommending workers and shop premises, in other aspects, such as trading networks and merchandise, sources are kept secret in a competitive way. The social networks they maintain and cultivate are primarily based on family or friendship ties that were established prior to migrating to Zambia.

Because there is a weak sense of community and relatively little interaction between the Chinese migrants in Lusaka, they cannot be described as a tight-knit diasporic community. According to Dobler (2009), “[d]iasporic communities are often perceived as a dense network, as close-knit small-scale societies, bound together by origin, shared experiences and similar living conditions” (Dobler 2009:715). The Chinese migrants at Kamwala Market do not fit to these descriptions. Today, much of the literature about migration focuses on diaspora and transnational communities. However, the problem as I see it is that many of the people labelled diaspora or transnational community, might not have the closeness and community feeling that these terms imply, such as the case with the Chinese at Kamwala Market. Faist emphasises that,

The terms ‘diaspora’ and ‘transnational community’ are too restrictive in that they imagine a rather homogeneous cross-border social formation. They repeat the same mistake as much migration scholarship in assuming rather homogeneous national, ethnic, and religious groupings (2009:44).

Hage (2005) also emphasises that there is not necessarily a strong sense of transnational community among migrants who have migrated from the same country. He writes of the result of his study on Lebanese transnational families that,

Villagers certainly had a sense of belonging to a village whose members are globally spread around the world. But to say that the villagers formed a global community and that they had a communal sense of belonging to a transnational community of villagers was a bit stretching in most cases (2005:467-468).

The concept of diaspora was traditionally associated with forced migration and “a moral purpose of restoration to that homeland” (Mohan and Kale 2007:10). However, the concept of diaspora “has taken on a looser meaning to denote social groups that subvert the territorial logic of the nation-state system and so are linked to transnationalism and globalisation” (Mohan and Kale 2007:10). Diasporic communities are complex social groupings located in many places at

the same time. It is the idea of being in a new place but also feeling connected to an 'old' place, often described as 'home'. In contrast to many diasporic communities, the Chinese traders in Lusaka do not form corporate groups beyond family and friends. One reason for the lack of a community feeling among the Chinese traders may be that the migrants are highly mobile and are motivated by short term economic gains. The fact that the Chinese migrants working at Kamwala Market plan to return to China or move onto other places after a period are also reflected in their lack of interest in learning English or Zambian vernacular languages, as well as avoiding to form close and long lasting relationships with other Chinese as well as Zambians.

Despite the lack of community feeling among the traders at Kamwala Market, on a family level, translocal networks are a way of spreading risks and remaining flexible. The family is the core for unity and cooperation, and sense of belonging is tied to the translocal family rather than to the diaspora at large. Bryceson and Vuorela define transnational families as "families that live some or most of the time separated from each other, yet hold together and create something that can be seen as a feeling of collective welfare and unity, namely 'familyhood', across national borders" (2002:3). These networks are not necessarily tied to national borders, and hence translocality better describes the connections. Translocal families continue to engage actively in family life in various places and the family becomes a site of belonging.

Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, I have focused on mobile livelihoods as a way to understand migration, and explored how multi-placement can be analysed from a theoretical framework of translocality. Translocality is a term that captures the relations between mobility and locations at different levels, by focusing on different types of mobility while simultaneously recognising the importance of localities in people's lives. Multi-placement does not mean that people are separated from localities, rather the different places they moor shape and affect their mobility. For the Chinese traders in Lusaka, Zambia is a place to moor temporarily, as part of a strategy to obtain social mobility for themselves and their families. They are mobile in the sense that they relate to livelihoods and opportunities at multiple locations simultaneously.

The Chinese migrants are in Zambia to search for opportunities that enable them to improve livelihoods practiced and valued in China. To work in Zambia is an investment in their future in China or other countries. They imagine mobile futures, where Zambia is a springboard to onwards migration and potential upwards social mobility in various places. They migrate in order to secure their own, their family and relatives' social and economic security, growth and

welfare. Therefore, to move from one place to another cannot necessarily be interpreted as being rootless or displaced, rather the migrants' practices are expanded to several places.

The Chinese migrants imagine mobile futures, as well as other locations, and these imaginaries form the basis for their activities and actions today. This means that the migrants' daily practices of translocality do not reside only in geographical movement, but also extend to acts of visualising and imagining connection between places, and between these places in the past, the present and the future. Both actual and potential mobility organise and structure social life, and hence, I have found it necessary to focus on the relations between imagined, social and geographical mobility. The Chinese traders imagine mobile futures and potential social mobility, and their geographical mobility is connected to these conceptions.

The Chinese migrants' multi-placement and focus on social mobility for themselves and their families is reflected in their lack of community feeling with other Chinese migrants in Lusaka. They do not form a Chinese diaspora in Zambia, in the sense of diaspora being a social group characterised by closeness and community feelings. As Chatelard has explained, there is no single "type" of Chinese person living in Zambia today, rather it is a very heterogeneous group of loosely connected, or largely disconnected, individuals with contrasting backgrounds, origins, personal histories and present ambitions (Chatelard quoted in Tsai 2010). Despite the lack of community feeling, on a family level, translocal networks are a way of spreading risks and remaining flexible.

In a sedentary logic, to migrate is viewed as being pulled up by the roots in order to be planted another place. However, the Chinese migrants in Lusaka do not think like this. For them, Zambia is a place to moor temporarily to work towards their ambitions of social mobility for themselves and their families. The migrants are, of course, only at one place at a time, but they think and operate in different places simultaneously; they have different localities in mind.

In the next chapter, I will focus on the relations between Chinese and Zambians at Kamwala Market, and elaborate on the conditions that configure the relations at the market today.

Chapter 4: Mutual Dependency, Ambivalence and Conflicts: Relations between Chinese and Zambians at Kamwala Market

Chinese trade and business are omnipresent in Lusaka. Chinese trucks deliver Chinese goods around the city, billboards advertise for the Bank of China in Chinese characters, people wear different clothes manufactured in China and Chinese investments are continuously debated in the media.



Advertisement and directions to the Bank of China's branch in Lusaka, written in both English and Chinese.

Zambian and Chinese people have in many ways become interdependent in the new economic environment, and many Zambians are employed in Chinese owned shops at Kamwala Market. Yet, there is little face-to-face interaction, communication or personal relationships between the Zambian and Chinese at the market. The relations are characterised by ephemeral encounters, ambivalence and contradictions. One reason for the lack of face-to-face interaction is that the Chinese traders do not work in their shops themselves. It is their Zambian employees who interact with the customers.

To understand the relations between Zambians and Chinese at the market, I will analyse these relations in a holistic manner and explore some of the conditions - structural, linguistic, economic, legal, and cultural - configuring the relations of ambivalence and conflicting experiences. Zambian and Chinese traders operate side by side, but despite the physical proximity, there are social, cultural, and communicative gaps that create distance between them, and this mixed nearness and distance gives rise to ambiguity. Moreover, the relations between Zambians and Chinese are hampered by language barriers, which lead to misunderstandings and a lack of communication. This in turn, creates tension and conflicts. The fierce economic competition and contested market space, as well as the legal regulations and enforcements by

the Immigration Office in Zambia, are also important conditions configuring the relations.

Additionally, different norms and expectations regarding labour relations create misunderstandings and conflict between Chinese employers and their Zambian employees. In a recent study of labour relations among Ghanaians and Chinese, Giese and Thiel have argued, “[d]ifferent sociocultural contexts give rise to cross-cultural differences regarding the form and nature of interpersonal exchange relationships in general and the attitudes and perceptions people share regarding employment relationships” (2012:11). Chinese traders often base their employment decisions on mutual trust, typically guaranteed by a third party, and the employer expects his or her employees to reciprocate by working hard and following orders. In comparison, the Zambian traders build their employment on provider-recipient relations, where employers are expected to help their employees in times of need, and hence the Zambian employees expect the same type of reciprocity from their Chinese employers. These different expectations is a cause of conflict and tension.

Ambiguous Relations and Ambivalence

The political climate, negative attitudes and corruption in Zambia, as well as a lack of language skills, have made the Chinese cautious in their interactions with Zambians. While this behaviour generates suspicion and negative rumours, the Zambian perspective is far from simple. Their perceptions and attitudes towards the Chinese at Kamwala Market are complex and the viewpoints and relations are diverse. That said, all of the Zambians I spoke to were ambivalent towards the Chinese. Zambian traders have a dual and contradictory view of the situation in the market and they acknowledged the complexity of the issues. They appreciated the availability and range of cheap Chinese merchandise sold by Chinese traders and the jobs created by Chinese companies and business. Simultaneously, many Zambian traders were facing harder competition and even bankruptcy. They blame the Chinese for copying their goods, yet they also admire their efficiency and their ability to succeed in business. They complain about the poor quality and cheap prices of Chinese goods, but they also acknowledge that the Chinese traders only import what the Zambian customers demand. Many Zambian traders emphasised that the Chinese traders create jobs for young people, even if they were being pushed out of the market themselves. I asked Abigail, a Zambian employee in a Zambian owned shop, if she thought it was a disadvantage that the Chinese were in Zambia. She immediately responded, “no, we Zambians are not like that!” She explained that while she thinks it is bad for business that the Chinese are in Kamwala Market, she has no right to stop them from coming to Zambia.

She emphasised that Zambians are a friendly and welcoming people who respect every nationality.

The Chinese traders are not part of Zambian people's social networks, and joint ventures between Zambian and Chinese traders are almost non-existent. Most Zambians had seen Chinese people in supermarkets and briefly in the Chinese owned shops, but few had actually spoken to a Chinese person. One Zambian shop owner, a man in his fifties, selling clothes in a Chinese owned building, told me that he has no communication with the Chinese traders at all. He explained, "They are hiding, you never see them". According to him even if they did meet, the Chinese traders would not greet him, but just "slip away". The Zambian traders I spoke to did not know what the Chinese were doing, where they were living, or what their backgrounds were. On one hand, the Zambians see the Chinese traders on a daily basis, while on the other hand they know very little about them.

David, a Zambian trader I spoke to in the large retail market in Mandevu, in the northern area of Lusaka, had a favourable view of the wide distribution of Chinese goods. He told me that the Chinese goods have given him and many others the opportunity to purchase merchandise and start their own trading businesses. David purchases cheap goods at Kamwala Market, which he resells from his stand at Mandevu Market. Occasionally the Chinese traders come to Mandevu Market to advertise their goods to the traders. He stated that when he then visits their shops at Kamwala Market he never finds the Chinese traders there, and the prices are always higher than promised. David believed the reason for this is that the Zambian workers in the Chinese owned shops increase the prices when the Chinese manager or supervisors are not there and take the extra money for themselves. He explained, "The problem is not the Chinese, it is us Zambians".

Zambian employees are essential to Chinese traders because they run their shops, deal with customers and conduct vital market research for them. Despite this, the Chinese are still apprehensive about employing Zambians in their companies. To run shops at Kamwala Market, they need to trust and rely on their employees, but they expressed a lack of trust in their Zambian employees and accused them of stealing and deliberately neglecting their work responsibilities. Simultaneously, the Zambian employees are ambivalent towards their Chinese employers. They are trusted with the daily running of the shops, which they view positively, but at the same time, the Chinese employers keep at a distance and fail to establish close relationships, which the Zambian employees expect from their employer.



Zambian employees and customers outside a Chinese owned shop, in China Hainan Ltd's shop premises.

Chinese traders and employers interpret situations differently from the Zambian traders and employees, and these misconceptions are at the core of the conflicts between them. Regardless of these conflicting expectations and the lack of communication, many Zambian employees in Chinese owned shops were positive to the Chinese traders, cooperated and were content with their working conditions. Daniel and his colleagues, working in a Chinese trader's shop, is one example of this. They were positive to the influx of Chinese traders and the opening of new shops at Kamwala Market. They explained that Zambian traders could not afford to open large shops and employ as many people as the Chinese traders. Daniel explained, "Kamwala wouldn't have been so big and busy without the Chinese".

The Zambians in Lusaka tend to group all Chinese migrants into the same category, and apply the same yardstick to everyone. Many Chinese traders felt unfairly treated and did not like being conceived as intruders and exploiters based on what other Chinese actors had done before them. They also felt that they were reported negatively by local and international media, based on generalised assumptions. One Chinese trader told me, "There are so many Chinese companies in Zambia, and of course some of these might be bad, but people forget that most are good". She explained that the problem with the criticism is that it is often one-sided; "Many only focus on the negative sides and forget about the positive sides". She felt that she was automatically, and wrongly categorised as an "exploitive Chinese trader who did not care about local people". The Zambians' ambivalence can be seen even as people who buy from Chinese traders and appreciate the cheap goods simultaneously complain about the Chinese presence at the market and often see Chinese migrants as intruders.

There is a long history of Indian and Lebanese traders in Zambia, but these traders do

not create as much cause for debate as the Chinese traders. Many Zambians I spoke to explained that Indian traders have been in Zambia for many generations and speak both English and Zambian vernacular languages. The Lebanese also speak English, and can communicate better with Zambians compared to Chinese traders. In this view, language barriers can be argued to enforce the feeling of foreignness and ambiguous relations between Chinese and Zambians.

Structural Conditions: Nearness and Distance

I will analyse the Chinese traders' position in the social structure of the market, and in this context I find Simmel's (1950) theory about the 'stranger' and Horgan's (2012) concept of 'strangership' useful. The stranger, in Simmel's (1950) sense, is both near and far. The Chinese and Zambian traders at Kamwala Market are "physically proximate but socially distant" (Horgan 2012:608) from each other. Simmel (1950) has described the 'stranger' as a mobile person, often a trader, and as a person fixed within a spatial group, but whose position is determined by the fact that he has not belonged to the group from the beginning. The stranger is not "the wanderer who comes today and goes tomorrow", but rather "the person who comes today and stays tomorrow" (Simmel 1950:1). The stranger's position stands out more sharply if he or she actually settles down within the group; because it is by being physically near that the social distances are visible. The trader's position as a member of the group involves both being outside it and confronting it (Simmel 1950). According to Simmel, nearness and distance are parts of every human relation, but in relations to the stranger, "distance means that he, who is close by, is far, and strangeness means that he, who also is far, is actually near" (1950:1). It is this duality of nearness and distance; the simultaneous characteristics of closeness and remoteness that makes the position of strangers "socially problematic" (Levine 1979). The figure of the trader, as a stranger, is not organically connected to the group through established ties of kinship or marriage, but through competition over resources (Simmel 1950).

Simmel (1950) describes the stranger as a mobile person who comes in contact with every individual in the group. I consider Simmel's description of the stranger useful in highlighting how the Chinese presence in Kamwala affects everyone at the market, without necessarily interacting face-to-face with Zambians. The Chinese traders are both near and far from the Zambian traders. The Zambians and the Chinese see each other on a daily basis, yet few form personal relationships with one another. The relations can be described by social distance as well as a lack of knowledge about each other.

The Chinese traders at Kamwala Market are often subject to generalisations by Zambians, where the fact that they are "strangers" overshadow other social positions. Simmel

elaborates that, “with the stranger one has only certain more general qualities in common, whereas the relation to more organically connected persons is based on the commonness of specific differences from merely general features” (1950:2). Because of the unfamiliarity with each other, the relations between the Zambians and Chinese proceed on the basis of not knowing each other and “ascribing one another with membership in broad social categories shared with many others” (Horgan 2012:615). An example is how people whom looked Chinese, irrespective of actual nationality, were called “Chinese” by the Zambians. In addition, Chinese traders were grouped in one social category, separate from their occupation, social status, length or purpose in Zambia. Simmel explains, “this non-common element is once more nothing individual, but merely the strangeness of origin, which is or could be common to many strangers. For this reason, strangers are not really conceived as individuals [...]” (1950:3).

Strangers are as socially ambiguous as the word ‘stranger’ implies (Shack 1979). Strangers are persons who stand on the margin of society because of language, custom or social roles. However, even if the word 'stranger' is ambiguous, Shack points out that,

[...] in sociological as well as literary usage, and although social scientists have often exhibited naiveté in their transmutation of Simmel's idea of *der Fremde*, the concept of the stranger remains one of the most powerful sociological tools for analyzing the social processes of individuals and groups confronting new social orders (1979:2).

Shack (1979) sees the concept of the stranger, in Simmel's sense, as a social type, useful in understanding social processes, and argues that strangers play important roles in economic and political changes in societies. However, in contrast to Simmel's ideal type, Shack points out that the structural positions of strangers are never static, and that “[a] complicated set of interrelated socioeconomic and political factors affect the structural position of strangers in host societies” (1979:10).

Horgan (2012) uses Simmel’s observations about the stranger as a springboard to develop a relational concept of what he has called ‘strangership’. He uses strangership “to both highlight and foreground the relational elements and processual character of contact between strangers” (2012:608). This is important in my study because it sheds light on the changing relations between Chinese and Zambians at Kamwala Market, and how these changes are affected by both parties’ actions. Horgan (2012) emphasises that the central questions are how, where and why strangership come into being. For me, the concept of strangership is useful in that it focuses on the conditions that produce strangership, as well as the fact that these dynamics

are shaped by two-ways relations. It is important to note that the relations between Chinese and Zambian traders are different from the relations between Chinese employers and their Zambian employees, because the two relations involve different degrees of closeness and distance.

According to Ahmed (2000), to recognise someone as a stranger means the existence of a social relation between the two actors. “Like friendship, strangership is fundamentally intersubjective; it requires some degree of recognition – even if only minimal – between those in relations of strangership” (Horgan 2012:612). In other words, strangers must recognise each other as strangers for strangership to exist. “It is the fact of physical proximity that makes social distance evident. This peculiar synthesis means that strangers are not wholly other, that the otherness of the stranger is incomplete” (Horgan 2012:608).

Important characteristics in the relations between Zambian and Chinese such as unfamiliarity and communication barriers can be analysed from a structural framework of ‘strangeness’. This analysis sheds light on the mixed distance and nearness that render the relations as ambiguous and hence create ambivalence towards one another. For the Zambian traders, the Chinese traders are near in that they are omnipresent at the market, but they are also socially and interactionally distant. They appear socially and culturally distant, and miscommunication is prevalent, even to the Zambian employees who interact regularly with their Chinese employers. Both parties are ambivalent towards each other as they view their relations as contradictory and ambiguous. They also simultaneously trust and distrust one another. Moreover, the Chinese migrants are only in Zambia temporarily to do business and do not show any interest in forming close relationships with Zambian traders. The Chinese migrants live translocal lives, and they maintain close relationships with family and friends across various locations around the world. This multi-placement shapes the way of acting towards Zambians and their reluctance to make relations with Zambians, and with other Chinese in Zambia. The social ties in the pre-migration networks appear to be more important than creating new ones in Zambia.

Encounters between Chinese Shop Owners and Their Employees

To provide a clear explanation of the relationships between Chinese shop owners as employers and their Zambian employees, I will examine two encounters I experienced early on in my fieldwork at Kamwala Market. My Zambian research assistant Levis and I were talking to two young Zambian men, who we had just met outside the Chinese owned shop they worked in. Lingering outside the shop, we noticed that their Chinese employer was inside the shop. He looked at us through the door several times, with a worried expression on his face. When he left

the shop we attempted to speak to him, but he said a few inaudible words and rushed past us. About a week later, we were back in the shop, talking to the Zambian employees again. The atmosphere was relaxed. We sat on top of piles of clothes, chatting about the weather, football and the types of goods in the shop. Suddenly one of the workers who had been sitting by the door, ran into the shop whispering, “he is here, he is just outside!” The atmosphere changed immediately, everyone looked worried and moved about, beginning to tidy the shop and look busy. Geoffrey, one of the Zambian employees, told us that it would be best if we left. He believed that his Chinese employer would not understand why we were there and would not welcome our presence, but we were welcome to return later. On the way out of the shop, we spotted the Chinese shop owner in his shiny, white car with tinted windows. We left the shop, but returned about an hour later.

On our return, we stood by the entrance when the Chinese shop owner suddenly reappeared, together with his Zambian manager. They were both serious and strong looking men. They stopped next to us with their arms crossed, measuring us. We could feel the tense atmosphere, and the workers appeared cautious yet again. The situation felt slightly threatening, and the Chinese shop owner appeared hostile towards us. His Zambian manager was more relaxed, and started talking to Levis in the vernacular Zambian language Nyanja, with Levis explaining about our project. The Chinese shop owner kept looking at us, and was trying to understand what Levis and I were saying. He asked us to follow him inside the shop. Or, to be correct, he didn't ask, he waved his hand in the direction of the shop while nodding the same direction and walking inside. Levis, the manager and I followed. The other workers kept at a distance.

Both the manager and Levis reiterated our research work at Kamwala Market, and they tried to explain it in simple words and in different ways to help the Chinese shop owner comprehend. However, he still looked very angry and hostile, and he asked, “You do business?” We both explained, again, that we were just students writing a research paper about the market. He asked, “Why you ask if not do business?” Levis talked further to the manager, who seemed to understand, while the Chinese shop owner still looked confused and angry. In the end, we shook their hands and left. To the Chinese shop owner, Levis and I appeared suspicious. His Zambian manager explained that the Chinese trader was careful with whom he interacted. His Zambian employees in the shop later explained that their Chinese employer might have thought that we were business people who wanted to copy his goods, steal his business ideas, or that we were spies for the Zambian Immigration Office, searching for faults in his licenses in order to blackmail him for money.

The case shows some significant aspects of a Chinese shop owner's experience at the market, and of the relationships between Chinese employers and their Zambian employees. The trader immediately suspected that we were competitors and he was ready to defend his business in this competitive trading environment. Also, as I will elaborate on later in this chapter, his experiences with corrupt Immigration Officers might have made him suspicious. Chinese traders are suspicious of everyone in the market that they do not know. The Zambian employees appear hesitant about how to act and how to interact with their Chinese employers.

The Chinese traders at Kamwala Market do not visit their shops longer than is necessary in order to deliver goods and make sure that everything is in order. In another encounter, I was working in a Chinese owned shop where Sash and John, two Zambian employees, worked. A white van with tinted windows parked outside the shop. The employees noticed and stopped talking, and Sash told me that it was their employer's car. Four Chinese people came out of the car and entered the shop, two men and two women. They looked very serious and seemed to be in a hurry. The women walked straight into the shop, looked around and began adjusting the way the goods were displayed. They nodded only a brief greeting to the workers as they walked past. The Chinese men brought in new goods, which they threw onto the shop floor, without speaking to their Zambian employees. The Zambian employees began putting the goods onto shelves immediately. The Chinese men showed the workers where and how they wanted the new bags, purses and other goods to be displayed. They gave a few instructions to their employees before they waved goodbye and drove off. They had only stayed in the shop for 10 minutes, and Sash explained that they rarely stayed longer than that. The relationship between these Chinese traders and their Zambian employees seemed to be more relaxed than in the case above, however, the interaction was still limited to a minimum of exchanging short, simple greetings and orders. With the exception of the short visits by the Chinese traders, the Zambian employees are left with the responsibility of the daily running of the shops. The Chinese traders trust their employees to run their shops, and the Zambian employees appeared to appreciate this responsibility and level of trust. However, the lack of interaction and what many Zambian employees described as lack of contact, social conversations and friendships, made them feel apprehensive in close physical proximity to the Chinese traders. Zambians in general were friendly and made time to speak to each other at the market, whereas the Chinese were too busy for such formalities.

Linguistic Conditions: Language and Communication Barriers

In addition to the lack of face-to-face interaction between Chinese and Zambians in the market,

communication is further hampered by language barriers. Esther, a Zambian woman in her thirties, works as a cashier in a Chinese owned clothes shop in Kamwala Market. She explained that it was possible to communicate with her Chinese employer, but they had to speak very slowly and simply in “broken English” because of her employer’s poor knowledge of English. “If we speak like we usually do, the Chinese will not understand”. According to Esther, this language barrier is one reason why the Chinese do not work in their shops themselves. She said, “Imagine the boss behind the till! [Laughing]. He wouldn’t manage to sell anything because he can’t communicate with the customers. Imagine that! It’s better that we Zambians get the jobs and make good business”. At times, Esther found it difficult to communicate her opinions to her Chinese employer and also to understand some of the employer’s orders. However, she also acknowledged that the Chinese traders’ lack of English provided Zambians with labour opportunities. In Esther’s opinion, she would not have obtained such a responsible job if her employer had spoken fluent English. This case highlights the dilemma and ambivalence between the Zambians and the Chinese. They depend on each other’s knowledge and skills, but are still distant from each other due to communication problems.

Sash, who also works for a Chinese trader, explained how the lack of fluency in a common language created problems for her. She explained that her Chinese employer occasionally shouts at her and her colleagues. Business can be slow because of circumstances like the beginning of the farming season, school start, changes in the bus routes, problems or policies in Zimbabwe that stop Zimbabwean purchasers coming to Zambia and so on. However, because of the language barriers and a lack of knowledge about the local context, her Chinese employer does not understand the circumstances that cause fluctuations in sales. Sash’s employer would get very angry and blame his Zambian employees when sales drops. When asked about how she responds to his anger, Sash explained there was nothing she could do, so she “just lets him shout”. She found it pointless to try to explain the reasons for drop in sales, as her employer “would probably not understand anyway”.

Some of the Chinese traders at Kamwala Market spoke relatively good English, but miscommunication was still prevalent. I realised while working together with Zambian employees and their Chinese employers in the market that language is more than just how to talk; it is also about what to talk about. The Chinese traders who could speak good English did not necessarily speak more to their Zambian employees than the ones with less English knowledge. In addition, the feeling of misunderstanding and the lack of a way to express opinions to each other was a common problem. This shows that differing cultural ideas and values about what topics to talk about in what situations and how to express oneself, may create

as much miscommunication and misunderstandings as the lack of language proficiency. For the Zambian employees, the Chinese traders often appeared cold, elusive and very private, which many found disrespectful and offending. Moreover, many pointed out that they found the Chinese impolite and rude in the way that they gave orders and due to their lack of greetings and formal introductions. The Chinese traders felt in contrast that this was the appropriate way of relating to their workers. Additionally, many Chinese traders misunderstood their employees' attempts to provide subtle explanations and views on problematic issues. Instead, they interpreted these explanations as a lack of business skills and commitment to the company's progress.

Exchange of Ideas and Knowledge

Many Zambians see the employment in Chinese owned shops as a springboard to beginning their own business. Because the majority of Chinese traders avoid spending time in their shops, the Zambian employees have more responsibility, and hence get first-hand experience on how to run a shop.



Zambian employees serving customers inside a Chinese owned clothes shop.

The Zambian employees gain important knowledge from their Chinese employers, such as knowledge about trade networks, the necessities in running a company, such as taxes, licenses etc., keeping accounts, organising goods, handling the money and making deposits to the bank. Likewise, the Chinese traders are dependent on the Zambian's knowledge about the market and consumer preferences to succeed in trading. They are also dependent of their Zambian employees' competence in a number of fields, such as language and customer service. The Chinese employers and Zambian employees possess complementary knowledge, and they share

these skills, knowledge and resources out of necessity. The Chinese traders have the capital and connections needed, while the Zambian employees have knowledge about consumer demands and local market strategies. The Chinese traders transfer their knowledge to their Zambian employees through the ways they organise their shops and by letting the Zambian employees manage the shops. In other words, the Zambians learn by mimicking how the Chinese run the shops, through trial and error. This is a type of involuntary or unintended method of knowledge transfer. Additionally, some Chinese traders intentionally teach their Zambian employees, whom they have a long lasting and trusting relationship with, about specific trade strategies and networks. However, this presupposes that the traders have a good knowledge of English.

The complementary knowledge between Chinese employers and Zambian employees has brought about a growing exchange of ideas, and there is an important knowledge transfer occurring. Mr Dodia, a well-known Zambian business man, thinks it is good that the Chinese traders are not in the shop themselves. He said,

If you ask a Zambian worker in an Indian shop what he can do he can only do simple services, following the Indian's orders, like putting something on a shelf, buying drinks for the boss or cleaning the floor. But he doesn't know anything about how to actually run the shop. But the Zambians in Chinese shops are actually running the business. They are negotiating prices, handling the money, doing the accountancy and so on. There's a mind-set amongst Zambians that the disadvantage is that there's no positive inputs to learn from the Chinese, but there are things we can take advantage of. The Zambians in Chinese shops are interns who are learning and getting qualified to run a business themselves one day (interview Yusuf Dodia 18.04.2012).

Many of the Zambian employees at Kamwala Market had such ambitions. The Zambian employee Daniel helped his Chinese employer to set up the employer's first shop in Kamwala Market a few years ago. He helped redecorate the shop, put up shelves and translate paperwork, such as trading licenses and migration documents. Because of Daniel's long experience and his employer's confidence in him, he has now become the manager of the shop. Daniel's employer has also promised to take him to China to purchase goods. This way, Daniel can learn both how to purchase directly from Chinese companies, and, hopefully build a network of useful business connections. Daniel dreams about opening a shop in his hometown. He has also spoken with his employer about the possibility of opening a shop on behalf of his employer. Daniel explained that in this way, he could be responsible for the shop in cooperation with his Chinese employer,

who has appeared positive to the idea. Whatever the outcome of this, Daniel's main goal is to save enough money to become an independent trade entrepreneur himself.

There are other examples of such a carrier path. A Zambian man I spoke to had already started his own business from the money he had saved by working for a Chinese trader. He had opened a small pub outside Lusaka, and combined this with his job in the Chinese owned shop at Kamwala Market. Another Zambian employee, Chedrick, works in a Chinese wholesale clothes shop in the buildings constructed by China Hainan Ltd. He wants to open his own shop, and he also dreams about taking a photography course and then work as a photographer. The Chinese employers provide Chedrick with work and opportunities to save money. However, his salary is low and he is finding it difficult to save enough money to pursue his dreams. Chedrick's salary allows him to save a small amount of money every month, but he has two children to look after and many expenses. After school fees, house rent, food and transport expenses he is left with only ZMK 50,000 (\$ 9.6) to save every month, which is too little to pursue his dreams.

Economic Conditions: Competition and Copying

The Zambian and Chinese traders compete for the same shop premises, the same customers and over the sale of the same types of goods. There is price war between all the traders at the market and competition is intense. There are also many stories that circulate in Kamwala Market about Chinese traders who make replicas of Zambian traders' most popular merchandise. Such stories, about what they commonly term as "copying", spur anger and despair among the Zambians.

A Zambian shopkeeper in a family run clothes shop in Kamwala Market told me that he found it harder to do business today compared to six years ago when he began trading. He explained that it is impossible to compete with the cheap prices that the Chinese traders offer. Because of the fierce competition, many traders find it increasingly difficult to stand out and offer something original to the customers. The shopkeeper I spoke to would occasionally purchase goods that became very popular amongst his customers, despite the goods being more expensive than his Chinese counterparts. He once imported a new style of dress, which became a big seller. However, according to him, it did not take long before a Chinese trader purchased one of these dresses from his shop, sent it to China where they manufactured copies, imported them to Zambia and then sold them at Kamwala Market at a much cheaper price. In another Zambian owned shop, I noticed ten new red dresses on display, partly hidden behind the entrance door. The trader explained that these were dresses he had imported from South Africa a few months ago, which had been very popular amongst his customers. However, several Chinese traders had recently begun selling identical dresses, but of lower quality and at one

fifth of the price. Now he was unable to sell his dresses. He considered the profit he had made so far on the dresses as lost.

When accused of making replicas, most of the Chinese traders brushed it aside, saying that it was merely a coincident and a result of the fashion being similar in all of the shops. One Chinese trader informed me, however, that he often researched Kamwala Market for clothes in popular demand and ordered clothes in a similar style from China, but he had never heard of anyone making exact copies. Nevertheless, stories like these are common at Kamwala Market, and most Zambian traders are sure that Chinese traders have made replicas of their goods and then sell them at a cheaper price. As a result, most Zambian traders are reluctant to let any “Chinese people” or Zambians working for Chinese traders into their shops. Esther, a Zambian employee in a Chinese clothes shop, told me that because of “the copying problems” she would ask any Chinese person who visited her shop to leave. I asked her how she knows which customers are there “to copy”, and she explained that Chinese people in Lusaka never buy anything from the “cheap shops” in Kamwala Market, unless they want to copy it. This means that Esther will essentially “guard” the Chinese owned shop she works in from other Chinese people. She considers it part of her job.

Copying also creates tension between the Chinese traders, who are suspicious of each other. I never once saw a Chinese trader in another Chinese trader's shop. Several Chinese owned shops have large signs at their entrance or by the till where it is written “No entrance of same profession” in large, red Chinese characters, with an English translation underneath. The Zambian employees explained that the sign was there to keep other Chinese traders out and to stop them from copying their goods. I noticed such a sign in Sash's shop, and she explained, “These guys [the Chinese] are very competitive. If they meet, they might be friendly and communicate with each other, but when it comes to business, they will compete. Some even live together in the same house, but they still compete and keep their businesses to themselves”. The price war and the race to purchase the latest fashion first is a response to the increasing competitive environment at the market. The negative result of this is that it creates tension and secretiveness among the traders. However there is a positive result as well, as it provides a wider variety of goods at cheaper prices for the customers.

When it comes to copying, it is also important to note that the Zambian traders copy each other's goods as well, and regularly research the market to find out what goods will be profitable to purchase. Their criticism of the Chinese traders' practices can be seen not necessarily as complaints about the copying in itself, but about the Chinese traders' advantages; of what the Zambians perceived as unfair conditions. They were frustrated that the Chinese

traders, as outsiders, earned money at their expense based on their own market insight. The Chinese utilised advantages, especially their networks in Chinese factories, which the Zambian traders did not have access to. The Chinese traders' success is seen to be at the expense of the Zambian traders, and many Zambians speculate in the reasons behind the Chinese traders' success. The Zambian traders accuse the Chinese traders for using "unfair" and "dirty" play to obtain their quick and seemingly unexplainable success. These accusations and suspicions nurture the ambivalent attitude towards the Chinese. For the Zambians, the Chinese traders' networks and advantages are undefined and incomprehensibly, and hence the Chinese traders' success is difficult to accept.

Accusations of Clandestine Activities

Many Zambians, both traders and employees in Chinese owned shops, expressed surprise and often annoyance at the Chinese traders' reluctance to interact with the Zambians, as if they had "something to hide". The Zambian traders often said that the Chinese keep everything secret, from business methods, ideas and networks, to their social lives, religion and residential address. When speaking about it, they used Nyanja phrases such as *ukusunya mwa chisinsi*, "to keep a secret", or *ukupanga mwa chisinsi*, "to make something in secret". Anne, a Zambian trader and tailor, said, "We Zambians, we are honest, we don't have anything to hide, so we can speak to anyone, we are not afraid", implying that the reserved Chinese traders are dishonest and have something to hide.

For Zambians, trading in Kamwala Market is a socialising affair. Exchanging of news and information, and maintaining good relationships with other traders, are important skills to succeed in the market. A large part of the job is to talk to and make contact with customers, and people are very friendly and forthcoming towards each other. One of the traders I worked with, a Zambian woman in her late forties, who sold clothes and shoes within Luburma market, would talk to two or three customers while simultaneously chatting to a friend who had come to visit and calling a street seller to come over to show his goods. She invited everyone to sit down, have a look and to have a chat. Zambian traders keep in close contact with each other and cooperate daily, especially those with shops next to each other. They will often visit each other to chat, to drink a cup of tea or to ask a favour. Many of the traders also cooperated in importing goods. In contrast, the Chinese traders keep all their business strategies to themselves and do not cooperate with other traders at the market.

Even Zambian employees in Chinese owned shops know very little about their employer. Sash, who has worked for the same Chinese employer for 2 years, told me that she

had asked him where he lived, but he had refused to tell her. Her employer, on the other hand, always demands to know where his employees live and where they come from. If goods are missing from the shop, he will visit his employees' homes to search for the missing goods. Sash disliked the assumptions behind it; "the Chinese think that all Zambians are poor and if they find expensive goods in your house they think it must have been stolen". She asked, "Who has the right to go into your house anyway?" She felt there was nothing she could do.

The fact that the Chinese appear reserved and secretive, spurs conspiracy theories and notions that the Chinese do not play by the rules. The Zambian traders suspect the Chinese of engaging in clandestine activities to gain success. They suspect that they have powerful 'business medicine'. The Zambians use the generic Bantu word for "a tree", *muti* (plural *miti*), which also connotes "herb" for business medicine. However, the term covers all kinds of substances, vegetal and others, which are manipulated and used to better one's chances and succeed in business. When opening a shop at the market, for instance, it is not unusual that Zambian traders place *miti* by the entrance and at the corners to protect the business against thefts and competitors, and to attract customers.

With the recent rapid economic development, socio-economic inequalities are increasing, and, in popular discourse, those who quickly access riches or move up the social ladder may be accused of engaging in clandestine activities such as using luck and business medicine, witchcraft, and, with the recent wave of Pentecostal revival, engaging in Satanism. It is a discourse that attempts to explain why some succeed while others do not. At Kamwala Market, it is common that traders accuse successful traders, Zambian, Indian and Chinese alike, for engaging in such clandestine activities. However, the "secretiveness" of the Chinese adds to rumours that they are in possession of much more powerful herbs than the Zambians are. It is a circular argument, the Chinese are secretive because they are in possession of powerful herbs, and, because they are in possession of powerful herbs, they must remain secretive. In the opinion of Levis, my research assistant,

Chinese and Indians believe a lot in herbs. You can see this by the way they drink plants and herbs all the time. They believe in tradition too much. The Chinese and Indians are witches because they know a lot about herbs. But, they have different herbs from us Zambians, and that's why they keep their medicine secret, so no one can get a stronger herb.

Such perceptions evidence the ambiguous figure of the Chinese trader in the social structure of

Kamwala Market. He is both near, in the sense that he uses herbs for success in business as the Zambians do, but also distant, in the sense that he knows about powerful herbs, strange and out of reach of his Zambian competitors.

Legal Conditions: Work Permits, Trade Licenses, Immigration Officers and Corruption

“They [the Chinese traders] have learned that it is safer not to speak to anyone. The less they stay in their shops and interact with people in the market, the less trouble they will get” (Andrew, a Chinese trader)

The absence and ephemeral visits by the Chinese traders to the market are also due to the lack of correct permits and licences and the occasional harassment from Immigrations Officers. Because of the political debate and public protests from 2003 onwards about Chinese investments and working conditions in Chinese owned industries, stricter immigration laws and formal demands for start-up capital have been implemented (McNamee 2012). Some of the Chinese traders operating in Kamwala Market do not have the capital required by Zambian authorities to formally establish a business, and that is why many did not have the required work permits or trading licenses. This suggests that many Chinese work and trade illegally in Zambia. New requirements stipulate that traders need a 'self-employment permit' to run a business in Zambia. However, many Chinese traders only possess 'work permits'. This means that although they are staying legally in Zambia, they work illegally as traders (McNamee 2012). Dobler's study (2007) in Namibia found similar traits and argues that acquiring the right permits is the most essential prerequisite for success in business for Chinese immigrants. Because of the high number of Chinese operating in Zambia without the necessary permits and licences, the Chinese traders at Kamwala Market are often subject to checks and sometimes harassment by Zambian Immigration Officers, independent of if they operate legally or not.

The Zambian government's policy allows foreign investments in manufacturing and infrastructure projects, but there are stronger restrictions on investments in small-scale trading. The Chinese traders at Kamwala Market are aware of these restrictions. According to Mr Wu, the Zambian government do not view the Chinese small-scale traders' investments as genuine investments, and this is a reason for the recent difficulties in obtaining work permits. Mr Wu disagreed with the Zambian policies and was of the opinion that small-scale trade provide good investments; “after all we supply the market with goods and create much needed jobs for Zambians”. Tao's employer runs a duvet and pillow factory outside Lusaka, together with a

relative, in addition to his shops at Kamwala Market. He originally started out as a trader, but because of the Zambian government's restrictions and policies, he decided to start manufacturing as well, in order to obtain more work permits, and to make it easier to import merchandise for his shops.

Dobler (2007) found that Chinese traders in Namibia also established factories in order to acquire more work permits for Chinese employees, as it was becoming harder to obtain permits there. A trader with a duvet factory in Namibia could obtain 20-30 work permits. A few of the work permits might be used for employees working in the factory, while the rest are used for workers in shops around the country. Dobler (2007) argues that work permits have become a commodity and a source of income for Chinese business people. The trend of establishing small factories to be able to be legally engaged in trade appears to be similar in Namibia and Zambia. I have been unable to find out, however, if permits and licences have become a commodity in Zambia.

Andrew, a Chinese trader who imports building equipment to Zambia, explained that many Chinese traders avoid interacting with Zambians and working in their shops themselves because of the corruption amongst Zambian Immigration Officers. He explained that Immigration Officers often interrogate Chinese traders and blackmail them even when they can produce the correct papers. He said that, "The Immigration Officers chase the Chinese because they want money, it is mostly corruption". The Zambian employees I spoke to in Chinese owned shops were also aware of the Immigration Regulations, and many help their employers to hide in the shop if Immigration Officers patrolled, while other employees pretend the shop is theirs and even put their name on applications to secure licenses. According to both Zambian and Chinese traders, Immigration Officers already know if a shop is Chinese or not in most cases, but they only charge the Chinese traders if they find them in the shop.

Andrew told me about an incident that happened to him and his cousin a few years ago. He was in his shop in town together with his cousin, who was visiting him from China. His cousin was on holiday and they had travelled around Zambia for a few days, to relax and see more of the country. Six Immigration Officers came into his shop to check his licenses and work permit. Andrew had all the licenses and permits he needed. However, they wanted to arrest his cousin because he only had a tourist visa. Andrew tried to explain to them that his cousin was just visiting, but the officers did not believe him and claimed that his cousin was working in Zambia illegally and would be arrested. Andrew became frustrated. He told me, "In the end all they wanted was money", and he paid the Immigration Officers what they wanted so that they would let his cousin off. Even though Andrew had all the right paperwork and speaks fluent

English, he still felt the easiest solution was to bribe the Immigration Officers. He explained, “The immigration system here does not work, so there is lots of corruption. But we just have to accept it and try to avoid it as much as possible”. Several Chinese traders at Kamwala Market told me that they viewed corruption and bribes as part of doing business in Zambia. Dobler observed similar notions among Chinese traders in Namibia, and writes that they regarded bribes as “the unavoidable entrance fee into a new world of opportunities” (2007:104).

Andrew pointed out, “if they [the Chinese traders] can't read English of course they don't know about the *Zambian laws!*” Many Chinese traders are unaware of the immigration and labour regulations, and do not understand what the Immigration Officers ask for, because of language problems and miscommunication. However, they have learned that if they pay, the officers will leave them alone. In a survey amongst Chinese traders in Zambia, 90% viewed corruption as a serious problem when doing business in the country (McNamee 2012:23). Many *Zambian* traders also complained about corruption in Zambia. If they report on illegal Chinese business to the Immigration Office, the officers will contact the Chinese trader, who will pay the officers money to drop the charges. Many traders felt it was a hopeless situation, and one *Zambian* trader said, “So it's no point complaining, because that will just lead to the officer earning money, and the case will die, just like that ... the laws are not enforced”. Mr Dodia, a well-known *Zambian* businessman, pointed out that the problem is domestic mismanagement, not the Chinese traders. He elaborated:

It's just what you can get away with. All investors will try to get away with what they can if our labour laws and the government don't work. Even corruption is a result of mismanagement and a problem in the system. People are complaining that the Chinese are corrupt, and for example pay someone to fix their work permits, but before the Chinese came, the Indians were doing it and the Europeans were doing it and the South Africans were doing it. So it's the system which is failing, not the Chinese.

(Interview with Mr Dodia 18.04.2012)

The fear of the Immigration Officers contribute to the shaping of the relations between the *Zambian* and the Chinese at Kamwala Market, both in the sense of the absence of the Chinese shop owners and employees, and their caution and reluctance to enter into rapport with *Zambians*.

Labour Relations, Misconceptions and Conflicts

Culturally based perceptions of employment relations are contradictory and prone to conflict (Giese and Thiel 2012:3).

Chinese employers and their Zambian employees have different cultural notions about labour relations, and conflicting norms and values are evident in the problems between them. Zambian employees expect their employers to provide certain welfare services, such as sick leave, insurances, transport money, permission to take days off to go to funerals and so on, while the Chinese are not accustomed to providing such services and they therefore interpret their Zambian employees demands as inappropriate or as a sign of “laziness”.

One morning in April, I was working in a Chinese owned shop together with four Zambian employees when one of them, Lucy, a 20-year-old woman, fell and injured herself on her way from the toilet. A passer-by carried her back into the shop. She was in a lot of pain, and she could hardly stand on her feet. The workers and customers in the shop helped her to sit down on a chair. Her colleagues told me she had been in an accident earlier in the week, when she was hit by a bicycle and hurt her arm. On the way from the toilet, she had slipped on the floor and fell on her injured arm. One of the customers looked at her and said that her collarbone was displaced. She cried and screamed and there was a lot of discussion about what to do. They decided to call their Chinese employer, but he just told them to send Lucy home. The Zambian employees and customers felt that this response was indifferent and unsympathetic, because she obviously needed to see a doctor.

The employees and customers in the shop discussed if they should take her to one of the smaller clinics nearby or to the main hospital and if they should call for an ambulance or get a taxi. At this stage, Lucy's sister, who also works in the shop, said, sounding desperate, that they did not have enough money for the hospital fees. They did not even have money for a taxi. The customers, Lucy's sister and the other employees all continued discussing the issue in a loud and frustrated manner. The customers said that they thought the employer should pay for the taxi and hospital bill; after all, she was injured at work. The customers were also surprised that the employees were not covered by work insurance. A young woman said, “Is the boss a Chinese? Eeech, why don't we chase them out of the country?” Another one said, “They [the Chinese] have to at least follow the Zambian laws”, while a third customer added, “We should report them to the immigration!”

Eventually someone suggested a small clinic nearby that was cheap, and they decided

to take Lucy there. Lucy's sister took money for the taxi from the shop's till and asked her mother to take Lucy to the clinic. She asked me to watch the till while the employees, her mother and some of the customers helped to carry Lucy into the taxi. Everyone involved in the incident seemed concerned and upset. Workers from other shops and passers-by had gathered inside and outside the shop to see what was happening and to voice their opinions about what to do and how bad the Chinese were. Lucy's sister said with tears in her eyes, "This person is a very bad man, how can he allow people to work without insurance?" A customer asked, "What happens if someone dies on duty? What will he do then?" They shook their heads in gestures of resignation. Some of the customers asked where the boss was now, but nobody knew. Another customer asked where he lived, because he wanted to go to his house to "talk some sense into him" and to ask him why he treated people like this. The Zambian employees in the shop explained that they did not know where their boss lived. They knew very little about their employer, and one employee said, "he keeps things secret, because he does not want trouble." A customer responded, "Eeech, these Chinese!" while shaking his head.

I found this incident very interesting, especially observing how the atmosphere changed and how the Zambian employees, who had earlier seemed quite content with their Chinese employer suddenly became very angry and expressed their frustration. A few days after the accident, I went to visit Lucy at her home to see how she was doing. She was feeling better, but had to stay at home for two weeks to recover properly. After she was taken to the clinic, her colleagues were concerned that their employer would fire her if she had to take sick leave, or that he would not pay her for the days she could not work. However, Lucy told me that her employer had accepted her leave without reductions in her salary, and he had told her to stay at home until she felt better. This exemplifies the ambiguities in the Zambians' relations to Chinese traders. The Zambian employees did not know what to expect or how their employer would react. In this case, their negative expectations turned out to be incorrect. Lucy and her colleagues had only a few weeks previously told me how happy they were with their employer and that they liked their jobs, but as it turned out, tension and dissatisfaction was lurking beneath the surface. One of the reasons for this tension was the lack of communication and that the Zambian employees did not know what to expect from their employer. Giese and Thiel argues that,

When a mutual understanding of the other party's culture is absent and communication skills are inadequate to resolve misunderstandings, largely due to the underdeveloped foreign language skills of many Chinese employers, cross-cultural miscommunication

almost inevitably translates into perceptions of inequity that are based on different interpretations of the reciprocity norm (2012:15).

Chinese traders often ground their employment decisions in their trust in third parties. The third party acts as a guarantor, and this makes it likely that the employee will perform well. The employment is based on mutual trust, and the employer expects the employees to reciprocate for their jobs by working hard and follow orders without questioning. This expectation is often transposed to settings abroad, such as African countries (Giese and Thiel 2012). In contrast, Zambian employment relations are often based on, or modelled after, kinship relationships, and the employer is expected to help relatives with employment and resources in times of need. People with more resources are expected to share and help those with less. The Chinese employers are seen as quite wealthy, compared to local standards, and hence expected to help their employees in need, in the form of small loans, time off work to care for sick family members and allowances beyond their regular salary. However, the Chinese traders' expectations of employment relationships does not conform with the Zambians' expectations, and they often perceived their Zambian employees' repeated demands for extra allowances and days off as unwillingness to work. To take a day off to attend a social gathering, such as a funeral, was understood as a basis for a wage cut rather than as a worker's right. Problems in the employment relationships occur because of the different expectations. Giese and Thiel (2012) has described this as the liability of foreignness, which is the mutual unfamiliarity with each other's sociocultural expectations of the relationship.

New employees have expectations about norms that regulate the employment relations, and these expectations are based on both the particular employment situation and previous experiences. If the employer and the employment situation do not comply with these norms and reciprocity expectations, the employee will consider this a violation of what he or she interpreted as a social contract. Some employees react by voicing their concerns, while others keep quiet or retreat (Giese and Thiel 2012). Despite the feeling of being treated unfairly, many Zambian employees do not find themselves in a position to openly challenge his or her employer. The lack of other job opportunities and their extended family's dependence on the wages has made many endure the situation in silence. They often complained about low salaries and poor working conditions to customers and acquaintances, but they rarely confronted their employer with their complaints. If a Zambian employee did complain or demand higher salaries and welfare services, the Chinese traders often viewed this as a breach of the exchange obligations. They interpreted the complaint and demands as "laziness" and ungratefulness, in

addition to a lack of respect. In some cases, the Zambian's complaints and demands lead to termination of their employment contract. While some chose to keep quiet, others decided to search for better job opportunities.

In many Chinese traders' view, their Zambian employees' behaviour differs from how they expect an employee should behave. Tao explained that the Zambians have a different work ethic than the Chinese; "sometimes the Zambians can be lazy and work very slow". Nevertheless, according to Tao, this does not constitute a major problem because the Zambian employees listen to him when he asks them to work faster. Andrew, a Chinese trader, explained how work cultures differ in China and Zambia. In China, most workers do not make enquiries about their rights, while in Zambia employees feel free to ask and demand what they see as their rights. Andrew said that they have to strike a balance between their differences; Chinese employers have to change too. He continued, "The longer Chinese people are outside China, the more they will understand. It will change gradually, but for the newcomers, they don't know".

Mr Wu also pointed out that the attitude towards work and money is very different in Zambia compared to China. Chinese people, he claimed, value the ability to save money, while in contrast he believes that the Zambians "spend very easily". Mr Wu said that he thinks cultural differences can be overcome, as they learn more and more about each other. Mr Wu had problems with theft from his shop. He did not know if it was his employees or the customers who stole. As a remedy, he had begun to reduce his Zambian employees' wages when goods were missing at month's end. This had improved the situation, even though they still had thefts. Another problem, which Mr Wu complained about, was the "drinking problem". Especially in his factory, drinking is a serious safety problem because of the heavy machinery. If he finds any of his employees, including the Chinese, drunk at work he will send them home. He said, "My rule number one is that I don't allow drinking during working hours". If he finds a worker drunk more than three times, he will fire him. Mr Wu continued, "People drink in China as well, but you know Chinese people are very serious workers. Working is working, you know, it's serious".

Another issue is that most of the Chinese employers expected their workers to work overtime and occasionally on Sundays, without extra payment. They regarded extra work as part of the reciprocity exchange. In their perspective, the salary included these extra days and hours of working, and, as a reward, they usually provided extra money for transport when their employees work extra, which the Chinese viewed as a gesture of kindness that was not really necessary. However, the Zambian employees complained about the expectations of working

extra hours. In their view, they already worked more than what is normal in Zambia, and on a low salary. They expected to be paid, and to be paid higher rates for overtime. The money they received for transport was taken for granted, as a matter of course. In addition, most of the Zambian employees were dedicated Christians, and found it problematic to miss Church on Sundays.

Giese and Thiel (2012) show how cross-cultural employment relations are characterised by social exchanges rather than entirely economic exchanges. Conflicts arise when the expectations and norms for the social exchanges are contradictory. They explain how the Chinese employers in Ghana felt vulnerable in the foreign setting with limited abilities to communicate and to understand the local rules, as well as to find employees they could trust. This resulted in reluctance to fire employees even if they failed to reciprocate as they were expected to. The young Ghanaian employees also felt vulnerable, because they did not have any other employment options, and would not terminate the employment relations despite finding his/her employment situation exploitative and not conforming to expectations. Giese and Thiel argue that Chinese employers are speechless due to their poor knowledge of English and local cultural norms. On the other hand, Ghanaian employees are voiceless because their complaints and actions to restore their expectations of labour relations are not understood by the Chinese employers, and because of the fear of losing their jobs. If the levels of cross-cultural communication are insufficient, the parties will not be able to address expectations and equity violations (Giese and Thiel 2012).

The Zambian employees found it difficult to interpret the mixed messages they received from their Chinese employers. They interpreted their Chinese employer as kind and fair in some situations, but at the same time, the lack of contact, low wages and mixed messages created apprehension. In addition, many Zambian employees expressed feelings of gratitude over the job opportunity, while at the same time expressed anger and despair due to poor working conditions. Poor communication, different cultural notions and values spur misunderstandings and conflicts.

The Issue of Salary in Public Discourse

A source of conflict between Chinese employers and their Zambian employees is low wages. The Chinese often said that they were not breaking any laws and that they were following Zambian government regulations concerning wages. They did not understand why this could be such a problem. Most of the Chinese shop owners would pay the minimum wage or slightly more, to their unskilled Zambian employees. However, the minimum wage does not cover the

Zambian employees' living expenses. They explained that the minimum wage has not been adjusted for inflations and rising prices, which means the regulations do not match the reality of urban people's lives. Zambia has a long tradition of labour unions, and employees expect democratic labour relations and the freedom of speech. The Chinese found the Zambians complaints and demand for better conditions as offending and as another sign of "laziness".

The low wages paid by Chinese enterprises and the current level of minimum wages have been widely discussed in the Zambian media, and is an important issue in public debates about the Chinese impact in the country (BBC Africa debate 2012³). As a result of this, the government has recently increased the minimum wage. However, the rise of the minimum wage has some unforeseen effects on employees in Chinese owned shops. Chedrick, a Zambian employee in a Chinese shop, explained that the new minimum wage had led to retrenchment and lay-offs in the Chinese owned shops and industries. The Chinese shop owners at Kamwala Market can no longer afford to employ as many employees in their shops as they previously could. In the shop where Chedrick works, they have cut down on the number of staff. In addition, his Chinese employer has recently closed down two of his shops, one in Downtown shopping centre and one in Kamwala Market.

Nevertheless, despite the conflicts and the public debates, it is important to note that not all the Zambian employees thought that the Chinese employers paid "too little". Sash and John, who work in a large Chinese owned shop at Kamwala Market, have both been working in the shop for several years. They were content with their salaries, received business bonuses and food allowances for lunch. At times, their employer invites them to lunch at upmarket restaurants. Sash told me that her employer is a clever businessman because he understands that it is important to treat his employees well for his business to progress. She was of the opinion that if a manager mistreats his employees or does not pay a good salary, the employees will not do a good job and then they might be dishonest and start stealing. Both Sash and John told me that because they respect their employer, they do their best to look after the business.

Another fiercely debated topic is the fact that Chinese shop owners and larger companies mostly employ Chinese persons in better paid positions, such as managers and accountants. According to Tang (2010), the Chinese traders' chief market strategy in Africa is low pricing, and this is a key point to be considered regarding the impact on local employment. The Chinese

³ An example of public debate is the radio debate program that was held in the government building in Lusaka 25.05.12, where the issue of China's impact in Africa was discussed. I was in the audience of this panel debate. BBC produced it as a radio program, but it was also broadcasted on Zambian TV by ZNBC (Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation) and covered by other local media.

traders have to keep labour costs down without reducing their productivity. Local employees do not have the same skills and working styles as the Chinese, and particularly in the managerial positions, the Chinese shop owners prefer Chinese employees because of their knowledge of trade and networks, as well as education in accountancy and business management. In addition, skilled local employees are often too expensive for the Chinese companies. Chinese traders' low price strategy restricts their flexibility to pay higher salaries and in the selection of employees (Tang 2010).

Another debated issue is the payment of rent to China Hainan Ltd. China Hainan Ltd rents out shop premises to Chinese, Zambian and other traders at Kamwala Market. The Chinese company demands that the rent is paid in US\$. Several market committees have been fighting against this to enable traders to pay in ZMK (Zambian currency Kwacha) in order to avoid poor exchange rates and taxes. One Zambian trader renting a shop from China Hainan Ltd said with his hands out in despair and shaking his head, "we lose money!" He felt he could not refuse to pay the rent in US\$ because there are always other traders who are willing to pay, and China Hainan Ltd will therefore just throw him out and find someone else. "If you close a shop today, someone else will open tomorrow", he said. The fierce competition for shop premises and for jobs is yet another reason why Zambians are reluctant to forward their concerns and complaints to the Chinese employers or rental companies.

Concluding Remarks

I have approached the relations between Zambian and Chinese in a holistic manner, by exploring how the interactions and relations unfold in the everyday life of the market. This chapter has pointed to the structural, legal, political, economic, and cultural conditions that create interdependence, ambiguity and conflict.

Zambian traders see the Chinese traders' presence as a zero-sum game, negative reciprocity and a win-win situation. They view the Chinese traders' success as being at the expense of their trade; it is a zero-sum game where the Zambian traders lose what the Chinese traders win. The relations can also be characterised by negative reciprocity, in that each party intends to profit from the exchanges. The negative reciprocity implies that both parties wish to gain from the competitive relations, even if it is at the expense of others. Negative reciprocity occurs when people reciprocate actions that have had negative effects upon them with actions that have negative effects on the other parties. At the same time, many Zambians see the Chinese traders' presence as a win-win situation, where the Zambians obtain jobs, cheap goods

and increased investments in the country, while the Chinese earn money and obtain business opportunities. In this view, both the Zambians and the Chinese win on the situation.

The relations between Zambians and Chinese at Kamwala Market can be characterised as ambivalent. They both compete and complement each other, they are interdependent but at the same time, there are many conflicts and misunderstandings. Despite the physical nearness on a daily basis in the market, they are foreign to each other because of the mutual unfamiliarity with each other's sociocultural expectations of the relationship. Zambian employees and Chinese employers found it difficult to interpret the mixed messages they received from one another. The repeated misinterpretation of the other party's reactions create continuous loops of perceived inequity. To break this, there is a need for effective cross-cultural communication (Giese and Thiel 2012).

Chapter 5: Responses to Market Saturation

There are many challenges facing traders at Kamwala Market today. There is a process of market saturation and the growing number of traders operating in Kamwala Market further intensify the competitive trade environment (McNamee 2012, Mulenga 22.05.12). There are escalating rents for shop premises and a fierce price war, and traders compete for physical, economic and social space in the market. Trading is an essential source of income for many Zambians in Lusaka, and the market saturation has led to falling profits for established traders and many find it difficult to support their families. Some respond to the increasing competition by being more mobile, in that they travel longer distances and more frequently to purchase goods, travel to other markets to sell their goods or establish shops in other regions of Zambia or in other African countries.

Despite the growing hardship for many traders, the low prices for goods imported from China lower the threshold for entering the market trade for poor urban people, for peasants who buy goods from their revenues from cash crops and resell these in rural areas and for traders from neighbouring countries. Street sellers often purchase a few items to sell on the street at a time, which they sell for a small profit. Because the goods in the Chinese owned shops are so cheap, street sellers can afford to buy larger quantities of goods, and hence earn more money. However, the new entrants to the market have further intensified the competition. This creates a paradoxical process, where the flooding of the market with cheap Chinese goods lowers the threshold for more poor urban people to engage in trade, but also further increases the competition, which pushes established small-scale traders out of certain niches or out of the market altogether.

Research about the impact of Chinese traders in African countries has primarily focused on the macro-economic effects. Lyons and Brown (2010) point out that the increasing import of Chinese goods to African countries stimulates the development of commerce and creates jobs in the commercial service sector as well as in transportation businesses. Many African traders are today acting as buyers, shippers and wholesalers in complex international supply chains. Lyons and Brown address the immediate impacts of the China-Africa trade on Africa's informal traders and its longer term impact on urban poverty. Based on studies in Togo and Mali, they write that,

The findings are that the increase in imports from China initially broadened access to trading for the poor, creating short-term improvements in livelihoods, but competition

is driving down profit margins, and restricting the trade to a survival mechanism for many today. Thus it has provided limited long-term potential as an economic platform for national development and poverty reduction (2010:771).

However, it is beyond the scope of this study to chart the macro-level effects of the Chinese presence in Zambia. Rather, my aim in this chapter is to examine the specific consequences of and responses to market saturation and the availability of Chinese goods in Kamwala Market. I will approach these strategies and changes from the perspectives of specific traders and concrete relations.

In the saturated market, many Zambians and Chinese are provided with opportunities to earn a living and potential for upwards social mobility, while others face falling profits and economic problems, and potential downwards social mobility. The consequences of the saturated market are not entirely positive or negative; it is rather a complex and multifaceted issue, characterised by diverse responses. Below, I examine what the symptoms of market saturation in Kamwala Market are and how the different traders respond to these conditions.

A Saturated Market

Imported consumer goods have been an element in Africans lives for many centuries, but the increase in consumption has probably never been as great as in the past twenty years (Dobler 2008:410).

Tens of thousands of local retailers, street vendors and sales assistants are now making their living from the distribution of the consumer goods made in China (Tang 2010:359).

These days there are too many traders, both Zambian, Chinese and what-what. It doesn't matter where they are from; the bottom line is there are too many traders doing the same kind of business in Kamwala. (Nathaniel, a Zambian shoe seller worrying about the survival of his business)

There is a long history of trading in Zambia, and the informal economic sector is characterised by trade (Hansen 2004). In Lusaka, trade has historically been a way for the urban poor to manage in difficult economic situations. The urban poor constitute a large part of the city's

population. Hansen writes that, “[f]rom the earliest days of colonial Lusaka, African residents developed informal work [...] in efforts to provide the goods and services that colonial governance did not provide” (2004:63). Furthermore, the economic decline in both the public and private sector since the liberalised economic regime in the 1990s has made people dependent on self-reliant informal income to earn a living (Hansen 2004).

Two decades of structural adjustment programs (SAP) and neo-liberal reforms have altered the nature and availability of urban space in Lusaka, including entrance and self-employment in markets (Hansen 2010). The World Bank’s strategy to reduce poverty that succeeded SAP has opened up the national economy to foreign investments. State owned industry was sold, and many Zambians were made unemployed. A large share of the people who were made redundant became self-employed in the informal economy, especially in trade. This again, has increased the number of traders in Lusaka, and hence heightened the competition. Moreover, the lion share of the foreign investments in Lusaka has been in the retail sector. Hansen writes that, “[i]n popular representations in Zambia, ‘freeing the market’ has almost come to mean opening it up to external rather than local participation” (2010:15). Investments, especially by Chinese and South African companies, have led to urban upgrading in some areas, but also to spatial segregation and the ousting of local traders. The markets are flooded with cheap Chinese goods and there are today Chinese traders operating in the same market niches as local traders. Markets have been at the centre of a storm of controversy, because the majority of Lusaka’s population make a living from extra-legal activities that are visible in public space (Hansen 2010). This means that markets in Lusaka are important economic resources for urban livelihoods in the face of shrinking job opportunities. Small scale trading is,

... increasingly an occupational refuge for people who never have had formal sector jobs and retrenched employees both from the public and private sector. It also constitutes a temporary pursuit aimed at accumulating money for other activities. And it serves as a side line for people who are seeking to extend their earnings from jobs elsewhere (Hansen 2000:156).

In basic terms, anyone, irrespective of age, skills, knowledge and capital can earn money more easily being self-employed in the market compared to other employment options.

In the case of Kamwala Market, it is important to understand the competitive and unstable conditions many traders operate in, and that their informal and often extra-legal status

make them vulnerable to increasing competition and changing ownership structures. Lyons and Brown write about trade in African markets in general that, “[t]he seemingly inexorable flood of new entrants to these markets, and the resistance of established traders to leave, reflect a perception that the alternatives are limited and, generally, worse” (2010:780). Many Zambian traders at Kamwala Market expressed resignation, explaining that they did not have enough money to “keep up with the Chinese”. They saw business opportunities and profit margins dwindle in this competitive environment.

Large parts of the urban population in Africa are in unregistered employment. Hansen and Vaa (2004) consider extra-legal and unregistered economic activities as constituting the ‘informal economy’. However, the divide between informal and formal economies is an analytical one, and we cannot clearly separate and disentangle informal and formal parts of the economy. Workers in the formal economy often supplement their income by engaging in informal activities, and many informal workers do adhere to formal taxes and regulations in some parts of their activities (Hansen and Vaa 2004). For example, some of the Zambian traders I met at Kamwala Market imported goods illegally from neighbouring countries, but paid market fees and operated from registered spaces in the market. Others imported goods by formal and legal means and paid customs at the border, but did not register at a market and sold their merchandise on to informal cross border traders.

Despite informal activities being illegal or extra-legal, the actors themselves do not necessarily perceive them as illegitimate (Hansen and Vaa 2004). The informal economy is not only the domain of the poor as informal trade often offers better opportunities for rapid enrichment, also for better off entrepreneurs. In other words, informal activities and their actors are heterogeneous and complex, and cannot be separated from formal activities. Hart (2000) has asked whether the term informal has lost its usefulness, since such a large and complex part of the economy can be described as informal. Nevertheless, Hansen and Vaa (2004) suggest that the idea of an informal economy remains constructive, because it reveals how livelihoods are made when there are few opportunities to make a living, read from standard statistical indicators.

Throughout history and in every part of the world, marketeers, street sellers and traders who pursue their work in public places, have formed contested sites of interaction (Hansen 2004, 2010). Traders in Kamwala Market fight over market regulations, ownership and management, along with physical, social and economic space. It has become harder for traders to find affordable shop premises, and there are also conflicts over the payment of rent, such as the complaints over payments in dollars to Chinese property owners. When traders have to

negotiate and renegotiate the rights to physical space at the market, tensions are heightened. The conflicts involve representatives of the state, manufacturers, importers, retailers and customers. Because trade represents such an opportunity for the poor, low skilled people in Lusaka, any intervention to formalise or regulate it is contested and a highly charged issue (Hansen 2000). It is difficult for the government or others to regulate or change marketing practices. The contested issues of market trade in Lusaka and the dependency on the trade for the urban poor are reasons why the Zambian governments tries to curtail Chinese investments in the small-scale trade, and instead direct Chinese investments towards manufacturing and construction industries. However, the government has to mediate between political commitments to China's "free market" conditions, local traders who argue for stricter immigration regulations, and large parts of the population who benefits from the availability of cheap Chinese goods.

The market saturation is felt by every trader. When Mr Wu opened his first shop, selling clothes at Kamwala Market in 1997, it was easy for him to earn money. However, he has seen how the situation has changed, and he explained, "These days; no good, trade is very slow, business is down". The fall in profit is related to a decrease in demand for Chinese manufactured goods. When Chinese traders first opened shops at Kamwala Market, the demand for their cheap Chinese goods was huge. Today, this demand has been largely satisfied. Yet, Chinese traders continue to open more and more shops selling the same types of goods. This can be compared to the situation in Cape Verde, and Haugen and Carling (2005) write that newly opened Chinese shops, "which offer the same range of goods as the established ones, thus face the problem of a declining overall demand in addition to fierce competition from existing incumbents" (2005:655). They further explain that, "[t]he saturation of 'Chinese' market niches has been a common feature of Chinese migration to different parts of the world. [...] Saturation occurs when the number of suppliers in a given business at a given location grows out of proportion to the demand" (2005:643). By assisting relatives and friends in establishing businesses at Kamwala Market and selling similar types of goods, the Chinese traders fuel the saturation of the market. The pattern of copying established companies often creates rigid and isolated niches that are ill prepared for saturation. It is much harder for Chinese traders to start a profitable company in Kamwala Market today compared to ten years ago. Haugen and Carling write about the market saturation in Cape Verde that, "[l]atecomers must make a living from the sad remains of a once booming market, and try to recover the borrowed money and savings they have invested in their migration and their shops" (2005:660). As a result, many Chinese traders find

themselves in a vulnerable situation and lack financial resources for onward migration or for a return to China.

In a statistical survey of Chinese trade in Africa, McNamee (2012) found that Chinese traders in Africa face competition mainly from other Chinese. Other foreign traders also constitute significant competition, while only 2 % said that local traders were the main competitors to their business (McNamee 2012:28). Laribee (2008) argues that the Chinese small-scale traders compete in an individualistic scramble to gain competitive advantages over other Chinese shops. McNamee's (2012) research shows that even if there have been some drawbacks in trade and opportunities to earn money, working in Africa still makes economic sense for most Chinese traders. He estimates that the Chinese in Africa can earn three times as much as they would have done in the same job in China. Chinese traders have the advantage that they can import directly from factories and suppliers in China, where they often have established business networks already. These connections, and the fact that they are able to communicate effectively with Chinese suppliers, reduces the intermediate transaction costs. In comparison, Zambian traders have to buy from wholesalers in Zambia or other African countries or travel to China themselves, which make the goods more expensive.

There is a long history in Zambia of urban-rural exchange of industrial produced consumer goods and food produce. Hansen, for instance, writes that there were few shops in the 1990s selling ready-made clothing in Zambia's rural areas (Hansen 2000). Today, however, almost every small town has traders selling ready-made Chinese produced clothes and other goods. The availability of the cheap Chinese goods have made it easier for the rural poor to engage in urban-rural trade, and they supply rural areas with cheap consumer goods. Peasants sell the Chinese made merchandise from their homes in their home villages, to add to their income from cash cropping, or use it in exchange for labour in the fields, where seasonal workers are often paid in kind. Many Zambian food traders also exchange Chinese goods for agricultural produce with peasants in rural areas. A Zambian employee in a Chinese owned shop told me about some of their customers who are Zambian food traders that purchase cheap Chinese clothes in bulk to exchange for agricultural produce from villagers in rural areas. These traders often lie about the quality and prices of the goods when exchanging them with the villagers. They are therefore able to exchange the goods for larger amounts of agricultural produce, such as groundnuts, tomatoes, maize or beans. The traders then bring the agricultural produce back to Lusaka where they sell it at Soweto Market. The Zambian employee I spoke to estimated that the traders' profit would be three or four times as much as what they had exchanged the Chinese clothes for in the first place. In other words, the markets for cheap

Chinese goods are expanding. This type of trade and exchange are not new in Zambia, but what is new is the large import of Chinese merchandise, and that in specific areas, such as in the Northern Province of Zambia, they have begun ambulant markets trading in Chinese goods. These markets visit villages every two weeks or once a month, and consist of local petty traders who travel around to these markets, and villagers who display their goods which they have bought in the cities (Jan Ketil Simonsen, *personal communication*). Zambian traders in Kamwala Market have also begun travelling to such ambulant markets to sell their goods, which I will elaborate on later in the chapter.

Trading is an essential source of income for the urban poor in Lusaka, and the markets have been contested spaces for decades. The high rise in the number of local traders in markets and other public spaces in the 1990s and the entrance of a large number of Chinese traders since 2000s, has intensified the struggle. In an article from 2004 on the politics of vending space, Hansen and Vaa ask, “Who rules the streets?” One may ask the same question today. At the saturated Kamwala Market, the battle is going on between the street sellers, the small-scale traders, the property owners and the government regulating bodies, balancing between the interest of the urban poor and the external and domestic demand for a free market policy. The fierce competition influences traders in different ways, and thus the consequences of the saturated market are neither entirely positive nor negative. From a grounded perspective, by following concrete actors in the market, I will now describe some of the strategies the traders use to respond to increasing competition and market saturation.

Diversifying Business, Exploiting New Niches and Moving out of the Market

Traders respond to the growing competition at the market by diversifying the ways of doing business. For many traders, Zambian, Chinese and others, it has become too risky to rely on only one type of goods or to rely on only one way of selling. Many traders begin to sell a larger variety of goods, while others sell their goods from several outlets. Some Zambian traders are forced out of Kamwala Market and search for employment elsewhere. Others begin exploiting niches in which the Chinese traders are not strongly involved, and where the competition is lower, or they sell different qualities of goods in the same niches as the Chinese traders operate. This is also true for traders of other nationalities. An example is Lebanese traders who have begun selling groceries instead of shoes, because they could not manage to compete against the Chinese traders’ prices on shoes.

Both Zambian and Chinese traders have begun establishing shops in areas where they assume there is less competition than in Kamwala Market. Zambian traders also use friends and

relatives' shops as additional outlets for their own goods. Chinese shop owners with enough investment capital often start manufacturing, commercial farming or restaurants, either in addition to their shops at Kamwala Market or as a substitute for it. Some Zambian traders seek employment elsewhere to supplement their income without closing their shop(s) at the market. This means that they are still self-employed traders while engaging in paid work elsewhere. These traders are thus dependent on family members to look after the daily running of their shop(s). Others close their shops completely and search for paid employment outside the market.

Douglas and his family are an example of Zambian traders who change their range of products, and begin selling different qualities of goods compared to the Chinese traders. They rent a shop in one of the new Chinese owned shopping complexes. They have been trading in clothes at Kamwala Market for ten years and have in the last few years chosen to specialise in different classes of goods compared to the Chinese traders. Douglas's mother previously traded in cheaper clothes but deliberately changed to more expensive and better quality clothes to avoid the Chinese competition. They do lose some customers to the Chinese traders, but this is not a big problem, since they mainly cater for a different category of customers than the Chinese. Most of their customers were what Douglas called "fashion-minded women" from the middle class, who could afford to be more concerned with quality and style. Douglas's mother and aunt travel to China, South Africa and Thailand to purchase clothes. One of their strongholds and competitive edges are their clothes from Thailand, which they assured their customers were "better than any type of clothes made in China", playing on many customers' perceptions that all Chinese goods are poor quality. Douglas thought the competition from the Chinese traders at Kamwala Market was positive, and he explained that it "makes everyone strive to always offer better goods to better prices". Even if Douglas and his family targeted other customers compared to the Chinese traders, it was still a struggle to attract customers who were likely to buy from both groups of traders.

Another case is Shaun and his family who have expanded their range of goods to include all the different classes of quality. Shaun is a 26 year old Zambian man who works in his family's shop, which is a similar business to Douglas. In addition to selling 'better quality' goods, they also sell similar clothes of poorer quality. Shaun explained that they want to target several categories of customers simultaneously, as a strategy to sell more goods. If a customer wants to buy a black skirt, she can choose from two or three similar skirts of different quality and price. Shaun told me that this strategy worked well, because with different price ranges they could attract many different customers, with different purchasing powers.

Douglas and his family are also a case in point of exploiting new niches. As it became harder to trade in Kamwala, Douglas and his family found it difficult to trade only in clothes and during the period of the fieldwork, they began selling large floor tiles and electronic appliances, in addition to clothes. Douglas explained that the trade in tiles was a coincidence. His aunt found an internet store selling cheap floor tiles from China. She decided to purchase a small quantity of tiles to see if there was a market for them in Zambia. They ordered 100 boxes and had them shipped from China to Dar es Salaam where they have an agent, who loaded the boxes in a truck that transported the tiles to Lusaka. They used some of the tiles on the floor in their own shops, while they displayed the rest in a corner of one of their clothes shops, as well as in friends' shops. Their friends receive a small commission for the tiles they sell. After a couple of months, they had not sold many tiles, but still enough to make a small profit. Douglas also began importing electronic appliances, like computers, computer parts, hard discs, chargers, radios and so on. He travels to South Africa and Botswana to purchase the electronic appliances, and resells them through personal networks and from his friends' shops in Kamwala Market. As a consequence of diversifying their range of goods, Douglas and his family travel more and use new ways of trading, for example by ordering from the internet and by expanding the outlets of their goods by distributing them to the shops of relatives and friends for a commission.

Another trader who is also exploiting new niches as a response to the growing competition is Carol, who is a 43-year-old Zambian woman that has been trading in Kamwala Market for several years. As competition came to a head, she began struggling to earn enough from selling only clothes. She noticed that most Chinese traders at Kamwala Market did not sell jewellery and accessories and thought this was a good opportunity for a new type of merchandise to sell. For Carol, it turned out to be a success, and she has become well known for selling attractive jewellery and accessories, popular with wedding guests especially. Because they would not manage to compete against the Chinese traders' prices, both Douglas' family and Carol chose to expand their range of goods, including exploiting niches in which the Chinese traders did not operate. Other Zambian traders, who did not operate in the niches the Chinese operated in, also expanded their range of goods. This included the cheap, directly imported Chinese goods in an effort to sell them at a higher price. A good example of this is Mrs Mina.

Mrs Mina is a Zambian woman in her forties selling *salaula* shoes from a stand at Kamwala Market. She is an experienced trader and has sold *salaula* shoes for more than 20 years. The second hand shoes are imported from Europe and the USA by large companies in

Tanzania and sold to traders all over the region. Mrs Mina purchases the shoes in bulk from *salaula* wholesalers in the city centre of Lusaka. She then polishes and repairs the shoes before she sells them at the market. In the last few years, Mrs Mina has also expanded her business to include seasonal clothes. She sells winter jackets and hats during the cold season, baby clothes during the “season” when many women give birth and *chitenge* cloths at other periods. With the exception of the *chitenge*, she buys all of the clothes cheaply from Chinese owned shops in the market and displays them on the wall behind her stand. She explained that the customers will not know that the clothes are cheap Chinese ones, because she will display them nicely, and she can therefore sell them at a higher price. Mrs Mina responded to the Chinese competition by joining her competitors; and she said, while laughing, that “if you can't beat them, join them [the Chinese traders]!” She, as a Zambian trader, and in contrast to the Chinese traders, was in a better position to “hide” the quality and origin of the goods.

The Chinese traders also find it increasingly difficult to earn money at Kamwala Market today, and they too respond by diversifying their businesses. Mr Wu explained,

Here is a small market, if you don't try to do many things you might fail. But before it was different, less competition. Today people will try two or three things, to see what works. I started manufacturing because I realised trade is down this time, we need to try something new. Trading is slow because the supply has increased without the demand increasing.

In 2007, Mr Wu decided to open a small factory in Lusaka because he did not earn enough from his shops at Kamwala Market. He told me that he wanted to spread the risk of his investments. Despite Mr Wu’s success, many Chinese traders find it difficult to begin manufacturing in Zambia, and therefore choose to diversify into farming or the restaurant sector instead. It is also important to note that diversifying the range of goods, expanding the number of outlets and starting alternative businesses are not possible for all traders at Kamwala Market. It takes investment capital and resources to carry out such strategies. For many, the strategy to import new types of goods or to diversify their business has proved to be a costly affair and as a result, many lose their investments or even go bankrupt.

Zambian traders that find the competition too hard seek employment elsewhere to supplement their income. Nathaniel is one such trader. He is in his forties, with a large family to support. Together with his brother, he has been running a shoe shop at Kamwala Market for many years successfully. They rent a small shop from China Hainan Ltd. Nathaniel's father used

to be a trader at Kamwala Market, and Nathaniel and his brother began working with their father when they were young. After some years, the two brothers opened their own shop at the market. Nathaniel had planned to go to college, but as he said, “I couldn't afford college, so I thought, why don't I start doing business?” The two brothers rented a small shop, at a different location in the market to their father's, and began purchasing shoes from Lebanese wholesalers at Kamwala Market. However, the Lebanese traders were pushed out of the shoe trade by the arrival of Chinese traders. Nathaniel and his brother did not want to purchase shoes from the Chinese wholesalers at Kamwala, because of the poor quality of the shoes. By then, their business had grown and they could afford to travel to Dubai to purchase shoes. Nathaniel explained that they chose Dubai because the shoes there are of good quality, despite being cheap. They have been travelling to Dubai for many years. However, due to slow business at the current time, they had not visited Dubai for over a year, both because they cannot afford to travel and because they still have a lot of shoes left to sell.

Nathaniel once showed me his account books and pointed out how his income has decreased little by little the last few years, and, especially, in the last two months. He explained there are “ups and downs” in trade, but that this year had been worse than normal. The accounts from the day before showed that they had sold only two pairs of shoes, for the total price of ZMK 60,000 (\$ 11.5). After he had deducted the purchasing price for the shoes, rent, transport money, and lunch, there was hardly anything left to bring back to his household. Nathaniel was worried and sad about his inability to bring enough money and food home to his wife and children. He had discussed with his brother what they should do; if they should expand their range of qualities of goods, change niche, or quit trading altogether. Nathaniel said that whatever they decided to do, he hoped that he would one day be able to retire and buy his own farm outside of the city. He did not want to change his profession altogether; he liked working with his family because he could trust and rely on them. However, he did not see any opportunities in the market any more. A few weeks later, he began searching for jobs outside the market. His sister had begun helping out in the shop, and a friend helped Nathaniel to find a job in a hotel. Nathaniel missed being his own boss and running the shop, but said the benefit of his new job was that he now had a stable income to cover for household expenses and for the education of his children.

Another trader who has moved out of the market is Shaun, the Zambian man who worked in his family's shop that had diversified their business by selling different quality of goods. Shaun was looking for a new job because he wanted a career of his own, not just working for his mother. He told me he wanted to “grow up” and be responsible for his own income. But

to begin as a self-employed trader at Kamwala was not an option. His family is relatively wealthy, and he has a college degree in economics. Just before I left Zambia, a Chinese trading company had employed him as a market advisor in their headquarters in Lusaka. He is responsible for the arrival of containers of goods from China. Shaun told me that he likes the job and thinks it will provide him with invaluable job experience. His plan was to work for the company for a few years first, before setting up his own company, maybe importing goods to sell at Kamwala Market, like his mother.

The reasons behind Nathaniel and Shauns' decisions to leave their self-employed jobs at Kamwala Market are very different. Nathaniel saw his opportunities in the market dwindling as a result of the increased competition from cheap Chinese goods and the increase in the number of traders. To leave his business for alternative employment was the last solution to be able to support his family. For Shaun, the Chinese presence has created competition for his family's business, but it has also created opportunities for employment. Shaun saw the opportunity to work in a Chinese company as a springboard to his own future business career.

To change the ways of trading and sharing business costs are strategies used to manage in the increasing competitive market environment. The combination of dropping profit margins and congestion at the market, which has created a shortage of space for outlets, has raised the rent for business premises out of reach for many Zambian traders. As a response, many Zambian traders choose shared tenancy. An example is Carol, who after several years of working as a *salaula* seller and running a small clothes shop, managed to rent a larger shop in a shopping complex owned by a Lebanese wholesaler and property owner at Kamwala Market. However, she soon realised that she could not manage the rent on her own, and sublet half of the room to another trader. Carol sells women's dresses, blouses and accessories, whereas the other trader sells men's jeans and shirts.

Up to four Zambian traders share the larger shops at Kamwala Market, displaying their goods in separate areas of the shop. Many of these traders sell similar goods and the only way to notice that it is a shared shop is by the presence of multiple cash registers. Some shops are furnished with a long counter, which stretches across the entire room and is divided into sections for the different traders. In one shop, one trader sold mobile phones on one side of the room, another sold underwear and pyjamas on the other side, and a third trader sold CD's at the entrance. Some of the shared shops, consisting of only one room, are quite small and are overflowing with goods. Many traders who shared tenancy also cooperated in other different ways, such as importing goods and serving each other's customers. They would promote, for example, their colleagues' goods in addition to their own. This also makes it difficult to

recognise that that a shop is shared by independent traders as they all cooperate in serving the customers.

As a response to market saturation and the flooding of cheap Chinese goods at the market, many traders begin to sell a variety of goods or different goods altogether, while others sell their goods from several different outlets. Others again, are forced out of Kamwala Market to seek paid employment outside of the market. Some traders change their ways of trading and cooperate to share costs of renting and importing goods. I will now turn to the ways in which the traders expand the geographical area of their operations.

Geographical Expansion: Increased Mobility of People and Goods

A common solution to market saturation is geographical expansion. Spatial diffusion at different geographical scales has been a recurrent element in the recent history of Chinese entrepreneurial migration to Europe (Haugen and Carling 2005:644).

My argument is that the same is now happening in Africa, where Chinese traders expand their businesses to larger geographical areas in response to market saturation. This is also true for Zambian traders. The geographical expansion of their operations involves increased mobility of people and goods in already established trade routes and chains of distribution. Some traders expand their outlets into larger geographical areas, whereas others expand their networks and areas of travel to purchase more competitive goods to sell in Kamwala Market.

To find new customers, consumers and markets, both Zambian and Chinese traders have begun operating in other markets in Lusaka or in markets in other Zambian cities. Some Zambian traders have also begun operating from markets in settlements just outside of Lusaka or at ambulant markets in rural areas outside the city. Many Chinese traders increasingly consider onward migration, to establish themselves in markets in other African countries where there are less Chinese actors, and which are not flooded with cheap Chinese goods to the same extent as Zambia.

A trader who has responded to the falling profits in Kamwala Market by expanding the geographical area she sells her goods is Mrs Mina. She sells *salaula* shoes and cheap Chinese clothes in Kamwala Market, but she has also begun selling goods in ambulant rural markets outside Lusaka once or twice a month, to add to her decreasing profits in Kamwala. She complained about the current competition, and asked rhetorically, while spreading her hands in a gesture of resignation, “If everybody is selling, who is going to buy?” By selling her goods in

various rural markets, she reaches larger groups of customers. She often brings additional goods to these markets, which she does not usually sell at Kamwala Market, such as plastic plates, cups and basins, clothes, strings, and kitchenware. She purchases these goods from both friends and Chinese owned shops in Kamwala Market. Because of the availability of cheap Chinese goods, she can afford to purchase larger quantities of goods to resell in these other markets. She has learnt to “follow the money”, as she put it. Using metaphors for hunting, she said that finding new customers for her goods was like “chasing the money wherever it goes; it’s like following a prey”. To travel to markets outside of Lusaka is a way to do exactly that; finding new “hunting grounds” for her business with less competition from Chinese traders and goods.

Her case speaks about the complexity of the relations between the Zambian and Chinese traders. In one respect, the increased competition from Chinese traders makes it harder for Mrs Mina to make a profit, which forces her out of Kamwala Market, while at the same time the availability of cheap Chinese goods provides her with opportunities to make a profit at other markets.



Traders from Kamwala Market selling their goods in a monthly rural market near Chikankata, south of Lusaka.

Many Chinese traders also respond to the decreasing profits at Kamwala by opening outlets outside of Lusaka, and thus expand their sales to larger geographical areas. The Chinese traders I spoke to at the market had opened or planned to open additional shops in other cities in Zambia, or in other African countries. Some had also opened similar shops in different areas of Lusaka in order to reach more customers. Because the Chinese traders view themselves as being only temporarily moored in Zambia, they are more likely to change the location of their trade than to change business. Often, the Chinese traders asked me if I knew which African

countries had few Chinese traders, as they wished to open shops in “new and untouched” markets.

As a response to market saturation, many Zambian traders expand their networks and areas of travel to purchase more competitive goods to sell in Kamwala Market. To enable this they need to find new suppliers in the region and beyond. Many Zambian traders travel farther and more frequently to purchase the latest fashion to keep a competitive edge to their business. A Zambian trader told me that “we have to go for new supplies often, because the customers always want something new”. Zambian traders search new suppliers of goods to be able to exploit less competitive niches, or to import better quality goods than what the Chinese traders import directly to Zambia, according to the local classification of qualities of goods. Most of these traders travel several times a month, most often to neighbouring countries, in particular to Dar es Salam and Durban, which are the two main ports of entry for Eastern and Southern Africa. Some traders travel to China to purchase goods directly from factories or wholesalers there, in an attempt to purchase goods at more competitive prices. Other Zambian traders have begun travelling to DR Congo and Botswana to purchase ‘better quality’ goods, as an alternative to Chinese-made goods. Others again, travel to Thailand and the Middle East to find alternative goods to compete with the Chinese goods. Cases in point are Carol and Douglas, from the cases described earlier, who have become more geographical mobile, because they travel farther and more frequently to purchase goods. Carol travels to China, Thailand and South Africa while Douglas has begun travelling to South Africa and Botswana. Another trader who responds by being more mobile in order to diversify her goods is Anne.

Anne and her two colleagues run a small tailor shop in Luburma Market, tailoring school uniforms and other clothes. Anne explained how she used to earn enough money by tailoring school uniforms, but “nowadays a lot of people buy cheap school uniforms from the Chinese traders”. As a response, Anne is increasingly travelling to other countries to purchase a wider variety of goods. To add to her income from tailoring Anne now sells shoes, *chitenge* cloths and baby clothes, which she has imported from other countries in the region. Additionally, she purchases school uniform jerseys from a Zambian factory outside Lusaka. A friend, in the shop next door, imports shoes from Tanzania for her. She travels up to several times a month to the Congolese border to purchase the *chitenge* cloths, and to Tanzania to purchase baby clothes. Despite it being a small shop, it consists of both a workshop and a retail store selling the goods from different countries. Anne changes her goods according to the seasons, selling school uniforms at the beginning of each school term, warmer jerseys in the cold, dry season and baby clothes in the “season” when many babies are born. She sells *chitenge* and shoes all year around.

When Anne travels to purchase goods, her colleagues look after the shop. This case shows Anne's strength and entrepreneurial qualities; she looks after five children, supports their education, and simultaneously runs a shop and workshop at Kamwala Market and travels to different countries to purchase goods. She finds it difficult and tiresome to travel and she wishes she did not have to do it. But to be able to remain in business and to care for her family, she needs to keep travelling. However, she plans to stop travelling to DR Congo, as the *chitenge* did not sell as well as she had hoped for and because she dislikes the conditions at the Congolese markets.

In addition to the increased regional flow and mobility of goods and people, Zambian traders have increasingly begun to travel to China themselves. However, many Zambian traders prefer to buy their goods from Chinese wholesalers in Zambia, Tanzania and South Africa, to save on the cost of travelling and transport compared to travelling to China, and because of the difficulties they face in China. Carol, a Zambian trader, explained that she had travelled to China and Hong Kong a few times, but she had difficulty finding her way around, had problems with communicating with Chinese wholesalers, and experienced racism and negative attitudes towards her. She talked about several incidents where Chinese people had held their noses and spat in front of her, saying she should go back to Africa. After these experiences, she travels to South Africa instead to purchase similar goods from Chinese wholesale traders there, albeit at a higher price.

Small-scale traders from neighbouring countries travel long distances as they purchase cheap Chinese goods at Kamwala Market to resell in their local shops and stalls. For example, many traders come from DR Congo to purchase goods from the Chinese owned shops at Kamwala Market. There are Chinese owned shops also in DR Congo, but these are centred around the capital, Kinshasa, making Lusaka closer and more convenient for traders from the south of DR Congo. A multitude of different trade networks link at Kamwala Market. Chinese trade networks end, while Zambian, Congolese and Zimbabwean trade networks begin. An example is how Chinese trade networks link up to South African networks in South Africa, which are then linked to Zambian networks that are connected to Botswana networks at Kamwala Market. The import and export of goods in these large networks create innumerable jobs for people in the transportation business. Buses leave every hour from the intercity bus station next to Kamwala Market, packed with goods purchased from the market abound for neighbouring countries and other areas of Zambia.

Concluding Remarks

A consequence of the responses to the saturated market is that Zambian traders increasingly move on a local, national, regional and global scale. Locally, traders open new shops and move between several outlets, as well as altering between different types and qualities of goods. On a national scale, many traders move to other areas of Zambia to try their luck in less competitive markets or open additional shops in other regions of the country. Some traders have also begun exchanging Chinese goods with agricultural produce. Regionally, many traders travel to other countries in Southern Africa to purchase goods, often different types and qualities than what the Chinese traders sell. On a global scale, some traders travel to China, Thailand and the Middle East to buy goods directly from factories or local wholesalers to get prices that are more competitive. This increased travelling, both to purchase goods and to sell goods in other areas, means that the geographical area of operation for Zambian traders is expanding. Additionally, Chinese traders are also increasingly mobile, as they expand their business to other areas of Zambia as well as to other African countries.

The point of departure is Lusaka and the saturation of the market. The geographical expansion of traders' operations takes place through existing trade routes, chains of supply, and established forms of barter trade. It is an exploitation of established trade routes and trade links, rather than the establishment of new trade routes and networks. However, some new trade routes have recently been established, such as the traders travelling to Thailand.

With the developments within the transportation sector, one can also argue that the amount of goods and number of traders transported along these trade routes are higher than ever before, and move at a higher speed and frequency. The increase in the volume of goods and actors in the established trade routes further increases the competition in national and regional markets. It is worthwhile noting that this study does not show if the markets that sell Chinese goods in other cities and rural areas of Zambia are also being saturated. Much literature about the transnational commodity trade has been focused on trade from the old colonial centres. However, today, the variety of goods Zambians can buy in the local shops and the prices they have to pay are no longer decided by the old colonial powers, rather these choices and prices are influenced by global trade networks that often bypass the old colonial powers (Dobler 2008). The current trade networks can be described as south-south, and are part of the south-south globalisation, which differs with the colonial patterns of trade where trade was dominated by goods produced and imported from the European colonial powers. The current trade also differs from the nationalisation of Zambia's economy in the 1960s and 70s when consumer goods were to be produced within the country.

Engaging in geographical expansion of their trade is a survival strategy that can lead to success or failure for the traders. Different types of mobilities are interrelated, and “physical movement pertains to upwards and downwards social mobility” (Gough 2008:244). Furthermore, to move between places physically as well as virtually can be a source of social mobility, in that people gain status and power (Gough 2008). Traders who travelled abroad to purchase goods were seen as resourceful and successful traders. Some traders cannot afford to travel or expand their range of goods, and downwards social and economic mobility is also reflected in people’s limited geographical mobility (Gough 2008).

Chapter 5 has shown that the Chinese and Zambian traders occupy the same niche in the market, namely the import and sale of Chinese consumer goods. In such a situation, one would expect competition to lead to the expulsion from the niche of one or the other group (Barth 1956). However, the Zambian traders manage to utilise different or marginal areas in the same niche as the Chinese, in that they begin trading in ‘better quality’ Chinese goods, as well as operating in different niches, such as similar consumer goods from other countries, different types of goods altogether, as well as trading in other markets.

In cultural ecology, a niche concept is used to describe the utilising of various natural resources, and these insights can be transported to economic niches in trade. Barth defines a niche as “the place of a group in the total environment, its relations to resources and competitors” (1956:1079). The ‘environment’ of groups is defined by the presence and activities of other groups on which they depend. Two different groups that exploit the same niche will form competitive relationships with one another, where the most powerful will most likely win. Barth argue that “[e]ach group exploits only a section of the total environment, and leaves large parts of it open for other groups to exploit” (Barth 1956:1079). The Chinese traders have an advantage in purchasing goods within the niche of cheap Chinese consumer goods that flood the market. However, Chapter 5 showed the complexity of niche specialisation, where the Zambian traders exploit marginal areas in this trade, as for example specialising in a higher quality. It is an adaptation to the market situation, which enables the two groups to co-exist. A power struggle and political tension lies in the fact that Chinese investments have a high position in the economic development of Zambia and that the relatively weak Zambian state is unable to regulate markets in a way that benefits the large number of urban poor in Lusaka.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The object of this thesis has been to examine the concrete relations between specific *Zambian* and Chinese actors on the ground; on the streets of Kamwala Market. Media coverage of Chinese interests in Africa have had a tendency to adopt an anti-Chinese discourse, as well as to see China and Africa as generalised and homogeneous categories, and therefore they fail to reveal the complexities and variations underlying these relations. My research among the *Zambian* and Chinese small-scale traders at Kamwala Market paints a more nuanced and complicated picture, showing the dynamics of the two-way process of engagement between the traders. Additionally, this study shows that the relations and developments are context specific. The context of Kamwala Market, with its history, social composition, location and importance for regional and global trade networks, as well as the high level of competition, influence the different actors preferred forms of engagement. I have argued that Kamwala Market can be described as a global shopping world, where global migratory movements, production chains and trade networks meet, and influence, as well as are altered, by the traders in the market.

From recent perspectives in anthropology on mobility and mobilities, and using in particular the concepts of ‘mobile livelihoods’, ‘multi-placement’, ‘translocality’ and ‘imagined mobility’, this thesis has argued that the Chinese traders live mobile lives, where they maintain a strong presence in more than one locality. In a sedentary logic, to migrate is seen as being pulled up by the roots and then planted somewhere else. But the Chinese traders in Lusaka do not think of themselves like this. For them, Zambia is a place to moor temporarily to work towards their ambitions of upward social mobility for themselves and their family. They travel to different places where they see opportunities to do business, as a strategy to obtain upward social and economic mobility in China or elsewhere. The Chinese migrants feel strongly connected to their families and work to support family members’ livelihoods. However, their families are scattered, with some permanently living in China and some temporarily moored in other countries. The Chinese migrants’ trade in Zambia forms part of the livelihoods of their family members in different places. Migrants are of course only in one place at a time, but they think and operate in multiple locations simultaneously, they have other locations in mind.

The thesis has elaborated on the relations between the traders. The relations between *Zambians* and Chinese at Kamwala Market are ambivalent and in many ways contradictory. They both compete and cooperate, they are interdependent but at the same time, the relations are characterised by conflicts and miscommunication. It is argued that the relations are contradictory because the *Zambians* and Chinese are simultaneously socially distant and

physically proximate (cf. Horgan 2012). I have approached the relations between Zambian and Chinese in a holistic manner, exploring how the interactions and relations unfold in practice on a daily basis in the market. The aim has been to grasp the relations within defined African locales, engaging the Chinese presence in a grounded context.

Despite daily interaction and complementarity between Chinese traders as employers and Zambian employees, the level of cross-cultural communication between them is inadequate today to successfully mediate mutual expectations and address conflicting issues. Giese and Thiel writes that, “only when effective cross-cultural communication is facilitated – through sufficient language skills, mutual respect, and openness to cultural learning – can foreignness be successfully mediated” (Giese and Thiel 2012:27). A question for further studies is whether such cross-cultural communication will take place and therefore diminish the social, cultural and interactional distances between the traders, or if the lack of it will create intensified tension and conflicts in the market.

The study has found that there is a process of market saturation at Kamwala, and that some traders are provided with opportunities to earn a living and potential for upwards social mobility, while others face falling profits and economic problems, and potential downwards social mobility. The traders respond to the competition by using mobile strategies such as diversifying business and expanding their trade to larger geographical areas. Furthermore, we have seen that geographical mobility relates to social mobility, and that mobility can be used in relation to movement in society, such as economic and social mobility. To move between places physically as well as virtually can be a source of social mobility. The Chinese traders imagine mobile futures, and both actual and potential movements organise and structure the Chinese migrants’ social lives. Social mobility is a cultural imagination for future developments. Mobilities are key for understanding the processes currently taking place at Kamwala Market. It is necessary to highlight that mobility is not a simple matter and it is not undertaken only by a few, rather it is present everywhere and may be experienced in many different ways. All forms and types of mobility and their imaginaries are deeply embedded in socioeconomic structures and, therefore, need to be analysed and understood in the specific context in which they occur (Salazar 2011). As Salazar argues, “[e]thnographic studies of human (im)mobilities provide an innovative means to grasp the complexity of the global circulation of people and the world-making images and ideas surrounding these movements” (2011:576).

In public debates, as well as in popular conversations about Chinese engagements in Zambia, many Zambians call for stricter government regulations. Rachael Akidi, BBC Africa Debate's senior producer, asked rhetorically, “China has a well-designed strategy for dealing

with African countries, and is clear and open about its objectives in the continent. But what about African countries, what is their agenda in embracing China?” (BBC Media Centre 2012). Mr Dodia asked, “What kind of China does Africa need? What does Africa want from China?” (BBC Africa Debate 2012⁴). If the calls for stricter regulations and policies are answered, there are several questions that are worth considering, such as will tighter regulatory frameworks make Zambia a less attractive place for Chinese traders to do business? What consequences will the retrenchments of Chinese traders and the demise of Chinese owned shops have for Zambian traders and customers? Moreover, what will the longer term implications of Chinese involvements in Zambia be? Will Chinese involvements enhance development prospects and political accountability in Zambia, or undermine them? These are interesting and important questions for further work. Whatever the outcome, it is important to monitor the concrete relations between Chinese and Zambian actors on the ground and at different levels in the future.

⁴ Mr Dodia was a participant in the debate organised by BBC on the topic of China in Africa, held in Lusaka 25.05.12

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