CHAPTER 3

Methodological and Theoretical Considerations

1 Approaching the Archive

The first archival research brought me to the Africa Museum in Tervuren, Belgium, in particular the Archive of Colonial History, the Archive of Decolonisation and Independent Congo, and the Library of Contemporary History. The Archive of Colonial History holds a wide collection of writing on the (Belgian) Congo's history, covering different periods, from Leopold II's colonial expansion policy to the formation of the Congo Free State in 1885, to the Congo under Belgian colonial rule from 1908, to the Congo after independence in 1960. The collection was therefore the right place to read colonial publications and approach colonial policies.

The Archive of Decolonisation and Independent Congo is vast, with valuable accounts from private individuals who lived or worked in the Congo or who carried out research there. It is a veritable goldmine of information, but one in which I felt lost. However, in the Library of Contemporary History in Tervuren, I came across issues of the workers' magazine, *Mwana Shaba*, published by the Union Minière du Haut-Katanga. It immediately captured my attention because the articles in it implicitly disclosed the company's different strategies to shape its workforce, and sometimes even – though through the words of the editors – the voices of workers in the letters to the editors. *Mwana Shaba* thus became an important element of my corpus.

Mwana Shaba was not a unique publication of that mining company or in the Congo. Workers' magazines were commonly produced by bigger employers, by public and private firms alike. Callaci, for instance, discusses publications in Tanzania in the 1960s:

> Nurses, teachers, postal workers, doctors, police officers, diamond mine employees, electrical workers, and engineers all had their own magazines produced by and for employees. These publications contained discussions about the profession as well as portrayals of the social lives of the workers and their families. Some magazines also gave tips on urban life, instructing their readers on how to open a bank account and how to plan healthy, nutritional meals after work in the evenings.[1]

1 Emily Callaci, *Street Archives and City Life*: *Popular Intellectuals in Postcolonial Tanzania,* Radical Perspectives (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017), 35.

Whereas in Tanzania these publications envisioned "an urban middle-class readership that would invest in the future of the modern city of Dar es Salaam", *Mwana Shaba*'s readership was the blue-collar worker and senior staff member, including his family members, and especially his wife.

The company archives of the UMHK/Gécamines/Umicore are located in the Joseph Cuvelier repository of the State Archives of Belgium, in Brussels. I spent several weeks there, browsing through minutes and annual reports. These documents proved to be another goldmine. All the topics about what were then called the "*main d'œuvre* ~~indigène~~" (MOI, meaning ~~native~~ workforce) (my deletions),[2] referring to Congolese and immigrant workers, were noted in detail: statistics on the demographic structure, school matters, the curriculum, housing, evening courses for the workers, organisation of leisure activities, health care, social problems in the settlement of the workers, demands by workers, and so on.

In my first readings of these annual reports, I was surprised that there was more material on social services (such as education, from kindergarten to evening courses for adults) than, for instance, statistics on workers employed in different kinds of services. Only after having engaged with my research topic for some months, and after the first stay in Lubumbashi, did it suddenly make sense to me that the UMHK was organising not only work-related matters but also the social life of the workers. Naturally, concerns for children and women found their way into the annual report of the Services d'Afrique, Département MOI, a company department principally intended to deal with matters related to work.

Thus, documents like these gave me an insight into the problems and perceptions of the company related to work, often in a context I initially would not have searched in for this specific kind of information. For instance, in the annual report of 1951, after a statistical overview of the number of children then enrolled in schools, numbers of African and European staff members, and so on, the report assesses the UMHK's general guidelines. The first point refers to the company's aim for education within the UMHK, which is followed by a detailed description of course content for all levels of education, from primary school to professional courses, language education and courses for adult women. The general guidelines are well hidden between statistical charts and curricula, but they offer an important view of UMHK's perception of male and female roles, which I had not expected to find there. Regarding men, the annual report said its aims were:

2 MOI = *main d'oeuvre indigène* (native workforce). I have struck out quoted words from which I dissociate myself, and indicate this with the insertion [DW] The term "indigène" often appears as part of names or in quotations. For the benefit of readability, it is later no longer struck out, even though I dissociate myself from its use.

[T]enter de faire progresser l'ensemble vers la civilisation par la diffusion des principes chrétiens, et des notions de sociologie occidentale (famille, cité, travail, etc.)[3]	To try to advance everything towards civilisation by the diffusion of Christian principles and notions of Western sociology (family, city, work, etc.)

The UMHKS plan for the female population was presented as follows:

1. Agir sur la majorité sinon sur la totalité des femmes adultes pour en faire de meilleures femmes de ménage. 2. Doter tous [sic] nos filles des connaissances, des habitudes, et de la volonté nécessaire pour devenir épouses et mères chrétiennes ; faire des meilleurs des exemples et des auxiliaires.[4]	1. To make sure that the majority, if not all, of adult women become better housekeepers. 2. Give all our daughters the knowledge, the habit and the will to become Christian wives and mothers; make them the best role models and auxiliaries.

These extracts show that even in an annual report the text that accompanied the lists indicated the UMHK's efforts to shape their workers' lives, down to the roles that men and women were expected to fulfil. A list showing the legally determined holidays of workers was presented as follows:

Nombre de travailleurs ayant bénéficié du congé.[5]	Number of workers who benefited from the leave.

The choice of wording, even for a statistical overview, tells us more than the numerical data does. In this example, the verb "to benefit" clearly presents the workers as beneficiaries of the company's generosity, granting them what was legally entitled to them anyway. Seventy-three pages later in the same annual report, another statistic on the "elements of the human coefficient per camp" again presents the company's perception of the workers:

3 AGR 2 – n°655–03047, Rapport Annuel 1951, 28.
4 AGR 2 – n°655–03047, Rapport Annuel 1951, 28.
5 AGR 2 – n°655–03047, Rapport Annuel 1951, 20.

Il est normal qu'un homme qui travaille régulièrement demande parfois un congé, qu'il soit parfois malade. Il est normal aussi que, malgré les congés et les repos qu'on lui accorde, il s'absente parfois. Enfin, pour faire régner la discipline, il est parfois nécessaire de recourir aux sanctions pénales.[6]

It is normal that a man who works regularly sometimes asks for leave or is sometimes ill. It is also normal that, in spite of the holidays and the rest granted to him, he is sometimes absent. After all, to make the discipline prevail, it is sometimes necessary to resort to penal sanctions.

In seemingly benevolent wording, the company comments on reasons workers do not report to work, with the added rationale that sometimes sanctions would be needed to ensure discipline. The chart that follows this statement is a numbered list of the reasons for absence from work. The sanctions, which become clear only when reading the chart itself, refer to prison, as used in the extract above. The indication that this punishment would be applied in extenuating circumstances reveals that the company must have been sensitive to "prison" at that time.

I read the annual reports of the UMHK with the following questions in mind: What was being said? Whose voice was it? Which topics were being discussed? And which discursive entanglements to other topics could be elicited?

It was clear that workers' voices were muted in the UMHK documents. Therefore, talking to workers who had actually experienced life in the company would be of utmost necessity, especially regarding those topics that seemed important to me during my archival research and which were later brought up by the ODVs during the interviews and group discussions. Speaking with the workers directly was doubly important because the archival material mainly covers the period of the 1940s and 1950s, rather than the 1960s to the 1980s when which most ODV members had worked for UMHK/Gécamines. Documents for the latter period are much more difficult to access, not having been systematically archived after the end of colonial rule.

The invisibility of workers' voices in the archival material does not mean that the voices did not exist. Harris discusses these ghosted voices and suggests that by reading sources in the archive in a spectral way these voices become visible. "[T]he work of archive is fundamentally spectral", he argues.[7]

Notwithstanding the fantasy of a comprehensive, complete archive, an archive is always an assemblage of fragments. In structuring an archive, no

6 AGR 2 – n°655–03047, Rapport Annuel 1951, 93.

7 Verne Harris, "Hauntology, Archivy and Banditry: An Engagement with Derrida and Zapiro", *Critical Arts* 29, sup1 (2015), 13.

matter how thorough the process might be, no matter how great the commitment to completeness, there are dynamics of inclusion and exclusion, and what has been excluded will whisper around the fragments. Ghostly voices.[8]

Harris's understanding of the term "archive" is insightful. He argues that the archive operates on three levels. First, there is a recording of a trace on or within a surface, the substrate.

> [Second,] the substrate has the quality of exteriority; it is external to the psychic apparatus of an individual. In this understanding, traces located only within the latter are the traces of memory rather than of archive. So that traces of memory shared with others, in for instance "collective memory" or "public discourse", because they have the quality of exteriority, can become archive.[9]

Third, such external traces must be considered worthy of protection, preservation and classification.

Harris argues that both the archive and the memory are best understood as belonging to the genre of traces. Neither should be anchored to notions of stability, durability and reliability because both are always already in the process of formation and both emerge out of the future.[10] Harris's thoughts encouraged me to think of the voices of the workers as a part of the archive and/or as an alternative archive. The archive's content does not sit only in buildings fronted by information boards that announce opening hours and access rules. The archive is open and an assemblage of fragments, including (and of course excluding) silenced voices that can be awakened through interviews and the *baraza*.[11]

2 Interviews

During my first two research stays, I conducted 63 qualitative interviews with members of the Collectif. They were born between 1930 and the 1960s, in most cases as children to workers at the UMHK, and thus grew up in the company's housing compounds. Approximately three-quarters of my interviewees, who

8 Verne Harris, *Ghosts of Archive* (Abingdon, NY: Routledge, 2020), 60.
9 Harris, "Hauntology", 15.
10 Harris, *Ghosts*, 10.
11 *Baraza* is a singular and plural noun.

were blue-collar workers or wives of workers, lived in Cité Gécamines; the rest were senior staff members who lived in the neighbourhood of Makomeno.[12]

The interviewees shared an immense amount of information, from childhood memories to their work life and all domains related to it through to their current situation. The members expressed great interest in participating. Towards the end of each stay in Lubumbashi, some addressed me and asked why I had not yet talked with them. In fact, the opportunity to conduct more interviews was limited by my time for these research visits. Furthermore, additional qualitative interviews would not have enhanced my insight. As Lepore states: "[H]owever singular a person's life may be, the value of examining it lies not in its uniqueness, but in its exemplariness, in how that individual's life serves as an allegory for broader issues affecting the culture as a whole".[13]

Some ODVs had been participating in a research project called *Ukumbusho* (memory), grounded in oral history practices.[14] This was the first iteration in 2000 of the oral history project "Mémoires de Lubumbashi". The aim was to present at the Museum of Lubumbashi the research conducted by Lubumbashi University (UNILU) on memories of recent history and daily urban life in the mining city of Lubumbashi. The exhibition displayed objects that the participants of the *Ukumbusho* project had brought into the museum with their testimony.[15]

I was lucky to make contact with UNILU early on, but also with people from the Waza Arts Centre who were involved in the *Ukumbusho* project as curators. They put me in touch with Marc,[16] who grew up in Cité Gécamines as a child of a blue-collar worker. He represents the new generation that is trying to overcome the situation of their parents, who he described as paralysed.[17] He was a useful observer of ODVs, on the one hand having a critical distance from them because of the generation gap, while on the other hand supporting the group through his close-knit network (of trade unions and NGOs).

Marc became my most important research partner and key reference person – and teacher in many ways. Right at the beginning of my first stay in

12 The segregation of the city is discussed in chapter 4 under the subheading *Space*.

13 Jill Lepore, "Historians Who Love Too Much: Reflections on Microhistory and Biography", *The Journal of American History* 88, no. 1 (2001): 133.

14 Sari Middernacht, "From Collective Curating to Sharing Curatorial Authority: Collaborative Practices as Strategies of Democratisation in Exhibition Making in Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of Congo", (Unpublished MA thesis: University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 2018).

15 Middernacht, "Collective Curating".

16 For reasons of security, I have changed his name.

17 The experiences of the ODVs' children were not the focus of this research.

Lubumbashi, he put me in contact with the president of the ODV branch in Lubumbashi.

The procedure of our meetings after the ODV weekly gatherings, to which I was then invited, was usually very formal, with the secretary taking notes on everything. I soon realised that I would not be able to operate in Cité Gécamines without this group. And at each of the many meetings I attended during the three stays in Lubumbashi, I had to explain what I intended to do. But at the same time, every member was extremely helpful and became interested in my research. They supported me in organising interviews, even putting interview lists together, and arranged for someone among them to accompany me every time I travelled to an interview.

They insisted on that point for my security. They explained that I would not be safe enough on my own, but if a member of the ODV accompanied me, I would be fine. Let me return to the hostility I faced on my first visit. The president explained to me that the people of the ODV were fighting for compensation, that they had been doing so for a long time, and that a representative of the World Bank was desperately expected. Even though most of them were aware that this representative would not come without advance notice, the long fight had exasperated some members, who had developed tunnel vision – the result being that any European showing up in the context of this meeting was likely to get into trouble. Rumours about the presence of the World Bank representative spread quickly, repeatedly, every time I was in Lubumbashi. It was thanks to the board members of the ODV that I was made aware of this and they put me under special surveillance now and then.

Shortly after my first meeting with the ODVs, I realised that an exclusive interest in the houses and the housing of workers would not make sense without taking into consideration the ODVs and their situation today. Being interested in a group that has a political agenda has its own challenges. The board members and I had several discussions on that point. I took time on several occasions to explain that, as a researcher, I would not be able to organise the money they were fighting for, nor would I personally interfere with the World Bank. However, it became important to me to make their voices heard. It was during the third stay in Lubumbashi, in July 2019, during the group discussions, that this effort was probably most apparent.

3 Shared Authority/*barazaweb*

I wondered how I could get closer to what is rightfully expected from any research based on qualitative methods, namely that "[t]he result of all of this

reflexivity is to produce research that questions its own interpretations and is reflexive about its own knowledge production towards the goal of producing better, less distorted research accounts",[18] without running the risk of spending "too much time wading in the morass of our own positionings".[19]

My desire to talk about my understanding of the topics discussed during the interviews with my research partners became a must. It was *their* voices that were important to contextualise and recalibrate my initial findings. It is important to acknowledge that producing "better, less distorted research accounts" was (and still is) my ideal, but that there was a barrier, which had to be recognised – namely, the unequal power relations between the ODVs and me, whether I liked it or not. Therefore, it was essential to think about the recognition of the "other", and, as a consequence, it was indispensable to think about how to draw close(r) to my ideal of a more inclusive research approach, which included sharing authority(ies) over knowledge production.

Pillow points to the imbalance of power between the subject/author/academic and the communities of research. She reminds us that there is quite a lot of research methodology for sharing power between research partners: "This may include discussions of co-development of the research focus and analysis, use of extensive member checks, 'sharing the data' with the subjects, and co-writing".[20] But she rightly argues that "[A]s Trinh points out, this share of power is 'given' to the research subject, 'not taken'".[21] Thus, in our research we continually have to question the capacity of the subject to define themselves or even their desire to do so. Reflexivity, then, always occurs out of an unequal power relationship and, in fact, the act of reflexivity may perpetuate a colonial relationship while at the same time attempting to mask this power over the subject.[22]

My way out of this dilemma was to understand the ODVs' own interest in me as a mediator for passing on the master narrative I described earlier. It was a relief to know that they too had their own agenda. However, I was aware that they could be pinning some of their hopes on me only because I was initiating the research. As Pillow and Trinh asserted, I was still the one "giving" them this opportunity or, to put it differently, I was the one actively claiming their (re) actions.[23] Understanding our exchanges and negotiations as partners using

18 Hertz, "Reflexivity", cit. in Pillow, "Confession", 178.
19 Patai, "(Response)", cit. in Pillow, "Confession", 177.
20 Pillow, "Confession", 185.
21 Pillow, "Confession", 67.
22 Pillow, "Confession", 185; Minh-Ha Trinh, *When the Moon Waxes Red: Representation, Gender and Cultural Politics* (New York: Routledge, 1991).
23 Pillow, "Confession"; Trinh, *Moon.*

the imagery of a spider's web, where prey and predator constantly change roles, seemed a valid approach to me. I discuss this conceptualisation in more detail further on.

To recognise the "other" and thus consider the ODVs as equal partners, was important. I wanted to avoid being seen as "generous", one of the dangers that Pillow alerts us to: "This characterization of the research relationship maintains a colonial relationship of one person with power, the researcher, who will then demonstrate humility and generosity toward the research subject".[24]

The start would be, I assessed, to share my material with those who were the focus of the research, to – at least partially – offer them access to material they otherwise could not access. I tried to be transparent about how and where I got my information, and what kind of archival material I had collected so far, which served as my basis for the questions. Ideally, I hoped, the research partners would get an insight into how I gained the information that triggered the questions that guided the interviews.

A more inclusive research approach is sensitive to the questions of authority over knowledge production that challenge the generally accepted habitus in academia. The norm is to recognise the achievements of other academics by citing them, but we often ignore others who are equally important in the production of knowledge. They share their knowledge, their views, their perceptions, and we, as academics, evaluate them and sometimes cite them in excerpts when their statements help to underline our arguments. I am no exception. It is necessary to think about possibilities to "deconstruct the author's authority in the research and/or writing process".[25] I am aware that I am writing this monograph, I am the author, trapped in the constraints of our professional habitus. Thus, I am far from deconstructing my authority in the writing process. However, what I aimed for was to broaden the understanding of authority, at least during the research process, by asking my research partners to evaluate my reading of our interviews and discussions and to discuss their and my perceptions of the issues at hand.

Sharing authority has gained interest especially among scholars in museology working with artefacts in museums, and in literary studies. The debates in the latter discuss ideas of collective creation and the possibility of a plurality of authors. In literary studies and literary production, as Meizoz points out, author, publisher, printer-typographer, various institutions (patronage, scholarships), literary agents, critics and other agents are involved in the process

24 Pillow, "Confession", 185.
25 Pillow, "Confession", 179.

of creating an accessible text.[26] Taking all these actors into account, texts are subjected to a critique that then allows the ideologies of all participants to be uncovered:

> La sociocritique cherchait, au contraire, à décrire le social dans le texte, elle montrait comment la représentation littéraire (codes rhétoriques, narratifs, dispositifs axiologiques, clichés, etc.) construisait une 'idéologie'.
>
> [Sociocriticism, on the other hand, sought to describe the social in the text by showing how literary representation (rhetorical and narrative codes, axiological devices, clichés, etc.) constructed an 'ideology'.][27]

Sharing with the ODVs some of the archival material as well as my preliminary research results and my reading of the issues discussed during the interviews, was an idea that emerged in 2018 from discussions with Sari Middernacht and Patrick Mudekereza from the Waza Arts Centre in Lubumbashi. I was inspired by reading about the approach of *shared authority*,[28] which the Centre had been exploring in creative production and research projects, such as the *Ukumbusho* project. We decided to collaborate on a project called "Mitaani #mapping Moments", planned for July 2019. It would be a collaborative discussion of my research issues with the ODVs, with the Waza Arts Centre as a facilitator and as the space to exhibit the discussion results.[29] In their very insightful study on the role of digital technologies in memories in Nigeria, Yékú and Ojebode (2021) discuss reconstructing history with and among the public, sharing archival material and transmission of history through digital means. They discuss the historical voices of "digital subjects" who engage in conversations about the past. However, their focus is on interlocutors with access to digital platforms. In contrast, the ODVs' lack of access to digital technologies, lack of electricity and so on turns them into "digital subalterns" (Yékú and Ojebode, 2021: 500). Therefore, it would not have been possible to work with them on a collaborative analysis using digital technologies. But, what Yékú and Ojebode's

26 Meizoz, *Postures*, 41–42.

27 Jérôme Meizoz, "Sociocritique, Ethnologie Et Sociologie De La Littérature", *Romantisme* 145, no. 3 (2009), 100.

28 See, for example, Frisch, *Shared Authority*; Frisch, "Commentary"; High, "Sharing" ; Middernacht, "Collective"; Portelli, "Living"; Shopes, "Commentary"; Sitzia, "Shared Authority"; Alistair Thomson, "Introduction – Sharing Authority: Oral History and the Collaborative Process", *Oral History Review* 30, no. 1 (2003).

29 James Yékú and Ayobami Ojebode, "From Google Doodles to Facebook: Nostalgia and Visual Reconstructions of the Past in Nigeria", *African Studies Review* 64, no. 3 (2021).

study have in common with my research with the ODVs is that through commentary and discussion, fragments of history could be put together.

In addition, we wanted to explore the notion of *shared authority* with all its possibilities and limits. Moreover, the project aimed to make the research process transparent and the research results accessible through a creative act, by using shared videography, so that the product of this approach would enable a collective creative response to sociopolitical issues.[30]

My desire to discuss the preliminary results of my research in the archives and the research based on the interviews with those actually involved was twofold. First, I wanted to share with the workers concepts and their modifications as reflected in the interviews and archival sources. Second, I was aiming at a collaborative analysis of the changing conceptualisations of the topics addressed in the discourse. Two of these topics briefly illustrate this point – work and identity.[31]

Work: Employment and the loss of it are the basis of existence of the ODV. Work, or "*kazi*", as the term is used in Swahili and by the ODVs, is thus one of the central concepts from which everything else starts. Up until the 1940s, work in the mining industry could certainly be described as similar to slavery: the living conditions of contract workers were not very different from those of slaves. After the Second World War, *kazi* took on a positive connotation and stood for "a good life".[32] The change of connotation occurred against the backdrop of the UMHK's urgent need for a stable workforce. Then, the company provided everything the workers needed in order to become and remain a controllable and efficient source of labour: housing, leisure facilities, health services, and so on. The focus was on the establishment of a society of workers organised according to the Belgian idea of how this society was supposed to function.

This rationale did not change much after independence in 1960. From the 1960s, the Congolese were increasingly given better positions and many became members of the company's cadre. The workers' perception of *kazi* (work) changed in 2003, when they were forced to leave the company "voluntarily" in

30 Carl-Philipp Bodenstein and Daniela Waldburger, "'There Is a Fault Here! A Report on a More Inclusive Research Method in a Project in Lubumbashi (DR Congo)", *FIELD: A Journal of Socially-Engaged Art Criticism*, no. 17 (2021); Daniela Waldburger, "Il y a une erreur ici !" Rapport sur une méthode de recherche plus inclusive dans le cadre d'un projet impliquant d'anciens mineurs à Lubumbashi", in *Lubumbashi aujourd'hui: Langues, arts et société*, eds. Flavia Aiello and Roberto Gaudioso (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2021).

31 These concepts are related to each other and can include several sub-concepts.

32 Dibwe dia Mwembu, "History"; Fabian, "Kazi"; Petit and Mutambwa, "LA CRISE".

order to receive paltry compensation. Their house was the only material asset they still had, which is why it serves as a trigger and the locus of their nostalgia. The interpretation of *kazi* today is that of an object of loss. The nonexistence of work has not only created a precarious economic situation, it has also deprived the ex-mineworkers of one of the core pieces of their identity.

Identity: Of course, a diverse range of anchor points to identity exists, including social categories such as a blue-collar worker or member of the cadre, place of origin of the first generation that moved to Lubumbashi, and gender-specific categories. But primarily, all the interviewees identified themselves with the company.[33] Promotion, for example, often entailed moving to a new house and changing work location, sometimes within Lubumbashi from Cité Gécamines to Makomeno. Thus, work had an impact on social and spatial mobility. Another identity-relevant topic was the pride in having been an agent of the company instead of merely a wheel in the system. This was revealed in statements such as "*J'étais très fière*" (I was very proud), "*Napenda kazi, utarespecté*" (I loved the work, you were respected), or even total identification as a part of a company already at birth, such as "*Je suis née dans le groupe sud*" (I was born into the southern group).[34] Others would say "I was born to my parents who were [names])". One interviewee in Makomeno was living in the *boyerie* and renting out his big house to earn some money. His living room was filled with objects of his past as a cadre of Gécamines, such as sports trophies, which he displayed with a great deal of pride and nostalgia.

The fact of having been a mineworker and identifying with that occupation manifested itself in different spheres of life – not only in those that related to the individual but also in the sphere of community. Strangleman describes mineworkers' identity perceptions in Great Britain, and reports that their occupational identity and community identity, and the norms and values linked to them, "are produced and reproduced within the context of workplace and community networks".[35] He points to the fact that stability and predictability

33 For the discursive analysis of concepts of identity, see for example, Bucholtz and Hall, "Identity"; Ochs, "Constructing"; Daniela Waldburger, *Komorisch im Transnationalen Kontext,* Grazer Plurilingualismus-Studien 3 (Graz: Karl-Franzens-Univ. Graz Treffpunkt Sprachen Forschungsbereich Plurilingualismus, 2015); Daniela Waldburger, "Social identity/identities among plurilingual Comorians in Marseille (France)", in *Mobility and Minorities in Africa – Nova Collectanea Africana,* ed. Michele Carboni (Cagliari: Nova Collectanea Africana Collana del Centro di Studi Africani in Sardegna, 2018), 193–214.

34 The UMHK and Gécamines had mining sites in different geographical locations.

35 Strangleman, "Networks", 259.

of life are valued by workers and that "acting accordingly is enabling identity through the achievement of one's role".[36] The ODVs' life plans were destroyed with the loss of work; predictability, stability, every aspect of what they identified with, were shattered in 2003.

Interviews with the former workers revealed the concerns that were most important to them. They disclosed not only individual perceptions of a specific topic at a specific time but also discursive links to other topics. Stråth argues that this temporality of "concepts" allows a translation of past experiences into futures. Moreover, "[t]the gap between the imageries of the past and those of the future is continuously revised".[37] The provision of housing was not only one of the main means of control over workers by UMHK and Gécamines; the house was also an object that belonged to the ODVs during their whole work life. The interviews revealed the workers' evaluation of these experiences.

Following the idea(l) of *shared authority* means first and foremost the willingness of all involved to talk to and listen to one another. Sharing authority, then, in its simplest version, "is shar[ing] in oral history by definition – in the dialogic nature of the interview, in the history-making offered by both interviewer and narrator".[38]

3.1 *Planning the* baraza

For the "Mitaani #mapping Moments" exhibition in July 2019, the Waza Arts Centre and I decided to organise the *baraza*. The conversation between the ODVs and myself at the *baraza* were expected to be a collaborative analysis of the changing conceptualisations of the topics that emerged after the interviews, based on my thoughts after the archival research. Although the ex-workers had shared their individual perceptions in the interviews, during the *baraza* we planned a collective analysis between all ex-workers present and the researcher. My intention was to elaborate on the analyses in collaboration with the ex-mineworkers, and as a consequence to value their voices as equally important in the knowledge production process. Despite the challenges, it allowed all of us to communicate under the premise of being an important part of the project as a whole. We transgressed the borders of the sphere that our roles as either researcher or researched partner normally allowed and required.

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36 Strangleman, "Networks", 259.

37 Bo Stråth, "Ujamaa – the Evasive Translation of an Elusive Concept", in *Doing Conceptual History in Africa*, eds. Axel Fleisch and Rhiannon Stephens, Making sense of history 25 (New York: Berghahn Books, 2016), 186.

38 Frisch, "Commentary", 113.

I associate transgressing borders with transdisciplinarity. Therefore, any approach under the label of shared authority I regard as transdisciplinary, an adjective that is often emphasised in academia. As Jahn et al. point out, independent from the definition of trans- and/or interdisciplinarity, "[c]ombining 'interdisciplinarity' and the 'participation' of extra-scientific actors seems to be the common recipe for defining transdisciplinarity".[39] I view the term "extra-scientific actors" as crucial because it acknowledges the ODVs' agency.

The same idea, but under a different term – "participatory transdisciplinarity" – is discussed by Mobjörk.[40] Societal actors are partners in a joint research process where their knowledge is "equally valuable to scientific knowledge".[41] Another layer in the discussion of the framework of transdisciplinarity is the question of the motives behind the research. Who has which interest to participate, assuming that the research endeavour is indeed a shared one? I argue that both the ODVs and myself had an interest in co-operation and our own agendas.

The goals of the "Mitaani #mapping Moments" project were threefold. First, as a researcher, I aimed at an analysis of the concepts related to the nexus of housing and nostalgia. In the process, the ex-workers' voice should be given equal value. Based on the principle of shared authority, new ideas and additional societal knowledge to which I might have been otherwise blind should be enabled. This in turn would increase public acceptance of the research results. In addition, the documented *baraza* should serve as data for the analysis of the negotiation process about nostalgia.

The second goal was to highlight that the ex-workers' voices were vital in a process of collaborative analysis, contributing equally to the different layers, changes and meanings of concepts. This approach would therefore democratise the production of knowledge. It would be a co-creation of scientific knowledge.

Third, the negotiation process itself and the objects linked to it (the filmed sessions and the cartoons of these discussions) would serve as curatorial material for the Waza Arts Centre, which would make them public and accessible to the ex-workers. It would allow critical examination of the research results by participants and the wider public.

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39 Thomas Jahn, Matthias Bergmann and Florian Keil, "Transdisciplinarity: Between Mainstreaming and Marginalization", *Ecological Economics* 79 (2012): 2.

40 Malin Mobjörk, "Consulting Versus Participatory Transdisciplinarity: A Refined Classification of Transdisciplinary Research", *Futures* 42, no. 8 (2010): 867, 870.

41 Mobjörk, "Consulting", 870.

The first week started with a meeting at the Waza Arts Centre to discuss the fine-tuning of the project. We had discussions on, for instance, how to deal with nostalgia and its impact on the ODV members' current life dynamic. In a follow-up meeting with the ODV board members, we discussed our idea and were given their approval and support – and equally important – their interest in this collaboration. In a joint collaboration, we thus organised what we called the "trigger event" that took place three days later.

The aim of this event was to present and discuss the idea of the planned *baraza* with all members of the ODV who were interested in participating. The first challenge was to find a fitting location. With the ODV board members, we decided on a location in Cité Gécamines. Access needed to be as easy as possible, so that no bus fares and long journeys were necessary. We scheduled the trigger event for a Friday, after the meetings at which the members of the association usually assembled. The board members distributed the information for this scheduled meeting. On 12 July 2019, the interested audience was large; approximately 100 chairs were set out and nearly all of them were taken. Three tables provided space for a projector, a laptop and the equipment for the microphones. The board members suggested that I should welcome everyone personally at the entrance. Patrick Mudekereza of the Waza Arts Centre formally opened the event and explained the general idea of the *baraza*. Then, I reported on my research that had started two years earlier.

I showed, for instance, pictures of the files I had found in the archives and explained how I worked with the idea to reveal the (colonial) state's, and especially the UMHK's, strategies of implementing measures of control. I played a propaganda film by the UMHK, which was produced to celebrate the company's fiftieth anniversary in 1956 and which was a useful research source for me. This film showed the UMHK's different measures of organising and controlling the workers – at least that was how we critically reflected upon it. However, the vivid and emotional discussion that followed the screening was not what I had expected.

Those present did not criticise the measures of "control" made by the company at that time. On the contrary, they argued that they had been "well taken care of", as shown in the movie (for instance, the kind of benefits awaiting newly arrived workers were described in detail), whereas today they felt neglected and deprived of the benefits they had enjoyed before 2003. Many participants shared their memories of how those measures were beneficial.

Discussing this film was the first moment in which sharing thoughts helped me recalibrate my assumptions about the workers' positions. At another point during the trigger event, I explained to the audience the great importance to the research endeavour of the interviews that I had conducted earlier. Their

voices allowed me to link their current perception to my reading of the archival material. I then suggested the topics for the *baraza*, derived from the interviews and archival sources: identity, health and hygiene; women's roles; and surveillance. No one objected to this procedure or the topics. We then invited ex-workers to sign up for discussions scheduled for the next week, according to their preference of topic, if they were interested in participating at all. To close the trigger event, the members of the Waza Arts Centre expressed our wish not only to give the ODVs a voice but also to preserve their voices, by taking them back to Europe and by presenting them in Lubumbashi.

We therefore suggested that these *baraza* could be filmed, if the individuals involved would give us permission to do so. The filming of these discussions and negotiations would be done by two pairs of eyes – those of the Congolese artist Gulda El Magambo and of my colleague, Carl-Philipp Bodenstein. Sharing in this layer of performance would then be extended to the editing suite afterwards, to combine the perspectives of the two observers. The feedback would finally be shared as a collaborative product. The benefit of this endeavour was not only to document the process of sharing authority but also to extend the concept of shared authority on different levels through form and content and finally synthesise the two layers of performance.

3.2 *Holding the* baraza

The group discussions followed the week after, in Cité Gécamines; the board members had invited us to use their meeting room. The advantage was obvious: the place was familiar to those attending. After the trigger event we had eight group discussions scheduled, two for each of the four topics. For reasons that are very common and comprehensible in the research setting, two group sessions did not take place. Nobody showed up. There were funerals to attend or other priorities that prevented people from being present.

The gathering started after the videographers had set up the technical equipment for filming. The *baraza* were set up in half-circles, in the middle of which a small wooden table served as a pedestal for the microphones. The videographers set up four cameras and field-recorders close to the entrance of the room, facing a corner of two window-less walls, to the right and left of which sat the participants of the *baraza*. Natural light came through a facing window and shone on the participants, eliminating the need for additional lightning. Two cameras them remained stationary and captured the entire scene. The other two were hand-held, operated by Carl-Philipp and Gulda. ODVs who had attended the trigger event had agreed to be filmed; however, we asked each participant for their consent again. There were no objections. On the contrary,

they often stressed that it was important to them that their voice be recorded and seen.

After the welcome, the gathering started by addressing the language question. Would they prefer French or Swahili?[42] Each time, we agreed that both languages would be used to allow the conversation to develop naturally.

Patrick Mudekereza took notes in French and Swahili, often combining both languages in one sentence. Later, I compared how he formulated the utterances in terms of language choice and found that he used and mixed the two differently from the actual verbal utterances documented in the films. Thus, the interesting observation was that mixing codes (using different codes within a sentence or utterance) is the normal usage of a plurilingual repertoire.

To end the "Mitaani #mapping Moments", the final event (*le grand baraza*) was organised by the Waza Arts Centre for the Friday of the following week. As soon as the *baraza* were over, the videographers started to work together to edit and grade the footage for a film that was planned to be screened to the ODV. The film was characterised by the fact that in order to be able to understand it, one had to have participated in the *baraza*. It was thus a film produced solely for those who had actually taken part in the project.

The *grand baraza* was held in the facilities of the Waza Arts Centre. Outside in the courtyard, a stage and a screen were prepared and plastic chairs were set up for the ODVs and other guests, who arrived in vast numbers. Patrick Mudekereza welcomed everybody, and the event started with the artist DJ Spilulu presenting a performance based on the audio files recorded during the *baraza*. For instance, he alienated my voice and combined it with extracts from the interviews. The ODVs listened carefully (as we all did) and frequently pointed to the one whose statement was heard. This was then followed by the performances of four poetry slammers, whose works commented the current situation of the ODVs.

At the same time, the accompanying exhibition was presented in the building. Colby, a cartoon artist, used the notes taken by Patrick Mudekereza during the *baraza* and turned them into art pieces, big drawings of the statements with accompanying illustrations that covered the walls of the exhibition room of the Waza Arts Centre. Chairs were set up in the room where viewers could watch a TV playing the film made by the videographers. I observed the visitors

42 For a discussion of the role of Swahili in Lubumbashi, see, for example, Ferrari, Kalunga and Mulumbwa, *Le Swahili,* 127; Daniela Waldburger, "Swahili in Eastern Congo – from a Dominated to a Dominant Language or Vice Versa?", in *Pluricentric Languages and Non-Dominant Varieties Worldwide: Volume 1: Pluricentric Languages Across Continents – Features and Usage*, ed. Rudolf Muhr (Frankfurt, Vienna: Peter Lang, 2016), 149.

in the exhibition rooms and talked to them; often, they recognised the topics or statements they had made.

In one very moving moment, a participant addressed me and said: "*Mama Daniela, il y a une erreur ici, je ne l'ai pas dit comme ça*" (Daniela, there is a mistake here, I did not say it like that). Even though the error was not relevant for the overall argument (in my assessment) – the wrong type of machine had been depicted – it was important for the participant to clear up this inaccuracy. So, we took a red pen and corrected the art object. It was a moment when his voice indeed mattered.

During the screening of the film, after the poetry slam session, the participants went back and forth between the exhibition inside and the screening outside, not paying the careful attention we had hoped for. But they addressed us and expressed their view of the importance of this event. In the office, the participants who had attended the *baraza* could fetch an envelope containing prints of the pictures that Carl and Gulda had taken and money for the bus transport back to Cité Gécamines. It turned out that the screening had been planned at bit too late for the participants; for safety reasons they needed to return home before it got too late into the night. We had not considered this point, thinking only about the darkness we would need for an outdoor screening. This was another subtle lesson learned.

3.3 *After the* baraza

After the events, we brainstormed our approach. We concluded that perhaps it had not been the right decision to hold the exhibition in the gallery of the Waza Arts Centre and the screening of the movie in their courtyard. We had asked the ODVs to come to an art gallery because we considered it as the normative place for an exhibition. Maybe placing the representation of participants' voices in their own quartier would have been more appropriate. The question remained open.

Reviewing the group discussions of the *baraza* revealed many topics that had not popped up in the interviews I had led. The setting of the *baraza* had fostered discussions among the ODVs, whereas during the interviews my research partners had often waited for my questions and I was thus the leading voice. In the individual interviews, there was more criticism of the mining company or the supervision it exercised. Or introspective statements like "Maybe we were badly prepared because we were always given everything". During the *baraza*, the participants were more confident about taking the lead in the discussion than had been possible during the interviews, even though the interviews were more open than structured. Still, the discussions during the *baraza* allowed more associative thoughts to be communicated.

In retrospect, I realise that the setup of the *baraza* resembled a stage, a stage that demanded a performance and an audience. Looking again at the video, I discovered that the performative setting revealed two important aspects: first, that the master narrative in its overall dimensions was maintained strictly; second, the hierarchies among the participants influenced the adherence to the master narrative. The ODVs were acting within their network of hierarchies and I was equally a part of it. It is my understanding that we were all part of a network, manoeuvring between roles characterised by dependency and capacity for action at the same time.

3.4 *Leaving the Spider Web and Entering the* barazaweb

I conceptualise the *baraza* as a *barazaweb*, a methodological contribution to describe a research situation in which the participants constantly adapt to each other and to the situation. The *barazaweb* is especially important because it evolved from the field, showing how important it is to pay attention to how the field can nourish the theory and not necessarily the other way round. In speaking with the Nigerian writer and feminist Ogundipe-Leslie, it turned out I was using a "locogenetic" approach – that is, a method born out of the field and responding to questions raised by a specific context.[43] Her social criticism questioned who speaks for whom, whose point of view counts, whose experience nourishes the theory. As indicated earlier, the *baraza* implies the idea of council/counselling, which boils down to the exchange of ideas central to the shared authority approach.

It was only when I was back home from Lubumbashi, when I started to carefully watch the filmed *baraza,* that it became obvious that in my role as a researcher I had decidedly influenced it. I chaired the group discussions, suggested topics and requested clarifications. I was a leading voice. However, I was not the only leading voice, and certainly not when discussions became emotional between the ODVs. Group dynamics appeared, and differences in hierarchy revealed themselves among the participants, such as between men and women, or between members of the ODV board and ordinary members of the ODV. I observed the strategies the attendees used to stress their positions; often, the choice of language was far from incidental, and they displayed politics and practices of remembrance of the glorious past to shape the picture of the miserable future awaiting them. The master narrative of *C'était bien à l'époque* was strictly maintained.

43 Molara Ogundipe-Leslie, "Literature and Development: Writing and Audience in Africa", in *African Literature and Africa's Development: Mapping Intersections*, eds. Anne V. Adams and Janis A. Mayers (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1998).

To analyse what happened during the *baraza*, and consequently to be able to interpret my data, I needed to consider the power relations between researcher and researched to be able to classify and interpret the data and conceptualise my findings. I thus needed to explore my first-person practice. Action research theory and practice engages with the process of valuing, leading to decision and action.[44] I needed to be conscious about choices, decisions and actions I took during the interviews and the *baraza* in order to extract my influence on the data. Nevertheless, I also realised that I was not the only one making decisions; rather, in the group dynamic of the *barazaweb*, decisions on topics were made back and forth by all sides, to a greater or lesser degree depending on the hierarchies among the participants.

I was reflecting on the ODVs, my entanglement and our roles during the *baraza* when I read Jiménez's text about the spider web.[45] His metaphor, which I later expanded, proved to be very useful in untangling what I experienced as chaotic intersections of decision-taking. Jiménez uses the metaphor of the spider web to refer to "a world that holds itself in precarious balance, that tenses itself with violence and catastrophe but also grace and beauty, and that calls out and silhouettes promissory worlds of entanglements".[46] Jiménez is interested in the trap that the spider web represents. The trap unites the world of the prey and the predator and he thus uses the image of the trap to describe social theory. He explains that "it is one of my central intuitions that modern knowledge is essentially a trap to itself, such that most forms of explanation are guests unaware they are actually being hosted – predators who do not know their own condition as prey".[47]

Reflecting on the happenings during the *baraza*, I realised that the metaphor of the web that catches the prey was a helpful tool to think about what I had experienced, which until then I had felt was just a vague sense of us all permanently trying to get the upper hand on the issues, interpretation, the word, and so on.

I aimed to produce knowledge, knowledge that became more complex the further the research process went on. For knowledge production, I was looking for the research partners' knowledge. The ODVs wanted to pass on the master narrative to me. While Jiménez talks about the prey's and predator's roles, which are interchangeable, and of prey and predator adjusting to the "trap", I see the benefit of this metaphor in the web itself. Thinking of myself and

44 Coghlan, "What?", 333.
45 Jiménez, "Spiderweb".
46 Jiménez, "Spiderweb", 53.
47 Jiménez, "Spiderweb", 53.

the research partners as being in that very same web helped me to see that I should rather focus on our entanglements than on our position. In that sense, the relations between the researcher and the research partners became one of the research topics.

Jiménez illustrates the changing roles of prey and predator with an example of a research setting in which guerrilla and open-source architectural collectives in Madrid are present:

> We experimented with the format of our meetings: where we met (at cultural centers, in bars, at the Spanish National Research Council), but also with how we conducted a meeting. We took turn taking minutes, which we called *relatorías* (storytelling), and which sometimes read like ethnographic accounts, while at other times they looked like architectural sketches. Sometimes the remit of our activities seemed defined and taken over by the concerns of architects (who were overrepresented at La Mesa, which became a concern in itself), while on some occasions it was the voice of cultural agents or of urban gardening communities that assumed the wisdom of political praxis. Sometimes, even, it was the anthropologists whom everyone turned to for inspiration.[48]

I would like to emphasise again that I do not think of our roles as those of prey and predator, but I find the constant adaptation in the same network helpful. Particularly relevant for this study seems the point of taking the minutes of these meetings. Minutes are – at least in normative settings – the documentation of discussions and serve as the proof of what was taken up and sometimes of what was decided. My archive of the *baraza* is found in filmed *baraza* sessions. The ODVs' archive is found in the minutes noted by the secretary, who chose to attend every *baraza* for this purpose.

Once again, it was only later, when I was back home thinking about my data and research, that I became aware that the secretary's minutes would be necessary to give me an insight into the ODVs – or at least the secretary's – perception of the points that were discussed during the *baraza*. Just like the minutes I had read in the archives of the UMHK, I would have access to a written record. In 2020, travelling to Lubumbashi was impossible because of COVID-19. However, many phone calls and emails to contacts in Lubumbashi, who then contacted the ODVs, were very helpful. I was able to place my request, which was then discussed among the ODVs during their following meeting in their clubhouse.

48 Jiménez, "Spiderweb", 73.

This meeting took place only a few days after a terror attack in Vienna (where I live). They were, via the contact person, asking about my wellbeing, because the news was being broadcast on the channels they watched. As I was later told, they were discussing whether Vienna would be safe enough for me. There was, first of all, their concern for a person they appreciated after three years working together, and second, this person had to tell the world "in the book she is writing" about their situation.

Their concern about the dangerous environment in which I was supposedly living might have speeded up the process. They agreed to prepare a report on the events of July 2019 and some days later I was sent scanned copies. It was a touching moment when I saw these pages; the hand-written testimonies reminded me of the first documents I had read in the UMHK archive in Brussels. This time, however, these were the words of the ex-workers, or at least the secretary's voice. I do understand the secretary's notes as a documentation of our discussions, which is – as much as a careful documentation of the weekly meetings – a complex record-keeping system that maintains the memory and the master narrative. It is very much a site of a corpus that has so far been invisible. It forms part of a new, alternative corpus that consists not only of the archival material in Brussels.

3.5 *An Alternative Archive*

Battley postulates the significance of complex record-keeping systems among communities who traditionally have been "othered" and whose "[r]ecords are embedded and embodied in the community's people, stories, processes and places of belonging".[49] Battley rightly warns us that "[r]emoving community records into an archival institution and arranging and describing them to suit institutional systems strips away the community's own measures of authenticity".[50]

Battley illustrates the point of a record taken from the community to be placed in the archive with the following example, in an interview with a long-standing club member who described going to look at club records that had been transferred to the university's "Special Collections".

> [...] there were also two big photograph albums, which again had been wafting around. They'd come out at Club functions. They used to sit in this wardrobe for a while. When I wanted to look at them, recently, they're now at the Archives in the University, so I had to put white gloves

49 Battley, "Authenticity", 60.
50 Battley, "Authenticity", 61–62.

> on to be able to look at them [laughing], but I appreciate this was policy for Archives, so I guess we've …".

I describe the secretary's report in chapter five in detail to assure the authenticity of his voice. However, it is important to mention his report at this point in relation to his role as chronicler of the history of the ODVs; of course, at the same time he is also an ODV sharing in the same painful experiences.

Seen from this perspective, dependency and capacity for action offer a new methodological turn that opens up the possibility of a new alternative corpus (or "new alternative archive" as Tchokothe suggests).[51] It is one of shared collective memories, while ensuring that the people in the field are not disowned of their archives, knowledge and agency.[52]

The entanglements of participants in the *barazaweb* become visible in the sometimes different representation of the discussions we had. Thus, it was during those moments that I had insight into how knowledge was produced. We find knowledge, as Strathern puts it, only if we relate things to each other. Hence, what counts as knowledge is what counts as relations because "[r]elations are also a means for comprehending a world thought of as connections between persons, however fractious, and however we describe values, collectivities, institutions, alliances, intimacies, and so on".[53] Taking up Strathern's point, Blaser and De la Cadena emphasise

> that the knowledge practices we (modern scholars) have at our disposal are, in turn, conditioned to reinstate themselves. A consequence of this feature is that it may perform epistemic and ontological invalidations – or absences – of the possibility of the multiplicity of worlds.[54]

My aim thus is to present the multiplicity in knowledge production and the entanglements that contributed to this assemblage of knowledge. It is after all, to emphasise Strathern's point, important to know how knowledge is produced. Equally important to me are two more questions: who owns knowledge and whose knowledge counts?

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51 Rémi A. Tchokothe, "Archiving Collective Memories and (Dis)Owning. Special Issue, ed. Daniela Merolla on Behalf of the International Society for the Oral Literatures of Africa", *Afrika Focus* 32, no. 1 (2019); Rémi Armand Tchokothe, *'Entré en tant que cousin, sorti en tant que gendarme': Visa Balladur, Kwassa Kwassa, (im)mobilité et géopoét(h)ique relationnelle aux Comores,* Africa Multiple 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2023).

52 Tchokothe, "Archiving".

53 Strathern, "Opening", 28.

54 Blaser and De la Cadena, "Pluriverse", 6.

Knowledge production is based on a process of communicative acts occurring between all those involved. Hence, all data collected is by nature based on the usage of languages and the choice of languages for any given moment. Even if the data has been presented in a text, such as in the annual reports of the mining company or my transcripts of interviews or *baraza*, all these texts are the result of face-to-face and orally mediated exchange that has then been transformed in a textual form. When it comes to the texts produced by the UMHK, for instance in the company magazine *Mwana Shaba*, we have to think of the company's strategies of information management and language strategies. The ODVs equally used strategies to formulate their points of views and stress their perspective.

Let me add a thought on textual practices as discussed by Segall from the perspective of ethnography. He describes ethnography as a meeting place "where a variety of voices are assembled together in a complex intertextual practice"[55] and warns us that:

> [a]s ethnographers, we use, manipulate, alter, edit, discard, reduce and recycle voices from both communities equally. Whether explicitly by signed consent (There) or implicitly through making one's writing (Here) public in journals or books, the voices we recruit – whether from those *in* or *from* the field – equally serve the ethnographer to explain, connect, theorise, concretise, illustrate, and advocate a particular ethnographic account.[56]

I am thus aware that, in the end, I am the one doing the textual representation of the ODVs' voices and there is thus a risk that I might represent their voices inadequately, especially taking into account that "[e]very transcription is a re-telling, a new telling of a previously heard, now newly heard voice".[57]

An appropriate approach to deal with this situation comes from Pillow[58] and Visweswaran[59] and their findings of the benefit of a reflexive approach: "[u]ncomfortable reflexivity, then, is not about better methods, or about whether we can represent people better but", as Visweswaran states, "whether we can be accountable to people's struggles for self-representation and

55 Segall, "Critical Ethnography", 584.
56 Segall, "Critical Ethnography", 584.
57 Segall, "Critical Ethnography", 585.
58 Pillow, "Confession".
59 Kamala Visweswaran, *Fictions of Feminist Ethnography* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1994).

self-determination".[60] I am, as far as the given circumstances allow, able to give an account of the way knowledge was produced because the ODVs were part of it. For them it was important to pass on the master narrative to me, *their* master narrative, which I could not and did not want to destroy. For me the narrative of *C'était bien à l'époque!* represents a sometimes uncomfortable reality.

The analogy of the participants' entanglement in a spiderweb helps one understand how the ODVs' master narrative was negotiated, and the knowledge production in the *barazaweb* helped me avoid the problem of becoming a platform for their goal and of them being instrumental for my goals. Our sharing in the *barazaweb* greatly dissolved the opposition of researcher-researched communities, while at the same time we did not affirm oneness and I did not pretend to avoid "othering".[61] The benefit of the *barazaweb* for the research was thus not "giving voice" to the ODVs in a benevolent way, but accepting that they were taking their voice to frame their master narrative. Hence, their voice is a new voice in the alternative archive.

The following section focuses on the plurilingual situation of the research setting, because an understanding of the different languages and language attitudes in the area of Lubumbashi over the given research time forms the basis for the description of language choices for strategic reasons. These language choices were made apparent not only during the interviews and *baraza* but also in the company magazine *Mwana Shaba*, and to a lesser degree in the annual reports.

4 The Importance of Language Choice

The language(s) used in the documents created by the representatives of the colonial state, the UMHK and later Gécamines, the ex-mineworkers and myself during the interviews and *baraza*, mirror not only what is thought of the most appropriate mean of communication in mostly a plurilingual setting but equally reflect relations of power between those who write or speak and those who listen or read.[62] Those involved in communication likewise chose a language to pursue resistance or offer concession. Thus, the language choice in the texts for this research is meaningful. Swahili and French are relevant in the context of this study, not because other languages were not used in

60 Pillow, "Confession", 193.
61 Segall, "Critical Ethnography".
62 Fairclough, *Language*.

the period in focus (for example, before 1965, immigrant workers brought to Lubumbashi Kilamba, Kiseba, Kilemba, Kisanga, Kiyeke, Wuruwund [Lunda] and other languages, from Zambia, Zimabwe and Malawi)[63] but because Swahili and French were employed for written and oral communication between the UMHK and the workers. Thus, the means of communication demonstrates the constant interaction between the wish to exercise power and the wish to be understood.

Swahili has been spoken in the eastern parts of the Congo, as well as in the region of Katanga and its capital city, what is now Lubumbashi, since at least the arrival of the Arabs. Swahili has been equally useful for European traders, missionaries and "explorers";[64] the coastal form from Zanzibar became the basis for a British controlled "standard" variety. But Lubumbashi Swahili is different. Schicho describes this creolised central variety (or central varieties) as a "broken" version of Lubumbashi Swahili (or up-country Swahili), characterised by lexical borrowings from French and Swahili and other Bantu languages, language switches and transfer of syntactic structures from "Standard Swahili" to Lubumbashi Swahili.[65] These linguistic differences emerged as individual and spontaneous phenomena. Ferrari et al. state that the simplified vernacular (which functioned like a pidgin) transformed into a widespread first language in Katanga: "*Le Swahili tel qu'il est parlé au Katanga est depuis longtemps un symbole du régionalisme katangais*" (Swahili as spoken in Katanga has long been a symbol of Katangese regionalism).[66] In addition, Swahili is part of the linguistic repertoire of immigrants and their descendants.

According to Fabian, Swahili was used in Katanga for two political reasons.[67] First, it was an attempt to create a greater distance between the Congo and southern British colonies. The British colonies constituted a danger because of their interest in Katanga's natural resources. Second, Swahili was considered a convenient means of communication to stabilise the workforce; controlling communication allowed not only the control of work life but equally other domains of life.[68]

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63 Tshibanda, «Vocabulaire», 92–93.

64 Fabian, "Missions".

65 Walter Schicho, "Non-acceptance and Negation in the Swahili of Lubumbashi", *African Languages and Cultures* 5, no. 1 (1992): 77.

66 Ferrari, Kalunga and Mulumbwa, *Le Swahili*, 107.

67 Johannes Fabian, *Language and Colonial Power*: *The Appropriation of Swahili in the Former Belgian Congo 1880–1938,* African studies series 48 (London, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Johannes Fabian, "Simplicity on Command: On Pidginization of Swahili in Shaba (Zaïre)", in *The Fergusonian Impact, in Honor of Charles A. Ferguson on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday. Vol. 1: From Phonology to Society*, eds. Joshua A. Fishman et al. (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1986).

68 For a discussion, see also Gysels, "French".

Thus, these power relations between colonisers and mineworkers led to Swahili-language textbooks being produced to serve as manuals for use by Europeans in Katanga.[69] The Swahili presented in these guides was an amalgam of different varieties used by Europeans from different backgrounds.[70] It was presented as a deficient medium with a restricted lexicon and rudimentary grammar, inadequate for expressing complex ideas. In fact, this sketched version of Swahili was just the Europeans' improvised manifestation of how they used Swahili to communicate with Africans. The colonisers' wish to control communication is highlighted by Fabian: "in descriptions of Congolese Swahili [...] 'communication and control' – the need to communicate and the intent to control – were inseparable motives".[71]

For the Belgian colonial state and the UMHK, language policies were essential, because those communicating needed to make sure that they would be understood and that their ideas would be followed. At the same time, they tried to propagate Belgian norms through French. French was therefore chosen for colonial publications such as *À chacun sa maison*, publications aimed in particular at the *évolués* ("an upper class of educated Congolese who were granted certain rights following their assumption, to varying degrees, of a lifestyle similar to the European one").[72] French was also the language of choice for company minutes; these documents were meant for internal use and communication with the metropolis.

4.1 *Language in Schools*

In Belgium, the question of the appropriate language(s) in the colony had been discussed from the very beginning. Flemish nationalists in particular protested against the fact, that Congolese children should only be taught French and not it Dutch.[73] However, for primary education in the Congo,[74] the colonial authorities preferred African languages to European languages. Meeuwis states that in the colonial context, in nearly all primary schools the medium of instruction

69 Fabian, *Language*; Gysels, "French".

70 Such as Greek or Flemish employees of mining and railway companies.

71 Fabian, *Language*, 14.

72 Kristien Geenen, "Categorizing Colonial Patients: Segregated Medical Care, Space and Decolonization in a Congolese City, 1931–62", *Africa* 89, no. 1 (2019): 111; Pedro A. G. Monaville, "Decolonizing the University: Postal Politics, the Student Movement, and Global 1968 in the Congo" (PhD dissertation: University of Michigan, 2013); Makombo, *Du Congo Belge*. Geenen ("Categorizing") shows in her paper on the categorising and taxonomy used for colonial patients that further distinctions were in use, such as *indigènes civilisés* and *indigènes évolués* and others, which included divergent professions.

73 Michael Meeuwis, "The Origins of Belgian Colonial Language Policies in the Congo", *Language Matters: Studies in the Languages of Africa* 42, no 2 (2011), 194.

74 Meeuwis, "Bilingual", 1281.

for the first two years was a Congolese language. Secondary education, on the other hand, "was always, and in all locations, organised around French as the sole medium of instruction, except in most technical schools and in teacher training schools".[75] However, the mineworkers were not necessarily very proficient in French, because they usually did not receive formal education before they were recruited by the UMHK. Swahili, the lingua franca, was thus the language connecting the workers and therefore played an important role in the communication between the UMHK and their workers. The schools provided for the workers' children in the camp gave preference to Swahili in the moment of enrolment.

In the annual report of 1950, in a section on courses for workers' general education, the company explains that it would like to offer illiterates and semi-literates an opportunity to increase their knowledge of reading Swahili and spoken French to prepare them for further professional education.[76] Still, the UMHK tried to put the emphasis on what they called "mother tongue", but that referred to Swahili. The workers' ambitions to learn French were criticised:

Sa grande ambition est de connaître le français, signe extérieur de civilisation. Calcul, mesure, dessin, langue maternelle, lui semblent superflus.[77]	His great ambition is to know French, an outward sign of civilisation. Calculation, measurement, drawing, mother tongue, seem superfluous to him.

In its 1953 annual report, the UMHK argued that it would be an absolute necessity to start teaching in Swahili, which would become the general language throughout Upper Katanga. However, in the first year, French would be an important curriculum subject. Starting from the third year of primary school, French exercises should include not only oral exercises but also writing and reading. In Grade 5, French should become the first language of instruction. All post-primary education should be taught in French.[78]

Thus, the schools for the workers' children, who were envisaged as the company's future workforce, prioritised Swahili from the moment of enrolment. However, knowledge of at least basic French was also promoted. For the company's future managers and senior workers, French was vital and was therefore taught and regarded as the language of prestige and power.

The UMHK mainly chose French to communicate in written form with the workers, but Swahili played an important role.[79] The UMHK chose a title in

75 Meeuwis, "Bilingual", 1280.

76 AGR 2 – n°655–03046, Rapport Annuel 1950, 32.

77 AGR 2 – n°655–03046, Rapport Annuel 1950, 32.

78 AGR 2 – n°656–03050, Rapport Annuel 1953, 26.

79 No records of oral communication between the UMHK representatives and workers are available.

Swahili for their company magazine, *Mwana Shaba* (copper worker). In the 1956 annual report of the Département MOI, the magazine is described as a bilingual publication in French and Swahili.[80] This decision had two reasons. First, Swahili would ensure that the workers understood the content. Second, French should be used to gradually enhance workers' command of French.

4.2 *Authenticité*

The company's language policy was influenced by political changes, particularly when Congo gained independence in 1960. After his second coup on 24 November 1965, Mobutu Sese Seko intended to change Congo's image. The country underwent a campaign under the motto of *authenticité*[81] (authenticity), which reclaimed the nation's African traditions.[82] The Mobutu government began to change the names of the country's major cities in May 1966; Elisabethville became Lubumbashi, a move that represented a re-baptism, because the Belgian colonisers had already renamed the cities between 1885 and 1935.[83] Mobutu stated: "[b]y the policy of [authenticité], the return to our sources, I hope to mentally decolonize my people, that is to say, to modify the structures left by the colonizer".[84]

This movement implied that he had to find a language for his ideology. Therefore, a conference was organised where intellectuals started debating language issues and made suggestions, but Mobutu was very much in favour of his own language, Lingala. However, *authenticité* did not contain a real language policy in which African languages would gain prominence. French remained the language of the state. The reason for this was the localised use of African languages in Zaire, which did not exceed the limits of the territory occupied by the communities speaking those languages.[85] In 1971, for instance, Mobutu decided to replace the terms *Monsieur* and *Madame*, not with words used in Lingala, or Kikongo, Swahili or any other language from the Congo, but with *Citoyen* and *Citoyenne*, taken from the French Revolution.[86] Mobutu was, however, favouring the French of France over the Belgians: the words *septante* (seventy) and *nonante* (ninety), used in Belgian French, were replaced by *soixante-dix* and *quatre-vingt-dix*, the French words for these numbers.[87] Furthermore, even the

80 AGR 2 – n°657–03053, Rapport Annuel 1956, 44.

81 For a detailed discussion of *authenticité* and its effect on the arts, see for example, Van Beurden, *Authentically African*.

82 Van Beurden, *Authentically African*; Dunn, "Imagining", 235; Ngalasso, "Etat".

83 However, re-baptism does not apply to Lubumbashi, because the Belgians founded the city.

84 Dunn, "Imagining", 240.

85 Ngalasso, "Etat", 11.

86 Dunn, "Imagining", 248.

87 Ngalasso, "Etat", 21.

term of Mobutu's ideology itself, *authenticité*, was used exclusively in French. Intellectuals claimed for an eradication of "foreign" languages and the promotion of national African languages, but Mobutu was not impressed.

In the following section, some extracts from articles published in *Mwana Shaba* illustrate the UMHK's choice of language to communicate to workers. The choice of Swahili for specific topics is of interest – the UMHK wanted to ensure workers' comprehension.

4.3 *Swahili and French*

4.3.1 Announcements

In 1966, *Mwana Shaba* published an order informing workers that they were requested to always carry their identity documents.[88] It published this notification in full length in French and in Swahili. The Swahili version includes terminology that is characteristic of Lubumbashi Swahili, which includes many words borrowed from French. They are marked with quotation marks and end marks in the original:

Kwa maombi ya "service" ya "administration Générale" ya mji wa Elisabethville kwa kutaka kupunguza kazi ya "contrôles" ya wa-"agents" wa kuchunga kanuni wa-"commissaires de police" na kwa faida ya watu wa kazi, tunakumbusha ya kama, kila mkaaji wa nji wa Elisabethville anapashwa kutembea kila siku na :

1. "carte" ya "photo"
2. buku ya mpalata
3. "carte" ya kazi
4. buku ya mkubwa wa jamaa

Vitu hivi ni vya kuonyesha wakate wote pale wakubwa wa kazi ya serikali wanaiomba.[89]

At the request of the services of the general administration of the city of Elisabethville in order to facilitate the controls of the agents of order (police commissioners) and in the interest of the workers we remind any inhabitant of the city of Elisabethville that he must permanently carry his identity documents:

1. plastic card with photo
2. identity card
3. work permit
4. family register booklet

These things have to be presented to the government employees whenever requested.

In the same year, the UMHK announced the creation of shops where employees of the company could buy daily necessities at a reduced price.[90] The text was

88 *Mwana Shaba*, No. 123, 15 April 1966, 15.
89 *Mwana Shaba*, No. 123, 15 April 1966, 15.
90 *Mwana Shaba*, No. 126, 1 June 1966, 2.

given in both languages and included words of thanks by the correspondents addressed to the UMHK to allow the workers to "live better in difficult times".[91]

In the 1 June 1966 issue, *Mwana Shaba* placed an announcement for a section dedicated to letters to the editor, a section that had existed before but had been cancelled for some time.[92] The announcement was published in French and Swahili, and letters from the readers were published in both languages. Each contribution ended with a short comment, such as thanks for the contribution or a reference to further information. The editors of *Mwana Shaba* added these comments in the language in which the letter was composed. The letters to the editors that were published were of course carefully selected and served as a measure to control communicative content by the company. In 1966, *Mwana Shaba* published the following complaint by a reader, which was followed by a reply from the publisher:

M. Lambert Lukuka wa Panda anasikitika ya kuwa Kiswahili inapunguka zaidi na zaidi katika Mwana Shaba. Français ni luga inaonekana kuwa na wasomaji wa kuenea. Habari yetu fupi inayoandikwa katika français na Kiswahili inawezesha kwa wasomaji wengi zaidi kwa kujizoea luga ingine. Lakini français ya vyombo vya ufundi tuseme, ni ngumu sana kwa kuiguza katika Kiswahili. Zaidi ya ile, ukurasa wetu wa "La Boîte aux Lettres" inajibu katika luga ile msomaji alitumia. Tena musisahau ya kuwa kizazi cha sasa kinajua français na kinaituia zaidi na zaidi.[93]

M. Lambert Lukuka of Panda is sad that Swahili is diminishing more and more in Mwana Shaba.
French is a language that seems to have a widening readership.
Our short contributions written in French and Swahili enable more readers to practise the alternating language. But the technical French, let's say, is very difficult to translate into Swahili. In addition, our "La Boîte aux Lettres" page responds to the message the reader used. And do not forget that the current generation knows French and uses it more and more.

The complaint provided the publisher with the opportunity to expound on the company's view that workers' French language skills should be improved. The response by the editor of *Mwana Shaba* implies the lower prestige that was attributed to Swahili in comparison to French. Swahili was presented as a language useful for communication as long as the topic did not concern any

91 "*Vivre mieux dans des moments difficiles*"/"*kuishi vema wakati wa magumu*".
92 *Mwana Shaba*, No. 126, 1 June 1966, 14–15.
93 *Mwana Shaba*, No. 127, 15 June 1966, 14.

complex subjects. Furthermore, the company's intention as formulated in the annual report announcing the aim of language choice for *Mwana Shaba* was reproduced: French competence should increase, even though in this comment the argument was formulated openly by mentioning that bilingual texts would help to practise the other language. It was further argued that the language choice was not the choice of *Mwana Shaba* but of the composers of the letters to the editors themselves. The trend went – as they argued – towards French, especially among the youth.

4.3.2 In Memoriam

Obituaries were published in either Swahili or French in most cases: in Swahili for Congolese workers and in French for white staff members. Bilingual texts were published when the Congolese deceased person held a higher position. In 1966, for instance, the obituary for M. Alphonse Hamici was published.[94] He was *chef* of the Cité and is described as the brother of the administrative director of the weekly newspaper *La voix du Katanga*. The hierarchy within the company and society thus had an influence on the language choice.

4.3.3 Swahili

The section *Nouvelles de chez nous* (News from Us) in *Mwana Shaba* was dedicated to news covering leisure and especially sport activities in the different locations in Katanga where the UMHK had its mines and camps. Additionally, letters to the editor were often (but not always) published in this section. Swahili was the choice for all this news, with the exception of the title of this section; sometimes the pictures illustrating a topic were accompanied by a caption in French and Swahili.

De Rooij analysed the section *Habari za Kwetu* (News of/from our Place/Home), as the section *Nouvelles de chez nous* was titled in earlier issues,[95] looking at the letters to the editor in the April 1958 issue. The letters described the problems and concerns of the residents in the late 1950s. De Rooij argues that the letters that made it into the magazine nearly always presented complaints about the loss of traditional values and behaviour in the new urban centres of the Copperbelt. There were warnings against the dangers of alcohol, thievery and the changing attitude of young women who no longer automatically obeyed the old customs. De Rooij points out that during this period of rising political activity and unrest, it did not come as a big surprise that the letters to the editor did not contain any political issues. In addition, "[e]ven if some

94 *Mwana Shaba*, No. 125, 15 May 1966, 15.

95 De Rooij, "Letters".

workers would have had the courage to write about politics, the editors of the journal would have made sure that these letters never got published".[96]

De Rooij argues that the letters in *Habari za Kwetu* are examples of popular literacy because most of the employees of the UMHK were schooled workers. However, the actual proficiency in writing Swahili is difficult to assess. According to De Rooij "[t]he variability in spelling displayed in the letters allows the conclusion that there was no clear written standard variety which the writers could turn to and that to some degree their writing reflects the spoken language of that time".[97] What we gain from De Rooij's analysis of the letters is an idea of the colloquial Swahili in the Copperbelt of the late 1950s.

The UMHK's language policy left its traces in the status that is attributed today to Swahili and French, status that became obvious in the interviews and during the *baraza*. Swahili is the lingua franca among the ODVs. However, in communications between the members and the president of their association, French was more commonly used, even though the president is a Swahili speaker. In many ways the group's language use mirrored the hierarchical structures in which they had been socialised. This resulted, for instance, in very formalised openings of the meetings (three times a week in Cité Gécamines for the board members of the ODV) in French, followed by a prayer in Swahili. The discussions that followed and which I attended were characterised by a typical switching between Swahili and French, in which Lubumbashi Swahili borrows from French and vice versa.[98] Whenever I was invited to talk during these meetings, to present my research project, deposit my interview requests or speak about any other issue, I had to follow the protocol given by the president in French.

I thus addressed them in French, but switched to Swahili after a while because I soon realised that the president or his secretary started to translate French into Swahili for some participants. Ex-mineworkers' knowledge of French depends largely on the category of work they did. Blue-collar workers usually had less formal education and were thus less proficient in French, whereas those whose career paths ended in senior positions were required to have a very good command of French, not least because all the paperwork had to be handled in French. However, since the blue-collar and senior positions were classified into numerous subgroups, there was a broad spectrum of

96 De Rooij, "Letters".

97 De Rooij, "Letters".

98 A description of the code switching and code mixing in Lubumbashi Swahili is not relevant here. In a recent contribution, Mutambwa concludes: "la langue swahilie ne serait aujourd'hui que l'ensemble de ces différentes variétés" (Mutambwa, "Kiswahili", 51).

competence in Swahili and French. I therefore started to adapt to the unwritten rules that French was the appropriate choice because we were in a rather formally organised setting, but that Swahili was equally appropriate when it came to the actual content and transmission of information. The secretary showed me his meticulous minutes of these meetings since 2003. It came as no surprise that all the minutes were in French, the language that has mainly been in use for writing in Lubumbashi, not because French is more widespread but because of the lack of standardisation of Swahili in Lubumbashi. In addition, by using French for the minutes, the language of greater status, the board members emphasised the seriousness of their fight for compensation.

Before I started an interview with the ODVs, I usually asked them what their language preference was. In Cité Gécamines, where ex-blue-collar workers usually lived, they most often were in favour of Swahili, whereas in Makomeno, the neighbourhood of the former cadres, French was usually preferred. In the course of the interviews, however, both languages were spoken. These interviews would certainly serve as a rich database to analyse code switching and code mixing by speakers and listeners with a plurilingual repertoire. However, in the context of this study, the purely morpho-syntactical discussion is irrelevant.

There was one interview that was in French only, although all the communication before and after was solely in Swahili, even without any borrowings from French. This interview took place in Makomeno, in the house of a former manager who had moved with his wife to Lubumbashi from Bukavu, a city at the very east of the DRC on the border of Rwanda. In this region, the Swahili is more similar to the Swahili from the East Coast and thus much closer to the variety I had learned. From the first moment I met him and his family our communication was in Swahili only; they even expressed their delight to speak "their" Swahili. However, for the recorded interview, he insisted on French. As a manager, as he pointed out, he wanted to perform according to what was formally required. Thus, language choice is never only to ensure mutual understanding, but equally an assertion of the status linked to it.

The difference in language choice for a formal and a less formal setting also became apparent in July 2019 within the scope of the trigger event and the *baraza* in Cité Gécamines. The trigger event took place in a hall that belongs to one of the many church organisations in that neighbourhood. The formal setting, with tables for the projector and laptop, the microphone ready for the introduction by the Waza Arts Centre and myself, meant that during the individual welcomes, even the members with whom I usually spoke Swahili chose French, and it was no surprise that unknown people greeted me in French.

It was planned that Patrick Mudekereza would formally open this event and explain the idea of our co-operation. He chose Swahili for this introduction; he is from Lubumbashi and wanted to ensure that everybody would understand. My role during this event was to present my previous research and highlight the importance of the interviews I had conducted with them in 2017 and 2018 and to explain the idea of the group discussions to come. As Patrick and the president of the ODV pointed out to me during the preparatory meeting, I was in the role of the European researcher and the formal setting demanded a presentation in French. The lively debate to clarify issues after the presentation was characterised by a preference for French among those asking questions, and therefore I answered in French, while Patrick Mudekereza of the Waza Arts Centre translated everything into Lubumbashi Swahili.

The *baraza* that followed the week after took place in the meeting room of the ODV board, a room that was familiar to me and to those attending. My introduction and initial statements to initiate the discussions were in French, but often borrowed from Swahili, especially when topics demanded specific descriptions, such as to discuss of the role of the *tshanga tshanga* (the *chef de Cité* in Cité Gécamines). During the discussion, though, I often switched to Swahili, especially when I responded to a participant who had made his or her statement in Swahili. The participants used both languages, some more French than Swahili, others more Swahili than French. What characterised these gatherings most was the discussions among the participants themselves (as I had hoped), who engaged enthusiastically in sometimes highly emotional debates. Everybody spoke according to their choice, it seemed. Nevertheless, I may have influenced the language choice during these discussions simply by my presence as a researcher from Europe.

5 Proceeding from Here

I proceed on the basis of two assumptions: that (industrial) paternalism existed, and that there is an interweaving of people and materiality. Both are relevant in the context of this research.

The ODVs' master narrative of *C'était bien à l'époque!* and their constant recall of what they had been provided with by the UMHK require some remarks on paternalism and the industrial paternalistic approach by the UMHK that is visible in the archival material. Paternalism obviously left traces among the ODVs, in the sense that they felt "taken care of well".

The (ex-)workers' perceptions of paternalistic experiences are not discussed in the literature. The "beneficiaries" of paternalism (which is critically discussed

by scholars today) are conveyed as having no power and no voice and there is the sense that anyway there was no need to understand their points of view because no resistance was to be expected. After all, the ODVs benefited and got what they sorely miss today. Nevertheless, within the framework of the *baraza* the ODVs indicated the meaning that paternalism had and has for them. The nostalgic references to it during the *baraza* were evoked by spatiality: that of the *baraza*, or their houses, a location that is a constant reminder of the past. In actor-network theory these spaces are non-human actors.

5.1 *Paternalism*

Young starts his discussion of what he calls the "paternal metaphor" by referring to a comment by the Belgian Minister of the Congo De Schrijver about the rural populations in the colony, made shortly after the DRC's independence in 1960:

> I see these simple populations outside the large urban centers, and I feel myself more than ever the father of a family. And if I have ten children, that has prepared me to better understand these peoples … We know that all the children of a family must work together to achieve the big goals. And these children are like the ten fingers of my two hands. When I am in the Congo, I listen to all the voices … I say to those who only represent two fingers, 'You don't have the right to ask me not to take account of the eight others'.[99]

De Schrijver was, as Young explains, the architect of a radical decolonisation. Considering De Schrijver's position, it was surprising that he used a metaphor that reduced the Congolese to children who needed to be taken care of. Belgium's role of mother and father was the blueprint for the UMHK's approach towards their workforce, as I argue below.

Young further argues that paternalism as a guide to policy can be traced back to the founding of the Congo Free State in 1885, but until World War II the approach was more of an implicit assumption than a political theory.[100] Up to that point, the Congolese had been simply considered immature and with no need of any further "sophistication". But in the postwar era colonialism was on the defensive and needed justifications for its prolongation. This resulted in paternalistic colonial administration policies. "[R]educed to its simplest expression, paternalism required an aggressive expansion in social

99 Crawford Young, *Politics*, 59.
100 Young, *Politics*, 60.

and economic fields, with political advance postponed until some undefined threshold of maturity had been reached."[101]

Colonial "development" gained a foothold on various levels in different domains and in rural as well as urban areas. In the urban areas, for instance, "African housing" was promoted, as well as schools and hospitals. In the rural areas, the Fonds du Bien-Être Indigène promoted welfare activities from sanitary campaigns to the provision of drinking water.[102] At the societal level, for instance, "[t]he sale of liquor to Africans was prohibited until 1955. This restriction dated back to the Brussels Anti-Slavery Conference of 1889–1890; initially, it was no doubt a humanitarian measure to halt the ravages of alcoholism and prevent unscrupulous exploitation".[103]

In relation to companies, in 1946 the legislation adopted the establishment of Conseils d'entreprise, similar to company unions, which were a forum for discussions between labour and management about worker grievances.[104] Half of the worker members were elected. Young argues that these bodies were a determining factor for the slow growth of African labour organisations.

For this study, I use the term "paternalism" to refer to all the measures used by Belgium (and by proxy, the UMHK) to "take care of" or "control" the Congolese or the workers (that were urgently needed). I do so against the background that paternalistic approaches were seen as a strategy to show concern or goodwill at that time. As Young put it:

> Hailey is quite right to add that the "concern of the Administration has not in fact been merely material; there has been a real element of good will toward the African population and its welfare. Good will is implicit in the paternal metaphor."[105]

The goodwill of the mining companies in the region was seen as such by many mineworkers, as Larmer et al. also point out.

> In Katanga, the provision of comprehensive social services by the triumvirate of the mine company UMHK, the Roman Catholic Church and the

101 Young, *Politics*, 60.
102 Young, *Politics*, 62.
103 Young, *Politics*, 66.
104 Young, *Politics*, 62.
105 Young, *Politics*, 63.

> Belgian colonial state created a system of paternalism which many mineworkers and their families genuinely regarded as generous.[106]

I consider the discussions on paternalism mainly as a discourse about a unilateral declaration, because the paternalistic metaphor simply reduces the "beneficiaries" of the measures to recipients lacking agency. For this study, I thus understand paternalism as a setting in which the mining company operated. This paternalistic approach is evident in the ideological orientation of the company's decisions, which can be seen, for example in the reports from the archives.

Since the paternal metaphor is at least implicitly used by the ODVs today as a reference point for a time when they lived in good circumstances, the question arises whether beneficiaries of a paternalistic approach are powerless or whether they find strategies to use the role of supposed powerlessness productively in order to cope with their current situation.

In this context it is worth examining a case study by Mutongi, who describes widows' agency in western Kenya from the 1940s to the 1960s.[107] The widows, the powerless "objects", used strategies to act within the alleged beneficiary roles to use the construction of the feminine, and consequently also masculine, categories for their own benefit. Mutongi describes that the widows

> consciously presented themselves as "poor widows", as idealized stereotypes of suffering females who were believed to become needy and helpless at the death of their husbands. They told their stories in ways calculated to solicit sympathy. And this usually worked to their advantage since it placed men in the difficult situation of having to defend their "ideal" masculinity.[108]

By grieving in public, the widows drew attention to their social and economic needs. They reinforced the importance of the gender categories to prompt men, who had to uphold their own self-image, to guarantee the economic livelihood and social status of the bereaved widows. "Assisting widows in the tasks previously performed by their deceased husbands made men feel 'strong', 'dynamic' and 'paternalistic'."[109] The widows' main aim was to acquire sufficient

106 Larmer, Guene and Henriet, *Across the Copperbelt* 15.

107 Kenda Mutongi, "'Worries of the Heart': Widowed Mothers, Daughters and Masculinities in Maragoli, Western Kenya, 1940–60", *The Journal of African History* 40, no. 1 (1999).

108 Mutongi, "Worries", 68.

109 Mutongi, "Worries", 70.

money to educate their daughters, in response to a paradigm shift that had occurred in that time. Young men preferred to marry well-educated young women – women who knew how to manage a modern household – which fit into Christian and European ideas about modernity and civilisation.

Mutongi's case study shows that at approximately the same time that the Lubumbashi mineworkers started their working careers in a paternalistic context, strategies to challenge the passive role existed, though in a different geographical and societal setting. Although I did not find evidence of these strategies in the archive, probably because of the corporate nature of the documents, I think the fact that the roles of beneficiary, passive and agent, can be reversed is important. Taking this line of thought further and applying it to the situation of ODVs, I conclude that they are not paralysed either, but also use strategies to voice their agency. The discourse on the past, the present and the future is thus shaped from different but intertwined roles.

5.2 *Interweaving*

The basic idea of actor-network theory (ANT), first developed by Bruno Latour and Michel Callon, is to bypass the subject-object dichotomy and instead focus on the interweaving of people and non-human "beings". The idea is not, as has often been assumed, to assign non-human things (such as objects, technology, animals, plants) attributes that are usually regarded as special features of the human capacity to act (such as consciousness, intentionality and eccentric positionality). On the contrary, ANT virtually refuses to make any a priori statements about the competencies, qualities and characteristics of the actors involved.[110] Latour suggested that ANT should be understood as the science of associations. The idea is that the concept of the actor should be expanded. Latour argues that we can either follow social theorists and set up at the start which group and level of analyses we will focus on, or "we follow the actors' own ways and begin our travels by the traces left behind by their activity of forming and dismantling groups".[111]

I use this concept of ANT to underline my argument that spatial configurations and objects in a space, as well as materiality, influence society in a dialectical relationship. Law argues that the successful long-distance control by Portuguese colonists was based on an expansion that involved "the

110 Lars Gertenbach, "Die Droge als Aktant: Akteur-Netzwerk-Theorie", in *Handbuch Drogen in sozial- und kulturwissenschaftlicher Perspektive*, eds. Robert Feustel, Henning Schmidt-Semisch and Ulrich Bröckling (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2019), 267.

111 Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory,* Clarendon lectures in management studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 29.

technological, the economic, the political, the social and the natural [...] all seen as being interrelated".[112] He shows that it was the combination of science, drill (a strict set of rules) and physical tools that allowed the Portuguese navy to be successful over a long period of time. Thus, objects are of a structural nature but they are not determinants. Seen from the perspective of ANT, people can be understood as a result of the unfolding web of relationships in which they are involved. And human and non-human actors are interconnected.[113]

In the context of this study, I see spatial objects, especially houses, as non-human actors. I treat them as triggers of nostalgia, as I will explain.

Let me draw your attention to one of the houses that was of great importance for this study: the house in which most meetings with the board members of the ODV and all *baraza* took place. The house was owned by Mama Helene, the "blind widow", as everybody called her. According to her late husband's will, the house was to serve as the meeting place for the ODV board. Her husband had been a member of this board as well as her companion. Mama Helene made the living room of her house available for these meetings. She was therefore usually around during the meetings, sometimes sitting in them and listening to them, sometimes sitting outside in front of the house. She was not a member of the board. Nevertheless, she was a participant in the board meetings, she was the "human infrastructure" who linked the house with the ODVs and facilitated the joint struggle. Thus, in this network Mama Helene linked human agency (the board members of the ODV) and non-human agency (the living room of the house), and the spatial object became the trigger for nostalgia. I follow Bennett, who writes:

> Place can be understood as simultaneously imagined and embodied, an active site for social practices through history, memory, other people, and material things. [...] History is not stuck in the past but moves through the lives of people and places, and is constantly being recreated in the present through memories (Blokland, 2001; Kuhn, 2000) and the presence of material objects (Jones, 2010).[114]

112 John Law, "On the Methods of Long-Distance Control: Vessels, Navigation and the Portuguese Route to India", *The Sociological Review* 32, 1_suppl (1984): 235.

113 John Law and Vicky Singleton, "ANT and Politics: Working in and on the World", *Qualitative Sociology* 36, no. 4 (2013): 491.

114 Bennett, "Gifted Places", 658.

The intertwining of the people involved in the research, with ever-changing roles, the associated material environment and the connection of knowledge from archives with newly created knowledge – the new alternative archive – are at the centre of this study. All these interconnections become visible at the moment they are communicated.

6 Conceptual Background of the Nostalgia-based Master Narrative

Reflecting on nostalgia involves thinking from today's perspective about what has been lost. I approach nostalgia by taking a closer look at the discourse and then suggesting that nostalgia works as a backward projection to solve today's problems.

6.1 *The Object of Loss*

Odhiambo discusses the lyrics of a song by Jumanne Omari, a musician from Samia in western Kenya, whose works often dealt with proletarian labour.[115] The following lines of a song from 1958 illustrate the virtues of humble domestic work:

Kazi ya Kiboi	The work of houseboy
Inapendwa sana	Is very much liked
Na vijana	By young men
Kwa sababu yake	The reason being
Wana pata posho	They get rations
Na nyumba ya bure.	and free accommodation.[116]

The work of a domestic servant is described as being attractive to young men, not because of the work in particular but simply because of the benefits linked to it: food and housing. This example illustrates that work was neither exclusively perceived as exploitative by employees, nor that the topic of this section is unique to Elisabethville/Lubumbashi.

Fabian's *History from Below* is a remarkable work that discusses the booklet *Vocabulaire de ville de Elisabethville*,[117] an account by André Yav, a former domestic servant. Yav's narrative of Elisabethville's history covers roughly

115 E.S.A. Odhiambo, "Kula Raha: Gendered Discourses and the Contours of Leisure in Nairobi, 1946–63", *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa* 36–37, no. 1 (2001), 262.

116 Translation by Odhiambo.

117 Fabian, *History*.

the years between 1885 and 1958, the years before the song above came to be known.[118]

In Yav's narrative, work conditions are mainly described as difficult and exploitative. "There was not a single worker who was able to open his mouth, even a little bit. [...]. Then we boys lived in true misery."[119] The boys' described hardship is also specified in relation to housing conditions. For instance, the lack of sufficient space troubles the father of a family; the absence of sufficient privacy[120] to get dressed before going to work is described as follows:

> Because they thought [it good] to build for the black man just a one-room house. [But] this man had his wife and his children, some of them male, some of them female. Now this poor man with his wife and children suffered when he went to sleep and when he awoke. Who is this man? The poor man, the boy, who sleeps in one small room together with his children, female and male. When he goes to work, the poor boy, when he wakes up, he says to all this grown-up children: Mothers and fathers, you must excuse me. Get up and leave, or go first outside. Me, your old man, I want to put on my clothes first.[121]

Lack of sufficient space is compared to the space available to the employer:

> And should this White man have two rooms, enough to give both to his employee, the boy, he puts a lock on it [to make it] his chicken coop or rabbit hutch. In that respect the White had a very bad spirit indeed. But there were many among them who had a very good spirit and took very good care of their people.[122]

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118 See Schicho ("Linguistic Notes") in Fabian, *History;* for linguistic and anthropological notes see Pauni and Dibwe dia Mwembu, "Vocabulaire».

119 Fabian, *History,* 75.

120 In her very interesting contribution, Malevez discusses how male architects of colonial architecture contributed to the exclusion of men from domestic work: "Intimacy is one of the notions at the core of this process: by branding the home as an 'intimate refuge from work' for men, domestic manuals and architecture and design magazines implicitly excluded them from participating in domestic work. Intimacy was also a prism through which male architects thought about the layout of houses. Rather than aiming to impress the occasional visitor, they advocated for homes to cater to their inhabitants' needs, discarding at the same time the need for domestic servants. Homes became more rational and practical, but also more 'intimate' as a result." (Malevez, "Les douceurs", 2)

121 Fabian, *History*, 75.

122 Fabian, *History*, 77.

This second excerpt reveals that the relationship between employer and employee was not always considered exploitative, and that in some cases employees were well taken care of. *C'était bien à l'époque!* (It was good at that time!), the most commonly expressed sentence by the interview partners talking about the former times, refers to before 2003. But as in Yav's account, in comparison to the ODVs' narrative, which related to a time long past, the sentiment of being well taken care of was of utmost importance to the ex-mineworkers. The nostalgic narrative of the past is based on the general perception *de ne pas être abandonné* (of not being abandoned). The references to being well taken care of are manifold among the members of the ODV and are discussed further below.

The decline in living conditions is a topic not only among the ex-mineworkers but also in the verbal arts of Lubumbashi today. Sando Marteau is a performing artist who lives in Lubumbashi and is "one of the very few Congolese poets who consistently employ Swahili for their compositions. Full of melancholy tones, Sando Marteau's beautiful, deep songs speak out the pain and malaise of contemporary Congolese society".[123] Rettová provides us with the Swahili lyrics of Marteau's song *Union Minère du Haut-Katanga*:[124]

Alikuwa mama wa Wacongomani wote,	She was the mother of all Congolese,
mama wa watoto wa Katanga,	the mother of the children of Katanga,
mushariki wa ulimwengu muzima,	a companion for the whole world,
na yeye wote walioneyamo.[125]	everyone found his place in it.

The reference to "mother" is used synonymously for the mining company that offered a place for everyone and took care of her "children". Also, the reference to "not being abandoned" is present in this song as it is in ex-workers' narratives.

The second stanza states that "the Congo is in tears" (*leo Congo mu matshozi*), followed by a reference to exploitation, asking the question "for whose benefit?" (*kwa faida ya nani*?) in the third stanza. In the fourth stanza, today's mining companies are criticised: "stranger ate what was on the table" (*Mutoka mbali alikuliya lwe ku meza*) "while the Congolese picked up the crumbs on the

123 Alena Rettová, "Swahili and Swahili Poetry in Lubumbashi: The Language and Lyrics of Sando Marteau", *Archív Orientální* 86, no. 3 (2018): 333.

124 Alena Rettová, *Chanter l'existence*: *La poésie de Sando Marteau et ses horizons philosophiques* (Středokluky: Zdeněk Susa, 2013), 90. I adapted Rettová's orthographic version (compiling the morphemes belonging to one predicate, noun, etc. in one word) to facilitate understanding for readers of (Standard) Swahili, because Marteau's specific orthographic style is not relevant for this chapter.

125 Rettová, *Chanter*, 90.

ground" (*na Mucongomani alilokota twa tshini*). The fifth stanza describes that the "companies extracted all the riches" (*Wali tshimbula mali fasi zote*) and "left the ponds without fish" (*kwatsha bishima bila samaki*).

The nature of the problem described corresponds to the perceptions of the ex-workers. They explained how today the wealth is taken by foreign companies which leave no benefits for them. In the sixth stanza of the song, Marteau asks where the leaders are, who are missing in these times:

Mabunge tulitshawa muko wapi?	Our elected representatives, our parliamentarians, where are you?
Viongozi mune tu ongoza muko wapi?	Leaders who lead us, where are you?
Kwetu kama aina kwetu,	At our place, it's as if we did not have a home;
kwetu kama dju ya muti,	with us, it's like being perched on top of a tree.
mali yetu kama aina yetu,	Our riches are as if they were not ours,
mali yetu kama ya benyewe.	our riches are as if they belonged to someone else.
Atu oneyemo,	We do not find ourselves in them,
atu oneyemo ma minings,	we do not end up in mining companies,
sisi atu oneyemo.[126]	we do not find ourselves in them.

The same perception of missing leadership manifested in the interviews and during the *baraza*, when statements like "*On a besoin d'un conducteur*" (We need a leading figure [lit. driver]) were made. In Marteau's song and among the members of the Collectif des ex-agents de la Gécamines, the UMHK – the mining company of the old times – is glorified whereas the state enterprise, Gécamines, which succeeded the UMHK, is criticised. Today's politicians and leaders are considered responsible for the economic decline.

Sando Marteau published another version of this song: *Mama wa Wacongomani* (Mother of the Congolese). In this version, "mother" is as a synonym for the UMHK. Many of the verses are similar, but this version includes a second verse that praises the mother for very specific qualities:

Alijenga mabarabara, masomo,	She built roads, schools,
mahospitali, miji mbali mbali,	hospitals, different cities,
wafanya kazi wake wali lipa vizuri,	and the workers were well paid,
mutoka mbali na mwana Congo	foreigners and Congolese
wote walifurahi,	were all happy,
kweli alikuwa mama wa wote.[127]	she really was a mother to all.

126 Rettová, *Chanter*, 91.
127 Rettová, *Chanter*, 88–89.

The building of infrastructure, the payment of good wages and general good conditions for Congolese and foreigners alike correspond to the ODVs' sentiment of *C'était bien à l'époque!* Thus the nostalgia is a sentiment expressed not only by individuals formerly employed in the mining sector, but also by artists of different art forms.[128] The widely heard catchphrase *Union Minière* [*kaji*] *njo baba, njo mama* (the Union Minière [or alternatively, salaried work] is the father and the mother)[129] thus sounds like the abstract of this song, reflecting the perception that the company was like a parental figure.

Sammy Baloji's artworks are prominent in Jewsiewicki's reflections on local collective memory and popular culture. Baloji works with a heritage that does not belong to him "because it was written from the gaze of elsewhere and refers to the generations of their fathers and grandfathers".[130] With these "ruins" that Baloji processes in his works he focuses on replacing old metaphors with new ones, with the purpose of reconstructing what is missing today.[131] This artist's work displays, as in Marteau's songs, the nostalgia that permeates today's society.

In *Native Nostalgia*, Dlamini explains that sentiments of nostalgia confirm that people's lives in the past were different in comparison to the current moment – though not in the way often imagined.[132] The author assumes that nostalgia is "a sentiment of loss and displacement" and "it is about present anxieties refracted through the prism of the past".[133] This sentiment usually erupts in moments when people feel adrift in a world that seems to be out of their control. This is certainly the case for the ex-mineworkers in this study, who regretfully refer to their good life in the past.

Following Boym,[134] Dlamini[135] delineates two types of nostalgia.[136] First, he discusses restorative nostalgia, the emphasis of which lies in "*nóstros*" (return/homecoming). Thus, a person wishes "to rebuild the lost home and patch up

128 Schicho (*Le Groupe Mufwankolo*) and Fabian (*Power*), for instance, researched the theatre troupe Mufwankolo, who promoted the local variety of Swahili.

129 Petit and Mutambwa, "LA CRISE", 470.

130 Jewsiewicki, "Leaving", 6.

131 Jewsiewicki, "Leaving", 7.

132 Dlamini, *Native*, 12.

133 Dlamini, *Native*, 16.

134 Boym, *Future*.

135 Dlamini, *Native*, 17.

136 Nadia Atia and Jeremy Davies, "Nostalgia and the Shapes of History", *Memory Studies* 3, no. 3 (2010): 182. "In 1688, the Swiss doctor Johannes Hofer proposed a name for a certain type of wasting disease. The word combined the Greek *Nostos*, 'return to the native land', with *Algos*, [meaning] suffering or grief; so that thus far it is possible from the force of the sound Nostalgia to define the sad mood originating from the desire for the return to one's native land' (Hofer, 1934 [1688]: 381)".

the memory gaps". Reflective nostalgia, on the other hand, "dwells in algia,[137] in longing and loss, the imperfect process of remembrance". People who would be classified as restorative nostalgics would not think of themselves as nostalgic at all; rather, they are convinced that their project is about truth. In contrast, reflecting nostalgics would not take the past for granted, as "there is no monumental past to recreate".[138]

The ODVs did not make a single reference to a wish to convince me of the "truth" of the past. There is no master narrative to correct, as it does not exist. When I referred earlier to the *Vocabulaire de ville de Elisabethville*, it was not an attempt to compare the narratives of the domestic servant of that time with those of the ODVs. The life experiences are not the same (although Yav describes the economic crisis in the 1930s and the ODVs experienced a severe economic decline). It is no surprise that the longing for earlier work and better living conditions was common. In that sense, Worby and Allen's approach to nostalgia seems to add a valuable aspect. They suggest that nostalgia "denotes a specific way of enfolding the past into the present, and indeed the future".[139] Worby and Ally elicit Dlamini's different registers; in the sociological reading, they identify nostalgia as a particular sentiment that represents a symptom, and use that symptom to diagnose and explain an underlying social malaise.[140] The workers' painful longing ("*algia*") does not refer to returning home ("*nostos*") but can rather be seen as an expression of this mood that represents the symptom of the underlying malaise. Furthermore, the "home" may have existed or it may have been purely imaginary; more importantly, it may belong to the past or to the future.[141]

Rosaldo discusses an additional and different aspect of nostalgia. He points to the fact that "agents of colonialism – officials, constabulary officers, missionaries, and other figures from whom anthropologists ritually dissociate themselves – often display nostalgia for the colonized culture as it was 'traditionally' (that is, when they first encountered it)."[142] However, this category of nostalgia is not relevant for this study. The UMHK and the Belgian (colonial) state were far from innocent in altering or destroying "traditional" life. I will

137 In neo-Latin, "*nostalgia*" = homesickness; in Greek, "*nóstos*" = return (to the homeland) and "*álgos*" = pain; today's meaning is probably influenced by the synonymous English nostalgia. Do you need this footnote, having made the point more or less in the footnote above?

138 Dlamini, *Native*, 18.

139 Worby and Ally, "Disappointment", 468.

140 Worby and Ally, "Disappointment", 460.

141 Piot, *Nostalgi*a, 20.

142 Rosaldo, "Imperialist" , 107–8.

read the measures they took to control and shape society and workers against the backdrop of actions of control.

Nevertheless, the nostalgia of the Belgians in this sense is an important aspect, which is relevant to Mobutu Sese Seko's undertaking to change Congo's imaginary. For example, he changed the name of Léopoldville to Kinshasa in 1966, and launched a campaign under the motto of *authenticité* (authenticity), which attempted to reclaim the nation's African traditions.[143] In the ideological *manifeste de la N'sele*, published in 1967, he defined *authenticité* and *Mobutism*. From a political point of view, *authenticité* started in 1971 when Mobutu addressed the UN on 14 February.[144] The motto of *authenticité* was created as an all-encompassing African philosophy and "represented a departure from the ferocity of the colonial experience and provided a cohesive and comprehensive value system (cultural, political, legal, and economic) to harmonize the past with the present".[145]

I see the ODVs' narrative of the glorious past as a possibility to elicit their "object of loss" in particular.[146] Their nostalgic narratives are associated less with life as a whole than with different aspects and facets that constitute a worker's life. I thus consider *C'était bien à l'époque!* as a concomitant feature and as a starting point to analyse how the workers interpreted and shaped their world on the basis of different facets expressed in concrete texts that represent the knowledge and thoughts of particular times.

The nostalgic reference to the past serves not only to remember the good times of the past but equally to create a feeling of belonging. Bennett points out that the past "is always viewed from a distance" and therefore it "is often seen as relatively fixed and stable compared to the present (May, 2013)".[147] She argues that it is the belonging that offers a stability that is needed in times of change because

> [i]t is change, rather than continuity, which is more difficult to come to terms with for many people, as it can lead to a loss of ontological security

143 Dunn, "Imagining", 235. For a detailed discussion of *authenticité* and its effect on arts, see, for example, Van Beurden, *Authentically African*.

144 Daviel Lazure Vieria, "Precolonial Imaginaries and Colonial Legacies in Mobutu's 'Authentic' Zaïre", in *Exploitation and Misrule in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa*, eds. Kenneth Kalu and Toyin Falola, 1st ed., African Histories and Modernities (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019), 171.

145 Vieria, "Precolonial", 168.

146 Worby and Ally, "Disappointment", 468.

147 Julia Bennett, "Narrating Family Histories: Negotiating Identity and Belonging Through Tropes of Nostalgia and Authenticity", *Current Sociology* 66, no. 3 (2018): 450.

> (Back, 2009; Giddens, 1991; Savage, 2008). A feeling of belonging may mitigate this loss (Bennett, 2012; May, 2013).

I thus see the strategies with which members of the ODV create their belonging to one group as a tool to cope with a life that radically changed in 2003.

Nostalgia is not a unique phenomenon among the ODV, and has been widely discussed under different perspectives in relation to economic decline. Bissell, for instance, examines nostalgia for the colonial past among Zanzibaris whose turning point was also economic change – the moment when the clove industry largely collapsed. "Unable to supply the "goods" of life, the state faced increasing levels of discontent. In the streets, ujamaa socialism was widely seen as the source of economic and social stagnation".[148]

Bissell argues that certain factors are necessary for the emergence of nostalgia. First, there must be a sense of linear historical time, because "[i]f history ends in redemption or if history cycles around in eternal return, then nostalgia becomes redundant".[149] Second, there must be a sense of loss, where

> [t]he present must be compared to other moments and marked as a moment of decline—as in the fall of empires, for example, or national eclipse, or a loss of power and position by a particular social group. Moreover, nostalgia requires an object world to seize on—buildings, fashion, images, and the ephemera of everyday life".[150]

Like Worby, Bissell points out that there is a loss that is connected to objects:

> As a false or fictitious history, the product of fantasy, nostalgia lacks a "proper" distance or objectivity. Moreover, it is typically represented as a reaction to a larger and more encompassing set of forces: modernity or modernization; consumption, spectacle, and the eclipse of history; postmodernism; transnational or late capitalism; and, of course, globalization.[151]

The ODV s' nostalgia is not a "colonial nostalgia" as described by Bissell, because their longing focuses mainly on the company that took care of them, before

148 Bissell, "Engaging", 219.
149 Bissell, "Engaging", 221.
150 Bissell, "Engaging", 221.
151 Bissell, "Engaging", 224–25.

and also after independence. However, the company's economic development is linked to historical events, though that is not represented in an explicit way. Likewise, the ODVs' nostalgia is not linked to an experience of dislocation. Their nostalgia focuses on being employed and being well cared for, which materialised in the access to objects. These objects of loss are discussed in the following chapter.

Nostalgia also gained interest among scholars working on the industrial sector, where it has been described as a strategy to create a feeling of belonging. Strangleman discusses nostalgia in reference to railway companies.[152] He suggests that the past, history and identity are almost malleable and thus used by managements and/or governments to win consent for change, or minimise criticism among workers and the public.

In Strangleman's approach, nostalgia is seen a result of successful strategies used by those in power over others. In his work, managements or governments are responsible for creating a sense of belonging. They create a corporate culture that results in nostalgia among the employees. He refers to Gabriel,[153] who argues that "marginalised workers attach nostalgic meaning to a wide variety of animate and inanimate objects in their work lives, and from such attachments derive ontological security".[154] It is therefore worth examining the discourse of those in power, in the context of this study of a mining company. At the same time, following Strangleman, nostalgia becomes visible in the ex-mineworkers' feelings of being neglected. Equally visible is how this feeling is linked to animate and inanimate objects that are intertwined with the lost employment.

The longing for what is lacking in the present is, following Pickering and Keightley, not only a yearning for what is not attainable anymore, owing to the irreversibility of time; it is also important to take into account that "to condemn nostalgia solely to this position leaves unattended not only more general feelings of regret for what time has brought, but also more general questions for how the past may actively engage with the present and future".[155]

6.2 *Nostalgic Backward Projection as a Solution to Current Problems and the Future*

I have often reflected on the term "surveillance". I encountered it in its French usage in documents of the colonial state and of the UMHK alike in connection

152 Strangleman, "Nostalgia", 729.

153 Yiannis Gabriel, "Organizational Nostalgia: Reflections on 'The Golden Age'", in *Emotion in Organizations*, ed. Stephen Fineman (London: SAGE, 1993).

154 Strangleman, "Nostalgia", 729.

155 Pickering and Keightley, "Modalities", 920.

with measures taken to control the many different domains of a worker's life. In literature, the term is used in the same sense:

A unique feature of the Belgian system was the Commission for the Protection of ~~Natives~~ [DW]. This body was designed to be a sort of moral ombudsman, to maintain *surveillance* [italics DW] on the administration and companies and to expose and denounce any exploitation of the African population."[156]

I therefore read this noun exclusively as a synonym for monitoring, observation, control and as a term that describes a situation of a unilateral performance by a powerful instance, leaving those under surveillance in a position with limited agency. However, the actions of those in the subaltern position also leave traces that influence those in power.

One of the group discussions was dedicated to "surveillance", which we agreed upon at the trigger-event. From my side, I wished to discuss points that I extracted from earlier interviews. However, what I perceived as the control of workers by the company (such as the gong mentioned by almost all interviewees, which marked working hours and free time, or medical examinations to conduct medical experiments, unannounced house inspections or the careful compilation of films screened to workers in the leisure circles) was – to summarise it very generally – described as a feeling of "being taken care of" and "not being neglected". The ODVs linked what I considered as surveillance in all contexts to the company taking care of them.

The nostalgic sentiment of the lack of a general leading figure can be seen in comments by ex-workers during the *baraza*, such as "*Quel papa va nous encore rassembler?"* (Which father will gather us now?), "*Est-ce qu'on peut exister sans papa*?" (Can we exist without father?), "*On a besoin d'un conducteur*" (We need a leader [lit. driver].) or "*On cherche un papa The early paternalist approach, un papa qui va nous conduire au paiement ya franca yetu*" (We are looking for a responsible father, a father that will guide us to our money being paid). All these statements refer to their current situation, where nobody is taking care of them anymore, expressing their feeling of helplessness. The term *papa* has another layer that goes beyond the simple reference to a father figure. It is used to describe a boss, someone from whom they can demand support in exchange for their manpower. However, that working relationship no longer exists. Hence, the call for a *papa* by the ex-workers is also a yearning for employment. Unfortunately, those times are now gone.

It is important to note that there were some voices with critical self-reflection among the ex-workers regarding their nostalgia. One participant in a *baraza*

156 Young, *Politics*, 38.

mentioned that they should be more proactive and take control of their lives, using the metaphor of the father figure in his statement: "*Nous avons dépassé le temps pour un autre papa*" (The time for [searching for] another father has passed). One participant summarised our discussion as follows: "*l'avenir iko sombre"* (the future is dark).

The interviewees and participants of the *baraza* were socialised in a company structure that fostered an approach where workers were to be provided what was needed for life, while workers in return dedicated their life to their employer. Discussions on the dangers of the former paternalistic approach for one's own agency today, however, usually resulted in the interviewees' and participants' reference to the current lack of father figure.

What Strangleman described as a successful strategy used by the ones in power can thus be read as being successful among the members of the ODV. Their longing to be taken care of is a longing for a paternalistic experience. They received objects, animate and inanimate, in return for a life they dedicated to the company. The dangers of paternalistic policy were discussed in 1947 by Malengreau:

> The object of paternalist policy is to make the African a being assisted, insured and pensioned, instead of making him a free man … Each native is provided with his standardized house, mass-produced furniture, pre-determined scale of food, his free time regulated to the last detail without a trace of imagination … Man turned into a sort of vegetable, in an anticipation of the mechanical earthy paradise of Bernanos. But all times, men have found freedom in misery preferable to a comfortable slavery.[157]

The early paternalist approach by the UMHK is illustrated by the following words of a supervisor at the UMHK in 1935, which reflect the slogan "*Bonne santé, bon moral, bon rendement"* ("Good health, good morale, good performance"), launched in 1927:

157 Malengreau cit. in Young, *Politics*, 71.

Le chef d'exploitation surveille l'entraînement de son ouvrier noir (…) Le chef de camp veille à la bonne discipline de son personnel, pendant et après le travail (…) Le missionnaire (…) inculque aux enfants et aux adultes les principes d'une bonne morale et d'une bonne hygiène. Le médecin soigne les malades et prévient les maladies. Tous interviennent dans l'éducation et le relèvement du noir.[158]

The supervisor of the exploitation supervises the training of his black worker (…) The camp leader ensures the proper discipline of his staff, during and after work (…) The missionary (…) inculcates to children and adults the principles of good morale and good hygiene. The doctor treats the sick and prevents diseases. All are involved in the education and raising the black.

Paternalistic actions concerned not only work and leisure, but the most intimate matters, such as marriage. What Cooper postulates for French and British Africa equally applies to the Belgian ideology: "Women as the provided for".[159] Thus, the UMHK supported their workers in getting married as one of the measures of the stabilisation policy, as it is explicitly mentioned for instance in the annual report of 1937.[160]

Les contrats de travail de longue durée (3 ans ou au minimum 2 ans) constituent avec les mariages des travailleurs (surtout des recrues) les bases les plus solides d'une bonne politique de stabilisation M.O.I.

Long-term employment contracts (3 years or at least 2 years) constitute, together with the marriage of workers (especially recruits), the most solid basis for a good stabilisation policy of the MOI.

"Already at the time of their recruitment, labourers were encouraged to take their wife and children with them, if they had any. If they did not yet have a wife, but had already started the 'traditional' negotiations with the family-in-law, the recruiter did everything in his power to make the marriage happen (Annual Report MOI 1947: 24–25)".[161]

The UMHK had a marriage brokerage system that provoked feelings of helplessness among workers as they realised "that they depended on their employer not only for wages, food and housing, but for love and family as well".[162] In

158 Vellut, *Les bassins,* 52.
159 Cooper, *Decolonization*, 468.
160 AGR 2 – n°0654-03037, Rapport Annuel 1937, 12.
161 Cuvelier, "Men", 78.
162 Fetter, *Creation*, 146.

the nostalgic references to the times when a father figure was taking care of workers, the downside of the paternalistic approach were usually faded out.

In the following chapter, I discuss the ex-mineworkers' nostalgia against the backdrop of three concerns that are in the broadest sense linked to the overall topic of surveillance. First, the ODVs' feeling of lacking stability, which I examine on the basis of the concepts of *kazi* (work), leisure, space and the controlling system of *tshanga tshanga* and *malonda*, invented by the UMHK. Second, *heshima* (respect) – all the ODVs reported, although in different ways, their experiences of loss of respect that went hand in hand with the loss of employment. I illustrate this topic with three individual accounts. The third concern refers to matters that I read as relevant for creating identities.