

Conclusion

Things Reassembled

In his postcolonial classic *Things Fall Apart*, Chinua Achebe (2001) tells the story of Okonkwo in great detail, his narration revealing the dramatic changes of social relations within Igbo society. I too have based my ethnography on relations of agonism and how they changed in respect to the socio-economic position of particular social groups in Mpatamatu. I wanted to carve out the individuality of the township's residents, their different experiential perspectives on the township's former social welfare buildings, and the practices and strategies they pursued in reappropriating bars, clubs, clinics, community centres and sports facilities. What happened to Mpatamatu's social welfare buildings gave me a glimpse of how people were coping with the post-industrial and, more precisely, post-paternalist processes of ruination that had marked the township since the reprivatization of Zambia's copper sector in 1997.

Mpatamatu was started as a corporate mine township by Roan Antelope Copper Mines (RACM) in 1957. Over a period of twenty years, the township extended ultimately to comprise seven sections, with residential houses for more than twenty thousand people. The mine shaped the lives and material living environment of its labour force through its paternalist practices for forty years. In the 1990s, mine operators started to retreat from those forms of the mine's social investment that lay outside the shafts, pits and plants. This corporate abandonment resulted in the internal restructuring of Mpatamatu. The social welfare buildings were separated from the mine and repurposed as parts of the municipal township of Mpatamatu in the city of Luanshya. I have investigated this repurposing through the reappropriation of the buildings from three different angles.

History gave me an understanding of how the area on which RACM started to mine copper in 1928 was transformed into an extractive sphere by corporate colonialism, how Luanshya was established as a company town, how Mpatamatu and its social welfare buildings were administered under the mine's corporate paternalism, and how the reappropriation of the buildings after the mine had left was informed by the township's corporate past.

Relations offered a way of examining how the material environment and the social order of Mpatamatu mutually informed and interacted with each other. Connections were cut and others newly established. These social and socio-material relations revealed the tremendous changes in the socio-economic positions of men vs. women, miners vs. teachers, and miners vs. preachers.

Materiality uncovered aspects of past corporate social control and opportunity. The former social welfare buildings had separated the locations of work, domesticity and leisure, manifesting the mine's capitalist time regime and gendered division of labour. Simultaneously, the buildings were at the core of community maintenance and reproduction. Left as corporate remains in a municipal township, the buildings resembled the cat in Schrödinger's experiment on the state of quantum superposition: the buildings may possess the potency to both ruin and renovate the community around them at the same time. Only practices of reappropriation collapsed this entanglement into one trajectory or the other.

My fieldwork in Mpatamatu focused on people's interactions with material sites and vice-versa that had been products of imperial practices under British colonialism and transnational capitalism. Corporate paternalism penetrated the socio-industrial project that had turned the rural landscape of the Copperbelt into an urban cluster of towns serving the industry. In light of the copper sector's reprivatization, I chose to move beyond what the industry had first established, maintained, and then left behind in Mpatamatu. Hence, in this book I have examined the reciprocal conditioning of material sites and social action through renovation projects in a ruinous post-paternalist landscape.

Relocation

The local specificities of ruination in Mpatamatu unfolded in the multiple relocations that took place after 1997. The privatization of Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines (ZCCM) resulted in a relocation of capital from the mines as integrated sites of work and life to the mines as exclusive sites of mineral extraction. This relocation ended most of the industry's social investment on the Copperbelt. Since the inception of the industry, mining companies had recognized that production and revenues were linked to maintaining a site of social existence for their labour force. This rationale stemmed from the trajectory of the mining sector, which had constructed the Copperbelt's basic infrastructures in the first place and was competing with other mines in central and southern

Africa for labour in the early days of industrial mining. At the time of ZCCM's privatization, the copper industry's prospects were dim. Investors resisted taking over the responsibility for the mines' social investments in order to cut costs. The mines had shaped people's lives over decades by being present in the residential areas. This presence changed into corporate absence as the relocation of capital destroyed the mines as unitary structures of paternalism.

Mpatamatu changed from being the most comprehensively planned mine township in Luanshya on the front line of the mine's production to being an abandoned municipal township in the periphery of Luanshya. Chapter 1 showed the township as a multi-layered place related to the Lamba people, colonial conquest and memorization, capitalist investment, scientific ore extraction, medicalization, segregationist town planning, corporate paternalism, social opportunity and post-paternalist ruination. Most of the mine's former infrastructures outside the mine's production area were reassigned as the responsibility of private businesses, the municipality, the province and the state. It became the government's obligation to provide and maintain the basic infrastructures in order to safeguard 'the operations of the market' (Comaroff and Comaroff 2000: 324). However, private actors and the government could not step in as fast or as comprehensively as the mine had left. Moreover, the mine operators retained their presence in selected areas. This selective presence of corporate social responsibility (CSR) reproduced colonial spatial hierarchies within the city of Luanshya. The corporate facilities still being run by CNMC Luanshya Copper Mines (CLM) in Luanshya were concentrated in the town centre: the recreation club, the mine hospital, the Trust School and the Craft Training School. The company's Director's Lodge, an exclusive walled-in residential compound for Chinese management staff, was located in the former European mine township. The further I moved away from this area downtown towards Roan and Mpatamatu townships, the less discernible was the mine's presence and the more visibly broken were the infrastructures. In Mpatamatu, one dilapidated mine clinic run by CLM represented all that was left of the mine's social investment. Its material and professional condition prevented it from being recognized as a CSR measure by the township's residents.

Economic activity relocated from the mine and its facilities to Mpatamatu's households, the privatized former mine houses. At the time of my fieldwork, a minority of Mpatamatu's residents were employed by CLM or one of its subcontractors. Labour had relocated itself from predominantly male formal wage employment to small-scale trade and agricultural subsistence, previously female domains of economic activity. In Chapter 2, I showed how the gendered division of labour dissolved into a situational assessment of how men and women respectively could best maintain their families' livelihoods. Women's income-generating strategies, adopted to lower their dependence on men and generate a separate income from their husband's wage under corporate paternalism, became

the economic basis of their households. Interestingly, the skills that women had acquired at the community centres, corporate facilities that had substantiated the paternalistic, male-dominated order of the mine, turned out to be skills that enabled women to replace the formal employment of men. My research participants cultivated their back gardens and undeveloped land along the streets of Mpatamatu, in the Nkulumashiba *dambo* and adjacent to the township. Making a livelihood meant not only going into ‘the bush’, but also bringing it into the township. The relocation of economic activity changed the relationship between men and women. It fragmented Mpatamatu’s urban character rooted in corporate town planning.

Renovation

I chose to investigate what had been left not from the perspective of the material remains and the forces that had created them, but from the perspective of the relation between the material remains and those who reappropriated them. The creative interaction between the material characteristics of Mpatamatu’s abandoned social welfare buildings and people’s private reappropriation of them caught my attention. This interaction was related to residents’ experience of the township under corporate paternalism and the changing relationships among particular social groups within its population after the decline of corporate paternalism. Private renovation projects countered the process of material and social ruin.

These renovation projects revived Mpatamatu’s former social welfare buildings. Former mineworkers, teachers and preachers reused the buildings in new capacities or restored aspects of their previous functions. The examples of the pay line buildings and the community centres in Chapter 3 showed how the buildings’ position within Mpatamatu was renewed. Social welfare buildings that had represented the male paternalist order of the mine and female domesticity became private educational facilities creating social opportunities in the township. Renovation brought the buildings back to life.

Renovation also took up the material characteristics of Mpatamatu’s former social welfare buildings. Their material durability made reappropriations possible, cutting across ongoing material decay. Their spatial arrangements, as in the case of the community centres, invited very particular renovative practices. Spaces in other buildings were manipulated to house new functions and provide room for new initiatives. Renovation fused materiality with collective social action and individual human agency.

The material renovation of Mpatamatu’s former social welfare building was also mirrored by social renovation, a transition I addressed in Chapter 3. The teachers who founded the township’s private schools in the former social welfare buildings had belonged to a subaltern class. They had been government employ-

ees in a corporate township, both integrated into and separated within the township at the same time. Mineworkers had been privileged in their access to the mine's infrastructures. As new sitting tenants of the former corporate buildings, however, teachers took over the responsibility for the buildings and determined the terms of access. Similarly, the priests and elders of the Pentecostal Assemblies of God (Zambia) (PAOG(Z)) decided who could use the former sports complex. This authority was mirrored in the fact that the student union leaders at the Mpatamatu College of Education (MPACE) were very much aware of it when they organized a concert. Renovation was a socio-material process that restructured both social positions and material access.

Reintegration

The privatization of ZCCM's Luanshya Division separated the mine from the material sites of its corporate provisions in Mpatamatu. Simultaneously it separated the township's residents from material sites that had played a role in their everyday lives. The unitary structure of the mine, which had integrated different infrastructures under the mine's authority, ceased to exist. The abandonment of the social welfare buildings resulted in the abolition of services, subsidies and programmes, that is, of the social opportunities that had been provided to Mpatamatu's residents. I wanted to know how reappropriations of the abandoned social welfare buildings realigned them with the changing living conditions in the post-paternalist township.

The reintegration of the former social welfare buildings into Mpatamatu was related to the buildings' old and new functions. At the time of my fieldwork, most taverns and clubs remained sites of sociality, exchanges of news and public debates. Mine clinics had been taken over by the Ministry of Health and a health-related non-governmental organization (NGO). The community centres had changed from being pillars of the mine's gendered division of labour between the shaft and the home to private schools extending educational opportunities. Teachers' initiatives became a catalyst in a process that made constructive use of the corporate remains. Other buildings, like the Kabulangeti Tavern, were reintegrated by abandoning their past corporate assignment. As Chapters 3 and 4 showed, reintegration was negotiated between past and present ideas of appropriation, between the past and present needs of the township population.

The ability to assemble people was central to the reintegration of Mpatamatu's former social welfare buildings, as Chapter 4 showed in particular. It was illustrated by taverns and clubs continuing to run in terms of their former functions. It also became evident in the pay line buildings and the community centres that enabled people to study and pray together. The stadium remained a site of football competition, but it was also used for large gatherings. The sports com-



Figure 5.1. The remnants of the entrance to Mpatamatu stadium. Photo by the author.

plex became Mpatamatu's largest house of prayer. On election day, many of the former social welfare buildings housed polling stations. Reintegration happened through people's encounters and collective action under one roof.

The reintegration of Mpatamatu's former social welfare buildings usually went along with a positive assessment of the respective building's spatial setting, material characteristics and inscribed memories. The private schools in the former community centres took advantage of the buildings' classroom structure and continued the centres' educational role. At the sports complex, Sunday services were held with physical intensity, with songs and music reminiscent of the sports activities and concerts of the past. However, this positive approach was not always apparent. In the church at the former *Kabulangeti Tavern*, memories of the building's past use as a place of drinking that involved intimacies between men and women were evaluated negatively and rejected during services. Reintegration was articulated in line with past aspects of the buildings in terms of both positive appraisal and negative rejections.

Reconnection

Finally, I wanted to understand how the converging processes of ruination and renovation were connected to the global. How did they reposition Mpatamatu in global hierarchies of power? Mpatamatu had turned from being a part of *Luan-shya's* mine to an independent satellite of the city. Its residents had experienced the condition of being put aside and assessed as redundant. From the deterioration of the streets connecting Mpatamatu's sections with each other to the road



leading through Roan and past the tailing dams into Luanshya, from the dismantling of the railway extension to the mine to the broken short-cut road from Luanshya via Fisenge to national highway T3, the infrastructural decay suggested a growing separation of Mpatamatu from Luanshya, the region and the world. In contrast to this disconnection, however, which was rooted in infrastructural decay, I observed multiple processes of reconnection at Mpatamatu's former social welfare buildings.

Mpatamatu was reconnected to Luanshya as a municipal part of town. Ward development committees held regular meetings in the township's former social welfare buildings. The story of the section 26 clinic illustrated how Mpatamatu was reconnected to the national health system under Luanshya's District Health Officer. The Ministry of Education also extended its presence in the township by opening a new primary school in section 27. Reconnection introduced and extended the state's presence in order gradually to take over functions previously provided by the mine.

Institutions started in Mpatamatu's former social welfare buildings after corporate abandonment established new connections between the township and the outside world. The Mpatamatu College of Education (MPACE) produced graduates who were posted to schools in all parts of Zambia and also attracted students from there. The Serve Zambia Foundation, which used the former section 21 clinic as its headquarters, became part of a global network of faith-based NGOs. The foundation facilitated an international exchange involving the township's living conditions. Reconnection resulted in people coming to, leaving and knowing about Mpatamatu.

People reconnected to the world through new modes of dependence. The mine's corporate paternalism had provided social opportunities. It had situated Mpatamatu within a global network of copper-producing communities. Pentecostal churches in the township's former sports complex, pay line buildings and community centres succeeded the mine in forming relationships of dependence that reconnected followers with a global Christian community. They provided new room for residents' claims. Pentecostal movements were present in the former social welfare buildings through their branch churches and the televangelists on the TV screens in Mpatamatu homes. Religion offered a new sense of belonging, of social and entrepreneurial opportunity.

This ethnography has demonstrated the gradual dissolution of a planned corporate spatial order through processes of relocation, renovation, reintegration and reconnection. The planned urban character of Mpatamatu has given way to a space marked physically by agricultural subsistence. Notably, the socio-material processes that I witnessed all possessed a reflexive component. This reflexivity, omnipresent through my recurring usage of the prefix 're-' from the mines' reprivatization to Mpatamatu's reconnection, indicated how much materiality, social experience and history were intertwined in Mpatamatu. It showed the tremendous change in people's living conditions when Zambia's copper sector was restructured in 1997. Nostalgia for past infrastructures was the strongest form of this reflexivity. Ruination with its different histories attached to it was the starting point for the projects of renovation countering it at the township's former social welfare buildings. In contrast to the appropriation of industrial ruins elsewhere (cf. Edensor 2005b: 169), in Mpatamatu it was not the corporate remains that violated normative assignments about township life. This violation was experienced in the corporate abandonment of the former mine township and its consequences outside the corporate remains.

In this book I have shown what people did with what they were left with. I have looked at both the corporate debris that was produced in the absence of the mine as its creator and how this debris was turned into something valuable by township residents. A question that remains with me, going beyond this ethnography, is whether and how ruination comes to an end. From the perspective of Mpatamatu, renovation projects managed to counter material and social decline. However, processes of postcolonial ruination were still present in Luanshya in the form of spatial segregation, socio-economic differentiation and infrastructural decay. It is my hope that the receiver of Roan Antelope Mining Corporation of Zambia (RAMCOZ) will acknowledge the creative initiatives covered in this book.