

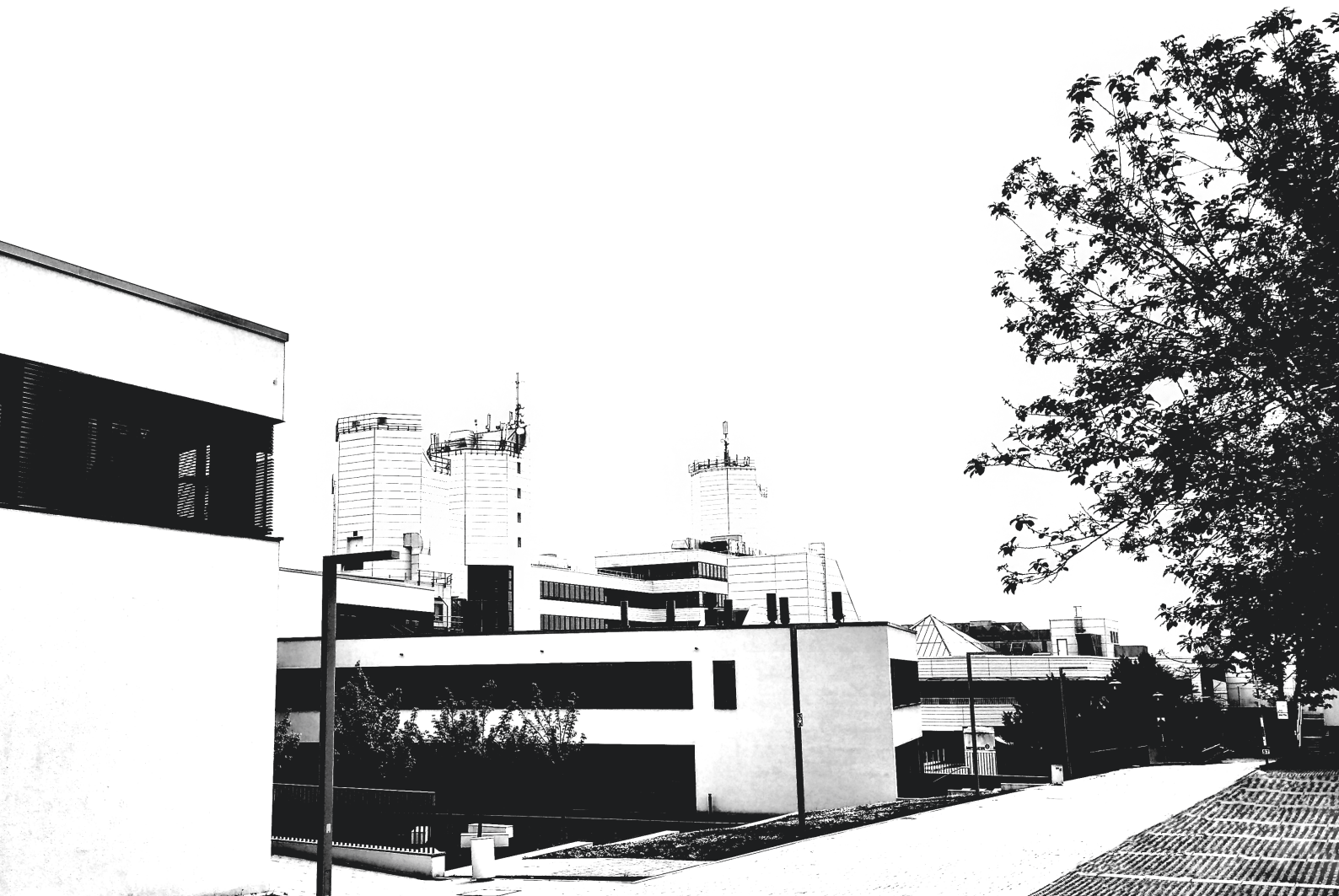
Siegener Working Papers zur Politischen Soziologie

SWoPS

Researching Transborder Mobility and Institutions of Intermediary Rule in Southern Africa

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No. 2 - September 2024



Siegener Working Papers zur Politischen Soziologie (SWoPS)

Herausgegeben von Katharina Inhetveen und Christian Lahusen
Universität Siegen



Zitation des vorliegenden Working Papers:

Inhetveen, Katharina / Krämer, Mario / Pargen, Laura (2024): Researching Transborder Mobility and Institutions of Intermediary Rule in Southern Africa. Siegenger Working Papers zur Politischen Soziologie (SWoPS) Nr. 2 (September 2024). Siegen: Universität Siegen, Seminar für Sozialwissenschaften. DOI: 10.25819/ubsi/10589

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Researching Transborder Mobility and Institutions of Intermediary Rule in Southern Africa

Katharina Inhetveen, Mario Krämer, Laura Pargen

Abstract

This paper outlines the ongoing research project “Mobility and Institutions of Intermediary Rule in Southern Africa”, which is part of the DFG Research Unit “Transborder Mobility and Institutional Dynamics” (transMID). Our aim is to introduce the research questions, assumptions, and theoretical and methodological tools of this sub-project, as well as presenting some preliminary findings of our ongoing empirical research. The project investigates the interrelation between institutions of rule (in the sense of Weberian *Herrschaft*) and transborder mobility. What effects do forms of mobility, both new and old, have on the ways in which power translates into institutionalized rule? Which processes affecting the de-institutionalization of rule are associated with the transborder mobility of diverse actors? Vice versa, how do institutions of rule influence mobility patterns and the (im)mobilization of rulers and subjects? The research project focuses, first, on mobility in the Global South, particularly in Southern Africa, complemented by the tracing of mobility patterns to the Global North. Second, the focus is on institutions of *intermediary* rule, especially chieftaincy. We argue that, on the one hand, transborder mobility may function as a breeding ground for the rise of intermediary forms of rule, while, on the other hand, mobility represents a permanent challenge to the institutionalization of power. To achieve a better understanding of the interrelation between transborder mobility and the institutionalization or de-institutionalization of intermediary rule, the project examines the institutional dynamics connected with the mobility displayed by chiefs or chieftainesses and their subjects, and traces its conditions, trajectories, and implications in the institutional field of rule.

Researching Transborder Mobility and Institutions of Intermediary Rule in Southern Africa

Katharina Inhetveen, Mario Krämer, Laura Pargen

The aim of Research Unit 5186 “Transborder Mobility and Institutional Dynamics”, funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG), is to explore interrelations between transborder mobility and social institutions. In the context of this Research Unit, we are currently conducting the sub-project “Transborder Mobility and Institutions of Intermediary Rule in Southern Africa”, which started its work in October 2021 and which we will introduce and discuss in this paper.¹

Our key objective is to examine the interrelations between the intermediary institution of chieftaincy (especially in Southern Africa) and transborder mobility. By ‘transborder’, we refer not only to mobility across national borders, but also to boundaries between different chiefdoms, as well as to the symbolic boundary between the Global South and North. In the following, we first outline the objectives and key concepts of the Research Unit that our project is a part of. We then introduce the more specific questions the project pursues, relating them both to the concepts and objectives of the Research Unit and to the state of the art in the relevant academic literature. After discussing our methods of data collection and analysis, we will finally share some preliminary findings from our empirical research and from conceptual discussions within both the project and the Research Unit.²

1 Mobility and institutions: a complex interrelation as a starting point for collaborative research

The starting point of the collaborative research endeavour of which our project is a part was an interest in the interrelations between spatial mobility and the dynamics

¹ Like the whole Research Unit (project number 441512655), our sub-project is funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation). The conceptualization of our project is part of the funding proposal to the DFG (Inhetveen/Krämer 2020). Sections 1 to 4 of this paper are largely based on the unpublished funding proposal. We wish to thank the DFG for funding and supporting our research. Our thanks also go to Celia Hsü and Julia Rongen for their invaluable support in the project as student research assistants, and to the other members and associates of the Research Unit, who discussed our work on several occasions.

² Sections 1, 2, 3, and 4 are authored by Katharina Inhetveen and Mario Krämer, the two PIs who wrote the funding proposal. Laura Pargen co-authored sections 5 and 6, as she joined the project for its implementation, conducted the fieldwork in Zambia, and played a major role in the development of the results. The three of us chose to explicate this differentiation in line with the regulations for doctoral candidates at the University of Siegen.

of institutions. In social-scientific thought, institutions are the core element of social solidification.³ Spatial mobility, however, is associated with fluidity, change, and reconfigurations, via mobility-induced changes in participation in spatially bound situations, fields, or social units. Obviously, the relation between institutions and mobility is far more complex than one between antagonists, one solidifying and one dynamizing the social. As a first step towards addressing this complexity, the Research Unit set out with two theoretical concepts:

First, we use the working concept of ‘institutional pluralism’ in a wider sense that allows for drawing on different theoretical perspectives, including the ‘institutional logics’ perspective (Thornton/Ocasio/Lounsbury 2012), the concept of institutional rationality criteria and institutional differentiation (Lepsius 2017), or institutional pluralism, as coined by Kraatz and Block (2008). This concept helps us to address the phenomenon that mobility adds to a multiplicity of institutions – and thus institutional rules and expectations – within and across social fields, as mobile people transfer elements of the institutional contexts from their places of departure to the places of arrival (see Research Unit transMID *forthcoming*).

Secondly, the Research Unit set out with a distinction between ‘endogenous institutions’, originating in the social units of the mobile people concerned, and ‘exogenous institutions’, which mobile people find in their places of arrival, without having participated in their genesis or been socialized in their context (see Research Unit transMID *in preparation*). It needs to be emphasized, however, that this analytical distinction does not imply any assumption that endogenous and exogenous institutions are empirically separated categories. Rather, the concepts are ideal types that allow us to examine the complex institutional environment of mobile people and of the social contexts in which they arrive (see section 5.5 below).

When looking at empirical interactions between institutions and mobility, a variety of questions arise, pertaining, for example, to institutional patterns traveling with mobile people and reaching other environments; to resulting pluralities of institutions in the contexts of arrival; to institutional claims to validity within certain territories (or beyond); to attempts to institutionalize the control or management of mobility – and eventually processes of institutionalization of mobility itself; or to tacit assumptions of sedentarism in institutional rationales which are confronted with non-sedentary people.

³ At the same time, a socially perpetuated solidity over time is seen as the one common denominator of the very different definitions of institutions within sociology: “The only idea common to all usages of the term ‘institution’ is that of some sort of establishment of relative permanence of a distinctly social sort” (Huges 1936, as quoted in Zucker 1991: 83). The process of institutionalization can consequently be defined as ‘reinforcement’, ‘stabilization’, ‘establishment’, or ‘solidification’ (Popitz 2017: 166-7).

The array of empirically-based questions has not been mirrored by any larger-scale theory building in the social sciences. Rather, theorizing about mobility (or its more specific forms, such as migration, refugee movements, and others) and institutional theory have been addressed in more or less separate discourses within the social sciences. A main goal of the Research Unit is to bring together these strands of research and thereby to develop them further in the course of five different empirical projects. These focus on different institutions and mobility phenomena.⁴ Our project examines institutions of (intermediary) rule, and the mobility of chiefs and chieftainesses (as rulers) in Southern Africa,⁵ as we will outline in the following.

2 Mobility and institutions of rule in Africa: our starting point

Following the approach of the late German sociologist Heinrich Popitz (2017: 165), we understand rule (in the sense of Weberian *Herrschaft*) as institutionalized power. The control of the spatial mobility of subjects by rulers is constitutive of the process of institutionalizing power. However, if subjects are able to evade the control of their mobility, this process of institutionalization is generally impeded (Popitz 2017: 169). Conversely, and from the rulers' viewpoint, this means that the immobilization of subjects, as well as the rulers' own mobility, might strengthen their power, developing it towards rule – as, for example, colonial rule in Africa illustrates forcefully. This assumption, however, needs to be followed up empirically, as it can also be argued that the expectations of a ruler's presence or strategies of managing rather than merely impeding the mobility of subjects and other actors relevant to the institution of rule might strengthen the latter.

Considering results from different social-scientific debates on rule, chieftaincy, and mobility, and identifying research desiderata in the existing literature, the research project focuses on the mobility of rulers and on the mobile aspects of chieftaincy in particular. In addition, it investigates the strategies of the rulers for controlling mobility within the realm of their rule. Mobility, as a fluid element of sociality, finds itself in a tense relationship with highly institutionalized forms of power such as statehood (or, as we shall discuss later, chieftaincy). This tension becomes evident in the debates on (forced) migration and statehood, which generally focus on the mobility of the subaltern in their relations with the state (Haddad 2008; Koser 2007). In contrast to the numerous studies on the interconnections

⁴ For more information about the DFG Research Unit 5183 'Transborder Mobility and Institutional Dynamics', see the Unit's website: <https://for5183.uni-siegen.de/?lang=en>

⁵ We speak of 'chiefs' and 'chieftainesses' as an analytical category including similar emic terms and titles, such as, for example, paramount chiefs, royal highnesses, kings, and queens. If we refer to a specific chief or chieftainess we use the title and name in capital letters, for example "Paramount Chief Dalindyabo Sabata".

between mobility/(forced) migration and the state, corresponding research focusing on institutions of rule *beyond* the state is still limited, although intermediary institutions such as chieftaincy play an important role in law and politics in many regions of the Global South (Kassimir 2001). Institutions of rule beyond the state are discussed in their relationship to mobility on the international and transnational level (Barnett/Finnemore 2004; Glick Schiller/Salazar 2013), but these studies mostly focus on the (im)mobility of those subjected to various forms of rule and less on the powerful themselves (Turner 2007). Exceptions are (historical) studies on colonial rule in Africa, which argue that colonialism very much relied on intermediary rule and on the mobility of administrative staff to subjugate the local population and to control the colonial territories (Guy 2013; Trotha 1996).

Loren B. Landau and Oliver Bakewell (2018: 4) claim that transborder mobility within Africa is still under-researched, although it very much prevails over the frequently discussed South-North mobility in quantitative terms. Transborder mobility and its implications for the institutionalization of power are discussed in 'borderland studies', which illustrate that several aspects of borderland situations reinforce the power of non-state institutions and enable new forms of rule at the margins and beyond the state (Feyissa/Hoehne 2015; Hüsken/Klute 2010). Research on mobility, land control, and belonging discusses the effects of transborder mobility on questions of power and rule (Bakewell/Landau 2018; Lentz 2013). Furthermore, studies on forced migration and refugees examine the interrelationship between transborder mobility and institutions of rule (Inheteven 2010), but mostly focus on the state (Van Hoyweghen 2002) or the international regime (Turner 2004). The prevailing focus on the state becomes clear, for example, in the argument made by Quirk and Vigneswaran (2015), who argue that 'mobility makes states' and that power is made spatially 'transportable' by mobile state actors. That is, the authors turn away from a static concept of the state and highlight the mobility of rulers, as well as those subject to rule. Despite this narrow focus on the state, both aspects are nevertheless valuable for our research project. In brief, the research project focuses on at least two key insights derived from the literature on institutions of rule and (transborder) mobility in Africa: first, we investigate intermediary institutions of rule from an institutional perspective, and second, we concentrate on the mobility of the rulers; this also means that we take the subaltern into account, to the extent that they become an object of the (de)mobilizing strategies of rulers.

Chieftaincy is one of the most significant and enduring institutions of intermediary rule in Africa. The literature on chieftaincy experienced an upswing from the 1990s onwards (Mamdani 1996; Van Dijk/Van Rouveroy van Nieuwaal 1999), with at least five main foci: first, studies on the relationship between chieftaincy and the state (Buur/Kyed 2007; Herbst 2000); second, research on the (in)compatibility of chieftaincy and liberal democracy (Baldwin 2016; Krämer 2016); third, a focus

on the legal role of chieftaincy (Zenker/Hoehne 2018); fourth, the interconnections between tradition, neoliberalism, and globalization (Comaroff/Comaroff 2018; Cook 2011; Krämer 2020); and fifth, studies on the (im)mobile aspect of chieftaincy, which is central to our research project, but a rather marginal issue in the literature so far. At first glance, the institution of chieftaincy is largely associated with immobility: the precolonial principle of control over people was converted into control over territory under colonial rule (Goody 1963; Herbst 2000), within which land conflicts and claims for territorial control often related back to the precolonial era (Lentz 2013; White 1957). In the postcolonial era, the control over land by chieftaincy often goes hand in hand with the enforced or restricted mobility of subjects (Berry 2017; Ntsebeza 2005). Only a few studies so far focus on the mobility of chiefs and chieftainesses themselves: For the case of Ghana, for example, Michels and Möhl (2001) analyze the implications of ‘transnational chieftaincy’ for hierarchical local organization, while Kleist (2011) examines the challenges so-called ‘return chiefs’ face, when they return to their home countries after having studied or worked abroad and try to implement their knowledge and skills in their neotraditional offices. The return of chiefs and chieftainesses, as well as other local leaders, from Zambia, as a country of asylum, to changed political constellations in the return country of Angola, was part of a research study led by Katharina Inheteven (Inglês et al. 2017). Cook and Hardin (2013) discuss social change resulting from the transnational mobility of chiefs in Southern Africa against the background of neoliberal capitalism and the ‘corporatization’ of tradition. Geschiere (2018) investigates the interaction of chiefs from different African countries in (academic) workshops and their efforts at neotraditional networking across African borders.

This stock of social-scientific knowledge on chiefs and mobility serves as a basis for our project. It aims to move further not only by focusing on empirical cases that are not thoroughly researched yet, but also by theorizing within the frame of institutional and mobility research.

3 Patterns and strategies of (im)mobility: questions and problems in the case of chieftaincy

The main objective of the research project is to investigate the interactions between institutions of intermediary rule and transborder mobility. Our focus is on the mobility of intermediary rulers and their administrative staff or affiliates. In addition, we examine strategies for the (limiting as well as initiating) control of the mobility of subjects and other actors on territories controlled by chieftaincy. The research project focuses on chieftaincy in Southern Africa and associated phenomena of (im)mobility, both within the region and transregionally between the Global South and North. Our basic assumption is that transborder mobility and the associated

neotraditional networking contribute to the rise of intermediary forms of rule, but that mobility at the same time constitutes a challenge for territorially-bound institutions of rule. The mobility of subjects is oriented towards rules and sanctions of the institutions of rule. Rulers themselves take the (potential or factual) mobility of subjects into account and adapt their own mobility to institutionalized rationality criteria (Lepsius 2017).

Rule is the result of a process of solidifying power up to the point where it is institutionalized. According to Popitz (2017: 166), three dimensions are key to this institutionalization process: depersonalization (that is, positions of power which are independent of specific persons); formalization (the normative arrangement of the exercise of power); and the integration of power relations into a superior social order (that is, the connection with existing social structures). These dimensions overlap with dimensions spelled out by Nedelmann (1995: 20), among which two dimensions are particularly relevant for our research project: routinized action (in contrast to strategic action; Nedelmann 1995: 16f, Berger/Luckmann 1967: 53-72) and the intrinsic value of institutions (Nedelmann 1995: 18). These five dimensions served for the project to analyse processes of the (de-)institutionalization of chieftaincy in relation to mobility, which we will comment on further below (see section 5.4). Nedelmann (1995: 21-38) also points out the fact that highly consolidated institutions may be affected by processes of deinstitutionalization and become fragile and that forms of flexibility management may strengthen institutional stability but also produce unintended consequences. That is, institutionalization and mobilization are not irreversibly progressing processes, but we understand them as contested dynamics. Therefore, the research project examines processes of increasing as well as declining institutionalization and mobilization. The following research questions are central to our research project:

1. How do institutions of rule generate the patterns of mobility of rulers as well as subjects? Which forms of mobility are produced by the institution of chieftaincy and what changes in traditional patterns of mobility can be observed?
2. Under what conditions do rulers prevent mobility or constrain their own and others' mobility? What alternatives to spatial mobility become visible through the strategic actions of chiefs and chieftainesses?
3. How do new and old forms of transborder mobility shape the process of the institutionalization of power? Can we observe an increasing degree of institutionalization or the modification of specific forms of intermediary rule?
4. Which forms of deinstitutionalization are associated with the transborder mobility of different actors? What are the challenges intermediary rulers face when mobility is increased, restricted, or controlled by external actors?

The project addresses these (and additional) questions by combining two project sectors: one focusing on inter-institutional and the other on intra-institutional dynamics.

In project sector I, Mario Krämer investigates the inter-institutional relations between chieftaincy and other institutions that are associated with the mobility of chiefs and chieftainesses. This sector concentrates on the interdependencies of chieftaincy with exogenous institutions within the same institutional field (rule and politics), but also examines other institutional fields. The transborder mobility of chiefs and chieftainesses within the Global South as well as between the Global South and North are central to the first project sector, which particularly focuses on different forms of neotraditional networking, such as ‘touring’, ‘rallies’, and ‘lobbying’ in a transnational context. For example, chiefs and chieftainesses may travel to international and academic organizations, transnational companies, and foreign governments to initiate local investment and development schemes. We investigate the repercussions of this transborder networking in the institutionalization of intermediary rule on the local and national level and how, in turn, the increasing or decreasing degree of institutionalization affects the various patterns of transborder mobility.

In project sector II, Katharina Inheteven and Laura Pargen investigate the intra-institutional aspects of the mobility of chiefs and chieftainesses, specifically regarding the interactions between different chiefdoms and their actors and how these interactions are facilitated or influenced by transborder mobility. On the local and national level, chiefs and chieftainesses form informal networks and formal organizations (such as the Forum of African Traditional Authorities, FATA) and assemble in state committees (Houses of Traditional Leaders; in Zambia House of Chiefs) to exchange ideas and to enforce their common interests. With increasing South-South and South-North mobility, these activities might expand to the transnational sphere (Geschiere 2018). Similarly to project sector I, we examine the implications of mobile neotraditional networking for the process of (de)institutionalizing intermediary rule. We assume that despite different political and economic conditions, transborder intra-institutional networking (transgressing borders between different chiefdoms, regional, or national borders) enables the institution of chieftaincy to protect or even to expand its autonomy from the state. On the other hand, we will take into account the reverse effects of transnational mobility and examine how such forms of mobility affect the routines of the rulers that demand substantial local presence.

To summarize, both project sectors ask how different forms of transborder mobility by chiefs, chieftainesses, and their affiliates affect the institutionalization of intermediary rule (in its five dimensions of depersonalization, formalization, integration, routinization, and intrinsic value) and how far and by what means

various institutional actors of chieftaincy generate or prevent different forms of transborder mobility as they strive for the stabilization or extension of intermediary rule.

4 Methodological strategies and considerations

Following the idea of a ‘complex triangulation’ (Olivier de Sardan 2015: 46f.; Breidenstein et al. 2015: 34f.), we combine several methodological elements in our research project. The focus is on multilocal field research in several chiefdoms and during the travels of chiefs and chieftainesses. More specifically, the methodology of the research project includes the following elements:

The core element of our methods is ethnographic fieldwork, including extended fieldwork (Spittler 2001), as well as shorter field stays. To echo the aspect of mobility in our research, fieldwork is situated at different places and ‘on the road’ between them. Among the multiplicity of research sites, an empirically based selection of these sites is researched more extensively than others (Jaeger/Nieswand 2022). In project sector II, material is generated during at least two fieldwork phases of several months, based in a peripherally situated chiefdom and in a more centrally situated chiefdom to obtain a multiperspective view (by rulers, administrative staff, relatives, subjects, state and civil society representatives, etc.) on the interconnections between chieftaincy and mobility. In project sector I, the focus is on shorter and more focused field research, concentrating on the mobility of chiefs and chieftainesses within Southern Africa and between Africa and the Global North in order to observe the touring, rallies and lobbying (‘follow the chief’; see Cook/Hardin 2013), and the interactions of chiefs and chieftainesses with transnational and national actors in the course of neotraditional networking.

In addition to participant observation, we employ different forms of qualitative interviews. For example, thematically focused interviews (Witzel 2000) and group discussions (Bohnsack/Przyborski/Schäffer 2010) with different stakeholders such as chiefs, chieftainesses, administrative staff, relatives, subjects, and other relevant actors serve to investigate the five dimensions of the institutionalization of rule, and to tackle the empirical and theoretical questions emerging during our research and our collaboration within the Research Unit.

Furthermore, we analyse written sources such as (auto)biographies, travel reports, internet sources, etc. The mobility patterns of chiefs and chieftainesses and their subjects are reconstructed on the basis of these sources and our interviews, allowing for a documentation of mobility biographies of specific chiefs (Inheteven

2020).⁶ Due to an increased consideration of historical factors, research in archives has become increasingly relevant during the ongoing project work.

The flexibility in methodological strategies which is implied here follows the idea of a Grounded Theory approach (Strauss 1987), which is our main orientation in analysing material and generating results – and further questions.

5 Preliminary findings and emerging questions

5.1 *Historical perspective on the conceptual triangle of mobility, institutions, and intermediary rule*

In further developing the initial funding proposal, a historical perspective on the conceptual triangle of mobility, institutions, and intermediary rule turned out to be crucial for at least two reasons: first, the limitations to conducting fieldwork in Southern Africa in the first year of the research project due to the Covid-19 pandemic encouraged us to re-examine and re-evaluate empirical data such as oral history interviews and archival sources that had been collected during previous field research. Based on this, we came to the conclusion that, second, in order to understand current dynamics, as well as the historical trajectory of institutional change, more comprehensively, we need to incorporate a diachronic perspective into our research design. Eventually, this resulted in the expansion of our methodological approach. In addition to the methods described above we are currently conducting archival research and oral history interviews and we analyse (auto)biographies of chiefs. This also corresponds to the relevance of historicity as a characteristic of institutions (Berger/Luckmann 1967).

This renewed and expanded focus on the ‘historical anthropology of (im)mobile institutions’ is of particular relevance for project sector I and includes elements of both the established historical anthropology (see, for example, Wolf 1982) and the more recent critique of ‘European historicity’ (Hodges 2013) proposed by the anthropology of history (Palmié/Stewart 2016). Two publications in progress explicitly deal with the reframed diachronic perspective on our conceptual triangle: the first investigates the interrelations between colonial rule, chieftaincy, and mobility and focuses on the historical trajectory of a specific chiefdom in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. It illustrates the origins of the chiefdom in the colonial era, which was characterized by various forms of (transborder) mobility, particularly out-migration, resettlement, and forced removal. The paper shows how the mobility pushed and enforced by the colonial administration impacted on de- and re-

⁶ Chiefs and chieftainesses were moreover asked to make drawings of their ego-centred networks (Scheibelhofer 2006) in order to reconstruct their neotraditional networking. This turned out difficult in practice, so that the material gained from it is limited.

institutionalization processes of the institution of chieftaincy, with severe long-term consequences. The second publication in progress moves on from the local and regional to the (trans)national level and from the colonial to the apartheid era in South Africa. It adds more complexity to the conventional (academic and public) account of chieftaincy as an immobile and despotic institution. While not disputing these arguments in general, the paper focuses on the interrelationship between chieftaincy, (im)mobility, and resistance. The focus is on notable exceptions of chiefs and chieftainesses being at the forefront of anti-apartheid resistance and examines the vignettes of Chief Albert Luthuli, Paramount Chief Dalindyebo Sabata, and the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa (Contralesa), in particular. By discussing and further developing the concept of ‘mobile political networking’, the paper investigates how these and other chiefs collaborated with and became part of the anti-apartheid movement and what this eventually meant for the status, role, and authority of chieftaincy in democratic South Africa.

5.2 Grasping the spatial dimension of institutional dynamics: ‘institutional turf’ as conceptual tool

There have been relatively few connections between scholarly debates on mobility and migration, on the one hand, and institutionalist research, on the other. This was already clear in the preparation phase of the Research Unit, and was one of the starting points for formulating its aims. Thus, it is not a self-evident and smooth operation to address mobility from a standpoint of institutional theory. For different reasons not to be explored here, there seems to exist a sedentarist bias in institutional theories, in spite of the wide range of theoretical approaches within institutional research.

Our research on spatially mobile chiefs and chieftainesses, and especially on their inter-institutional encounters with, for example, the institution of Christian mission, as well as discussions with other sub-projects about their empirical work, directed us to the question of what the spatial ‘claims’ of specific institutions are. That is, what is the spatial scope of their claims to control the social according to their institutional rules – or, depending on the conceptualization of the institutionalist approach concerned, their scripts (DiMaggio/Powell 1991), their criteria of rationality (Lepsius 2017), or their institutional logic (Thornton/Ocasio/Lounsbury 2012)? Addressing this question avoids the common tacit assumption of a spatial co-occurrence between an (implicitly territorially defined) institution, usually the state or formal organizations, and its claims of control. This assumption leads the analytical attention away not only from institutions that are not explicitly defined territorially (such as the family), but also from dynamics, negotiations, and contestations of the spatial realm of institutional validity.

In addressing the question about the dynamics of institutions' spatial realm, our sub-project developed the conceptual suggestion of 'institutional turf'. We understand this concept as decidedly spatial, aiming to grasp the implicitly or explicitly territorialized claims to validity by institutional actors. We depart here from more metaphorical uses of 'turf' in organizational or institutional research.⁷ Our concept of institutional turf denotes specifically the spatial, or territorial, scope of validity ("Geltungsbereich") of institutions. It allows us to analytically consider and to empirically discern this scope.

Generally, institutional claims to control or validity can refer to different criteria; they might, for example, be defined universally, or refer to membership and belonging, or to specific social spheres. Especially when studying the spatial mobilities of people, as in our sub-project and the overall Research Unit, spatial criteria as captured by the concept of institutional turf, that is, definitions of scope and limits of institutional validity ("Geltung"), are highly relevant, as institutional turf is affected by, and in turn affects, the spatial mobility of people. In our sub-project, using the self-coined concept of institutional turf as the geographically defined space of institutional claims to validity seems especially promising, because the institution of chieftaincy has been tightly connected with associations with specific land, or territory, at least since colonialism (Goody 1963; Herbst 2000; see above).

The empirical background to this conceptual idea is evidence from Laura Pargen's fieldwork in Zambia, specifically in connection to the "King of Kings Celebration" organized by the missionary organization Overland Missions, which provides a meeting occasion for African chiefs and chieftainesses as part of the Forum of African Traditional Authorities (FATA) and the Forum of African Traditional Authorities in Zambia (FATAZA) (see, on this event, Pargen *forthcoming*).⁸ This arrangement, which encompasses and facilitates the spatial mobility of chiefs and chieftainesses, seems to be an institutional tit-for-tat: On the one hand, it strengthens the institution of chieftaincy in several ways: by providing an opportunity for intra-institutional political networking among chiefs and chieftainesses (who travel there from different chiefdoms), as well as for inter-institutional networking with resource-rich actors such as UN Women and the missionary organization, Overland Missions; and, in addition, by offering recognition, awareness, and visibility. On the other hand, it enables (or at least aims at) organized, mobile Christian missionaries to move their activities into chiefdoms, into the chiefs' and chieftainesses' territory,

⁷ Focusing on bureaucratic agencies and organizations, there is a scholarly debate on turf protection by allowing or preventing organizational cooperation without coining the concept of turf as explicitly territorial or spatial category (An/Tang 2020; Busuioc 2016; Heims 2019).

⁸ This event in October 2022 was initiated by Overland Missions as a gospel event for the Zambian chiefs and chieftainesses. Due to the involvement of FATAZA and FATA it further developed into an international conference with speakers from the Zambian government, UN Women, and the Pan-African Parliament, among others.

allowing a new (missionary) institution to enter the established institutional turf of chieftaincy. One might see this as a ‘turf expansion’ for the mission (enlarging the spatial realm of their missionary activities, which are aimed at installing their institutional criteria of rationality there), and as a ‘turf sharing’ for chieftaincy, allowing the co-presence of a religious institution in the chiefdoms, including the relevance of institutionalized religious expectations to actors in the chiefdom. Cases like this might constitute a process that could be called ‘turf symbiosis’.

While networking can aim at entering an institutional turf, the empirical research also points to the relevance of leaving behind the institutional turf of, in this case, chieftaincy. The mobility of chiefs and chieftainesses gives them the opportunity to leave their institutional turf and thereby also leave behind or avoid institutional obligations and control. For example, while traditional customs do not allow Zambian chiefs and chieftainesses to eat and drink in public, these institutional obligations do not apply, for example, during university-organized training for traditional authorities at a Zambian university, or at international conferences (field notes 02.11.22, ll. 126-134). Notably, leaving one’s own chiefdom does not always imply leaving the institutional realm of chieftaincy. Events that are closely and formally associated with chieftaincy, such as meetings of the House of Chiefs (the Zambian parliamentarian chamber of traditional authorities), the aforementioned King of Kings Celebration, or the Traditional Leaders Caucus, do belong to the institutional turf of chieftaincy – which is manifested in the phenomenon that the events often take place in specific spaces, again showing a spatial dimension of institutional claims to validity, and institutional control. The building in Lusaka called ‘House of Chiefs’ serves exclusively as a meeting place for the political body ‘House of Chiefs’; the conference hall in which the King of Kings Celebration took place was explicitly described as a ‘palace’ (field notes 05.10.22, ll. 140ff.). If chiefs and chieftainesses meet in such places and participate in such events, institutional regulations apply and behaviour such as eating and drinking in public is forbidden. Such places, outside chiefdoms, but with a close association with the institution of chieftaincy and thus part of the space in which it claims validity, could thus be seen as an institution’s ‘turf exclaves’.

More generally, apart from this empirical case, what might the concept of institutional turf enable us to see? If we understand institutions as claiming validity within (and rejecting validity outside) their spatially defined turf, we can relate this to mobility and might observe and analytically distinguish an array of constellations, among which we might expect, for example: (1) mobile people moving into the institutional turf or moving out of it; (2) mobility strategies extending, protecting, or diminishing an institutional turf (such as the missionary organization in the example outlined above); (3) mobility patterns changing the relations between institutional turfs; or (4) different phenomena between contestation, negotiation, or

institutional stasis, such as turf wars, turf negotiations or symbiosis, turf exclaves, or turf overlaps. As the concept of institutional turf is still to be tested in its analytical implications, further empirical research will contribute to its differentiation and dimensionalization.

5.3 *Chieftaincy, networking mobility, and inter-institutional encounters: Christian mission and networking with and between traditional authorities*

Our research shows that members of the chieftaincy institution are engaging with organizations from different institutional fields by travelling and participating in (inter)national or regional events to facilitate local investment and development projects. Different institutionalized organizations, such as NGOs, development agencies (e.g. USAID or GIZ), and universities, host training sessions or workshops for chiefs, chieftainesses, and other administrative staff on issues such as gender and climate change, among others. Overland Missions, as mentioned before, is one of the different institutionalized organizations engaging with members of the chieftaincy institution with the aim of moving onto the institutional turf of chieftaincy and cooperating with chiefs and chieftainesses (see also Pargen *forthcoming*). The networking between actors from the chieftaincy institution and Christian missionaries is characterized by the negotiation of different institutionalized rationality criteria. Informed by the overall goals of poverty reduction and land preservation, FATA aims at an inter-institutional cooperation with Overland Missions to establish development-oriented, philanthropic projects for the chiefdom communities. Historical and contemporary Christian missionaries and churches usually offer training and employment opportunities in the sectors of agriculture, health, and education by establishing mission hospitals and schools alongside their evangelizing endeavours (Garvey 1977: 416f.; Opuni-Frimpong 2021: 36). According to the president of FATA, chiefs and chieftainesses can engage with representatives of Overland Missions similarly to representatives of NGOs and other developmental agencies that do not undertake proselytizing activities (field notes 05.10.22, ll. 799-806). FATA thus aims at an inter-institutional cooperation with Christian missionaries without the incorporation of Christian values and practices into the institution of chieftaincy.

Although many Christian churches and missions are often involved in philanthropic projects on the institutional turf of chieftaincy, they are reluctant to extend their evangelizing services, especially to chiefs and chieftainesses (Opuni-Frimpong 2021: 29f.). Overland Missions, on the other hand, specifically aims at the goal of proselytizing chiefs and chieftainesses to tackle practices of witchcraft and facilitate so-called 'transformational development' for the chiefdom community (interview with OM representatives, ll. 39-42, 51-53). Focusing on a people-centred approach,

Overland Missions pursues the establishment of close relationships with chiefs, chieftainesses, other community leaders, and members of the community itself, and concentrates less on philanthropic projects. Influenced by the individualistic, instrumental belief system of Evangelicalism, an improvement of the socio-economic situation in the chiefdom communities – according to Overland Missions – can only be achieved by devotion to God (Balcomb 2017: 305f). To reach this goal, Overland Missions established the ‘Tribal Chaplaincy Program’, training pastors and church leaders of different local churches as spiritual advisors for chiefs and chieftainesses. This programme was initiated in Zambia in 2015 and some of the Zambian chiefs and chieftainesses are working closely together with their chaplains as an integral part of their ‘chiefdom councils’ (informal exchange with OM representatives, ll. 23f.). By hosting the King of Kings Celebration, Overland Missions wanted to get into contact with traditional authorities across the African continent and introduce the chaplaincy programme with the aim of cooperating with the participating chiefs and chieftainesses. Besides the goal of moving onto the institutional turf of chieftaincy, Overland Missions, supported by FATAZA, aims at an inter-institutional cooperation enabling the integration of Christian values and practices into the institution of chieftaincy.

5.4 Dimensions of institutional dynamics: first evidence from the field

To look at the dynamics of chieftaincy as an institution of rule, at processes of its increasing or decreasing institutionalization in connection with (im)mobility, we apply the dimensions of institutionalization that Heinrich Popitz (2017) and Birgitta Nedelmann (1995) developed for analysing the institutionalization of power into rule, and for analysing degrees of institutionalization of political institutions (see Inhetveen/Krämer 2020: 6-7). According to Popitz (2017: 165-186), power solidifies into rule along three crucial dimensions of institutionalization, namely 1) depersonalization (i.e., the development of power positions that are independent of specific persons occupying them, or, more briefly, positionalization), 2) formalization (i.e., the normative regulation of the exercise of power), and 3) the integration of institutions of power into a superordinate system of rule (i.e., an interdependence with existing social, and in our case more concretely, institutional structures). The more power proceeds along these three dimensions, the more institutionalized it becomes. These ‘tendencies’ of the institutionalization process outlined by Popitz overlap with Nedelmann’s (1995: 16-17) ‘frame of reference for analysing institutional dynamics’, from which we adopt two more dimensions, formulated as poles on a continuum of institutionalization: 4) routinization, and thereby eventually taken-for-grantedness, as opposed to strategic action, and 5) the intrinsic value of an institution, as opposed to its instrumentality. In other words, a pattern of action is the more institutionalized,

- 1) the more it is depersonalized, that is, independent of individual persons in specific positions,
- 2) the more it is formalized, that is, the more action is regulated by established rules,
- 3) the more it is structurally integrated in its social environment,
- 4) the more the pattern of action is routinized and taken for granted, and
- 5) the more intrinsic value is associated with it, and correspondingly, the less it depends on extrinsic motivation (i.e., it is seen as instrumental to reaching other goals), to reproduce the pattern of action.

In analysing material from the field, these five dimensions of institutionalization did not all lead to equally rich discussions, but at the very least yielded some insights concerning the functioning of chieftaincy as an institution of intermediary, mobilized rule – and in addition, we did not limit our analysis to the five dimensions, but also kept an open eye on further dimensions of or distinctions between institutions that would prove relevant in the empirical cases. At this point in our empirical research, we will only refer to selected aspects of each dimension and discuss how the analytical use of the distinction between endogenous and exogenous institutions (Research Unit transMID *forthcoming*) could contribute to a better understanding of the interrelations between transborder mobility and intermediary rule.

ad 1) Depersonalization

Intra-institutional networking between chiefs and chieftainesses is facilitated through different formal meetings, for example during the House of Chiefs, the King of Kings Celebration, or traditional ceremonies. They are part of what we call mobile political networking, as the chiefs and chieftainesses travel from their chiefdoms to the meetings. Such formal meetings between chiefs and chieftainesses are opportunities for the traditional leaders not only to communicate, but also to establish close personal relationships with other chiefs and chieftainesses, usually from different ethnic backgrounds (interview with a chief, ll. 314-320, 330-334). These close personal relationships differ from the ones between chiefs and chieftainesses that are based on shared ethnic belonging or shared historical roots, as those are already institutionalized as relationships within the relevant chieftaincy system.⁹ At the same time, such a forging of intra-institutional friendship ties is personalized in the sense that the close relations are specifically established between persons, and not

⁹ These institutionalized chieftaincy relationships or networks are also characterized by the fact that it is possible to send a representative to certain meetings or events, for example a royal family member or a member of the chiefdom administration. This may entail intra-institutional networking, for example during cultural festivities or Indabas, as well as inter-institutional networking, for example as part of government-led workshops (interviews with members of the chiefdom administration, ll. 100-105, 114-119; 99-101).

depersonalized in the sense of being independent of these individuals. As far as it is the chiefs and chieftainesses who personally become mobile, their encounters during mobility have a personal quality, and the networks established have a personalized quality associated with lower institutionalization.

As for inter-institutional networking, organizations like Christian missions or NGOs use such formal meetings attended by traditional leaders to get in contact with chiefs and chieftainesses, including the aforementioned ones like the King of Kings Celebration, House of Chiefs meetings, the Traditional Leaders Caucus, or the ‘traditional leadership training’ at Chalimbana University (CHAU), attended by Laura Pargen. Some organizations also approach chiefs or chieftainesses at the local level in their palaces; for example, Overland Missions and Emmanuel TV visited a Lunda chief at his palace (field notes 19.08.23); however, here it is also the chief or chieftainess personally who decides about access to the chiefdom, and the forging of personal bonds is often decisive for access to a chiefdom or to a chief’s or chieftainess’s network.

These personal relationships can become de-personalized and hence institutionalized in different ways:

- opening up the institutional turf by integrating and contracting actors from different institutionalized organizations on the local level, e.g. building permanent missionary bases in the chiefdom (interview with a chief, ll. 304ff., 311-316);
- involving and sending members of the chiefdom administration or royal family, which can assure that contacts with certain people or organizations will remain even when the chief or chieftainess is absent or dies (interview with a chief, ll. 319ff; interviews with members of the chiefdom administration, ll. 100-105, 114-119; 99-101).

Otherwise there are meetings where it is necessary for the traditional leader, that is, the chief or chieftainess, to be present. For example, during the House of Chiefs meetings it is not possible to send a representative. Also, it would be inappropriate to send a member of the chieftaincy administration (Induna or headman) to the King of Kings Celebration rather than a royal family member to represent the chief.

Summing up, Laura Pargen’s field observations point to a high relevance of forming personal ‘friendships’ as a part of mobile political networking. Here, the specific mobility of chiefs and chieftainesses themselves, and their attendance at meetings where they cannot easily be represented by someone else, functions in a way that personalizes networking and thus hampers the depersonalization, or positionalization, of chieftaincy. The association of political networking mobility with encounters between specific persons (those who are mobile) thus does not directly heighten the institutionalization of chieftaincy. As far as political networking relies on personal ties between individual mobile power-holders, it can contribute to a

personalization,¹⁰ and thus decrease the degree of institutionalization, of chieftaincy. Indirectly, the relation can look different, as we will argue below.

ad 2) Formalization

Understood as ‘traditional’ or ‘customary rule’, chieftaincy features a high degree of formalization, its practices being structured by clear and well-known norms, binding both subjects and power-holders, in daily life as well as during manifold ritualized ceremonies (see Krämer 2009; Trotha 1996; Williams 2010). Relevant in the context of our research is the norm, or customary obligation, for chiefs and chieftainesses to be available for their subjects at the palace (interview with a chief, ll. 107-112; 122ff.). This is manifested for example in the first draft of a “code of ethics for chiefs”, where the palace is described as “the reference point” (House of Chiefs n.d., p. 2) for the community, especially where there is a lack of local governance by government institutions (Field notes 02.11.22, ll. 70-82). A lot of chiefs and chieftainesses actively refer to this norm, and there is no apparent disagreement by other traditional leaders. In practice, however, the obligation of spatial presence – implicating immobility – is not strictly followed, but rather softened, as many chiefs and chieftainesses spend time outside the palace or, more relevantly, outside the chiefdom; some even live outside their chiefdom (interview with a district official, ll. 61-70). Does increasing mobility, in these forms, point to a de-formalization of chieftaincy?

Rather than merely ignoring rules by being mobile, chiefs and chieftainesses relate their mobility to a detailed interpretation of the norm of being present at the palace. They argue that mobility, in the sense of leaving the palace or chiefdom, is allowed on specific occasions. Some of these occasions are directly connected to the established responsibilities of chiefs and chieftainesses, thus legitimizing mobility, among them:

- participation in meetings of the House of Chiefs or so-called ‘Indabas’ at district or provincial levels, or in other events that are hosted by governmental actors or part of governance procedures (field notes 31.10.22; 03.11.22; interview with a chief, 72-78; 174 ff.)
- acting as mediators on behalf of the government, when the Zambian government sends chiefs and chieftainesses who are members of the House of Chiefs to mediate in succession conflicts in chiefdoms outside their districts and

¹⁰ Such relations between personal ties and political networking have been issues in public discourses; an example is the friendship and the “Schmusekurs” (Spanger 2005: 9) between Germany’s former chancellor Gerhard Schröder and Russian president Vladimir Putin.

ethnic communities¹¹ (interview with a government official; field notes 31.10.22, 104-109)

- participation in traditional ceremonies or other cultural festivities (e.g. coronation ceremonies, funerals), the personal attendance at which is a customary obligation for chiefs and chieftainesses (field notes 27.08.22; 03.12.22; 12.08.23; 26.08.23)
- other official occasions entailing participation, such as conferences or workshops organized or hosted by other institutionalized organizations like NGOs, statal development agencies (e.g. USAID, GIZ), missionary organizations, or Chalimbana University (field notes 28.07.22; 05.10.22; 14.09.23; 18.09.23; 11.10.2023).

In these legitimations of mobility, we observe a clear reference to norms and official obligations, and thus can speak of formalized mobility, in which the process of formalization might possibly function as a counter-weight to the eroding norm of immobility at the palace.

It is noteworthy that this case shows how norms that regulate mobility do not only apply to people with few power resources, even though power asymmetries imply that they are affected in more existential ways. By focusing on chieftaincy, we study the mobility of the powerful. Even here, we see efforts to legitimize mobility, namely against the normative expectation that chiefs and chieftainesses must remain present in their chiefdoms. While we will look at this connection further, it points to formalization as a dimension of the institutionalization of power: the norms established in this process also bind the powerful, not only those subjected to power (Popitz 2017: 173).

ad 3) Integration

While the mobility of chiefs and chieftainesses seems to have ambivalent impacts on the institutionalization of chieftaincy as an institution of intermediary rule, the dimension of integration in overarching orders creates specific potential for increasing the institutionalization of chieftaincy.

Firstly, at the inter-institutional level of integration, regular mobility facilitates the enacting of the law-based integration of chieftaincy into the institutional order of the state.¹² The House of Chiefs is a formal advisory body to the

¹¹ A possible rationale behind these missions is that the conflict parties involved might have more respect for other chiefs or chieftainesses as mediators than for government officials getting involved in traditional chieftaincy affairs like succession.

¹² Kate Baldwin sees the chiefs' and chieftainesses' power in the Zambian state and economy at national level, through the House of Chiefs, as rather low. However, their influence at the local level has become more important with the development of a multi-party system since the 1990s (Baldwin 2016: 87-95). Notably, it is integration, not necessarily influence, which we discuss here as a dimension of institutionalization.

government. It discusses government initiatives, policy reforms, and the members of the House of Chiefs' own initiatives (interview with a government official, ll. 56-62). Importantly for our point, mobility also establishes connections between individual chiefs or chieftainesses and individual government members; for example, a Lunda chief has visited Zambia's president Hakainde Hichilema in his home, and one of his nieces (who in this case can be seen as a classificatory daughter) is married to Gary Nkombo, the Minister of Local Government (interview with a chief, ll. 124-130; informal exchange with a chief, ll. 75ff.). Here, the dimension of integration interacts with that of personalization (see above), a point to be further discussed in the project. It is, however, notable that the personalized relations established here between a chief and politicians are at the family level, not the individual level.

The integration of chieftaincy into the political environment of statehood is a crucial point here insofar as chieftaincy is strengthened specifically as an institution of *intermediary* rule. It is mainly the intermediation between the population and the state that has been associated with chieftaincy since colonialism (see Buur/Kyed 2007; Herbst 2000; Krämer 2016; see section 2 above). However, the mobility of chiefs and chieftainesses also facilitates integration into the institutional environment of other social fields or spheres. Among them are the institutional order of state law, for example, when a senior chief argues to his subjects that he is mainly based in Lusaka because of the various court cases he is involved in. Since the High Court is in Lusaka, he has a much shorter journey than from his chiefdom and is readily available even at short notice (informal exchange with a community member, ll. 27-33). Moreover, the mobile networking of chiefs and chieftainesses also includes, via NGOs and (inter)national state development agencies, the economic sphere, and, via missionary organizations, the sphere of religion or, more generally, *Weltanschauung* and spirituality. Such inter-institutional networking can also facilitate or ease their contact with third parties like the UN – as was the case when Zambian UN representatives contacted Overland Missions to get in touch with chiefs and chieftainesses, as contact between them and the missionary organization is already established (informal exchange with OM representative, ll. 88ff.). At the same time, the interaction partners of such inter-institutional networking, such as political, development, or missionary organizations, can be expected to pursue their own agendas, as Laura Pargen shows with regard to missionary strategies to extend the mission's institutional turf via mobile networking with chiefs and chieftainesses (Pargen *forthcoming*).

Secondly, at the intra-institutional level, mobility facilitates the establishment of larger, (inter)national chieftaincy networks, as well as the integration of individual chiefdoms within them. The mobility of political networking *between* chiefs and chieftainesses feeds into the exchange and cooperation between different

chieftaincy organizations, as well as between individual (mobile) chiefs and chieftainesses at both national and international level. Regular destinations for such intra-institutional networking mobility are the meetings of the Forum of African Traditional Authorities in Zambia (FATAZA), the Forum of African Traditional Authorities (FATA) as official body of the African Union (AU) at continental level, the Council of Traditional Leaders at UN Women, and the Lunda Ndembu International Chiefs Unity. Established rituals seen as an integral element of chieftaincy practices also bring chiefs and chieftainesses together. At traditional ceremonies, it is not only chiefs and chieftainesses with the same ethnic background (from Zambia or neighbouring countries) who assemble, but often also chiefs and chieftainesses with different ethnic backgrounds (interview with a chief, ll. 338-346; field notes 27.08.22., ll. 199ff.; field notes 03.12.22; ll. 38-45). Thereby, all of these occasions contribute to an inter-ethnic institutional integration of chieftaincy.

Intra-institutional networking also reaches out to the economic sphere. The House of Chiefs has founded another organizational entity, the Chiefs Foundation, which is meant to represent all Zambian chiefs and chieftainesses and focuses on business enterprises, as the House of Chiefs itself, as a national governance body, is not allowed to undertake economic endeavors (interview with a chief, ll. 282-290; 306f.).

Summing up this point, both intra- and inter-institutional networking mobility contribute to the increasing institutionalization of chieftaincy on the dimension of integration both into the political sphere and into other social spheres. It is not only individual chiefdoms that enhance their positions, but chieftaincy as an overarching institution of intermediary rule becomes integrated into the structures of several other institutional fields, most importantly that of nation-state and government, in relation to which the intermediary function of chieftaincy is primarily defined.

ad 4) Routinization versus strategic action

Pertaining to the routinization of patterns of action as a dimension of institutionalization, the mobility of chiefs and chieftainesses, which is seemingly an increasing part of chieftaincy practices, has, at least in Zambia, not (yet) reached the state of being a taken-for-granted routine. According to the field observations, mobility, especially in the form of mobile political networking, appears rather to be strategic action – for establishing connections to actor networks conducive to chieftaincy and the chiefdom, as for example with reference to (economic) development (see above). Chiefs and chieftainesses argue that they become mobile, and thereby leave their chiefdom, if they are invited by the government, NGOs, or other actors like CHAU or Overland Missions (see also the above discussion on the dimension of formalization). They legitimize their moving out of the chiefdom, which is portrayed

as traditionally not allowed, as necessary to bring development to the chiefdom – and hence as strategic action involving an explicit goal that means benefits for the chiefdom.

It seems that, at least in some chiefdoms, the routine work of the chieftaincy administration is hampered by the mobility of the chief or chieftainess. In these cases, mobility as strategic action might impair the enactment of routines. For example, absences of chiefs and chieftainesses from the chiefdom are said to influence the functions of the administration or Royal Establishment. An administrative member of a Lunda chiefdom describes this as follows: “Things kind of just go on pause (...) until he [the chief; LP] comes back” (interview with a member of the chiefdom administration, ll. 346f.). In other cases, like in a Ngoni chiefdom, the chief's absence seems to have no influence on the work of his royal council. A factor contributing to these differences might be the degree of hierarchization in the structure of a chiefdom. People describe the Lunda hierarchy as very strict,¹³ so that members of the Royal Establishment *strategically* avoid any decision-making, although they are formally allowed to make certain decisions (except on land and witchcraft issues), without the presence of the chief. Another example from a Soli chief is that complainants in a dispute did not respect the chief's ruling, which they received via the council members and not directly from the chief – so they brought the case to the royal court another time, summoning the chief to again discuss the decision he had already made (field notes 13.07.23).

Furthermore, some efforts to legitimize the chiefs' or chieftainesses' absence from their chiefdoms to the community, the government, and other chieftaincy members point to a more instrumental perspective on mobility, namely when chiefs and chieftainesses depict themselves as – to say it in Baldwin's (2016: 65ff) words – “development brokers” for their local communities. As this legitimizing argument goes, development is facilitated by the chief or chieftainess moving around, meeting with different actors from government, chieftaincy institutions, NGOs, and business partners, in the sense of purposive networking mobility.

Summing up, as mobility is not (yet) a comprehensively routinized practice of chiefs and chieftainesses, and seems to need legitimization *as* strategic action, an increase in mobility would at this stage tend to decrease the degree of institutionalization of chieftaincy, if we focus on this dimension specifically.

ad 5) Intrinsic value versus instrumentality

As for the fifth dimension of institutionalization, the intrinsic value afforded to an institution, the empirical material does not point to high mobility-related dynamics

¹³ This characteristic seems to have persisted since pre-colonial times; according to Baldwin (2016: 87f), the Lunda were among the most hierarchically organized groups even before the arrival of the British colonialists.

in the degree to which chieftaincy is institutionalized. Even when chiefs and chieftainesses become mobile, there is no decrease in the intrinsic value of chieftaincy as an institution to be observed, either at local community level or at national government level. Whereas people involved legitimize mobility as being instrumental, chieftaincy itself does not appear to be instrumentalized by chiefs and chieftainesses and their subjects. On the contrary, the institution of chieftaincy serves as a doubtlessly legitimate reference point for the utilization of mobility, to which instrumentality is assigned to reach goals connected to the obligations of chieftaincy.

From the perspective of other actors connected to the chiefs' and chieftainesses' networking mobility, chieftaincy does appear in some respects to be instrumentalized. The linking-up of missionaries, for example, with chiefs and chieftainesses has an aspect of mission actors using these inter-institutional networks to expand their institutional turf, that is, the spatial area in which an institution (here: specific Christian denominations, or orientations¹⁴) claims validity for its rules, or scripts, for social action. However, it is arguably the high institutionalization of chieftaincy, the intrinsic value assigned to it by the participants (the chiefs, chieftainesses, and subjects), which makes it a valuable networking partner and promising gate-keeper for 'institutional outsiders' like the missionaries or NGOs.

5.5 *From binary categories to institutional dynamics: 'endogenous' and 'exogenous' institutions*

In the original proposal of the Research Unit, the conceptual distinction between endogenous and exogenous institutions served as a heuristic device. It understands "endogenous institutions as those institutions that mobile persons bring with them from their previous institutional contexts, where they are socialized and which, according to our assumption, play a role for their own action orientations as well as in the sense of self-control of the collective", and "exogenous institutions as those institutions that have emerged outside the mobile persons' collective of origin, i.e. those that they find in the course of mobility at the places of arrival" or transit (Research Unit transMID *forthcoming*).

In our sub-project, we are focusing on networking mobility, that is, a mobility aiming at and being used for political networking. Accordingly, the distinction between endogenous and exogenous institutions led us to compare different aspects across sub-projects in the Research Unit, looking at mobilities involving mid- and long-term stays in countries migrated to, or through – as, for example, in the cases of the legal status of toleration (*Duldung*) of asylum seekers in Germany, or of African labour migration to the UAE (see Research Unit transMID *forthcoming*).

¹⁴ Some of the groups encountered in the field reject the term 'denomination', hence the wider wording we use.

The case of chieftaincy illustrates that, empirically, institutions may not be categorizable as either endogenous or exogenous in an unambiguous way. From the perspective of our interlocutors, chieftaincy is for the most part seen as something indigenous, as stemming from one's own group, and often as having been there since time immemorial. In our terminology, this would mean a categorization of chieftaincy as endogenous. As indicated above, however, chieftaincy was profoundly changed, sometimes even invented (Hobsbawm/Ranger 1983), by the colonial administration (Havik 2010; Trotha 1996). In Zambia, British colonial rule found heterogeneous precolonial authority structures which they aimed to align, so that, on the one hand, the British divided up paramount chieftaincies with large territories and elaborate hierarchies into smaller units and, on the other hand, introduced chiefdoms encompassing a number of formerly separate, decentralized groups (Baldwin 2016: 87-89). This shows that, historically, the institution of chieftaincy was considerably altered, sometimes even introduced, by unbidden external forces – making a categorization between endogeneity and exogeneity more ambivalent. Such a categorization can vary, first, depending on the perspective of those doing the categorization and, second, in the course of historical processes of change.

Another specification of the conceptual distinction is connected to our empirical encounters with missionaries, in their interactions with chiefs and chieftainesses, and in their references to colonialism. These encounters make it clear that any tacit assumption that exogenous institutions are spatially fixed, while endogenous institutions are spatially mobile, is misleading, even though our initial definition might be read as suggesting that. Rather, mobile institutions, entering into peoples' societies and life-worlds via mobile carriers, necessarily start off there as exogenous institutions – such as in the case of colonialism addressed, but also, as in our empirical material, in the spreading of specific religious institutions by Christian mission. Getting back to our concept of institutional turf, mission is a case of the purposive proliferation of an institution (also in the spatial sense of turf expansion). This necessarily entails exogenous institutions aiming at their own endogenization, at being accepted as institutions (in this case: a religion) in their own right.¹⁵

Summing up, interpretations of institutional belongings, and thus categorizations of institutions as endogenous or exogenous, differ between the people involved and over time: Whose perspective are we looking at, at which point in time? And how do these perspectives and categorizations relate to each other? Based on our ongoing research, we do not treat the conceptual binary of endogenous versus exogenous institutions as empirically separate categories, but use this heuristic tool

¹⁵ Marian Burchardt and Ann Swidler (2020) show for South Africa, with a focus on social organization, how congregational Christian religion, introduced by missionaries, has succeeded in this, while NGOs and the institutional principles promoted by them have been less successful.

to trace the dynamics that develop in the transitions, ambivalences, *mélanges*, and battles of definition around the distinction between endogenous and exogenous (or emic terms denoting the same distinction).

6 Prospects for continuing the research

The institution of chieftaincy proved to be a fruitful empirical case for the above-mentioned analyses of (im)mobility and institutional dynamics within both the project and the wider research group. Nevertheless, further research will focus on different empirical cases to examine both anti-mobile and mobile institutions in order to complement the research findings and theorizations.

First, the continuing research will highlight questions of immobility and anti-mobility in addition to the current focus on mobility. Although (transborder) mobility is an important aspect of intermediary rule, land control and the immobilization of subjects remain part and parcel of the institution of chieftaincy. One objective is to explore how far place-making practices and what has been referred to above as institutional turf are expressions of immobility, or whether they are associated with (normative) attitudes of anti-mobility and thus contrast sharply with mobile political networking. Therefore, future research will widen its focus to investigate the interrelationship between place-making and local belonging, on the one hand, and anti-mobility and immobility on the other.

Second, and in contrast to the institution of chieftaincy, where mobility is not yet fully institutionalized in the case of Zambia, the institution of Christian mission entails the mobility of the missionaries involved as an integral part, informed by institutionalized criteria of rationality. While chiefs and chieftainesses become mobile against the background of their institutionally shaped self-perception, the institution of Christian mission is itself a mobile institution that aims at institutional expansion through the mobile proselytizing practices of its actors. The unexpected prominence of Christian missionaries during our fieldwork in Zambia led to a shift in research focus to further analyse and theorize the inter-institutional dynamics associated with mobility. Building on the findings of our project on chieftaincy, the continuing research will focus specifically on processes and attempts at institutional expansion as they occur when missionaries attempt to expand the institutional turf of Christian rationality criteria through mobility.

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